MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Edited by

AZIZAH KASSIM
LAU TEIK SOON

RE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
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CONTENTS

EDITORS' FOREWORD

Malaysia and Singapore share a common colonial experience, they are economically interdependent, both are multi-racial societies and politically they have adopted the multiparty system and Westminister model of parliamentary democracy. Physically, they are linked by a causeway across the narrow Straits of Johore.

Co-existing with the common bonds are the differences between Malaysia and Singapore. Malaysia has become a manufacturing centre, but it still exports major primary products including rubber, tin and palm oil. Singapore has become an administrative, commercial and financial centre. The populations in Malaysia and Singapore are dominated by the Malays and Chinese community respectively. In politics, Malaysia has developed a strong coalition government comprising representatives from various political parties, while in Singapore, there continues to be a one party dominant political system.

The factors of commonality and difference have created a special relationship between Malaysia and Singapore in that peaceful and harmonious relations do sometimes erupt into periods of stress and tension. Thus, while the governments maintain that official relations have been consistently good, yet there are occasional expressions of hostility over certain issues.

Malaysia and Singapore relations have been characterised by competition and cooperation. Competition is seen in many fields including economics and social matters. Cooperation is reflected in the diplomatic and security areas, for example, the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC), the Cambodian issue and the Five

s are constantly reminded of the symbiotic relationship
oth countries. It is as if they are twins born in the same
they are now separated. Thus, Malaysia and Singapore
hasised from time to time their economic inter-
e and defence indivisibility.

a need to examine closely the dynamics of Malaysia-
relations. Towards that end, a cooperative approach by
from both sides would be very useful. Hence, the
ngapore Forum (MSF) was inaugurated by the Faculties
Social Sciences of Universiti Malaya and the National
of Singapore for the primary purpose of achieving
exchanges and cooperative research into the various
alaysia and Singapore.

d to establish a common platform for such co-operation
nges between academics from both the Faculties had
felt, but it was only in early 1990 when the idea was
us consideration. The National University of Singapore
start the ball rolling by holding the First Malaysia
Forum at its campus on April 23-27, 1991. The forum
ed by about fifty participants including eighteen from
Malaya. Twelve papers, six each from the two universities,
nted; touching on issues relating to history, literature,
economics, politics and foreign relations of both
t was an attempt by the academics of the two Faculties
and gain insights into the various complex aspects of
ral relations.

Faculties have agreed to hold the Malaysia Singapore
odically with each side hosting it on an alternate basis.
gs, it is hoped, will help foster close relations between
of both our universities and contribute positively
e maintenance of good relations between our two

opeful that the Malaysia Singapore Forum will play an
significant role by providing a balanced perspective of
oth countries and of Malaysia-Singapore relations.

d like to express our gratitude to Professor Tunku

to Professor Edwin Thumboo, former Dean and members of the NUS Organising Committee members, namely, Assoc Prof Ong Jin Hui, Dr S Vasoo, Dr Victor Savage and Dr Euston Quah.

We would also like to express our appreciation to all staff members of Universiti Malaya and National University of Singapore who have put in valuable time to participate in the First Malaysia Singapore Forum.

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Azizah Kassim
Lau Teik Soon

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CHAPTER ONE

MALAYSIA: LESSONS OF HISTORY FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dato' Khoo Kay Kim

History is the best example of a liberal discipline; it is about no particular thing. On the contrary, it is about everything — *past everything* to be more precise. Many frown on history because they prefer a discipline with a more structured approach. But, a 'structured approach' so far has been little more than drawing conclusions from certain assumptions with the use of labels which, in effect, have no universal validity.

History writing is, or should, not be a game or a race to determine which scholar can better fantasize. It is often possible to know quite accurately how people in the past (at least the recent past) felt or thought. There is no need to make a plain situation unduly complicated. For example, people do have strong racial prejudices. These are not necessarily the result of colonialism or capitalism.

A historian — the old-fashioned historian — is like a detective. He leaves nothing out in his investigation, in so far as it is humanly possible to do so. Be that as it may, the good historian is necessarily very diligent. He relentlessly seeks information, no matter how minute, and it is upon a large corpus of information that he proceeds to draw conclusions. In other words, in order to arrive at certain conclusions, he must *know* his subject very well.

Naturally the good philosopher will ask: "What is meant by

does not exactly fall into that mould. Historians are nously agreed that there are lessons to be learnt from ough that is not to say that history, in the opinion storians, has no relevance to life.

blem is an etymological one or simply a question of Still, the subject can, perhaps, be discussed without ting to be too pedantic. What needs to be shown really *past has a bearing on the present.* Or, to understand the s important that one should understand its antecedent. would be surprising that there should be any doubt. lue of history, has been increasingly challenged or is the approach to history writing rather than history esting though the subject may be, this is not the place ll the criticisms levelled at the methodology of history. ediate purpose here is to try to establish a link between national development. In all developing countries, development' is a matter of primary importance. t means different things to different countries. Here, laysian experience will be discussed and seen, however, the Malay perspective because it has been the one in the formulation of all national development es. In Malaysia, national development is often also n terms of 'nation building'. The local perception development has long been dominated by one issue relations. As early as the year 1909, a local daily on the subject:

> the rubber boom here, one would have said that the chief ics of the F.M.S. were their output of tin and their remarkable anism. The former is undeniably a big asset, but it is a moot ner the latter can be regarded otherwise than as a drawback. from time to time that the mixture of races that we see in our thy of all commendation, in that it enables those who have to hority or to supervise labour to play one nationality off against nd it may be that there is a substratum of truth in this theorising, easonable to deduce that Ramasamy will not take more kindly of the society of the Open Coffin, than were Ah Fong to the -like instruments that assist in accompanying the religious with the version of the deities of the Hindu mythology. But

> apparently, we have no exception; the only reasonable deduction being that, though our very cosmopolitanism constitutes insurance against united opposition, yet it affords an equal safeguard against effective union in the public interest. The former we can well believe, but is it true of the latter? We have the examples before us of English, Malays, Chinese and Tamils working together on our Sanitary Boards for what, we are only too willing to believe, is regarded as the common weal; and only the other day we saw a Malay, a Chinaman and a Tamil marching jauntily down the public highway in perfect accord. But does all this bring us nearer the real goal, when, to parody the old catch-phrase, none are of the party, and all are for the State? It may be so, and we sincerely hope that sure is the case; but there is danger in attempting the premature realisation of what may well be but idealism; for it is absolutely essential in the public interest that, while working steadily and steadfastly in the course of unity, we should not fail to recognise the need for dealing with each nationality separately in such matters as, from their very nature, demand distinct treatment.[1]

That was in 1909. In March 1991, the Malaysia's Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, when presenting a paper at the inaugural meeting of the Malaysian Business Council, spoke of nine challenges which Malaysians have to face in order to achieve progress which, he hoped, would place the country on par with the advanced countries of the world by the year 2020. He said:

> The first of these is the challenge of establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony and full and fair partnership, made up of one *Bangsa Malaysia* with political loyalty and dedication to the nation.[2]

Although he did say that the nine central objectives listed[3] "need not be our order of priorities over the next three decades" because "the priorities of any moment in time must meet the specific circumstances of the moment in time," he added:

> ... it would be surprising if the first strategic challenge which I have mentioned — the establishment of a united Malaysian nation — is not likely to be the most fundamental, the most basic.

This has been Malaysia's preoccupation for the past several decades. Every major activity is, at least, seen against the backdrop of Malaysia's heterogeneous society. It has to be, inevitably.

re for it has never been substantiated, only assumed, based dence that such a policy was practised elsewhere. What is, er, true is that British colonial administrators deliberately ed the progress of Malay education. Even though Malay cular education was encouraged from the very beginning tish administration, no less a person than the influential Birch (son of J.W.W. Birch, assassinated at Pasir Salak, Perak, 75), wrote, when he was Acting Resident of Selangor, in 893, that:

> Vernacular education is in my opinion useful in so far as it makes the ay regular and cleanly in his habits; but where it exalts boys, as it often s, above the level of the calling of their fathers, who for the most part always remain small agriculturalists or fishermen, it does more harm n good. It is of course necessary to create a class of interpreters, oolmasters, clerks and policemen, but the education now afforded only cts that object to a limited extent, and it would be preferable to establish horoughly good boarding school in Kuala Lumpur where a higher cation could be given to the brighter pupils of the Vernacular schools n to scatter broadcast over the country schools for which it is difficult find efficient masters.[4]

t even more influential than Birch was Frank Swettenham came here as a cadet in 1870, and rose to become High missioner of the Federated Malay States and Governor of the s Settlements in 1901, only to retire prematurely in 1903. He as well in favour of limited vernacular education. As Resident erak, he wrote in 1890 that:

> ... the large majority of Malay boys and girls have little or no opportunity learning their own language, and if the Government undertakes to ch them this, the Koran, and something about figure and geography pecially of the Malay Peninsula and the Archipelago), this knowledge d the habits of industry, punctuality and obedience that they will gain regular attendance at school, will be of material advantage to them and ist them to earn a livelihood in many vocations ...[5]

ut, he was distinctly against the teaching of English to Malay lren in general. He explained:

> The one danger to be guarded against is to teach English discriminately. It could not be well taught except in a few schools, and

He was to add a little later that:

> I do not think we should aim at giving Malays the sort of higher education that is offered by the Government of India to its native subjects ... It is unfortunate that, when an Eastern has been taught to read and write English very indifferently, he seems to think that from that moment the Government is responsible for his future employment, and in consequence the market for this kind of labour is overstocked, while many honourable and profitable trades find difficulty in obtaining workmen, because of the prejudice against anything like manual labour.[7]

He openly stated in a local newspaper that "We don't want in Malaya a repetition of the Bengali Baboo."[8] English education in India, he thought, had led to pathetic results.[9]

British educational policy towards the Malays never really changed after that, the establishment of the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar, (M.C.K.K.) in 1905, notwithstanding. The M.C.K.K. was an institution meant for a small minority of Malay children, namely, those from the aristocratic families. As late as 1930, the British Adviser of Kelantan, A.S. Haynes, remarked that "an English education for the majority of the inhabitants will not be conducive to the happiness of the people or the welfare of the state."[10] Even O.T. Dussek (Principal of the Sultan Idris Training College or S.I.T.C., established in 1922) who took a very personal interest in the progress of the Malays, did not argue for the advancement of Malay education. In 1926, he criticized the system of English education in the country for failing to cater to "the needs of the country or the state of intellectual development, or to the social culture attained by the inhabitants." But, he felt that Malay vernacular education was being "conducted satisfactorily on satisfactory lines", in particular what he termed "the 'Practical' side of Education, for example, Gardening, Handicraft, Trade Schools ... and Homecraft." He did, however, advocate that "adequate and reasonably cheap facilities" should be made available so that more children might obtain an English education. But higher education, he added, should be provided only "for the more brilliant few."[11]

The Malay attitude towards British educational policy was not, in general, passive though, initially, there was little appreciation

> Malay parents ... are not convinced that it is to the advantage of their ys that they should be educated. They aptly complain that to be able to ad and write does not enable their boys the better to cut attaps, or clear ngle, or work fishing stakes. On the contrary, the boys, when they leave hool, are flung on their parents' hands, without that knowledge of odcraft that would enable them to get a living, while the mere knowledge the three R's is of doubtful use to them in gaining that living. That is old argument, specious to the educationists, but, mayhap, convincing the practical man. We have heard it over and over again in England, now have it in Malay dress.[12]

ne situation was to change markedly after World War I. oughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Government was continually d to provide better education for the Malays, especially English ation. One instance may be cited. A *Harapan Melayu* wrote ne *Malay Mail* in 1921, expressing regret that

> ... the voice of the Malays, which is very much needed by the overnment, especially at present, is never or very seldom heard in the ublic Press, by which I mean "the English papers". This lack can have no ason but the scantiness of the number of Malays who are regular readers English papers, and fewer still, who are able to write and express their inds there. But this scantiness is in turn simply the outcome of a rresponding scantiness of English education.[13]

n the other hand, the Malays "are freely writing and expressing r views" in the vernacular papers such as *Lembaga Melayu* gapore), *Pengasuh* (Kota Bharu) and *Lidah Teruna* (Muar).[14] art of the reason for this upsurge of interest in English cation is clear when one considers the case of the concerned ay father who, being among the few who were better informed 922, wrote to the paper to explain that a Malay boy passed the standard in a Malay school only at the age of 12 by which time vas too old to be admitted to an English school. On the other d, he was not eligible to teach in a Malay school unless he had n selected to undergo training at the college in Tanjong Malim. ancies were limited. He added:

> Heaven knows what will become of him and what his father thinks of he five years spent by his son in the vernacular school. Some of these boys ho are fortunate are appointed punkah pullers, and peons in the District

> if such appointments are still open to peons and punkah pullers. But one knows that they have not the same prospects as they had about two years ago in the Government Service.
>
> If any one of the Malay peons now applies for the vacant post of say, a Customs Officer, he is sure to be told in reply that a Malay with a little knowledge of English is required. If this is the policy of the Government now, I fail to see what benefits a Malay boy derives from the vernacular education, for which he will have to spend at least five years in a vernacular school.[15]

Another Malay correspondent of the *Malay Mail* commented on a statement made by the Chief Secretary (E.C.H. Wolff) at the opening of the College at Tanjong Malim. Wolff had said that the Government wanted to give the best possible education to the Malays of the villages and that indeed was the principal aim of the S.I.T.C., "namely, to give the best education to the Malays of the agricultural class and fisher folk." But, the correspondent said that these children were to be given the best education in Malay which, however, would not be of much benefit to them because "The very, very best education in Malay will not qualify them for the posts of Malay writers in the Government service." Also, "With the very best education in Malay they will be no better fishermen or agriculturalists than their fathers, because they will find as their fathers have found, all the books on agriculture, etc., written in a language which is Greek to them."[16]

In 1926, replying to the suggestion of a S. Kanapathipillai (who seemed disillusioned with the thousands of English-educated young men who were unemployed in India and Ceylon) that in Malaya the "education of youths should be in vernacular on national lines", Mohamed Ali bin Sulaiman Kajai of Kampung Baharu, Kuala Lumpur, said:

> Mr. S. Kanapathipillai should first put his theory into practice by going back to Jaffna ... and with every endeavour persuade his countrymen to chuck up English education and take to the plough. If he succeeds, then Malayan born citizens need not fear cheap competition and his countrymen need not travel over 1,000 miles to earn their living.[17]

What he said about the value of English education sounds familiar even today:

upporter of vernacular education myself, I still have to hear of
or discoveries made by persons with vernacular education, that
ght benefit to the world.
ears hence, this world will be in the "flying age" and if we are
bued, or partly imbued with Western science and knowledge,
only be brought about through English education, to keep up
'time", we all had better undress and live in caves like our
s. Perhaps then we will have no strikes, no unemployment, and

n throughout the 1920s and 1930s there were continual
hange in British policy towards providing better quality
for the Malays, British policy did not change. After
II, the same lament from the Malays was heard. A
e *Malay Mail* in 1946 said:

layan people, particularly the Malay people, are to-day hungry,
education, for a better standard of living and for freedom.
lays are unable to get admission into English schools. Even the
girls who have been admitted are asked to leave school on
texts such as over age, etc. Is this fair or just? If the Government
ke proper arrangements to provide education for all Malays
overnment should make a public proclamation to this effect.[18]

57, not only was it difficult for Malays, in general, to
sion to English schools, no secondary Malay school
een established. For the Malay-educated, the highest
of learning to which they could aspire was the S.I.T.C.
could qualify to teach in Malay primary schools.
ere also Malays who did not go to the vernacular school
d their education in religious schools, either the *pondok*
ngly in the 20th century, the more advanced *madrasah*.[19]
ed furthered their education in West Asia, returning
ntry to become teachers of private religious schools.
e Islamic-educated could gain employment in
service.
ducational policy nevertheless was not the sole factor
ded the development of Malay society. A number of
led to the movement of foreign capital and labour
f the Malay states by the middle of the 19th century.

British occupation of Penang (1786) and Singapore (1819).[22] The Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 saw the withdrawal of Dutch monopoly over the tin trade of the Malay states. By the middle of the 19th century, Straits entrepreneurs had become interested in developing the hinterland more intensively. Commercial agriculture had already expanded to the mainland from the Straits Settlements when more land was needed — sugar estates emerged in Province Wellesley and pepper-gambier plantations in Johor. Tin production in the western Malay states continued to increase substantially when there was urgent demand from Britain's tin-plate industry. By the 1860s, Malay rulers and chieftains had practically lost effective hold over their own territories because of the intense rivalry for control of tin-bearing land.[23] In Johor, where there was no turbulence as in the western Malay states, the Chinese population outnumbered the Malay population by the close of the 19th century.[24]

In 1867, the Straits Settlements became British Crown Colony. Britain was now obliged to protect the interests of residents of the Colony, especially British subjects (those born in the Straits Settlements). By January 1874, British intervention in the administration of the Malay states had begun. It was a process which was to be completed in 1919 when British administration was also set up in Terengganu. All the Malay rulers hence lost *de facto* control of their own countries although the British continued to recognize them as legal sovereigns.

British administration was to lead to far-reaching consequences. Education, as one contributory factor, has been discussed. A whole complex of other factors, not designed with the intention of keeping Malay society in *animated suspension*, did have, in the long run, practically the same effect.

On February 12, 1885, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, Acting Governor, Straits Settlements, arrived at Port Weld (in Perak). He had come for the launching of the Taiping-Port Weld railway (passenger service). He was met on arrival at the mouth of the Larut River by F.A. Swettenham, Acting Resident, and C.V. Creagh, the Assistant Resident. The establishment of the Taiping-Port Weld railway owed much to Sir Frederick Weld, the Governor, who was

course of construction.[25]

pearance of railway in the Malay Peninsula was to have nsequences on Malay society. The Malays had become, ly 19th century, very distinctly a riverine people, from en, in earlier days, a maritime people. Indeed, all the Malay kingdoms were established along the major rivers ot for Negeri Sembilan, a matrilineal society, derived s from the rivers where they were originally based. ggannu, geographically more fragmented than the other s, with more than a dozen rivers flowing separately China Sea, had its focus, politically at least, at the u River.[26]

rs formed the main artery of communication not only llages but also with the outside world. In most of the mouth of the principal river also developed into an port., for example, Kuala Selangor, Kuala Pahang, Kuala u and Kuala Kelantan (now Kota Bharu). These were, , state capitals, but not all state capitals were located th of the principal river. Perak and Negeri Sembilan exceptions. These were also the two states which, were not typical Malay maritime kingdoms.

ak and Negeri Sembilan nevertheless had important ots. In the case of Perak, Kuala Bidor was, for a very the major port of call. Situated about 45 kilometres outh of the Perak River, it was located at the confluence r and Perak rivers. Today it forms the northern part n of Teluk Intan (between 1882-1982 known as n). In the case of Negeri Sembilan, Simpang (at ence of the Linggi and Penagis rivers) was the epot.[27]

uries, the traditional ports, especially those on the st of the Malay Peninsula, served the commercial needs y states. They had direct links with ports outside the ipelago. This was the era of maritime trade which backbone of the economy of the Malay states. These vered when first Penang and then Singapore emerged nal ports and began servicing the Peninsular ports

and, to some extent, Selangor. Both Selangor and Negeri Sembilan were more directly dependent on Melaka for transhipment of exports and imports. Singapore had direct links with the east coast states as well as Johor but also indirectly served the western Malay states as both Penang and Melaka became its commercial dependencies. By the mid-nineteenth century, Singapore was clearly the premier international port in Southeast Asia.[28]

Ships from Penang, until the early 1880s, regularly called at the ports of Kuala Kedah and Kuala Bidor. Until the 1850s, Penang ships also visited Kuala Selangor, which was then the state capital. From the 1850s onwards, the new Sultan of Selangor (Abdul Samad) moved his capital to Kuala Langat, but it was Kuala Klang which gradually became the main port of Selangor. The development of tin mining along the Klang valley turned the village of Kuala Lumpur into an important depot for the neighbouring mining districts, in particular Ampang and Petaling. For those outside the state, Kuala Klang was the most convenient route of communication to and from the mines.

Melaka, long since outlived its usefulness as an international port, regained some measure of importance when mining activities in the interior expanded. It was almost directly connected to the Sungai Ujong mines by the Linggi River. And its proximity to Kuala Klang made it convenient for its comparatively modest port to handle the trade of Kuala Klang.

But Penang and Melaka were more than just ports servicing the Malay states. The leading merchants in both places became the principal financiers of major economic activities in the Malay states. Naturally, much of the capital was invested in tin mining. Originally, the merchants advanced capital to the Malay aristocrats who employed Chinese to work their mines. Eventually, the Straits merchants, who were the source of capital for the development of tin mining, were able to acquire concessions in the Malay states and to work the mines directly.[29]

With the advent of more capital and with the demand for Straits tin increasing rapidly in order to meet the needs of the tin-plate industry in Britain, the Malays, initially, also enjoyed greater

to convey goods and equipment to the mines and to
tin to the ports. Until the advent of the railway, this
ansport was largely in the hands of the Malays. The
not merely provide transport, they were also petty
the way upstream, they conveyed goods which they
kampung to kampung.
mining workers were dependent on food supplies
y the Malay petty traders. In one instance, at least, it
hat the development of tin mining caused a minor
alay society for, until then, it appears that the people
elangor were largely engaged in padi planting. In the
aja Bot (whose father, Raja Jumaat, turned Lukut into
mining town in the mid-nineteenth century):

> Selangor River from Telok Penyamun, on the right bank and
> , as far as Kampong Kedah, in the interior, nothing but padi
> d be seen in those days.[30]

r Ulu Selangor and Kanching had been opened up
ning, "... the raiats of Selangor forgot altogether about
di, preferring to engage in buying and selling."[31]
improve this commercial link between the mining
and the ports that the construction of railway was
. Naturally, railway first came into existence in this
ere tin mining flourished. After the Taiping-Port Weld
xt railway line to be constructed linked Kuala Lumpur
da, near Klang. This line was opened in 1886. Later,
ight Bridge over the Klang River was built and the
nded to Klang itself in 1890. The third railway line in
states, not surprisingly, linked Seremban (the leading
n in Sungai Ujong) with the new port of Negeri
– Port Dickson — a distance of about 40 kilometres.
ed to traffic in July 1891.[32]
tly, in the same year, plans were made to link Ipoh
Anson. It was rather ironical that almost as soon as
-Port Weld railway had commenced service, Larut
ecline as a mining centre. By 1889, the Kinta District
ing over half the total tin output of Perak. But the

between Ipoh and Teluk Anson had been completed. Up to that point in time, the systems of railway completed in the Malay Peninsula consisted of four lines linking the leading mining towns with the ports facing the Straits of Melaka.[33]

It is pertinent to note too that mining activities had resulted in urban development in the interior of the tin mining states. The traditional urban centres had been concentrated along the coastal area: the principal ports were also the leading towns. With new towns emerging in the interior, not linked to one another by river, there was no other means to effect communication among these towns except by extending the railway network.

Railway development proceeded at a faster pace thereafter. By 1903, Prai, opposite Penang, had been linked to Seremban. During 1904, an agreement was completed with the Johor State Government for the construction of a line from the Negeri Sembilan-Johor frontier to Johor Bahru. By the beginning of July 1909, the line through the state of Johor had been opened and direct communication was finally established between Penang (Prai) in the north and Johor Bharu at the southern extremity of the Malay Peninsula. The Johor Causeway was completed by the end of 1923.

The completion of the north-south railway line, joining the ports of Penang and Singapore, had significant consequences on the traditional ports on the west coast of the Peninsula. Throughout the 19th century, these ports still had an important function to perform — they served the interior of the Peninsula. It was no accident that when British administration was first established at Perak and Selangor, Bandar Baharu, in Lower Perak, situated slightly to the north of Kuala Bidor, was selected as the administrative capital of Perak, and Klang, situated at the mouth of the Klang River, was made the capital of Selangor. This itself was an important change for, prior to the establishment of British administration, the seat of royalty was always the state capital. By the early 1880s, the state capital of Perak had been transferred to Taiping and that of Selangor to Kuala Lumpur. Significantly, both the new administrative capitals were also

opment of infrastructure, thereafter, was concentrated
erior. Railway development was soon followed by road
on especially with the advent of motor transport which
ne important by the eve of World War I. Little towns in
r, especially where rubber estates had been established,[34]
re not served by the railway, were linked by road to
ough which the railway passed.

gh the new towns which emerged under British
ation — Taiping, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur and Seremban
eviously smaller Malay villages, the transformation which
under the new regime was rapid and radical. Above all,
immigrant population outnumbered the indigenous
n. More important still, land in the town centre soon
er the ownership of Chinese merchants and Indian
nders (Chettiars). Malay villages which proliferated
major rivers remained relatively unchanged. Social
available in the new urban centres by the beginning of
ntury, such as hospitals, water supplies, English schools,
al clubs, guilds and associations, were absent in the
alay villages. Malay participation in the early phase of
al development, attendant upon the expansion of the
dustry, had been significant, as mentioned earlier, before
g of the railway. But, a decline gradually set in when
g centres were, first, linked by rail to the coastal ports
equently, to one another as well as the principal ports
and Singapore. For example, by the turn of the present
ne Linggi River completely lost its function. Klang and
on, as ports — the latter temporarily — survived because
wth of the rubber industry. Increasingly, however, Teluk
ved as only a subsidiary outlet for agricultural produce
icinity of the town were located rubber estates, coconut
sugar-cane plantations.[35]

however, was more fortunate. Apart from being the
an important agricultural district which included Kuala
and Kuala Langat, the development of port facilities
led to the opening up of Port Swettenham in 1901,

States Railway.[36]

To all intents and purposes, the advance of the railway marked the demise of the traditional coastal ports. Penang and Singapore, the two leading ports, henceforth, no longer depended on the coastal ports as depots. On the other hand, the new administrative capitals also played the additional role of handling the exports and imports of the Malay states, with the railway serving as the principal means of transport. This role was enhanced when motor transport also made its presence felt.[37]

The displacement of the Malays from the main stream of economic life had been apparent even before the steady progress made in the construction of modern infrastructure. The *Malay Mail* discussed the subject as early as 1899, asking in one instance:

> Whilst the whole Chinese population of the State [of Selangor] is beginning to wear the broad smile of contentment [because of the high price of tin]; whilst the Government talks of Pathological Institutions, of Museums, of sending troops to South Africa, and of all sorts of other excellent proposals, what is happening to the Malay?
>
> We invite the British Resident to take a drive along the Gombak road leading to New Amherst estate. He will then observe two quite distinct factors in contemporary Malay life. He will see a most pathetic sight in the number of abandoned coffee gardens, he will find the people struggling for a bare living by doing all manner of little odd jobs; and we fancy if he happens to possess an officer in Kuala Lumpur who can really ascertain the position, he will find a good deal of distress.[38]

Earlier the paper had referred to "the higgley-piggley Malay slummeries which now exist at different parts" of Kuala Lumpur.[39]

Not that the Malay made no attempt to involve himself in the modern economy of the country. Malay participation in rubber cultivation became noticeable by about 1909. In Selangor, "the rubber craze was said to have permeated every class of cultivators, including those holding land on temporary licences in which rubber cultivation was prohibited."[40] The situation in Perak and Negeri Sembilan was largely similar. In general, the Malays owned only smallholdings (usually not more than ten acres). Rubber did not bring permanent benefit to the Malays. In times of economic depression, they could hardly make ends meet. A graphic picture

Sir, I am the owner of a small rubber estate of 3 acres 1 rood and oles, and the output of rubber is approximately 3 katties per diem. t afford the time or expense to have it smoked, so when the rubber erted into cash it comes to something like $34.00 (if I tap 28 days nth and sell at 40 cents per katty). I am tapping my own trees and collects the latex and does some weeding. When I am "sakit" the e either not tapped or given to some neighbours to tap on the half- f basis. Out of the $34, the sum of $18 goes to Mr. Shylock for who lent me $1,000 — when I bought the estate for $1,800. There ther reduction of $4 — for acetic acid, etc. and other incidental es, but the scrap may make up for this and I hear they are going ibit export of scrap rubber. Then there remains the paltry sum of ch is sufficient for purchases of rice for my wife, old mother-in-law, children and also myself. For the last 6 months we have been n pawning and on what we got by selling some fruits from the s' old trees in my estate. Yesterday when I went to the local shop ubber, the Towkay informed me that I owe him the sum of $87.45 visions taken by me on credit. I borrowed the sum of $200 from the ($100 to settle old accounts and $100 to tide over the present My half-brother who was an estate tapper and recently discharged, nd stayed with me to tap my rubber trees. I supplied him with free and makan but no wages. So I have time either to go and do some s such as tapping, fencing and fishing just to earn something to the family purse.[41]

result of the fall in the prices of rubber in 1920, the n Restriction Scheme was introduced in 1922 which even greater hardship to the Malay smallholders who difficult to sell their rubber. In Perak and Johor, they violently to what they interpreted as attempts to break bowls.[42]

ld not be inaccurate to say that the Malays emerged from ar I feeling insecure and fearful of the future; hence, the l calls for greater opportunities for Malay children to etter, preferably English, education. Even some of the Muslim activists, not usually favourable towards things and Christian, valued English education. One of them borean) in 1925, appealed to Muslims to take advantage ble opportunities instead of "squabbling and wrangling ty and minor differences in religious questions". He

exceedingly sorry to see that not a single Muslim boy's name appeared.

The system of education given in our Schools is in accordance with certain regulations approved by the Government which apply equally to all boys; in fact a certain privilege is given to Muslim boys in that they get free education at Government Schools if they pass through Vernacular Schools. This being so and all other things considered equal, I do not see why Muslim boys lag behind others as regards English Education.[43]

It was in Singapore too that a suggestion was first mooted for the formation of a single central association for the Malays. In supporting the idea a certain Mohd. Azharie remarked that the fact that up to early 1926 there did not exist such an association "shows that there is something wrong among the Malays themselves." He continued:

We are most certainly not born to a heritage of incapacity; why then are we not able to form such a long-desired Association? The answer is obvious and I believe no one will disagree with me that the many and varied ills that beset our law-abiding and peaceable people are due to the woeful lack of education, unity and also through various groundless jealousies which frequently arise among the Malays out of triviality and thus distorting the harmony of their progress, etc., etc. Hence the result is their present backward condition.

Having known the disease and panacea thereof is it becoming of us all to continue to be indifferent? Let us wake up and do something beneficial to our community if we do not want it to be socially and commercially extinct.[44]

The *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* (Singapore Malay Union) was then born in the middle of May the same year. The Union, not surprisingly, was founded to encourage its members to play a greater role in public and governmental affairs. Most interesting of all, its membership was confined to the indigenous people of the Malay Archipelago. Non-Malay Muslims (Arabs and Indian Muslims) were not accepted.[45] This cleavage in Singapore Muslim society continued until the outbreak of war. In 1938, the Union extended its wings to the sister settlements of Melaka and Penang.

In the ensuing years two other events sharpened Malay distrust of non-Malays. When the world economic depression hit the country during the early 'thirties, emotions ran high because each

water they must go to Chinese or at least Malabari shops. If to sleep they will carry their wives and children to Chinese or hotels.[47]

caled to the Malays "to join the competition and seize at had been seized by the other races."

were those who felt that the time for concerted arrived. According to a certain "Rashid al-Ghalam" of mbilan:

two or three months back almost every [Malay] newspaper in sula heartily called for the formation of a Malay association d that a congress should be held. Where is the association? In npur, Penang, Ipoh or where? We have not heard yet, except for association referred to here is a general Peninsular association, sociation in a village or a town. No! Or is our nationalism e midst of searching for a place or will there be just complete reafter?[48]

the second event had taken place. On August 18, 1931, Commissioner, Sir Cecil Clementi, had announced Menanti Durbar (a conference of Malay rulers) that ntralization Policy, first proclaimed by the High oner, Sir Laurence Guillemard, in 1927, would be is meant that greater power would be entrusted to the nments. Sir Cecil also favoured a "Malaya for the Malays" here was vehement non-Malay opposition to Sir Cecil's not all non-Malays though, only the English-educated.[50] ile, Malay suspicion of non-Malays continued to mount. *Benar* (a Melaka paper) had occasion to comment on minations expressing complete dissatisfaction with the e paper said:

y to success in anything is knowledge, but the key is with others: ith us does not lead us anywhere. There is general discontent in every quarter and our former pleas do not have any effect. mpelled for the second time to plead for the consideration of onsible in the matter. The education of the Malay boys is but or a difficulty is in the way. Except in the case of the Junior and [Cambridge] all the rest of the lower examinations are conducted chers absolutely. As these teachers are not, mostly, of our own

> We suggest that the Educational Department should adopt a new system of examinations under a close and careful supervision. From the lowest to the highest standards the examinations should be conducted by a central body or a committee appointed for the purpose. This body or committee would set the questions and see whether they are suitable and proper for the standards to be examined. Teachers should be excluded from this. The papers in which the candidates answer the questions should be numbered for correction. In short the examinations should be conducted as the Junior or Senior examinations in every respect.[31]

As for the Decentralization Scheme, one Malay interpretation appeared in the *Dewasa* (a Penang paper) in late 1931. The writer said:

> We think this scheme is for the benefit and the prosperity of the Malay Country and its people, with each State administering its own affairs individually to give more opportunities to the Malays in general without any distinction between a native of one State and another.[32]

Another Malay urged that:

> As each State Council is given back more legislative powers, steps should be taken to see that the Malays are given more executive powers as well. I refer to the Office of the British Resident and his Secretary; and I cannot help feeling that if a Malay Assistant Secretary to the Resident is appointed, such an appointment will be looked upon with more confidence by the Malays than the mere investment of more powers in the State Council, provided that the Malay Secretary is one who is selected by H.H. the Sultan in Council with the approval of the Government.[33]

A third person, writing in the *Saudara* (also a Penang paper),[34] raised the question of the likely composition of the State Council. He had heard that members of other nationalities would be appointed too. If this was true, he stated, "... we might put forward a question whether the number of Malay Members in the Council of each State would be more, equal, or less than the Chinese and the Indians." He proceeded to remark that "The Chinese and Indians have no (inherent) loyalty to the Malay country and the Malay Rulers, as the Malays have ..." And concluded by saying that:

> In this matter the duty of the Malay public is to strive hard not to train

been shown that in the 1920s, educated Malays red to impress upon their own people the importance on and they pleaded for better opportunities for Malay o obtain admission to English schools. Zainal Abidin Za'ba), one of the more enlightened of his generation, he privilege of having his articles entitled "The Salvation lays" published as leading articles in the *Malay Mail*.[55] had written that:

> alvation of the Malays, economically as well as morally, is to be ly in one way, and that is in remedying their intellectual poverty overty of knowledge — by means of the right sort of education.[56]

after having heard the opinions of many others, he his view slightly which was that:

> f-help and self-exertion, are the basis of all worldly salvation for ys. Nevertheless, the place of the utmost importance must still be for education in any scheme of Malay salvation.[57]

ike many later Malay leaders, was conscious of the need he past. He wrote:

> ation is most necessary to rectify the defects of our national , and to change or improve our 'nature'. For, it must never be , above all, we *can* change our nature by education. Unlike other who are industrious and enterprising, we have to struggle against of formidable habits, the result of centuries [sic]. Hence the that our people, especially our rising generation, should first ood general education before they can be expected to open s and stir themselves up to activity. Without education they will always continue to be from generation to generation, the "frogs under the coconut shell", having no idea even of the of "progress".[58]

1930s, Malay attitudes, as revealed by that of the more ng them, had changed visibly. There was less discussion escription for progress. Instead, there were increasing reater unity and self-reliance. The tone, in general, was ressive. This was particularly evident towards the end of es. In the middle of 1938, there appeared in the *Malay*

Malay Associations in three States of the Federation.[59]

The Perak Malay Association was the first to be formed. The inaugural meeting took place at the end of 1936. The Pahang Malay Association emerged in early 1938, followed soon by the Selangor Malay Association. The writer continued:

> The benefits and advantages accruing from such bodies cannot be over-estimated, and the Malay Associations which have just been formed have been rightly regarded as *manifestations of Malay nationalism*. It is anticipated that after Negri Sembilan has formed one Malay Association, steps may be taken to have a Central Association embodying all the four Malay Associations. [Emphasis added]

He opined that it was through "the benefits of education ... we have come to realise that we have been left far behind the non-Malays in every respect on account of lack of unity in voice and action, and the absence of leaders." In urging the need to have leaders ("some medium" as he put it) "to act as the mouthpiece between the Ra'ayat and their Highnesses and the Government," he expressed surprise at "the attitude of the so-called Malay leaders (perhaps not very 'Malay' in origin) who deprecate the formation of these Malay Associations because in their opinion the net result of these associations (which have gained official recognition) will be the sowing of seeds of disloyalty in the Malays towards our Rulers and Government."

The Negeri Sembilan Malay Association came into being by early 1939 and, in August 1939, the first All-Malaya Malay Congress was held in Kuala Lumpur. The Congress decided that there should be created a *Persekutuan Persatuan-Persatuan Melayu Semenanjung Tanah Melayu* (Federation of Malay Associations of the Malay Peninsula). A second Congress was held in Singapore at the end of 1940. A third, scheduled to be held in Ipoh in 1941, had to be cancelled owing to the outbreak of war in Europe. A great part of the discussions in both the Kuala Lumpur and Singapore Congress dealt with the definition of who was a "Malay".[60]

Perhaps one of the more concrete achievements of the Malay nationalists, on the eve of World War II, was the establishment of

ce before World War I) was published in Singapore. It
t to be the voice of the genuine Malays. It continued
aign of Malays who, in the course of the 1920s and
d urged their own community to work towards uplifting
ety, socially and economically. Clearly this was not an
ewspaper meant principally to disseminate news. It was
y meant to contribute to the enlightenment of the
ty. One important feature of the paper was that it was
f-critical. Its tone was reminiscent of that of the *Kaum*
aper, *Al-Imam*, which was also published in Singapore
906-1908. It called upon the Malays to involve themselves
spect of economic life in the country instead of letting
s monopolize the field. Hence, Malays were encouraged
e labourers too. It was always possible, as demonstrated
races, to progress from being labourers to overseers,
and, eventually, wholesalers — to graduate from using
motor-cars. It is pertinent to note that many of those
n the publication of *Utusan Melayu* were indeed members
gapore Malay Union, including Ishak Haji Muhammad
own literary figure and later to become a leader of the
ist movement) and Yusuf Ishak (of Taiping origin, and
come the first President of the Republic of Singapore).[62]
he Seri Menanti Declaration (by Sir Cecil Clementi),
y press became increasingly critical of the non-Malay
nd position in the country. *Saudara* (Penang), in 1936,
by the continual demand of the *Straits Echo* (Penang)
Malays ought to be given greater consideration by the
vernment. It asked why the editor of the Penang English
d his associates should ask for this and that when they
among those for whom the British government served
The *Warta Ahad* (Singapore), in 1937, expressed concern
ese activities were no longer confined to the town but
ad to the rural areas where they had bought land and
up plantations; with the economic power which they
ded, they would be able to influence the politics of the
n 1939, the *Utusan Melayu* complained that the Chinese

Chinese for being avaricious, trying to grab all forms of property in the country. In 1940, the *Majlis* (Kuala Lumpur), reporting a debate in the Federal Council on Malay debts to non-Malays (the amount owed to the Chinese was $1,541,771 and the Indians $2,054,577), asked if the Malay race would end up bankrupt or become slaves repaying their debts endlessly. These are a few examples of Malay perception of the non-Malays as found in the Malay press of the 'thirties.[63] The basic cause was the clearly disadvantaged position which the Malays then occupied in comparison with the non-Malays.

The war only exacerbated the cleavage between the Malays and non-Malays. A section of the Malay population, in particular the Young Malays' Union (*Kesatuan Melayu Muda*) led by Ibrahim Yaacob[64] co-operated with the Japanese. On the other hand, the Chinese, in general, were, as is well known, vehemently anti-Japanese. The Chinese schools in the country (Chung Ling High School in Penang, for instance) were hotbeds of anti-Japanese movements. The relationship between Malays and Indians did not deteriorate at this juncture because the latter rallied behind Subhas Chandra Bose in his policy of collaborating with the Japanese to free India from British rule. But the peak of antagonism between Malays and Chinese occurred towards the end of the Japanese Occupation.

There is no doubt that the activities of the Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army or MPAJA (practically the Malayan Communist Party), formed to carry on guerrilla warfare against the Japanese, instilled fear in the hearts of the Malays, convincing them that the Chinese were intent on taking over the country. The MPAJA practically controlled the country between August and September, 1945, before the return of the British. They apprehended those whom they believed had colloborated with the Japanese and, in most instances, executed them, actually irrespective of whether they were Malays, Chinese or Indians. But the MPAJA membership was largely Chinese. Their language of communication was also Chinese.[65] Sino-Malay disturbances soon broke out and, in certain places, continued until early 1946 despite the presence of the

nced the Malayan Union proposal and the Union itself was rated on April 1, 1946. The Union reduced the Malay o a subordinate of the British Governor and, to all intents rposes, conferred on non-Malays (those eligible to become s) a status equal to that of the Malays. *Jus soli* was a criterion zenship. The massive reaction to the Malayan Union scheme en well discussed elsewhere.[67] The British seemed unaware tory when they introduced such drastic constitutional s and expressed surprise when the Malays (men, women ildren) demonstrated in thousands everywhere against nion and prevailed upon their rulers to boycott the ral ceremony.

he famous Sultan Sulaiman Club meetings, held in umpur, in early March 1946, to protest against the Union, ay associations were represented by their delegates. In hen the All-Malaya Malay Congress was held in Singapore, state associations were represented. The war had lasted id-August 1945 when there was complete dislocation in untry and the Japanese did not tolerate any organization nsored by them. Yet within a period of about six months, ne end of the war, so many associations, most of them e bodies, had been formed, such as: the *Persatuan Melayu g Perai*, the *Persatuan Melayu Chenderiang*, the *Persatuan Keluang*, the *Persekutuan Melayu Ulu Selangor* and the *uan Melayu Sabak Bernam*.[68] There is no evidence that ere formed specifically to oppose the Malayan Union, known only in early 1946. It is more likely that many associations formed after the war resulted from the of insecurity among the Malays as a result of the alay disturbances.

ugh the racial disturbances of 1945-1946 undoubtedly uted to fierce Malay opposition to the Malayan Union , Malay negative perception of the non-Malays had clearly zed in the course of the inter-war years. It would be difficult rstand Malay political behaviour in the mid-1940s without nowledge of development during, at least, the decade

Emergency was declared. The Malayan Communist Party continued to be Chinese-dominated. In Malay perception, it represented a Chinese attempt to wrest control of the country. Also, within two years, the Malays were forced to assess their future relationship with the non-Malays. Believing that the best way to persuade Britain to grant self-government to Malaya was to bring forth a strong non-communal party, Dato Onn bin Jaafar, the widely-acknowledged leader of the Malays, attempted to turn the United *Malay* National Organization into a United *Malayan* National Organization. He failed because he did not attempt seriously to assess the mood of the Malays. His departure from UMNO in the middle of 1951 was a traumatic experience for the Malays, especially since it was followed by widespread debate over the question of citizenship. *Jus soli* had been abolished in 1948. Non-Malays persisted in their attempts to revive it.

Even at the time when the Federation of Malaya was established, it was assumed by the better-educated that the country had taken the first step in its march towards independence. By the early 1950s, the pressure from political parties, in general, to seek independence from Britain was too great for leaders such as Dato Onn (leader of the Independence of Malaya Party which he founded in 1951) and Tunku Abdul Rahman (Dato Onn's successor as President of UMNO) to ignore. The Malays were once more compelled to decide on the future position of the non-Malays.

It should be mentioned, at this juncture, that between the late 'forties and early 'fifties, the Malays, generally, broke up into three groups. UMNO (destroyer of the Malayan Union) was there. By 1949, its leadership had been involved in the Communities Liaison Committee (very much the brain child of Malcolm MacDonald, British Commissioner-General for Southeast Asia) which attempted to effect closer co-operation among the major racial groups in the country. There was also the Malay left which endeavoured to carry on its struggle along ideological lines but, in fact, its attitude towards the non-Malays was somewhat ambivalent. It was, at any rate, depleted during the early years of

1952, the concept of an Alliance Party was born. Initially up of UMNO and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), ition formed to contest the Kuala Lumpur Municipality ns, it was encouraged to perpetuate itself owing to the nelming success achieved in the elections. It was joined by alayan Indian Congress (MIC) on the eve of the national ns (1955). But, even as UMNO agreed to co-operate with there was a substantial exodus of UMNO members to the alayan Islamic Party (PMIP, later to be known as *Parti Islam* S), founded in 1951. PMIP then emphasized its *Malayness* han its Islamic stance. Its struggle differed little from that Peninsular Malay Union.

ough the moderate UMNO prevailed over its rivals in the lections, it was careful, in the preparation for independence, ignore basic Malay expectations evident since the 'twenties nirties. These could not be compromised on a permanent They were: (1) Malay as the sole national language of untry; (2) Islam as the official religion; and (3) Malays, as *ns of the soil*, to enjoy certain privileges (to be specified ime to time). These were manifested in at least two ways before the country's constitution had been drafted by id Commission.

first involved education. A foreign scholar noted:

> s soon as the new quasi-independent government was elected to power 55, it set about to provide a national educational policy for a national ation institution.[69]

result was the Razak Report (the committee was chaired o Abdul Razak bin Hussein who was then Minister of ion). Education was seen as the principal instrument to nation building. The importance of the Malay language was no doubt. Although Chinese and Tamil schools, at the y level, could continue to exist, Malay would be the sole n of instruction at the secondary level and, eventually, at tiary level as well. English schools would continue to exist mporarily. This was the wish of the largely English-educated

colonial government had acted more vigorously in the development of the extended urban sector (rubber estates and tin mines), the traditional Malay sector had been left in a state of backwardness. Gayl D. Ness said that it was only after the establishment of the Federal Legislative Council in 1948 that the Malays "began to find their voice in the new forum" and "became increasingly vociferous in their demands for more development in the traditional Malay sectors."[70] This is incorrect. The need to improve the economic life of the Malays as a whole, and not just those in the rural areas, was repeatedly raised in the pre-war Federal Council and, as shown earlier, loudly voiced in both English as well as Malay newspapers. The new Legislative Council, however, did provide them with a more effective forum simply because, unlike in the pre-war years, self-government was now in the air.

If the Malay demand was seen to be persistent and ubiquitous, it was because the colonial government, to the Malays, had been unmindful of its duty as the trustee of the Malays. The Alliance Government was conscious of the need to avoid perpetuating the policy of the colonial government. Therefore, the Party's manifestos for the 1959 and, in fact, even the 1955, elections promised "more for the rural areas, more for the previously neglected Malays, and land for the landless [Malays]." Ness was more astute in his observation when he said that "In 1955 the emphasis upon rural development shared a place with the promise of independence. In 1959 it held top priority."[71]

However, as a coalition party, the Alliance (and later the *Barisan Nasional*) had always to maintain some amount of balance between Malay and non-Malay expectations. The problem would have been less acute if past developments had more successfully prepared Malay society for the demands of modern living. As it turned out, Malay suspicions and sensitivities required more than careful handling. From 1956, when the Razak Report was released, until 1970, when what was known as the New Economic Policy (NEP) was promulgated, racial unrest, at times actual riots, occurred from time to time. The 1969 riots in Kuala Lumpur led to the

he 1980s, the country has developed at a faster rate than . As mentioned earlier, Malaysia's Prime Minister, Datuk r. Mahathir Mohamad, expects the country to be on par dvanced Western countries by the year 2020. Foreign capital comed and foreign labour increasingly used to meet ower shortage though, unlike in the past, very stringent ions now govern their presence in Malaysia. The importance glish, primarily as a *lingua franca* at the global level and as nguage of technology, is once more stressed.

v well the Malays will cope with modernization, mainly as a of industrialization, is important in national development. he Prime Minister elaborated in his explanation of one of ne challenges: an economically just society

> . is a society in which there is fair and equitable distribution of the h of the nation, in which there is full partnership in economic progress. a society cannot be in place so long as there is the identification of with economic function, and the identification of economic wardness with race.[73]

dless to say the scenario has changed somewhat compared past. Educationally, the Malays are better prepared now. the pre-1957 era when there was not even one Malay lary school, today there are six national universities (using Malaysia as the medium of instruction) to which Malay ts can gain admission. But the decline in the command of n language has troubled the government and the Prime er has indicated that it may again be made compulsory pils at the fifth form level to obtain a pass in the language ler to qualify for the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* or S.P.M sian Certificate of Education). He said:

> feel that we will lose out if we do not strive to master the language at the same time continue to improve our command of Bahasa ysia .... In these modern times, knowledge of just one language is not gh. Furthermore, English is recognized as an international language.[74]

the possibility of making a pass compulsory in the S.P.M. nation will not be implemented "until the shortage of English

foreign universities where English is the medium of instruction.

The preceding discussion has attempted, firstly, to demonstrate that the past does have a bearing on the future. Developments throughout the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century resulted in the Malays being displaced from the mainstream of social and economic life in their own country. This contributed in no small measure to the growth of antagonism towards the non-Malays. Secondly, it is also intended to demonstrate that beginning from the period of the approach of independence, the political party — the Alliance — entrusted with the task of steering a new nation along the thorny path of independence did not fail to take cognizance of the lessons of history in its nation-building efforts. Its failure or success is not a point of discussion here. Suffice it to say that to undo history is a monumental task. The focus here is on Malaysia's Prime Minister's vision for the year 2020.

Once again the situation of the Malays will play a major role in every programme aimed at achieving the projected target. It has been shown that when large numbers of Malays were displaced from the mainstream of social and economic life, ethnic problems became very intense. It is not likely, of course, that the colonial situation will be repeated; the lessons of history, in this respect, will not be ignored by Malaysia's leaders. But it is imperative to point out that there is a basic similarity between the situation existing in colonial times and now, namely, that Malay society's exposure to modern (largely technological) culture (fundamentally Western at that) was practically non-existent and is now, comparatively, limited. In the years prior and subsequent to independence, there was an upsurge of political and cultural nationalism at the expense, temporarily at any rate, of, one might say, "technological nationalism" (the relentless pursuit of scientific knowledge for the upliftment of the nation). In the process, sometimes modern technology is seen simply as Western culture *per se* injurious to indigenous culture, and even as an element alien to Islam. Muslims in Malaysia have been known to withdraw from worldly life (television sets, for example, have been thrown

of knowledge, it can certainly enlighten even though it
t have the audacity of certain modern disciplines which
be able to predict. And who predicted the Gulf War and
of Communism in Europe, astrologers apart?

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ay *Mail*, 27 August 1909.
Star, 2 March 1991.
nine challenges were, in brief:
establishing a united Malaysian nation;
creating a psychologically liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian society;
fostering and developing a mature democratic society;
establishing a fully moral and ethical society;
establishing a mature, liberal and tolerant society;
establishing a scientific and progressive society;
establishing a caring society and a caring culture;
ensuring an economically just society; and
establishing a prosperous society.
pertinent to add here that No. (8), above was very much the basis
the promulgation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970 which
be discussed later.
ual *Report Selangor*, 1892.
ual *Report Perak*, 1890.

tish Rule in Malaya" in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, XXVII
5-96), p. 289.
ay *Mail*, 8 December 1897.
was referring to what he had perceived to be the growing arrogance
he English-educated Bengalis.
ntan *Administration Report* for the Year 1930.
onial Office Records 717/53, O.T. Dussek to W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore,
December 1926.
ay *Mail*, 12 August 1896.
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., 4 December 1922.
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ay *Mail*, 23 September 1923. Kanapathipillai's letter was published in

Education) in Awang Had Salleh (ed.), *Pendidikan Ke Arah Perpaduan: Sebuah Perspektif Sejarah* (Education Towards Unity: A Historical Perspective), Kuala Lumpur, 1980.

20. Still the best work on the subject is Wong Lin Ken's *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, Tucson, 1965.
21. See James C. Jackson, *Planters and Speculators: Chinese and European Agricultural Enterprise in Malaya 1786-1921*, Kuala Lumpur, 1968.
22. See D.K. Bassett, "The British Commercial and Strategic Interest in the Malay Peninsula During the Late Eighteenth Century" in John Bastin & R. Roolvink (ed.), *Malayan and Indonesian Studies* (Essays presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his eighty-fifth birthday), Oxford, 1964. See also Khoo Kay Kim, "Trade and Shipping in the Malay Peninsula 1784-1824" in Department of History, *Kapal dan Harta Karam* (Ships and Sunken Treasure), Kuala Lumpur, 1986.
23. See Khoo Kay Kim, *The Western Malay States 1850-1873: The Effects of Commercial Development on Malay Politics*, Kuala Lumpur, 1972.
24. Khoo Kay Kim, "Johor in the 19th Century: A Brief Survey" in *Journal of the Historical Society University of Malaya Kuala Lumpur*, Vol. VI, 1967/68, p. 94.
25. Colonial Office Records 273/133, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith to Lord Derby, 23 February 1885.
26. See Khoo Kay Kim, "Trengganu and Kelantan in the 19th century" in *The South-East Asian Review* (India), Vol. I, No. 1, August 1976, p. 34.
27. See Khoo Kay Kim, *Teluk Anson (Teluk Intan) 100 Tahun* (100 Years of Teluk Anson [Teluk Intan]), Kuala Lumpur, 1982.
28. The subject has been well studied by Wong Lin Ken. See his monograph, "The Trade of Singapore 1819-69" in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Malayan Branch (JMBRAS)*, Vol. XXXIII, Pt. 4, 1960.
29. Khoo Kay Kim, *The Western Malay States*, pp. 58-67.
30. "Rice Cultivation in the State, Interesting Letter from Raja Bot" in *Peninjau Sejarah (Journal of the History Teachers' Association of Malaya)*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1966, p. 73.
31. Ibid.
32. The Federated Malay States Railway, *Fifty Years of Railways in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, 1935, p. 18.
33. For a useful study of the development of transport in the Malay Peninsula, see Amarjit Kaur, *Bridges and Barrier: Transport and Communications in Colonial Malaya 1870-1957*, Singapore, 1985.
34. Rubber became important beginning from about 1905 and coffee which had been the principal agricultural export from Malaya thereafter declined.
35. See Khoo Kay Kim, *Teluk Anson (Teluk Intan) 100 Tahun*, p. 5.
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by the more affluent teachers trained to teach in the English language. He subsequently became a journalist and, on the eve of World War II, collaborated with the Japanese 5th Column, the *Fujiwara Kikan*. During the Japanese Occupation he was recognized as the accredited leader of the Malays. His constant adviser was Professor Y. Itagaki. He left the country at the end of the war and became a citizen of Indonesia. He died in Indonesia a rich banker.

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CHAPTER TWO

NGAPORE: LESSONS FROM HISTORY IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Edwin Lee

fferent times in history men have had dreams about pore, dreams of empire and dreams of nationhood. But this ne place where they learned that things had a notorious way going according to plan. However, the outcome was not in cases necessarily bad. It could be better than they had a o expect at first sight. The Tourist Promotion Board attempts what they call "Surprising Singapore". They are accurate ps more than they themselves suspect, for this is true to an beyond the concerns of tourism.

he 14th Century, Parameswara, a prince of Palembang, the f the empire of Srivijaya, then in final decline, had to seek abroad. He sailed to an island called Temasek. He was to ne it Singapore, the lion city. The local ruler gave him the Singaporean welcome to foreigners, the more so because status and the reputation of his country. Parameswara repaid cal ruler by murdering him.[1] Whatever scheme Parameswara led by this vile act towards a gracious hospitable host, he nave, in addition to manipulating the situation from within, ol over the external circumstance, and this he did not have. apless ruler of Singapore had a regional overlord, the Thai om of Ayudhya, bent on avenging its vassal. Parameswara rced to run to another place where he founded the kingdom

region, the Ming Dynasty of China in its newly established expansionist phase. The Ming Emperor warned off Ayudhya, and Malacca was safe.[2]

In the 19th Century, another would-be empire builder Raffles was to turn to Singapore. Again, the local rulers proved very receptive, and Raffles acquired a trading post for the British East India Company. The British actually paid for their rights to open a factory and port, and later acquired the island outright. This time there was no repetition of the 14th century style villainy. The local rulers, namely, the Temenggong Abdul Rahman and Sultan Hussein, were not murdered in their beds; they were merely negotiated out of their house.

Singapore was not Raffles's first choice; it was more like his last. He had been Governor of Java during the Napoleonic Wars, when the Netherlands' hold over their East Indian empire was temporarily relinquished. Java offered everything a British imperialist could desire, except permanent possession. So Raffles sought to establish in Borneo and Sumatra outposts and bases which would compensate the British when Java reverted back to the Dutch.[3] He failed everywhere; his grand vision of a chain of British bases guarding the China Trade route narrowed down to the one point which, if it had vanished too, would have caused him to give up and turn philosopher.

Raffles was aware that Singapore was the site of an ancient Malay maritime kingdom, and this knowledge had evidently given him inspiration. But there was no precedent for what happened since 1819, and no one was more surprised than the founder himself, when he on a subsequent visit, found in it a reason to live after several serious misfortunes suffered in the interim period. With great energy and foresight, Raffles worked to give his settlement, proper laws, proper roads cut to a town plan, a policy of Free Trade, and a school.

Raffles did all in his power to create a viable settlement and port. But, as he well understood, the critical decision lay not with him, but depended on an external circumstance, the balance of power in Europe. The British were anxious to maintain it with the help of the Netherlands. Top official opinion in the Raj in India

two North Sea maritime states, Britain and the Netherlands, reasserted itself, spurred on by the progress of British pore in a corner of Asia resurgent with unregenerate Dutch ial power.

gapore was a place where people came to make money. The n and Europeans came with capital and enterprise to develop , and later to undertake tin-mining and rubber-planting in Malay States. The British, confident because of their early strial take-off, believed that free trade and competition was , and kept up this belief longer than the other Western ns which were to later cut into Britain's industrial lead.

ne Chinese also arrived, some as traders and merchants, but ast majority as poor labourers. They had their own economic s. As a hedge against economic risks, they used a range of ly, clan and dialect connections when they engaged in trade abour.[4] Another Chinese trait was their belief in hard work savings as a means to achieving social mobility.[5] Their value em was basically, Confucian, and the wonder was that it survived sea-change when they went abroad. Confucian values were reflected in the Chinese concern for education, first heir mother tongue, and then, when they perceived the antage of it, in English as well. The same respect for educa- underpinned the success with which Chinese students won Queen's Scholarships, established in 1885, and still do in ay's President's Scholarships.

The people of Singapore, notably the Malays, who lacked a ory or an ethos for money-making or work, would invariably e out, as in fact they did. At the turn of the 20th Century, slim leaders warned the Malays about their plight, and tried to e them an ideology of work derived from the reformist Islam the Middle East.[6]

The growing disparity between the Chinese and the Malays in rticular signalled that all was not well in the plural society, spite the prosperity and stability enjoyed under British rule. nless the British faced up to this problem, and they did not, it ld go on to bedevil the future nation as yet unborn.

British colonial rule.[7] The Second World War intervened and made strange bedfellows of the British and the Chinese Communists, who joined forces against the Japanese invaders. The war, and heightened Chinese nationalism, and the Communist challenge, pushed the British to devise a scheme for uniting the plural society into a putative nation. The Malayan Union scheme[8], in its political boldness and generosity, broke every previous British record, but alas, it was rapidly followed by a very British *volte face*. Under the Malayan Union of 1946, and in the change to the Federation of Malaya of 1948, Singapore was constitutionally cut off from Malaya, the reason being that the large Chinese population of Singapore would, otherwise, unsettle the racial balance in Malaya.

To the veteran Malayan Communist Party and the young local born men who were cutting their political teeth in the post war era, this severance was a wicked, untimely, colonial act, which must someday be reversed. The dream of a united Malayan nation, comprising Malaya and Singapore, was cherished by them all.

The Communists had the first crack at realizing this dream. Their armed revolt failed, but they remained a formidable subterranean force. Yet, in Malaya, a national leader of statesmanlike calibre, Tunku Abdul Rahman, triumphantly led the country to independence in 1957. By then the Communists had revised their opinion about a possible merger of Singapore with Malaya. It was left to Lee Kuan Yew to take up the battle for merger.

Clearly, there is a lesson to be learned from the Communist threat in Singapore during that period. The root cause was poverty, unemployment, and inadequate food and housing. There were grievances against the colonial society felt by the Chinese Mandarin-educated youths and Chinese workers. Singapore's first Chief Minister of the Labour Front government, David Marshall was less than resolute in dealing with revolutionary violence, but his successor Lim Yew Hock was courageous and determined, and succeeded in meeting force with force, with arrests and detention without trial to follow.[9] Lim Yew Hock's friend across the Causeway, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was also unrelenting towards the

egal adviser to revolting students and striking workers.[10] But uld not afford to be choosy as his partners, the Communists, power over the electorate, and his objective was to win power and then deal with them later. This coincided with the objective e MCP. Eventually, Lee succeeded in weaning support away them over the merger issue, climaxing in a referendum in the PAP was handsomely endorsed. Another reason was that AP, a latecomer into the political arena as compared to the was proving itself to the people and establishing its credentials le with them.

e merger with Malaya was widely hailed by political parties in pore, but the PAP was the one able to see it through. wing its 1959 electoral victory, it made Malay the National uage, a Malay as the head of state and sang a Malay National em. That Singapore belonged with Malaya was the accepted m and the political imperative. Yet, as it turned out, this was mpossible dream. In August 1965, Singapore was asked to Malaysia. "All my life, my whole adult life, I have believed merger and unity of these two territories"[11] said a tearful Kuan Yew afterwards.

hat lessons may be learned here? The hard bargaining on erms of the merger clearly meant that all was not well from tart. But, what do people say in retrospect? While both sides to blame, more or less, Kernial Singh Sandhu and Paul atley in the summing-up to their blockbuster on Singapore, ed that the PAP "appears to have misread the Malaysian tion"[12] when they underestimated the strength of Malay nalism in the issues of the period. R. S. Milne and Diane y, assessing the legacy of Lee Kuan Yew, saw the PAP's entry the 1964 federal elections as a political miscalculation.[13] ali Shafie, an insider in these events and a future Malaysian net Minister, recalled in an article he wrote twenty six years the gravity of it, and of his having said so to Lee Kuan Yew.[14] he PAP's retrospective view has focused on what the troubled ears in Malaysia did for them.[15] The anger and the ignominy e experience propelled them to greater things. Soon after

turbulent riots and strikes. Anyone aware of this would have hesitated to act. But not the PAP which had the courage of despair.

Trials and adversity had another effect on the PAP. They pulled together to govern well and effectively. The next lesson in this paper is, therefore, what the PAP itself exemplified. They knew that people basically needed jobs, housing, ordinary decencies. Dr Goh Keng Swee has revealed that back in the 1960's, he constantly worried about where the jobs were coming from. On his way home from office he would see school-children pouring out of their schools which for him was a sobering and scary sight. This attitude of honesty with oneself, and concern for people's needs, produced the kind of clean, resolute government which won the respect of all.

Dr Goh did not want everybody to be reduced to the same mediocre level, but supported elitism. The colonial-sponsored Queen's Scholarships first given in Victoria's reign has been expanded as today's President Scholarships. Despite this continuity with colonial times, the attitude and spirit of PAP educational policy is light years ahead of anything known before. The PAP government believes in education as an investment in people, and in excellence in education. The colonial system with its humanities bias, and its lack of engineering and technological curricula has been rectified, as the elite desired is not only the Arts graduate but the Engineering graduate as well.

Elitism was also reflected in the housing policy. The homes for workers were to be the high rise apartments in the satellite towns. Many Western commentators proferred the advice to build to lower densities and spread the units over a wider area: there was room enough for all, they argued.[16] But the authorities demurred. There must be choice districts where the upwardly mobile professional and managerial elite may purchase their dream homes. It was not the aim to convert the island into one great condominium for all its citizens equally.

The management of the plural society also emerged as a very crucial issue for Singapore, having had a background of racial tensions and conflicts. There are constitutional safeguards given

of helping the country towards self-government.[17] Soon all ore political parties were putting forward ideas to bring ouble-ridden Chinese medium schools in line with the h medium ones. These ideas were agreed on, and mented in 1957 by the then elected Labour Front ment, led by Lim Yew Hock. The PAP had a share in these and when it took over, it sought to perfect them. Not wanting crucial Asian values, their one generally agreed aim was bi-lism, with the mother tongue of the pupil and the English ge used in the curriculum.

gapore had also to raise a citizen's reservist army through al Service. This was difficult enough given the Chinese bias t soldiering. But there was greater sensitivity with regards to alays, owing to the tensions before and after separation Malaysia, and the perceptions of Malay loyalty at the time.[18] osition of Malays in the armed forces remains difficult to . It has been found that National Service, by throwing er youths of different backgrounds, rich and poor, educated neducated, gave them a shared experience they would not found anywhere else, which was good for nation-building. is discovery related mainly to Chinese youths, and not so to youths throughout all ethnic groups.

modernization help fight the plural society problem? "If es can become modernized, they may care less about their differences"[19] says Robert Gamer, expressing an optimism shared by social scientists at one time. But this did not n. Instead, it would appear that the progress attained under AP added to the disparity between the races.

the sake of excellence, the government upgraded schools ertiary institutions. At the same time, it wanted Malays ndians who were lagging behind to catch up. It is like g them to jump on a moving train that was going full ahead. Yet to go slower in order to accommodate them l be unthinkable, and jeopardize Singapore's ability to ete internationally. The search for excellence, therefore, roduce conflict and disharmony. The idea of excellence

Singapore's technologically fast-changing industries. There has been a tremendous increase in the number of engineers trained at the university. But they were mostly Chinese, and too few were Malays and Indians.

A peculiar aspect of the ethnic problem is the divisions within each race itself, which can be bedevilling. The Chinese, for example, are divided into dialect groups, and the two major ones, Hokkien and Teochew, were rivals who had clashed in historic bloody riots. The size and importance of the Chinese was such that the PAP government grew concerned about their lack of homogeneity. It mounted a campaign, using posters, the radio and television to encourage them to speak Mandarin, and changed all programmes rendered in dialect to Mandarin. The media blitz was repeated annually.

As time passed, the "Speak Mandarin" campaign was modified to cover another objective, that of preserving Asian values, which for the Chinese referred to Confucian values. Again the Chinese were targetted because it was felt that their rush to become modernized and industrialized had left them deculturalized. The fear was that they would begin to think and act like Westerners, be disrespectful and confrontational towards authority, reluctant to look after aged parents, care more for self than community, and emigrate to where they would feel quite at home. On all these points, Confucianism was thought to provide constraints. In 1990, the message beamed through the media was that to speak Mandarin was equivalent to making a statement for one's cultural heritage. However, the message also sent unintended signals to Malays, Indians and Eurasians, disconcerting them. They did not always see it as an attempt to give cultural ballast to Chinese without moorings. They had visions of losing their identity in an overwhelmingly sinicized environment.

In a plural society, one's place of residence can also be a politically sensitive thing. The British, since Raffles's time, opted for a loosely observed segregation. The PAP however, viewed this as perpetuating the problem. Their new industrial and housing estates policy deliberately broke down the old ethnic enclaves. But they later found a disturbing trend, as Malays preferred certain

amme had created new racial enclaves.[20] So adjustments made to the way flats were allocated or resold. Another which came to light was that Malays liked the lower storey nd the Chinese the higher ones. So if a Malay balloted high up he would exchange it with a Chinese to their l satisfaction.

utions are continuously being sought. The second generation Cabinet led by Goh Chok Tong are mindful of the fragility national fabric. The electoral system was altered in time for 988 general elections, whereby three constituencies were ed as one, and the three MPs standing included one who f the minority race. There was first one Malay MP-led ization, and then a second one, consisting of Muslim and professionals, to help out in the progress of the Malay unity. This suggests some duplication of effort, but then rofessionals wanted to have a separate body so as to preserve distance from the government while receiving government for their work, matched dollar for dollar with private butions. The PAP's acceptance of this arrangement is a le concession from their highly centralized ruling style, and ws Goh Chok Tong's readiness to be flexible in a very tant matter.

e new leadership has also seen fit to enact a Bill to safeguard ous harmony. The fact that it was needed is further proof progress does not reduce ethnic rivalry but tends to en it.

ey have also led a public dialogue to define the national which all should support. The result was a predictably nunitarian agenda which placed family, community and above self. Religious harmony was on the list, but religion was out. One wonders if this would make sense to the ous-minded among us.

e last lesson to be noted in this paper is also the first that pore had to learn during the time of Parameswara. This is esson of external relations. Singapore must live regionally lobally, or not at all. The entrepot trade of old, the modern

The basic things that guarantee our position in the world never varies. These include our strategic location, our human resource, competitive spirit, openness and liberality with foreigners (for which our 14th Century predecessor paid a heavy price) and vulnerability to external forces.

Finally, history seems to have come full circle for Singapore. In the 19th Century when it was founded, it was part of the migration movement of the Asian poor and tired. Today it is caught up in the 20th Century's movement of the Asian rich and talented to lands as far away as Australia and Canada. Just as we complete one cycle, we begin, under a new leadership, what has been described in their manifesto as the *Next Lap*. We hope to run the race as well as we have done in the past. But, because this is Singapore we must be prepared for the unexpected. In his forward to the book *Singapore: The Next Lap* Goh Chok Tong wisely says "We may try to look many years ahead into the next century, but we cannot predict the future. History is full of surprises".[21]

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CHAPTER THREE

LOCAL LITERATURE AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY IN MALAYSIA

Rahmah Hj. Bujang

Background to Paper

This paper makes no pretense of the fact that to expound on the impact of local literature on its society in Malaysia will be, at its best attempt, a hypothetical exercise at this meeting. Therefore let it be known that what I am about to give is but a conjecture. However, this paper can also become a hypothetical tool for a serious study I have planned along the lines of the topic at hand. In fact, I am happy to inform delegates of this forum that I have planned and successfully applied for research along the lines of the topic in hand for the Literature Stream of the Department of Malay Studies, University Malaya. The project simply tabled as *The World of Malay Literature* will cover a period of five years, starting 1991, under the auspices of Research & Development vote of the Sixth Malaysia Plan.

Literature and Society

Cesare Segre opens his book on *Semiotics & Literary Criticism* (1973) with the realization that:

> "Methods in criticism are like color filters in photography. Each filter throws into relief certain particulars of the object photographed while it

ons; quite unlike the Hobbesian thesis of war of all against
ciological Perspectives, 1973).
rature as a system dynamics becomes a tool giving meaning
; society's way of sharing orientation and institutionalizing
ocial fact of the future. Through literature is interacted
standing, observing, defining and meanings arising.
ure as a system dynamics translates the author's material
e readers' response into one that could reflect one of three
states —
e theological state of fictitious, supernatural elements;
e metaphysical or transitional state of personified
stractions; and
e positive state of reasoning and observation which is more
ed and definite.
s stance of literature actually enhances the other attribute
form as a work of art, because it gives equal consideration
rature as an aesthetic case yet seeing the form also as a
ogical mode, a regulating of the subordination of the sense
beautiful to the knowledge of the true. Thus literature
es the aesthetic value that at once relates to the emotions
human beings.

Malaysian Literature and Its Society

yet thorough examination of the dynamics of Malaysian
ure to society needs to take into consideration two aspects
process: a historical treatise, and, its treatment by genre.

f Historical Survey

ef historical survey of Malaysian literature shows a different
ional root to that of its modern equivalent. One would
fore treat Malaysian literature as of two genesis — the
ional Malay literature, which was either improvised oral and
mptu works from traditional folk society, or, planned hand-
n tradition under the auspices of the then Malay rulers; and
odern Malaysian literature, which was characterized by the

cultural in nature which helps highlight its significance in its time and social milieu, and those that are structural in nature which gives insight into its form and content.

More importantly, that Malaysian literature can be distinctly divided into its traditional and modern counterparts is a demonstration of socio-political factors governing the society at large which ultimately gives shape to the literary works deriving from it.

Traditional Literature

Traditional Malay literature has been seen to reinstate social fact of traditional times by the very existence of the oral folk literature belonging to the illiterate people as opposed to the existence of the annals belonging to the Malay Sultanates. Each exist quite separately from the other. The form and content of the one is very different from the other. It brings into focus the social fact that traditional Malay society is divided sharply into the ruling gentry and the ruled "*RAKYAT*". That the "RAKYAT" looked upon the Sultan with awe and reverence is demonstrated in works like the '*PENGLIPUR LARA*' tales belonging to them. That the rakyat think of themselves as inadequate socially is seen in stories like their 'cerita jenaka' repertoire. On the other hand, the handwritten works of literature 'commissioned' by royalty unto royalty is an attempt at institutionalizing the Sultan as a revered head of state, a myth-building using fact and fictional story construction by virtue of which the form when studied nowadays can only be best ascribed to as 'sastera sejarah'. There are also other works from the istana which are as significant, especially the annals that dwells on the dos and don'ts of a sultanate, a kind of traditional judiciary that falls into the realm of literature as much as sastera sejarah. They are now better known as 'sastera undang-undang', a tool with the aspiration of establishing the power of the sultan within a traditional Malay society.

Thus we see a perpetuating process through the literature of traditional times of Malaysia; a process that further institutionalize the ruling power of the sultan, whether the literature work stems

e British marked a colonialist era that while
o the Malay rulers, allowed the rakyat to find
ion and identity of their own. The magic of education
opened Malaysia well and fully into the realms of literacy. In
rly days of social awakening we get factual journalistic writings
hose of Munshi Abdullah's. Memoirs that he wrote strongly
ted from the normalcy of literature around or before his
The spirit of Malaysian literature marked by the people's
cy took on a very different dynamism. No more was there
could be on the other side of the world is wonderful' attitude.
r the precept of one own's betterment through a focussing
the self and other society's familiar selves around it became
rder of the creative process to literature. Perhaps this is best
ted in the literary group movements like ASAS 50, Gapena
thers that bespeak of a need to coerce and collectively create
own brand of literature. The process of writing modern
ysian literature found its characteristic dynamism in this way,
so we get works that can be fitted into such molds as that of
protest literature of the 1960's, Islamic-bias literature of the
's, and the suchlike that broadly fit into the total concept of
untuk masyarakat'. (lit: Art for Society)

fact the term literature in modern literary activities has
nded into more than just creative writing, for literature of
modern age is any writing within various specific fields of
ity be it journalism, judiciary, social studies, and so on. Thus
ature can be a report writing, a thesis, an essay and such like
h fall into the factual and positive writing for the purpose of
l and definite guide to life for society.

hus, when treating modern literature for Malaysia there arises
need to give in to the treatment of its dynamics by confining
term literature into its various genres.

tment by Genre

ch I presume brings us closer to the topic at hand, that of
ature and its impact on society, a discussion best approached

the play forms.

Poetry

Modern Malaysian literature of the poetic genre is perhaps the most available to readers because its form allows for mass media inclusion, specifically in the daily local newspapers. The modern Malaysian poetry made its debut in the 30's through the creative efforts of such poets like Muhammad Yasin Maamor who carried the pen-name of Pungguk — he is now ascribed as the father of modern Malaysian poetry — Kasmani Hj. Ariff, Ngumba and Mohd. Yusof Arshad to name a few. Their poems were published in *Majalah Guru*, a magazine of the teaching profession, and local dailies like *Warta Malaya*. In their works there was a conscious effort to deviate from the traditional poetic forms of pantun, gurindam, syaer and suchlike. They started the free verse form, which quickly became popular in the literature columns of the daily papers for the consumption of readers. During World War II poetry was fully utilized in papers or magazines like *Berita Malai*, *Fajar Asia* and others published during the Japanese occupation; wherein was exercised censorship to highlight only those that adhere to the concept of "Asia untuk Asia" and "Asia Timur Raya Makmur Bersama Pimpinan Dai-Nippon". In short, poetry became the means for propagandistic Japanese politics, which constrained while encouraging creativity. Malaysian poets found expression during this period by confining to themes of nationalism and patriotism directed more at themselves as a Malay race against British colonialism. Any inference to Japanese supremacy was either taboo or totally censored.

During the Japanese occupation names like Ahmady Asmara, M. Kidin, Sharif Naning, Ros Melaka, Asba, Putera Melaka and others were producing poetry for the newspapers. Japanese censorship finally reduced creativity to poems that either gave praise to the Japanese as a new power able to free Asia from the British, or carried hope for a new nationalism, or those that were more personal in nature. Of these only poems dwelling on new nationalism by poets Muhammad Hassan Abdul Wahab for

for a united Malay race. From the Japanese occupation to
ependence, poetry, or for that matter literature in general,
e the all-consuming medium for Malays to voice their
alistic dreams and aspirations. For example, the well-known
eader Dr. Burhanuddin Helmi and others have used poetry
their public oratory.

ay be interesting to note at this juncture that the new form
of free verse, thus freeing itself from the structured form
pantun, syaer of tradition. Yet it is essentially traditionally
in spirit, especially in the way the poets adhere to the
try of rhyme and rythm which were very much the
eristic of traditional poetry. An example is given here to
monstrate:

amun pelita tetap bernyala
erapi-api merah membara
adi suluh hasrat bangsa
adam sepanjang masa.
pt from *Pelita Yang Tak Padam* by Keris Mas)

poetry genre during the 50's and 60's period in Malaysia
ry much caught up in the concept of 'Seni untuk
akat'. It became the guiding principle for a literary
ent formed in August 6, 1950 called the Angkatan
wan 50 (ASAS 50). In line with the concept ASAS 50
ed literary works with the expressed political and social
ent of man and society. Poets making their mark through
ovement include Usman Awang, Keris Mas, Noor S.I., Salmi
A.S. Amin, A. Samad Said and Masuri S.N., from Singapore.
Awang himself has achieved institutional status as a
ion of the art for society sake. The poet laureate has the
quality of retaining a romantic style no matter how severe
ticism of social undoing seems in his poems. His special
of people are the underprivileged, highlighting their sorry
nd championing their right to welfare and attention by the
ment in poems like *Pak Utih* and *Penjual Air Batu*. Usman
ver wavered from his literary cause. Indeed in the late 60's

being overshadowed by giving equal importance to both the national and the English language. Usman and his cronies produced and conducted poetry reading sessions protesting that the Malay language has been guilottined, and suchlike, poems that blatantly aired their misgivings and grudges at the constitution of *Akta 152*. Their poems on this issue was published with the appropriate title of *Keranda 152* (1967). While still smarting from the *Akta 152*, they found cause to sympathize with an underprivileged group headed by a certain Hamid Tuah, who were asked to evict a plot of land which they had developed. They had acquired the land illegally. The ASAS 50 poets jumped into the protest bandwagon when they came out with poems that protested the issue of land rights and privileges. This was published as an anthology titled *Teluk Gong* (1967). In all this Usman played an active role rallying and getting support from poets around him.

In the writing of poetry, the main focus has always been on the social ills and problems centering around the less privileged citizens, criticizing the government for their lackadaisical attitude; generally championing for better all-round social conditions. The 'seni untuk masyarakat' became a powerful guiding principle for poetry of the 50's and 60's in Malaysia. Perhaps the most significant for the period were the protest poems, for it created spin-offs through writings of the genre in the same vein through the various literary movements at the state levels. Kedah based poets, for example, through their group called GATRA produced a semi-published anthology titled *Kebangkitan* (1969), which carries the thematic issue of Malay nationalism. Likewise seven poets based in the city of Kuala Lumpur, rallied around and produced *Suara Tujuh* (1969).

By 1970, Malaysian writers operating in their states found reason to unite as a body nationally. In October of that year they formed Gabungan Persatuan Penulis-Penulis Nasional (GAPENA) uniting 22 groups from all over the country. Headed by Professor Ismail Hussein, GAPENA began to make its mark through a yearly celebration of poets and writers called Hari Sastera, initiated in

it to continue with special columns on creative poetry ibutions from the public. Also the government instituted al Literary Awards for the recognition of good and significant s of poetry and other genres of literature. Those poets already lished kept on producing more and better works; poets like m Ahmad, Baha Zain, Kemala, Jihaty Abadi, Alis Murni, just names beside those already mentioned. Meanwhile new found expression in the 70's and 80's; poets like Suhaimi Muhammad, Firdaus Abdullah, Zaihasra (deceased), Siti on Ismail, Wahab Ali, Muhammad Hj. Salleh, Zurinah Hassan me but a few. These new breed of poets augur the age of a oping nation. Most of them are well-educated nationals, well- d not only in issues within their country but also very much sed to issues of the world at large. Many of them are actually ated overseas at some time of their life, or have been on ea sojourns long enough to be extra sensitive to issues within without their country. As such from their works were reflected per social commitment, a new sense of citizenship, a broader ook reflected not just thematically but also creatively in their ns. Some began to experiment with form, as in the case of aimi Hj. Muhammad and Abdul Ghafar Ibrahim, who rimented with concrete poetry. Abdul Ghafar's experiment *akgakgak* (Tan Sri Bulan, 1967) and *Tak Tun* (Tak Tun,) among others showed a concreteness not just in visual but in vocal and verbal properties in his poems. Then there is artist-poet Latiff Mohideen who created his poetry of images; ein he experimented between the artist and writer mediums ing out with quite unusual creative poetry for the Malaysian ic. Still others delved into the realms of Islamic mysticism ducing poems like "a", *Kaktus-Kaktus*, *Aku Hanya Sebuah Zarah* suchlike by Kemala, a poet endlessly looking for the meaning ne self through his poems.

he poetic genre in Malaysian literature carries a heavy social sciousness that spans over seven decades of its creativity. It is since the 1970's that we get a few poets appearing to divert

Novel and the Short Story

The novel and the short story come under prose genre in this paper and treated together despite the writer's awareness of the richness and variety of each from the other. Both the novel and the short story began their debut in the 1920s providing a rich source of creative reading material for the Malaysian public through the book form or the local newspaper editions. Both prose forms experienced a period of lull during the World War II, but the writing of the novel and short story was renewed in the 50's and continued developing with popular response from readers.

The short story is perhaps the most prolific literary genre comparable by number perhaps to the poetry form. This attribute is made possible by virtue of the fact that both the short story and poetry are very popular contributions in the local magazines and newspapers. In fact the short story seems to come to its own through the patronage of the newspaper media. It is therefore logical that the short story would reflect much of the social, economic and political aspirations of the times in concordance with the news media concerned. In the early period of the short story, its debut has been ascribed to such news media like *Pengasuh*, *Majalah Guru*, *Dunia Melayu*, *Suara Melayu*, *Al-Ikhwan* of the 1920s period; followed by the 30s with *Warta Ahad*, *Majlis*, *Warta Jenaka* and the 40s with *Utusan Zaman*, *Lembaga Melaya*, *Al-Hikmah*, *Mastika* and others. Likewise with the Japanese occupation we see the short story being utilized for Japanese propaganda through such magazines and newspapers like *Semangat Asia*, *Fajar Asia*, *Suara Timur* and *Berita Malai*.

What is more important was the fact that short stories written during the Japanese occupation carried no romantic tendencies of love, fantasy unrequitted or otherwise, between a man and a woman; which had been quite a significant part of short story works of the 20s and 30s. Rather, there was a concerted effort by writers to voice the issue of independence and anti-colonialism. Such writers like Ishak Hj. Muhammad and A. Samad Ismail wrote works like *Hujan Mas Di Negeri Orang* (Seruan Asia, Feb. 1942)

cumentation of Malaysian cultural history. I perceive the ry activities of the Japanese occupation as a breaking ground nort stories into the more serious socio-economic and socio- ical issues that augur independence. Writers of the short became the voice of the social conscience of the nation, nal identity and religion of the country; such writers like n Kajai, Keris Mas, Awam-il-Sarkam, Wijaya Mala, Usman g and others. In their hands the short story became a social ise of the realities happening around them, a society freed the clutches of Japanese occupation into the hands of the sh colonial powers leaving its people demoralized socially, omically and politically. However through their creative ts, the spirit of freedom and the concept of one united nation d expression. With the formation of ASAS 50 the short story in line with poetry as an important voice of the people, lucing works that are clearly committed literature. The arch Division of Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka in 1968 did dy of literature in the mass media and found that between years 1951 to 1957 alone, there were about 40 newspapers magazines published which produced 2,600 short stories 00 writers.

he 60's period did not carry much changes in the thematic ment of short stories. There was, however, a more matured roach to story telling in format as well as content. The short became the writer's medium for projecting his thinking, efs and philosophies to life, a dynamism that went on into the and 80's. As such short stories created in the later period of development in Malaysian literature, though still giving hasis on social issues, began to dwell less on characterization was action oriented in favour of a more mentally or tionally introspective characters. Like in the poetic genre, short story became a favourite experimentation ground for aysian literary stalwarts and aspirants alike. The better known es in the writing of the short story nowadays are Shahnon nad, S. Othman Kelantan, Arena Wati, Ali Majod, Azizi Hj. ullah, Khadijah Hashim, Fatimah Busu, Abdullah Tahir

published. The early years of the modern Malaysian novel were mainly of social and historical themes; demonstrating the writers' need to better his society. Thus we see works that mainly touched on social ills like loose moral values, the receptiveness to Western compared to the preferred Eastern ways, as well as trying to instill nationalistic feelings and a new economic consciousness. Writers like Ahmad Lutfi, produced *Pelayan* (1948), *Bilik 69* (1949), *Balik Dari Medan Perjuangan* (1948) and *Bangkai Bernyawa* (1949) among others; Harun Aminurrashid produced *Cinta Gadis Rimba* (1947), *Korban Kinabalu* (1948), *Minah Joget Moden* (1949), *Siapakah Yang Bersalah* (1949) and was quite a prolific writer in the late 40's producing eleven novels between 1946 to 1949. He also produced one historical novel in 1958 entitled *Panglima Awang*. Hamzah whose novel *Rumah Itu Dunia Aku* (1951) was quite well-received; Keris Mas produced *Pahlawan Rimba Malaya* (1946) and *Korban Kesucian* (1949), the former carrying a nationalistic theme of guerrilla Malays against the Japanese, and the other about a social aspect of Malay society then. Other writers include Ahmad Murad Nasarudin with works like *Nyawa Di Hujung Pedang* (1946); Remaja Malaya who began writing during the late 50's producing works like *Jalan Neraka* (1953), *Di Bawah Loceng Gereja* (1956) and *Sayang-Sayang Buah Kepayang* (1958) among his other novels.

Like the short story, the novel genre also achieved maturity during the 60's, a factor attributed by the institution of Malay as a national language, plus the fact that more and more writers as well as readers are getting the education to equip them with the proper understanding of literature. The impetus to literary activities is another encouraging factor made possible by institutional and other groups partial to literature, and conscious of its role to play within a developing new nation like Malaysia. Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka became the national institution geared for the betterment of society through reading and writing of literature, a process that includes fulfilling both quantity and quality. These novels sent in were never rejected. Rather they were edited or advised to be edited by its author. Soon the Dewan

nnon Ahmad, Arena *Wati* and A. Samad Said. Shahnon Ahmad, ne, is a prolific writer of the 60's producing significant novels *Rentong* (1965), *Ranjau Sepanjang Jalan* (1966), *Menteri* 7) being three of his six novels published during the 60's. ther prolific writer of the 60's is Ruhi Hayat producing twelve ls in the 60's. However, his works are less significant compared nahnon's. The 60's herald yet another thematic trend, that is political novel for which A. Samad Said, Arena Wati, and Alias each respectively producing the novels entitled *Kail Panjang ngkal* (1967), *Lingkaran* (1965), and *Krisis* (1966).

Other than Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka as a governmental tution specially involved in developing and improving the ing of the novel and other literature genres, there is also PENA, a national association of Malaysian writers, which oduced their own literary awards through literature writing petitions. Their attractive prizes help nurture promising young ers like Anwar Ridhwan, Khadijah Hashim, Azizi Hj. Abdullah, ari Affandi, A. Talib Hassan, S. Othman Kelantan, Fatimah u, Jong Chian Lai and many more. Khadijah Hashim, for mple, has come into her own as a writer of teenage novels. nwhile literary stalwarts like Shahnon Ahmad and Arena Wati tinued writing, goaded perhaps by the literary awards and r very own status as National Writers of Literature, for which are given the best facilities and perks to pursue their literary ativity. Shahnon Ahmad, for example, recently won a prize h for both short story and novel when his novel *Tunggul-nggul Gerigis* and one of his short stories were awarded the diah Sastera Malaysia for 1988-89.

ma

ma as a literary genre is the most recent writing phenomenon npared to that of poetry, novel and the short story. It follows the wake of a conventional-type education instituted by the onial powers of the British. Through the English medium of cation, Malaysians studied English Literature. Shakespeare and works were one mainstay of the subject, and his tragedies and

societal pursuits in traditional Malaysian society. Research which I have carried out since 1973 on traditional Malay performing art types has led to the tabulation of the traditional dramas in Malaysia under the following functional groupings, (see below):

Traditional Malaysian Drama Types — functional grouping

Ritual (magico-sacral)	(1)	Main Peteri
	(2)	Seni Mek Mulung
Ritual/Entertainment	(3)	Wayang Kulit
	(4)	Dikir Berendoi
	(5)	Dikir Maulud
	(6)	Kuda Kepang
	(7)	Barongan
	(8)	Boria
	(9)	Chinese Opera
	(10)	Menora
Social/Entertainment	(11)	Jike
	(12)	Dikir Barat
	(13)	Boria
	(14)	Hadrah/Noge
	(15)	Bangsawan
	(16)	Sandiwara
	(17)	Andai-Andai
	(18)	Hamdolok

Bangsawan, for example, was a theatrical drama form that became very popular in the 1920's to 1940's so much so that the form was adopted by the Japanese when they occupied Malaysia during the Second World War. They used the bangsawan to play up their propagandistic precept of 'Asia Timur Raya'.

All the traditional drama types are improvised in nature and are therefore spontaneous at first but became quite steeped in its tradition as the form grew more popular within its interacting communities. At present, through the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism the traditional drama forms have found new impetus

alded by *Bukan Lalang Ditiup Angin*, a modern drama first ormed in 1970 and was the first to draw from the rich itional heritage, producing a conglomerate of poetry, music, , chorus, clown characters complete with comic skit and a tment of story into a dramatic whole. Indeed boria, the itional drama form, was featured strongly in this play.

ut let us look back at the beginning of modern drama in aysia. For the drama genre, the concept of its modernity has much to do with fully scripted and written work which is rary to the improvised spontaneous traditional or folk drama. drama genre as literature was first realized in 1951 when Teh mah binti Abdul Wahab wrote a drama adaptation of *Megat ewis*, based on a famous personality of that name in history. as published by Malaya Publishing House in Singapore. vever the writing of drama only began picking up in the 1960s, r which its literary creativity made headways that could well the other literary genres; perhaps not in terms of actual nber of works written and published (for drama has less than published works) but certainly in the innovativeness of the na writers themselves to forge a varied and colourful style of genre. Within 40 years of its life the written drama has gone ough romantic, realistic, existentialistic and surrealistic modes. stories were wound round themes of heroic valour, love for n, for woman, for country, of kings and queens, of social life, eligion, the self, of life itself. From dramas depicting courtly everyday life, on to dramas involving issues bigger than life f. How indicative it is of the very dynamic social process of se 40 year period in Malaysia is a hypothetical possibility.

A brief historical survey of the drama genre would highlight its amism. During the first decade of its activity, the written drama duced only three dramas of the historical type dwelling on the ne of heroicism, and another three on the social issues of the es mainly touching on nationalism, morality and education. ough very few, the drama of the 50's has shown the writers' sonance of thought and creativity to the social climate and ing of the times; for the 50's marked the Malaysian peoples' g for independence from British colonialism. It is now history

being the bringing together of the once separated communities of races; mainly Malays, Chinese an Indians; the reducing of economic differences between the races; reducing rural and urban disparity of population distribution by race; and especially the reshaping of a new nationalistic morality. These are gargantuan tasks for which the ruling party in power had to work for. Colonialism had reigned over Malaysia for nearly a century. Without the feeling of nationalism that prevailed among a majority of Malaysians, the task of building a nation would be well nigh impossible. But public sentiments against the use of English at that time also helped in the forging of a national language, an essential unifying factor for a new nation. The dramas of the 60's have also dwelled upon pertinent issues like nationalism, heroism, and moral, educational, social and religious issues.

Nationalism and heroism are themes which characterized the historical drama types. One dramatist very much associated to the theme of nationalism is Shaharom Husain. Drawing from local history he created such works as *Si Bongkok Tanjung Puteri*, *Tonggak Kerajaan Melayu Johor*, *Harimau Johor*, *Tun Sri Lanang*, *Wak Chantok*, *Tun Fatimah* and used the main characters to unfold about a nationalistic hero who would put aside personal things for the sake of country. Stories with historical basis through the colourings of dramatization are the best bets for nationalistic type themes, and indeed has been the hallmark of the dramas of this nature in the 60's and early 70's period. The moral was that Malaysia had once been an independent and respected nation and should strive for the very same. Thus the spirit of nationalism against colonialism. Observe an example of a dialogue from one of his dramas:

Si Bongkok: ... Freedom knows naught ... Puteh was maintaining peace. I was maintaining peace.

Tanjung: Yes the unlawful type of freedom, one built upon selfish lust of power.

Si Bongkok: What was that you said about unlawful freedom? How dare you when Malays have been from the onset highly constitutional, or have you forgotten about the Malay race?

There are other dramatists who dwelt on this theme, but not frequently as Shaharom Husain. One of them is Kala Dewata his work entitled Robohnya Kota Lukut. Usman Awang in Malam merdekaan and Adly Azamin in Malam Ikrar both carried the tionalistic theme, except that they used the recent historical emise of independence rather than taking from the feudal era. One mythical character comes forth as the most used by amatists when dealing in the theme of heroism. It is none other an the legendary Malay hero of fifteenth century Malacca, Hang uah. Writers like Syed Alwi Alhady, Izhab Ismail, Hamidy Anwar, i Aziz and Usman Awang have each given Hang Tuah as the ain character in their drama works. The heroic myth of Hang uah from traditional literature has been transplanted into the ama of the 60's in Malaysia. He became the symbol of Malay ight and epitomized the Malay spirit of survival and loyalty to e Sultan. Hang Tuah's brand of heroism became significant ecause he himself had humble beginnings, being the son of an rdinary rakyat but who through his good luck and fortune hieves a phenomenal stature beside his king. Contrary to Hang uah is Hang Jebat, Tuah's brethren in combat and life, who ecame the tragic hero that bespoke of the breaking away of alays like him from feudalism. Hang Jebat offers to the rebel alay what Tuah could not. He is the rebel hero in counter- haracter to Tuah who is basically an upholder of institution. erhaps Usman Awang has put the idea of heroism within the odern context most succinctly while using the characters of bat and Tuah:

Jebat: ... I recognise no self-pity, Tuah. I act on my faith, ... A warrior who acts on his faith, believe me. Tuah, we will never regret.

(Translated from Usman Awang, *Drama-drama Pilihan*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1987, p. 231)

Jebat: Again I say I have never regretted. Indeed it is you who shall be, should my death be at your hand. Surely you shall be praised and honoured by the King to overflowing, upon your good justice and

parents as upon the need of a man and a woman they would deplore your over unconsidered allegiance.

(Translated from Usman Awang, *Drama-drama Pilihan*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1987, p. 233)

Issues of moral, educational, social and religious themes are set in stories that are more contemporary to the times. The society forming the background to the story is of course the Malay society. The problems being treated ranged from family to national problems relating to backwardness of attitude, loose behaviour, land ownership and land dealings, corruption, town versus country, teenager problems, the good life concept, and so on. It is probably not wrong to say that almost all the contemporary drama writers would be instigated into writing by some social issue or other, either through seeing it happening around them, or out of personal experience; problems experienced daily in modern day living and under the stress and strain of social progress.

Atap Genting Atap Rembia, for example, bares the differences between the social lifetyle of town versus village, woven into the story is a moral code of conduct wherein the town people in the drama are pictured as vain, lewd and hypocrites whereas the village folks are portrayed as simple, unassuming and calm people. One character, Hindon, epitomises what is negative in the town. She too has a very low opinion of village folks:

Cik Hindon: We townspeople have our codes of conduct, our etiquette. This is a backward place, far from town, to whom shall we show our manners? To Monkeys?

(Translated from Kala Dewata, *Drama-drama Kala Dewata*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, p. 315)

But the villager in Mak Piah has her own opinions of the likes of townspeople like Cik Hindon, and when provoked she retorted just as spiritedly:

Mak Piah: Even if you must speak there is no need to shout. This house has but a flimsy roof, and can easily blow a hole unlike the tile-roofed house. There you can shout all day.

rtunities but brings out more evil in man compared to the
e but peaceful village. If the twains should meet than everyone
l be the better for it, as did Shamsiah, from town, and
suddin, from the village, when they decided to marry. Most
as of this kind brings an ending that gives some hope at
nciliation of the differences and a leveling off to reduce the
rities between them.

ducation is also an important social issue. For a majority of
ysians education opens doors to jobs and achieving a good
s in life. Socially education has become a prerogative to get
n life. In drama works however the issue of education has its
Thus we see works like *Anak Derhaka* by Ahmad Murad
uddin with a character who easily forgets his kampung roots
getting a Western education. Likewise *Dibalik Tabir Harapan*
Atap Genting Atap Rembia by Kala Dewata and *Apa Dia*
ng Tahu by Ismail Muhammad carries a cautionary reminder
what education and resultant affluence can do. It can make
forget and use education only as a means to one's selfish
. However, there are also dramas that see education as a need
mprove living standards. Thus we see such works like *Zaman*
g Mencabar and *Kalut* by A. Ghafar Ibrahim highlighting the
ed of socio-economic progress through education in the
npungs. The fact that education and progress goes hand in
nd is never questioned. What is questioned is the attitude
oblem of the individual who has acquired education for himself.
Belief in Islam as the guiding principle in life has always formed
under-current to Malaysian drama works of the sixties. Yet
ere are very few dramas dwellin on the teachings of the Quran.
rhaps at this point in time there is the more materialistic needs
social development to cater for which religion becomes the
iding principle. One drama by Kalam Hamidy, however, is
vious in its treatment of religion as a theme. His *Anak Nazar*
ujuh Keramat bares open the characters' callousness towards
e goodly principles of their religion and the tradition that goes
the story abounds with selfish characters like

The handling of this play by the writer is made interesting when Tun Hamzah, who abhors the king for his misdeeds, himself fell prey to his own undoing by repeating the very sins that the king had done. Tun Hamzah became no better because although he has said of the king as,

> "... he is religious, ... his father too, yet he is a murderer."
> (Translated from Hassan Ibrahim, *Tragedi Tun Hamzah*, Tampin, N.S: Kedai Buku Mustafa & Yusoff, 1964, p. 50)

he became one too when he killed the king with just as selfish a reason, despite his religious conviction. Then he took yet another life by killing his wife; again out of selfish motivation,

> "He has sinned to me, he committed adultery. Adultery with the heir apparent to the throne, with you."
> (Translated from Hassan Ibrahim, *Tragedi Tun Hamzah*, Tampin, N.S: Kedai Buku Mustafa & Yusoff, 1964, p. 75)

Compared to the 60's period the 70's and 80's proved to be a significant two decades for the writing of drama. We see a marked deviation from the usual social realistic type dramas. We see the writers going into self-appraisal through their works. They are well-educated young men like Dinsman, Johan Jaafar, Hatta Azad Khan, Noordin Hassan to speak of a few. Dinsman as a dramatist leads the pack with such works like Protes, which questions the writer in him; *Bukan Bumuh Diri*, which questions the usefulness of one's very existence. Dinsman's trademark has indeed become that of a soul-searching writer. His works contrast sharply to that of Johan Jaafar's cynicism directed at social groupings in society. His *Kotaku Oh Kotaku* and *Angin Kering* are testimony to this. Johan's cynicism made him produce works that are blatant outcries characterized by epilogues like,

> "This is a reality! A reality! If not for now, for one day soon. Just you wait and see!
> "MAHATAHU: Death is the only answer!"
> (Translated from Tohan Jaafar, *Angin Kering*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1981, p. 124)

Bidin Subari, or his pen-name Malina Manja, is another dramatist of the 70's that has carved a niche for himself in the

yles of people in the lower strata of society. Then there is Alwi, another dramatist to reckon with. He intellectualizes the social stigma of protocol and bureaucracy. Through his we see the writer's ego trip. We see a man shunning such l decorum yet finding his characters helplessly entwined in stem. Such plays include *Tok Perak*, *ZOO:M* and *Alang Rentak u*. Already mentioned is Noordin Hassan, first to start it all he 70's when he brought his audience into the world of ealism through the play *Bukan Lalang Ditiup Angin*. Noordin me known for his love of traditional literary material which andomly borrowed and used in his plays. Thus we see for nple boria choral group singing and comic sketches in his s like *Bukan Lalang Ditiup Angin* and *Anak Tanjung*. Noordin also made a niche for himself as a dramatist who is deeply mitted towards the teaching of Islam in his works like *Tiang Tegak Berlima*, *Jangan Bunuh Rama-Rama*, *1400*, and he goes so s to dub his works in that vein as teater fitrah.

he 80's has its new crop of dramatists like Annuar Noor Arai, aria Ariffin, Khalid Salleh, Hashim Yassin and Ismail Kassan to e a few. Drama writers such as these have already toyed with genre from the 70's but their works only began nake its mark in the 80's. This is the state of affairs with drama lly where only a privileged few has the distinction of being to watch the playwright's play through the medium of theatre, e the bulk of readers has to wait for the work to be published . Between the staged play and the printed version there would difference of a few years. An extreme case in point is that of ordin Hassan's *Bukan Lalang Ditiup Angin* which sees a erence of nine years between the first staging of the play and first printed publication. Indeed there are more works of ma that though staged, never find their way into print for one on or another.

erhaps it would be pertinent to note that those dramatists has made their mark in the writing of the genre seem to y their own brand of originality in their respective works. The me may be a recurrence of the same but the treatment of it

non-Malay Malaysians. There is no doubt as to the fact that the early decades of literary activities in Malaysia has been ascribed to the Malays. However, with the nationalization of the Malay language as Bahasa Kebangsaan nearly thirty years ago, a new breed of writers have emerged. They are the non-Malay Malaysians writing in the national language. This is a very recent development, an 80's phenomenon in the writing of literature. The writers still have to make their mark although one or two have managed to win in literature writing competitions organized. For example names like Jong Chian Lai, Lim Swee Tin, Awang Abdullah, Kathirasan may prove important to future Malaysian literature enthusiasts. What can be discerned at this juncture is that Malaysian Chinese seem to be making their mark in this creative activity.

There are other Malaysian writers that produce original Malaysian literature in English like Muhammad Haji Salleh, K.S. Maniam to mention but two. But my special emphasis in this forum is on the Malaysian literature for the Malay-speaking public.

Impact of Literature to Society?

In the short treatise on the development of literature in Malaysia a few salient points in creativity can be singled out. They are:

1) That the writing of literature is an impetus created by education. Literacy calls for a need to create more readable books, especially literature.
2) That the writing of literature for Malaysia has been, for most writers, a fulfillment of their social consciousness. As such their works are either didactic pieces which are only too obvious in their approach to the writing of the art, or became a nostalgic, often cryptic, point of view to a concept of good society.
3) For some it was also an occupational need, especially in the case of the journalists of the 30's, 40's, 50's periods who write to fill the columns of their newspapers and magazines. For others it became a need projected through their activistic

nd 80's together.

That nowadays education and literacy is a matter of fact. New xcitement is the advancements of science and technology, in elations to the audio-video media. The ready availability of ction and drama, even poetry, through tuning on to certain elevision channels, has perhaps reduced the urge to read for ne urge to watch.

n added impetus is the general conduciveness nurtured by overnmental and non-governmental institutions in awards nd prizes given through competition or recognition.

iterary activities has become both a fashionable and lucrative astime and is associated with the well-educated members f society.

That the writing and reading of literature need the patronage f financial elite groups, need to be activated constantly rough prizes and awards and regular discussion in ewspapers and other written media to keep it well within the ublic eye and interest.

other words, that Malaysian literature has always been a ed' creativity: be it as the writers' expression of his many ations and dreams, be it as a concerted effort between writers vell on certain themes, be it the governmental or non-nmental effort to help in whatever way for purposes related tion-building, be it to nurture reading habits or be it for c consumption yet again and again through a secondary um by the establishing of the electronic technology of sion, film and video.

nen viewed in total all the writers are part and parcel of the sian public — Malaysians that represent various walks of life the technocrat to the administrative leader to the thinker — pose their voice are the representation of society itself. As their works voice the social hopes and needs of their public ndeed more so, because the majority of Malaysian literary s are reflective of the social dynamism of the times.

versus a visual 'paradigm'. The idea is to see the comparatism of the text, as an underlying network of ideological and cultural structures; to that of the performance, as an attempt at enunciation.

The study views the visual media as a dynamic technological tool for the manipulation of literature and holds the opinion that for Southeast Asia — indeed the world — it has and will continue to be a strong influence to society. Not to see this inevitability and not to use it for the advancement of our own arts, literature inclusive, would prove a futility and a divergence from any nation's nationalistic precepts towards nation-building.

The study, therefore, holds this overview in the implementation of the research project and its findings; seeing the visual media as a potential for universal readability that allows for manipulation of its readability which as a result brings about the emergence of visible elements that further allow for manipulation of visibility — a modal dynamism, a conditionate, that allows treating a literary work for both the perspective of adhering to tradition as well as giving room for experimentation into modernity.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE IMPACT OF LITERATURE ON SOCIETY IN SINGAPORE

Koh Tai Ann

... mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its saying where executives
Would never want to tamper, ...
...
A way of happening, a mouth.

W.H. Auden,
"In Memory of W B Yeats (*d. 1939*)"

All these may well
come to nothing,
World doesn't owe us poets
a reading.
Or if it does attend
we may not tell
how mind or heart
should turn its meaning
but where it will.

Ee Tiang Hong, "Epilogue
(*Tranquerah, 1985*)

ly and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of r and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must e his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; oetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause.

are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

, "A Defence of Poetry" (1821)

e to novels our own ideas of what the novel should be; ... Because d, really, to find out what we already know, we can take a writer's for granted. And his originality, the news he is offering us, can r our heads.

Naipaul, "Conrad's Darkness" (July, 1974)

ould sum up in one word my response to the topic, "The ct of Literature on Society", I would say ambiguously — in ng with the nature of literature — "incalculable". Incalculable e obvious sense of being "uncertain" because no-one knows ure. Who can demonstrate the impact of literature on society nd all reasonable doubt to, say, practical men of affairs tient with fictions and imaginings that seem remote from *real* world of making a living and economic survival? Yet ersely, its impact could be said to be incalculable in the sense ing "*too* great for calculation". This potential, even real power erary works to transform perception, and hence reality — ugh the capacity of their vividly imagined worlds to challenge conception of the real and of value — this power has given erature a mystique and endowed the recognised literary artist a charisma and influence traditionally associated with the nely-inspired prophet. It explains why along with other arently more practical social and economic issues we should devoting a session to literature. And finally, its impact is lculable in the sense that it "cannot be reckoned before hand". ke a recent, dramatic instance of a literary work which made

by Nikos Kazantzakis, considered its blasphemous counterpart by many Christians, only made an impact when made decades later into a film.

Given the multifarious nature of literature itself and the fact that the impact of literature is incalculable in every sense of the word, I will begin by providing a context to my discussion with a brief look at some historically influential views about the nature of literature from which our writers have derived their ideas about the role and purpose of literature in society. I will also briefly point to the historical circumstances which have also influenced the kind of literature they feel impelled to write, remark upon official attitudes towards literature, and make some conclusions regarding both that and some observable current trends on the local and international literary scene.

Perhaps, at this early stage of Singapore's history as a nation, it might even seem from a reading of the literature, more of a case of the impact of rapid developments in our society on literature, rather than the other way round! I'm inclined to conclude from observation that in a multicultural situation, we are a long way from achieving a "national literature", and that perhaps, we need not consciously strive to create one. In colonial days, Malayan writers quite naturally wrote a literature of protest and resistance against both socio-political and cultural imperialism, while in the early post-colonial, post-independence years, writers may have felt an urgent need for a national language and literature to foster a national identity and consciousness. But in a way unforseeable at the time — especially unanticipated was the loss of the idea of a Malaya and then Malaysia of which Singapore was an organic part — other much-touted symbols of a Singaporean national identity, tangible and intangible, have since emerged such as Singapore's internationally acclaimed housing estates, Changi Airport, the port itself, a reputation for efficiency and probity, and so on. Indeed, it might be wiser in the interests of inter-ethnic harmony and the status quo that literature or rather, the various Singaporean literatures, so inextricably linked to the politics of language, be left alone to develop in the course of time according to the inherent genius or dynamics of each literature,

on the local literary scene. On the one hand, apart from ting sizeable English-educated segment of the population, e post-seventies generation has grown up mostly or wholly ed in English.[1] Hence a case has been argued for English literature in English to play the role respectively of "bridge ge" and "bridge literature" between our component ethnic . On the other hand, in an increasingly bilingual Singapore, rious Singaporean literatures are continuing to address press the experiences of each of their respective linguistic unities or that of the dominant classes within each unity. While the literature in English mostly addresses the -educated middle-class, that in the other literatures function antly to symbolise ethnic cultural identity. At the same time, terature, including that in English, is reaching beyond al borders to the larger linguistic community that each also s to. Just as economies today are globalizing, so with easier communications and migration of the skilled and educated, ures in major world languages are crossing borders and ing internationalised. First World countries such as the U.K. ne U.S.A. are beginning to recognise that there exist ures in English other than the British and the American are not tributaries of their own. Thus V S Naipaul, now led in Britain and once considered a West Indian writer, is nternationally claimed and acclaimed simply as a writer in n. Similarly, there is an international literature in Chinese e canon of literature in Chinese and canons of judgement longer dictated by China. Literature in Malay, Chinese, n and Tamil in turn flow into Singapore. The impact of ure on a society, especially on one as small as Singapore, not therefore be its own. By the same token, literature in n, like that of the Malaysian writers in English such as Shirley e Tiang Hong and Singapore writers may be published and cognition beyond national borders. Meanwhile, over the simply because the English literary canon is enshrined in nool Cambridge "O" and "A" level examinations and at the rsity, and because English literature graduates both local

that perhaps, the greater impact on society may be not the printed word, but overwhelmingly the electronic media.

Given their different literary histories and affiliations, it was both not surprising and quite significant that at the first and only multilingual Malayan Writers' Conference held in 1962, the delegation of writers in English, differed from their counterparts in the other main languages in their idea of the function of literature. Where the other writers believed in "Art for Society's Sake", they declared, "art comes first, everything else is second", that the writer's responsibility was "to explore new forms, themes and methods of expression, and that his private life is his own responsibility."[2] The rhetoric of "art for society's sake," had its modern origins in left-wing views about the nature and function of literature in societies suffering grievous social inequalities and/or colonial/capitalist exploitation. To the extent that literary works are often responses to particular crises perceived at specific moments of a society's history, then the response of the Chinese and Malay writers was at that point in time, historically determined, even when seen in retrospect, a historical hangover. In the Asian context, the influential statement of this doctrine was of course Mao Tse-tung's celebrated Marxist "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art" held in May, 1942. He declared that literature should be written for the broad masses — the workers, the peasants, the soldiers and "urban petty bourgeoisie". "Popularization" should come before artistic quality, and the political criterion before the artistic, because he saw the function of literature to be "revolutionary", to "awaken the masses, fire them with enthusiasm and impel them to unite and struggle to transform their environment".[3] This of course is the literature of commitment or engagement, protest, and resistance, a creed still actively subscribed to by many African, Palestinian and other writers in Third World societies struggling for political and cultural liberation.[4]

However, on the other hand, the position of the writers in English at the 1962 conference was not quite by then the discredited 19th century European aesthetic doctrine of "art for art's sake". The Russian and then Chinese communist/socialist

the creed of the first generation of writers in English such
g Gungwu, Ee Tiang Hong and Edwin Thumboo. Both
ore's achievement of self-government, Malaya's of
ndence and the *de facto* dominance of the English-educated
ade this, by the early sixties, a difficult stance to maintain
Singapore. Moreover, as a result of their English literary
on (many of the writers in English tend to be English
re graduates), they were inevitably influenced, as is evident
heir writings, by literary movements in the West. World
nd its aftermath produced a modernist literature in Europe
erised by fragmentation and discontinuities, reflecting the
and anarchy writers such as Eliot and Yeats. The advent of
War II led to a deeper post-modernist sense of an underlying
glessness and nothingness in contemporary life, this being
d in the themes of isolation, alienation and loss of belief
. The war and Stalinist excesses also caused leading British
with left-wing sympathies such as Auden and Orwell to
pessimistic about the power of literature to effect change
ty. In a meditative poem, "In Memory of W B Yeats" who
1939, the year World War II started, Auden could state as
r of fact that "poetry makes nothing happen". To believe
se would have seemed at the time, self-deluding. The early
entury Romantic poet Shelley's much-quoted idealistic
sion to his famous "Defence of Poetry", that "poets are the
owledged legislators of the world" sounds distinctly hollow
a context.

he basis of the still influential Romantic poet's claim —
e poet's gift for imaginative enactment of the "pains and
es of his species" and representation of "the beautiful which
thought, action, or person, not our own"[5] such as to arouse
t moral capacity on the reader's part to identify and
hise with these — is what till today gives literature and the
literary artist their moral and cultural authority in society.
er, the literary artist's work achieves its effect not by *explicit*
for he or she does not see the artist's role to be that of
moralist or political pamphleteer,[6] but hopes to elicit

be that expressed by Edwin Thumboo in 1968 at a Commonwealth Literature conference on the theme of national identity. In a discussion of the poetry of the Malaysian poets, Muhammed Haji Salleh and Ee Tiang Hong, he noted that the poet "deals with his own interests and experiences, those confrontations between the individual and his environment, with his isolation, and commitment, with the particular not the general"; that although others "may use his work for isolating a national identity", "the undertaking is theirs, not his."[7] As another Singaporean writer, Lee Tzu Pheng observes, the poet "by writing in English" is influenced by one of the "literary assumptions of the English poetic tradition", that "literature is primarily concerned with its canons and standards of art, that it is an activity for *artists* and only secondarily related to the pulse-beat of the populace."[8]

But whether one assumes the redemptive power of the imagination which is embodied in literature or the social power of literature to speak for and to others through the eloquence of a committed rhetoric, does literature as such, on its own, indeed make a difference to members of a society — including its decision makers — and to the collective existence? In a sense, no. Let me quote Auden more fully:

> ... mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
> Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
> For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
> In the valley of its saying where executives
> Would never want to tamper; it flows south
> From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
> Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
> A way of happening, a mouth.

One such "executive" (if one may be permitted the liberty of so describing him) who could be said to have declined to "tamper", so to speak, with literature, was our former Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew. He said in 1968, speaking off the cuff to a university audience in reply to a question on the matter, "Poetry is a luxury that we cannot afford" because he believed technical education was more important. He was right at the time, of course,

ge ... can inculcate the values of our traditional heritage philosophy to a society". Given current views and Mr Lee's at it is through the "second language" (i.e., the so-called tongue) that we maintain links with our inherited Asian nal values and culture — and what is literature after all, ove affair with language — his answer is surprising. He that literature was to be read merely for pleasure, "to ease d", a private activity. To him, "what is important for pupils iterature, but a philosophy, an outlook towards life ... a ystem for life" to counter "the values [children] see on an T.V." "This is an important matter which is not ned with poetry or literature."[9] If Mr Lee had read 's "Defence of Poetry" when he was an Arts under- e, he wasn't letting on.

ar later, in 1979, the government introduced Moral on as a compulsory separate subject at Primary and Lower ary levels, and this, not literature, is taught in the second ge.[10] Yet, only just a month before the televised discussion ned earlier, a Ministry of Education official had, in fact, nced that the teaching of "Asian values" "would be built isting subjects such as language and literature."[11] This had pedagogic logic with regard to language-learning as well as l logic since traditionally in Asian and most societies here, literature (in the form of poetry and prose fiction) is ed as a potent means of acculturation and moral education young because it instructs through delight.

perception, at the highest and crucially influential levels, erature is marginal to society's culture and development count in part for the hitherto low priority given to the arts on the national agenda, if the 1988 *Committee on Literary port* commissioned by the former Ministry of Community pment, is anything to go by. The Committee, chaired by dwin Thumboo and including at least four other poets and in Singapore's main languages as well as the Political ry to the then First Deputy Prime Minister, now Prime r Goh Chok Tong, concluded that there was a "lack of

aggrieved Appendix listing "proposals" by the Committee "which were not realised", ranging from "a multilingual creative writing journal" to provision for the training of translators to make Singaporean literary works mutually accessible to the main language communities.

But the lack of support and appreciation for Singaporean literary works have in part also largely to do with public indifference and the absence even among the better educated of a literary culture. Citing several national surveys, the *Report* notes that while Singapore boasted a high literacy rate of 94% in 1988, 33% do not read books; reading ranks second to television, (over half of available leisure time being spent at the goggle-box), while popular light fiction is preferred by all age-groups followed by cookery and hobby books. Literary works and drama ranked lowest, and "book ownership is generally low." A 1981 survey showed that among those who read, there was "an overwhelming preference for foreign authors and books, and little exposure to and knowledge of the works of Singapore authors."[13] Such cheerless findings are confirmed by a National Library branch survey of 1987/88.[14] If literary fiction fared badly, the situation of poetry is worse. Writing for a special issue of *Tenggara* on poetry in Southeast Asia, Lee Tzu Pheng pointedly titled her "brief overview of the current poetry in English from Singapore", "Words in search of people."[15]

It was very telling that in the absence of an articulated national policy of our own on literature, the *Report* had to quote suggestively from the Arts Council of Britain's Policy Statement for Literature" and also from an Australian Council Annual Report that

> Literature is the primary art of mankind, it is the species thinking aloud, making some sense of its experience and sharing its experience across time and space. A culture out of touch with its Literature is a culture that can no longer think or reflect upon its experience, a culture that is, quite literally, illiterate.[16]

And that

> It is our artists who are providing us with new theories of identity, whether national or social or individual ... It is they who are providing us

re and the Arts, and the commissioning of such a ort, suggests that the government under the present n of leaders is signalling its recognition of the central ce of the Arts (and thus literature as one of the this stage of Singapore's development. A Ministry nation and the Arts has been newly established and ter, a National Council of the Arts under the shed directorship of Prof. Tommy Koh was announced. emains to be seen that just as we have a National vity Board whether in time we will see the Report's endation of a National Literature Board become

en, under what kind of circumstances will a government the power of "artists who are providing us with new of identity, whether national or social or individual" and w measures of national achievement" that may rival and ts own theories of identity and measures of achievement? i-materialist and critical temper of much of literature endear much to politicians necessarily committed to ic development and the state's power. (After all, poetry by extension, literature — has been influentially defined icism of life")[18] Perhaps, Mr Lee Kuan Yew was shrewder know and his political instincts in this and other matters lert. Literature is rendered innocuous when valued merely private pleasure it gives, for its own sake and for its utic capacity to "ease the mind" and when not put on the agenda, given a public role.[19] Unlike the other arts, it is impossible to appreciate literature for its own sweet sake literature is language and therefore cannot be regarded as a pure form. Language means, language signifies; above guage does not belong to the writer alone, but to the nity of users of which the writer is only one, albeit an ial one. It also has a culturally symbolic value. As societies the world become less homogeneous linguistically, firstly vake of Western imperialism, and then an increasing cross- on of peoples, and as others achieved independence, even

are willy-nilly linguistically embedded in political and historical circumstances. Thus Muhammed Haji Salleh who has published an admired first volume of poems in English, *Time and its People*,[20] has chosen since to produce only literary works in Malay, while Edwin Thumboo whose linguistic heritage includes both Chinese and Tamil writes only in English. In a sense, the medium *is* the message. The words on the page no longer constitute a transparent medium innocent of intent through which we, innocently perceive the world. Culturally derived, the very language the writer uses influences his and our perception of the world.

Paradoxically, the psychic sense of themselves and their art as being peripheral to the national life, their postmodernist awareness of the powerlessness of their writing, their feelings of alienation from the contemporary national scene, together comprise a motivating power behind much of the work of the Singapore writers in English. Not surprisingly, a large proportion of this work is increasingly inward-turning or satirical. This seems as true of the writing in English as in the other main languages used here.[21] An observation by Singapore poet, Lee Tzu Pheng is both personally characteristic and generally representative:

> The landscape has grown loud with the silence of concrete and glass, has become more and more opaque, impenetrable. The poet's mind, confronting the new scene, feels forced to wander in its midst like a lost soul trapped; finds itself oppressed by the monuments of its own success.[22]

The best-selling fiction by Catherine Lim, probably Singapore's most famous short story writer, focuses on the bitter ironies in the lives of individuals caught between an older order with its no longer sufficient values and the newer stresses of life in an achievement-oriented, competitive environment. On their part, novels such as *If We Dream Too Long* (1973) by Goh Poh Seng (a Dublin-trained medical doctor) and more recently *Raffles Place Ragtime* (1988) by the younger writer, Philip Jeyaratnam (a Cambridge-trained lawyer), tend also to reject the symbols of success. In none of the serious novels in English do individuals feel they are able to bring about change. The main characters in

he same time, while serious literary works by Singaporean may be little *read*, literature as such retains its mystique *ters* have a standing and influence in the community far what their total output would indicate, whatever they may lly feel to the contrary. All the recognised creative writers nain languages have been amply honoured with cultural ons, national and regional literary awards, often being ewed and featured in the media. They are nationally ed and sit on advisory committees, on literary judging panels various literary competitions, contribute to and edit gies, discuss their own work and that of contemporaries at egional and international conferences, and find no lack of tion opportunities and outlets. (The embarassment seems ather, a *dearth* of readers and of literary productivity). This due, also incidentally, to the fact that several writers ionally hold influential positions in Singapore's tertiary ions and the media and may thus be said to form part of tablishment, while their former students are scattered in ools and the media. Patronage relations between writers, , academics and publishers are therefore also an ever- t possibility.

s in a peculiar sort of way, even while literature as such, ally the poetry, remains curiously marginal to national l life, it continues to be much honoured as Literature while nors thereby enjoy a high prestige in Singapore society. For ce, Singapore has also hosted in recent years prestigious ational Writers' Weeks and international conferences on eratures in English and in Chinese, where its writers in the tive languages have played central organizational roles, and ch the related local literatures have featured equally and neir own with that from other countries.[24] The literature in too, although relatively small, is discussed at a publicised, rly held biennial Tamil Language and Literature Seminar sed by the NUS Tamil Language and Literature Society. porean literary texts moreover, have been on lower secondary

Studies, Chinese Studies and English Departments at the National University of Singapore study the respective local literatures and offer courses in them. For instance, my own Department has for several years been offering a course which includes Malaysian and Singaporean literature in English. Affluence and an increasingly better-educated younger reading public have, besides in the past two years, made bestsellers of novels by first time young novelists and short story writers in English such as Jeyaratnam, Adrian Tan and Ovidia Yu whose works unprecedentedly sell in the tens of thousands.[25]

The problem for the writers in the various languages, but probably becoming less so for the writers in English if the commercial success of the novels (which are also not without literary merit) by younger writers is any gauge, is that both authorship and readership are fragmented among the various linguistic communities. No Singaporean writer could claim to be a nationally representative Singaporean voice and mouthpiece in the way that say, others could say of Narayan with regard to India or Chinua Achebe of Africa. A case could and has been made for English as the "bridge language"[26] and the literature in English the "bridge" literature, the one as Singapore's virtual lingua franca and the other capable of mirroring multiracial Singaporean experience in the way that none of the communally-based literatures can.[27] But until Singaporeans (or rather, influential public figures) can shake off the discomfort of possessing inwardly as part of their cultural identity — and not merely functionally using — a non-Asian language, and until both writers and their readers have truly indigenised English and feel unapologetically, unashamedly at home in it, the literature in English, catering for potentially the largest reading public will remain peripheral to the spiritual concerns of Singaporeans. Yet, on the other hand, all the other Singaporean literatures are too communally confined to be cross-culturally representative of Singaporean expression and experience.

But whether we like it or not, the fastest-growing reading public is that in English, and the fastest-growing class, the English-

s unselfconsciously assume the centrality of the literature
n in his survey of Singapore fiction in English during the
nd that "the Singapore Novel" will be that in English:

> apore fiction still awaits the central character who can speak
> ely for the Singaporean psyche, however one may choose to
> rise it. I feel certain that the Singapore Novel when it is finally
> will have such a character.[29]

unquestioning belief in the place, representative power
act of literature and the printed word in the cultural
Singaporean society (or even in any society today where
onic media is pervasive) is subverted by the little statistics
d earlier — that Singaporeans do very little reading, are
buyers and spend over half of their available leisure
ching television. In late April 1991, a Singapore
ing Corporation (SBC) Mandarin drama, "Behind Bars",
daily, ended after thirty episodes. Sub-titled in English,
daily viewership of almost a million, including my two
bilingual primary school children.

as Chinese, Malay and Tamil drama units which churn
highly popular television serials. However, there is no
Drama Unit, perhaps because English is considered a
anguage still and culturally suspect, or because of the
belief that traditional Asian values are best transmitted
he so-called mother-tongues in these highly moralistic
as. Or, because anyway, we get so much drama in English
erica, Britain and elsewhere. But the SBC Chinese dramas
ed in English, and because of demand the more popular
dubbed in English and then screened again. Strangely
he dubbed version is even occasionally premiered before
ese original, thus reaching a potentially multiracial
ean viewership as well.

never fails to note, the Singapore situation is always full
ontradictions. On the one hand, the literatures in each
are treated evenhandedly and (excepting English)
ed to survive and thrive as cultural expression, as symbolic
tation of each ethnic group, thereby reinforcing a
l identity. At the same time, our literature in English in

literatures in English (British, American, Australian, Indian, African, West Indian, etc).[30] In turn, these and other literatures in Chinese, Malay and Tamil flow in together with television material, films and videos from Britain, America, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and elsewhere, thereby reinforcing the increasingly cosmopolitan, globalized culture that seems to be developing here: Disneyland, MacDonald's, Michael Jackson/Madonna among the young; Hilton Dinner Theatre/ Theatre Works, golf and SBC Channel 12 among the English-educated managerial or middle class; karaoke, shopping and Channel 2 or 3 among the rest. Meanwhile, nationally, in schools, junior colleges and at university, English literature and literature in English (in the form of the highly respected subject, Literature), are intensively and sometimes, narrowly taught, either encouraging an interest in English literature for life and ensuring its impact on that individual and through him or her, society; or equally, repelling other students' interest forever, which is when the electronic media can take over as a major cultural influence. But then, who controls the electronic (and print) media? A good question. Another good question is, who works in the media? Graduates in the humanities who have either majored in Literature or inevitably taken it as a subject in school, junior college or the university. As I said, the impact of literature on society is incalculable.

NOTES

1. English has been the sole medium of instruction (except for second language instruction) in all Singapore schools since 1987.
2. *Report of the Malayan Writers' Conference*, Dewan Bahasa dan Kebudayaan Kebangsaan Singapura, 1962, p. 41.
3. *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971), pp. 267, 275, 266.
4. "Haven't we heard critics who demand of African writers that they stop writing about colonialism, race, colour, exploitation, and simply write about human beings? Such an attitude is often the basis of some European writers' mania for man without history — solitary and free — with unexplainable despair and anguish and death as the ultimate truth about the human

Chickera, eds. (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 233.
other great Romantic poet, Keats, has put it well in an oft-quoted
ark, "We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us ... Poetry
uld be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul ..."
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deed, Mr Lee was not being flippant about poetry when he talked of
function in easing the mind. The English poet and a former Oxford
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decade on, the writing in English at least, still confirms this observation
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he Poetry of Singapore, p. 460.

Conference, August, 1988; and The First ASEAN Chinese Literary Conference, December, 1988.

25. For a discussion of the development and current state of the novel in English, see Koh Tai Ann, "Telling Stories, Expressing Values: the Singapore Novel in English", *Tenggara* 25, 1990; pp. 96 – 109. The Managing Director of Heinemann Asia in Singapore has been reported as saying that it could take 10 years to sell just 3,000 copies of prize-winning literary works, but Catherine Lim, who could be said to be Singapore's first writer in English to achieve high sales, managed to achieve a sale of 28,000 copies over six years for her first collection of short stories, *Little Ironies* (1978). In contrast, a Chinese literary work such as Ho Yeuk Kam's *My Happy World*, a collection of short stories which won a 1982 National Book Development Council Book Award is considered to be doing well when it sold 3,500 copies. (*Straits Times*, 23 Jan., 1988) However, more recently, Adrian Tan's first novel, *The Teenage Textbook* (1988) was reprinted twice the year it appeared and four more times the year after. It's sequel, *The Teenage Workbook* (1989), launched at the Singapore Book Fair that year had to be reprinted within three days, and again a mere month later.
26. Edwin Thumboo, "English — Bridging the Gap", New Directions, June, 1976; pp. 9 – 11.
27. "Given the right sensitive and supportive environment, writings in English could serve effectively as a bridge for the different groups and are likely to draw their Singaporean character from a rich, collective heritage." *Committee on the Literary Arts Report*, p. 4.
28. Citing two national reading surveys (1981, 1988) and the National Survey on Arts and Culture, 1987, the *Committee on Literary Arts Report* notes, "Of both sexes and in all ethnic groups, higher income earners tend to read more than lower income earners, and singles more than marrieds." (p. 27). Singles tend to be from the younger age group and English-educated, while the English-educated tend to be among the higher-income earners.
29. *Straits Times*, 27 Dec. 1989.
30. For a detailed discussion of this contemporary trend, see Koh Tai Ann, "On the Margin, in Whose Canon? The Situation of Ee Tiang Hong and Shirley Lim" (*Kunapipi*, forthcoming).

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL ISSUES IN MALAYSIA: CIETAL NON-REACTION TOWARDS SELECTED SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Abdul Hadi Zakaria

per revolves around a common phenomenon which tes a major form of social problem in Malaysia. By problems," I mean conditions which society thinks oe eliminated, resolved or remedied through collective ulian, 1977:3-4; Tallman and McGee, 1971:41). Specifically, phasis is on the lack or absence of societal reaction actions which are capable of producing further types of roblems.

phenomenon which I have in mind is what Merton 18; 1971:834) called the "institutionalised evasion of onal rules". It is a social problem principally because it n a social milieu and the attributable causes are seen ng in the environment.

"institutionalised evasion of institutional rules" refers mount of leeway within which it is considered acceptable ple to deviate from the norms of their society. This may be unavoidable and may even be necessary in x societies. It develops when practical exigencies ting large parts of the society require adaptive behaviour s at odds with long-standing norms, sentiments and or correlatively when newly-imposed requirements for

According to Merton, such evasions of institutionalised rules are themselves institutionalised when they are patterned, adopted by a substantial number of people, organised in the form of a fairly elaborate social machinery made up of tacitly cooperating participants, including those who are socially charged with implementing the rules, and people who practise them rarely punished and when they are, punished in largely in symbolic forms that serve primarly to indicate abhorrence.

A consequence of the "institutionalised evasion of institutional rules" is tolerance and permissiveness, both of which in turn result in the absence of reaction or a subdued reaction to certain forms of infractions.

Tolerance has to do with the stretching and bending of the boundaries of the normative system, which among other things, allows for the mutual accommodation of heterogeneous sub-groups within a society. It implies a more or less conscious act by which members of the society accord each other the privilege to deviate, within limits, from the normatively defined standards of behaviour.

Permissiveness is the social climate that is generated by a widespread absence of reaction to nonconforming behaviour. It reflects a liberal and open-minded social attitude, which our society has the tendency to value positively.

Tolerance and permissiveness are expressed through at least three broad categories of actions. Firstly, through inability to react to an infraction. Secondly, through an unwillingness to reset, usually arising out of fear, on the part of the agent of social control or the victim of the infraction; and thirdly, indifference.

In contemporary society, there are many instances of non conforming behaviour in which the witness or the victim lacks the means to react in a manner that will be perceived by the infractor as a negative sanction. A postal clerk may be unduly rude in discharging his/her services, but, if we need his services urgently and other counters are closed, we cannot go elsewhere.

The failure to react to an infraction because of fear of possibly adverse consequences is of course very common, and is certainly not limited to contemporary society or to any particular

-reaction or a subdued reaction to deviance may also exist
he potential reactor is indifferent to either the deviant
or the deviant act, or both. Indifference is encouraged by
ber of characteristics of our (modern) society. The general
nity, and the secondary rather than the primary relationship
nt in our rapidly-changing society result, on the average,
emotional involvement of the individual with any given
person or deviant act. Under such circumstances there is
tivation to react, except in such cases where the potential
is himself the victim of the deviance.
tever the reason for the evasion may be, the overt behaviour
society is the same, namely, there simply being no reaction
ely a subdued reaction.

n of Norms and Social Problems

context of the rise of social problems, the institutionalised
of institutional norms works at least on two levels:
the patterns of behaviour which eventually generate the
n behaviour; and two, at the level of society's reaction to
oblem behaviour.

f reaction towards problem generating behaviour

examples can be cited of behaviour patterns, where
k of reaction plays a substantial role towards generating
uent social problems. To my mind, the most obvious
le is the lack of supervision by parents or guardians
heir children. Given that to enforce supervision means
h over a child's activities and to enforce parental rules
and Farrington, 1973:55), poor supervision means "a
nation of laxity in applying rules of behaviour and lack
lance in watching over the child's activities and his
bouts" (West, 1982:49).
parental supervision over children facilitates many
of deviant behaviour, the most usual of which are sexual
mentation by girls and boys and delinquent and

which would otherwise dampen down women's involvement in delinquency" (Box, 1983:181).

Using the criteria for lack of parental supervision proposed by West, Harriett Wilson (1987) discovers that in England, parents who are lax in their supervision are more likely to have children who are delinquents, and highly likely to do so if they reside in areas of high delinquency. Thus, Wilson maintains that "lack of parental supervision is unquestionably the most relevant factor in facilitating delinquency" (1987:291). In fact, criminologists Norval Morris and Gordon Hawkins (1970) once expressed the view that opportunities for crime are increased by affluence because as the boundaries of economic and social activity expand, the boundaries of non-conformity, delinquency and crime follow suit.

In Peninsular Malaysia, physical detachment from the family has been reported by at least 3 studies on prostitution by teenage girls in Malaysia (See Fong Ying, 1983; Ching Siat Fong, 1987; Abd. Hadi, 1990). All of these studies report that at the time of their apprehension, more than 80% of the girls were living in nonfamily-based residential units, that is, either they are living alone or with their girlfriends or their boyfriends.

In Sarawak, Nicholas Sia discovers that 80% of the delinquent boys in his study felt that detachment from parents gave them a great sense of freedom (1982:74).

The greater degree of freedom young people now have has also led to an increase in sexual experimentation, and possibly, in premarital pregnancies and abortions. A Malaysian study on human sexuality undertaken jointly by the Population Studies Unit and the Section of Social Obstetrics & gynecology in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Malaya reveals that 28.1% of a sample of 3003 people have had sexual intercourse before marriage. 11.3% of the sample even claimed to have had sexual intercourse with more than 5 partners before marriage (Khairuddin, et. al. 1983:29-30).

Available literature suggests that the inability of parents to enforce supervision over their children may be attributed to many factors, such as the parents having heavy job commitments, the

arse, children leave home for many reasons. Youngsters do run away from home. In not a few cases, youngsters uraged to leave home since nowadays leaving home is as an intermediate step in the transition to self-ment, adult work and family roles (Goldscheider and , 1986; Wells, 1989). But an effect of the juveniles' ent from the family is the inability of this institution to upervision (e.g. Kadushin, 1980; Rosenbaum, 1989).

aysia, the encouragement for youngster to leave home seen by tracing the changing attitudes towards the ent of women and girls. Traditionally, not many people ed the role of women as home-bound persons. Girls were ome while being prepared for marriage and their eventual nothers. Beginning in the early 1950s we saw how such veness" was slowly being allowed to be breached in the progress. Thus women were allowed to leave home to etter education and subsequently to work. Even then were reluctant to let their daughters live on their own. ngement then was for the girls to live with their parents mute to their places of work. In early 1960s, another ced bout of "institutional evasion of institutional rules" This time the impetus was provided by the demand for orkers. Again, the rules requiring women to stay home wed to be breached and our girls were allowed to migrate areas, to live there and work in the factories. We kept hing our limits of, and extending our tolerance for, a egree of deviance that girls were not only leaving their home, but were also staying alone or sharing a house es, without much hue and cry from the neighbours.

eneral acceptance by parents of the idea that girls may loyment and live outside the home may be desirable in the economic development of the country, and of the improvement of the family. But in terms of social nent, such freedom must be viewed with caution for l consequences of youngsters leaving home may not desirable.

of our tolerance of infractions also abound in our society. One that immediately comes to my mind is the practice by large institutions of invoking "in-house" proceedings against members who commit infractions even when those infractions are committed outside the institution. This practice is widespread in schools, institutions of higher learning, vocational training institutions and large government or quasi-government institutions. Infractions by students are frequently regarded as acts of indiscipline and dealt with by the school authorities, even though those acts involve drug abuse, extortion, stealing, fighting and assault and battery, possession of weapons, possession of pornographic materials, damaging school property and gambling (e.g. see Cheng Wee Ta, 1989:44; Mohd. Noor Rashid, 1990:20). Whilst the practice of sheltering members from the criminal justice system is desirable in terms of the avoidance of stigma, the same practice may not have the necessary effect in terms of deterring infractions. It may even be viewed as a form of indirect support for crime and delinquency.

An indication that society condones the withholding of negative reactions towards problematic behaviour can be derived from two common practices in society. One is the internalisation by individuals of popular ideologies which sanction crime, such as those mentioned by Cressey (1953): "it is all right to steal when you are starving," "all people steal when they get in a tight spot," "honesty is the best policy, but business is business". The other is the indirect support which people give to criminal and delinquent acts. A list of people who are guilty of providing such support can be drawn. They certainly include dealers of stolen goods; professional fences; purchasers of stolen, smuggled, imitation, or "pirated" goods; men and women who patronise sex workers and establishments which provide sexually-laced services; operators of places where, or through which, illegal activities can be carried out, such as operators of massage parlours, brothels, video games centres and social escort agencies; parents who shut one eye at their child's habit of consuming hard drugs and people who do not

ailability of such support ensures the infractor that others
t interfere with his actions (a) are excluded by reason
l barriers; (b) are regularly absent, even if there are few
cacles to vision and action, (c) are excluded by virtue of
, or (d) are implicated as being a party to the infraction.
equence of such a lack of reaction towards both problem
ng behaviour and problematic behaviour is the
on of such behaviour patterns and their consequences.
ens because such failure on the part of society may be
aspiring violators as a form of support for the infraction.
t refers to the backing an offender receives from his
l from other members of the society. Box called the
social support and the latter as symbolic support
). The notion that offending is sided by the support
rom his peers is very familiar to us all as can be derived
writings of Sutherland (1949), Cohen (1955), Cloward
(1960) and Matza (1964). The view that groups have
fluence on the development of deviant behaviour is
d by Sutherland's proposition that "a person becomes
t because of an excess of definitions favourable to
f law over definitions unfavourable to violation of law"
Indeed, Matza believes that group support comes in
of teaching of delinquency skills which are common
in the particular "situation of company" (1964:184).
c support which is derived from the wider society
ut in at least two ways. One is through the internalisation
uals of popular ideologies which sanction crime, such
right to steal when you are starving"; "honesty is the
, but business is business" (Cressey, 1953). The other
"the most proximate and effective of immediately
ponses" to everyday routines (Lofland, 1969:72). Thus
d Black (1960:41-45) report that a cashier might
ware that certain of his employer's customers
uy large amounts of goods for cash rather than on
king it possible for him to pocket a large portion of
from these unwritten exchanges.

professional fences and residents who purchased stolen goods".

Implications for Control/Prevention

What does the future hold in terms of the control and prevention of social problems? To put it simply, it can be contended that the process of change or abandonment of problematic behaviour patterns involves at least the alleviation of situational or other forces that weaken or neutralise society's ability to react to negative patterns of behaviour.

But how can this be achieved? We can but offer a few possible routes. Firstly, getting people to react to behaviour patterns which are likely to generate social problems implies an emphasis on primary prevention of problematic behaviour, for it is far more preferable to prevent problems from arising in the first place than to try and relieve them after they occur. In other words, a primary prevention programme tries to prevent the onset of a problem. This may involve a two-prong course of action.

Firstly, involves the identification of the physical and social environment that provide opportunities for or precipitate problematic behaviour. Here the objective is to alter those conditions so that problems cannot arise. The other engages in the early identification of potential offenders and seeks to intervene in their lives in such a way that they never commit problematic behaviour (Brantingham and Faust, 1976; Leitenberg, 1987). Some teething problems can be expected in getting these programmes off the ground because they are usually predicated on some knowledge of the causal links to a disorder. A lot of people who need to be convinced before such programmes can be implemented can be sceptical of what researchers say. Furthermore, primary prevention deals with problems that hardly exist, with people who have not posed problems and are not likely to be amicable to intervention, and with methods that probably have not been demonstrated to be efficacious (Bloom, 1981:8).

Secondly, enhancing social integration may reduce people's [illegible] towards engaging in most forms of problematic

-70; Rogers 1977:43). In achieving this aim, adult conventional culture are expected to take it as their vent the young from straying into non-conforming Youngsters may be induced into conformity,

> ving attached to adults, particularly parents, by becoming to future conventional lines of activity, and by coming to believe l superiority of conventional legal standards" (Box, 1983:178).

paper I have tried to show that the major cause in oment of social problems in our society is the lised evasion of institutional norms". It is unlikely that ion can ever be erased; so are social problems arising

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CHAPTER SIX

SOME EMERGING SOCIAL ISSUES IN SINGAPORE

S Vasoo

The social landscape of Singapore has been undergoing a rapid transformation over the last three decades. This transformation has been facilitated by a number of social, economic and political factors. Some of the broader social issues underlying the changes in the social landscape of Singapore are identified here. Some of the emerging social problems and issues that are likely to confront Singapore in the next 25 years are also discussed.

Relocation and Rehousing

New towns have become a common feature in Singapore.[1] Since the 1960s, the Singapore government has found it necessary to develop new towns to house the growing population. To decant people into new towns, the government has ensured that the new towns are self-contained communities with adequate facilities to support social life and interaction.

The rehousing of residents into public housing estates in the new towns is one of the most significant programmes successfully implemented by the People's Action Party (PAP) government in this century.[2] About 87% of the population of 2.6 million people have already been housed in the Housing and Development Board (HDB) flats.[3] The rehousing of residents into new towns has

sed or better layouts. It has to take into consideration nsequences and challenges facing the residents but P government. These social consequences and oncern the social integration of people who have d, the building of relationships and support networks nts, the psycho-social adjustments of residents, the nation and anomie among residents, the relationship residents and government represented by local the willingness of the government to accept residents' response of the government to the needs of the the availability of avenues for residents to seek redress blems. The increasing pressure from residents for services have prompted policy makers to deploy encourage the formation of various social and rganisations to deal with the abrasions arising out iving.

ith higher household density are more vulnerable is is due to the lack of useable space within the lence, families living in limited floor area, particularly room flats, have found to be more exposed to stress. y revealed that high internal density, as measured r of square feet per person in the flat, appears to be elated with the worry index. Families living on higher n 6 and 12 floors) face more strain and stress than e on the lower floors. This is because members on are more restrained by the height and find it difficult lat when they face tensions.[4]

chold density affects the parent-child relationship. n high density homes tend to be less confined to olds and inadvertently receive little supervision of when they go to the environment outside. Such ecially those from lower income group become d to delinquent activities. This observation is Chen.[5]

ocation, most of the new town residents came from enclaves in the city and urban areas, squatters and

was limited, selective and lacked the feeling of community sentiment.[6] Besides being disengaged from their old social networks, it would incur some personal costs for the residents to establish a new network of social relationships. Given the more anonymous environment of their neighbourhood and when pushed by stress, or pulled by autonomy, people in high density high rise public housing tend to withdraw into a private world, thereby creating a spatial environment which is characterised by inward looking attitude, impersonality, individualism, apathy and a sense of general insecurity.[7]

In addition to being apathetic, the residents of the housing estates in the new towns are from time to time troubled by vandalism and fear of crime. However, this concern is not as glaring because most estates are usually safe and not crime infested.[8]

From the various studies cited, it has come to light that people who have been resettled in new towns are less interactive and neighbourly. This situation, coupled by the feeling of loss of community, may have affected the development of community attachment among residents. The absence of community attachment can retard the process of participation of the residents in the maintenance of their social and physical environment.[9] The ramifications for lack of interest in the maintenance of their social and physical environment can create various pathologies, some of which have already been identified.

About 45% of the population living in new towns are children and young persons[10] who are being or are already socialised in the high rise environment. This situation raises some concern. Firstly, if the young are not provided with the right channels to be interested in the welfare of their neighbourhoods, they are likely to adopt the same attitudes as their parents and may become more parochial in their outlook. Secondly, as the young are now more literate and educated, they are likely to demand better urban services and facilities and if such demands fail to get communicated, they can be rather disruptive to the well-being of the neighbourhoods. Finally, if the young are denied the

which are primarily occupied by the lower-income re is evidence to suggest that this sector of residents nerable to social dysfunctions (Hassan 1976, 1977) re would require more attention from the policy the local bureaucracies.[12]

f Traditional Organisations

organisations such as clan and lineage associations nd mutul aid societies which have been playing an ediation role between the residents and government seem to have now lost their effectiveness and They have become weak in representing broader l interests of residents. They are no longer effective communication between the policy makers and the bureacracies.[14]

's new town environment has generated some s efforts among residents to initiate formal to deal with the social consequences of rehousing. 1960s Queenstown and Toa Payoh New Towns' nessed the establishment of Residents' Associations. ations were formed by some residents who were promote social and recreational activities and neighbourhood improvements to HDB. Initially the were able to attract some residents to be members, hip did not increase overtime. This was due to the eness among residents and the inability of the o dispense exclusive benefits to members other than d by non-member residents living in the same od. Besides, the complexity of new town environment e residents' feeling of distrust in the Associations' ogether with the faltering support from residents, ancial resources, the difficulties in securing premises the new towns and the inadequate administrative mmunicate with as many residents as possible, the ecame operationally ineffective. In the end they in the early 1970s. Indigenous efforts in organising

the last two decades the new towns in Singapore saw a number of formal organisations being established under the auspices of the government.

By the late 1970s, most of Singapore's old communities had been restructured through an increasing tempo by the government to provide housing for people. The pragmatic efforts of the government to rehouse people in the various new towns have both intended and unintended consequences in the social life of the residents. Attempts have been made by the government to set up two local social institutions such as the community centres/clubs and citizen's consultative committees[15] to deal with the needs and problems faced by residents living in the new towns. These institutions have been the translation of the government's desire to keep in touch with the grassroots level of society. They are intended to obtain views to reshape government policies including housing for people and better social integration of the residents who belong to different ethnic groups. At the same time they are designed to meet the challenges of the growing social complexities in the nature and extent of the problems of residents in the new town neighbourhood. However, they are becoming less effective in mobilising and enhancing the involvement of the residents. As a result, the government has to plan new approaches in reaching residents at the grassroots, namely the residents' committees to provide a new channel for the participation of residents in community development.

Besides government induced formal organisations, the voluntary welfare organisations also play a part in delivering services to specific target groups who have been found to be in need of help. However, the role played by the voluntary welfare organisations under the Singapore Council of Social Service to develop formal voluntary organisations has been rather limited and centred mainly on the delivery of services to the disadvantaged groups.

In fact, the approach to encourage the formation of new social and community organisations by the policy makers has also been found to be of a rather limited utility. Participation in social and community organisations depends upon two factors. One is support from the residents themselves. Another is the resident

tation.[16]

io-Ecological Environment

ocio-ecological environment has been changing
e last 25 years, the demographic patterns have
o changing fertility trends and population policies.
environment and skyline have been reshaped; the
as been redistributed into various new towns. In
ctations and demands of the younger generation
for better social service provisions (for example,
cation, health, transportation and entertainment)
rply.

ds, if not mediated, would increase the financial
gapore. Other alternative strategies of meeting the
oeing devised. It is not surprising, therefore, to see
governmental emphasis on corporatisation and
of some social provisions such as health and
overnment is also encouraging citizens to set up
organisations such as Family Service Centres to
ial problems and emerging community needs.
e citizens' initiatives, it is hoped that financial
oe used effectively and service efficiency increased.
nent's pursuits of restructuring and privatisation of
or, it is important that social provisions be priced
h is within the reach of the ordinary working class.
next two decades, many social and community
ill be facing a greying leadership. There is a danger
y pervading in the organisation and this may lead
al inertia, parochialism and lethargy. To remain
gressive, these organisations have to find ways to
dership. Although it cannot be ignored that older
s provide organisational wisdom, the survival of
d organisations, both in the public and private
epend on the readiness of the older leadership to
younger citizens to manage them. It is indeed
ny outsiders that conscious efforts are undertaken

another without any disruption, contrary to what is normally experienced in most developing countries.

Some emerging problems are expected to surface in the next decade as a result of the demographic changes, changing value orientation, declining fertility and socio-ecological changes. These problems include impact of our ageing population, re-employment of retirees, erosion of human values, competing demand for discretionary time, economics of health care and emigration.

One of the most significant social phenomena of the future is population ageing in Singapore. In Singapore where the average life expectancy at birth is about 74 years, it is appropriate to consider the elderly population as comprising those who are 60 years and above. Although there is presently no official retirement age, there appears to be an implicit recognition that the retirement age should be raised from the previous 55 years to 60 years.

The population ageing trend has been conspicuous. In 1970, there were about 118,300 persons aged 60 and above. The number increased by 47% to 173,000 in 1980. By the turn of the century, the number will rise to about 332,000. It has been estimated that 25% of Singaporeans will be above 60 years by 2030.[17]

A major challenge which will confront Singapore in the future has been identified by the government as the ageing of its population, expressed as the expected dramatic increase in the number of elderly persons and in the relative proportion of the elderly to the other age groups. While the aged population in Singapore is relatively small (8.6%) compared to most developed countries (11.4%), demographers in Singapore have predicted a sizeable increase in this age group in the next 50 years.[18] This trend, shared by other newly industrialising countries, is anticipated to result in a broad-based transformation of the society, requiring adjustments and adaptations at all levels. This would significantly alter the dependency ratio between the young and the old.

Two implications have received particular emphasis. First, concern is expressed on whether ageing of the population will

implications of population ageing and its potential
economy's future development.

awareness of issues of the elderly in Singapore has
ed as early as the 1970s. At least seven studies were
the elderly during that time. In the 1980s, the
udies have increased significantly. Even before the
1985, there were at least ten known studies, one of
ocial Policy and the Elderly' conducted by the
ncil of Social Service.[19] In addition, the appointment
evel committees in 1982 and 1988 to review the
ising from population ageing reflected this
re was also an awareness that the rapidity of the
s and its consequences are related to, if not an
the policies implemented in the past. The two
chaired by Cabinet Ministers and comprised
s from various sectors, were therefore given the
ing the policy options and recommending policy
se two committees, as well as other initiatives,
eginning of Singapore's effort to plan for an ageing
he other hand, the report of the Committee on
he Aged, or commonly known as the Howe Report,
a gate for more public attention and debate on
he elderly.[20]

l infrastructure dealing with population ageing will
at two levels: policy formulation and programme
on. Three general features of the infrastructure
l mention at the outset. First, population ageing
ations have been accorded high political emphasis.
olitical party has explicity mentioned population
portant issue in its agenda for national discussion.
efforts in policy formulation and programme
n have benefitted from such political patronage.
pore is a relatively small place and an extensive
vernment and non-government organizations are
ce. Thus, it is possible to exploit what is already
the creation of a support infrastructure for the

Policy Formulation

In the 1970s, the concern for the welfare of the immigrant aged led to the establishment of a number of services catering to the special needs of this group. Such services were formulated by the then Ministry of Social Affairs in conjunction with the Singapore Council of Social Service. Although they attracted much attention, planning efforts were essentially sectoral and services were treated as an extension of the existing social welfare schemes.

In the 1980s, the concern has broadened as the implications of population ageing were made known. The fact that the problems of the aged will not disappear along with the passage of the group of immigrants, destitute aged led to serious reviews of the issue. In June 1982, the appointment of a high level 13-member committee marked the beginning of the government's efforts to understand the implications of population ageing and to implement appropriate counter-measures.

The Committee on the Problems of the Aged was chaired by the then Minister for Health. In its deliberations, the Committee took the problems of old age beyond the realm of humanitarian and social welfare concerns. It took note of the long term impact of population ageing and its ramifications. As a result, the Committee stressed the potential contributions of the elderly to the society and the importance of incorporating them in socio-economic development, while concurrently acknowledging and meeting their special needs. To assist in its deliberations, the Committee commissioned the National Survey on Senior Citizens in 1983[21], providing updated information from an earlier study conducted in 1976.[22]

The report of the Committee was finalized and released in March 1984. Several controversial policy recommendations such as raising the aged eligible for provident fund withdrawal and legislations on filial piety lead to much public outcry and discussion. However, the bulk of the Committee's recommendations were accepted. The major ones included the change in provident fund contribution rates for older persons to generate employment for older workers, legislation on minimum

ment the report's recommendations, several were established with members drawn from relevant statutory boards, institutions of higher learning and ment agencies. The Co-ordination Committee to e Report on the Problems of the Aged was set up in under the Ministry of Community Development Ministry of Social Affairs) to evaluate and oversee entation of the report's recommendations. The o Co-ordinate the Development Programmes and as formed in January 1986 in the Ministry of Development to promote, direct and supervise entation of the recommendations in respect nd recreational needs and social services and care by government and non-government agencies. tee on Public Awareness on Ageing was set up to public education and awareness programme in the Community Development and Communication and to educate the public with a view to projecting a ome image of senior citizens. The Public Awareness n Ageing was launched in November 1987 with the of a tripartite Task Force on the Employment of the Ministry of Labour. The task force comprising government and union representatives would ed to provide counselling for and retraining of .

g that population ageing is also a demographic government established in 1984 an Inter-Ministerial ommittee (IMPC) to undertake a comprehensive ingapore's population trends and to make tions on policy measures to arrest the declining nd to bring about the desired population size and Chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry l reporting to the First Deputy Prime Minister, the e IMPC comprised Permanent Secretaries of relevant ministries. Following the IMPC's recommendations, opulation policy was revised in 1987. The Committee, e Population Planning Unit, continues to monitor

comprehensive review of the status of ageing in Singapore. Its term of reference, inter alia, include the review of programmes and services available to the aged, to examine the premises, assumptions and policy recommendations contained in the 1984 Report on the Problems of the Aged, to suggest ways to enable the aged to work beyond age 55 and finally to examine how families can be helped to look after their aged dependants.

The Advisory Council appointed four committees to look into the specific issues of concern. The four committees were: Committee on Community-Based Programmes for the Aged, Committee on Attitudes Towards the Aged, Committee on Residential Care Programmes for the Aged and Committee on Employment for the Aged. The composition of the members of the Advisory Council and the committees included experts from government ministries, statutory boards and voluntary organisations who were concerned with the provision and planning of services for the aged.

In September 1988, the reports of the four committees were reviewed by the Council and subsequently submitted for the consideration of the government. One of the key recommendations proposed by the Council was that a National Council on Ageing should be set up with the character and authority of a statutory board to effectively plan and co-ordinate policies and programmes for the elderly. Other proposals included raising the retirement age from 55 to 60 as continued employment provides a sense of worth, dignity and financial independence to the elderly; adjusting the seniority-based wage system so that more older people will be employed; expanding and strengthening public education programmes on the aged and ageing so that the right attitudes towards the aged could be inculcated; making land available for voluntary organisations to set up homes for the aged; lengthening the term leases for homes; studying the feasibility of providing health and medical services for the frail elderly living in their own homes; and increasing the dependency tax rebate for families who look after the aged.

A national policy on ageing in Singapore is therefore taking

plementable decisions. Historically, cross-sectoral on has worked well in the local context and it is the ature in Singapore's government problem solving econd, the Committees were given much publicity. eness of the issues were heightened, especially when al recommendations were made. The enhanced n policy changes by the public reflect an increasing social care of the elderly in Singapore. Public inputs become an important consideration in both the deliberations.

Implementation

mmes and activities for the elderly are co-ordinated e principal organisations: the Ministry of Community t, the Ministry of Health and the Singapore Council vice. The two Ministries, in addition to the provision vices, provide overall guidance in planning for welfare ervices respectively. The Singapore Council of Social ys a co-ordinating role among non-government ns and helps in representing their views to the . A total of 26 voluntary and religious organisations the Singapore Council of Social Service are currently rvices to the elderly. In addition, other ministries or dies may also be responsible for certain schemes the elderly, such as the HDB. Taken together, the ed by government and non-government organisations ensive.[23] Basically, provision of social service for the be categorised into formal and informal care. Formal the elderly in Singapore include community based residential care. Informal services are support given y or friends of the elderly.

the community based services available in Singapore home nursing service, befriending service, senior etirees' club, day care centre, and free or cheap meal ile existing community based services should be

possibly introduced to provide a broad based service.

Residential care includes the aged homes, nursing homes, community homes and commercial homes. The provision of social services to the elderly is particularly important in view of the rising number of elderly in the community, the smaller size of the family and more women entering the labour force. The routine of the family would be greatly disrupted when an elderly member becomes weak and requires regular attention. In addition, the large number of elderly (11,044) who live in one-person household suggests the vulnerability of this group in times of need and sickness. In Singapore, with only 2% of the elderly living in institutions, the family's role in ensuring the well-being of the elderly is of paramount importance. In a rapidly changing society, the family is also subjected to numerous competing demands that might affect its capability and willingness in the provision of care.

The National Survey on Senior Citizens in 1983 showed that about 5% of non-institutionalized elderly lived alone, with the remaining living in households mainly with immediate relatives. The finding was re-affirmed in a 1986 survey[24], noting that the elderly tended to live with immediate family members. The same survey also showed that the elderly enjoyed reasonably good accomodation with 98% observed to be living in satisfactory living conditions in terms of sleeping arrangement, accessibility to facilities and cleanliness. It was also found that home ownership was high and two thirds of the elderly lived in households with monthly income exceeding $1,000/-. Questions were asked in the surveys about preferred living arrangement. It was found that there was a distinct and overwhelming preference among the elderly to live with their children, in particular, their married children. The choice of co-residence appears to be culturally influenced: the Chinese and Indians preferred to live with their married sons while the Malays preferred their married daughters. The surveys also found an overwhelming reluctance among the elderly to stay in old folks' homes, as was expected. The findings from a number of studies have shown that most of the elderly with immediate relatives (spouse, children and grandchildren)

at they could rely on their family for help when they
nen they had other problems. No evidence has been
gest that the family, as an institution, is shirking its
ies. However, several changes could restrict the
of the family as the primary source in the future.
reasing involvement of married women in the labour
educe the availability of care givers within the family.
labour force participation rate of married women in
age group was 33%. This has increased to 46% in
ne shrinking of family size, there are also likely to be
to share out the responsibility of care. In the 1960s,
ded to have about six children in her life time. This
about four children in the 1970s and to about 2.5 in
here is also concern about the younger generation,
be as filial towards their ageing parents. The decline
, coupled with increasing external commitments and
es of the family members could erode the coping
the family in the care for an aged sick. These changes
the formal support system may have an important
in the future. Therefore, to encourage the family to
elderly members to the fullest extent possible, the
has introduced measures which included the
ional co-residence, income tax relief, moral education
community based services and legislation. In the
ional co-residence, married children and their parents
to apply adjoining HDB flats. Their applications will
n priority in allocation. Also, for a person who is
n elderly dependant, a $3,500 income tax relief is
Year of Assessment 1991, provided that the latter is
more than $1,500 a year. Moreover, children can
lief of up to $6,000 a year for the equivalent sum of
have contributed to their parents' Central Provident
account.

n to the family support and community based services,
pport services are also available. The public assistance
er the Ministry of Community Development provides

assistance in cash and kind to the financially distressed. Churches, temples, charitable foundations and various community service groups provide ad hoc aid such as *hong bao* and food to the needy elderly during the festive seasons. However, the various financial schemes lack co-ordination to ensure efficient and effective distribution of financial resources. The old age financial security for Singaporeans is provided principally through the CPF scheme, whereby monthly contributions are made by both employees and employers. At present, the rates of contribution is 17.5% for employers and 22.5% for employees. The scheme is run by a statutory board and guaranteed by the government. Contributors can also draw on the fund for approved purposes, such as purchase of property, payment of medical expenses and other investment ventures. The principal sum plus interest can be withdrawn at age 55, except for a sum of $30,000 which can only be withdrawn after the age of 60. This is to provide an added protection for financial well-being in old age against squandering of the savings. Part of the CPF is channelled into a Medisave account which can only be drawn for medical expenses. At present, the cap for the Medisave account is set at $15,000 .

To help reduce the burden of care on the family, services such as home visiting, day care and respite care are being offered. The government has also launched various initiatives to promote as much community involvement in these services as possible. Two objectives are emphasized. First, the elderly should be kept fit and healthy, capable of full participation in the mainstream of community life. Second, the aged sick are to be provided supportive services which will enable them to live with their families for as long as possible.

The Committee on the Problems of the Aged recommended that laws be passed to impose on children the obligation to care for their elderly parents. No legislations have been instituted and the Advisory Council on the Aged has also advised against it. However, the government is prepared, if necessary, to institute legal protections for the welfare of the elderly if the family is abdicating its duties.

sures designed to maintain rather than to foster families
noral education programme is therefore special as it
active role to inculcate specific filial attitudes. Whether
ntervention can help to stem the influence of
tion remains to be seen. However, education of this
help prepare the young to accept the challenge of
their aged parents.

y Participation and Involvement

anning principle put forward by the Committee on the
of the Aged is the recognition of the potential
on of the elderly to the society and their own welfare.
iple came through clearly in the Committee's report
gain endorsed by the Advisory Council on the Aged.
is likely to have a quarter of its population aged 60
nd it is clear that this vast amount of human resources
pped if Singapore is likely to maintain its economic
Harnessing the contributions of the elderly is however
than done. Age-old prejudices often cast the elderly in
and the emphasis is mainly placed on their problems
n their potential contributions. The developmental
of the government's approach is therefore encouraging.
ising that contribution is possible only through
on, the two national planning committees have given
attention to three aspects of participation, ie. health
ce, community activities and gainful employment.
is often the critical factor in a person's adjustment in
While old age is not necessarily a time of ill health and
a variety of chronic illnesses do occur more frequently
elderly than among the younger persons. In Singapore,
majority of the elderly enjoy reasonable good health
ndependent lives. But they are also disproportionately
umers of medical care. In 1986, the elderly accounted
all admissions into government hospitals while forming
of the population. In absolute numbers, the admission

primary health care has been emphaisized. Three aspects, namely the health education, health screening and self-help groups have been promoted thus far.

Participation in community activities is an indication of the elderly's integration in the society, beyond the confines of the family. Greater involvement in the community, especially in age integrated activities, signifies a respectable status accorded to the elderly. Conversely, social isolation of the elderly reflects a poor image of the elderly among the younger generation. Community participation of the elderly can be grouped into two types: age segregated or age integrated. The rapid proliferation of Senior Citizens' Clubs encouraged by the government is one example of the former. These clubs offer recreational programmes, health screening, keep fit activities and opportunities for community services to senior citizens. At present, there are 166 such clubs with a membership of about 47,600, run mostly by government or para-government organisations. Among the few non-government run clubs, the Singapore Action Group of Elders (SAGE) is the largest with a membership of about 1,500. Such age segregated clubs meet certain needs of the elderly. They provide a contact point for meeting and making friends and a forum for exchange of opinions and experiences. They, unfortunately, also segregate the elderly from the other age groups. The establishment of a network of Senior Citizens' Clubs may therefore heighten the awareness of the elderly as a distinct social group. Thus far, these clubs are not linked to form a larger organisational base. The National Council of Ageing, proposed by the Advisory Council on the Aged could conceivably provide the linkage to these clubs, effectively organising them into a potentially potent self-interest group. On the other hand, to what extent are the elderly involved in age integrated activities? This is difficult to assess, as empirical evidence are scarce. In a 1987[26] in a report on the support systems of the elderly, sponsored by the United Nations University, it was found that the most common avenue of participation is through religious activities. Apart from these, the study found that the higher the educational attainment, the greater

being too busy with household chores, lack of
lack of opportunities. It should be stressed that the
r the elderly to participate in community services has
alised. This group clearly possesses varied experience
that could be tapped by the community for specific
t present, elderly persons are involved in ad hoc
activities. More could be encouraged to join in such
services as childcare, home nursing, crime prevention,
ng, teaching and home help. The Volunteers
nt Programme of the Singapore Council of Social
rrently exploring the recruitment of elderly volunteers.
en the emphasis of the government that the elderly
encouraged to work for as long as possible in order
n mental alertness and financial independence.
in labour-short Singapore, the elderly constitute an
source of labour supply. However, as noted earlier,
een a gradual decline in their labour force participation
past five years.

ment of retirees

was estimated that 58% of those between 55 years
ars were economically inactive in Singapore. Among
ve 60 years, 82% were economically inactive. The
ce participation rate of these two age groups are no
There is an urgency to encourage more older workers
ined in our work force.
nber of people in the retirement age group is on the
t is projected that by the end of 1990s, there will
persons in the retirement age group, that is, between
years. With such an increasing number of retirees
stream, it is a challenge to both the public and private
establish a more specialised service for retraining and
ment of the retirees.
of the future shortage of manpower and slow increase
ion, there are pressing demands from the trade unions

recommendations, ie. raising of retirement age, changing the wage system, increasing employment opportunities and training and retraining.

The Council was of the view that the customary retirement age at 55 should be raised to 60. This increase should be done through negotiations between employers and employees, taking into consideration the special needs and circumstances of each economy or job. However, the government has since indicated that such negotiations may be too slow to bring about changes in retirement age. Inspite of the government's urging, only 65% of unionized companies and 25% of non-unionized companies in the private sector have done so in 1990. The employers were apparently concerned with the unsuitable nature of the work, the high cost and lower productivity of employing older workers. In a survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour in 1988, it was found that 47% of the companies with retirement age below 60 reported that it was impractical to revise their retirement age.[27] Among them, 56% gave the reason of unsuitable work and about a third each indicated high cost, lower productivity and less feasibility in employment as reasons. The Ministry of Labour, therefore, announced in March 1989 that retirement age will be raised to 60 by 1992. The three-year grace period is to allow companies to make necessary adjustments.

The Council also noted that wages in Singapore are largely based on seniority. Consequently the wage bill for an older worker is far greater than a new entrant, even if they are employed in the same job. As an inducement to encourage employers to retain older workers, the government has reduced the rate of Provident fund contributions for older workers. To further facilitate the expansion of employment opportunities, the Council advocated fundamental adjustments in the wage system, taking into account considerations such as the salary to be tied to the worth of a job, salary scales to be shortened, costly fringe benefits tied to seniority to be reduced and staff to be rewarded through one-off bonuses rather than through basic wage increments.

To increase the employment opportunities, the Council urged

ncil recognised that one obstacle to continued for older workers is their inadequate or outdated urged the Skill Development Fund, a statutory body ill training, to develop special schemes for older to provide special subsidy to employers in retraining workers. It is foreseeable in the future that training for the older workers will be developed by various g institutes.

measures taken together halt the decline of the our force participation rate? The answer to this ontingent on a number of factors. First, it is clearly t these measures are fully implemented. While the can take steps to encourage the employment of older employers themselves must see the advantage of hiring tance on the part of the employers will not help to rk opportunities. Second, the attitudes of the older be changing such that leisure is increasingly valued ued employment. If this is the case, then, Singapore he example of many developed countries where the rates of older workers drop steadily regardless of opportunities.

ortant to note that the retention of retirees affects s for the young. The problems of re-employing the the resulting frustrations in the young both deserve ideration.

Human Values

ealth of any progressive and vibrant society varies the human values the members of the society cherish eir capacity to find social antigens to decadent values oral and social responsibilities. Singapore is an open e population is exposed to various information which positive or negative effects on their outlook to life. ore vulnerable to the erosion of human values. It is herefore, for Singaporeans to actively promote right al values as early as possible. The right time for this

inculcate filial piety and respect for the elderly. For example, an annual Senior Citizens' Week is being organised to promote the contributions and status of the elderly. A family life education programme has also been implemented to promote harmonious family living. Values education, if carefully planned, can also encourage good citizenship. In the long run, it can prevent the citizens from becoming self-centred and uncaring.

More citizens with high social DNA are to be nurtured.[29] These people with the acumen for the promotion of public good are likely to further strengthen the foundations of our social and public institutions.

With improvements in working conditions, Singaporeans are likely to have more discretionary time which can be tapped by many social and community organisations. As discretionary time is rather limited, Singaporeans are likely to spend it in voluntary activities which are beneficial and useful to them. There is always a danger that they may participate less in altruistic activities for they have to first meet their own economic necessities. It is, therefore, crucial for social and community organisations to make their voluntary service programmes interesting and satisfying experiences for the participants.

Economics of Health Care

In recent years, the issue of rising cost of health care in Singapore has been a subject of public debate. This has been generated by the Government's move to restructure and privatise public hospitals and the general concern among consumers of the increasing cost in health care. Though the total expenditure on health care in Singapore is still well below 3% of the GDP and the current level of health care expenditure is still considered low by western standards. The concern is not symptomatic, although it should be noted that in the last 15 years, government recurrent expenditure on health care has increased by three-fold in nominal terms, well exceeding the economic growth. It is precipated by a significant increase in consumer price index for health care which has risen to 20% over the last 5 years. The private per capital

l better educated, the demand for better health care
increase. The important issue is that the increasing
for health care must be balanced with affordability.[50]
saged that there will be more concerted efforts by the
nt to implement various cost containment measures,
rtailing the increasing demand for health care,
of primary health care, regulating the supply of health
eduction of subsidies for those who can afford,
ent of community hospitals, cost-control on high-tech
nd efficient use of health care professionals.
ng demand for health care is inevitable due to advances
technology, longer life expectancy, population ageing,
affluence and education and hence expectation of the
1957, the life expectancy at birth was only 64 years.
is 74 years. In fact, improvements in life expectancy
elderly, particularly among the male elderly, have been
ater than that of the general population.
r, what people really want is good health and not good
re. As the major provider of health services to the
n, responsible for about 70% of the total hospital care
of primary health care, the government could lead in
alistic standards of health care by regulating the amount
at the public is willing and can afford to share. This
p in dampening or slowing down the demand for better
e and services so that it would not be incompatible with
omic growth. Moreover, the government could also help
n the increasing cost of health care by improving
vity in the public health services and encouraging
on among the health care providers in both the public
te sector. On the other hand, the provision of an efficient
e health care and frontline curative services through the
health care services plays an important part in keeping
lation healthy and curtailing the demand for health care.
nprehensive immunisation programmes would help to
many serious infectious diseases. Early detection and
of serious conditions could reduce the need for costly

and C class) for those who are in the low income group. Otherwise, this group would find health care less accessible and they would delay in seeking treatment. This could add to further cost increase in health care. On health financing, the policy decided by the government is the Medisave Scheme, which aims to build the individual's financial resources so that those who fall sick would have the means to pay for their health care, especially in his old age. Being the individual's personal saving, incentives have already been provided for him to stay well and use the Medisave wisely.

Emigration Problem

Emigration of some young adult Singaporeans is a new emerging problem. As Singapore maintains an 'open door' policy, there is no administrative controls for emigration from Singapore. With the increase in regional economic co-operation and growing investments of Singapore companies overseas, there is an emerging flow of temporary emigration of managers and skilled workers. Singaporeans emigrating to the West have also become noticeable in recent years as some of the developed countries have relaxed their immigration policies. The trend of migratory flows of Singapore could be seen within a framework of growing regional and international economic exchanges of which labour exchange is becoming an important aspect. In general, Singapore benefits from the supply of skilled and unskilled labour from the region while the region benefits from the provision of technicians, professionals and investment by Singapore firms.

There are four main reasons for Singaporeans to leave Singapore, namely, the homeland emigration where the emigrants return to the countries of origin; emigration for family reunion where Singaporeans who have married foreign spouses may choose to stay overseas and eventually settle there; emigration for better living arising from political or social reasons and economic emigration where the Singaporeans leave Singapore to take up overseas employment for better career prospects, higher returns and other benefits.[31]

though small, deplete the local pool of talent. To ne outflow, it is necessary that more educational and opportunities be made available to children of the l emigrants.

st be reiterated that Singapore cannot afford to face a ed economic down turn. When this happens, we could eater exodus of people as the world has become an arena r-migration.

ion

nary, Singapore's social landscape has indeed undergone nt changes as a result of demographic transition, relocation housing, urban development and city planning and ssed modernization. Some of the more pertinent social nd problems are the impact of population ageing, re- ment of retirees, increasing financial burdens of health ems and potential erosion of human values. The challenges ting policy makers and the Singapore community are de proactive and cost-effective solutions.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

DEPAN, AN ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM FOR MALAYSIA IN THE 1990'S

Richard F Dorall

Introduction

DEPAN is the Bahasa Malaysia word meaning "forward". It is also the acronym for *Dasar Ekonomi untuk Pembangunan Negara*, in English, "Economic Policy for National Development". It is the title of the 444 page document agreed upon by members of the Malaysian Government-appointed National Economic Consultative Council (NECC), which deliberated for two years from January 1989 to February 1991. This document was submitted to the Malaysian Government as the council's proposal for a post-1990 national economic and development strategy for Malaysia, one which should replace the New Economic Policy (NEP) which from 1971-1990 provided the basic development paradigm for Malaysia.

The writer of this paper seeks to identify the more important analyses and proposals of DEPAN which, if accepted in toto by the Malaysian Government, will result in paradigmatic shifts in the processes and methodologies of national economic development which grew into place under the NEP over the past two decades. The writer was invited by the Malaysian Government to be a member of the NECC, and participated in the deliberations of the council and its sub-committees from its inception in early 1989 to the final plenary meeting in early 1991 which agreed upon a document to be titled DEPAN which constitutes the official

i Dr Mahathir Mohamad, on February 9, 1991 by council
, Tan Sri Muhammad Ghazali bin Shafie.

n Economic Development Paradigms Prior to DEPAN

view of members of the NECC that DEPAN is a new
n[1] upon which Malaysian national development in the
d beyond ought to rest. As such, therefore, if one is to
preciate the full implications of the DEPAN proposal, a
nt which is less a listing of independent proposals than a
refully integrated one which requires full acceptance if it
e the results the members of the council desire for the
of the 1990s, it will be helpful to briefly review past
n national development paradigms, and to indicate the
why paradigmatic changes in developmental strategy have
ade from time to time in the course of the three decades
alaysia gained its independence in the late 1950s.

aruddin Maaruf (1988) has usefully identified several stages
evolution of the development philosophy of Malaysia's
lly dominant Malay leadership, philosophies which have
two quite distinctive paradigms which have dominated
an economic development planning since independence
. Under the leadership of Malaysia's first Prime Minister,
Abdul Rahman, the government, "merely continued the
pment philosophy of the former colonial power and shared
ses and prejudices." "There was," he continued, "no
ing of the suitability and relevance of classical Western
sm and capitalism to the Malaysian situation" (Shaharuddin,
120-121). The first Malayan development plans gave
sis to rural development in order to raise the standards of
f the rural farming communities, and by so doing to close
p between the mainly Malay-indigenous rural peoples and
edominantly non-indigenous urban communities. This
ant development paradigm emerged as a direct result of a
man's agreement forged between community leaders at the
f independence for a mutual separation between Malay/

of the 1960s this "agreement" was being increasingly called into question by a new generation of post-Independence political leaders. In Shaharuddin's words,

> "Tunku found out too late that beneath the outward calm, social tension was fast mounting in the young nation. ... Right to the end of office, he put his faith in the dualistic arrangement and was quite oblivious to the social, economic and social discontent created by it. ... The non-Malays turned out to be quite capable of political interests and the Malays of capitalistic ambition" (1988: 134-135).

In May 1969, just days after the general elections, the Tunku was to find himself caught up in Malaysia's most violent and bloody racial riots which resulted in a state of emergency being declared, parliamentary democracy suspended, resulting in the months following in a paradigmatic "revolution" initiated largely from within the Malay community and his own party UMNO, a shift which was to reject (or substantially modify) the ideas, policies and the agreements made in the 1950s and 1960s, and to replace these with a radically different set of ideas, and with new objectives and new methodologies to achieve them. The development policy which the critics of the pre-1969 development strategies proposed came to be officially known as the New Economic Policy (NEP), and with these developments were to come a new set of leaders who would systematically send into retirement the nation's first generation of political leaders. Tunku was to sadly write of this sudden (and violent) break with the past,

> "I frequently and openly said that I was the happiest Prime Minister in the world. On May 13th, however, I suddenly found that I was unhappiest Prime Minister" (quoted in Shaharuddin, 1988: 134).

The New Economic Policy (1971)

A recently published book by Faaland, Parkinson and Rais Saniman (1990), usefully details the foundations and formulation of the NEP in the aftermath of the riots of May 13, 1969. This event, the authors say,

> "was only the tip of the iceberg of a far more serious and deep seated

ng disquiet among the Malays, Peninsular Malaysia's
nt indigenous community, of being "relegated to the status
omic inferiority," and the results of the elections suggested
that they now had reason to fear non-Malay political
nce (Faaland, Parkinson and Rais, 1990: 13). Faaland,
on and Rais concluded that,

> he Malaysian tragedy of May 13 which followed the election of 1969 the country into a state of national emergency. Among other things wed that the past economic strategy had clearly failed to bring the mic and social status of the Malays anywhere near that of the non-s. The measures which had been taken during the years since Merdeka eviate the economic status of the Malays were shown clearly to have too weak and insufficiently comprehensive to make a real dent on roblem. In May 1969 it became clear that something new had to be to help the Malays get onto the bandwagon of economic progress in ith the rest of the population. Otherwise the trends were very clear eryone to see — over a few generations the Malays would eventually out on both counts, politically as well as economically" (*Faaland, son and Rais*, 1990: 22-23).

the suspension of parliamentary democracy in the
ath of the riots, and the setting up in its place of a National
ions Council (NOC), the national leadership directed
solution be found for the basic causes which had led to
burst of ethnic unrest. Faaland, Parkinson and Rais (1990:
identify three distinct schools of economic and
pmental thought which quickly emerged in the ensuing
. The first of these were the proposals put forward by the
mic Planning Unit (EPU) with strong support from major
mic institutions such as the Treasury, *Bank Negara* (the
l Bank), and the Federal Industrial Development Authority.
proposals emphasised economic growth with minimum
mental interference in the economic affairs of the country
r maximum incentives for private local and foreign capital,
turn to normalcy, and the more effective implementation
policies and strategies of the 1960s. The EPU approach
d essentially for "growth first and distribution later". This
of view found favour with local non-Malay business

Minister's Department. The DNU approach gave greater importance to the historical and ethnic processes in Malaysia, concluding that if national unity was to be restored, the correction of racial economic imbalances and the eradication of race with economic functions would have to take place. The DNU approach emphasised the need to correct the economic imbalances primarily between the indigenous Malay communities and the other more economically advanced ethnic groups, with special emphasis being given to the issue of imbalances in income, employment and ownership of capital and assets. Finally, a third set of proposals emerged from the Economic Committee of the National Consultative Council (NCC) which had been set up by government in January 1970 to formulate guidelines for inter-ethnic cooperation and social integration in Malaysia[2].

The NEP which emerged out from the debate reflected the victory of the DNU approach over that of the EPU, that is of the over-riding importance of achieving genuine national unity in Malaysia's multi-ethnic society through far-reaching societal reforms — but with the new policy accepting the need for economic growth as the prior basis upon which the redistribution of wealth among the various ethnic groups was to be undertaken. Furthermore, since the Department of National Unity did not have the expertise to translate the new strategy into economic planning and developmental terms, Faaland, Parkinson and Rais (1990: 37) note that the EPU was to eventually take over the leadership of implementing the NEP with the assistance of the Implementation Coordination Unit in the Prime Minister's Department. And with this development the Department of National Unity began fading away into relative obscurity, at least as far as national economic development was concerned. The NEP was to give primary emphasis to the problems of ethnic economic structural imbalances, mass poverty of the rural Malays in particular, and income disparities between and even within ethnic groups.

Faaland, Parkinson and Rais (1990: 69-72) have summarised the main elements of the developmental objectives of the NEP as

s of income, employment and wealth.
get rate of growth of GNP of 6.4 per cent in real terms.
l employment policy.
nterventionist role for the Federal and State governments
their various agencies and institutions to ensure that
Malays obtain fair opportunities and entrance into the
ern sector.
implementation of social policies to avoid communal
icts, find ways to achieve common identity, and the
sation of national unity. And, finally.
establishment of a comprehensive system of economics
social data gathering and analysis to ensure that the
rammes and projects proposed were properly monitored
in conformity with the stated objectives.

nd, Parkinson and Rais (1990: 72) conclude, the DNU

> much more than an ordinary five year plan. It set out to achieve
> than a complete social and economic transformation and to lay the
> tion and framework for a new Malaysian order. It sought to achieve
> ergence of a new Malaysian society which would transcend existing
> cultural, religious and economic differences and provide for
> unities for advancement for all Malaysians."

DNU strategy was, therefore, to provide the philosophical
nning of what was to become known as the New Economic
t was nothing less than a major paradigmatic shift from
ket oriented planning policies of the 1960s and earlier
ir emphasis on rural economic development to close the
ween the urban and rural populations, to a policy which
ntral importance to the need for government monitored
ic development which was to be consciously ethnic in its
s objectives and its results. The purpose was to eradicate,
ole, all identification of ethnic groups with economic
, and thereby radically transforming ethnic and economic
es inherited from the past, structures now deemed unjust.
NEP, given by government a twenty year time frame within

> for the New Economic Policy. ... For its part, the Government will ... spare no efforts to promote national unity and develop a just and progressive Malaysian society in a rapidly expanding economy so that no one will experience any loss or feel any sense of deprivation of his rights, privileges, income, job or opportunity" (Malaysia, 1971: v-vi).

The Second Malaysia Plan insisted that national unity as enunciated in the national ideology the *Rukunegara* which had been announced in August 1970 was the overriding objective of the NEP[3], but that national unity was unattainable without greater equity and balance among Malaysia's social and ethnic groups in their participation in the development of the country, and in the sharing of the benefits from modernisation and economic growth (Malaysia 1971: 3). The basic development strategy of the NEP rested on eradicating poverty irrespective of race, and restructuring society and economic balance to eliminate the identification of race with particular economic activity, and to create within one generation the full partnership of Malays and other indigenous peoples in the economic life of the country, both of these prongs to be undertaken in the context of a rapidly expanding economy so that no particular group would feel deprived as a direct result of the radical social engineering which was being proposed (Malaysia 1971: 4-6). Subsequent editions of the Five Year Malaysia Plans, as well as their respective mid-term reviews also outlined, if sometimes in slightly differing words, these basic tenets of the NEP which remained unchanged for the two decades from 1971 to 1990.

The Great Debate: What Development Policy After 1990?

The Outline Perspective Plan (OPP) covering the two decades 1970-1990 was first published in the mid-term review of the Second Malaysia Plan (Malaysia 1973: 61ff), and it outlined a perspective planning framework for the two decade period up to 1990 to achieve specific output, employment and distribution objectives of the NEP. Among the targets specified in the OPP were that "within a period of 20 years, Malays and other indigenous people

rn of employment in particular sectors, the OPP stated
ie context of full-employment for all ethnic groups

> targets also imply inter-sectoral migration leading to increased
> articipation in the modern sectors of the economy in line with the
> ion of Malays in the total labour force" (Malaysia, 1973: 78).

cantly, no targets were set for the reduction of poverty
the OPP, but the plan expressed confidence that the
s of the NEP though ambitious were feasible, and
y could be achieved within a single generation. It
d that,

> s for all Malaysians of all races, all ages and from all walks of
> fully utilise the opportunities available to forge the building of a
> united Malaysian nation with progress and prosperity for all"
> ia 1973: 94).

hird Malaysia Plan 1976-1980 (Malaysia, 1976: 51-90) gave
quantification to the objectives of the Outline Perspective
1-1990, including targeted growth rates of Gross Domestic
specific average annual growth rates for each economic
he desired structural changes that needed to take place
the various economic sectors, employment targets, poverty
ic restructuring by particular employment sectors as well
ership of share capital. This statement of the OPP
tly concluded that,

> e analyses which underpin the long-term projections of the OPP
> y suggest that the major targets of the NEP are capable of attainment
> 0, ... an ample enough scale of opportunities will be created by
> nic growth to enable the Government to channel a significant part
> esources created to the tasks of poverty redressal and socio-economic
> truction while enabling, at the same time, the currently more
> aged in society to continue to progress. No group in the country
> therefore, experience any loss or feel any sense of deprivation"
> sia, 1976: 89).

the formal launching of the NEP in 1971, there has been
tage of analyses and critical reviews of the NEP, as a

academic and other journals, are testimony to the fact that the NEP was not only a bold attempt at social re-structuring, indeed, a virtual social revolution few other Third World countries had attempted in the context of a parliamentary democracy, but also that it held the key to Malaysia's future as a united nation, a key which other nations facing similar problems might, perhaps, want to consider implementing as they too seek to overcome similar such problems.

Suffice it to say that as the twenty year period of the NEP as laid out in the Outline Perspective Plan began coming to an end with the Fifth Malaysia Plan 1986-1990, there began an increasingly lively debate among supporters and opponents of the NEP, both within the component parties of the ruling coalition party, the *Barisan Nasional* (National Front), opposition parties, academics, social scientists, community leaders and even the public at large, all of whom had reason to be concerned, even worried, over what development paradigm would replace the NEP after 1990[5]

The Democratic Action Party, Malaysia's leading opposition party since the 1960s, which had not been invited to sit on the National Consultative Council established by the National Operations Council after the 1969 riots, has never claimed that it was party in any way to the discussions and formulations of the NEP which the government has always claimed represented a national consensus. DAP leader and chief spokesman, who is the leader of the opposition in the Malaysian Parliament, Lim Kit Siang has long criticised the NEP as having "created new injustices and inequalities in our multi-racial society which will retard the process of nation building" (Lim 1978: 9), and he has warned that the policy it had set off time bombs of race and class which unless defused, will "blow to smithereens" all of Malaysia's "beautifully-bound five year development plans" (Lim, 1978: 145). Various non-Malay community leaders have also increasingly pointed to the NEP as being at the root of ethnic polarisation which especially in the 1980s was threatening to negate the fundamental objective of the NEP which was to attain and maintain

objectives[6]. Furthermore, others criticised the NEP as orsened class relations within particular communities, especially the Malay community where the rich and privileged were said to have benefited most from the ring exercise (see for example the volume of papers y Syed Husin Ali, 1984), and some have held that the Malay National Organisation (UMNO), the dominant n the ruling coalition, had used the NEP as an excuse to n "money politics" on a vast scale for its own financial nomic benefit (Jomo and Ishak Shari, 1986; Jomo, 1989; cially Gomez, 1990). Mounting criticism was also to come nation's environmentalists concerned that the unlimited ic growth factor required by the NEP to sustain the ring policy was provoking an environmental crisis which the leading advocates of environmental protection in was to term early in the 1980s as a problem ranking the most serious in the world" (S.M. Mohd. Idris quoted umers' Association of Penang, 1982: 1).

ort for the NEP during this period of mounting debate icism was to come primarily from the UMNO and Malay ic and professional individuals and institutions closely ed with UMNO. The wider the protests against the NEP, ly from the non-Malays, the more resolute this backing NEP from the Malay community, a support which was to a degree of notoriety in August 1986 when Datuk Abdullah , an UMNO Member of Parliament, put forward a theory ecessity for Malay political dominance in Malaysia which d to place other ethnic groups in a position of permanent class status (Abdullah Ahmad, 1987: 10). This model of ominance, one which explicitly rejected the calls for greater thnicity and cultural-plurality being made at that time by 's political coalition partners, was to provide supporters of P in the Malay community a political weapon with which npt to put on the defensive critics and opponents of the aaland, Parkinson and Rais summarised this increasingly

and economic benefits in which now the Malays are dominant, including in particular the civil service, the defence and police forces, land settlement etc (1990: 209)."

The closing years of the 1980s were not good ones in Malaysia. The increasingly divisive NEP debate within the ruling party, and especially in the wider society was complicated by a serious leadership split within UMNO which led to the party itself facing legal challenges. Inter-ethnic relations were deteriorating sharply, and the very real threat of social disturbances was the reason given by the Government for its sudden swoop code-named *Operation Lallang* launched in October 1987 which resulted in some national newspapers being banned, leading politicians from opposition parties as well as a few individuals from the government's own parties being detained under the Malaysia's draconian Internal Security Act laws along with assorted social activists and religious personnel[7]. The hitherto sacrosanct judiciary in Malaysia next came under open criticism by the nation's political leadership, and under circumstances still shrouded in mystery and controversy several senior Supreme Court judges were abruptly dismissed (Williams, 1990). Political commentators were despairing of the state of democracy in Malaysia, many declaring it all but dead[8]. And finally, there was the added pressure on Government of having to call for a general election at any time before 1991 at a time when UMNO appeared irrevocably split, and the Malay-Muslim opposition, on the other hand, in full-blown political resurgence.

The announcement made by Prime Minister Dato Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on December 18, 1989 of the formation of a consultative council to review the NEP and draft a policy to replace it after 1990, a council which would comprise equal numbers of indigenous and non-indigenous members, and which would include opposition parties and pressure groups, must surely be interpreted as an attempt to stem this growing tide of public criticism within and without Government, and to attempt to obtain another national consensus on the issue of the NEP and its successor. He said, in announcing the Government's intention to

il as the basis of the national economic policy after 1990"

r, December 19, 1988). One hundred and fifty persons tually named to the council representing all major thnic community, professional and social opinion in Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah. In his address prepared mal launching of the National Economic Consultative NECC), the Prime Minister set the parameters of the deliberations more widely than the term "economic" in ould suggest when he said,

> ion's economic policy is no small matter and one which can be mulated. A plural society's economic policy, as is the case with is even more difficult to plan because its thrust is not just towards c growth. It also takes into account the political and social ations of the various ethnic groups, with their respective problems rests" (*New Straits Times*, January 20, 1989).

cribed the NEP which had been formulated after the as an attempt to overcome the nation's problems with cial-engineering which has not been tried by other and that "the Government pleads with all parties, whether nembers of the council of not, to give their fullest and tention to the task at hand" (*New Straits Times*, January . And by making the point of inviting this time round cal opposition to full membership of the council, this mpt at developing a national consensus sought to correct ake" made two decades earlier when the opposition was excluded from the discussions which eventually led to formulation.

ECC optimistically set the end of 1989 as the deadline ing its recommendations to government. The task of ing a new developmental paradigm for Malaysia was to ther more difficult than first thought, and the council ok twice as long to complete its deliberations. The NECC ed its deliberations in February 1991, and formally d its report, DEPAN, to the Prime Minister as a consensus nt representing the collective hopes and aspirations for

policy DEPAN to replace the NEP after 1990, are too vast in scope for this writer to do full justice in this one paper. The writer shall, instead, focus attention on the core objective of the NEP, that of promoting national unity through two strategies, the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty irrespective of race, and the restructuring of society so as to eliminate the identification of race with economic function. The events of the 1980s as reviewed are indicative of a deteriorating, not improving, inter-ethnic situation in Malaysia in the last decade of the NEP, an unmistakeable sign that the national unity so desparately sought by the proponents of the NEP appeared to be as elusive as ever. What had gone wrong? Was it shortcomings in the implementation of the NEP? Or was there something wrong in the very formulation of the NEP itself? These were the fundamental questions which members of the NECC sought to address before turning their attention to making counter proposals.

The NECC used the following quantified objectives as given in the OPP in the Third Malaysia Plan to evaluate the achievements of the NEP between 1971-1990 (Malaysia, 1990: 17-18):

Poverty: The reduction of the average poverty rate from 49.3% in 1970 to 16.7% in 1990, with the reduction for rural areas from 58.7% to 23.0%, and for urban areas of 21.3% to 9.1% in the same time frame;

Unemployment: The reduction of the rate of unemployment from 7.4% to 3.6% in the given period;

Restructuring the Labour Force: The restructuring of the ethnic composition (indigenous/non-indigenous) of the labour force in each sector as follows:

(a) The reduction of the indigenous representation in the primary sector from 67.6% to 61.4%; the increase of indigenous representation in the secondary sector from 30.8% to 51.9%; and finally in the tertiary sector from 37.9% to 48.4%.
(b) For the Chinese, the planned respective changes in the primary sector were from 21.4% up to 28.3%, the secondary sector from 59.5% down to 38.1%, and in the tertiary sector from 48.3% down to 39.0%.

tal was expected to change from the ratio of
64.3 for indigenous/non-indigenous/foreigners in
: 40 : 30 by 1990; and finally

Economic Growth and Transformation: The achievement
ge growth rate of 7-8% in the Gross Domestic Product
70-1990, with the manufacturing sector becoming the
rtant sector by 1990 with 26.6% of the GDP, and
s share declining in the same period from 32.1% of
19.7%.

ncil evaluated each of these objectives from the point
nplementation and performance from the perspectives
onomics; the reduction of poverty; corporate share
ng; regional, urban and rural development; the
ent of an indigenous industrial, commercial and
urial class; the development of human resources; the
ss of administration and implementation of the NEP
e itself; and finally, and most important of all, from the
lative effect of the implementation of all of these on
nity.

CC agreed that the NEP would be analysed, evaluated
ed from the point of view of its *implementation* in the
1-1990. The council did not attempt to examine whether
NEP was the right or wrong developmental paradigm
70s and 1980s. Indeed, the implicit assumption in the
nal report is that the NEP was in fact the correct policy
e it was conceived, and that, therefore, it ought then
tinised primarily as to how it was implemented over
year period, and to what extent it has, or has not, met
objectives, in particular, its over-riding *raison d'etre*
ing national unity among Malaysia's ethnically
mmunities.

nomic Performance.

C report records the council's general satisfaction that
economic performance in the period under review was
better when compared with the economic performances

Malaysia's immediate neighbour to the north Thailand, it must be admitted that Malaysia's achievements could have been much better. The report admitted that, world economic forces aside, the social redistribution objectives of the NEP directly contributed to the relatively weaker performance of Malaysia vis-a-vis the NICs, but, the report hastened to add, conditions peculiar to Malaysia in the late 1960s and early 1970s required a slower rate of national economic growth than perhaps could otherwise have also been achieved alongside the NICs so that social restructuring could take place. The recording of lower rates of national economic growth than were predicted by the OPP (5-7% per annum compared with the expected 7-8% average) was held to be due mainly to the decline in world economic growth which affected the price of Malaysia's primary exports (Malaysia, 1991: 19). Furthermore, the OPP goal of a reduction of the unemployment rate from 7.4% to 3.6% was, similarly, not achieved, the rate having in fact increased in 1986 to as much as 8.5-9.0% from a low of 5.7% recorded mid-way through the NEP in 1980. International economic developments were again blamed, and these were also cited as the root cause for rising rates of inflation (Malaysia, 1991: 30).

Reducing Rates of Poverty

The NECC report concluded that the overall rate of poverty in Peninsular Malaysia declined from 49.2% in 1970 to 17.3% in 1987 (with the comparable urban poverty rate down from 21.3% to 8.1%, and the rural poverty rate from 58.7% to 22.4%). It noted that these figures compare well with the objectives set in the OPP, and that this achievement ought to be a matter of considerable satisfaction (Malaysia, 1990: 35). However, the report drew attention to the overall poverty rate in Sarawak which though it had declined in the 1980s to 25.1% was high in comparison with the rate in Peninsular Malaysia. More importantly, however, the report expressed its concern that the rate of poverty in Sabah in this same period as increased in both the urban and rural areas, and among all groups in the state. The NECC report went

in the post-1990 period (Malaysia, 1991: 38). Income
ion between the poorest in the population and the
ses ought, therefore, to be a matter of considerable
or development planners in the post-NEP 1990s.
sing poverty in the various sectors of the economy and
as a whole, the NECC also sought to draw special
o the low levels of income earned by specific categories
such as those in traditional and smallholder agriculture,
and workers in the estate and mining sectors who are
l by fluctuations in world market prices for Malaysia's
ial exports. Furthermore, the report draws attention to
ng phenomenon of some 900,000 hectares of abandoned
e lands, and the ever-present problems associated with
rural credit. The ever growing numbers of urban poor
-urban migrants were highlighted, as were those living
lages who have faced unique housing and land problems
their forced relocation during the Emergency in the
e high cost of housing was also recognised as a problem
Malaysians, but most especially the poor. And finally,
C report urged that regional and urban-rural cost of
lices be taken into account when comparing relative
a methodology which has not been used enough in the
comparing income statistics between different parts of
try.

ECC report also drew attention to the fact that although
not be denied that under the NEP there has been
able progress in regional development, and that regional
has been reduced and regional incomes increased, in
ore matters there is still need for improvements. Using
oss Domestic Products statistics, the report showed that
pendent on agriculture such as Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis,
Perak and Malacca rank below the national average of
per capita in 1989, and that it was these states which
out-migration to more advanced regions such as the
Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The council

in the country (Malaysia, 1991: 54).

Restructuring Corporate Equity

The issue of the restructuring of corporate equity to ensure 30% indigenous ownership by the year 1990 has often over-shadowed many of the other more basic objectives of the NEP, and this fact has been at the centre of much of the controversy concerning the NEP. In 1970, indigenous individuals and agencies owned only 2.4% of the share capital, compared with 34.3% for other Malaysians, and 63.4% by foreigners. The NECC report examined the many problems arising from the calculation of share capital ownership, including the question of how to classify by ethnic group shares held by nominee companies and holding companies. It noted that depending on how such shares were classified, the indigenous to non-indigenous to foreign ratio in share ownership for the year 1988 could range from 19.4 : 56.0 : 24.6 when the controversial shares are included in the non-indigenous category, to 40.6 : 34.8 : 24.6 when these shares are counted as part of the indigenous total (Malaysia, 1991: 57). The council deliberated at length of this issue, and finally decided to advise that data pertaining to ethnic ownership of shares should *not* seek to classify nominee and holding company share capital under any ethnic category, indigenous, non-indigenous or foreign, but rather as a separate fourth category, resulting in the following data for share capital distribution for 1988: 19.4% indigenous, 34.8% non-indigenous, 24.6% foreign ownership, with the remaining 21.2% being held by the nominee and holding companies (Malaysia, 1991: 58). This decision is an almost Solomonic resolution to an issue which has in recent years been long, bitterly and divisively debated in public, and it effectively means that *both* the indigenous and non-indigenous Malaysians have *fallen short* of their respective OPP goals for 1990 — 30% indigenous ownership and 40% non-indigenous ownership — and, therefore, both groups could rightly claim to have some way to go before achieving their respective NEP targets[9]!

alaysian Indians who comprise 10% of Malaysia's total
on (compared with 31.4% of the total population
by Malaysian Chinese) emerge in the NECC report as
Malaysian ethnic community which has benefited least
national restructuring exercise launched since 1971 when
recorded as owning almost the same percentage of
pital (1.1%) as they do now (1.2%), twenty years on
, 1991: 58).

port, finally, noted that using ownership of the corporate
the measure for restructuring society overlooked the
fact that the trading, industrial, agricultural and mining
are major players in national development. And it
ed that while the indigenous and Malaysian Indian
ities lagged behind in ownership and management of
duction and commercial sectors and in selected
onal fields, non-indigenous people in general lagged
in their participation in the public sectors, in new
lement schemes, and generally in agriculture. For these
then, the council recommended that the entire issue of
conomic distribution be restudied, and a new approach
ed to ensure the fuller participation of all ethnic groups
tors of the economy based on new principles which would
nsure social justice and, consequently, national unity
ia, 1991: 63).

uring Employment Patterns

the major objectives of the NEP had been to reduce
cation of ethnicity with economic function. The NECC
observed that in general there has been significant progress
971 in developing a greater indigenous presence in the
, entrepreneur, and professional sectors, but that the
nous, Indian and other smaller minority communities still
in many individual sectors. The NEP objective of ethnically
turing the labour force in major economic sectors had
shown considerable progress, but as of 1988, indigenous

Malaysians be given opportunities of employment in the government sector at all levels, and it drew attention to the fact that in the 1980s, for example, official statistics show that some 97% of all new appointments in government went to indigenous people. Urgent steps must be taken, it called, to correct this situation and make government service more multi-ethnic (Malaysia, 1991: 93). On the other hand, the report also concluded that steps ought to be taken to ensure that indigenous people participate more fully in the manufacturing, sales, technical and professional sectors in which their participation rates still lag some way behind the goals set by the NEP (Malaysia, 1991: 92).

Evaluating the NEP from the Perspective of National Unity

Achieving and maintaining national unity was the primary objective of the NEP, reducing poverty irrespective of ethnicity, and restructuring of society, being but two strategies proposed to ensure the attainment of national unity. The NECC, therefore, sought to evaluate the totality of NEP's sectoral achievements, or lack thereof, from the over-riding perspective of this goal of ensuring national unity. The quantitative achievements of the NEP, the council noted, are generally impressive, and available for all Malaysians to see, and to enjoy the fruits of. However, from the perspective of national unity, the council was far less positive in its assessment. It concluded that, the relatively higher poverty rates among the Malays, Orang Asli, Iban, Kadazan/Dusun, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu, and other indigenous communities was a serious challenge to national unity. Likewise, the poor among the Chinese, Indians and other minority communities have good reason to feel left out by the mainstream of development. Furthermore, there is a growing problem with relative poverty within and between ethnic communities, and this is worsening, and a major challenge to unity.

The report noted that a large number of indigenous Malaysians also feel dissatisfied with the OPP objectives which in recent years have given greater emphasis to economic growth over societal restructuring, that the public sector had reduced opportunities

e expressed feelings of the smaller non-Malay indigenous
ities which were of the opinion that indigenous
nents were overwhelmingly enjoyed by the Malays to their
e disadvantage. And the non-indigenous Malaysian
ties in general were dissatisfied with the implementation
EP which, they said, had resulted in hardships such as
opportunities for non-indigenous youths especially in
of higher education. Furthermore, they had complained
ns entering land schemes, the modern agricultural sector
cially the public services (Malaysia, 1991: 114). This all-
happiness, the council warned, complicated the various
achieve national unity. It warned of worsening ethnic
on which could be exacerbated upon provocation by
politicians included, seeking to play on these ethnic
ns (Malaysia, 1991: 116). Furthermore, tendencies within
society which still give room for ethnic stereo-typing,
cultural prejudice, and ethno-centrism could all deepen
satisfactions to the further detriment of national unity
, 1991: 116). The NECC concluded its critical review of
by noting that Malaysian society ought to learn from the
es, shortcomings and abuses and deviations that emerged
ourse of implementing the NEP, and that from these
replacement of the NEP should be constructed which
ot repeate the errors of the past (Malaysia, 1991: 117).
ECC, therefore, focussed its major criticisms of the NEP
ortcomings arising primarily from problems associated
nplementation strategies which had, generally, failed to
demand for sustained national unity among Malaysia's
hnic communities. Indigenous, and then too almost solely
digenous, econometrics, number and ratio juggling
he dominant concern of national planners, and with this
ti-ethnic human dimensions of Malaysian economic
and development which had been given central focus in
expressions of the NEP had faded into relative
ance. The council's criticism of the implementation of
most especially that in the 1980s, is, therefore, essentially

nation building and national unity. The unmistakable signs of growing ethnic polarisation in the latter half of the 1980s were, in the NECC's opinion, ample testimony of the societal failures of the NEP even as it recorded relatively impressive economic gains.

An Outline of the NECC's Proposals for National Economic Development After 1990

The NECC report outlines the council's proposal for the successor to the NEP after 1990. The basic objectives of the new policy which, the council recommended by known by the acronym DEPAN, is summarised in the report as follows (Malaysia, 1991: 125):

CONTINUING the efforts to build a nation with one future, which is united, just, impartial, peaceful and prosperous, which has its own Malaysian identity, and which is politically stable based on parliamentary democracy;

ELIMINATING poverty irrespective of race and to correct the economic imbalances between ethnic groups, sectors and regions based on the realisation that Malaysian society is multi-ethnic, this being a reality which must be accepted in all development programmes and their implementation so that there is equality in the distribution of opportunity and of national wealth.

INVOLVING all parties to strive more effectively to avoid the deviations (and other shortcomings resulting from the implementation of the NEP) and increasing the achievements of the original two pronged objectives of the NEP for all ethnic groups in the interests of the nation;

STRENGTHENING moral and spiritual values and to enhance the spirit of self-reliance through more effective human resource development; and finally

ENCOURAGING healthy and sustained economic development and which is progressively based on science and technology and capable of facing the challenges of developing an international economy so that Malaysia may aspire to become a more developed

from its successor, the NEP. Afterall, the summary emphasises *continuity* with the national development ne past two decades, and reiterates the necessity to poverty, and to correct ethnic, sectoral and regional but with the admonition that this is to be done keeping ely in mind the multi-ethnic structure of Malaysia's . The direct reference to the NEP in DEPAN's post- ulations is stated in terms of taking action to avoid the deviations of the past two decades, and a return to the o pronged strategy of that policy. In what way, then, aid that DEPAN is a new developmental paradigm? Is ly the NEP re-write, couched in a softer, more appealing obviously more in tune to the heightened sensitivities of rs? Is DEPAN but a mere rewording of the NEP, an making cosmetic changes, and nothing else? A more nding of DEPAN's proposals is necessary if these questions answered.

ajor differences between the NEP's formulation of economic development, more especially as it came to reted in the 1980s, and the policy proposed by the as follows:

the Constitution and the Rukunegara

C stressed repeatedly in its official report that the Constitution and the national ideology, the Rukunegara, ractice be the substantive basis upon which developmental re proposed and implemented. The council insisted that to correct ethnic imbalances the government must do so *nity with the Constitution* which provides for *equal* protection alaysians, while at the same time, for historical reasons, the nation's indigenous peoples "special rights," as well ght to affirmative action to correct historic imbalances, o be done without threatening the legitimate interests r Malaysian communities, interests which are also tionally guaranteed (Malaysia, 1991: 126-127). These

some of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of equality for all Malaysians irrespective of race and religion. The council insisted that the ethnic divisiveness of the development policy of the past two decades be replaced by an economic development policy after 1990 which would strengthen the unity of all Malaysians through the evolution of a single Malaysian identity rather than one which reinforced ethnic patterns and processes (Malaysia, 1991: 127-128). The council was particularly highly impressed by the formulations contained in the Rukunegara ideology, and advocated that these be treated as the guide in implementing the new development policy, DEPAN.

The council stressed that if the objectives of DEPAN were to succeed, immediate steps must be taken to raise among all Malaysians their spirit of patriotism, to reduce ethnic, cultural and religious polarisation at all levels of society, to promote greater integration between the various states of Peninsular Malaysia as well as Sarawak and Sabah, and the moving towards the creation of a *single Malaysian identity*, an identity the council admitted had still not fully emerged despite over thirty years of independence. In short, the NECC was of the considered opinion that beyond national economic development there lay the far more basic question of instabilities in the Malaysian nation itself, especially among its multi-ethnic peoples, indigenous and non-indigenous alike, who still held too strongly to their separate ethnic identities with not enough emphasis being given to submersing these in favour of a single, Malaysian national identity. DEPAN, therefore, is to be a policy rooted on the prerequisite that nation-building go hand-in-hand with economic development if a united and more prosperous Malaysia is to emerge by the end of the century.

Eliminating Poverty Irrespective of Ethnicity

The NECC report insisted that the remaining vestiges of absolute poverty in Malaysia must be eliminated under DEPAN. Special developmental assistance must be given to all low income groups and sectors (such as fishermen, estate workers, padi farmers, small traders, and those in the informal sector) irrespective of ethnicity, including the smaller ethnic minority groups in Peninsular

erative to which top priority is to be given.

uctural Imbalances

EP had tended to interpret economic restructuring
ly in indigenous — non-indigenous terms, DEPAN,
hand, seeks to broaden the issue to include other
n society, including those between all ethnic groups,
al classes, and between sectors and regions. In short,
correcting structural imbalances should be given top
out the NEP's too narrow and almost exclusive ethnic
n of the term "restructuring". If this suggestion was
e NECC said, more Malaysians than at present would
supportive of the necessity for societal restructuring
not be viewed as an ethnic exercise possibly depriving
so that another can be rewarded, but rather one
ne truly disadvantaged.
ing the continued need to correct ethnic imbalances
), the NECC report recognised that the indigenous
s in Malaysia still face major structural problems, but
nilar problems are faced by the Indian community,
problems in fact being the more serious. The Indian
therefore, also deserves special Government assistance
991: 137, 140, 142). In DEPAN, the NEP's almost
ncern with Malay indigenous poverty is replaced by
ss of the acute situation facing the non-Malay
communities in Peninsular Malaysia (the Orang Asli)
ose living in Sarawak and Sabah. It notes that the non-
genous communities lag far behind the Malays in
rom the NEP's restructuring programmes, and that
ore, must also be given special assistance in order that
gap created over the past two decades of the NEP be

CC report gave further special consideration to the
sition of the two Malaysian states of Sarawak and
re development lags far behind that of Peninsular
'hese inequalities, the council had concluded, has
'major problem", and requires special attention to be

The council insisted that under DEPAN all strategies seeking to correct such imbalances must be based on the fundamental principles of social justice, self-respect of the individual and group, and of the poor and weak over the rich and powerful (Malaysia, 1991: 147). In this regard, DEPAN provides detailed plans for the development of particular sectors and groups in the wider Malaysian society which have tended to be over-looked in the development programmes inspired by the NEP. These include, policies for human resource development, more human-oriented national education and health policies, specific policies integrated in the national development strategy for women, youth and retirees, and even for immigrant labour (Malaysia, 1991: 153). And finally, DEPAN argues that all national, regional and other development policies and strategies must keep in mind environmental protection and conservation, and it introduces the concept of sustainable development for the first time as a viable basis upon which a national economic development strategy ought to be based (Malaysia, 1991: 158-159).

Promoting National Unity.

DEPAN makes national unity the main objective of all planning just as did its predecessor the NEP in its original formulation. The NECC in its evaluation of Malaysia in the 1970s and 1980s under the NEP concluded that national unity had *not* been achieved, and, more importantly, national unity appeared in fact to be *waning* in the latter part of the 1980s as ethnic polarisation gathered pace. It was in this particular regard, the council held, that the biggest failings of the NEP had to be admitted, and to be corrected. The NECC recommended the establishment as an integral part of the DEPAN national development policy a National Unity Advisory Council which would have as its membership representatives from all the various ethnic groups in Malaysia, and which would discuss issues outside the narrow field of economics pertaining to genuine national unity, but which have a direct bearing on the success or otherwise, of the new national development strategy. Such a council would be advisory to Government, prepare an annual auditing of the state of inter-

respective programmes from the point of view of the e of national unity (Malaysia, 1991: 296-297).

ouncil proposed that the term "Bangsa Malaysia", or race, be used more widely as the necessary steps were aken to move away from using the names of specific oups (Malaysia, 1991: 303), and the council pointedly nded that ethnic politicking by politicians in both mono- d multi-ethnic parties must be reduced if inter-ethnic to be promoted (Malaysia, 1991: 305). Furthermore, the n of basic human rights, "the democratic way of life", ee judiciary" were deemed basic necessities to the success -1990 policy, the mention of these appearing to be an erence to the distressing events in Malaysia in the last of the 1980s which had, in the opinion of many observers, sulted in a reprise, more especially in Peninsular Malaysia, ommunal tensions of the late 1960s.

ng the Implementation of DEPAN

after taking to heart the fact that in its opinion much of ism leveled against the NEP had come about because of re of Government, in particular of the Economic Planning provide accurate, up-todate and complete statistics on gress, or lack thereof, of development in the 1970s and n particular those which involved sensitive issues such as reduction and ethnic restructuring, the NECC made its ost important proposal of all: the establishment of an dent body to monitor the implementation of DEPAN. CC report argues that the principle of accountability in affairs between the cabinet and parliament as enshrined onstitution, ought to be extended to involve other persons itoring the national development strategy. The council recommended the establishment of a body to be known Commission to Monitor DEPAN, members of which would ointed directly by the Yang di Pertuan Agong. It will se no less than 15 and not more than 50 persons who will esentative of Malaysia's multi-ethnic peoples, and its various

a. To monitor the implementation of national economic development by Government officials and the private sector in accordance with the objectives of DEPAN;
b. To ensure that there are no deviations and errors of implementation in both the Government and private sectors of the plan;
c. To draw attention of particular sectors, both government and private, when the existence of such deviations and errors become known, so as to make the necessary corrections and adjustments; and
d. To collect, prepare, and analyse data and statistics connected with the implementation of DEPAN.

The work of members of the Commission, the council proposed, must be free from Government or any other control and direction; that the public can make representations directly to the Commission; and that the Commission has the power to call any witnesses, or demand any document required in the course of its duties. And finally, that this Commission is to be established no later than six months after the launching of DEPAN, and will operate for the full duration of DEPAN's implementation as Malaysia's post-1990 national development policy and strategy.

DEPAN Is A New Paradigm Only If Accepted Intact

The NECC gave full recognition to the need to evaluate the NEP in terms of its very own assurance given in the Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975, that "... in the implementation of this Policy, the Government will ensure that no particular group will experience any loss or feel any sense of deprivation" (Malaysia, 1971: 1). After evaluating the responses of all groups represented in the NECC, the council concluded that this assurance given in 1971 could not be said to have been held, and that many groups, be they ethnic communities, regions, social classes, etc. had legitimate reason to feel that they had experienced some sense of loss or deprivation during the course of the NEP. One major reason for this was that the NEP fell short of meeting its 20 year targets as spelled out in the Outline Perspective Plan for all the major and

not explained the procedures or definitions used by
l failed to be sufficiently liberal in making these data
to the public, and, finally, had used categories such as
in too crude a manner, and without fullest consideration
uly diverse nature of Malaysia's multi-ethnicity, such that
uspicion between the ethnic groups and other national
onal categories had, needlessly, been aroused.

rmore, the NECC had in its deliberations taken seriously
e given to it by the Prime Minister at its launching in
989 when he said that development planning in a plural
ust go beyond considerations of economic growth and
also into account "the political and social considerations
rious ethnic groups, with their respective problems and
" (*New Straits Times*, January 20, 1989). And the council
heart the Prime Minister's public promise made at the
first announced the establishment of the council that
overnment promises that it will implement the policy
l by the council as the basis of the national economic
ter 1990" (*The Star*, December 19, 1988).

question which now needs to be asked is, does DEPAN
o be described as a new paradigm for post-1990 Malaysian
ic development? Or is it merely an extension, with some
ns and improvements, of the development policies evolved
pecially in the 1980s but still rooted in the NEP paradigm?
P itself was for its time a new development paradigm
it made explicit in Malaysian economic development
g ethnic-based objectives and methodologies. Would the
90 period have to reject ethnic-based planning for this to
te a paradigmatic break with the NEP?

paradigmatic break with the NEP it is meant the turning
om ethnic-rooted planning, DEPAN does not deserve to
d a new developmental paradigm. While it is true that the
als of DEPAN are significantly less concerned with the
nous/non-indigenous dichotomy which is the defining
of the NEP, it is equally true that DEPAN does not *reject*
turing goals of the NEP, pointing out that all

DEPAN differs from the NEP in that it *extends* the ethnic restructuring exercise beyond the indigenous/non-indigenous divide to specifically include all the minority ethnic communities, principally the Indians, Orang Asli, Thai, Eurasian and Portuguese in Peninsular Malaysia, and the various minority indigenous communities in Sarawak and Sabah. For example, DEPAN specifically targets the Indian and other minority communities for assistance of the same kind which the NEP extended to the Malays to help them realise the creation of a entreprenerial class (Malaysia, 1991: 246). DEPAN differs from the NEP in that it takes cogniscance of the fact that during the two decades of the NEP the Malay and Chinese communities benefited largely from the policies and strategies of the day, while at the same time the minority communities were unable to have their voices effectively heard, and some of them, so to speak, fell through the cracks of the NEP paradigm, and regressed relative to the two major, dominant and developmentally more fortunate communities.

DEPAN also differs from the NEP by giving greater weightage to the issue of merit over quotas, but while it urges the evolution towards a merit-oriented society, it acknowledges that this cannot be achieved immediately upon the launching of the post-1990 successor to the NEP.

In comparison with the Malaysia five-year development plans of the NEP era, DEPAN will come across as more human in its developmental concerns, and also more concerned with environmental issues, and it supports the model of sustainable development. Besides targetting the minority ethnic communities which the NEP all but ignored, DEPAN gives greater emphasis to the well-being of all sectors and sub-structures of Malaysian society, such as specific categories of the economic work force more prone to poverty (padi farmers, estate workers, fishermen, petty traders, tribal communities, new villagers, etc), women, youth, the unemployed, the retirees, etc., and it, therefore, is much more concerned with the totality of the developmental impact on society than was the case of the NEP. Human and sustainable development much more so than a more narrowly economic development

hy then did this writer at the beginning of this paper seek racterise DEPAN as a new paradigm for Malaysian national pment in the post-1990 period? The key to appreciating radigmatic character of NECC's DEPAN proposal is not to nd in the particular development strategies outlined by N, nor perhaps even in the difference of their cumulative but rather in the proposal coming right at the end of the chapter of NECC's report which recommends the shment of an independent commission to monitor the nentation of DEPAN. It is this proposal, and more especially asons given for making it, that marks in this writer's opinion aradigmatic difference between the NEP and DEPAN.

arguing the case for *social accountability*, the NECC insisted this become a central element in the planning and mentation of economic and social development in the years me. The council noted that among the abuses that had place under the NEP were corruption, financial and gerial mismanagement, of both individuals and institutions n both the small and large scales, and the council advocated he principle of *public accountability* be extended to all levels e private and public sectors for reasons of national interest. s principle were to be extended to national development ning and implementation, the NECC was of the opinion that would ensure the greater commitment of government agencies heir staff, as well as other public and private agencies to the onal goals, ensure their ultimate success, and minimise uption and other deviations and abuses. The council was cularly concerned with the evidence that under the NEP ning for national economic development had in many nces become highly politicised, it being said that the promise evelopment or the lack thereof had been used as a weapon artisan politics, and that this transgressed the democratic right l Malaysians, regardless of their political inclinations, of free ess to the national patrimony and to the fruits of its elopment. The council's attention was also drawn to the public ate over "money politics" and the potential conflict of interest

of disrepute by the end of the 1980s. By proposing a commission to be appointed by the Yang di Pertuan Agong, Malaysia's constitutional monarch, and that this commission be directly responsible to him for its workings and reporting, and by recommending that the commission be given a free hand to evaluate the implementation of the new national development policy, and to act on proven cases of abuses and deviations from the intention of the agreed upon policy, the NECC makes it most radical break with the NEP paradigm which had given to the Economic Planning Unit and other associated Government ministries and agencies both the power to implement development programmes as well as to evaluate the results of these programmes. Given the reality of Malaysian politics where parliament is in practical terms dominated by a single political party (the Malay-based UMNO) in coalition with its partners in Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah, and where this coalition has held an overwhelming majority of seats ever since independence, the NECC was of the opinion that an independent, non-partisan apolitical commission answerable to the monarch himself (and by implication, answerable directly to the Malaysian public) was the only viable solution to overcoming the most serious shortcoming of the NEP era: the politicisation of development, and the accompanying abuses arising therefrom.

It is a measure of the considerable maturity that Malaysian political life, at least during the life of the NECC, has now attained that this proposal to remove from the hands of ruling politicians and civil service administrators and give in turn to an independent commission the all-important evaluative dimension of the post-1990 development policy, was *unanimously* approved along with all the other council proposals for DEPAN by those members of council who were still with it at the end of its tenure in February 1991[10]. Most importantly, these included representatives of all the component parties of the ruling Barisan Nasional, principally the three major ethnic-based parties, United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC).

The measure of DEPAN's paradigmatic break with its NEP

ient is the *fundamental right of all Malaysians*, and as such ever be viewed as the property of any one party, or one of society, to be used for partisan objectives. Whereas ient in the NEP era had been tainted by political and artisanship, the new policy proposed for the post-1990 as intended to be deliberately non-partisan, reaching out ose Malaysians in need without fear or favour, but always g within the guidelines of the national development s and goals agreed consensually by all Malaysians. The of national development is enshrined in Malaysia's Federal tion (Article 92), and the constitution proclaims the ental equality of all citizens, and the barring of any nation on the grounds of race save for ethnic affirmative Article 8). The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Rights insists on the fundamental right of the individual omic well-being (Article 25). And Malaysia's very own ideology, the *Rukunegara*, specifically dedicates all ns "to the creation of a just society in which all members equal opportunity to enjoy the material well-being afforded Nation", and where "The task of national consolidation is onsibility of everyone." The NECC's proposal for a post-conomic development policy, DEPAN, qualifies as a natic break with the NEP past if the substance, if not also ils, of its many suggestions are accepted in full. The single mportant proposal of all is that of establishing the ring commission which, because it will operate outside the partisan politics, will have the best chance of rescuing an economic and national development from the quagmire l itself increasingly bogged down in the 1980s and which n fueled politically partisan development, a situation which xically witnessed real national economic advancement g simultaneously with that of increasing ethnic polarisation g in increasing social and political instability.

Will Be The Fate Of DEPAN?

EPAN to be a break with the past decades of economic

one or more of the more basic proposals (principally the proposal for non-partisan involvement in evaluating DEPAN's progress), will cripple the basic purpose of the NECC to propose to the Malaysian nation a post-1990 national economic development policy, the successor to the NEP, which is *not* to be but a continuation of the NEP with some adjustments and corrections, but rather *a totally new philosophy of development.*

Since the brief reports in the press of the presentation by the council of its official report to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, little more was to be heard publicly of the NECC, its report, or its proposals. Then, a little short of three weeks after the final session of the NECC and the council's formal dissolution, the Prime Minister quite suddenly publicly announced the establishment of the Malaysian Business Council to help the country face challenges and guide it on future economic opportunities (*The Star*, February 26, 1991). Among the tasks to be given to this new council were to study and recommend measures and strategies for implementation; to produce a system of feedback on policy and development issues related to industrialisation; to prevent misunderstanding and obstacles which could hamper the development of beneficial cooperation between the public and private sector; and to bring about a consensus on the direction of the country's economic development (*The Star*, February 26, 1991). The names of 62 members of this council were announced, including a handful of prominent NECC members, but also senior members of the cabinet (with the Prime Minister himself chairing the council), heads of the civil service, captains of industry, and one representative of a national labour federation (*New Straits Times*, February 26, 1991). Two days later, in his working paper presented at the inaugural meeting of the Malaysia Business Council, the Prime Minister told the council that its basic agenda was to assist in the objective of developing Malaysia into a fully developed and industrialised country by the year 2020, and he ended his paper with these words.

> "This is the agenda before us in this Council and before the nation. I hope you will discuss this agenda and criticise or improve on it. Whether we achieve perfection or consensus on this agenda is not absolutely

ecommendations to Government. The membership and reference of this new council are far too narrow for this e interpreted as constituting the monitoring commission l by NECC. This unexpected development when taken in ion with other public statements made from time to time ime Minister himself raises some serious doubts over the he NECC's official recommendations to government as d in DEPAN. The Prime Minister, for example, remarked st 1990 that with the withdrawal from the council of some s earlier, including the opposition Democratic Action Party "Since the NECC cannot achieve a consensus, the nent is not bound to accept all its recommendations." further declared, "We are almost back to square one, ne government has to formulate and devise the economic after 1990 almost by itself" (*Asiaweek*, September 14, 33). A few more members of NECC, including the ntatives of the main Islamic opposition party, Pan Malaysian Party (PMIP) were so upset by these remarks they then out of the council declaring the Prime Minister's speech, barrassing insult to all NECC members," and that "the Minister has already prepared an excuse for rejecting it commendations of the NECC]" (*Asiaweek*, September 14, 33). The Prime Minister in receiving NECC's final report ruary 9, 1991, had occasion to say in his address marking ssolution of the council that the Government would give port "appropriate weightage", and he reiterated his earlier at not all the recommendations could be accepted because NECC members had withdrawn from the council. Finally, se to describe those who had left the council as "cowards" *Straits Times*, February 10, 1991).

April 1991, the Minister of Finance, Datuk Seri Anwar m announced that a ten-year Outline Perspective Plan to e the NEP will be tabled by the Prime Minister in Parliament e 1991 when the Sixth Malaysia Plan would also be unveiled. id that the sixth plan, as well as the new OPP, will provide for "more effective Bumiputera participation in the

> and continued growth. In this way, uplifting the standard of living of the people and poverty eradication irrespective of race and restructuring of society will not be affected like when the country was hit by recession in 1985-1986. ... In line with this long term policy, national development under the Sixth Malaysia Plan would be towards balanced growth with attention to socio-economic aspects, sectoral economy, science and technology and environmental issues" (quoted in *New Straits Times*, April 12, 1991).

The minister, as quoted in the media, made no mention whatsoever of the NECC report, or of DEPAN. The next day, the Prime Minister himself was to explain that the Government would devise new methods to implement to new OPP. He said that some of the old methods had failed to produce the desired results under the NEP, and as such could not be relied upon again (*New Straits Times*, April 13, 1991). The media reports of his remarks also did not mention the NECC, nor of its proposals for DEPAN. Two days later, the chairman of the Malaysian Chinese Association's (MCA) economic bureau, Dr Fong Chan Onn who is also Deputy Education Minister and a former NECC member, was to pointedly remark to the media that his party would emphasise a just and fair implementation of the NECC recommendations, and that he hoped that the NECC report would be given serious consideration when formulating the new OPP (*The Star*, April 15, 1991). He was further quoted saying, "The [NECC] report has a detailed comprehensive strategy to develop the nation in a healthy and sustainable manner," and he said that the NECC had recommended that an independent body be set up to investigate all cases of deviation in the policy's implementation, and that this body be politically independent, and that it should report to the Yang di Pertuan Agong and parliament annually (*The Star*, April 15, 1991).

This MCA reference to the independent monitoring body reflects the unanimous agreement of NECC members in February 1991 that this proposal is the unique and most basic recommendation of all made by the consultative council to the government for Malaysia's post-1990 policy. And it surely bears repeating that this recommendation was *unanimously accepted* by

d choose at random from DEPAN's proposals, the post-alaysian developmental policy will in all probability be but nuation of the NEP with some cosmetic changes for the But if DEPAN is accepted in full, or its most fundamental ls are accepted substantially unchanged, then Malaysia k forward to a paradigmatic shift of developmental policy, ich the NECC members concluded will be for the national promote all round economic prosperity in a more sible manner, and most important of all, better ensure the Malaysia's ethnically diverse peoples and so better prepare o face the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

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aradigm has been defined as "the working assumptions, procedures and dings routinely accepted by a group of scholars, which together define a ble pattern of scientific activity; this in turn defines the community which res in it" (Johnston, 1981: 246). Although the concept and its usage has en a matter of considerable controversy in both the pure and social ences, and the theory of advancement of ideas originally attached to the m has fallen into disrepute, the word itself has become "a convenient pirical shorthand for a particular universe of discourse" (Johnston, 1981: 7). In developmental studies, the term has come to be used to describe rticular interrelations of models, theories, methodologies and procedures economic and social change which differ markedly from other competing s of relations, or paradigms. It is in this latter sense of the term "paradigm" at this writer wishes to refer to in the course of this paper.

he NCC comprised "... representatives of ministers in the National perations Council, state governments, political parties, religious groups, ofessional bodies, public services, trade unions, employers' associations, e press, teachers and minority groups. ... The deliberations of the Council re purposely kept away from the media, so that sensitive issues could be oroughly discussed and a true consensus arrived at for the benefit of all alaysians, present and future" (Faaland, Parkinson and Rais, 1990: 27).

he *Rukunegara* opens with the words, "Our Nation, Malaysia, being dedicated achieving a greater unity of all her peoples; to creating a just society which the wealth of the nation shall be equitably shared; to ensuring liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural traditions; to building progressive society which shall be oriented to modern science

5. Faaland, Parkinson and Rais (1990) devote some 57 pages in chapter five of their book to an extensive review of the positions of the various groups, political ethnic, and professional participating in this debate.
6. As early as 1981, the Malaysian Chinese Association was raising doubts about the implementation of the NEP (Malaysian Chinese Association, 1982). In 1984, the President of the Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, Dr Lim Keng Yaik, said in a policy statement issued on the occasion of his party's national seminar on *The National Economic Policy — 1990 and Beyond* held in 1984, that "... we are concerned of the need to whittle down the ethnic consciousness that has been built up in this country since the promulgation of the New Economic Policy. While we in principle support the objectives of the New Economic Policy, the way this policy has been implemented has not brought the people of this country any closer to the broader goal of national unity. If anything, ethnic polarisation has intensified with Malaysian (sic) becoming even more mindful of their own ethnic background because of the distinct division made between Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras" (Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, 1984: 160). And in a book evocatively titled *The Future of Malaysian Chinese* (Ling, 1988) which captures now heightened Chinese national concern, Dato' Kok Wee Kiat, then Vice-President of the Malaysian Chinese Association, was to complain that "The feelings of deprivation and loss experienced by the Malaysian Chinese in the socio-economic aspects of life the NEP has infringed upon have been heightened by a sharp sense of political emasculation" (Kok, 1988: 14), and he expressed this perception of the NEP: "The NEP came into being in 1970 with the tacit consent of all races. The consent was expressedly for 20 years. That 20-year period expires in 1990. When it expires in 1990, let it forever lie in peace. When it lies in peace, with it goes the a terrible spectre of racial polarisation. With it will be buried the 'they' and 'we' approach in our Malaysian way of life. Let Malaysians start all over again on the basis of unity, harmony and comradeship that gave us *Merdeka* in 1957" (Kok, 1988: 19).
7. See Das and Suaram (1989) for a critical review of the Government's official explanation for Operation Lallang.
8. Human rights activist Chandra Muzaffar (1986) was to complain even before *Operation Lallang* of "a highly controlled, severely limited, democracy in Malaysia." After the detentions and subsequent events of 1987 and 1988, he, as well as Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's first Prime Minister, and Malaysia's leading elder statesman, were moved to use the term "police state" to describe the situation in Malaysia.
9. The NECC report noted that there are several ways of valuing the "quality" of corporate equity, including share par value, market prices, and net tangible assets, the respective use of which in calculating corporate ownership could result in very different statistics than the ones officially used by Government in its analyses. It commented that each method of calculation had its own

bers appointed to the council withdrew for various reasons. Prominent g these were representatives of the main opposition parties, the cratic Action Party (DAP), Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM), Pan Malaysian c Party (PMIP), representatives of Chinese schools and assemblies, handful of individuals (Malaysia, 1991: 12-13).

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CHAPTER EIGHT

A DIVERSIFIED AND RESILIENT GAPORE IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Linda Low
Tan Khee Giap

ıction

ɛn the theme of this forum on Malaysia-Singapore ıship, this Singapore paper would interpret its contribution ıs of analysing Singapore's economic restructuring in the of the region in general and vis-a-vis Malaysia in particular. ıe ample literature on Singapore's economic growth and ɔment path, a quick overview would suffice to provide the ound for its industrial restructuring and diversification to ıree challenges. One has to do with its own constraints and options which requires a more resilient growth path as ɔnomy matures into the economy of a developed country. l is the need to position Singapore strategically in the region, ally in the context of the Association of Southeast Nations N) and in particular, the growth triangle which has ned between Batam in Indonesia, Johor in Malaysia, and ɔore. This enhanced role as a regional economy has to be r viewed in the context of Singapore's globalisation, which, Economic Development Board's mission statement, is "to Singapore into a global city with total business capabilities".

The Making of a Resilient Economy

The growth path of Singapore is checkered. Generally it remains a good performer due to its very introspective and frequent self-examining policies to pre-empt adversities and maximise economic opportunities. By this argument, its resource deficiencies and extreme dependence on external factors actually spur its development consciousness and enhance its economic resilience. The growth and performance of some key macroeconomic variables are shown in Table 1.

The economic structure of Singapore has diversified, first away from entrepot services to manufacturing, and currently to a manufacturing-service economy. The diversification is accompanied by significant technological upgrading. The hallmarks in Singapore industrial structure comprise modern and world-class infrastructure, information and computer technology and overall efficiency that is not just machine generated but also sparked by dynamic thinking and innovativeness of its people. These are not mere platitudes but important ingredients in Singapore's survival kit.

Economic restructuring involving the manufacturing and services is further characterised by diversification within sectors. In the manufacturing sector, the shift has been away from traditional activities such as textile and garments to electrical and electronics, while industries such as petroleum and chemicals have increased in sophistication and linkages.

Table 1 Growth of Key Macroeconomic Variables in Singapore (% unless otherwise stated)

Variables	1960	1970	1980	1990
Gross domestic product*	8.7	9.4	9.7	8.3
Gross fixed capital formation*	21.7	11.8	20.2	14.7
Total trade	4.2	20.2	34.0	11.4
Total merchandise exports	3.5	20.6	34.0	9.3
Total merchandise imports	4.8	19.9	33.9	13.4
Index of industrial production (1989 = 100)	na	12.1	12.2	9.5
Changes in productivity	na	4.3	5.7	3.4

2 shows some indicators of its openness measured by its ncy on trade, foreign investment or visitor arrivals. These o underline Singapore's concern to have an international e regime and economic prosperity in all its trade partners stors.

e 2 Indicators of Openness of the Singapore Economy

s*	1970	1980	1990
de^/GDP	2.140	2.690	3.269
dise trade/GDP	2.117	3.698	4.048
nvestment commitments/ mitments+	0.804	0.841	0.890
population@	0.251	1.061	1.472

^ goods and services
@ 1989 population

cturing sector only

s in Table 1.

the years, Singapore's export oriented industrialisation o increased its trade with major countries in the sation of Economic Cooperation and Development), especially the US, Japan and the Economic Community hese three, together with Malaysia, have been Singapore's trade partners. Trade with Indonesia is also conceivably ut trade statistics with Indonesia are not published by ore. Despite the dominance of the western countries, Table s the rising trade shares of Singapore with East Asia. The on in trade between the newly industrialising economies and Japan has been high since 1970 (about 18 times), d by that between the NIEs and ASEAN (over 20 times) Direction of Trade, various years). In intra-ASEAN trade, ore has the largest shares.

Table 3 Singapore's Trade Shares with East Asia, 1980 and 1990 (%)

	1980	1990
ASEAN	19.0	19.4

ASEAN and the growth triangle

a) ASEAN

The common political fear that brought the ASEAN countries together in 1967 continued to hold it together over the years. But while peace and stability within ASEAN provided a conducive environment for economic growth and development, each member in ASEAN developed largely out of its own independent achievement. There was relatively little owed to joint ASEAN economic cooperation despite the efforts. Many factors can be identified for this economic lethargy, from institutional to structurally ill-defined cooperation schemes as put forth under the Kansu report (see Sopiee, et al, 1990). This failure in ASEAN economic cooperation was due in no small measure to the faulty conceptual framework adopted by the Kansu report (1974) which recommended more inward rather than outward strategies[1].

Programmes like the ASEAN industrial projects (AIP), the ASEAN industrial complementation scheme (AIC), the ASEAN industrial joint venture scheme (AIJV) were premised on inward looking industrialisation strategy with heavy involvement of the bureaucracy in the selection of investment projects. This bureaucratic approach to industrialisation tended to create regional monopolies, import substituting and protectionistic trade policies that entailed substantial static and dynamic efficiency loss. It was not surprising that ASEAN's economic cooperation has turned out to be a record of protracted negotiations and platitudes, generating more exasperation and frustration than tangible results.

As political configurations are reshaped and if the external threat is no longer the cohesive factor, ASEAN needs a new binding force and a common purpose in the coming decades. There are also other diluting forces such as wider regional efforts as in the Asia Pacific which may threaten ASEAN solidarity. In the 1980s, the trend in regionalism has somewhat changed. The share of US in world GNP has declined from about 50% in the

ome the most dynamic middle-income economies in the Their annual growth rates in GNP per capita since the Os have averaged 6-8%, almost triple the average rate of middle-income economies and double the 3.6% average AN (excluding Singapore) (see Table 4).

ble 4 GNP Per Capita in NIEs and ASEAN Countries

	Average Annual growth rate (%) (1965-88)	GNP Per Capita Level (1988) (US$)
	6.8	3,600
ng	6.3	9,220
	7.5	6,060
e	7.2	9,070
a	4.3	440
es	1.6	630
	4.0	1,000
	4.0	1,940
	5.4	330
ncome es	2.3	1,930

World Development Report, 1990, World Bank

Growth Triangle

development of the growth triangle involving three ASEAN r countries is also an interesting scenario within ASEAN. thern growth triangle involves Johor in Malaysia, the Riau principally Batam Island in Indonesia, and Singapore. ilateral and regional economic cooperation among these SEAN countries have been on for many decades, the ated pace of economic cooperation development on a e basis is a relatively new phenomenon.

triangle is of greater significance in positioning it as a regional economy as it pursues its globalisation ambitions. Collaboration with the region also offers more opportunities and scope for its local enterprises to reach a new level of development and growth. The region is awash with capital and opportunity but lacking in activities and pursuits to galvanise these capital and other natural resources including human resources. The growth triangle is occurring at the right time in the political economy of the region. It provides the mechanism to pull all these together with the right personalities powering the momentum.

Singapore's growth triangle concept is not altruistic. Besides expanding its production possibility frontier in economic parlance, in the words of the former Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, "rich neighbours will become better neighbours and good customers" (Straits Times, 8 February 1990). Singapore's need for water, land and labour would be neatly packaged whilst the triangular relationship will not be seen as a threat to current ASEAN efforts. At a political level, cross-investment and business relations would also reduce any threats to security, and a stronger political commitment is always a wise insurance policy. With rapid development coming into Johor and the Riau Islands, sooner or later, Singapore's policy to pioneer and stake claims there earlier makes economic sense before higher prices of development catch on.

A more direct benefit to Singapore, however, is the tapping of resources especially that of labour. Singapore's structural diversification has been accompanied by a reliance on foreign workers as evident from the increase from a total of 72,590 non-citizen and non-resident (foreign) workers in 1970 to 119,483 in 1980, both being census years. An estimate of foreign workers in Singapore is provided in Table 5. There is no information to break these down by nationality, but the majority would be from Malaysia.

rkers in Singapore, 1983 — 1989

	ar	Est no work permit holders	Employm pass holders	Tot no foreign wkrs	% of total labour force
	(2)	(3) = (1)/(2)	(4)	(5) = (3) + (4)	
08.0	1620	128000	23000	151000	12.9
21.0	1620	136000	24000	160000	13.6
04.5	1620	126000	23000	149000	12.9
53.0	1620	94000	22000	116000	10.1
37.6	1620	85000	23000	108000	9.1
18.0	1668	130000	24000	154000	12.4
00.0	2964	135000	26000	161000	12.6

ng, Chen and Low (1991)

nber of possible misconceptions or myths about the iangle need to be cleared. First, as noted, neither the tion with Johor nor Batam Island is intrinsically new. ness of Johor has been exploited for an even longer han perhaps Batam. In the case of Batam, President has pushed for an industrial zone there since 1973.

ond misconception that was cleared by the Minister for nd Industry, Brigadier-General Lee Hsien Loong, with investors from the European Community (EC), is growth triangle is not like the EC in being an economic al union (Straits Times, 5 June 1990). With the current ward free trade areas and customs union was witnessed pe and elsewhere, it is common to visualise ASEAN n the same direction. The growth triangle concept is a mechanism to increase economic cooperation nalised by the private sector but spearheaded and by official channels.

, the growth triangle concept is neither in conflict with

triangle. In fact, the growth triangle can galvanise, reinforce and expand ASEAN cooperation by stretching the concept further or strengthen the regional prospects to pull in more foreign investment and opportunities. Morever, unlike the ASEAN framework, the growth triangle concept is not a structured and formal mechanism for cooperation, but a looser alliance born out of goodwill and common goals (Straits Times, 19 February 1991).

Fourth, it is often thought that the growth triangle is more for industries to relocate to take advantage of more abundant resources within the growth triangle. There are however two other aspects to be considered. There is the attraction to increase foreign investment and MNC participation which must not be overlooked. As each country in the growth triangle has its intrinsic qualities attracting MNCs, since industries and countries are more interrelated and MNCs are more globalised, the growth triangle offers a bigger and more diversified package to MNCs. In other words, MNCs can make use of Singapore like a beach head to penetrate the region.

Moreover, because MNCs need local supporting enterprises to support and service them, the growth triangle would also spawn these local enterprises too. From the Singapore angle, this would complement its Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) master plan to build up local enterprises in general and some even to worldclass standards (EDB, SME Master Plan, 1990). For local firms, the region is more familiar and they would be comfortable to tap these countries nearby. The potential within the region is also high as the ASEAN GDP is growing apace with development. This is especially so when there are vast opportunities for local entrepreneurs to team up with their counterparts in Indonesia and Johor where rich pools of indigenous capital is awaiting business openings.

Fifth, for political and practical reasons, the growth triangle is based on an equilateral triangle concept, treating all partners on an equal footing. A popular political myth is that the growth triangle is more beneficial to Singapore than the other two

ustrialisation and development, Johor and perhaps later
nay leapfrog ahead and have a bigger competitive
e given their resource capabilities.

er, as noted by the Prime Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong,
style zero sum cooperation, where economic decisions
le by bureaucrats who insist on equal spread of benefits,
ave to change. The new style is one where the benefits
operation depend on the countries' own competitive
e as decided by the market (Straits Times, 5 March 1991)

is a misconception that the equilateral growth triangle
al three-way flows in relationships among the three
In practice, Singapore is the common denominator as
bilaterally involved with Johor and with Indonesia. There
f an economic relationship between the latter two. In
, both Johor and Indonesia can also have cross investment,
on and trade linkages. However, in practice, their stage
strial development is more competitive and do not
nent each other as well as each of them with Singapore.
the growth triangle is strictly like a compass with the
at Singapore. To keep an equidistance between Johor
onesia is not easy in practice as there are the politics of
sm and other economic intricacies.

ate, the dialogue between Johor and Indonesia has
d with the visit of the Malaysian Prime Minister to Batam
participation of Johor in an Indonesian hotel development
n (Straits Times, 6 March 1991). If all parties believe that
forces should dictate all relations and activities, possible
erstanding and misconceptions could be avoided and
ed and greater collaboration may be engendered. The
Besar of Johor goven the assurance that Batam is not a
o Johor (Business Times, 14 February 1991).

southern growth triangle has probably inspired others
the northern growth triangle involving Penang and the
n states in West Malaysia, southern Thailand and northern
sia. While Singapore is not directly involved, it would have

in 1990. In magnitude, the amount in Malaysia came to US$119 million which is second to that in Indonesia (28.9% and 52.7% of total, respectively). Singapore's investments in both Malaysia and Indonesia grew by 19% in 1990 over the previous year compared with 51% growth in Thailand and -42% in the Philippines.

Table 6 Singapore's Investments in ASEAN Countries, 1990

	Thailand	Philippines	Malaysia	Indonesia	Total
US$m	62	14	119	217	412
% of total	15.0	3.4	28.9	52.7	100.0

Source: Merrill Lynch, Asian Economic Commentary, March 1991.

Singapore-Malaysia Economic Relations

a) Singapore-Johor

By geographical proximity and history, Singapore's relations with Johor are closer than with other Malaysian states. To assess the nature and scope of such a relationship, an understanding of Johor's development objectives is needed. First, Johor is keen to diversify from its agricultural base to more agro-based industries. In Johor's metamorphosis into an industrialised state, the new industrial projects will create an extra 276,000 jobs by 2005 in a state plan drawn up by the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER) (Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 January 1991). The economy is predicted to grow at 8% in the next 15 years which will double its GDP by the end of the period. By 2005, the manufacturing sector will contribute at least 25% to GDP and will also take over from the agriculture sector as the largest employer to account for 30% of the labour forces[2].

Both resource and non-resource based industries are promoted. Agricultural processing, textiles, chemicals and petrochemical industries are among the resource-based while electrical/

into the agri-food processing industry. Since 1987, of total investments into Johor went to electrical/ . It is estimated that the manufacturing sector would annual rate of 15% between 1990 and 1995. The wing industries are chemicals (44%), metal products l non-metal products/electronics (30%). A total of kers are employed in the 310 factories in the industrial the Johor State Economic Development Corporation Johore Investment Digest, May-June 1990).

lalaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) that capital investments applications in Johor .5% from $1,829.5 million in 1989 to $22,736.1 million nich will provide 36,588 jobs (Johore Investment Digest, st 1990). Investments in Johor were largely put into electrical and electronics with the latter providing ent for 22,000 in 1989. A recent MIDA report quoted aporeans have committed a total of M$895.3 million million) worth of investments involving 147 projects in and its projection is that this will reach M$1 billion d of 1991 (Straits Times, 21 January 1991). Singapore th largest foreign investor in Malaysia after Taiwan illion), Japan (M$4.2 billion), Indonesia (M$1.1 billion) (M$1.0 billion).

pore accounts for 40% of the 127 new projects st eight months in 1991, with Singaporean equity valued 3.4 million or US$66.6 million (Far Eastern Economic January 1991). Direct foreign investment from Singapore erienced a three-fold increase since 1987, to M$811.2 in 1989, generating a total of 78,900 employment nities over the period.[3] On the whole, foreign investment accounts for 27% of the total number of approved projects sia. Total committed investment increased by 290% from nillion in 1987 to M$2.8 billion in 1989. Another indicator gn participation in Johor's industrialisation is the ratio of

cost, has also been announced (Straits Times, 22 February 1991). In a study done in 1984, the passenger demand for 1995 is 336,700, rising to 463,400 in 2000 and 663,400 in 2005. While Singapore may not be directly involved in this tourist project, there can be scope in terms of Singapore aiming to be a hub for tourism in the region.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOE) to provide a framework for greater cooperation to promote the growth triangle is also in the offing, similar to the MOE signed with Indonesia in 1989 (Business Times, 5 February 1991). This is subject to the agreement of the federal government and follows from the new water agreement that Singapore just signed with Johor. The MOE would cover, among other things, the setting up of a skilled training institute in Johor, a joint investment promotion campaign in countries such as Japan and the development of a technology park in Johor.

A joint committee would be set up to look into the proposed training institute and technology park. The Menteri Besar of Johor had earlier called for the development of human resources and manpower to meet long term industrial needs in Johor and Singapore (Business Times, 18 November 1990).

The Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong has proposed that a skills training institution be built in Johor (Business Times, 5 February, 1991). In addition, for training workers in Singapore, part of the foreign worker levy can be used for defraying training costs. Johor is prepared to offer the land and the institute could get off in 1991, provided the logistics can be fully thrashed out. In a later development, Indonesia has also joined in under the proposed training institute and the location is being reviewed. The institute will specifically cater to the manpower needs of the growth triangle. Both Indonesia and Johor have ambitions to move into high technology industries like Singapore. Indonesia, which has a stock of 70,000 engineers, including agricultural engineers, has the capacity to produce between 3,000 to 3,500 engineers a year. The Menteri Besar of Johor is also not opposed to the idea of labour inflows from Indonesia (Straits Times, 22 February 1991).

from Indonesia for the construction industry. But as the oves up the industry scale, more training and skills ment programmes would be needed. Rapid growth with eans investing and spending their tourist dollars in Johor, farm land prices soaring by some 400% to M$32,000 a On a related point, the Johor Human Resources and er Committee has raised the problem of 30,000 unskilled workers in Singapore who are not covered by the Central t Fund (CPF). Malaysian workers have preferred to have in full (Lianhe Zaobao, 8 February 1991).

pore-Penang

dly, the success between Johor and Singapore is spilling other states like Malacca, and even further up as g, Kelantan and Pahang (Straits Times, 21 January 1991). gapore Manufacturers Association (SMA) has led an nt mission to Penang in April 1990, with officials from , TDB and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Penang ment Corporation projects that by 2000, manufacturing ccount for 49% of its GDP. This implies stronger ion for foreign investment and Penang is as keen to have Es have their headquarters. In this respect, there may be er element of competition than complementation as d with Johor. Some electronics firms like Conner als and Seagate have already pushed northward to Penang, oduction capacities as large if not eventually larger d to what they have in Singapore.

pore-Pahang

Menteri Besar of Pahang, Tan Sri Haji Mohd Khalil was also on the 70-member team to Singapore to attend on investment opportunities in Pahang (Lianhe Zaobao, ry 1991). Pahang may have come later than Johor but essons can be drawn from Singapore's relation with nd then applied to Pahang. The water agreement

affairs. That it has interest in more bilateral economic relations with a technopolis like Singapore implies its desire to latch on to a faster economic track through information technology and more modernised means.

Pahang offers an additional incentive to Singapore in terms of water and gas resources. Officials from Singapore and Pahang have initiated talks in this regard. Singapore may have to buy water from Pahang in ten years' time as an upper limit will be imposed under the pact with Johor (Straits Times, 11 February 1991). Yet it would be comfortable to buy water from Pahang as soon as it is available. A Singapore-Pahang joint committee like the one in Johor, with private sector participation, has also been suggested (Straits Times, 1 February 1991).

Similarly, despite it being under the opposition's rule of PAS, Kelantan has also expressed its intention to send an investment mission down to Singapore. The progression of Singapore's interest northwards is logical since technology and costs as well as labour and other resource constraints in Johor are being felt and lower end industries from Singapore need to relocate further up. The growth triangle concept can thus be applied elsewhere for the same linkage effects.

d) Singapore-Trengganu

Interest in Trengganu is also awakening. Singapore investments in Trengganu in 1990 alone amounted to $30.27 million, mainly in industrial and resort projects. By the end of 1991, direct air services would connect Kuala Trengganu with Singapore. Trengganu's potential in energy and labour intensive industries are also attractive to Singapore. Given Trengganu's land and natural attractions as a holiday resort, tourism would be another area for mutual development.

e) Singapore-Malacca

In terms of geographical location, Malacca is probably the most logical extension of the Malaysia-Singapore economic nexus

egic maritime location had been exploited to the fullest
acca was turned into an opulent emporium for maritime
om the east and the west.

a's development strategies evolved in two stages with
sation programme started in the early 1970s, then
by the active promotion of the tourism industry in the
0s. Given the steady influx of multinational companies
ufacturing investment into Malacca since 1972, the
sence of only four manufacturing companies from
seems somewhat surprising, given the geographical
and historical link of the Straits Settlement States.
e fifty or more international companies, spread over
dustrial estates including two free trade zones,
facturing projects are from the NIEs, 11 companies
ctronic manufacturing are of European origin, five are
firms and four are investment projects from the US.
cs and electrical manufacturing is by far the biggest
owed by textile, timber products and metal equipments.
k presence of the Singapore investment may be
ed as the competition from Johor, being so close to
e. However, with the accelerated growth currently
ace in Johor, it is highly probable that Singapore
may logically look beyond Johor to take advantage of
wages and much cheaper industrial lands in Malacca,
ly upon the completion of the North-South Malaysia
by 1994.

the establishment of the Malacca State Development
ion (MSDC) currently under the active Chairman-ship
hief Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik,
m the federal investment incentives which are basically
e to all states in Malaysia, investment incentives offered
ate government in terms of the Discount Purchase and
l Payment Schemes on industrial land, have great appeal
n investors.

ourism industry which is currently thriving in Malacca is
to get a further boost as the completed North-South

Malacca since 1987. The strong presence of Singapore tourists in Malacca must have led to the recent buy over of the Merlin hotel by the Singapore hotel group. A new multimillion dollar resort at Pulau Besar off the coast of Malacca managed by an international consortium is also currently underway. As the state government begins to tap the potential of Malacca as a tourist destination particularly for Singaporeans, the Singapore-Malacca economic nexus is expected to develop further, which in turn may spur on more hotel investments. The Chief Minister of Malacca is expected to lead a bilateral trade promotion team to Singapore in the later half of 1991.

f) Singapore-Sarawak

Economic cooperation between Singapore and East Malaysia is also beckoning as Sarawak seeks Singapore investors for its free trade zones (Business Times, 27 March 1991) and its timber ventures. The free trade zones will be ready by 1992 to take advantage of Sarawak's natural resources in timber and petrochemical products. Besides Singapore, Sarawak is also wooing Taiwan and Japan. In timber related industries, a trade mission under the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME) visited Sarawak in April 1991 (Business Times, 2 April 1991).

Sarawak may be further away than Peninsular Malaysia, and interest in timber-related and other resource-based activities has to first be entrenched among Singapore businessmen. Yet, the mood of economic cooperation and opening in all the Malaysian states can be stimulating.

g) East Asia Economic Grouping (EAEG)[4]

A discussion on Singapore-Malaysia economic relations would not be complete without some thoughts on the idea of the East Asia Economic Grouping (EAEG) suggested by the Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir. He suggested that Malaysia would take the lead to set up an East Asian trade bloc to counter the single market concept of Western countries (Straits Times, 11 December 1990). The EAEG concept was to embrace other

ionale for the EAEG is that market cooperation ecessary among the Asia-Pacific countries especially of the failure of the talks of the General Agreement nd Trade (GATT). Besides the EC, the reunification y, the possibility of countries of Eastern Europe EC and the US forming free trade areas with Canada, Mexico and possibly more Latin American countries, erceived threats. The EAEG would also ease off y the countries of the Organisation of Economic nt (OECD) on ASEAN to move towards premature p in the OECD. It is reckoned that affinity with in the EAEG could achieve this easing-off effect. to possibly anchor Japan to East Asia, arguing that hould be Japan's natural constituency rather than oot industries away to Europe or the US. From the erspectives, the EAEG would strengthen and t in a similar fashion like the Cairns Group, in the ng a loose group to look into trade matters. is not envisaged as a trade bloc but rather as a low mic alliance, a pressure group or a "megaphone to he group's voice at the Uruguay Round for instance ts Times, 19 January 1991). The group would thus ı ASEAN vis-a-vis its dialogue partners, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the EAEG would however have to be consistent with principles under the GATT, ASEAN and APEC.

os toward such a group which would a priori exclude es not in East Asia, would take two stages. First, a of an organisation comprising like-minded countries e or share common interests in specific areas of is GATT and the Uruguay Round. The EAEG is however l to the success or failure of the Uruguay Round nes, 12 January 1991). The second stage envisages a on of trade and economic links which would spur investment in the East Asia region. Any formal nts would however be based on GATT principles, in Article XXIV and/or the enabling clause, not create

its ASEAN partners individually. This was when the Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, visited Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and Brunei with letters from Dr Mahathir to the respective heads of government. It was later decided that heads of government outside ASEAN would also have to be wooed, although the ASEAN core members were the most crucial (Straits Times, 29 January 1991).

When the Malaysian mission first came to Singapore, the initial response was a cautious one (Straits Times, 3 January 1991). Given Singapore's policy to be a free trader and be as non-aligned as possible when it comes to trade blocs, this initial reaction was not surprising. However, it quickly recognised the political sensitivities and gave, in principle, the endorsement based on three criteria (Straits Times, 8 January 1991). First, it reiterated that the EAEG should neither compromise nor dilute GATT principles nor ASEAN solidarity. Second, that it would not affect the APEC initiative. The Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong then went on further to comment on the possibility of a crescent of prosperity linking East Asia, Indochina and ASEAN (Straits Times, 10 January 1991).

Singapore turned out to be Malaysia's strongest supporter when it offered to help to expand the idea (Straits Times, 12 January 1991 and Business Times, 12-13 January 1991). The Senior Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew also endorsed the idea when he put forth the view that the EAEG is complementary to APEC and would be useful to ASEAN, to the US Secretary of State and the US Trade Representative during his US visit (Business Times, 24 January 1991).

Such support may be useful to Malaysia as it still faces resistance to the EAEG idea from a few other sources. Thailand prefers to see intra-ASEAN cooperation strengthened before any other trade blocs are to be formed (Straits Times, 8 January 1991). It remains skeptical as the current ASEAN projects aimed at smoothing trade by removing barriers, have not even materialised in a way that would facilitate intra-ASEAN trade. It is also more in favour of the APEC framework and later pushed for an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA).

otectionistic stance under such a trade bloc would be the ate medicine to fight protectionism.

is in two minds about the EAEG proposal. It hat it was against APEC philosophy. Yet it cannot absent n any economic grouping in the region (Business Times, ry 1991 and 26 March 1991). It is an uncomfortable that the EAEG left out the US, Canada and Australia. nese were of the view that more efforts should be made ete the Uruguay Round rather than form regional trade ich would escalate friction and protectionism. Malaysia ed Japan that nothing prescriptive at the moment was lated and it would proceed on a step-by-step basis *Times*, 27 February 1991).

US also commented that the EAEG was illogical as it PEC redundant (Business Times, 6 March 1991). While tives of the EAEG and APEC are similar to maintain free d economic cooperation, EAEG is more restrictive and is give its members more leverage against the US-Canada e agreement and the EC.

Zealand expressed its interest to join the EAEG though s APEC (*Straits Times*, 2 February 1991). Australia also e left out especially by the tyranny of distance.

theless, Singapore-Malaysia relations have matured at the two countries can give each other tacit and support on most propositions and issues. In typical style, some of the differences and apprehensions g the EAEG would be ironed out first within ASEAN eaching a wider audience.

ions and Policy Implications

Mahathir has set his sights on accelerating the economic of Malaysia to becoming a developed country by the year *Straits Times*, 1 March 1991).[1] An economic council ing 10 cabinet ministers, eight senior members from the ector and 44 top leaders from business would meet three

ensure a more balanced growth among the races (Straits Times, 1 March 1991 and Business Times, 7 March 1991). He has chosen to lay aside political ideals in pursuit of economic growth.

These points have tremendous implications for further Singapore-Malaysian economic relations. First, they may explain his implicit support for the growth triangle. Second, a quid pro quo situation may be expected as support from Singapore would help the attainment of this broad goal. Such a conducive political and economic environment in Malaysia should be taken advantage of and Singapore's own philosophy has always been one of a development-oriented approach.

In terms of concrete policy implications and recommendations, four areas are clear. One is the assistance to states like Johor to set up the industrial and technology parks which would allow projects to come onstream as quickly as they do in Singapore. The second relates to manpower training and more formal schemes for skills training. Similar schemes in infrastructural development would also be necessary as Malaysia is beginning to face constraints in this regard.

Third, Singapore and Malaysia should promote more joint investment missions abroad as well as to increase bilateral investment flows. For overseas missions the package deal effect of the growth triangle should be exploited. The investment missions should permeate from the government and official levels down to private sector cooperation. The joint investment promotion must be based on a competitive framework where market forces dictate the direction, composition and the gains.

Fourth, with regards to encouraging the private sector to put the flesh on to areas and ventures identified by the official bodies, reliable and sufficient market information must be made available. Apart from official bodies and authorities doing this, local private trade, commerce and industrial bodies should be galvanised.

As noted by leaders on both sides of the causeway, Singapore-Malaysia economic relations have come a long way from the days of the Malaysian merger. Warmer relations precipitated by external threats and changes in personalities have developed. More

ries. First, it gave both the space and distance to follow
nomic destinies and strategies which appeared
ly opposed in the 1960s and would have stifled each
hout the acrimony, both countries emerged more
ted and mature and found new conditions for
n, more conducive now than then. Singapore took the
ientation because its size and resource constraints do
otherwise. Malaysia had many socio-political problems
nd its options were understandably different.
oth countries have emerged as strong economies
on, Singapore as a NIE and Malaysia only refusing to
th aspire to be developed countries by 2020, however
here is "no turning back" in the words of Dr Noordin
irector-General of the Institute of Strategic and
nal Studies (Business Times, 21 March 1991). Malaysia
ve to accelerate faster given Singapore's higher
nt state and opportunities for more competition,
well as for collaboration and cooperation would come
ese four C's would have to be balanced sensibly and
Both have a clear role to play in ASEAN and the Asia
l together, they form a potent force. Hence, the split
a good one and from the lessons learnt, there are now
nd chances for both the governments and the private
the two countries.
the mood of greater economic cooperation in and
SEAN, be it the northern or southern growth triangles,
and other groupings, relations between Singapore and
re too near and too dear to be neglected. This is an
time to reinforce the ties between two best friends
mes have also had difficulties, as most intimate relations
d. However, the leadership in both countries have
onsiderably and the private sectors are more ready now
eeded action.

Organisation (FAO) and the UN Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) produced the report for the project chaired by Professor Gunal Kansu. The Kansu Report looked comprehensively into major areas covering trade and industry, monetary and financial matters, agriculture, forestry and shipping.

2. Statistics given in a speech by the Menteri Besar of Johor, Tan Sri Muhyiddin on "The Transformation of Johor", at the annual dinner of the Economic Society, Singapore, 16 November, 1990.
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CHAPTER NINE

MALAYSIA: KEY ISSUES IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

Mohamed Hear Awang

l Context

ording to one definition is about who gets what, when
viously it implies conflict, bargaining and compromise
ation (or, war). In a Western democratic system, this
s place in a functionally plural or diverse social order.
apping membership and loyalty systems, a citizen's
his interest groups or party is likely to be contingent,
readier adjustment and accomodation of conflicts.
l terms Malaysia too is a democracy of sorts. But its
aracterised by communal pluralism. Malaysia is a multi-
ety with a weak (but growing) functional pluralism.
nental cleavages are still along communal lines. There
rlapping loyalties to bridge the ethnic cleavages. The
ce: politics in Malaysia has come to be dominated by
or communal factor. Ethnic concerns or consciousness,
rge extent, defines the issues and animates Malaysian
nterest aggregation and articulation, conflict and
n, bargaining and accomodation, etc. all tend to be
ethnic terms.
y the party system too is founded along communal
es are formed to protect and promote the respective

out to be ideology-based or non-communal parties inevitably succumb to the 'communal trap' e.g. Gerakan (Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia), DAP (Democratic Action Party), Partai Rakyat. (lit: People's movement party)

In terms of political culture (attitudes, beliefs, behavioral patterns with regard to power, authority, political action, etc.) Malaysians, again, do not all share an identical political culture. As Gordon Means has observed: "because of Malaysia's ethnic diversity, both social and political institutions have reflected the cultural and ethnic divisions found in the society ... (And) the political culture of the country developed within separate ethnic compartments ... Basic social trust (appears) to be rather low and there is little empathy extended beyond the communal boundaries".[1] The different political cultures spring from different value systems of the communities: Malay, Chinese, Indian, Kadazan, etc. in Malaysian society.

Complicating, modifying or aggravating this problem of politics in a society characterised by communal pluralism, is the federal structure of the Malaysian state. The Government (the control over which is the primary aim of politics) is constituted at two levels — federal or central and at the level of the states, of which there are thirteen. Each has its own sphere of powers, rights and duties spelled out in the constitution. The size, wealth and population of the states vary considerably. Although there have been strong centralising tendencies since *Merdeka* the states still retain significant autonomy. All these bear weight in the political processes of conflict, competition, accomodation and alignment in Malaysian politics. Thus there is not only the ethnic factor but also the federation factor which must be taken into account when analysing Malaysian politics.

Yet, for more than thirty years since independence, except for the period known as the 13th May 1969 riots and its aftermath when emergency rule was imposed, Malaysia has maintained a remarkable record of political stability. In political terms the reason for this lies in the successful evolution and maintenance of an elite accomodation system in politics. Although a common civic

es.[2] Mobilisation on 'sensitive issues' is kept to a and issues that arise are resolved (bargained away) te negotiations.

's elite accomodation system, of course, has its and may face increasing strains in future. But thus far irst elections and the formation of UMNO-MCA-MIC vernment (1955-69) surviving the National Operations nergency rule period (1969-71) to the formation of sional and the present) it has worked. The approach non-communal but inter-communal.

ence of Communalism

come as no surprise that one of the key issues or, key issue in Malaysian politics today is the persistence nalism.

ic that twenty years after the ambitious New Economic P), whose aim among others is to reduce or eliminate sm to prevent another May 13th 1969 type of racial romulgated, communal sentiments among Malaysians s strong as ever.[3] The obvious evidence of this was in e event now better remembered as a series of arrests d *Operation Lalang* in October that year.[4] The Prime r Mahathir Mohamad spoke of "racial tensions" and eds" on the rise "which could destabilise the country".[5] y came close to another open racial conflict.

matic, and on the level of everyday life, there is among Malaysians today, a growing consciousness of ct ethnic identity as a Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban, red, say, with the condition in the post-*merdeka* period. in another way there is increasing racial or ethnic n. "Each community becomes overly conscious of its identity" says Chandra Muzaffar. Each consciously

the form of cultural or religious revivalism. In his study on Islamic resurgence among Malays in Malaysia, Chandra Muzaffar further argues that the underlying drive is part and parcel of the assertion of Malay ethnic identity. He notes the same process also taking place in the other ethnic groups:

> "there is, at the same time, a much greater determination among the Chinese, as an ethnic group, to pursue and perpetuate their culture at all costs. This is also true, to a large extent of the Hindu-Indian community. Defending one's cultural identity has become a major concern ... their revivalism is also obsessed with identity."

Even on the university campuses, supposed to represent the more enlightened section of the society, the phenomenon is quite evident. There is less intermixing among the ethnic groups today compared, for instance, in the period of the 1960s.

That communalism and racial polarisation are a grave threat in a delicately balanced plural society like Malaysia needs no reiteration.[8] But the problem almost defies solution. Perhaps the proper question to ask is not why communalism persists, rather, given the fact of Malaysia's multi-ethnic society and the nature of its communal-based politics and political process, why should not communalism persist?

Intra-and Inter-Party Tensions

Linked to the above issue of the persistence of communalism is the problem of increasing political tensions in the country.

The viability of Malaysia's elite accomodation system lies in the ability of the leaders' of the various communities to represent and bargain authoritatively for their respective communities while at the same time having the capacity to empathise one another. It is critical that they understand the limits to the political demands that they can make without straining the system.

Today we are witnessing a gradual weakening of the basis of this system. The 'second generation' leaders are not as able to command obedience from their followers as the 'first generation' ones with the result that there has emerged within each community

coalition, MCA had a protracted Neo Yee Pan-Tan Koon
ional struggle in 1985. The MIC too had its share of the
he form of Samy Vellu-Subramaniam faction contest.
ost critical was the UMNO crisis of 1987 which split the
two and eventually led it to being declared unlawful by
[9] A similar trend is also observable in parties outside the
such as PMIP and DAP.

t to note here is that intra-party conflicts not only
political tensions in their own right but also contributes
arty and inter-community tensions. The leaders and their
ors in an attempt to appear more legitimate before their
ty avail themselves ever more stridently to the ethnic
ecure support from the community. They cultivate "more
nd intransigent political styles even when they operate
e structure of the ruling elite accomodation system".[10]
g this trend in 1987 the *Far Eastern Economic Review*
"Malaysian politicians who have always prided themselves
skill at compromises grew uncompromising." There
o be an erosion of the old 'ground rules' for resolving
n within the Barisan Nasisonal governing coalition.
lalaysian political system places a heavy onus on the
ng of inter-ethnic accomodation process. Without it and
lso a measure of trust and regard among the elite across
ic boundaries, the political system can become very
with grave consequences on the economic and social
s well.

Economic Policy

Economic Policy, (NEP) formulated in response to the
cial riots of 1969 and launched in 1971 ended in 1990.
eventually it came to be accepted by all, albeit grudgingly,
as first introduced the policy had aroused much rancour
roversy between the communities. For one it was the
ich popularised or enshrined the bumiputra/non-
a dichonomy in Malaysian society.[11] And it was the aim

a scholar, although "some were better able to capitalise on the new opportunities and gained more advantage than others. In the reallocation of jobs, wealth and political power to Malays the policy had affected a veritable revolution."[12] Naturally in an area where previously the non-Malays had predominated this 'affirmative action' effort of the government in favour of the Malay community aroused significant resentment among the non-Malays.

The question being asked today is what comes after the NEP? All parties and all communities are very interested in this question. Obviously the Malays are arguing for its continuation into the next century. As obviously, the non-Malays want to see government intervention in the economy on behalf of Malays stopped. Disputes and debates between the communities can easily escalate. In the last few years there have been many public seminars and discussions sponsored by various groups and communities to rebut criticisms, offer proposals, and exert pressure.

In an attempt to remove the issue from public contention and 'internalise' the debates a National Economic Consultative Council consisting of 150 members composed of representatives from political parties, interest groups and prominent individuals, was set up in 1988.

But to date it is still unclear what has been decided and who will have the greatest influence in determining the new policy. UMNO, it appears, favours the retention of the twin objectives of the old NEP: eradication of poverty and restructuring of society but, in the words of Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba "with some modifications that could be accepted by all quarters".[13] The process of bargaining between the parties however continues. To UMNO "the Malays have not yet achieved a standard of development (that enables them) to compete well with other communities."[14] There is a hint that government intervention and protection on behalf of the Malays are still required and will continue. The Gerakan and MCA on the other hand insist that the target of thirty percent bumiputra ownership in the economy (the target set in the old NEP) had been achieved and that future economic policy "must be fair and acceptable to the multi-

y to the benefit of DAP. Indeed, in recent years the s to be gaining more and more support from those senchanted with the Gerakan and MCA.

cs of Federal-State Relations

ederal structure where powers are distributed between and the states, a federal-state conflict is always possible. or avoid this and to facilitate a smooth implementation which requires the cooperation of the states, a federal nt is always interested to ensure that the government in are formed from the same party or coalition of parties the centre. In Malaysian practice moreover the nt of Menteri Besar or Chief Minister as head of the rnment itself is determined by the Prime Minister. With le power of patronage and control over funds in the he central government, the state government is likely to completely subservient to the centre.

owever, has not always been the case. Conflicts have he past and still do exist today. Kelantan and Trengganu, ce, have had PMIP — a party opposed to UMNO — he state government in the past. Today after the 1990 lection, Kelantan and Sabah have state government a party or parties opposed to the Federal government: e of Kelantan, by PMIP with the help of Semangat 46, bah, by Party Bersatu Sabah (PBS). In Penang the case different. Here the state has been ruled by Barisan But unlike in other states the senior partner in the n Penang since 1969 is not UMNO but Gerakan. t, it was MCA.

tinent questions to ask, therefore, are: to what extent ederal government be able to work with the state nts especially in Sabah and Kelantan? Will the states cooperation to the centre? Will federal development aid be severely curtailed or even denied to them? way will the centre try to regain control of the

that development funds and aid to Sabah and Kelantan may be reviewed. In February this year amid much fanfare UMNO made its entry into Sabah, a clear evidence that the party is determined to be involved directly in Sabah politics.[16] Accusations have been levelled at some Sabah leaders of stirring "anti-federal" or "anti-Muslim" feelings and of wanting "to take Sabah out of the federation.[17] Some arrests under Internal Security Act have been made and corruption charges laid against Sabah's Chief Minister and his brother.[18] Publicly no one has mentioned the prospect of imposing federal rule over either Sabah or Kelantan if relations deteriorated to a critical point. But there have been precedents in the past: in Sarawak in 1965 and in Kelantan in 1977-8.

Against these possibilities however, there must be weighed certain tempering considerations. Sabah, especially, but Kelantan also to some extent, have strong ethnic-nationalistic feeling or regional pride. A heavy handed federal approach far from solving the problem may even exacerbate it, accentuating the ethnic, religious or regional sentiments of the local people, causing them to be further alienated. Certainly in Sabah the resurrection of the "twenty points" question is a reminder of the fear Sabahans harbour about the erosion of their rights and privileges to the centre. What happens in Sabah can readily provide a demonstration effect to Sarawak.

Perhaps the issue at the very heart of the problem here is the poor understanding of the concept of federalism itself. A federation, rather than a unitary state, is formed precisely because there are important historical, cultural, religious, economic, etc., peculiarities and interests the component members have and want recognised while wishing to federate in one political entity. In mature federations, there are developed mechanisms — councils, meetings, the court — for resolving disputes. The constitution and the court, moreover, are there to determine the precise powers, rights and duties of the various parts of the federation in their mutual relations. In Malaysia there appears to be insufficient appreciation of these needs and characteristics of a federation. The skill and practice required for handling disputes are

enge of Islam

mes an issue in Malaysian politics in two ways. In relation ay Community, it means a point of political contention MNO and PMIP — two leading adversaries vying for port. Malays are Muslims. In the context of Islamic internationally and domestically, and since Islam is a or determining Malay identity, both parties have found y to express their Islamic credentials and promote Islam Malay support.[19]

ion to the non-Muslims it has been remarked that [they] are fearful of the pronounced emphasis upon the country.[20] They are afraid that pressure for on might increase. They look to the future with sion. Will the state remain secular or will it be ed gradually into an Islamic state? Will the legal d the economy, too, be 'islamised'? Where will they d all these?

P since its establishment in 1955 the creation of an te has been its consistant political objective. But PMIP Malay opposition party. Its championship of Islam in ad not aroused a significant concern. But in the past ars support for PMIP especially in the predominantly s showed a perceptible increase. In the general election ar it managed to recapture the state government in UMNO the dominant party in government does not e its support decline. It too has become "increasingly l about its Islamic image" and has "embarked upon a e of Islamic ventures" in support of Islam in the country.[21] years the UMNO-dominated government has set up titutions such as Islamic Bank, Islamic University, Islamic ; it committed itself to the promotion of Islamic values ally "assumed a much more activist role in Islamic affairs oting to infuse Islamic principles to many existing and policies".[22]

-PMIP competition to 'out-Islam' each other in generate the effect that ever wider area of public life

The Islamic challenge in Malaysia also comes from another source: the activities and demands of Islamic groups. These range from the quietist type to the more militant ones.[23] Thus far there have been several isolated cases of religious violence of which the most serious was the 'Memali incident' in Kedah in 1985.[24] The threat of social disorder remains present from the activities of the extremist groups as the government White Paper, *The Threat to Muslim Unity and National Security*, (1984), shows. Can their spread be contained?

The rise of Islamic consciousness among Malays reinforced the rise of religious consciousness on the non-Malay communities. In Malaysia today there is evidently not just ethnic polarisation but also religious polarisation. The two, of course, are interrelated. Indeed the fissures in Malaysian society are more pronounced today than they were ever before.

Political Succession

Both the Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Ghafar Baba are in their sixties. Both have had a heart bypass operation. Although they appear robust and full of energy, speculations have began as to who will succeed them. To still speculations, the Prime Minister on a number of occasions has stated that as in the past the deputy will take over from the president (of UMNO and Prime Minister of the country) when the latter retires. But Ghafar Baba, if he remains after Dr Mahathir Mohamad retires, perhaps will not remain long, they being more or less of the same age.

The focus of attention therefore is on the three elected Vice-Presidents of the Party: Anuar Ibrahim, Abdullah Badawi and Sanusi Junid. Anwar Ibrahim is the youngest in age, being hardly forty-five. However he is the most senior of the Vice-Presidents and the Cabinet post of Finance he holds is the most important after the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister in terms of considerable power of patronage. Abdullah Badawi has been in that elected position the longest — this being his third election to the post. Both Anuar Ibrahim and Sanusi Junid were only

votes obtained by one over the other was not very The next party election, therefore, will be crucial in succession.

the outcome, one thing can be said of Malaysia: it iable tradition among Southeast Asian countries of ooth transfer of power when the time comes.

imperfections for thirty-three years since indepen- political system of Malaysia has proved workable. will remain so depends on how the problems or issues country are resolved by the second generation leaders. e most crucial are communalism as well as religious polarisations. The assumption has always been that a nomy can help dampen the sharper edges of conflict. be enough for all. But any downward turn in the ll give rise to grave problems.

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CHAPTER TEN

SINGAPORE: HE POLITICS OF TRANSITION

Jon S. T. Quah

n

ber 28, 1990, Goh Chok Tong became Singapore's
ne Minister when he succeeded Lee Kuan Yew, who
ed the position for more than 31 years and holds the
being the longest serving Prime Minister in the world.
rst hinted in August 1984 that he would step down
eached 65 (on 16 September 1988), following the
lopted by major U.S. corporations.[1] However, his
was delayed by more than two years because Goh had
o stay on as Prime Minister after the People's Action
) had won the September 3, 1988 general election.
herefore a significant milestone in Singapore's political
ause of the formal transfer of power from the founder
Singapore to the chosen leader of the second
. It is not easy to change overnight and the PAP
t's three decades under Lee's leadership, cannot be
ghtly. Indeed, Lee's continued presence in the Cabinet
or Minister and his retention of the PAP's Secretary-
position would serve as a bridge between the two
s as well as a reminder of the original rationale for
e existing government policies.
ointment of Goh as Prime Minister marks the beginning

of the political reforms introduced by the PAP government in recent years makes sense as they are designed to safeguard Singapore's survivial in the future.[2]

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and discuss those issues which are of paramount concern in Singapore's domestic politics during the transitional period i.e., from November 28, 1990 until the next general election in September 1993 (the maximum period of five years after the September 1988 general election) or earlier, as hinted by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong during his tour of Cairnhill constitutency on August 4, 1991.[3] This chapter will discuss three issues which have been introduced for public debate in the form of White Papers[4] viz., the elected president (EP), the maintenance of religious harmony, and shared values. It contends that in dealing with these issues the Goh Chok Tong government's approach is to build on what its predecessor has accomplished rather than to strike out afresh. In other words, Goh and his colleagues seek to fine-tune Lee's original formula for Singapore's success, but not to reject or discard it.

We begin our analysis with the discussion on the issue of the EP.

The Elected President

When Singapore attained self-governing status on June 3, 1959, it inherited a British-style parliamentary form of government with a Prime Minister as head of government and a *Yang Di Pertuan Negara* as Head of State. After achieving independence on August 9, 1965, Singapore became a Republic four and a half months later, when the institution of the Yang Di Pertuan Negara was transformed into the Presidency with the passing of the Constitutional Amendment Act on December 22, 1965.[5]

According to the Constitution, the President was the head of state and was to be elected for a four-year term by the unicameral Parliament, which had, at that time, 51 members elected from single-member constituencies (SMCs) by a simple majority vote. There are now 81 elected members of Parliament (MPs), with 60

ote of Parliament. The Prime Minister and his 13
nstitute the Cabinet, which is the supreme policy-
of the government.[6] However, while the Cabinet
eral direction and control of the government, it is
esponsible to Parliament, which is the supreme
thority in the country.[7]

lysis of political systems, Douglas V. Verney argues
nentary government is concerned with *efficient*
while presidential government emphasizes *limited*
This is certainly true in Singapore's case, where
during the first 25 years of PAP rule (1959-1984)
king the government more efficient rather than
owers. Elsewhere, I have argued that the constraints
environment have led to the adaptation of the
tminister model of parliamentary democracy to a
or regulated form of democracy in Singapore.[9]
n Frears' description of the French Parliament as a
orse" but "poor watchdog" can also be applied to
e Parliament.[10]

problem which the EP is designed to solve can be
follows: How to check the powers of the Prime
Singapore's one-party dominant Parliament?
was the former Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, who
he issue in April 1984 (when he was still Prime
en he revealed that the government was "seriously
t amending the Constitution to introduce a 'blocking
so that foreign reserves could be spent" only with
f the President and a special committee.[11] Four
, Lee reiterated in his National Day rally speech
nstitution would be amended to ensure that any
nment would not waste the country's reserves, and
r the creation of an EP, with powers to control the
he reserves.[12]

's official foreign reserves at the end of 1984
o S$22.8 billion. These reserves increased to
n in 1985, S$28.2 billion in 1986, S$30.4 billion

The Original Version

Accordingly, on July 29, 1988, Goh Chok Tong, who was then the First Deputy Prime Minister, introduced a White Paper entitled "Constitutional Amendments to Safeguard Financial Assets and the Integrity of the Public Services" in Parliament. This document proposed the establishment of an EP without executive powers to perform a custodial role in protecting the official foreign reserves and in maintaining the integrity of the civil service and statutory boards. Referring to the experience of other countries where "irresponsible, free-spending governments have mismanaged the national finances and irreversibly ruined their economies," the White Paper justified the need for an EP to check the "untrammeled power" of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet in the following way:

> Presently our Constitution does not contain any checks on the government ... Any government ... has complete legal access to all the levers of power and decision-making. It can do anything it wishes to the financial assets and reserves. It can also change any appointment in the civil service ... Similarly, the Cabinet appoints and removes members of Statutory Boards. Overnight, everything can be dismantled.[14]

It should be noted, however, that the introduction of the EP would not result in a radical change of the parliamentary system of government as the Prime Minister and his Cabinet would continue to govern the country. Indeed, the only change would be that the government had to obtain the EP's approval before spending those official foreign reserves which it had not accumulated, and making appointments to key positions in the public bureaucracy. Furthermore, even though it was "impossible to design a completely foolproof protection against an irresponsible government," the White Paper emphasized the need for the Constitution to have "safeguards which make it very difficult for any government to act in a manner detrimental to the nation's best interests."[15] The government reviewed several alternatives to decide on the form of constitutional safeguards and concluded that "the most effective safeguard was an elected president with reserve powers over assets and key appointments."[16]

not be removed before his term of office expires, except upon passed in Parliament with a majority vote of at least ⅔ of the er of Members of the House upon a finding by the Supreme e is incapable of discharging his functions by reason of mental infirmity or that the President has been guilty of intentional the Constitution, treason, misconduct involving abuse of his ffice and any offence under the law involving moral turpitude.[17]

ore, only Singapore citizens with ministerial, high r administrative experience would be eligible for candidacy.[18] A special advisory committee known as tial Committee for the Protection of Reserves would o provide expert advice and make recommendations ent. It would also moderate his custodial powers and ck against hasty or arbitrary decisions" by him.[19]

according to Goh Chok Tong, the proposed nal safeguard can be described as "a two-key the Prime Minister and his Cabinet possessing one elected President, the other. Both keys must be used serves can be unlocked or the integrity of the public ntled."[20]

feedback on the proposed EP, the Feedback Unit ofessionals to discuss this issue on August 2, 1988, er the White Paper was presented in Parliament. ssionals agreed that Singapore's foreign reserves tection and suggested that a referendum should be n the people's assent to this important constitutional [21] Four days later, the opposition MP, Chiam See the government to make the EP an issue at the next on if it did not want to hold a national referendum.[22]

12, 1988, the then Chairman of the Feedback Unit, ng Bock, recommended to Parliament that the ld first be considered by a Select Committee, before ingaporeans' views in a national referendum so that e given an "opportunity to discuss thoroughly changes to the Constitution and the political Chok Tong informed Parliament on the same day

President Wee Kim Wee dissolved Parliament on August 17, 1988 and announced that a general election would be held on September 3. Not surprisingly, the EP became an electoral issue and this was reflected in the televised debate on August 30 between the PAP's Goh Chok Tong and Lee Hsien Loong on the one hand, and the Singapore Democratic Party's Chiam See Tong and the Workers' Party's J.B. Jeyaretnam on the other hand. After winning the general election, Goh announced the new Cabinet on September 10, and identified the EP as one of the government's four priorities. He added that the proposal would not be rushed since a Bill had to be prepared and presented to Parliament first, before sending it to a Select Committee for scrutiny.[24]

The Revised Version

After two years of public discussion on the topic, the government published a second White Paper on August 27, 1990, which proposed that the EP be given the additional role of preventing the government from abusing its powers to curb subversion, religious extremism, and corruption.[25] Accordingly, three days later, the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No. 3) Bill was read for the first time in Parliament.

The second White Paper stated explicitly the three safeguard powers of the EP. First, the EP had "the right to veto the annual budgets of the Government, statutory boards and key government companies, if they draw down reserves accumulated during the terms of previous governments."[26] The purpose of this power was to ensure that "political parties should not have the luxury of running for office by promising to spend reserves which have been accumulated by previous governments." This means that a government intending to finance its programmes by utilising reserves accumulated by its predecessors must first obtain the EP's concurrence to do so. The usual procedure for the government to obtain money for the annual budget is by passing Supply Bills and Supplementary Supply Bills in Parliament. The EP is required to consult the Council of Presidential Advisors

he reserves are being drawn down to finance public
However, if the EP withholds his assent to the budget,
approved for the previous financial year would apply
prevent total paralysis of day-to-day administration."[28]
ajor part of the government's assets is held in statutory
government companies, the EP is also required to
assets by controlling their activities by approving the
of their key officers and budgets. Given the large
rganisations, the second White Paper has identified
y boards and four government companies, which will
the EP's control since they require his approval for
budgets.[29] If the EP vetoes a budget, the statutory
vernment company will continue operating on the
approved during the previous year.[30]
nd safeguard power of the EP concerns the
s of key officers in the public service, statutory boards
nent companies. Paragraph 21 of the second White
tes that the EP "will have the discretion to approve
ommendations to appoint the following key public
Chief Justice, Judges and Judicial Commissioners of
Court; the Attorney General; the Chairman and
the Presidential Council for Minority Rights; the
d members of the Public Service Commission; the
eral and Accountant General; members of the Armed
cil, other than ex-officio members; the Chief of
e; the Chiefs of the Air Force, Army, and Navy; the
r of Police; and the Director of the Corrupt Practices
Bureau (CPIB). The EP has also been given the
appoint two members of the Council of Presidential
is also responsible for approving the appointment
utive officers, company directors and statutory board
he abovementioned nine statutory boards and four
companies.[32]
hird safeguard power was not mentioned in the first
as it resulted from two important legislative

with the executive and not with the courts."[33] In response to the criticism during the parliamentary debate in January 1989 on the amendment by some MPs that the government could abuse its powers under the ISA, Goh Chok Tong, who was then the First Deputy Prime Minister, said:

> The answer to possible abuse of ISA ... cannot be judicial review. ... The answer must be political, that is, having another political body to exercise judgment on security cases, much the same way as the Executive has done ... to provide a second opinion and a check and balance. We are working on this idea.[34]

Whether ISA detainees should be detained further is usually determined by an Advisory Board, which is chaired by a Supreme Court judge. The Board advises the Minister for Home Affairs on whether the detainee should be detained for a further period, but the Minister is not required to heed the Board's advice. The EP has been entrusted with the additional role of preventing the government from abusing the ISA's powers through the requirement that the Home Affairs Minister must obtain the EP's support if he disagrees with the Board's recommendation.[35]

The second area where the EP has been asked to provide an additional safeguard concerns the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill, which was being examined by a Select Committee when the second White Paper was published. Among other things, this Bill enables the Minister for Home Affairs to issue Prohibition Orders to prevent "persons from causing ill will between religions, and from mixing religion and politics." The Minister is assisted by the Presidential Council on Religious Harmony, which advises him on whether to revoke or modify a Prohibition Order, but he does not need to accept such advice. However, the Minister requires the EP's assent if he wishes to ignore the Council's recommendation.[36]

The CPIB was formed in October 1952 as an autonomous anti-corruption agency to enforce the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act (POCA). From 1970, the CPIB came under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to enable it to "obtain the necessary cooperation from all the ministries and

nprehensive anti-corruption legislation and by
incorrupt anti-corruption agency to enforce such

owers are designed to prevent an "irresponsible,
" government from mismanaging the national
m undermining the civil service's integrity "through
politically expedient appointments." A government
in this manner will "most likely condone corruption,
investigations into complaints of corruption. Thus,
irector does not have the Prime Minister's consent
ries or investigate into any complaints regarding a
nay nevertheless continue his investigations if he
's support.[39]

portant change discussed in the second White Paper
size and composition of the Council of Presidential
s wider role. Instead of the three to five members
he first White Paper, the Council will have six
two members each being nominated by the EP,
rvice Commission's Chairman, and the Prime
EP is required to consult the Council when he
cise his discretion to approve or reject the annual
government, statutory boards and key government
may consult the Council on other matters where
onary powers, but he is not required to do so.[40]
n of a mechanism to override presidential vetoes
ite Paper was rectified in the 1990 version, which
onditional override mechanism" for Supply Bills
ntary Supply Bills passed in Parliament. The EP's
d to be final if his decision is supported by the
Council members. On the other hand, when the
against the Council's advice, the government can
eto by passing the Bill again in Parliament, with a
ority.[41]
f the public discussion on the required experience
ons of the EP, the 1990 White Paper indicated that

(b) chairman or chief executive officer of a company with a paid up capital of at least $100 million; or

(c) chairman or chief executive officer of a key statutory board, i.e. one subject to Presidential control.[42]

The final change to the 1988 White Paper concerns the Office of Vice-President, which was scrapped in the revised version. The earlier suggestion of including a Vice-President was criticised by some MPs who argued that "a Vice-President who is concurrently a Minister would face a conflict of interest, as he would from time to time act on behalf of the President, whose primary function is to scrutinise, and if necessary block, decisions of the Cabinet of which the Vice-President had been a member."[43] Accordingly, there would not be a Vice-President, and when the EP is temporarily unable to perform his duties, he is replaced by the Chief Justice or the Speaker of Parliament.[44]

The Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No. 3) Bill was read for the second time in Parliament on October 4, 1990. It was sent by Parliament to a Select Committee two days later to scrutinise the Bill and to ascertain whether modifications were necessary.[45] Members of the public were given until the end of the same month to submit their views on the Bill.[46] A total of 34 written representations in English, Chinese and Malay were received and four groups and six individuals were chosen to appear before the Select Committee on November 14-15.[47]

The Select Committee on the EP presented its report to Parliament on December 20, 1990. First, it reaffirmed the two White Papers' requirement that presidential candidates must have ability and experience in financial management, and must be persons of integrity, good character and reputation. They must be at least 45 years old, and be citizens who are registered voters and have resided in Singapore for at least ten years. Second, candidates are required to resign from political parties if they belong to such organisations. They must also affirm on oath that they would not allow their previous party affiliation to influence the performance of their ties. Third, the EP must consult the Council of Presidential Advisors when using his power over

trol was reduced to six as the Telecom, Port of rity (PSA) and Public Utilities Board (PUB) were l for privatisation. Finally, the EP has been given he annual budgets of the government, statutory rnment companies.[48]

1991, Parliament passed the Constitution of the apore (Amendment No. 3) Bill and changed the presidency from a ceremonial role to one with government budgets, key public appointments, nst government abuse of powers under the ISA, ny legislation, and corruption investigations.[49]

Religious Harmony

lti-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious society. f 2.68 million people in June 1989 consists of nese (75.9%), 408,800 Malays (15.2%), 174,300 ng Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Sri Lankans) 300 persons of other ethnic groups (2.4%).[50] the four official languages (English, Malay, Tamil), there are six main Chinese dialects chew, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese and five Indian languages (Malayalam, Punjabi, d Bengali).[51]

e is also great diversity in religion among the ording to the 1980 Census, 29.3% of the oist, followed by 26.7% Buddhist, 16.3% Muslim, , 10.3% Christian, 3.7% Hindu, and 0.6% belong .[52] A 1988 national survey of a random sample aged 15 years and above has shown that the w the largest religious group (28.3%), followed (18.7%), those with no religion (17.6%), the the Taoists (13.4%), the Hindus (4.9%), and .1%).[53] (See Table 1 below.)

ine the distribution of religion among the major n Singapore, we find that there is a close een ethnicity and religion. An analysis of the

national survey indicate that the Buddhists (38.1%) are the largest group among the Chinese as the proportion of Chinese Taoists has dropped to 18.3%. Islam (99.3%) and Hinduism (55.1%) continue to be the dominant religions among the Malays and Indians respectively.[55]

TABLE 1
Distribution (%) of Religion in Singapore, 1980 & 1988

Religion	1980	1988
Taoism	29.3	13.4
Buddhism	26.7	28.3
Christianity	10.3	18.7
Islam	16.3	16.0
Hinduism	3.7	4.9
Other Religions	0.6	1.1
No Religion	13.2	17.6
Total	100.0	100.0
(N)	(1,981,962)	(1,015)

Source: Kuo and Quah, *Religion in Singapore: Report of a National Survey*, p. 76, Table 1.

In view of the racial, linguistic and religious diversity of the population, it is necessary for any incumbent government in Singapore to first formulate and implement policies which will enhance racial harmony. The second obligation of the ruling government in a plural society is to ensure that both public and private organisations are fair and impartial in their treatment of their clientele, regardless of their ethnicity, language or religion. Thus, it is not surprising that there is a Presidential Council for Minority Rights, which examines Bills presented in Parliament to ensure that minority rights are not endangered.[56] In November 1984, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew attributed Singapore's success to two factors: the guiding principles of good government

TABLE 2
jion and Ethnicity in Singapore, 1980 (%)

	Ethnicity			
Chinese	Malays	Indians	Others	Total
10.6	0.3	12.4	60.8	10.3
34.3	0.1	1.0	17.4	26.7
38.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	29.3
0.1	99.3	21.8	6.5	16.3
0.0	0.0	56.5	0.2	3.7
0.1	0.0	7.0	1.6	0.6
16.7	0.2	1.2	13.4	13.2
1,517,660	294,121	127,781	42,399	1,981,962

ion in Singapore: An Analysis of the 1980 Census Data, p. 43.

constitute the most serious threat to Singapore's
e such riots can undermine the multi-racial basis
society and also tear the social fabric apart. Indeed,
ety like Singapore, racial riots are more likely to
here is a lack of harmony, understanding and
een the various ethnic groups.[58] To date, Singapore
ed four racial riots: the Maria Hertogh riots of
0; the July and September 1964 racial riots; and
which resulted from the spillover effects of the
acial riots in Kuala Lumpur.[59]
y, the PAP leaders' perceptions of the communal
pore have been influenced to a great extent by the
the four racial riots. Accordingly, they have relied
ion of positive and negative measures to prevent
from eroding racial harmony and understanding.
e side, the government has embarked on a nation-
amme since 1959 that relies on the four pillars of
elopment, public housing, national service, and

riots by restricting individuals, groups, organisations and the press from sensationalising and exploiting racial, linguistic and religious issues. The other negative measures employed by the government include the use of the ISA and the Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Ordinance to detain without trial those persons involved in subversive or communist-related activities, drug traffickers, and criminals.[61]

In his address at the opening of Parliament on January 9, 1989, President Wee Kim Wee stressed the need for religious tolerance and moderation in Singapore's multi-religious society. He also reminded religious groups to observe the taboo of non-involvement in the political process because "in a multi-religious society, if one group violates this taboo, others will follow suit, and the outcome will be militancy and conflict." He further hinted that the government would be making explicit the ground-rules for political and religious groups in the near future.[62]

On December 26, 1990, the White Paper on "Maintenance of Religious Harmony" was presented to Parliament. This White Paper explains the rationale for introducing legislation to maintain religious harmony and tolerance, and for establishing the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony. It states explicitly at the outset that in the context of Singapore's multi-racial and multi-religious society, "religious and racial harmony are not just desirable ideals to be achieved, but essential conditions for our survival as one nation."[63]

As part of the universal trend of religious revival affecting many countries, the White Paper referred to the finding of a study commissioned by the Ministry of Community Development (MCD) in 1988 that there has been "a definite increase in religious fervour, missionary zeal, and assertiveness among the Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and other religious groups in Singapore."[64] Given the fragile nature of religious harmony, it cannot be assumed that such harmony will persist indefinitely as a matter of course. Rather, more conscious efforts are required to maintain religious harmony, especially by religious leaders and groups.

ner faiths, or by insensitively trying to convert those belonging
ons. If they do, these other groups will feel attacked and
d must respond by mobilising themselves to protect their
cessary militantly. Similarly, if any religious group uses its
rity to pursue secular political objectives, other religions
w suit. Tensions will build up, and there will be trouble

ant to note here that the White Paper has included
a report on "Religious Trends — A Security
prepared by the Internal Security Department to
tual instances" of aggressive and insensitive
, mixing of religion and politics, and religious
iting religion for subversive purposes.[66]

Paper has identified two "vital conditions" for
eligious harmony viz., (1) "followers of the different
exercise moderation and tolerance, and do nothing
ous enmity or hatred" and (2) "religion and politics
t rigorously separated."[67] Regarding the second
e White Paper contends that "the social fabric of
l also be threatened if religious groups venture into
political parties use religious sentiments to garner
ort." Therefore, religious leaders and their followers
omote any political party or cause "under the cloak
The leaders should not incite their followers to "defy,
actively oppose secular Government policies" or to
eir followers or their organisations for subversive
nus, like civil servants and judges, religious leaders
cipate actively in politics, even though "they enjoy
tical rights to hold political opinions and to vote as
s."[68] In short, the aim of separating religion from
establish working rules by which many faiths can
amental differences between them, and coexist
Singapore."[69]

realistic and unwise to assume that all the religious
abide by these rules without any legislation, the

government has introduced legislation which enables the Minister to issue a Prohibition Order against those who threaten racial harmony because of their harmful conduct[70] by preventing them from engaging in the following activities: addressing any congregation; printing, publishing, distributing or contributing to any publication produced by that religious group; and holding office in any editorial board or committee of any publication produced by that group.[71]

The MCD study on religion recommended the formation of an Inter-Religious Council (IRC) for two reasons: "(1) to promote harmony between the different religions in Singapore and to monitor the relations between them; and (2) to minimise friction and misunderstanding between these religious groups and to perform an arbitration role if necessary."[72] The government accepted this recommendation as the IRC could play an important role in improving relations between religious groups, and in advising it on how to deal with sensitive religious issues. Accordingly, the government proposed the creation of a Presidential Council for Religious Harmony in the White Paper. This Council will have representatives from all the major religions in Singapore, as well as prominent lay persons with distinguished public service and community relations records. It will have a Chairman and a maximum of 15 other members, who will be appointed for three years by the President on the advice of the Presidential Council for Minority Rights.[73]

The Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill was introduced in Parliament for its first reading on January 15, 1990. It was read a second time on February 22, 1990 by Professor S. Jayakumar, Minister for Home Affairs and for Law, who informed Parliament that the Bill would be sent to a Select Committee. He said that the government had a choice of doing something now or let the situation remain the same. He contended that the price for inaction was heavy and that "many countries are now paying the price". The government's approach was a cautious one and it recommended that the risk be avoided because "far too much

this Bill is a recognition of a retrogression, a potential
n religious harmony. The Government takes no joy in
I take no joy in speaking on this subject. It is not something
y proud of. We introduce it more with sorrow or more in
th joy. It is to prevent us from sliding backward. It is an
reserving common sense and harmony.[75]

day long debate in Parliament, the Bill was sent to
ittee on February 24, 1990. Submissions on the Bill
om members of the public, who were given until
end their views to the Select Committee.[76] The Bill
ond time in Parliament on July 18, 1990, and even
ginal deadline had expired, Professor S. Jayakumar,
fairs and Law Minister, indicated that those who
r their views on the Bill to the Select Committee
so.[77]

Committee received 78 written representations from
nd organisations. More than half (41) of these
upported the Bill, 25 opposed it and the remaining
ar stand. The 11 member Select Committee, which
y the Speaker, heard oral evidence in private from
ine of whom presented their views in public on
-21, 1990.[78] The organisations which presented their
he Singapore Council of Christian Churches, the
Islam Singapura (MUIS), the Graduates' Christian
ne Hindu Advisory Board, the Hindu Endowments
ngapore Democratic Party and the National University
's Political Association.[79]

Committee proposed a total of 18 amendments to
ance of Religious Harmony Bill in its report.[80] In
he third reading of the Bill, Professor S. Jayakumar
ne amendments proposed by the Select Committee
our aspects:

essed concerns that too much power would be given to the
giving the Elected President a safeguard role;

ved the element of subjectivity in the language of part of the

The Bill was passed in Parliament on November 9, 1990.[82]

Shared Values

The origin of the concept of shared values can be traced to Goh Chok Tong's speech to the PAP Youth Wing on October 28, 1988, when he first suggested the need for Singapore to have a national ideology "to immunise Singaporeans from the undesirable effects of alien influences and to bind them together as a nation."[83] On November 5, 1988, a committee, chaired by the Minister for Trade and Industry, Brigadier-General (Res) Lee Hsien Loong, was formed to formulate Singapore's national values.[84]

In his opening address at the Seventh Parliament on January 9, 1990, President Wee Kim Wee explained why Singapore needed a national ideology and identified its four core values in the following way:

> If we are not to lose our bearings, we should preserve the cultural heritage of each of our communities, and uphold certain common values which capture the essence of being a Singaporean. These core values include placing society above self, upholding the family as the basic block of society, resolving major issues through consensus instead of contention, and stressing racial and religious tolerance and harmony. We need to enshrine these fundamental ideas in a National Ideology. Such a formal statement will bond us together as Singaporeans, with our own distinct identity and destiny. We need to inculcate this National Ideology in all Singaporeans, especially the young.[85]

On January 21, 1989, Goh Chok Tong announced that a discussion paper on shared values would be presented to Parliament.[86] Soon after that, the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) was requested by the government to conduct a study to identify those national values which would help to unite all Singaporeans. Accordingly, the IPS formed a Study Group on National Values for this purpose. The IPS Study Group completed its study within ten months and its report was published as a monograph, entitled *In Search of Singapore's National Values*, in September 1990.

The IPS Study Group evaluated the usefulness of the four core values identified by President Wee and recommended three

uence of listing the values and placed the original
e of racial and religious tolerance and harmony
ortant core value. Thus, the IPS Study Group has
nat the government adopt the following six values,
order of importance, as national values for all

g racial and religious understanding, tolerance and

and maintaining the tradition of honest government.
ing individual interests with the interests of the community

g the family as a basic institution of society.
ompassion for the less fortunate in society.
major issues through consensus as far as possible.[87]

, 1991, the government presented a White Paper
ues" in Parliament after taking into account the
ussion on the topic both within and outside
e President Wee's identification of the four core
ry 1989. The White Paper presents and explains
t's position on the proposal for a set of shared
aporeans. More specifically, it has identified five
which are extensions and modifications of the
ore values. The five shared values identified in
er are:

ion before community and society above self.
nily as the basic unit of society.
gard and community support for the individual.
nsensus instead of contention.
ial and religious harmony.[88]

Paper on "Share Values" was debated in Parliament
15, 1991 and it was adopted with two amendments.[89]
value of "Regard and community support for the
s changed to "Community support and respect for

White Papers can be viewed as the government's response to its two major problems. The EP is the government's answer to the problem of checking the power of the Prime Minister in the context of Singapore's one-party dominant system. The second major problem facing Singapore's political leaders is: How to minimise the potential for racial and or religious conflict in multi-racial and multi-religious Singapore? The PAP government's answer to this problem is two-fold: (1) develop a Singaporean national identity by promoting the five shared values among all Singaporeans; and (2) ensure religious harmony by separating religion from politics and taking action against those who impose their religious beliefs on other Singaporeans.

NOTES

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2. See Jon S. T. Quah, "Singapore in 1988: Safeguarding the Future," in *Singapore 1989*, edited by Tan Han Hoe (Singapore: Information Division, Ministry of Communications and Information, 1989), pp. 16-17.
3. *Straits Times*, August 5, 1991, p. 1.
4. A White Paper is a statement of government policy which is presented to Parliament because it is of sufficient public importance. See Paul Silk, *How Parliament Works*, 2nd edition (London: Longman, 1989), p. 90.
5. *Singapore Facts and Pictures 1990* (Singapore: Information Division, Ministry of Communications and Information, 1990), p. 13.
6. Jon S. T. Quah, "The Public Policy-making Process in Singapore," *The Asian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (December 1984), p. 113.
7. K. I. Sudderuddin (ed.), *Singapore 1986* (Singapore: Information Division, Ministry of Communications and Information, 1986), p. 39.
8. Douglas V. Verney, "Analysis of Political Systems," in *Comparative Politics: A Reader*, edited by Harry Eckstein and David E. Apter (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), p. 190.
9. Jon S. T. Quah, "Controlled Democracy, Political Stability and PAP Predominance: Government in Singapore," in *The Changing Shape of Government in the Asia-Pacific Region*, edited by John W. Langford and K. Lorne Brownsey (Halifax: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1988), pp. 127-129.
10. See John Frears, "The French Parliament: Loyal Workhorse, Poor Watchdog,"

gapore in 1988," p. 17.
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titution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No. 3) Bill,"
of 1990 (Presented to Parliament by Command of the President of
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, paragraphs 12-13.
, paragraph 14.
e statutory boards are: Board of Commissioners of Currency,
e; Central Provident Fund Board; Housing and Development Board;
Town Corporation; Monetary Authority of Singapore; Port of
e Authority; Post Office Savings Bank; Public Utilities Board; and
munication Authority of Singapore. The four government companies
ernment of Singapore Investment Corporation Pte. Ltd.; Ministry of
Development Holdings Pte. Ltd.; Singapore Technologies Holdings
; and Temasek Holdings Pte. Ltd. See *ibid.*, p. 5, paragraphs 16-17.
5-6, paragraph 20.
6, paragraphs 21-22.
5, paragraphs 19-20.
7, paragraph 24.
in *ibid.*, p. 7, paragraph 24.
7, paragraph 25.
7, paragraphs 26-27.
Quah, "Singapore's Experience in Curbing Corruption," in *Political*

40. *Ibid.*, p. 9, paragraphs 30b and 30c.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 10, paragraph 35.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 11, paragraph 38.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 13, paragraph 50.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 14, paragraph 51a.
45. *Straits Times*, October 7, 1990, p. 27.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
47. *Ibid.*, November 14, 1990, p. 25.
48. See "Key Changes Recommended by the Select Committee," *Straits Times*, December 21, 1990, p. 26.
49. *Straits Times*, January 4, 1991, p. 1.
50. *Singapore Facts and Pictures 1990*, p. 3.
51. *Singapore 1990* (Singapore: Psychological Defence and Publicity Division, Ministry of Communications and Information, 1990), p. 7.
52. Quoted in Eddie C. Y. Kuo, *Religion in Singapore: An Analysis of the 1980 Census Data* (Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1987), pp. 4-5.
53. See Eddie C. Y. Kuo and Jon S. T. Quah, *Religion in Singapore: Report of a National Survey* (Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1988), p. 76, Table 1.
54. Kuo, *Religion in Singapore: An Analysis of the 1980 Census Data*, pp. 36 and 43.
55. Kuo and Quah, *Religion in Singapore: Report of a National Survey*, p. 77, Table 2.
56. Quah, "Controlled Democracy, Political Stability and PAP Predominance," pp. 127-128.
57. *Straits Times*, November 19, 1984, p. 1.
58. Quah, "Controlled Democracy, Political Stability and PAP Predominance," p. 128.
59. For more details of these riots, see Jon S. T. Quah, "Meeting the Twin Threats of Communism and Communalism: The Singapore Response," in *Governments and Rebellions in Southeast Asia*, edited by Chandran Jeshurun (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985), pp. 193-195.
60. Quah, "Controlled Democracy, Political Stability and PAP Predominance," p. 128.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.
62. "Maintenance of Religious Harmony," Cmd. 21 of 1989 (Presented to Parliament by Command of the President of the Republic of Singapore, 26 December 1989), p. 1, paragraph 2.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 2, paragraph 4.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 3, paragraph 10. For details of the MCD study, see Eddie C. Y. Kuo, Jon S. T. Quah and Tong Chee Kiong, *Religion and Religious Revivalism in Singapore* (Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1988).
65. "Maintenance of Religious Harmony," p. 4, paragraph 13.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-19.

per defines as "harmful conduct" those acts of a religious
ber of a religious group or institution which cause feelings of
, ill-will or hostility, or which prejudices the maintenance of
ony. It also includes the following: carrying out activities to
itical cause or conducting subversive activities under the guise
g or practising any religious belief; and "exciting disaffection
esident or the Government." See *ibid.*, pp. 9-10, paragraph 37.
aragraph 38.
ad Tong, *Religion and Religious Revivalism in Singapore*, p. 34.
aragraphs 43-44.
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s, November 1, 1990, p. 2.
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these amendments, see *Straits Times*, November 1, 1990, p. 22;
Times, November 1, 1990, p. 2.
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ng Singaporean Values," p. 1.
uah, "Searching for Singapore's National Values," in Quah, (ed.),
Singapore's National Values, pp. 102-103.
lues," Cmd. 1 of 1991 (Presented to Parliament by Command
sident of the Republic of Singapore, 2 January 1991), p. 10,
52.
of this debate, see *Straits Times*, January 15 and 16, 1991.
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CHAPTER ELEVEN

MALAYSIA – SINGAPORE RELATIONS: A MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE

Lee Poh Ping

Time and circumstances do not permit me to do justice to this subject. I shall instead offer a few thoughts in the hope that further discussion can be stimulated.

It is not necessary to belabour the obvious. Race is very important and many will argue, the determining factor in Malaysia-Singapore relations. Very few aspects of such relations can be fully understood without at least considering race as an underlying factor. Yet one can argue when compared with other such bilateral relations that is influenced by racial considerations, Malaysia-Singapore relations is sui generis. Consider two of the nearer comparable examples, that of Sri Lanka and India, and Turkey and Bulgaria. Both bear similarities, yet there are fundamental differences.

Sri Lanka has a large minority of Tamils who have bedevilled relations with its giant neighbour India. So is the case with the Turkish minority in Bulgaria with regard to Turkey-Bulgaria relations. Legacies of empire (the British in the former case though it must be said that many Tamils in Sri Lanka predate the British Raj, and the Ottoman Empire in the latter), the presence of both minorities had often made for difficult relations between the countries involved. Yet the minorities in both cases are not

ri Lanka. While in the case of the Turks, they are nsequential in Bulgaria and themselves the victims similation policy. Whereas in the Malaysia-Singapore e left the Malaysian federation because, or at least eived by the majority group of Malays, its leaders ng the non-Malays, particularly the Chinese, to take control of Malaysia. Even after separation there is stantial Chinese population in Malaysia much more an either the Tamils or Turks in Sri Lanka and ectively. At the same time there is a fairly sizeable alays, over fifteen per cent, in Singapore who, while threat to the Chinese, is not an unimportant factor Singapore relations. No such large minorities of d Bulgarians exist in India and Turkey respectively. rther to this uniqueness, and indeed complicating ship, is the common history of both and the s under which Singapore left Malaysia in August 1965. etaphors that have been coined to describe it bespeak problematic intimacy. The late Tun Razak described tween Siamese twins. And as recently as this month), the Malaysian foreign minister, Datuk Abdullah awi, resorted to a conjugal metaphor. Even a man an sleeping together, he said, can have problems.

ce can be an underlying factor, it takes on a salience tion to other variables such as political, economic, ultural and other considerations. As is said of race the United States, a negro is a negro. Only under umstances does he become a slave. In this paper, I some reflections on the political and economic nces", believing such to be most relevant in this lationship. If there is any underlying theme, it is a that Malaysia-Singapore relations can be seen as a ogression from a unique relationship since 1965 to normal" one as between two independent states, ch "normality" is yet to be fully achieved.

1976-1981 (the premiership of Hussein Onn); and 1981 to the present; (the Mahathir administration).

1965-1976

This probably constitutes the most difficult period in the bilateral relationship, one where both leadership tried to come to grips with the fact that Singapore was a separate state. It was an attempt made more difficult by the acrimony between the two leadership groups which preceded the separation. In the first place, a deep ambivalence characterised the attitudes toward each other. There was the Tengku who on the one hand made a genuine attempt to accept Singapore's independence by sponsoring its membership in the United Nations while on the other opposed Singapore's intention of trading with Indonesia (confrontation was not over then), suggesting Malaysian national security could be affected. The Singaporean leadership on its part sought to distance itself from Malaysia but yet at the same time could not help make disparaging remarks about the non-Malay leadership in Malaysia.

Also there was the emotional scar, particularly during Razak's premiership. While one should not underestimate the capacity of the Tengku to make ruthless but necessary decisions, he nevertheless evinced a fatherly figure (perhaps borne out of his age and royal status) to all, including the Singapore leaders. This often tempered relations. But Razak was of the same generation as the Singaporean leadership and one most personally involved in the negotiations with these leaders before separation. Such naturally coloured the bilateral relationship (though Razak as premier did visit Singapore to improve the relationship). Razak also assumed power after the racial riot on May the 13, 1969 which could not but have an effect on Singapore. Such a relationship on the top level naturally seeped into the lower levels as to create misunderstandings and pettiness. Thus, there was a furore in Malaysia when the long hair of three young Malaysians in Singapore were forcibly cut, a result of the over-zealous implementation of a Singaporean policy to curb decadent Western

'ne compensation for goodwill to one of 'ngapore Airlines, that of Malaysia.

.ame premier after Razak had no involvement ,ny before 1965. The late Tun Hussein, as is well wed his father, Onn bin Jaafar who left UMNO when open its doors to non-Malays. He was in the political or some length of time until brought back into active 68 by his brother-in-law, Tun Razak (they both married brought a fresh eye to the relationship. One of the his direction was his invitation to the Singapore Prime e Kuan Yew for an official visit. (Lee Kuan Yew was ne funeral of Tun Razak in 1976 though). This set the new relationship which was marked by less testiness mall incidents blown out of proportion.

ot to say there were no incidents, but they were not charged or a result of one upmanship. There was the Far Eastern Economic Review editor-in-chief, Derek vies had an interview in 1976 with Lee Kuan Yew upposed to be off the record. He subsequently narrated dings of the interview into a tape which he claimed was , and not for subsequent quotation. What the exact the tape was had not been made public, but there of rumours circulating that it contained disparaging Lee of certain Malaysian leaders. Subsequently in order misunderstanding on the part of Malaysia which the d be assumed to have found its way, the Singapore ister issued a statement declaring his high regard for ian leadership.

incident concerned the arrest of two Malay journalists re for anti-national activities. Following this in Malaysia, nown Malaysian journalist, Samad Ismail, was also He was made to confess in television for his communist s. This led to further arrests in the persons of Abdullah

many, particularly from the left, who believed these two events were coordinated by both authorities.

1981 to present

When Mahathir assumed the premiership, some sixteen years have elapsed since the separation. This time period had made both sides more aware and accepting of the fact they were two separate states, and relations should be as normal as possible.

In addition to the time factor, one reason for this "normality" is the style of Mahathir. Although he was involved in some debate with Lee Kuan Yew when Singapore was part of Malaysia, there had been no acrimony. On the other hand, Mahathir's style approximates closer to that of Lee Kuan Yew than was the case with his royal and aristocrat predecessors. They are both direct in approaching their subject matter, with little time for verbal niceties and subtle gestures. Moreover, both are go-getting, efficiency-oriented types who will not suffer fools gladly nor allow tradition and other obstacles to get in the way of their goals. Thus, Mahathir could not consider the Singapore style as "kasar" or crude. Lee Kuan Yew on the other hand believes he can operate on the same wavelength as Mahathir.[1] The scope for misunderstanding was thus minimized.

At the same time there is some shared perception of international economic relations as it pertains to relations with the West. Mahathir has made no secret of the fact that the West consistently applied double standards to economic relations with the developing countries. This is most clearly evident in the realm of trade. While it suited the West, i.e. at a time when they were economically competitive, they were great proponents of free trade. When they started to lose their competitiveness especially to Japan and the rising Asian economies, free trade is questioned, if not about to be abandoned. At the same time, they attempt to reduce the competitiveness of these Asian nations by insisting on human rights, proper work conditions, currency revaluation and a host of other demands that could reduce their competitiveness. Even

an and British governments took steps to restrict rather
e passenger traffic in the British-Singapore-Australian
Singapore Airlines (SIA) in favour of British Airways
as, Singapore Civil Aviation authorities were able to
e ASEAN countries successfully against this. Malaysia's
to this joint ASEAN action was crucial even though its
S may have only been marginally affected. Lee Kuan
ted this cooperation to Mahathir's belief that Western
ndards on free trade or competition were practised.
er reason for "normality" pertains to the political
nts in Malaysia. So long as the Malays feel that the
Malaysia can and will challenge them politically, there
nifications to the Malaysia-Singapore relations. There
that, justified or not, Singapore could exploit this. But
ncreasing willingness on the part of the Chinese to
secondary political role, and the rise to political
e of a Malay middle class more confident of handling
se question, there is now less concern of a political
tween the Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore, even if
ay politicians may continue to fan this fear. On the
d, Singapore no longer believes it has anything to gain
volvement, if any, in Malaysian politics by way of
ng the dominant role of the Malays in the Malaysian
ystem.
e "Siamese twins" still remain to be completely parted,
ne Mahathir period.[2] What are said and done by both,
ularly by Singapore, will still have consequences for the
ree events illustrate this.
as the comment by Brigadier General Lee concerning
of Malays in the Singapore armed forces. His intention
was not to question their loyalty but rather to bring into
a question many Singaporeans may have discussed in
ventilation of this problem could thus be healthy. What
pear to be an internal Singaporean problem nevertheless
a nerve in some Malaysian quarters who objected to the

Indonesia). Anti-zionist demonstrations were held, and Singapore was accused of being insensitive.

The third pertains to the Singaporean offer recently of increase of military facilities to the United States. It was a move designed to contribute to the so-called burden sharing in Southeast Asia and also perhaps to bring about a favourable outcome in the Filipino-US negotiations on the bases. Whether there was a miscommunication, or a lack of communication with Malaysia, many Malaysians, both in government and outside, construed the offer when first made as that of a base in Singapore to the Americans. They criticised this essentially as contrary to the ASEAN declaration of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality or ZOPFAN in Southeast Asia. While the theoretical objection was that it was against ASEAN policy, nevertheless, much of the future arose from more bilateral Malaysian-Singapore concerns. This was underscored by the point made by a Malaysian commentator that American aircraft in Singapore, given the small size of the island, would invariably have to use Malaysian air space to land. In the event, things settled down when it was clear Singapore was not offering a base.

The Economic Aspect

I am treading on dangerous grounds as I am not an economist. But because economic relations is so important in this bilateral relationship, it cannot be ignored. I shall therefore focus as much as possible on those aspects that pertain to international political economy.

As is well known, Singapore had historically acted as an entrepot for Malaya and Southeast Asia. In colonial times it served as a centre for the exchange of manufactured goods from the European metropolitan countries with raw materials from Malaya and other parts of Southeast Asia. By the time of the independence of Malaya in 1957, Singapore was still a colony of Britain.[5] Singapore too was anxious for independence from Britain. But there apparently was a profound belief held by the Singapore

ıose from the Peoples Action Party, made no secret of
for a merger with Malaysia.
on its part could not continue accepting forever its
e on Singapore as an entrepot as it had plans to develop
lets in places like Johore, Port Klang and elsewhere.
t also aspired to industrialize and would not welcome
veloped Singapore as a competitor in the Malaysian
the event Singapore was accepted by the Tengku but
for political reasons as the Tengku said he did not
ɔa at his doorsteps.
ame token when Singapore was forced to leave Malaysia,
and was thus gone.[4] The new approach taken was instead
r the world the new hintherland. Its industrialization
s geared towards encouraging multinationals to produce
ɔre for world markets, such as in the electronic, oil and
ndustries. Also Singapore sought to make itself a centre
al activities. It would seem to have been very successful,
great increase in GNP per capita since 1965, and the
industrial and financial developments. Malaysia for its
ahead with its own strategy of economic development
not dependent on Singapore. It developed its own
tural outlets for exports, its own industrial zones and so
gh its development was not as impressive as Singapore
5, it nevertheless achieved a credible performance in
GNP growth and industrialization. Yet economic
ndence was not completely broken. There were still
al economic links such as the continued use of Singapore
joint share markets (only recently divided), Singaporean
nts in Malaysian and so on, suggesting that the Siamese
age still holds.
cently, Singapore's economic strategy may have come a
e in the so-called Growth Triangle. It may be returning
laysian and Southeast Asian hintherland. The global
and strategy seems to be running into difficulties, brought
y certain developments. One is the trend towards

Singapore which could put it in the cleft stick of competition from lower wage countries and its inability to match the technological status of countries like Japan which could afford high wage labour.

The apparently logical step was the development and intensification of close economic links among Singapore, Johore and Batam. This Growth Triangle was first officially mooted by Goh Chok Tong, then prime minister designate of Singapore. In essence it involved a so-called "natural" economic grouping whereby the most advanced partner, Singapore would aid in the development of Johore and the Batam Islands, all within the context of an international economy where the multinationals continue to see this part of the world as a place to do business with. In addition to the hintherland concept, other motivations for Singapore consist of the possibility that Johore and Batam could constitute a nearby client for Singapore's advanced service industry. A not unimportant consideration was Singapore's desire for another source of water supply. Singapore now obtained much of its water from Johore but Singapore politicians envisaged a water pipeline drawing water from Sumatra to Singapore and then to Batam Islands.

As far as the Malaysian side, namely, Johore, was concerned, it would constitute the middle-ranked player whereby it hoped to benefit from middle-level manufacturing that an already saturated Singapore would want to hive off. There was the prospect of development from the building of a second causeway, and the creation of a new market in Batam for Johore products. In addition, Singapore was also Johore's tourism and agriculture market.

The intriguing question arises as to why the Malaysian side should agree as it could reinforce the dependence of Johore on Singapore. What may be "natural" to Singapore may be exploitative, to some Malaysians. Or even if not exploitative, some Malaysians see this as mainly benefitting Singapore. The Johore Mentri Besar, Muhyiddin Yasin's reply to doubters, apart from listing the potential benefits, is that Johore does not wish to

d other strategic gurus have written on this. I do not aining to critically evaluate their insights. But what is e is that the view that international capital movement ploitation of the host countries is increasingly out of e contrary, the view is now almost universally accepted by countries of the old Soviet bloc) that with e limitations, a developing country needs international d the technological input that accompanies it to Seen in this light, Singapore is no longer a sub imperial a conduit for necessary multinational and Singaporean, l technology for the modernization of Johore.

d reason lies in the new generation of leaders in both particularly Malaysia. Much has been made of the of traditional, particularly fundamentalist Islamic, values usands of Malay students with tertiary education, either a or abroad, during the era of the New Economic Policy. t in doubt. But the other side of the coin is that their to the modern world have led them to have some nding of modern business and a even better ding of its political connection. Business opportunities, or actual, should be sought, even if it is in collaboration apore or with others. Muhyiddin is a representative neration.

rtheless has to be stressed that Malaysia, or specifically oes not wish to see itself frozen into the present position ldle manufacturing state. It has aspirations to high gy. Muhyiddin himself talks about establishing a high gical park in Johore. This suggests that the long term of the Triangle depends on members in the lower levels le to advance to higher ones.

e Singapore side, one has a hint that the younger leaders e enthusiastic. Lee Kuan Yew in his last National Day as premier in 1990 mentioned that his younger colleagues ed him that Singapore could still keep ahead in this — Lee mentioned that the number of people involved rch and Development in Indonesia and Malaysia combined

deprive Singapore of its advantage. Presumably the younger generation, free to a great extent from this mindset and more confident of their ability to handle modern technology, can approach this linkup in the Triangle with confidence.

NOTES

1. In contrasting the political styles of Mahathir and the Tengku recently, Lee Kuan Yew said that there were times that the Tengku's signals and nuances were so subtle that he missed many of them. The Tengku apparently did not take too kindly to this remark.
2. Early in the Mahathir administration, Lee Kuan Yew who praised Mahathir and Musa Hitam then as serious political minds said he believed Mahathir realises that a Singapore gone wrong could affect Malaysia.
3. As we all know Singapore was excluded from the Malayan Union proposal and the subsequent Federation of Malaya agreement in 1948 which formed the basis of contemporary Malaysia.
4. There are some who believe that Lee Kuan Yew himself had never actually wanted to stay forever in Malaysia. He wanted an independent Singapore, which he knew the British would not grant but would allow it if it were part of Malaysia. He thus declared Singapore independent on August 31st 1963 when the Tengku delayed the formation of Malaysia till September 16th so that he could lay the legal basis for a breakaway, while at the same time making life so difficult for the Tengku and UMNO that they have no choice but force Singapore out. It is an intriguing theory but remains controversial and is not universally accepted.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE MANAGEMENT OF TERDEPENDENCE AND CHANGE THIN A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

Chin Kin Wah

an almost irresistible temptation to turn to analogies politicians on both sides of the causeway reflect on the Malaysia-Singapore relations. The easy proliferation of point to the complexity and special quality of relations he two countries.

ost common analogy is that of the family. Former Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew for example, likened testy relationship between Malaysia and Singapore (ie. onship between leaders of his generation) to that of a arrel "because we can't really walk away. We were brought e society, in one mould... we were part of one whole".[1] e of the family is similarly found in the Malaysian Prime Dato Seri Mahathir Mohamed's reference: "Just like you ve problems with somebody you don't know, but you blems with your wife, your own children, because what mpacts upon you".[2] Former Malaysian Foreign Minister Ghazali Shafie in turn has written of the two countries les as being "destined to be inseparable twins. The hopes and hurts and joys of one side are shared by the other".[3] rs have compared Malaysia-Singapore relations to those couple who cannot be truly separated because of

of Singapore should be in Singaporean hands and that of Malaysia in Malaysian hands. That's all the separation there is."[4]

A second set of analogies serve to characterise the condition between neighbours. The present Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Badawi once compared Malaysia-Singapore relations to those "between neighbours living in semi-detached houses, sharing a common wall and roof". He drew the analogy to stress the importance of giving due consideration to the needs and sensitivity of each other.[5] The current Singapore Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong for his part, chose the analogy of "flat dwellers sharing the same corridor" to characterise the Malaysia-Singapore-Indonesia nexus. The inter-relatedness of their security and economic concerns is reflected in a seemingly mundane comment: "If one household is watching out for robbers, burglars or thieves, that alertness will also benefit the neighbours. Likewise, if I engage in a little gardening along the corridor, we can help one another".[6]

The third set of analogies pertains to the world of the bio-sciences and is often used to depict the new economic linkages and co-operation between Malaysia and Singapore. Two words that come most readily to mind are "symbiosis" and "synergy"[7] whenever references (especially by Singapore ministers and officials) are made to the concept of the economic "growth triangle" involving Singapore and parts of Malaysia and Indonesia.

At a more abstract level, the image of images is invoked by way of referring to the respective Malaysian and Singaporean societies. BG Lee Hsien Loong (currently Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry and a Deputy Prime Minister) described the interlinked societies of Malaysia and Singapore as "mirror images of each other. In nation building, we face mirror images of similar problems but we have chosen very different solutions to them. This makes our relationship a complicated one to manage".[8]

Each of the above analogies can be said to underline one unique aspect of the special relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. They provide quick and easy, even necessary, but nevertheless, insufficient handles to an understanding of the total relationship.

mentals in Malaysia-Singapore Relations

constantly operating factor is the obvious difference geo-political circumstance and racial arithmetic that ly influence the respective world views and sense of oility of the two countries. Singapore is the only city- e only nation with a Chinese-majority populace and llest territory in the whole of Southeast Asia. In Law of parlance the island-state is ironically "land-locked" with lusive Economic Zone to speak of because of its ity to Malaysia and Indonesia. Given its confined also has no defence in depth. The need to compensate has led Singapore to cultivate "multi-dimensional — the kind (as Brigadier General (Res) George Yeo, ngapore's Minister of State for Finance and Minister e for Foreign Affairs, described it) that is created lomacy, economic alliances, overseas investments ernational networking.[9]

ysia on the other hand is, in land area alone, 570 times han Singapore. As the only country that shares common s with all the other ASEAN states, Malaysia is at the f a geographically linked ASEAN security complex. Malaysian analyst points out, since the formation of laysian Federation in 1963, the country has effectively e a "maritime nation" possessing a 1,900 mile shoreline. ornean part of the Federation is separated by vast es of the South China Sea, at points nearly a thousand listant. Malaysia also has an Exclusive Economic Zone ne 160,000 sq. miles.[10] Though not an Islamic state, ia has a Malay-dominant political system that in turn hape to a different world view and self-image.

he early post-separation years especially, these geo- ic facts of life led to a sharp divergence in mutual otions between the two countries. On the one side, ore was perceived as a possible "Cuba", a second Israel third China. [Today, one equally popular image of

emergence as a separate state, had tended to view its immediate external environment in less sanguine terms. Its siege mentality was reinforced by a perception of that environment as a "Malay sea" which Malaysia and Indonesia constituted. While these adverse perceptions may still linger, the fact remains that Singapore has recognised and seeks to give substance to, the need to stabilise and cultivate special relations and engage in confidence – building with both Malaysia and Indonesia to strengthen their interdependence and remove precisely the negative consequences of such perceptions.

Nevertheless there is persisting divergence in strategic perspectives and attitudes towards the legitimacy of great power involvement in regional affairs. While Singapore emphasizes the importance of self-reliance on national defence based on a high deterrent posture, it also recognises the importance of sustaining a balance of external influences. This includes keeping the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) in good repair and engaging a continuing American military presence in the region. The decision to extend military facilities to the US is one expression of the latter concern.

Malaysia however seems to prefer a more indigeneous regional order as evidenced by the Zopfan – syndrome in its declaratory foreign policy and a political de-emphasis on the FPDA. And while Singapore has been far more supportive of America's regional security role, for example over the Gulf Crisis, Malaysia reflects an ambivalence towards the United States. Indeed, as the Gulf Crisis erupted into war between the US – led coalition forces and Iraq, the Malaysian government, in some way responding to a shifting Malay ground on the issue, began to express dissatisfaction with the American Middle-East Policy in general and the way the war was being handled by the US.[12]

The unique proximity of the two countries creates a special set of security interdependence in as many dimensions as the word "security" can possibly convey. In strategic parlance, Malaysia and Singapore constitute a "security complex" in the

cored this point when he commented that the one lesson Malayan Campaign in the Second World War that is still s the indivisibility of the defence of Malaysia and ore. This inescapable fact of geography, he stressed, is ered by the emergence of the two countries as sovereign .[14] The indivisibility of Malaysia-Singapore defence was ed by both Brigadier-General (Res) Lee Hsien Loong Goh Chok Tong during their visits to Malaysia in July nd January 1989 respectively. Indivisibility of defence plies that close neighbours have a strong interest, indeed in each other's domestic political stability. As BG Lee ed in a speech in Kuala Lumpur in July 1988, "Malaysia imagine coexisting peacefully with a Communist ore off the coast of Johor. Indeed, it is not necessary for ore to turn Communist to be a danger to Malaysia. A ore which is a Third China, and hold itself out as a for overseas Chinese everywhere in Southeast Asia to o to, would cause immense trouble to its neighbours ... rsely, Singapore cannot imagine what it would be like to n obscurantist irrational government in charge of the res of the Straits of Johor ..."[15]

uably, Singapore's public affirmation of the indivisibility aysia – Singapore defence might have been intended to alaysian apprehensions over the Republic's high defence which could be misconstrued as threatening.[16] The fact s however that a militarily resilient Singapore is also et within the security complex, in as much as a weak ore can undermine Malaysian security. Singapore itself es that "stronger neighbours are better for us than ones".[17]

hird fundamental in Malaysia-Singapore relations is divisibility of their economic security or prosperity. A re of their economic interdependence is reflected in ct that Malaysia is Singapore's third largest trading r in 1988 with total trade amounting to S$23.6 billion.[18] same year, Malaysia was Singapore's seventh largest

Taiwan and Japan, with Singapore companies committing over MS900 million in proposed manufacturing projects. It has been noted that in terms of approved investments in Malaysia, Singapore figures "doubled from 1986 to 1987, more than quadrupled in 1988 (over 1987) and more than doubled again in 1989 (over 1988)".[20] One noteworthy pattern in Singapore's investments in the manufacturing sector is that almost all these investments are concentrated in Johor, thus underlying the economic – strategic proximity of the peninsula's southern-most state to the island republic.

A fourth fact of life in Malaysia-Singapore relations is their close geographic proximity. However it should be said at this juncture, that Malaysia is not the only geographically close neighbour that Singapore has. After all, the nearest Indonesian islands are nearly as close to Singapore as Johor is. And Malaysia itself has a common land frontier with Thailand (which creates quite a different kind of security problem). But essentially, as Datuk Ahmad Badawi observed, "Malaysians do not get uptight or publicly emotional about the fate of Malays in Southern Thailand".[21] However, what geographic proximity compounds, in the case of Malaysia-Singapore relations, are the other transnational linkages expressed through ethnic ties (among Malays as well as Chinese), family relationship, and historical and cultural links. And these can create special problems when the interpenetrating influences converge on sensitive issues. Datuk Ahmad Badawi graphically portrayed these interpenetrating influences by claiming that, "To many Singaporeans, Malaysia is their ancestral land ... There is therefore, a sense of brotherhood on the part of Malaysians about what happens to their kind in Singapore and vice versa ... There is anger and concern when Singapore is perceived, rightly or wrongly, to be doing things against the interests of Malays and Malaysia."[22] The *Straits Times* in Singapore for its part, saw that "Part of the problem is the insistence of some politicians across the causeway that Malaysia has the right to

nal influences was the public furore generated in Malaysia
official visit to Singapore of Israel's President Chaim
in November 1986 — an event which marked the nadir
aysia-Singapore relations since separation.[24] Further
ersy followed BG Lee Hsien Loong's candid remarks
uary 1987 on the SAF's cautious approach towards taking
ays and placing them in key positions.[25] Although
l leaders on both sides have since attempted to repair
a-Singapore relations, subsequent lapses and irritants
ue to be registered in the relationship.

th determinant in Malaysia-Singapore relations is the
able fact that the two countries are and will remain
nentally different political systems that operate within
fferent political cultures. The Malaysian political system
pluralistic, embodying Federal-State relations, coalition
s, intra-party factionalism and involves a variety of
titive centres of power and authority. As one UMNO
ian described it, "Malaysia is an open society. In spite of
accusations that we are undemocratic, opposition parties,
interest groups, political party factionalism and critical
often biased reporting thrive. There is a limit on
nment control over them".[26] The dominant political
e and sense of the nation are derived from the political
of a Malay-Muslim dominant polity. All these however
t detract from the fact that Malaysia has an essentially
central government which has also proven to be an
so far, in stabilising external relations with Singapore.
e island-republic on the other hand is far more unitary,
no centre-periphery relations to deal with and has a
al culture that de-emphasizes open political contention
tresses instead national consensus and a managerial
ach to democracy. Such basic differences have been
ed out by some Malaysian commentators who urge
poreans not to over react when MP's or certain institutions
Singapore, and taking counter action that

Singapore-bashing and "roll with the punches" so to speak. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the *Straits Times*, such an accommodative approach in bending over backwards, might perhaps be favoured by Singaporeans with business interests in Malaysia, but Singapore would only end up conceding its primary interest before long.[28] Be that as it may, Mr Goh Chok Tong has noted that while reactions from some Malaysian Ministers which were opposed to the official stand had affected bilateral ties in the past,[29] Singapore nevertheless appreciated that this was the nature of Malaysian politics: "If the reactions at the official level are okay, we are happy. If it is just a press report, it is a different level. Maybe it is a reaction by certain ministers, not the official stand. That is the way politics is conducted in Malaysia".[30]

Following from the above fifth fundamental is the obvious linkage between domestic politics (or politiking) and foreign relations. The stark fact of life is that domestic politics in Malaysia can have an effect on, and in cases, complicate the management of foreign relations. A case in point is the manner in which the opposition Spirit of '46 party and the Parti Rakyat Malaysia sought to make Johor-Singapore relations an issue during the 1990 general election campaign in Johor Baru. Both Dato Jaafar Onn, a Spirit of '46 leader and Abdul Razak Ahmad, leader of Parti Rakyat Malaysia attempted to play up issues like the high cost of living in Johor Baru, the influx of free-spending Singaporeans who took advantage of the strong Singapore dollar vis-a-vis the ringgit, the ownership of property in Johor by Singaporeans, and the proposed second link across the Johor Straits which, it was claimed, would only benefit Singapore. The purpose was to highlight the grievances of some Johoreans against their state government.[31] In the wake of the ruling Barisan Nasional's electoral victory, Lee Kuan Yew commented that the result was good for Singapore-Malaysia relations because "those who were most critical of working with

nth fundamental is that both Malaysia and Singapore vely new states, still actively engaged in their respective of nation-building and understandably protective of ditional political sovereignties. In this respect, easy e is often taken over adverse comments, "acts of ence", and intended or unintended "instrusions" by or individuals from the other side. The greatest y often turns on allegations of territorial violation and ence in domestic affairs by outsiders. The so-called Melayu incident in which four Singapore national nen in two boats strayed into Malaysian waters near Melayu in Johor a few years ago, served to underline ad of sensitivity. As Lee Kuan Yew subsequently ed it, the incident was blown up in the Malay e newspapers "as if we were preparing for some big, spionage to go and secure a Dieppe landing or dy invasion ..."[33] Again, in September 1990, allegations Malaysia that a Singapore Air Force helicopter had d into Johor, led to a Singapore Defence Ministry ation which found that the aircraft was in the area in ion with an authorised air defence exercise.[34] Earlier ruary 1990, the Malaysian government stopped the ore Flying College and the Singapore Flying Club from Malaysian airspace following allegations of violations of an airspace and intelligence gathering activities by aircraft from Singapore.

t these irritants point to is that territorial issues seldom ouch a raw nerve in the relations between new states. in point is the yet unresolved disputed sovereignty edra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih), an island on which rsburgh lighthouse stands. On Singapore's part there as strong an assertion of sovereign rights whenever e inter-penetrating influences from Malaysia (or ere for that matter) are encountered. As the *Straits Times* "At source, many of the recent instances of Malaysian ent and unhappiness over Singapore – be it over Israeli

and independent nation as, for instance Indonesia and Thailand are."[35] Indeed, the "sovereignty syndrome" of a small state is consistently reflected in the tough international stance taken by Singapore whenever violations of sovereignty, especially territorial sovereignty (such as Iraq's invasion of Kuwait) come before it. That said, traditional notions of sovereignty are constantly assailed by the relentless march of the new telecommunications technology. Even in Singapore, where the intrusions of undesirable foreign influences are jealously guarded against, an acknowledgement is made that "unfortunately in this electronic age, the barrier cannot be completely watertight: RTM and TV3 broadcasts are received in Singapore, just as SBC programmes can be received in Johor".[36]

The eighth though by no means the least important fundamental in Malaysia-Singapore relations is that external influences, whether from immediate neighbours or extra-regional powers, cannot be wished away. The respective and joint futures of Malaysia and Singapore cannot be isolated from the pressures of fast changing global trends — whether we are referring to the end of the Cold War, the growing polycentrism of the international system, the fragmentation of power, the shifts in the global balance of economic power or the growing primacy of economics as a determinant of security. One implication of a fast shrinking world is that there is really no alternative to interdependence. The challenge lies in how Malaysia and Singapore can manage this interdependence and benefit from it together.

Having considered the constantly operating factors that shape present and future Malaysia-Singapore relations, it may now be asked, what are the elements in the Malaysia-Singapore nexus that will change and how should such change be handled within a relationship that continues to be special?

The Changing Elements in Malaysia-Singapore Relations

relations had depended very largely on the personal between top political leaders, makes this generational en more challenging. The significance of personal is clearly indicated in Lee Kuan Yew's remark in that he had done more business with Dr Mahathir ars (since the latter took office as Prime Minister in n the other Malaysian Prime Ministers in 21 years.[37] made progress according to Lee, because Mahathir g and decisive, drove a hard bargain and yet prepared decisions when there were mutual benefits. The between the two men was quite clear.

a reflection too of the importance of personal that Lee was asked by Goh Chok Tong to tie up ends of the important new agreement for the f water and gas to Singapore — a matter which personally handled with Mahathir over several years. he new agreement did not have an easy passage. ns began as early as 1982 but it was not until 1988 Memorandum of Understanding was signed the two Prime Ministers. However differences delayed of officials trying to finalise the pact, for another s.[38] The political symbolism was not lost in the fact agreement was signed in November 1990 just days ee Kuan Yew stepped aside for Goh Chok Tong to he prime ministership.

imself has felt that the special rapport he shared with r was "non-transferable" but the working relationship n the two countries could, indeed should, be ed.[39] By Lee's account in late 1987, Mahathir had by epted the need for the younger ministers in Malaysia with their counterparts from Singapore to get to know ner.[40] There are however, both an advantage and a ntage for Malaysia-Singapore relations in this internal of power. The advantage, as recognised by Lee Kuan his younger colleagues is that the latter, without having nced the trauma of separation from Malaysia, do not

Prime Minister at the time of Separation) did not meet Lee again until the latter visited him in Penang in December 1989.[42]

The disadvantage, on the other hand, with the change of guard is that the new generation of political leaders brought up differently in quite separate settings, lack the benefit of "old school ties" which lay the foundations for rapport. Referring to ties forged at Raffles College before World War 2, Ghazali Shafie recalls that it was there in 1941 that he met Lee Kuan Yew. "There were quite a few of us from both the Peninsula and the island, and they included Abdul Razak, Eddie Barker, Maurice Baker, Zaiton Ibrahim, Robert Kuok and Toh Chin Chye. Goh Keng Swee was still in college but very much our senior." [It may be added that Dr Mahathir and the late Tun Dr Ismail had also studied at the then University of Malaya in Singapore.] After the war "almost the same Raffles College crowd met in the United Kingdom as students at various Universities". The point that Ghazalie Shafie sought to establish was that the political and administrative elites of both Singapore and Malaya were "from the same mould, and indeed of the same club, with a common cause".[43] As we look into the future we may find that new generations brought up under separate educational systems emphasizing separate concerns and interests, will have even less of the things that bind. This takes us to the second point.

It is not just that political elites are changing; the respective societies of Malaysia and Singapore are also changing. New generations of people will be brought up differently under different nation – building processes and reflecting different political values. There is furthermore, the prospect (or danger) that different school/university curriculums with their different emphases, could well add to a growing psychological distancing and even ignorance, among the new generations of Malaysians and Singaporeans, of each other's dominant culture, language, customs, society, history and political system. The fact however is that the educational system is a powerful tool in nation-

r of non-Malay parents who send their children to Singapore with alarmistic warnings that such a trend to the emergence in time, of two societies (namely, e educated and a locally educated) in Johor.[44] Such could easily find echoes in the rest of Malaysia. importance of cultivating in both countries a wider of each other's national policies to narrow the cal distance and reduce the misperceptions.

nd significant indicator of change in Malaysia-relations, is the new break-through in the cultivation ional linkages built on rational economic criteria. elopments follow from efforts made over the past etween then Prime Minister Lee and Prime Minister to improve overall Malaysia-Singapore relations occasional hiccups. The improved ambience has times enabled Singapore to establish more direct ith the component states of the Federation. This is Prime Ministerial level official visits undertaken by (then still under the stewardship of Lee Kuan Yew) – Kedah – Langkawi in September 1989, Sarawak in 990 and (under the Prime Ministership of Goh Chok Johor in February 1991. These developments are in that direct contacts between Singapore and Malaysian states were discouraged after the in 1965. As Lee Kuan Yew disclosed during his sit, "Once we became independent, Kuala Lumpur otified us that all dealings will have to go through He felt that one reason for this was that Malaysia certain distance kept between Singapore and ring Johor with which Singapore had always ose informal ties. "I had to wait till the 1980s when nir became the Prime Minister, before he gave me lleagues the green light to fraternise without going Considering that the conduct of foreign affairs is onally, the prerogative of the central government in

While economic co-operation and improving bilateral relations are quite evident, these are also being enhanced by new linkages being forged within multi-lateral frameworks. The "Growth Triangle" concept is a case in point. The concept originally linking Singapore with the island of Batam in the Riau archipelago of Indonesia, and Johor to encourage joint economic co-operation (based on complementary resource pooling) was first mooted by Goh Chok Tong in late 1989 when he was the First Deputy Prime Minister. Since then the concept has been endorsed by the 22nd ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting. In subsequent elaborations, Goh Chok Tong said that the idea was to get investors to look at Singapore, Batam and Johor as a single investment region and not separate states competing for capital. Potential investors in the triangle would have a choice where they would locate their industries according to their comparative advantage. It can be said that the Growth Triangle is a pragmatic, sub-regional expression of wider ASEAN co-operation. At an even lower level it can be seen as an extension of Johor's economic twinning with Singapore — which was how the Johor Mentri Besar, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin put it.

Several projects undertaken within the Growth Triangle framework are at various stages of being realised. The details and problems of economic co-operation within such a framework will not be discussed here. But it is useful to reflect on some political implications of this form of triangular relationship and relate them to our discussion of Malaysia-Singapore relations.

In the first place this triangular relationship involves transnational linkages forged between Singapore (which has no "periphery" to speak of) and the peripheries of Indonesia and Malaysia. In the case of the Johor-Singapore side, the development of relations between the central government and the state government of Johor will have an important bearing on the linkages between that state and Singapore. As pointed out by the Secretary-General of the Malaysian Foreign Ministry,

dly, there is the politically sensitive question of who
n groups in Indonesia (or Malaysia) are the real
aries of such a close relationship with Singapore. Within
, Johor may well be perceived by the other states as
ial beneficiary of the special relations with Singapore.
nus been necessary to point out that this particular
does not preclude other Triangles involving other
Malaysia.[48]

lly, uneven distribution of benefits may also be
d as accruing to a certain partner. The Executive
of the Johor State Economic Development Council
ssed the importance of ensuring that the Triangle
nefits all. A more extreme criticism has it that the
ore-Johor co-operation can only be at Johor's
. Such a view has been expressed by the former Welfare
of Malaysia, Datuk Shahrir Samad who also warned
Johor's entrapment in the economic clutches of
re.[49] Interestingly, Dr Mahathir has sought to put
n perspective by saying that "what is important to
nat we (Malaysia) get the maximum we can out
co-operation. If by other people's estimation
re gets more, that is none of our business. We are
rested".[50]

ly, there are the political implications that follow
n uneven development of bilateral relationships
a triangular framework. It has been pointed out e.g.
ile the Singapore-Johor and the Singapore – Riau
the Triangle are sufficiently developed, much remains
lone on the Riau-Johor side. As Tan Sri Muhyiddin
d in mid-1990, the problem then was over the areas in
Batam (Riau) and Johor should co-operate. Also, as
ost triangular relationships, apprehensions from the
artner could be aroused by too close a relationship
n the other two. It is noteworthy that when Lee Hsien
visited Suharto in July 1990, he was informed by

Future Malaysia-Singapore relations will have to cope with the rush of developments in the new telecommunications and mass communications technology which will hasten the lowering of traditional boundaries. Both societies will become increasingly porous at a time when people will take a lot more interest in each other's domestic developments. These inter-penetrating influences will lead to an opening-up of societies (hopefully to an opening-up of minds too) and affect the way we handle traditional notions of sovereignty. The challenge before us lies in whether we can break free of the perception warps which emerged from an era that is passing away. How we manage the process of change will ultimately determine what our futures shall be.

Conclusions

Given the unique linkages that exist between Malaysia and Singapore it can be surmised that irritations and sensitivities will never quite go away. The important thing is that these sensitivities are handled sensibly so that more important interests are not jeopardised. There are some common-sensical considerations that can be kept in mind when dealing with the broader Malaysia-Singapore relationship.

i) The starting point must be the recognition and acceptance that Malaysia and Singapore are different, that they have concerns, perceptions, world views and interests that are distinct even as we apply ourselves to cultivating, strengthening and broadening those interests that are mutual.

ii) There must be a recognition that each side has legitimate sensitivities and that the respect of these sensitivities should be mutual and not one-sided.

iii) There should be a recognition that each society given its respective unique racial arithmetic, has also its own sensitivities to manage and that as little as possible should be done to complicate the management of these sensitivities for the other side. Effective communication is necessary in order that the sensitivities are accurately read in time.

amiliarity can breed, perhaps we should have less rity and more knowledge. And since we are no longer amily" so to speak, it should be easier to be more ss-like. In any case we should, over sensitive issues, ed more by the head and less by the heart.

on the whole, we have a lot more reason to be stic, I would like to believe that we can add knowledge iliarity. In this respect, the cultivation of knowledge, ess and appreciation of each other's policies and tic developments should be consciously extended d official and ministerial contacts to other sectors and of our respective societies.

ould expect that the mass media, educational and h institutions on both sides of the causeway have an ant public education role in helping to narrow the tion gaps between Malaysians and Singaporeans.

ture course of our relations will also depend largely e soundness and rationality of the economic oinnings that we can devise, as increasingly, economics come the primacy in our relationship. While we cannot ooking back some of the time in our consideration of ia-Singapore relations, the important thing is that p looking forward most of the time.

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es, 18 October 1989.

with *Sin Chew Chit Poh*, reproduced in *Straits Times*, 6 April 1990.

nafie, "Singapore and Malaysia: Inseparable twins", ISEAS Trends olished in *Straits Times*, 27 December 1990.

nam, speech to the Alpha Society and Temasek Society, reported *Times* (Singapore) 14 January 1990.

dullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi, *Malaysia-Singapore Relations*, IPS Speakers Lecture Series No. 2, Singapore, Times Academic Press, 0. Interestingly a commentator at the lecture chose to compare onship at that between a sprawling bungalow and a very small

advantage of both". "Synergy" is defined as "the combined effect of drugs, organs etc that exceeds the sum of their individual effects".

8. Singapore Government Press Release, No. 35/July, 15-1/88/07/20, p. 3.
9. *Straits Times*, 9 February 1990.
10. Hamzah Bin Ahmad, *Malaysia's Exclusive Economic Zone*, Malaysia, Pelanduk Publications, 1988, pp. 3-4.
11. Dr. Noordin Sopie, the Director-General of ISIS Malaysia has cited numerous economic indicators to support his view of Singapore as "an economic superpower in Southeast Asia and a global economic power of substantial presence". (*Business Times*, 3 April 1990.)
12. For a discussion of the impact of the Gulf War on Malay/Muslims in the region see Chandran Jeshurun and Abdul Razak Baginda, "The Gulf War and the Malay world", ISEAS Trends No. 5, published in *Straits Times*, 31 January 1991, pp. 1-2.
13. Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear — The National Security Problem in International Relations*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1989, p. 106.
14. Interview with *Asian Defence Journal*, March 1989, p. 47.
15. Singapore Government Press Release, No. 35/July, 15-1/88/07/20, p. 12.
16. As Datuk Abdullah Badawi puts it, "Singapore is already the most densely defended country in the world. When you express the wish to host US facilities here, we perceive that you regard us as a threat to your existence and stability. We see the offer is directed as a deterrent to us". (Badawi *op. cit.*, p. 12.)
17. Singapore Government Press Release, No 35/July, 15-1/88/07/20, p. 10.
18. Singapore External Trade Statistics and IMF Direction of Trade Statistics.
19. Singapore Census of Industrial Production.
20. Noordin Sopice, *Business Times*, 3 April 1988.
21. Badawi, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
22. *Ibid*, pp. 10-11. An even more strident comment was made by Datuk Abdullah Ahmad, an UMNO politician and one time junior minister in the Prime Minister's office, when he told a Singapore audience in August 1986 that Singapore must not be a "harbinger of Chinese irredentist tendencies" in Malaysia and should make it clear to Malaysian Chinese that the present Malaysian political system (which reflects Malay political dominance) was the only system there could be. (Datuk Abdullah Ahmad, *Issues in Malaysian Politics*, SIIA occasional Paper No. 7, Singapore, Heinemann, 1988, p. 7.)
23. *Straits Times* (editorial), 27 February 1990.
24. The episode is discussed in Michael Leifer, "Israel's President in Singapore: Political Catalysis and Transnational Politics", *Pacific Review*, Vol 1, No. 4 1988, pp. 341-352.
25. *Straits Times*, 23 February 1987.
26. Badawi, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
27. See e.g. Awang Selemat's commentary in *Utusan Zaman*, 3 February 1991.

their tanks with cheaper petrol in Johor which would have
Torts to curb car use in Singapore through petrol pricing — was
to sabotage the Visit Malaysia Year Campaign. Subsequently when
ime Minister Lee Kuan Yew called on Singaporeans to visit Malaysia
was questioned by the same Minister.
s, 5 February 1990.
ctober 1990, 13 November 1990.
ctober 1990.
ctober 1987.
es (Singapore) 9 September 1990.
s (editorial) 14 February 1990.
sien Long, Singapore Government Press Release, No. 35/July.
/20, p. 4.
s, 4 May 1990.
ovember 1990.
ctober 1989.
y 1991, Lee Hsien Loong in a press interview said that he
"no difficulty in mutual co-operation" after meeting the younger
eaders such as then Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Defence
atuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk
a Rafidah Aziz and the then Finance Minister Datuk Paduka
uddin. (*Sunday Times (Singapore)* 3 February 1991). This is not the
ing there is rapport between them.
ional baggage" was compounded by the family ties with the
e.g. six of the 9 ministers in the first Singapore cabinet were born
nsula. S. Rajaretnam who was also in that cabinet, though born
did receive his early education in Malaya.
s, 18 October 1989.
afie, "Singapore and Malaysia: inseparable twins", *op. cit.*, p. 1.
s, 19 April 1991.
ecember 1989.
ecember 1989.
ugust 1990.
h Bow Tan (Singapore's Minister of State for Trade & Industry
mmunications) has indicated at a Pahang investment seminar
uary 1991 that there was no reason why the concept could not
to other partners like Pahang to form new Growth Triangles.
August 1990. A refutation of these arguments is provided by
of the ASEAN Economic Research Unit at ISEAS, in a letter to
Times, 7 September 1990.
s, 15 January 1991.
ly 1990. Interestingly, Malaysia also appears to be somewhat
n about the close security co-operation between Singapore and

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

Associate Professor Abdul Hadi Zakaria
Department of Anthropology and Sociology

Professor Abdul Majid Nabi Baksh
Professor and Head
Department of English

Associate Professor Abdul Wahad Ali
Department of Malay Studies

Professor Ang Tian Se
Professor and Head
Department of Chinese Studies

Associate Professor Azizah Kassim
Department of Anthropology and Sociology and
Deputy Dean Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Associate Professor Chan Kok Eng
Department of Geography

Professor Stephen Chee
Professor and Dean
Faculty of Economics and Administration

Mr Richard Dorall
Lecturer Department of Geography

Associate Professor Firdaus Abdullah

rofessor Lee Poh Ping
conomics and Administration

rofessor Mohamad Abu Bakar
of History

nad Hear Awang
partment of History

rofessor Muhammad Ikmal Mohd Said
of Anthropology and Sociology

rofessor R Rajoo

of Indian Studies

rofessor Rahmah Bujang
of Malay Studies

rofessor Shaharil Talib
of Southeast Asian Studies

unku Shamsul Bahrain
epartment of Geography and

rts and Social Sciences

id Alatas
partment of Southeast Asian Studies

UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

n
partment of Philosophy

Choon
urer Department of English Language and

rofessor Ernest Chew
rtment of History and
y of Arts and Social Sciences

Associate Professor Chia Siow Yue
Department of Economics and Statistics

Dr Chiew Seen Kong
Senior Lecturer Department of Sociology

Dr Anthony Chin
Lecturer Department of Economics and Statistics

Dr Chin Kin Wah
Senior Lecturer Department of Political Science and
Deputy Director Centre for Advanced Studies

Dr John Elliott
Senior Lecturer Department of Social Work and Psychology

Dr Ho Khai Leong
Lecturer Department of Political Science

Dr Shirlena Huang Swee Lian
Lecturer Department of Geography

Associate Professor Koh Tai Ann
Department of English Language and Literature

Associate Professor Eddie Kuo Chen Yu
Head Department of Mass Communication

Associate Professor Lau Teik Soon
Head Department of Political Science

Associate Professor Edwin Lee
Acting Head Department of History

Professor Lim Chee Then
Head
Department of Chinese Studies

Dr Ong Chit Chung
Senior Lecturer Department of History

Associate Professor Ong Jin Hui
Head Department of Sociology and

xir
urer Department of English Language and

an
urer Department of Philosophy

PuruShotam
partment of Sociology

ofessor Jon S. T. Quah
of Political Science and
, European Studies Programme

. E. Quah
partment of Economic and Statistics and
aculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Savage
urer Department of Geography and
aculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ddin Maaruf
urer Department of Malay Studies

e Giap
partment of Economics and Statistics

Yeok
partment of Economics and Statistics

rofessor Teo Siew Eng
rtment of Geography

ham Seong Chee
rtment of Malay Studies

dwin Thumboo
rtment of English Language and Literature

urer and