READINGS IN MALAYSIAN POLITICS

Edited by
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Preface

This volume grew out of the realization that, although the study of Malaysian politics continues to be enriched by the writings of both local and foreign scholars, the results of many recent studies have remained relatively inaccessible to non-specialists. Academic contributions tend to remain buried in the pages of academic journals with circulations confined largely to the libraries of interested tertiary institutions.

The publication of this collection of articles is an attempt to give the academic literature a wider audience. It is hoped that journalists, businessmen and academics, as well as students following courses on Malaysian politics and society, will find the analyses provided in this book helpful in understanding the political developments of recent years.

For the convenience of readers, the articles have been grouped in the book according to subjects. Within each category there is inevitably some repetition of themes. However, requiring each contributor to rewrite his or her article in order to eliminate such repetitions would have involved a considerable delay in publication. In any case, the amount of repetition involved is minimal. The articles reprinted in each category were selected precisely because they offered different, and sometimes contrasting perspectives.

The first section contains three articles on electioneering. Diane Mauzy examines the 1982 election campaign, the first to be conducted after Dr. Mahathir became Prime Minister. She offers several explanations for the DAP's apparent decline and discusses aspects of the struggle between UMNO, Berjasa and PAS for the Malay vote. My own contribu-

tion on the 1981 and 1982 election campaigns in Sabah focuses on federal-state relations. Regarding intra-state politics the article notes that, despite leadership changes, political patterns in Sabah involving patron-client ties have changed little since independence. In 1985, more than a year after the article was written, Berjaya was defeated by the Kadazan-based Parti Bersatu Sabah led by Joseph Kitingan. However, this has not altered the validity of the analysis.

Another article by Marvin Rogers, this time using the 1978 elections as a point of reference, studies local electoral strategies in the rural areas of Johore and Malacca. He points out how, in a situation in which the ruling coalition has massive financial and logistical advantages over the opposition, elections can often be more realistically seen as a means of legitimatizing the regime rather than providing the people with a meaningful choice between alternative leaders and policies.

The second section deals with the revival of Islamic and *dakwah* (missionary) teachings within the Malay community. The paper by Diane Mauzy and R. S. Milne is perhaps the most comprehensive study available of this controversial and little understood subject. This article tries to put the government's new Islamisation Policy in the context of other problems and issues faced by the Mahathir administration.

The other contributions in this section deal more narrowly with the Islamic resurgence itself. Judith Nagata argues that the recent Islamic revival, based largely on young urban tertiary educated Malays, is now beginning to challenge the authority of the traditional *ulamas* (Muslim scholars). Her paper, reprinted from *Man*, is followed by two shorter ones. The first, by Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, is a critique of Nagata's article while the second is her rejoinder. They are reprinted here in order to promote further academic debate on this important new aspect of Malaysian society.

The final contribution in this category puts the Islamic resurgence in its global context. Chandra Muzaffar, chairman of the widely-respected ALIRAN Reform Movement, looks at the causes of the new interest in Islam, its character and possible ramifications. This thought provoking essay by a committed Muslim intellectual will be read with great interest by all those concerned with the world-wide phenomenon.

Ethnicity and development is the subject of the third section of the book. The articles by Marvin Rogers and Shamsul Amri Baharuddin focus on the effects of development programmes in rural Malay communities. Both authors emphasise the increasing importance of local political leaders as sources of patronage. The matter, Shamsul points

out, is important because such patronage often results in the distribution of "development" projects to select groups – not necessarily the poorest – thus frustrating the poverty eradication efforts of the New Economic Policy (NEP).

A third article by Judith Strauch discusses changes in the ethnic and subethnic perceptions of the Chinese community and contrasts these with those of the Malays. In yet another article Simon Barraclough explores the confusing usage of the terms "communal" and "communalism" in Malaysian politics.

The final section of the book deals with foreign policy. Lee Poh Ping's contribution provides a useful summary of Malaysia's position on many international issues just after Dr. Mahathir came to power in 1981. It discusses the Malaysian approach to the Kampuchean question, the role of ASEAN and the involvement of the major world powers in the region.

In a book of this size it is not possible to cover every aspect of Malaysian politics. There is, for example, no section on political economy. But this subject, and others like it, has already been covered in a variety of readily available publications in recent years. The object of this collection is not to provide a comprehensive survey, but to make available supplementary material on specific areas. In this way it is hoped that the book will enable readers to develop a deeper understanding of some of the forces at work on the contemporary Malaysian political scene.

Bruce Gale
Editor

Section I

Electioneering

CHAPTER ONE

The 1982 General Elections in Malaysia:
A Mandate for Change?

Diane K. Mauzy

In July 1981 Tun Hussein Onn formally resigned as Prime Minister of Malaysia following a slow recovery from complicated heart surgery. He was succeeded by former UMNO "radical", Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad. Datuk Musa Hitam, another former "radical", was named the Deputy Prime Minister after he defeated party rival Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah in a hard-fought contest for the post of United Malays National Organization (UMNO) Deputy President. It was believed that the new administration would seek a fresh mandate from the people well before the mid-1983 constitutional deadline for elections. Election rumours were in the air by the end of 1981,[1] so it came as no big surprise when general elections were called for April 1982.[2] The campaign period was 15 days, the briefest ever, and as in other post-1969 elections, a ban on rallies was imposed for "security reasons" (e.g., to avoid the inflaming of ethnic emotions).[3] For the first time, polling would be on a Thursday instead of the traditional Saturday, in order to accommodate the five Peninsular states who use Friday, the Muslim holy day, as their holiday.[4]

The ruling National Front (Barisan Nasional) coalition of 11 parties (six – Peninsular Malaysia, two – Sabah, and three – Sarawak) went into the election from a position of overwhelming strength,[5] and, as in every election since 1955, the question was not "who" would form the government but rather by "how much" would the government be re-elected. Elections remain important, however, as a barometer of support for the government and for reaffirming legitimacy.

TABLE 1. Peninsular Malaysia: Election Results for Parliamentary Seats, 1978 and 1982

Party	1978		1982	
	Seats Contested	*Seats Won*	*Seats Contested*	*Seats Won*
National Front	113	94[a]	114	103[b]
UMNO	74	69	73	70
MCA	27	17	28	24
MIC	4	3	4	4
Gerakan	6	4	7	5
PPP	1	0	0	0
Berjasa	0	0	2	0
Direct N.F.	1	1	n.a.	n.a.
Opposition Parties				
PAS	87	5	82	5
DAP	51	15	56	6
PSRM	4	0	4	0
SDP	3	0	1	0
Pekemas	6	0	1	0
Kita	1	0	0	0
Workers Party	1	0	0	0
Independents	18	0	15	0
TOTAL	284	114	273	114

[a] Five National Front candidates were returned unopposed in 1978 (four – UMNO, one – MCA).

[b] Four National Front (UMNO) candidates were returned unopposed in 1982.

In addition to the natural advantages accruing to those controlling the resources of government, the National Front brought into the campaign a number of other campaign resources. First, it had an impressive long-term record of achievement, economically and in terms of political stability and overall ethnic harmony. Second, the coalition was now led by a forceful new duo already imprinting their own stamp on policies and programmes. Third, the Front's organization and finances far exceeded those of the opposition. The Front's theme was "Clean, Efficient And Trustworthy Government", which the coalition would provide, and it stressed its legacy of unity, peace, harmony, political

stability, and economic progress along with a reminder that strong government was necessary because Malaysia was poised for a major economic takeoff. By contrast, the opposition parties were disorganized, underfinanced, traumatized by infighting, lacking credible alternative programmes and policies, and unable to spark issues or to get their various messages across convincingly.

The Front did have some potential weak spots with which to contend. The economy has been negatively affected by the recent worldwide recession and the decline in world prices for some of Malaysia's chief primary products, and the government might reasonably have been expected to share some of the blame for this. However, it successfully diverted attention from this issue and continued to talk about economic progress and development plans throughout the campaign.[6] Another difficult task faced by the ruling coalition, traditionally, has been the allocation of seats among the component parties and, to a lesser extent, the selection of candidates.[7] UMNO normally accepts fewer than its full share of the Malay-majority seats (see Table 2), and this leaves some extra seats for non-Malay component candidates.[8] In 1978 the rancour over allocation of seats between the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Gerakan spilled over into the election and the opposition benefited, while in Sabah some "friendly contests" between Front partners and arch-rivals Berjaya and the United Sabah National Organization (USNO) were sanctioned by the Front. In 1982 the MCA and Gerakan were pressured to work out a compromise: Gerakan was given some additional seats nationally, while the MCA was given an equal number of state seats with Gerakan in Penang, the only state with a Chinese Chief Minister. In Sabah, however, the political animosity between Berjaya and USNO continued and resulted in five seats technically going to the opposition.

When all the results were compiled, the National Front had won 132 of 154 parliamentary seats with 60.4 per cent of the popular vote (see Tables 1, 3, 4) and 280 of 311 state seats and control of all state assemblies (see Tables 5 and 6). The win was even more impressive, however, considering that in politically dominant Peninsular Malaysia, the Front raised its total seats won in Parliament by nine to 103 of 114 seats (see Table 1).

THE PENINSULAR MALAYSIA ELECTIONS

The National Front faced two major opposition parties in Peninsular

Malaysia, Partai Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) and the Democratic Action Party (DAP), as well as a group of smaller and less significant parties and Independents. The campaigns and the issues varied between the Malay and the non-Malay parties, and the contests can be analysed most usefully by considering these elections separately.[9]

TABLE 2. Peninsular Malaysia: Ethnic Majorities in Constituencies by States, 1982

	Parliamentary[a]					*State*				
States	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Non-Malays*[b]	*Total Seats*	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Non-Malays*[b]	*Total Seats*
Perlis	2	–	–	–	2	11	1	–	–	12
Kedah	13	–	–	–	13	24	1	–	1	26
Kelantan	12	–	–	–	12	36	–	–	–	36
Terengganu	7	–	–	–	7	28	–	–	–	28
Penang	3	5	–	1	9	10	13	–	4	27
Perak	10	6	–	5	21	25	13	–	4	42
Pahang	6	–	–	2	8	26	3	–	3	32
Selangor	6	1	–	4	11	22	7	–	4	33
Federal Territory	1	3	–	1	5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Negeri Sembilan	3	1	–	2	6	14	5	–	5	24
Malacca	3	1	–	–	4	15	4	–	1	20
Johore	13	3	–	–	16	24	5	–	3	32
TOTALS	79	20	–	15	114	235	52	–	25	312

[a] These figures indicate very little change from 1978 figures for Parliamentary constituencies: one Chinese majority constituency in Perak and one in Pahang became non-Malay majority constituencies. There are a few more changes in the state constituencies: in 1978, the totals for the states were Malays 238; Chinese 51; Indians 0; Non-Malays 23.

[b] The non-Malay majority constituencies represent a combination of Chinese, Indians, and Others which form a majority but do not have an absolute Chinese majority.

UMNO/Berjasa versus PAS

The key issues for the Malay contests were "Islamization" in Malaysia

and development. In the past, UMNO has been viewed as the secular Malay party concerned with development and upgrading the economic situation of the Malays, while not choking off the economic opportunities of the non-Malays. As a partner in a multi-ethnic coalition, albeit the dominant partner, UMNO has had to compromise on some Malay demands and as a result has felt itself threatened by the outbidding of the Islamic party, PAS, on Malay nationalist and Islamic matters.

TABLE 3. Peninsular Malaysia: Total Party Votes and Percentages for Parliamentary Seats, 1982

Party	*Seats Contested*	*Seats Won*	*Total Party Vote*	*Per Cent Total Valid Vote*	*Per cent Valid Vote in Seats Contested*
National Front	114	103	2,262,316	61.01	61.01
UMNO	73	70	1,328,937	35.84	65.37
MCA	28	24	678,206	18.29	56.27
MIC	4	4	79,825	2.15	64.08
Gerakan	7	5	146,654	3.96	53.93
PPP	0	0	–	–	–
Berjasa	2	0	28,690	.77	47.78
Opposition Parties					
PAS	82	5	598,948	16.15	24.45
DAP	56	6	766,677	20.68	35.15
PSRM	4	0	38,600	1.04	23.57
Pekemas	1	0	619	.00	1.22
SDP	1	0	464	.00	1.04
Independents	15	0	40,158	1.08	8.19
TOTALS	273	114	3,707,778	100 per cent*	–

*In this table and subsequent tables, figures have been rounded off at one-hundredth of one per cent and hence do not always add up perfectly to 100 per cent.

The PAS position has not changed since 1978 when it attempted to champion and channel the emotions of the Islamic fundamentalist movement then beginning to sweep the country. In 1982, PAS called for alterations in the federal Constitution to bring it more in line with Islamic law and an Islamic state, and it opposed what it called development for development's sake devoid of spiritual concerns. The PAS President, Datuk Mohd. Asri bin Haji Muda, said that PAS sought

Malay and Islamic sovereignty, and he warned of the need to secure the prominent position of the Malays and Islam against the encroachment by non-Malays and secular development policies.[10] PAS officials also accused UMNO members of being infidels and threatened calamity and punishment for those who supported the infidels.[11]

UMNO's position towards Islam has changed since 1978, when it was deeply concerned about Islamic fundamentalism in general, the *dakwah* (missionary) groups — especially ABIM (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement) led by Encik Anwar Ibrahim — and possible PAS linkups with this religious resurgence.

Before the 1982 elections, Dr. Mahathir announced that Malaysia would be setting up an International Islamic University exempt from the Universities Act and national education policy,[12] that the possibility of setting up an Islamic Bank was under discussion,[13] and that the Societies (Amendment) Act, aimed in 1981 at controlling ABIM, would be reviewed.[14] Further, UMNO embarked on a major campaign to demonstrate the depth of its Islamic commitment and its concern for Malaysian Muslim unity and the international brotherhood of Islam.[15] UMNO declared itself Malaysia's oldest and largest Muslim party, and in fact the world's third largest Islamic party.[16] The Deputy Prime Minister noted that "even Iran, which PAS considers an ideal Islamic state, acknowledges Malaysia's Islamism."[17] Further, UMNO defended itself from charges of "secular development" by stressing that "modernization is not Westernization", and that economic growth must be matched by spiritual advancement and moral strength.[18] Finally, UMNO scored a major coup on the eve of the elections when it was announced that Encik Anwar Ibrahim was resigning as President of ABIM, joining UMNO, and contesting a parliamentary seat.[19]

By the actual campaign period, UMNO's credentials as an Islamic party were so well established that the entire Federal Territory PAS organization came over to UMNO, explaining in a statement that they did this "so that UMNO's ultimate objectives in absorbing Islamic laws into the national administration can be achieved. UMNO, under the 2M leadership, has already taken over the policies and struggles of PAS."[20] Meanwhile, UMNO covered itself on other fronts as well, announcing new development schemes, providing one-time cash subsidies for drought relief for the Kedah rice farmers, and bringing former Selangor *Menteri Besar* and Youth President Datuk Harun bin Haji Idris back into active participation in politics.[21]

TABLE 4. Alliance/National Front Parliamentary Seats and Percentages of Votes, 1955–82, in Malaya/Malaysia

Year	*Seats Contested*	*Seats Won*	*Total Parl. Seats*	*Per Cent Total Valid Vote*
1955	52	51	52	80.0
1959	104	74	104	51.8
1964	104	89	104	58.5
1969[a]	103	66	103[b]	48.5
1974	154	135	154	60.8
1978	153	131	154	57.6
1982	154	132	154	60.4[c]

[a] Peninsular Malaysia only. The elections in Sabah and Sarawak were suspended after the May 13, 1969, riots broke out.

[b] The election in one seat was postponed.

[c] The All-Malaysia total valid vote in 1982 was 4,187,288. The total National Front vote was 2,527,079.

UMNO's new Islamic image demolished the *raison d'etre* of Berjasa, the Front's "Islamic Party", however. Originally it had been put together in late 1977 by PAS dissidents in Kelantan who were opposed to Datuk Asri's leadership and to PAS leaving the Front. In Kelantan, it was the Front's answer to PAS' Islamic appeal, and the UMNO/Berjasa team contested very successfully in the March 1978 state elections in Kelantan, winning 34 of the 36 seats there. By April 1982, Berjasa was internally divided, getting little help from the UMNO Kelantan organization, and had little to say of any significance that UMNO could not say better.

The internal leadership splits in PAS were of greater portent. Since the April 1981 party elections, the "Old Guards", led by Datuk Asri, have been fighting and manoeuvring to hold their positions and influence against the challenge of the mainly Arabic-educated Islamic fundamentalist "Young Turks", led by Ustaz Fadzil Nor (formerly an ABIM official) and Ustaz Haji Abdul Hadi Awang, both Al-Azhar graduates.[22] In Kelantan the Old Guard under Datuk Asri emerged on top, whereas in Terengganu the Young Turks prevailed in the candidate selection. In Kedah and Perlis neither faction gained dominance, although pro-Asri candidates contested in the more possible seats. On the whole, the bitterness that developed between the two factions hurt PAS

efforts during the elections, especially in Kedah and Perlis.

In the parliamentary elections, UMNO won 96.7 per cent of its contests, losing only to PAS twice in Kelantan and once in Kedah. In the state elections, 95.6 per cent of the UMNO candidates emerged victorious, losing only eight seats to PAS (five – Terengganu, two – Kedah, one – Kelantan) and one seat to an incumbent Independent in Selangor. By contrast, Berjasa lost both its parliamentary contests to PAS and won only five state seats (four – Kelantan, one – Perak) of 11 versus PAS for only a 45.5 per cent win ratio.

TABLE 5. State Elections: Total Seats Won by Parties, 1982

	National Front Parties							Opposition Parties			
States	UMNO	MCA	MIC	Gerakan	Berjasa	PPP	N.F. Total	PAS	DAP	IND	Total Seats By State
Perak	23	9	1	3	1	1	38	0	4	0	42
Negeri Sembilan	14	6	1	0	0	0	21	0	2	0	23*
Malacca	13	5	0	0	0	0	18	0	2	0	20
Selangor	20	7	3	1	0	0	31	0	1	1	33
Johore	20	10	1	1	0	0	32	0	0	0	32
Pahang	24	5	1	1	0	0	31	0	1	0	32
Penang	10	6	1	8	0	0	25	0	2	0	27
Terengganu	22	1	0	0	0	0	23	5	0	0	28
Perlis	9	2	0	0	0	0	11	1	0	0	12
Kedah	19	3	1	1	0	0	24	2	0	0	26
Kelantan	21	1	0	0	4	0	26	10	0	0	36
TOTAL SEATS WON	195	55	9	15	5	1	280	18	12	1	311*

NOTE: No state elections were held in Sabah or Sarawak.

* The election for one seat (Gemencheh) was postponed. It was later won by UMNO in a by-election on May 22, 1982.

PAS won only five parliamentary seats (four – Kelantan, one – Kedah) for a 6.1 per cent win ratio and 18 state seats (ten – Kelantan, five – Terengganu, two – Kedah, one – Perlis) of 226 seats contested, or 8 per cent. All of the seats won by PAS are located in the four heavily Malay-populated northern states where PAS strength is concentrated. Despite PAS' low win ratio and low percentage of the valid vote

nationally, it continues to be a significant force in the four northern states, winning 38.21 per cent of the valid vote (as opposed to 40.29 per cent in 1978). One difference from 1978 is that PAS strength would appear to be reverting to its old traditional strongholds, the two northeast states of Kelantan and Terengganu, and declining in Kedah and Perlis. The PAS percentage of the total parliamentary valid vote in the four northern states was as follows: Kedah – 31 per cent, Perlis – 32 per cent, Terengganu – 41.4 per cent, and Kelantan – 46.5 per cent.

However, these percentages are at least partially explained by factors which may not reflect a long-term trend. First, PAS did less well in Kedah and Perlis because the factional struggle between the Old Guard and the Young Turks remains unresolved and some promising Young Turk candidates contested difficult seats (e.g., Haji Yusoff Rawa op-

TABLE 6. Party Totals for the State Elections, 1982

Party	*Seats Contested*	*Seats Won*	*Total Party Vote*	*Per Cent Total Valid Vote*	*Per Cent Valid Vote in Seats Contested*
National Front	307	280[a]	2,109,226	62.89	63.04
UMNO	204	195	1,234,879	36.82	67
MCA	62	55	532,612	15.88	59.7
MIC	9	9	78,317	2.34	65.7
Gerakan	18	15	173,200	5.16	55.7
PPP	3	1	37,932	1.13	53.17
Berjasa	11	5	52,286	1.56	47.9
Opposition Parties					
PAS	226	18[b]	591,576	17.64	26.25
DAP	128	12	537,785	16.03	30.89
PSRM	14	0	43,000	1.28	22.58
Workers' Party	1	0	111	.00	.78
SDP	2	0	542	.02	1.58
Kita	1	0	93	.00	.61
Baram	1	0	293	.01	.99
Independents	73	1	71,250	2.12	10.07
TOTALS	753	311[c]	3,353,876	100	–

[a] Fourteen National Front candidates were returned unopposed (13 – UMNO, 1 – MCA).

[b] Three PAS candidates were returned unopposed.

[c] The election in one constituency, Gemencheh in Negeri Sembilan, was postponed. It was won by UMNO later in a by-election on May 22, 1982.

posing the Prime Minister), and also because the Chinese vote, especially in Kedah, is generally believed to have gone more strongly to the government side in 1982.[23] Further, in 1982 Kedah was the Prime Minister's home state, and this could not help but impress Kedah Malays.

In Terengganu, a state that has become more important now with its oil revenues, the Young Turk-controlled PAS organization has breathed new life into the old party organization, virtually disassociating itself from the PAS national Old Guard, and its Islamic purist image and its call for an Islamic administration in the state appealed to more than 40 per cent of the voters. In Kelantan the explanation is more complex. The fratricidal struggles inside PAS in 1977–78 left the party organization in a shambles, and the UMNO/Berjasa team was able to take full advantage of this. In 1982 there were new factional disputes, but the Asri-led Old Guard (or "Group of Twenty") managed to come out on top in time for the campaign, and as a result PAS was better organized and more prepared than in 1978. On the other side of the coin, there was friction inside Kelantan UMNO, inside Berjasa, and between Kelantan UMNO and Berjasa. The main problem was the factional rivalry between the head of UMNO in Kelantan, Tengku Razaleigh, and the former Deputy *Menteri Besar*, Datuk Haji Hussein Ahmad, leader of the pro-Datuk Musa Hitam Kelantan contingent during the 1982 UMNO party elections for Deputy President. The situation that developed was that the UMNO Kelantan machine did not expend much effort to help the pro-Musa candidates or the Berjasa candidates, and so PAS was able to make a substantial comeback in Kelantan.[24]

MCA/Gerakan/MIC/PPP versus the DAP

The campaign pronouncements and issues among the non-Malay parties were significantly different from those expounded by the Malay parties.[25] The National Front non-Malay (mainly Chinese) parties[26] hammered on a single point that the Chinese must organize, be self-reliant, and unite politically in order to protect their interests, and that these interests were better safeguarded inside the government than from the outside. The MCA appealed to the non-Malays "to understand the peculiar situation they are in and to cast their votes wisely so that those who represent them in the government can do so effectively, and not with one hand tied behind their backs."[27] The MCA told the electorate that it could "deliver the goods" if supported, but needed a "breakthrough" to escape the dilemma of representing the Chinese in government but being dependent largely on Malay votes and not able

to win seats in the heavily Chinese populated urban constituencies. This appeal was not new; the MCA has called for Chinese unity at every election. But, sensing that the timing was right, the MCA did do something new: it put top candidates in dangerous urban seats considered to be DAP strongholds.[28] Accepting the challenge of DAP leader Encik Lim Kit Siang to stand in one of the 12 urban constituencies (where then, theoretically, Lim Kit Siang would oppose him), MCA President Datuk Lee San Choon gave up his safe Johore seat and stood in Seremban.[29]

Gerakan adopted a campaign line very similar to that of the MCA: it toned down its previous multi-racialist approach, and it pulled off a significant election coup when it won the support of the very powerful and traditionally anti-government United Chinese School Teachers Association (UCSTA),[30] whose President said that "only by being represented in Parliament can Chinese educationalists play a more effective role."[31] In backing Gerakan, the UCSTA indirectly helped the MCA because it opposed the DAP throughout the Peninsula.[32] Although the MCA and Gerakan once again viewed themselves as serious rivals, the "back-stabbing" was not as great in 1982. Most notably in Penang the parties did not go to the length of sponsoring Independents in each others seats as was done in 1978.[33]

The DAP came into the 1982 elections in a weakened condition, and then proceeded to compound these problems.[34] The party was wrecked by internal dissension and defections in 1980 and 1981, especially after the Penang by-election loss in 1980 which resulted in the shelving of the DAP's "Project '83" to win control of the Penang state government.[35] The DAP lacked unity, organization, resources, new leaders, adequate campaign workers, and media exposure; the record of many of its MPs for constituency work, the notable exception being Lee Lam Thye in Kuala Lumpur Bandar, was not good. The party added to these disadvantages by running too many candidates, shifting old stalwarts to new constituencies, alienating the UCSTA,[36] and by Lim Kit Siang not carrying through his own challenge to face Lee San Choon in an urban constituency.

The DAP did have some issues for the campaign since the grievances of the non-Malay community remained basically the same: urban unemployment, university ethnic quotas, Chinese education, Merdeka University, and some aspects of the New Economic Policy. The DAP election manifesto supported the rightful place of Chinese education, language, and culture, called for a strong, responsible, and constructive

TABLE 7. Peninsular Malaysia: National Front Non-Malay Parties Parliamentary Contests and Percentage of Non-Malay Electorate, 1982 (1978 figures in parentheses)

Percentage of Non-Malay Electorate	MCA			Gerakan			MIC		
	Seats Contested	*Seats Wons*	*Per Cent Vote*	*Seats Contested*	*Seats Wons*	*Per Cent Vote*	*Seats Contested*	*Seats Wons*	*Per Cent Vote*
Unopposed	– (1)	– (1)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
31 – 40.9	2 (–)	2 (–)	77.36 (–)	–	–	–	–	–	–
41 – 50.9	3 (3)	3 (3)	62.83 (63.04)	–	–	–	1 (1)	1 (1)	60.96 (58.40)
51 – 60.9	6 (7)	6 (7)	58.26 (57.96)	– (1)	– (1)	– (47.86)	1 (1)	1 (1)	66.37 (62.40)
61 – 70.9	5 (6)	5 (6)	61.78 (64.69)	4 (2)	4 (2)	62.14 (54.44)	2 (2)	2 (1)	64.28 (46.10)
71 – 80.9	8 (4)	6 (0)	51.30 (36.94)	1 (1)	0 (0)	44.79 (43.45)	–	–	–
81+	4 (6)	2 (0)	45.77 (36.83)	2 (2)	1 (1)	49.29 (37.85)	–	–	–
TOTAL	28 (27)	24 (17)	56.27 (50.06)	7 (6)	5 (4)	53.93 (44.76)	4 (4)	4 (3)	64.08 (52.24)

opposition, and criticized the NEP for spawning a new class of rich UMNO Malays while not touching the Malay masses and excluding the non-Malay poor.[37] Further, the DAP said that the National Front manifesto read like *The Malay Dilemma*,[38] and that this election was the most undemocratic ever. However, the DAP did not adequately get its message across to the electorate, thus leaving the impression that the election had no issues. This was partly because the media tended to ignore the DAP, partly because the DAP had been outmanoeuvred on the issue of the "3R programme" in Chinese primary schools,[39] and partly because the DAP campaign was generally lethargic and listless.

The election results for the non-Malay seats surprised most observers. The MCA and Gerakan did achieve a "breakthrough" in the urban constituencies, reducing the DAP's peninsular parliamentary seat totals from 15 to six. The voter swing in some constituencies illustrates the magnitude of the breakthrough: Petaling – 27.5 per cent, Ipoh – 33.5 per cent, Damansara – 30.4 per cent, and Menglembu – 30 per cent. The MCA and Gerakan wins also destroyed a long-standing "axiom": that the Front non-Malay parties could not win in constituencies with a high (75 per cent or more) non-Malay electorate.[40] In 1982 none of the Front's non-Malay parties lost in parliamentary contests where the non-Malay electorate was less than 75 per cent. In contests where the ethnic composition of the constituency was more than 75 per cent non-Malay, the Front won half its parliamentary contests (MCA – four of eight, Gerakan – one of two). Likewise, all six DAP parliamentary wins in Peninsular Malaysia were in constituencies with more than 75 per cent non-Malays.

Despite the fact that the DAP declined badly in terms of seats won, it was not really crushed. In its percentage of the valid vote in seats contested, its totals declined by 4.23 per cent for parliamentary contests and 4.61 per cent for state seats from 1978 (see Tables 3 and 6). The MCA increased its percentages by 6.21 per cent for parliamentary seats and 8.65 per cent for state contests, while Gerakan upped its percentages by 9.17 per cent for parliamentary seats and 4.18 per cent for state contests (see Tables 3, 6, and especially 8).

THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN SABAH AND SARAWAK

Political activity is newer to Sabah and Sarawak than to Peninsular Malaysia and is somewhat peripheral to the centre. The parties and the issues are not so strictly ethnic, personalities are important to the

electorate, and, except perhaps in the most sophisticated urban centres, the only other real issue to spark interest is what the government intends to do for a constituency.

There were several interesting and somewhat surprising developments in the Sabah and Sarawak parliamentary elections. The most surprising and potentially most important result was the advances made by the DAP, the only Peninsular party to run candidates in the Borneo states. The DAP was able to retain its seat (with an increased majority) in defiant and largely Chinese-populated Sandakan, despite the threats of the Sabah state government to turn off all development funds for the city. This handed the ruling Berjaya party its only defeat. In Sarawak, despite a multitude of obstacles set in its way over the previous four years, the DAP won its first two seats there, the two urban Chinese-majority seats of Bandar Kuching and Bandar Sibu, both at the expense of the Sarawak United Peoples Party (SUPP).

In Sabah, it was not really a surprise that Berjaya defied Kuala Lumpur National Front directives and sponsored five former party members as Independents to stand against USNO in the seats the latter had been allocated by the centre.[41] Berjaya and USNO are bitter political enemies at the state level, and this outweighs the fact that they are both component members of the National Front. The reappearance on the political scene of USNO's founder and former Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha, has rekindled Berjaya's efforts to totally destroy USNO. Perhaps what was surprising was the success that Berjaya's Independents had against USNO, defeating all five of its candidates and leaving USNO nearly demolished.[42] While it was assumed that USNO was in trouble in most of its contests, it was not expected to lose its stronghold of Kota Belud. This loss can be partly explained by the rift that developed between Tun Mustapha and his hand-picked candidate, and the family and followers of former USNO President, Tan Sri Said Keruak.[43]

In Sarawak three former Sarawak National Party (SNAP) members running as Independents defeated SNAP candidates, including the SNAP Deputy President, Datuk Amar Dunstan Endawie. The problem, which goes back several years, is the factional struggle between the James Wong and Leo Moggie groups. Both the SNAP party elections, which were held before the parliamentary election and which saw the Moggie faction lose most of its positions, and the thorny problem of candidate selection fueled the factional struggle and, it is alleged, led to some support by SNAP members of the opposite faction for In-

TABLE 8. Parliamentary Elections in Sabah and Sarawak, 1982

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Wons	Total Party Votes	Per Cent Total Valid Vote	Per Cent Valid Vote in Seats Contested
Sabah					
National Front	16	10[a]	112,779	52.77	52.77
Berjaya	11	10	81,963	38.35	59.99
USNO	5	0	30,816	14.42	41.04
Opposition Parties					
DAP	2	1	18,641	8.72	41.92
Pasok	7	0	14,958	7.0	16.19
SCCP	2	0	9,600	4.49	22.68
Pustaka	2	0	352	.16	1.16
Ind	19	5[b]	55,382	25.91	36.03
TOTAL	48	15	211,712	100 per cent	–
Sarawak					
National Front	24	19[a]	151,988	56.8	56.8
PBB	8	8	28,700	10.72	71.9
SUPP	7	5	81,993	30.62	54.63
SNAP	9	6	41,295	15.42	53.07
Opposition Parties					
DAP	5	2	48,623	18.16	42.69
Pajar	1	0	1,415	.53	16.08
Sapo	1	0	449	.17	2.59
Ind	26	3[d]	65,323	24.39	24.41
TOTAL	57	24	267,798	100 per cent	–

[a] Two Berjaya candidates were returned unopposed.

[b] The five successful Independents were all former Berjaya members who contested, with party approval but not with National Front approval, against Berjaya's arch-rival but N.F. partner, USNO. These five Independents won 42,415 votes (76.59 per cent of the total vote for Independents) and their percentage of the valid vote in seats contested was 56.48.

[c] Six National Front candidates were returned unopposed (four – PBB, two – SNAP).

[d] The three victorious Independents were all recently expelled SNAP members who contested against SNAP candidates.

dependents opposing SNAP.[44]

However, the Front's main parties in Sabah and Sarawak, Berjaya and the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), performed up to the expectations. Berjaya won ten of 11 contests, and the PBB once again won all eight of its seats (see Table 8). The main effect of the loss of 11 seats in Sabah and Sarawak (eight to Independents and three to the DAP) was to take a little of the lustre off the Front's overall election victory, despite its biggest success in the Peninsula since the original elections in 1955.

CONCLUSION

While the DAP, and to a lesser extent, PAS suffered setbacks in the 1982 general elections, it is conceivable that this decline could be reversed in the next elections. In has been accepted that one long-term effect of the NEP would be to alter the ethnic demographic picture in the direction of more Malays migrating to the urban areas. Some analysts suggest that these changes help explain the decline of the DAP in 1982 in the most populous urban areas in Peninsular Malaysia. However, a comparison of the ethnic breakdowns in urban constituencies in 1978 and 1982 shows that this has not been a significant factor.[45]

Some explanations for the decline of the DAP have already been mentioned. There are three additional, and possibly contradictory, explanations. First, it is thought that the non-Malay community has tired of supporting the opposition and championing causes which seem beyond the political pale and which bring no positive return. Second, it is widely said that the non-Malay community has taken to the Mahathir-Musa administration and has confidence in their leadership.[46] Finally, it is thought by some that the non-Malay community responded to the unity call this time, where it did not in the past, because it is concerned with Malay advances and the implementation of the pro-Malay and Islamic policies of the government.[47] What does seem evident is that the breakthrough achieved in terms of unity does not necessarily represent a permanent shift in voter allegiances. Unless the Front non-Malay parties now gain some tangible concessions, such as in university enrolment quotas, or are visibly active in fighting to maintain the status quo in such areas as Chinese primary education, there could be a substantial non-Malay voter backlash at the next general elections.

The Malay scenario is more complex and difficult to predict, mainly because very few know how far UMNO intends to proceed with Islami-

zation in the country.[48] The Prime Minister has talked about the possibility of Islamic law and an "Islamic state", while protecting the rights of non-Muslims.[49] The problem is that while UMNO is successfully proving its Islamic credentials, and in this sense currently is undermining PAS, it is simultaneously arousing a heightened Islamic awareness, with all of the emotive power contained therein, among the Malays. If, as is likely in the next few years, the PAS Islamic fundamentalist Young Turks consolidate their leadership and unite PAS, the potential for PAS to engage in Islamic "outbidding" will be high. If, on the other hand, UMNO "out-Islams" PAS, the potential exists for worsening relations inside the Front and for alienating non-Malay electors.

NOTES

1 Since the elections in Malaysia in practice cannot coincide with the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, the monsoon season, or the period preceding an UMNO General Assembly (whose elections for party posts are quite correctly referred to as Malaysia's "real" elections), some intelligent guesses can be made about when an election will in fact be called.

2 The elections were for Parliament and for eleven of the thirteen state assemblies. No state elections were held in Sabah or Sarawak. The life of the Sarawak Council Negeri can extend until 1984, and elections in Sabah need not be held until 1986. The dissolution of Parliament and the 11 state assemblies occurred on March 29. Nomination day was April 7, and polling for Peninsular Malaysia was on April 22. In Sabah and Sarawak polling was staggered from April 22 to April 26. There is no official election report yet available. The data in this article have been compiled from press reports and party sources.

3 With the ban on rallies, the election campaign, as in 1974 and 1978, was conducted through *ceramahs* (more or less indoor rallies with space delimiting size), massive poster and banner presentations, newspaper advertisements, with limited radio and television time allotted.

4 This drew a protest from the DAP, who saw the move as designed to cut down the blue-collar non-Malay voter turnout. PAS, being an Islamic party, could not protest the new polling day. The move also led to speculation that at some time in the future the new administration might impose uniform Friday holidays on all state administrations. Dr. Mahathir has denied in the press that he intends to do this.

5 The N.F. won 131 of 154 parliamentary seats in 1978 and control of all state assemblies. (See Diane K. Mauzy, "A Vote for Continuity: The 1978 General Elections in Malaysia", *Asian Survey*, XIX:3 [March 1979], pp. 281–296.) At the dissolution of Parliament on March 29, 1982, the N.F. held 133 seats, as a result of cross-overs.

6 In the months since the elections there has been considerable talk by government ministers about austerity measures and the need to curtail certain development projects.

7 In 1959, the Alliance, predecessor of the N.F., nearly broke up over MCA demands for more seats. The Prime Minister makes the final decision on seat allocations and candidates, but enforcing coalition discipline remains difficult.

8 However, the 75 of 114 seats allotted to UMNO and Berjasa, the Malay parties, is higher than the Malay percentage of the electorate. This is largely the result of rural weightage which favours the Malays.

9 There is a permanent Front Supreme Council and an appointed election committee, both dominated by UMNO, to oversee and coordinate the N.F.'s election effort. On the whole, however, the component parties of the Front conduct their own campaigns, and within the broad guidelines on Front policy the component parties are free to stress whatever issues they believe will appeal most to the electorate and, to a certain extent, can even criticize particular government practices.

10 *New Straits Times*, April 20, 1982.

11 See, for example, *ibid.*, April 17, 1982. The *Kafir-Mengafir* (infidel) issue seems to have peaked early in 1982. Then PAS leaders began worrying about a voter backlash when UMNO retorted that it was contrary to the Quran for Muslims to divide Muslims. However, the Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir, reported that PAS had used the infidel issue with some success during the campaign in the more rural Malay areas in the four northern states (interview, July 5, 1982). The animosity is such that in the four northern states many groups of PAS followers now have separate Mosques and graveyards. Also see *New Straits Times*, March 24, 1982.

12 *Star*, March 10 and 13, 1982.

13 *Ibid*, April 17, 1982. Final approval has been given for the bank and initial finance arranged. (See *New Straits Times*, April 7 and July 6, 1982.) The bank, which will use a profit-sharing system instead of interest payments (usury) expects to be in operation in 1983 (interview which Encik Anwar Ibrahim, July 3, 1982). It will be some time before the possible implications for the commercial banks and the non-Malays become apparent.

14 *Star*, March 9, 1982. Also see *Asiaweek*, April 16, 1982.

15 See *New Straits Times*, March 26 and April 19, 1982; *The Star*, April 16, 1982.

16 This was Datuk Sanusi Junid's propaganda gem (interview, July 1, 1982).

17 *New Straits Times*, April 12, 1982.

18 *Ibid.*, April 17, 1982. Malaysia wants to balance Western influence by its "Look East Policy," which emphasizes the work ethics and attitudes of the Japanese and South Koreans.

19 *Ibid.*, March 27, 29–31, 1982. Encik Anwar Ibrahim said that he joined UMNO rather than PAS because he believes in Dr. Mahathir and UMNO's commitment to Islam, because PAS is divided, and because he could be more

effective in the government party (interview, July 3, 1982). Other politicians and journalists, in interviews, have pointed out that Anwar had been seen as a successor to Datuk' Asri as President of PAS, but with the rise of numerous young Arabic-educated intellectuals in PAS, Anwar would have had difficulty in uniting PAS and maintaining his position. He is now considered one of UMNO's brightest rising stars, and most on the scene consider that he will one day become Prime Minister. Also see Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Khoon's interview with Anwar in *The Star*, April 9–10, 1982, and *The Sunday Star*, April 11, 1982, and the interview in *Wartawan Sarina*, 7:74 (May 1982).

20 *New Straits Times*, April 15, 1982.

21 Dato' Harun was put in charge of the UMNO election campaign in Selangor, including the selection of candidates. Most of those who had voted "no confidence" in him before he went to jail were dropped as candidates. This was not for revenge, Dato' Harun explained, but because of their association with corruption, although his "heart did not bleed for them" (interview, June 29, 1982).
On Dato' Harun's legal problems, see R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia* (Singapore and Vancouver: Times International and Univ. of Brit. Col. Press, 2nd ed., 1980), pp. 205–207.

22 See *New Sunday Times*, March 28, 1982; *New Straits Times*, March 31, April 1–3, 6–7, 15–17, 20, 1982.

23 Interview with Kedah *Menteri Besar* Datuk Syed Nahar Shahabuddin, July 9, 1982. Also see *New Straits Times*, April 14, 1982.

24 Related in interviews with several high-ranking Ministers and UMNO officials after the elections in June and July 1982. PAS President Datuk Asri won a state seat in Kelantan, but lost his parliamentary contest there. On the Berjasa-Kelantan UMNO problems, see *New Straits Times*, May 7, 1982.

25 Islam was not an issue and was rarely mentioned or hinted at, partly because it sparks little interest among the non-Malay electorate and partly because the non-Malay leaders consider it sensitive and difficult for them as non-Muslims to discuss Islam. The closest one gets is a statement by MCA President Datuk" Lee San Choon exhorting the Chinese in Malay-majority constituencies to support UMNO. He said, "If PAS is allowed to threaten UMNO's stability, the party will be forced to toe the extremist line to stay in power. If this occurs, the MCA and the Chinese will not only be fighting PAS extremism but also extremism in UMNO" (*ibid.*, April 21, 1982).

26 This really means the MCA and Gerakan. The Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) was given relatively safe seats and campaigned quietly in its own areas. The People's Progressive Party (PPP) is a spent force in Perak. It was expected that it would be finished off in this election, but it managed to salvage one state seat out of the three it was given to contest.

27 *New Straits Times*, April 13, 1982.

28 Although denied by the MCA and UMNO leaders, Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Khoon wrote that "UMNO leaders have urged top MCA leaders to fight

Chinese majority seats to justify their claims to be leaders of the Chinese" (*Watan*, April 20, 1982).

29 The choice of Seremban was not random. Of the 12 urban constituencies, it has the lowest percentage of non-Malay voters (78 per cent); it is not truly urban in its settlement and work patterns; it traditionally has a low Chinese voter turnout, and its incumbent, DAP Chairman Dr Chen Man Hin, had not been doing much constituency work. Further, the choice put Lim Kit Siang and the DAP in a dilemma: for Lim Kit Siang to face Lee San Choon in Seremban and make good his challenge, he would have to displace Dr. Chen, who was local, the incumbent, party Chairman (symbolic head of the party), and one of the party's founders. In fact, Lim Kit Siang did not stand there. Apparently, a great deal of money was spent on the MCA's Seremban campaign. The figures cited in interviews ranged from M$2 million to M$6 million. Also, to ensure that Gerakan support was forthcoming, the MCA gave Gerakan a state seat inside the Seremban parliamentary constituency to contest. Finally, in the event that worst came to worst, the MCA President took the precaution of not giving his rival, MCA Deputy President and Federal Minister Datuk Richard Ho, a parliamentary seat to contest. However, beyond all of this, it is a fact that the MCA President took a chance, and the Chinese community applauded his courage. The DAP's decision not to have Lim Kit Siang oppose Datuk Lee had a psychologically negative effect on the Chinese electorate.

30 *New Straits Times*, April 2, 1982. One Malaysian university academic reports that it is believed that the UCSTA approached the MCA first, but that the MCA was reluctant because of its concern over future repercussions because it could not guarantee the results sought by the UCSTA (interview, July 12, 1982). It should be noted, however, that Gerakan's Datuk Michael Chen probably had better relations with the Chinese educationalists than anyone in the MCA, and thus it might have been easier for the UCSTA to move to Gerakan's side.

31 This is Sim Moh Yue (*New Straits Times*, April 20, 1982).

32 Interviews with Gerakan's Datuk Michael Chen (July 7, 1982) and the DAP's Lee Lam Thye (July 12, 1982).

33 The MCA did make a mistake in Penang of categorizing the state election there as a contest between the MCA and Gerakan for the post of Chief Minister, which probably helped Gerakan and hurt the MCA.

34 The former Prime Minister, Tun Hussein Onn, was even prompted to comment that the "DAP is not the DAP of 1978" (*New Straits Times*, April 11, 1982).

35 The by-election was in Pengkalan Kota in November 1980 and was won by the MCA.

36 Lee Lam Thye explained that the "misunderstanding" between the DAP and the UCSTA, which he views as very significant came about when the UCSTA asked the DAP not to contest two constituencies (Tanjong and Kepong where they were going to run their own members as candidates. Since the

DAP had invested a great deal of time and went against the DAP nationally (interview, July 12, 1982).

37 *New Straits Times*, April 9, 1982.

38 This is the title of Dr. Mahathir's book, which was banned in Malaysia until he became Prime Minister. Interestingly, one Gerakan official noted during the campaign, in reference to the book, that ideas once regarded as extremist had now become government policy (*New Sunday Times*, April 14, 1982).

39 The "3R programme" appeared to threaten the character of the Chinese primary schools. Although concerned with "reading, writing and arithmetic" to upgrade standards, the language and cultural content of the syllabi was Malay. The MCA took a strong and vocal stand against the 3Rs. When the government announced soon after that it would rectify the problems with the 3R programme and print Chinese syllabi, MCA prestige increased. First, the party had championed Chinese primary schools, and, second, it had succeeded in getting the government to listen. See *New Straits Times*, February 28, March 10, 23, April 2, 15, 1982; *Star*, March 13, 1982. The DAP position on this is that the MCA deceived the Chinese community because while the language was changed to Chinese, the cultural content remains Malay (interview, July 12, 1982). However, the Chinese electorate and Chinese educationalists seemed pleased with the MCA's efforts and the changes made.

40 There was one exception in 1978 (Kepong, won by Gerakan). See Mauzy, "A Vote for Continuity," p. 294, fn. 30.

41 See *New Straits Times*, March 29, 1982. This also occurred in 1978. See Mauzy, "A Vote for Continuity," pp. 286–287.

42 After the elections, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir said that the Berjaya Independents, even if they were accepted back into Berjaya, would have to sit with the opposition in Parliament and could not be accepted into the National Front. See *Asiaweek*, May 14, 1982.

43 *New Straits Times*, April 20, 1982.

44 *Ibid*, April 28, 1982.

45 The largest percentage increases of Malays into non-Malay majority constituencies occurred in Shah Alam (+4.28 per cent) and Petaling (+3.8 per cent) in Selangor near Kuala Lumpur, Sungei Besi (+3.43 per cent) in the Federal Territory, and Lumut (+4.3 per cent) in Perak where a new navy complex is being constructed. However, many other urban constituencies showed remarkably little change over the past four years. Kuala Lumpur Bandar (+.11 per cent), Kepong (+.28 per cent), Menglembu (+.25 per cent), Seremban (+.51 per cent) and Damansara (no change). Of the 39 constituencies contested by the Front's non-Malay parties, 16 had ethnic demographic changes of less than 1 per cent and 12 had changes of less than 2 per cent. On the whole, however, there seems to be a drift of Malays to Malay majority semi-urban areas (3–4 per cent), especially in Johore and Selangor.

46 See, for example, *New Straits Times*, April 24, 1982.

47 This view was expressed in several interviews in June and July 1982.

48 One Malaysian Muslim academic believes that the UMNO leadership has not really stopped to consider the full implications of Islamization, that there has not been enough discussion on the directions being pursued because everyone is afraid to criticize anything Islamic, and that Islamization may not be easy to control or halt in place in the future (interview, July 16, 1982). At least one high-ranking Malay political figure is surprised and concerned about Islamic developments (interview, July 1982).

49 Interview, July 5, 1982. Also see *New Straits Times*, July 16, 1982; *Star*, July 16, 1982.

CHAPTER TWO

Politics at the Periphery: A Study of the 1981 and 1982 Election Campaigns in Sabah

Bruce Gale

This paper examines the interplay between local and national political forces as they developed during two recent election campaigns in Sabah. It argues that, despite the continuing turnover of both state and national leaders, political patterns have remained virtually unchanged since independence. Local politics is still largely a matter of distributing patronage rather than establishing programme-based ideological movements. Questions of race, religion and class, relevant to the study of West Malaysian politics, are less important in Sabah than the existence of strong clientelist networks.

Sabah has operated according to its own set of political rules since the formation of Malaysia in 1963. Election campaigns seem generally more vindictive than those on the peninsula and family feuds are often a key element in inter-party and intra-party competition. However, ethnic relations are generally better, with almost all the dominant political parties allowing (at least in theory) members of any ethnic group to join. A combination of geographic isolation, historically separate administrative institutions, and a distinctive ethnic configuration (in which Malays form a minority) has also encouraged Sabahans to oppose vehemently any attempt to bring the state into line with federally designed and administrated development programmes. Tun Mustapha, and to some extent Datuk Harris Salleh, have sought to establish powerful state governments, maintain links with the heads of foreign nations and conduct foreign policies more in the manner of independent sultans than elective state leaders.

Frequent contact with federal leaders in the National Front coalition

is limited by distance, while restrictions on the movement of West Malaysians to the state in an effort to reserve jobs for Sabahans has further insulated the area from national social and cultural trends. The Federal Constitution, drawn up in 1963, recognized the special position of the East Malaysian states (Sabah and Sarawak) by giving them special powers in the fields of health, language, immigration, and taxation.[1]

Provincial newspapers flourish in a situation where logistical problems make it difficult for national dailies, such as the *New Straits Times* and *The Star*, to cultivate a local readership. Almost unavoidably, Sabah newspapers are a prime target for chief ministers who can see the importance of a sympathetic press in maintaining themselves in office.

Control of timber licences is another key factor influencing the course of Sabah politics. It is common knowledge in the state that a timber licence is a means of making large profits. These licences are shared out among officials and supporters of the governing party so that the stakes in an election contest are naturally much higher than in other parts of the country.

History has also played its part. Most of the peninsular states have a long history of Malay court politics upon which their modern political systems are built. Indigenous leaders in Sabah lack a similar historical experience or cultural framework. The state has a small, first generation political elite. Institutionalized structures regulating political activity are therefore weak, and political office is often seen as the personal possession of the incumbent in a manner similar to Weber's characterization of the patrimonial state.

The existence of an external threat from Indonesia and the Philippines has not encouraged Sabahans to look to Kuala Lumpur for leadership. Unlike Sarawak, Sabah suffered little during the Indonesian confrontation in the early 1960s and has therefore had little experience in dealing with military problems. Perhaps it has been a lack of appreciation of the dangers involved which has led state leaders to prefer to use their own resources. The Philippines claim to Sabah actually encourages Sabah's chief ministers to take a particular interest in foreign affairs by cultivating good relations with Indonesia, Brunei and other friendly powers. Naturally, these moves are not appreciated by federal leaders.

THE SEARCH FOR POLITICAL INTEGRATION

The defeat and subsequent dissolution of the Kadazan-based United Pasokmomogun Kadazan Organization (UPKO) and the rise to power of

Tun Mustapha as Chief Minister as a result of the 1967 state elections seemed to mark a new phase in federal-state relations. Tun Mustapha's party, the United Sabah National Organization (USNO), was closely identified with federal policies, and his early activities seemed to confirm this association. He encouraged the use of Bahasa Malaysia and promoted large-scale conversions to Islam.[2] Political opponents, however, accused him of curruption, nepotism and economic mismanagement through grandiose development schemes.

By 1974, the Chief Minister was beginning to display serious signs of independence. Sabah began its own air charter service (Sabah Air) in defiance of federal wishes, Tun Mustapha avoided functions marking an official visit of Malaysia's King to Sabah and even took it upon himself to contact Indonesian and Philippine politicians directly without first consulting the leaders in Kuala Lumpur. There were also rumours that he was complicating Malaysia's relations with its ASEAN neighbours by giving assistance to Muslim rebels in the southern Philippines.[3]

These activities, however, almost paled into insignificance with the apparently well-founded allegation by a newly-formed opposition party (Berjaya) that Tun Mustapha had raised the possibility of secession at an USNO meeting in April 1975.[4] Earlier, in a typically Malaysian attempt at compromise, federal leaders had offered him the portfolio of the Defence Ministry after the national elections of 1974, but this had been refused. Renewed federal attempts to unseat the Chief Minister involved the Federal Government using its constitutional powers to ensure that Berjaya, which largely consisted of ex-USNO members, would be able to compete effectively with USNO in the 1976 state elections. It is beyond the scope of this paper to give an account of the election campaign which followed. Suffice it to say that, for the Federal Government, the resulting Berjaya victory established a co-operative state government once more in Sabah.[5]

After the elections, the National Front in Kuala Lumpur hoped that Berjaya and USNO could be encouraged to settle their differences, establish a coalition government and thus save the federal leaders the embarrassment of having two of their component parties being political opponents at the state level. By 1981, however, this goal had yet to be achieved – partly because of unending personal feuds which were constantly fuelled by accusations and counter accusations.

During the 1981 election campaign, the Secretary-General of Berjaya, Datuk Mohamad Noor, repeated the party's stand that Berjaya and USNO could never co-operate while certain personalities such as Syed

Kechik remained in USNO.[6] However, it should be pointed out that personal animosities did not necessarily influence the actions of all the senior party leaders. Tan Sri Said Keruak, who became USNO President after Tun Mustapha's resignation in April 1978,[7] and Datuk Harris Salleh, the Berjaya President, were business partners in a timber concession dating back to the time when they served under Tun Mustapha.

With the leaders of the two parties on such good terms, it seems reasonable to look for other possible causes for the failure of the two organizations to unite. One explanation is that the success of Berjaya in 1976 had re-established a natural two-party system based upon the major ethnic divisions of the state. In other words, a basically non-Muslim Kadazan political party had been created which was opposed to an organization which attempted to represent the interests of the Malays and other Muslim indigenous groups. The Chinese, having the option to align themselves with either group, held the balance of power.

Such an analysis, however, can be misleading. It is true that Berjaya had mostly Kadazan and Chinese support, but it must also be recognized that many of the party's prominent leaders, such as Datuk Harris Salleh, Salleh Sulong, and Mohamad Noor, were not Kadazans or Chinese. Moreover, they were well known as Muslims in a party which was largely supported by non-Muslims.

It is not easy to make simple generalizations about political cleavages in Sabah. Race and religion are clearly important issues. However, the evidence suggests that other considerations, such as a desire to gain the support of sections of the other communities in order to win, the existence of clientelist networks and the need to present a united multiracial image to the Federal Government, also play an important role.

THE 1981 STATE ELECTIONS

When the State Assembly was dissolved on 21 February 1981 for the elections in March, there were an estimated 315,073 voters on the rolls out of a population of around one million. Of these, about 109,524 were non-Muslim Bumiputeras (mostly Kadazans), 118,613 were Muslim Bumiputeras (Malays, Bajaus and others) while a further 86,936 were Chinese. The Muslim Bumiputera groups, consisting mainly of padi farmers and fishermen, predominated in the coastal areas. Non-Muslim Bumiputeras worked on the land in the interior. The Chinese worked in the urban areas as labourers, businessmen, and professionals.

There had been a number of changes since 1976. In the elections of that year Berjaya had been successful in 28 constituencies, while the remaining 20 had been retained by USNO. However, nine USNO assemblymen subsequently joined Berjaya, increasing the number of seats held by the new state government to 37.

With obvious federal support, Berjaya was soon able to consolidate its position in the state. However, the party received a severe blow in June 1976. Tun Mohammed Fuad Stephens, who had resigned as Yang di-Pertua Negeri (state governor) in July 1975 in order to become President of Berjaya, was killed in a plane crash. The tragedy also claimed the lives of other key Berjaya figures, including the charismatic leader, Peter Mojuntin, and the intellectual Salleh Sulong. Datuk Harris Salleh, Vice-President of USNO until his resignation in July 1975 to form Berjaya, became the new party President and Chief Minister. After Tun Mohammed Fuad Stephens' death, however, it was not at all certain that the Kadazans would continue to unite behind the party. Datuk Harris Salleh had the support of Berjaya's Chinese leaders but many Kadazan politicians were known to have preferred James Ongkili as party President.[8]

USNO's election calculations were apparently based on two major considerations. One was the belief that the defection of assembly members did not necessarily mean that the loyalty of the voters to the party had changed. This assumption seemed reasonable enough at the time, particularly since the defectors represented areas with Muslim Bumiputera majorities which were traditionally sympathetic to USNO. The party was therefore confident of regaining all the 20 constituencies it had won in the 1976 elections.

Realizing it could not possibly win the elections by appealing to the Malay and Bajau voters alone, USNO made an electoral pact with two new parties. They were the United Pasok Nunukragang National Organization (Pasok) and the Sabah Chinese Consolidated Party (SCCP). The strategy was to take advantage of the apparent ethnic cleavages within Berjaya by offering disaffected government supporters a means of registering their discontent.

Pasok, which took its name from the ancestral village of all the Sabah native tribes (Nunukragang), near Keningau in the interior, was apparently Berjaya's main worry. The new party intended to appeal to Kadazans, Muruts and Rungus, many of whom were among the poorest in the state. Pasok's obvious line of attack was to take advantage of the historic divisions within the non-Muslim indigenous community.

Originally, the term "Kadazan" had been used to describe the indigenous people of the Penampang district near Kota Kinabalu. These Kadazans were educated in Catholic mission schools and obtained employment in the colonial civil service. They were in a better position than the other indigenous peoples to influence government policies. In the 1950s, however, Donald Stephens, later known as Tun Mohammed Fuad Stephens, successfully advocated that the term "Kadazan" be applied to all non-Muslim indigenous people in the state.

Since then, many indigenous peoples in the interior have been officially considered Kadazans although they have continued to prefer the older name "Dusun" – a term Donald Stephens thought demeaning. These groups resented the early domination of indigenous politics by the Penampang Kadazans. The Muruts, concentrated in the southern highlands of the interior, also rejected the Kadazan label as did the Rungus people in the Northwest. Since the 1960s, Kadazans, Dusuns, Muruts and Rungus have become more united because of their common opposition to the Malayo-Muslim peoples of the coastal areas rather than through any feeling of a common identity. To them the Malays, Bajaus, and Illanums are "usurpers" of the land they feel to be historically their own.

In 1981, Pasok had few resources with which to challenge Berjaya. Moreover, there was no obvious domination of Berjaya by the Penampang Kadazans. Many of the interior peoples, however, still harboured the resentments of a bygone era. Pasok soon developed strong branches among the Dusuns in the Langkon constituency and among the Rungus in Matunggong, although Pasok leader Ignatius Stephen Malanjum was reluctant to take advantage of the issue.

SCCP, on the other hand, was set up to challenge Berjaya in the urban areas. The party was meant to replace the Sabah Chinese Association (SCA), a former USNO ally, which had become defunct soon after losing all eight of its seats in the 1976 elections.

Barisan Sabah, the name given to the tripartite alliance, planned to split votes that would otherwise have gone to Berjaya in no less than 19 constituencies. This was to be done by fielding both USNO and Pasok candidates in electorates where the number of Malay/Bajau and Kadazan voters were nearly equal in an attempt to siphon off Kadazan votes from other non-Muslim indigenous voters and thus ensure victories for USNO.[9]

There were signs, however, that all was not well with the opposition pact. The level of trust between the Barisan Sabah's component parties

was perhaps best illustrated by USNO's insistence that it contest a sufficient number of constituencies to enable the party to govern in its own right should the alliance fail to work.[10] Pasok and the SCCP, on the other hand, objected to several USNO leaders becoming candidates. Thus, Tun Mustapha and USNO Vice-President Datuk Haji Dzulkifli Hamid were omitted from the list of USNO candidates in order to facilitate the establishment of the electoral alliance.[11]

The component members of the Barisan Sabah also found it difficult to agree on other matters. According to sources within Pasok, the party wanted to field a candidate in Kudat in order to obtain the support of the Rungus people in the area. However, they were forced to allow the SCCP to field a candidate instead because of the number of Chinese in the town.

USNO and Pasok also had conflicting views about the groups they expected to support them. USNO wanted to unite all the Muslim indigenous peoples under its banner. Pasok, on the other hand, looked to tribal rather than religious loyalties. Difficulties arose because in some constituencies such as Tandek and Sungut there were Dusuns who were also Muslim. Both parties, therefore, fielded candidates. In such situations, Pasok may have attracted USNO as well as Berjaya voters.

Apart from Berjaya and the Barisan Sabah, the only other credible contender in the elections was the DAP. In the 1978 parliamentary contest, the DAP had managed to break into Sabah politics by winning in the predominantly Chinese electorate of Sandakan. This was a remarkable achievement for a political organization encumbered with the stigma of being a peninsular party. In 1981, the DAP planned to enter candidates in the predominantly Chinese constituencies of Sandakan, Tawau, and Kota Kinabalu.

Untainted by any previous association with Tun Mustapha's government, the party could claim to be a more trustworthy representative of Chinese interests than the SCCP. Berjaya implicitly testified to the party's potential strength by maintaining a ban on the entry into the state of DAP Secretary-General Lim Kit Siang and his deputy, Lee Lam Thye. The ban was first imposed before the 1978 elections.

Fung Ket Wing, the DAP's successful candidate in the 1978 parliamentary elections, had built up a good reputation among voters in his constituency, but the party was subsequently weakened by an internal political crisis on the peninsula. It had also lost a significant number of protest votes to the SCCP. In 1978, USNO had allegedly encouraged Sabah's urban Malay minority to vote for the DAP. In 1981, however,

the party urged its supporters to vote for SCCP candidates.

The DAP was also at a disadvantage because of the circumstances in which the election was being fought. In 1981, voters were being asked to select a new state government, not send representatives to a distant national parliament. The DAP was, therefore, an irrelevancy because it was not aligned with either the Barisan Sabah or Berjaya. Whichever party formed the state government, the DAP representatives were likely to sit on the opposition benches. This meant that voters who supported the DAP would simply be giving up their chance to participate in determining the fate of the state's two major rivals.

The SCCP also faced an uphill battle to convince voters to support its candidates. The SCCP Secretary-General, Joseph Chia, claimed that Berjaya had become a business concern competing with the Chinese. "In fact, it has been given the name of Berjaya Sendirian Berhad by some people," he pointed out.[12] He criticized the Berjaya system of allocating timber land to party supporters and reminded voters in Kota Kinabalu that not a single Chinese school had been built in the area since Berjaya came to power.

The Chinese voters were apparently unimpressed with the SCCP's "propaganda". Many SCCP leaders had formerly been in the SCA and associated with Tun Mustapha's government — an administration not known for its sensitivity towards Chinese culture. Perhaps it was for this reason that Stephen Chan, a popular Sandakan accountant, was chosen to lead the party. He had never been a member of the SCA and was imprisoned during Tun Mustapha's rule. In 1976 he joined Berjaya but failed to win a seat in the elections of that year. In Sabah, this defeat was generally explained by the fact that the party did not allow him to stand in Bandar Tawau where most of his Chinese supporters were concentrated. In 1981, Stephen Chan was still a popular figure, but whether this popularity would be sufficient to encourage Chinese voters to overlook the SCCP's close association with USNO was another matter.

Berjaya was in a stronger position in Kota Kinabalu. Lim Guan Sing, the State Minister for Communications and Works, was an acknowledged leader among the Chinese. He was said to have the support of several organizations in the state capital, including the Sabah United Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Berjaya also claimed to be the only truly multiracial party in Sabah. Its leaders represented all three major communities and, although there were a few isolated expressions of discontent, internal arrangements

seemed to be working well. According to one Berjaya official:

> We are not banking on either the Malay votes, the Kadazan votes or the Chinese votes. What we are looking for is the people's vote. We don't segregate people by races because our record shows we have been fair to all.[13]

As if to prove its point, Berjaya fielded non-Kadazan candidates in no less than 10 out of the 23 Kadazan dominated electorates.[14]

Political manoeuvring for the elections began in January but it was not until early March that the major contenders released their political manifestos. Nominations closed on 7 March and polling was staggered from 23 March to 28 March because of communication difficulties.

Berjaya released an 80-point manifesto promising continued progress, prosperity and a just, clean government. The party claimed it had kept the promises it made in the 1976 election and at the same time had restored the people's freedom and democratic rights. Future programmes would include modernizing the agricultural sector, providing more aid to fishermen and promoting agro-based and resource-based industries. The party also promised to build more low cost houses in urban and rural areas, expand rural electrification schemes and improve the water supply.[15]

The Barisan Sabah promised that if elected it would pay "special attention to people-development through education, socio-economic and welfare programmes, land development schemes and forestry restructuring policies".[16] The coalition also planned to set up a special council to solve Sabah's high inflation rate, accusing Berjaya of having failed "miserably" in this area. Land would be given to every Sabahan and those whose welfare aid had been allegedly discontinued because they had refused to support Berjaya, would be paid arrears.

During the actual campaign, the component parties added various emphases according to the particular group of voters they were trying to attract. USNO accused Berjaya of trying to de-Islamize the Muslims, while the SCCP alleged that government agencies such as Kojasa, which operated retail food outlets, were competing unfairly with Chinese businessmen. Pasok, seeking the Kadazan vote, claimed that the state government had arbitrarily acquired land without regard for proper compensation or the customary rights of the Kadazans.[17]

Sabah politicians interviewed by this writer were remarkably forthright in their open acknowledgement of the vital importance of money in the state's politics. The need to spend money in order to win was particularly acute in the rural areas where there was much competition

for the loyalty of the local chiefs and village headman. The local leaders were offered a number of inducements, including zinc roofing and water tanks for distribution among their followers, in return for political support. The areas where money was a particularly vital factor included the parliamentary constituencies of Silam (Lahad Datu, Kunak and Sempora), Marudu (Banggi, Kudat and Bengkoka), and Kota Belud (Uruskan, Tempasuk and Bebayan). In all these three areas the expectations of the people had been raised because of the vast amounts of cash which had been used in previously hard fought political campaigns.

In the urban areas it was different. Here, campaign workers cited the past performance of sitting members, infrastructure development and issues such as Chinese education as important factors influencing the voters. Equally important was the need to gain the support of Chinese guilds and associations. These organizations could not be so easily influenced with offers of money. Voters in the urban areas were generally better educated and therefore made more sophisticated political choices.

The struggle for power in the state cut across family loyalties. In the predominantly Bajau Tempasuk constituency in Kota Belud, Berjaya Secretary-General, Datuk Haji Mohamad Noor Mansor stood against his uncle, Datuk Ashkar Hasbollah, who was also the Secretary-General of USNO. The two men were related by marriage. Adding spice to the battle was the fact that Datuk Ashkar Hasbollah was tipped to take over Datuk Haji Mohamad Noor Mansor's portfolio as Finance Minister if USNO won control of the state government.

Another well-known example involved Tun Mustapha and his son, Datu Hamid. Tun Mustapha did not contest the elections, but it was common knowledge that he supported USNO. Datu Hamid, however, stood as the Berjaya candidate in the Kunak constituency in a straight fight with USNO's candidate, Salim Bacho. Tun Mustapha said he would campaign against anyone who stood in USNO's way — including his son.[18]

THE FEDERAL CONNECTION

Whatever their differences, both Berjaya and the Barisan Sabah were agreed on the importance of some issues. One of these was the need to remain loyal to the state of Sabah. The Barisan Sabah, for instance, promised to ensure the transfer of management technology in the state's industries to Sabahans, rather than Malaysians in general, and wanted to know why Berjaya used state money to run a cattle farm and

grow sugar-cane in Australia when there was suitable land in Sabah.[19] Not to be outdone, Berjaya released a statement to local newspapers in Sabah alleging that USNO had lost its proposed headquarters site in Kota Kinabalu because its President and Secretary-General, after transferring the ownership of the site to their own names, sold it to a group of West Malaysians.[20]

Such accusations, however, could not hide the fact that both major parties were vitally concerned about the attitude of federal leaders. Both sides went to considerable lengths to gain the sympathy of key figures in the national government or, at the very least, ensure their neutrality. Berjaya distributed a poster in the kampungs which featured a photograph of Prime Minister Hussein Onn and Datuk Harris Salleh hugging each other. USNO President Tan Sri Said Keruak published a book at about the same time with a similar photograph of himself and the Prime Minister on the front cover. The Barisan Sabah also promised that the party would not deal directly with foreign businessmen without the prior agreement of the leaders in Kuala Lumpur – something it claimed the Berjaya government had done.[21]

One early controversy which erupted in Sabah over the attitude of the federal leaders suggested that the Federal Government was itself unsure of the position it should take. In mid-January, a front-page report in a local Sabah newspaper quoted Chief Minister Datuk Harris Salleh as saying that the Prime Minister supported Berjaya.[22] Tan Sri Said Keruak reacted to the claim by charging that Datuk Harris Salleh was "putting words into Prime Minister Hussein Onn's mouth".[23] He argued that since another senior federal leader, Datuk Musa Hitam, had already announced in Sabah that the National Front would be neutral in the coming election, Datuk Harris Salleh's announcement was a violation of federal party policy.

So confident was Berjaya of federal support that, according to the USNO President, the party had printed thousands of election registration slips in Kuala Lumpur bearing the symbols of the Barisan Nasional and Berjaya. A caption between these symbols read: *Pangkalah Lambang Barisan Nasional Bererti Mengundi Calon Berjaya* (A Cross against the National Front symbol means a vote for Berjaya), and *Undilah Calun Berjaya/Barisan Nasional* (Vote for the Berjaya/National Front Candidate).[24]

The Berjaya Secretary-General, Datuk Haji Mohamad Noor Mansor, retaliated by accusing Tan Sri Said Keruak of having "insulted" the Prime Minister. Datuk Hussein Onn, he said, had "enough experience

and nobody can put words into his mouth".[25] He went on to say that Berjaya would defeat the Barisan Sabah as the Prime Minister had requested. Datuk Haji Mohamad Noor Mansor, who was also the Sabah Finance Minister, denied any knowledge of the registration slips and claimed instead that USNO was spreading stories that the Barisan Sabah pact had been blessed by federal leaders.[26]

The Prime Minister remained silent throughout the controversy although he was known to be angry about Datuk Harris Salleh's statement. Datuk Hussein Onn had a serious heart condition and was about to leave for London for a coronary by-pass operation. The Federal Government's attitude towards the Sabah elections may have been discussed at what was described as a "very important" Supreme Council meeting of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) which he chaired before he left.[27] Issues pertaining to the Prime Minister's one-month absence were certainly on the agenda, but no clear statement on the matter was forthcoming until mid-February when Dr. Mahathir, in his capacity as acting Prime Minister, met USNO leaders in Kota Kinabalu. To the relief of USNO, Dr. Mahathir announced that UMNO had decided to prohibit its members from campaigning for any party in the coming elections and went on to express the hope that the other component parties in the Barisan Nasional would also observe strict neutrality.[28]

Apart from the embarrassing fact that both Berjaya and USNO were members of the National Front at the federal level, UMNO had a particular reason to take a neutral stand. Past experience had taught UMNO leaders to be cautious of Sabah politics. The history of USNO under Tun Mustapha had shown that parties which had at first appeared to have policies highly attractive to the Federal Government would not necessarily retain them.

Like USNO in 1967, Berjaya's relations with the Federal Government in early 1981 were indeed close. Three Berjaya-party Members of Parliament were serving as Ministers or Deputy Ministers in the Federal Government and Datuk Harris Salleh was careful not to say anything that would conflict with federal policy. Moreover, in February it was disclosed that Berjaya and UMNO had set up a joint holding company with interests, through subsidiaries and associates, in housing development, trading, plantation development, leasing, and general investment. The joint business venture, known as Jaya Usaha Bersatu Sdn Bhd, was incorporated in Kuala Lumpur with an authorized capital if M$ 10 million, and chaired by the Secretary-General of the National Front,

Encik Ghaffar Baba.[29]

In the 1981 Sabah elections, however, UMNO seemed to have decided to keep its options open in case its good relations with Berjaya changed. This may have been partly due to the fact that open support for Berjaya would have antagonized powerful UMNO leaders who sympathized with USNO's cause. In any case, the spectacle of UMNO leaders openly opposing the Malay- and Muslim-based USNO in favour of the predominantly non-Malay and non-Muslim Berjaya would not have appealed to the UMNO rank and file.

On the other hand, Dr. Mahathir seemed prepared to risk being accused of violating federal policy by providing Berjaya with limited assistance. As Deputy Prime Minister, he could fully expect to become the next Prime Minister when the ailing Datuk Hussein Onn retired.[30] Whichever party won the Sabah election (and it was clear from the start that Berjaya had a decided advantage) Dr. Mahathir would have to work with them in the government. That he should take the opportunity to cement his close association with key Berjaya figures such as James Ongkili is hardly surprising. Another attractive feature of Berjaya to Dr. Mahathir was its pragmatic approach to economic development, a philosophy which was similar in many respects to his own.

Shortly before the election campaign officially began, the Deputy Prime Minister visited Sabah at the invitation of the Sabah government to open Berjaya's new M$38 million headquarters in Kota Kinabalu. In his opening speech, Dr. Mahathir repeated the federal policy of neutrality. However, he went on to praise the Berjaya government for bringing economic stability to the state. Sabah's precarious financial position when Berjaya took office in 1976 had been corrected, he said, and the state government had even been able to venture into areas thought impossible a few years before.[31]

The Barisan Sabah also had its sympathizers at the federal level. Unrestricted by party policy or discipline, former Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman clearly wanted USNO to win. Some of his reasons were probably personal. The Tunku was well known for his loyalty to his friends, and his close association with Tun Mustapha went back many years. Although the latter was no longer President of USNO, he was known to be still closely connected to the party. A win for the Barisan Sabah may have seen Tun Mustapha become politically active once more. Personality differences may also have been important. Dr. Mahathir and the Tunku were old rivals, the former having committed the almost inexcusable act (in Malaysian politics) of challenging the

authority of the latter when he was Prime Minister and UMNO President. Thereafter, both men had frequently been found in opposing camps on a number of public controversies.

Tunku Abdul Rahman's weekly column in *The Star* newspaper was the major means by which USNO was able to make its views known in Kuala Lumpur. As a devout Muslim, the Tunku was concerned about Berjaya's apparent attempts to win Catholic support. He accused Berjaya of using the centenary celebrations, marking the commencement of operations of the British North Borneo Company, as a cheap publicity stunt to consolidate its influence among Christians in the state.[32]

THE RESULTS

The election results justified Berjaya's confident prediction of an easy victory and surprised many local observers who had expected a much closer contest. Berjaya received 60.2 per cent of the popular vote, compared to 53.6 per cent in 1976, and increased its representation in the State Assembly from 37 to 43 of the 47 contested seats.[33] Despite the rhetoric of Pasok and the SCCP, the majority of Kadazans and Chinese supported Berjaya.

The state government had also made deep inroads into traditionally USNO-held constituencies. In fact, USNO managed to retain only three seats. The party won Banggi, the former stronghold of Tun Mustapha, Semporna, a Bajau-dominated constituency, and Uruskan, held by USNO President Tan Sri Said Keruak. Indicative of the extent of the Berjaya victory was the fact that a determined effort to unseat the USNO President, who was also a Bajau chieftain with strong roots in Uruskan, almost worked. Berjaya had campaigned strongly amongst the Illanum, a Bajau subgroup, and counted upon the votes of the Chinese and Dusuns in the constituency to tip the balance.[34] With

RESULTS OF THE 1981 STATE ELECTIONS

	Seats Contested	*Seats Won*	*Deposits Lost*
Berjaya	48	43	nil
USNO	29	3	1
Pasok	27	nil	13
SCCP	7	1	1

6,400 voters casting their ballots in the electorate, Tan Sri Said Keruak managed to defeat his Berjaya opponent by a majority of only 89 votes.[35]

USNO's partners in the Barisan Sabah were in a similar state of disarray. Pasok's inexperienced leadership failed to win the party a single seat. Thirteen of its candidates lost their deposits. In explaining the defeat to this writer, the Pasok leader, Ignatius Stephen Malanjum, pointed out that the party had been formed too late to reach its potential supporters at the local village level. He also agreed that the party had been handicapped rather than helped by its association with USNO in the Barisan Sabah.[36] The SCCP fared little better, although its allegation that Berjaya-sponsored government retail stores were competing unfairly with Chinese businesses may have won it some votes. The SCCP President, Stephen Chan, won narrowly in Bandar Tawau (by 77 votes), possibly because of disunity in the local Berjaya branch.[37]

Many reasons may be put forward to explain the Berjaya victory. One of these was the Malaysian election regulations which tended to work in favour of the party in power. Political rallies were banned so that parties were forced to use posters and pamphlets, campaign from house to house and hold closed-door oratory sessions (*ceramahs*). Berjaya, being the government party, had easy access to community-halls whereas the Barisan Sabah candidates had to hold their *ceramahs* in the homes of party supporters.

In such a situation, access to the mass media was vital. In Sabah, television and radio were a Federal Government monopoly and federal leaders were clearly anxious not to become officially involved in the campaign. The Barisan Sabah could, therefore, not expect any help from them.

Local newspapers, on the other hand, were virulently pro-Berjaya. The two newspapers with the largest circulations in the state were the *Daily Express* and the *Sabah Times*, both of which were published in English, Malay, and Kadazan editions. Since 1975, Chinese millionaire Yeh Pao Tzo had used the *Daily Express* to support Berjaya. The *Sabah Times* had been previously owned by Tun Mustapha and run by his son, Datu Hamid. In 1977, however, Datu Hamid was induced to join Berjaya and arrange for the *Sabah Times* to be purchased by the Pemodalan Sabah, a state government controlled company. West Malaysian newspapers took a generally more balanced stand in their reporting but this did not help the Barisan Sabah much because these newspaper reports did not reach the voters concerned.[38]

Another important factor working in Berjaya's favour was the attitude of the Federal Government which, although officially neutral, could not hide the fact that its sympathies were clearly with Berjaya. The visits of President Suharto of Indonesia, Dr. Mahathir and other federal leaders, and the conference of *Menteris Besar* and Chief Ministers, obviously helped to enhance the image of Datuk Harris Salleh. It also implied that development funds for the state under the new *Fourth Malaysia Plan 1981–85* would be readily available should Berjaya win.

Economic issues generally worked in favour of Berjaya despite the efforts of the opposition to blame the state government for Sabah's high inflation rate. Berjaya's emphasis upon infrastructure development during its four and a half years of office, the introduction of old-age pensions, free milk and school uniforms for children, were some of its more obviously popular measures. Berjaya also revived an old USNO tactic of paying out a large dividend from the Sabah Foundation to each voter just before the elections.

The various ethnic groups had their own reasons for supporting Berjaya. Among non-Muslims, religious issues were still important. The predominantly Catholic Kadazan community was encouraged by its religious leaders to continue supporting what was, after all, a basically Kadazan political party. Among the Chinese, memories of Tun Mustapha's rule (when the lion dance was banned) were still strong and Catholics had not forgotten the expulsion of their expatriate priests. Both the Chinese and the Kadazans apparently believed that a win for the Barisan Sabah would result in Tun Mustapha returning to politics to become Chief Minister once more.

The fact that large numbers of Malay and Bajau voters also supported Berjaya is more difficult to explain. USNO's heavy emphasis on its Islamic orientation was obviously insufficient to retain the loyalty of the Malays and other Muslim groups. Apart from the general economic development which had taken place during Berjaya's rule, Malay and Bajau voters may have been influenced by the fact that senior Malay leaders in the Federal Government were obviously more closely associated with Berjaya than with USNO. In any case, Berjaya was the party in power and this in itself was strongly persuasive. "You have to live," was the way it was explained in one Bajau kampung in Sandakan – implying that it was easier to support the party in power than to oppose it.[39]

Perhaps USNO's most serious handicap was that it was not united. Strong moves within the party to have Tun Mustapha stand as a candi-

date were strenuously opposed by Tan Sri Said Keruak, Datuk Haji Dzulkifli Hamid, Datu Ashkar Hasbollah, Puan Amisah Borhan and other influential leaders who resented his earlier domination of the party. Officially, the decision not to name Tun Mustapha as a candidate was based on the fact that USNO's partners, the SCCP and Pasok, would object. However, there were also allegations that many party figures with close connections with the former Chief Minister were being deliberately rejected as candidates in favour of those who supported the "New Order".[40] Tun Mustapha himself also appears to have contributed to the party's problems. In Bengkoka, Tun Mustapha supported an independent candidate against the official USNO nominee. The facilities of the United Sabah Islamic Association (USIA) were also apparently involved.[41]

Moves against Tun Mustapha were apparently supported by the ex-Chief Minister's former strategist, Datuk Syed Kechik. The two men had fallen out in 1976 when Tun Mustapha blamed Datuk Syed Kechik for the USNO defeat that year. The split became permanent soon afterwards when Datuk Syed Kechik assisted in the production of a book (*The Politics of Federalism*) which criticized Tun Mustapha's 1975 suggestion that Sabah consider withdrawing from the Malaysian federation. USNO was thus split into two opposing camps just before the election.[42]

BETWEEN ELECTIONS

Soon after the election results were announced, stunned USNO leaders began to accuse Berjaya of vote rigging. An appeal to the Election Commission, however, did not result in any substantial changes. Before the election campaign began, extra police had been flown in from Kuala Lumpur to maintain order. The Federal Government's special representative to observe the elections, Datuk Musa Hitam, pronounced himself satisfied and appealed to Sabahans to uphold the decision of the electorate.[43]

What had yet to be decided was not the impartiality with which the elections had been conducted, but the fate of USNO itself. Some USNO leaders were reportedly planning to hand in their resignations. The Federal Government could have tried to force the issue by expelling USNO from the National Front, but there were no early moves in this direction. Both Berjaya and the federal leadership appeared to have decided to wait for the party to collapse on its own accord.

The fact that USNO continued to remain active can be attributed, at least partly, to the return of Tun Mustapha as President at the party's General Assembly in June. Despite the state election debacle, the controversial former Chief Minister still maintained an enthusiastic following. A wealthy man, he also had the means to finance future election campaigns.

The morale of USNO supporters was lifted by an unexpected turn of events within Berjaya. In September, Datuk Harris Salleh surprised everyone by alleging that four senior Berjaya officials were part of a conspiracy with USNO to overthrow the state government. Datu Abdul Hamid, the state Minister for Culture, Youth and Sports, was sacked together with his political secretary, assemblyman Abbas bin Ali. Puan Norsaudah, the Assistant Minister to the Minister of Community Services, also lost her portfolio.[44]

Puan Norsaudah was allowed to retain her nominated seat after expressing regret about her involvement in the alleged plot. However, both Datu Abdul Hamid and Abbas bin Ali, who had previously signed undated resignation letters, were forced to resign their Kunak and Balung seats respectively.

Datu Abdul Hamid, the son of USNO President Tun Mustapha, denied that he wished to topple the government. He said he was the spokesman for a group of Muslim Berjaya assemblymen who were unhappy with the party's handling of several issues. One of these was the allocation of Cabinet posts.[45] Out of 44 elected Berjaya assemblymen in 1981, 28 were believed to be Muslims. However, in spite of their majority, only three were given ministerial positions while another two had become Assistant Ministers. Within the Cabinet, the corresponding figures for non-Muslims were six and seven. The matter was a serious one for Datuk Harris Salleh as the state assemblymen involved, said to number up to 17, had reportedly sought to raise the issue with the Federal Government in Kuala Lumpur.[46]

In late September, Tun Mustapha announced that the USNO Supreme Council had decided to contest the by-elections as soon as they were held. The decision was somewhat surprising in view of the state's political history, which showed that an opposition party stood no chance against the government in by-elections for state seats. A well-known example was in 1975 when Datuk Harris stood as the Berjaya candidate for the Labuan constituency. He lost to USNO's Mohamed Omar Bledram. Recognizing the difficulty, former USNO President, Tan Sri Said Keruak, had announced in 1980 that the party would avoid such

contests.

However, events during the latter half of 1981 gave the party renewed confidence. There were to be three by-elections, not two, and USNO strategists believed there would be more in other constituencies held by Muslim Berjaya assemblymen.[47] The party could not have asked for a better testing ground. All three constituencies had large numbers of Muslim voters and in each case Berjaya had won them by only a few hundred votes previously.

Berjaya was successful in the Balung and Lumadan constituencies, but in Kunak USNO was well organized. Salim Bacho won by 500 votes. USNO officials were elated. The party's Deputy President, Datuk Haji Dzulkifli Hamid, described the victory as the beginning of the downfall of the Berjaya "regime".[48] Some believed Tun Mustapha's influence to be decisive, particularly since Salim Bacho was known as the USNO President's "god-son".

Other factors were probably of equal importance. The retrenchment of more than 1,000 workers from the Sabah Land Development Board and the announcement that the Sabah Padi Board was to be closed down may have helped swell USNO's ranks.[49] In all three constituencies, the voters were mostly fishermen, coconut planters and land settlers. The state government had also been issuing warnings and dismissals to officials in other government departments and statutory authorities. Instead of announcing new development projects, Berjaya had been making threats.

More ominous for Berjaya was the fact that the party's previously cordial relations with the Federal Government were becoming strained. One indication of this was the cancellation of a trip to Sabah planned for the end of October by the Prime Minister. Federal leaders were apparently unwilling to provide Berjaya with the same moral support for the by-elections which had been forthcoming in the state-wide contest earlier in the year.

Several actions by Datuk Harris Salleh had annoyed the Federal Government and invited comparisons with Tun Mustapha's reign. There were rumours, for example, that he had become involved in UMNO's internal affairs by supporting Tengku Razaleigh against Datuk Musa Hitam in the race for the UMNO Deputy Presidency in June.

Moreover, his invitation to the Sultan of Brunei to visit Sabah was seen as a serious breach of protocol in Kuala Lumpur. In the State Assembly in October, he bluntly accused federal ministers of neglecting the state. Later, in early December, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa

Hitam arrived in Kota Kinabalu amid widespread speculation that he planned to ask Datuk Harris to resign. Undaunted, the Chief Minister repeated his earlier charge of Federal Government neglect and demanded that Malaysia break off diplomatic relations with the Philippines. He claimed that Manila had been harassing Sabah with unfounded charges that Philippines rebels were being trained in the state.[50]

Datuk Musa did not ask for the Chief Minister's resignation. However, it was clear that he was unhappy with Dato' Harris Salleh's tendency to run the state on an independent course. At a press conference attended by the Chief Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam told reporters that the Philippines charges would be dealt with through the proper diplomatic channels. The following day, the Deputy Prime Minister went further, saying there was no need for Malaysia to take drastic action. Datuk Musa Hitam also revealed that the federal and state governments had different approaches to economic development. He told guests at a dinner in the luxurious Berjaya headquarters that the state government should change its strategy to prevent income disparities in Sabah from worsening.[51]

THE 1982 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

As the 1982 general election drew near, the glaring anomaly in Sabah politics, in which the two most bitter rivals in the state were both members of the National Front, had yet to be resolved. In the 1978 parliamentary elections, a direct clash had been avoided when the two parties had been assigned seats based on the outcome of the 1976 state elections. A formula had been adopted whereby the party which controlled two out of three state seats, which formed each of the 16 parliamentary constituencies in the state, was given the seat.

Berjaya had, therefore, contested in ten constituencies and had won nine, while USNO had won four seats out of the five it contested. The DAP had won in Sandakan, while in Kota Kinabalu USNO had lost to Mark Koding, a Berjaya-backed independent candidate. In Kinabatangan, no agreement could be reached on which party should represent the National Front. With the consent of Datuk Hussein Onn, both parties had then contested here under their own symbols. Berjaya won.

The National Front's problem in 1982 was that, if the 1978 formula was used, USNO would have only one parliamentary seat to contest.[52] Many UMNO leaders were sympathetic to USNO because they considered it to be fighting in the interests of the Muslim Bumiputeras. Moreover,

the existence of a strong opposition party in the state would help moderate the excesses of Datuk Harris Salleh. On the other hand, the leaders in Kuala Lumpur had not forgotten the poor management of the state under Tun Mustapha. Berjaya's obvious popularity was another factor which could not be ignored.

Berjaya was in favour of both parties being allowed to contest the elections as rivals under their own party symbols. Datuk Harris suggested that the National Front should choose the winner of the elections to remain in the coalition and drop the loser altogether. From Berjaya's point of view, USNO was not a reliable member of the National Front because it had formed an electoral pact with two non-Front parties (Pasok and the SCCP) during the 1981 state elections.

The National Front decided to allow USNO to stand under the *dacing* symbol in five parliamentary constituencies. In this case, the number of seats allotted to each party was based on the total number of votes obtained in 1981 rather than on the number of seats won. Berjaya officials were annoyed. The party wanted the chance to wipe out USNO in the elections but this National Front policy prohibited the component parties from fielding candidates against each other. To defy the national leadership in this manner was to risk expulsion from the National Front and the complete withdrawal of federal support. Berjaya reacted by getting five of its members to leave the party and contest the election as independents. The Berjaya leadership then openly campaigned for them.

This strategy was not new. It had been used by other Sabah parties as early as 1962, as well as in several by-elections in the 1970s.

In 1981, however, the Federal Government was clearly unhappy about Berjaya's actions. During a visit to Kota Kinabalu during the election campaign in April, Datuk Musa Hitam called on voters in Sabah to support National Front candidates. The Deputy Prime Minister went on to say that the government in Kuala Lumpur was taking a neutral stand in the contest between USNO and Berjaya. However, he emphasized that "the candidates we support are those who are using the *dacing* symbol. The others are not our candidates."[53] Datuk Musa also issued an apparent rejoinder to Berjaya claims that, in putting up independent candidates against USNO, it was trying to "save" the National Front. He said that no-one, except those officially supported by the coalition, had the right to say he was standing on a National Front ticket.

Despite the moral support USNO received from the federal leaders, the party faced an almost impossible task. USNO had limited financial

resources and faced a hostile local press. It was also seriously divided. Tan Sri Said Keruak refused to associate himself with the USNO campaign in Kota Belud when Tun Mustapha chose Pandikar Haji Mulia to contest the seat. Tan Sri Said Keruak, the incumbent Member of Parliament, had apparently expected his son, Mohamed Salleh, to be nominated instead.[54] Pandikar Haji Mulia was a lawyer unknown to most voters in the constituency. On the other hand, the Berjaya-backed independent, Haji Yahya Lampong, had come within 89 votes of unseating Tan Sri Said Keruak in the 1982 state elections in Uruskan, which was one of the three state seats in the Kota Belud constituency.

Other USNO leaders were also dissatisfied with Tun Mustapha's leadership. Ansari Abdullah, the USNO Youth leader, and Puan Amisah Borhan, leader of the women's section of the party, resigned and joined Berjaya. So did Sabdin Ghani, the party's Chief Information Officer. Many that remained, such as Datuk Haji Dzulkifli Hamid, Gendy Jeffery and Railly Jeffery, were not known for their enthusiastic support for the new President.

In Marudu, the struggle for power was as much an extension of an old family feud as it was a battle between rival parties. The feud was between the families of the late Tun Mohammed Fuad Stephens, the founding President of Berjaya, and USNO President Tun Mustapha. The Marudu campaign was fought by the sons of both men. Datu Abdul Hamid had rejoined USNO after his expulsion from Berjaya the previous year. Encik Affendy, the late Tun Mohammed Fuad Stephens' son, was the Berjaya-backed independent. During the campaign, he had the active support of Datuk Harris Salleh.

Berjaya faced its greatest challenge in the predominantly Chinese urban areas. Three constituencies in particular were of concern to party strategists. They were Gaya (which included Kota Kinabalu), Sandakan, and Tawau. In these areas, the DAP and the SCCP made an issue out of recent massive increases in rates and licence fees levied by the state government through various local authorities. The government reacted by setting up a panel to review the new rates. At the same time, Datuk Harris toured Tawau and Sandakan, and talked to the local *towkays* (Chinese businessmen).

The election results dealt a crippling blow to USNO. The Berjaya-backed independents won all five seats, leaving USNO with no representation in the national Parliament. The Federal Government was faced with a difficult decision. The Prime Minister had previously said that no-one who resigned from the National Front to fight another Front

candidate would be re-admitted. In Peninsular Malaysia, UMNO, MCA and the Gerakan had disciplined members who had contested as independents against official Front candidates. This policy worked well in a situation where such independents were rarely successful. In the case of the Berjaya-backed independents, however, it meant they would have to sit on the opposition bench in Parliament. On the other hand, if the National Front reversed its decision and decided to re-admit them, USNO might take this as a precedent to back independents against Berjaya in the next parliamentary elections.

The National Front's first response was to prevaricate. The coalition's Secretary-General, Encik Ghaffar Baba, told an interviewer on Malaysian television that he had still been unable to determine whether it was merely a coincidence that the successful candidates were standing on independent tickets. He confirmed that there was a directive from the National Front to its component parties to expel members who contested against the coalition's candidates. However, he pointed out that the authority to expel such members rested with the parties concerned. The National Front could not intervene in their internal affairs.[55]

Meanwhile, Datuk Harris Salleh repeated his previous statements that Berjaya had sponsored the independents. "The five are Berjaya men," he said bluntly. The party's Deputy President, Datuk James Ongkili, told reporters that by fielding independent candidates against USNO, Berjaya had saved the National Front. He believed that USNO was so unpopular in the state that its candidates would have lost the seats to others irrespective of whether Berjaya had opposed them.[56]

Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir was unimpressed. The five independents, he said, would not be allowed to join the government. "As far as we are concerned they are not in the Barisan Nasional. They can rejoin Berjaya but not the Barisan. They are opposition MPs." It was up to the Barisan Supreme Council, he continued, to decide whether Berjaya had shown "open defiance" by backing the five independents.[57]

Berjaya's multiracial approach was clearly popular in Sabah, but the party was denied the clean sweep it sought. In Sandakan, the DAP candidate retained his seat in a straight fight with the Berjaya candidate, Ian Chin. Sandakan not only had a greater proportion of Chinese in the town than Kota Kinabalu but the DAP had also won the support of the Chinese Hawker and Taxi Driver Associations. Recent increases in licence fees were another obvious factor contributing to the DAP victory, as was the DAP slogan "Berjaya for state – DAP for Parliament". Many Chinese were apparently prepared to support Berjaya in the state

elections in opposition to the Muslim-based USNO. In the Federal Parliament, however, they preferred the DAP to protect Chinese interests. Party loyalty was considerably more fluid than on the peninsula.

Related developments suggested that Berjaya was attempting to re-establish its popularity by removing politically embarrassing government officers in the town. The District Officer, Municipal President and another top administrative officer were immediately transferred. When questioned about the transfer, Datuk Harris Salleh claimed it was merely a normal administrative matter. "They change every three years and the time has come for a change," he said. However, it was known that at least one of the officers had been posted to Sandakan only a few months before. Local government officials were known to have antagonized Sandakan hawkers by the strict enforcement of local by-laws.

CONCLUSION

The history of Berjaya since 1976 suggests several parallels with Tun Mustapha's rule as leader of USNO. Both USNO and Berjaya came to power with the support of federal leaders after previous chief ministers had raised the possibility of secession. As their grip on the state became more secure, both parties then began to display increasing signs of independence from federal controls. Their respective chief ministers cultivated close relations with foreign governments, acquired immense personal wealth and attempted to eliminate all political opposition.

Many observers believe that these developments can be explained by the fact that Datuk Harris Salleh obtained his political education while serving as one of Tun Mustapha's key lieutenants in USNO before 1975. However, the idiosyncracies of particular leaders are not the only factors to consider. The state's geographic isolation and lucrative timber trade are also important. To these must also be added Sabah's unique history and ethnic composition.

Perhaps the most important difference between the government of Tun Mustapha and that of Datuk Harris Salleh is that the latter is the head of a basically non-Malay and non-Muslim party. In the eyes of many, Datuk Harris Salleh is a figure-head rather than a real leader. The true driving force of the party is said to lie with Kadazan politicians such as Deputy Chief Minister James Ongkili and his major rival, Pairin Kitingan, who heads the Kadazan Cultural Association. Despite its close relations with federal leaders, such a government may find it difficult to implement enthusiastically aspects of the national culture deemed im-

portant by powerful Malay politicians in Kuala Lumpur. If there are to be difficulties between state and federal leaders in the future it will almost certainly involve the issue of ethnicity.

USNO's Islamic orientation is obviously its strongest point in dealing with federal leaders. At one stage, the party apparently believed that its best guarantee of success in Sabah politics would be to join UMNO. Such a move may have benefits for federal and state leaders. The Sabah branch could be assured of federal support while, at the same time, state party officials would be obliged to accept directives from UMNO leaders in Kuala Lumpur.

However, UMNO has shown itself to be less than enthusiastic about such a merger. Tun Mustapha's attempt to remain in power by using this tactic in 1976 was greeted coolly in the federal capital. A similar reception is likely to result from any new moves in this direction. If USNO were to join UMNO it would probably result in a change in the balance of power within the new national party in favour of USNO sympathizers. Dr. Mahathir and Datuk Musa Hitam are, therefore, unlikely to agree.

In any case, there are more fundamental differences between the two parties which would probably ensure that political tensions continue to exist even after a merger. A large number of the Muslims in Sabah are not Malays and still take pride in their respective cultural identities. The Malays themselves also tend to have a different outlook to those on the peninsula. Sabah's Malay community has never experienced a traumatic political awakening like the one which accompanied the British Malayan Union proposals in 1946. Nor do the Malays in Sabah regard the Chinese as being quite so threatening in the economic sphere. Moreover, in a period when UMNO has encouraged young well-educated members to take key positions in the party, USNO has been unable to hold the ones it had, much less attract additional talent. In such a situation, party leaders in Kuala Lumpur and Sabah are bound to take divergent stands on a variety of issues.

Any assessment of Berjaya's future must take into account the fact that genuine multiracial parties have not been able to survive long in Malaysian politics. The party's promotion of welfare-state policies, such as old-age pensions, for which all are eligible irrespective of race, may have helped to dilute latent racial tensions. However, federal leaders apparently still prefer to deal with communally-based political parties.

The announcement in June 1982 that Datuk Harris Salleh would retire at the end of his term of office suggested that Berjaya was prepared to

make some compromises in order to placate federal leaders.[58] In previous months, the Chief Minister had made a number of public statements which could hardly have pleased the federal leaders. He had also begun to antagonize sections of Berjaya by pursuing a policy of promoting Muslims and encouraging conversions to Islam.

The future course of events in Sabah remains uncertain. Leadership changes within Berjaya may well produce short-term alterations to the relationship between federal and state governments. An USNO victory in the 1986 state elections (however remote it seems at present) would also result in important political realignments. Whatever happens, fundamental political patterns are likely to remain unchanged for some time.

NOTES

1 See Articles 95B, 95C, 95E, 112C, 112D and 161 of the Malaysian Federal Constitution.

2 In 1975, newspaper reports credited him with being responsible for the conversion of 95,000 non-Muslims in the state to Islam. See *The Star*, 17 June 1975.

3 A more detailed account of Tun Mustapha's government has been given by Robert O. Tilman, See "Mustapha's Sabah 1968–1975: The Tun Steps Down", *Asian Survey* 16, no. 6(1976): 495–509.

4 *Far Eastern Economic Review* (*FEER*), 25 July 1975, p. 10. See also *FEER*, 8 August 1975, pp. 11–13.

5 For an attempt to analyse the factors involved in the Berjaya victory, see Harvey Sotckwin, "Bulldozing the Tun Mustapha Legend", in *FEER*, 30 April 1976, pp. 8–9.

6 *New Straits Times*, 10 March 1981. Syed Kechik, a multi-millionaire originally from Kuala Lumpur, had formerly been closely associated with Tun Mustapha, having served as chairman of the Sabah Foundation before 1976. Berjaya also objected to USNO's Vice-Presidents, Datuk Haji Dzulkifli Hamid and Encik Karim Ghani. Both did not participate in the 1981 elections. On the role of Syed Kechik during Tun Mustapha's rule, see Bruce Ross-Larson, *The Politics of Federalism. Syed Kechik in East Malaysia* (Singapore: Bruce Ross-Larson, 1976).

7 Tan Sri Said Keruak had also been selected as USNO President earlier when Tun Mustapha resigned briefly as a result of federal pressure in 1976. Tun Mustapha was re-elected USNO President in May 1977.

8 Bruce Ross-Larson, *op cit.*, pg. 204.

9 *New Straits Times*, 8 March 1981.

10 *New Straits Times*, 19 February 1981.

11 *New Straits Times*, 6 March 1981. In an interview with this writer in August 1982, Datuk Haji Dzulkifli Hamid said that an additional reason for the rejection of Tun Mustapha's candidacy by the USNO Supreme Council was opposition from the federal leaders.

12 *The Star*, 12 March 1981.

13 *New Straits Times*, 24 March 1981. The assertion that Berjaya made no distinctions between ethnic groups was not entirely true. In Uruskan, Berjaya attempted to split the Bajau vote by appealing to the Illanum subgroup in order to defeat USNO President Tan Sri Said Keruak.

14 Official figures on the racial composition of seats are difficult to obtain and often contradictory. Those given here are based on newspaper reports. The term "Kadazan" is used in its broadest sense.

15 *The Star*, 6 March 1981.

16 *New Straits Times*, 11 March 1981.

17 The party also alleged that Berjaya was using the traditional Kadazan harvest festival for political gain by providing the necessary finance. See *New Straits Times*, 11 March 1981.

18 As things turned out, Tun Mustapha did not come to Sabah. He remained in London throughout the campaign.

19 *New Straits Times*, 11 March 1981.

20 *Sabah Times*, 17 March 1981. Tan Sri Said Keruak later accused two Sabah newspapers (the *Daily Express* and the *Sabah Times*) of defamation, See *Utusan Malaysia*, 27 March 1981.

21 *New Straits Times*, 11 March 1981.

22 *Daily Express*, 17 January 1981.

23 *The Star*, 29 January 1981.

24 *Ibid.* The National Front (Barisan Nasional) should not be confused with the Barisan Sabah. Both Berjaya and USNO were members of the National Front at the federal level.

25 *The Star*, 30 January 1981.

26 *Ibid.*

27 *New Straits Times*, 29 January 1981.

28 *Utusan Malaysia*, 16 February 1981.

29 *Utusan Malaysia*, 17 February 1981.

30 Datuk Hussein Onn announced his retirement in May. See *The Star*, 16 May 1981.

31 *Daily Express*, 15 February 1981. These views were echoed by the federal Minister for Finance, Tengku Razaleigh (*Sabah Times*, 21 February 1981).

32 *The Star*, 9 March 1981.

33 *New Straits Times*, 30 March 1981. The election in one constituency (Bengkoka) was postponed because of the death of one of the candidates. Voter turn-out was 75.7 per cent compared to 80.7 per cent in 1976.

34 *Business Times*, 19 March 1981. The Illanums are a Bajau subgroup whose dialect and customs are different from the majority of Bajaus.

35 The detailed results for each seat were published in the *New Straits Times* and the *Utusan Malaysia* on 29 March 1981.

36 Interview with Ignatius Malanjum, Kota Kinabalu, August 1982.

37 *New Straits Times*, 30 March 1981.

38 At one stage, Datuk Harris launched a bitter attack on three major West Malaysian newspapers (*The Star*, the *New Straits Times*, and the *Utusan Melayu*) for allegedly "printing rubbish and insulting the intelligence of national leaders and the people," saying he was filing a libel suit against *The Star*. Other Berjaya leaders made no comment and at least one appeared to sympathize with the journalists concerned. See *The Star*, 6 March 1981.

39 *New Straits Times*, 9 January 1981.

40 Tun Mustapha's supporters were not completely excluded. USNO candidates who had close ties with Tun Mustapha included Datuk Sakaran, Salim Bacho, and Datuk Salam.

41 Interview with Datuk Haji Dzukifli Hamid, Kota Kinabalu, August 1982.

42 For an account of the election campaign sympathetic to Tun Mustapha, see Shafie Nor, *Politik Usno, Berjaya dulu dan Masakini* (Kuala Lumpur: Shafie Nor, 1981).

43 *New Straits Times*, 30 March 1981.

44 *Sabah Times*, 18 September 1981.

45 *Daily Express*, 19 September, 1981.

46 *National Echo*, 2 November 1981.

47 The third by-election was caused by the resignation of a veteran assemblyman representing the Lumadan constituency.

48 *New Straits Times*, 10 November 1981.

49 *Sabah Times*, 15 September 1981.

50 *FEER*, 11 December 1981.

51 Ibid.

52 The parliamentary seat was Silam. In the 1981 elections, USNO won the state electorate of Semporna and later won Kunak in a by-election, thus giving it the required two out of three seats in the Silam parliamentary constituency.

53 *New Straits Times*, 19 April 1981.

54 *The Star*, 18 April 1982.

55 *The Star*, 28 April 1982.

56 *National Echo*, 28 April 1982.

57 *The Star*, 30 April 1982.

58 *The Star*, 24 June 1982.

CHAPTER THREE

Electoral Organization and Political Mobilization in Rural Malaysia*

Marvin L. Rogers

During an era in which multi-ethnic states in Asia and Africa have been convulsed with turmoil and coups, Malaysia's record of political stability is impressive. The most recent election demonstrated increasing support for the Barisan Nasional (National Front), the ruling coalition which has governed since independence in 1957.[1] In Peninsular Malaysia, the National Front's vote in the parliamentary contests rose from 57 per cent in 1978 to 61 per cent in 1982. Numerous studies have indicated that the rural Malays are the most important electoral group in the country, but little has been published in English about the strategies and tactics used to secure their votes.[2] The government's sweeping victory in 1982 raises two fundamental questions about elections in Malaysia: how does the National Front mobilize electoral support, and what is the function of elections in a society in which one party has an overwhelming preponderance of resources? An analysis of the 1978 election campaign partially answers these questions.

This article is a case study of the pattern of political mobilization in rural areas of Johore and Malacca in 1978.[3] It examines the election in the Pagoh parliamentary constituency in northwestern Johore and the

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state legislative assembly constituency in Kesang, one of two state constituencies encompassed by that parliamentary area. The campaign in Malacca is analysed in terms of the pattern of activity in the Jasin parliamentary constituency and the Ayer Panas state legislative constituency, one of five state assembly seats within that parliamentary area.

In 1978 only the two major opposition parties challenged the government in Johore and Malacca. The UMNO-dominated National Front, like its predecessor, the Alliance Party, had always enjoyed strong support in Johore. UMNO leaders from Muar district, which includes the Pagoh parliamentary constituency, had led Johore politics since 1959. Although UMNO and the ruling multi-party coalitions had governed Malacca since independence, they never had enjoyed the degree of support found in neighbouring Johore. Urban voters supported opposition parties, and many rural Malays backed the Islamic Party (PAS). In 1978 the National Front was challenged in the Pagoh and Kesang constituencies in Johore by PAS. In the Jasin and Ayer Panas constituencies in Malacca the ruling party was opposed by PAS and the largely urban-based Democratic Action Party (DAP), widely regarded as a spokesman for non-Malays.

This study describes the campaign organizations, strategies, and tactics of the three parties which contested in these areas. It examines the tactics in terms of the actions undertaken to mobilize the electorate and in terms of the appeals used to arouse support. The investigation illustrates the ruling party's overwhelming advantage in terms of resources, personnel, and organizational strength. The analysis concludes that in Johore and Malacca the election was a ritual which served to legitimize the leaders and policies of the ruling coalition.

CANDIDATES

The candidates for these constituencies in Johore and Malacca varied considerably in their motivation, status, and political experience. The National Front representatives were part of a well-entrenched political machine seeking to continue to legitimize its power and policies. Its aspirants campaigned as spokesmen of their party rather than as individuals seeking popular support. While they argued that only the National Front could preserve political stability and promote further economic development, their success in the election assured them of continued stature in the party, possible advancement in its hierarchy, and enjoyment of the prerequisites of power. In contrast, the PAS can-

didates in Johore and Malacca campaigned in areas in which they had little or no chance of victory, as did the DAP challengers in Malacca.

The striking differences between the government and opposition candidates reflected the Front's numerous advantages in these states. In Johore, the National Front candidate for the Pagoh parliamentary constituency was Muhyiddin bin Md. Yasin. After graduation from the University of Malaya, he had held a number of positions in the government and private sector. In 1978 he was head of UMNO Youth in the Pagoh constituency. The Front's candidate for the Kesang state assembly seat was the *Menteri Besar* (Chief Minister), Tan Sri Haji Othman bin Haji Mohd. Sa'at, who had represented that area since 1959. Elected to the state assembly in 1954, he had served as *Menteri Besar* since 1967. The Front's candidates in Malacca were equally impressive. Ghaffar Baba ran as the government's candidate for Parliament in the Jasin constituency. A former school teacher, he had risen through UMNO to positions of prominence in the state and national governments. At the time of the election he was executive secretary of the National Front. The Front's candidate for the Ayer Panas assembly seat was Adib bin Haji Adam, a young university graduate from the Jasin area, who had worked as a civil servant, diplomat, and UMNO executive. During the campaign he was rumoured to be slated to become the new Chief Minister after the election.

The PAS nominees lacked the stature and experience of the Front's candidates. Abdul Wahab bin Abdul Rahman, who contested in the Pagoh area in Johore, was a self-employed businessman who had been a trade union leader in the 1950s. He had never been active in politics until 1978 when he decided to work with PAS in order to oppose UMNO and protest the government's failure to promote an Islamic society in Malaysia. The PAS candidate for the *Menteri Besar*'s seat was Taib bin Haji Kassim, a poor, devout taxi driver. In Malacca, the party's candidates had more stature. The parliamentary candidate, Jaliluddin bin Haji Abdul Wahid, had a B.A. in Arabic Literature from Baghdad University and worked as a translator in the Libyan Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. A former religious teacher, he had joined the party in 1968 and had worked in previous campaigns. His colleague in the contest for the Ayer Panas assembly seat was Alias Sijak, a retired policeman who had worked for years in Singapore. He was the *imam* (religious leader) of the village of Terentang two miles from Jasin, chairman of the local PAS branch, and a member of the division and state PAS committees. In 1969 he had run unsuccessfully for the state legislature as a PAS

candidate.

The DAP candidate in the Jasin parliamentary seat was Abdul Karim bin Abu. Active in politics since 1946, he had worked as a teacher, *penghulu* (head of a subdistrict), and businessman. He was elected to Parliament on the Alliance ticket in 1964, only to be expelled from the party for alleged improprieties. In 1969 he ran unsuccessfully for Parliament and for the state assembly as a member of Pekemas, the small, multi-ethnic Social Justice Party. The DAP candidate for the Ayer Panas assembly seat was Othman Taha, a successful dairy farmer, who had been involved in politics for two decades. In 1959 he had resigned a government position to protest corruption and mismanagement in the Malacca state government. In 1974 he had run unsuccessfully for the state legislature as a Pekemas candidate.

CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATIONS AND FINANCES

The parties' campaign organizations reflected Malaysia's federal system of government and the division of the states into one or more parliamentary constituencies. They also revealed striking differences in the parties' resources. The National Front's election organization had been developed in Johore since 1959. It extended from a national headquarters in Kuala Lumpur through state election committees to division-level committees with well-organized "operations rooms".[4] These important headquarters, which the press often likened to military operations rooms, were linked by telephone to the state and national offices. Run by experienced, competent, salaried men and women, the division-level organizations directed and coordinated the political mobilization efforts of the grass-roots election committees established by local branches of the component parties in the National Front.

PAS and the DAP had similar campaign organizations of national headquarters, state committees, and local organizations. The size of the PAS division and local committees varied with the number of party supporters in a given area. In Malacca, the local DAP candidates created their own grass-roots organizations.

The National Front's campaign organization in Johore was truly impressive. The *Menteri Besar* prided himself on the dynamism of the state UMNO organization, its ability to mobilize support for the ruling party, and the absence of significant opposition in his state. Apparently annoyed that PAS dared to challenge UMNO's dominance in Johore,

the *Menteri Besar* and the National Front campaign organizations mobilized every available resource in an effort to decisively defeat PAS and silence its supporters once and for all.

The Front's division-level operations room for the Pagoh parliamentary constituency was housed over a bank in the town of Muar. An outer office, decorated with campaign posters, served as an informal working area for typists and a mimeograph (cyclostyle) machine operator and a meeting place for campaign volunteers. The inner air-conditioned office with its wall-to-wall carpets and drapes was the nerve center of the division's systematic efforts to mobilize electoral support. It was equipped with an electric typewriter, a photocopy machine, a safe, filing cabinets, and drape-covered panels with 20 large, multicoloured maps and charts with numerous pins of different colours. These provided detailed information on the electorate and local political organizations in the parliamentary and two state legislative constituencies. They included data on the number, sex, and race of every voter as well as the number of UMNO, MCA, and MIC branches and dues-paying members in each area. Other tables showed the total number of voters reached during the campaign through small meetings, the number of complaints voiced, and the percentage of these grievances which had been resolved. Still another chart listed all the local election committees, the names of their drivers who would transport voters to the polls on election day, and the license plate numbers of their vehicles.

The division operations room was run by a dynamic middle-aged Malay from Muar. A member of the board of directors of a number of companies, he had worked in elections since 1955, including the March 1978 election in which the National Front decisively routed PAS from its 19-year dominance of the state government in Kelantan. Several days after the election, he leaned back in his posh chair in front of a large executive desk and explained that during the campaign he had not left the office for three weeks, that he had been in daily contact with the *Menteri Besar* and the state operations room, that he had not read a newspaper for days, and that he had not seen his children for three weeks. Then, pointing to stacks of forms on virtually every household and every voter in the constituencies, he remarked, "These files are our x-ray film on the voters." He concluded that before the election he knew who would support the National Front, who would oppose it, and why those opposing the government would vote against it.

The division's mobilization efforts were augmented by the establishment of three suboperations rooms in different parts of the parliamen-

tary constituency. Led by UMNO branch leaders, most of whom were teachers, these local organizations were housed in the teachers' homes or in rented houses. Linked to the division operations room by telephone, these offices had numerous charts and tables on the electorate and local party organizations, and served as meeting places for volunteers and as a distribution point for posters and campaign literature.

In Johore, as elsewhere throughout much of the peninsula, a key component in the campaign organization was the village-based election committee. Weeks before the election the chairman of the local UMNO branch in the village of Sungai Raya attended a one-day course in Muar on the conduct of the forthcoming campaign. Following the official filing of nomination papers and the determination that the government would in fact be challenged in his area, the chairman converted his large kitchen into an operations room. Maps and charts were put up with data on the number, sex, and ethnic group of the voters in the local polling area. A ten-member election committee was formed in accordance with instructions received earlier from the Front headquarters in town. Approximately 50 villagers, out of a total of about 500 adults, were directly involved in the campaign.

The PAS campaign organization in Johore was very weak by comparison. The candidates organized their own election committees. The parliamentary candidate used his home on the outskirts of Muar as a campaign office. The would-be assemblyman's headquarters was a meagrely furnished, thatched Malay house in a community nearly five miles off the north-south coastal highway. National, state, and local PAS leaders met there to plan their furtive campaign strategy, to distribute copies of the PAS manifesto and posters, and to seek God's blessings. There were no salaried staff or secretaries, no mimeograph machines, no typewriters, not even a bulletin board on which to post scheduled campaign meetings.

In Malacca, the National Front's campaign organization was not as dynamic as in Johore, but it was still impressive. The division-level operations room in Jasin was housed in the permanent office of the South Malacca representative to the state assembly. Open during the campaign from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m., it was equipped with a mimeograph machine, typewriters, filing cabinets, and telephones. The office had a full-time director who had been an UMNO employee for five years. He was assisted by a full-time salaried secretary and an office boy, as well as numerous campaign volunteers who were paid M$7.00 per day.[5] One wall of the director's office consisted of sliding panels

with charts and tables similar to those in Johore. These recorded detailed information on the electorate, the local party branches, the increasing number of people reached during the campaign, and so forth. Whereas the division-level operations rooms in Muar, Johore had an air of intense campaign activity, the Jasin office always had a relaxed atmosphere. The director had copies of the party's 25-page guide to organize a campaign, but he had concluded that in a small state like Malacca there was no need to undertake all the mobilization activities suggested by the party headquarters.

The local organizations were not as elaborate as in Johore. Multi-ethnic election committees were established for the parliamentary and state assembly constituencies, but at the grass-roots level the UMNO branches set up their own campaign organizations. These had only five to six subcommittees, as compared to the local ten subcommittees in Johore. In the village of Terentang, for example, the energetic local UMNO branch chairman organized a small campaign committee. Moving about by car or motorcycle, he maintained daily contact with the division headquarters in town and with key branch officers in the area. Assisted by a few leaders from the local UMNO branch, which had nearly 300 members in five villages, he arranged campaign meetings and other mobilization efforts.

PAS was unable to organize a comparable campaign organization in Malacca. In the Jasin parliamentary constituency, PAS had a one-room division headquarters in a small village several miles from town. The dilapidated building, decorated with campaign posters, was hardly comparable to the National Front's operations room in Jasin. There were no paid staff members; no telephones. The dingy, poorly lit office was equipped with a typewriter and an ancient mimeograph machine used to produce faint lists of forthcoming campaign meetings on cheap brown paper.

Fearful of UMNO infiltration, the division PAS leaders operated on two fronts. A small, secret election committee directed the party's campaign efforts. A key PAS speaker in the area confided that he was not able to attend the committee's meetings and that he did not know the identity of its chairman. Meanwhile, an open PAS headquarters coordinated the efforts of volunteers and 50 speakers for about 15 meetings per night during the campaign. While the PAS organization lacked material resources, the local leaders and campaign speakers appeared strikingly more dedicated and earnest than their relaxed National Front counterparts in Jasin, who seemed confident of their

eventual victory.

At the village level, the PAS branches established election committees. In Terentang, a campaign headquarters was established in the home of the PAS candidate for the state assembly. Village leaders, most of whom were teachers or retired policemen who had worked in Singapore, met there to plan their campaign, organize local meetings, and to work with volunteers stringing posters to be hung across the roads throughout the community.

While the formal structure of the DAP campaign organization resembled that of the National Front, its grass-roots efforts in Malacca were similar to those of PAS. All campaign activity was in the hands of the individual candidates and the committees they had established. In the Jasin parliamentary constituency, the DAP candidate had a small election committee made up of Malays, Chinese, and Indians living throughout his constituency. His home served as the campaign headquarters. Although he had a telephone, a typewriter, and a car, he lacked the financial and human resources to mount a serious campaign. The DAP candidates in the Ayer Panas state constituency near Jasin had a similar multi-ethnic ten-member committee who helped him put up posters and tried to persuade friends to vote for the DAP. Lacking even a telephone and dependent entirely on his own resources, he was essentially a one-man committee travelling about the constituency in his car.

The three parties' campaign finances varied as much as their capacity to mount effective election organizations. The National Front headquarters in Kuala Lumpur paid the M$1,000 deposit for its parliamentary candidates and the M$500 deposit for its state assembly candidates.[6] Although Front leaders were reluctant to discuss the details of their budgets, one got the distinct impression that the national party provided M$20,000 for each parliamentary candidate and M$15,000 for each state candidate. Thus, in Pagoh parliamentary constituency in Johore this would have amounted to a total of M$50,000 for the parliamentary and the two state candidates running in that area. In the Jasin constituency in Malacca, this would have totalled M$95,000 for the parliamentary candidate and five state assembly candidates.

The National Front not only provided at least the maximum amount legally allowed, it also mobilized governmental resources to assist the ruling party. In the Pagoh constituency, for example, the district information office in Muar organized civics courses before and during the campaign. These meetings, which involved government personnel, funds, and equipment, were clearly designed to influence the vote the

300 to 500 villagers who attended each gathering. In both Johore and Malacca, as elsewhere throughout the peninsula, the National Department of Information put up billboards and posters showing a picture of the Prime Minister, Datuk Hussein Onn, against a backdrop of smiling faces of all ethnic groups. The caption of the posters read *Bersatu Untuk Keadilan, Keselamatan Dan Kemakmuran* (Unite for Justice, Safety and Prosperity). The message was supplemented with radio and television shots also designed to heighten the public's awareness of the need for national unity, solidarity, and security. Defending these posters and billboards during and after the election in court and in Parliament, ranking civil servants explained that they had acted in response to the government's disclosure that it had information that the Communist Party of Malaya was planning to intensify its activities against the government during the election campaign.[7] In Malacca, local National Front volunteers interspersed these posters with other Front posters on cords hung across the roads near Jasin.

PAS's campaign finances were only a fraction of the ruling party's. The national party headquarters supplied campaign posters and provided a limited number of copies of the party's lengthy manifesto and hundreds of leaflets summarizing it. National and state leaders also gave advice to nominees in both states. In Johore, the party paid the deposit for the taxi driver challenging the *Menteri Besar* in the Kesang state constituency. The candidates and their supporters paid for locally printed posters and faintly mimeographed leaflets. All the PAS contenders reported that their campaigns suffered greatly from lack of money. In Malacca, the PAS candidate for Parliament reported spending between M$3,000 and M$4,000 of his own funds during the campaign. The party's nominee for the state seat invested M$700 in his bid for office.

The DAP gave virtually no financial support to the Malay candidates in the Malacca constituencies studied. While the party provided posters and copies of its short manifesto in Chinese, Tamil, and Malay, the candidates paid their own deposits and raised their own campaign funds. The candidates estimated that they each spent between M$1,000 and M$1,800 of their own money.

CAMPAIGN GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND TACTICS

The campaign goals of these parties were strikingly different. The National Front appeared to have six basic goals during the campaign: to retain power for the ruling elite, to legitimize the rulers and their poli-

cies, to destroy PAS as a threat to the ruling elite and to the political stability it had achieved, to reduce the number of DAP representatives in Parliament and in the state assemblies, to win the election in a manner that would ensure continued political stability and would not drive the opposition into militant subversive activity, and to obtain a victory in a manner that would retain the government's international respectability. PAS appeared to have two basic campaign goals: to increase its representation in Parliament and in the state legislatures and to work for the long-term mobilization of Malay support for PAS and the eventual establishment of an Islamic society in Malaysia. The DAP also seemed to have two campaign goals: to increase its representation in the Parliament and the state assemblies and to mobilize opposition to the ruling elite and its policies.

Despite the difference in the parties' goals, their campaign strategies were very similar in both states. All three sought to reinforce the commitment of party stalwarts, to activate the latent support of weak partisans and indifferent voters, to maximize their followers' turnout on polling day, and to increase the percentage of supporters who properly marked their ballots. Additionally, PAS sought to heighten the Malays' political awareness and support of an Islamic state.

Although the parties had similar campaign strategies, there were significant differences in their tactics to mobilize electoral support. These reflected the parties' bases of support in the population, power, resources, and goals. The National Front used a number of tactics to reinforce the loyalty of the local partisans in Johore and Malacca. Several large meetings were held before and during the campaign at which state and national leaders spoke to hundreds of local and district activists. Meals were often served at these gatherings. After the Front candidates filed their nomination papers for the Pagoh constituency in Johore, for example, hundreds of party backers went to the *Menteri Besar*'s home for lunch and a rousing speech which symbolically launched his campaign. During one meeting in Jasin, district, state, and national leaders addressed about 400 local partisans: Malays, Chinese, and Indians. The speakers included Ghaffar Baba, and Front's executive secretary, and Datuk Musa Hitam, the Minister of Education. With masterful skill, Datuk Musa poked fun at the opposition and called upon the audience to work for a smashing victory.

Before the 19-day campaign started the National Front began distributing souvenirs to local leaders and party activists in both states. These included sports shirts and T-shirts, flags, little caps, books of matches,

and plastic shopping bags. All had the party's symbol, the *dacing* (scale of justice). These were conspicuously worn or carried during the campaign and added to the impression that nearly everyone backed the government.

In Johore, establishment of village campaign organizations heightened the local partisans' interest in the election. As mentioned earlier, the chairman of the UMNO branch in the village of Sungai Raya formed an election committee in accordance with instructions from the Front headquarters in Muar. These men and women led ten subcommittees charged with various responsibilities which ranged from "psychological warfare" and transporting voters to the polls to providing refreshments and securing absentee ballots for voters temporarily out of the village. A tenth of the men and nearly as many of the women actively participated in the mobilization of electoral support. Involvement in the campaign reinforced their commitment to UMNO and their determination to work for the National Front's victory.

In both states the ruling party employed a number of tactics to activate the latent support of weak partisans and indifferent voters. Since public rallies were banned because the government feared that communists might use them to stir up trouble, local UMNO leaders organized *ceramahs* (indoor meetings) in individual homes, in accordance with instructions from the National Front office in town. The UMNO branch in Sungai Raya arranged three gatherings; each was attended by 40 to 75 men and women. In the village of Terentang, the local UMNO stalwarts held at least three meetings which attracted 30 to 60 men and women each. In both states the village leaders and division representatives used battery-powered or electric public-address systems. Occasionally the Front candidates spoke briefly before dashing off to other gatherings. The speakers stressed what UMNO and the government had done for the Malays, attacked PAS, and called upon the villagers to support the National Front. Talks by the *penghulu* and prominent religious leaders from town added to the villagers' understanding of the link between UMNO and the bureaucracy, reinforced their belief that religion and politics are inseparable, and enhanced the government's legitimacy in their eyes. Again and again, speakers explained the proper procedure for marking ballots in an effort to reduce the number of invalid votes. In both states the Front spokesman repeatedly emphasized recognition of the party's symbol. At one *ceramah*, a *penghulu* urged the audience to put a sample ballot over their beds and "to go to sleep whispering *dacing, dacing, dacing*".

Although rallies were prohibited, the ruling party mobilized government resources in an effort to maximize its electoral support. In Johore, and in areas of Malacca outside the Jasin parliamentary constituency, government-sponsored ceremonies to open new schools, offices, etc., enabled prominent leaders to address large crowds of marginal supporters and apathetic voters. During the campaign the Department of Information office in Muar organized an evening *kursus sivik* (civics course) in Sungai Raya as part of its regular information programme. During the evening 200 to 300 villagers listened to endless speeches by the assemblyman, the Front candidate for Parliament, the *penghulu*, and other UMNO leaders from town. With only one reference to the pending election, the assemblyman spoke over an hour about the history of UMNO and the UMNO-dominated government's efforts to raise the Malays' standard of living. Toward the end of the campaign another special meeting was held in Sungai Raya to celebrate the formal opening of a new government-sponsored cooperative in Muar District. Organized by the government, this gathering attracted nearly 300 men and women from Sungai Raya and nearby villages. It was addressed by the assemblyman in his capacity as *Menteri Besar* as well as by other prominent state and district officials. Without mentioning the forthcoming election, the assemblyman spoke at great length about the government's accomplishments in rural development. He vividly contrasted the standard of living in the rural areas at the time of independence with that achieved under the ruling party.[8] Again, the pageantry of the meeting and the status of the leaders present added credibility to their message and reinforced the government's legitimacy among the villagers.

In Johore and Malacca male and female campaigners went from house to house urging residents to vote for the National Front and distributing sample ballots showing the names of only the Front's candidates. Sometimes they passed out leaflets, handbills, and party manifestos. Village party workers also distributed "registration cards" showing the party's symbol and listing the voter's name, address, identification card number, the location of the polling station, and voter registration number. Distributing these cards, with information needed at the polls, provided another opportunity to strengthen party symbol recognition and to remind villagers to place their "X" next to the *dacing*.

In Johore, where the mobilization effort was more intense than in Malacca, members of local election committees conducted house-to-house canvasses. Forms supplied by the party headquarters in Muar

were completed with information on each household and on every registered voter. These data included partisan sentiments and contacts with opposition spokesmen. Presumably the questioning and recording of responses encouraged some indifferent residents to vote for the National Front. These surveys also sought information on complaints against the regime. The Front's operations room in town recorded these grievances, and government offices acted with dispatch to resolve as many problems as possible during the campaign. These included such complaints as that a family had never received a reply to its application for admission to a resettlement scheme and that a village had never secured chairs requested for its community center.

As in earlier elections, the parties engaged in a "poster war". In Malacca, in particular, the Front and PAS saturated the constituencies with posters on walls, fences, trees, wrecked cars at the side of the road, and even on leaves of banana trees.[9] Posters were strung on cords across roads throughout the constituencies. While some PAS posters were destroyed by Front activists in Johore, there was no vandalism in Malacca.

In both states the National Front used a number of tactics to maximize its supporters' turnout on election day. Speakers repeatedly stressed the date of the election during the house meetings. Distribution of registration cards provided information voters had to supply at the polling stations. On the morning of the election, paid "runners" went from house to house urging fellow villagers to vote in the morning. Cars bearing the Front's symbol provided transportation to and from the polls. In accepting a ride, voters indicated support for the party. Using copies of the registration list, campaign workers kept track of who had balloted. That afternoon, village leaders called on residents who had not voted, urged them to do so, and offered transportation to the polls.

Similarly, certain tactics were designed to ensure that Front followers correctly marked their voting papers and properly deposited them in the ballot box. As noted earlier, the constituencies were saturated with posters showing the Front's symbol, and villagers were given sample ballots indicating only the party's symbol and candidates. Speakers at house meetings repeatedly emphasized recognition of the *dacing*, the procedure used to mark ballots, and the importance of placing the voting papers in the ballot box. In Johore, they spent more time explaining how to vote than in attacking the opposition.

The ruling party used a number of appeals to get out the vote in these states. Village headmen, division spokesmen, and national leaders stressed UMNO's achievements. They listed rural development programmes

which had improved the Malays' level of living, increased their educational attainments, and raised their incomes. Conscious that many village teachers were key leaders in local UMNO branches, the *Menteri Besar* of Johore observed that in 1957 village teachers rode bicycles to school, while in 1978 they drove their cars. Although rural UMNO leaders often spoke to me about the educational qualifications of the Front's candidates, all appeals were in terms of the party, not in terms of individuals. During the *ceramahs*, Front spokesmen appealed for support of UMNO, the National Front, and the *dacing*. No effort was made to distinguish between UMNO and the multiparty National Front or to explain that the *dacing* represented the ruling coalition, not both UMNO and the Front as many villagers thought.[10] However, in the multi-ethnic meetings in the town of Jasin, Malay, Chinese, and Indian leaders stressed the government's achievements and the need for communal cooperation. They insisted that only the National Front could preserve inter-racial harmony. Explaining Malaysia's need for foreign investment, Ghaffar Baba stressed that only the National Front could maintain an environment which would attract additional investment, particularly in such costly endeavours as oil exploration.

In villages, as well as in the towns, the Front speakers criticized the opposition parties, particularly PAS. They charged that PAS had failed to develop Kelantan during the 19 years that it had controlled the state government. Campaigners accused PAS and the DAP of having a secret agreement to work together during the campaign, and they impugned the PAS leaders' competence. Stressing the importance of intercommunal cooperation, government supporters insisted that PAS could not work with the Chinese.

PAS used many of the same tactics to arouse its partisans and to mobilize weak supporters. In Johore its campaigners faced a hopeless task. The party was weak, lacked resources, and some villagers feared government reprisals if they backed PAS. The candidates and their campaign workers contacted voters in their homes. In Malacca, on the other hand, PAS enjoyed considerable support, and local leaders campaigned freely, even though some Malays were reluctant to admit openly that they favoured the party. Hoping for victory and inspired by the party's long-term goals, many dedicated partisans worked night and day throughout the campaign.

In Malacca PAS held a number of house meetings to arouse partisans, to mobilize weak followers, to heighten political awareness and support for an Islamic state, and to ensure that backers knew how to mark their

ballots. Attended by 50 to 75 men and women, these *ceramahs* were held in individual homes. Whereas the local National Front election committees paid for the light refreshments served at house meetings, the hosts supplied the snacks at the PAS gatherings. Four *ceramahs* were held in the village of Terentang. They lasted two to three hours. The speakers included local religious leaders, teachers, village headmen, and other prominent villagers, as well as students and other spokesmen, sent by the party's state and national headquarters. In addition to appealing for electoral support and denouncing UMNO and the government, speakers repeatedly explained the voting procedure. They seemed more dedicated than their Front counterparts, were more eloquent, and aroused more interest among their audiences.

In both states PAS campaigners visited potential voters in their homes. A limited number of leaflets and manifestos were distributed. In Malacca, registration cards were passed out similar to those used by the National Front. Whereas PAS put up only a few posters in Johore, the party actively participated in the poster war in Malacca, especially the night before the election. In the constituencies studied in Johore, the national PAS headquarters provided at least one car to transport voters to and from the polls. In Malacca, the local election committees had a number of vehicles, bearing the party's symbol, which ferried voters throughout the day.

Whereas the National Front appealed for votes on the basis of its accomplishments and its ability to maintain inter-racial harmony, PAS sought support for the establishment of a new society based on Islamic lines. Rural Malays were urged to vote for Islam and PAS, not specific candidates. UMNO and the government were criticized for failing to promote Islam. Speakers in both states decried the rise of sexual immorality among Malays and the spread of corruption in the government; many charged the National Front was soft on communism. In Malacca, PAS campaigners accused the government of mismanagement, condemned the growing national debt, and implied that the nation's family planning programme threatened the Malays' slim numerical superiority. PAS intimated that the Prime Minister was not a good Muslim and that the Front's candidates were out of touch with the needs of rural Malays. Spokesmen in Malacca warned that the Chinese dominated Singapore and Penang, that they controlled the city of Malacca, that they were expanding their influence in the surrounding areas, and that soon they might rule the whole state. Only PAS, they asserted, could protect the Malays.

The DAP's tactics reflected the party's lack of support among rural Malays and the nominees' limited resources. The candidates sought to arouse Chinese and Indian partisans and to mobilize support among indifferent or disgruntled voters. They and their election committees put up hundreds of posters and campaigned house to house in areas of presumed strength. Both DAP challengers organized a number of *ceramahs* at which they or their designated supporters spoke. Those arranged by the aspiring state assemblyman were held in community centres on rubber estates outside Jasin. They attracted 50 to 75 Chinese and Indian labourers, both men and women. Party spokesmen speaking in Chinese, Tamil, and Malay introduced the impassioned candidate who communicated very effectively with his non-Malay audiences. Chinese, Indian, and Malay drivers transported voters to the polls on election day.

The DAP's campaign appeals in rural Malacca reflected the party's ideology and the candidates' disenchantment with UMNO, the National Front, and the government's socio-economic policies. Campaigning on behalf of the poor, the Malay nominees criticized corruption and mismanagement in government, economic policies which favoured the rich, and the lack of employment opportunities, especially for Chinese and Indian labourers. They advocated establishment of a "Malaysian Malaysia" in which everyone would be treated equally regardless of ethnic origin. Accusing the National Front of destroying Malaysian democracy, they urged audiences to increase the DAP's representation in Parliament and the state assembly so that the party could more effectively safeguard the rights of all citizens. Whereas the National Front and PAS candidates sought votes for their parties, the would-be DAP assemblyman asked voters to support him. Stressing that he lived in the area, he promised to open an office in Jasin if elected and to become the spokesman for his constituents.

CONCLUSION

As in earlier elections, the ruling coalition easily won the 1978 election.[11] In Peninsular Malaysia the National Front captured 94 out of 114 parliamentary seats as well as 239 out of 275 state assembly seats. The government's party won 57 per cent of the valid votes in the parliamentary contests in Peninsular Malaysia, while PAS received 18 per cent and the DAP gained 22 per cent. In Johore, the Front triumphed with 90 per cent of the valid votes in the Pagoh parliamentary constituency.

PAS obtained 10 per cent. The *Menteri Besar* retained his state assembly seat from the Kesang constituency. He secured 87 per cent of the votes; his PAS challenger got 13 per cent. In Malacca, the ruling party decisively defeated PAS and the DAP. In the Jasin parliamentary constituency the National Front prevailed with 60 per cent of the votes, while the PAS challenger won 18 per cent and the DAP candidate received 21 per cent. In the fight for the Ayer Panas assembly seat, the ruling party obtained 61 per cent; PAS secured 15 per cent; and the DAP gained 24 per cent.

Malaysia's enviable record of political stability rests in part upon the government's continued ability to mobilize electoral support and to legitimize its authority. In Johore and Malacca the National Front clearly had an overwhelming advantage in terms of funds, patronage, personnel, and institutionalized organizational strength. Furthermore, the national leaders and local UMNO elite used governmental resources to ensure victory. Under these circumstances, the election did not offer a meaningful contest between alternative leaders and policies. The campaign temporarily heightened governmental sensitivity to voter complaints, encouraged distribution of patronage, and strengthened ties among UMNO leaders. It demonstrated to Malays and non-Malays alike that the surest means of securing political power was to work through the component parties of the National Front rather than to oppose it. In the final analysis, in these states the National Front had such a preponderance of resources that the election was basically a ritual which helped to institutionalize the UMNO-dominated political system and to legitimize the existing regime.

NOTES

1. The 11-party National Front is the successor to the tripartite Alliance Party established in 1953. The Alliance was a coalition of three communal parties representing Malaysia's major ethnic groups. The United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). UMNO was the acknowledged senior partner of the coalition. The Alliance easily won the national elections in 1955, 1957, 1959, and 1964. Its support declined significantly in 1969. In the early 1970s government leaders expanded their bases of support by bringing most of the opposition parties into a new coalition called the National Front. Dominated by UMNO, the National Front won decisive victories in the elections of 1974, 1978, and 1982.

2 The major studies of Malaysia's national elections include the following: Danial Eldredge Moore, "The United Malays National Organization and the 1959 Malaysian Election: A Study of a Political Party in Action in a Newly Independent Plural Society" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Berkeley, 1960); K.J. Ratnam and R.S. Milne, *The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967); R.K. Vasil, *The Malaysian General Elections of 1969* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1972); Chandrasekaran Pillay, *The 1974 General Elections in Malaysia: A Post Mortem* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1975); Ismail Kassim, *Race, Politics and Moderation: A Study of the Malaysian Electoral Process* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1979); Harold Crouch, Lee Kam Hing, and Michael Ong (editors), *Malaysian Politics and the 1978 Election* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980); and Harold Crouch, *Malaysia's 1982 General Election* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982).

3 This investigation built upon earlier research in these areas. During 1965–1967 I studied the Malay village of Sungai Raya six miles from the town of Muar in northwestern Johore. See my *Sungai Raya: A Sociopolitical Study of a Rural Malay Community* (Berkeley: Research monograph No. 15, Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, 1977). The 1978 election occurred during my year's residence in the Malay village of Terentang two miles from the town of Jasin in Malacca.

4 UMNO, as the dominant component of the National Front and the best organized party in the coalition, provided much of the organizational structure for the Front's campaign. Local UMNO branches normally correspond to polling districts. The division usually encompasses the area of a parliamentary constituency.

5 In 1978 the value of the Malaysian ringgit was US$1.00 = M$2.20.

6 In keeping with the British electoral tradition, every candidate running for Parliament or the state legislative assemblies had to pay a deposit at the time nomination papers were filed. This was forfeited if the candidate did not receive at least one-eighth of the votes cast.

7 *New Straits Times*, July 7, 1978, p. 10, and November 23, 1978, p. 6.

8 A key official in the National Front campaign headquarters in Jasin estimated that the Front put up 720,000 posters in the Jasin parliamentary constituency.

9 Indeed, between 1966 and 1978 villagers in Sungai Raya received many benefits under the government's numerous rural development programmes. These included construction of a new elementary school, clinic, mosque, and community center, provision of piped water and electricity for the remote areas of the community, and allocation of scholarships for bright Malay youth. See my "Patterns of Change in a Rural Malay Community: Sungai Raya Revisited," *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXII, No. 8 (August 1982), pp. 757–778.

10 Weeks after the election, a survey of half the men and half the women aged 21 or older in Sungai Raya revealed that only 57 per cent of the men realized

that the National Front had won the recent election. Others thought UMNO had been victorious. 57 per cent knew that the *dacing* symbolized the National Front, others assumed that it represented both UMNO and the Front. Only 18 per cent of the women understood that the Front had triumphed. Most perceived UMNO as the winner. Less than 10 per cent realized that the *dacing* stood for the National Front. Most assumed it symbolized UMNO; some thought it represented both UMNO and the National Front. Men under 50 and women under 40 were better informed than older villagers, many of whom were illiterate.

11 In July 1978 elections were held for Parliament and for 10 of the 13 state legislative assemblies. State elections had been held in Kelantan in March 1978 and in Sabah in April 1976. The Sarawak state government decided not to hold state elections in July 1978. In Peninsular Malaysia the elections were held on July 8. In Sabah the voting for Parliament was staggered from July 8 to 15, while in Sarawak it ran from July 8 to 22.

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Section II

Islam

CHAPTER FOUR

The Mahathir Administration: Discipline through Islam

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The accession of Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir to the prime ministership of Malaysia on July 16, 1981 invited the comment that a history of having been a "rebel"[1] was no impediment to attaining the highest political power. The accession did indeed testify to the flexibility of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the key component of the ruling National Front Party (Barisan Nasional). But this flexibility had already been demonstrated by the previous incumbent's accession: Tun Hussein Onn was the son and the collaborator of the most illustrious UMNO "rebel" of all, Dato' Onn bin Jaafar. Furthermore, Mahathir had become fully accepted by the party when deputy prime minister, so his transition to Prime Minister occasioned no surprise. Indeed, his appointment, far from being an example of discontinuity, was in fact quite the reverse. Tun Razak's replacement of Tunku Abdul Rahman was a confused and protracted affair, in some respects dating effectively from May 1969, but formalized only in September 1970. Tun Hussein Onn's succession to Tun Razak came as a shock, after the latter's sudden death. On the other hand, Hussein's well-known ill-health prepared people for the Mahathir succession after the Prime Minister had undergone a serious heart operation. The transition in 1981 was, therefore, the first planned and orderly handover of power since Independence in 1957.

This paper is concerned with the question of whether the smoothness of succession was accompanied by an equally smooth continuation of previous policies. Did the new government pursue old policies, or did it break new ground? Mahathir himself has stressed the theme of continuity. "I like to speak my mind, and I may offend people in the

process. But, apart from differences in style and abrasiveness, perhaps, there will be very little change." The differences would be, "more in style than substance".[2] Leaders are indeed constrained by existing policies, as well as by underlying social forces. Nevertheless, in some important respects the new administration's policies bear the imprint of Mahathir's own ideas: the style is very much the man.

This paper has three sections. The first, introductory, section deals with the new administration's management of the parties in the Barisan Nasional, with political aspects of federal-state relations, and with the administration's policies on human rights. The second considers its drive for clean and efficient government and, in the economic context, its "Look East Policy" which seeks to learn from the experience of Japan and South Korea. The third analyses government policy as regards Islam. The main thesis is that, while there has been little change under the first heading, under the others a new theme has emerged which links the promotion of discipline and the work ethic to appropriate Islamic moral values.

In managing the Barisan Nasional, Mahathir's methods are similar to those used in the past. At the 1982 electons, he used his control over the final choice of Barisan candidates to effect a large turnover. In appointing Ministers and Deputy Ministers, he has adopted the previous practice of selecting younger and better-educated people. He continued the time-honoured UMNO tactic of co-opting opponents (practised at the party level on a grand scale by Tun Razak when he created the Barisan), by recruiting Encik Anwar Ibrahim, who many believed was likely to join Partai Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), the major Malay opposition party. In the UMNO General Assembly (described by some as "Malaysia's real Parliament") a considerable measure of democracy has continued to prevail. But, like previous UMNO presidents, Mahathir apparently gave indirect indications of his preferences before important UMNO elections for deputy president in 1981 and for youth leader in 1982. Both choices, Datuk Musa Hitam and Anwar Ibrahim,[3] were elected by the General Assembly and Youth Assembly, respectively. One Executive Council member explained the youth leader election by saying that a youth leader, "must get the right signals from the top [the Prime Minister] to know how far the movement can go in putting pressure or in mobilizing Public Opinion on issues it is concerned about". He believed that Anwar would have this advantage because of his relationship with the prime minister.[4]

During Tun Hussein Onn's first year in office as Prime Minister,

UMNO had been plagued by factions and squabbles. Mahathir, then deputy president, said that never in the history of the Malays had the leadership been in such a chaotic state or its credibility so questioned. In contrast, the start of the present administration was peaceful but later factionalism broke out at the top levels of UMNO. Tengku Razaleigh bin Hamzah, defeated by Musa for the UMNO deputy presidency, has remained as Finance Minister, but against Mahathir's wish may challenge Musa at the 1984 party elections.[5] Another potential threat to the leadership was posed by Dato' Harun bin Idris, former *Menteri Besar* (Chief Minister) of Selangor, who had been jailed for fraud during the Hussein Onn administration, and later elected an UMNO vice-president in June 1981. But the leadership avoided confrontation by exempting Harun from the law barring him from holding office for five years because of his conviction; the Pardons Board remitted the rest of his sentence and subsequently (in August 1982) granted him a full pardon.[6] In not opposing Harun's political resurgence, the UMNO leadership in effect made use of his talents by "re-co-opting" him. By the end of 1982, lines of division had surfaced in UMNO, although Mahathir's own pre-eminence was unaffected. Some corresponded to old rivalries;[7] others were new, such as those consequent upon the rapid rise of Anwar Ibrahim (who became a full minister in June 1983), which threatened the political careers of other young leaders in the party.

There has been no great change in the relation between the predominant[8] Malay element in the government (UMNO) and the other ethnic elements. Generally, when an UMNO politician becomes Prime Minister, he switches from a rather "pro-Malay" stance to a more detached role approaching that of "supra-communal arbiter".[9] Mahathir had earlier on gained an undeserved reputation for being "anti-Chinese".[10] Nevertheless he later demonstrated, as Minister of Trade and Industry, that he could work well with the Chinese – particularly with respect to the potentially discriminatory Industrial Co-Ordination Act[11] – consequently he was obliged to display some "supra-communal" skills before becoming Prime Minister.

The most important Chinese component in the Barisan Nasional, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), did surprisingly well at the 1982 elections, increasing the number of its parliamentary seats from the 1978 election figure of 17 to 24.[12] However, it did not increase its number of seats in the Cabinet, nor was it allocated any more important portfolios.[13] It lost the portfolio concerned with trade and industry in 1969 and the finance portfolio in 1974, and has not regained them

since. In 1982, the MCA seemed to benefit from dissension inside the main opposition non-Malay party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), and more electors were apparently convinced that it was better to work inside the government than outside it. Nevertheless, the MCA leaders, although heartened by the election results, are also aware that some of the voters supported them, not because they were attracted to the MCA, but because the Prime Minister and his Deputy, Musa, seemed to stand for clean and efficient government.

Working "from the inside", the MCA does indeed obtain some concessions from the UMNO leadership. The Prime Minister said in a speech that all the MCA leader had to do was "whisper in my ear and I will hear him; all the screaming of the opposition will go unheard".[14] The MCA managed to effect changes in a new curriculum for schools, and has made progress in securing a higher non-Malay entrance quota for universities.[15] However, it is unlikely to succeed in having certain other proposals adopted – for instance, getting electoral boundaries redrawn so as to produce constituencies which are more ethnically balanced. And, in 1982, the Malaysian courts finally eliminated any hope of founding a (Chinese) "Merdeka University". Malay opposition to making concessions to the Chinese is sometimes vehemently expressed. At the UMNO 1982 General Assembly, the Information Minister was booed for having relaxed government policy by reinstating the use of Chinese in a radio programme. The Prime Minister had to use his prestige and verbal skills to restore order.

The main shift that seems to have occurred is that, while UMNO-MCA communications at the top are still necessarily conducted in "whispers", the exchanges may be rather more frank than previously. However, the resignation of Datuk Lee San Choon and his replacement as MCA leader by Datuk Neo Yee Pan in March 1983 has made the MCA's role more difficult. It takes time for a new leader to establish really close links with the highest UMNO leadership.

Because of the limited powers of the Malaysian states and their financial weakness,[16] one might conclude that the country was a federation in name only. This is not so – unfortunately, perhaps. To be sure, the federal Prime Minister has the power to approve the choice of a *Menteri Besar* and to exercise some control over state policies through party channels. However, the states have powers over land (including timber) – often exercised with paralytic slowness – and over the State Economic Development Corporations (SEDCs). In each of these spheres there is ample opportunity for corruption by engaging in what is

colloquially known as "concession politics".[17] The pressures on a *Menteri Besar* (to quote a former incumbent), "are impossible; people want help even to the extent of corruption. Politically, it is hard to say 'no' ". A *Menteri Besar*, in addition to dealing with political factions in the ruling party, must also contend with the Rulers of the states, who are jealous of their prerogatives, protocol – and revenues. A determined Ruler can exploit factional disputes so as to make a *Menteri Besar*'s position untenable, a prime example being Abdul Rahim Abu Bakar (Pahang) in 1982.[18]

The new administration's policy is an extension of that pursued under Tun Hussein Onn. The emerging pattern is to appoint a new type of well-qualified young man as *Menteri Besar*, with the expectation that he will serve one term of office, maybe two. The days are over for the old breed of *Menteri Besar* – such as Tan Sri Othman Saat in Johore, who coverted the state into a fiefdom over a period of more than a decade, and left under a cloud of allegations of corruption. The Mahathir administration carried the policy even further during the 1982 election, by ensuring that seats at the state level were contested by well-qualified people who, once elected, could contribute useful service on the state Executive Councils.

Some *Menteri Besar*, although qualified, are relatively inexperienced and need guidance in the early stages. For instance, the new *Menteri Besar* of Johore in 1983, Abdul Ajib Ahmed (formerly Musa's political secretary), will initially have the support and advice of Musa in the latter's capacity as the state chairman of UMNO.

In Sarawak and Sabah, the Chief Ministers have tended to be somewhat independent of the federal government.[19] However, after Tun Mustapha's departure in 1975, there were fewer autonomous tendencies in Sabah, and this trend continued after Mahathir became Prime Minister. In Sarawak, it had become increasingly difficult for the federal government to work with Tan Sri Haji Rahman Yaakub; but when he finally resigned early in 1982, the long service of his successor, Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, as a federal minister (latterly in the Ministry of Defence) made state-federal relations much smoother. For the *Menteri Besar*, the implication of the new pattern of appointment is that (with the exception of Sarawak and Sabah) they are increasingly seen as subordinate in rank to federal ministers. A move from *Menteri Besar* to becoming a federal Minister – for instance, the moves by Datuk Rais Yatim (Negeri Sembilan) and Encik Adib Adam (Malacca) in 1982 – amounts essentially to a promotion.

There has also been a shift in government policy as regards human rights. The new government inherited the ISA (Internal Security Act, 1966), which provided for detention without trial, and was intended to be used principally against militant communists or subversives, but which had sometimes been used against opposition party members who did not fall into these categories. The Mahathir administration, while maintaining that the ISA was necessary, maintained the rate of releasing detainees. The numbers detained fell from 900 in 1978 to about 544 in mid-1981 (when Musa took over as Home Minister), and to approximately 377 by the beginning of 1983.

The Societies Act (1966) – which was originally intended to register and control secret societies, subversive groups, and mutual-benefit organizations – was amended in April 1981, primarily to "smoke out" those groups which the government believed were acting "politically", although ostensibly formed for other purposes. The amendments required that societies, among other things, declare whether they were "political" or "non-political". The main target was ABIM, an Islamic Youth Movement headed by Anwar Ibrahim, some of whose members had already contested elections in 1978 under the banner of the chief Malay opposition party, PAS. Another target was Aliran, a non-partisan, multi-ethnic reform movement, founded in 1977, whose president is Chandra Muzaffar. Together with dozens of other groups, including the Consumers' Association of Penang and the Environmental Protection Society, the two societies founded a Co-ordinating Committee to protest against the amendments.[20] To their chagrin, the bills introduced to amend the amendments (November 1982 and March 1983), although offering certain concessions, did not meet all their objections. The probable relaxation of the terms of the Societies Act (as well as the ISA) was important in persuading Anwar Ibrahim to join UMNO.[21] His credibility as a liberalizing force inside the party is dependent on his success in moderating the tougher provisions of the act.

The Barisan 1982 Election Manifesto stressed the virtues of cleanliness, efficiency and trustworthiness in government. The Mahathir administration renewed Hussein Onn's fight against corruption, and the number of cases investigated by the Anti-Corruption Agency increased in the first quarter of 1982. The Prime Minister also spelled out the conditions under which a senior civil servant, minister, or executive council member was entitled to acquire land at a low price for the purpose of building a house for himself. As one of its last acts of office in 1982, the outgoing government of Selangor had allocated some choice

park-land to influential civil servants. The transaction was exposed in the press, an unlikely event under any previous administration, and, as a consequence, it was "frozen" by the federal government, and the land was handed back.[22]

It is often difficult, of course, to distinguish between acts of corruption or illegal/improper allocations of benefits, and legitimate patronage, designed to lubricate the party machine. A vast grey area lies between. A growing literature testifies to the importance of patronage at *kampung* level in performing a "lubrication" function for local politics.[23] It is interesting to consider to what extent a thorough "cleaning-out" at the federal and state levels would cause the lubrication to dry up at the local levels – and what the political effects would be.

The emphasis on efficiency has been conveyed in repeated exhortations by Mahathir, who has called for discipline, hard work, and productivity, as well as changes in culture, values, and motivation. "We are not workaholics. We think we should be."[24] This emphasis was predictable from the Prime Minister's own experience. When asked about his achievements, he particularly mentioned his success in managing a previously unprofitable pineapple factory in Johore and, later, ensuring that people received their pensions more quickly after retirement.[25] Comments on his style of government have referred to his managerial qualities, including a sense of urgency, speed, and attention to the distribution of information. In previous administrations, Cabinet decisions were conveyed to top civil servants in the form of brief summaries. Under Mahathir, each minister briefs the appropriate civil servants at the end of a Cabinet meeting, while the decisions are still fresh in his mind.[26] In the words of one high-ranking UMNO official, "He is really a technocrat; he looks for solutions." The new Prime Minister is more directly involved in day-to-day administration than was his predecessor, is inclined to push civil servants harder, and monitors and supervises them more ruthlessly. Where Hussein's mind was judicial, Mahathir's is managerial. His management approach is illustrated by the specific changes which have been introduced: insistence that civil servants should arrive at the office on time, hence provisions for "clock-in"; name-tags for civil servants; declarations of assets by ministers and others; the requirement that politicians adopt a non-ostentatious life-style; special dress for Ministers at National Day celebrations (a dark blue suit, reflecting a hardworking blue-collar industrial society). Obviously, as an editorial in *The Star* (July 16, 1982) pointed out, whether this kind of approach will be effective or not will depend on

whether the changes go beyond symbolism and become institutionalized.

In the economic sphere, apart from the "Look East Policy" discussed in the next section, changes have been few, partly because Mahathir, before becoming Prime Minister, had held the Trade and Industry Ministry where he had been given a relatively free hand. Consequently, policies on foreign investment generally, and the implementation of the Industrial Co-ordination Act in particular, were already very much in accordance with his ideas. There seemed to be less room for manoeuvre in 1982 because of the effects of the recession on the economy. The growth rate fell from 8 per cent in 1980, to 6.5 per cent in 1981, to 4.5 per cent in 1982 – and was estimated to be about 5 per cent in 1983. Borrowing increased sharply (with a consequent increase in the public debt). Accordingly, in mid-1982, budget cuts were made which concentrated on the postponement of long-term infrastructure projects, such as highways and railways. Clearly, if lower growth rates continued, not all the Fourth Malaysia Plan targets could be reached. A principal target of the plan – and of the whole New Economic Policy (NEP)[27] – was that, by 1990, 30 per cent of the country's corporate wealth would be held by, or on behalf of, Bumiputeras (Malays or other indigenous people). By 1981, the figure had reached only 13 per cent. However, Mahathir affirmed later that, in spite of bad economic conditions, this target would remain unchanged. In fact, conditions improved early in 1983, including a rise in tin and rubber prices. Concurrently, the government was well aware of the need for investment from abroad. Multinational corporations were "wanted and appreciated" in Malaysia. The 30 per cent figure for Bumiputera ownership was *global*. Even some completely foreign-owned enterprises were welcome, if, for example, they made substantial contributions to exports or employment. One feature of foreign investment policy was tightened up: a requirement that local employees be given adequate training was to be included in agreements with foreign firms.

Government views on the roles of the public and private sectors are becoming clearer. At the start of the Mahathir administration, the lamentably inefficient record of many ventures undertaken by State Economic Development Corporations (SEDCs) provoked the government to act. Thirteen per cent of such ventures were shut down, following a reassessment ordered by Musa. Shortly afterwards, SEDCs were forbidden to operate in certain fields – heavy industry; construction industry, which would be handled by Bumiputera entrepreneurs; and any spheres where they lacked appropriate expertise.[28] They were also

forced to withdraw from most housing projects. Later the government was said to be considering "privatization" – turning over such services as television, telephones, railways, electricity, water, and so on, to the private sector. But large federal governmental bodies – such as MARA (Council of Trust for the Indigenous People) and PERNAS (the State Trading Company) and their subsidiaries, which play a prominent role in development – were to remain. Additionally, in 1983, under a "Malaysia Incorporated" system which followed the Japanese example, representatives of the public and private sectors started to hold regular joint forums as an initial step towards achieving closer co-operation between the sectors.[29]

However, just as conspicuous success in business has so far been achieved by relatively few Bumiputeras, share-ownership among them is also highly concentrated. According to some observers, it has been the upper and middle classes who have benefited under the NEP.[30] Carried further, the argument is that something in the nature of a "Malay business class" or a "bureaucratic capitalist class" has come into existence, operating in the top echelons of public and private enterprise.[31] If such terms are to be used, they should be carefully defined so as to allow for the fact that politicians do retain ultimate control in Malaysia.

A related theme is the existence of widespread poverty, especially in rural areas, which so far has not been much alleviated by "trickle-down" effects of the government's economic policies.[32] Mahathir accepts the inevitability of some economic disparity and has explained why. "In a way I think it's true that there is a growing disparity [among] Bumiputeras. But we think it is an indication of the success of the New Economic Policy .... Quite obviously we will find some disparities; how can you restructure society without having some disparity? What is important is not the disparity but the *degree* of disparity. If you try to lessen the degree of disparity by bringing down the [wealthy] rather than by raising the poor, you'll lose a lot." He added that the average Malay felt happier because the NEP allowed him to aspire to a better life. But the government could do little to help people who were not willing to work.[33]

In the economic sphere, the most striking change under the new administration has been the adoption of the "Look East Policy". The policy rests on the perception that new models of economic progress and industrialization are needed, and that Japan and South Korea are good examples to follow. Western countries are no longer seen as setting

the appropriate standards, either materially or morally. They are no longer making headway technologically, and they are marked by a materialistic attitude, self-interest, atheism, lack of honour, and exploitation of fellow humans.

Disillusionment with the West did not lead to any dramatic shifts in foreign policy, although it was reflected in a statement defining Malaysia's foreign-policy priorities. ASEAN countries came first, then Islamic nations followed by non-aligned nations and, fourth, Commonwealth countries. Moves were also made to strengthen ties with smaller countries in the Pacific – Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa. More important, there was initially a distinct shift away from Britain. The Prime Minister was perhaps especially wary of Britain as the former colonial power.[34] Two specific issues led to tension in late 1981. Mahathir was unhappy with what he considered to be British obstruction to legitimate takeovers of British firms (mostly plantation holdings) by Malaysian governmental or quasi-governmental organizations. He also resented the sharp rise in student fees imposed by the British government which severely hit the 13,000 or more Malaysian students then in Britain. Mahathir retaliated by stating that the Malaysian government would give preference to buying goods from countries other than Britain. He reiterated this decision to Lord Carrington, when the latter visited Malaysia in February 1982 (at a speaking engagement later that same day he called on Malaysians to emulate Japanese work ethics and learn from their technology).[35] However, tensions eased in early 1983, and good relations between the two countries were restored.

Given that Western influences were rejected, why were Japan and South Korea chosen as models? The small city-states of Singapore and Hong Kong would have been inappropriate because of their greater degree of urbanization. As well, like Taiwan, they were predominantly Chinese, which could have obscured the lessons to be learned from them by Malays. By a process of elimination, then, the countries to be emulated were Japan, because of its astounding economic success, and South Korea, whose level of economic development is closer to Malaysia's and thus more relevant as an example.

Precisely which features of these countries did the Prime Minister admire so much, and why? Occasionally he referred to technology or to such administrative arrangements as the "open-office concept". For the most part, however, he mentioned such Japanese qualities as loyalty, unselfishness, diligence, efficiency, cleanliness, orderliness, sincerity, trustworthiness, thrift, and – most frequently – hard work and dis-

cipline.[36] The Japanese "are not very religious, but their cultural values are akin to the kind of morals and ethics that we have in this country or would like to acquire in this country. They may not be praying all the time but. ... [in] their philosophy in trade, for example, profit is not everything. They do not have this great class difference that you find in the West [where] in a factory the executives will never sit down in the same canteen with the workers".[37]

Organizationally, two innovations were proposed with the Japanese example in mind. One was to create large companies, modelled on the Japanese *sogoshosha*. Though their development was not as rapid as the Prime Minister would have wished, some of these companies were already in operation by early 1983. The other suggested innovation – establishing "in-house" trade unions – encountered heavy criticism and was not pushed so strongly by the government.[38]

For Mahathir, emulation of the Japanese and Korean models did not imply total imitation. To attempt this would be unrealistic, he said: picking up 50 per cent of the Japanese work ethic would be good enough. Nor, in fact, did he believe that total imitation would be *desirable*. Not everything in "the East" was wholly good; not everything in the West wholly bad. In "looking East", there might be conflicts with local values, and Malaysia was not prepared to absorb other countries' values wholesale "to the extent that we are prepared to commit harakiri".[39]

Other difficulties have been pointed out by commentators. A newspaper article remarked that long office-hours, resulting from employees' working late, as in Japan, would not be tolerated by Malaysian wives. A more basic objection was that, while the Japanese work ethic and self-reliance were indeed worthy of emulation, Malaysia was already too economically dependent on Japan, and the establishment of closer relations would intensify this dependence.[40]

It is not clear to what extent the "Look East Policy" might increase the level of trade and investment with Japan and South Korea.[41] The most spectacular recent agreement with a Japanese firm concerns a made-in-Malaysia car to be manufactured through a joint venture by the Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia and Mitsubishi. Initially most of the components will be imported. The scale of manufacture, even by 1989, will be only about 60 per cent of the production level generally thought to be the minimum which is economically viable (200,000 units a year); to make the product competitive, tariff barriers will have to be raised. In spite of such economic considerations and

possible objections by Malaysia's ASEAN partners, the project was "pushed very hard" by the Prime Minister.[42] He believed that there would be spinoffs in technological know-how, and that a larger scale of manufacture would be possible in the future if Malaysia's population could be increased.

Apart from the possible expansion of trade and investment in the long term, the "Look East Policy" is currently taking the form mainly of educational and training schemes; 582 trainees and students are to be sent to Japan and South Korea in 1983. Programmes have been announced for exchanging teachers, professors, officials, and businessmen who are considering joint ventures. New language-classes, most of them vocational, are to be started in Malaysia to teach Japanese and Korean. Additionally, each of the two languages is to be introduced as an optional third language in some secondary schools.

The impact of "Look East" is hard to predict. Obviously, however, the present scale of education and training is minute, as compared with the numbers of Malaysians who are being educated in the West. In 1982, there were 49,000 Malaysian students in Western countries, and only 200 in Japan and South Korea. The implementation of the policy has encountered some apathy: a letter to the *New Straits Times*, for example, complained that businessmen were not showing enough enthusiasm. There were also complaints about Japanese practices and attitudes. Some Japanese (and South Korean) firms in Malaysia were said to be denying promotion opportunities to local staff, and some Japanese businessmen were accused of behaving arrogantly and demanding special treatment.[43]

In evaluating the "Look East Policy", it is important to consider not just the direction of the look, but also the motives of the looker. As Malaysia was looking toward Japan, so also was Singapore, partly with an eye to sophisticated technology transfers, but also with a view to reviving those aspects of "Confucianism" which have to do with filial piety and the strengthening of family ties. It was remarked that Singapore's goal "was to create a corporate state similar to Japan in which both government and industry are an extension of the family with all three entities sharing a responsibility for individual welfare".[44] The Malaysian government's motives are different. It is "looking East" because, having first examined itself, it has become aware that certain moral values associated with economic development are lacking. The issue is not imitation of Japan as such, but rather the promotion of hard work and discipline. According to the Prime Minister, it is the

"moral values" which matter.[45] It would seem that these do not necessarily go hand-in-hand with economic growth, but need to be strong enough to resist the erosion of morality which often *accompanies* economic growth. The Japanese virtues which are so esteemed, and which are to be emulated, are not technological skills as such – in fact, some of the attractive Japanese techniques, such as quality control, actually originated in the United States – but specimens of something closely resembling the Protestant ethic,[46] now an endangered species in some of its former Western habitats.

Our third area of concern is the new government's policies regarding Islam. Malaysia, it appears, has been swept up in an Islamic resurgence.[47] Ten years ago, Malaysia did not have the "feel" of an Islamic country, even with the proliferation of mosques and *suraus* throughout the nation. Now it does. Ten years ago, Islam was just one of the emotional issues used by PAS, the major Malay opposition party, to win the political allegiance of the rural Malays away from the dominant government party, UMNO. Now Islamic politics is centre-stage.

Since the mid-1970s the country has experienced progressive Islamization, a process which has picked up significant momentum under the Mahathir administration. This is so much the case that in 1983 both of Malaysia's living former Prime Ministers publicly called for a halt to this process.[48] One of them, Tunku Abdul Rahman, stated that Malaysia, with its multi-ethnic composition, should never become an "Islamic state",[49] implying that this would violate the understandings held in trust with the largely non-Muslim Chinese and Indian communities.[50]

The non-Malays are hesitant to speak out about the process, because, as they are unqualified, it would be presumptuous and even sacrilegious in any way to criticize or show concern about Islam.[51] Many Malays who do not wish to see Islamic orthodoxy institutionalized in the political and economic systems are also hesitant to speak – it is close to being heretical. For example, a Muslim academic who has spoken out against the racial aspects of the Malaysian Islamic resurgence has received rude and angry phone calls.

The world-wide Islamic resurgence was occurring just as the Malays in Malaysia were finding their ethnic boundaries and identity eroding. The Malays have won the language battle, which has joined the list of "deceased" Malay nationalist issues. But now that Malay is rapidly becoming the language of social communication for all Malaysians, it has lost its capacity to generate a symbolic quality of ethnic exclusiveness or "Malayness". Increasingly, Islam has become the last barrier protecting

the Malay ethnic identity.[52] Additionally, other social and political factors have coalesced to propel Islam to the forefront. The Malays emerged in the early 1970s, after Emergency rule following the May 1969 riots, in a stronger, virtually hegemonic, political position. This has given confidence to the Malays, and a sense of legitimacy to their demands that the country should solidly reflect a Malay/Muslim character and identity. Moreover, the implementation of the NEP has resulted in a significant and rapid expansion in the number of Malay university students. These students found themselves in a non-Muslim dominated and competitive urban setting, both domestically and in the West, and this led at least initially to new and intensified cultural insecurities. Finally, the Constitution (Amendment) Act of 1971, which banned certain sensitive ethnic issues from the political arena, cleared the way for Islam to become the major theme for political competition among Malays.

The Islamic resurgence movement, beginning in the mid-1970s, was symbolized by the emergence of a host of *dakwah* groups.[53] The term means "to call" in Arabic, although it is more commonly translated as "missionary". Most of the *dakwah* groups were aimed not at gathering converts, but rather at propagating Islamic fundamentalism to born Muslims. Many of these groups were avowedly apolitical; nevertheless, some of the *dakwah* themes which emerged had political implications. A common theme involved the rejection of Western values, culture, materialism, science, education, and "decadence". The revivalistic aspects concentrated on an unquestioning acceptance of early Islamic tradition and scholarship, denuded of later accretions. The seventh-century Arabic culture was often presented as the ideal. Colonialism was usually depicted as a major cause of the decline of Islam: it forced un-Islamic practices on Muslim peoples and infused some Muslims with secularistic visions. Therefore, some *dakwah* groups believed that "those involved with the resurgence view the implementation of the *Syariah* [Islamic law] as a sacred duty"[54] – a goal with explicit political ramifications. In all, the return to untainted Islamic ways was presented as an ideological alternative to the dogma of both East and West. The government in the mid-1970s was concerned that these *dakwah* groups, if they became too popular, would set back governmental development efforts designed to uplift the economic position of the Malays. The government was also troubled over the activities of some small fanatical groups who preached that violence was an acceptable means to an Islamic end. But these groups were not the real concern of the govern-

ment, even though their activities (such as a temple desecration and an attack on a police station) provided material for headlines.

The main threat came through the accelerating pressures for Islamization being applied by a large, covertly political, well-organized, and well-financed group called ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, or Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia),[55] led by activist intellectual Encik Anwar Ibrahim. More precisely, the government feared the possibility of a future link-up between ABIM and PAS. Although ostensibly non-political, ABIM, with its holistic view of Islam, has taken the position that Muslims and Malays in particular have sacrificed political power through "secularistic democratization". The organization's ultimate goal is an Islamic society, achievable only by political changes in the structure and content of government.[56]

PAS, although Islamic in name and, on paper, a party dedicated to the creation of an "Islamic state", in fact has used the appeal and cohesion of Islam primarily to promote Malay nationalist causes. However, before the 1978 general elections, PAS changed the focus of its political appeal. The old nationalist position that the government was "selling out" the birthrights of the Malays had lost much of its credibility and needed to be revived in another form. The PAS leaders realized that there were opportunities available if their party could champion the Islamic resurgence. Since 1978, PAS has concentrated on preaching fundamentalist tenets, calling for an Islamic constitution and an "Islamic state", and accusing the government of recklessly pushing development at the cost of Malay spiritual values. The ethnic overtones – and the threat of the non-Malays encroaching on Malay sovereignty – are still present, but the idiom is Islamic.

Although PAS and ABIM were incompatible in a number of ways,[57] there seemed to be a potentially powerful coalition in the making. Both sought an "Islamic state", both had important members who were enamoured of the Iranian Islamic revolution, and both invoked the idea of a revitalized Islamic consciousness as a chief means of solidifying the position of the Malays. PAS did succeed in recruiting a number of young Arabic-educated Islamic fundamentalists, some of whom had been ABIM members (so successfully were they recruited, in fact, that the "Young Turks" have since purged the old nationalist leadership).

All of this made UMNO and the Barisan Nasional government understandably nervous: at stake was the basis of their support, and possibly the secular governmental framework within which they functioned as leaders. They responded initially to the threat in the late 1970s by

making mostly symbolic concessions to Islam; by exhortations against "deviant" religious teachings and "incorrect" interpretations of the Quran; by government-sponsored *dakwah* programmes and the establishment of a larger federal bureaucratic infrastructure to try to direct and control religious activities; by slowly and cautiously trying to convince some of the less cooperative Rulers, jealous of their religious prerogatives, of the dangers of religious extremism; by tightening legal regulations governing associations in general; and, finally, through an amendment to the Societies Act. The problem for the government was that it firmly desired to avoid direct confrontations with any Islamic groups, and considered itself restricted in the use of most of the coercive powers of the state in dealing with activities involving Islam. It attempted to keep Islam out of the mainstream of politics; yet, by its concessions, by the extensive media coverage given to *dakwah* activities, and by expanding the size and activities of the federal religious bureaucracy, the government response drew more attention to Islam and so partly exacerbated its own problems in trying to control the scope of Islamic political demands.[58]

After Mahathir took office as Prime Minister in July 1981, however, the government response gradually changed: it picked up the Islamic "gauntlet" thrown down by the fundamentalists. As Judith Nagata had foreseen, UMNO leaders apparently decided that the only way to meet the Islamic challenge was with more Islam; they could not afford to leave Islam to the opposition.[59] The government now seemed to be attempting to "out-Islam" PAS while wooing ABIM. UMNO leaders began working on upgrading the party's Islamic credentials. Previously viewed widely as a "secular" Malay party dedicated to development, the official line now was that the UMNO constitution had always stated that the party's goal was to promote Islam – and UMNO had not changed its goals. UMNO was now represented as Malaysia's oldest and the world's third largest Islamic party.[60] Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir told the press on several occasions that UMNO's struggle was based on Islam, and that its three objectives were protecting Malay rights, Islam, and the country.

The government's explanation of development objectives also changed in tone: now it was stressed that economic development could not be devoid of a spiritual regeneration, that it was necessary to have a disciplined and morally-upright society, modernizing without sacrificing its (Islamic) values.[61] Since the fundamentalists were determinedly anti-West, the government had to face the "contradiction" that, while it

was promoting more Islamic content in society, it still wanted to maintain a healthy pace of economic modernization, which had always been based on the secular Western model. The fact that Islamic countries apparently did not offer promising alternative models led the government to adopt its "Look East Policy", which could be popularly justified by referring to the Prophet's well-known exhortation to his people to seek knowledge even if it takes you to China. Deputy Prime Minister Musa explained in January 1983 that the government's Islamic projects were aimed at proving that Islam was not a backward religion, showing that Islam was modern, dynamic and adaptable to present-day needs.

On March 29, 1982, the government pulled off a pre-election coup which raised its Islamic credentials: UMNO recruited or coopted (then) ABIM President Anwar Ibrahim.[62] Shortly thereafter, in April, Anwar contested and won a parliamentary seat and was named the Deputy Minister in charge of the Islamic Religious Affairs Section of the Prime Minister's Department. In September 1982, he was elected as president of UMNO Youth over the incumbent, thus making him one of UMNO's five vice-presidents; in June 1983, he was made a full minister. Anwar is clearly a rapidly rising star, and many predict that one day he will become Prime Minister.

The strategy of coopting influential opponents and opposition parties into the government has been employed by the ruling elites on numerous occasions in the past, most notably during the coalition-building years of the early 1970s, when ultimately a coalition with PAS was concluded and the Barisan Nasional was formed. Later, when PAS was perceived as trying to spread its influence from within the grand coalition, it was forced out. The first important question to ask about Anwar Ibrahim is whether, indeed, he has been "coopted" – or whether instead he has "infiltrated" UMNO. Interestingly, as early as 1980, an UMNO minister suggested that ABIM's best strategy would be to infiltrate UMNO. Likewise, a high-ranking ABIM official explained that ABIM's strategy was to "work underneath" so that one day "the strong just replace the weak". Apparently ABIM was split on Anwar's decision to join UMNO, but the top leaders agreed that Anwar should be given a chance to Islamize the country from within the government. Anwar himself has said publicly that he would not abandon the principles and ideals for which he had fought – that he was not selling out, but would fight for ABIM's goals from inside the party in power. Soon after, he declared that, little by little, UMNO was doing what ABIM has sought, and that he would be a "third force" from the inside.

Anwar, who has considerable personal charm, remains something of an enigma. The second important question to ask is whether he is an Islamic moderate and social liberal as many think (and as is suggested by his views on the ISA, the Societies Act, and the Universities and University Colleges Act), or a fundamentalist determined that Islam should permeate every aspect of Malaysian society, or a natural politician who simply seeks the logical route to power, or some combination of these. The answer is not clear. Some believe Anwar to be trustworthy, and have no worries about him. Some believe that the government was correct in bringing him into power; they hope not only that it will make it easier to control him, but also that power and responsibility will tend to moderate his views and goals. At a press conference in July 1982, Mahathir was asked if he would "be able to contain Anwar's eagerness for an Islamic Malaysia", to which the Prime Minister replied: "I don't see any worry about that". Others, however, are concerned about Anwar's ultimate aims. Many of his statements are only slightly modified versions of his earlier ABIM statements. For example, in the *New Straits Times* in October 1982, he reaffirmed his support for the Islamic administration in Iran, but added that the model was not necessarily suitable for Malaysia. In a lecture in December 1982 he said, "Despite the great strides that have been made to promote and elevate the status of Islam, and to inculcate Islamic values in all aspects of the nation's life, we are not complacent. ... The Muslim must be able to live in a manner true to his faith; in other words, he must be in full control of the entire complex of systems – economics, social, political – that run his life."[63]

The nature of the concessions to Islam under the Mahathir administration has also changed, so that many can no longer be considered just symbolic. Furthermore, these projects are no longer widely *perceived* as concessions, but rather as part of a government-sponsored Islamization process. Mahathir said in September 1982 that the government had three major projects – the Islamic Bank, the International Islamic University, and compulsory Islamic civilization studies at the tertiary level (all of which were scheduled to be implemented beginning in 1983). "I am confident," he added, that "from time to time, other Islamic aspects will be introduced into national activities. These will be done without jeopardizing the position of other religions protected by the Constitution".[64]

Other steps have already been taken. These include the establishment of the Malaysian Islamic Development Foundation, approval for an Islamic Insurance company and Islamic pawnshops, a decision to up-

grade the position of *kadis* and *Syariah* courts to the level of magistrates and civil courts; a ban on the importation of non-*halal* beef (beef not slaughtered in accordance with Islamic ritual), which came into effect on January 1, 1983; the establishment of an Islamic Teachers Training College in Petaling Jaya; provision for the establishment of an International Islamic Youth Complex and permanent International Islamic Youth camp; increased instruction in and use of *Jawi* (Arabic script); closer ties with Middle-Eastern countries; the extension of *Ramadan* (fasting month) regulations (including the suspension of the Supplementary Meal Programme in all national primary schools during the fasting month, even for non-Muslim students); a ban on smoking in all government offices, and a later ban on MARA loans to smokers; a return to the traditional method of moon-sighting for determining *Hari Raya*; and Penal Code Amendments directly related to religion. Some further measures have been suggested as well: a proposed ban on gambling; a proposal to deduct *zakat* contributions from income-tax liabilities; and, most ominously, a Federal Minister's proposal to establish morality laws.

Anwar Ibrahim, when asked by a member of Parliament to explain what steps the government was taking to adopt Islamic ways for the country, answered that, in addition to many of the projects listed above, the government was encouraging such Islamic activities as the National Council for Islamic Affairs, state Religious Departments, *Dakwah Islamiah*, and voluntary *dakwah* bodies; promoting anti-corruption and anti-vice measures; establishing an Islamic consultative body to advise the government on religious principles; and holding regular discussions with the *ulamas*.[65]

The formation of an Islamic Bank (Bank Islam Malaysia) was approved by Parliament in late 1982, when it passed the Government Investment Act and Islamic Bank Act, 1982; and the bank commenced operations in July 1983. It is intended that this bank provide an alternative financial system run according to Islamic Law. Its structure will be similar to that of commercial banks except for the addition of a parallel supervisory council of *ulamas* to make certain the bank's activities conform to Islamic Law. Its paid-up capital will come from the federal government, various state Religious Departments, the Pilgrims' Fund-Management Board, and Perkim. The bank will not have to conform to the standard requirements concerning the ratio of loans to capital reserves. Interest will be banned: the bank will neither charge interest on loans nor pay interest on deposits. However, those making deposits with the

bank may receive "gifts in appreciation", and larger investors will qualify for profit-sharing dividends. Those seeking money to finance a project will obtain "equity participation" rather than a loan: the bank will extend the money, sharing in the profits if the venture is successful, and bearing the losses if the project fails.[66] The commercial success of the bank, while important, is secondary.

Two questions arise: (1) what is the position of non-Muslims vis-a-vis the bank; and (2) what are the long-term ramifications for the nation's commercial banking system? In answer to the first, apparently the bank will not be exclusively for Muslims. However, it is not going to be possible for non-Muslims to secure loans which they can then deposit in commercial banks paying interest – although the preventive control mechanisms have not been specified. As to the second question, Musa explained that it was not the government's intention to have the Islamic Bank take over the economic system, and Tengku Razaleigh stated that the position of the non-Muslims would not be affected.[67] However, the non-Malay business community is apprehensive on two accounts. First, it is worried that the government intends gradually to convert the economic system to an Islamic one; and its fears are exacerbated by statements like that of Anwar Ibrahim in December 1982 – that there exists a framework for establishing "10 or 100 similar banks within a short time", and that the Islamic Bank will ultimately Islamize the banking system as well as the country's economic system. Second, some non-Muslims are concerned that, even if it is *not* the present intention of the top leadership to alter the basis of the economic system, in the event that the Islamic Bank appears to be faltering or unviable, the government might be forced to take action directly impinging on the commercial banks in order to save it.

The International Islamic University (IIU),[68] which opened in July 1983, at first glance appears mostly symbolic, and certainly has not stirred much of a reaction from the non-Malays, except some grumblings that it was not fair to establish it, since the government did not allow the establishment of a Chinese Merdeka University. However, there are some fears that the IIU could eventually become a "breeding ground" for Islamic fundamentalists. Anwar Ibrahim, while stating that the IIU should serve to accelerate the adoption of Islamic values in Malaysia, has also said that the government will ensure that no group, including foreign donors, will make use of the university for its own purposes. The IIU will be the first university to implement the concept of integrating knowledge with morals – a concept that was adopted in 1976 at

the international convention on Islamic education in Mecca. According to an officer in the Ministry of Education, Mahathir attended the convention when he was Education Minister; and the idea of having such a university and putting the concept into practice has long been on his mind.[69]

Eventually reversed in early 1983, the earlier government decision to make the study of Islamic history and civilization compulsory for all students at the tertiary level was a move that directly threatened to implicate the non-Muslims.[70] Despite government assurances that it would be a non-examination course and would not be a narrow study of Islamic ritual, some non-Muslims were concerned that students should be required at all to study a religious culture that was not their own. Mahathir explained that the aim of the directive was simply to make the nation's official religion familiar to all Malaysians. In retracting the edict, the government has shown both that it is flexible and that it remains sensitive to the major views and fears of the non-Malays.

Another move which worries the non-Muslims is the new amendments to the penal code and criminal-procedure code, designed to protect security and order by making it an offence to abuse religious freedom (Article 11 of the Constitution) by causing disharmony, disunity, hatred, or ill-will between persons or groups professing the same or different religions. Most non-Muslims seem satisfied that the amendments are intended to help control conflict between Muslims in Terengganu and Kelantan, and that the government does not want to use the ISA (associated with communists) to curb religious fanaticism. However, some fear that the broad scope of the new regulations could, in the future, allow the government to control the religious practices of non-Muslims.[71]

Perhaps the proposal which created the most controversy was the suggestion by Datuk Mohammad Nasir, who was then a minister in the Prime Minister's Department, that the government was considering adopting morality laws. These laws would cover all aspects of morality, from prostitution to kissing in public, and would apply to all people in Malaysia.[72] Although Mahathir quickly reassured the public that there was no cause for alarm, and that the proposed laws could only be passed after a thorough study of their implications,[73] non-Muslims (and perhaps some Muslims) remain alarmed. One cause for anxiety is that this would represent the introduction of elements of Islamic Law into the nation's secular code of laws. Indeed, Mohd. Nasir noted that the government was considering "such a code to expose elements of Islamic

Law to the people".[74] Second, there is concern that, once the idea of morality laws has been introduced, it would not take much to extend the scope of the laws to, for example, banning alcohol.

This is not to say that, even if the government does pass morality laws, Islamic Law will be replacing secular laws. But it could be construed as an initial step towards that end. As such, and because it could profoundly affect and alter the life-styles of non-Muslims, the implications are tremendously important for the nature of society and the role of Islam in Malaysia in the future. The whole issue of the Islamization process would reach a climax with the imposition of Islamic Law. This action could be seen as the ultimate step in the creation of a full "Islamic state". As Jansen writes, the *Syariah* is the bed-rock of Islamic society.[75] The *Syariah* ("the path to follow"), based on the Quran and *Hadith* and other traditions, is not composed just of criminal and civil law, but is a complex all-embracing code of ethics, morality, and religious duties – even including matters of hygiene and etiquette – and it combines the sacred with the secular and the personal with the societal. "Islam is, *par excellence*, a religion of laws".[76]

The various steps taken to Islamize the country, and the postures adopted to support Islamic values, served to upgrade UMNO's credentials as an Islamic party, and this seems to have paid dividends in the April 1982 general elections: PAS won only 5 parliamentary and 18 state seats, all in the 4 northern states.[77] Since the elections, the Islamic political stakes appear to have been raised. As a result of the "fratricide" which began at the annual PAS *Mukhtamar* (general assembly) in October 1982 (under large posters of the Ayatollah Khomeini), long-time President Datuk Asri bin Haji Muda and the majority of the more religiously moderate and essentially Malay-nationalist PAS leadership has been purged.[78] The party now is under the control of the Islamic fundamentalist "Young Turks", led by Ustaz Fadzil Noor, Ustaz Hadi Awang, and youth leader Mustafa Ali, and guided by the upgraded and more powerful Council of *Ulama*. Already the rhetoric has increased. Hadi Awang has said, for example, "This is not an Islamic country. The authorities say they uphold Islam, but their Islam was learned from colonial masters. We have no Islamic constitution, no Islamic Law".[79] The PAS Islamic challenge is a vitally important ingredient in Malaysian politics. With all that UMNO has done to promote Islam, the PAS leadership demands more – and campaigns on the promise of providing it. If UMNO wants to "out-Islam" PAS in the future, it will need to take further measures (while managing not to alienate the non-Muslims).

In politics, credit or gratitude for initiatives taken is often short-lived; the relevant question then becomes "what else?"

In July 1982, in a press interview on the first anniversary of his administration, Mahathir said that he did not rule out the possibility of Malaysia adopting Islamic rule. But he also counselled the people not to be unduly worried: it was not the intention of Islam to impose itself on the non-Muslims.[80] At the 33rd UMNO General Assembly in September 1982, Islam was the central topic of discussion. In Mahathir's opening speech at the Assembly, he said:

> UMNO defeated the Malayan Union. UMNO won Independence. UMNO redeemed the dignity of the colonized Malays. UMNO has preserved and upheld Islam in Malaysia. UMNO has ruled justly and brought about development, and many other things. These are the results of UMNO's struggle. But I repeat, UMNO's struggle has not ended. Today we face the biggest struggle – the struggle to change the attitude of the Malays in line with the requirements of Islam in this modern age.... UMNO's task now is to enhance Islamic practices and ensure that the Malay community truly adheres to Islamic teachings.... Naturally this cause is far bigger than the previous struggles of UMNO. Of course it is not easy to succeed. But UMNO must pursue it, whatever the obstacles, for this is our real cause.[81]

What has happened in Malaysia in the last few years is that Islam has been dynamically propelled to the centre-stage of politics: it is *the* medium for Malay politics, and, not surprisingly, political demands for greater Islamic purity have multiplied. These demands range from trivial calls – e.g., eliminating the "un-Islamic practice" of having birthday candles and cakes at government functions – to increasingly frequent demands for the implementation of more Islamic Law.

The prevailing situation raises some interesting questions. First, what is an "Islamic state"? To the outsider, it would appear that such an entity, like a "democracy", is a matter of "more or less" – that "Islamization" exists largely in the "eye of the beholder". However, Mahathir, in answer to a question of whether Malaysia was trying to be more Islamic than some other countries, replied that is was not a question of more or less, "but whether you are or are not Islamic".[82] According to Jansen, there is little agreement on the subject even among Islamic scholars, past and present. Jansen, however, distinguishes between an Islamic state (where politics and religion are inseparable) and an Islamic order (where politics are derivative from the spirit of Islam).[83] An important

goal motivating the fundamentalists may be to dislodge from power the secular or Westernized elites. If this is the case, it seems unlikely that the fundamentalists will be satisfied simply with more Islamic content in government — or with, in Jansen's terms, an Islamic order. It seems more likely that the Islamization process will not satisfy the fundamentalist counter-elites until it has progressed so far that only they, and not the secular elite, are eligible and qualified to rule. If this prediction is accurate, then the government's Islamization process, with its unclarified goals, represents a dangerous gamble. One observer, Mohammed Ayoob, predicts growing polarizaton and confrontation in Malaysia between what he terms "Islam from above" (the government) and "Islam from below" (the counter-elites).[84]

The second question is what the Mahathir administration really wants and hopes to do with regard to Islam's role in the state. Clearly, the government has accepted and is fully engaged in the challenge of political Islam. Mahathir has stated publicly that he is not opposed to some kind of Islamic rule or state, while the details remain vague, the implication is that he will define the terms.[85] In turn, he always reassures the non-Malays that there will be justice and fairness and that their interests will be safeguarded. He has also reassured the international community that the Islamic resurgence will not mean revolution nor lead to political instability.[86] Likewise, Musa has said that the government does not necessarily want the "whole fundamentalist package", but will adapt suitable elements.[87] The Mahathir administration appears to place a high priority on the achievement of Muslim unity, and to view Islamic progress as a way of uniting, disciplining, and motivating the Malays.

The third question is where the non-Muslims fit in. Mahathir and other Malay ministers have constantly told the non-Muslim community that it can expect fair play from the government — that there are no grounds for fear or alarm, since the government has not and will not force non-Muslims to accept anything that is against their conscience. Further, Malay ministers, in talking to Malays, are careful to stress that the Islamization process must take into account the country's multiethnic composition. Two of Malaysia's leading Chinese politicians believe that the top Malay leaders are pragmatic and able enough to handle the situation.[88] Most of the Chinese community has appeared to be apathetic and withdrawn regarding the Islamization process, at least until very recently.

However, there are some Malaysians, including Muslims, who are

concerned as to whether an "Islamic state" can be instituted without seriously infringing upon the rights of society's non-Muslims.[89] To complicate matters, Islamic fundamentalism overlays ethnic rivalry in Malaysia, and the non-Muslim minority accounts for nearly half of the population.[90] Chandra Muzaffar has recently observed that, while ethnic conflict over language and culture is now muted, the Islamic revival has injected a new element into the cultural scene by cutting off social interaction between Islamic adherents and non-Malays, and provoking fears among non-Malays that Islamic law and an Islamic life-style will be imposed on non-Muslims as well as Muslims. There is some evidence that the non-Malay community is becoming more cognizant of the Islamization process. The DAP, for example, in its by-election victory in Kapayang state seat in Perak on October 16, 1982, campaigned at length on the problem of Muslim religious extremism.[91] Likewise, K. Das generalizes that the non-Malays see the government Islamization programme "as a deadly threat to their way of life".[92] In a journal interview, the Rev. Paul Tan Chee Ing said, "I personally feel that the aim is to make Islam the basis of everything.... I fear certain principles laid down in the constitution are being whittled away ... we are fighting a losing battle if the non-Muslims do not speak out and take a stand on their rights as citizens".[93] Similarly, Goh Cheng Teik, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said that, as the Chinese move closer towards the goal of integration, they are aware of pressures on the government to "shift the goal post further and further back". Further, he said, while the Chinese may be over-reacting, the "Khomeini Revolution and its effects on the Muslims of this country are causing great anxiety to the *hua yi* [people of ethnic Chinese origin] and worrying even those who have enthusiastically embraced the government's philosophy of national integration".[94]

Because the ultimate intentions of the government are not entirely clear, and details are vague about the Islamic content that might evolve should the Islamization process continue, the non-Muslims do not know what to expect or how to react. On the whole, the tendency of the non-Malay community has been to treat anything to do with Islam as a "Malay affair". However, the more directly Islamic measures affect the non-Muslims, the more conceivable is tension across ethnic lines.[95]

The final question is vital. Can the Islamic resurgence be controlled and channelled; can UMNO moderates compete in an Islamic political arena and remain politically viable without steadily becoming less moderate? Musa admits that there will be continued political pressure

for ever greater Islamization, but he says that the government feels on top of the situation and believes it can exert control.[96] Another Malay politician views it differently, however. He thinks that the country is becoming Islamic very fast, and the government may find itself unable to stop short of instituting Islamic Law.[97] Still another Malay politician puts it, less subtly, in terms of political competition: "UMNO seeks support and if to get support it means chopping off one hand or both, or a head, UMNO would do it".[98] The non-Malay leadership in the Barisan Nasional seems to believe that, on the whole, UMNO is doing what it must to outflank the fundamentalists, that UMNO leaders are essentially pragmatic, and that the government can maintain control. Some, however, admit to feelings of doubt and insecurity should the present trend continue or accelerate in the future. PAS under the control of the "Young Turks" can be expected to operate with more of a sense of moral righteousness and destiny in the future, and to push demands for more Islamic purity and for a full "Islamic state" more vigorously. It may be difficult for UMNO to stay in the game if the ante is continually raised. As the dominant government coalition partner, however, UMNO has some important powers at its disposal. For example, it can influence the content of sermons in the mosque and the dissemination of Islamic information in the mass media. While UMNO leaders may, understandably, be reluctant to use the coercive powers of the state, in the final analysis it can employ selective coercion to intimidate and silence its Islamic opponents. UMNO has another course available as well, if religio-ideological differences prove no hindrance: it could continue to coopt key Islamic fundamentalists, or it could arrange another coalition with PAS.

In conclusion, then, there would seem to be two "prongs", or thrusts (to borrow the terminology of the Second Malaysia Plan), in the Mahathir administration's new policies (or new emphases on policy). One is the call for discipline and hard work, exemplified or symbolized in the "Look East Policy". The other is support for, and institutionalization of, the teachings of Islam. Given the Prime Minister's style as a deliberate thinker and planner, there is very likely a close relationship between these two prongs. It is possible that they are designed simply to balance each other, the first being a means to material improvement, the second a path to spiritual development. What seems more likely, however, is that the two are not meant to be balanced, but integrated: that each is concerned with moral values and that both prongs point in the direction of "discipline through Islam".[99]

NOTES

1 His opposition to the policies of Tunku Abdul Rahman (then Prime Minister) was followed by his expulsion from UMNO in 1969. He was readmitted to the party in 1972 and later became its vice-president and then deputy-president (and concurrently deputy prime minister). He held the portfolio of education (1974–77) and trade and industry (1977–81). On the events leading to his expulsion, see Karl von Vorys, *Democracy Without Consensus* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975), especially pp. 371–78.

2 *Asiaweek*, July 31, 1981, p. 12.

3 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 17, 1981, p. 10; Tan Sri Tan Chee Khoon, "All Set for the Youth and Wanita Pools". *The Star*, September 8, 1982, p. 18. For examples of the previous exercise of this kind of influence, see R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia*, 2nd edition, rev. (Singapore: Times Books International/Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), pp. 202, 207–8.

4 *New Straits Times*, September 6, 1982.

5 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 1, 1983, pp. 16–17.

6 *New Straits Times*, July 16, 1982; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 3, 1982, p. 12. A supporter of Dato' Harun had opposed Tun Hussein at the 1981 election had the latter not resigned (interview with Dato' Harun, June 1983).

7 See the dispute on responsibility for Bank Bumiputra's financial difficulties, which had overtones of Musa-Razaleigh rivalry (*Asiaweek*, March 25, 1983, pp. 49–50). See, also, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 2, 1983, pp. 42–4, and August 4, 1983, pp. 12–13.

8 R.S. Milne, *Politics in Ethnically Bipolar States: Guyana, Malaysia, Fiji* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981), pp. 166–74.

9 Von Vorys, *Democracy Without Consensus*, pp. 164, 205.

10 Based largely on the reputation of his book, *The Malay Dilemma* (Singapore: Asia Pacific Press, 1970). However, the book was critical of both Chinese and Malays.

11 Milne and Mauzy, *Politics and Government*, pp. 346, 348–50, 394–6.

12 Diane K. Mauzy, "The 1982 General Elections in Malaysia: A Mandate for Change?" *Asian Survey*, XXIII, 4 (1983), pp. 497–519.

13 *Asiaweek*, May 28, 1982, p. 38.

14 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 30, 1982, p. 19.

15 The so-called "3 R's" programme. To meet objections, the language of instruction in some parts of the programme was changed from *Bahasa Malaysia* to Chinese, although the content remained "Malay". See Lim Kit Siang, *Malaysia in the Dangerous 80's* (Petaling Jaya: Democratic Action Party,

1982), pp. 6–17; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 22, 1982. The university quota agreement was reached in 1978 (Chandra Muzaffar, "The 1982 Malaysia General Election: An analysis," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 4 (June 1982), p. 88). The provisions seem to have been that over a period the proportion of non-Malays (mostly Chinese), which in 1977 was only about 31 per cent, would reach 45 per cent. The arrangement apparently continued to be implemented during the new administration.

16 During economic recessions, as at present, even previously well-off states may have deficits. For background, see Robert O. Tilmah, *In Quest of Unity: Ten Centralization Themes in Malaysia Federal-State Relations, 1957–1975*. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1976).

17 Dorothy Guyot, "The Politics of Land: Comparative Development in Two States of Malaysia," *Pacific Affairs*, 47 (Fall 1971), pp. 368–89; Sri Tharan, "Systems Corruption and the New Economic Policy," *Philippine Journal of Public Administration*, XXIII (January 1979), pp. 39–60.

18 On this and the role of the Rulers in general, see *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 30, 1983 (pp. 26–34) and July 4, 1983 (p. 16).

19 Robert O. Tilman, "Mustapha's Sabah 1968–1975: The Tun Steps Down," *Asian Survey*, XVI, 6(1976), pp. 495–509; Michael Leigh, "Sarawak at the Polls," in Harold Crouch, et al., eds., *Malaysian Politics and the 1978 General Election* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 240–54.

20. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 29, 1981, pp. 13–14. On Aliran's fight against possible de-registration, see *Aliran Speaks* (Penang: Aliran Kesedaran Negara, 1981), pp. 320–91.

21 He had not only been president of ABIM, but also chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee of the societies opposed to the act.

22 *New Straits Times*, June 6 and 7, 1982; *New Sunday Times*, June 4, 1982. A rather similar case of land being handed back, because it was feared that the previous state government's allocation might be found to be illegal, occurred in Johore in 1982 (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 21 1982, p. 15). Some other allocations of land are defensible: see the Prime Minister's statement on allocations to civil servants in Negeri Sembilan at a low price (*New Straits Times*, September 12, 1982).

23 S. Husin Ali, *Malay Peasant Society and Leadership* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1972); Conner Bailey, *Broker, Mediator, Patron, and Kinsman* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1976); Marvin L. Rogers, "Patterns of Change in a Rural Malay Community: Sungai Raya Revisited," *Asian Survey*, XXII, 8 (1982), pp. 757–78. See, also, the references in fn. 17, and Shamsul A.B., "The Politics of Poverty Eradication: The Implementation of Development Projects in a Malaysian District," *Pacific Affairs*, 56 (Fall 1983), pp. 455–76.

24 *Asiaweek*, May 7, 1982, p. 43.

25 *New Straits Times*, April 14, 1982.

26 Interview with the Prime Minister (July 1982).

27 Milne and Mauzy, *Politics and Government*, ch. 10; R.S. Milne, "The Politics of Malaysia's New Economic Policy," *Pacific Affairs*, 49 (Summer 1976), pp. 235–61.

28 Mavis Puthucheary, "The Control of Public Enterprises with Special Reference to State Economic Development Corporations," in Cheong Kee Cheok, et al., eds., *Malaysia: Some Contemporary Issues in Socio-Economic Development* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Ekonomi Malaysia, 1979), pp. 193–204; *New Straits Times*, November 17, 20 and 24, 1982.

29 *New Straits Times, ibid.*, March 24 and April 6, 1983; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 15, 1983, pp. 69–76.

30 S. Husin Ali, "Alternative Development Strategies for Malaysia: A Committee," in H. Osman Rani, et al., eds., *Development in the Eighties with Special Emphasis on Malaysia* (Bangi: Faculty of Economics, Universiti Kebangsaan, 1981), pp. 302–6; Chandra Muzaffar, *Protector?* (Penang: Aliran, 1979), pp. 92–3, 121–3.

31 Lim Mah Hui, *Ownership and Control of the 100 Largest Corporations in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1981); Basuki Gunawan, Rabeendran Raghavan and Dolf Valenbreder, *The Emergence of the Malay Business Class in West Malaysia*, (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 1980); Lim Mah Hui and William Canak, "The Political Economy of State Policies in Malaysia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 11, 2(1981), pp. 208–224.

32 On poverty, see *Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1981–1985* (Kuala Lumpur: Director-General of National Printing, 1981), pp. 31–53, 104–8; and D.R. Snodgrass, *Inequality and Economic Development in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980).

33 *Asiaweek*, March 27, 1981, p. 35.

34 He is the first Prime Minister not to have been educated in Britain, the first not of aristocratic birth, the first not trained as a lawyer, and the first who does not play golf.

35 *New Straits Times*, February 8, 1982. The same issue carried a cartoon showing Lord Carrington being ushered in to see the Prime Minister, who was ready to receive him dressed in Japanese style in a Japanese setting.

36 See, for example, *ibid.*, March 31, September 11, November 9, 1982. These qualities correspond closely to those which he emphasized as desirable for all civil servants (see above).

37 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 11, 1982, pp. 38–9.

38 On *sogoshosa*, see *New Straits Times*, January 20, February 4, and March 29, 1983; and *Asiaweek*, March 25, 1983, p. 56. For comparisons of large enterprises in Southeast Asia with those in Japan, see J. Panglaykim, *Emerging Enterprises in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1979). The second proposal was seen as an attempt

to weaken existing trade unions. It was also objected that only some Japanese workers enjoyed the compensating benefits of long-term employment by a firm and generous welfare scheme, and that no Malaysians working for Japanese firms or joint ventures in Malaysia enjoyed these (summaries of papers delivered at the Seventh Malaysia Economic Convention, *New Straits Times*, January 2, 1983; Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Khoon, "A Cover for Anti-Labour Policies?" *The Star*, March 2, 1983, pp. 20–1).

39 *New Straits Times*, March 31, September 11, November 28, 1982.

40 Summaries of papers delivered at the Seventh Malaysia Economic Convention, *ibid.*, January 2, 1983. For further criticisms, made at a later seminar, see *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 8, 1983, p. 46.

41 Cumulatively, Western investment in Malaysia is predominant; but since 1981 Japan has been the largest single foreign investor, having overtaken Singapore (*Asiaweek*, April 8, 1983, p. 30; *New Straits Times*, May 31, 1983). Japan accounts for over 20 per cent of Malaysia's trade. In May 1983, Prime Minister Nakasone announced that Malaysia, along with other developing countries, would have greater access to the Japanese market, and that there would be a review of the lending terms and utilization requirements for Japan's special credit to Malaysia. He also announced a new programme for co-operation with the ASEAN countries on aid, scientific and technical expertise, youth exchanges, etc. (*ibid.*, May 10, 1983).

42 *Ibid.*, October 28, 1982, and November 24, 1983. At the UMNO General Assembly a few weeks earlier, he had said that a bigger population was needed for industrialization, maybe up to about 70 million. This larger domestic market should be accompanied by the growth of a new work ethic. On the car project and industrial strategies generally, see *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 16, 1983, pp. 101–6.

43 *New Straits Times*, April 6, November 8, November 10, 1982. On the occasion of Prime Minister Nakasone's visit to Malaysia, Mahathir said that the "Look East Policy" had become a target of the anti-Japanese feelings of some Western nations and that this hostility had spilled over into Malaysia (*ibid.*, May 9, 1983).

44 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 26, 1982, p. 26.

45 *New Straits Times*, September 29, 1982. Significantly, a three-day seminar on the "Look East Policy", held at the Universiti Kebangsaan early in 1982, had as its theme, "Character, the Pillar of Development" (*ibid.*, February 12, 1982). In March 1983, the Prime Minister launched a "leadership by example" campaign, beginning with civil servants, which stressed values and the work ethic. On possibilities of changing values and character, see *The Malay Dilemma*, pp. 58–9 and 96.

46 Cf. a recent statement by a Japanese economist: "The problem is not that American workers cannot do what Japanese workers do. They can. But they must regain what you call the Protestant work ethic" (*Christian Science Monitor*, May 25, 1983). See, also, Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*.

The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957), chs. 1 and 7. For a recent popular statement, see Yoshiei Shimizu, "The Japanese Sense of Labour: Holy Duty rather than Mere Toil," *Speaking of Japan*, 1, 3 (1981), p. 25. Note, however, interpretations of Japan's economic success in terms of group orientation and loyalty: Ezra F. Vogel, *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), esp. p. 254; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 31, 1983, pp. 69–70. The last reference is decidedly sceptical about some conventional interpretations of the "Japanese miracle".

47 A prophecy from the *Hadith* (Prophetic traditions) foretold that, after 700 years of spreading the faith, there would follow 700 years of decline. After this there would begin a glorious new Islamic era, beginning in the Muslim year 1400, or November 1979 by the Roman calendar. Malaysia has not been immune from the prophecy, fuelled by the demonstration effects of the Iranian Islamic Revolution and Arab oil power.

48 K. Das, "The Father of Malaysia Calls for a Halt," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 3, 1982, pp. 26–7. Das reports that Anwar Ibrahim regretted that these statements had received so much publicity. Anwar describes Islamization as a process designed to inject more spiritual values into the Malaysian/Muslim way of life; to bridge the spiritual-material gap; to unite Muslims, but not turn them into religious fanatics. The intent of the Islamic-based programmes is not to convert everyone to Islam (typed excerpts from a speech by Anwar Ibrahim, no date or place cited; provided by his office). Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam has noted that the government emphasis on Islamic values is neither an Islamization process, nor is it a response to challenges by PAS; it is merely an effort to strike a balance between the spiritual and the material (*New Straits Times*, February 26, 1983).

49 The term "Islamic state" is enclosed inside quotation marks because, as a concept, it remains undefined and widely ambiguous. In an interview, the Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam, answered "Whatever it is" to the question of "Does the government want an Islamic state?" He added, however, that it was the government's contention that Malaysia is already an "Islamic nation" (July 8, 1982). The Prime Minister similarly said that Malaysia already was an "Islamic state" (interview, July 5, 1982).

50 *New Straits Times*, February 9, 1983. Datuk Harun publicly supported Tunku's speech (*ibid.*, February 11, 1983); however, many others were critical. See Husain Haqqani, "Why Islam Says 'No' to Secularism," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 14, 1983, pp. 38–9.

51 Chinese political leaders are in a dilemma about Islam. Many see potential danger, but they are hesitant to discuss it in the councils of government, and they fear a Malay backlash if they publicly express concern. They must support UMNO's position as the Islamic moderates, but worry that UMNO leaders are becoming less moderate. As Gerakan's Dr. Goh Cheng Teik said, what was extremist ten years ago is now government policy (*New Straits*

Times, April 4, 1982). One MCA staff member summed it up this way: "Islam is unlike education; it is none of our business. We must be careful, but on the other hand we do not want to be caught unawares. It will be too late then. The timing for alerting the Chinese community is tricky. We must await further developments first" (interview, July 8, 1982). Other Chinese politicians see the danger specifically that "UMNO leaders could lose control" (interview with an MCA official on July 12, 1982), but believe that the government's moves are designed to head off the extremists. However, K. Das notes that: "Everytime the fundamentalists push their cause, UMNO reacts and non-Muslims shudder ... convinced that the onslaught is to become greater and more oppressive" ("Preaching Moderation," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 3, 1982, p. 22).

52 Chandra Muzaffar writes that "Islam is seen from a communal angle", and the agitation for an Islamic state, at root, "helps to underline the differences that exist between Muslims and non-Muslims," for which "no other cultural symbol of the Malay community can be as effective" ("Introduction," in *The Universalism of Islam* [Penang: Aliran, 1979], pp. 6, 8–9). There are even two "Gods" in Malaysia – "Allah" for the Muslims, and "Tuhan" for the non-Muslims. Also, see Chandra Muzaffar, *Protector?*, p. 107; Judith Nagata, "Religious Ideology and Social Change: The Islamic Revival in Malaysia," *Pacific Affairs*, *53* (Fall 1980), pp. 405–39, especially pp. 409, 416; M.L. Lyon, "The Dakwah Movement in Malaysia," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs (RIMA)*, 13 (1970), 34–5; Das, "Preaching Moderation," p. 22.

53 A considerable amount of pioneering scholarship on *dakwah* has been done by Judith Nagata. Also, see Lyon, "Dakwah Movement"; Clive S. Kessler, "Malaysia: Islamic Revivalism and Political Disaffection in a Divided Society," *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, 75 (October 1980), pp. 3–11; Gordon P. Means, "Public Policy Toward Religion in Malaysia," *Pacific Affairs*, 51 (Fall 1978), pp. 384–405; Rodney Tasker, "The Explosive Mix of Muhammad and Modernity," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 9, 1979, pp. 22–7; *Christian Science Monitor*, December 10, 1981; and *Bangkok Post*, June 13, 1982.

54 Dr. Mohd. Kamal Hassan, "Islamic Identity Crisis in the Muslim Community in Contemporary Malaysia," *Readings in Islam*, 11 (April–September 1981), p. 47. Rather than being primarily philosophical, Islam is a revealed religion with a complete and complex set of rules derived from the *Syariah* and sayings of Muhammad. Islam is a political religion with a yearning for *al-din* (a complete Islamic way of life). In other words, many Muslims believe that, to be true to Islam, they need an Islamic polity with Islamic law and economic systems. For background on Islam and especially on the Islamic resurgence, see G.H. Jansen, *Militant Islam* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979); Judith Nagata, *From Peasant Roots to Religious Radicals: The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, forthcoming); John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito eds., *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University

Press, 1982); *Time Magazine*, April 16, 1979, pp. 30–44; *The Guardian*, November 23, 1979; *Christian Science Monitor*, December 14, 1978; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 13, 1983 (pp. 14–15), and March 3, 1983 (pp. 20–8); Deputy Minister Anwar bin Ibrahim, "Islamization – The Malaysian Experience" (typed copy of his lecture, delivered in Tokyo, December 19, 1982), excerpts from which were printed in the *New Straits Times*, December 21, 1983.

55 ABIM was formed in August 1971. Only 153 attended its inaugural meeting, but, by the late 1970s, its membership was estimated to have mushroomed to around 35,000. Its appeal has been to the more educated urban-based and Western-influenced Malay youth, although, since 1980, it has attracted more activist Arabic-educated youth. See Nagata, "Religious Ideology and Social Change," p. 425.

56 See Lyon, "Dakwah Movement," pp. 44–5. Nagata points put that neither ABIM nor PAS has worked out the complex procedural details for such an Islamic polity ("Religious Ideology and Social Change," p. 427). Anwar Ibrahim, in an April 30, 1980 interview, said that ABIM had no strategy for achieving the goal of an Islamic state, and no foreign model (although the Iranian Islamic revolution was greatly admired). Anwar added that the achievement of an Islamic state would necessarily be long-term and evolutionary.

57 Basically, PAS and ABIM appeal to two different constituencies somewhat suspicious of and hostile to each other. PAS's strength has always been based on rural Malay peasants and traditional village religious leaders. ABIM's attempt to spread its influence in the rural areas has met with some resistance. The rural Malay peasant farmers have generally viewed ABIM representatives as Western-educated types who were arrogant about religion, while the traditional religious leaders have felt the threat of being displaced by ABIM-type purists (based on interviews in Kedah in 1980).

58 In articles written before the Mahathir administration, both Nagata ("Religious Ideology and Social Change," p. 436) and Lyon ("Dakwah Movement," p. 44) believed that religious polarization was growing. Also, see *Christian Science Monitor*, March 23, 1982.

59 Nagata, "Religious Ideology and Social Change," pp. 429, 436. The same view was taken by Dr. Tan Chee Beng, who, speaking at a panel discussion on National Unity and Ethnic Relations, noted that the government could not ignore the "we-are-more-Islamic" approach of PAS. He added that the position and future development of PAS will have a significant impact on ethnic relations (*The Star*, April 22, 1983). Also, see Frederic A. Moritz, "Malaysia Already Friendly with Arabs, Warms Up to Japan and Indonesia," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 29, 1982.

60 Datuk Sanusi Junid says he first mentioned "third largest". He is not absolutely certain this is actually so, but he decided that "third" sounded impressive enough and was more difficult to disprove than first or second (interview, July 1, 1982). It has since been picked up by many UMNO politicians and

is now stated as an acknowledged fact.

61 See, for example, *New Straits Times*, June 14, July 16, August 29, 1982, and Moritz, "Malaysia Already Friendly". The theme selected for the 1982 Quran Reading Competition also stressed hard work and discipline. In an interview for the UMNO journal, *Merdeka*, Mahathir quoted the case of the Uhad War in Islamic history wherein greed and indiscipline led to the eventual defeat of the Islam army, which was earlier poised for a victory (*New Straits Times*, May 29, 1982).

62 See *ibid.*, March 27, 29–31, 1982; *Malay Mail*, March 30, April 9–10, 1982; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 2, 1982, pp. 23–4. Anwar Ibrahim stated that he had been friends with Mahathir since 1969, and that he believed in the Prime Minister and UMNO's commitment to Islam (interview, July 3, 1982). He said that he joined UMNO instead of PAS because he felt that he could be more effective in the government party, and also because PAS was divided (*ibid.*). Others expressed the opinion that Anwar would have experienced great difficulties in trying to unite PAS, and also with remaining on top against the challenge of the more radical and less patient rising young Arabic-educated "Young Turks" in the party, had he succeeded Datuk Asri as president.

63 Anwar bin Ibrahim, "Islamisation – The Malaysian Experience". Many have wondered whether Anwar intended to transform what recently has been a rather tame UMNO Youth organization into a more militant and Islamic-oriented force. While the answer is not yet apparent, some changes are taking place. In April 1983, for example, Anwar announced that UMNO Youth would introduce paramilitary training for its members to instil greater discipline.

64 *New Straits Times*, September 11, 1982.

65 *Ibid.*, October 16, December 7, 1982. The *ulamas* want a larger say in government decision-making councils, and they want the government to appoint an *ulama* as a senator (*ibid.*, December 20, 1982).

66 See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 17, 1982 (pp. 58, 60–1), March 3, 1983 (p. 21), May 5, 1983 (pp. 52–4); *Asiaweek*, July 30, 1982, pp. 41–2; *New Straits Times*, April 17, June 19, 23, July 6, 13, September 6, December 2, 9, 1982, February 2, 5, March 1, 1983; *New Sunday Times*, June 13, September 5, November 21, 1982.

67 Interview on July 8, 1982, and *New Straits Times*, December 8, 1982, respectively.

68 See *The Star*, March 13, 1982; *New Straits Times*, April 16, May 15, 29, July 5, November 22, 30, December 11, 31, 1982, January 12, 19, May 21, 1983; *New Sunday Times*, December 22, 1982; *Asiaweek*, March 26, 1982, p. 16. The IIU, to be located permanently in Fraser's Hill, Pahang, will enrol both foreign and domestic students, including non-Muslims. Arabic and English will be the media of instruction (the IIU has been exempted from the University Colleges Act). The government will not set up separate univer-

sities for males and females; however, control measures will be instituted so that any contact between sexes will not be offensive to the IIU's status as an Islamic university. All courses will be taught according to Islamic beliefs and principles and based on Islamic philosophy.

69 *New Straits Times*, December 31, 1982. Apparently other Islamic universities have not integrated all subjects with morals. Instead they offer Islamic studies and jurisprudence, and other related disciplines are offered as academic subjects without any particular moral content.

70 See *ibid.*, May 29, September 11, November 1, 1982, March 16, 1983; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 5, 1982. The decision of Mahathir not to implement this was noted in *ibid*, April 7, 1983, p. 10. The Islamic civilization course is now compulsory for Muslims and optional for non-Muslims. There is also a new syllabus on Islamic Studies for primary schools which has been implemented on a trial basis in 3,000 schools (*New Straits Times*, June 22, 1982).

71 See K. Das, "An Eye on the Imams," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 13, 1983, pp. 8–10. Also two informative articles on the subject by Chandra Muzaffar: "Controlling Religion" and "Towards Religious Authoritarianism?" both in *Aliran*, vol. II, no, 4 (October–December 1982), pp. 5–8, 28, 40. The Malaysian *Ulamas* Association is also concerned that the amendments will hinder *dakwah* activities (*New Straits Times*, December 20, 1982).

72 See *New Straits Times*, December 13 and 15, 1982; K. Das, "Courtship Gets it in the Neck," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 13, 1983, pp. 8–9; Das, "Preaching Moderation," p. 22. Liquor and sexiness were banned from radio and television commercials in a 1980 advertising code (*Straits Times* [Singapore], March 18, 1980).

73 See *New Straits Times*, December 14, 1982. Shortly thereafter, Datuk Mohd. Nasir's office issued a statement saying that the Minister's remarks on morality laws were misunderstood and misrepresented (*ibid.*, December 22, 1982). Later, in March 1983, the Minister announced his intention of resigning his Cabinet post, effective in June, and retiring from politics.

74 *Ibid.*, December 15, 1982. Later, after gambling at Genting Highlands was banned for Muslims, the Pahang *Menteri Besar*, Datuk Mohd. Najib Tun Abdul Razak, said that it was not necessary to impose moral laws on non-Muslims in the country at present (*ibid.*, April 11, 1983).

75 Jansen, *Militant Islam*, p. 185. However, it has been pointed out to the authors that this is not the only view, albeit the dominant one. Others would argue that values distinct from purely contextual laws constitute the Islamic world view.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 24; *Time Magazine*, April 16, 1979, pp. 30–44.

77 See Mauzy, "The 1982 General Elections in Malaysia," and Chandra Muzaffar, "The 1982 Malaysian General Election". When Mahathir was interviewed afterwards, he was asked if the elections were a defeat for Islamic fundamentalists. He replied that they were a defeat for deviationists, people who are

not interpreting Islam the way it should be interpreted (*Asiaweek*, May 7, 1982, p. 42). Among the non-Malays there was little interest in Islamic matters, which were still perceived primarily as a Malay affair. One of the few election statements to emerge on the subject came from MCA President Datuk' Lee San Choon, who said that, if PAS threatens UMNO's stability, "the party [UMNO] will be forced to toe the extremist line to stay in power. If this occurs, the MCA and the Chinese will not only be fighting PAS extremism but also extremism in UMNO" (*New Straits Times*, April 21, 1982).

78 Datuk Asri resigned as PAS president in October 1982. He and the "Group of 13" (originally "Group of 18") were suspended from the party in January 1983, and in March 1983 Datuk Asri formally quit the party. On March 24, 1983 he announced the formation of a new Islamic party, Hisbul Muslimin Malaysia (Hamim).

79 *New Straits Times*, November 22, 1982. Also see *ibid.*, January 3, February 18, 1983; Das, "East is Green," *Far East Economic Review*, p. 24–5. For earlier background on the "Young Turks", see *New Sunday Times*, March 28, 1982; *New Straits Times*, April 1–2, 7, 10, 15–17, November 22, December 6, 1982. An example of the current rhetoric comes from an ex-PAS MP who criticized the Islamization process, saying that the system and character of the country were still secular and did not recognize the sovereignty of Allah's laws. He also urged the *ulamas* not to be mere "rubber stamps" for the government's Islamic programmes (*ibid.*, December 20, 1982).

80 *The Star*, July 16, 1982. In an interview (July 5, 1982), the Prime Minister stated the Malaysia would not have a theocratic state like Iran – that there would not be rule by the equivalent of the *mullahs*. He said the important thing as concerns the non-Muslims is "fairness and justice". If they have this, they can accept the system. In 1983, the Deputy Prime Minister is reported to have said that Malaysia would not become as "Islamic state" (*The Mirror* [Singapore], vol. 19, no. 6 (March 5, 1983), pp 2–3, from the *Utusan Melayu*, February 13, 1983).

81 *New Straits Times*, September 11, 1982.

82 *The Star*, March 5, 1982.

83 Jansen, *Militant Islam*, pp. 172–87. The two most important ingredients for an "Islamic state" seem to be the pre-eminence of Islamic Law and a constitution based on the Quran. However, details are vague. There is the further distinction in the "Islamic state" between the theocratic state, where political power is concentrated in the hands of the religious clergy and scholars, and the state where the leadership is secular and the role of the religious scholars is restricted to guidance. At a panel discussion on National Unity and Ethnic Relations, conducted by Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Khoon, Chandra Muzaffar noted that the government was not very clear on what it meant by Islamization. Syed Husin Ali agreed, adding that he was not sure that the idea was shared by all leaders or parties in the government. Tan Chee Beng then noted that "the non-Malays don't quite understand.... They don't know what is going on and I think there is a need for explanation" (*The Star*, April 26,

1983).

84 Mohammed Ayoob, "Islam: New Grievances, Traditional Idioms," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 13, 1983, pp. 14–15. Also, see David John Baker, "Local Muslim Organizations and National Politics in Malaysia," unpublished doctoral diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1973, pp. 92 and 191.

85 Mahathir seems to be enthusiastic about the potential of the Islamic resurgence. For example, he has said that the "15th century of *Hijarah* is seen by Muslims all over the world as an era of the revival of Islam to reclaim its eminence and to restore the pride of Muslims," and that the "stage has been set for Islam to launch a second rescue of the world with the resurgence of the religion and the tremendous economic wealth of the Muslims nations". See *The Star*, March 13, 1982, and the *New Sunday Times*, June 13, 1982, respectively.

86 See *New Straits Times*, September 30, 1982. Mahathir, in a talk to the Asia Society and Council of Foreign Relations in New York, said that he perceived some apprehension about the Islamic revival in Malaysia, but he reassured the audience that it would not lead to instability.

87 Interview, July 8, 1982.

88 Interviews with Datuk Lee San Choon (July 9, 1982) and Lim Choon Eu (October 22, 1981). A well-known former Chinese politician said he was optimistic; but if Islamization was pushed too far, then there would be racial trouble. A Chinese opposition MP said that Islamization was hard to gauge, but potentially serious (interviews in July 1982).

89 At a Malaysian Social Science Association Conference in 1983, Encik Mohd. Abu Bakar presented a paper proposing Islam as a formula for achieving ethnic integration. His idea was that, if the Chinese and Indian communities could accept the NEP and special privileges for the Bumiputera, there was no reason why they would not accept an Islamic approach to national integration, since the universality and social justice of Islam should make it acceptable to non-Muslims. Chandra Muzaffar praised the paper for presenting the Islamic ideal, but contended that the socio-economic realities in Malaysia were different. He doubted that there were any instances where Muslims have championed non-Malay interests purely on the grounds of Islamic justice (see *New Straits Times*, January 12, 1983).

90 The 1980 Census shows that 53 per cent of the population is Muslim (see *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 2, 1983, p. 43). See Means, "Public Policy," p. 400; and Chandra Muzaffar, "Introduction," *The Universalism of Islam*, pp. 1–9. Jansen, writing about Islam generally, notes that "there is no evading the quite obvious conclusion that in an Islamic state non-Muslims cannot but be second-class citizens" (*Militant Islam*, p. 186). Also, see Husain Haqqani, "Why Islam Says 'No,'" pp. 38–9. However, at a regional *dakwah* conference in Kuala Lumpur in June 1983, Mahathir questioned the alleged danger to the rights of non-Muslims in a state which "fostered an Islamic way of life". The Prime Minister added that the "Islamic system really

guarantees the rights of minorities" (K. Das, "Casting a Wider Net," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 23, 1983, pp. 16, 18).

91 See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 29, 1982, pp. 23–4. This is the first report the authors have seen in which the DAP has discussed Islam in its election campaign rhetoric. In a June 1983 by-election in Bandar Raub, Pahang, won by the DAP, the party campaigned on the "one-language, one-culture problem", contrasted the rejection of Merdeka University with the establishment of the IIU, and hinted at the possibility of further impositions of Malay religion and culture (*ibid.*, June 16, 1983, pp. 28, 29).

92 Das, "The Father of Malaysia Calls for a Halt," pp. 26–7.

93 "Non-Muslims Should Stand Up for Their Rights," pp. 27–8.

94 *New Straits Times*, January 13, 1983. Also, see Rodney Tasker, "Malaysian, Not Malay," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 28, 1983, pp. 25–7, on a Chinese socio-cultural memorandum to the government.

95 See Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Khoon, "Islamisation and Ethnic Relations" (report on a panel discussion on National Unity and Ethnic Relations), *The Star*, April 27, 1983. Another issue which is generating strong emotions among the non-Malays is the proposed Kuala Lumpur Master Plan which contains no provisions for new burial grounds for non-Muslims. See the transcription of the panel discussion conducted by Tan Chee Khoon on the K. L. Master Plan in *ibid.*, February 9, 16–18, 1983.

96 Interview, July 8, 1982.

97 Interview in 1982. The surprise at the forcefulness of the Islamic directions being pursued by the Mahathir administraiton perhaps has some parallels with Bangladesh. Recently, Lt. General H.M. Ershad, the nation's military ruler, has made some strong statements associating himself with the Islamic fundamentalists, to the great surprise of most of the country. In a January 14, 1983 speech, he said, "The ideals and principles of Islam as a religion will be reflected in every sphere of state and national life". See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 10, 1983, p. 22.

98 Interview in 1980.

99 This integration is suggested in Mahathir's opening speech at the UMNO General Assembly in September 1982. For example, "Today we face the biggest struggle – the struggle to change the attitude of the Malays in line with the requirements of Islam in this modern age (see p. 97 and fn. 81).

CHAPTER FIVE

Islamic Revival and the Problem of Legitimacy among Rural Religious Elites in Malaysia

Judith Nagata

Despite Malaysia's geographical position on the fringes of the Muslim world, Islam has played a significant role in the life of the dominant Malay population since at least the 15th century, when it replaced the then prevailing Hinduism and other Indic religious practices. Modern Malayisa also lies firmly within the orbit of the Islamic revival now emanating from the Middle East. All Malays are officially Muslim; over 60 per cent still reside in rural areas, with styles of religious practice tending to vary by area.

This article explores some of these variations, concentrating on the question of religious leadership, the establishment and maintenance of legitimacy in different Malay-Muslim communities, and particularly the impact that the urban-led religious revival has had on traditional rural religious elites. The process of this interaction also helps illustrate the delicacy of the relationship between leaders and followers in their own 'congregations', and suggests the degree to which orthodoxy *per se* is integral to, or independent of, the creation of religious authority.

In rural areas, where settlements are somewhat encapsulated and isolated from direct external religious influences, the nature of village religious leadership tends to reflect uniquely local needs and personalities. The relationship between leaders and followers may even be characterized as a kind of 'bargain' struck or built up over time; that is, the position of leader is as much the product of a particular social constituency as of unilateral imposition from above. Most Malay villages have established their own relationship with individuals whose style, personality and personal connections suit villagers' needs. Much the

same was originally true of village headmen and other secular informal leaders. In urban areas, on the other hand, the 'congregation' is more dispersed and the choice of religious authority for the individual somewhat broader. Among the choices currently available in urban centres are various forms of Islamic revitalisation, whose leaders derive their legitimacy variously from secular intellectual authority and from more direct ties with the international Muslim community.

'Legitimacy' in Malay Islam is essentially the product of an implicit 'contract', or at least understanding, between leaders and led. In the same way as charisma is now recognized as coming from a dyadic response to a specific social situation, and as groups seek out a representative (cf. Spencer 1973; Wilson 1975), village congregations may be said to create their own religious *guru* just as much as the reverse. In this respect, Weber's classic treatment of religious authority probably did not accord quite enough attention to the active role of 'followers' in determining their leadership. Likewise, Geertz's (1960) description of the *kijaji* as religious broker presents a rather one-sided view of the relationship between teacher and villager, although the term 'broker' itself does imply more of a two-way interaction. The relationship could profitably be compared to that of the 'big man', in which there is a constant and mutual manipulation of relations in both directions, resulting in periodic redefinition of goals and strategies and a sometimes precarious balance between the two sides. In Malay communities maintenance of legitimacy is often a consideration in the adoption and interpretation of doctrinal issues, and as such, another aspect of power and authority in local-level religious life.

This proposition is explored in the context of one specific type of religious leadership, in the relationship between scholars or *guru* and Malay villagers, through examples from recent religious events in a state in north Malaysia. I present an analysis of the differing bases of contemporary authority between rural and urban religious leaders, and try to show how these relate to the recent Islamic revival (*dakwah*). First I consider the nature of religious change upon each of these two segments of society independently, and then examine the local link in the chain, in which the urban 'reborn' attempt to set their own imprint on rural Islam, in the name of greater orthodoxy.

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

The Kaum Muda ('young faction')/Kaum Tua ('old faction') controversy

which assailed the Malay-Muslim community in the 1920s and 1930s was probably the first in the peninsula to raise issues which have continued, with fluctuating intensity, to affect the community today.[1] At that time there was an inflow of new Islamic ideas from the Middle East, under the influence of an urban, and often foreign-born intelligentsia, the Kaum Muda, who simultaneously raised questions as to the legitimacy of local religious elites and attacked the orthodoxy of many of their teachings. At the same time, they launched a campaign to stimulate Malay ethnic consciousness, with Islam as their banner and symbol. Now that Malaysia is undergoing a second religious revival in the *dakwah* movement of the 1970s and 1980s, these questions have once again risen to the surface, if indeed they ever really subsided. While debates concerning religious ideology and practice continue, it is the crisis over the legitimacy of religious authority which appears the most salient today.

As Roff pointed out long ago (1967: 84–5), Kaum Tua was found principally among the more traditional elites, whether the sultans as custodians of 'Malay religion and custom',[2] the Religious Court (*Syari'ah*) authorities who were the sultans' representatives, or the village *ulama* (religious specialists) as religious pace-setters in their own immediate domain. This is not to ignore any independent connection between rural religious leaders and new developments from the Middle East, nor to label such leaders as monolithically conservative, but it does underscore their role within a type of society and as representatives of a constituency still in many ways qualitatively different from that of the Malay urban middle class. The greatest gulf between rural and urban *ulama*, however, lies in the differing basis of their religious status and authority.

The current Islamic revival in Malaysia, which has been gathering momentum since the early 1970s, in many respects repeats themes of the Kaum Muda/Kaum Tua confrontation. Urban revivalists have adopted the term *dakwah* to refer to the various intellectual and devotional activities and organizations which collectively make up the new Islamic movement and reflect the winds of religious change from beyond Malaysia. Strictly, and following usage in other Muslim countries, *dakwah* is a generic term for any Muslim missionary activity, whether to make new converts or to remind lapsed Muslims of their neglected obligations. In principle, this is a duty incumbent on all practising Muslims. Malay urban revivalists, however, have tended to appropriate *dakwah* to themselves exclusively and to their own religious practices,

and it is in this specialist sense that the term is now popularly used in Malaysia. Some urban enthusiasts have failed to recognize that rural *ulama* too have long made independent references to *dakwah*, in its original sense.

What follows is based on research conducted in both urban and rural areas in 1979–80: a study of the followers and leaders of the principal urban *dakwah* movements and of the three organizations they have generated; and material on 'traditional' rural Islamic practices collected largely from a sample of 12 religious *ulama* and teachers and the villagers under their influence, in the 'rice-bowl' of the northern Malaysian state of Kedah. For several generations, this agriculturally rich region has supported a number of respected religious schools, usually known as *pondok* and the equivalent of the *peasantren* of Indonesia (Geertz 1960). Students, ranging from young children to old retired farmers, typically resided in small, one-room huts, where they cooked, ate and slept, close to the house of their *guru*, and formed an almost self-contained community. This area of Kedah was also historically connected by religious ties to schools and scholars in Sumatra and south Thailand (Patani), which together comprised a well-established southeast Asian circuit for itinerant *ulama* and the exchange of ideas on the periphery of the Muslim world.

THE BASES OF TRADITIONAL RURAL RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Historically, the uncentralized, nature of Islam, and the lack of any ultimate authority or court of appeal for the faith as a whole, has provided considerable scope for individuals to acquire standing as a teacher or interpreter of the scriptures largely on the basis of personal characteristics and local acceptability alone. Much as the 'big man', by the force of his personal skills, manages to construct a body of political support and convince it of his rightness too, so traditional *ulama* used the fine arts of persuasion and instruction to create followings of their own. In the strictest sense, therefore, it becomes difficult to define what is meant by 'orthodoxy'. In practice, some external constraints and controls are exercised through religious councils where established by local, secular governments in their own territories, but their rulings are only valid for that domain. Thus each of the states[3] of Malaysia has a formal Council of Religious Affairs officially under the jurisdiction of the sultan of that state, who appoints a *mufti* with the right to issue doctrinal rulings (*fatwa*) for that state. Beyond this, the only source of

legitimacy for the *alim* (pl. *ulama*) and religious teacher (*guru agama*) lies in their creating a reputation with and gaining the confidence of the audience they are trying to reach. Indeed, many village *ulama* and their followers have remained stubbornly independent of the religious councils, presuming to issue *fatwa* of their own on local affairs, and resent the superimposition of what they regard as an unwarranted level of interference.

Credibility in religious matters in rural Malaysia may be acquired in any of the following ways. The first, not surprisingly, is through demonstrated Islamic learning and scholarship, to the satisfaction of village folk (cf. Winzeler 1974). Sometimes this does not extend far beyond the cultivated skills of mnemonics as a basis for the legitimacy of knowledge, as illustrated for Morocco by Eickelman (1978). This is combined with an ability to read and expound the *Quran* and *Hadith*[4] (often with 'earthy' homilies appropriate to a rural audience), apparent facility in Arabic, and often also in Islamic law and jurisprudence and astronomy, the latter essential for the determination of hours of prayer and dates of calendrical rituals. Several are also writers and printers of religious books. By village standards, these skills *de facto* confer the right to issue rulings or *fatwa* in local controversies, although this is now officially the sole prerogative of religious councils. Despite the fact that nowadays the councils normally appoint an official *imam* or prayer leader to most local mosques, all *ulama* are expected to be competent in leading the prayer and delivering the Friday sermon. Other desirable qualifications for the recognition of village *ulama* involve a number of practices whose orthodoxy has been specifically disputed, both by the original Kaum Muda and more recently by *dakwah* revivalists. In question because of their alleged Hindu origin[5] are some of the ceremonies attendant upon ritual feasts for such occasions as the opening of a new house, officiating at such Indic rites of passage at the first hair-shaving of a baby or the baby's social presentation to the world, instruction in the ancient Malay art of self-defence, or acting as curers (*bomoh*). Other skills sometimes disapproved of by urban purists include specialization in a form of chanting leading to trance (*zikir*), and reflect more traditional lines of cleavage in the Islamic community at large, between those inclined towards Sufi mysticism on the one hand and the 'intellectuals' on the other.

A further qualification for religious leadership is derived from what might be called an 'intellectual genealogy' (*isnad*) – the putative unbroken line of teachers and students, of who studied with whom, that

creates a chain of intermediaries linking *ulama* across time and space. Particular prestige adheres to training in certain well-known religious schools, and to direct ties with 'famous names' in Islamic scholarship, the most illustrious being *guru* in Patani (south Thailand), Sumatra, India, Egypt and Mecca. Indeed these *ulama* tended to be highly peripatetic and geographically mobile, and as a result were by no means as isolated from outside trends as sometimes depicted by their urban critics. In Malaysia, two of the most renowned and respected Islamic scholars in the rural tradition were Haji Muhammad Yusuf and Abu Abdullah Sai'd Hasan, more popularly known as Tok Kenali and Tok Khurasani (Abdullah Al-Qari bin Haji Salleh 1974: 87 sq.; 162). Both *ulama* were originally from the Malay state of Kelantan; the first completed his religious studies in Mecca, and the second in Deoband, India (although his epithet 'Khurasani' popularly connected him with Afghanistan). These men formed important links in the intellectual chain. Of the 12 Kedah *ulama* whose histories I formally investigated, ten claimed to have studied under one or both of these two men at some stage in their career. Related to the *isnad* qualification is the added 'halo effect' of claims to direct contact with the Middle East beyond the educational connection alone. For many Malay *guru* this means having performed pilgrimage, or having lodged in the houses of famous *sheikhs* during sojourns in the Holy Land, sometimes being adopted by them, or even marrying their daughters. Despite the hazards and costs of travel in earlier days, a surprising number of *ulama* from southeast Asia managed to make the journey to the Middle East, sometimes with the aid of funds collected on their behalf by loyal pupils, teachers or supporters at home, on the strength of reputations already partly established.

The legitimacy of religious leaders was further enhanced, and frequently deliberately cultivated, by means of kinship and marriage alliances, both for themselves and on behalf of their children. Marriages were strategically arranged with the offspring of other *ulama* or religous officials such as *imam*. In some cases the most promising pupils from their own schools were given in hand to the *guru*'s own daughter, and subsequently established as sons-in-law cum successors to the school in question. In respect of the 12 *ulama*, 17 of their 27 wives (many married polygamously) were daughters of other *ulama*; 18 of their 37 sons-in-law were either sons of religious leaders or selected pupils. The effectiveness of this strategy is compounded by multiple marriages and members of religious elites generally have more wives than the

average villager.[6] Alternatively, spouses for members of *ulama* families were and are sometimes taken from those of wealthy landowners or even scions of the aristocracy and royalty, thereby gaining valuable patronage, often in the form of endowments of property and land, for support of the school. Some *ulama* initially gained entry into secular elite circles through teaching the Quran to children at court. In many ways, the benefits were mutual, for the secular elites themselves reinforced their prestige, legitimacy and blessing (*berkat*) through the connection, and assiduously sought the services of venerable *ulama*.[7] Such arrangements helped to provide another of the prerequisites of authority, namely wealth, as a foundation of greater independence from agricultural activities. Most *ulama* were in a higher economic bracket than the average farmer, and some further supplemented this by trade or small business enterprises (cf. Mansor Haji Othman 1978), ranging from shops to printing presses. It is also no accident that areas where *pondok* schools were most numerous were also the richest agriculturally, generating a sufficient surplus for voluntary contributions of rice and other commodities from local peasants. Sometimes, as noted, the latter would contribute funds to send their *guru* to Mecca, even for a second time. The resources of these areas also permitted the affiliation of full-time pupils, freed from the necessity of continuous labour on the family farm. In the past at least, many of the denizens of *pondok* schools, especially those who travelled from other areas to study with a particular *guru*, were among the wealthier elements of the rural population.

Finally, for *ulama* to be taken seriously, advancing age was generally an advantage, as a presumed source of experience ('those who have tasted the salt or bitterness of life'), of scholarship, and of the opportunity to perform pilgrimage. It was also in keeping with the accepted hierarchical notions of village society. In all these respects, the relationship between *guru* and disciple was reached through mutual understanding and accommodation; specific theological issues were often subordinate to them rather than their determinant.

Traditional religious leaders could thus be regarded as a form of elite in their own right, parallel to the secular elites. As such, they were often described as 'noble' (*mulia*). This position was structurally reinforced by their tendency to in-marriage, the somewhat exclusive school system and by their above-average economic resources. *Ulama* enhanced their elevated status by remaining aloof from the mundane activities of the village, especially sports and entertainment, reserving

their participation for ritual services at feasts, funerals, religious addresses and teaching. Frequently, too, they were able to command voluntary services from the village folk, in the form of labour on the land and in the school. One important community service rendered by the religious teachers was their instruction, not only of the youth, but also of the older members of the village. Indeed, it was common in many villages for those who had already performed the pilgrimage and were preparing for the 'afterlife', and whose financial,[8] family and life-cycle situation permitted, to take up permanent residence in one of the *pondok* huts attached to the school, to spend the rest of their days at the feet of their *guru*, in a combined religious retreat and old folks' home.

In their own way, the most influential *ulama* and teachers were able to generate a relatively stable, permanent and loyal following out of their student body, young and old. Within the somewhat cloistered domain of the school, in the past usually reinforced by numerous physical and symbolic boundaries, they established a kind of parallel community to the secular village whose respect they enjoyed. It was customary for all village children to be sent, part-time at least, to one of the schools or *guru* to study the Quran, if only be rote, and normally in Arabic and the Arabic script (Jawi). Those with the means to remain as boarders in such schools underwent the greatest exposure to Islamic teaching (and often too, to the political ideas of their mentors). Even today, most rural children receive at least minimal instruction in Quranic recitation.

Through historical connections with a long Sufi tradition in religious centres in other parts of Southeast Asia, some of the more charismatic *ulama* have generated their own idiosyncratic cults and religious movements or *tarikat*, usually only of local importance, with intensely personal followings in just one or two villages. Some still exercise a powerful hold on segments of the rural population, but under the onslaught of urban revivalists, these are being castigated as 'heretical' or 'deviant'.[9]

Other than being a distinct status group, the *ulama* could also muster considerable resources as a political pressure group when necessary. This not only provided a measure of unity but also helped to curb the more extreme individual idiosyncracies to which uncentralized Islam is vulnerable. In the case of Kedah, the Kedah Ulama Association (Persatuan Ulama Kedah) has existed since 1946 (Abdul Manaf bin Saad 1979: 148–58), and has in its career taken on such issues as the Malayan Union crisis of 1946.[10] The association's influence was spread

through members' pupils, who carried its message to parents and relatives in their home village. In recent years, many *ulama* have been passive or active supporters of the Malay party (PAS) in opposition to the incumbent United Malays National Organization (UMNO). What is significant here is that as early as the 1950s the Ulama Association was already suggesting an 'updated' religious school system (to be financed by the state Religious Council), in which both secular educational needs and solid religious training could be had simultaneously, in order to keep in step with the changing educational priorities of the modernizing Muslim population. This is one indication that the rural *ulama* were not in fact out of touch with contemporary trends.

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AND URBAN *DAKWAH*

Over the past two or three generations, Malays have become progressively more urban in residence, and some families contain no members with experience of rural life. For reasons of occupational mobility, secular education has tended to eclipse the importance of religious instruction, and success in the national promotional examinations is avidly sought. Most Malay children, even in the cities, continue to receive some basic Quranic instruction; but as many of them are now prepared to admit, they are not usually deeply imbued with Islamic knowledge, and cannot even read the Jawi script, unlike most of their rural counterparts. It is this contingent of Malay youth which has also been largely trained in local and foreign universities, and which is highly professionalized and proficient in English.

For many, their first exposure to a concerned Islamic community and way of life and to active religious *ulama* and proselytization occurred abroad, in such infidel outposts as Australia, the United Kingdom and North America, or else in the Middle East. Their mentors and mediators are colleagues and fellow students from other Muslim countries, particularly Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Libya. Through these contacts, a form of non-traditional 'peer learning' (Eickelman 1978; 500, 503), young Malays are suddenly made aware of their religious deficiencies. They become intent on improving their religious knowledge, and in consolidating an identity as 'Muslim', a status with more impact and universalistic significance than that of 'Malay' alone. This they do through attendance at *dakwah* lectures and conferences, and through the study of Arabic as well as of the voluminous Islamic literature, much of it in English, now in wide circulation. These youths are deeply

preoccupied with theological issues, particularly of a fundamentalist cast, which tend to take priority in their relationship with fellow Muslims and in evaluating behaviour. They also make a general attempt to re-orient their personal lives along more devout lines, some very privately, others by a conspicuous attention to ritualized behaviour and observances. Like the Kaum Muda before them, these youths tend to intellectualize their approach to religion, and are advocates of a 'rational' as opposed to the 'uncritical, ritualistic' Islam practised in the village. For those Malays who remain at home for higher education, this kind of religious exposure is now being achieved either indirectly via scholars returned from overseas, themselves now teachers and lecturers at home in Malaysia, or through the religious associations these people have established. In contrast with just over a decade ago, the Malaysian urban scene of today is remarkable for its highly visible Islamic consciousness, with widespread evidence of a new devoutness. Whether expressed through the observances of prayer or dress, or attention to strict dietary purity (for example, by eliminating anything of possible Chinese origin as unclean), or in personal morality, the new *dakwah* spirit pervades life among the city youth in general, beyond the confines of school and university.

The three most prominent urban *dakwah* organizations with the greatest impact on contemporary Malay youth are ABIM (for Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, or Malay Muslim Youth League), Darul Arqam and Tabligh.

ABIM. ABIM was founded in 1971 by a group of University of Malaya student leaders with strong ethnic and political convictions, almost all of urban middle class background. It is the most academic of the *dakwah* movements, with a didactic mode of instruction, has supported such social causes as the Baling movement of 1974,[11] and is a covert ally of the Islamic opposition party PAS. ABIM now runs a chain of its own secondary schools, combining a secular, examination-oriented curriculum within a solid Islamic framework. In matters of observance, ABIM followers are distinguished by attention to Islamic dress (a form of partial veiling for women and sometimes Arab robes and turban for men), and a desire to implement Islamic virtues in all areas of life. Many ABIM members are in active and continuous contact with their counterparts in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, Libya and Saudi Arabia. They also tend to be most critical of syncretic (that is, largely rural) Islam, and advocate a return to the original and pure teachings of the

scriptures. By infusing a religious element into an otherwise secular but highly respected teacher or *guru* status, many ABIM evangelists try to enhance both statuses, in the hope that the kudos of one will permeate the other.

Darul Arqam. One of the founders of Darul Arqam was originally a *pondok* teacher without a rural school of his own who collaborated with a group of Malay lecturers, many from the National University's Faculty of Islamic Studies. Darul Arqam's base is a residential commune near the capital, Kuala Lumpur, although by no means all of its followers actually live there. In fact, the commune comprises only the houses of a core of a few hundred members, together with a religious school, a mosque and a number of small, cottage-industry style factories. The commune tries to run its affairs as far as possible on what it considers to be scriptural principles, through councils and collective decisions. One of Arqam's distinctive features lies in its attempt to develop an alternative and autonomous economic system based on petty manufacturing enterprises, agricultural projects and a network of small Malay traders. Their goal is partly to produce a range of 'pure' (*halal*) food products, such as chilli sauce, noodles and so on, and partly to generate a truly Islamic system, free of both secular government and non-Muslim (Chinese) control. In other matters Darul Arqam members attempt to practise what they perceive to be Arabic customs, as in dress, language and style of eating (with three fingers, from a common dish), emphasis on sexual segregation, rejection of such western items as chairs, tables and televisions, and attention to such rituals as stepping with the left (unclean) foot into the latrine.

Tabligh. Tabligh was originally founded in India, and Delhi is still its headquarters, but its missionary network is world-wide. Once confined almost exclusively to the Indian Muslim communities of Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, Tabligh is rapidly expanding its appeal to young Malay males (females may not participate). Tabligh encourages religious retreats, with seclusion overnight or longer in the mosque, where an intensive solidarity is generated through the sharing of food, accommodation and the discussion of personal religious problems and experiences. This has had the effect of creating a form of alternative youth culture, particularly among unmarried youths, for whom the religious confraternity and Arabic customs and dress replace the urban coffee-shop and blue jeans routine. Tabligh has no particular political or economic ideology or interests, but concentrates instead on cultivating the inner,

spiritual development of its followers. It is probably the most aggressively evangelistic of the three urban-based movements, and is continually expanding its field from community to community and from mosque to mosque, nowadays including rural areas. The Tabligh movement puts great stress on egalitarianism and down-plays individual leadership or personality cults, combined with goal of training all its followers as missionaries and potential teachers, who in their turn will train more like themselves. Although Tabligh's Indian association was regarded somewhat apprehensively by urban Malays in the past, today the renewed attention to connections with other parts of the Muslim world, and the general commitment to *dakwah*, has made the movement more acceptable.

Most of the top leaders, and many of the followers, of all three movements are drawn preponderantly from the ranks of the young, middle class and highly educated professional Malays. They use the authority and prestige derived from these occupations as the principal basis for their legitimacy and credibility in other matters. Such secular qualifications as university degrees are regarded with considerable awe by both urban and rural Malays, and confer upon their bearers an aura of expertise and authority far beyond the immediate area of their qualification. Few older Malays have university degrees. By way of further support, the young revivalists marshal literary resources translated from foreign religious publications, and disseminate these in both urban and rural conferences, lectures and seminars. They also cultivate direct contacts with the Middle East. Libya and Saudi Arabia provide substantial financial aid to Malaysian *dakwah* organizations. The rise and success of the Middle East politically and economically in recent years has added to the impact of Islam in Malaysia, creating a growing sense of pride and confidence in Islamic culture and civilization, together with a rejection of the West. Contact with the Muslim Middle East thus lends additional status and legitimacy to this new cohort of aspiring Muslim leaders. It has also cast the orientation of modern *dakwah* ideology in a decidedly fundamentalist direction, which emphasizes a literal interpretation of the Quran, the cultivation of Arabic customs, especially those of the time of the Prophet, and the establishment of an Islamic state. A consequence is disapproval of rural Malay Islam, with its Hindu accretions, certain Sufi mystical practices and marginal cult movements.

Undoubtedly part of the appeal of the new *dakwah* movements to urban youth lies in the alternative political outlet they provide, in the current situation of official proscription of most political activities in

the universities (embodied in the Universities Act of 1974). Some ABIM leaders have recently run for local elections as PAS candidates. It is also clear that in cities the *dakwah* movement has an ethnic dimension, since in Malaysia, Islam is an important symbol of Malayness, *vis-a-vis* non-Muslim Chinese and Hindu Indians. In rural areas, on the other hand, the lines of ethnic consciousness have never been as deeply engraved, partly because of lower inter-ethnic exposure or competition.

THE CHALLENGE TO RURAL AUTHORITY

Over the past two decades, the processes of Malay urbanization and increased aspirations to higher education and professional occupations has led to a shift in preference by rural parents for a more secular and academic education for their children. Even the *ulama* have succumbed to this trend, and their own children have been among the first to receive the more expensive secular education, with fathers sometimes carefully steering them into strategically chosen posts in the civil service and professions. This has left the religious schools, where they survive, to be taken over by others. Of 26 school 'take-overs' recorded in my study, and covering the last 15 years, only 9 were by sons of the *guru* himself. Of the remaining, 13 were ex-pupils, 9 of whom were also sons-in-law and 4 unrelated; 3 were other kin (wife's brother, sister's-son and a brother), while 1 was an adopted son. Those pupils who still remain full-time in the religious schools are now often drop-outs from government schools or have failed the promotional examinations. They also tend to be poorer than previously, for richer fathers can afford to send their failed offspring to private 'rehabilitation' or 'cram' schools. Meanwhile, more secondary schools are being provided by the Ministry of Education to fill a gap in village education opportunities once satisfied by the religious school. It is true, however, that some part-time religious instruction is still sought by parents of all rural children, and often with the same *guru*, but the 'total' institution of the old *pondok* is rapidly dying, on the admission of the *guru* themselves.

With the increasing power of the state religious council, in close alliance with secular elites, the latter have begun to appoint their own religious officials, including *imam*,[12] some of whom are competing for influence in the village with the traditional *ulama*. The new appointees tend to be supporters of the incumbent party UMNO and of the political status quo in opposition to the PAS tendencies of the latter. Council

officials have begun to monitor more closely the political content of the homilies of the *ulama*, and make their approval a condition of a licence to continue to operate. The religious council has centralized all religious tax collection, eroding the economic base and autonomy (through voluntary contributions) of the schools. The religious school situation was further weakened when the federal Ministry of Education decided to centralize all religious instruction in Malaysia, making financial aid contingent upon the schools following the prescribed national curriculum and examination system. As many *pondok* schools were now short of funds, this was a compromise many of them decided to make, combining Ministry requirements with a more traditional religious education, sometimes in separate morning and afternoon sessions. In return, they receive financial support for teachers of academic subjects, additional classrooms and equipment. As a result, the old *pondok* system proper is giving way to what is known as a *madrasah* or *sekolah rakyat* ('people's school'), a more comprehensive type of educational institution for which there are Arab and other Middle Eastern prototypes. That the *guru* have been able to accommodate this particular change is probably due in part to their earlier anticipation of such developments by the Kedah Ulama Association in the late 1950s, when a number of new *madrasah* and specially trained teachers were established. A final consequence of all these changes is that the elaborate kinship network of the religious elites has been threatened, although a few of them have already attempted to develop marriage alliances with the offspring of the 'new' *imam* and officials appointed by the religious council.

The evangelistic efforts of the recent urban-based *dakwah* organizations have in some respects compounded the effects of this challenge to adherents of traditional-style Malay Islam and its authority base. However, the latter are not passive receivers, but have managed to adjust in a variety of ways.

The arrival of many young *dakwah* missionaries to the villages as part of their lecture circuit has created some antipathy among the rural population, partly on account of age. While most youthful evangelists are acknowledged to be devout and sincere, their right to assume the white turban (men) or veil (women) and Arab style of dress is questioned, for this is seen by villagers as the role prerogative of those who have already made the pilgrimage to Mecca, which the young rarely have. They are thus resented for their presumptuousness, for it detracts from the status and distinction of those who have 'earned' the qualification,

and from the latter's authority in the village hierarchy. The youthful *guru* are generally regarded by rural standards as insufficiently trained in Islam, too inexperienced to lead the prayer or deliver the sermon, and too lacking in wisdom to dispense advice. They have not yet 'tasted the salt/bitterness of life', say the village folk, while the *ulama* ask how those who hardly even know their *alif, ba, ta* (alphabet), or who cannot write Jawi or speak Arabic, presume to instruct those who have spent a lifetime studying Islam. The didactic style of ABIM in particular is often misunderstood or resented, and yet 'they behave as if they get their monthly salary from God'. Some *ulama*, along with other villagers, feel that the full style of Arabic dress, eating and other customs, often taken literally from the Quran, are overdone, and even inappropriate for the Malaysian climate and society.[13] The extreme segregation of the sexes is also regarded as unsuited to the exigencies of an agricultural village economy, particularly as Southeast Asian women have always enjoyed relatively high status and freedom of action in most matters. Even the *dakwah* followers' own contacts with certain Middle East countries are sometimes suspect, because of their revolutionary and socialist tendencies, and do not necessarily confer the legitimacy sought. Finally many *ulama* are understandably defensive about overt criticisms by urban 'intellectuals' of their style of religious education and lecture delivery, and of some of their involvements in Sufi, the martial arts and curing activities.

By way of balance, both the obvious dedication of the youthful missionaries to their cause, and the high status derived from their educational and occupational background, place them in a position of respect *vis-a-vis* village inhabitants, including its traditional elites. The role of 'teacher', religious or secular (both types are known as *guru*),[14] generally commands respect. Indeed teaching of any variety has long been considered the chief avenue of upward mobility in both rural and urban society. Although some *ulama* are known to be apprehensive, and even actively obstructionist on occasion, rarely do they refuse outright to grant permission for a visiting missionary to address a local mosque or school; but they always take care to be present in person, and appear to be in control of the situation lest it detract from their own display of authority.

Like Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua, the opposition between urban and rural, fundamentalist and syncretic, modern and traditional should not be overdrawn. Despite their differences, those associated with the latter have always shown, and continue to show, an awareness and an ability

to adapt to new religious trends and situations, and can usually find ways to defend their status. Since the late 1940s, the Kedah Ulama Association has shown flexibility and a capacity to defend its members' interests. As a further buttress to their authority, many *ulama* subsequently formed the backbone of the party PAS. As long as two generations ago, the rural *ulama* were also referring to their own brand of *dakwah* or commitment to the faith. After all, the village *ulama* have long been exposed to direct influences from the Middle East, whence most new ideas ultimately come. For all the changes he has been forced to undergo, particularly in school curricula for young pupils, the followings of old people remain faithful to their *guru*, who has continuing authority among the village elders. And, given the renewed religious consciousness in contemporary Malay society, it is possible that this support may not end with the current senior generation, whether it be in alliance with, or as a counterpoint to, the spread of the *dakwah* movement.

In the past three or four years, some *ulama* have made a conscious attempt to come to direct terms with the modern *dakwah* organizations and teachings in such a way as to enhance rather than compromise their own authority.

As an alternative to modifying their curricula to Ministry of Education requirements in return for funds, a small number of rural religious teachers have preferred to enter into a partnership with ABIM, and have set up joint schools, in which ABIM provides the secular, academic and examination-oriented content, and the *ulama* the religious instruction. ABIM is well endowed with ample funds from Middle Eastern sources, as well as with a body of eager young graduate teachers, and with its *dakwah* orientation is more acceptable to some *ulama* than a Ministry programme. ABIM has also established a form of political involvement by fielding PAS candidates in a number of rural Kedah constituencies, thus increasing its own rural influence, and reciprocally providing PAS with a stronger foothold in segments of the urban population where the party has traditionally been weakest. This pattern of political alliance nonetheless appears to be a covert one from the point of view of the *ulama*, many of whom are active in PAS, for at the time of by-elections, their mobilization campaigns are in the name of the party rather than the (ABIM) candidate. Indeed, they either play down their association with the candidate as an individual, or else play down the candidate's ABIM credentials. Such strategies clearly relate to the need to steer a precarious path between religious accommodation and continued

acceptability with the village constituency.

In the case of Darul Arqam, many *ulama* and villagers are sympathetic in principle to its ideals of increased Malay economic independence, and are willing to buy and sell *halal* food products. Indeed a few Kedah traders are already linked to the Arqam distribution network, and some have made periodic retreats to the commune in Kuala Lumpur. However, one notable experiment, in which a religious teacher in one Kedah village permitted Arqam to send a contingent of teachers to his school and set up a branch commune there, ended in failure and the withdrawal of the Arqam members. In part this reflected the inability of the villagers and the university-trained lecturers to communicate effectively with one another, and in part the offence some of Arqam's methods gave to the village folk. What was particularly resented was their pattern of 'secular' education, which consisted largely of training the pupils as members of their manufacturing and retail network, by encouraging them to make such commodities as chilli sauce, or practise carpentry at home, and even 'stealing' home recipes, as one outraged mother claimed, at the expense of their academic subjects. Arqam's extreme insistence on sexual segregation, on Arab dress for boys and the veil for girls,[15] together with their total rejection of fans, tables, radios and other appurtenances normally aspired to by village people, were regarded as old-fashioned and counter-productive. Further, their refusal to accept the financial aid normally allotted to local religious projects from the State religious council finally resulted in a loss of rapport. Within eight months the original *guru* was asked to restore his old regime. For his part, by his initial collaboration with the Arqam experiment, the local *guru* had laid his reputation 'on the line', and stretched his credibility to breaking point. His only means of redress was to dissociate himself from the newcomers once more. 'Orthodoxy' in the village, therefore, depends on a delicately negotiated balance between the leader and his followers, and a constant re-testing of ideological waters, to avoid breaking the critical tie.

Of the three urban *dakwah* movements, Tabligh appears to be the most warmly received by the rural *ulama* and also most easily accepted by the rural population at large. One reason seems to be Tabligh's lack of political involvement or economic ideology, which allows the *ulama* to preserve a low profile where expedient and to avoid controversy. Further, Tabligh's methods are widely believed to be closest to those of the ways and days of the Prophet, being based on small, consensual groups around a local mosque, spreading the message from community

to community, as Muhammad did from tribe to tribe in Arabia. The other crucial factor in Tabligh's acceptance undoubtedly has to do with its low emphasis on individual leaders within the movement, which reduces the threat to the authority of the established *ulama*. On the other hand, some of the missionary/lecturers on circuit, like those of ABIM and Darul Arqam, are admittedly rather youthful, and identified with urban 'arrogance' towards many of the syncretic village practices and rituals considered contrary to 'pure' Islam. In cases where Tabligh has been involved in controversies over such issues as the participation of the *ulama* in rituals to propitiate sea spirits, which challenges their legitimacy in the eyes of the villagers, it has met with a more cautious reception. On the other hand, one or two cases are on record where the *dakwah* influence in such matters has been accepted by both *alim* and followers alike, in agreement that this is in 'keeping with the times' and in the spirit of the 'true Islam', in which event the authority relationship is not violated. Finally the 'Indian' element of Tabligh's membership, sometimes resented in urban areas by 'pure' Malays, seems absent in the village. A long history of educational and other religious contacts with India, as part of the Islamic core, has predisposed rural *ulama* to considerable openness of mind in such matters. At least one teacher has directly incorporated some Tabligh ideas into his curriculum, and is actively influencing his pupils in that direction. Generally the rural followers of Tabligh do not practise the 'Arabic' customs and style of dress as assiduously as do the urban members.

In summary, it is acknowledged that there does exist a demonstrable and continuing gap between many urban and rural Islamic practices in Malaysia, to be traced at least as far as the early debates between Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua. This is balanced somewhat by the equally demonstrable fact that village *ulama* have shown a willingness to make accommodations in a number of ways, and that they are by no means as insulated from, or resistant to, new religious trends as they are sometimes depicted. It is the conflict of personal legitimacy and authority and between two styles of religious leadership which remains the principal issue, and which has resurfaced so visibly since the recent *dakwah* revival. Although they may experiment with new ideas, concern over personal credibility will force the *ulama* continually to monitor and 'gate-keep' innovations and innovators, so as to maintain their own advantage and elite standing in the local community. While purely doctrinal questions are important, these sometimes take a subordinate position to the maintenance of the leader-follower relationship as such,

and in this sense the *guru* as broker is the voice of his constituents as well as the authoritarian bearer or interpreter of a tradition or orthodoxy.

NOTES

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1 The original Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua represented a conflict over questions of reformist versus traditionalist religious ideology and over the qualifications of contemporary religious authorities, including that of the sultans. Much of Kaum Muda influence came directly from the Middle East, especially via Arab and Indian traders and intellectuals active in the urban areas of Malaya.

2 While many of the secular functions of government and political decision-making were arrogated by the colonial authority, the British left control of 'Malay religion and custom' in the hands of traditional rulers or sultans. Each of the original nine Malay states retained its own sultan, who thus has ultimate jurisdiction in such matters within his territory.

3 Two of the present 11 states of West Malaysia, Malacca and Penang, due to their status as ex-Crown Colonies, have no sultans, and their religious councils are answerable directly to the King of Malaysia, who is one of the nine sultans elected by his peers for a five-year term on a rotation basis. In Kedah, the Council of Religious Affairs and Malay Customs was established in 1948, replacing an earlier personal advisor to the sultan or Sheikh Al-Islam (Othman Ishak 1979: 186).

4 The Hadith is a work documenting the sayings and acts of the Prophet, used by Muslims as a supplementary guide to behaviour where the Quran is silent or unclear.

5 Before Islamization of the Malay peninsula from the 15th and 16th centuries, the indigenous (Malay) population practised a variant of Indic (Hindu) religion, many of whose beliefs persist in contemporary Malaysian Islam.

6 Women also played an important role in traditional religious schools, by instructing the girl pupils separately, sometimes by cooking for them, and by washing female corpses according to Muslim rites.

7 Some *ulama* I knew had close ties of this kind with the royal family of the state of Perlis (immediately to the north of Kedah), although one or two others claimed that such endowments are undesirable, since they may involve the use of ill-gotten land for religious purposes.

8 In some cases, the costs of renting a *pondok* in the compound of a popular *guru* is substantial by Malay peasant standards, and may be as high as M$1,000 (c. £200) per year.

9 These cults have also increasingly come under the scrutiny and suspicion of the secular government, who view them as potential political forces and they are accordingly strongly criticized in the official media.

10 When the British returned to Malaya at the end of the second world war, a number of constitutional changes were proposed, among which was a more united form of political federation, and the granting of equal citizenship privileges to immigrant Chinese and Indians on a par with the indigenous Malays. It was this latter proposal which was so violently opposed by the *ulama* and other Malays.

11 On this occasion, a situation of generalized unrest united representatives of a peasantry suffering under high inflation, poor market commodity prices and near starvation, with a segment of an equally restless urban proletariat, and concerned students from all the universities in the country.

12 Not all *ulama* were official *imam*, but in practice many often did lead the prayer and deliver sermons. Traditional *imam* too were usually informal, locally created functionaries.

13 In fact, many *ulama*, who have themselves spent lengthy periods of time in the Middle East, often have a much more realistic view of Arabic customs which they illustrate through irreverent anecdotes.

14 One relatively sure road to social influence and acceptability in Malaysia is via the teacher role. Retired individuals and other professionals sometimes choose to establish private schools of their own, often as a form of status compensation where this is either lost or lacking in the first place. The combination of the appellation of respect for adults, with the first morpheme of the occupational title *guru*, viz. *cik'gu*, is the commonly used honorific to distinguish anyone with any claim to be a teacher, and may stand in place of the personal name.

15 It was even alleged that Darul Arqam teachers refused to allow the windows of the girls' classroom to remain open, despite Malaysia's tropical heat, and without benefit of fans, for fear of 'observation' by boys.

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CHAPTER SIX

A Revival in the Study of Islam in Malaysia

Shamsul A.B.

Judith Nagata's article on Islamic revival in Malaysia merits critical comment for a number of reasons. Firstly, its content shows a considerable degree of overlap with two previous articles which are not cited.[1] Secondly, it is surprising that she fails to cite any of the dozen or so publications and studies done by Malaysianists and Malaysian students before her on the *dakwah* movement or "Islamic revival". In view of the fact that she refers to several "peripheral studies", it is a matter of concern that she avoids those directly relevant to the topic under discussion (see references appended). Thirdly, she resorts to simplistic argument and strings together inaccurate data. This renders her analysis weak: in some places, elements of sensationalism and exaggeration reduce the value of her contribution.

In her earlier articles, Nagata describes the origins of "Islamic revival" in Malaysia, discusses the activities of important *dakwah* organizations, gives her views on the impact of *dakwah* on Malaysian society, and indicates its future directions. She argues that the emergence and consolidation of *dakwah* among the Muslim Malays, who constitute the largest ethnic group in the country, are directly related to wider unresolved ethnic conflicts over issues such as "language, youth, education, rural-urban imbalances and Malay identity and rights".[2] The various steps taken by the Malaysian government to redress these problems and "uplift" the lot of the Malays have, in fact, been seen by many Malays as undermining Malay unity and eroding what she calls their "elements of 'Malayness' – language and *adat*".

According to Nagata this situation has led to the creation of "a Malay

identity crisis". The section of the community supposedly most vocal in manifesting this "crisis" is the "young, well-educated, middle class ... and urban-based group of Malays".[3] Thus, Nagata argues, it is this particular section which has adopted the leading role in "returning to Islam" as a way of restoring Malay unity and integrity, and of providing the much-needed renewed sense of identity for Malays as a whole; hence she calls *dakwah* "the urban challenge". In a narrower context, such a strategy is also adopted by this section to serve as "an alternative form of gratification"[4] for its members' inability to move upwards through the ladder of mobility, due to the general impact of Malaysia's New Economic Policy. "Religious slogans and ideology," expressed within organized *dakwah* groups, are thus used to restore ethnic unity, and simultaneously, to express narrow sectional frustrations.

In several articles she describes the operation of the three major non-governmental *dakwah* organizations in Malaysia, *Jemaah Tabligh, Darul Arqam* and ABIM and touches briefly on the government-sponsored PERKIM. Nagata predicts that *dakwah* "has *yet* to become a future political force in its own right, ABIM's potential alliance with PAS could bring Islam to centre stage in party politics in the future"[5] (emphasis added). At the present level, according to Nagata, it is already challenging "traditional authority – parental, religious and political – in kampung, city and in the establishment generally, and has created its own new leaders and heroes". In her article in *Man* (reprinted in this book), Nagata highlights the urban-based *dakwah* challenge to rural-based traditional religious authority, represented by the *ulama* (traditional learned ones of Islam, not "religious specialists" as Nagata translated), in which the latter adopts "a strategy of accommodation" and hence preserve their legitimacy. She cites as examples events which have taken place in the Malaysian state of Kedah.

In essence, all Nagata's arguments rest on the assumption that there exists a problematic relationship between religion and politics within the Islamic tradition, generally, and in Malaysia, in particular, which results in one trying to displace the other.

This view emerges clearly in Nagata's handling of *dakwah* as a primarily "religious" phenomenon in the Malaysian setting. Furthermore the Malaysian context is compounded by the factor of ethnicity – a major theme of her earlier work. But rather than see the simultaneous political nature of *dakwah*, the "religious" movement, and the political implication of ethnic identity (which Nagata calls an "ideology" in only the conservative political science sense), Nagata chooses to explain

dakwah (as religion) primarily in terms of its implication in the ethnic sphere, and ethnicity for her takes on primarily religious overtones in terms of its identification. Because of the ethnic predominance in Malaysian society Nagata thus gets side-tracked into treating religion and ethnicity as mutually explanatory constructs, so much so that politics, considered as another discrete abstract construct, is not awarded a place in the initial analysis.

I would argue that in Islam religion and politics are not separate, they are one and the same, and the relationship between them, based on a notion of their prior separation, is not an issue; in fact it is a false problematic. This is amply demonstrated within the *dakwah* phenomenon in Malaysia which is both political and religious in its origins – in the way its message is disseminated, in the popularity it commands, in the kind of reactions (official and non-official) it attracts, and in its impact. It is not merely, as Nagata asserts, a reaction to the supposed Malay "crisis of ethnic identity". Rather, it is inextricably related to underlying class contradictions within Malaysian society in general and the Malay community in particular, a situation all too often obscured by overt ethnicity.

We can find many instances of this complex intertwining – it is Western terminology which sees them as separate – of religion and politics in Malaysian history, which Nagata only briefly and loosely alludes to. For example, during the pre-colonial era, Islam was the fundamental tool for the legitimation of the Malay chiefs' authority in setting themselves up as Sultans, each with his own empire. During the British period, Malay nationalism was triggered off and sustained by Islamic reformist ideals. Islam became the vehicle through which Malays in general challenged the British-controlled Malay aristocracy. Immediately after the Second World War, during the interregnum period of near anarchy, Islam was a crucial rallying factor in the formation of cult movements, for the self-protection of Malays against outside threats of physical violence. When Malaysia achieved her "independence", Islamic ideals found a new political platform in *Partai Islam*. As Malaysia moved into the 1970s, especially with the 13 May, 1969 racial riots and the introduction of the New Economic Policy, Islam, progressive as ever and within a redefined political scenario, re-emerged as a cohesive force orchestrating demands for political change, bringing together elites and mass elements, but taking an "apparently" apolitical form, namely, the *dakwah* movement. As Kessler has succinctly stated, "Islam has come [again] to serve as the ideology and mechanism of a popular

moral repudiation of the post-colonial state, for excluding rather than embodying the popular interests". And hence, he argues, through *dakwah* "popular energies and moral enthusiasm" are expressed, to a level "powerful enough ... for a government to want both to condemn and co-opt" it.[6]

It is clear that "Islamic revival" has occurred frequently in Malaysian history. In fact, it is a misnomer to call it "revivalism" when it occurs at such regular intervals. What is actually being revived here is, in effect, foreign scholars' interest in studying Islam, in Malaysia or elsewhere. This is a result of the global political environment which has increasingly focused attention on Islam, from the Middle East crisis in the mid-1960s, the oil crisis of the early 1970s (which shattered the myth of the economic invincibility of the Western powers) and the recent Iranian revolution. Since then not only academics but also the whole Western mass media have paid special attention to anything Islamic. Perhaps it could be said that Nagata's study is an example of this fashion.

However, it cannot be denied that there has always been a study of Islamic separatist movements and of the practice and theory of Islam, including focus on Southeast Asia. Such studies were not well publicized but nevertheless have received genuine academic recognition.

A major factual error is thus made by Nagata when she suggests, "that Malaysia is undergoing a *second* religious revival in the *dakwah* movement of the 1970s and 1980s" (my emphasis). As mentioned earlier and as Funston, the noted historian of Malay politics, also said, "Islamic revivalism" (for want of a better term) is not a new phenomenon in Malaysia, and he lists numerous examples.[7] Probably Nagata's mistake is a product of her token concern for Malaysian history, compounded further by inherent problems in her generally eclectic theoretical and methodological approaches. This generates further misrepresentations of reality and, in some cases, a tendency to draw upon irrelevant evidence in support of argument.

At the theoretical level, Nagata has never been comfortable with class analysis. In fact she dismisses the great utility and validity of the approach, choosing to view what happened within Malaysia in general, and within the Malay community in particular, as merely "an ethnic issue".[8]

The convenience with which she uses ethnic explanations, based mainly upon empirical observation, should have led her into "an analysis of the underlying structural forces which have pushed them into prominance".[9] Since Nagata is so obsessed with ethnicity (hence

her neglect of rigorous study of historical-structural aspects of Malaysian society), she fails to observe how, in societies like Malaysia which have been penetrated by capitalist forms of production and exchange, divisive categories such as ethnicity, race, gender, tribe and religious belief have functioned to obscure the prior fact of class relations created by colonial penetration. In fact, these categories have become most effective "ideologies" mobilized by the state to suppress potential class conflict in Malaysia.

Nagata fails to realize that not only has religion become an ideological tool in Malaysia but it functions in a parallel sense with ethnicity. In several articles she argues instead that religion is an ideology in the service of ethnicity, that is of Malays as an ethnic group. What I am arguing is how "ethnic factors" have "blurred and obscured" the class contradiction within the Malay community itself.[10] Thus the problem that the Malays are confronting now is not simply "an identity crisis" which led them to resort to religion, hence *dakwah*, as asserted by Nagata. It is a crisis in both the economic and political spheres, which finds popular expression in the ideological sphere.

It has been convincingly argued by many scholars that since Independence Malay bureaucrat capitalists have made serious attempts to establish themselves as the new national bourgeoisie, together with Chinese compradors and the international bourgeoisie, through various state ideological apparatuses.[11] Their initial attempt took the form of "primitive" state capitalism before 1969 and developed into a fully-fledged one after 1971 (following the implementation of the New Economic Policy and other policies). Here is a classic case whereby bureaucrat capitalists, working through the state, attempt to establish themselves as a national bourgeoisie, almost the reverse of the Indian case.

This attempt was by no means an easy one. Class oppositions from all sections of Malaysian society, especially from other Malays, were expressed in various incidents. Draconian laws were introduced or reinforced to suppress this opposition in the political sphere. With the growing political impotence of *Partai Islam* the popular idealism interests and dissenting nationalist traditions of the Malays found a new and less direct method of expression in *dakwah* – the controversial and much misunderstood movement of the 1970s.

The main protagonists of this movement in its early stages were Malay university students. They were drawn out of Malay peasant society and plunged into the unfamiliar urban, bureaucratic environment. They

found *dakwah* to be strongly appealing, first in providing reassurance in the "confused" and "disorienting" urban milieu, and secondly as an important parapolitical outlet, which Kessler aptly describes as "one that government is reluctant to choke off too clumsily or abruptly and which therefore enjoys a certain immunity".[12]

Contrary to Nagata's suggestion in several academic articles, the main external link of this *dakwah* movement (especially the stream which was initiated by these students and later became ABIM), was not with Egypt, India, Libya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia or Iran; it was with Indonesia.[13] This conclusion is only logical because, as Nagata herself has mentioned, the students who were involved in *dakwah* were mainly Malay-educated, did not read English and were ambivalent about Western education. They read mostly Indonesian books on Islam, and had dialogues with their Indonesian counterparts, from Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI), and with the *ulama*. In fact between 1971–73 there were a number of "special *dakwah* courses" organized by the Malaysian Islamic Students National Association with the help of their Indonesian colleagues. Some were conducted in Malaysia by the Indonesians, and a few groups, consisting mainly of potential leaders, went to Indonesia to attend courses of one month's duration (I had the opportunity to participate in one of the latter).

The Pakistan, Libya, India, Saudi Arabia and Iran connection became important to the Malays in 1974 when Malaysia began sending its first batch of government-sponsored students to English-speaking countries overseas – England, U.S.A., Australia – to matriculate, then enrol for degree courses. It was through these students, hundreds of whom became involved in *dakwah*, that books on Islam in English by Pakistanis, Indians, etc. became popular.

In the light of this chronology, it appears that Nagata's inaccurate facts have wrongly guided parts of her analysis on the origins and activities of ABIM, and also her conclusion regarding the external influences within the *dakwah* movement in Malaysia. She has totally neglected the "Indonesian connection" and thus has failed to consider the crucial role of this source of influence in shaping the *dakwah* movement in Malaysia.

Nagata also seriously misrepresents reality when she argues that "the young, middle-class, highly educated and urban-based group of Malays" have "turned to Islam as an alternative form of gratification" because of limited access to opportunities for social mobility. Nagata mentions that the New Economic Policy has brought about many advantages to middle-class Malays, but not necessarily to the lot of lower-class Malays.

In fact studies by Snodgrass (1981) and Lim (1981) have shown that job opportunities are plentiful, especially in the private sector, for young Malay graduates to take advantage of, although the government public service, usually the main job-provider for this group, has now dramatically reduced the intake of new civil servants. The chances are many for this group of young, educated Malays to get jobs which could ultimately facilitate their upward mobility. Despite this, some still choose not to take advantage of these opportunities and prefer to run their own private schools, as Nagata has mentioned. She also says that many young Malays who once had cosy jobs threw them away to join the *dakwah* movement. These contradictory assertions are not only puzzling, but also give the impression that Nagata has carved out a problem from a "reality" which does not exist.

The other point to clarify concerns the *dakwah* challenge to the *ulama*. Nagata argues that *dakwah* missionaries currently preaching in the countryside pose a new challenge to the authority of the *ulama*. While the urban-based *dakwah* movement has had an impact in the rural areas, I would argue, from my field research in a Malaysian district and from previous detailed studies that it does not pose a challenge to their authority of the magnitude mentioned by Nagata. On the contrary, the real challenge faced by the *ulama* comes from the present system of Islamic administration in each state. For example, the teaching of Islam is prohibited for any person other than those with official certification from the State Religious Department. Furthermore, it is no longer possible for any *alim* (pl. *ulama*) to deliver *kutbah* (sermons) to Friday prayers. Only mosque officials sanctioned by the State Religious Department may deliver *kutbah*, and the sermons are prepared by the Department.

In short, what was once the central domain of the rural *ulama* has now been highly bureaucratized and taken over the state, thus undermining their religious authority to a great extent. Although there are groups of young *dakwah* missionaries trying to make inroads into the rural areas, they have not posed a challenge of equal intensity to that of the state bureaucracy. Hence, Nagata not only inflates the importance of *dakwah* in challenging rural religious authority, but fails to mention its most crucial source of opposition to date.

In view of the fact that she has now assumed the status of "expert" on Malaysian affairs, it is imperative for Nagata to re-examine her perceptions of Malaysian society in general and of *dakwah* in particular. I do consider some of her early work to be useful in broadening our

understanding of some aspects of Malaysian life. But lately I detect signs of over-zealousness on her part. Let us hope that henceforth she does not sacrifice academic rigour for the sake of enterprising vigour. We still need her future contributions.

NOTES

1 Judith Nagata "The New Fundamentalism: Islam in Contemporary Malaysia" *Asian Thought and Society* Vol 5, 1980 pp 128–141. See also Nagata's "Religious Ideology and Social Change: The Islamic Revival in Malaysia" *Pacific Affairs* Vol 53 1980 pp 405–439.

2 Nagata "Religious Ideology ..." pp 438–439.

3 Nagata "The New Fundamentalism ..." p 140 and Nagata "Religious Ideology ..." p. 438.

4 Nagata "The New Fundamentalism ..." p 130.

5 Nagata "Religious Ideology ..." pp 438–439.

6 Kessler, C.S. "Malaysia: Islamic Revivalism and Political Disaffection in a Divided Society." *Southeast Asian Chronicle* Vol 75 1980 pp 10–11.

7 Funston, J.N. *Malay Politics in Malaysia: A Study of PAS and UMNO* (Heinemann, Kuala Lumpur, 1981) p 186.

8 Nagata "Religious Ideology ..." pp 437–438.

9 Smith, W. A. "Japanese Investment in Malaysia: Ethnicity as a Management Ideology" Paper presented at the Third Colloquium of Malaysia Society, ASAA, University of Adelaide, Australia, 1981 p. 1.

10 See especially Stenson, M.R. "Class and Race in Malaysia" *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* Vol 8 1976 pp 45–54; Jomo K.S. "Class Formation in Malaysia" PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1977, and Lim Mah Hui, 'Ethnic and Class Relations in Malaysia" *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol 10, 1980 pp 130–154.

11 Ibid. Se also Caldwell, M and M Amin *Malaya: The Making of a Neo-Colony* (Spokesman, London 1977); and Chandra Muzaffar *Protector?* (Aliran, Penang 1979).

12 Kessler "Malaysia: Islamic Revivalism and Dissatisplaction in a Divided Society" *Southeast Asian Chronicle* Vol 75 1980 p 9.

13 Mohamad Ali Saripan "Dakwah Islamiah di Pusat Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia" (Islamic Dakwah in institutions of Higher Learning in Malaysia) BA thesis Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia: Hussein Mutalib "Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia – the Middle East and Indonesian Connection" Paper presented at the Third Colloquium of Malaysia Society, ASAA, University of Adelaide, Australia 1981.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Islam in Malaysia: A Rejoinder

Judith Nagata

The comments from Shamsul Amri Baharuddin on my interpretations of the religious scene in Malaysia propel me into making a rejoinder. I shall resist the temptation to match his own polemical tone, and confine myself to a number of the more important points of fact and interpretation.

First, on the assumption that Shamsul's rather impulsive statement was ostensibly triggered by my article in *Man* (reprinted in this book), which claimed only to deal with one relatively limited aspect of the recent Islamic revival, most of the "omissions" and curtailments of background material to which he refers were considered beyond the pale of that particular paper. It is generally understood that this kind of article in academic journals requires restraint and compression in matters of detail, and indeed (regrettably) imposes the need for a somewhat arbitrary "cut-off" point. Likewise, the list of "references cited" follows similar rules, that is, they are limited to those mentioned in the text by name, and are never intended to constitute a complete bibliography of the subject. To take the latter first, I am aware of, and have read and used most of those "omitted" items to which Shamsul draws our attention, but did not make direct use of them in the article.

It seems apparent that part of the "problem" lies in my having written a different kind of article from that which Shamsul himself would like to have written – and he has kindly proceeded to provide his contribution anyway. In other words, this is an opportunity to gain a forum in *Man* for all his views on the entire contemporary Malaysian scene, drawing in issues far beyond those legitimately arising from my

Man article alone.

Since Shamsul has taken it upon himself to raise other issues and much of my other publications for good measure (in places other than *Man*), I shall respond to some of these in turn.

First (and this was underplayed in my 1981 article), the question of the role of politics and power in Islam generally is a crucial one, but one that I did illustrate in my *Pacific Affairs* paper (1980), which curiously Shamsul feels *overlaps* with *Man* paper. This whole theme is developed in even greater detail in my forthcoming book (University of British Columbia Press), where I finally have space to cover such problems fully. Given the fact that Islam is essentially political and a "way of life" (*al-Din*), it not surprisingly reflects the power relations in the local community and, in Malaysia, it so happens that the local community (at all levels) is deeply riven by ethnic divisions which fuel the rhetoric of both "religious" and "political" discourse, from elections to economic policies. In my forthcoming book, I pay substantial attention to the political background and social consciousness of the *dakwah* movements, ABIM, Darul Arqam and Tabligh, and the dialectic of their relations with the state and federal political regimes. Here too, I place the *ulama* in a broader historical and political context, and illustrate in some detail the pressures on their freedom of action and authority from state religious councils, federal bureaucrats and royal religious powers (all of which are also mentioned in the *Man* piece).

On the topic of ethnic cleavages, I maintain that these persist, in addition to inequalities by "class", and they continue to obscure any burgeoning sense of class consciousness or conflict. Indeed, if Shamsul reads carefully my "Perceptions of social inequality in Malaysia" of 1976, he will find that I make precisely this point. People do recognize class/status inequalities, but their perceptions tend to run along the more familiar ethnic grooves, and this has long been encouraged by officialdom (colonial and recent). Such politically inspired sentiments have the effect too of muting intra-ethnic inequalities in the popular mind. For the researcher and academic, familiar with social science and other jargon from the West (such as Shamsul and myself), additional infrastructural components of such inequalities and dissatisfactions may be apparent as I made clear in the 1976 article and elsewhere. Here, Shamsul missed the point, and has confused his roles as anthropologist and as member of the local society. Thus I have never denied any awareness of social inequities on the part of Malaysians, but I see no reason to subscribe to the "zero-sum" view that more awareness of other

kinds of inequities necessarily means less ethnic sentiment or friction. The very political process he accuses me of neglecting promotes this, notably in its politico-religious electioneering rhetoric known locally as *kafir-mengafir*. The ongoing debate as to the relationship and interaction between ethnic and class formations, and of their perceptions in the public mind continues to pervade scholarly circles at large, including those among Malaysianists. It should be noted that other Malaysian writers tend to follow interpretations more similar to my own, e.g. Chandra Muzaffar (1979; 1983), Sanusi Osman (1983) and Milne and Mauzy (1980), to name a few. A partial reconciliation of the two approaches may possibly be achieved if we accept that class relations are ultimately determined by relations of power, and not just (economic) production, and that in Malaysia, differential powers are accorded to the principal ethnic communities by constitutional fiat.

The broad sweep of Malay/Muslim history does reveal, as Shamsul correctly observes, that religious revivals are not new to the Malay peninsula. The present one, however, *is* the second major period of flowering and largescale revitalization in the more recent colonial/post-colonial period (the first being the Kaum Muda), as opposed to the independent eruption of individual and more idiosyncratic localized cults, such as the Sufi cults, in separate areas. Again, I have tried to draw together episodes in a longer historical perspective in my forthcoming book, which explicitly develops a theme of greater continuity over a period of several centuries. Here too I give the "Indonesian connection" its due.

The range of topics raised by Shamsul clearly exceed the purview of my original *Man* article, and he has taken the liberty of roaming over the entire Malaysian social field, something which I have tried to tackle more fully in the manuscript now in press. I trust that it will clarify some of the questions at issue, although where it is a matter of interpretation in such areas as the perception of inequality, Shamsul and I may continue to differ; but that is the prerogative of scholars.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Judith Nagata's book *The Reflowing of Malaysian Islam: Religious Radicals and their Roots* was published by the University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, in 1984.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Islamic Resurgence[1]: A Global View (with Illustrations from Southeast Asia)

Chandra Muzaffar

To start with, there is perhaps a need to explain why I am using the term "resurgence" – and not "re-assertion" or "revivalism" which are also in vogue.

Resurgence which the dictionary defines as "the act of rising again" has a number of strong points. First, it is in a sense a view from within, a way in which many Muslims themselves see the growing impact of the religion among its adherents. It conveys the impression that Islam is becoming important again, that it is regaining its prestige and self-respect. Second, "rising again" suggests a phenomenon which has happened before. There is a hint that there are elements in the present rise of Islam which are linked to the past. And indeed, the past glory of Islam – the cherished path trodden by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions – exerts considerable influence upon the thinking of those who are committed to the "Islamic way of life" today. Third, resurgence as a term embodies the notion of a challenge, even a threat to those who adhere to other world-views. Many Muslims themselves would regard the espousal of an Islamic alternative as a challenge to the dominant social systems. Groups outside Islam, including those who are being challenged, would similarly perceive the rise of Islam as a threat to the positions they hold. For that reason, resurgence reflects the actual reality of perceptions on both sides.

"Islamic re-assertion",[2] terminologically speaking, has many of the same advantages. However, it does not convey the idea of a challenge to existing social arrangements. It does not even come close to suggesting that dominant paradigms are being questioned. It merely connotes

insistence, insistence upon one's cause, one's position. It is essentially a positive statement, a declaration. But the Islamic movement, as we shall show in a while, is more than that.

"Revivalism" on the other hand, brings out clearly the idea of returning to the past. But it also suggests a desire to revive what is antiquated. While this may be true of certain segments of the Islamic movement, it certainly does not represent the outlook of the movement as a whole which would insist that its emphasis upon the Quran and the Sunah (the way of the Prophet) is merely loyalty to perennial, eternal values.

For all these reasons then the term "Islamic resurgence" is preferred. But before we begin to analyse Islamic resurgence as a social phenomenon, there are certain clarifications that have to be made. The phenomenon we are about to study is not as recent as some would like to think. It can be argued that the rise of Islam began more than 200 years ago, after centuries of stagnation. It is associated with names such as Muhammad ibn Abd. al-Wahab of Saudi Arabia in the 18th century (the founder of the Wahabi movement), Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Sanusi of Algeria in the 19th century (the founder of the Sanusiyyah movement), Jamal al-Din al-Afghani in the 19th century, Muhammad Abduh of Egypt in the 19th century, Zia Gokalp of Turkey in the early 20th century, Mulla Hadi Sabziwari of Iran of the early 19th century and Shah Wali Allah Dihawi of India of the 18th century. Though there were significant ideological differences between, say al-Wahab and al-Sanusi on the one hand, with their emphasis upon conservative purity, and al-Afghani and Shah Wali Allah on the other, with their commitment to progressive reinterpretation of Islam in the light of reason and knowledge, all these great personalities of what has been called the Islamic renaissance were equally dedicated to restoring the greatness of their religion.[3]

Here in Southeast Asia, the early 20th century witnessed the emergence of Islamic intellectuals like Daud Patani, Tok Kenali, Sayyid Syaikh al-hadi and Tahir Jallaluddin who, though lesser lights compared to the illustrious thinkers of the Middle-east and the Indian sub-continent, were nonetheless distinguished pioneers of a more reformist approach to Islamic laws and concepts. As far as Malaysia in particular is concerned, they were in fact the first resurgents to call for a return to the Quran and the Sunah.

What distinguished these early resurgents from their present-day counterparts was mainly the environments in which the two respective

generations operated. The writings and activities of most of the leading personalities in the first generation were directed towards colonial political and constitutional dominance and how it affected Muslim identity and the Muslim struggle for independence. For the present generation, its main concern is not just the Western-controlled international system but also the domestic situation in post-independence societies beset with overwhelming challenges in almost every sphere of human activity. Islamic resurgence in the second phase then is deeply involved in the whole question of the character and direction of Muslim societies.

It is precisely because we are dealing with the character of a variety of Muslim societies that any attempt at presenting a global view sets its own limitation. The high level of generalization which is inevitable in an essay of this sort is bound to do some injustice to specific contexts and situations. Indeed, even within regions some of the arguments may not hold. For example, Islamic resurgence in Indonesia appears to be much more concerned with issues of poverty, income disparities and economic exploitation[4] than Islamic resurgence in Malaysia which seems to be more involved in the question of identity and the symbols and rituals which help define it. Similarly, Islamic consciousness in two Muslim minority communities in the region may express itself in very different ways. In South Thailand it is on the whole ideologically conservative while in the Southern Philippines it tends to be more radical. It shows that Islamic resurgence is conditioned to a great extent by history, the political culture and the local economic and ethnic milieu.

What makes it more complicated is that in Southeast Asia as elsewhere, the movement is in a state of flux. It is simply impossible to provide precise answers to many of the crucial issues involved in its growth. All that I will attempt to do is to suggest some tentative responses to what I regard as the five basic questions associated with this resurgence. First, who are the initiators and participants in this resurgence? Second, what are its dominant intellectual characteristics? Third, what are the factors responsible for its emergence? Fourth, what are the reactions to it? Fifth, what is its significance to Islam and civilization as a whole?

INITIATORS AND PARTICIPANTS

There is a tendency in the West in particular to view Islamic resurgence as a return to religious faith, to belief in God and the hereafter.

It is equated for instance with the way in which atheists and agnostics sometimes rediscover God through Christ. What is happening within the Muslim world is quite different. Muslims had never really ceased to believe in God. Even urbanized, Westernized elites who maybe negligent of their religious duties like praying regularly or fasting and may have violated rules on alcohol or gambling somehow retain their belief in God. Why this is so will be explained later. For the time being let us remember that the atheism which is widely professed among urban, educated elites in Western society has no parallel in Islam. Thus Islamic resurgence has nothing to do with restoration of faith as such. It is rather an endeavour to adjust to what is perceived as Islamic behaviour, to adhere to certain Islamic attitudes and practices, to advance an Islamic world-view.

Given the pervasive influence of Western life-styles in the post-colonial cities of the Third World, Islamic resurgence which in one sense is a reaction to this, is closely linked to urban centres rather than the rural areas where the majority of Muslims live. Its geographical and demographic impact is therefore more confined than is generally thought. Within these urban centres it is only a segment of the population that is actively or passively involved in this movement.

This does not mean, however, that Islamic resurgence has not seeped into rural localities. There is some evidence to show that in rural parts of South Thailand, Sumatra and Northeast and Northwest Malaysia young village women are becoming more conscious of what is perceived as Islamic attire. But even in these cases, it is not inconceivable that the influence is via urban centres, especially since there is so much interaction between these two sectors of society. Teachers in rural schools who have graduated from universities in the cities are among the most active agents of this change in habits and life-styles.

And within the Islamic segment in the cities, three inter-related groups can be identified. The most significant of them is made up of young, middle-class elements with incomes and occupations that are reasonably comfortable. Educated in a secular[4] school system with rudimentary exposure to religious knowledge, these elements have on their own sought out Islamic norms and values as an alternative way of life. The underlying reasons for this will become clear in a while.

A much smaller group which has also played an important role in the resurgence comprises teachers and civil servants with a strong background in traditional Islamic education. In countries like Indonesia, Pakistan and Egypt the struggle for nationhood brought this group to

the forefront. Though economic and administrative structures in the post-independence period failed to accord sufficient recognition to be members of this group they have nonetheless succeeded in carving out significant roles for themselves in the political and cultural life of these countries. Indeed, the secular ruling elites in many Muslim countries have been compelled by events to accommodate some of their aspirations if only because of the real and potential influence they exercise over the masses.

The third group is numerically much larger than the other two groups though its actual power has yet to be realized. This group is from the urban working-class. With low incomes and little formal education, whether secular or religious, these workers in firms, factories and government offices are to some extent newcomers to the environment. Their consciousness of Islamic practices has now begun to assume a manifest form compared to its latent nature in their traditional rural communities.

How these three groups interact is worth reflecting upon. Islamic politics in Malaysia affords, some illustration. In the leadership of the Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement (ABIM), the first group is significant though there are elements of the second too. From time to time, there is some uneasiness in the relations between the two which is linked to how much knowledge of Islam each commands and how "Islamic" or "secular" each group is both in terms of personal behaviour and public roles. The present leadership of the Islamic party of Malaysia (PAS) however is dominated more by the second group and this could well condition its view of ABIM and of elements from the first group on The United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and governors espousing the Islamic ideology. The first group – rather than the second group – at the moment appears to have much more influence over the third group partly because it is more capable of articulating issues of direct relevance to the third group, especially those that pertain to the urban socio-economic environment.

INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Having looked at the groups associated with the movement, I shall now examine its intellectual characteristics. As we have already noted, there is tremendous intellectual heterogeneity conditioned by varying structures and experiences. Therefore, for this reason any generalization should be treated with some caution. Nonetheless a cursory analysis of Islamic movements in places as removed from one another as Kuala

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Lumpur and Istanbul seem to reveal certain common characteristics. It is even possible to identify both a dominant and a subordinate intellectual trend in this resurgence.

The one outstanding characteristic of the dominant trend is its fervent belief that society should be organized on the basis of the Quran and the Sunah (the way of the Prophet Muhammad – May Peace be upon Him). This means that the values, principles, rules and regulations contained in the Quran and the Sunah should be upheld in the political, economic, cultural, educational, legal and administrative spheres. Fundamental to this belief is an explicit recognition that the Quran and Sunah lay out a complete way of life whose sanctity and purity should not be tarnished by new interpretations influenced by time and circumstance. New ideas and institutions are acceptable as long as this supreme principle is not compromised in any manner.

At a more specific level, this outlook on Islam has expressed itself in a number of ways. It is perhaps most obvious in the rejection of old habits such as gambling or consuming alcohol or frequenting night-clubs and in the acquisition of new attitudes which could stretch from faithful observance of daily prayers to dressing in proper Islamic attire.

While female attire in particular tends to catch the eye of both Muslims and non-Muslims and for that reason is given exaggerated emphasis as evidence of a "return to Islamic living", the more subtle changes in conduct and behaviour are seldom observed. A more restrained attitude towards the opposite sex is, for instance, one of those transformations which accompany this new outlook.

Specific attitudes in politics, economics, culture and in other areas of public life brought about by an Islamic consciousness have also passed unnoticed. It is only the insistence upon certain modes of punishment for certain types of crimes – the cutting off the hands of the thief is an illustrious example – which have received maximum publicity in the Western press. It would be only fair if the advocacy of greater political freedom, of more widespread consultation between leaders and masses is also accorded some attention. Similarly, the opposition to interest in the banking system and the commitment to the rights of non-Muslim minorities, including their right to equal treatment in matters of social justice, should also be viewed as legitimate aspects of the Islamic resurgence. In fact, some of the more profound elements in this resurgence have called for the establishment of an education system directed towards the creation of ethical human beings as an alternative to the functional, utilitarian type of education available in most Muslim coun-

tries.

Indeed, the initiators and participants in the dominant trend of this movement have been vehement critics of Western civilization. They argue that the secularization of life, the subversion of eternal values, the pervasive growth of materialism are all indications that Western civilization, which has long been in a state of crisis, is on the verge of collapse. Invariably, they point to increasing crime and divorce rates, juvenile delinquency and suicides as symptoms of a deeper malaise. This is why, they further argue, Western civilization has to be rejected. Though some of them will be willing to accept the West's achievements in science and technology, all of them agreed that the concept of development associated with Western civilization is inimical to the interests of the Muslim world. Their basic thesis is that Western models of growth and social change negate man. They subordinate the human being to materialistic goals and desires.

The dethronement of the West as a civilization worthy of emulation and the importance of returning to the Quran and Sunah are ideas which have gained tremendous popularity among Muslim youths, in particular in the last decade or so. The writings of Maudoodi from Pakistan and other lesser known personalities like Hassan Nadvi and Khurshid Ahmad have contributed towards the growth of this awareness in South and Southeast Asia. In the Middle-East, on the other hand, Hassan al-Banna, Syed Kotb, Muhammad Qutb, and others associated with the Ikhwan-ul-Muslimin (Muslim brotherhood) would figure prominently as proponents of this approach to Islam. At the philosophical level – in contrast to popular propaganda – the works of Hussein Nasr have been specially significant in providing a certain degree of intellectual credence to this trend in Islamic resurgence.

The subordinate trend stands in symbiotic relationship to the dominant trend in resurgent Islam. It shares many of the features of the dominant trend including its emphasis upon the Quran and Sunah and its rejection of Western civilization except that it gives much more importance to the underlying values and principles in Islam. Consequently, the philosophical premises upon which the Quran, for instance, is founded emerge as the crux and core of the religion. It interprets the equality of the sexes, the need to abolish social dichotomies and the significance of the unity of mankind in a much more comprehensive manner than the dominant trend is inclined to. Also, it extends its vision of social reconstruction beyond the eradication of social injustices within a particular community to include the transformation of the

international social order. As a result, economic imperialism with all its attendant evils is also subjected to some scrutiny. Elements of this approach to Islam can be found in the writings of Ali Shariati whose essay on the *Philosophy of Tauhid* (oneness of God) is an example of the emphasis upon the underlying principle, the inner meaning of the Quran. The writings of the Egyptian philosopher Hassan Hanafi should also be included in this category.[5] They are beginning to make some inroads among Indonesian groups.

In fact, in Indonesia it is now possible to talk of a cogent subordinate trend which is philosophically more wholistic and sociologically more progressive than the dominant trend. In Malaysia, on the other hand, a subordinate trend of that sort does not exist.

There are reasons for this. The precarious ethnic balance between Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia, and the accompanying emphasis upon ethnic solidarity has expectedly given rise to a conservative Islamic ideology which does not provide any room for a progressive alternative. In Indonesia, the Muslim community, which is nominally at least 90 per cent of the population, feels much more secure. Besides, a tradition of examining and evaluating Islamic teachings had developed during the Dutch Colonial period itself partly because the colonial administration through its policies directly challenged the position of Islam in Indonesia. The British attitude to Islam was quite different. They chose to leave it alone most of the time. If anything, by placing Islam under the authority of the Sultans, both the British and the monarchs ensured that the religion would remain a conservative force. Also, Malay society did not experience the sort of changes in the class structure which would have provided the basis for a more progressive interpretation of Islam.

In Indonesia, a middle-class seeking legitimacy in new values derived from democracy and socialism, and through them establishing linkages with a more contemporary and less orthodox version of Islam, had begun to challenge the traditional structure during the nationalist struggle. It is a pity, in this connection, that in Malaysia the emergence of a Malay middle-class in the post-independence decades has not brought about a similar development. This is partly because this new class derives both its strength and its world-view from an all-pervasive culture of ethnicity. Since a subordinate trend will have to challenge this culture, it cannot strike root.

GENERAL CAUSES

This analysis of the intellectual characteristics of Islamic resurgence has, in a sense, given us some idea of the factors responsible for the growth of this movement. Without any doubt at all, disillusionment with Western civilization is one of the reasons, though it is certainly not the most important. As we have seen, this disillusionment is the product of a conviction that Western civilization has failed humanity. It has contributed directly to the quest for an alternative which, in the opinion of the participants in this resurgence, is more real and genuine because it is based upon Divine revelation.

This disillusionment with the West represents a significant shift in attitude for the Muslim world as a whole. When Muslims first began to react to Western domination during the colonial era, they showed two distinct tendencies. Among some there was a desire to absorb all that was good from the West, including its political ideas, its economic organization; education system and technology while retaining Islam mainly in the form of rituals and rules of personal conduct. It was the opinion of the advocates of this position that Western civilization was a great blessing to mankind, and colonial rule – its unsavoury aspects aside – at least enabled Muslim societies to come into contact with a magnificent tradition. After all Islam, it was said, encouraged modernization which was the essence of Western civilization. Syed Ahmad Khan of India espoused this view in some of his writings. So did Taha Husayn of Egypt.

Others, however, argued that many of important ideas and practices of the West were already in Islam. Democracy, socialism, science, reason – were all part of Islam. There was therefore no question of imitating the West. What was urgently required was a reinterpretation of Islam in accordance with these ideas and practices from the West. Tjkroaminoto, the Indonesian nationalist, for instance, was of the view that both democracy and socialism were integral to the Qurannic tradition. He linked the prohibition of usury (*riba*) to the theory surplus of value. Muhammad Iqbal too suggested that socialist principles of equality and justice could be found in Islam. He, like the famous Syed Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, spoke of an "Islamic socialism". Al-Afghani was also a firm believer in the importance of imbibing the modern sciences which had developed in the West. His disciple, Muhammad Abduh, the Egyptian philosopher, was keen on establishing that reason and rationality as understood in the Western intellectual tradition were highly regarded

in Islam. There were others too who tried to show that what they perceived as the positive side of the West was not alien to Islam.[6]

If one had to explain this attitude one could perhaps attribute it to a certain degree of awe of the West among the Muslims at that point in time, especially in the case of those associated with the first reaction. As a subjugated people, the Muslims – like others in similar positions – could not help but admire their colonial overlord. Even after independence, for a decade or two, Western social systems and Western ideologies had a mesmerizing effect upon the former colonies, especially since many of them were then unaware of the need to revolt against the continuing economic and cultural domination of the West. Young Muslims who studied in the West or those who attended Western-type educational institutions in their own countries contributed in no small measure towards the perpetuation of this image as soon as they joined the elite-stratum of society.

However all this began to change with changes in the West. As its crisis of values became more and more apparent, as liberal-capitalism, democratic socialism and Marxist socialism – ideologies spawned in the West – found it increasingly difficult to cope with the problems of post-industrial society, the Muslim nations of the Third World began to wonder whether they should proceed along the same path of development. This new perception of the West, reinforced by an increasing consciousness of their economic and cultural rights, has endowed the Muslims with a sense of identity which was absent in the colonial past. Unlike their predecessors, Muslims studying in the West today are not enamoured by a civilization which appears to be aimless and uncertain.[7] Hence, the clarion call for a new Islamic order.

There is, however, a more important reason. Because most Muslim states had, at the time of independence, opted for some variety or other of socialism, with a few choosing a modified form of capitalism, it became apparent that sooner or later the performance of these ideologies would be judged critically. The failure of elites operating these ideologies to overcome problems related to poverty, widening social disparities, economic exploitation, political oppression, corruption, social greed and ethnic tensions has convinced Islamic elements that capitalism and socialism are incapable of meeting the challenges confronting developing societies. Of course, it can be argued with some justification that it is not fair to condemn an ideology on account of the ineptness of its operators. Nonetheless, this is how it is perceived – by young Muslims in particular.

Socialism, partly because it is more widespread, has been the special target of Islamic resurgence. This is why in recent years, Arab Socialism and Baathist Socialism in the Middle-East have come under vigorous criticism, just as Socialism in Pakistan is on the wane. Even in secularized Turkey, democratic socialism is being compelled to defend its ideas against the onslaught of Islam. There are certain elements in the theory and practice of socialism in the Muslim world which make it particularly susceptible to criticisms from the dominant trend in Islamic resurgence. First, for all the efforts of Muslim socialists to distinguish their brand of socialism from the type of Marxist socialism which denies the transcendental dimension in human existence, Islamic critics have somehow managed to persuade a portion of the populace that socialism is a Godless philosophy. Second, in most of the so-called socialist states in the Muslim world there is heavy concentration of power in the hands of a small number of elites. This is usually accompanied by political repression. Since Islamic groups have been among the victims of this repression – the Ikhwan-ul Muslimin in Nasser's Egypt for instance – their antagonism towards socialist regimes is all the greater. It is significant that capitalism, which betrays many of the values of justice and compassion that are highly cherished in Islam and is equally guilty of political repression, has never been subjected to the same degree of harsh criticism by some of the leading lights of the resurgent movement like Maudoodi. I shall try to explain this towards the end of this essay.

For the time being, we shall turn to the third reason for Islamic resurgence. It is not just their ideologies but the very life-styles of Muslim elites which have prompted Islamic-minded youths to turn to their religion for inspiration. Muslim elites, like many other third world elites, whatever their ideologies, are often distinguished by their extravagence, lavishness and conspicuous consumption. This is especially true of many of those who rule oil-rich states, though it is by no means confined to them. The situation has prompted Islamic groups to conclude that the real reason why Muslim elites are capable of living in style in the midst of squalor and neglect is because they are estranged from their religion. They lead lives divorced from Islamic values of moderation and simplicity. They have become materialistic because they are no longer governed by spiritual considerations. Invariably, their materialism is linked to the ideologies they profess and the culture they seek to emulate – at least as far as their Islamic critics are concerned.

Thus, the life-styles of Muslim elites, socialism and capitalism and

Western civilization are all interrelated. Of the three factors it is perhaps the life-style of the elites that has had the greatest impact upon the Muslim mind. It provides "tangible proof" to the masses of the "evil" of Western civilization and foreign ideologies. It is something that is easily understood by ordinary people. For it is expressed at the level of the houses the elites own, the cars they drive, the clothes they wear, the food they eat, the parties they attend. True or not, tales about these elites are almost always interwoven with lurid lore about their decadent habits with the emphasis upon their sexual misdemeanours. That is why, if Islamic groups opposed to existing regimes ever succeed to mobilize the people on behalf of their pure, puritannical concept of Islam, it would have been partly because of their condemnation of the alleged moral decadence, the materialistic life-style of the elites. This is an issue that has much potential mass appeal.

Indeed, one should expect Islamic groups to use such issues. For the desire to gain political power is also one of the factors that has helped propel the movement. In order to understand this, one has to analyse one of the most significant sociological phenomena in Third World societies in the post-independence period – the expansion of the middle class. As the middle-class expands through the universalization of education and economic development, the accommodation of new entrants within the arena of establishment politics becomes more and more difficult. This is because the political arena, especially for those who are interested in leadership roles associated with the establishment, does not offer many opportunities. Middle-class types expect to lead; yet the apex cannot hold all of them. And so a segment of the middle-class becomes the opposition. In a sense, this process has taken place in a number of countries both developed and developing. In Britain, a portion of the expanding middle-class, with expectations of power and influence, became the opposition from the early part of this country. This fragmentation of the middle-class has also occurred in India, Indonesia, and Egypt. It is beginning to happen in Malaysia.

In the case of most Muslim countries, the opposition that emerges from middle-class fragmentation often turns to Islam as its ideology. Islam in that sense serves as a vehicle for the pursuit of its political aims. Islam becomes a conduit in the quest for political power. This is one way of interpreting the role of the *Jamaat-I-Islami* in Pakistan or *Ikhwan-ul-Muslimin* in Egypt. Muslim political parties in Indonesia in the fifties and early sixties like the *Masjumi* and the *Nahdatul Ulama* could also be included in the same category. If anything, the manoeuvres

and manipulations of some of these parties, and their readiness to separate means from ends dictated by their interests, further establishes that in reality political power precedes ethical principles in their calculations.

It must be stressed, however, that by suggesting that Islam may be used as an avenue for achieving power, one is not denying the idealistic aspects of the resurgence which have already been noted. Nonetheless, it is only right that attention is given to some of the less altruistic considerations which tend to shape the tone and texture of most social movements.

In a sense, the political goals of the Islamic segment of the middle-class have, in recent years, been reinforced considerably by yet another sociological development. This is the rural-urban drift, an outstanding feature of most Third World societies. Unlike earlier settled groups in urban centres, these recent migrants have different psychological traits. They come from traditional communities where religion is the most significant thread in the social fabric. The urban centres that they come to, especially the post-colonial cities, have seen some secularization of life. There is, therefore, a serious cultural dichotomy with which they have to contend. Often, these migrants take on very poor jobs in settings where the display of wealth and affluence is quite stark, especially when compared to rural localities with which they are familiar. This is also bound to affect their perceptions. Most of all, the migrants, for a while at least, are completely lost and uprooted in their new environment, bereft of all the traditional support which had made life secure in the past.

It is this insecurity that sometimes persuades a migrant to seek psychological comfort in a religious movement. Islamic resurgence, which emphasizes a Muslim identity in the face of the challenges posed by a "morally decadent", "materialistic" city environment can under such circumstances provide much needed solace. Besides, it gives the migrant the feeling that he has not lost contact with his village and its religious mores. At the same time, his new urban ties with Islam furnish him with easy though superficial explanations of the cultural and economic dichotomies that pervade his environment. He is told that the cultural and economic evils around him are the consequences of an absence of religious faith and all that he has to do is to fortify his commitment to Islam.

As the Islamic commitment of the poor migrant increases, it becomes easier for the better-educated, better positioned middle-class elements

to recruit him for their political struggle. This alliance between the migrant element in the working class and the fragmented element in the middle-class – both connected indirectly to post-independence changes in society – is, to my mind, one of the most significant characteristics of Islamic resurgence. It shows the close relationship between Islamic resurgence and actual sociological change.

In some societies, there is yet another dimension to the sociological change wrought by the rural-urban drift. This is the ethnic dimension. In addition to the usual insecurity and apprehension associated with the urbanization process, a migrant moving into an ethnically alien city, which may in some specific instances display traces of hostility, could be even more threatened and intimidated. If the city is largely non-Muslim and if the Muslim component is more prominent at the lower echelons (as is the case in certain cities in India and Malaysia) the concomitant resentment and frustration can be utilized to strengthen Islamic resurgence. Indeed, in such circumstances, assuming a Muslim identity is not just a reaction to the city *per se*; it becomes a way of preserving one's ethnicity in relation to the out-group which does not share one's religion.

There is every reason to believe that in Malaysia at least, Islamic resurgence has a great deal to do with the ethnic question. It is no coincidence that the resurgence has become more apparent in the late seventies after a decade or so of concerted efforts to urbanize the Malays (who are all Muslims). In effect this meant drawing them into what have been largely non-Malay and therefore non-Muslim cities. Even in other countries where the nexus between community and urbanization, religion and location, Islam and occupational pattern is not as obvious as in Malaysia ethnicity does contribute to the emergence and sustenance of Islamic resurgence.[8] This is certainly true of certain parts of India. This is why in Malaysia equality for non-Muslim minorities, which is integral to the progressive trend in Islamic philosophy, has very little support among Muslims. Similarly, solidarity with the non-Muslim majority is a slogan that has restricted appeal among the Muslims of India. It merely goes to prove that sometimes a religious ideal loses its impact when confronted by social reality which forces action in another direction.

While there is no doubt that the ethnic atmosphere in certain cities has contributed to Islamic resurgence, it is quite conceivable that the contemporary city itself may have something to do with it. Over the last two or three decades large urban centres in many Muslim states,

and indeed the Third World as a whole, have begun to acquire some of the unhealthy features of the Western city. Traditional communal solidarities which managed to linger on for a while in some Third World cities created by colonial rule are now beginning to break down. Individualism and atomized families are rapidly becoming aspects of city life in the Muslim world. Clear dichotomies between home and factory, work and leisure, material pursuits and spiritual yearnings are beginning to appear. The nature of modern urban occupations have become such that an individual's public personality often contradicts his private self. There is an outer man as against an inner man. Unintegrated, fragmented existence of this sort, a characteristic of the city in the West, is now threatening to overwhelm many a Muslim city.

The dichotomization of human existence which expresses itself in an environment of unquenchable materialistic pursuits tends to create a spiritual vacuum. There is a feeling of emptiness, purposelessness, and life devoid of meaning. In such a situation some turn to religion. Religion can act as a sort of sanctuary in the midst of the irreconcilable tensions of urban living. It serves to console and comfort; it provides a certain degree of emotional strength and solidarity to lives stripped of spiritual joy by the god of wealth and power. The contemporary city then, which generates certain psychological pressures upon its inhabitants, has also played a role in Islamic resurgence.

In a sense, this point about city life is not confined to Islamic resurgence alone. It explains to some extent why even in the secularized West it is the city – and not the countryside – that is beginning to witness a religious revivalism of sorts. For all the factors responsible for creating a spiritual vacuum in the city-dweller of the Muslim world are present on a much more comprehensive scale in the Western city. The born-again Christian who suddenly frequents Bible meetings, the American youth who joins the Hari Krishna consciousness movement, the German student who forsakes his middle-class comfort to become a Buddhist monk are in fact all reaching out for that sacred experience which the city by its very nature, denies all and sundry.

It might be observed in this connection that it is perhaps the nature of the Western city which persuades non-Muslim minorities in London, Paris, Frankfurt and New York to become such ardent – if sometimes intolerant – resurgents. This is why there are cases of Turkish workers in German cities displaying a zeal for religious rituals which is completely out of character with their family backgrounds or domestic surroundings in Turkey. Of course, the need to assert one's identiy – which we had

analysed earlier – may also be a factor.

RECENT EVENTS

So far we have looked at perceptions, changes and the environment – perceptions of the West, of the workings of Western ideologies, of ruling elites, changes in the middle and working-classes; and the environment created by the city – to explain Islamic resurgence. Now we shall consider the impact of certain events in the last 10 years or so which have had a profound effect upon the economic viability and political ideals of Islamic resurgence.

As far as economic viability goes, the restructuring of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) into a powerful cartel, the majority of whose members are Muslim states, and its subsequent success in obtaining better oil prices from Western companies, was the crucial turning-point. These new oil prices brought in economic wealth to exporters like Saudi-Arabia, Algeria, Libya and Iraq among others from the seventies onwards. Both their ability to force the Western companies to accept higher prices and their new-found wealth added to the prestige of the exporting nations – especially among Third World countries.

The leadership in Saudi-Arabia and Libya in particular felt that their riches – a gift from God – should be used to promote Islamic teachings. In the last few years, Saudi Arabia, for instance, has given millions of dollars to projects such as the construction of mosques, the building of libraries and offices and the training of missionaries in a number of other Muslim and even non-Muslim countries, including Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia on the one hand and South Korea and Australia on the other. Libya has also given considerable financial assistance to Islamic missionary work.

There is no denying that all this money has helped to maintain organizations and activities associated with Islamic resurgence. Without this aid, Muslim groups in non-Muslim countries in particular may not have been able to popularize the religion among the young. This is true to a great extent of Japan, South Korea and Australia, apart from Western Europe. Of course, there are other places where the spread of Islam has not been helped directly by the flow of money from outside. Certain parts of Africa, where Islam is growing rapidly, are good examples of this.

If OPEC and oil have strengthened Islamic resurgence economically,

then the Egyptian victory over Israel in the 1973 war served to boost its political ego. For the first time in more than two decades – and after a series of humiliating defeats – a Muslim state managed to recapture the Suez canal and regain lost territory from Israel. To understand the significance of this episode one has to remember that the creation of Israel, the eviction of the Palestinians from their homeland in 1948, and all the encounters between Israel and its Muslim neighbours since then were traumatic experiences for the International Muslim community as a whole. They were seen as direct challenges to the honour and integrity of the Muslim world. This does not mean, however, that the Palestinian issue was regarded as a Muslim – Jewish squabble as such; the majority of Muslim nations perceived it rightly as a struggle against the ideology of Zionism. Nonetheless, what was at stake was not only the future of more than four million homeless Palestinians but also Muslim pride, wich was badly hurt by the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, long regarded as the third holy city of Islam. Viewed against this background, one can begin to appreciate why the 1973 victory was so crucial to the Muslims.

However more important than 1973 in the political resurgence of Islam is the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Even critics of the Revolution and avowed supporters of the former Shah's regime admit that the Revolution has left an indelible mark upon the Muslim mind. This is largely because it is the first Revolution in modern history that has been conducted in the name of Islam. By this one means that the philosophy and goals of the Revolution, the broad principles of its reconstruction programme, its major personalities, its songs and its slogans are all connected to Islam – as far as most of its initiators, participants and supporters are concerned.

Whether every action or even some of the important decisions of the Revolutionary government reflect Islamic ethics is another matter. Certainly, the execution of opponents of the system, of dissidents and of members of religious minorities, apart from drug pushers and hard-core criminals, without any regard for judicial processes[9] would be completely repugnant to Islam. By the same token, Islam cannot be held responsible for the thirst for vengeance that is reflected in some of Iran's domestic and foreign policies. Most of all, is there anything Islamic in a constitutional and state structure which bestows unquestioned authority upon a single individual – the *Imam*? In spite of all this, however the irony is that the Revolution is still perceived by many Muslims all over the world as an Islamic Revolution.

This is perhaps due to three factors – apart from what has already been mentioned, that "it is a Revolution conducted in the name of Islam". First, right from the beginning the Iranian revolutionaries displayed an unshakeable resolve to fight American imperialism. The last four years have demonstrated the strength of their determination. Iran's ability to survive an American-imposed economic blockade, its success in obtaining "ransom" from the United States for the release of its hostages in Teheran and its disclosure of CIA operations in the country have convinced others that it is capable of confronting the United States.[10] Second, there is an equally strong determination on the part of Iran to remain an independent, autonomous Islamic entity outside the control of both the American and Russian superpowers. Indeed, it is, in a larger sense, a desire to remain outside the capitalist and socialist orbits of influence. The dominant as well as the subordinate trends in Islamic resurgence would see this as a genuine attempt to preserve the integrity and sanctity of an Islamic state which is seeking to develop a distinct social system based upon its own religious tradition.

Third, in spite of all the turmoil and chaos often highlighted by the Western press, Iran has succeeded to maintain its viability as a nation. This is remarkable when it is remembered that both internal and external pressures have been tremendous. Apart from American moves against Iran, supported directly and indirectly by some of the conservative, pro-Western Arab states, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt, there have been serious schisms within brought about by factional and ideological disputes which almost destroyed the national leadership. Besides, the Iranian revolution, like most other revolutions, has been accompanied by massive economic and social dislocation. If in spite of all this, the nation is able to survive, it is bound to have some impact upon Muslims elsewhere. And in that way it has helped propel Islamic resurgence.

The other event which has also had an impact of sorts upon the resurgence is of a different type. According to the Muslim calendar, the world has just entered the fifteenth century. The first seven centuries, in the view of some Muslim historians and mystics, marked the rise of Islamic civilization. The next seven centuries saw its decline. Starting from the fifteenth century Islam is expected to rise again. Those who believe in this theory of the rise and fall of Islamic civilization argue that Islam will be the dominant force in the world replacing existing civilizations and exercising an unprecedented influence in the affairs of human beings everywhere as no civilization has been able to do in the past. Thinking of this sort, especially since it has gained some currency

among Muslim religious elites and youths, can persuade groups and individuals that the Islamic movement is the inevitable wave of the future. It can, therefore, help to strengthen and solidify commitment to Islamic resurgence.

To summarize this section of our essay, it can be said that Islamic resurgence has been inspired by the following factors (a) disillusionment with Western civilization as a whole among a new muslim generation (b) the failings of social systems based upon capitalism and socialism (c) the life-style of secular elites in Muslim states (d) the desire for power among a segment of an expanding middle-class that cannot be accommodated politically (e) the search for psychological security among new urban migrants (f) the city environment (g) the economic strength of certain Muslim states as a result of their new oil wealth; and (h) a sense of confidence about the future in the wake of the 1973 Egyptian victory, the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the dawn of the fifteenth century.

REACTIONS

After this analysis of the causes of Islamic resurgence it is appropriate to ask: what are the reactions to this phenomenon? In the West, as we have hinted elsewhere, the media have created a somewhat distorted picture of the resurgence. Apart from sensationalizing female attire, and certain types of punishment like cutting off the hands or stoning the adulterer or adulteress, most Western newspapers tend to give the impression that the "return of Islam" is a return to the past, it is a journey back into the Middle Ages. It is therefore a retrogressive development. In order to establish this, attention is often focused upon three areas – (a) the severe nature of punishment for various types of moral crimes (b) the unequal position of women with some stress upon polygamy and (c) the importance given to various types of religious rituals and practices.

While there may be some truth in some of the Western criticisms about the severity of punishment for certain crimes like stealing and adultery, it is also apparent that misinterpretations have arisen partly because these and other laws have not been presented in their total context. There has been no attempt to point out, for instance, that a person can be charged for adultery only if the actual act has been witnessed by four pious persons. This makes it almost impossible to prosecute a person for adultery under Islamic law.

Similarly, the Western media that berates the allegedly inferior position of women in Islam should balance their exposition with an analysis of the rights that women enjoy under Islam – rights which were unknown to their Western counterparts until the beginning of this century. In Islamic jurisprudence, a woman has the right to equal education, the right of inheritance, the right to own property, the right to work, the right to do business, the right to enter a contract in her own name, the right to divorce and the right to keep her maiden-name after marriage. It is worth noting that many of these rights were fully enforced in certain societies at certain periods in Islamic history before the epoch of Western dominance.

By the same token, rituals and practices in Islam are no more prominent than in other religions. All religions enjoin their followers to pray and fast and require them to observe certain rituals associated with these practices. Of course, there are many Muslims who adhere rigidly to these religious practices. In itself, this does not mean anything. It should not be equated with fanaticism. Scrupulous adherence to certain rituals may have nothing to do with fanaticism. Besides it is a phenomenon that exists in all religions. It is pertinent to ask, in this connection, – as Edward Said has – why segments of the Western media should regard ritual observation in Islam as fanaticism when it accepts the wide variety of religious rituals practised in Israel as normal behaviour?[11]

Obviously then, some of the biased writings in the West on Islam are not the products of sheer ignorance. If they were, the problem of communicating correct perspectives would have been less difficult. Without any doubt at all, prejudice has also coloured some Western views of Islam as it has always conditioned its thinking on non-Western civilizations as a whole.

Why is there this element of prejudice in the dominant Western attitude towards Islamic resurgence? Recent history has something to do with it. When OPEC raised oil prices in the early seventies, the industrialized economies of the West decided to blame the oil producers rather than the big oil companies for their difficulties though the latter were exploiting the situation to their advantage. It was, of course, more convenient to blame the producers since a critical attitude towards their own companies would expose the truth about Western capitalism. As part of this sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious, effort to transfer blame to foreign elements, a segment of the Western business and political community supported by some important groups in the media began to promote distorted and derogatory views of the Arabs.

the mainstay of OPEC. In the process, Islam was also subjected to biased criticism without any attempt to separate the actual behaviour of Muslims from the ideals of the religion. Cartoons for instance were used to caricature the Arabs and Islam.

However, it was the Iranian Revolution which heightened American antagonism, in particular towards Islam, since it brought about the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi. Iran was for long the lynch pin of American interests in the Middle-East. The fall of the Shah was therefore a serious blow to the United States.

This is why the political leadership in the United States – out of anger and frustration – sought to denigrate Iran and the Islamic Revolution. Leadership attitudes, buttressed by propaganda from the media and business elites, have contributed immensely towards distrust and suspicion of Islam. Islamic religious elites more than other groups have been the butt of caustic comment. If anything, the holding of the hostages – an act that was unjust as it was foolish – increased American antipathy towards Islam. It confirmed the worst prejudices of ordinary Americans in regard to what they feel is Islamic behaviour.

But American and Western attitudes towards Islam cannot be understood merely on the basis of recent events. One has to explore – however inadequately – the history of Christian-Muslim ties which span centuries of contact and cover different spheres of interaction. To start with, there are certain theological differences which in some ways have hindered meaningful communication. In spite of their common allegiance to the Prophet Abraham, Islam's acceptance of Jesus as a prophet – and only as a prophet – with its explicit rejection of his status as the son of God juxtaposed with Christianity's non-acceptance of Muhammad as the last prophet, present in a sense a major theological barrier. This is why, when the Catholic church first came into contact with Islamic teachings it dismissed them as the utterances of a false prophet. This remained the Church's official outlook on Islam for centuries. Islam, on the other hand, regarded later-day Catholicism and indeed Christianity as a whole as a deviation from Jesus' original teachings.

Theological differences, however, cannot affect the psychology of a entire people unless there are other reasons for antagonism brought about by more tangible historical episodes. The Muslim conquest of parts of Western Europe (especially its subsequent governance of Spain) and the crusades were two such episodes. It is important to observe in this connection that Christian Europe right through its history never

had to confront another religious civilization on its own continent. Though in the end, the Muslim advance was checked at the battle of Tours in 732 A. D., the capacity of an alien religion to conquer and administer an important segment of Europe left a deep imprint upon Christian society. The eventual outcome of the crusades after a long series of engagements over a period six hundred years from 1095 to the middle of the fifteenth century did not help to restore Christian pride either. More than that, after each successive failure, the Popes, Kings and Princes who organized these crusades became even more bitterly opposed to Islam. The bitterness and anger was transmitted to various sections of the populace so much so that even illustrious navigators like Christopher Columbus and Vasco Da Gama regarded the demolition of Islamic control over sea routes as one of their primary goals.

Christianity and Islam, it is apparent, have had an antagonistic relationship in history. It is a relationship which has coloured perceptions of one another in the contemporary world. It explains to a great extent Western attitudes towards Islamic resurgence.

Historical influences, however, are one aspect of the story: the position of Western civilization today, its self-perception and its perception of other cultures and civilizations also constitute an important factor. Religion in contemporary Western society has a restricted role. Religion does not exercise any direct influence over the state. Indeed, the separation of religion from state is one of its main features. Similarly, religious elites do not pursue political power through participation in the political process. The religious and political domains are recognized as separate and distinct.

More important, the dominant elites in Western society are convinced that these and other facets of their society represent an advanced stage in social evolution. They believe in a linear conception of change and progress with each new stage representing an improvement over the previous stage. This means that Western society today is the pinnacle of human progress. Its characteristics, its goals, are worthy of imitation and emulation. All societies which wish to progress will have to proceed along the same path. It is the only path that can rescue humankind from backwardness and stagnation.[12]

This notion of progress was very much a part of the thinking of two philosophers who, superficially at least, appear to be diametrically opposed to each other: Herbert Spencer with his emphasis upon individualism and Karl Marx with his emphasis upon the collectivity. It shows

how at a deeper level there are certain elements of thought which suggest a Western world-view as distinct from other world-views. There is little doubt that this world-view emerged partly through the role that the West has played in the last five hundred years or so as the planet's dominant civilization. After all, nothing could have provided a more convincing justification for colonial conquest than a view of the world which places the West at the apex and other societies at lower levels of development.

Now this notion of progress is being challenged by a civilization that argues that the West is not advanced. It is a civilization that argues for religion; it is a civilization that argues for religious ethics as the foundation of society. It does not recognize any division between religion and politics, since every sphere of life is subjected to moral principles derived from religion. Further, it is a civilization that is convinced that the survival of society does not lie in the path laid out by the West, rather in a return to perennial religious values which were revealed in their entirety one thousand four hundred years ago.[13]

From what has been just stated it is apparent that in a very real sense, the dominant trend in Western civilization has not even begun to comprehend Islamic resurgence. It cannot understand how and why such a movement can gain so wide a following in this day and age. It is a phenomenon that is outside its psychological framework. Understandably, the dominant Western trend regards it as a threat, a challenge to its status.

This reaction to Islamic resurgence is shared by others outside the West. The middle and upper classes in many Third World societies hold a similar view. We shall deal with the non-Muslim component in these states first since there are other aspects as well in the reaction of their Muslim counterparts which must be considered in some depth.

The non-Muslim attitude towards Islam and Islamic resurgence has been influenced to a great extent by reports and interpretations from Western news agencies which appear in local newspapers and magazines. In other words, the non-Muslim Third World learns about the Muslim Third World through the West. Since the Western press has been less than fair, the non-Muslim middle and upper classes in the Third World also tend to have a negative attitude towards the resurgence. Besides, they too believe that modernization and development – the Third World goods – are attainable only with the secularization of life and the decline of religion. It is a notion of change which they have imbibed from the West. Indeed, there is often uncritical absorption and assimilation of

Western ideas of society and progress among the middle and upper classes of the Third World. It is truly an excellent instance of the "demonstration effect" of Western civilization which has such a powerful impact upon the rest of the world.

Western interpretation of Islam and Western ideas of progress aside, the Islamic resurgents that Thrid World non-Muslims come across have also conditioned their thinking. To many non-Muslims, the obsession among resurgents appears to be with attire and social intercourse. In some cases, the rediscovery of Islamic ways leads almost automatically to a decline of interest in non-Muslims. An in-group attitude develops very quickly which sometimes breeds suspicion and even hostility towards the out-group. In contrast to Muslims who have become "Islamic", other Muslims with a veneer of Western liberalism continue to be relaxed and open in their relations with their non-Muslim friends. This difference in attitudes has undoubtedly reinforced non-Muslim antipathy towards Islamic resurgence. For this, the resurgents have only themselves to blame.

As far as secular Muslim elites are concerned, Western news agencies also interpret Islamic resurgence in other countries for them. Their concept of progress in also derived from the dominant trend in the West, except that they believe that religion too should receive some attention. Consequently, they often advocate spiritual and material development, meaning that there is one sphere for spiritual development and another sphere for material development. This is, of course, at variance with the Islamic notion of a religious basis to all spheres of society.

This difference in approach is part of the larger problem confronting secular Muslims in their relations with Islamic resurgents. For the secular Muslim elites know that it is not just their ideas on society, but their very life-styles and, in the ultimate analysis, the political power they command, which the resurgents regard as their targets. It is a fact that the greatest dilemma they face today is how to cope with this challenge.

For three reasons they are at a disadvantage in this confrontation, though they have all the resources of power within their control. First, some of the allegations hurled at them pertaining to their life-styles are, as we have seen, well-founded. Since it is not possible to defend themselves in Islamic terms – after all alcohol and gambling are prohibited in the *Quran* – and since they profess Islam as their religion, these elites suffer from perpetual guilt. These guilt feelings tend to weaken their position considerably.

Second, these secular elites are on the whole not well-versed on Islam

– whether it is its philosophy; history, ethics or theology. This lack of knowledge inhibits them from engaging in debate and discussion with religious elites associated with the resurgence. Even if some of their ideas are beneficial to society as a whole – like encouraging women to play a more active role in public affairs or reforming certain aspects of the laws on inheritance or abolishing certain modes of punishment – secular elites would prefer not to articulate them publicly for fear that they would be branded as "un-Islam" or *kafir* (unbelievers). This is because they are not intellectually convinced themselves that such reforms are possible within a progressive conception of Islam. That a progressive interpretation is legitimate in Islam is something that does not occur to them because of their own lack of knowledge.

Third, even if some of them have the knowledge, they are unwilling to deal with retrogressive thinking among Muslims because of the nature of their societies. The masses often follow, without question, the ideas and instructions of their religious leaders who are almost always inclined towards orthodox interpretations of religious texts. This orthodoxy is a product both of their own religious education and the surrounding religious atmosphere which in most cases does not encourage an innovative approach. Besides, strict literal interpretations, which tend to emphasize "do's" and "dont's", "rights" and "wrongs" in a rigid, authoritative manner help to strengthen the position of those who have the power to decide and determine. There is thus an element of self-interest, as far as religious elites are concerned, in preserving the orthodox approach. And the secular elites, knowing that they – the religious elites – exercise a great deal of influence over the masses, would not want to alienate them since it could lead to the erosion of their own political power.

Given these circumstances, secular elites appear to have decided upon two courses of action in their response to Islamic resurgence. It is often not a case of choosing one or the other; both are combined depending upon the needs of the situation. In some instances, secular elites feel that it is in their own interest to accommodate Islamic resurgence. So there are those among them who become "Islamic" at least in its outward manifestations. They may give up gambling or alcohol or embellish their speeches with Arabic phraseology. They may decide to embark upon a massive mosque-building programme or to increase the amount of time devoted to Islamic education in schools or to enhance the Islamic content in radio and television programmes. In Malaysia, and now Indonesia, they have been holding *Quran*-reading competitions

as a way of demonstrating their commitment to Islam. In fact, in Malaysia there has been yet another unique achievement. For the first time in the Muslim world, the state organized a "missionary" month (*bulan Dakwah*) in December 1979. This is considered "unique" because every Muslim is expected to remind himself and others of his mission to Islam without the help of a special "missionary month". Quite apart from all this, secular elites have also – when pressured – pledged to implement Islamic laws in full and establish an Islamic economic system.

Accommodation is, however, often accompanied by a contradictory stance: the suppression of Islamic resurgence. This, more than anything else, reveals that the secularists' response is motivated by their own political survival. In some Muslim countries Islamic resurgents are not allowed to speak in state mosques; their publications are controlled or banned. In other countries, the leaders of the movement are sometimes imprisoned for long periods. This has happened in Tunisia and Libya. It is reported that in both Syria and Iraq, some well-known leaders of the Islamic resurgence have been killed by their respective *Baathist* governments.[14]

Whether this carrot-and-stick approach to Islamic resurgence will enable the secular elites to stem the tide is difficult to predict at this stage. A great deal will depend upon the social situation in each Muslim country and upon global conditions. In the ultimate analysis, corruption, social disparities, suppression of divergent opinions, abuse of elite power, extravagant elite life-style; the exploitative international economic system – and not Islamic rhetoric as such – will, it seems to me, determine the fate of the secular elites. It merely goes to show that when all is said and done the causes of major social change are no different in Muslim or non-Muslim societies, in modern or ancient polities. An analysis of the underlying causes of the Iranian revolution will establish this point. This is why it is wrong to suggest that the Islamic vitality of the Iranian revolution – which we have already observed – will, on its own, lead to the fall of secular Muslim regimes elsewhere. Indeed, in certain respects – the absolutist nature of the monarchy, the pervasiveness of its control over the nation's finances, its obsession for grandeur, its massive corruption, its harsh, brutal suppression of dissent, its utter neglect of the urban poor, its callous destruction of the rural economy – the Shah's regime was almost an exception, even among feudalistic monarchies and repressive governments. Secular elites can perhaps take some comfort from this. But it does not ensure the permanence of power they desire, unless of course they are prepared to

effect radical changes to existing structures directed towards the economic and political well-being of the masses.

SIGNIFICANCE

After having analysed the social background of the resurgents, their intellectual characteristics, the causes and conditions of the growth and development of Islamic resurgence and the various reactions to it, it is time to turn to the final segment of this essay: what is its significance to Islam and the world?

By raising questions about Western civilization, about Muslim elites and the whole concept of development prevalent in both the West and the third world, Islamic resurgence has contributed immensely towards the search for alternative life-styles. Though one may not agree with important aspects of the analyses of Muslim thinkers on the state of Western civilization, there is little doubt that the pattern of social organization which it has propagated to all corners of the earth in the last two centuries has reached a critical phase. Problems of unending consumption, over-production, ecological imbalances, personality crises, the erosion of family ties, and developing social tensions are some of the evidences of the illness that afflict the West.[15] Muslim critics of the West are not the only ones who are aware of the disease; many others in the Third World are equally conscious of the need for an alternative civilization. However, Islamic resurgents have been singularly vocal and vehement in their criticism.

Criticism of Western civilization aside, the contributions of Islamic resurgence at this stage of history have been very minimal. And yet, they could, if they choose, make a significant impact in one important sphere at least. They could help nurture "God consciousness" among secular elites both in the West and the East. The Islamic conception of God is particularly suited for the task of making modern man, with his emphasis upon rationality, aware of the importance of believing in a transcendental reality because it is so intimately linked to reason. It is not mere faith which is expected to convince man of the existence of God but his own observations of the workings of nature, the processes involved in the biological conception of the human being, the physiological structure of man, the specificity and variety in animal and plant life and the pattern of growth, decay and death in all life-forms. Even in the rise and fall of human civilization, which it is believed coincides with the consolidation of certain social virtues or the erosion of certain

social values, there is a message for mankind. The Quran argues that all these phenomena are the signs of God. The whole of creation with all its complexities and the entire gamut of human activity manifest the power of God. Thus, to understand God one has to study man, nature and society. This helps to establish a link between God and scientific investigation.

In a larger sense, it also explains why the early Muslims, without any scientific background, succeeded in a short while to emerge as the founders of modern science. As Briffault once observed, it was Islam between the eighth and the twelfth centuries which incorporated detailed observation, investigation and experimentation into traditional science. The inspiration for this obviously came from the Quran. This is why the Muslim professional or academic – his learning and training notwithstanding – remains faithful to the idea of God. For he does not see any contradiction between reason and science, on the one hand, and faith and God on the other. They are all part of the same continuum. It is for this reason that atheism, as we had pointed out earlier, failed to make any inroad into the educated stratum of Muslim society.

Because God is so rationally conceived, it would be easier to harness the concept as an antidote to some of the ills that threaten the life of contemporary civilization. One is not suggesting, however, that the concept by itself can resolve major challenges. Many of these are related to economic and political structures prevalent in both Western and Eastern societies. But insofar as consciousness influences social action among individuals and communities, an attachment to the idea of God as the basis of one's world-view could undoubtedly generate certain attitudes and values which would in turn determine the direction of change.

The consumer mentality, the insatiable desire for change and the creation of production techniques and a production system that cater for these cannot be overcome merely through social restructuring. This is proven by the experiences of the Soviet Union and the East European states. The underlying consciousness must also change. When all is said and done, the consumer psychology is also the product of a civilization that confines its notion of man's destiny to the "here and now". Since it is the "here and now" that matters more than anything else, unbridled consumption, unlimited growth and untrammelled change become inordinately important. There is, after all, only this material plane of existence to think of. If, on the other hand, there is a concept of God and the hereafter – if one believes in a spiritual destiny – one will be more inclined towards limiting consumption, growth, variety and

pleasures, for the material world has only transient value. There will be a greater tendency to seek permanence rather than constant change – permanence in economics, and political institutions, as well as in social and sexual relations.[16]

In this connection, permanence as a spiritual value should not be understood as the permanence of an economic system that contains various inequities. If permanence is considered in conjunction with equality, justice and other important spiritual values, one arrives at a situation in which a system is regarded as "permanent" only because it has eliminated the inequituous conditions that would render it unstable and therefore "temporary". Similarly, by emphasising a spiritual destiny and by regarding the world as "transient", one is not encouraging the neglect of material pursuits, including the development of science and technology directed towards ameliorating human miseries on this planet. Such a tendency need not arise in Islam since it does not admit any dichotomy between the material and spiritual dimensions of existence. In Islam, matter itself is spiritualized since man is supposed to act on the material plane in accordance with certain divine values so that he will be adequately equipped for the spiritual hereafter. Not to do so would amount to a neglect of a Muslim's duty to God. Thus, Islam avoids both the negation of matter of certain traditions and the repudiation of a spiritual destiny so obvious in the dominant consciousness of contemporary Western civilization.

By spiritualizing matter, by making life and living itself sacred in this manner, Islamic – and indeed religious – consciousness as a whole become even more relevant to present-day society. The absence of a sense of the sacred is certainly one of the root problems of the Western psyche. It manifests itself in a rapacious attitude towards nature and its bounties; it manifests itself in the profanity that pervades relationships within the family. It is also borne out in the devaluation of roles which had always been regarded as sacred, such as the roles of the father and mother or of grandparents or uncles and aunts. The crisis that confronts the Western family at this juncture establishes the importance of restoring sacredness to life. And yet there can be no restoration of the sacred unless God is returned to His primary position in the consciousness of Western man.

More importantly, God-consciousness is fundamental for the establishment of an ethical order founded upon perennial, absolute values.[17] The erosion of absolute values is perhaps at the very crux of the spiritual crisis that plagues modern man. For the ethical relativism that has

dominated Western thought and action in the last two centuries has had certain adverse consequences. It has indirectly removed crucial areas of human activity from the purview of ethics. Business and industry, science and technology, politics and power, sex and social relations are no longer subjected to moral judgements based upon some perennial conception of right and wrong. Circumstance and situation are used to justify greed in industry and lust in sex just as the development of destructive weapons and territorial aggrandisement are legitimized in the national interest. Of course, all these have been part of previous civilizations too, including the devoutly religious ones. The crucial difference is that sexual laxity or political aggression is perceived today as right and proper because there are no absolute values which can be used as criteria for judging human action. Consequently, confusion and chaos reign in the realm of ethics.

Perennial, absolute values, whatever their shortcomings, do not permit circumstance, situation, location or interest to interfere with moral judgements. They therefore provide a sound moral foundation for society. By establishing certain immutable criteria of right and wrong in all spheres of human activity, diverse and varied social roles and relationships are held together in a harmonious whole. This leads to the integration of the human personality itself since the same values are supposed to condition the different roles a human being must perforce perform in life. In this connection the problem of the fragmented individual, one of the most pathetic phenomena of contemporary society, compelled to adopt contradictory stances, alienated from work, estranged from family and isolated from community, cannot be resolved merely through a reorganization of the system of production. It requires a willingness to live by absolute, perennial values.

It is significant, then, that Islam regards loyalty to God – which needless to say is the whole purpose of life – as loyalty to these perennial values. A good society is one that allows these values to flourish both at the level of the individual and, more importantly, at the level of the collectivity. Progress and development are meaningless without the cultivation of these values of truth, justice, freedom, unity, equality, compassion and restraint. Since these values are fundamental to development, since the human being realizes his loyalty to God through these values and since loyalty to God is the purpose of existence, it can be argued that there is an intimate relationship between development and the meaning of life. One of the crucial dilemmas facing all the paradigms of development spawned in the last few decades is their inability to

establish a link between development and the meaning of existence. It is a link that has to be established; otherwise development will remain divorced from the great questions confronting humankind. As long as this is so, the problem of whether there should be limited or unlimited growth, controlled or uncontrolled consumption, fully socialized or partially socialized production will continue to be vexatious. These are not mere economic questions; in the ultimate analysis, their answers are interwoven with fundamental metaphysical considerations.

For what is involved in these issues – if one may repeat a point – is the very conception of man and his destiny. If one's conception is spiritual then everything else in society, from production and technology to art and education to the organization of the city and the nature of architecture will change accordingly. Architecture is perhaps one of the best testimonies to this. The design and construction of a house in medieval Islam for instance was very much a reflection of underlying philosophical concepts in the religion including those relating to space, the cosmos, man and the community. Similarly, contemporary Western architecture is closely connected to its dominant world-view which in turn accounts to some extent for the prosaic, functional approach where change rather than permanence is the crucial factor. This is why any attempt to promote development without giving sufficient consideration to the values and world-views involved in the process is bound to come to grief.

God-consciousness, then, is strongly linked not only to sacred roles and perennial values but also to the meaning of development and the purpose of life. Ordinary Muslims are vaguely aware of this. A number of Muslim scholars are acutely conscious of this link but they have failed to explain and analyse society from that perspective. Some of the links explored in this essay, like that between God-consciousness and the problem of restraint in production and consumption, have yet to engage the energies of more than a handful of Muslim thinkers.

THE NEED FOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS

This, in a sense, is indicative of a larger and deeper problem. There appears to be a general inability to examine critically the Islamic tradition, just as Muslims have not developed an intelligent understanding of the West. What we have is an exhortative attitude towards Islam accompanied by a condemnatory stance towards Western civilization. What we need, however, is an analytical approach in regard to Islam and

an evaluative perspective on Western civilization.

An essential attribute of the analytical approach would be the willingness to apply historical and sociological knowledge to the study of the Quran and the Sunnah. By so doing, a better understanding of the perennial as against the ephemeral, the essential as against the inconsequential, will develop. Muslims will understand, for instance, that adultery, as a violation of the sacredness of sexual relations – which in turn is connected to the sacredness of life itself – should be distinguished from the mode of punishment prescribed for it. While prohibition of adultery has occurred over and over again in civilizations precedent and antecedent to Islam, the mode of punishment has changed from period to period. In the punishment prescribed in the Quran, the influence of the surrounding culture and the prevalent legal norm is obvious. It is a manifestation of the infinite wisdom of God that the mode of punishment is also part of the revelation so that the first Muslim community would be able to understand the practical significance of a moral prohibition. This nexus between moral prescriptions and prohibitions and their juridicial and legal manifestations runs right through the Quran and the Sunah since universal, perennial ideals had to be translated into a particular, contextual reality. In distinguishing the former from the latter, the status of the Qurannic revelation or the example of the Prophet Muhammad (May Peace and blessings be upon him) will not be affected in any way. On the contrary, there will crystallize a deeper understanding of the perennial meaning of the Quran and the Sunah. Revelation and reason, divine truth and sociological reality, will be brought into closer harmony. It will pave the way for the sort of creative dynamism in Islam which has been missing in the last few centuries.

History and sociology, reason and analysis, must also be brought into play in trying to comprehend the development of Islam since the Prophet Muhammad. The injunctions and writings of various Caliphs. *Imams* (leaders), saints and philosophers must be studied not just in relation to their Qurannic tradition but also in connection with their sociological environment. It is undeniable that the structure of society, the political atmosphere, economic relationships, the level of knowledge at a certain point on history and the state of technology among other variables have a profound impact upon thought – processes. Thus, the Caliph Omar Ibn Khatab's attempt to help the poor through the *Baitulmal* (a sort of state treasury) must be understood both from the perspective of the impulse for justice in Islam and from the perspective of the type of society that existed at that time. Similarly, Imam Al-Ghazali's

(died IIII A.D.) pronouncements on the nature and function of poverty should not be accepted as a divinely-ordained truth without analysing the social relationships and social consciousness that prevailed in eleventh century Persia and in the middle-East in general.

By adopting this approach, the strengths and weaknesses in the ideas and actions of individuals who have exercised tremendous influence in Islamic history will be better appreciated. We will know why Muslim societies failed to live up to Islamic ideals. There will be a firmer grasp of the sort of transformation that is required if the perennial values embodied in the religion are to find expression through new structures and institutions.

As with Islam, so with Western civilization. The sweeping condemnation of the civilization is a travesty of justice and truth. This is why in this essay we note specific areas of crisis and specific attitudes which are inimical to the development of the human being rather than condemn Western civilization in its totality. For the West like the East is far too complex for that sort of superficial judgement. There are various trends and tendencies in that civilization. Even within its dominant consciousness certain contradictory attitudes are discernible. Generally speaking, one has to make at least two fundamental qualifications in any analysis of the West. First, there are attitudes and values which are part of man's universal heritage. Pride and happiness, sorrow and death, niggardliness and generosity, envy and love dicit more or less similar responses and reactions in most cultures. In other words, there are certain common elements in human behaviour which bind East and West. There is no reason to suspect that an American mother would feel any less unhappy about the illness of her child than a Pakistani mother. Second, social structures condition social behaviour to a great extent. There is more of a community feeling and less individuality among rural dwellers compared to urban dwellers in most parts of the world. Dominant classes tend to defend the status-quo everywhere; subordinate classes are easier to mobilize against the system anywhere. Capitalist societies, whether in the West or the East, tend to encourage the development of certain positive and negative qualities like enterprise and initiative at certain levels on the one hand, and greed and selfishness among various groups, on the other. Similarly, socialist societies inside and outside Western civilization help to cultivate certain values like the need for equality and assist in propagating certain values like the necessity for conformity. It is obvious therefore that one cannot judge Western civilization in its entirety without considering the role of pre-

vailing social structures.

Only after these qualifications – about universal human behaviour and social structures – have been made should we examine the unique features of Western civilization. To be sure, the Renaissance, the development of science outside religion, the conflict between scientific reason and religious faith, the different stages in the struggle between classes, and the consequent crystallization of various attitudes towards religion, science, faith and reason are peculiar to European history. Some of the adverse consequences of these attitudes have already been observed.

However, if Muslim critics want to be fair to the West they must not only highlight these negative characteristics but also acknowledge some of the positive elements in that civilization.[18] Even if one has some misgivings about aspects of the philosophy that accompany scientific inquiry in the West, one cannot deny that its achievements have alleviated the sufferings of millions in Europe and America. No other civilization in history has managed to reduce poverty, improve health and hygiene, expand the opportunities for work and leisure, provide access and mobility to the socially disadvantaged and generally uplift the standard of living as successfully as the West. Few other civilizations have legitimized the right of dissent and institutionalized the right of participation for its people – as the West has done in the last few decades. By the same token, it is a civilization that is capable of protecting its citizens from the arbitrariness of those in authority. Most of all, it has the capacity for introspection, for analysis, for self-criticism and self-correction – attitudes spawned by a dynamic intellectual tradition.

Muslim critics have seldom recognized the fact that this willingness to evaluate oneself has time and again enabled the modern West to overcome its own shortcomings. Indeed, great Western minds have been far more competent critics of their own civilization than the vast majority of Muslim critics. Decades ago, Spengler, Toynbee, Schweitzer, Northrop and Sorokin had analysed, albeit from varying perspectives, the spiritual crisis of the West. In the last twenty years or so, historians, sociologists economists and political scientists like Theodore Roszak, Paul Goodman, Christopher Lasch, Peter Berger, Daniel Bell and others have dissected in brilliant detail the culture, religion and politics of Western civilization to show the need for new values and new visions. Though one may not agree with some of these analyses, the intellectual content of their works outshines most of the critiques of the West produced by Muslim scholars and propagandists. More specifically, there is hardly any Muslim writer who can match Lewis Mumford's profound analysis

of how the underlying philosophy of man, life and society in the West has shaped its urbanization and technology.

The question we must now ask is: why isn't there an analytical approach towards Islam and an evaluative attitude towards the West among the Islamic resurgents? Two sets of reasons can be advanced. First, there is a civilizational problem. The Islam that we see today has just emerged from a long period of colonial subjugation and dominance. Like any culture that has just emerged from subjugation it is bound to assert its identity at least in the first few decades of its independence. The notion of identity, in addition, will tend to emphasize the puritanical aspect of the religion since this will help enhance its uniqueness and distinctiveness. This has happened in other cases too. The initial reactions against colonial rule in India, Burma and Indonesia were often clothed in cultural obscurantism. The obsession was with asserting one's distinctive identity. It can be argued that psychologically a once-dominated culture feels a much greater need to assert its uniqueness in this manner.

A culture that is caught in this process will not want to examine itself or analyse its strengths and weaknesses. On the contrary, it will maintain that there is no need for reinterpretation of its philosophy or world-view. If there are any problems, it is because the adherents are not prepared to be Islamic in the fullest sense. And being Islamic to the hilt often means accepting a rigid, doctrinaire version of the religion without question. Only then is one faithful to the character and identity of Islam. Analysis therefore becomes an anathema.

This fear of analysis has another dimension to it. After the destruction of the great centres of Islamic learning in the thirteenth century and the general decline of Islamic civilization after that, a conservative mood began to set in. Because of this historical trauma, the earlier eagerness to invent and experiment, to innovate and invigorate, which was mainly responsible for the rise of Islam as a dynamic intellectual civilization, was replaced by a pronounced desire to preserve and perpetuate whatever little was left. If anything, the advent of colonialism further reinforced this conservative tendency.

It is also because of colonialism, and its traumatic historial experience, that Islamic resurgence is unwilling to evaluate Western civilization in a more objective manner. For such evaluation can only come from cultures that are secure and confident – as Islamic civilization was between the eighth and twelfth centuries. It was a civilization that was secure enough to absorb the finest ideas and techniques from other cultures.

As it absorbed and synthesized these alien elements, it realized that in the process its own growth and development had become even more dynamic. Islamic civilization became eclectic while retaining the essence of its identity.

A religion that is just emerging from subjugation, a religion which has yet to create a contemporary social system embodying the perennial values at its core, a religion that is nowhere at the apex of its glory, cannot possibly be expected to demonstrate the sort of confidence that characterized the illustrious Islamic civilization of the past. Understandably, therefore, it is afraid of absorbing ideas from outside. It is ambivalent about assimilating techniques from the West. There is a lurking fear that selective assimilation from Western civilization will lead to the eventual erosion of its identity.

In this connection, what Islamic resurgence fears most is the loss of its God-based identity as the result of adopting ideas born of an "atheistic civilization". It explains to some extent why within a significant segment of the resurgent movement there is much greater hostility towards socialism (especially Marxist socialism) with its overt repudiation of God than towards capitalism, which at least appears to tolerate religion.

What the resurgents do not realize is that some of the concepts developed in the West on the causes of exploitation and oppression, on how economic disparities are perpetuated and why civil liberties are lost may be very relevant for the creation of social structures which will ensure that the values associated with God-consciousness are sustained for all time. Since socialism has contributed immensely towards the growth of knowledge on the structure and organization of society, Islam, which seeks to provide institutional meaning and content to its eternal values, has everything to gain by absorbing selectively whatever is useful from that school of thought.

The reluctance of Islamic resurgence to try to understand socialism, and indeed the social sciences as a whole, in greater depth is connected with the second set of reasons we must now explore. The dominant elements in the Islamic resurgence have very little understanding of the social sciences. This is especially true of those with traditional religious education. If social science means the scientific study of society, then the conventional curricula of Islamic instruction in most Muslim countries have never really been concerned about it. This is why it is true to say that the unspoken fear of Islamic resurgents is that the accommodation of the social sciences will create a situation whereby their own leadership of the movement will be endangered.

By not allowing ideas from the social sciences to gain root within the Islamic intellectual tradition, the resurgents are consciously or unconsciously preventing the development of an analytical approach to Islam. Self-interest is part of the problem.

It is also one of the reasons why the resurgents are not prepared to adopt an evaluative attitude towards the West. For selective assimilation of aspects of Western civilization will require knowledge of its history, its philosophy, its economics and its politics. This the resurgents do not possess. Once again, the fear is that such interaction with the West will create the sort of intellectual momentum that will render them irrelevant.

At this point, it must be emphasized that resurgents with a background in secular education tend to be a little better in this respect. But unfortunately the need to react constantly to their political competitors, the liberal-elements and the Marxist-socialists – apart from other factors discussed in the earlier part of this essay – have compelled them to eschew innovation within Islam while condemning Western civilization in its entirety. Besides, like the resurgents from traditional backgrounds, they are also trapped in that larger civilizational challenge confronting Islam at this stage of its history.

This challenge – and indeed everything else that we have discussed in this essay – establishes quite clearly that what Islamic resurgence needs are thinkers and leaders who are imbued with Islamic values, whose world-view is Islamic, but who, at the same time, understand not only the weaknesses but also the strengths of Western civilization. At the moment such human beings are rare in the Muslim world. This is not their hour in history. The present phase will have to yield to a more mature period.

After all, Islam – so it appears from our analysis – is experiencing its resurgence in the dark night of an epoch in crisis. It is an epoch that is about to seek new meanings and new ideals in a new age. The new Muslim and revitalized Islam belong to that new dawn.

NOTES

1. This essay is based to some extent upon two talks on the theme delivered at the School of International Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, the United States, on 5 June 1980 and at the Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada on 25 June 1980 respectively.
2. The term, "Islamic Re-assertion" has been used by Mohammed Ayoob, of

the Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore. I may not have done justice to its meaning in this short exposition.

3 For some discussion of Islamic renaissance see *A history of Muslim Philosophy* Vol. 2 M. M. Sharif (ed.) (Otto Harvassawitz, Uieshaden, 1966) book 8.

4 See *Pergolakan Pemikiran Islam* catatan harian Ahmad Wahib (LP3ES Jakarta, September 1982).

5 For more of their writings see Ali Shariati *On the Sociology of Islam* (Mizan Press, Barkeley, 1979) and Hassan Hanafi *Religious Dialogue and Revolution* (Anglo Egyptian Bookshop, Cairo 1977).

6 For a more detailed discussion of all these writers and their writings see *Islam in transition* Muslim perspectives John L. Danohue and John L. Esposito (eds.) Oxford University Press, 1982).

7 There are many profound critiques of contemporary Western civilization authored by Westerners themselves. See for instance Theodore Roszak *Where the Wasteland Ends* (Anchor Books, 1973) and Daniel Bell *The Cultural Contradictions of capitalism* (Basic Books 1978).

8 This is elaborated in my introduction to *The Universalism of Islam* (Aliran, Penang, 1979).

9 There are clear hints of some changes in its very Anti-American policy of the past. This can be seen from newspapers reports appearing in the last two or three months (April-June 1983).

10 For the data see *Amnesty International Report 1982* (London, 1982) pp. 323–6.

11 See Edward Said *Covering Islam* (Pantheon Books, New York, 1981).

12 This notion of the superiority of Western civilization in relation to non-Western cultures is brilliantly discussed in Edward Said *Orientalism* (Pantheon, 1978).

13 See selected articles in *The Challenge of Islam* Altaf Sauhar (ed.) (Islamic Council of Europe, 1978).

14 The struggle of the resurgents is discussed in a somewhat dogmatic way in *Issues in the Islamic Movement* 1980–81 Kalim Siddiqui (ed.) (The Open Press Limited, London, 1982).

15 For an analysis of the personality crisis in American society and related issues see Christopher Lasch *Culture of Narcissism* (Warner Books, 1979).

16 For some reflections on problems of constant change the need for permanence see E. F. Schumacher *Small is beautiful* (Perennial library, 1973).

17 See my "God-consciousness" *Aliran Quarterly* (Vol. 2 no. 4, 1982) for a detailed treatment of the subject.

18 Some of the positive achievements of Western civilization are elaborated in a balanced manner by Peter Berger *Pyramids of Sacrifice* (Anchor Books, 1976).

Section III

Ethnicity and Development

CHAPTER NINE

Patterns of Change in a Rural Malay Community:
Sungai Raya Revisited*

Marvin L. Rogers

During the past decade agricultural production has risen in Malaysia and the Malay villagers' level of living has improved. However, despite increased investment in rural development,[1] the economic imbalance between the largely rural Malays and the predominantly urban non-Malays (Chinese and Indians) has grown, and the even more striking income disparity between rich and poor Malays has increased. Although the government speaks of a "strategy to create a more development conscious and self-reliant rural community",[2] the Malay peasantry has not been mobilized to maximize its contribution to agricultural and rural development. The worsening trend of these economic imbalances, the increasing expenditure on agriculture, the reevaluation of development priorities and strategies, and the sense of urgency underlying the government's efforts, all demonstrate the need for longitudinal studies to examine the effects of the socioeconomic and political changes occurring at the grass-roots level in Malaysia.

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This article is an analysis of social, economic, and political changes that took place between 1966 and 1978 in the rural Malay community of Sungai Raya in northwestern Johore. It provides a longitudinal perspective for earlier studies of the village and local leadership that appeared in *Asian Survey* in 1969 and 1975.[3] This analysis documents an impressive range of improvements since 1966. It reveals that the Malays have been beneficiaries in the government's rural development programmes, but not participants in the sense of being involved in formulating, planning, and implementing projects and contributing time, labour, or capital. It suggests that Malaysia's rural development strategy has thwarted growth of the leadership, motivation, and institutions needed to initiate community-based efforts to raise the villagers' standard of living.

The research for this study was conducted during 1965--67, 1976, and 1978. The initial fieldwork combined participant observation, a household census, in-depth interviews, and a survey of random samples of half the Malay men and one-fourth of the Malay women aged 17 or older. The sample comprises 79 men and 55 women. The survey was conducted by seven Malay university students (four men and three women) during the year of my residence in Sungai Raya. They interviewed 95 per cent of the male sample and 96 per cent of the female sample. During 1976 I spent a week in Sungai Raya gathering information on changes in the community during the previous decade. In 1978 detailed census data were collected on every Malay household in Sungai Raya. Key questions from the earlier questionnaire were used in a survey of random samples of half the men and women aged 17 or older. The samples comprised 101 men and 122 women. The census and survey were undertaken by six secondary-school-educated Malays (five men and one woman) during a year's research on rural development in Malaysia. They interviewed 92 per cent of the male sample and 77 per cent of the female sample. In 1967 and 1978 Chinese assistants collected census data on the few Chinese households in Sungai Raya.

THE COMMUNITY

Sungai Raya, a predominantly Malay community of approximately 1,000 inhabitants, is located midway between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.[4] It is six miles inland from Muar, a coastal city on the Straits of Malacca. Officially known as Bandar Maharani, Muar is the capital and commercial center of Muar District, one of the most populous

districts in the state of Johore. Half a mile beyond Sungai Raya on the paved highway from Muar is the primarily Chinese town of Bukit Pasir, which had 3,536 inhabitants in 1970. Sungai Raya, one of many rural Malay communities in Muar District, comprises three contiguous villages (*kampungs*) under the jurisdiction of a government-appointed headman (*ketua kampung*). The largest *kampung* in Sungai Raya extends for a mile along the highway. It is the social, religious, and political centre of the community and contains a mosque, two *suraus* (Muslim prayer houses), two cemeteries, two elementary schools, and two provision shops. Two smaller villages extend along both sides of two drainage canals (*parits*) perpendicular to the highway. One is a mile and a half in length, the other a mile.

The community of Sungai Raya exemplifies many aspects of rural Malay society along the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, particularly in rubber-producing villages in the southern half of Malaya. The social, economic, and political developments that have occurred in Sungai Raya during the 20th century parallel those changes that have produced the cleavages and tensions of contemporary Malaysian society. Whereas before World War II the villagers in Sungai Raya had preserved most of their traditional way of life, after the war, and especially since independence in 1957, an accelerated rate of change has profoundly altered the basic character of their society. Sungai Raya is representative of the more "urban" Malay villages in southern Malaya. Presumably it illustrates the pattern of social, economic, and political change that more isolated communities will experience in the near future.

SOCIAL CHANGES

Between 1966 and 1978, a number of significant social changes that occurred in Sungai Raya raised the villagers' standard of living, improved their opportunities for social mobility, and heightened their political awareness. These developments reflected the government's increasing efforts to improve the quality of life among rural Malays and the villagers' rising incomes. The most important changes were the migration of young Malays from Sungai Raya, the rise in the villagers' exposure to the mass media, the improvement in educational opportunities and medical care available to the community, and the provision of additional government services and amenities for the *kampungs*.

The population of Sungai Raya increased very little between 1966 and 1978 because of the emigration of young men and women to

obtain improved employment, to further their education, or to follow their husbands. The number of Malay families rose from 136 to 149, while the number of Chinese households increased from 16 to 17. The Malay population rose from 822 to 878, and the number of Chinese residents grew slightly from 147 to 149. At the time of the initial fieldwork, 37 per cent of the families had one or more sons living outside the *kampungs*; 25 per cent of the households had a daughter residing outside the community. Twelve years later, 56 per cent of the families had one or more sons living outside Sungai Raya, and 53 per cent had at least one daughter residing elsewhere.

As in *kampungs* throughout Peninsular Malaysia, the villagers' access to the mass media improved after the mid-1960s and frequency of exposure rose. For example, in 1966 no one in Sungai Raya subscribed to a newspaper and very few villagers bought papers while working or shopping in town. Most Malays who read a newspaper did so in provision shops in Sungai Raya, at a coffee shop in neighbouring Bukit Pasir, or at schools or offices where they worked. A decade later one of the shops in Bukit Pasir sold 100 Malay papers daily. Half were purchased by subscribers from Sungai Raya and nearby *kampungs*. The two provision shops in Sungai Raya continued to buy papers which were read by customers, as did several coffee shops and restaurants in Bukit Pasir. Since Malay custom, reflecting Islamic proscriptions against mixing of the sexes, did not permit women to sit in the shops and read papers, when men began buying newspapers and taking them home an increasing number of women gained access to this medium.

The significant rise in newspaper readership after the mid-1960s was a result of the villagers' increasing access to the press, their improving standard of living, and their rising level of education. In 1966 one-fourth of the men aged 21 or older read a paper daily, and half read a paper at least weekly. By 1978 one-third of the men read one or more newspapers daily, and two-thirds read a paper at least weekly. Readership rose even more significantly among women. In 1966 only a tenth of the women read a newspaper weekly, a reflection of their low literacy rate and very limited access to papers. In 1978, following a significant rise in their level of education, one-third of the women aged 21 or older read papers at least weekly.

The rise in the frequency with which villagers listened to radio newscasts was less noteworthy. In 1966 only 37 per cent of the families owned an operating radio; by 1978 the figure had risen to 65 per cent. In 1966 a fifth of the men heard radio news broadcasts daily, and half

did so at least weekly. By 1978, however, an eighth of the men listened daily; half did so at least weekly. The consistency in the men's exposure to newscasts, during a period in which the number of families with radios doubled, probably reflected increased reliance on television for news reports. Among women, radio listening increased. In 1966 less than a tenth of the women surveyed reported listening to newscasts daily, and only a fifth did so at least weekly. Twelve years later a tenth heard news broadcasts daily; nearly half listened to them at least weekly.

TABLE 1. Exposure to the Mass Media of Men and Women Age 21 or Older

Frequency of Exposure	*Men*		*Women*	
	1966	1978	1966	1978
	%	%	%	%
Read newspapers daily	24	36	0	18
Read newspapers at least weekly	50	67	12	34
Listen to radio news daily	21	13	7	13
Listen to radio news at least weekly	58	59	19	44
Watch TV news daily	3	16	0	18
Watch TV news at least weekly	23	62	2	46
(Number of cases)	(62)	(70)	(43)	(76)

The spread of television viewing was even more dramatic, reflecting rising affluence in the community. In 1966 most programmes broadcast by Television Malaysia on one channel were in English, and only 4 per cent of the Malay families in Sungai Raya owned a television set. Nearly one-fourth of the men watched television news programmes at least weekly; virtually none of the women did so. By 1978 the situation was strikingly different. There were two channels, most programmes were in Malay, and 48 per cent of the Malay households had a television set. A sixth of the men watched news programmes daily and nearly two-thirds watched at least weekly. A fifth of the women watched the news daily; about half did so at least weekly.

During the second decade after independence, Sungai Raya continued to benefit from the government's strong commitment to education as a means of promoting socioeconomic development, of reducing the income imbalance between ethnic groups, and of raising the rural Malays' standard of living. In Sungai Raya, as in villages throughout the

country, the government sought to improve the educational facilities, to reduce the financial obstacles to education, and to maximize the academic achievements of the brightest youngsters. In the early 1970s a new elementary school was built at the northern edge of Sungai Raya. This impressive, large, white structure with its big mural on one wall was one of hundreds of similar schools built throughout Malaysia in the 1970s. It replaced an English-medium school built after World War II beside an older Malay-medium school. By 1978 the language of instruction had been changed from English to Malay as part of the national programme to phase out all English-medium schools.

During the 1970s a number of families in Sungai Raya benefited from a variety of programmes designed to maximize the educational opportunities available to village children. Aware that the cost of textbooks had been a major burden for rural Malays and a frequent source of complaint by *kampung* political leaders, the government instituted a programme under which families earning less than M$200 per month could borrow textbooks free. Ten per cent of the families with children in elementary school borrowed texts in 1978. In the early 1970s some of the brightest youths began receiving funds to help pay for books and other secondary-school expenses, and a few received scholarships to attend special residential high schools in other parts of Johore or elsewhere in the country. In 1978 a fifth of the households with children in secondary schools received a waiver of school fees or other types of financial assistance. Commenting on the range of programmes to help *kampung* children, a perceptive village teacher remarked, "Today any bright, hard-working, poor Malay child can get ahead".

The dramatic post-war improvement in educational facilities and the increasing opportunities for secondary schooling were reflected in a rising level of education among the villagers and in higher levels of academic achievement by *kampung* youth. In 1966 only 29 per cent of the men and 4 per cent of the women aged 21 or older had completed more than four years of schooling. By 1978 these figures were 48 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively, and 10 per cent of both men and women had attended secondary schools. The rise in educational attainment was even more dramatic than these figures suggest, because many of the best-educated men and women had left Sungai Raya in search of urban employment or further education. At the time of the initial investigation, no Malay from Sungai Raya had ever passed the examination at the end of Form V (11th grade) that is a prerequisite for further formal education. Twelve years later, however, one young man had

obtained a B.A. degree in actuary science in Australia and four others were studying at universities in Malaysia, Britain, and America; three men and two women were enrolled at the MARA Institute of Technology outside Kuala Lumpur; two men were attending teacher training colleges; and five men and two women were enrolled in Form VI, the final two years of secondary school.

The change in educational facilities after 1966 was paralleled by an equally impressive improvement in medical care available to the community. Responding in part to repeated petitions by Sungai Raya political leaders, in 1973 the government opened a small health centre in Bukit Pasir on the northern edge of Sungai Raya. A second building was constructed in 1976, and more facilities and staff were added in 1977 in order to promote family planning more effectively.

In 1978 the center offered an impressive range of medical services for residents in Bukit Pasir and for villagers in Sungai Raya and surrounding *kampungs.* A doctor and a dentist provided free care one morning a week, outpatient treatment was available six days a week, and an infants' clinic was held weekly. Travelling by bicycle, nurses visited homes daily in the nearby villages to provide pre- and post-natal care. In addition to medical care offered in the nearby schools, the nurses gave annual physical examinations and vaccinated pupils regularly for tuberculosis, polio, and smallpox. And all first-graders and new students had their eyes examined.

Women seeking maternal and child care or other medical aid at the centre were encouraged to adopt family planning. During visits to individual homes, the nurses advocated contraceptives as a means of spacing infants, not as a way to reduce the number of children. The staff reported that virtually none of the women of any ethnic group (Malay, Chinese, or Indian) would use family planning without her husband's consent. In 1978 the centre provided free pills and condoms. The pill was used by virtually all the women using contraceptives. The centre, which had no information on the percentage of acceptors among married women in the area, reported that the rate was very low among women aged 15 to 44, but that it was rising.

In addition to providing medical care, the centre attempted to improve the sanitation in Sungai Raya and other *kampungs.* Seeking to persuade villagers to construct water-sealed toilets (*tandas jirus*), the centre's public health officer argued that they had no smell, that they improved sanitation about the house, and that they reduced the incidence of hookworms and roundworms. Although the government

had begun advocating construction of these toilets in 1965, it did not begin to promote them vigorously until the early 1970s. In 1966 there were more television sets in Sungai Raya than sanitary toilets. Twelve years later, 76 per cent of the Malay households had a water-sealed toiled while 48 per cent had television sets. The centre's staff attributed the change to its health education programme, to rising family incomes, and to the piping of water to individual homes.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, the government continued to provide additional amenities for Sungai Raya and other villages throughout Peninsular Malaysia. Some were supplied as part of national and state rural development programmes, while other, less expensive projects frequently were given as patronage in response to requests by local *kampung* political organizations or other village groups. The most important amenities provided for Sungai Raya between 1966 and 1978 were a community centre, a new mosque, and piped water and electricity for the two smaller villages in the community.

In 1968 Sungai Raya finally got the community centre (*balai raya*) that the villagers had repeatedly requested during the early 1960s. When the local State Assemblyman promised to secure funds if the villagers would provide a suitable building lot, the Headman and other *kampung* leaders persuaded the wealthiest villager to buy a lot and donate it to the community. In 1975 the centre was expanded after an allocation of additional funds. Seating close to 200 on folding chairs, it provided a meeting place for various *kampung* groups that had formerly met in the nearby school buildings. These groups ranged from political gatherings and conferences with agricultural extension agents to kindergarten and adult-education classes. The concrete playing field adjoining the centre provided a place where young men could play *sepak raga*[5] and badminton. At one time the field had electric lighting, but the lights were never repaired after being broken.

During the 1970s Sungai Raya continued to benefit under the government's politically inspired programme of building mosques and prayer houses (*suraus*) throughout the country. A new mosque, seating 500, was built in the mid-1970s at a cost of M$50,000. It was constructed beside the old mosque, which the villagers had financed and built before World War II. In the early 1960s, the Assemblyman had provided M$12,000 to renovate and expand this building. In 1978 the government financed construction of an impressive brick and wooden *surau* in one of the two smaller villages in Sungai Raya.

In the early 1970s, the government responded to the villagers'

repeated requests for piped water and electricity for the two smaller villages. In 1966 piped water was available only to houses along the highway through Sungai Raya, and those without piped water carried water from standapipes along the highway or from wells near their homes. In 1973 pipes were laid along the dirt roads through the smaller villages. Whereas in 1966 only 18 per cent of the Malay households in Sungai Raya had had piped water, by 1978 the figure had risen to 71 per cent.[6] Electricity first became available to houses along the highway in 1965, and in the early 1970s to the two smaller *kampungs*. The percentage of families with electricity rose from 45 to 79 between 1966 and 1978. Households that did not have access to this service or could not afford the cost of installation continued to rely on kerosene lamps or kerosene-burning pressure lanterns. During my casual conversations in 1978, a number of villagers indicated that the provision of water and electricity for the two smaller *kampungs* was the most significant change in Sungai Raya during the previous decade.

ECONOMIC CHANGES

When I returned to Sungai Raya in 1978, I was immediately struck by the signs of greater affluence and changing life-styles. The movement of new families into the *kampungs* and the rise in incomes had encouraged home improvements and construction of many new dwellings. Thirty per cent of the Malay houses had been built during the previous decade, many on the ground rather than above the ground in the traditional Malay style. Forty seven per cent had either been repaired or improved since 1966, at a median cost of M$945. In 1966 only 56 per cent of the Malay families used corrugated iron roofing rather than thatch (*atap*); 12 years later 87 per cent used this more durable material. Adopting urban niceties, many had added potted orchids to the shrubs in front of their homes.

There was little change in the pattern of landownership between 1966 and 1978. Fifteen per cent of the Malay households increased their acreage; 7 per cent sold part or all of their holdings. Most purchases and sales were of one to three acres. While the proportion of landless families declined slightly from 32 per cent in 1966 to 28 per cent in 1978, the number of households owning only one or two acres, including the house lot, rose from 18 per cent to 35 per cent. The median landholding per Malay family remained at two acres, while that of the Chinese was still four acres.

Most land in Sungai Raya was planted in rubber; some was in rambutan, durian, and other fruits. The value of the land rose at least 100 per cent during the decade after 1966 because of the increasing productivity of the rubber and fruit trees replanted in the early 1960s, the provision of water and electricity in the two smaller *kampungs*, the gradual growth in population, and the increasing desirability of Sungai Raya as a residential area only six miles from town. In the late 1970s, a developer built six single-family dwellings and duplexes that he was selling and renting to civil servants and affluent villagers.

The pattern of employment in Sungai Raya changed very little between 1966 and 1978. Two thirds of the men and one-third of the women aged 21 and older continued to work as unskilled labourers tapping rubber trees, cutting grass, clearing drainage canals, etc. The percentage of men working in "skilled" jobs, such as truck drivers and carpenters, or in "semiprofessional" positions, such as policemen and government clerks, rose from 11 per cent to 18 per cent. There was, however, far more occupational mobility than these figures suggest, since many of the best-educated young men left Sungai Raya to work as policemen, soldiers, junior government officials, or teachers. One young man, the son of a poor rubber tapper, was teaching computer science in Kuala Lumpur.

During this period a number of Malays started a variety of commercial endeavours. Although the two provision shops begun in the early 1960s had closed, a new, well-stocked store was opened in the mid-1970s by a villager who had started business in another *kampung* with a government loan. A smaller concern was begun by an elderly Malay who bought basic foodstuffs in neighbouring Bukit Pasir and sold them at a 15 per cent markup. In the early 1970s, several men began renting small, government-built stalls in Bukit Pasir where they sold coffee and cakes, used clothing, meat and vegetables, and other inexpensive items. Working long hours, they operated with pathetically small inventories. In 1978 a retired policeman rented space in government-built stalls in Muar for his son in Kuala Lumpur who wanted to open his own radio and television repair shop. And that year another enterprising Malay in Sungai Raya began making concrete building blocks, toilet bowls, and Malay gravestones.

Between 1966 and 1978, many villagers benefited directly or indirectly from numerous government efforts to assist rural Malays. In the early 1970s, three agricultural extension agents were stationed in Bukit Pasir. By 1978 two-thirds of those who owned rubber or fruit

lands had replanted all or nearly all their acreage under special subsidized replanting programmes. Sixteen per cent of the households were raising one to three herds of cattle, either to eat or to sell. Most had been obtained under the government's *Lembu Pawah* programme that provides villagers a cow with the understanding that the first calf will be given to the government. The Veterinary Department continued to provide free vaccinations for the Malays' chickens and cattle. In 1978 the Village Headman and several other Malays received hundreds of small coffee and cocoa plants as part of a programme to encourage cultivation of new and potentially more profitable crops.

The villagers' real income rose significantly during this period. Excluding the earnings of a school gardener who had won the national lottery twice, in 1966 monthly family incomes ranged from M$10 to M$500; the median income was M$80.[7] Twelve years later monthly household earnings in current dollars varied from M$36 to M$3,450, and the median income was M$275.[8] Adjusted for a 61 per cent increase in the Consumer Price Index, the 1978 earnings in constant dollars ranged from M$22 to M$2,143 per month; the median income was M$171.[9] Whereas the income of the poorest 40 per cent of the rural population in Peninsular Malaysia fell between 1957 and 1970 because of declining rubber prices,[10] in Sungai Raya the real incomes of each quintile of the Malay households rose at least 100 per cent between 1966 and 1978. This growth in earnings was reflected in a 1978 meeting at which more than 40 men from Sungai Raya and neighbouring villages heard an official outline a special government programme enabling Malays to invest in mutual funds. In 1966 there were so few affluent villagers that such a meeting would have been inconceivable.

A number of factors contributed to this rise in prosperity. The percentage of men employed in "skilled" and other better-paying jobs had risen slightly. Nearly all the families had replanted their agricultural lands with improved strains of rubber and fruit trees which had matured and begun to yield. After a dramatic decline in the price of rubber in the late 1960s, prices rose significantly during the 1970s.[11] Thirty-seven per cent of the Malay households received financial help from children who had moved away, usually to urban areas. This assistance varied from M$5 to M$350 per month in current dollars; the median contribution was M$60. Finally, the meager earnings of a few families, especially those headed by widows and divorcees, were supplemented by small monthly allowances from the Department of Social Welfare.

Although all the villagers enjoyed a rising standard of living, between

1966 and 1978 the income disparity between Malay households grew. In 1966 the top fifth of the families received 49 per cent of the total Malay income, while the bottom fifth got 6 per cent. In 1978 the top quintile obtained 59 per cent of the total earnings, and the lowest quintile received 5 per cent. The inequality was even more pronounced if one compared the highest and lowest deciles. In 1966 the top tenth received 33 per cent of the income; the bottom tenth earned 3 per cent; 12 years later the top decile obtained 47 per cent of the total Malay income and the bottom received only 2 per cent.

Village respondents indicated that there had not been a comparable increase in the status gap between the haves and have-nots. The men's attendance at Friday prayers in the mosque and other religious activities, as well as the villagers' continued participation in social activities such as preparations for weddings, helped to retain social bonds within the community. Cohesion had also been perpetuated by emigration of the best-educated youth. Had they continued to live in Sungai Raya while working in town, their salaries would have increased the income gap between families and might have generated social cleavages within the community.

Although not all families had shared equally in the community's rising standard of living, when I returned to Sungai Raya in 1978 I was immediately struck by the evidence of greater prosperity. Whereas 2 per cent of the Malay families had owned cars in 1966, 12 years later 13 per cent had cars, and the proportion owning motorcycles and motorscooters had risen from 6 per cent to 27 per cent. The front parlours of many homes were furnished with new, plastic-covered furniture. Coffee tables and television sets were draped with Malaysian batik, which had not been common earlier. Thirty-eight per cent of the households had an electric iron, 27 per cent possessed electric fans, 26 per cent owned eight-track or cassette players, and 17 per cent had electric refrigerators.

The rise in the villagers' standard of living was accompanied by a conscious adoption of many urban Malaysian practices. In many households the free Chinese pictorial calendars used as wall decorations in the past had been replaced with large pictures of Malay or European movie stars and singers or with pictures of mountain scenery in Europe. Whereas formerly guests were invariably served inexpensive Malay coffee, in 1978 they were frequently offered Milo or soft drinks. Vases of orchids on the head table during social meetings in the community centre also reflected changing life-styles. The tight jeans and T-shirts

worn by some young girls and the young men's long hair illustrated a dramatic break with traditional attitudes. In addition, young villagers married later than their parents had, and they had begun to choose their own marriage partners.

In the final analysis, the most striking socioeconomic changes in Sungai Raya were the rise in the villagers' standard of living and the social mobility achieved by secondary-school-educated young Malays who obtained jobs, status, and incomes that were unimaginable a generation earlier.

POLITICAL CHANGES

Between 1966 and 1978, several significant political changes took place in Sungai Raya. Although there had been a noticeable rise in the level of political involvement in the community during the first decade after independence in 1957, by the mid-1960s the pattern of political activity had become routinized. The politicization of Sungai Raya before 1966 was due in part to the government's increasing penetration into the villages and to the dominant Malay political party's growing ties with the community.[12] The pattern of political change after 1966 reflected the lack of new governmental efforts to mobilize the villagers' participation in rural development, the decline of partisan competition in the state of Johore (a bastion of support for the ruling party), and the depoliticization of Malaysian politics following the May 1969 riot in the federal capital. During 1966–78 Sungai Raya's four major links with the government continued to be: (1) the Village Headman, (2) the local State Assemblyman, (3) the Village Development Committee, and (4) the local branch of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO).

Village headmen (*ketua kampungs*) are members of an administrative hierarchy that extends from the federal and state capitals through the districts and subdistricts (*mukims*) to the villages. The *ketua kampungs* have jurisdiction over one or more communities, depending upon the size of the communities and their proximity to each other. They are the main link between the villagers and the *penghulus*, the salaried headmen of the subdistricts. The *ketua kampungs'* position as honorary community leaders accords them considerable status, but it provides little formal authority and no coercive sanctions. Their responsibilities impose endless demands upon their time and money, for which they receive a very small allowance.

The present headman of Sungai Raya was appointed in 1962 as part of the government's effort to accelerate rural development by replacing most *ketua kampungs* with more progressive individuals. His duties were increased in the early 1960s as part of the government's strategy to enlist Malay support of its development programmes. Between 1966 and 1978, however, there were no important additions to his responsibilities, a situation that reflected the absence of any serious new efforts to enlist peasant participation in rural development.

During the period after 1966, there was little change in the *ketua kampung*'s role as the main link between the villagers and the government. Concerned about communicating with higher authorities and preserving social harmony in the community, he did not perceive of himself as the leader of locally initiated development. He looked to the government to provide additional amenities for the community and to raise the villagers' standard of living. Sixteen years after his appointment, he still lacked the authority, training, patronage, and motivation to perform effectively his numerous developmental responsibilities. Furthermore, the necessity of earning a livelihood as a small-scale contractor conflicted with the performance of his many designated duties. His annual allowance had been raised from M$180 to M$600, but without adequate remuneration, regardless of training and motivation, he could work only part-time as leader of the community.

The Malays' second link with the government was their State Assemblyman, who had represented the Sungai Raya area since 1959 and had been *Menteri Besar* (chief executive) of Johore since February 1967. Tan Sri Haji Othman bin Haji Mohd. Sa'at was a prominent leader of UMNO, the dominant Malay political party and the key member of the ruling National Front, a coalition of Malay, Chinese, and Indian parties. Returned to office unopposed in 1969 and 1974, he decisively defeated his 1978 opponent from the Islamic Party (PAS). A tireless politician, he continued to maintain close ties with his constituents. Every Thursday he returned from the state capital to his huge house in a village three miles from Sungai Raya. That evening and all day Friday he met with villagers to talk about their problems and needs. Periodically the *kampung* leaders in Sungai Raya called on him to seek his help. Villagers acknowledge that sometimes local meetings were organized for the specific purpose of asking his support in obtaining further governmental assistance. The Assemblyman visited all the *kampungs* in his constituency at least twice a year. When unable to accept an invitation, he often sent an UMNO leader from Muar or the Assemblyman from an

adjoining constituency. At local UMNO meetings, religious gatherings, and other events he invariably delivered a long, politicizing speech designed to remind the villagers of UMNO's accomplishments on their behalf and to sustain their loyalty to the party. While these gatherings undoubtedly served to reinforce party allegiance, their importance as a source of political information presumably declined during the 1970s as the level of education rose and as exposure to the mass media increased.

Sungai Raya's third link with the government, the Village Development Committee, was established in 1962 as part of the federal government's effort to increase the Malays' political support and to raise their standard of living. Organized because of a directive from the District Officer rather than in response to a recognized community need, it was directed (1) to encourage villagers to formulate requests for government assistance, (2) to plan and initiate community self-help projects on the basis of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), (3) to encourage villagers to make maximum use of their land, and (4) to increase the Malays' awareness of government concern for their welfare. In 1975 the scope of the Committee's responsibilities was extended to include maintenance of security in the community, and it was renamed the Village Development and Security Committee. This modification, reflecting increasing government concern about communist terrorist activities in northern Malaya, did not substantially change the Committee's role.

Throughout 1966–78 the ten-man Committee did little more than periodically petition the government for further assistance such as repairing the mosques, expanding a primary school, or providing cattle for a few families. Attempting to mobilize the community for a new development effort in 1975, the Committee encouraged villagers to grow vegetables and fruits on unused land about their homes. This initiative was part of a nation-wide programme to reduce the cost of food, which was rising because of inflation. Although half the families reportedly participated in this project during 1975, a year later only those households that had always had gardens were still raising vegetables.

The demise of the Committee as an agent of change was illustrated in another endeavour. In the early 1960s, it mobilized villagers once a year to resurface the dirt roads through Sungai Raya with crushed laterite rock provided by the Department of Public Works. Enlisting help from the families that benefited was difficult, and the roads were never as smooth as desired. In the late 1970s, discouraged by the problems of organizing *kampung* support for this project, the paterna-

listic District Rural Development Office began resurfacing the lanes with a large road grader.

The failure of the development committees in Sungai Raya and elsewhere was almost inevitable. Following the initial burst of bureaucratic enthusiasm in the early 1960s no serious effort was made to develop the committees as viable institutions that could mobilize villagers to contribute time, labour, or capital for local improvements. In 1976 the Assemblyman from Sungai Raya stated that since the government had a responsibility to raise the Malays' level of living, he opposed insisting on community-based development projects before granting further assistance. In Sungai Raya, as in other *kampungs*, the committee members received no training in the techniques of community development, they lacked incentives, and they controlled no resources.[13] Furthermore, aware that UMNO used rural development projects as patronage, the members knew that appealing to the Assemblyman or to the UMNO headquarters in town was more effective than seeking assistance through established bureaucratic channels.

The villagers' fourth link with the government was the local UMNO branch, which included members from Sungai Raya and neighbouring Bukit Pasir. It was one of 5,000 branches in Peninsular Malaysia in 1978. Formed in 1959 in response to village initiative, it established ties between *kampung* political leaders and officers of the UMNO division in Muar, enabled villagers to attend political meetings and courses in town, provided a channel through which they could request governmental assistance, and encouraged local leaders to participate more actively in the periodic mobilization of electoral support for Malay communal concerns.[14] Between 1966 and 1978, changes occurred in the branch's leadership, its organization, its activities in the community, and its role in the national political process.

The pattern of leadership began to change in the mid-1960s. Several teachers who had helped the Headman organize the branch withdrew from active leadership to devote their time to family and professional or economic interests. Few young men assumed positions of leadership. Several retired policemen, who had settled in Sungai Raya, exerted considerable influence in the community because of their above-average levels of education and income and their familiarity with modern ways. In 1966 the Headman's older brother, recently retired from the police, was elected as the UMNO chairman, replacing the Headman. Between 1967 and 1975, he and another retired policeman led the *kampung* organization. The Headman remained active in the local and division-

level party organizations, and in 1975 he was again elected chairman, a position he continued to occupy.

The key leaders in 1978 were the Headman, his older brother, and a teacher. When asked to identify the most politically influential men in the community, respondents insisted that the 17 members of the branch executive committee were the key leaders. Ten of the 11 members living in Sungai Raya were interviewed. Whereas the teacher-dominated leaders in 1966 had an above-average level of income, education, and exposure to the mass media, in 1978 the branch leaders were more representative of the community in terms of occupation, income, education, and exposure to the media. During this period there was a marked decline in their sense of political efficacy.[15] In 1966 two-thirds of the branch leadership felt that they and other villagers could exert a great deal of influence on the government to provide assistance for the *kampungs*, but less than a fifth of the other village men felt they had this much influence. Twelve years later, however, only one-third of the branch leaders and one-third of the other men thought they could exert "a great deal of influence".

A number of factors partially explain these changes. Had there been a realistic challenge to UMNO's dominance in the area, as there was in northern Malaysia, the teachers and others who dropped out of active leadership would probably have continued to work through the local organization to advance Malay communal concerns. The exodus of villagers after independence included a number of young men and women with above-average levels of education, initiative, and motivation who might have assumed positions of leadership. The decline in the leaders' sense of political efficacy probably reflected their rising level of political sophistication. It may also have been due in part to the villagers' increasing belief that many party leaders were insensitive to the frustrations and disillusionment of their *kampung* backers and that some of the party's elite were corrupt and engaged in nepotism and favouritism.[16]

In response to directives from UMNO headquarters in town, auxiliary organizations were established that were politically insignificant. A separate UMNO youth group was formed in 1970, with all male members aged 16 to 40 automatically becoming members of this organization and of the branch. The youth body had its own leaders, held separate meetings, sent delegates to the division-level UMNO Youth meetings in town, and participated in a variety of nonpolitical activities such as Quran reading contests and sports competitions. Within a few years,

however, it began to atrophy because so many young men had left the *kampungs*. Furthermore, in the absence of partisan competition in the area, there was no sense of urgency about grass-roots political activity and recruitment of future leaders. The youth organization's chief role in the community was sponsoring two martial arts (*silat*) groups that performed before dignitaries at the opening of festive meetings in Sungai Raya and nearby communities.[17] The group was not assigned any major tasks in the branch's systematic mobilization of votes during the 1978 national election.

Although most villagers in the mid-1960s felt that politics was not a proper concern for *kampung* women, in the early 1970s a separate women's UMNO organization was formed. Wanita UMNO comprised all female branch members, regardless of age. It was led by a widow, about 40 years of age, whose late husband had been a teacher and an active branch leader. She was assisted by the Headman's niece. These women had above-average levels of education and exposure to the mass media. In the mid-1970s the Sultan of Johore decorated the leader for her community service. While establishment of an auxiliary women's organization prompted more women to join the party, the group was politically insignificant. Its leaders attended at least one party meeting in town each year, but limited their activities in Sungai Raya to organizing occasional social gatherings for *kampung* women. Frequently when the Assemblyman or other dignitaries arrived for an important meeting, they were met by a group of Wanita UMNO women, dressed in matching sarongs and overblouses, who beat flat *rebana* drums and chanted greetings. In 1978 the Wanita UMNO leader spoke at one of the election meetings in Sungai Raya, but the women's organization had no responsibility in the campaign.

During the 1970s the Sungai Raya UMNO branch provided a communications link between the government and the villagers, served as an important channel for securing additional governmental assistance for the community, and occasionally mobilized electoral support for the UMNO-led ruling coalition. In the decade after 1969 it assumed an increasingly significant role in the legitimization of the political system, which was plagued with growing corruption. UMNO encouraged branch leaders and members to look to the party for help with community and personal problems. The Assemblyman contended that the key function of the UMNO branch was "to convey problems to the assemblyman". Local leaders meeting with him in his home, at UMNO meetings in town, or during party gatherings in Sungai Raya discussed community

needs and individual desires.

Branch meetings were an equally important means of communicating party concerns and fostering support for the UMNO elite and its policies. Held once or twice a year, the *kampung* meetings were addressed by the dynamic Assemblyman, who delivered politicizing talks designed to raise the listeners' level of political awareness and concern, to revive their appreciation of UMNO's efforts on the behalf of Malays, and to sustain party loyalty. Other political gatherings, such as a two-day fund-raising fair in 1978 organized by the UMNO branch and the Sungai Raya parent-teachers association, always included speeches by the Assemblyman or his representative. While branch meetings effectively communicated party views and concerns, their relative importance as a source of general political information presumably declined during the 1970s as the villagers' levels of education and exposure to the mass media rose.

Representation of the local party organization at UMNO meetings in town, however, continued to have an important communications role. Following the formation of the UMNO Youth and Wanita UMNO auxiliaries, members of these groups joined the key branch leaders in periodically attending division-level meetings. These provided an important opportunity for the most politically active villagers to listen to politicizing talks by the *Menteri Besar*, members of parliament, and other prominent UMNO leaders. These respected spokesmen communicated party concerns and sought to heighten partisan loyalty. One such meeting attended by four men from Sungai Raya in 1976 displayed considerably more pomp and ceremony than a comparable gathering a decade earlier. National and state leaders urged nearly 300 *kampung* representatives to recruit new members and presented a trophy to the branch that had enlisted the most new supporters. In a tone of exhortation not heard at a similar assembly ten years before, they called upon the local stalwarts to support government efforts to eliminate communist guerrillas and subversives. This threat was likened to the armed communist insurrection in Malay between 1948 and 1960.

UMNO's increasing use of rural development projects as patronage heightened the local branch's importance as a channel for requesting additional assistance from the government. While nearly all groups in Sungai Raya sought aid from government offices in town, by 1978 the *kampung* UMNO organization, headed by the Village Headman, was widely recognized as the community's most important channel for help. The Assemblyman acknowledged that the most efficient way for

villagers to secure benefits was to apply to the government through the UMNO division headquarters or to contact him personally. Typed copies of the branch's requests were usually sent to the party headquarters in town, to the government department concerned, and to the Assemblyman in his capacity as head of the state government. These appeals frequently supplemented those sent by the Kampung Development Committee.

Various incidents in 1978 demonstrated the villagers' growing perception of the branch as a prime source for obtaining rural development assistance and of the party or government as a horn of plenty. Early that year the Assemblyman asked the UMNO branches in two subdistricts to submit lists of improvements needed in their communities. The Sungai Raya UMNO executive committee compiled a list of projects costing M$30,000. Later, however, the chairman thought of other items that the community could use. These were added to the list, which totalled M$83,000. The expanded requests included funds to pave several dirt roads in the area, to build a new prayer house (*surau*), to repair and expand the washing area next to the old *surau* in Sungai Raya, to erect a new fence and canteen for the old school in Sungai Raya, to purchase playground equipment for the families living at the police station on the edge of Sungai Raya, and to subsidize the women's group in Sungai Raya. The combined appeals from the UMNO branches in the two subdistricts totalled nearly M$225,000. Unable to meet all their requests, the Assemblyman allocated M$43,000 for the Sungai Raya branch. When the chairman informed the executive committee of what had happened, the Secretary immediately submitted another appeal to the division UMNO headquarters asking for an additional M$24,000 to finance a new *surau* in one of the smaller *kampungs* in Sungai Raya, a community centre for the Malay neighbourhood in Bukit Pasir, and various kinds of musical and sports equipment. Another branch executive committee member, who was also head of the community youth organization, *Belia*, wrote the UMNO headquarters seeking money to purchase a public address system, a mimeograph machine, and a typewriter.

In the 1978 election, the Sungai Raya branch, established originally as ensure continued Malay political domination, again sought to mobilize the community in support of the UMNO-led government. When the election was called, the branch chairman (the Headman) converted his large kitchen into an "operations room". Maps and charts were put up with data on the number, sex, and ethnic background of the voters in

the local polling areas. A ten-member election committee was formed in accordance with instructions received from the UMNO headquarters in town. These men and women served as leaders of ten subcommittees charged with various responsibilities ranging from "psychological warfare" and transporting voters to the polls to providing refreshments and securing absentee ballots for voters temporarily out of the community. Approximately 30 villagers actively participated in the campaign.

Rallies were banned during the campaign because the government feared that communisits or other subversive elements might cause trouble. However, political parties were allowed to hold indoor meetings (*ceramah*). The branch in Sungai Raya organized three such gatherings, which were attended by 40 to 75 men and women. Speaking over an electric public-address system, the chairman and other *kampung* leaders ignored the opposition party and focused their remarks on what UMNO and the government had done for the Malays. They repeatedly explained the proper procedure for marking ballots in an effort to reduce the number of spoiled ballots. Talks by the *Penghulu* and prominent religious leaders from town added to the villagers' understanding of the link between UMNO and the bureaucracy, reinforced their belief that religion and politics are inseparable, and enhanced the government's legitimacy in their eyes.

Although rallies were prohibited, in Sungai Raya as elsewhere, the ruling party mobilized government resources in an effort to maximize its electoral support. During the campaign the Department of Information office in Muar organized an evening civics course (*kursus civic*) in Sungai Raya as part of its regular information programme. The community centre was decorated with coloured lights similar to those used to light homes during *Ramadan*, the celebration at the end of the Muslim fasting month. Wanita UMNO women beat *rebana* drums and chanted as the dignitaries arrived. During the evening 200 to 300 villagers listened to endless speeches by the Assemblyman, the National Front candidate from Parliament from the area, the *Penghulu*, and other UMNO leaders from town. With only one reference to the pending election, the Assemblyman spoke for more than an hour about the history of UMNO and the UMNO-dominated government's efforts to raise the Malays' standard of living. Toward the end of the 19-day campaign another special meeting was held in Sungai Raya to celebrate the formal opening of a new government-sponsored cooperative in Muar District. Organized by the government, this gathering attracted nearly 300 men and women from Sungai Raya and nearby *kampungs*. It was

addressed by the Assemblyman in his role as *Menteri Besar* as well as by other prominent state and district officials. Although the Assemblyman never mentioned the forthcoming election, he spoke at great length about the government's accomplishments in rural development. He vividly contrasted the standard of living in the rural areas at the time of independence with that achieved under the ruling party. Again, the pageantry of the meeting and the status of the leaders present added credibility to their message and reinforced the government's legitimacy among the villagers.

The branch conducted a house-to-house canvass as part of the mobilization effort. Forms supplied by the National Front headquarters in town were completed with information on each household and on each registered voter. This information included partisan sentiments, contacts with opposition spokesmen, and complaints against the government. Campaign literature was distributed, and voters were given cards listing all the information they would need to supply at the polling stations. As in rural areas throughout the country, information sheds were built near the polling stations, and on election day cars were provided to transport villagers to the polls. Working with copies of the registration list, campaign workers kept track of voters who had balloted. That afternoon the Chairman and others called on villagers who had not yet voted, urging them to do so.

The significance of the activities of the local branch in Sungai Raya and other *kampungs* began to change after 1969 as UMNO became more entrenched politically, as the regime became more authoritarian, as corruption became more prevalent, and as villagers became more politically aware. While UMNO and the government relied less on the voter turnout that the local organizations could and did provide, they became increasingly dependent on the branches to help sustain their legitimacy. The pattern of mobilization observed during the 1978 election suggests that political meetings, election campaigns, and other branch activities not only reinforced party loyalty, but that such efforts also helped to develop a sense of participation in the political process and to legitimize UMNO and the political system.

CONCLUSION

The implications of this study extend beyond Sungai Raya. As in many *kampungs* throughout Peninsular Malaysia, an increasing range of government programmes achieved impressive results: agricultural

production improved, the range of public services reaching the Malays expanded, family incomes rose, and social mobility increased. However, while the level of living in Sungai Raya rose significantly between 1966 and 1978, many villagers moved away from the *kampungs* to seek employment, and the income disparity among the Malays widened.

The political changes between 1966 and 1978 illustrate the institutionalization of the position of the headman as both the administrative and the political leader of the community, the primacy of his role as a communications link between the government and the villagers, and his failure to become an initiator of change. During the decade after 1966, UMNO became the established channel through which the community appealed for additional aid. Whereas earlier the Malays had requested the government to provide major items such as water and electricity, a clinic, and new religious buildings, by 1978 the government was regarded as an almost unlimited source of assistance and the range of benefits sought was expanded to include less essential items such as electric fans, typewriters, and public address systems. With the decline of partisan competition in Johore in the mid-1960s, the depoliticization of politics throughout Malaysia during the 1970s, and the spread of corruption, the local UMNO branch in Sungai Raya became less important as an instrument for mobilizing electoral support but increasingly significant as a means of sustaining the legitimacy of UMNO and the government.

In the final analysis, the pattern of change between 1966 and 1978 was essentially one of rural development with limited community participation. While the villagers made increasing demands upon UMNO and the government for further amenities and benefits, they were not involved in formulating, planning, and implementing local projects, and they were not expected to contribute time, labour, or capital. Further improvements remained almost completely dependent upon the efforts and resources of the state and national governments. Malaysia's development strategy and UMNO's use of rural projects as patronage reinforced the villagers' dependence upon the government's benevolence and discouraged growth of the leadership, motivation, and institutions needed to initiate community-based efforts to raise the Malays' standard of living. Malaysia cannot maximize its potential for rural development until the villagers are mobilized to make their maximum contribution toward improving the quality of life in their communities.

NOTES

1 The total public development expenditure for agriculture under the Second Malaysian Plan (1970–75) was M$2.1 billion; the revised allocation for agriculture under the recently concluded Third Malaysian Plan (1976–80) was M$7.4 billion. (During the past decade the value of the Malaysian ringgit (M$) per U.S. dollar ranged from M$3.00 in 1966 to M$3.06 in 1970 to M$2.20 in 1978–80). Under both plans 23 per cent of the total public expenditure was allocated for agriculture. Investment in rural development, rather than just agriculture, was much greater than these figures suggest, since they do not include expenditures for education, health, social and community services, and other sectors related to rural development. Government of Malaysia, *Third Malaysian Plan, 1976–80* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1976) and *Mid-Term Review of the Third Malaysian Plan 1976–80* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1979).

2 *Mid-Term Review of the Third Malaysian Plan 1976–80*, p. 231.

3 See my "Politicization and Political Development in a Rural Malay Community", *Asian Survey*, 9:12 (December 1969), pp. 919–933, and "Patterns of Leadership in a Rural Malay Community," *Asian Survey*, 15:5 (May 1975), pp. 407–421.

4 On Sungai Raya before 1966, see my *Sungai Raya: A Sociopolitical Study of a Rural Malay Community* (Berkeley: Research Monograph No. 15, Centre for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, 1977)

5 *Sepak raga* is a traditional Malay game, similar to volleyball, in which players kick a small rattan ball over a net.

6 Acknowledging great differences between districts, in 1978 the chief executive of Johore estimated that 85 per cent of the people in Johore had access to piped water. *New Straits Times*, August 24, 1978, p. 24.

7 The initial census of Sungai Raya did not obtain information on Malay family incomes. However, during the 1966 surveys of half the men and one-fourth of the women aged 17 or older, respondents were shown or read a card with incomes ranging from M$1 to M$500 or above and were asked to indicate "your family income, including wages, or income from land, or welfare, or other income". Estimates of household earnings were obtained from 70 per cent of the Malay families; the median monthly income calculated from this information is very similar to that found in other studies of Malay *kampungs* in the mid-1960s.

8 In contrast, throughout Peninsular Malaysia in 1976 the median monthly Malay household income in current dollars was M$229. Government of Malaysia, *Mid-Term Review of the Third Malaysian Plan 1976–80*, p. 44.

9 Differences in the methods used to collect income data may have inflated the rise in household earnings. Whereas in 1966 Malay survey respondents were asked to indicate total family income from a range of figures on a card that was shown or read to them, during the 1978 census every household head was asked a series of questions on all possible sources of earnings and

the monthly household income was computed with the respondent's assistance.

10 E.L.H. Lee, "Rural Poverty in West Malaysia, 1957–70", in ILO, *Poverty and Landlessness in Rural Asia* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1977), pp. 185–203.

11 Although rubber prices fell sharply in 1975, they rose at an annual average rate of 23.5 per cent between 1972 and 1976 in large measure because of the rising cost of oil, which increased the competitiveness of natural rubber *vis-a-vis* synthetic rubber.

12 See my "The Politicization of Malay Villagers: National Integration or Disintegration?" *Comparative Politics*, 7:2 (January 1975), pp. 205–225.

13 The ineffectiveness of village development committees in other states is analysed in Conner Bailey, *Broker, Mediator, Patron and Kinsman: An Historical Analysis of Key Leadership Roles in a Rural Malaysian District* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Centre for International Studies, 1976); L. Conner Bailey, "Social and Economic Organization in Rural Malay Society" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1980); G. Shabbir Cheema, et. al., *Rural Organizations and Rural Development in Selected Malaysian Villages* (Kuala Lumpur: Asian and Pacific Development Administration Centre, 1978); and Alang Perang Zainuddin, "Factors Associated with Level of Participation of Members of Village Development and Security Committees in Four Peninsular Malaysian States" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio University, 1977).

14 The branch is UMNO's basic unit, usually serving the are of a polling station. The next higher level in the organizational hierarchy is the division, normally encompassing a parliamentary constituency.

15 Political efficacy was measured by asking survey respondents, "In your opinion, how much could you or other people in this village influence the government to help villagers here? Would you say that the amount of influence which you or other villagers have is: a great deal, just a little, or almost none?"

16 While there is no readily available statistical data on the growth of corruption, during the research in 1978, Malay villagers and urban Malaysians repeatedly commented on the distressing rise of corruption since 1969.

17 *Silat* is a traditional Malay martial art form of self-defence that resembles karate and tae kwon do.

CHAPTER TEN

The Politics of Poverty Eradication: The Implementation of Development Projects in a Malaysian District

Shamsul A. B.

Malaysia's New Economic Policy (NEP), which was launched in association with the government's Second Malaysia Plan (1971–75), has been the subject of much discussion in the context of development at the national level. This article will focus on empirical issues pertaining to its implementation, and thus offer a picture of its impact at the local level.[1] It begins with a brief discussion of the origins of the NEP and its objectives. The next section examines the implementation of the NEP, especially its "poverty eradication" aspect, within one administrative district,[2] and is mainly concerned with the process whereby the bureaucratic operations of the "district development machinery" are ultimately controlled by politicians. The third section describes the different categories of development projects available within the district under the "poverty eradication" objective of the NEP, and demonstrates, again, the political dimension of the projects' distribution. The final section presents some detailed cases of the implementation and distribution of these benefits in a particular village within one state electoral constituency in the district studied. Data presented in this essay were gathered during an extended period of field study throughout 1980 and 1981.

THE NEP: ITS ORIGIN AND OBJECTIVES

Many scholars assume that the objectives and policies of the NEP were formulated, and later implemented, solely as a government response to the May 13, 1969 racial riots in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital

city.[3] This is perhaps true insofar as the physical effort of putting together the whole content of the document called *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971–75*, in which the NEP was detailed, was carried out immediately after the incident occurred – that is, in mid-1970. However, other scholars have suggested that the philosophical ideas and practical policies incorporated in this document, and hence into the NEP, can be traced back to before the 1957 *Merdeka*.[4] Suffice it to say here that the NEP embodies the economic interests of the then-emerging Malay capitalist class, which were first expressed in a systematic manner during the two historic *Kongeres Ekonomi Bumiputera* (Indigenous Economic Congresses) of 1965 and 1968.[5] Analysis reveals that these same interests came to be reflected in the objectives and specific policies of the NEP.

For instance, although the first objective of the NEP was "to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty ... irrespective of race,"[6] this was apparently to be achieved without eliminating class exploitation, without challenging the interests of the propertied class, and without incorporating efforts to improve the lot of wage-earners. In short, all measures to "eradicate poverty" could only be carried out within a framework which did not "disturb" the interests of the propertied class, of which the Malay capitalists constitute an important component. As a result, specific policies directed at "poverty eradication" have actually worsened the overall state of income distribution,[7] although officially the incidence of poverty has been reduced dramatically.[8]

The economic interests of the Malay capitalists were even more clearly represented in the second objective of the NEP, which was "to restructure Malaysian society to correct economic imbalance, so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function."[9] For instance, in order to "rectify" the "racial" economic imbalance, at least 30 per cent of the total commercial capital and industrial activities in all categories and scales of operation had to be allocated to the Malays and other indigenous people in terms of ownership and management. For this sole purpose, the government implemented programmes to support the activities of private entrepreneurs – an approach which had been adopted during the pre-NEP era, but which met with little success. Dozens of public enterprises or statutory government bodies – such as the Urban Development Authority (UDA) and the State Economic Development Corporations (SEDCs) – were established to promote the interests of the Malay capitalists, purportedly on behalf of, and in trusteeship for, the Malay community as a whole.[10]

The objectives of the NEP have been implemented by stages, in successive five-year plans subsequent to the Second Malaysia Plan (1971–75). Hence, the Third Malaysia Plan (1976–80) and the Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981–85) have incorporated the original objectives and policies of the Second Malaysia Plan. Inevitably, there have been changes made in the latter two plans, none of which, however, have affected the Malay capitalist class. On the contrary, the interests of the latter have been consolidated and strengthened.[11]

It is against this general background that my analysis of the implementation of the NEP objectives at the local level must be set. The overall emphasis will be on the political dimension of the whole process and its sociological impact at the different levels of social organization within the district I studied.

THE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MACHINERY

In Malaysia, at the district level, all projects implemented under the NEP are simply called *projek pembangunan*, or development projects, irrespective of whether they are for "poverty eradication" or to "restructure Malaysian society". Usually there are about a dozen committees formed to handle the administration and implementation of these projects.[12]

In Malawati district,[13] which I studied, there are about forty different district-level committees dealing with matters ranging from the Quran-reading competition to the issuing of gaming licences. Twelve of these committees deal with "development matters" directly. Of these, only four could be considered of major importance in handling and fashioning "development" within Malawati: the District Action Committee, the Development Committee, the Land Committee, and the Planning Committee.[14]

The District Action Committee is the largest and most important. It is made up of about sixty members, and includes all leading officials from district-level government and quasi-government bodies, all the *wakil rakyat* (elected members of the state[15] Legislative Assembly and the Parliament), all *penghulu mukim* (civil parish chiefs), and a few state government representatives. The chairman of this committee is the District Officer (D.O.). The committee functions as the highest decision-making body in the district in all matters pertaining to district affairs. Its main business concerns specific development policies, financing of projects, and evaluating the general progress of the implementation of

all projects. It also handles such matters as the annual visit to Malawati by the sultan. The District Action Committee is empowered by legislation to create small or special committees to deal with "urgent" problems. More importantly, it handles public funds in the order of M$4–4.5 million annually, out of which about M$3.5 million is spent on development projects.[16]

The Development Committee specifically monitors the progress of all development projects throughout Malawati. It is required to produce a monthly progress report, outlining any problems in detail. This report is presented to the District Action Committee for its regular evaluation of the general development progress of Malawati. The membership of the Development Committee is slightly smaller than that of the District Action Committee. It consists of a core group (about ten) of district-level heads of government departments and politicians (who are normally represented by their secretaries). At every monthly meeting, various government and quasi-government officials, and even individuals from the private sector, are invited to attend and are coopted as members. In this way, the committee is able, when it needs, to get direct progress reports from all sectors involved in implementing the projects.

The Planning Committee is much smaller than the previous two, because it deals primarily with the technical aspects of development projects – such as the physical planning of an industrial site, pollution problems, architectural matters, soil analysis, etc. The main task of this committee is to draw up an annual master plan of Malawati's physical development. It consists of District Office officials, the district engineer and technicians, surveyors, etc., and politicians or their representatives.

The smallest of the four committees is the Land Committee. It has only four members, namely the Collector of Land Revenue, who is the chairman of the committee, and three state assemblymen. They decide on land matters such as the alienation of land plots, the transfer of land ownership, land applications for development projects, and problems in the collection of land revenues. Any piece of land to be alienated – either to individuals or to the government – must be inspected by such district technical departments as the Public Works Department (PWD). The Land Committee does not make the final decisions; it only makes recommendations to the state Executive Committee of the state Assembly, popularly known as the EXCO.[17] It is this committee, which is dominated by politicians, that has the final say. In fact, the EXCO is a type of state cabinet, and is the highest decision-making body in the state (as in other states of Malaysia). It ultimately controls the distribution of

funds, the alienation of land, and the planning and implementation of all development within the state.

The four district committees mentioned above are chaired by the D.O. or one of his assistants. This is stipulated by law. However, the real power rests in the hands of the six *wakil rakyat* (literally, people's representatives) – two parliamentary members and four state assembly members (two of whom are women). This is because decisions made in any of these committees will ultimately reach the state Legislative Assembly and the state EXCO, both of which are political bodies within the government. In short, since the state Legislative Assembly is dominated by National Front Party[18] members, and the EXCO by members of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) – the dominant party within the National Front – this means that the class interests of the Malay capitalists are always well looked after, both at the state and district levels. How this affects village-level development will be dealt with shortly.

In this overall context, all the bureaucrats, and to some extent the private entrepreneurs of Malawati, are subject to the will of the politicians – if not at the district level, then at the state level.[19] Moreover, most of the members of the four committees are, in fact, National Front Party members, and this has tended to boost the dominance of the politicians at the local level. Since 80 per cent of the members are Malays, UMNO then has the largest representation in the district committees. According to government rules, government or quasi-government officials cannot be members of any political party, unless given special permission. Ironically, here is a situation in which these officials have not only received permission to be members, but received it in their capacity as "party officials" (of course, this is only possible if one is a member and official of the National Front, or UMNO, but not of the opposition party).[20] The clear implication of this situation is that all the "development committees" are virtually National Front or UMNO district development committees garbed in "government" clothing. As a result, although formally these committees are the crucial bodies that decide on the implementation of all development under the NEP, and hence shape the overall development of the district, the ultimate power of decision-making lies elsewhere – i.e., within the UMNO-dominated National Front of Malawati. This situation holds in all *mukim* and *kampung* within Malawati. One may argue that the police department within the district could not be included in this "political-bureaucratic complex," nor could the judiciary (represented by one magistrate in

Malawati). While theoretically this may be the case, upon closer scrutiny it is apparent that they also are subject to political pressures which have led to legal compromises.[21]

It is clear that the entire Malawati district development machinery has become very much an integral part of the total ruling party organization, and now operates within the context of the political factions, cleavages, and coalitions within UMNO Malawati. Moreover, the development organization is now the most effective instrument within the district, not only for suppressing opposition from other political parties – such as the *Partai Islam* (or PAS) – but also for dealing with opposition from within the UMNO ranks. The large pool of material rewards that this machinery can offer through the implementation of NEP programmes, and the potential power that one can gain by associating with its organization, have created highly significant political and economic configurations in Malawati and in the various *mukim* and *kampung* within the district.[22]

THE POLITICS OF DISTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR THE POOR

At the district level, there are many types of development projects. However, the focus of this article is upon those meant to "eradicate poverty" – i.e., the "rural development" projects.[23] These are categorized broadly into "agricultural" projects and "basic amenities" projects.

"Agricultural" projects are aimed mainly at providing as much assistance as possible to peasant smallholders who grow perennials – such as rubber, oil-palm, cocoa, coffee, and coconut – and annuals, such as rice. This is because the government believes that there is a strong tendency for rural poverty to be associated with the cultivation of certain particular crops. Furthermore, it is amongst the peasant smallholders that underemployment is rampant, and they suffer from the perennial problem of low productivity.

To alleviate these problems, the government has established numerous quasi-government institutions to deal with almost all of the different crops grown. For example, to help Malaysian rubber smallholders improve their production technology, a Rubber Industry Smallholders' Development Authority (RISDA) was established in 1973. Recently, its scope of activities was extended to include oil-palm smallholders. Separate bodies have been established to handle the other crops and also to deal with marketing. All these institutions are national-level organizations. Although they have established branches at the district and *mukim*

levels, many of their policy decisions are neither made nor affected by circumstances at the local levels. Financially, all local branches receive direct grants annually from the head office, either in cash or in the form of goods (for example, fertilizer or machinery). Although they do not take orders from local politicians as such, nevertheless the local branch officers of these institutions are never free from the political pressures and manoeuvrings that take place at the local level. For instance, there have been cases in which they were forced to favour rich UMNO smallholders at the expense of the poor PAS ones, or to allocate substantially more funds and supplies or agricultural inputs to UMNO areas rather than those of the PAS in Malawati district.[24]

Besides these national-level institutions, the Department of Agriculture of Malawati has its own separate projects; but they only supplement those described above. They supply the peasants with fertilizers and foodcrop seeds or seedlings, such as maize, banana, sugar cane, cassava, coffee, and cocoa. However, these projects are relatively cheap and small-scale compared to those provided by the RISDA. Each project has a budget of no more than M$1,000. The Department of Veterinary Services has its own development projects, some of which have also been categorized as "agricultural" projects. For instance, the department encourages small-scale animal-rearing and supplies the villagers with cattle, goats, and poultry. Again, the cost of each project seldom exceeds M$1,000. As such, these projects have often been referred to by leading district politicians and bureaucrats as *projek ikan bilis* (literally, small fish projects), because there is little financial gain in taking tenders to supply these agricultural or livestock inputs.

Nevertheless, these projects have very high "political value", especially at the *kampung* level. The *wakil rakyat* often delegate the power to distribute these benefits to local *ketua kampung* (village heads) who are, more often than not, the chairmen of UMNO branches in their respective villages. The village heads have their own personal criteria, apart from those of the government, which guide them in distributing these benefits. My detailed findings show that most of the peasants who receive these aids are either immediate relatives of the village heads, or loyal UMNO supporters. The recipients are not, therefore, necessarily the needy ones whom these projects are designed to help. In short, although not all village heads can enjoy "big slices of the development pie" unless they are very close associates of particular *wakil rakyat*, they can still taste the "crumbs" and enjoy a lot of political influence from the little given to them.

It is also interesting to note that lower-ranking local bureaucrats who are directly involved in "official matters" relating to the distribution of the *ikan bilis* projects gain personal benefit from the whole exercise, especially if their *kampung* of origin are within the district. From the evidence gathered, there have been cases where these bureaucrats have managed to help their relatives and close friends obtain such benefits as fertilizers, seedlings, and the like. More interesting, however, are the cases where these low-ranking local bureaucrats are also UMNO branch officials or ordinary UMNO members who aspire to become local party officials. Under such circumstances, it has been observed that these particular bureaucrats often work closely with their respective village heads in distributing the development benefits. Where there are personality clashes or conflicts of interest between the bureaucrats and the *ketua kampung*, the closeness of either to the *wakil rakyat* usually decides who wins. In other words, the political patronage of the *wakil rakyat* is crucial for political success at the *kampung* level.

The second category of development projects for the "eradication of poverty" at the district level is simply referred to by the district bureaucrats as the provision of "basic amenities". These projects are grouped into seven major categories: (1) "minor projects" (for example, the building of village mosques or *surau* [small prayer houses], bus sheds, bicycle paths, playgrounds, markets, community halls, etc.); (2) road construction (constructing new primary or secondary roads, resurfacing of roads with tar or laterite, building bridges, etc.); (3) electricity; (4) piped-drinking water; (5) low-cost housing; (6) postal and telecommunication services; and (7) health services. There are other projects at the district level – such as the building of schools – which are not under the jurisdiction of district or state administration. Therefore, the projects listed above are only those over which the District Action Committee has the final say in matters of planning, implementation, distribution and, most importantly, finance.

Unlike the "agriculture" projects, the "basic amenities" projects are generally expensive; and the cost of each ranges from between M$10,000 to M$250,000. According to one Assistant District Officer (A.D.O.), "it is in these projects that the money is". For example, in the period 1978–80, the total budget allocation for these projects was approximately M$2.5 million – more than double that allocated for "agricultural" projects in Malawati district for the same period (about M$1 million). The stated aims of these "basic amenities" projects are to improve "the poor quality of life" of the village poor, to reduce un-

employment, and "to motivate peasants to work harder through the provision of basic amenities".

My detailed findings show that, although the peasants (not necessarily the poor ones) have benefited from the implementation of these projects, the individuals who reap the biggest material harvest are the leading district politicians and their allies – *penghulu, ketua kampung*, village elites, Chinese *towkays* (businessmen), and local bureaucrats. Politically, the members of the latter group also occupy the most powerful and strategic positions in the distribution process and are hence able to decide to which areas, and to which groups, the benefits will go. The potent combination of these two advantages (economic and political) has given the politicians and their allies an awesome power which they can wield almost at will – and which is not without support, of course, from top-level politicians and bureaucrats. A brief discussion now follows to explain how the local politicians have made huge gains, materially and politically, from the implementation of the "basic amenities" projects, which were meant to "eradicate poverty" in Malawati district.

Since all the projects in the above-mentioned categories are government-funded, each one has to be tendered out – that is, it must go through the normal procedure of being awarded to a contractor after a call for tenders has been issued. Contracts are graded according to a scale of estimated cost per project. (For example, Grade A contracts are those worth M$100,000 or more.) To avoid red-tape delays in implementing the more minor projects, the Malaysian government has allowed contracts for projects worth less than M$25,000 to be awarded immediately at the discretion of the D.O., or usually A.D.O., of the Community Development Section. Contracts above that amount can be awarded only after being vetted by the PWD and, more importantly, passed by the District Action Committee. But it is not uncommon for tenders which have not been vetted by the PWD to be accepted by the said committee alone.

Nearly all these projects involve construction work of some sort, mainly building and road construction. Contracts for supplying building and other construction materials involve large amounts of money, too. A common practice is for the *wakil rakyat* to set up their own *syarikat* (companies) to "compete" for the more lucrative contracts – those above M$25,000. As shareholders, they often include Chinese *towkays* and professional Malay contractors who are already established in the business. Also involved are the rich village heads, landlords, petty

commodity traders, and influential schoolteachers. Those individuals who are invited to participate in the *syarikat* as shareholders are usually considered by the *wakil rakyat* to be their most loyal and trusted supporters.

Predictably, it is not uncommon for these *wakil rakyat* and their political supporters to become simply the "sleeping partners" of the Chinese or Malay contractors who actually run the business. The former are probably satisfied receiving a certain percentage of the profits, in return for doing little more than ensuring that their *syarikat* wins the contract each time a development project comes up for tender in the district. After all, they dominate the development machinery at the district level, especially the all-important District Action Committee.

Besides winning the major contracts, these *syarikat* have an almost endless supply of small projects to choose from – those under M$25,000, ranging from building a bicycle shed, to constructing the expensive and elaborate dais for the annually-held Quran reading competition. Evidence shows that, on average, each *syarikat* was awarded at least ten small contracts in the period 1978–80. It is relatively easy to win these contracts, because the District Action Committee has instituted a protection policy by formally designating them for Malawati district entrepreneurs only. The big projects often attract competitors from outside the district – such as *syarikat* formed by federal or state-level politicians and their business associates, or companies belonging to members of the royal family. Therefore, district politicians often have to curb their economic interest when competing against their "patrons" for the major contracts.

There are also situations where lower-ranking, district-level bureaucrats have involved themselves, directly or indirectly, in this "business of poverty eradication". They often operate independently of the politician-controlled groups and have their own networks of petty contractors, Malay and Chinese, whom they serve. Some of these bureaucrats are shareholders in the *syarikat* of the petty contractors, while others are satisfied with the material gains (in kind or cash) which flow from their close association with the contractors.[25] Since there are so many small contracts for the taking, the politician-controlled groups seldom interfere with these bureaucrats – that is, as long as they themselves feel *kenyang* (full). Moreover, the politician-controlled groups are dependent on these bureaucrats for processing much of the paperwork relating to the projects for which they have won contracts. They need the bureaucrats to give favourable reports on the quality of the work done and,

most importantly, to prepare the payment cheques quickly. As such, it is "morally fair", as one of the low-ranking bureaucrats said, for him and his colleagues to have their own "shares" without interference from the politicians, who have "more than enough to feed their whole family for a century". Therefore, it is very rare to find the politician-controlled groups and the low-ranking bureaucrats in conflict over development "benefits".

There are three groups of petty contractors whom the bureaucrats serve: (1) those Malays not considered by the politicians to be "close associates" or "loyal supporters"; (2) small-time independent Chinese or Indian contractors, who could be either ruling-party members or non-members; and (3) members of the bureaucrats' families or circles of close friends within or outside the district.

Having discussed how the contracts are distributed, it is also necessary to explain how the projects themselves are allocated to the different areas within Malawati district. The decisions regarding this process lie mainly in the hands of the politicians and, to a lesser extent, the bureaucrats. Generally, demands for benefits come from the villages themselves and are communicated through various channels, the most common being their own Village Development and Security Committee (VDSC)[26] However, these demands do not necessarily represent the needs of a majority of villagers. Instead, they may express the collective interests of the committee members, or of a dominant faction within the committee. The evidence collected shows that if there is a strong opposition-party branch in a particular village – say, a PAS branch – the VDSC of that village is generally kept on its toes, and the general interests of the villagers are not brushed aside in preference to the individual or collective interests of UMNO committee members. But, at another level, the village could suffer because of this situation; district UMNO politicians might see this as a sign of weakness on the part of the UMNO village-branch leadership, and the village could be denied most of the "basic amenities" projects.

On the whole, opposition parties are not strong in Malawati district, except in a few areas, and, even here, the opposition has had no effect on the ruling party's dominance. Although there might be bitter opposition, for example, between UMNO and the PAS in some villages, the more widespread and significant conflict occurs within UMNO party ranks. It is these cleavages within UMNO itself that usually influence the pattern of distribution of development benefits in Malawati district. Therefore, the "loyalty" factor has an important, ideological role in the

distribution process.

For example, a *wakil rakyat* who seeks to hold an important post within the central committee of the Malawati UMNO *bahagian* (Division) needs votes from all the village branches within his electoral constituency during the *bahagian* annual general meeting. Or, if he is already a committee member, he might want his right-hand man elected. In these circumstances, if any of the village branches do not cooperate, it will be considered an act of disloyalty, with the likely outcome that the village will be denied further "basic amenities" projects. On the other hand, those villages which the *wakil rakyat* considers to be his loyal supporters will be showered with benefits. He may also reward those villages whose leadership worked hard for him during a general election compaign.

Among the *wakil rakyat*, members of the state EXCO are especially powerful. Their projects and other demands will always be given top priority by the district bureaucrats, with little protest forthcoming from other *wakil rakyat*.[27] This is because their colleagues know that the EXCO members are the ones who can fight for their interests at the state level. In Malawati district, there is one *wakil rakyat* who is also the state EXCO member, and, according to one A.D.O., his constituency gets the most "basic amenities" benefits.[28] So, whoever among his colleagues does not deliver the votes necessary for his re-election as the deputy chairman of Malawati UMNO *bahagian*, will not receive the personal favours he controls. Possibly, he could mount a campaign among the District Action Committee members to shift a particular project – for instance, a rich low-cost housing project – from the constituency of his disfavoured colleagues to the constituency of another friend. This has happened a number of times, according to District Office sources.

Therefore, in comparing the "agricultural" and the "basic amenities" projects, the latter can be seen to generate more economic and political configurations within the district by the very fact that they offer more material benefits. This phenomenon has served to strengthen the political dominance of individual politicians, who are then in a commanding position to accrue even more wealth and power.

I shall now examine some detailed cases of the implementation and distribution of these benefits in a particular village within one state electoral constituency in Malawati district.

THE CASES OF MAWAR AND KAMPUNG CHEMPAKA

Mawar state electoral constituency covers a physical area of 33,920

acres and coincides closely with that of *mukim* Mawar – a civil parish.[29] Within the constituency or *mukim*, there are nine "official" villages, two "rural towns", and 14 rubber and oil-palm estates. About 95 per cent of the constituency's population is concentrated in the villages and the townships, which constitute 58.8 per cent of Mawar's physical area. The other 5 per cent of the population is distributed among the various estates which made up about 41.2 per cent of Mawar's land space.

The two towns, Mawar and Sungai (Sg.) Ikan, are very close to the coast. Both are under the jurisdiction of Malawati local government. Mawar serves more as an administrative centre for the *mukim*, because both the *wakil rakyat* and *penghulu* reside and maintain offices there. The *mukim*'s post office, police station, government health centre, and main public playing-fields are located in and around the township. Sg. Ikan, on the other hand, is the *mukim*'s commercial centre. It has about thirty shophouses, a market with twenty stalls, and a small but flourishing fishing industry.

There are eleven UMNO branches and two PAS branches in the constituency. The first UMNO branch was established in 1948 in Kampung (Kg.) Mawar. In fact, this was the only UMNO branch in Mawar until around 1960, after which new branches were established in other villages of the constituency. In the initial 1951–60 period, the majority of the Kg. Mawar branch members were from the *kampung* itself, the rest being recruited from the elite of other villages within the *mukim*. This branch remains the strongest and most influential UMNO branch within Mawar, in terms of membership and support, and by virtue of the fact that the past two *wakil rakyat* and the current one are all from this branch.

The first PAS branch in Mawar was established in 1958 in Kg. Asal, which is officially a part of Kg. Chempaka. The second branch, established in 1962, was that of Kg. Teratai. Within Malawati district, the PAS branch at Kg. Asal is considered to be one of the strongest and most active in terms of membership, support, and party activities. It has also provided the party with all its candidates for the general elections since 1959, both for the Malawati parliamentary seat and the Mawar state seat. This in itself indicates the strength of Kg. Asal PAS leadership within Malawati. However, none of these candidates have won any of the seats they have contested.

Hence, the PAS in Mawar has never really posed a serious threat to UMNO's strong position within the constituency. However, at the village level, especially in the area where I conducted my research (that is, the

cluster of four "official" villages – Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Teratai, Kg. Kasturi, and Kg. Baru), the contest between UMNO and PAS has always been very keen and, at times, has created bitter tensions within the community.[30] In order to understand the politics behind the distribution of development benefits at the level of Mawar constituency, one has to envisage the whole process within the context of the political factions, cleavages, coalitions, and alliances within UMNO Mawar.

Within Kg. Chempaka and its three immediate neighbouring villages, the presence of a strong PAS branch has not had direct effects on the generally UMNO-biased patterns of distribution in the area. However, it has affected the relationship between the leaders of UMNO Kg. Chempaka, on the one side, and the *wakil rakyat* and UMNO Malawati *bahagian* officials, on the other. The former's inability to neutralize the PAS challenge within Kg. Chempaka (and hence Mawar) for the last two decades has been seen by the latter as the result of incompetence and weakness on the part of the former. Consequently, the *wakil rakyat* and Malawati *bahagian* officials have always been prejudiced against the leadership of Kg. Chempaka. With very little support from top *bahagian* officials, the Kg. Chempaka UMNO leadership has found it difficult to recruit new members and has not been able to defuse the PAS challenge. The antagonism between these two groups of leaders ultimately erupted into open conflict just before the 1974 general elections.

The immediate cause of the conflict was a confrontation between the two main UMNO branches in Mawar – namely, UMNO Kg. Mawar and UMNO Sg. Ikan – over the choice of a candidate to represent the ruling party in the forthcoming elections. UMNO Sg. Ikan demanded the right to provide the candidate for the Mawar state seat this time because the incumbent, who was from UMNO Kg. Mawar, had been the *wakil rakyat* for the last three terms, or about twelve years. This demand was strongly opposed by UMNO Kg. Mawar, and especially by the incumbent. He wanted to retain his position for two important and interrelated reasons. Firstly, the introduction of the NEP had resulted in several changes in the administration of development projects at the district level, which had afforded more decision-making power to *wakil rakyat* in the "district development machinery". Secondly, this new power enabled the *wakil rakyat* not only to decide on the distribution of development benefits within the district, but also to participate in the "business of development". As a result of the latter, the incumbent and his son had established a private construction company and built a M$50,000 mosque and 20 units of a M$100,000 low-cost housing project. At the end

of his third term, he was determined not to lose the opportunity of accumulating even more wealth under the NEP. Hence he fought very hard to retain the post of *wakil rakyat* in Kg. Mawar, and he made ready his own candidate – his daughter-in-law. (His son was unavailable, due to ill-health.) As an influential and long-serving *wakil rakyat* in the state Legislative Assembly and as a very senior UMNO official in the state, the incumbent commanded the respect not only of the state Chief Minister but also of the top UMNO national leaders, especially members of the all-powerful UMNO Supreme Council which makes the final choice of election candidates. Through this very powerful network, he was able to convince the top leaders of the need for a woman candidate to contest the Mawar seat, because at that time there was only one woman *wakil rakyat* in the state assembly. As a result, Kg. Mawar managed to retain the position of *wakil rakyat*, through the clever manoeuvring of the incumbent.

The UMNO Sg. Ikan, reacting to this act of "nepotism and greed", fielded an independent candidate. It was then that the UMNO Kg. Chempaka leadership took sides, aligning itself with UMNO Sg. Ikan and supporting the alternative candidate. The Kg. Chempaka leaders saw this as their opportunity to settle the score, after being neglected for so long by the Malawati and Mawar leaders. The PAS leaders of Kg. Asal, who had disagreed with the PAS national leadership over the issue of joining the National Front coalition, also seized the opportunity to demonstrate their resentment, and entered into a temporary alliance with their supposedly bitter enemies. While the PAS decision was ideologically tinged,[31] there were strong economic motives behind the actions of the UMNO Sg. Ikan and Kg. Chempaka. The Sg. Ikan leaders, consisting of businessmen and schoolteachers, were known to have expressed hopes of gaining material benefits from the NEP, should one of them become the Mawar *wakil rakyat*.

Although the woman candidate from the Kg. Mawar UMNO branch finally won the 1974 elections, the rift between her faction (which includes a selection of village heads and UMNO branch chairmen of seven other villages) and the Sg. Ikan and Kg. Chempaka UMNO leaders remained until she was forced to "retire" before the recent 1982 general elections. But what is more significant is how she took her "revenge" during her eight years as the Mawar *wakil rakyat*, mainly through the power vested in her as a state Legislative Assembly member responsible for bringing development projects to all villages within her constituency. Of equal importance is how she managed to continue the

"family business" started by her father-in-law, the Mawar *wakil rakyat* who preceded here.

As a *wakil rakyat* of the ruling party, she received M$120,000 annually for distribution as "development expenditure" from the state Chief Minister's Fund.[32] This was over and above the normal allowance given by the state and federal governments. Officially, the money should have been distributed through the District Office to villages in her constituency for development purposes. But upon close scrutiny one finds that the money was basically used for buying continued support for UMNO leaders and members of each branch in her constituency. She also used the money to reward her loyal supporters during the 1974 and 1978 general elections. This buying of support took various forms, ranging from purchasing sports goods for local teams to outright monetary grants to the UMNO branches. During her two terms as *wakil rakyat*, Kg. Chempaka received only about M$10,000 out of the M$960,000 available during the eight years. She stated that this was the way to teach the people and UMNO leaders of Kg. Chempaka a lesson for being *pembelot*, or traitors. Sg. Ikan suffered similar treatment.[33]

Perhaps the most devastating action she took against the interests of Kg. Chempaka was to block many of the development projects intended for its inhabitants.[34] For example, she diverted a cattle-rearing project, designed for Kg. Chempaka because it has a large suitable grazing area, to Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai, which have very little grazing land. She also continuously denied the PAS-dominated Kg. Asal, which is a part of Kg. Chempaka, a decent water and electricity supply – amenities which Kg. Chempaka proper has had for years. However, even though Kg. Chempaka proper had water and electricity prior to 1974, the conditions of the supply have never been upgraded, despite repeated requests from the villagers and support from the district PWD. Numerous other cases could be cited to show how powerful and influential the Mawar *wakil rakyat* was in deciding the distribution of development benefits within her constituency.

Despite all this, the village head of Kg. Chempaka did not miss out on opportunities to participate in and enjoy various benefits of the "poverty eradication" projects, even though he was excluded from the *wakil rakyat* clique. A successful small contractor even before the NEP was introduced, he had survived by winning small contracts with the PWD and had long-established contacts with low-ranking bureaucrats at the district level. Hence, he continued to prosper in his business and was able to take advantage of the NEP projects – but not without having to pay

dearly, because the bureaucrats knew he had been labelled as an UMNO "rebel".

While the excluded *ketua kampung* was still able to enjoy the material benefits of projects under the NEP, the *wakil rakyat* took what she wanted almost at will. She continued her father-in-law's business and, in fact, expanded it to include her own younger brother, her loyal supporters, and two Chinese *towkays* as partners. The *syarikat* was expanded initially on capital partly from the Chinese *towkays* and partly from bank loans, with land belonging to her loyal supporters as collateral. The *syarikat* extended its activities beyond its initial involvement in building construction to include the more lucrative road construction and road resurfacing projects and contracts to supply building and construction material, ranging from M$25,000 to M$150,000 per contract. As mentioned earlier, such contracts were quite easily obtainable by the *wakil rakyat* in Malawati district. Within eight years, she was able to expand her business activities sufficiently to maintain a plush mansion in the state capital as an office to administer her business dealings in other parts of the state.

CONCLUSION

Since the advent of the NEP, the national government has made many changes to the general administrative structure, in order to facilitate implementation of its various development programmes. The impact of such changes at the district level, as observed in Malawati, has been great. The most significant change of all has been the increased dominance of the *wakil rakyat* over the decision-making process within the district bureaucracy – especially in the operations of the district development machinery, which were traditionally the domain of local bureaucrats. This dominance is further enhanced by the fact that many local bureaucrats have become partisans who openly belong to the local ruling UMNO party organization. Hence, they are under the control of the top local politicians, namely the *wakil rakyat*, not only within their local party organization but also in the development committee itself. As a result, the district development machinery, which controls and monitors every aspect of the implementation of all district development projects under the NEP, has now become an integral part of the local ruling party apparatus. The political and economic implications of this pattern for the whole process of development benefit distribution at different levels within Malawati are far-reaching and wide-ranging.[35]

Firstly, since the funds allocated for "poverty eradication" projects have generally been biased towards the "basic amenities" type, mainly involving construction jobs, the biggest beneficiaries in Malawati have been the politicians – the *wakil rakyat* and their close associates. They have managed to turn the development projects, initially aimed at eradicating poverty, into an extremely rich personal financial resource by establishing their own businesses and awarding themselves lucrative government contracts. These efforts are interpreted by them as fulfilling the 30 per cent quota of Bumiputera ownership in business and management, as outlined in the NEP. In other words, they believe they have fulfilled to some degree the "restructuring of society" objective of the NEP, but, ironically and on their own admission, by exploiting the "poverty eradication" objective. This is a very different strategy from that pursued by the Malay national bourgeoisie, who generally involve themselves in stock-market shares or running the national industrial sector.

Secondly, although there exist numerous other development projects at the *mukim* and district levels which are relatively small in material value, the distribution of these projects is based on political and personal grounds, as the Mawar case has demonstrated. As a result, at the village level, the beneficiaries have been small and selected groups of peasants – and not necessarily the poorest, although the projects are supposedly for them.[36] This pattern clearly contravenes the so-called "egalitarian-motivated" philosophy of the NEP and, hence, does not help to redress existing inequities in the rural areas.

Thirdly, through their successful business activities, the *wakil rakyat*, such as the one in Mawar, have managed to foster a new locally-based Malay business class, not of petty commodity traders, but of full-fledged capital-based entrepreneurs. The existence of such a class at the village level was unknown prior to the NEP. Similar developments are occurring not only in other parts of Malawati but also in other areas of Peninsular Malaysia, as shown by recent detailed studies.[37]

The next significant pattern involves changes in the basis of patronage politics within the local ruling party organization.[38] Since the introduction of the NEP, the general position of *wakil rakyat* in Malawati has undergone substantial changes. Prior to the NEP, a *wakil rakyat* was seen more a political patron than an economic one. The NEP has transformed not only the image but also the objective political and economic position of the *wakil rakyat* in Malawati. Their political power has been greatly increased by their control of the district development

machinery, which in turn places them in an unassailable position in distributing development benefits. This situation has not only brought them enormous personal material gain but also, by virtue of their new-found wealth, has given them the ability to buy continued political support.

Changes in the position of the *wakil rakyat* since the advent of the NEP have also generated tremendous internal political competition within UMNO Malawati, giving rise to intense factional politics – as we witnessed in the Mawar case. The struggle is now over the coveted position of the *wakil rakyat*, especially during the pre-selection period before a general election, since contending leaders regard the position as providing "the passport to be rich and powerful". Given the stakes, the whole contest over pre-selection can develop into intense internal political strife, dissent, and factional fighting – which, in the Mawar case, led to a protracted conflict within the ruling party ranks.[39] As a result, disfavoured groups of people, and even whole villages, have been deprived of development benefits. In most cases, the disadvantaged faction can do little in retaliation other than write letters of protest to the local press – and such letters have, indeed, become a common feature of local newspapers lately.[40]

The patterns described above are by no means particular to Mawar and Malawati. Mass-media reports and findings from recent village studies in other areas of Peninsular Malaysia also reveal that the local *wakil rakyat* have become very influential not only in deciding the allocation of development benefits but, more importantly, in determining the future course of district-level development.[41] As a result, internal struggles for the key position of the *wakil rakyat* have intensified greatly since the introduction of the NEP. Inevitably, patronage has become even more significant as a factor in local UMNO intra-party politics. Reports from other parts of Peninsular Malaysia confirm that the organizational changes in development administration since 1971 have led to an increase in favouritism and corruption amongst the *wakil rakyat* and district-level bureaucrats, resulting in the loss of millions of dollars allocated for village development.[42]

NOTES

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2 The names of the district, *mukim* (civil parishes), and *kampung* (villages) which are mentioned throughout this paper have been changed to disguise the locale of the research area. Individuals have not been named.

3 See, for example, Donald R. Snodgrass, *Inequality and Economic Development in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980); also, Stephen Chee, "Introduction: The Political Economy of Multiracial Development", in Stephen Chee and Khoo Siew Mun, eds., *Malaysian Economic Development and Policies* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Economic Association, 1975), pp. 1–5.

4 I have discussed these points in detail elsewhere. See Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, *RMK: Tujuan dan Pelaksanaannya* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1977); also, my articles, "The Development of Underdevelopment of the Malaysian Peasantry", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 9:4 (1979), pp. 434–54, and "The Theoretical Orientations of the Second Malaysia Plan", in Cheong K. Cheok, Khoo S. Mun, R. Thillainathan, eds., *Malaysia: Some Contemporary Issues in Socio-Economic Development* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Economic Association, 1979). See, also, K.S. Jomo, "Class Formation in Malaya", Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1977; R.S. Milne and D.K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Federal Publications, 1978), pp. 321–6, and R.S. Milne, "The Politics of Malaysia's New Economic Policy", *Pacific Affairs*, 49:2 (1976), pp. 235–62.

5 See *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971–75* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1971), p. 1, paragraph 2.

6 See *Lapuran Seminar Kongeres Ekonomi Bumiputera Pertama* (Kuala Lumpur, 1966) and *Lapuran Seminar Kongeres Ekonomi Bumiputera Kedua* (Kuala Lumpur, 1969). See, also, J.H. Beaglehole, "Malay Participation in Commerce and Industry: The Role of RIDA and MARA", *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 7:3 (1969), pp. 316–45, and Tham Seong Chee, "Ideology, Politics and Economic Modernization: The Case of the Malays in Malaysia", *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 1:1 (1973), pp. 41–59.

7 See Ishak Shari, "Some Comments on the Eradication of Poverty Under the Third Malaysia Plan", in *Southeast Asian Affairs 1977* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1978); K.S. Jomo and Ishak Shari, "Income Inequality in Post-Colonial Peninsular Malaysia", *Pacific Viewpoint*, 23:1 (1982), pp. 67–76; Anwar Ali, *A Note on Poverty Eradication During the Third Malaysia Plan*, Occasional Paper of the Faculty of Economics and Management, no. 6, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1978.

8 See *Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1981–85* (Kuala Lumpur: National Printing Department, 1981), pp. 31–3.

9 See *Second Malaysia Plan*, p. 1, paragraph 2.

10 Since the NEP, there has been a proliferation of public enterprises catering to the Malay business community. For discussions of this development, see R.S. Milne, "The Politics of Malaysia's New Economic Policy", pp. 243–50. Bruce Gale, *Politics and Public Enterprise in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Eastern Universities Press, 1981); and Lim Mah Hui and William Canak, "The Political Economy of State Policies in Malaysia", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 11:2 (1981), pp. 208–24.

11 See Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, "RMK dan Penyusunan Semula Masyarakat: Satu Usaha Untuk Meningkatkan Kedudukan Orang Melayu?" *Jurnal Antropologi dan Sosiologi*, 6(1978), pp. 81–97.

12 Most of these committees were established before the NEP era. A brief outline of the structure and functioning of these committees before the NEP is found in C.G. Ferguson, "The Story of Development in Malaya (Now Malaysia): Some Aspects", *Journal of Local Administration Overseas*, 4:3 (1965), pp. 149–64; Mavis Puthucheary, "The Operations Room in Malaysia as a Technique in Administration Reform", in Hahn-Been Lee and Abelardo G. Samonte, eds., *Administrative Reform in Asia* (Manila: Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration, 1970), pp. 165–98. For a more detailed account, see Gayl D. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967). A detailed analysis of changes that occurred within the Malaysian administrative structure as a result of the introduction of the NEP can be found in Milton J. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia: Institution Building and Reform in a Plural Society* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1972); a more brief account is in Mavis Puthucheary, *The Politics of Administration: The Malaysian Experience* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 107–16.

13 I have obtained information regarding not only the district development machinery, but also other aspects of Malawati administration, from various sources, including the files of various sections of the District Office, intensive interviews with a dozen high- and low-ranking officials of the office, and government reports, such as the series on district and local government in selected states of Peninsular Malaysia, published by the Prime Minister's Department in 1979. It is important to emphasize the fact that this district is under the jurisdiction of the Malaysian Administrative and Diplomatic Service. A detailed discussion on this point is found in Mavis Puthucheary, *The Politics of Administration*, pp. 1–3, 4–19. However, districts within the ex-Unfederated Malay States, such as Kelantan, are under their own separate civil-service system. An excellent and detailed study of such a district was carried out by J.H. Beaglehole, *The District: A Study in Decentralization in West Malaysia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976).

14 Since 1968, there have been numerous excellent empirical studies done by honours-year students of the Public Administration of the Faculty of Economics and Administration, Universiti Malaya, on district development

administration in various districts throughout Malaysia. These are often overlooked by scholars of Malaysian politics and government, probably because they are mostly in the Malay language. See, for example, Mansur Yusof, "Peranan Ketua Kampung Dalam Pembangunan Negara" (1971); and Shahar Abdullah, "Perhubungan Antara Pentadbir Dan Ahli Politik di Peringkat Daerah: Kajian Kes Mersing" (1975). See, also, the collections of B.A. theses in the various departments of the social science faculties at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, and Universiti Malaya.

15 The term "state" used throughout this paper refers to a geographical area and not to the abstract notion of "the state" used in political science.

16 These figures were obtained from the district's annual budget reports which were made available to me.

17 For further explanations regarding the authority, power and composition of the EXCO, see my paper, "Malay Village Politics: Some Past Observations and Recent Findings", presented at the Fourth National Conference, Asian Studies Association of Australia, Monash University, 10–14 May, 1982.

18 From 1955 until 1974, the Federation of Malaya – later Malaysia – was ruled by the Alliance Party which was made up of UMNO, MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association) and MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress). In 1974, the National Front or *Barisan Nasional* Party was formed, made up of former Alliance Party members and six more parties from Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak. A brief account of the politics within the National Front is given in Harold Crouch, Lee Kam Hing, and Michael Ong, *Malaysian Politics and the 1978 Election* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 1–10.

19 On the relationship between administrators and politicians in Malaysia, see J.H. Beaglehole, "The District: Some Aspects of Administration and Politics in West Malaysia", *Journal of Administration Overseas*, 12:4 (1973), pp. 184–98; Puthucheary, *The Politics of Administration*. pp. 24–34, 39–50; and Milne and Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia*, pp. 276–78.

20 I would argue that it is inevitable for most administrators at the district level to become involved in party politics – a trend which has become especially pronounced since the NEP made available so many lucrative rewards. Some scholars have suggested, however, that administrators can still remain "politically neutral" by staying away from the "intrigues of party politics", see, for example, Mavis Puthucheary, "Political Neutrality: Myth or Reality?" *Pentadbir*, 2 (1972), pp. 4–11. During the Razak regime, many Malay administrators were recruited into the government as ministers or parliamentarians. After that, especially after 1974, it was common for newly-recruited Malay bureaucrats to become UMNO members or officials in their *kampung* branches, in the hope that one day they would be chosen to run for higher office. For example, in the recent 1982 general elections, the deputy state secretary of Selangor, who has been an active UMNO official for ten years, resigned from the civil service, then contested and won the parliamentary seat of his own area. Later he was appointed as one of the deputy ministers

of the Ministry of Finance. Therefore, it is not uncommon for Malay administrators at all levels to be officials or members of UMNO or the National Front, but not of the opposition parties. A more detailed and empirical study of this issue may be found in Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, "Bureaucrats as Partisans: The Myth of Political Neutrality of the Malaysian Bureaucracy", unpublished manuscript (1982).

21 For example, in May 1981, a schoolteacher who was also a committee member of a village UMNO branch in Malawati and a close associate of the local *wakil rakyat*, was arrested for illegal gambling. I attended his trial. All charges against him were dropped by the prosecuting officer from the local police, because the *wakil rakyat* had met with the district police chief and promised to deal with the teacher personally. The teacher resigned as a UMNO branch committee member. The police chief and the prosecuting officer were my key informants. I also learnt that some of the lower-ranking members of the force are ardent supporters of UMNO. This was demonstrated, for example, when one of them was used by a village UMNO branch to collect donations for a party gathering from Chinese shopkeepers in a nearby town.

22 Summaries of the subsequent discussions appear in Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, *Daun-daun Kemarau: Ceretra dan Kuntuman Puisi Sabar Bohari* (Subang Jaya: Penerbit Tra-Tra, 1982), pp. 23–31; and my "Malaysia: Politics and Poverty Eradication at the Grassroots Level", *Asian Thought & Society*, 7:20 (1982), pp. 227–9.

23 I began conducting research on development planning in Malaysia in 1973, with a special focus on the controversial Second Malaysia Plan and its NEP. Since that time, I have come across no fewer than a thousand titles of published and unpublished materials (excluding government materials), both in English (35 per cent) and Malay (65 per cent), which discuss and analyze various features of the NEP. Nearly 60 per cent of the materials deal with the "rural development" aspect of the NEP. For an overview of the policies and implementation of Malaysian rural development policies during the period 1971–80, see Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, "Pembangunan Pertanian dan Luar Bandar di Malaysia: Satu Penilaian dan Kritik", *Jurnal Antropologi dan Sosiologi*, 8 (1980), pp. 22–46.

24 At the *mukim* and *kampung* levels, groups of villagers can be closely identified with political parties. Many are actually registered members of UMNO, or of UMNO-sponsored voluntary organizations such as the youth clubs, or are enrolled as students in the "community development" classes sponsored by the government, which basically function to recruit UMNO members. The family members of these groups of villagers are automatically considered to be supporters of UMNO, too. In this way, it is possible to find a whole village of UMNO members, supporters, and sympathizers, clearly recognized as an UMNO area. There are other villages where opposition parties, such as the PAS, have their branches, and (at least in Malawati district) the village population is split between UMNO and PAS supporters. Moreover, it is not uncommon for the members of opposing parties to live together and occupy

different parts of the village. Villages where the PAS dominates are often referred to as "black areas" by the UMNO *wakil rakyat*, and are frequently deprived of development benefits such as electricity, piped water supply, proper roads, etc.

25 In one case, a junior technician received an expensive car as a "gift", but dared not bring the car to work. Instead, he left it at his relative's house, about two miles from his office, and travelled to work by motorcycle.

26 The VDSC usually submits the minutes of its monthly meeting to the *penghulu*, *wakil rakyat*, and the Community Development Section of the District Office. These consist of reports on (1) what the village had received as development benefits from various government, semi-government, and individual sources; (2) the progress and problems of the projects' implementation; and (3) new requests. Besides this formal channel, there is always an informal one – i.e., through group or personal appeals directly to the *wakil rakyat*, through UMNO.

27 The member of parliament within the district, too, receives such treatment, especially if he is holding a post at the federal level – for example, as a parliamentary secretary, deputy minister or a minister.

28 For example, while all the secondary roads within his constituency are fully macadamized, in other constituencies they are made of laterite only.

29 It is not uncommon in Malawati for a state electoral constituency to overlap with a *mukim*. As this is the case for Mawar, the constituency I focussed on, my discussion will use the terms, "constituency" and "*mukim*" interchangeably. However, it must be noted that there are also cases in Malawati and elsewhere where a constituency contains two or more *mukims*, or where a *mukim* is split into two parts, with each part organized under separate constituencies.

30 A more detailed history of the village and *mukim* can be found in my paper, "Malay Village Politics" (1982), pp. 12–15.

31 *Ibid.*

32 See *an Indepth Study of District and Local Government* (Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister's Department, 1979), pp. 23–24. However, a member of parliament only receives M$100,000 from the federal government.

33 This information was obtained from the private secretary of the *wakil rakyat* and confirmed by my interviews with the village heads of Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai.

34 Detailed information on the cases cited and on other cases was obtained from UMNO officials of the various branches within the *mukim* Mawar and from Malawati district officials.

35 For about three weeks in May 1981, a small research team, consisting of researchers from the Institute of Cultural Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, and the Socio-Economic Research Unit (SERU) of the Prime Minister's Department, conducted an intensive survey of 21 villages distributed throughout all

mukim of Malawati district. The main aim of the survey was to assess the overall progress of the rural development projects implemented under the Third Malaysia Plan of 1976–81. I was fortunate enough to be invited to join the research team, and managed to obtain first-hand information on "development progress" in other areas of Malawati, which allowed me to make some comparisons with my own findings from the study of Mukim Mawar. See, also, two other studies of Malawati: Salleh Lamry, "Modenisasi Pertanian di Kalangan Pesawah dan Pekebun Kecil Kelapa Tani Melayu", M.A. thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1978; and Mohd. Shahari, "Rural Poverty and the Malay Peasant Politics of Survival", Ph.D. diss., University of Hawaii, 1978.

36 Similar patterns have emerged elsewhere in Malaysia as recent studies by local scholars have shown. See, for example, Wan Hashim, *A Malay Peasant Community in Upper Perak* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1978); Wan Hashim, "The Transformation of Malay Peasantry under Peripheral Capitalism", Ph.D. diss, University of Manchester, 1982; S. Husin Ali, *Kemiskinan dan Kelaparan Tanah di Kelantan* (Petaling Jaya: Karangkraf, 1978); Mansor Haji Othman, "Hakmilik Tanah Padi dan Politik di Kedah", M. Soc. Sc. thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1978.

37 See, for example, Jailani Md. Dom, "Sistem Patronage di Kampung Bagan, Johor: Satu Kajian Kes", Hons. diss., Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1979; and Mohamed Khatib Ismail, "Pola Hubungan Patron-Client: Satu Kajian Kes di Kampung Serengkam, Maran, Pahang", Hons. diss, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1979.

38 See, for example, the two studies cited in footnote 37. Also, see S. Husin Ali, "Political Functionaries in Rural Malaysia: Leader or Middlemen?" in David Banks, ed., *The Changing Identities of Modern Asia* (London: Mouton Press, 1976); Chandra Muzaffar, *The Protector*? (Penang: ALIRAN, 1974); and Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, "Patron-Client Relationship in Peasant Society: A Theoretical Critique and a Re-evaluation of Its Application to Malay Peasant Society", *Akademika*, 17 (1980), pp. 79–89, for discussions of patronage politics amongst the Malays.

39 This phenomenon is by no means unique to Mawar. On April 14, 1982, eight days before the 1982 Malaysian general elections, the Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly of Negri Sembilan was murdered (see *New Straits Times*, April 15, 1982). A few months later, a Federal Cabinet Minister and four others, from the same UMNO *bahagian* of which the deceased was a senior and influential official, were arrested and charged in court with the murder. The trial began in November 1982. Evidence presented during the trial showed the existence of an intense power struggle within the *bahagian* over two closely related issues – namely, the pre-selection of candidates and the distribution of development benefits under the NEP (see *New Straits Times*, November 5, 9, 10 and 11, 1982, and December 21, 22, 23 and 24, 1982). The trial was still in progress when this article was completed.

40 See, for example, *Utusan Melayu*, *Berita Minggu*, *Utusan Malaysia*, and especially *Watan*.

41 See, for example, Hussain Mohamed, "Masyarakat dan Politik di Kampung Padang Luas, Trengganu", M.A. thesis, Universiti Malaya, 1974; Hussain Mohamed, "Proses Politik dan Pilihanraya di Negeri Trengganu 1954–78", *Malaysia dari Segi Sejarah*, 11 (1982), pp. 104–29; Alang Perang Dzainuddin, "Factors Associated with Level of Participation of Members of Village Development and Security Committees in Four Peninsular Malaysian States", Ph.D. diss, Ohio University, 1977; Hing Ai Yun, "Changing Patterns of Economic Organization in West Malaysia", Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1979; Conner Bailey, "Social and Economic Organization in Rural Malay Society", Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1980; Marvin L. Rogers, "Patterns of Change in a Rural Malay Community; Sungai Raya Revisited", *Asian Survey*, 22:8 (1982), pp. 757–78. See, also, footnote 36.

42 See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 3, 1983, pp. 24–5, and Shamsul A.B. *From British to Bumiputera Rule: Local Politics and Rural Development in Peninsular Malaysia* (Singapore, ISEAS, forthcoming).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Multiple Ethnicities in Malaysia: The Shifting Relevance of Alternative Chinese Categories*

Judith Strauch

Ethnicity takes many forms, meets a variety of needs, and has a wide range of uses. No single case can provide material for an exhaustive analysis of the full complexity of the phenomenon, but all contribute pieces to the mosaic, illuminating that complexity. Analyses have been couched in terms of cultural definitions, of perceptual and cognitive categories, of social distance and solidarity of groups, of boundary definition and maintenance, of conflict and competition, of emergent versus conservative qualities of the phenomenon, and so forth – and *all* hold some validity, for ethnicity is multi-faceted. As A. L. Epstein points out, to define ethnicity exclusively in terms of only one of these many facets – whether its potential as a focus for political mobilization, its contribution to an individual's psychic comfort as a member of a group, or its cultural or linguistic attributes – "is to confuse an aspect of the phenomenon with the phenomenon itself" (1978:96).

The present paper examines the shifting relevance of segmentally ordered "levels" of ethnicity among Chinese in Malaysia, revealing some of the diversity possible among the several related meanings of the single conceptual term "ethnicity". "Subethnic" boundaries separating culturally and linguistically distinct groups within the wider Chinese-Malaysian[1] community appear to be declining in salience, at least insofar as such salience is manifested through the use of subethnic categories to

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shape or define certain kinds of social action. Nonetheless, affective identification in terms of these subethnic categories remains strong. At the same time, a conscious ethnic identification with a more broadly defined "Chineseness" has become heightened. These observable trends are not simply evidence of a unilinear melting-pot process. Rather, they are reflective of historial developments in which increasing security and predictability of life and livelihood within small face-to-face communities of Chinese have been paralleled by an increasing sense of vulnerability as Chinese *vis-a-vis* the broader national multi-ethnic political environment. Thus a number of possible meanings and uses of "ethnicity" appear to operate simultaneously for individuals participating in a social arena comprising ethnic categories of different conceptual orders, some of which may be nested or overlapped, and some of which are unequivocally discrete.

ETHNICITY AS A CONCEPT

Ethnicity, where it appears, is ultimately based in distinctions of "we" from "they" that may generally be considered to be irreducible givens (although gradations of distinction may in fact be distributed continuously along a scale rather than dichotomously or at discrete intervals). But it is context that determines whether and to what extent those distinctions are socially or psychologically significant. Ethnicity, i.e., does not exist simply because such distinctions exist; such distinctions provide no more than the potential for ethnic differentiation. Moreover, even when ethnicity *cum* ethnic *differentiation* is manifest, it is not safe to assume that ethnic *groups* are a necessary concomitant, for the word "group" implies some organization function or at least consciousness of *group* existence and identity of purpose. Careful analytical distinctions must be drawn between different conceptual orders of "ethnicity" as they apply to a wide range of self-conceptualizations and social behaviour and experience.

Explicit differentiation among three sorts of ethnic phenomena is useful: 1) ethnic identity, 2) ethnic categories, and 3) ethnic groups. Each of the first two implies the existence of the other, though identity may be seen to operate independently of overt recognition of categories once both are well established in the conceptual schemes of the individuals who make up a given social system. The third often, but not always, appears as an outgrowth of the first two: ethnic identities and categories may exist without ethnic groups, but ethnic groups, if they do

come into being, must be built on categories and identities, and may then in turn serve to reinforce those categories and identities.

Much of the current debate in the literature over the nature and meaning of ethnicity is bogged down unnecessarily in a failure conceptually to distinguish ethnic groups from ethnic categories. Barth, in analyzing the generation, maintenance, and negotiation of ethnic boundaries, shows that ethnic categories demarcated by such boundaries may vary considerably in form and in content, as well as in the degree of relevance and the breadth of scope with which they impinge upon social action (1969:14). He refers in fact to categories rather than to ethnic groups as such in much of his theoretical discussion. Abner Cohen misses the distinction, however, both in his critique of Barth (1974:xiii) and in his own treatment of the subject (1969, 1974). In focusing so intently on the political use of ethnicity, as it underlies the formation of competitive interest groups in African towns, he highlights a very important dimension of ethnicity, but at the same time dismisses the very real significance that ethnic identification and ethnic categorization can hold in the absence of actual group formation. Epstein points out that Cohen's data, drawn from a group that is relatively cohesive in residential and occupational as well as ethnic terms, lead logically to the notion that ethnic expression is essentially political interest expression. But he goes on to note that this model may be inadequate in situations marked by greater diversity and heterogeneity (Epstein 1978:94).

J. C. Mitchell, by contrast, has been assiduous in drawing the contrast between group and category (1970, 1974). He sees categorization as a process that provides necessary order and predictability in social relations by reducing the complexity inherent in situations in which social interactions are transitory and superficial and at the same time multitudinous and extensive. For Mitchell, "ethnicity" is a perceptual or cognitive construct, while "ethnic groups" are behavioural phenomena, and any connections between the two must be empirically demonstrated and explained rather than assumed. Ethnic identities are derived from a labelling process that relates more to categorical expectations of public behaviour in a public context than to an individual's basic customs, beliefs, or cultural practices. "The social meanings of ethnicity, therefore, depend directly on the wider social context of which it is only a part, since the meanings have social significance in that they enable behaviour to be predicted" (Mitchell 1974:23).

In the case material that follows, we will see the persistence of ethnic categories that originally emerged to meet political and economic needs

under conditions that have now undergone considerable change. What were once *groups* are today merely *categories*, for ethnic groups of a different order, demarcated by expanded boundaries, have come to the political fore in response to a transformed social and political environment. The formation of the ethnic groups relevant today in Malaysia does represent, as Cohen would argue, a dynamic rearrangement of relations and customs, and not merely a resurgence of cultural conservatism and continuity (see Cohen 1974:xxiii). David Parkin's related notion of ethnicity as "a) the articulation of cultural distinctiveness in b) situations of political conflict or competition" (1974:119) accurately describes a part of the range of observable ethnicity in Malaysia as well. But the political interpretation of ethnicity illuminates an aspect of the phenomenon, not the phenomenon itself. The point that both Cohen and Parkin neglect is that the original ethnic categories do not necessarily disappear simply because they are superseded by newly relevant categories as bases for interest group formation. That a category falls into operational disuse does not necessarily mean that it ceases to exist or to hold social meaning. The ethnic categories that informed economically and politically competitive groups among Chinese in Malaya half a century ago today persist only as social identities. Nonetheless, however seldom they may be elicited for concrete purposes, they appear to offer some measure of psychological satisfaction to people who refuse to forget who they, and others around them, are.

OVERSEAS-CHINESE ETHNICITY

The plural society of Malaysia, like many the world over, is comprised of a multiplicity of groups, some indigenous and some immigrants. The *Nanyang* ("Southern Seas") Chinese are immigrants of a particular sort, however, in that the homeland they left behind cradles one of the world's oldest and greatest cultures, whose historical as well as contemporary significance cannot be denied. The large-scale emigrations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries included impoverished coolies, petty and not-so-petty merchants, and, particularly in this century, members of the intelligentsia. All, even the poorest who hardly knew the written characters for their own names, carried with them an indisputable sense of their cultural heritage. Chinese chauvinism was given a free rein by the colonial governments in control of most of Southeast Asia, and events in China such as the 1911 revolution and the Japanese invasion of 1937 provided unifying foci for the Chinese nationalistic and culturalis-

tic pride that was propagated through a widespread network of Chinese schools which socialized even the poor. The 1949 revolution met with a more mixed response, but response there was, and overseas Chinese were no less certain that they were Chinese first, immigrants second – though whether Communists, Nationalists, or neutrals was not always so clear.

Despite its chauvinistic focus on a broadly "Chinese" culturalism, overseas Chinese society exemplifies a characteristic shared to a certain degree by all groups defined by ethnic criteria – the potential for segmentary opposition of subethnic categories. Chinese can be divided into subgroups which, like similarly constituted and territorially discrete groups in Africa and Europe, through the centuries developed linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. But in contrast to most of the rest of the world, China, while evidencing rich cultural variation at regional and local levels, maintained a striking degree of unity and integration at the higher level of empire for more than two millenia. A geographically mobile Chinese individual, whether an imperial bureaucrat or an emigrant merchant or labourer, never (traditionally) severed his ties or his identification with his (or his ancestors') native place, but instead added additional levels of identification with each move (see Skinner 1976, 1977). Because of this imperial integration, the Chinse segmentary opposition model differs from the African by virtue of its vast inclusiveness. It is not limited by kinship, putative or otherwise, but is extended by a sense of cultural commonality instilled across a vast empire through ideological, economic, and political integration that perdured for centuries. Thus the emigrant Chinese could and did recognize common ties, in ascending order, with village mates, with members of the same standard marketing system (and both of these might also be lineage mates), with nonkin from the same intermediate marketing system or administrative unit of the lowest level, or from the same country, prefecture, province, region, and ultimately from the same empire.

From the time of the earliest Chinese settlement in the Nanyang, the use of these nested native-place categories has been important in the social organization of the immigrant community (see Crissman 1967). In the contemporary context, the most inclusive meaningful units are national units (Malaysian Chinese, Thai Chinese, Indonesian Chinese, etc.). Within each of these national Chinese communities, the first degree of internal segmentation follows linguistic lines (Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka, etc.) which largely coincide with territorially bounded native place divisions as well (the notable exception being the Hakka group, who in China are territorially interspersed with other locally

dominant populations). Further segmentation is likely to occur within any given host locality according to smaller geographical units of origin, which also display some cultural diversity in custom and dialect usage.

Although theoretically any set of territorially contiguous ethnic gorups or categories could construct a similar hierarchy of identities, few have in fact elaborated the model to such a degree or utilized it so universally as the Chinese. At different times and places in history many of the various levels of Chinese ethnic and subethnic identities available have served in turn as the bases for group formation, while the others remained meaningful, for the time being, merely as categories. Chinese have always had simultaneously at hand several non-conflicting identities – the concept of "being Chinese," the only slightly contrary notion of, e.g., "being Cantonese" as opposed to "being Hokkien," and within that, the clear self-identification as, e.g., a Szeyap person (a group of Cantonese counties) or finally a Toisan person (one of the four Szeyap counties). For convenience I refer to the lower-level units of Chinese ethnic categorization as "subethnic," to distinguish them from the higher-order differentiations that are more commonly made in Malaysia between Chinese, Malay, Indian, etc. "ethnic" groups, or "communities." But in fact these Chinese subethnic categories are as ethnically distinctive as are many African "tribes," and indeed they have been referred to as "tribes" by earlier writers (e.g. Purcell 1965), although they lack the overarching kinship or political organization that is more usually associated with this imprecise term.

The Chinese-Malaysian community has demonstrated considerable variability in self-identification, self-categorization, and group formation, as it has experienced a number of different encapsulating political and social environments. The national political system has gone from pre-war *laissez faire* mercantile colonialism to military rule (by first the Japanese and then the British Emergency administration), to the Malay-dominated sovereign state, and each has meant a very particular sort of incorporation for the ethnic Chinese. Local-level Chinese social groupings have ranged from labour *kongsis* in tin mines and logging camps, to scattered squatter settlement, to forced relocation camps ("new villages"), to densely packed urban centres. In each context, ethnicity has a specific meaning, and in each, a particular conceptual order of ethnicity underlies the sense of commonality of purpose that defines the ethnic "group".

THE MALAYAN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Under British indirect rule Chinese were permitted a high degree of internal self-rule, as were the other major ethnic groups. Broadly speaking, colonial Malaya approached the epitome of the plural society as described by Furnivall (1948), with different communities living side by side, interacting little except in the marketplace, and kept in order by the overarching but foreign political force, which dealt separately with leaders of each local community. Edward Bruner draws attention to Furnivall's ethnocentric grouping together of all "natives" under one rubric (1974:255), and of course the same device was applied to all "Chinese" as well. Certain lines of cleavage (those perceived by Furnivall) were indeed muted by the power situation, but the classic formulation obscures those cleavages which were not so affected, those within each of the broader communities.

For the Chinese immigrant labourer the effective social and political world comprised only other Chinese. Newcomers followed their natural proclivities to join together with their native-place fellows (*tongxiang*) who spoke a common language and had common cultural habits, preferred the same foods, propitiated the same gods, and so forth. Among this *tongxiang* community one was most likely to get help in finding work, in borrowing cash during periods of temporary enforced idleness, in settling disputes with fellow workers, and, as the settlers put down roots, in finding a suitable bride to be brought over from the home community in China. Native-place associations (*tongxiang huiguan*) were formally organized in every port city and large town in Southeast Asia (see Freedman 1960).

Just as associations among *tongxiang* were important, so too were cleavages between different *tongxiang* groups. Economic competition, as well as cooperation, tended to be organized along linguistic and native-place lines into the larger groupings of voluntary associations and secret societies that provided the political structure of the community. Such competition led to frequent and violent conflict, both in developing ports and in tin-mining areas in the hinterland. The British eventually stepped in, attempting to bring order in part through the establishment of an official Chinese Protectorate charged with combatting secret societies and their power. The Protectorate offered direct recourse for new immigrants that allowed them to bypass the hierarchical segmentary channels provided by the Chinese community's internal structure. Thus direct rule was implemented to supplant the indirect "Kapitan

China" system (see Skinner 1968), but it was by no means entirely successful (Purcell 1967:152f), for the function the native place associations filled was a meaningful one. In the southeastern Chinese provinces from which most of the immigrants came, the strong localized lineage had offered its poor members some economic and political security through both strength in numbers and special protection based on the wealth and power of its elites. Consequently, horizontal class cleavages within the lineage were less salient than vertical cleavages between strong rival lineages. In the absence of large kinship groups in the Nanyang, native-place associations played a similar role, providing the individual with the security of membership in a strong cooperative group.

In this environment subethnicity (native place and language) tended to determine the opportunities open to the immigrant, defining both his initial employment in a certain category of work (e.g. more likely commercial if he was Hokkien, more likely agricultural if Hakka) and his chances for advancement within that category. Although internal class divisions existed objectively, class-consciousness had far less salience in daily life than had ethnic solidarity. The Hakka logger saw the rich Hakka lumber merchant as his patron, and the wealthy Teochiu rice wholesaler was likewise viewed as a trusted protector by the poor Teochiu vegetable farmer. The "armies" engaged in the Larut Wars of the Perak tin-mining district in the late 19th century tended to comprise primarily Hakkas on the one side and Cantonese on the other, each with a few segmentarily determined allies, and each made up of loyal "foot soldier" workers bound through secret-society ritual to their elite leaders who filled authority roles modeled in part on those of lineage heads in China. In sum, cleavages and alliances within Chinese immigrant society were both complex and of daily significance, whereas for all but the elite, contacts with Malays and with Europeans were few and relatively unimportant.

It has been noted in many contexts that in plural societies the colonial umbrella served to mute interethnic conflict, and that once it was removed, such ethnic conflict emerged as central in the struggle for the power once held securely by foreigners and now open for capture as the prize of independence (see e.g. Parkin 1974:120). In the plural society of colonial Malaya, however, we see that though contact and thus conflict between Malays and Chinese was in fact muted, as Malay Bumiputeras ("sons of the soil") continued in their traditional roles as sultans and farmers while Chinese and Indian immigrants met most of the newly

created demand for wage labour and merchant middlemen, subethnic conflict among competing Chinese groups ran rampant. The close of the colonial era, here as elsewhere, opened up new ethnic conflicts and rivalries. The British formula which granted political dominance to the Malays through numerous constitutional protections, while leaving the problem of Chinese economic advantage to be dealt with in the future, satisfied no one. But although the opening of new ethnic rivalries led to ethnic *group* formation of a different order, it did not entail the total closure of ranks at the subethnic level that perfect operation of the segmentary model would imply. Chinese subethnic *categories* persist as *categories*, and in many specific cases as *subgroups* as well, despite the contemporary preeminence of the Malay-Chinese political opposition.

THE SPECIAL CONDITION OF THE CHINESE OF WEST MALAYSIA

The experience of the Chinese in West Malaysia[2] differs significantly from that of *huaqiao* (overseas Chinese) elsewhere in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world in a number of respects. Most salient is the unusual demographic balance. Chinese Malaysians are nationally an extremely large minority, as indicated in Table 1. Table 2 shows the contrast in the comparison with other countries in the region (Singapore, as an essentially Chinese city-state, is an exception of a different order). In five of the eleven peninsular states, all along the relatively densely settled west coast, Chinese make up approximately 40 per cent of the population, and in one, Penang, 56 per cent. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, Chinese are overrepresented in urban areas, but in Malaysia they are found in large numbers in small towns and rural agricultural areas as well. The 1970 Malaysian census shows that of the roughly 3,100,000. Chinese in West Malaysia, 47 per cent, not quite one and a half million, live in urban centres of over 10,000 population, 23 per cent in towns from 1,000 to 10,000 in population, and 30 per cent in population concentrations of under 1,000.

TABLE 1. West Malaysian Population by Community

Community	*Percentage*
Malay	53.2
Chinese	35.4

(table continued)

Community	Percentage
Indians	10.6
Others	0.8

Source: Chander 1972

TABLE 2. Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia (1970 estimates)

	Percentage of Chinese in total population
Singapore	74.5
Malaysia	34.1
Thailand	10.0
Cambodia	6.4
Vietnam	6.5
Indonesia	2.6
Laos	2.0
Philippines	1.4

Source: Heidhues 1974:3

The subethnic mixture of Chinese in Malaysia is particularly complex. The overall percentages for West Malaysia appear in Table 3, contrasted with those of some other nations of the region. Judging from the available figures, broken down by district, these groups appear to be quite thoroughly intermixed throughout the country. Given areas are thought to be predominantly occupied by one subethnic category or another, as indicated by the particular language most commonly in use, but extrapolation from the district figures suggests that contrary to common wisdom even these areas are in fact quite mixed. Despite clear linguistic dominance, Cantonese comprise less than one half and one third of the Chinese populations in and around Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur respectively, and Hokkiens make up less than half the Chinese population on the island of Penang (Chander 1972).

Table 3. Chinese in Southeast Asia by Subethnic Group (percentages)

	West Malaysia (1970)	*Thailand (1955)*	*Philippines (1939)*	*Indonesia (1930)*
Hokkien	34	7	75	44
Hakka	22	16	–	16
Cantonese	20	7	25	10
Teochiu	12	56	–	7
Hainanese	5	12	–	–
Other	7	2	–	20(?)

Sources: West Malaysia: Chander 1972; other estimates: Purcell 1965:82, 386–7, 498.

An additional regional contrast lies in the fact that in Malaysia, unlike Thailand and the Philippines, for example, there exists no transitional ethnic category, half way between Malay and Chinese and able to move in either direction at will. Islam demands total adherence, allowing for no half-Muslims: Malays are, virtually by definition, Muslim, and Chinese are, almost without exception, non-Muslim. The Straits Chinese, like Indonesian Peranakan Chinese are often thought of as semi-assimilated, speaking a home language that is a sinicized form of Malay, and adopting certain Malay food habits and clothing styles (Freedman 1965). But they cannot situationally opt for Malay or Chinese identity by choice, as some Thai Chinese might choose between Thai and Chinese labels. Chinese do not take Malay names, and intermarriage is practically negligible, among urban educated classes as well as among more parochial rural segments of the population. Chinese female children (often infants) are sometimes adopted by Malay familes, but they are then raised wholly as Malays, and often come strongly to deny any Chinese parentage despite their Chinese physical characteristics.

Prior to the second world war a process of residential integration had been underway in many rural areas, where Chinese households were interspersed among small Malay hamlets. During the depression many urban Chinese had been forced to move to the countryside to take up subsistence farming; under the Japanese occupation more joined them, fleeing the cities for both political and economic reasons. In the communist insurgency of the 1950s, however, all rural Chinese were pre-

sumed to be potential supporters of the jungle-based Chinese guerrillas. About half a million rural Chinese, one in four of the country's Chinese population at that time, were grouped together into fenced and curfewed "new villages" under a forced relocation programme. Thus the urban Chinese concentrations that had developed over time through natural social and economic processes were complemented by rural ghettoes established at one stroke, so to speak, as a short-range political and military strategy.

Given the population distribution in both urban and rural areas, Chinese Malaysians are less likely than most *huaqiao* to think of themselves, in the context of daily life and social interaction, as a minority community surrounded by a numerically dominant local group. In his study of ethnic group interaction in Indonesia, Bruner argues that social demography is critical in two respects: it determines the presence or absence of a "dominant culture", and it may define a clear and unambiguous locus of power (1974:255). For most Chinese Malaysians, the dominant culture that shapes daily social intercourse is likely to be Chinese, but all are aware that the locus of real power lies within the Malay-dominated government bureaucracy, a function as much of political history as of demography. Thus, although it is a locally salient subethnic *category* – e.g. Cantonese or Hokkien demographic ascendancy – that will determine the choice of language used in the street, it is the centralization of power with an ethnic group of a higher order – Malays – that determines the structuring of ethnic *groups* at the most inclusive level of ethnicity – Chinese, as opposed to Malays. Although in the course of the day a given Chinese individual may never actually interact with a Malay (and the individual is thus interacting in terms of categories only), he or she will probably be reminded more than once of the salience of ethnic groups, and thus of his/her membership in a group by virtue of automatic ascription at birth. Within a political environment in which people must rely on government sanction, intervention, or simple negligence on matters ranging from business permits to land titles to university positions for students, under rules that provide ethnic quotas for these and other limited goods, ethnic-group consciousness can never be completely submerged for long.

Most of the generalizations made about *huaqiao* throughout Southeast Asia are based on urban data, in part because in most countries Chinese are primarily urban, and in part because that is the body of data that was collected in the 1950s and 1960s. In Malaysia, however, the rural and semirural Chinese merit closer attention as an important segment of

the community, both numerically and politically.[3] The material that follows describes the subethnic structure and social relations within a small rural market town of about 3,000 people in southern Perak, one of Malaysia's five hundred "new villages". Relations within the Chinese community of Sanchun[4] provide the salient ethnic frame for the daily lives of its people. Rural Chinese, like their urban counterparts, have only limited contact with Malays and Indians as individuals, though their livelihood and future aspirations are in no small degree affected by a federal government controlled predominantly by Malays, and they are aware of this fact.

SANCHUN

Sanchun[5] has existed as a settlement for nearly a century. Originally it consisted of a cluster of a few wooden Chinese shops near the river and a scattering of Malay hamlets nearby. The first rows of permanent two-story stone shophouses were built a few miles away at the present site in 1919, when the development of British rubber interests was attracting increasing Chinese immigration to the area. Until 1950 Sanchun remained a small market center serving nearby rubber estates and smallholders, both Chinese and Malays, scattered throughout the vicinity, but under the relocation programme instituted during the communist insurgency it became a population centre as well. About 200 families, mostly Chinese rubber tappers and loggers, were brought together in a newly cleared area adjacent to the market town. The new village and the existing shop area were enclosed from the beginning within the same fence and subjected to the same curfews, conscription for the home guard unit, and so forth. Nonetheless a distinction persists in the minds of the people today between the *xincun* (new village) and the *jieshang* (the shop area, literally, "street").

In the early days the shopkeepers in Sanchun were predominantly Hokkien, while most of the tappers and loggers in the surrounding area were Cantonese and Kwongsai. Shortly before the war large numbers of Hakka labourers and Teochiu vegetable farmers also settled in the vicinity. Today the Hokkiens still cluster in the street section, but Cantonese merchants are now numerous as well. The village is made up largely of Cantonese and Hakkas. Malays and Indians comprise nearly 20 per cent of the community, but are centred chiefly in the shop area, aside from two small clusters of Indian rubber tappers in the village. Most of the Malays are government servants living in govern-

ment housing at the edges of the town. Both Malays and Indians turn outside of Sanchun to nearby hamlets, rubber estates, or the district administrative capital for social, religious, and even political affiliations, and Sanchun proper is essentially a Chinese town.

Among the Chinese households in the community, the current subethnic distribution is as follows: Cantonese, 45 per cent; Hakka 27 per cent; Hokkien, 11 per cent; Teochiu, 10 per cent; Kwongsai, 4 per cent; Hainanese, Hokchiu, Hokchia, Henghwa, and Hunanese together 3 per cent. As would be expected from the discussion above, occupational groupings show some correlation with speech groupings. Hokkiens are overrepresented in the commercial sector and Hakkas in manual labour, while the Cantonese are somewhat more evenly distributed. Two of the four coffee shops are run by Hainanese, two of the three bicycle shops by Henghwas, and the goldsmith, like most goldsmiths throughout Malaysia, is Cantonese. Cantonese is now the lingua franca, spoken by almost everyone, but informants say that in pre-war years this was less common. A number of the villagers reported that they could not speak Cantonese before they were moved into the new settlement.

To what extent is the subethnic diversity seen in Sanchun typical of other comparable rural Chinese Malaysian towns? Unofficial census figures indicated that as many of these towns are as heterogeneous in speech-group composition as they are homogeneous, a fact not surprising in the light of their origins as forced groupings of scattered hamlets rather than as naturally formed and gradually developed social units. Observations on interspeech-group relations and attitudes in Sanchun, then, illuminate the persistence of certain uses of subethnic identity among Malaysian *huaqiao* in the rural and small town contexts.

1) *Formal organizations*: Much of the overseas Chinese literature draws attention to the salience in the urban situation of formally organized Chinese native-place associations. Similar associations, often branches of those in larger towns, were sometimes established in small market centres as well. In Sanchun two such native-place associations own buildings serving as headquarters, appropriately labelled Gugangzhou Huiguan and Gaozhou Tongxianghui, respectively. The former includes members tracing their origins to the four *xian* (counties) commonly referred to as *sze yap* (in Cantonese) and two additional Guangdong *xian*, while members of the latter claim Gaozhou prefecture, also in Guangdong, as their native place. In 1972 these associations still functioned in the traditional manner as mutual-aid societies, providing their

members with financial aid for funerals and the use of tables and benches for both wakes and weddings. Leaders of the organizations visited the Sanchun Chinese cemetery for the spring and autumn ritual observances, after which members joined together in banquets of commemoration and solidarity. The Gugangzhou and the Gaozhou associations claim about 50 and 30 families as members, respectively. Another dozen or so families participate in a less formally organized manner in the Hanjiang association, which includes Hakkas and Teochius from Chaozhou prefecture, while some 20 Hokkien families are members of the Hokkien association. These two are affiliates of larger associations in a nearby town, and have no formal local branches, but their members met twice yearly for the spring and autumn observances and banquets. Nearly half of the families interviewed[6] said they were members of a native-place association, either locally or elsewhere.

Leading members of all of these associations, however, agree that they are not as important in the community as they once were, and younger men often drop out after their father die.[7] Sanchun has two locally organized mutual-aid associations that draw broader support from the community as a whole, both providing assistance with costs and labour needs for wakes and burials. One is organized privately by a respected village elder; the other operated under the aegis of the locally dominant political party, the Malaysian Chinese Association, until a local party split in 1973, though its members were not necessarily party members. It has now dropped its party affiliation, but its executive committee membership, encompassing both political factions comfortably, has changed little. As community-wide organizations, these two societies can make larger contributions to families in need than can the more narrowly based native-place associations. A similarly broadly based organization is the cemetery committee, comprised of men of all speech groups, which is in charge of spring and autumn graveyard rites centred on the Sanchun Chinese "common grave" commemorating all Chinese who have died in the area, including those unknown, with no descendents. In 1972 these ceremonies were held a day or so after each separate *tongxianghui* held its own observances and were followed by a community banquet in the Chinese recreation club. Thus, following temporary ritual division along native-place lines, these activities symbolically reunited the local community as a solidary whole. In 1976 I was told that this communal observance has replaced the smaller *tongxiang* gatherings almost completely. The single exception is the Hokkien group, whose members continue to meet separately before the community

gathering out of deference to their highly respected leader, who apparently cannot bring himself to abandon tradition.

2) *Local-level political processes*: In studies of urban *huaqiao*, speech-group and native-place affiliation have consistently been seen to be of salience in local political organization. Hence, I originally hypothesized a similar basis for leadership rivalries and support-group cleavages in this heterogeneous community, but the data proved to contradict the hypothesis. The three most important and respected leaders are members of three different speech groups, but neither rivalry nor support follows speech-group lines today.

The village patriarch, an elderly Hakka who came to power in the chaotic period of the Emergency, cooperates with, and is deferred to, by the local council chairman, a middle-aged Cantonese businessman. Another leader now of somewhat peripheral status, the traditionally-minded Hokkien leader referred to above, eschews formal politics in part because of the personal animosity he feels towards the elderly Hakka, whom he believes to be responsible for his (the Hokkien's) imprisonment as a suspected communist supporter during the Emergency. The mutual aversion between the two may have deeper roots tracing back to subethnic divisions in the early days of the settlement, however, for the Hakka's late patron (also a Hakka) and the Hokkien's father were the two dominant local figures before the war. The Hakka patriarch has a long string of minor conflicts with both Hokkiens (the elder Hokkien died in the early 1960s).

Today the Hokkien leader is chairman of the temple committee, is active on the school board and various other committees in the community, and is in every way treated as a community leader by all except the elderly Hakka, who is merely passably civil to him. The Hokkien's staunchest supporters are a Teochiu and a Hakka, who covertly criticize the patriarch, but show no interest in challenging him openly. The local council includes in addition to the central figures – the Hakka patriarch and the Cantonese chairman – other Hakkas, Cantonese, and a Hunanese, as well as a Malay and an Indian. The actual leadership and decision-making functions are carried on smoothly by a cohesive clique of mixed speech-group composition centred on the patriarch and the chairman. Most local dispute mediation is carried on not by this council but by three of its members who are considered "village elders" – the Hakka patriarch, the Cantonese organizer of the private mutual-aid society, and an elderly Cantonese businessman. Many people of all speech groups throughout the community express trust and faith in these three men,

in their honesty, and in their ability to resolve difficult matters fairly. 3) *Social interaction*: When I asked people about the relevance of speech-group differences I was consistently told that they no longer matter. In the early days, before the war, according to some informants, the different groups did not mix much, in part because of their physical dispersion – the Hokkiens clustered in the town, and Cantonese and Hakka labourers were scattered in groups throughout the surrounding areas. In those days, I was told, when differences arose between members of different groups, mediation by leaders of both groups involved was necessary for settlement. Today, however, the elders serve the community as a whole, not their own speech groups or *tongxiang*.

I was also told that in the old days marriage outside the speech group was virtually unknown, but that today such matters are irrelevant. My own impression was that intermarriage was increasingly frequent among younger people, as I happened to know a number of such couples. People under 35 have been raised for the most part within this integrated community, and many teenagers of minority groups even admit to speaking Cantonese better than their own mother tongues. The data show less intermarriage than either I or my openminded informants would have guessed, however. Interestingly, families in the shop section, who are by and large differentiated from those in the village by occupation, income, educational attainment and residential stability in the prewar years, show slightly higher rates of intermarriage regardless of age or generation in Malaysia. Thus subethnic integration, at least as indicated by intermarriage, does not follow a simple time vector even in a small community with relatively minimal socioeconomic differentiation. Instead, patterns generally observed more clearly in "modern" urban – rural contrasts are seen to operate to some degree even within a single rural context.

Friendship groups, from surface appearances, seem to be thoroughly integrated. There is real difficulty, of course, in trying to substantiate such an observation in any formal way. Given a population 45 per cent Cantonese, for example, one might count the number of friends a person has and try to determine whether there is a non-random excess of non-Cantonese among them, but such a count can never be fully accurate, nor can it measure degrees of friendship controlled for degrees of kinship. Some minority group members seem to have many ties among their own group, but these ties may ultimately be based on kinship rather than on speech-group or subethnic solidarity. Of the two dozen or so Teochiu families in Sanchun, for instance, kinship links four

second-generation middle-aged brothers, all now established in separate homes, and their many affines through both wives and sisters, most of whom are Teochius. Thus the group manifesting high solidarity turns out to be based on kinship rather than (or as much as) on Teochiu-ness or minority-group status.

4) *Business alliances*: Accurate information on business partnerships is difficult to come by, but more appear to be mixed than exclusively limited to one group or another. The largest local enterprise, a sawmill, was established by a Hakka some 20 years ago, but is now owned by a partnership of 10 men of various groups. The Cantonese council chairman, in addition to family holdings shared with brothers, owns pieces of land jointly with the Hakka patriarch and with his Hokkien brothers-in-law. A small pork raising, roasting, and selling partnership includes a Hakka, a Cantonese, and two Teochius. Young labourers, asked who if anyone has provided useful job introductions for them, generally cite former schoolmates (*tongxue*), co-workers in the same trade (*neihangren*), or relatives, both patrilateral and matrilateral; some of these may be *tongxiang* as well, but that is not treated as a significant category in itself.

Counter examples do of course exist. The rubber smokehouse is owned jointly by two Hokkien rubber dealers, but since it was established a generation ago by the fathers of the two men now partners, it tells us little about contemporary attitudes. On the other hand, a particularly successful and progressive fifth-generation Hakka agricultural entrepreneur who talks of Chinese unity and the irrelevance of speech-group divisions, nonetheless has only Hakka partners in his several ventures.

5) *Conceptual frameworks*: Despite these clear tendencies toward integration on the operational level, subethnic categories appear to retain some degree of meaning, for purposes of labelling and easy identification, at the very least. When asked, my companions in a local coffee shop could invariably name the speech group and often supply a lower-level native-place category as well for every other person present in the shop. When my assistant, a young man from a new village near the federal capital who is fluent in five Chinese languages as well as Malay and English, first came into the community, I noticed that in many of his first conversations with Sanchun people information about his speech group and often his family's native *xian* was either requested or offered as a matter of course. People still carry conceptual stereotypes in their heads about other groups, and maintain that they can usually tell a person's

subethnic identity on sight.[8] They can catalogue such differences as the kinds of rice bowls and eating utensils preferred by Hainanese, Hokkiens, and Cantonese,[9] and cite differences in wedding and funeral rituals, points that occasionally necessitate acknowledgement and active compromise. With so many variations on China's "little traditions" now available, it seems that pragmatism rather than family affiliation is sometimes the factor determining a choice. The young head of a Hokkien family told me that when his father died, Cantonese burial customs were followed because they were considerably cheaper than the proper Hokkien funeral.

It is clear that the roughly 2,500 Chinese who live in this semirural town are finding over time that the experiences they share together on a day-to-day basis in what has been a reasonably cohesive and stable community for 25 years or more provide more relevant criteria on which to base choices in social behaviour than do traditional categories rooted in a land many of them have never seen. Nonetheless, the traditional categories persist to some degree, even when the linguistic barriers that may have once been one of the chief pragmatic reasons for their importance in social life are now effectively eradicated. People still, for whatever reasons, tend to label themselves and others in one way and not another, and most perpetuate subethnic linguistic usage in the home. Many, moreover, continue to display large plaques above their doors identifying the village of their ancestors' origin. Though they tend less often than in the past to allow these identifications to shape or limit their behavioural choices, they refuse to give them up, seeing no contradiction in the persistence of subethnic categories that have little or no operational pragmatic use within a local community that has grown familiar and predictable in its own right.

CHINESE MALAYSIANS AND "OTHERS"

Considerably more has been written about Malaysian ethnic relations than about subethnic relations (see e.g. Wilson 1967, Enloe 1970, Rabushka 1971, etc.), and most is supported by the Sanchun data. Rural Chinese have only limited personal experience with members of other ethnic groups, and so of necessity most operate both behaviourally and conceptually on the basis of widely held stereotypes. Most interaction is in the marketplace, and while hostility is never open or even obviously apparent, negative stereotypes hold considerable currency. In conversations on the subject of intergroup relations, most Chinese

express disdain for Malays, and some even urge total avoidance of them as the wisest course of action. A number of shopkeepers insist that Malays are untrustworthy, citing examples from their own past experiences, and refuse to extend credit to them. By and large, Sanchun Chinese seem to feel that Malays are decidedly different from themselves in ways of thinking and feeling – *xinli butong* – and the assumption seems to be that the differences are irreconcilable.

Sanchun Chinese perceptions of the government and its Malay leaders, however, bear only an uncertain relationship to their views of rural Malays. Among Chinese there is strong resentment of government policies regarding Malay-language requirements in school examinations and Malay quotas in university admissions, various business licenses, and government employment. Most rural Chinese are well aware of these issues through the Chinese press and through their own experiences. The better educated and more politically active Sanchun Chinese discuss these matters frequently, and complain that the government treats Chinese as nothing more than second-class citizens.

It is not entirely clear, however, to what extent the Malays in power in the government and the Malays encountered in the Sanchun marketplace are seen as one and the same. Locally relevant ethnic stereotypes refer primarily to what is perceived as childlike behaviour and lack of ambition, traits that can be smiled on with some condescension. Government officials, by contrast, may be viewed as heavy-handed tyrants spoon-feeding the Malay peasant on the one hand and constricting natural Chinese rights on the other. The conflicts inherent are obvious. The Malay owner of the so-called "Ali-Baba"[10] taxi license may himself be a very likeable fellow, but the Chinese who spends long hours driving the taxi understandably resents both the individual who takes a part of his earnings and the system, based not on capital but on ethnicity, that allows him to do so.

Chinese and Malays in Malaysia represent ethnic *groups* in terms of both political and economic consciousness. There are no non-ethnics in Malaysia, for one's "race" is relevant in virtually all formal applications for jobs, licenses, and the like, and the information appears on the identity card that must be shown often, regardless of whether quotas apply to the particular issue at hand. Sanchun Chinese are constantly aware of certain interests that they share with other Chinese by virtue of their ethnicity – interest in the continuation of good Chinese-language primary schools for their children, for example, and in increased quotas for non-Malays at the nation's government-run universities (the govern-

ment is currently rejecting attempts by Chinese leaders to establish a private university where official quotas would not apply). Many Chinese, of course, are aware of the complexity of the situation confronting the government and are willing to grant good intentions on the part of leaders of both ethnic communities. Nonetheless, seeing both sides of the issues involved does not simplify the personal choices a Chinese may have to make in his own interests or those of his family. One successful Sanchun Hakka entrepreneur employs both Malays and Indians as well as Chinese in his enterprises, is personally friendly with a number of Malays, and defends them both as individuals and as a group in discussions with other Chinese. Pragmatically, however, he notes quotas and fears future trends, and so makes plans to educate his sons in English and send them to Australia or New Zealand where he feels they will enjoy fuller lives.

SUBETHNIC CATEGORIES AMONG CHINESE AND MALAYS: CONTRASTING FORMS AND MEANINGS

A cogent analysis of Malay subethnicity by Judith Nagata (1974) provides a valuable opportunity for comparison of two ethnic groups which stand in strikingly different relation to the single national power structure that encompasses them both. Like the Chinese, Malays are in fact a mixed bag, comprising groups of diverse geographical origin and cultural heritage. The principles of fragmentation, however, are too irregular and variable to fall legitimately under the rubric of complementary segmentation. Nagata notes that a number of different identifying criteria are use in Malaysia, but the most salient definition of a "Malay" is that provided by the federal constitution. It is purely cultural: a Malay is a Muslim, habitually speaks the Malay language, and follows Malay *adat*, or customary law (Nagata 1974:335).

Of the various subethnic categories (*sukubangsa*) of Malayness, peoples stemming from different local places in Malaya and Indonesia differ only minimally, though the diverse range of historical Indian and Arabic influences on separate indigenous groups has not been totally inconsequential. Two additional "Malay" groups are treated at greater length in Nagata's analysis: those who in some contexts consider themselves either Arabs or "Klings" (Indian or Pakistani Muslims), regardless of generational depth of residence in Malaysia.

There is at first glance an apparent parallel between the subethnic conceptualizations within the two major Malaysian ethnic groups.

"Chinese" as an inclusive term encompasses Hokkiens, Cantonese, Hakkas, etc., and at finer levels of discrimination, Szeyap Cantonese, or Toisan Szeyaps. "Malays" include Kelantanese, Minangkabau, Javanese, etc., as well as Arabs and some Indians and Pakistanis (those who are Muslim). The models differ, however, in two very significant respects, the first relating to the conceptual structure of subethnicity, and the second to the ineluctable role of political interest and power as they inform ethnic processes.

Malayness in its broadest sense is ultimately defined in religious terms; in Malaysia, Muslims are Malays. Thus Arabs and Klings are in one sense, as Muslims, "Malays". But in another meaning, pertaining to lines of descent, Arabs and Klings are not Malays, they are Arabs and Klings. Nagata points out that Malaysian Muslims can and do situationally choose to label themselves according to reference groups varying along three dimensions: 1) simple comparison (statements of social distance or solidarity), 2) immediate expediency, and 3) normative statements (claims regarding comparative values of social status) (1974:340). An Arab or a Kling can have his or her cake and eat it too. Nagata cites examples of Arabs in a given situation claiming greater ritual purity by explicitly contrasting themselves to "those Malays", while members of several *sukubangsa*, including Arabs, when making claims on government largess, refer to themselves as "we Malays". Some individuals are seen to oscillate freely back and forth between identities, with no apparent negative consequences psychologically or socially. On the contrary, Nagata suggests that such oscillation may be adaptive both personally and socially (1974: 333).

The Chinese case differs significantly. The inclusive category in the Chinese model can never be contrasted against one of its subcategories in any context: being Hakka or Cantonese never stands in opposition to being Chinese, for one is always both simultaneously. A Chinese oscillating between higher and lower order categories of identification is not likely to suffer psychological strains because for him, unlike a similarly flexible Arab or Kling, there is in any case no real contradiction involved. Increasingly, it appears, the lower order categories are more vestigial than functionally meaningful, at least in rural communities such as Sanchun. Personal familiarity within the community and the stability of daily life have both grown over time, and the predictability that was once provided by *tongxiang* categories is now available in equally reliable categories of "Sanchun Chinese" versus. e.g., "Ipoh Chinese", categories that imply simply "we" versus "they" rather than

differentiation that can legitimately be termed ethnic. Similar patterns have not necessarily evolved in the urban setting, however, where life holds greater social complexity. Recent work in Singapore indicates that subethnic divisions there are as important now in determining social, occupational and political affiliation as they were in earlier times (Hsieh 1977). But Singapore, being predominantly Chinese and politically independent, lacks the impetus toward broader Chinese unity that is inherent in Malaysia's communal politics.

The intimate connection between ethnic groups and formal political groups in Malaysia persists by design rather than by accident. The original tripartite Alliance government formed at independence comprised the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). There have been a few earnest attempts to organize interethnic parties based on shared ideology rather than shared ethnicity, but these parties have either folded owing to lack of support, or gradually come to be identified largely with one group or another, fitting tacitly into the communally based political system. Some of them have joined the government party expanded in 1974 and now known as the National Front (Barisan Nasional).

The opposition Malay and Chinese parties, interestingly enough, base their opposition on contrasting themes. The pro-Malay extremist party, taking a very particularistic focus of dissent, criticizes UMNO for not being sufficiently adamant in defending the faith, yielding too much to the infidels in the government partnership. Chinese-based opposition parties, both the legal socialists and the illegal communists, focus instead on more universalistic issues of political representation and economic distribution. Class divisions exist within both ethnic groups, but to date at least, Malay leaders have been able to call on traditional loyalties to Islam and to the Sultans as religous leaders to mute some of the discontent that is growing between the rulers and the ruled. The ideological appeal of religous affiliation combines with the pragmatic political advantage to be gained from identifying with the strong government party both to unite diverse subethnic categories under the rubric of "Malay" and to minimize the import of internal class divisions.

The Chinese leaders within the government, however, are caught in a political dilemma, for they are asked to win unified support among their ethnic constituency for government policies, yet are denied effective means of soliciting unity. Most Chinese leaders hold that by strength of numbers a united Chinese community would be able to maintain a

stable balance *vis-a-vis* Malay political power, and both class and subethic divisions, some of which correspond to a certain extent, are actively suppressed in favour of pan-Chinese solidarity. Hokkien leaders, for example, who have long been educated in English and have represented Chinese capitalist interests in the MCA are now making an effort to learn Mandarin, the language of the Chinese primary schools of Malaysia, to strengthen their bid for support among Chinese workers and villagers. The dilemma arises from the fact that the UMNO-dominated government appears to be more interested in unquestioning allegiance than in a real balance among constitutent parties, for the Barisan Nasional is widely recognized to be a very unequal partnership. While UMNO uses blatantly ethnic appeals to its Malay followers (see, e.g. Rogers 1975), Chinese leaders find that ethnic appeals to Chinese solidarity bring Malay charges of Chinese chauvinism, which implicitly encompass questions of national loyalty versus subversive communism (see Strauch 1976, 1978). Moreover, the presence within the government of several Chinese-based parties, who despite public claims to the contrary are strong rivals rather than allies (Strauch 1980, Lee 1977), inevitably undermines whatever potential there might be for Chinese unity as such, and instead the Chinese community retreats in confusion and internal dissension, held to the low political profile that is most satisfactory in the eyes of its Malay "partner".

CONCLUSIONS

The social meanings of ethnicity, as the Malaysian case demonstrates, are many and varied. Not all ethnic units are directly comparable. Some are ethnic *groups*, implying a sense of shared interest or purpose, and some are merely ethnic *categories*, implying a commonality of identity that offers a measure of comfort and relaxation, perhaps, but little concrete benefit beyond that. The behavioural boundaries that define an entity that clearly acts as an ethnic group at one point in time may at another time, with little or no change in shape or form, enclose not a group but a category. As we have seen, the Chinese *tongxiang* groups of the past have, in some situations at least, come to be *tongxiang* categories instead. Behavioural boundaries may, on the other hand, reconstitute themselves to admit new categories to an inclusive group without changing the label that is applied, as we see in the case of the most inclusive order of Malay identity. Or totally new boundaries may come into prominence as lower order categories/groups join together to form

a higher order entity that is the sum of the parts, as in the inclusive Chinese identity/category/group.

The building blocks of ethnicity may be givens, irreducibles, but the combinations and permutations yielding meaningful forms with which to structure personal and political lives that emerge in concrete situations of interethnic interaction display a versatility that belies the notion of a "given". Nonetheless, there are limits. And in the final analysis the limits are set by power and by group interests. In Malaysia, the ultimate goal of a true "Malaysian" identity that is either the sum of its parts or a reconstitution of old boundaries into a more inclusive form acceptable to all, along with a concomitant reduction of constitutent groups to categories, remains for the present, at least, well beyond reach.

NOTES

1 The use of the term "Chinese Malaysian" rather than the more common "Malaysian Chinese" is intentional, and will persist throughout this paper. It is increasingly accepted that language usage shapes consciousness, and traditional usage often implies definite conservatism, though perhaps subconscious and unintentional. Most, possibly all, of the Chinese of whom I am writing probably prefer to identify themselves politically with Malaysia rather than with China, and thus the ethnic term "Chinese" is properly an adjective modifying the noun "Malaysian", which connotes nationality in the sense of citizenship or political affiliation.

2 Conditions in East Malaysia, both demographically and historically, are sufficiently different from those in West Malaysia to justify their exclusion from consideration in this study. Thus when for simplicity's sake I refer to Malaysia, I mean, in fact, West Malaysia.

3 Concern over governtal neglect of new villagers and squatters has been a hot political issue since the race riots of 1969; in 1971 a new federal ministry with full cabinet status was established primarily to deal with issues being raised relating specifically to new villages, though the focus of this ministry is today less exclusive. There is continued governmental concern regarding the possible existence of communist sympathies and support among the rural Chinese.

4 The name "Sanchun" is a pseudonym.

5 This community is described in Strauch 1981; fieldwork was carried out in 1971–72, and on brief follow-up visits in 1976 and 1978.

6 A random sample of over half of the Chinese households in Sanchun were interviewed at length in 1972.

7 The son of the Gaozhou chairman is working to revive the association, but I believe his interests lie not in rejuvenating *tongxiang* solidarity but in

attracting a following that might then be won over to the opposition political party he is trying, so far with little success, to build up in Sanchun.

8 When asked for some distinguishing features, an example people frequently offered was that Hokkiens are light-skinned and wear glasses, while Hakkas are dark-skinned – characteristics that could be predicted easily in tropical Malaysia given that Hokkiens are predominantly shopkeepers, while Hakkas are generally agricultural workers.

9 In the home in which I was a guest for two months in 1976, the Cantonese wife invariably used a rice bowl and chopsticks, but set a shallow bowl and spoon and fork in front of her Hokkien husband (of a Straits Chinese family) and the children.

10 Ali is a common Malay name, and Baba is another term for Straits Chinese.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

Communalism and Confusion:
Towards a Clarification of Terms in the Study of Malaysian Politics

Simon Barraclough

The terms 'communal' and 'communalism' are widely used in both the daily language of politics and in academic studies of the political process in Malaysia. Indeed, an understanding of these terms is central to an understanding of Malaysia's political system. Yet, despite their importance and widespread usage, these terms are seldom (if ever) defined, and are frequently used in ways which are confusing and sometimes contradictory.

In these notes we will firstly examine these terms as they have been commonly used by actors within the Malaysian political process, before proceeding to investigate their usage in academic writings on Malaysian politics. In each case, usage will be critically evaluated to reveal imprecise applications, paradoxes and contradictions. In this brief survey, we will concentrate upon writings and statements made about Malaysia's political parties, since this area of the political process readily highlights problems of usage. The terms will then be examined in a broader comparative context in order to see how they are used in academic writings on other societies characterized by ethnic cleavages. Having considered the problems revealed in our examination of the Malaysian context, and bearing in mind much comparative usage, some suggestions will be proposed for an improved understanding of the usage of these terms in the existing literature.

POLITICAL USAGE OF THE TERMS

In daily usage the terms 'communal' and 'communalism' are frequently

employed in a pejorative and partisan fashion, although they can also be used to objectively describe a particular phenomenon. For example, speaking a few months after the racial riots of May 1969 which had led to the suspension of Parliamentary rule, the late Tun Abdul Razak told a meeting of Commonwealth Parliamentarians that:

> The major concerns of Malaysia . . . are communalism and militant communism. These are problems which, by their very nature, impose constraints on any completely liberal concept of democracy.[1]

However, the terms are invariably used by each of the political parties to denigrate its opponents. Some examples taken from the statements of political leaders will serve as an illustration. In 1980 Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad in attacking the Democratic Action Party (DAP), Malaysia's principal opposition party, claimed that:

> Without the DAP, communal politics would not arise. The MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association) would not need to adopt chauvinistic attitudes and UMNO (United Malaysia National Organisation) would not need to be extreme . . . If there is any sort of racial dissatisfaction arising among the people of Malaysia it is the work of the DAP.[2]

For his part, the Secretary-General of the DAP claimed, in the wake of the 1978 General Elections, that his party enjoyed overwhelming Chinese endorsement, a substantial Indian following, and growing support from the Malay electorate; consequently:

> . . . the DAP is the only party which is multi-racial in character and support in Malaysia. All the component parties in the National Front thrive on racial appeals, and when Ghaffar Baba (Secretary-General of the National Front) said after the elections that Malaysia must do away with communal politics, let him answer what he is doing to do away with the communal politics of UMNO, MCA and MIC.[3]

In similar fashion almost all of Malaysia's political parties condemn each other. The *Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia* (PSRM) sees the ruling *Barisan Nasional* as well as the DAP and *Parti Islam* (PAS) as communal. PAS stresses the universality of the Islamic creed to counter accusations that it is communal. The *Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia* (GRM) with its professedly non-communal platform attacks both the DAP and

even the MCA, its partner within the ruling coalition, for their communal approach. Thus a web of accusations and counter-accusations links the various parties as each publicly labels its rival as communal, while defending itself against the same charge.

But what do these political actors really mean when they employ these terms? As we have seen in the case of Tun Razak's remarks, the terms can be used in a relatively objective sense to describe actual phenomena. Thus the term 'communal' may be used to describe the mode of organization of a particular organization, if there are ethnically-based restrictions upon membership. However, in its critical sense, most political actors in Malaysia employ the term to refer to those attitudes, orientations, and actions motivated by a preoccupation with the interests of a single ethnic group (or combination of ethnic groups) at the expense of another ethnic group or the nation as a whole. Paradoxically, it would therefore be possible to organize political action along communal lines yet eschew communal attitudes. Similarly, a party composed almost entirely of one ethnic group might still seek to oppose communal attitudes.

'Communalism' would describe those beliefs which permit or even foster communal attitudes, orientations, and actions. Such beliefs might range from a pragmatic acceptance of the inevitability of communal politics, to a positive predilection for political action organized along ethnic lines. Such values are generally regarded as undesirable since they perpetuate social divisions, may jeopardize harmonious relations between the various communities and are a continuing hindrance to national integration. Moreover, particular sections of Malaysian society regard 'communalism' as a direct negation of cherished universalistic value systems such as Islam, socialism, humanitarianism, and so forth.

While political actors might agree upon a general understanding of these terms and concur as to their undesirability, there is considerable disagreement over their application to actual action, attitudes, and entities within the political process. A critical examination of both the organizational principles and actual ethnic orientations of the principal protagonists in the Malaysian party system underscores the degree by which the respective parties differ in their perceptions of what is 'communal', and what constitutes 'communalism'. Such an examination should also alert academic observers to some of the problems in applying these terms to the realities of Malaysian politics. We will therefore briefly deal with the case of the ruling *Barisan Nasional* and three of its opponents – the DAP, PSRM, and PAS.

The *Barisan Nasional* (and its predecessor the Alliance Party) have unashamedly and pragmatically *organized* political action along ethnic lines. Illustrative of the extent of such organizational differentiation was the case of the Alliance Direct Membership Organization (ADMO). ADMO was established to give access to those who did not wish to join their appropriate ethnic component (Malay, Chinese, or Indian) within the tripartite Alliance Party, as well as to those who were quite literally ineligible to join any of these components due to their particular ethnic origin (among such elements were Eurasians, Ceylonese, Thais and other minority groups). Following the 1969 riots the Alliance took steps to expand the appeal of this 'non-communal' channel to Alliance membership. In February 1971 the Grand Alliance National Council decided to establish ADMO as the fourth 'pillar' of the party, and suggestions were openly made that ADMO would serve as the model for the Alliance Party of the future.[4]

However, with the expansion of the Alliance into the *Barisan Nasional*, with two of its component parties, the GRM and People's Progressive Party (PPP), open to all citizens regardless of ethnic affiliation, ADMO was rendered redundant. In 1975 ADMO was abolished and its members instructed to join either the GRM or PPP. With the subsequent decline of the PPP as a serious political force it would now seem that supporters of the *Barisan Nasional* who wish to join the ruling party through a 'non-communal' channel must do so through the GRM. Yet the GRM is almost totally Chinese in composition and has effectively played the role of 'an alternative MCA'. Should the GRM ever withdraw from the *Barisan Nasional*, those not fitting into the neat ethnic classification of the three original Alliance components would find themselves in the same position as in pre-ADMO times. In the organizational sense then, the *Barisan Nasional* is demonstrably communal, as was its predecessor the Alliance Party. But is its behaviour communal as its opponents maintain?

Critics would regard the organizational orientation of the ruling party as to a large extent determining its behaviour. Since it is based upon parties which (with few exceptions) profess to strive for the welfare and protection of a particular group, be it ethnic or religious, the *modus operandi* of the *Barisan* must be based upon communal criteria. Hence the MCA or GRM petition the dominant Malay component (UMNO) for specific measures of benefit to the Chinese, the MIC acts for Indians, and so forth. In essence, the key concern of the *Barisan Nasional* is multi-ethnic representation with the realities of UMNO

dominance. As Tun Razak explained at the first General Elections contested by the expanded *Barisan* in 1974:

> Malaysia needs a multi-racial Government. The National Front wants the Chinese to participate in governing their country. It does not matter whether the Chinese vote for MCA, Gerakan, PPP or SUPP candidates . . . If the Chinese want to participate in the Government they will have to vote for Chinese candidates in the National Front.[5]

Critics would argue that such a rationale acts to further reinforce ethnic divisions, and retards progress towards the goal of overcoming communal thinking. They would further argue that it is actually in the interests of the ruling party to exacerbate communal thinking in order to strengthen both the established political system and their position of primacy within it.

Certainly, at the micro level the ruling party is not only, for the most part, organized along communal lines, but much of its rationale would appear communal. But is this the effect at the macro level? Defenders of the *Barisan* would point out that the coalition, while pragmatically and honestly accepting ethnic differences and unhindered by idealistic impedimenta, actually overcomes narrow communal imperatives in the interests of ethnic harmony and political stability. Such a process involves goodwill, a willingness to make concessions, and keeping conflict within the realm of private discussion and well away from the public political arena. Moreover, such a communally-based entity is the only feasible system for Malaysia at this stage in its development. In short, the *Barisan* would admit to communal means toward non-communal ends.

But how do the *Barisan Nasional's* opponents stand up to such critical analysis? The DAP professes to be 'non-communal' in both its organizational principles and actual political approach. Yet as its critics have frequently pointed out, it has consistently failed to return a single Malay to the Federal Parliament and has rarely even returned one at the State Assembly level. Few Malays have joined the party and even fewer hold positions of power or influence in the party's national executive. Although the DAP has championed a variety of issues, it has consistently and most vigorously fought to defend the rights and privileges of non-Malays in the face of the *Barisan* Government's declared policy of accelerating the educational and economic opportunities of the Malays. Indeed, almost all of the party's electoral support has come from pre-

dominantly urban non-Malay areas.

In its defence the DAP admits its predominantly non-Malay composition but says that it has eschewed appointing 'token Malays' to leadership positions; its championing of the non-Malay cause is merely part of a commitment to a 'Malaysian Malaysia' which would guarantee equality to all communities.

PAS also suffers a gap between professed intentions and actual practice. The party claims to be based upon the universalistic teachings of Islam and its membership is therefore open to all Muslim citizens. In reality, however, PAS is virtually 100% Malay and has been a vigorous champion of that community's position, although in recent years it has sought to temper this reputation with pledges of concern for the welfare of all communities.

The PSRM, which as a socialist party is opposed to all forms of communal thinking, is nevertheless almost entirely Malay in composition, although it does make a point of fielding candidates form a variety of ethnic backgrounds. In past years, ethnic issues played a role in the PSRM's stance; its serious disputes with the Labour Party (which has since become defunct) over the question of the position of Malay as the national language, and other issues involving the special treatment of the Malays was one of the reasons for the demise of *Front Rakyat* (People's Front) which had been formed between these two parties in 1957.

This brief survey of political parties presents us with a somewhat confusing picture. All of these parties, according to their own criteria, deny that they are communal (in the pejorative sense of the word); yet, as even a cursory examination reveals, each may (depending once more upon the observer's criteria) be described as communal. The spectacle of these mutual recriminations reminds one of the Malay proverb *'ketam suruh anak jalan terus'* (the crab tells its offspring not to walk sideways), and there is a strong temptation to simply dismiss all Malaysian parties as communal and part of the overall phenomenon of communalism. Yet it is incumbent upon the academic researcher to make at least some effort at differentiation. Such a task will involve discriminating between the parties in a variety of areas such as eligibility for membership, actual membership patterns, professed policies involvement in issues exclusively the preserve of particular ethnic groups, and sources of support.

It is not difficult to categorize parties according to concrete criteria such as their openness to multi-ethnic membership, or even the actual

composition of their membership. However, any judgement as to whether a particular party's motivations or actions are communal runs the risk of becoming highly subjective. We may forgive loose or subjective usage on the part of political actors anxious to denigrate an opponent. However, in academic analysis such usage makes for serious problems. Yet as we shall shortly see, such subjective judgements have been commonly made by academic researchers.

ACADEMIC USAGE OF THE TERMS

A major problem in studies of Malaysian politics is the absence of even a rudimentary definition of either terms. K.J. Ratnam's *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya,* despite its central concern with 'communalism', assumes that the term is self-evident and launches into the intricacies of the political process without providing even a preliminary working definition. Standard reference works on Malaysian politics all gravely assert the dominance of communal considerations. Gordon Means writes that 'the central issues of Malaysian politics have been those of a communal character'.[6] R.S. Milne and D. Mauzy state that 'it has proved impossible to separate most issues from communalism, because they nearly all have inescapable communal implications'.[7] Neither work actually defines the authors' understanding of these terms. Most other works on Malaysian politics suffer from the same definitional defect.[8] The terms 'communal' and 'communalism' are simply assumed to have a general meaning readily comprehensible to the reader. Such an assumption, however, is problematic. As we shall see, there is by no means general agreement upon how these terms should be used in a comparative sense. As one Indian scholar of comparative ethnic politics had emphasized, the use of the word 'communalism' is almost solely confined to former British colonial territorities.[9] Moreover, researchers of Malaysian politics sometimes contradict one another in the application of these terms, as well as using them in an ambiguous way. Some examples from the literature on Malaysian politics will serve to illustrate this problem.

K.J. Ratnam would apparently have us believe that the Alliance 'ran with the fox and hunted with the hounds' when it came to communal questions. He relates that in its early days:

> . . . UMNO and the MCA were successful because they were practical enough to realize that at least *for the first few elections* to be held in the country, voting would almost always be com-

munal. In achieving its immediate ends the Alliance, at least for the time-being, *ignored the desirability of campaigning on a non-communal platform.*[10]

Despite this observation, and a subsequent statement that the 'Alliance is thus an inter-communal organization, and not non-communal as is often claimed'[11] the author concludes that:

> The Alliance has conducted an extensive campaign (*especially during elections*) against communalism, and has met with some success in convincing the electorate that inter-communal politics is the best solution for everyone, that communal politics is irresponsible politics.[12]

Clearly the meaning of communal in these examples differs with context. Otherwise, Ratnam would be suggesting that the Alliance was opposed to the very basis of its own existence.

R.S. Milne's use of quotation marks allowed him a degree of flexibility in his usage. Writing in 1967 he observed that:

> The Alliance . . . as an inter-communal party subject to internal stresses, might think that its own cohesion could be imperilled by discussions on communal issues which might become hard to control. The resulting paradox was that the Alliance was a party with a communal structure, which believed that too frequent open discussion of the problems of communalism is itself 'communal'.[13]

Yet, despite such adroit punctuation, we are still left in some confusion as to what is meant by 'communal'. Nor have subsequent academic studies done much to clarify this general confusion. More recently, Nancy Snider concluded that:

> . . . non-communal parties in Malaysia, while not without some voter attraction, have generated greatest appeal only when they accommodated their noncommunal stance to a more communally oriented one.[14]

One wonders how political parties can be considered as non-communal when they have actually 'accommodated their non-communal stance to a more communally oriented one'.

Contradictions between researchers also occur. For example, Alvin Rabushka describes the DAP, GRM, and PPP as 'the more extreme-

minded Chinese (cum Indian) communal parties'.[15] Yet these are the very same parties included in R. Vasil's study of non-communal political parties.[16] However, Vasil himself does not escape apparent internal contradiction. On the very first page he states that the non-communal parties in his study are included:

> . . . because, even though they may not have remained entirely non-communal political parties *in a strict sense*, they were launched by their founders as genuinely non-communal political parties.[17]

Once again, 'communal' appears to be a most fluid term capable of various shades of meaning depending upon context. Regretably, Vasil does not inform us what the 'strict sense' of 'communal' actually is.

From these examples we are able, once again, to identify confusions between purely descriptive categorizations, and subjective judgements as to the intentions of the political parties under discussion. Clearly, more precision is required for terms which are central to an understanding of the Malaysian political process. To this end let us examine some of the ways in which the terms have been used elsewhere.

COMPARATIVE USAGE OF THE TERMS

On a very general level, the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines 'communal' as: 'Of or pertaining to the community, esp., in India of any of the racial or religious communities'. 'Communalism' is said to be 'a theory of government which advocates the widest extension of local autonomy for each locally definable community'. While the term communal is frequently used in the sense of this definition, the same is not true of communalism. If one were to read most of the standard texts on Malaysia with this dictionary definition in mind one would be totally misled.

Turning to a more specific application of the terms, a most useful definition is offered in J.D.B. Miller's discussion of communalism in *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences.*[18] Miller quotes W.K. Hancock's 1937 definition:

> the phenomenon of collision or tension between several communities coexisting on a single territory.[19]

and adds that communities are regarded as based upon race, language, or religion. He also observes that 'a community is one which by reason

of race, language, religion, or historical memory, considers itself to be one and acts accordingly'.[20]

A more concise definition is offered by Milton J. Esman:

> Communalism can be defined as competitive group solidarities within the same political system based on ethnic, linguistic, racial or religious identities.[21]

While both Hancock and Esman regard communalism as a phenomenon, Robert Kearney in a most useful preliminary discussion to his study of politics in Sri Lanka, prefers to see it in terms of the attitudes of political actors, and identifies communalism as:

> . . . an attitude which emphasizes the primacy and exclusiveness of the communal group and demands the solidarity of the members of the community in political and social action.[22]

As in our earlier examination of usage in the Malaysian context, this brief comparative survey reveals differences in emphasis. On the one hand the terms are used to describe an observable and obvious phenomenon – the existence of communities based upon a shared sense of identity 'usually on the basis of a distinctive language, religion, social organization, or ancestral origin', and the political competition between such groups.[23] On the other hand, as Robert Kearny suggests, there is the *attitude* which emphasizes political and social action based upon these divisions. Once again we confront the problems involved in making judgements about the attitudes of political actors.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERMS

The principal purpose of these notes is to alert the students of Malaysian politics to the pitfalls of usage of the terms 'communal' and 'communalism' in the existing literature. It is therefore not our intention to suggest new definitions. Rather, we wish to ensure that we are aware of the particular usage in any given application of these terms. By way of both summary and suggested clarification, we will conclude with a brief outline of these differing applications.

First, let us clarify the uses of the term 'communal'. In general, it may be used simply as an adjective applied to a group with an observable sense of solidarity based upon shared characteristics of a fairly immutable kind, such as language, religion, and ethnic identity. By exten-

sion it could also be applied to issues and problems identified with the existence of such groups. Of course, the composition of a communal group is not always certain. For example, the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) has sought to mobilize joint 'Indian' political action, but has met resistance from some Indian Muslims and Punjabis who have left the party to found their own political parties. It could be suggested that, in the context of the Indian subcontinent, a party such as the MIC which contains Tamils, Sikhs, Punjabis, Bengalis and other 'Indian' ethnic groups as well as adherents of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, might well be considered to have overcome communal barriers. Clearly it is the competitive position of these groups (sharing a common geographical origin) beside the politically dominant Malays which promotes a communal solidarity which would be unthinkable in the Indian subcontinent.

Since this usage of the term 'communal' refers to the actual characteristics, composition, or organizational principles of a particular group it is the least vulnerable to subjective judgements, although it must be conceded that demarcational problems might arise.

A second usage in the Malaysian context is linked to the *professed* aims or intent of political actors (both organizations and individuals). If an actor claims to eschew commonunal motives and to work for the benefit of all citizens, that actor is classified as non-communal. No other criteria are applied in such a judgement. Thus a political party which has non-communal aims in its constitution or platform, and which is open for membership by all citizens regardless of ethnic affiliations would be considered non-communal. Such a classification would be made regardless of its actual ethnic composition or behavior. Such usage runs the risk of a degree of naivety, as well as the acceptance of apparent contradictions between professed intentions and actual behaviour. As we have seen, both Nancy Snider and R.K. Vasil classified non-communal parties according to those parties' own claims. Yet both were obliged to moderate, and even contradict, such classifications in the light of the actual behaviour of the parties.

A third usage relates to judgements about the attitudes and behaviour of political actors *regardless of their professed aims and attitudes* and is, in effect, the antithesis of the second approach discussed above. Such usage, while obviously necessary in the interests of rigorous analysis, is nevertheless highly subjective. For example, are we to judge the *Barisan Nasional* by the means it employs to ensure multi-ethnic participation or by the outcome of the *Barisan* concept? It is possible

for a political entity to be communal in its components yet non-communal as a whole? It is therefore not surprising that this usage is most open to discrepancies between different researchers.

Differences in meaning are also evident in the term 'communalism'. In both general and specifically Malaysian usage, 'communalism' refers to the phenomenon of political or social action based upon competitive group solidarities where such groups derive their cohesion from relatively immutable factors such as language, religion, race, and ethnic identity. This definition invariably implies some form of conflict – especially in the Malaysian context. Once again it is purely descriptive – a phenomenon is identified and its characteristics noted.

Yet in the Malaysian context, the term also frequently involves a value judgement. 'Communalism' commonly describes attitudes resulting in a positive belief in the efficacy or desirability of, or a predilection for, the organization of social and political action along communal lines. This often involves judgements as to the motives behind such a preference for communally based action. Such motives might range from a cynical or opportunistic exploitation of fears in the interests of political power, to a simple pragmatic belief that, given the complexity of Malaysia's plural society and the immutability of communal identity, communally-based political action is the natural order of things. Thus, communalism is more than a description of actual conditions. It is a statement about the actual attitudes of political actors and the impact of these attitudes in shaping the political system.

If the distinctions discussed above are kept in mind when reading the literature on Malaysian politics, some of the confusion revealed in this brief survey of terms should be avoided. When embarking upon new writing on these subjects two courses of action are open. We may either choose to completely avoid the use of 'communal' and 'communalism' and, as some scholars have done, use the term 'ethnic'.[24] Although the term ethnic is itself subject to problems of definition, it does avoid the dangers of confusion with pejorative everyday language. A second course is to continue to use 'communal' and 'communalism' but to clarify particular definitions at the outset of each application of the terms.

NOTES

*The author wishes to express his appreciation of the critical comments of

Professor R.D. Scott and Dr. P. Arudsothy upon an earlier draft of these notes. All responsibility for the opinions expressed in these notes remains with the author.

1 *Report of Proceedings of the Seventeenth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Kuala Lumpur* (September 1971, London: General Council of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) p. xxi.

2 Reported in the *Star*, 28 November, 1980.

3 Lim Kit Siang, *Time Bombs in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: Democratic Action Party, 1978) p. xvf.

4 See *Straits Times* (Malaysia), 17 February and 27 May 1971.

5 *Straits Times* (Malaysia), 5 August 1974.

6 Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970) p. 12.

7 R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia* (Singapore: Federal Publications, 1977) p. 377.

8 See for example R.K. Vasil, *Politics in a Plural Society: A Study of Non-communal Political Parties in West Malaysia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1971); Karl Von Vorys, *Democracy Without Consensus: Communalism and Political Instability in Malaysia.* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975).

9 Ratna Naidu, *The Communal Edge to Plural Societies: India and Malaysia* (Vikas, Sahibabad, 1980) p. 7.

10 K.J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press) p. 160 (emphasis added).

11 *Ibid.*, p. 161f.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 209 (emphasis added).

13 R.S. Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967) p. 216.

14 Nancy L. Snider, 'Malaysian Noncommunal Political Parties', in John A. Lent (ed.), *Cultural Pluralism in Malaysia: Polity, Military, Mass Media, Education, Religion, and Social Class* (Center for Southeast Asian Studies, North Illinois University, 1977) p. 16.

15 Alvin Rabushka, *Race and Politics in Urban Malaya* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1973) p. 36.

16 R.K. Vasil, *op. cit.*, Chapter VI and Postscript.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 1 (emphasis added).

18 J. Gould and W.L. Kolb (eds.), *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (New York: The Free Press, 1964) p. 111.

19 W.K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937) Vol. 1, p. 430.

20 J.D.B. Miller *op. cit.*, p. 111.

21 Milton J. Esman, 'The Management of Communal Conflict', *Public Policy*, Vol. XXI, (1973) p. 49.

22 Robert N. Kearney, *Communalism and Language in the Politics of Ceylon* (Durham, North Carolina: Duka University Press, 1967) p. 5.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

24 For example, Stanley S. Bedlington consistently uses the term 'ethnic' in preference to communal' in his general text on Malaysian politics. See his *Malaysian and Singapore: The Building of New States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

Section IV

Foreign Policy

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Indo-Chinese Situation and the Big Powers in Southeast Asia: The Malaysian View

Lee Poh Ping

The major issues in the Southeast Asian region that have exercised the minds of those who shape Malaysian foreign policy pertain to the Indochinese area and the role of the big powers in Southeast Asia. The Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea since December 1978 has not only created a crisis situation in the Indochinese peninsula but also threatened the stability of Southeast Asia, particularly the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). A more long-term problem has been big power involvement in the region, especially at this time when these powers have yet to achieve an equilibrium satisfactory to the Southeast Asians.

Regarding the former problem, the Malaysian approach has been basically that of subscribing to a united ASEAN position. But this does not mean that Malaysia does not have its own independent view. Indeed, when Malaysian officials are not speaking for ASEAN, their statements do not seem to be in accord with their statements when they are. The conflict, however, is more apparent than real. Malaysia places great emphasis on ASEAN unity and when dealing with the Vietnamese and other parties involved in the Indochina conflict subordinates its own view to the goal of a united ASEAN position. Moreover, the nature of ASEAN is such that while constituent countries strive hard for a united approach, this does not preclude the existence of diverse national views.

The importance Malaysia attaches to ASEAN is clear. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, listed Malaysia's commitment to ASEAN as the first priority of its foreign policy, followed by its commitment to the Muslim countries, the non-aligned movement,

and the commonwealth countries, in that order. Such a priority list probably arises out of the belief that Malaysia can best achieve its foreign policy interests through ASEAN, particularly because this collective body has demonstrated viability in the period since the Bali Summit of 1976. In addition, the ASEAN spirit has gone some way toward helping Malaysia maintain good relations with the other constituent members. This spirit has played an important part, for example, in Malaysia's relations with the Philippines; the president of the latter country announced his intention in the ASEAN summit meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1977 of dropping the Filipino claim to Sabah. It has also contributed to the establishment of joint operations between Malaysia and Thailand against the Malaysian communist guerrillas encamped on the Thai-Malaysian border. Some observers may not be impressed with ASEAN's achievements on the economic front, but this does not detract from Malaysia's belief in its political viability.

Thus, Malaysia subscribes to the Asean position in the present Indochinese crisis that the territorial sovereignty of a country cannot be violated by another no matter how detestable the government of that country might be. The Kampucheans themselves must be given the right to choose their own government with necessary guarantees by all concerned to ensure Kampuchea's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. A solution to the present crisis must therefore first consist of a total withdrawal of foreign forces in Kampuchea. In addition, Malaysia agrees with the ASEAN suggestion, which was accepted by the United Nations, that an international conference on Kampuchea be convened under UN auspices which will discuss the conduct of free elections among the Kampucheans themselves under UN supervision. This is distinct from a regional approach that ASEAN sees as only helping Vietnam in Kampuchea. Thus the *Straits Times* of Kuala Lumpur writes that the Malaysian representative in the United Nations, Tan Sri Zainal Abidin bin Sulong, advocates an international approach and says that "suggestions made to the effect that the question of peace and security in Southeast Asia should be solved on a regional basis through regional consultations with the countries of Indochina on one side and ASEAN on the other were clearly intended to legitimize Vietnam's action in Kampuchea".[1]

Malaysia remains unenthusiastic over the return of the Pol Pot government even if the logic of the ASEAN position compels ASEAN to deny recognition to the Heng Samrin government and continue recognition of the government of Democratic Kampuchea. ASEAN,

however, would prefer a coalition of groups to replace the Heng Samrin government because this would enhance the international stature of the ASEAN position in view of the world-wide revulsion against the excesses of Pol Pot. Such a coalition would include, in addition to the Khmer Rouge, the groups led by Norodom Sihanouk and Son Sann. To establish such a coalition, ASEAN approved Singapore's attempt to convene a meeting of all three parties in Singapore in September 1981. In the event, a joint declaration of cooperation among all three was worked out in Singapore though it remains to be seen whether this declaration will hold once the pressure from ASEAN is removed.

As mentioned earlier, when ASEAN solidarity is not affected, there are enough statements from Malaysian officials to suggest that Malaysia's own independent position may be somewhat different. Ever since the late Tun Abdul Razak took over the premiership of Malaysia from Tunku Abdul Rahman in September 1970, the neutralization of Southeast Asia became the official foreign policy objective of Malaysia. Tun Razak, while still deputy premier, had declared the desirability of such a policy in the conference of the non-aligned movement in Lusaka, Zambia, a few months earlier. Subsequently, in an ASEAN meeting in 1971 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was able to obtain ASEAN endorsement of the goal that Southeast Asia should become a zone of peace, freedom, and neutrality (ZOPFAN). This neutralization concept, realistic or otherwise, presupposes guarantees by the big powers that they will respect the sovereignty of Southeast Asian states by not involving themselves politically and militarily. Big power rivalry militates against the achievement of this neutralization,[2] and if the big powers involved happen to be primarily China and Russia, as is the case in Indochina, it will be cause for even greater apprehension because Malaysia considers both powers to be dangerous. Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad states that Malaysia does not "differentiate really between the role of China and the role of the Soviet Union. Both are equally disruptive, we want to keep them at arms length".[3]

Malaysian apprehension of China has become more open since Dr. Mahathir assumed the premiership from Tun Hussein Onn; shortly after taking office, he openly declared China to be a threat to Southeast Asia. This suggests a partial departure from Tun Razak's policy of neutralization when he established diplomatic relations with China in 1974. Implicit in this policy was a belief that China would act "responsibly" in Southeast Asia. Some might see this inference as unwarranted and depict Tun Razak as only following a policy that acknowledged the

reality of China's existence. Further, his timing was right, just two years after Nixon's visit to China and in the midst of an obvious ebbing of American enthusiasm in Vietnam. In other words, the recognition was inevitable. Still, Malaysia was the first ASEAN state to recognize China. Indonesian diplomatic relations with China were frozen in 1967, and to this day Indonesia and Singapore have not accorded diplomatic recognition. Moreover, Malaysia's recognition of China left unresolved the question of the stateless Chinese, variously estimated at about 200,000 or more.

Apprehension concerning China springs from two sources. The first is the belief that China will, if not now, then at some future date, adopt a belligerent attitude towards Southeast Asia. The possibility will be greater when it no longer needs ASEAN support for its objectives in Indochina. The second is the continuing Chinese support for the Communist Party of Malaysia (CPM). Malaysia remembers its first emergency from 1948 to 1960 when there was a full-scale challenge by the then Malayan Communist party. While the Malaysian government has managed to contain the remnants of these communist guerrillas, it has not been able to eliminate them entirely. These remnants have camped on the Thai side of the Malaysian border and have continued operations against the Malaysian government. Malaysia has consistently driven home the point to visiting Chinese leaders that such support constitutes an unwarranted interference in Malaysia's internal affairs. It remains unconvinced by the well-known Chinese position that there is a distinction between state-to-state relations and party-to-party relations, for Malaysia knows full well that in China the party controls the government. To describe this Chinese policy Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, the Malaysian Foreign Minister, resorts to metaphor: Malaysia regards "this as a policy of rotten fish being served in the specialized recipe of a sweet and sour dish ...."[4]

The declaration by the Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang during a recent visit to Malaysia that the Chinese Communist Party's support of the Communist Party of Malaysia was confined only to moral and political aspects was not very reassuring. This is clear from Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie's statement that "we in Southeast Asia face a rather bizarre situation when our hands are being shaken by a government in the name of friendship, yet the political parties from which that government is formed declare openly to us in our faces, of its commitments to continue to support, albeit morally and politically, illegal and terroristic groups that are striving daily to overthrow by violent means our respective

governments".[5]

Particularly annoying to the Malaysians is the broadcasting station called the Voice of the Malayan Revolution that beams messages hostile to the Malaysian government. An example of a recent broadcast consists of this:

> The ruling clique of Kuala Lumpur and the ruling clique of Singapore are obstinately and recalcitrantly carrying out anti-communist, anti-people and anti-democratic and reactionary policies which make the rich people richer and the poor poorer.[6]

Believing this station to be located somewhere in Southern China, the Malaysians have urged the Chinese to refrain from such broadcasts if their declarations of friendship for Malaysia are true. Apparently the Chinese have closed this station but not before announcing that it will resume broadcast under a new name, the Voice of Malayan Democracy, somewhere outside China. The Malaysians remain unimpressed by this gesture, seeing it as a mere change of location and nomenclature, not of substance.

Beijing's ties with the guerrillas in Malaysia have also coloured Malaysia's view of Sino-American ties. While Malaysia does not object in principle to the global strategic considerations motivating close Sino-American ties, Malaysia is, however, apprehensive about the regional consequences. "If the United States," said Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, "wished to support China in terms of global strategy, by all means do so. But we remind the U.S., China herself has her own designs which she has not yet given up".[7] A special cause for concern is that U.S. arms sales to China might find their way to the guerrillas in Malaysia. Tan Sri Ghazali's views of this seem to be shared by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, who says that many in ASEAN "recognize America's need to balance Soviet influence in East Asia, but they have apprehensions that a well-armed China may become a greater problem for South-East Asia".[8] Informed and influential Americans such as Henry Kissinger and John Holdridge, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, have given assurances that the Reagan administration has no intention of playing the "China card" against the long-term interests of ASEAN, and that any American military equipment sold to China would not be in quantities that would make a decisive difference in the power structure in the region. It remains to be seen whether these assurances will assuage Malaysian and ASEAN fears.

All this is not to suggest that Malaysia is about to break off relations

with China. Malaysia is able to see the value of diplomatic relations; indeed Dr. Mahathir himself favours the continuation of such relations and added that recognition was "a wise decision made by Tun Razak".[9] There is also the consideration of trade with China, particularly increased Chinese purchases of Malaysian primary commodities.

Malaysia perceives the Soviet threat, despite the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1968, as emanating not only from its hostile communist ideology but also from activities among certain sections of the population, especially those in high places. Such activities naturally push the Soviet view and have included espionage. There was a dramatic revelation in June 1981 that no less a personage than the political secretary to Dr. Mahathir for as long as seven years, Mohamed Siddiq Ghouse, had been recruited as a secret agent by the Soviet KGB. Infuriated by this, the Malaysian government expelled the Russian diplomats involved from the country.

There is also a deep concern that Sino-Soviet rivalry may affect the domestic Malaysian scene. In a multiracial society Malaysia, racial differences can easily be exploited by big powers. It is not impossible to imagine the scenario dreaded by the Malaysian government in which the Russians play the Malays off the Chinese and China in turn backs the ethnic Chinese. It is because of this fear of big-power rivalry and entrenchment in Southeast Asia that Malaysia's own independent position may not be in accord with some of the other ASEAN states. At the Kuantan meeting in March 1980 between Tun Hussein Onn, then Malaysia's premier, and President Suharto of Indonesia, both stated that the big powers should refrain from involvement in the Indochinese crisis. The Indonesian-Malaysian position differs from that of the Thai regarding Chinese involvement; Malaysia does not subscribe to the apparent Chinese strategy of allowing the war to become protracted because this would serve to entrench the big powers. In Malaysia's view, the more protracted the conflict, the greater the Chinese support for the Khmer Rouge and the greater the indirect involvement of Thailand and the danger to Thai stability. Unlike the Philippines and Indonesia, the stability of Thailand has a very direct bearing on Malaysia, since it shares a common border and faces insurgents operating from the Thai side of the border.

Nor is Malaysia enamoured with the Chinese strategy of bleeding Vietnam white because this strategy will not work. Malaysia believes the Vietnamese to be very tough fighters, not given to conceding easily, and the Russians would not allow it, partly for strategic reasons but

mostly for symbolic reasons. According to Tan Sri Ghazali, "Russia does not need Vietnam for global strategic purposes. She can do what she wants to do from Vladivostock but it is important to have a base there (Vietnam) for refuelling and refurbishing. It is important to have stations to work out their maritime intelligence. These are important things to the Soviets but more important to them is the fact that they have Vietnam on their side and this they will never give up".[10]

There is also an underlying feeling of admiration for Vietnam's standing up to China and for its nationalist resistance against the big powers. A strong Vietnam can therefore be a useful buffer against any Chinese expansionist intent whereas a Vietnam bled white would create a vacuum that could be filled by China. It would be best if Vietnam were kept out of the Sino-Soviet conflict. Kampuchea, for its part, should not be involved in any arrangement that would threaten Vietnam; this means that Kampuchea too must be neutral in the Sino-Soviet conflict. In addition, Kampuchea could act as a buffer between Vietnam and Thailand.

Regarding the proposed Khmer coalition, Malaysia has an obvious preference for Son Sann because he is the least influenced by China. This preference is manifest in the Malaysian invitation to Son Sann after the Singapore meeting in September and by Tan Sri Ghazali's affirmation of his personal friendship. In fact, Tan Sri Ghazali has gone as far as suggesting that Son Sann has a powerful military group behind him. Tan Sri Ghazali said that "even now he [Son Sann] is able to raise an army despite odds. Already he has 9000 armed men. Our intelligence confirms it. But the world does not believe him ... [thousands] are ready to support him .... Even Heng Samrin people will join him ...."[11] Such a statement suggests at least a belief in Son Sann's efficacy, if not an enthusiasm for him.

Another power of some consequence in Southeast Asia is Japan. The figure of Japan is writ large in the ASEAN economies but the political and possible military aspects of its involvement are not easy to analyze. This is primarily because Malaysia and Southeast Asia are not confronted by any clear-cut Japanese aim, whether it be in the form of a *mission civilatrice* or coprosperity sphere or carefully thought out policies guiding its actions in this region. Hellmann's bamboo metaphor seems particularly apt to Southeast Asians; likening Japanese foreign policy to a bamboo thicket, it is "full and attractive in appearance, resilient in all kinds of weather, but lacking in real substance and crowding out all around it that are reached by its roots".[12] However, Southeast Asians

do perceive certain traits of Japanese behaviour: attractive Japanese promises that are often unfulfilled; continued Japanese capacity to prosper despite a changing strategic situation in this region; and gradual but certain overcrowding of their economies by the Japanese.

In the Fukuda Doctrine of 1977, Japan explicitly rejected any military role for itself in Southeast Asia, and this was confirmed by premier Suzuki in his visit to Thailand in 1981. This position coincides with Malaysian sentiment. There are memories of the harsh Japanese occupation of Malaysia during the Second World War and also uncertainty about how Japan would act if rearmed. If Japanese rearmament were inevitable because of the extreme disproportion between present Japanese military capacity and its economic and diplomatic influence, Malaysia would probably prefer that Japan help strengthen the capacity of Malaysia and other ASEAN countries to defend themselves rather than have Japan assume the role of protector. Malaysia welcomes Japanese diplomatic support for ASEAN in the present Indochinese crisis and appreciates Japanese help in maintaining a power balance and involvement in Malaysian internal affairs will not be at all welcomed even though the temptation may exist, especially among some ASEAN intellectuals, to urge Japan to support the forces of democracy within the ASEAN countries.

Japanese investment in the Malaysian economy matters little in the agricultural and mining sectors; it is concentrated in the manufacturing sector, primarily in selected industries such as textiles, electronics, iron, and non-ferrous metals.[13] The manufacturing sector does not compare in size with the agricultural and mining sectors where the bulk of foreign investment is Western in origin. This to some extent accounts for the absence of intense, large-scale anti-Japanese demonstrations during Tanaka's 1974 visit as compared to events in Thailand and Indonesia where Japanese investment is more conspicuous and forms a larger proportion of foreign investment. Any nationalistic reaction against foreign economic domination in Malaysia would have been directed against the West, particularly Britain, which in 1974 still maintained large holdings from colonial days. Nevertheless, in recent years, Japanese investments have loomed larger, given the purchasing power of the Malaysian market, its relatively low labour costs, and the favourable conditions for foreign investment. Malaysia looks to Japanese investment as an important means of achieving domestic socio-political objectives.

Finally, with regard to the concept of the Pacific Community

enunciated by the late Japanese Premier Masayoshi Ohira, Malaysia's attitude is best described as open, if not negative. The Pacific region is very diverse, not easily unified under any kind of grouping. If it were to be attempted, something similar to ASEAN should be the model. As the Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir said,

> Before we take the first steps it is essential that we appreciate the delicacy and complexity of bringing so many ideologically, culturally and economically different nations together. Associations of nations do not metamorphose overnight, premised upon some expert economic programme. Associations of nations are brittle and fragment easily under the slightest strain. Therefore it behooves us to move with circumspection, mindful of the sensitivities of everyone concerned.
>
> The ASEAN experience could perhaps provide a guide and an inspiration for Pacific cooperation.[14]

In other words, make haste slowly.

NOTES

1 The *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), October 22, 1981.

2 See M. Ghazali bin Shafie, "The Neutralization of Southeast Asia," *Pacific Community* (Tokyo), No. 1, October 1971.

3 *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong), October 30–November 5, 1981.

4 The *New Straits Times*, September 30, 1981.

5 *Ibid.*

6 *The Star* (Kuala Lumpur), August 4, 1981.

7 *The Business Times* (Kuala Lumpur), November 27, 1981.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 30–November 5, 1981.

10 The *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), September 14, 1981.

11 *Ibid.*

12 Donald C. Hellmann, "Japan and Southeast Asia: Continuity Amidst Change," *Asian Survey*, 19:12 (December 1979).

13 See Chee Peng Lim and Lee Poh Ping, *The Role of Japanese Direct Investment in Malaysia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, Occasional Paper Series, 1980).

14 Mahathir bin Mohamad, "Tak Kenal Maka Tak Cinta" in Sir John Crawfurd, ed., *Pacific Economic Cooperation: Suggestions for Action* (Heinemann Asia for the Pacific Community Seminar) 1981.

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