





# WHO LIVES IF MALAYSIA DIES?

*A Selection from the speeches and writings of DAP leaders —  
C. V. Devan Nair, Lim Kit Siang, Nor Jetty, Goh Hock Guan,  
Chen Man Hin and others.*

*Also basic documents of the Democratic Action Party, Malaysia.*

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## A Choice of National Destiny

**R**EGARDED against a broad historical background and perspective, Malaysia must be seen as undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny.

For a stage has been reached in which intelligent Malaysians can discern, on the one-hand, the possibility of integration of a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious people in a wider, all-embracing Malaysia-centred identity and consciousness, and on the other hand, the equal possibility of the failure to effect such an integral transformation with the inevitable consequences of national discord, dissension and disintegration.

The choice is there, and it is imperative. In the final analysis, it must be the people as a whole who have to make this choice of destiny—either to take the road which leads to an integral national transformation, or the alternative road leading to eventual national decay and disintegration.

We have faith that if this choice of destiny is placed before them in frankness and honesty, Malaysians of all races and creeds will make the right choice.

Those who are communalists in mind and spirit can never hope to contribute to the nation-building process. Only those Malaysians can take up this process, who have effected the integral transformation in their own minds and spirits, and who therefore possess a creative and harmonising spirit of national construction. Otherwise, everything must welter in a general confusion and discord out of which it will be impossible to build a greater harmonic life of the nation.

It is to this sacred task of creative and constructive nation-building that we in the DAP dedicate ourselves.

— *From the Setapak Declaration of the DAP*

DEDICATED TO ALL THOSE,  
WHATEVER THEIR RACE,  
COLOUR AND CREED,  
WHO SERVE THE CAUSE  
OF AN EQUAL  
MULTI-RACIAL  
MALAYSIAN NATION.



## FOREWORD

*by*

*Willi Eichler*

German Social Democratic Party leader and Chairman of the Commission which prepared the Godesberg Programme of the Social Democratic Party of Germany.

I feel greatly honoured by the request of the Democratic Action Party of Malaysia to write a foreword for this distinguished publication which presents the plans and ideas developed by the Democratic Action Party after long and thorough-going investigations and considerations. They concern such important subjects as nation-building; national economy and finance; the co-operation of a workers' party and trade unions; cultural policy in general education and in universities; international politics. What, however, can a man like myself, a "foreigner" not only from a far-away land but from a different continent altogether, contribute to these problems so intimately connected with the situation of Malaysia, a country which has never been the object of his own special studies?

I hope to be on the right track by suggesting that my friends from the Democratic Action Party have offered me this privilege because we feel at one regarding the basic approach to political issues, which means that we share the fundamental convictions of democratic socialists irrespective of their nationality and origin. As the chairman of the commission entrusted with the drafting of the Godesberg Programme of the Social Democratic Party of Germany which was passed by a Party Congress in November,

1959, I had the opportunity of devoting myself to the task of rethinking and reformulating the principles of democratic socialism. But what may have prompted the Democratic Action Party in their decision to approach me might have been first and foremost the fact that I have been trying out for many years the practical applicability of the principles underlying the Godesberg Programme not only in my own country but in other parts of the world too. It was in this effort that I met my friends from the Democratic Action Party of Malaysia and we got to know each other. I for my part appreciate this encounter so much that it is not only a privilege but a real joy for me to be able to introduce this volume.

The Democratic Action Party is irrevocably committed to the ideal of a free, democratic and socialist Malaysia and to the institutions of parliamentary democracy. Thus this party forms a part of the worldwide movement of democratic socialism to which also belongs the Social Democratic Party of Germany whose programme invokes freedom, justice and solidarity as the basic values of democratic socialism. In contrast to the communist one-party-system, democratic socialists measure the political development by the criteria of freedom and justice for the individual. These criteria constitute the real *value* of all political decisions including legislation; and only if this is understood, questions of usefulness and effectiveness of such measures are worth discussing by politicians and technical experts.

I understand that the most urgent task facing the people of Malaysia, and thus also the Democratic Action Party, is the necessity of nation-building. What are the essentials which go into making a nation – this is a question passionately debated by thinkers and politicians all over the world. It appears to me that the most valid answer was offered by the French historian *Ernest Renan* who claimed that nation-building was an every-day plebiscite which meant the permanent sharing in a common task performed by all members of the people. Thus the Democratic Action Party has chosen the right but hard path by striving for developing Malaysia's multiracial society into a nation, without the hegemony of any particular race, since no race can claim superiority over another. As Malay will be the common official language, for many reasons inherent in Malaysia's particular situation, it will be all the more important that the other racial groups, the Chinese and the Indians, should have the full right to their own cultural autonomy and to the use of Chinese and Tamil in their own communities. This is the view of the Democratic Action Party, in keeping

with the principle of equality, whose practicability can be pointed out by the experiences gained in such countries as Switzerland, Canada and India. The true equality of the races will have to be proved by the policy followed in the sphere of education – from the primary schools up to the universities – and above all by the way the central, regional and local administrations will choose their staff: only objective qualifications, no racial prejudices in one way or another must be decisive. In the Democratic Action Party's Setapak Declaration of Principles the multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious problems are rightly dealt with at great length, for on their solution in the spirit of freedom and justice depends the common obligation for the whole of the State, the solidarity of the people in building a free and prosperous nation. In such a society differences of opinion regarding home and foreign policy will be discussed in a peaceful and democratic manner; as becomes freedom-loving human beings they will be able to disagree in a civilised fashion. Once equality has been established with respect to fundamentals, questions in the field of economy, finances and culture will no longer present insoluble difficulties, for they will be approached from the practical angle of technical experts whose pragmatic minds will not lose sight of the principles of freedom and justice.

It is in the nature of things that the labour movement always was – and still is – the protagonist of such aims – not because the workers by their very nature were better human beings but because they suffered most acutely by injustices and were therefore more prepared than others to fight them. This was our experience in Europe and there are parallels in Asia, although distinct differences exist with regard to the respective roles of the agrarian and peasant questions. I may, however, mention a specific problem which concerns the labour movement in Asia as well as in Europe: the relationship between political parties and trade unions. To find the right methods of co-operation is of vital importance for both sides. If the trade unions prefer not to become active in a strictly political sense, it often amounts only to the fact that they refuse to become a political party. This is perfectly legitimate, for trade unions are organisations with specific tasks: to represent the interests of the workers as producers. Trade unions cannot be, however, non-political altogether, for it *must* be their concern to see to it that legislation – which is a result of party politics – should not render their struggle more difficult or even impossible. Co-operation between trade unions and social democratic parties



is therefore essential in the mutual interest, in order to attain an aim of equal importance for both: a strong trade union movement to represent effectively the interests of the workers and a social democratic party which can count on trade union support at election time, so as to become a political force strong enough to carry out its programme and to serve the interests of the workers and their trade unions.

The Democratic Action Party's programme seems to me distinguished by the fact that it strives for aims which correspond to the basic values of democratic socialism and whose realisation is being attempted in a rational and practical way. In extending my congratulations to my friends of the Democratic Action Party for their excellent work, I hope, for the sake of the people of Malaysia, that they will be able to carry out their programme in the shortest possible time.



(Willi Eichler.)

*Bonn, February, 1969.*

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## Introduction

BY DR. CHIEN MAN HIN

CHAIRMAN, DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY.

THIS BOOK APPEARS at a time when several crucial choices face the Malaysian nation. Will we choose the way of multi-racialism based on equality of status and opportunity for all Malaysians, irrespective of race, colour and creed? Or will we choose to go down the slippery slope of racialism to national disintegration?

Are there going to be intelligent and positive political, social and economic counters and answers to the distinct possibility of another armed insurrection in this country in the 1970's, led by the Malayan Communist Party, when the British military cover will have been completely and effectively removed? Or will the leaders of the Malaysian Government choose to ignore the lessons of history and commit the same follies as their counterparts did in similarly-placed Asian countries, who thought they could deal with the challenge of communist insurgency by means of negative repression?

Next, how is the noticeable retardation of the nation's economic growth rate, as well as the fearsome spectre of increasing unemployment, both in urban and rural areas, to be countered and offset? Are our Government leaders going to spend their time in passive prayer that drastic fluctuations in the prices of rubber and tin do not occur too frequently? Are they going to leave the nation's economic destiny to the vagaries of Fortune and hope for the best? Or will we choose to consciously and deliberately emerge into an altogether new dimension of dynamic, accelerated and all-round economic expansion and growth? And will we develop the courage, vision and resolution to prepare the necessary political, social and economic infra-structure within which this

aim might be achieved, as has already been done by a few other developing nations, far less favourably endowed by Nature than our own?

Again, what will we actually do to increase regional economic co-operation in the South East Asia of the 1970's and 1980's? What, for example, do we propose to do, apart from periodically uttering pious platitudes, to achieve closer economic co-operation with our nearest neighbour, Singapore, by way of creating the beginnings of a common market between the two countries? Singapore is rapidly developing a vigorously export-orientated economy, which does not seem concerned, at the moment, with the possibilities of the Malaysian market, the purchasing power of which would appear to be on the decline. But, on the other hand, Malaysia has tended to concentrate more on import substitution than in the development of an export-oriented industry. Would it not be to the future advantage of both territories to gear in their economies more closely with a view to complementing one another rather than competing against and duplicating one another? Could there be a really enduring and viable basis for co-operation in matters of defence between the two countries, without the emergence of a corresponding basis for greater economic co-operation? Or is a greater convergence of interests between the two states, and an eventual merger between them on this basis, to be completely ruled out from the field of serious practical consideration?

These are some of the crucial choices which face Malaysia in the years ahead, as well as some of the questions which disturb the minds of thoughtful Malaysians who care for their country and its future. These are also some of the questions which tease the imagination of foreign observers, friends and foes alike, who seriously wonder whether Malaysian political leadership will display the intelligence and resolution to meet the challenges of the years ahead, or will choose instead to flounder in a bog of indecision, and proceed from lesser blunders to greater blunders in their conduct of the affairs of this nation.

We in the DAP are a serious-minded group of persons, who have given serious thought to the major problems which confront our country, and to the possible remedies and solutions for our problems and ills.

The following pages contain some of the basic policy documents of the DAP, as well as a selection from the speeches and writings of party leaders like C. V. Devan Nair, Lim Kit Siang, Goh Hock Guan, Nor Jetty and others.

Considerations of space and cost have severely limited our selection of the speeches and writings of party leaders. Numerous significant articles and speeches of Goh Hock Guan, Lim Kit Siang and others have had to be left out of this collection. We regret, in particular, that we have not been able to do adequate justice to the innumerable questions on all manner of subjects, raised by Devan Nair in Parliament, and to the numerous speeches he made in the House, as well as outside it.

Nonetheless, the selection which is contained in the following pages is more than sufficient testimony to the positive contribution the DAP has made to sound political thinking and analysis in the country, and give the lie to the attempts of some propagandists to denigrate and besmear the accomplishments of the DAP.

The basic policy documents of the DAP are available in the Malay, Chinese and Tamil versions. Many of the speeches and writings of party leaders, apart from some of Devan Nair's parliamentary speeches, have also been published in translation in the pages of the DAP Journal - "The Rocket."

We regret, however, that considerations of cost have again inhibited us from attempting Malay, Chinese and Tamil editions of this book. We hope that the Party's fortunes in the coming months will enable us to rectify this omission.

Devan Nair has felt himself obliged to withdraw from active public life in Malaysia, because he considers, probably rightly, that his intimate ties of friendship with the leaders of Singapore, which he sees no reason to repudiate (see page 67), would lead

to a continuation of the charge that the DAP has more than purely ideological affinities with the People's Action Party of Singapore.

It is our hope that this book will serve, among other things, as convincing testimony to Devan Nair's contribution to the great cause of a democratic, multi-racial and socialist Malaysia, based on equality of status and opportunity and of social justice for all Malaysians, whatever their racial origins may be.

The movement for multi-racialism did not falter or disappear when Singapore was evicted from Malaysia. On the contrary, it gained fresh momentum. Again, it did not falter when Devan Nair announced his decision, more than a year ago, to withdraw from public life in this country. For any movement, worthy of the name, will always be greater than the individuals who constitute it, as it must be founded and firmly established in the hearts and minds of innumerable fellow-countrymen. We have no doubt that the DAP is such a movement.

In conclusion, we are grateful to Mr. Willi Eichler, the well-known veteran social democrat of West Germany, for his enlightened and encouraging foreword to this book.

## Storm Signal

*Joint Declaration by Opposition Parties from Sabah, Sarawak, Malaya and Singapore, Convenors of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention, on 9th May, 1965.*

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, conscious of the threat to Malaysia from without and deeply concerned over mounting signs of disruption through internal dissension are calling a Malaysian Solidarity Convention to rally our people to meet these twin threats.

2. Malaysia's survival and consolidation are imperative to ensure the right of 10 million Malaysians to seek happiness, freedom and prosperity as a democratic and independent nation. We believe we can do this if we adhere sincerely to the spirit and intent of the basic principles enunciated during the various meetings of representatives of the territories - Sabah, Sarawak, Singapore and Malaya and embodied in the agreement signed in London. It is transgression of these basic principles rather than Indonesian confrontation and pro-Communist subversion which presents the greater threat to Malaysia. The peoples of Malaysia have so far stood up to Indonesian confrontation and Communist subversion simply because they feel that the principles and objectives of a Malaysian Malaysia are worth fighting for and dying for.

3. It is with grave concern that we find that since the start of confrontation there have been utterances and manifestations by highly placed political leaders which are contrary to the spirit and purpose of Malaysia as conceived and agreed to by the vast majority of people.

4. The basic principle on which Malaysia was founded can be summed up in three simple words: A Democratic, Malaysian Malaysia.

5. By democracy we mean the provisions for the fundamental



rights of all our citizens, and the system of parliamentary democracy enshrined in our present constitution. It not only permits divergence of views but also protects the right of any Malaysian to compete for popular influence and support through processes sanctioned by the constitution and for ends embodied in it.

6. A Malaysian Malaysia means that the nation and the state is not identified with the supremacy, well-being and the interests of any one particular community or race. A Malaysian Malaysia is the antithesis of a Malay Malaysia, a Chinese Malaysia, a Dyak Malaysia, an Indian Malaysia or a Kadazan Malaysia and so on. The special and legitimate interests of different communities must be secured and promoted within the framework of the collective rights, interests and responsibilities of all races. Support for the ideal of a Malaysian Malaysia means, in theory as well as in practice, educating and encouraging the various races in Malaysia to seek political affiliation not on the basis of race and religion but on the basis of common political ideologies and common social and economic aspirations, which is the real basis of ensuring the emergence of a truly free, prosperous and equitable national community.

7. The people of Malaysia did not vote for a non-democratic Malaysia. They did not vote for a Malaysia assuring hegemony to one community. Still less would they be prepared to fight for the preservation of so meaningless a Malaysia. It is because the concept of a Democratic, Malaysian Malaysia has been challenged by certain leaders that doubts and fears have arisen as to the future of Malaysia.

8. Certain political leaders have allowed their resentment of criticism and opposition to some of their policies to degenerate into threats that if such criticisms are persisted in then parliamentary democracy might be brought to an end. Others have gone so far as to enunciate the doctrine that the existence of democracy and Malaysia is conditional only on their unchallenged right to be the rulers of Malaysia and that therefore other groups should desist from trying to win following and support by constitutional

and legitimate means. If they do not, then dire consequences are predicted. These range from the ending of democracy to warnings about communal disturbances.

9. The growing tendency among some leaders to make open appeals to communal chauvinism to win and hold their following has gradually led them also to what has been tantamount to a repudiation of the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia. This is not to deny the fact that communal fears and prejudices still influence popular political thinking and that the emergence of a Malaysian outlook may take time to develop. We are realistic enough to recognise that until such time as a Malaysian outlook takes strong roots, substantial sections of our population will be inclined to express themselves through communally organised political parties.

10. But what occasions dismay and portends danger is the viciousness with which attacks are launched against those who, of whatever race, abandon communal forms of politics for non-communal politics. One would have thought that the more the people affiliated themselves to non-communal ideologies and organisations the nearer we are moving to our goal of a Malaysian Malaysia. If people are discouraged and denounced for abandoning communal loyalties because they have found common ground or political action with Malaysians of other races then the professed concern for a Malaysian Malaysia is open to serious doubts.

11. We ourselves believe that the number of people who believe in a Malaysian Malaysia is large and that their influence is rapidly growing.

12. This Convention is being called to disabuse those who believe that Malaysians are few, weak and unorganised and that they are neither prepared to rally to defend and sustain the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia, nor are they determined to unite and work for its realisation, no matter how arduous or protracted the struggle may be.

13. We believe that a Malaysian Malaysia has the support of the vast majority of the peoples. We also believe that silence and passivity on the part of Malaysians will not only encourage the

forces of communalism to become more virulent but that it will also set in train a sequence of events which must inevitably lead to turmoil and the eventual collapse of Malaysia. Assertion by one group of chauvinists must lead to counter-assertion by other chauvinistic groups and in no time a multi-racial Malaysia must be rent asunder by communal conflicts.

14. The purpose of this Convention is to get political leaders and interested individuals to come together to discuss and re-examine our many problems in the context of a truly Malaysian situation. For more than a decade political and other leaders in the constituent states of Malaysia have developed organisations, attitudes and philosophies which may have stood them in good stead before Malaysia. But what may have been practical and logical two years ago, before Malaysia Day, may be destructive of Malaysia at the present time. The Malaysian view cannot be a simple projection and extension of views that have been used to run the States of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah or Sarawak as separate entities. A great deal of our present internal difficulties springs from the failure of certain political leaders to realise that the Malaysian view and a Malaysian approach must be qualitatively different from our accustomed approach to things.

15. It takes time and courage to accept the fact that each of us must change our ideas and political styles to fit with the new needs of a Malaysian nation. The economic, social and political problems that beset us are now Malaysian in scope and therefore require new concepts and new approaches for their solution.

16. Unfortunately certain political leaders have persistently refused to consider objectively and calmly what adjustments must be made to accustomed modes of thinking in regard to Malaysian politics, Malaysian administration, Malaysian economics and, most important of all, how to subordinate racial, religious and state loyalties to a Malaysian loyalty.

17. A convention like this is the first organised attempt to search for a Malaysian view through free and frank debate and how to put it into practice. Some of the problems that require

urgent examination are how democratic competition between communally organised parties and non-communally organised parties can be conducted without intensification of communal animosities; how best to meet quickly and effectively the economic, social and cultural aspirations of the under-privileged majority of all races without destroying economic stability – in other words, to define with as much precision as we can what we mean by a Democratic, Malaysian Malaysia and how best we can move towards this goal.

18. The Convention calls upon all Malaysians who believe in a Malaysian Malaysia to come forward to pool their ideas, energies and resources in order to help our advance towards realising it. The slogan that should rally us and guide us towards victory is: *Malaysians Unite*. We are convinced that if Malaysians unite they have sufficient strength to safeguard Malaysia against external threat and corrosion from within.

19. A Malaysian Malaysia is worth fighting for because only in such a Malaysia is there a decent and dignified future for all Malaysians.

20. It is in this spirit and expectation that we, the undersigned, appeal to all Malaysians to support this Convention.

Leong Ho Yuen (Machinda), M. Buma (Machinda), Marican Salleh (SUPP), Stephen Yong (SUPP), Lim Chong Eu (UDP), Abdul Wahab bin Mohamed Yassin (UDP), Lim Meng See (UDP), Lee Khoo Choy (PAP), E. W. Barker (PAP), Othman Wok (PAP), Toh Chin Chye (PAP), Ong Pang Boon (PAP), D. R. Seenivasagam (PPP).

## The Why's and Wherefore's of Separation — Two Historic Letters

*Letter from the Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj to the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore and Chairman of the People's Action Party, Dr. Toh Chin Chye.*

Telephone No. 4433



Prime Minister,  
Federation of Malaya,  
Kuala Lumpur

*My dear Chin Chye*

I am writing to tell you that I have given the matter of our break with Singapore my utmost consideration and I find that in the interest of our friendship and the security and peace of Malaysia as a whole there is absolutely no other way out.

If I were strong enough and able to exercise complete control of the situation I might perhaps have delayed action, but I am not, and so while I am able to counsel tolerance and patience I think the amicable settlement of our differences in this way is the only possible way out.

I request you most earnestly to agree.

*Kind regards*

*Yours sincerely*  
*T. Rahman*  
- 1 -

*Reply from Dr. Toh Chin Chye to Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj*



Deputy PRIME MINISTER  
SINGAPORE

5th August 1965

*My dear Tunku,*

I thank you for your undated letter which I received yesterday explaining your position and your solution to the present difficulties that have arisen between the Central Government and the Singapore Government. It is indeed sad that in your view our problems can be solved only by asking Singapore to quit Malaysia and this barely two years from the day Malaysia was inaugurated.

My colleagues and I would prefer that Singapore remain in Malaysia and we felt that there could be other solutions to the present impasse. However, as you have indicated that the situation does not lend itself to any other workable settlement and as you have impressed upon me that Singapore remaining in Malaysia will lead to a situation you may not be able to control, we have no alternative but to be resigned to your wish that Singapore leaves the Federation of Malaysia.

I and my colleagues had rejoiced at the reunification of Singapore with Malaya in September, 1963. It has come as a blow to us that the peace and security of Malaysia can only be secured by the expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia. If this is the price for peace in Malaya and Singapore then we must accept it, however agonising our inner feelings may be. Although lasting unification of Singapore and Malaya has not been achieved this time, nevertheless it is my profound belief that future generations will succeed where we have failed.

In order that my friends and political colleagues in the other states of Malaya and particularly those in the Malaysian Solidarity Convention may know my true feelings on this matter I may have at some future date to tell them of the true position.

*With kind regards*

*Yours Sincerely*  
*Toh Chye*

[Note: Both these letters were hand written but for the sake of easier reading, they have been type-set.]

## **A Wrench in the Heart**

*Speech by M.P. for Bungsar, C. V. Devan Nair, in the Dewan Ra'ayat on 9th August 1965.*

IT IS DIFFICULT, Sir, to speak without a wrench in the heart. Sorrow there definitely will be on this day of tragedy, but, in all conscience, Sir, it is tragic that two years after the birth of Malaysia we should be listening to funeral orations on Malaysia.

Sir, what has happened today will be quite clear – that Singapore has been ejected from Malaysia. I say "ejected," Sir, because I know that Singapore has been put in a situation where it has no choice but to accept an ultimatum presented to it by the Central Government. I know, Sir, that Singapore does not want to leave Malaysia, because the leaders of Singapore, of the present Government in Singapore, believe in the unity of Malaysia, of Singapore and Malaya. This has been the basic ideological belief of the leaders of Singapore, right from the time the Party was founded; and I can assure this House that it will continue to be the basic and fundamental belief of the leaders of the Peoples' Action Party. But, Sir, their belief was founded on the concept of a multi-racial, non-communal, tolerant society, on the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia, which phrase these days is treated as a dirty word.

Singapore has been ejected for no other reason than that it has refused to postulate unity on the basis of any other consideration, on the basis of a communal Malaysia. It is no accident, Sir, that this ultimatum by the Central Government comes only some two months or thereabouts, after the formation of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention; and, perhaps, no less significant is that this ultimatum comes one month after the by-election in Hong Lim

in which, strange to say, the Alliance, together with the anti-Malaysian Barisan Socialis, concentrated their attack on the P.A.P. and on its "Malaysian Malaysia" slogan. Had the P.A.P. been defeated in that by-election, I have no doubt that that defeat would have been used as a pretext to satisfy extremist demands in the Alliance's ranks to crush the P.A.P. and to change the leadership of the Singapore Government.

Even yesterday the *Malayan Times*, very close and very sympathetic to certain Alliance leaders, has been indulging in wishful thinking: "Changes of leadership," "Lee Kuan Yew resigned - on the way out," "Dr. Toh taking over."

Sir, fortunately the people of Hong Lim, despite the vicious propaganda of the Barisan Socialis, of the pro-Communist elements in Singapore, aided and abetted by pro-Communist elements in Malaya, and in spite of all the vicious propaganda of the Alliance extremists, voted for a Malaysian Malaysia policy instead of the "Crush Malaysia" alternative.

Faced, Sir, with this solid support given to the P.A.P. Malaysian Malaysia programme and policy, and with the growing support that the Malaysian Solidarity Convention was gathering in other parts of Malaysia, Alliance extremists have been able to manoeuvre a situation in which they pose Singapore with the alternative "Withdraw or Chaos," and "Chaos" means violence, bloodshed. Sir, this was no idle threat. Alliance leaders, and some of their newspapers, have been openly saying for a considerable time that the persistent agitation for a Malaysian Malaysia was a communal slogan, which was bound to lead to racial conflict - a non-communal slogan leading to communal conflict! That was the kind of logic that was systematically pursued in their papers.

The Honourable, the Deputy Prime Minister will recollect, and other Alliance leaders were publicly saying, that if racial conflict broke out, then they would not be responsible, not all the ultras and the extremists, they would not be responsible, but Mr. Lee Kuan Yew would be responsible! That was an advance warning. We know, Sir, that two race riots did break out in



Singapore last year. And so any predictions about racial troubles in Malaysia, especially when they come from responsible Central Government leaders, are not to be lightly dismissed – cannot be lightly dismissed! We know that it has become a constant, consistent refrain among certain Alliance leaders to shout “Blood will flow!” whenever they are confronted with any kind of legitimate opposition viewpoints, both in this House and outside this House. What would have happened, let us ask, if the Singapore leaders had refused to accept the ultimatum to pull out of Malaysia or face the consequences, which the extremists in the Alliance ranks had threatened, not only Singapore with, but the whole of Malaysia. We know that these ultras exist within the Alliance. Everybody knows that. It is an open secret – one of the most open secrets in our country. The Honourable Prime Minister himself, in a statement he made while he was still in London, admitted that there were a few “loony bins” in his Party. What upset me and my colleagues was that the Honourable Prime Minister should have given the impression to the world that these “mad caps” in the Party were the life and soul of his Party.

Sir, these ultras have made it clear that they would go to any length to halt the gathering momentum towards a Malaysian Malaysia. In their propaganda they tried to cover up this fear of a Malaysian Malaysia by making Singapore, and in particular Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, as the *bete noire* who comes to disturb the peace and harmony of Malaysia. “Malaysian Malaysia” was presented as the cloak for a P.A.P. type of communalism which was anti-Malay, anti-Islam, anti-religion and anti-what have you – and even anti-Rulers! This was presented, and all this was supplemented, by threats to arrest Mr. Lee Kuan Yew and, if necessary, by crushing the constitutionally elected Government of Singapore. I have no doubt, Sir, that the ultras in the Alliance would have carried out their threats even to the point of sparking off racial conflicts. The concept of a Malaysian Malaysia is, they know, inimical to the Alliance set-up, an Alliance essentially of M.C.A. compradores and an UMNO right wing, which uses

communalism and communal solidarity as a cloak to conceal the basic economic and social problems of our society. Singapore, Sir, is being forced out of Malaysia, not because she was a source of weakness to Malaysia, not because she was inefficient and corrupt, not because she was an advocate for any particular form of communalism – we saved Singapore from communal chauvinism – but because certain Alliance politicians believe Singapore to be the bulwark and the chief source of inspiration for a Malaysian Malaysia. That, Sir, was the chief, simple, basic reason. In this the Alliance extremists, the opponents of a Malaysian Malaysia, are grievously wrong, and they will discover soon enough that a Malaysian Malaysia is not just a Singapore concept, though admittedly Singapore was one of the chief inspirers and a pillar of strength for the movement. But, Sir, Alliance extremists should realise, and they will realise, that the movement for a non-communal, tolerant, Malaysian Malaysia has got roots not in the hearts of P.A.P. or of Lee Kuan Yew and company but in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Malaysians – in Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. It has vigour and momentum. This concept can be sustained and will be sustained even if, technically, Singapore is booted out of Malaysia. And why, Sir? Because whatever politicians on the Government bench may think, what is left of Malaysia after the excision of Singapore is still a multi-racial society, and the logic of that situation must ultimately lead to the fulfilment of the concept which my colleagues and I in the P.A.P. had advanced, and the fact that Singapore has been ejected, Sir, will not mean that the spirit of those of us who believe in a Malaysian Malaysia has been crushed. The very existence of a multi-racial Singapore still progressing, and still bound to progress, in the spirit not of any narrow communal chauvinism, but of a Malaysian Malaysia, is bound to act as a stimulus to the movement for a Malaysian Malaysia.

By ejecting Singapore and granting it independence, the ultras of Malaysia have no longer the power, perhaps, to directly intervene to suppress the fulfilment in practice of an ideology based

upon a non-communal multi-racial society – the ideal of a non-communal, tolerant, multi-racial, democratic society. Today, Sir, by the ejection of Singapore, I am the only representative of the P.A.P. left in this House. Time will show, Sir, the future will show that it is a much greater pity than is realised now. But, Sir, I am not the only one. I firmly believe and know that there are hundreds of thousands of people in this country, who will subscribe to the ideals and principles which we had sought to advance here. There are others also on the Opposition benches, who are no less passionately concerned than I am, than the hundreds of thousands of the other citizens of this country, about a Malaysian Malaysia. And more important, Sir, there is an international opinion, and international opinion is definitely coming to a philosophy where what is encouraged, what is accepted, are larger and larger integrations of peoples, communities, and territories, and what has happened today is a reversal of the tide of history, an attempt to reverse the tide of history: and as King Canute discovered, Sir, in the legend, it is bound to fail. Sir, the extremists, the ultras in the Alliance know the extent of the support which the ideal and the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia has: they know that despite their massive and distorted propaganda against the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia. This concept has already fired the imagination of people throughout this country and, I repeat, fired the imagination of people of all races and communities. If the Alliance extremists were not so frightened of the power of the Malaysian Malaysia concept to rally the people of Malaysia, they would not have resorted to this desperate strategic measure of ejecting Singapore.

*Enche' Senu bin Abdul Rahman*: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of clarification. I wonder whether or not the Honourable Member knows that his own bosses in Singapore – that all the Ministers in Singapore – as mentioned by the Honourable, the Prime Minister just now, have signed the agreement.

*Enche C. V. Devan Nair*: That question has been asked. The Honourable Minister ought to have concluded from what I have

told this House that the alternative faced by the leaders of Singapore was: accept ejection, hive off separately, or bloodshed! Sir, there is none in our ranks, there is none among the leaders of the P.A.P. in Singapore, who desires bloodshed and conflict in this country. If this temporary hiving off is necessary, so that the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia can further be advanced in peace, and without conflict and bloodshed, then obviously it is an act of wisdom to accept that. At the moment the forces of irrationality preponderate in the Alliance Party; and I am glad that the question has been asked so that an answer can be given, and the people will judge where sanity and good sense lies in this whole issue.

Sir, there may be some Alliance leaders who may think that, with Singapore out, they can go back to the halcyon days before Malaysia, when Malaya was ruled as an Alliance preserve. The battle for Malaysia, and the existence of Malaysia itself for two years, has brought about a radical transformation in the minds of our citizens here, and this situation, in the minds and the spirits and the hearts of the Malaysian people, is something which our friends in the Government benches will discover cannot be scotched – and the most important transformation is the realisation that a Malaysian Malaysia is desirable, necessary and, as the Minister of Finance has pointed out, in the only part of his speech that I agree with, inevitable. The ejection of Singapore may cause temporary confusion, dismay, heartbreak, even tears; but to eject Singapore, Sir, is not to annihilate the concept and the principles which sustain the people of Singapore and all those in this country who believe in the ultimate emergence of a Malaysian Malaysia. Nor will the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara (who is glaring at me very intensely) succeed. (Laughter.) They will not kill the logic and necessity which compelled those who opposed the reunification of the two territories for well over a decade to accept merger. This logic cannot be defeated and the Alliance extremists have repudiated the logic of history and geography to preserve their own petty, transient interests.

*Dato' Syed Ja'afar bin Hasan Albar*: Nampak-nya Ahli Yang Berhormat dukachita pemisahan Singapura. Tetapi pemisahan Singapura, mengikut kenyataan Perdana Menteri, akan menjadi sa-buah negara yang sovereign dan independent. Ada-kah dia mahu Singapura sovereign dan independent, atau tidak mahu, dia hendak jadi hamba atau siapa? Itu yang saya hendak tahu.

*Enche' C. V. Devan Nair*: Ahli dari Johor Tenggara, Tuan Speaker, saya mahu beri tahu kepada dia, saya ucap sini sa-bagai sa-orang yang di-pilih oleh ra'ayat Bungsar. (Interruption)

Sir, I would like to continue with this, that the Alliance Party's interests are not the permanent and true interests of the 11 million people of Malaysia. History will teach them that lesson, and I think one of the people who will learn, probably the least slowly, the lessons of history, will be the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara - but learn it he will! Sir, I believe he is vaguely aware of this. They are vaguely aware of the fact that they do not represent the interests permanently of the 11 million people of Malaysia, and the ejection of Singapore by threats of violence and bloodshed and people running amok and so on, Sir, is but the first step to reverse the inevitable tide of history and, as I have indicated before, it is bound to fail. Sir, they cannot stop that. Other measures of intimidation must be taken now to halt the movement towards a non-communal Malaysian Malaysia. They must either quietly watch the movement for a Malaysian Malaysia grow, despite the ejection of Singapore or counter it by intimidation and repression. Singapore out, but intimidation and repression can be obviated in the case of Singapore, because they say, "All right, we are generous chaps; we don't want to intimidate you and repress you; we prefer to give you independence." However, they are going to find themselves in a situation in which they will have to give independence to millions of people in this country on that same logic. Sir, I do not believe for one moment that the ejection of Singapore will bring peace and harmony to Malaysia. On the contrary, Sir, I foresee actual disaster for both Singapore

and Malaysia which can benefit others in our country – the Communists, who can ultimately bring about re-unification of a kind, which most of us, who believe in a free society, will definitely find hard to accept. I am convinced, Sir, that the majority of the people in Singapore and Malaysia will not long accept this division imposed this time not by British colonialism but by men, who have neither the foresight nor the breadth of vision to see what are the true and permanent interests of Malaysia, the real interests of Malaysia, and it should be the duty of those of us, Sir, . . .

*Enche' Tan Toh Hong* : The Honourable Member for Bungsar, to me, was describing his own party leader, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, who suggested and, in fact, initiated the re-arrangement of States – the partition of Malaysia. That was even confirmed by Radio Singapore itself.

*Enche' C. V. Devan Nair* : Mr. Speaker, Sir, every time Honourable Members of the Government bench ask for a clarification, I am afraid they are asking for it. I am not to blame, Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the Honourable Member believes the lies told him by his own T.V. They have these T.V. forums – forums, but they are actually Alliance symphonies: first speaker, Alliance; second speaker, Alliance; third speaker, Alliance; fourth speaker, Alliance; Chairman, Alliance. They have these forums on partition, partition, partition! I will let him have another copy of the speech made by the Prime Minister of Singapore, the famous Delta speech for his edification.

*Enche' Tan Toh Hong* : It is even announced by Radio Singapore itself, and foreign correspondents also received statements from the Ministry of Culture in Singapore.

*Enche' C. V. Devan Nair* : Sir, I will not waste my time answering. It should be the duty of those of us, who see the folly of what the Alliance leaders have done, to work for the bringing together ultimately of the two territories – Singapore and Malaya. Sir, the terrible consequences of what the short-sighted Alliance leaders have done will become apparent in future months and we must rally together; and I make this appeal to Members of all

sides of this House to rally together the forces of sanity and reason.

Sir, there will be questions about my position in Parliament, but the legal position is that Singapore has become independent, but Enche' Devan Nair has not become independent of this Parliament, nor of the constituents who returned me; and I will give intimation, Sir, to Members on the Government bench that even though I am the only voice here which stands up for the ideals and principles of a Malaysian Malaysia, I will never be intimidated. I can give this assurance in all seriousness, Sir - that I am not a quitter and I do not believe in quitting from our principles. The only way in which Alliance leaders may prevent me from coming to this Parliament is by persuading the Honourable, the Minister for Home Affairs to lock me up. Sir, I have spent five years in British prisons, and I think I am quite prepared to spend another few years to catch up on my reading of literature. Thank you.

## **Setapak Declaration**

### *Manifesto of the Democratic Action Party*

#### **Introduction**

WE, THE CHAIRMAN and Members of the Central Executive Committee of the Democratic Action Party, together with Members of Branch Committees of the Party, here assembled at Setapak, Kuala Lumpur, on 29th July, 1967, hereby re-state and reaffirm the basic guiding policy and principles of the Democratic Action Party, as given hereunder.

We firmly resolve to continue to be governed in all our activities and in all our approaches to the social, political, economic and cultural problems in Malaysia, by the same basic guiding policy and principles.

#### **2. Objectives**

THE D.A.P. is irrevocably committed to the ideal of a free, democratic and socialist Malaysia, based on the principles of racial equality, and social and economic justice, and founded on the institutions of parliamentary democracy.

We believe that it is possible to mobilise the support of the big majority of the multi-racial people of Malaysia in the pursuit of this aim, and we shall regard it as our primary objective to mobilise such support.

We are aware that in the pursuit of our aims, we shall meet with serious resistance, not only from the Alliance Party and Government, but also from political forces hostile to the Malaysian nation and inspired by foreign powers and ideologies.

**We re-affirm that the D.A.P. intends to be guided by purely Malaysian perspectives and aspirations. We shall not allow ourselves to be deflected from our chosen path by**



**either the reactionary and communal right wing, or by the foreign-inspired anti-Malaysia left. Neither shall we lend ourselves to manipulation by either of these two groups.**

In order to achieve our primary objective, the most vital condition must be success in the process of nation-building in a multi-racial society. But it is precisely in the vital process of nation-building that the Alliance Government has been guilty of a gross and shameful betrayal of national trust.

### **3. The Correct Principles of Nation-building in a Multi-Racial Society**

WE UPHOLD AS INCONTESTABLE the fact that success in the nation-building process must depend on the adoption and implementation of the principle of racial equality at all levels of national life and in all fields of national endeavour – political, social, economic, cultural and educational.

The first thing to do if we are to get our principles of nation-building in a multi-racial society correct is to completely eschew any idea of racial hegemony by one community. Such an endeavour must be doomed to failure, and must be discarded, on the grounds of both desirability and practicability.

Racial hegemony in a multi-racial society is certainly an undesirable principle to be adopted anywhere in the world, but in Malaysia, the very composition of our population also makes it impracticable of realisation, for the good reason that in this country, no single racial group can claim to enjoy an overall majority.

The Malays do not constitute a national majority. Neither do the Chinese, nor the Indians, nor anybody else. In other words, any single community in Malaysia, by itself, is outnumbered by the rest. And thereby hangs the obvious lesson that any attempt to violate the principle of racial equality in Malaysian society must lead to inevitable and catastrophic failure.

All movements aimed at the realisation of racial hegemony by

one communal group or another, have failed in the past, and will continue to fail in the future.

For example, one of the major reasons for the failure of the armed insurrection initiated by the Malayan Communist Party in 1948 was the fact that the communists committed the great mistake of thinking that success was possible on the basis of appealing to the susceptibilities of only one section or one community – the Chinese, while ignoring the susceptibilities or the aspirations of the other communities.

The communists discovered to their cost that in the absence of a multi-racial national base, they were inevitably denied national success.

We see the Alliance Government also failing, eventually, for the same reason – that they show a readiness to pander to the racialist gallery of a particular community, while ignoring, if not actively offending against, the rights, susceptibilities and aspirations of other communities.

Classifying citizens into “bumiputras” and “non-bumiputras,” discriminating against citizens in matters of appointments and promotions, particularly in the public sector and now increasingly in the private sector, on grounds of race, are hardly calculated, in our view, to strengthen the sense of national consciousness and solidarity in our multi-racial nation.

Mere lip-service to the principles of racial equality, mutuality, tolerance and accommodation, will not realise the ideal of national solidarity. The principle must be seen to be clearly reflected in all national policies, and to be faithfully implemented in practice in all fields of national life.

Such implementation of the basic principles of racial equality, mutuality, tolerance and accommodation are clearly absent for example, in the Alliance Government’s policies on the sensitive but nonetheless vital questions of language, education and culture.

#### 4. On Language, Education and Culture

WHILE THE D.A.P. will uncompromisingly champion the acceptance, propagation and development of the national language, we cannot accept a language and education policy based on the erroneous premise that the propagation and permanence of the national language can only be finally secured on the basis of the eventual deculturation of two major communities in Malaysia – the Chinese and the Indians.

This is precisely what significant sections of the Malaysian people read into the National Language Act and the education policy of the Government and in our view, with ample justification.

If linguistic and cultural homogeneity were the vital precondition of national existence and consolidation, then several multi-lingual and multi-cultural nations in the world, like Switzerland, Canada or India could never have come into being or succeeded, let alone survived.

The Malaysian Constitution does indeed recognise the multi-lingual and multi-cultural character of the nation, and guarantees the free use of the languages of the other major communities in the nation.

This constitutional guarantee is, however, rendered sterile by an educational policy which does not permit the free use of the Chinese and Tamil languages as media of instruction and of examination in national-type secondary schools. This restriction must lead to the steady deterioration of levels of attainment and of proficiency in these two languages, as well as to the inevitable decline in their usage and to their eventual elimination.

**We re-affirm our contention that the Alliance Government's education policy has the effect of rendering null and void the constitutional guarantee with regard to the free use of the other languages in the country, and we shall deem it as one of our objectives to secure a correspondence between educational policy and constitutional guarantee.**

We also reiterate our belief that while the national language should, by virtue of its status, become ultimately the

chief language of administration in the country, this should not preclude the use for necessary official purposes, of the Chinese and Tamil languages, in addition to the English language. This would contribute to the fitness of things, as well as to the purposes of rational and intelligent administration.

#### 5. **The Removal of Economic and Educational Imbalance as the Correct Means to Achieve National Integration in a Multi-racial Society**

COMMUNAL DIVISIONS and dissensions are, at bottom, engendered and aggravated by economic causes. The intelligent and effective way of dissolving communal barriers, and transcending communal sentiments in our multi-racial society, and to expedite the process of national integration, would be to implement a policy aimed at the eradication of the existing economic imbalance between the communities.

This imbalance reflects the slower pace of socio-economic processes in the rural areas, and the disparity as between rural incomes and productivity on the one hand, and urban incomes and productivity on the other.

These are phenomena which are not peculiar to Malaysia among the developing countries. Similar social, economic and cultural disparities as between rural and urban areas also confront other developing countries.

What renders the problem more acute and dangerous for Malaysia, however, is the fact that class divisions in our country appear very often to coincide with communal divisions.

The rural peasantry are largely Malays while the bourgeoisie in the towns and the professional classes are largely non-Malays. This fact has been effectively exploited in the past, and continues to be so exploited, by communal-minded politicians who play on Malay sentiments of insecurity and backwardness in order to justify the political dominance which they exercise in the name of Malays, but which in fact they really exercise for the minority

social class which they represent – that sordid, selfish and curious amalgam of a social class, for whom the best description so far coined is – the “feudal-compradore” class, and their hangers-on, which constitute the Alliance leadership.

In point of fact, the coincidence of class divisions with communal divisions is not as straightforward and as general as it would appear at first sight. No doubt, certain communal politicians find it convenient to give the impression to the Malays that the “haves” are all non-Malays. This is simply not true, for the vast majority of Malaysians of Chinese and Indian origin are workers and wage-earners of various categories.

The truth is that the fraternity of Malaysian “have-nots” are to be found in urban as well as rural areas, and embraces Malaysians of all communities and religions. This is the truth which the communal politicians deliberately ignore, for it upsets the neat and plausible theories which they habitually hawk as their stock-in-trade in order to justify themselves to their followers. But it is a truth which national-minded democratic socialists must incessantly drive home, in order to help expedite the process of national integration on the basis of the common economic interests of the have-nots of all races.

However, the economic and educational imbalance as between the urban and rural areas does lend itself rather easily to being clothed in a communal garb, and it must be part of any enlightened socio-economic policy to remove this imbalance.

The DAP charges the Alliance Government with not doing anything significant towards this end. Indeed, one of the most striking commentaries on Alliance failure in this respect is the fact that the great majority of Malay students in our university do Malay language and religious studies, whereas the crying need is surely for more and more Malays to become qualified in the modern disciplines of science, medicine, technology, economics, etc., so that Malays may be able to compete on equal terms with their fellow-Malaysians of Chinese or Indian origin, who are not in the habit of sending their offspring to centres of higher learning

in order to become experts in Buddhism or the Bible or the Bhagavad Gita.

But apart from occasional lip-service, the Alliance leadership has been gravely delinquent in regard to the positive encouragement of Malay students to qualify themselves in the more productive and sophisticated disciplines of modern knowledge.

Again, with regard to the improvement of the rural economy, one would have thought that the primary end in view would be the raising of the per capita income of the Malay peasantry, while the means employed would have been radical land reform measures to eradicate crude exploitation of the peasantry by landowners and middlemen and the introduction of modern techniques of agricultural production.

Instead of this, the emphasis has been on the provision of an expensive and outwardly imposing infrastructure in the rural areas which has largely succeeded thus far only in enriching a few entrepreneurs, middlemen and a favoured elite among the Malays.

**The constitutional provision affording certain special rights to the Malays has been used, not with a view to raising the general standards of living in the rural areas, but for the creation of an elite Malay capitalist class who have proved just as rapacious as any 19th century capitalist, but far less efficient in their operations than the 20th century expects of its entrepreneurs.**

The crucial criticism, however, is that it is impossible to see how the per capita income and the standards of life of the Malay peasantry can be significantly raised by the creation of an elite group of Malay capitalists, who operate in conjunction with an elite group of Chinese compradores and tycoons.

Lest it be charged that we oppose Malay participation in business and commercial fields, we might declare categorically that we welcome the equalisation of opportunities for Malays to participate in all fields of national life.

Our contention is simply that no major onslaught can be made

against peasant poverty in the rural areas by creating a few rich Malays, any more than the social and economic problems of the Chinese and Indian workers in the urban areas can be solved by enrolling a few more members in the "Compradores Club," or the even more restricted club of the big business tycoons, both presided over by the M.C.A.

Problems of general social and economic development in urban as well as in rural areas can only be tackled on the basis of the application of more meaningful economic policies, aimed at improving the lot of the many, and not of enhancing the gains of the few.

## 6. International Perspectives of Malaysia

THE FIRST THING for Malaysians to understand and appreciate, as we look at the rest of the world, and particularly at the rest of Asia, is that we are a very small nation, by any standards, with a population of about 9 million people.

Indeed, the only nation smaller than us in this part of the world is Singapore. For the rest, we are surrounded by larger countries with far bigger populations and resources.

One of our closest neighbours in South-east Asia is Indonesia with more than a hundred million people, whose recent political and military confrontation we managed to meet and survive, not on our own, but because of the protective British defence umbrella spread over us and Singapore.

A second stark and naked fact that we have to face is that the British defence umbrella, which we have taken all along for granted, and behind which we had confidently sheltered, is now in the process of rapid contraction, leading to eventual total withdrawal. The grim fact is that by the mid-seventies, present British plans envisage the complete withdrawal of the British military presence in Malaysia and Singapore.

This means that as a small nation, living in an extremely troubled and unsettled part of the world, surrounded by huge neighbours with far larger standing armies, Malaysia must increasingly depend on her own more slender resources, for both internal and external

defence. We must swim alone in a hostile sea full of predatory sharks and man-eating piranhas.

The fact that both Malaysia and Singapore are relatively better off economically than any other country in Asia (apart from Japan), and provide a better living for their people, does not make our problems of survival as small, but separate and distinct political entities in the years ahead, any easier.

It is dangerous to be small, defenceless, but relatively affluent if you are surrounded by larger countries with bigger and hungrier populations. Historically, such a situation has always provided the classic recipe for aggression.

One of the strongest indictments of the lack of foresight of the Alliance leadership has been its proved inability to envisage and prepare for the dangerous defence vacuum that would be created if and when the British do decide to effect a total military withdrawal, as they have already decided to do.

There was no appreciation over the last decade that the process of decolonisation in Asia and Africa had finally and irrevocably deprived Britain of her status and role as a world power, and left her as yet another small European nation, far more interested in her survival in Europe as a member of an European economic fraternity, than in any kind of presence in distant South-east Asia.

In spite of this, British public opinion might have been persuaded into continuing British defence commitments in this part of the world over a longer period, at least until such time as Malaysia could have safely secured alternative defence arrangements, if the Alliance government had not gone about trying to twist the tail of the aged British lion in a fit of juvenile heroics.

Alliance backbenchers indulged in anti-British tirades in Parliament, while the Alliance government itself, obviously playing up to a thoughtless gallery, slapped down on a whole range of Commonwealth preferences.

The stupidities of the Alliance government have finally come home to roost, in the shape of the recently published British



defence White Paper, and we had to witness the humiliating spectacle of the two Alliance Government leaders visiting London, and appealing to the very same people they had only lately insulted and reviled, to retain their military presence in the country.

Be that as it may, Malaysia must now seek to survive in a rapidly changing world, and particularly in a South-east Asia in which the potential dangers and threats to our national survival and territorial integrity are likely to be aggravated, rather than diminished, in the years ahead.

Since we are neither a super-power nor even a medium-sized one, it is clear that we are too small to defend ourselves, and that we must seek alternative defence arrangements for ourselves in conjunction with friendly powers, and look for whatever international guarantees and co-operation we can obtain to safeguard our national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

**If public confidence, which has already been rudely shaken, is to be maintained, it is imperative that the government be seen to be working intelligently and diligently towards credible and dependable arrangements to ensure national defence and security.**

It is in this new context that the DAP hopes that the governments of Singapore and Malaysia will finally see it as the better part of wisdom, to cease their perpetual feuds and interminable squabbles, and to establish new relations of trust, confidence and co-operation to ensure their common economic democratic development and prosperity, defence and survival.

#### **7. Certain Vital Conditions for Malaysian National Survival in an Unstable South-east Asia**

IT IS NOT always true that small nations cannot hold their own, either militarily or politically, in the international power game. Several small nations have distinguished themselves in history by showing a capacity for national survival and progress out of all

proportion to their geographical size or to the size of their population.

They have done so, invariably, because they enjoyed three vital prerequisites of survival: One, a firm sense of national unity, identity and solidarity; two, a highly skilled and dedicated population; and three, social and economic discipline.

We do not see any reason why, given the right political leadership, Malaysia cannot acquire all these attributes so clearly necessary to ensure our continuance and survival as a nation. It is our contention that the present policies of the Alliance government are gravely inimical to the national attainment of the vital attributes.

The first prerequisite of a firm sense of national unity, identity and solidarity can only be established if the principle of racial equality is faithfully observed and implemented in all fields of national life. We shall struggle for this.

The second prerequisite of a highly skilled and educated population can be obtained through the implementation of a modern and dynamic policy of education. The DAP shall strive to achieve such an education policy.

The third prerequisite of social and economic discipline in the national life can be secured by the following measures. One, the formulation and implementation of social and fiscal policies to ensure a fairer distribution of the national wealth. Two, a more scrupulous adherence to the principles and practice of social justice. Three, more realistic planning for economic diversification, and agricultural and industrial expansion, involving the enthusiastic involvement and participation of all sections of the population, and four, the creation of an incorruptible and efficient government administrative machinery. All these measures the DAP shall persistently strive for.

#### **8. On the Use and Abuse of the Internal Security Act**

ONE OF THE unpleasant facts of life that we have to live with is that the general situation in South-east Asia being what it is, Malaysia

will continue to face grave threats to her security from the activities of the agents and instruments of foreign powers, hostile to our national existence.

The threat of subversion is very real, as the period of Indonesian confrontation so clearly showed, and as the existence of foreign inspired communist activities in the country continues to show.

In the circumstances, the DAP, as a sober and realistic party cannot share the enthusiasm of well-meaning but nevertheless starry-eyed and unrealistic persons, who call for the total repeal of the Internal Security Act.

**We recognise that it must be one of the paramount concerns of any Malaysian Government, including a DAP Government, to protect the security and integrity of the nation against the forces of foreign-inspired subversion.**

**We therefore support, in principle, the need for internal security legislation. We must nevertheless urge the utmost public vigilance in regard to the exercise of the powers vested in the government by the Internal Security Act.**

We cannot afford to be blind to the fact that it is not beyond the capacity of the Alliance Government to abuse the provisions of the Internal Security Act for partisan and other purposes, which have nothing to do with the legitimate concern for the maintenance of internal security.

Some examples which come to mind are: 1. the retention by the government of emergency labour laws promulgated in the name of meeting the dangers of Indonesian confrontation, long after that confrontation had ended, and 2. the continuance of the requirement for suitability certificates for admission to higher centres of learning, despite the fact that experience has shown that no real security need exists for such a requirement.

The DAP therefore calls for the abolition of the requirement for suitability certificates as being both unnecessary and humiliating, and for the prevention of other abuses committed in the name of the maintenance of internal security.

### 9. Conclusion — A Choice of National Destiny

Regarded against a broad historical background and perspective, Malaysia must be seen as undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny.

For a stage has been reached in which intelligent Malaysians can discern, on the one hand, the possibility of integration of a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious people in a wider, all-embracing Malaysia-centred identity and consciousness, and on the other hand, the equal possibility of the failure to effect such an integral transformation with the inevitable consequences of national discord, dissension and disintegration.

The choice is there, and it is imperative. In the final analysis, it must be the people as a whole who have to make this choice of destiny — either to take the road which leads to an integral national transformation, or the alternative road leading to eventual national decay and disintegration.

We have faith that if this choice of destiny is placed before them in frankness and honesty, Malaysians of all races and creeds will make the right choice.

All that the Alliance leaders have contributed in this direction so far have been a fungus of outdated and reactionary political, social and economic nostrums and notions, a medley of communal and contradictory slogans and panaceas.

The politics of the Alliance have been the politics of communal segmentation and division. We see it as the primary duty of all Malaysians, who desire the survival of their country, to counter the segmenting and dividing politics of the Alliance with the politics of creative and dynamic multi-racial integration at all levels — political, social, economic and cultural.

Those who are communalists in mind and spirit can never hope to contribute to the nation-building process.

Only those Malaysians can take up this process, who have effected the integral transformation in their own mind and spirits, and who therefore possess a creative and harmonising spirit of national construction. Otherwise everything must welter in a general confusion and discord out of which it will be impossible to build a greater harmonious life of the nation.

It is to this sacred task of creative and constructive nation-building that we in the DAP dedicate ourselves.

## **Cultural Democracy**

*Full text of policy statement issued by the DAP Central Executive Committee on the occasion of the Second Anniversary of the Party on June 1, 1968.*

### **1. On the De-fusing of Questions of Language, Education and Culture as Explosive Political Issues**

ISSUES OF LANGUAGE, education and culture can be so easily and harmfully charged with irrational and sub-rational feelings and motivations. This is so because questions relating to language, education and culture have been allowed to become explosive political issues in our country. For this, the Alliance political leadership is largely to blame.

What is basic and primary in the task of nation-building in our multi-racial society is the establishment in the national consciousness of the fundamental community of territorial and socio-economic interests which unites all Malaysians, whatever their race, colour or creed may be.

This is particularly so where Malaysian 'have-nots' of all races are concerned. Such a basic community of interests transcends divisions based on language and cultural background.

The experience of other multi-racial societies has shown that national integration can take place in spite of linguistic and cultural divisions, if the people concerned are led to recognise the primacy of the community of socio-economic interests which unites them.

Such a recognition would have helped to de-fuse language, education and culture as explosive political issues, and make it possible to view cultural diversity as a source of strength to the nation, and as a stimulus to collective cultural growth, rather than as a source of strife, disharmony and discord.

However, instead of doing this, the Alliance leadership is guilty

of having adopted language and education policies which have served to obscure and divert public attention from the more basic issues of socio-economic progress and justice, and to concentrate it instead on the morbid, divisive and nationally injurious pre-occupation with linguistic and cultural security and survival in a multi-racial milieu.

It was precisely such a morbid pre-occupation with questions of language, culture and religion which has led to the instability and eventual downfall of other multi-racial nations, in a welter of racial discord and chaos. On the other hand, it was the successful de-fusing of language, education and culture as controversial political issues, which led to the creation of vigorous, united and soundly integrated multi-racial nations like Switzerland, Canada and the Soviet Union.

We in Malaysia would have marched very much faster and further on the road of national integration and progress, if the nation's political leadership had sought inspiration and guidance from the examples of the successful multi-racial nations of the world, instead of from the proven failures in nation-building efforts.

The poverty and failure of the Alliance leadership in this respect stems from a fundamental misconception of the essentials of nation-making in a multi-racial society, and can have serious consequences for the future progress and security of Malaysia.

We in the D.A.P. deem it of vital importance that the issues of language, education and culture should be discussed and clarified in an objective, rational and constructive manner, without any racial, cultural or linguistic bias, if the possibility of a united Malaysian nation is not to recede even further.

## 2. The Colonial Legacy

THE OBJECTIVES of British colonial policy were not to create a united Malayan nation. On the contrary, the British rulers found it convenient to keep the various racial groups in their separate

and practically water-tight cultural compartments, for only thus could they exercise their political hegemony over the country.

The Malays went to Malay schools, which never took them beyond the primary level, unless they belonged to the small feudal elite who sent their children to English schools, either in Malaya or in Britain, and these products of the English stream became members of the privileged English-educated feudal aristocracy.

The Chinese schools constituted another water-tight compartment. Their curricula and syllabuses were not Malaya-centred, either in content or in orientation. On the contrary, the text books they used were imported from Canton or Shanghai.

Similarly, Tamil schools developed in their own isolated communal grooves, with text books imported from Madras.

The English-education system in the country was intended primarily to produce an administrative cadre to man the lower divisions of the administration and, at tertiary level, to produce a small group of professional personnel who could, of course, never claim entry into the higher levels of the ruling British elite. The curricula, syllabuses and text books used in English schools were also not Malaya-centred in content or outlook.

Such was the fragmented and basically foreign orientated education system which we inherited from the British. As a result, the independent Malayan nation which came into being in 1957 was, in fact, not yet a psychologically integrated nation reared on multi-racial values.

It is significant that the reins of political power were handed over by the British, not to a non-communal and multi-racial Malayan political movement, but to an alliance of communal parties, each claiming to unite and represent the separate communal interests of the three major races in the country.

The seeds of disintegration were therefore already present at the very birth of independent Malaya. But the possibility of successful integration was also present, in the written Constitution of the new nation.



### 3. **The Growing Gap between Constitutional Guarantees and their translation into Educational and Political Practice**

WE MIGHT HAVE started off wisely, and on the right track, in the evolution of a sound and rational policy on education, language and culture in our multi-racial country, if the wisdom of the national Constitution we adopted after independence, had been translated into effective policy and practice. This did not happen.

The Constitution we adopted to govern the conduct of our independent nation laid the basis, and prepared the possibility, of the emergence of a united multi-racial Malaysian nation.

It is implicit in the Malaysian Constitution that, in the very nature of things, Malaysia cannot become a Malay nation, or a Chinese, or an Indian nation.

Our Constitution guarantees the preservation and sustenance of all languages and cultures in the country. In other words, the Constitution provides, both in spirit and intention, that no linguistic or cultural group in the country need fear de-culturation. There was no intention either to Malayise anybody, any more than there was any intention to Anglicise, Sinicise, or Indianise anybody.

On the contrary, the recognised and generally accepted spirit and intention of the Constitution was to build a multi-racial and multi-cultural nation, united in a common economic, political and territorial life, and developing within this context, a common national language, while at the same time promoting and preserving other languages and cultures.

The tragedy, however, is that along the way, and in the hands of the Alliance leadership, the spirit and the intention of the Constitution became diminished, deformed and distorted.

The pledge in the Constitution to preserve and sustain the free use and study of the major languages in the country, other than the national language has, in its translation into national educational and political practice, been honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

Even a cursory survey of our educational system will show that the role and status granted to Chinese and Tamil as media of instruction fall short of the spirit and intention of the Constitution.

In the so-called national-type secondary Chinese and Tamil schools, these languages have in fact been derogated to the status of second languages. They have also ceased to be the recognised media of examination.

The free use of the English, Chinese and Tamil languages, as guaranteed by the Constitution, has not resulted in their free use as official languages. On the contrary, they have been denied any official status or use, and it has been decreed instead that the national language should be developed as the sole official language.

All these diminutions, distortions and deformations of the constitutional guarantee to preserve and sustain the free use and study of the other major languages in the country have raised serious doubts about the real intentions of the Government in the pursuit of its policies on language, education and culture.

And because the bona fides of the Government and of the ruling party have been thrown into serious doubt, fears of deculturation have arisen among large numbers of non-Malay Malaysians, and questions of language, education and culture have become willy-nilly, delicate and explosive political issues.

Such injurious national trends might have been avoided if the nation's leadership had been categorically multi-racial and non-communal in its approach to these issues.

Let us now turn to a consideration of the fundamental misconceptions regarding the nation-building process which have been responsible for the wrong and dangerous turning taken by the Alliance leadership.

Only an intelligent understanding of the process of nation-building in a multi-racial society, as justified and illuminated by the lessons and experience of history, can help the nation to reverse the policies of intolerance which, if pursued, can only lead to a nation enfeebled and devitalised by racial discord and disharmony.

#### 4. National Identification or Communal Identification

VERY CRUCIAL to the nation-building process in a multi-racial society is the kind of attitude that the political leadership seek to inculcate in our citizens.

The crucial question which determines a citizen's attitude is "Do I identify my future and my fortunes with my particular race and religion, or with the larger multi-racial society which makes up Malaysia?"

There can be little doubt that the communal political leaders of our country have actually encouraged their followers to give the wrong answer to this question, and many Malaysians have identified their future and their fortunes with their particular race and religion, and not with the larger multi-racial society to which they belong, to the serious detriment of the cause of national integration.

The right answer to suggest to this question would have been "My future and my fortunes are not tied up with my particular race or religion, but with the larger multi-racial society which makes up Malaysia. This means tolerance, understanding and accommodation in a multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-religious society. Therefore, let everybody keep what he has, but let us look for the common denominators which unite us in a common national community of interests."

The most damning indictment of the Alliance leadership is that these are not the answers that they have inspired and educated the people to give. It is perhaps impossible to have expected them to do so, in the first place.

**The Alliance leaders have never been Malaysian leaders united in a single multi-racial political movement. They have been and continue to be essentially communal leaders. As such, they have consistently reacted to national problems in a communal way.**

#### 5. Fundamental Misconceptions about Nation Building

THERE IS A widespread misconception, sedulously propagated

bigoted racialists, that without one language and one culture, there can never be a united nation.

We might note, in passing, that the chauvinist, the extremist and the bigot, is very often a mono-linguist. His mind has therefore no windows opening out on other worlds and values. Like the proverbial frog in the well, he prefers to gaze at his own minute piece of sky.

On the other hand, we invariably find that with a knowledge of another language comes an understanding of a different culture and civilisation, which means more windows in the mind, and therefore, inevitably greater tolerance and more understanding.

However, turning to the misconception that without one language and culture, there can never be a united nation, the first fact that strikes the discerning observer is that there are several examples in modern history which prove the exact contrary.

There are several precedents to show that peoples of different languages, races and cultures have succeeded in forming strong and united nations, without in any way having to deculturate or undermine any of the constituent cultures in the nation.

On the other hand, there are also examples to show that a common race, language and cultural background by no means always result in a united nation. Cases in point are the peoples of Vietnam, Korea and Germany, who live under different flags. The people of Vietnam have a common race, language and culture, but nonetheless they live under different flags in North Vietnam and South Vietnam.

Similarly, there is not one Germany but two Germanies, which, even though they possess a common language, race and religion, are nonetheless divided by separate political and socio-economic beliefs and value systems. And so too with Korea.

## 6. A Communal Definition of 'Loyalty'

WHAT THE PRESENT rulers of Malaysia are striving for is not a cultural democracy. A cultural democracy is one in which all the diverse cultural strands in a multi-racial nation are given free

and equal play and inter-play, as the best means of achieving securely-based and enduring national integration.

What our rulers are plainly striving for, on the contrary, is cultural aristocracy, in which the favoured community of "bumiputras" are given completely free cultural play, while the communities of "non-bumiputras" are systematically enfeebled by insidious process of deculturation.

That this was, in fact, the intention was revealed by the Prime Minister, Tengku Abdul Rahman, when in an unguarded moment he described the loyalty of Tun Tan Siew Sin as "unquestionable because "He does not know the Chinese language."

By this criterion, half the population of the country, who speak the Chinese, Tamil and other languages, should be deemed "disloyal." This is in fact the apprehension of innumerable Malaysians with regard to the basic assumptions behind the Government's policies. And these apprehensions are given further credence by the favoured status accorded to the so-called "bumiputras," not only in matters of language and culture, but also in the military and defence institutions of the nation.

There is a pressing urgency, in terms of nation-building, for all Malaysians and, in particular, the Government, to appreciate that mutual tolerance and accommodation in a cultural democracy is the best insurance against the emergence of relations of dominance on the one side, and of submission on the other, or acculturation on the one side and deculturation on the other.

Indeed, the values of tolerance and accommodation can exist and occur only on a plane of equality. For where inequality prevails, only mutual distrust and animosity can occur. This fact has been recognised in sociological theory, but awaits recognition by the political leaders of Malaysia, before they become complete prisoners of the communal forces they have helped to unleash.

## 7. Switzerland — The Outstanding Example of Cultural Democracy

WE SHALL single out for special attention one outstanding example of a successful cultural democracy — that of Switzerland. It is not an example which we need follow in every detail, but one from which we can derive valuable principles and guide-lines to illuminate our own efforts at nation-building.

The peoples of Switzerland are anything but homogeneous. Neither is there any Swiss language serving to bind the nearly 5 million people together in a linguistic uniformity.

German, French, Italian and Romanish are designated in the Swiss Constitution as "national languages," and the first three are declared to be official languages. Even the linguistic diversity of Switzerland is barely indicative of the great cultural diversities found in the country. The observer comes across considerable regional differences in customs, dialects, ways of thought and of living.

Religion too does not serve as a binding factor, for 57 percent. of the Swiss population are Protestants, and 41 percent. are Catholic.

Yet, in spite of these diversities, the Swiss are a united and prosperous nation. Though small in area and population, they were a nation that had to be reckoned with by every foreign aggressor, from Caesar and Hannibal to Napoleon and Hitler. Those who care to visit Switzerland and make a study of how effective a cultural democracy can be, will no longer subscribe to the fiction that the Swiss are merely a collection of milkmaids, yodellers, hotel-keepers and watch-makers. They will find instead a nation of very loyal and extremely Swiss-conscious citizen soldiers, and very good ones at that!

Let us quote from a writer who made an expert study of Swiss attitudes. This is what he says:

"A Swiss feels very Swiss when he stands on a mountain top and looks upon his land; he feels very Swiss when he serves

in his Army, when he commemorates old battles, when he compares his country with the rest. In every day life, he may feel more affinities with the French, the Germans, or the Italians than with those among his fellow-Swiss, who speak a different tongue from his own.

“A German Swiss, for instance, will sympathise with Germany, but only culturally, as it were. He will feel strongly for his canton most of the time. But when the question of being Swiss is involved – well he is a Swiss, and he intends to stay one.”

What is the factor which binds this diverse people into a united and successful nation? Those who have made a study of the multi-racial Swiss equilibrium point out that the German Swiss, who constitute a majority of the population, never made any effort to impose their language upon the nation.

This linguistic equilibrium, which represents one of the foremost stabilising and integrating influences in modern Switzerland, originated at a time before language became a symbol of national and ethnic identification. This fortunate circumstance has been consciously reinforced by wise political measures designed to prevent language, as it has elsewhere, from being a focus of division and conflict.

Conceivably, the assimilation of the peoples in Switzerland might have been attempted on a basis of dominance and subordination, or on a basis of segregation – neither of which, however, would have produced the national loyalty which the Swiss now possess. Instead, an enduring accommodation in the nature of cultural pluralism was reached during the 19th Century.

The feeling of loyalty and of a common Swiss identity was further strengthened by other political devices which were aimed at safeguarding the integrity and interests of the various ethnic groups on a basis of equality of all citizens.

There are fundamental lessons which we can learn from the Swiss example. Cultural democracy, or cultural pluralism, if you

wish, is a historically vindicated form of adjustment for the differences of racial and ethnic groups, and makes a special appeal to those who subscribe to democratic ideals and processes. It is in accordance with the values of tolerance, fair-play, freedom, and the sacredness of human personality.

We might also note the significant fact, that the three great traditional civilisations which meet and mingle in Malaysia, the Islamic, the Indian and the Chinese civilisations, have also upheld in their own ways, the traditional Asian tolerance of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Buddha, Krishna, Lao-tze, Confucius and Mohammed founded religions and systems, which were based on compassion, and a vast tolerance and active acceptance of human diversity, and on a deep sense of the essential brotherhood of men.

It is the communal politicians who distort and deform these basic religious values which are the common possession of all the great religions of mankind.

## **8. The Practice of Cultural Democracy in the Malaysian Situation**

THE D.A.P. BELIEVES that the principles and methods of cultural democracy are eminently applicable to the Malaysian situation, and can yield the largest dividends in terms of the creation of that sense of national consciousness and identity, which is so vital to ensure the unity, coherence, security and territorial integrity of our multi-racial nation.

The alternative to the practice of cultural democracy must mean a deepening sense of cultural division and discrimination, and a resultant backward look on the part of the different communal constituents of the population to their original homelands, i.e. to China, India and Indonesia.

For a nation with a fairly evenly balanced racial composition, and with no majorities and minorities to speak of, the outcome of such a process can only be national disintegration, racial conflict



and discord – a prospect which must horrify all those who love this country and are anxious to secure its future.

### 9. Cultural Democracy and Educational Practice

IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE, cultural democracy in Malaysia should express itself in the equal treatment of the four streams of education in the country. This is clearly not the case today.

As was pointed out earlier, Chinese and Tamil have in effect been derogated to the status of second languages in the so-called national-type Chinese and Tamil schools.

Further, even though these languages are nominally regarded as media of instruction in these schools, they are denied recognition as media of examination. This is not only an absurdity in educational theory, but a positive outrage against commonsense.

It must be emphasised that the constitutional guarantee to sustain and preserve the free use and study of these major Malaysian languages can hardly be realised if they are not accorded recognition as the chief media of instruction and examination at all three levels of the nation's education system – the primary, the secondary and the tertiary stages.

If only primary level instruction in Chinese and Tamil is catered for, then it will only be a matter of time before the Malaysians who speak Chinese and Tamil find themselves effectively deculturated.

The recent outcry against the proposers of Merdeka University and the reckless charges of communalism levelled against them, smacked of disgusting hypocrisy, coming as it did from Alliance Party sources, which see nothing wrong in racially exclusive educational institutions like the MARA College.

Apart from those who have already chosen the sycophantic road of communal and cultural submission, genuine multi-racialists can see nothing wrong in the aspiration of Malaysian citizens to found educational institutions to realise the constitutional guarantee to preserve and sustain the free use and study of their languages **provided**, of course, that these institutions do not prove racially

exclusive, and do not neglect to foster and promote the essential common denominators in our multi-racial society – the national language and a Malaysia-centred orientation in their courses of study.

It is on this similar basis that the Nanyang University has been recognised in the Republic of Singapore, not as a divisive force, but as an institution which disseminates the vital common denominators of nationhood, in the medium of one of the constituent languages of that multi-racial Republic. And it is on such a basis that a Tamil university can also be accepted, and indeed encouraged, in Malaysia.

#### 10. **The Common Denominators in a Multi-Racial Education System – the National Language and a Malaysian-centred Orientation of Studies**

MALAYSIANS ENJOY ONE advantage, even over Switzerland, in that all sections of our multi-racial people have freely and willingly recognised and accepted Malay as the national language.

There is not even an attempt to secure the declaration that all the major languages of the country should be deemed as national languages, as is the case in Switzerland.

There is also general acceptance of the fact that the curricula, syllabi and text-books of all the four language streams of education should be categorically national orientated in outlook, exposition and content, and serve as vehicles and instruments of a common Malaysian national consciousness.

There is no reason to suppose, and other historical precedents justify the assumption, that such an arrangement can produce anything but loyal and united Malaysian nationals. Only communalists and concealed racialists will prove intolerant of this historically vindicated assumption.

#### 11. **Cultural Democracy and its Expression in Political Practice**

IT HAS ALREADY been observed that the recognition in Switzerland

of German, French and Italian, not only as National Languages, but also as official languages, has in no way eroded or diminished the strong sense of Swiss nationality.

Quite apart from the Swiss precedent, the provision in the national constitution stipulates the free use and study of Chinese and Tamil in the country.

**It is the DAP's view that the free use of these languages need not be taken to mean only their private use. If this constitutional guarantee is to have any relevance or significance, it should also include the official use of these languages.**

Such a recognition would come naturally if the political leaders of the country genuinely accept the principle and practice of cultural democracy, and would not derogate in any way from the sense of national unity. On the contrary, it would serve to enhance the sense of national unity by giving a respected place to all the major languages in the country for official purposes.

It is, for instance, a childish denial of democratic rights to deny the use, in Parliament and in the State Assemblies, of major languages in the country, like Chinese and Tamil.

It could not have escaped the attention of Malaysians that Singapore, for example, clearly does not suffer from any loss of national consciousness or national loyalty, by reason of the fact that the Singapore Parliament permits the free use in Parliamentary proceedings of Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil. It is therefore difficult to ascertain why it should be considered that a contrary result would obtain in Malaysia, if the same principle applied here.

## **12. The Economic Reasons for Urban and Rural Disparities**

THE DISPARITIES between rural incomes and rural productivity on the one hand, and urban incomes and urban productivity on the other, is not a phenomenon peculiar to Malaysia. Similar social

economic and cultural disparities, as between rural and urban areas, also confront other developing nations.

However, in culturally homogeneous societies, the reasons for such disparities are clearly and easily seen as arising from economic factors and policies. Since racial divisions are absent, nobody sees economic disparities between one section of the population and another as being connected in any way with racial causes.

Economic divisions in such societies are rightly seen as deriving from relations between social classes. As a result, political parties in culturally homogeneous societies seek to represent the interest of separate social classes.

There are no racial parties. There are only bourgeois parties representing the interests of entrepreneurs and capitalists, labour parties representing manual workers and middle-class salary earners, and peasant parties representing rural and agricultural interests. Political discussions and debates therefore take place on straightforward social and economic issues.

In Malaysia too, disparities in incomes and productivity as between urban and rural areas are also, at bottom, due to economic factors.

But the problem is rendered acute and dangerous in Malaysia, because the urban-rural division here largely coincides with communal divisions. The rural population is largely Malay while the urban population is mainly non-Malay.

This makes it possible for racist politicians to confuse basic economic factors by equating them, irrelevantly but quite dangerously, with racial factors.

The strongest indictment against the Alliance politicians is that they have deliberately and consciously exploited the relative economic insecurity and educational backwardness of the Malay rural population, in order to consolidate their political positions on a communal basis.

The Malays have been told that rural poverty and backwardness can only be removed if they unite on a racial basis. Economic

disparity is mischievously equated with racial disparity, and economic insecurity with racial insecurity.

Once this false position was taken, the next step was to persuade the Malay population that the only way to advance their racial security was to ensure that, as a race, they should obtain and keep their dominant political position in the country; that the Malay language should become the dominant language in the country; and that their religion should be declared the official religion. Such were the illogical imperatives which proceeded from the racialist position taken up by the leaders of the UMNO, who are in fact the *de facto* leaders of the Alliance.

But historical retribution awaits its hour. The time must inevitably come when the Malay people will see that the fact that their language has been made the National Language as well as the sole official language, and the declaration of their religion as the official religion, has in no significant material way, helped to solve the problem of rural poverty and educational backwardness.

In short, Malaysians of Malay origin will come to see that all these racial gimmicks have not helped in the least to insure them against economic insecurity.

### 13. **Education as a Vital Factor in the Banishment of Rural Poverty and Backwardness**

A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST and multi-racial government can devise a number of far-reaching economic and educational measures to radically improve rural productivity, incomes and standards of living, without having to resort to racial gimmicks of any kind.

We are interested here, however, in the employment of the principles of cultural democracy, as expressed in educational practice, as a vital factor in the banishment of rural poverty and backwardness.

In this respect also, the Alliance Government can be justifiably charged with an almost monumental failure.

**The national schools in the rural areas reveal shockingly low standards of instruction. The poor standard of the**

scope and content of instruction given in these schools can by no means be attributed to any inherent deficiencies in the Malay language itself.

Like any other language, Malay can also be as developed as the people who speak it. And like any other language, it possesses the capacity to develop as an adequate means of communication and expression in the arts and sciences of modern life. But practically nothing has been done to develop this potential capacity.

Government policies have even failed to develop the national language as an adequate vehicle of secondary level education.

One of the ways in which the common national language can be helped to develop adequate powers of expression and communication in modern subjects, is to provide, in our rural schools, higher standards of instruction in English as the vital second language, and as the most conveniently available window on the world of modern science and technology, particularly for the Malays.

The more modern-minded and educated the people who use the national language are, the more capacity for growth the national language will come to possess and display. Be it noted, in passing, that even a racially exclusive college like the MARA college is obliged to insist on an adequate working knowledge of English as a basis for instruction.

It is also no secret that many Alliance Malay leaders, in spite of their high-faluting talk about the national language and national schools, prefer to send their children to English schools, either here or abroad.

Narrow political considerations appear, however, to have inhibited the intensification of instruction in English in the rural schools, with the result that rural Malay students have had to compete on unequal terms with non-Malay as well as Malay students from English-media schools, for admission into the University of Malaya and the MARA College.

The manner this disability on the part of rural Malay students

has been tackled by the Alliance government calls for the strongest condemnation. Instead of doing the proper thing, by formulating and implementing an intensive programme to raise educational standards in rural national schools, there is a brazen and shameful attempt to force through the portals of the national university large numbers of lesser-qualified Malay students at the expense of other students who possess superior basic qualifications.

Several members of the academic staff of the university are known to be seriously concerned that all this must result in a serious lowering of the standards the university has maintained thus far, quite apart from the fact that hundreds of non-Malay students with superior basic qualifications have been thereby deprived of their rightful places in the university.

These are not contentions peculiar to the D.A.P., nor do they constitute a propaganda stunt on our part, as claimed by Encik Mohammed Khir Johari, the Minister of Education.

We assert that the Alliance Government will not be able to deny the following facts:-

1. that each year, the University is asked to admit hundreds of students on Central and State Government bursaries and scholarships, without question;
2. that a large number of these students were admitted with minimum qualifications when there were hundreds who were more than the minimum qualifications, who were thereby deprived of the chance of furthering their education;
3. that several members of the academic staff of the university are concerned at the manner in which the Central and State Government scholarships and bursaries have been administered, as this is bound to lead to the lowering of standards in the university.

One evil can only lead to the creation of other and worse evils. To the evil of lowered standards in the university, which explains the spate of resignations on the part of members of the academic staff, is added the evil of acute frustration and resentment on

part of those deprived of a chance of higher education, in spite of their possession of superior basic qualifications.

The facile answer to these serious objections is that only thus can the Malays be helped to advance. It must surely be seen, on the contrary, that the logical conclusion of forcing the admission of lesser-qualified Malay students into the university must be to force the equal lowering of university standards.

It would be ludicrous to expect that such methods can spearhead the drive for rural progress and Malay advancement.

Such policies constitute, in our view, the greatest long-term disservice to the Malays themselves. Apart from the general lowering of national academic standards, a premium is placed, not on genuine Malay advancement and progress, but on Malay regression from accepted standards of achievement.

When national retribution ultimately overtakes the Alliance government, as it must one day, they will stand condemned, not only at the bar of Malaysian public opinion, including Malay opinion, but also at the bar of the High Court of History.

#### 14. **The Role of English as an Important Instrument of Modernisation and International Communication**

ENGLISH may have been the language of the colonial rulers, but it also served as the vehicle of successful national independence movements, apart from Malaysia. It was the language of Gandhi and Nehru, of Nyerere, Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah. In the circumstances, it would be ludicrous to contend that English cannot also serve as a fit vehicle for Malaysian national sentiments, in the same way as it served as a vehicle for Indian, Tanzanian, Kenyan and Ghanaian nationalisms.

English is also a world language. In fact, where Malaysia is concerned, it can also be legitimately regarded as a Malaysian language, by virtue of the fact that it is the normal and accepted vehicle of communication employed by a significant group of Malaysians.

Like Malay, English is also a *lingua franca* between Malaysians



of diverse racial origins. In spite of all their other defects and shortcomings, the English schools in the country have been, and continue to be, meeting places of students of all races, and have in significant measure contributed to the breaking down of racial and cultural barriers between the Malaysian communities.

While Malay is a *lingua franca* in the homes, shops and market places of the nation, English serves as the indispensable means of communication in the professions, in the fields of commerce and banking, and in the spheres of higher education.

It would be foolish in the extreme, therefore, in terms of rapid modernisation through scientific and technological progress, to denigrate the value and status of the English language in the national scheme of advancement.

In the circumstances, it must be deplored as a retrogressive measure that English should have lost its status as an official language, and be accorded only a permissive role in official and parliamentary usage.

The D.A.P. will therefore press for the restitution of full official status to the English language.

#### 15. Summary of D.A.P. Proposals for the Implementation of Cultural Democracy in Malaysia

- (i) UNQUALIFIED ACCEPTANCE of Malay as the National Language.
- (ii) RESTITUTION of official status to the English language.
- (iii) OFFICIAL STATUS to be also accorded to the Chinese and Tamil languages, including the free use of the languages in the proceedings of the Parliament and State Assemblies.
- (iv) ABOLITION of the classification of "national" and "national-type" schools by giving equal treatment to all the four language streams of education - Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil. Chinese and Tamil

be accepted as media of instruction as well as examination at primary and secondary levels, in all Chinese and Tamil media schools.

- (v) ACCEPTANCE by all the four streams of education of common denominators, like (a) the teaching of the National Language as a compulsory second language in all schools, and the teaching of one additional language in all schools, to be chosen from among English, Chinese or Tamil; and (b) adoption of Malaysia-centred curricula, syllabuses and text-books, by all language streams of education.
- (vi) THE ADOPTION of an intensive programme to secure radical improvements in the scope and standards of instruction in rural schools, including the intensification of the teaching of English as a vital second language in the schools.
- (vii) ADMISSION to the University to be determined solely on the merit of basic educational qualifications, to ensure that standards of university admission and of university examinations are maintained at a high level.

## 16. CONCLUSION—A Choice of National Destiny

WE ARE AWARE that racialist politicians are capable of describing even multi-racialism and cultural democracy as being racialist in character.

Those who sincerely believe in the tenets of multi-racialism, and have set themselves firmly against racialist attitudes of any kind, be it of the Malay, Chinese or Indian variety, have had the experience of having charges of communalism levelled at them. We in the DAP are no strangers to such charges.

We are confident, however, that the majority of decent Malaysians will understand that it is the stock-in-trade of the racialists to level such charges against honest multi-racialists.

A racialist sees everything through his racialist blinkers, and unlike the multi-racialist, who sees all racialism as evil, the only

kind of racialism that a racist himself approves is his own brand of racialism.

Be that as it may, decent Malaysians of all races must hope that the political leadership of the nation will possess the courage, character and capacity to give positive leadership to the nation, and steer it away from the dangerous shoals and whirlpools of racialism, which can easily suck our multi-racial people into the vortex of an irreversible process of disintegration.

Whatever the odds against us, the forces of multi-racialism must persevere in propagating the ideals of cultural democracy, as proved in historical practice, and as justified by all the highest ideals of the great traditions and civilisations of mankind.

In conclusion, we can do no better than to quote the conclusion of the Setapak Declaration of the Party, which described the fundamental choice before this nation as a choice of national destiny, in the following words:

“Regarded against a broad historical background and perspective, Malaysia must be seen as undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny.

“For a stage has been reached in which intelligent Malaysians can discern, on the one hand, the possibility of integration of a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious people in a wider, all-embracing Malaysia-centred identity and consciousness, and on the other hand, the equal possibility of the failure to effect such an integral transformation with the inevitable consequences of national discord, dissension and disintegration.

“The choice is there, and it is imperative. In the final analysis, it must be the people as a whole who have to make this choice of destiny – either to take the road which leads to an integral national transformation, or the alternative road leading to eventual national decay and disintegration.

“We have faith that if this choice of destiny is placed before them in frankness and honesty, Malaysians of all races and creeds will make the right choice.”

## The Triple Decline

*Central Executive Committee Report to the First Party Conference of the Democratic Action Party held at Setapak, Kuala Lumpur, on Sunday March 17, 1968.*

PRESENTED BY CHEN MAN HIN, CHAIRMAN

**BEGINNINGS:** AUGUST 9, 1965 was a fateful day for the democratic socialist movement in Malaysia. That was the day which saw the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. The reasons for that separation are still galling and painful for many Malaysians. It boiled down to the simple fact that the feudal-compradore regime of the Alliance Government decided that it possessed neither the capacity nor the will to meet the open political challenge of a multi-racial, modern-minded and democratic socialist movement as represented by the People's Action Party. Communal reaction and political cowardice won the argument in the councils of the Alliance and the outcome was the unceremonious booting out of Singapore from the Malaysian Federation. The *bona fides* of the Alliance Government have been totally prejudiced in the eyes of innumerable Malaysians since then.

However, the Alliance was soon to discover that the forces of multi-racialism and democratic socialism had not died a natural death in Malaysia with the political separation of Singapore. A completely Malaysian-based PAP took over, in a much more modest fashion, of course, from where the largely Singapore-based PAP had left off. But not for long. The very nomenclature – PAP – appeared to stick in the throats of the Alliance leadership, and the Malaysian PAP found itself deregistered on September 9, 1965.

Nothing daunted, the leaders of the de-registered Party grouped

together once again and sought the registration of a new Party, to be known as the Democratic Action Party of Malaysia, with a new symbol, the now well-known Rocket.

After a period of waiting, and being driven from pillar to post, the new Party was finally registered on March 19, 1966. Political observers did not fail to note that the DAP was only registered after the Alliance Government had rammed through Parliament the new Societies Ordinance. As everyone knows, the new Ordinance provided, among other restrictions, provisions which would make it difficult for the DAP, and for that matter, any other opposition political party, to take adequate steps to protect its membership against any infiltration by government agents as well as by anti-Malaysian extremist elements.

But even before the new Party was registered, the Chairman of the Protem Committee of the DAP contested the Rahang by-election to the State Assembly of Negri Sembilan as an independent candidate, and won the seat with an absolute majority, thus demonstrating that the democratic socialist movement had won a secure place in the hearts and minds of innumerable Malaysians.

**THE IMPACT OF THE DAP:** In two years since the birth of the Party, the DAP has emerged as a unique and distinct force on the Malaysian political scene, with a clear, sober and unambiguous political message, coherent and consistent in its ideological approach; united, disciplined and tightly-knit in its organisation - in spite of the Societies Ordinance.

Alone among opposition parties in the country, the DAP produces a regular monthly journal, in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil, named after the Party symbol - the Rocket.

The Rocket has already gained both local and international reputation as a lively political paper of high quality and intelligence. International recognition came to the Party in a big way when the Socialist International unanimously welcomed and approved the affiliation of the DAP on October 10, 1967.

Today, the Party has 38 registered branches throughout the country, all of them multi-racial in composition and character.

We would do well to bear in mind that the major reason for the positive national and international response to the DAP was the fact that we did not present ourselves as a haphazard and precarious get-together of political has-beens or of cynical speculators or gamblers on the electoral market. On the contrary, the DAP has earned the well-deserved reputation of being a group of serious men, dedicated to the realisation of the concept of a multi-racial nation, based on political equality and social and economic justice.

If the DAP is to increase its impact and widen its influence, it is vital to maintain the political quality and character of the movement at a high level. Most important of all, neither in word nor deed, should we allow ourselves to pander to any kind of communal gallery, or racial chauvinism. As a Malaysian party, our approach to all the social, political, economic and cultural problems of the nation must be seen to be informed and inspired throughout by a genuine and sincere multi-racial approach.

Alliance propaganda will no doubt continue to imply and insinuate that we are merely a Chinese party, that we are anti-Malay, and so on. Such propaganda need not disturb us, so long as our theory and practice, our thoughts and acts, continue to be genuinely multi-racial and truly Malaysian. If this is ensured, then no amount of Alliance smears and lies will succeed in smudging our image in the long run.

As a serious movement, we must recognise that the task of establishing a multi-racial and democratic socialist society in Malaysia is not something that can be achieved overnight. It is going to be a long and even painful haul for all those who sincerely believe that there can be no higher and worthier political ideal for Malaysians than an equal, democratic and multi-racial society.

We must therefore avoid the transient luxury of seeking immediate political advantages at the price of jettisoning any of the principles and values we cherish, or at the cost of losing our unique identity, character and integrity as a serious political movement.

**THE ECONOMIC DECLINE:** All objective observers will readily agree that this nation of ours is working up towards a major crisis of

confidence in the policies of the Alliance Government. The general political deterioration in the country, the loss of confidence and the absence of any sense of clear purpose and direction in the nation's leadership, have all been accentuated by the deepening economic crisis afflicting the country, arising from the fall in rubber and other export commodity prices, the devaluation of sterling and the impending withdrawal of the British military presence from South-east Asia. These factors, singly as well as in combination, have had a retarding and dampening effect on all facets of the economy.

Apart from the fact of our annual budget becoming increasingly dependent on deficit financing, and the mounting national debt, there has been a steady and inexorable decline in the rate of public as well as private investment in development projects and manufacturing industries, accompanied by an even more rapid decline of public confidence in the soundness of the fiscal and budgetary policies of the government. Most immediately, where the people at large are concerned, the economic deterioration in the country is painfully manifested in increasing poverty, unemployment and underemployment, in rural as well as in urban areas.

The current economic decline has served to show up, more than anything else, the poverty of economic planning, purpose and direction on the part of the government. The freak affluence of the fifties and the early sixties went to Alliance heads. They mistook the relative prosperity and stability of the early years of Malaysia as arising from their own brightness and sagacity instead of taking it for what it really was – a long run of freak good luck brought about by abnormal international factors like the Korean War. In their heady exhilaration, foresight and planning to prepare the nation for a rainy future were abandoned. We had extravagance and arrogance, lavish monuments, political circus and prestige projects and white elephants of all sorts and sizes, instead of the harnessing of the national resources and of the temporary affluence for the task of vigorous economic diversification, against the day when rubber prices would take a downward plunge.

That day has now come for the nation, and a variety of factors, over which we have no control, are likely to make sure that rubber prices will stay down.

The economic decline which has set in shows the Alliance Government caught with its pants down, as it were, with little or nothing to cover their nakedness. Our rulers are shown up today, not as the geniuses and wizards they fondly took themselves to be, but as weak men, without plan or purpose, solution or remedy, blundering from error to greater error, driven from pillar to post by international factors, and barren of all creativity and inspiration. Their sins of irresponsible omission and of extravagance in the heady years of a fortuitous and unplanned plenty, have now come home to roost, and we find a nation completely unprepared for planned progress and prosperity.

The economic decline has only served to exacerbate an already declining political situation.

**THE POLITICAL DECLINE:** The political decline is mainly manifested in the growth of divisive racialist tendencies and sentiments in the nation. Far from Alliance government policies countering and checking such divisive tendencies, they actually serve to accentuate them.

The crying need of the hour is to initiate bold and creative policies aimed at securing rapid progress towards the goal of the integration of our multi-racial people, in an enduring national unity. What is called for is the creative transcendence of communal categories in all fields of national life, in a supreme effort at nation-building. But what the Alliance Government offers at best is merely a pandering to communal sentiments and motivations. Alliance policy-makers seem to subscribe to the fallacious theory that the best way to conquer a vice is to indulge in it. But experience has rapidly shown that the indulgence of a vice, far from curing it, only ensures the growth of a monstrous insatiability. The indulgence by the Alliance Government of the vices of communal separatism and communal motivations in our multi-racial nation has only served to further entrench and consolidate



communal modes of thinking and feeling among the people. The Malay feels that he is a bumiputra first, and a Malaysian only incidentally. As such, bumiputra unity is his dominant political preoccupation – not the creation of Malaysian national unity! The non-Malay feels that he is a non-bumiputra first, and a Malaysian only incidentally. As such, his dominant preoccupation is his own communal and cultural survival in a bumiputra-dominated milieu – not the achievement of Malaysian national unity! And in this manner, feelings of communal separatism and insecurity among all communities, instead of weakening mutually feed and strengthen each other. Wherever this process may end up, of one thing we can be sure. The end result will not be an integrated Malaysian nation and people!

The Alliance policy-makers find themselves today entrapped in their own snares, and the only remedies they can offer are the palliatives which have already so clearly failed. To compound the mounting tragedy of failure, there is no evidence of even the faintest glimmer of an appreciation in the ranks of the Alliance leadership that their political policies have been proved as demonstrable nonsense in the sphere of nation building. Nowhere in Alliance ranks is there any evidence of the qualities of character, courage and will to initiate a vigorous process of national self-recovery. We have only effete and tired men, set in their narrow ways and petty prejudices, blundering on towards national disintegration.

The DAP says that this drift to disaster must and can be checked. Whatever the outcome of our own efforts may be, we in the DAP are determined to ensure that history will record the fact that there were at least some Malaysians, who had the character, intelligence and courage and who, given the chance, would have taken the nation on the sane and rational road to national integration in a multi-racial society.

The DAP declares categorically that the only way to achieve the national integration of our multi-racial people is to systematically

erode and ultimately destroy the economic foundations of communal separatism and division in our country.

The causes of backwardness and poverty, whether of the Malay have-nots in the rural areas or of the non-Malay have-nots in the urban areas, are economic – not racial! And the measures to remove such backwardness and inequality must be social and economic measures – not racial ones!

Socio-economic measures to eradicate poverty and backwardness have the virtue of being non-racial in formulation and implementation. On the other hand, Alliance policies have failed because whatever measures they have adopted have been argued and justified on the basis of racial considerations. Economic causes and results have been dangerously equated with racial causes and results. And, most unpardonable of all, in the light of nation-building, the economic advancement of one section of the people has been equated with the political regression of another section of the people. In short, the Alliance policy reminds one of the primitive witch doctor's method of trying to cure one man's headache by hitting somebody else on the head. The inevitable end-result of such a procedure must be that you have to deal with two headaches instead of one.

But this has precisely been the end-result of Alliance policy – the socio-economic problems of the bumiputras have, if anything, been aggravated while the non-bumiputras are increasingly made to feel unwanted and resentful. In the process, the forces of racial exclusivism have gathered strength. And meanwhile, the multi-racial edifice of the Malaysian nation begins to visibly totter, and crack, and crumble.

The alarming hidden realities of the situation, so complacently and even grandiloquently ignored during the Tenth Merdeka Anniversary celebrations held last year, erupted to the surface only two months later in the tragic racial violence which shook Penang and Northern Malaya.

Many of the immediate culprits were presumably apprehended and punished. But the real and ultimate guilt resides in the

pemonstrable failure of the political, social and economic policies of the Alliance leadership. Communists and racialists no doubt helped to ignite the powder-keg, but the powder-keg itself prepared by Alliance policies, and similar powder-kegs will continue to be prepared elsewhere by the same policies, to be gleefully ignited by racialists and communists, at times of their choosing.

A drastic recasting of current political, economic and educational policies is urgently called for if the current political deterioration is to be checked and eventually reversed. Such a recasting must involve the categorical enunciation and vigorous implementation in all fields of national life, of the basic principle of the political equality of all Malaysians, regardless of race, language and religion on the basis of social and economic justice and equality of opportunity for all. The DAP sees it as its major task to press for the adoption of this vital and basic principle in our national life.

THE DECLINING NATIONAL SECURITY SITUATION: The military factors which enabled Malaysia to meet and overcome the armed insurrection led by the Malayan Communist Party in 1948-1950 and the Indonesian confrontation in 1963, no longer exist today. Malaysian national pride notwithstanding, the stark fact remains that were it not for the British military presence and participation in the so-called Emergency which began in 1948 would have taken a different turn. The same thing holds good with regard to the Indonesian confrontation. The world knows that had it not been for the British defence umbrella over Malaysia, Indonesian military confrontation would have ended quite differently than it in fact did.

The British military withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore poses serious threats to national security. We may safely assume that the internal enemies of the Malaysian nation, as well as potential external aggressors, will be making their own calculations as to how the military vacuum created by the British withdrawal may be utilised and exploited for their own advantage, and against the interests of the independence and territorial integrity of

ation. In these circumstances, one of our urgent national aims must be to build up our own defence capability, in co-operation and alliance with our traditional friends and allies.

The DAP has pressed upon the Government, more than once, the vital need to accept the fact that the basic ingredient in the preparation of an effective national defence capability is the creation of a sense of Malaysian national identity and consciousness which transcends all communal categories. Apart from a radical recasting of national political and socio-economic policies to expedite this vital process, we would also require the rapid creation of genuinely multi-racial defence institutions and organisations. Failure to do this would mean failure to mobilise to the full and to the most effective purpose the total defence potential of the nation.

RELATIONS WITH SINGAPORE: At least one favourable result of the serious military and economic problems posed by the projected British military withdrawal has been the creation of a new sense of urgency, in both Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, in calling a halt to the petty mutual recriminations that have bedevilled relations between the two states. A welcome recognition has dawned in both countries that at least where the paramount concern of defence is concerned, the interests of the two countries are indivisible.

One would wish, however, that co-operation between the two countries will extend from the sphere of defence to that of economics as well. If the defence of the two countries is recognised as being clearly indivisible, the economics of the two must be recognised as being equally so.

The DAP emphatically deploras as a retrograde measure, in the light of the need for closer co-operation between the two countries, the withdrawal of work permits from Malaysian citizens working in Singapore and the projected withdrawal of jobs from Singaporean citizens working in Malaysia.

The political separation of Singapore from Malaysia was an act of supreme folly, but this cannot and should not mean that the

close ties of family and kinship which exist between large numbers of people in both countries should be so cruelly severed.

The reasons for these acts of severance by both countries are at bottom economic. In order to provide for the free mobility of labour between the two countries, there must be created a common market for both. A common market for commodities must inevitably mean a common market for labour.

The DAP therefore calls upon both governments to work out a common market agreement between them, with the generous assistance of the World Bank, as a matter of urgent and enlightened self-interest on the part of both. If diverse West European nations can operate a European Common Market, which has clearly acted as an incentive to economic growth and expansion in all the member nations, there exist even better and more compelling justifications for two states so closely linked together as Malaysia and Singapore are, to confidently embark on a similar venture of economic co-operation for mutual benefit and advantage.

**THE TASKS AHEAD:** The new Central Executive Committee of the DAP will have to shoulder greater responsibilities and more onerous burdens than that fell to the lot of the outgoing Central Executive Committee.

While expanding its activities, the Party must at the same time take care to raise the quality and effectiveness of its membership. Indiscriminate expansion without the exercise of care and discrimination in the selection of membership will lay the Party open to dangerous infiltration by elements hostile to the character and objectives of the Party.

The Party must intensify its exposure of the political fraud, chicanery and insincerity inherent in the policies of the Alliance Government, and the great political and economic dangers to the nation presented by the continued pursuit of its policies.

The Party has to work out and propagate a series of national programmes to ensure the genuine social, educational and economic upliftment of the Malay peasantry as well as of the labouring

number of underprivileged citizens of all races in the urban areas; in short, to unite and rally the have-nots of all races in the country on a common platform of multi-racial democratic socialism.

The coming general elections must not find the Party unprepared. All the resources that the Party can muster from its members, supporters and sympathisers, must be effectively mobilised to challenge the foundations of Alliance power in Malaysia. Above all, the Party's message of multi-racialism, of political equality, of social and economic justice and of equality of opportunity for all Malaysians, regardless of racial origins, must go out to the people with renewed urgency. The consciousness of the people must be heightened to appreciate the Party's basic and fundamental thesis that there is no alternative to a Malaysian Malaysia other than political chaos and national disintegration.

The major criteria on the basis of which the Party's political performance will be judged by the people will be our success in organising a united, ideologically consistent and disciplined political movement, and in protecting our image and reputation from being tarnished by political opportunism and expediency. Our co-operation with all political groups and individuals in the country must be based on principles which do not conflict with the basic ideological objectives and policies of the Party, and on the maintenance of the unique identity, character and integrity of the Party.

It is with these observations, aspirations and hopes that the outgoing Central Executive Committee of the Party offers to the first Party Conference this brief report of our stewardship of the first genuinely multi-racial, categorically pro-Malaysian and democratic socialist movement to have emerged in Malaysia.



Delegates at the "Malaysian Solidarity Convention" held in Singapore on 9th May, 1968.  
*Left to Right:* Mr. Leong Ho Yuen (Machinda), Mr. M. Buma (Machinda), Enche' Marie Salleh (SUPP), Mr. Stephen Yong (SUPP), Dr. Lim Chong Eui (UDI), Enche' Abdul Wahid bin Md. Yusoff (UDP), Mr. Lim Meng See (UDP). *Back to Camera:* Mr. E. W. Barker, Mr. Lee Khoo Choy. *Others Present were:* Enche' Othman Wok (PAP), Dr. Toh Chin Chuan (PAP), Mr. Ong Pang Boon (PAP), Mr. D. R. Seenivasagatu (PPP).

## We are no Political Gamblers

*Extracts of talk by DAP Central Executive Committee Member and Member of Parliament for Bungsar, Mr. C. V. Devan Nair to members and supporters at Petaling Jaya on Thursday, 28 March 1968.*

I have been asked by some well-meaning people - why do the DAP also not dissolve and join the new Party? We have many good reasons for not doing so. Let me explain a few of the reasons.

In politics, as in other spheres of human relations, the qualities which really count in the end are the same. They are the qualities of consistency, stability and sincerity. A fickle husband or wife, constantly on the look out for new bedroom partners, discovers in the end that the ephemeral joy of chasing rainbows has not been worth the damage inflicted on the stability of home and family.

It is the same with politics. For us in the DAP, politics is a serious and solemn commitment to long-term goals. Thus, when a group of probably well-meaning individuals approached us with the suggestion that we give up our unique identity, name and symbol, in order to merge with others, some of whom were in the process of either liquidating or leaving their own undertakings, it smacked to us of an invitation to gamble. Not being political gamblers, we had to politely rebuff these gentlemen. We explained that we did not relish the idea of periodically reappearing before the public in new political garbs and disguises. We said that we were determined to remain what we were, but that we would welcome into our fold some of the sponsors of the new Party as individuals, provided that they sincerely subscribe to our multi-racial approach and democratic socialist values. They assured us that they did, but we find that a new Party has emerged, all the same. So be it!

The most significant reaction to the new Party came from Tun Tan Siew Sin. "The more the merrier" was Tun Tan's gleeful observation.

What we find of some significance is that men of academic standing, like Professors Wang Gungwu and Syed Hussain Alatas have come out publicly with the oft-repeated DAP view that the end-result of Alliance policies has been – not the creation of an integrated Malaysian nation – but of a simmering communal cauldron. Their concern and alarm is shared by an increasing number of thoughtful people, and the forthright expression of their views constitutes a well-deserved slap on the faces of Alliance leaders.

It is surely a loss to Malaysia that both these men of academic



standing have deemed it necessary to find more congenial academic surroundings outside the country. With the best will in the world, one wonders sadly how the good fight for a multi-racial Malaysia can be fought from the campuses of Canberra or Singapore.

Be that as it may, the DAP can give this assurance to the people. We shall not acquire the disconcerting habit of periodically changing our political apparel. We shall continue to be ourselves and on this secure foundation, we shall welcome all those who are prepared to strive together with us for the creation of an equitable multi-racial nation - a Malaysian Malaysia!

## **Why I Will Not Contest Again**

*An open letter to the voters of Bungsar  
from C. V. Devan Nair*

**Dear Fellow Malaysians,**

YOU ELECTED ME to the Malaysian Parliament in the General Elections of April, 1964, when I stood as a candidate of the People's Action Party.

My platform was to strive for a united Malaysian nation, in which all Malaysians, regardless of their racial origins, would enjoy equal political rights and equality of opportunity in all fields of the nation's life. You approved this platform and elected me as a member of the Malaysian Parliament.

Far-reaching changes and developments have taken place since then, including the traumatic experience of the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in August, 1965. There was also an unsuccessful attempt to declare my own election to Parliament null and void.

**In the coming months, but not later than April 1969, general elections will once again be held in Malaysia, and I wish to inform you that I shall not offer myself as a candidate for election to the next Parliament, though I shall continue to serve the D.A.P. and its cause.**

I owe you, the voters of Bungsar, an explanation for this decision.

I believe that August 9, 1965, will be seen by historians of the future as a fateful day for Malaysia. On that day, the Malaysian Parliament booted Singapore out of Malaysia, and the struggle for a multi-racial Malaysian nation, a MALAYSIAN MALAYSIA received a temporary setback.

Instead of being one of the 13 P.A.P. M.P'.s in Parliament, I

found myself a lone survivor, without a party. My colleagues, in what was left after Singapore's eviction from the Malaysian scene, Dr. Chen Man Hin, Mr. Goh Hock Guan, Dr. S. Seeveeratnam and I, found ourselves faced with a crucial choice.

On the one hand, I could have given up my seat in Parliament in despair. On the other hand, I could remain behind, retain my seat in Parliament, and together with my Malaysian colleagues, start again, from scratch, the battle for multi-racialism and for a Malaysian Malaysia.

We chose the latter course, for we decided that to fold up the struggle for multi-racialism, after the booting out of Singapore from Malaysia would have constituted:

1. a betrayal of the hopes and aspirations of countless Malaysians, on the basis of which I was returned to Parliament, and
2. a complete victory, by our default, for the forces of intolerance and racialism.

It was a difficult choice for me personally, because I had to make it against the wishes of my wife and family in Singapore. But events have justified the choice that my colleagues and I then made.

For in the last three years, we have succeeded in building up, from scratch, a clean and honest, as well as a viable and vigorous political movement in the D.A.P., dedicated to the struggle for a free and democratic multi-racial Malaysia.

It was the constituency of Bungsar, which provided the starting point for this movement, and my colleagues and I in the D.A.P. are grateful to the voters of Bungsar for having made this possible.

A word about the reasons why I will not personally offer myself as a candidate is called for.

Leaving aside my domestic commitments in Singapore, my close personal links of friendship with the leaders of the P.A.P. in Singapore have been and will be used by Alliance politicians to

confuse some Malaysians into believing that the D.A.P. is a Singapore-controlled party.

I am proud of these ties of friendship, and see no reason to repudiate them for reasons of political expediency or any such unworthy reason. However, the fact remains that my numerous personal links with Singapore are bound to lay us open to the charge (still being made by rival political parties in Malaysia) that the D.A.P. has more than purely ideological affinities with the P.A.P. of Singapore.

It is not in the interests of good relations between the two countries, nor in the long-term interest of the D.A.P. itself, that ground should continue to be given for such a charge, however spurious or unworthy it may be.

What is of significance is that the D.A.P. has emerged as an independent political movement. Immediately after the eviction of Singapore, Alliance leaders had believed that with the P.A.P. leaders out of Malaysia, the cause of multi-racialism and of a **Malaysian Malaysia** would die a natural death, and they could rule Malaysia along the racialist lines they were accustomed to.

But far from this happening, they were to discover that the cause of multi-racialism was the steady and deep-seated aspiration of innumerable Malaysians. These are basic and profound aspirations at ground level, which do not depend on the presence of individual leaders; and it was childish to expect that they would disappear with the eviction of the P.A.P. and its leaders.

This has been strikingly demonstrated by the emergence of the Democratic Action Party, and the momentum it has gathered in the last three years, entirely on its own, without the presence of P.A.P. leaders, and without any external support or assistance.

**At the proper time, we shall approach you to support, once again, the same policy and principles which you supported in April, 1964, by giving your vote to the D.A.P. candidate in the coming elections.**

**For he will stand for the same policy and principles, and**

his platform will also be the same platform of a Malaysian Malaysia.

My colleagues and I are confident that in the coming elections, you will help us to vindicate once again this principle of racial equality in our multi-racial society, which its opponents have tried so hard to deride and to obliterate from the Malaysian scene.

Once again, I pray for your understanding, sympathy and support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "N. D. Duraiswami", with a horizontal line underneath it.

*Kuala Lumpur,  
31st May, 1968.*

## The Big Cultural Debate

*The Central Executive Committee Member of the Gerakan Ra'ayat Malaysia, Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas, said at a public rally in Seremban on October 26, 1968, that he did not understand the meaning of 'Malaysian Malaysia' as advocated by the DAP.*

*He also defended his speech at a University of Malaya Forum in July 1968 where he declared that Malaysian literature should only be written in Malay, and that Malaysian literature should include Indonesian literature.*

*Dr. Syed Naguib also accused the DAP Organising Secretary, Lim Kit Siang, who had described such a cultural policy as an 'Indonesian Malaysia' policy, of distorting his stand and challenged him to a debate.*

*This challenge culminated in a debate held at the MARA Auditorium on November 24, 1968, before a packed audience who stayed on throughout the debate from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.*

*Following is the text of the speech at this debate by Lim Kit Siang :*

WE GATHER HERE today to debate and discuss the DAP and Gerakan cultural policies, so as to ascertain whose policy is more relevant and suitable to Malaysia.

I submit that what we are debating and discussing today is one of the most vital problems facing Malaysia, because on it will depend the success or failure of the Malaysian experiment in multi-racial nationhood.

There are two cultural policies open to Malaysians. One is to recognise that Malaysia is a multi-cultural nation, and to allow the diverse cultural strands to freely develop, grow and interact with one another. The other one is to choose to promote the hegemony of one culture and the elimination, over the passage of years, of other cultures.

The adoption of a multi-cultural policy would mean that the objective is a multi-racial nation, while a policy to promote the hegemony of one culture over others must mean the striving for a communal nation.

Before we go further into this subject, it may be useful to ask what do we mean by 'culture.'

'Culture' has probably as many definitions as there are academicians. The late Indian Premier, Jawaharlal Nehru, declined to define 'culture' because of its complexity, but he commented:

'But among the many things that culture includes are certain restraint over one-self and consideration for others. If a person has not got this self-restraint and has no consideration for others, one can certainly say he is uncultured.'

It is quite clear what we mean by a 'cultured' and an 'uncultured' man.

A 'cultured' man possesses good manners and good taste. One may be inclined to think that a bachelor of arts degree or doctorate of philosophy symbolises possession of culture, but unfortunately this is not always the case.

We have a recent illustration in Kuala Lumpur. An academician of the University of Malaya, who holds a doctorate of philosophy, was guilty of the most shocking language in public.

I refer of course to Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas' public statement. In his statement of Nov. 4, accusing me of distorting his University of Malaya forum speech, he indulged in a string of abuse and name-calling, like 'crabs-groping and creeping about perverse and futilely,' 'a confused company of futile clowns disguised as politicians,' 'the entire tribe of highly strung political nomads that constitute the DAP leadership,' and 'to drive the whole tribe to its proper breeding grounds.'

I have, as Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas pointed out, no academic standing. But I would have been thoroughly ashamed of myself to have used such language.

Last month, in the October issue of *Berita Pelajar*, a University

of Malaya student publication, a lecturer wrote with alarm at the growing number of undergraduates who make it a point to be 'uncultured' – from whose lips a torrent of abuse flowed with the greatest of ease.

Whether this is the result of undergraduates imitating their senior lecturers, what in the social sciences, I think, is called the law of imitation, it will be interesting for sociologists to study. Equally interesting to find out will be where we can find the largest collection of nomadic politicians, who creep from party to party. But we are talking about culture, and not nomads and crabs.

In schools, in an attempt to bring up a 'cultured' generation, teachers try to impress on students that they should not be pompous, arrogant or conceited. Before he left to take up his Australian appointment, Professor Wang Gungwu advised graduates not to become 'misfit graduates' by expecting too much of their degree or to feel superior to the ordinary man.

Yet, right here, in the University of Malaya, we have a senior lecturer unashamedly flaunting his degrees publicly.

The *Malay Mail* of 8th November reported Dr. Syed Naguib as asking, when referring to me:

"Who is he to discuss with me the cultural policy of Gerakan?"

Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas added, reported the *Malay Mail*, that "it was pretentious and irreverent of Mr. Lim to challenge him to a debate on culture because Mr. Lim was of no academic standing and knew nothing about Malaysian literature and culture."

I did not know that one must go to McGill University in the United States to get a M.A. and later a PH.D. in Islamic Studies before one qualifies to talk about culture.

On this basis, only a few thousand Malaysians will be qualified to talk about culture, while over nine million Malaysians must not even think about culture because they have no 'academic standing.' Is this the democracy the Gerakan is working for?

It is probably fortunate that Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas wasn't a



contemporary of any of the great religious founders, or Prophet Mohamed, Buddha or Christ would have to shut up, and would not have laid the basis of great religions, because they had no 'academic standing.'

This is a digression, but not entirely irrelevant, because we are talking about 'culture.' But here, we are not referring to the individual's personal refinement, which makes him 'cultured' or 'uncultured.'

By culture, we mean the sum total of the ways of life of men in society. It means not only art, music, literature, religion, language, but all the socially created and inherited beliefs, customs, laws, political and economic institutions and the material creation of man which mould the thoughts and attitudes of man.

The debate today is to place before the nation the cultural problems of the country, and let them judge which is the best cultural policy for the nation - the DAP's, the Gerakan's, or anybody else's.

As the debate was sparked off by two public pronouncements by Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas, I will deal with them first.

I must assume, as any man of common sense will assume, that what Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas said reflected the Gerakan's stand as he is one of the national leaders of the Party.

The first pronouncement was made by Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas at a University of Malaya forum on "Eastern and Western Literature: Their contribution to the development of Malaysian literature" organised by the Malay Language Society of the University of Malaya.

I quote from the *Berita Harian* of 13th July 1968, which reported the forum:

"The problem of the use of the National Language in Malaysian literature was keenly debated at a forum entitled 'Eastern and Western Literature: Their contribution to the development of Malaysian Literature' organised by the Malay Language Society of the University of Malaya on Thursday night

"The time was extended till 10 o'clock at night for further analysis of the problem.

"The problem was first raised when one of the three participants said the first question that should be given attention was the medium aspect.

"According to Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas, the medium must be based on the Malay Language, which had become the national language in the country.

"He said Malaysian literature must be written in the Malay language because every citizen of this country had accepted the Malay language as the National Language.

"So, with the National Language as the medium, the literature can be enriched by influences and contributions from Western, Chinese and Indian literature.

"This is what is called Malaysian literature", he said.

"He made this explanation when asked why Malaysian literature must be written in the Malay language and not in the English language.

"Together with Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas in the forum, which was chaired by Dr. Taib Osman, were Mr. E. N. Dorall and Mr. D. E. Ward, both lecturers in the English Department of the University of Malaya.

"Before this, Dr. Syed Naguib, who was the second speaker, said that a discussion of Malaysian literature requires careful thought.

"He said from history, what is known as Malaysian literature to historians and sociologists is Malay-Indonesian literature, which existed in the 19th century, in a region now known as Nusantara.

"So, he added, genuine Malaysian literature is not literature which appeared since Malaysia was formed five or six years ago.

"To me, Malaysian literature comprised writings in the Malay Language, with ideas which came from east or west.

"According to him, people like Chairul Anwar, a member of

Generation 45 in Indonesian literature, can be considered an author of this Malaysian literature.

"But, he added, woman novelist, Han Su-yin, cannot be admitted to this list, because she writes in English, although she has works which are Malaysian-oriented.

"If Han Su-yin is accepted as a writer in Malaysian literature because of her contents only, then novelist Somerset Maugham can also be recognised as a writer of Malaysian literature.

"In Somerset Maugham's works, there are also material about Malaysia.

"This is the reason Malay language is vital in establishing Malaysian literature, Dr. Syed Naguib reiterated."

From the above extract, Dr. Naguib Alatas' attitude and approach to Malaysian literature is made very clear. We can draw three main conclusions:

\*Firstly, to write Malaysian literature, the language used must be Malay;

\*Secondly, Indonesian writing, or any writing in Malay, regardless of the nationality or loyalty of the writer, must be considered as part of Malaysian literature.

\*Thirdly, no writings other than in the Malay language, whether English, Chinese or Tamil, even if the authors are Malaysians and the works are about Malaysian life, values, hopes and aspirations, can be considered Malaysian literature.

Dr. Naguib Alatas reiterated his stand on Malaysian literature in an interview a month later to the Malay Mail, which shows that his forum speech was not an ivory-tower academic exercise.

On August 13th, the Malay Mail reported:

"In an interview, Dr. Alatas said a future Malaysian culture must be based on Malay.

"Since the various races in Malaysia had decided on Malay as the national language, they should abide by their agreement in good faith.

"A nation's spirit and ideals were reflected in its literature and he could not conceive a Malaysian literature in any language except Malay.

"The writings about Malaysia in foreign languages reflected ideals and values from the foreign viewpoint, for they were written for a foreign public.

"Genuine Malaysian literature, he said, was written in Malay by people, who not necessarily being Malay, had imbibed the traditions and culture of the Malay archipelago."

In this second pronouncement, Dr. Syed Naguib clearly advocated that Malaysian culture must be based on Malay.

In a separate report on the forum of July 10, the *Eastern Sun* (July 12) quoted Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas as saying that "no literature could develop independent of nationhood" and that "literature reflects the values, pride and honour of the nation."

Based on his two public pronouncements, I discussed the cultural policy of the Gerakan in a talk at the first anniversary celebration of the Klang DAP Branch Women's Section on September 8, 1968. This speech was reproduced in *Opinion* of Sept. 20 - Oct. 20.

In my Klang speech, I said the policy expounded by Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas was a 'clear-cut attempt to Indonesianise Malaysian culture, and to deny Chinese and Indian cultures an equal place in the free development of the cultural streams in Malaysia to evolve a Malaysian culture which is a synthesis of all that is best of the four great cultures that meet in Malaysia.

I also asked the Gerakan cultural expert whether the Gerakan seriously suggested that Indonesian writing on Indonesian aspirations and life reflect the 'value, pride and honour' of the Malaysian people. And also whether the Gerakan thought that Indonesian literature was dedicated to the growth of multi-racial Malaysian nationhood.

I stand by my speech in Klang, and I challenge him to answer the questions posed, and to prove that I had distorted him.

The cultural policy expounded by Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas in the two public pronouncements deserves close study, because it is a highly obnoxious and dangerous policy, pregnant with far-reaching mischief. Such a policy must be exposed and denounced in uncertain terms, because if unchallenged, it will impede the growth of a united multi-racial Malaysian nation, and sow the seeds of racial misunderstanding and conflict.

Only those who have no place for the other languages in the Malaysian scheme of things will take the stand that Malaysian literature must be in the Malay language. This accords with the Gerakan's rejection of a policy of multi-lingualism.

What Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas said corresponded with what the UMNO ultras have been pressing for. The Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Inche Senu bin Abdul Rahman, reported in the *Malay Mail* of September 5, 1966, as saying:

"If Malaysia is to have its own literature which can be identified as distinctively Malaysian in form and content, then the medium of expression cannot but be the National Language."

If this policy is accepted, then there is no room for a Malaysian Chinese or Tamil to express Malaysian nationalism, aspirations, struggles, hopes and sorrows, unless he thinks and writes in Malay.

The basic premise of such a concept is that the other languages—Chinese, Tamil and English, are not qualified or fit vehicles for the expression of Malaysian nationalism, values, aspirations, views, points and hopes.

Or to put it more bluntly, Chinese, Tamil and English are regarded as un-Malaysian languages which could only be vehicles for un-Malaysian expressions. Hence the blanket rejection of non-Malay medium Malaysian writings.

I shudder to think of the logical development and consequences of such a narrow and intolerant attitude.

Having reached the conclusion that English, Chinese and Tamil are un-Malaysian languages, then we must further conclude that there is no justification for retaining or permitting their usage

Malaysia's national life, whether over radio, television, newspapers or cinemas.

In fact, this constituted three of the seven-point plan for integration of the races proposed by an *Utusan Melayu* staff writer on April 9, 1968: They are:

- \*Ban all languages other than the National language and ban all films using languages other than the National language unless these films have been dubbed into the National language.
- \*Ban all scripts other than the National script from being written at any public place or on signboards of shophouses; and
- \*Ban all non-National Language newspapers, like Chinese and Tamil newspapers.

Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas' stand is a clear violation of the Malaysian Constitutional guarantee enshrined in sub-clause (1)(a) of Clause 152 which states:

"152. (1) The National Language shall be the Malay Language and shall be in such script as Parliament may by law provide:

Provided that -

- (a) no person shall be prohibited or prevented from using (otherwise than for official purposes) or from teaching or learning, any other language."

What is the use of learning other languages, when they are not only barred from official usage, but rejected as legitimate vehicles for Malaysian expression?

The tragedy is that there are people who want to make Malay as the sole language in Malaysia, to the exclusion and suppression of other languages.

The stand that only literary works written in Malay are to be considered as Malaysian literature is completely indefensible. Malaysian literature cannot be limited to works of one language, if

Malaysia is a multi-racial, multi-lingual nation. Malaysian literature must comprise all writings whether drama, novel, short story, play or verse, written by Malaysians, which by emotion, identification, description, social context and involvement relate to Malaysia whether written in Malay, Chinese, Tamil or English.

After 1945, there was a great controversy between two schools of Malayan Chinese writers. One was the Overseas Chinese school of literature and the other the Malayan Chinese school of literature.

The Overseas Chinese Literature school maintained that the writings of Chinese abroad, irrespective of their content, were part of Chinese literature. These writers were completely China oriented and paid no attention to their environment.

The Malayan Chinese School of literature insisted that the Chinese writer in Malaya should be part of his environment and that his responsibility was to the land where he lived, and that he should not engage in expatriate writing.

As a leader of the Malayan Chinese literature movement Mr. Fang Hsiu, later put it:

"In Malaya there are millions of Chinese, many of them here for centuries, taking part in the evolution of Malaya's history. They have played a role in the country's economy, in its government; their emotional identification with the country has been proved; with their bodies they have defended Malaya, shedding their blood against the invader, for they consider Malaya their Homeland.

"However, in spite of their loyalty, their toil, their ancestors and having renounced any connection with China as their ancestral land . . . they are still being refused their right and equal place within the body politic of the country; they are still being maintained within an alien status, their loyalty suspect . . .

"They want to be citizens of Malaya, and not Overseas Chinese, but the government discriminates against them

this respect in such manner, that it perpetuates the notion of alienation. They want to live in peace, harmony and companionship with the other races in Malaya, but barriers are erected . . .

"Literature reflects reality, and in reality, the Chinese in Malaya have worked and written for race harmony . . .

"Literature has a formative influence upon events, by writing and telling our grievances, and our hopes, we want to reach out to the other races, to achieve mutual understanding . . . we want everyone to know that although we use the Chinese language, yet we belong here . . .

"In China, the role of literature is the liberation of the people of China. Here in Malaya, the role of our Malayan-Chinese literature is to stimulate and to consolidate the unity, mutual understanding and harmony of the three great races of Malaya.

"This is the special and particular character of Malayan-Chinese literature."

The Malayan Chinese school of literature prevailed and triumphed, and the Overseas Chinese School of Literature has died out. But here comes along the Syed Naguibs, the Gerakan, the Senus, the ultras, to say that whatever their content and loyalty, they are not part of Malaysian Literature.

Let us take Tamil writings. If, for instance, Mr. V. David was moved by the Muses and writes excellent Tamil poetry on Malaysian themes, will the Gerakan dismiss them as un-Malaysian literature?

We know Mr. V. David does not have these poetic impulses and inclinations, still as a hypothetical case, we will want the Gerakan and Mr. V. David to let us know.

Are we to view *Tamil Nesan*, *Tamil Murasu* and other Tamil language newspapers, which open their columns to budding young Tamil writers, as vehicles of non-Malaysian literature and expressions?



Or let us take the English language. Some of the finest literature of the Indian national renaissance, in both the political and cultural aspects of the renaissance, was in the medium of the English Language.

Let us take first the large corpus of the political literature which inspired the Indian independence movement. Tilak and Aurobindo, the great predecessors of Gandhi and Nehru, used English as their pre-eminent vehicle of expression. Later on, a whole great generation of Indian national revolutionary leaders, including men like Gandhi, Nehru, Subas Chandra Bose, C. R. Das and others, gave inspired utterance to the values and demands of Indian nationalism through the medium of the English language without ceasing to be the giants of Indian nationalism which they were in the eyes of their own people, and indeed, of the whole world.

In the field of the great cultural renaissance in India also, the giants of literature, philosophy and the arts, found in the English language an effective vehicle of utterance. Philosopher-saints like Vivekananda, fired the Indian imagination with the pride and glory of India's cultural past - and most of his lectures and writings were done in the English language. The great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, wrote with equal facility in English as well as in his Bengali mother-tongue, but India does not reject his English works as not being part of Indian literature.

The Indian poetess, Sarojini Naidu, who served several terms of imprisonment for her part in the Indian national struggle, wrote her poems entirely in English.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the former president of India, wrote all his works on Indian philosophy in English, without ceasing to be an Indian.

The Indian philosopher and poet, Sri Aurobindo, wrote all his great works, prose and poetry alike, in English - and yet he is regarded in India as being in the great line of Indian saints and seers from the Vedas and Upanishads downwards.

All this establishes one cardinal principle - and it is this

Language as such is a neutral vehicle. It is the people who use the vehicle who are important.

English, which was and is accepted in India as one of the Indian languages, by virtue of the fact that millions of Indians speak it, is recognised as being just as fit a vehicle for the expression of the values and demands of Indian nationalism, as any of the indigenous Indian languages, which brings us to another equally significant point, which we in a multi-racial and multi-lingual Malaysia might profit from.

Nationally orientated literature easily recognised as distinctive Indian literature, continues to be written in Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam and Gujerati, and nobody in India suggests that literature produced in all these various languages are un-Indian.

It is only the chauvinist, concealed or otherwise, who suggests that linguistic uniformity is a necessary basis for cultural unity.

In fact, as the examples of India, Switzerland and several other multi-racial and multi-lingual nations show, linguistic variety in cultural expression only serves to enrich the cultural wealth of a national community.

What leads to cultural impoverishment is not linguistic variety but a narrow-minded insistence on linguistic uniformity, and this is precisely what is wrong with ideas like - 'Malaysian literature must be based on the Malay language.'

If they had said things like that in India, then neither the Indian cultural nor political renaissance would have taken place. Fortunately for India, Indian universities did not produce Syed Naguib.

#### **Malaysian literature must include Indonesian literature:**

It was Dr. Syed Naguib's contention that Malaysian literature must include Indonesian literature that prompted me to say that this was a policy to Indonesianise Malaysian culture.

To my knowledge, even the UMNO ultras have not made such a claim.

We are not here to assess the merits or demerits of Indonesian writers or poets.

But when it is maintained that Indonesian writings must be included in Malaysian literature, while a Malaysian writing in one of the non-Malay languages is excluded – we are not hearing the voice of Malaysian nationalism, but of Melayu Raya.

When Sukarno launched his confrontation policy, he was partly trying to revive the Melayu Raya concept and revive the glory of Nusantara – the golden days when the Malay Archipelago was under one rule, during the Srivijaya and Majapahit empires.

In the Melayu Raya concept, the focal point of loyalty is not multi-racial Malaysian nationalism, but the solidarity of all blood brothers in the Malay Archipelago.

### **Malay as the Basis of Malaysian Culture:**

Dr. Naguib advocates that Malay should form the basis of Malaysian culture.

This again is exactly what was advocated by the UMM Executive Secretary, Inche Musa Hitam, in July 1966. Inche Musa Hitam said all Malaysians must accept Malay culture and their own culture.

I had earlier referred to a seven-point integration plan suggested by an *Utusan Melayu* staff writer. Three of his proposals were

- \* Ban the use of all symbols which are not Malaysian characteristics like the dragon symbol;
- \* Ban the construction of all buildings which are not Malaysian in architecture;
- \* Ban all un-Malaysian costumes.

The Minister of Lands and Mines, Inche Rahman Ya'atman, in opening a University of Malaya Language Society seminar on October 29, 1966 said:—

“Those who struggle for the Chinese language to be made an official language are people who want to give a place to Tse Tung in Malaysia.

“Malaysia is not responsible for cultures which did

originate in Malaysia, including Mao Tse Tung's culture. "We are only responsible for the culture that we have formed, that was born and that was created in Malaysia."

I have said earlier that culture means all the socially inherited beliefs, practices and institutions of a given group of people, including their social, economic and political institutions.

A strict application of the demand that Malaysian culture should be based on Malay culture would mean the restoration of pre-capitalist Malay society, rejecting the one-man one-vote system, electricity, radio, television, the motor-car, democracy, socialism, rural development planning, because all these are alien to traditional Malay culture.

The Naguibs, the Musa Hitams and the Rahman Ya'acobs do not really know what they mean when they demand that Malaysian culture should be based on Malay culture.

But there is no doubt that they are possessed by an intense intolerance of other cultural forms and would want to see their disappearance.

What they understood by the solgan, 'Malaysian culture must be based on Malay culture' is probably what the *Utusan Melayu* staff writer had elaborated: Ban all non-Malay languages, non-Malay schools, non-Malay signboards, non-Malay newspapers, non-Malay symbols, non-Malay buildings and non-Malay costumes.

### **Cultural Democracy vs Cultural Dictatorship:**

I had said that there are two cultural policies open to Malaysians. The one espoused by Dr. Naguib Alatas is the policy of cultural dictatorship - which rejects other cultural forms so as to bring about the dominance of one culture.

This is not only the policy of Dr. Syed Naguib, but also the policy of the UMNO, and all those who seek to bring about a communal Malaysia.

The other cultural policy is the one advocated by the DAP,

which allows the various cultures to freely interact and interchange, leading to the evolution of a common Malaysian culture, what we call cultural democracy.

The outcome of the contest of these two cultural policies will decide whether Malaysia succeeds as a nation.

This is because cultural policy in a multi-racial nation is a reflection of the nation building policy. A cultural policy can neither be formulated nor discussed in a vacuum.

Those who advocate the policy of the dictatorship of one culture do not accept that Malaysia is a multi-racial nation. They reject the following three basic fundamentals of Malaysian nationhood:

- \* Malaysia is a multi-racial nation, and does not belong to any one particular race, but belongs to all races who have made this country their home. In consequence, no race should regard itself as typically Malaysian, a norm to which the other races must conform. In fact, all races, whether Malay, Chinese, Indian, Ceylonese or Eurasian, must consciously undergo a mental reorientation to feel and act and think as Malaysians;
- \* Malaysian culture is not Malay culture, Chinese culture or Indian culture, but the synthesis of all that is best from a free interplay and interaction of the cultures in Malaysia;
- \* All the languages spoken by Malaysians of different racial origins are Malaysian languages, and to describe or to refer to Chinese or Tamil as foreign languages is tantamount to regarding or treating Malaysian Chinese or Indian as foreigners.

Since independence, the forces for a communal Malaysia, which advocate cultural dictatorship, have been stronger than the forces for a Malaysian Malaysia, which advocate cultural democracy, because the foremost exponent of cultural dictatorship is the Alliance Party, with people like the Syed Naguibs to provide spurious intellectual justification for the doctrine.

Let us ask ourselves whether in the last eleven years

Merdeka, the policy of cultural dictatorship has succeeded in welding the diverse races into one people, and in instilling a common sense of national identity and consciousness to replace racial appeals.

Any objective answer must be a big 'NO.' If we are succeeding, year by year, to get more and more Malaysians to be Malaysian-centred and Malaysian-minded, will it be necessary, ten years after Merdeka, to pass a law to compel respect for the national anthem, or put up on the highways throughout the country huge hoardings urging the people to respect the national flag and national anthem, thus degrading our national symbols to the status of advertised items like groundnuts, beer, cigarettes, coco-cola etc?

Or would it have been necessary for Tun Tan Siew Sin to periodically urge the MCA to launch 'loyalty' campaigns?

Or would the Penang and North Malayan racial riots last year have occurred on the same scale and intensity over the devaluation of the old Malayan dollar?

The Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, said at the opening of the \$70,000 UMNO Division building at Banting last Saturday that there was a communist plan to recruit pupils from Chinese secondary schools to rebel against the government.

He said the pupils were taught "the greatness of China and the personality cult of Mao Tse Tung and his achievements."

The Tengku added: "This is rather unfortunate because we have difficulties in countering their propaganda. China is truly a great nation and possesses the atom bomb.

"How can we compare ourselves with China? We can only explode fire-crackers."

Why is it that eleven years after Merdeka, more and more people feel less and less MALAYSIAN?

Basically, the problem is because they do not have a sense of belonging to Malaysia.

Malaysians are divided into 'bumiputras' and 'non-bumiputras,' strictly on racial grounds.

Celebes-born Syed Jaffar Albar and Bogor-born Syed Hussein

Alatas are bumiputras. But Kedah-born Goh Hock Guan and Ipoh-born D. R. Seenivasagam are 'non-bumiputras.'

In schools, a whole new generation of Malaysians are growing up feeling aggrieved and resentful at this distinction, which they do not fully understand but know that it denotes inequality and injustice.

This 'bumiputra' policy in differentiating citizens is transferred also to the cultural field, where we are swiftly having 'bumiputra' language and culture and 'non-bumiputra' languages and cultures.

When it is now demanded that 'non-bumiputra' languages like Chinese, Tamil and English, should be eliminated - which the cultural policy of the Syed Naguibs, Musa Hitams, Ya'acobs, finally leads to - Malaysia can explode any amount of fire-crackers or even an atom bomb, but the ingredients for welding the diverse races into one Malaysian people simply does not exist.

Let me stress that the DAP is not anti-Malay. We are anti-Malay chauvinism, just as we are anti-Chinese chauvinism and anti-Indian chauvinism. We will be as vigorously opposed to any call to make Chinese or Indian culture the basis of Malaysian culture, or any call that Malaysian literature can only be written in the Tamil or Chinese language.

The DAP is the only party which has given consistent thought and attention to the cultural problem of Malaysia.

In November 1966, the Central Executive Committee of the DAP issued a policy statement on the question of language, education and culture. In July 1967, in the Setapak Declaration and in June 1968, in a special policy paper entitled "Cultural Democracy," we have explained our attitude and approach to this question.

The DAP advocates cultural democracy, based on the principle of equality, tolerance, justice and harmony. There will be free opportunity for the cultures to interact and interplay, so that out of the cultural diversity, a unity emerges.

Already, today, Malaysians are more and more coming under the influence of two and very often three cultures.

A Chinese may enjoy Chinese films, appreciate Malay dances, and love Indian food.

But if it is decreed that a Chinese cannot appreciate Malay dances or love Indian food, then it is cultural dictatorship in practice.

Broadly, the DAP's cultural policy involves three major planks:

- (1) *Language* : Acceptance of Malay as National Language and Multi-Lingualism.
- (2) *Education* : An integrated Education System with multi-media instruction and examination.
- (3) *Culture* : Full and free cultural diversity and variability, so long as they are Malaysian-centred.

We accept unconditionally Malay as the National Language. We need a common language as a common medium of expression and communication among the diverse races.

But we reject the 'one nation, one language' school of thought. In a multi-racial nation like Malaysia, any attempt to impose linguistic uniformity will not bring about national unity. On the contrary, it will disrupt national unity by provoking cultural resistance among the people whose languages are being threatened.

Partitioned Vietnam, Germany, Korea are good examples to show that a single common language does not automatically produce a united nation.

In a multi-racial Malaysia, the only sane and prudent language policy is multi-lingualism, by according official status to Chinese, Tamil and English.

These languages have now become Malaysian languages used by large numbers of Malaysians.

Multi-racialism is the only answer to allay fears among the diverse races that their languages may be eliminated, over a period of time.

Apart from multi-lingualism, there is no guarantee whatever that their languages will be allowed free growth and development.

The growing claim that Malaysian literature must be written



solely in the Malay language is nothing but a step in the direction of eliminating other languages.

So long as there is a race of people who feel that its language is being threatened and discriminated against, so long will that race of people feel alienated from the nation.

The accordance of official status to Chinese, Tamil and English will also once and for all remove language as an issue, whether politically, economically, socially or culturally.

Multi-lingualism means that in the Parliament, in State Assemblies and local councils, in government correspondence, any of the four main languages may be used.

There are those who wonder whether this is practicable. Other countries have practised multi-lingualism successfully, as Switzerland, Canada and Singapore. There is no reason why this could not be equally workable in Malaysia.

The adoption of multi-lingualism will involve increased administrative problems, but this is surely a small price to pay to ensure national unity.

The elimination of Chinese and Tamil as media of instruction and examination in secondary schools, and their coming elimination as media of instruction in primary schools, is a good example of the policy of linguistic uniformity in practice.

It is in clear violation of the constitutional guarantee for the sustenance and preservation of the major languages.

An education expert, Professor Wolfgang Franke, who was in the Department of Chinese Studies of the University of Malaya in 1965, made a study of Malaysian Chinese who did not receive 'mother-tongue' education.

He said that English education had a deculturising effect on Malaysian Chinese who received exclusively or predominantly English education, because the uprooting of the Chinese humanistic tradition was not replaced by an acquisition of Western humanistic tradition.

No deculturised group has anything to contribute. This is the declared policy of eliminating Chinese and Tamil as media

examination and instruction has aroused misgivings and resistance among large numbers of Malaysian Chinese and Indian parents.

The question of cultural and linguistic diversity is again involved here.

We hold that so long as the content and syllabi are Malaysian-oriented, irrespective of the language of instruction, it is a Malaysian institution, and it will produce Malaysian-minded products.

It is on this principle, and the principle that all the major languages are full Malaysian languages, that we support the Merdeka University and the National University.

As Malay is the common language, it will be the compulsory second language in all schools, so that the next generation of Malaysians will have a common tongue.

The four main cultures, Islamic, Indian, Chinese and Western, in the country should be allowed free inter-play, without any stifling of cultural differences or diversities to achieve unity of content and cultural integration.

It does not matter whether we express our views, directed to a Malaysian loyalty, in Chinese, Tamil, English or Malay. They are all Malaysian.

From what we can learn, the Gerakan is opposed to the granting of official status to Chinese, Tamil and English; opposed to the use of the main languages as media of instruction and examination; and opposed to cultural diversity in unity, as indicated in the two public pronouncements by Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas.

I need not mention of course that the variegated leaders of the Gerakan, who had come from all places, had had variegated policies before as well.

For instance, on the Merdeka University project, in March this year, Mr. Teh Ewe Lim, then UDP Penang Chairman, and now Gerakan leader in Penang, condemned the MCA for not supporting the Merdeka University project. He went on to say that the MCA had sold out Chinese education.

In the Dewan Ra'ayat on January 22, 1968, Dr. Tan Chee Khoon said that if the Chinese educational authorities wish to

have a Merdeka University, the Minister of Education, Inche Khir bin Johari, should not oppose.

But on 3rd September, Dr. Syed Hussein Alatas, Gerakan Chairman, said his Party opposed the Merdeka University because the initiators of the University are dominated by a certain section of the community not best qualified for the task of setting up a university. He said the attempt was dominated by 'communal sentiment.'

Be that as it may, the Gerakan's cultural policy belongs to the same school as that of the Alliance-cultural dictatorship and a communal Malaysia.

The Gerakan cultural policy appears to be more extreme than the UMNO one, because Dr. Syed Naguib Alatas' cultural stand is not only for a communal Malaysia and cultural dictatorship, but for Indonesia Raya.

Although the debate today is between the DAP and the Gerakan it is in fact between the two national forces which I earlier spoke about – the forces for cultural democracy as represented by DAP on the one hand, and the forces for cultural dictatorship as represented by the Gerakan here, but even more effectively, by the Alliance Party.

We are not interested in scoring debating points, but in letting the public know the options open to them.

Before I conclude, let us remember that when discussing the cultural problems, policy and future of Malaysia, we are in fact discussing the survival or disintegration of Malaysia.

Let us not be complacent about the possibility of a Malaysian racial conflict and national disintegration.

For the first ten years after independence, Ceylon was mentioned as the country which had solved its communal problem. Then it blew up in racial flames.

Until two years ago, Nigeria in Africa was described as the shining example of multi-ethnic democracy, often compared to the Malaysian experiment in Asia.

But today, it lies in shambles and has become the theatre of tribal massacres, carnage, genocide and gross inhumanity.

The Alliance boasted about racial harmony but ten years after Merdeka, the worst racial riots erupted in Penang, spread to North Malaya, and left in its wake scores of dead, hundreds of injured and over 1,600 arrested.

What is the lesson for all? It is this: We must be courageous and realistic enough to face the problems of our country, and acknowledge that racial harmony in Malaysia is a fragile one, because there is lacking a Malaysian outlook.

If the present drift towards racialism and cultural intolerance continues unchecked, then Malaysia is heading towards the way of Nigeria.

The choice is with the people, whether to choose the cultural dictatorship policy of the Gerakan and the Alliance or the policy of cultural democracy of the Democratic Action Party.

We know that we are likely to be accused of being communal, of being anti-Malay, because we advocate multi-lingualism and oppose Malay as the sole language acceptable for Malaysian literature.

We will urge the thinking Malays to give this serious thought and not be influenced by meaningless accusations.

If the DAP is anti-Malay and a Tamil or Chinese chauvinist party, then we will not have unconditionally supported Malay as the National Language, Malay as a compulsory second subject in all educational institutions, and supported the National University project.

I am sure the Malays do not want a Chinese or an Indian Malaysia, or a Malaysian culture based on Chinese or Indian culture or Malaysian literature written exclusively in the Chinese or Indian language.

Similarly, they will understand that the non-Malays do not want exclusively Malay-based culture and society.

Any narrow racial or cultural domination of Malaysian life will

be resented by the rest, which in this case, always comprises the majority as Malaysia is a nation of minorities.

The debate today is for the country to know the cultural problems and policies open to Malaysia, and it is now up to the Malaysian electorate to judge for themselves what cultural policy they prefer. *The Alliance stands for a Malay Malaysia. The Gerakan stands for an Indonesian Malaysia. The DAP stands for a Malaysian Malaysia.*

The Choice of Destiny is the People's.

## **Teach us to Love the National Language, not to Fear it**

*Speech by M.P. for Bungsar, C. V. Devan Nair, in the Dewan Ra'ayat during the debate on the National Language Bill - 3rd March, 1967.*

MR. SPEAKER, SIR, it must be an ordeal for any rational mind to participate in a debate which is largely conducted from the solar plexus and not from the cerebral vortex, a debate which can so easily and so harmfully be charged with irrational and sub-rational attitudes towards questions of language, education and culture. But one must hope, even against hope, that there will be found a sufficient number of rational minds in our society, who will not lack the courage to go through this ordeal; and if the rational minds of our society shirk this responsibility, then this nation must inevitably run to waste, futility and ruin. As a constitutional and law-abiding bird myself, and as the representative of a constitutionally based political party, my colleagues and I do not possess, nor do we desire to possess, any expertise in the violent arts of brick-throwing, head-bashing, or even hand-grenade throwing in order to establish in practice the principles which we uphold.

In such an event, people like us might perforce be obliged to get under the table and leave the field to those who believe in violent, extra constitutional methods of political action. I must emphasise that the appeal I intend to make in this House will be directed to the rational intellect and not to the solar plexus or to the vital regions of the people of this country. I do not expect all rational minds to agree with me and my colleagues in the D.A.P., as I acknowledge that other rational minds possess the prerogative to disagree with us - but in a civilised fashion! It is vital that the

leadership of our nation must show that it is capable of presiding over such a rational debate and discussion, and will take care not to let it be diverted from this level by the purveyors of communal fears, hatreds and suspicions, no matter from which communities they come and no matter to which political party they belong.

Sir, I think many members of the general public are aware of some of the problems and headaches faced by the Honourable Prime Minister in introducing this Bill. They are aware of the raucous and fractious minority in his own ranks, who beat the drums of absolute intolerance of all languages, other than the National Language.

I will submit, however, with all respect to the Prime Minister that it would be exceedingly unwise to assume, as he and his Government appear to have done, that non-Malay opinion on this matter is non-existent in the country, and that it does not require satisfaction or assuagement. There is a misleading assumption that non-Malay opinion presents a monolithic unity of acceptance of the provisions of this Bill, based on no less flimsy a justification than the pantun reciting concord exhibited in this Chamber yesterday morning by the leaders of the M.C.A. and M.I.A. I refer to the Honourable, the Minister of Finance and his colleague the Honourable, the Minister of Works, Posts and Telecommunications.

There is of course, Sir, another and an uncharitable view going around, to which I do not subscribe and which, I hope, the Government will effectively deny, to the effect that this is not a misleading assumption, but a deliberate pretence on the part of the Government that only sections of Malay opinion require persuasion to accept the provisions of this Bill. Be that as it may, the general public are also aware, and I think the Prime Minister and his own Cabinet colleagues will readily acknowledge, that no leader in this country enjoys, to the same pre-eminent degree, the multi-racial esteem which the Tunku enjoys, and to go with it, the same capacity to communicate effectively to the people of all communities the vital need to accept and accommodate each other.

languages and cultures, and to translate into concrete terms the constitutional safeguards to preserve and sustain the study and use of other major languages in the country.

But sooner or later, Sir, destiny must take a hand, for the Tunku cannot always be with us. In that event, a major opportunity to consolidate the fabric of national unity on the basis of multi-racial values may be irretrievably lost. It is with these considerations in mind that I intend to offer constructive criticisms of the Bill as it stands, and my major contention will be that the real intentions of the Government are not made explicit in the Bill.

This Bill has been presented by the Government as a compromise between extreme positions on the language issue in this country. It is undoubtedly a compromise, or an attempt at a compromise, representing as it does, a departure from the inflexible position taken by a few Malay extremists in the country. To this extent, the Prime Minister and his moderate colleagues in the Alliance Government deserve some praise. But I am afraid that this praise must be qualified by the observation that it is not enough of a compromise, lacking as it does any firm guarantees as to how the Government proposes to preserve and sustain the continued use and study of the languages of other communities in the Federation as provided for in the Constitution.

The D.A.P. has always accepted without reservation, or qualification of any kind, Malay as the National Language, to establish it eventually as the chief language of administration in the country. On November 8, 1966, the Central Executive Committee of the D.A.P. issued a policy statement on "Language, education and culture in a multi-racial society" in which the following points were made:

- (1) *In the very nature of things, Malaysia cannot become a Malay nation, or a Chinese nation, or an Indian nation, or a Dayak nation.*
- (2) *The Malaysian Constitution guarantees the preservation and sustenance of other languages and cultures in the*



country. In other words, the Constitution provides, both in spirit and intention, that no linguistic or cultural group in this country need fear deculturation. There is no intention in the Constitution to Malayise anybody, or more than there is any intention to Anglicise, Sinicise or Indianise anybody. On the contrary, the clear spirit and intention of the Constitution is to build a multi-racial and multi-cultural Malaysian nation, united in a common economic, political and territorial life, and developing within this context a common National Language, while at the same time promoting and preserving other languages and cultures.

- (3) Accordingly, it is desirable to review the whole educational system of the country with a view to translating into national educational practice the pledge in the Constitution to preserve and sustain the use and study of the other media languages in the country.

Even a cursory survey of the educational system will show that the role and status granted to Chinese and Tamil media of instruction fall short of both the spirit and intention of the Constitution.

In this connection, it would be pertinent to observe that Chinese, Tamil and English have become Malay languages, by virtue of the fact that considerable numbers of Malaysian citizens speak these languages. In any event it is difficult for us to see how the constitutional safeguards to preserve and sustain the use and the study of these languages can be implemented, if they are not given recognition and status as media of instruction in National Type Primary and Secondary schools.

I submit that if this is not done the constitutional safeguards will in due time be rendered meaningless. This is no great a step forward to take. The Minister of Education has already assured us that in national-type primary schools Chinese and Tamil are already employed as

*of instruction. Just one little step more is called for, and that is, to establish the same principle in national-type secondary schools, so that Chinese and Tamil are made the media of instruction and examination in their respective streams. It is such a very small step to take, but it would have enormous significance in establishing, beyond any doubt, the bona-fides of the Government.*

- (4) *The fact that the National Language by virtue of its status is bound to become the chief language of administration in the country need not, and should not, mean that the other major languages in the country, namely Chinese, Tamil and English, are not accorded even a subsidiary official status and use in the country.*

Such were the main points, Sir, made in the D.A.P.'s policy statement issued in November last year. The Central Executive Committee of the Party instructs me to state that we still stand by that policy statement. We acknowledge that this policy will not be immediately acceptable in its entirety, but we believe that ultimately all persons of tolerance and goodwill must come to accept that this would be the only sane and rational policy in a multi-racial society.

Our plea to Government, and particularly our plea to gentlemen like Tuan Syed Nasir and Gentlemen in the National Language Action Front, is:

Teach us, please, to love the National Language and not to fear it!

Teach us to love it as a vital factor for unification in a multi-racial society, but not to fear it as a sinister instrument for the eventual annihilation of other languages and cultures in this country!

This is precisely the fear that has been engendered by Malay extremist opinion and this is the same fear which has vitiated the otherwise loyal acceptance by Malaysian citizens of non-Malay

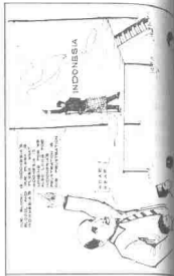
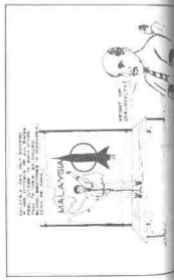
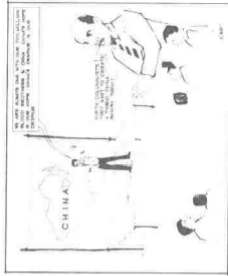
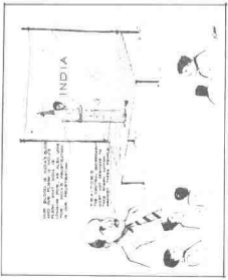
origin of Malay as the National language. It is not so much the letter as the spirit which is wanting in this Bill. The letter is all right but the crucial question is, what are your intentions? No one has any serious quarrel with either the letter or the spirit of the safeguards provided in the Constitution, but there are serious doubts as to the real intentions of those who are responsible for the implementation of these safeguards. And the intentions of the Government will remain in grave doubt, simply because there are no guarantees in the Bill that the implementation of the National Language Act will not mean the steady and continuing erosion of the rights of other linguistic groups in the country. I say, Sir, give us certain minimum guarantees, so that the public may be satisfied that this Bill does not represent, as it were, the thin end of the wedge as far as Malaysians of non-Malay origin are concerned. Even the continued use of the English language for such official purposes as may be deemed fit is made conditional on the consent of His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. In other words, even English is not to be accepted; it is merely to be tolerated, and, I say, that Malaysians of non-Malay origins find it galling to be merely tolerated instead of being accepted. They do not want to be tolerated. They want to be accepted.

Be that as it may, Sir, I am prepared to support this Bill, in spite of its deficiencies, provided the Government will accept an amendment which will put beyond doubt the intentions of the Government with regard to the preservation and sustenance of the use and study of the other major languages in the country in pursuance of the safeguard provided in Clause 152(1)(b) of our Constitution and also in pursuance of Article 26 (iii) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December, 1948, to which Declaration the Government of this country subscribes. The amendment I have in mind, Sir, is the addition of a further Clause which may be numbered as Clause 9 of the Bill and reads as follows:

"Nothing in this Act shall affect the right of the Federal Government or of any State Government, in pursuance of Article 26 (iii)

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its 183rd Meeting on December, 10th 1948, to the effect that parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children, and in pursuance of the safeguard provided in Clause 152(1) (b) of the Constitution of Malaysia relating to the preservation and sustenance of the use and study of the language of any other community in the Federation, to provide that the language of instruction and examination in all national-type primary and secondary schools shall be English, Chinese or Tamil as the case may be."

"Teach us, please, to love the National Language and not to fear it! Teach us to love it as a vital factor for unification in a multi-racial society, but not to fear it as a sinister instrument for the eventual annihilation of other languages and cultures in this country."



## The Perils of Albarism

*Debate in Parliament on 16th June, 1966.*

*C. V. Devan Nair (Bungsar)* : MR. SPEAKER, SIR, I had thought that the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara had decided some time ago somewhat in the fashion of President Soekarno himself to shut up in a thousand languages (*Laughter*). I think it is most interesting to discover that he has decided to break his vow of silence in a very loud manner indeed and I notice that the same skill, the old skill, has not been lost, but the skill, I am afraid, not for a capable parliamentary performance but a skill at an inimitable demagoguery, the kind of demagoguery which can weave webs of doubt and confusion and hatred. Personally, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am glad to note that the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara sits there. I will be really alarmed should he move from there to the Government front benches there (*Laughter*) because that, Sir, would be the beginning.

*Tan Sri Syed Ja'afar bin Hasan Albar* : It will be the end of everybody like you.

*C. V. Devan Nair* : It will be the end of everybody on your side of the bench as well.

*Mr. Speaker* : The sitting is suspended for ten minutes.

Sitting suspended at 5.30 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 5.50 p.m.

*C. V. Devan Nair* : As I was saying – but unfortunately the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara is not here, he is recuperating from his efforts of the last one and a half hours in the tea room and I can't grudge him that inspiration from tea – but as I was saying, I think many people in this House and the nation would be happy if demagogues like our friend remained where they are at the moment and did not come on to our Government front

benches, because then this nation, Sir, would be ruled not by a statesman but by demagogues, and we don't have very far to look for that, Sir. Across the Straits of Malacca, there is a nation, the Republic of Indonesia, which for 17 years was ruled by a man whose only genius lay in the capacity for spellbinding with words, and if we had to depend less on statesmen and more on spellbinders in the conduct of the affairs of this nation, then, I fear that we also would go the same way which the Republic of Indonesia had the misfortune to go through in the last 17 years. Sir, the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara referred to a speech which I made in Seremban. I doubt whether he has read the full transcript. People like him are not interested in reading full transcripts, but in picking out and treating out of context statements in the speech and then painting in a demagogic fashion, people who have expressed views which were more intelligently loyal to Malaysia than he is ever capable of, distorting things out of context and painting me as a disloyal chap who owes his loyalty outside the country, and so on. Sir, I may say this for his edification; my ancestors may have come from Kerala; his came from Saudi Arabia. (*Laughter.*) Sir, I have never been to Kerala. I don't know what it looks like apart from the postcards, and Kerala is more of a fiction to me than Saudi Arabia is to the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara. Let me quote, Sir, for his edification, some of the things which I said in Seremban:

"In the final analysis, the nation's safest investment lies in the loyalty and allegiance of a multi-racial people. This loyalty and allegiance can only be secured by consent and by giving all the racial components in our population a firm stake in the country's vested interest in the success of the Malaysian nation. Our Constitution guarantees equal political rights to all Malaysians regardless of racial origin, colour or creed. Let the spirit of the Constitution be translated into practice. This is the only way to ensure that Malaysian citizens, whether they be Malay, Chinese or Indians, are closer to each other than they are to the so-called blood brothers in Indonesia, China or India."

What is there un-Malaysian about that? Here is a man saying that Malaysian citizens should find themselves closer to each other, in more intimate contact with each other than they will ever be to people of other nations. Is that un-Malaysian? Some more, Sir, for his edification.

*Tan Sri Syed Ja'afar bin Hasan Albar* : Boleh saya interrupt sadi-  
kit?

*C. V. Devan Nair* : Boleh!

*Tan Sri Syed Ja'afar* : Dia baca paragraph yang dia suka baca. Kasi satu kopi itu biar saya pegang biar saya tahu apa isi dia. Saya ta'boleh perchaya orang ini.

*C. V. Devan Nair* : Sir, I will give him a thousand copies for distribution in his constituency - the full one, the complete one. Incidentally I believe, Sir, that the *Utusan Melayu* has published the whole lot, and if he will have some patience, which demagogues find themselves incapable of, but if he will have some patience, he will get the burthen of my contentions.

"The kind of country we build up, for instance, the social, economic and cultural objectives we set for ourselves, in short, the kind of Malaysia we want, is very much the concern of all Malaysian citizens. We cannot afford to be passive or indifferent to these considerations. The most obvious aid to the survival of a nation is the coherence and unity which it possesses as a nation. The greater our success in imbuing our multi-racial people with the sense of a common national identity, the more effectively do we insure ourselves against the risks of the future."

A strong sense of national identity, purpose and destiny commonly shared can be established in a multi-racial nation like ourselves if gentlemen like the Honourable Member were less present around.

"We have the examples of other multi-racial nations before us. Indeed, given the will, the vision and the courage, Malaysia may yet be able to boast of the proudest achievement in this respect.

"Sir, the immediate advantages are with Malaysia. The major nations which could possibly seek to vie with Malaysia for the



loyalty of our people are Indonesia, China and India. Malaysia is in fact a confluence of these three great civilizations but neither Indonesia, China nor India can at present nor in the foreseeable future offer their citizens the social and economic advantages and opportunities which are even remotely comparable to those which Malaysia offers today. Malaysia provides all her people with a standard of living higher than the standards which obtain in Indonesia, India or China.

"But we live on borrowed time. Indonesia, India or China will not always remain as they are today. They also can make social and economic progress. If and when their standards do catch up with ours, and if in the meantime we have not consolidated our national identity, then this nation could easily be disintegrated through subversion by non-Malaysian loyalties and attractions.

"The obvious task of a responsible and intelligent political leadership in Malaysia must be to exploit Malaysia's present advantage to the fullest and to utilise the time available in order to consolidate our national existence by giving our multi-racial people the firm sense of a common national identity, purpose and destiny.

Sir, in the course of my speech, I had referred to an editorial of *Utusan Melayu*. I have sent a reply to the *Utusan Melayu* and I hope the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara will persuade his friends in the editorial board of the *Utusan Melayu* to publish it in full, but the answer to what he raised, Sir, is here.

"Among other things, your editorial of May 5th states, 'Peace between Indonesia and Malaysia is not mere peace between two friends who are at enmity. The peace between us is more than that. It means peace between an elder brother and a younger brother who are of the same parents. We accept Indonesia like the betel leaf accepts its stalk, and Indonesia accepts us like the betel nut accepts its corolla. Our blood is Indonesia's blood and our flesh is Indonesia's flesh. (Meanwhile, Sir, Malaysian citizens like me get a bit worried.) How can flesh and blood be separated unless we reach the tomb? Based on recent developments, it seems clear that the rolls of the waves in the Malacca

Straits are singing the song of longing hearts between two similar nations. What Indonesia is longing for, we also long for. Indonesia's frustration is our frustration." That is from the editorial of May 5th. This is part of my reply. "Your June 14th editorial asked what was wrong with such ecstatic oratory, as such blood relationship also existed between Mr. Devan Nair and the people of Madras, or between Minister Tan Siew Sin and the people who live in Peking."

Sir, am I to believe that if the *Nanyang Siang Pau* or the *Sin Chew Jit Poh* had in the same ecstatic language exhorted the Malaysian Chinese never to forget that their flesh is the flesh of the 700 million Chinese in China, that their blood is the blood of the 700 million Chinese in China, and that the Malaysian Chinese can never be separated from the 700 million Chinese in China until death intervenes, are we to believe that the *Utusan Melayu* and the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara would applaud in approval and delight or seek to justify it in this House; are we to believe, Sir, that if the *Tamil Murasu* or the *Tamil Nesan* had editorialised on the indissoluble blood and flesh relations between the Malaysian Indians and the 450 million Indians in India, which can only be broken when they die - the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara or the *Utusan Melayu* would have cheered such sentiments as a vital contribution to the evolution of a distinct Malaysian national identity and purpose? That was the whole burden of the point I was making, and here I am told that I am a disloyal chap.

*Tan Sri Syed Ja'afar Albar*: Tuan Yang di-Pertua, kalau bolch Ahli Yang Berhormat bachakan editorial *Utusan Melayu* dalam bahasa Melayu lebeh tegas, fasal takut dia punya translation tidak betul.

*C. V. Devan Nair*: Sir, I admire the cunning of the Honourable Member (*Laughter*). Bahasa Kebangsaan saya tidak berapa halus.

*Tan Sri Syed Ja'afar Albar*: Editorial *Utusan Melayu*?

*C. V. Devan Nair*: *Utusan Melayu* tidak di-sini, ada kopi di-poket awak? (*Interruption*.) This is what the Honourable

Member says - it comes from a disloyal chap. Sir, I do not want to give too much prominence to the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara. I believe that it would be better for all of us if he remained less prominent, and I shall go on, Sir, with my address on His Majesty's Speech. He can sit back and rest. (*Laughter.*)

I regret, Sir, that I shall feel obliged to cast my vote, for which it is worth, and it is worth only one vote in this House but for which it is worth, against the Motion of Thanks to His Majesty for his Gracious Address to this House yesterday. I am afraid, Sir, that I cannot with the best will in the world extend the same deference and respect which I have for His Majesty to His Majesty's Government.

Malaysia is going through an extremely crucial phase of its existence. What the future holds for us and for our children is anybody's guess. Indonesian confrontation shall end soon. The British public increasingly demand military disengagement from Suez, in spite of the temporary respite which Mr. Wilson reported to have achieved yesterday. But sooner or later this must take place and probably sooner than later. A military vacuum in South-East Asia would then be created. How Malaysia can manoeuvre in this situation in order to defend her sovereignty and territorial integrity against the incalculable risks of the future does not seem, unfortunately, to have bothered His Majesty's Government at all.

The Royal Speech, Sir, also conspicuously omits to mention the shape and direction of internal political policy after the end of the confrontation. I refer in particular to the whole lot of restrictive laws and regulations which were introduced in the name of security against Indonesian confrontation. There is no indication whatsoever that any of these restrictive laws and regulations will be repealed. If anything the indications are that restrictions on democratic activity will increase rather than decrease.

There is a third striking omission in His Majesty's Gracious Address. The Appendix to the Royal Speech refers to the possibility of the resumption of armed insurrection by the Co

Communist Party of Malaya. This House and the nation at large would have expected to learn from his Majesty's Speech as to what political, social and economic counters the Government has in mind to meet the communist challenge to the security and to the unity of Malaysia and it surely does reflect poorly on the Government that it has neither asked nor answered certain basic and fundamental questions which must be agitating the minds of thoughtful Malaysians throughout the country. Instead of being given a sober and dispassionate analysis of the total situation facing the country, the intelligence of this House – and I submit, Sir, the intelligence of the nation as a whole – has been insulted by a whole lot of barren platitudes which was all that his Majesty's Government was capable of offering His Majesty for his Royal Address.

I had hoped, Sir, that the Government backbencher who moved the Motion of Thanks might fill in some of the gaping voids in His Majesty's Address. He did not. What he did was to inflict on us a wholly facetious and rather juvenile address, more appropriate to a comic opera performance than to this august House of Representatives of the Malaysian people. The Alliance Government, we are led to believe, has suddenly turned anti-British and anti-American. The heroic Alliance was seen twisting the tail of the aged and almost toothless British lion (*Laughter*), while the Government benches rattled to what struck me as synthetic applause. Perhaps, Sir, this performance was directed to the diplomatic gallery, but I suspect that the reactions evoked there were largely reactions of amusement or bewilderment, or both perhaps, for the brute fact, Sir, is that Malaysia as a small nation seeking to survive in a shark-infested South-east Asian Sea should require and should seek as many friends as possible in order to under-write her sovereignty and territorial integrity. The last thing that one would expect of a nation in our circumstances is that its leaders should show petulance or peevishness in the pursuit of this aim.

Let us take first of all the tail-twisting of the toothless British

Our own self-interest, Sir, must be the only criterion to justify the international postures we strike up. We have gone through and survived, enough dangers and threats to our sovereignty and to our territorial integrity in the last two years to appreciate the harsh realities of our existence in a very disturbed and turbulent South-east Asia. We cannot defend ourselves. The Honourable the Minister of Finance's reported contention that it is necessary to develop our defences in order to meet the threat from China must have raised derisive smiles in many foreign capitals. Let us face the stark facts of life. Until the dust has settled in South-east Asia, and until such time as the relations between the non-communist nations of South-east Asia are firmly stabilised on a firm basis of respect for each other's sovereignty and independence, we shall continue to remain vulnerable in an extremely predatory world. Even the so-called blood brothers can turn out to be bloody-minded if occasion arose as indeed they had been for the last three years until the recent Bangkok talks.

I hope that the recent anti-British postures adopted by the Government have nothing to do with the rumoured existence of a Formosa Lobby within the MCA, who would be quite happy to replace the British military presence in this part of the world with an American military presence. In that event, Sir, we can all be quite certain that the Tunku's "Happy Malaysia" would degenerate, practically overnight, into an image of America's most distinctive contribution to South-east-Asia - the appalling confusion and chaos and agonies of South Vietnam. Would it not be in Malaysia's self-interest to settle for and look with more favour perhaps at the toothless and relatively innocuous British lion rather than for the rash and brash and politically disastrous Americans?

Let us now move from Malaysia's defence considerations to internal political and social policies. We all recall, Sir, that the Government had used Indonesian confrontation to justify a number of restrictive acts. Local government elections were abolished. The Essential (Trade Disputes in the Essential

Services) Regulations were introduced to prohibit strikes in essential services. There was the Essential (Control of Publications and Safeguarding of Information) Regulations directed against the Press. Finally, there were the causeway measures requiring Singapore citizens to register at police stations.

But His Majesty's address, Sir, did not contain any indication that these restrictions which were introduced on the plea of Indonesian confrontation, among other reasons, would be repealed, now that confrontation is to end soon. On the contrary, the indications are that these restrictions are not only to remain, but to be further intensified. We all remember that the causeway restrictions, for example, were justified on the grounds that Indonesia's recognition of Singapore posed a security threat to Malaysia. But yesterday, Sir, in this House, the Honourable, the Minister of Home Affairs informed us, without batting an eyelid, that full immigration controls will be imposed at the causeway. Confrontation has ended, mind you, Sir, but nonetheless immigration controls which never existed during confrontation, are to be introduced.

Next, new emergency regulations against the holding of processions and rallies have been announced, just a few days ago.

There is no indication that the Essential Emergency Regulations, prohibiting strikes in essential industries will be repealed or even relaxed. On the contrary, Sir, we heard an anti-trade union trade from the Honourable government back-bencher who moved the Motion of Thanks. Not a single word about anti-trade union employers or about the exploitation of labour, but a whole lot of vitriolic vituperation against trade unions. This is only to be expected, perhaps from a House in which the interests of capital are profusely represented, but where labour does not have any representation to voice the aspirations and views of workers and thereby, I should think, hangs a lesson for the Malaysian trade union movement. The Malaysian Trades Union Congress must learn that all the clap-trap about the political non-commitment of the trade union movement, which is boasted so loudly, have had

the most corrosive effect on trade union rights in this country. If the trade union movement continues with its non-political commitment, then it can only expect anti-trade union politicians to secure election to this House and ride rough-shod over trade union aspirations and rights and if Malaysian labour does not learn its lesson now, then, I am afraid, it will never learn its lesson at all.

We also heard a tirade against the Civil Service. Allegations of corruption and inefficiency were made. No mention was made of course, about the existence, the possible existence, of the same vices at higher levels of the administration. The Constitution we have been told, is to be amended in order to vest powers of promotion and discipline in heads of departments, and in every respect, Sir, it seems to me that the Government has taken the line of least resistance, the easiest way to disaster. An efficient Civil Service can only be created by consent, security of tenure and by a fair deal for the public service. But this is not to be. What is really attempted is the creation of efficiency through terror, that is what the vesting of disciplinary powers in heads of departments will mean. It will not be the efficient civil servant who will make his way to the top in those circumstances, but, Sir, the people who will make their way to the top will be the sycophants and the inveterate yes-men. The net result will be not an efficient civil service, but a demoralised one, working fearfully and fitfully under a whole lot of petty departmental despots. It will no doubt be a sycophantic civil service, but certainly not an efficient one.

The Honourable Member for Kota Star Selatan unleashed an attack on the *Straits Times*. With some of the points he made I was in sympathy. But, Sir, I had intended to say some very rough things about the *Straits Times* myself, for it appears to me that even if Malaysian citizens, as the Honourable Member for Kota Star Selatan wants, were nominated to the editorial staff of the *Straits Times* by the Government itself, or by an Alliance coalition, even they could not have been guilty of the abject and servile sycophancy displayed by the *Straits Times* in its news coverage and in its editorials (*Interruption*).

*Dr. Mahatir bin Mohamed (Kota Star Selatan)*: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of clarification. I did not describe the *Straits Times* alone. I was talking about the Straits Times Press, which controls so many newspapers and all these newspapers have to toe the *Straits Times* line. What I intended was that all these various newspapers should be split up into different newspapers run by different people, so that at least speeches like I made yesterday and today could have a chance of appearing. I can see that after I made my speech against the *Straits Times*, the *Straits Times* can easily boycott, probably after an order from London (*Laughter.*)

*C. V. Devan Nair*: Sir, I am responsible for all the evils in this country, according to our friend (*Laughter*). But, Sir, I will stand corrected as I have indicated I was in sympathy with some points that the Honourable Member made. But every comma, Sir, this is contrary to what they claim, every comma in a Ministerial speech, every stupidity uttered by an Alliance leader, is given full play in this paper. But speeches and statements of Opposition leaders are mercilessly slashed, massacred. I will be lucky, Sir, if tomorrow the *Straits Times* carries a small paragraph saying, "Devan Nair, M. P. for Bungsar also spoke" (*Laughter*). Sir, it would appear that the *Straits Times* has bent over backwards to please the Government and I had intended, in fact, to ask what special techniques of intimidation the Government, the Honourable Minister of Information and Broadcasting, had employed to render into abject submission, the otherwise decent and intelligent men who sit in the editorial offices of the *Straits Times*. But this is the point I would like to make. It is an alarming commentary on the illiberality of our times that even such an obligingly servile organisation like the *Straits Times* should come in for a severe drubbing from the Government side.

*Mr. Deputy Speaker*: Order, order, the time is up. The meeting is adjourned till 9.30 a.m. tomorrow.

Sitting adjourned at 6.30 p.m.

(Resumption of debate on 17th June, 1966.)



*C. V. Devan Nair* : Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday two Members of this House made observations on the *Straits Times*. One was the Honourable Member for Kota Star Selatan and the other was myself. This morning, Sir, the *Straits Times* justifies the charges which have been made against them in this House yesterday by two Members of this House. They have done so by omitting any mention in their report of the charges that were made in this House. Are we to assume, Sir, that the *Straits Times* perhaps, believes that just as the royal prerogatives of His Majesty are above the consideration of this House, in the same manner the prerogatives of the *Straits Times*, or matters pertaining to the *Straits Times*, are beyond public discussion or public report? But what has happened, Sir, is that the views expressed in this House by two members of Parliament will not reach large numbers of the newspaper reading public of this country. The *Straits Times* exercises a monopoly of the English speaking press. Sir, my sympathy this morning for the Honourable Member for Kota Star Selatan has increased, that press monopoly of the kind today exercised by the *Straits Times* should be broken up quickly and the quicker the better.

Sir, yesterday, I ended with a remark, however, that it was an alarming commentary on the illiberality of our times that even such an obligingly servile organisation like the *Straits Times* should receive a drubbing from the Government side. Sir, as far as Members of the Opposition are concerned, the *Straits Times* might as well have been an Alliance party newspaper dedicated to boosting Alliance propaganda, except when that goes against them, and either suppressing or completely ignoring the views coming from the Opposition. But, whatever else the *Straits Times* might claim to be, it could by no means be described as a free newspaper in a free society. One suspects, Sir, that the responsibility for the deplorable and sickeningly sycophantic news-coverage of the *Straits Times* does not entirely rest with the undoubtedly intelligent and decent men who run the editorial policy of the *Straits Times*, or for that matter, Sir, even of those, who run the editorial

policy of the *Berita Harian*. The safest guess is that these men have allowed themselves to be browbeaten into submission by a Government given to intolerance and a Government which is determined that the only side which should be heard by the public should be its own side. Sir, our Radio and Television do not do any better – if anything they come off worse. I have only to refer to last night's coverage by Radio and Television Malaysia about the proceedings in this Parliament. The parliamentary reports in the evenings gave copious extracts from the speeches of those who spoke on the Government side. The Honourable Member for Kota Star Selatan was profusely quoted and I do not grudge him that. The Member for Johor Tenggara was less profusely quoted, which I thought was a pity, for I thought it would have been a good thing for the public to have known about the kind of froth and demagoguery he treated us to. The Honourable Member for Batu, who spoke, Sir, for nearly an hour, was brushed off in two minutes. I spoke for about 40 minutes yesterday and obtained hardly a minute. This is the kind of parliamentary reporting that we obtain from our Radio and Television. This evening both Radio and Television Malaysia will no doubt regale the public with all the replies, copious replies, that will be given by Government Ministers today to the points raised by the Opposition, but only Radio and Television Malaysia listeners will not have had the advantage of finding out what it was that the Opposition did say and so parliamentary democracy in this country marches on to its probable doom.

Sir, let me refer to yet another illustration of the practice of parliamentary democracy in this country. The *Suara Malaysia*, Sir, is a Government publication, issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, financed by public funds. But anyone, Sir, who has read the May 12th issue of the *Suara Malaysia* would have thought that this was not a Government publication but a political publication, publication of a political party, of the UMNO Party, as the issue is profusely illustrated with party articles and news. Sir, I would like to know which parliamentary

democracy in the world uses Government publications, paid for out of public funds as a blatant forum for party propaganda. If a Government publication can be used for the UMNO's purpose – and the UMNO under the law is just another political party like any other political party – then surely the PMIP, or the Labour Party, or my own Party have an equal right to demand that our various party platforms should also be published in future issues of the *Suara Malaysia*. Would that be done? On the second page here, Sir, there is an article – “UMNO – a party that has for twenty years spearheaded, moulded national sentiment in Malaya.” Would we perhaps be able to see one of these days another article in the *Suara Malaysia* – “The DAP – Three months of uneventful history and its manifesto”.

*Tan Sri Syed Ja'afar bin Hassan Albar (Johor Tenggara)*: Tuan Yang di-Pertua, renchana yang di-sebutkan itu tadi, siapa punya karangan? Boleh-kah dia sebutkan – dia refer.

*C. V. Devan Nair*: “Yesterday, May 11th, the United Malays National Organisation, or better known as UMNO, was 20 years old. The day also marks the 15th year of the Tunku's undisputed leadership of UMNO. In a nation wide broadcast last Monday, the Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak traced the history of the organisation thus.” So, Sir, going by the logic, or the implied logic, of the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara, as a Member of this House, I could give a history of the DAP, or Dato Asri might give a history of the PMIP, that should be published by the same logic.

Sir, this nation can only survive on the basis of more democracy – and not less, more tolerance and inter-racial harmony – and not less. This House was deluged yesterday by a veritable flood of Albarian verbiage. I refer, Sir, to the horrendous speech by the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara. Hardly anybody was spared by this “self-professed apostle of tolerance” – that is within quotes. The British got it in the neck, so did the Americans; Members of the Opposition were told that they were all disloyal. I, personally, was assured that if the Honourable Member for

Johor Tenggara ever found his way to the Government front bench it will be the end of me. But I am not so sure, Sir, whether he had political or physical elimination in mind. If it is the latter, then I fear that I may have to trouble the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs to provide me with protection against "the apostle of tolerance" from Johor Tenggara.

But what would really make political ears prick up, however, is the fact that the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara did not spare even our Prime Minister and other Members of the Cabinet. He criticised the Government for allowing the Prime Minister of Singapore to come to Kuala Lumpur to meet Ministers of our Government. He demanded an account of what took place at the meeting with the Prime Minister of Singapore. He waded into the Government about its imbroglio with Pakistan. He made it quite clear that practically the only person in this House who enjoys his strongest support was himself. In the circumstances, Sir, can I be blamed for praying most fervently that the gods in their infinite mercy may never allow the self-professed "apostle of tolerance" to move into the Government front bench. Whatever faults our Prime Minister or our Deputy Prime Minister or our Minister of Home Affairs, or our Minister of Finance, may have, the unthinking tub thumping, and sabre rattling and demagoguery are not among those faults. It must be said to their credit that on certain rare occasions the leaders of this Government have managed to rise to levels of statesmanship to which the Honourable Member for Johor Tenggara will never reach.

*Tan Sri Syed Ja'afar bin Hassan Albar* : Tuan Yang di-Pertua, saya ta'fikir Ahli Yang Berhormat dari Bungsar faham tegoran2 saya yang membena kepada Kerajaan sa-malam dan sa-tengah langkah2 Kerajaan. Kalau ia chuba hendak melaga2kan saya dengan Kerajaan, saya ingin memberi tahu Ahli Yang Berhormat itu bahawa usaha-nya akan sia-sia. Kita dalam Dewan ini, Tuan Yang di-Pertua, mempunyai kebebasan menyatakan fikiran kita, menyatakan pendapat kita, dan saya harap Ahli Yang Berhormat itu faham apa yang saya tegor pada Kerajaan dalam soal Pakistan

berkenaan dengan Wakil kita yang dudok dalam United Nations dan lain2-nya yang saya tegor. Saya fikir dia tidak faham, dia tidak mengerti.

*C. V. Devan Nair:* Mr. Speaker, Sir, he has not explained how one, an average intelligent person is to understand froth and nebulous clouds, I cannot understand it. Beyond comprehension!

*Mr. Speaker:* Jikalau Ahli Yang Berhormat itu mengatakan tidak faham, biarkan begitu sahaja (*Laughter*).

*C. V. Devan Nair:* Yes, that is the "apostle of tolerance". But be that as it may, Sir, in all his flood of verbiage he did make one little point which was all that I gathered in all that verbiage which did strike a sympathetic cord in my own heart. He referred to the need to raise the standard of living of our depressed Malay brethren. Nobody in his senses will quarrel with him, with such an intention, and indeed my colleagues and I have repeatedly said that economic disparities in the nation give strength to communal divisions in our society, and political demagoguery of the kind we heard yesterday thrives on the fertile ground of such economic imbalance in our society. But who is responsible for the fact that nothing truly effective had been done in all these years to redress such a balance? Who is responsible for this state of affairs? The economic policies of the Opposition or the economic policies of the Alliance Government? Rural incomes, Sir, have not risen appreciably between 1957 and 1966. Who is responsible for that? And I say this, that there is a democratic and a socialist way of redressing this balance, and the Member for Johor Tenggara might contribute towards the economic progress and emancipation of our Malay brethren, if he did not look so much to his political alliances with the compradores, capitalists, and tycoons of the M.C.A.

Sir, the basic question that the Government has failed to answer in His Majesty's Speech is this. With the end of confrontation are we to have less democracy in this country or more? It would seem that His Majesty's Ministers have become so used, so inured to rule by administrative decree and by emergency regulations that they have lost all desire, inclination or capacity to rule by

democratic processes, by way of the open argument and debate in an open society. And yet we are warned of the communist threat. I appeal to the Government, Sir, to appreciate that in the final analysis the only way to meet the communist threat in this country is not by way of negative repression and denial, but by making the democratic process meaningful and significant in the life and in the administration of the nation. As I said, we live on borrowed time. The ending of confrontation will, perhaps, give us as a nation some breathing space. We have the opportunity now to weld together into a united nation our multi-racial people with a strong sense of a commonly shared national identity, purpose, destiny. And this can be the only guarantee of our survival as a separate and sovereign nation in a disturbed and increasingly turbulent South-east Asia. The next decade or so will determine whether we will make ourselves as a nation, or break ourselves. If we are to make ourselves, then the leaders of this nation have to fulfil certain basic conditions and meet certain exacting standards. They will have, first of all, to transcend in themselves all purely communal considerations of race, language or culture. As I said yesterday, Sir, Malays by themselves cannot save this nation, and neither can the Chinese, nor the Indians, nor the Dayaks, nor the Ibans, by themselves can save this nation. Only Malaysians can save Malaysia and our leaders have to set the example and the way. If they fail, then we all fail, and the nation fails. If our leaders, Sir, possess the necessary vision, courage, foresight and wisdom, Malaysia can become an inspiring creation, a shining example of a stable and progressive multi-racial democracy. And it was with sorrow as well as with some anger that we noticed that His Majesty's Gracious Speech should display the complete absence of these essential qualities in the leadership of the nation. The stakes, Sir, are so high, the possibilities so inspiring and so challenging. But alas, Sir, the leadership of the nation apparently is afflicted with an appalling poverty of vision, inspiration and wisdom.

I can only conclude, Sir, by saying: Heaven help us all, if our leadership does not find the necessary vision and courage to lead

this nation in to the uplands of progress as a happy, multi-racial, non-Albarian society.

## **Are There Enough Malaysians to save Malaysia?**

*Speech by Secretary-General of Democratic Action Party and Member of Parliament for Bungsar, C. V. Devan Nair, at the Annual Dinner of the University of Malaya Graduate Society, Federation of Malaya (Negri Sembilan Branch) at the Seremban Rest House on Saturday, 11th June, 1966 at 8.30 p.m.*

WE IN MALAYSIA have to take our bearings, not on a smooth and unruffled sea, under a clear sky, but on a storm-tossed boat on a storm-whipped ocean.

What does the future hold for us and our children in Malaysia, now that Confrontation has, for all practical purposes, ended? What does the future hold for Malaysia in the context of a disturbed South-east Asia and a constantly and rapidly changing world scene? These are questions which most of us ask, and to which there are as many answers as there are political pundits and pontiffs.

The truth of course is that the world scene changes with such alarming rapidity that the total situation becomes more and more unpredictable with each passing day.

The world of today is vastly different from what it was even a few years ago. The monolithic communist world has cracked up. Seemingly well-established African rulers and regimes have toppled down one after another. America is caught in a big public debate about the rights and wrongs of its Vietnam policy. The British Government faces mounting public pressure for British military and political disengagement East of Suez. Western Europe pursues its own comfort in selfish isolation from the rest of the world. American and Russian space machines orbit in space and send back pictures of the lunar landscape.

Nearer home, famine and social unrest stalk the Indian



sub-continent. A bloody conflict rages in Vietnam, including war within a war. China has exploded her third nuclear device and once-powerful heads roll on the red carpets of Peking.

Singapore gets into Malaysia and is kicked out in a quick-operation which flabbergasted everybody.

In Indonesia, the most powerful communist party in the world outside Russia and China disappeared in a bloody coup and counter-coup, while the once irrepressibly voluble President Sukarno now shuts up equally volubly "in a thousand languages".

*Uniformed gentlemen from Jakarta flew into Kuala Lumpur, embraced and were warmly embraced, even before the peace accord was signed. The Bangkok talks promised the end of Confrontation and would have been met by universal relief and satisfaction, if it were not for all the ecstatic talk about "blood brothers" getting together again. The question that arises is "What about those in Malaysia who are not blood brothers? Is there going to be peace between Malaysia and Indonesia, or only between blood brothers?" The lyrical outbursts of the Utusan Melayu on the subject have not helped to assuage whatever doubts that arose.*

There was a sigh of relief when the papers reported the gathering together in Kuala Lumpur of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew and the Tunku and his colleagues, and the public pledge of close co-operation which they gave.

This, more or less, is the general background against which we have to discuss our subject, "Malaysia - Post-Confrontation."

What the shape of the Malaysian future will be, is anybody's guess. We are not here as soothsayers, to cast an infallible horoscope for the nation or for ourselves.

Malaysia's future must be the resultant of the operation of innumerable forces and circumstances, national and international, and over many of these forces and circumstances, we have no control.

*But over a number of factors we can and ought to exercise some control and direction!*

*The kind of country we build up, for instance, the social, economic*

and cultural objectives we set for ourselves; in short, the kind of Malaysia we want is very much the concern of all citizens of Malaysia. We cannot afford to be passive or indifferent to these considerations. God only helps those who help themselves. But neither God nor man will waste time or interest on those who do not choose to help themselves. Only the Devil will be there to reap an evil harvest.

The most obvious aid to survival of a nation is the coherence and unity which it possesses as a nation. The greater our success in imbuing our multi-racial people with the sense of a common national identity, the more effectively do we insure ourselves against the risks of the future.

A strong sense of national identity, purpose and destiny can be established in a multi-racial nation like ours. We have the examples of other multi-racial nations before us. Indeed, given the will, the vision and the courage, Malaysia may yet be able to boast of the proudest achievement in this respect.

The immediate advantages are with Malaysia. The major nations of Asia which could possibly seek to vie with Malaysia for the loyalty of our people are Indonesia, China and India. Malaysia is in fact a confluence of these three great civilisations. But neither Indonesia, China nor India can at present, nor in the foreseeable future, offer their citizens social and economic advantages and opportunities which are even remotely comparable to those which Malaysia offers today.

Malaysia provides all her people with a standard of living higher than the standards which obtain in Indonesia, India or China. The easiest way of securing a man's soul lies through his belly and Malaysian bellies are fuller than Indonesian, Chinese or Indian bellies. The first, and most basic, condition for Malaysian national integration and consolidation in a turbulent South-east Asia is thus present.

But we live on borrowed time. Indonesia, India or China will not always remain as they are today. They also can make social and economic progress. If and when their standards do catch up

*with ours, and if in the meantime, we have not consolidated our national identity, then this nation could easily be disintegrated through subversion by non-Malaysian loyalties and attractions.*

In other words, in the absence of quick evolution of a distinct and commonly-shared sense of Malaysian national identity among our multi-racial people, appeals based on affinities of race and culture could easily disrupt the present communal checks and balances, and lead to the disintegration of Malaysia through subversion by non-Malaysian loyalties and attractions. Such subversion might come from either Indonesia, China or India, or from all together, in which case we would all be in a pretty pickle.

The obvious task of a responsible and intelligent political leadership in Malaysia must be to exploit Malaysia's present advantage to the fullest, and to utilise the time available in order to consolidate our national existence by giving our multi-racial people the firm sense of a common national identity, purpose and destiny.

*The Tunku's statement that Malaysia will not go in for the Maphilindo concept is welcome to those who believe in the survival of Malaysia. It is good to know that the Alliance Government rejects Maphilindo or any other racialist grouping of nations in South-east Asia, and seeks instead a wider economic co-operation among the nations of South-east Asia. Inche Tan Siew Sin has even talked about the possibility of the eventual emergence of a South-east Asian common market, like the European Common Market. These are healthy thoughts and deserve all the encouragement that we can give.*

*The ending of Confrontation means the removal of defence burdens. All our financial and human resources can now be concentrated on a balanced economic development, which should eliminate the economic disparities which today unfortunately give strength to communal divisions within the nation. It is in the enlightened self-interest of all Malaysian citizens that no group of Malaysians should be left behind in the general march of social and economic progress of the nation. The have-nots of all races, Malays, Chinese, Indian Dayaks, Ibans, Muruts and Kadazans must be given an equal stake*

*the national progress if we are to successfully consolidate Malaysian national identity.*

There is no escape. All this we must do if we seek to survive as a nation in one of the most turbulent and disturbed parts of the world today.

I believe that most Malaysians want Malaysia to survive as a separate and sovereign nation. We do not want to be dismembered and absorbed into larger units. But in the name of all that we seek to secure in Malaysia, let us do away with all communal narrowness, pettiness and selfishness. For the alternative to Malaysian national consolidation must be a Malaysian national disintegration and our eventual extinction as a separate and sovereign state in South-east Asia.

The political leadership of the nation must be able to transcend in themselves communal habits of thought and action. *Let us call a halt to the policies of communal brinkmanship. Let us refuse to pander to chauvinist elements in our own communities, whether they be Malays, Chinese, Indians or Dayaks. If our politicians are patriotic Malaysians, then they must stop making rash and intemperate political speeches, which tread on the susceptibilities or arouse the fears of fellow Malaysians of other races and creeds.*

*Only Malaysians can save Malaysia. Malays by themselves cannot. Nor can the Chinese or Indians or Dayaks by themselves do so. The question is "Are there enough Malaysians to save Malaysia?"*

I believe that there is a sufficiently large number of Malaysians of intelligence and goodwill, in all communities, who know what the stakes are, and who are prepared to come together and to work sincerely towards the creation of a viable and enduring nation out of the multiplicity of races, cultures and languages.

Each and everyone of us has got a positive part to play in securing the success of the Malaysian nation. We can decide, by our contributions, the outcome of the race between nation-building in a multi-racial society, on the one hand, and national disintegration on the other. We can do this by being resolutely non-communal

and multi-racial in our approach to all the problems which face the nation. We can do this by quietly, politely and firmly insisting, at all levels of the national life, on the ideal of multi-racialism; we can do this by quietly and firmly rebuffing the forces of communalism and social obscurantism in our midst, which stand in the way of Malaysian national consolidation. We can actively give encouragement to the emergence of a rational and intelligent opposition in Parliament to keep the Government on its toes. If we fail to take a positive attitude, then the race to create a durable Malaysian nation must inevitably be lost to the forces of social and political obscurantism. We will only have ourselves to blame if the Malaysian political stage is eventually monopolised by the wrong people. If we believe in the emergence of a multi-racial Malaysian nationalism as the only effective safeguard against national disintegration, then there is a price to pay, and that price is organisation, honesty and sincere effort, and the end of passivity and indifference to political developments in the country.

Internationally, post-confrontation Malaysia must seek to strengthen its links with friendly nations. *A power vacuum is bound to be created in South-east Asia if British military disengagement from the region becomes a reality, as it eventually must. We can think of several powers who would be keen to fill such a vacuum. Even "blood brothers" can become very bloody-minded in such a situation. Being a small nation, Malaysia cannot defend herself and cannot depend on her own resources for defence. So we must find a new system of defensive alliances with friendly countries in order to guarantee not only our own sovereignty and independence but also the peace and stability of South-east Asia in general. All these tasks devolve upon the political leadership of the nation, and let us hope that they will lead us wisely and well.*

In the final analysis, the nation's safest investment lies in the loyalty and allegiance of her multi-racial people. This loyalty and allegiance can only be secured by consent and by giving all the racial components in our population a firm stake in the country, a vested interest in the success of the Malaysian nation. On

constitution guarantees equal political rights to all Malaysians, regardless of racial origin, colour or creed. Let the spirit of the constitution be translated into practice. This is the only way to ensure that Malaysian citizens whether Malays, Chinese or Indians, are closer to each other than they are to their so-called "blood-brothers" in Indonesia, China or India.

## Tenderness for the Millionaires

*Address to Parliament on the Supply (1965) Bill by C. V. Devan Nair, M. P. for Bungsar.*

THERE IS A fundamental prerequisite for a fair and just national budget, and that is that the burden of running the nation must be fairly and equitably distributed among all classes of the population. The poorer man must not be made to pay proportionately more than the rich man.

It would be impossible, of course, to expect our Minister of Finance to echo the inspiring call uttered two thousand years ago on the shores of Gallilee - "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I shall give ye rest." Quite apart from the fact that it would be quite ludicrous to credit our Finance Minister with any divine attribute or capacity, the brute fact remains that the survival of the Malaysian nation demands that all Malaysian citizens should be prepared to shoulder greater burdens.

The Minister's call therefore should have been - "Come unto me all ye who do not labour, who are already well served, and I shall give ye your appropriate burdens." But, in point of fact what he has in effect done is to say - "Come unto me all ye who are poor, and are already heavily laden, and I shall load more on you," accompanied by a call to the multi-millionaires, millionaires and demi-millionaires, the class to which the Honourable Minister himself has the good fortune to belong, as follows - "Come unto me, ye affluent ones who are lightly laden, and I shall make you even lighter for ye."

Even a cursory examination of the new income tax provisions in the Budget will bear out my contention. Singapore's millionaires and demi-millionaires will, for instance, enjoy a windfall reduction of 5%, from 55% to 50% on incomes over \$50,000/-, and

over-all decrease in tax burden of 18.35% if he were a person with an income of over \$200,000/-.

Singapore's higher income strata had never complained very seriously about their 55% tax burden. Singapore's economy had not suffered as a result. By and large, those who could afford to pay did cough up the 55% to the over-all benefit of the State's revenues, and without any harm to the effective size of their purses. Does the Minister of Finance seriously contend that Malaya's upper income strata, the multi-millionaires, millionaires and demi-millionaires, could not have contributed what their Singapore counterparts had contributed readily enough, and without prejudice to themselves or to their businesses, over the last few years? Was it really necessary to achieve 'harmonisation' as he calls it, by bringing the 55% tax burden for the upper income brackets in Singapore down to 50%. Could harmonisation not have been achieved the other way round - by bringing the tax burden of Malaya's upper income strata into line with Singapore's higher tax burden of 55%? Indeed, would it not have been feasible to have increased the tax burden of the higher income strata by 5% over Singapore's 55%, to make it 60%. Millionaires would not have ceased to be millionaires if this had been done, but they would have contributed more to the nation in these times of Indonesian confrontation.

Why this tenderness for the millionaires? This disinclination to place burdens on shoulders which can bear them in comparative comfort and ease? Is it perhaps because of the Minister's class affinity with the millionaires? Is it perhaps because of the Alliance Party's touching solicitude for its MCA stalwarts, many of whom belong to this select group? These are the inevitable conclusions that members of the public must draw from the income tax provisions of the Budget.

Very significantly, there is no similar solicitude on the part of the Minister for those in the lower income brackets.

Singapore's more enlightened taxation policy had, in the past, provided for separate assessments of the husband's and the wife's



earnings. This arrangement had in fact encouraged women to get away from the role of being parasitical wives, to take on jobs and to become wage-earners themselves. The teacher married to the nurse and the clerk married to the salesgirl earning a combined modest income in the \$7,000 to \$8,000 bracket, had relief because they were separately assessed. These were the couples who could look forward, in due time, by dint of thrift and hard work, to the ultimate \$25,000 house in the suburbs. Here was an arrangement in Singapore which would have permitted the eventual emergence of a property-owning democracy. One would have thought that if the Minister sincerely believed in the ideal of a property-owning democracy, based on the expansion of the lower-middle class, he might have adopted Singapore's provision for separate assessments of the husband's income and the wife's income. In short, he might have introduced into Petaling Jaya the same hopes and aspirations which had up to now propped up the inhabitants of Singapore's Serangoon Gardens. But that is not to be. Serangoon Gardens has to learn to live with miseries to which Petaling Jaya had already been subjected. Separate and less exorbitant assessments of husband-and-wife incomes are out. The teacher married to the nurse, the clerk married to the salesgirl, in short the middle and lower-middle class groups as a whole, now look to a future where the hope of an ultimate \$25,000 house disappears into the mists of the never, never and life becomes a grind.

Let us take a look at some simple facts and figures. The result of the abolition of separate assessments, assuming the wife's income is two-thirds of the husband's is as follows:-

- For a couple with \$7,000 means an increase of 375% in taxation;
- For a couple with \$9,000 an increase of 292%;
- For a couple with \$12,500 an increase of 133%;
- and so on till a couple with \$200,000 an increase of 16%.

Again the smaller man bears proportionately the heavier burden.

Let me put it in more vivid terms. The junior bank clerk married to a salesgirl in Singapore earning a combined income of \$7,000 a year faces an increase of 375% in taxation, while the bank director, say somebody like my old opponent Mr. Tan Chin Tuan, gets off with a negligible increase of 16%. Do not let us forget that Mr. Tan Chin Tuan's tax burden is no longer 55% but has been reduced by 5% to 50%. That should mean a windfall of a few hundred thousand dollars for the bank director. It is no wonder that Mr. Tan Chin Tuan is able to pay \$50,000 towards the National Solidarity Fund. Basking under a very comfortable tax windfall of hundreds of thousands of dollars, patriotism becomes a very comfortable and convenient pastime for a millionaire; but for the bank clerk married to the salesgirl, he cannot even consider now contributing the modest \$10 which he might have otherwise contributed to the Solidarity Fund.

Is all this really in the interests of the nation. Are we to place a premium on the development of Petaling Jaya in the future? How is it possible to encourage women to take to careers if the modest income of the nurse, the typist, the telephone-operator and the teacher, which by itself would be free from taxation, becomes subject to taxation when integrated with the income of the husband. In many cases the working wife becomes a tax liability for the husband.

*Estate Duty*: Let us take a look at the Minister's proposals for Estate Duty. Not only is our Finance Minister sympathetic to the millionaires, but also to those who inherit the millions and who have made no contribution to the nation and its welfare. Probably he feels that they are so effete that they need this protection.

Estates worth more than \$2 million will only be taxed at the rate of 50% and not 60%, which was the previous rate in Singapore. This represents a substantial saving of 10% for millionaires in the class of the Minister of Finance.

Let us take the case of a person who has been nurtured by a father who owns \$4 million and who comes into this inheritance. It would appear that according to the Minister of Finance, \$1.6 million is deemed insufficient to keep this person in the estate to which he has been accustomed. The Minister now prefers to assess his need at \$272,000 more. This means \$272,000 less for the revenue of the State in respect of one example only.

And yet we hear astonishing talk in some circles that this is a 'soak-the-rich' budget. In point of fact, the rich are progressively unsoaked. If anybody is soaked, it is the poor.

Then there is this question of gifts *inter vivos* - such gifts will escape duty if made during a period of five years before death. This follows the position in Singapore and is a progressive step. However, I would have liked the Minister to have been more progressive than Singapore in this respect. There would have been no complaints if he had had the courage to extend the period to ten or even fifteen years. This would surely have made evasion of death duties even more difficult.

As things stand, there is hardly a millionaire who would not contrive to escape estate duty by the simple expedient of transferring substantial parts of his estate to his relatives in good time in order to escape such duty. As it stands at present, this provision in the Bill is an open invitation to millionaires to take the hint, as it were, from the Minister, whereby they may legally avoid their proper responsibilities and financial contributions to the nation.

*The Turnover Tax:* The Minister of Finance appears to have a monotonous mind, with but a single obsession - that the rich must at all costs be preserved in the enjoyment of their riches and that the poor should be required to carry the burdens. Take the Turnover Tax, which the Minister assures us at  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  is very low and should not increase prices. The real facts of the case are that the turnover tax, in his own words, "is expected to yield

"\$45 million," i.e. approximately 1/3rd of the total increase in the budget.

\$45 million must come from somewhere, it must be paid for, and it is ludicrous to expect that the employers are going to produce \$45 million from their own pockets. They must inevitably pass it on to the consumers. Human nature being what it is, they must inevitably make their own profit on the operation of passing this tax on to the consumer. And it won't be just  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  on turnover, as the Minister would have us believe, but  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  escalated by the number of times that commodities are transferred through a whole series of middlemen before finding their way into the hands of the consumer at the bottom.

Thus, the Malay peasant living in the kampong, living perhaps on \$30 to \$40 per month, will probably find his cost of living increased by at least one or two dollars a month. The labourer in the P.W.D., surely one of the most depressed workers in Government, will find his cost of living rising at least \$4 or \$5 per month as a result of this so-called direct tax.

And in this connection, let us not forget the 5 cent tax on crown corks. Every time the Malay peasant in the countryside, the P.W.D. labourer or the factory worker in the towns quenches his thirst with a bottle of Greenspot, Pepsi-Cola or Red Lion, he will have to pay 5 cents more. The wealthy in so far as they bear the effects of the turnover tax, will probably pay approximately \$100 per month on an annual income of \$50,000. Even the blind can see where the burden falls most heavily.

*The Payroll Tax:* In his Budget speech the Minister of Finance observed rather ostentatiously as follows:—

"Payroll taxes are not an uncommon feature of taxation in other countries and are usually levied in order to help finance Government expenditure and social services."

Indeed, payroll taxes are not an uncommon feature of taxation in advanced industrialised countries. I believe that this tax was

imposed by the Tory Government in the U.K., when full employment or nearly full employment obtained, in order to keep wages levels down and also as an inducement to industry to take to automation at greater speed.

What the Minister failed to mention was that payroll taxes are an extremely uncommon feature, if not entirely non-existent, in the developing countries, where the emphasis is on labour-intensive projects, in order to absorb as many of the unemployed masses into employment. It is altogether incredible that the Finance Minister of a developing nation like Malaysia, where the primary need is to encourage labour-intensive programmes in order to provide employment and absorb the unemployed, should think up a payroll tax which would only calculated to achieve the opposite effect of encouraging capital-intensive programmes. The major problem in Malaysia is to provide gainful employment for human beings, and not to find more employment for machines at the expense of human beings.

The payroll tax is inevitably bound to put a premium on the employment of labour, and this can have quite unhappy and unforeseen consequences on the labour situation in the country.

The Minister states that he estimates the payroll tax to bring approximately \$21 million in 1965. Heaven alone knows how many managements of labour-intensive undertakings in the country will succumb to the irresistible temptation to avoid payment of this tax by cutting down on the number of workers they employ. We may in fact be faced with a spate of retrenchments together with the inevitable industrial unrest which is bound to ensue in such circumstances. Let us take, for example, a typical labour-intensive industry, the public transport industry. Public transport companies will find themselves burdened not only by the payroll tax, but by other taxes like the turnover tax. My fear is that they will be sorely tempted to react to the conglomeration of taxes in a manner which will have unhappy consequences for their employees. The Minister of Finance, we may be certain, will not be there when it comes to finding new employ-

...ment for workers retrenched by labour-intensive undertakings like public transport companies.

The thing to do in an under-developed country like Malaysia would be to encourage public companies to take relief conductors to serve each bus during peak periods. This would provide more employment but with this payroll tax, the Minister will have succeeded in manufacturing a situation in which it is conceivable that bus companies will consider having no conductors at all on buses. The driver alone would be good enough.

He presses a button as in some countries of Western Europe, the doors of the bus will open and a machine instead of a conductor reproduces the required ticket. Is that what the Minister wants, less employment and not more employment? If that kind of situation arises in a public transport company, then the trade unions will know where to place the blame.

As a trade unionist, I am not over-sympathetic to employers, as members will appreciate. But when the interests of managements of labour-intensive undertakings are likely to be seriously prejudiced, so that they are tempted, as inevitably they will be, through the working of this payroll tax, to retrench workers, then I must protest as strongly as I possibly can.

The Minister may be able to point to payroll taxes as being a common feature of taxation in the advanced and industrialised countries of the West. But I challenge him to show where such payroll taxes are features of taxation in the developing countries of Africa and Asia. An examination of taxation in the developing countries will undoubtedly show that payroll taxes are uncommon in other developing countries. The workers of a developing country like Malaysia have every right to expect that their Finance Minister will behave like a Finance Minister of a developing country in which labour-intensive programmes should be given every encouragement, and not like the Finance Minister of an industrially advanced and developed western country, which already enjoys full employment and wishes to modernise industry by automation.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, Sir, having regard to the developmental requirements of Malaysia's economy, particularly to the urgent need to provide more and not less employment, this payroll tax must be denounced as altogether inept and utterly misconceived. It is in essence an anti-labour tax, and when labour reacts strongly to the inevitable effects of this tax, then I hope our Minister of Finance will be ready to take the unpleasant consequences.

In the name of Malaysia's progress and advancement, and in the cause of greater employment opportunities in this country, let us by all means have taxes based on profitability, but not a tax like this, one against the employment of labour.

*The Profits Tax on Tin:* The Minister has managed to notice that tin mining these days is more profitable. Indeed, he could not have failed to do so, however disinclined he may have been when the newspapers are filled with reports of the increasing world price of tin. It is common knowledge in business circles that the profits accruing from this recent spectacular increase in price is the order of \$250 million.

The Minister believes that an equitable tax on this staggering sum should be a meagre \$5 million, or approximately just 2%, which compares with the iniquitous payroll tax of 2%, with, however, this significant difference: Whereas the payroll tax applies equally to the profitable, less profitable and even unprofitable undertakings, this profits tax applies, at a ridiculously low level, to an industry which fortuitously has made undreamed-of profits through no particular effort on the part of the owners of these profitable mines.

In short, the tin mine Croesus goes off practically Scot-free. Croesus does not even feel the pinch, while the Ahmads, the Al Kows and the Ramasamys at ground level are pinched, and quite painfully too, in several places simultaneously.

Why again, this tenderness and solicitude for Croesus as displayed by this Budget? We will not go far wrong if we hazard a guess that it is merely a case of one Croesus, or an Alliance consortium of Croesuses, showing kinship for fellow Croesuses.

The inescapable conclusion of any unprejudiced reader of the Minister's budget speech would be that this is a big business budget, designed by those whose prejudices and sympathies are those of big business, for big business.

The Malaysian economic scene has, in this Budget, been viewed through big business blinkers. It is essentially a Budget which fails to reveal thinking of a high responsible order. On the contrary it displays a poverty of thought as well as of good intentions. It reveals thinking of an extremely narrow and pedestrian kind.

The Malaysian tragedy is this: our Minister of Finance had magnificent opportunities, had he the will or the capacity to seize them, to rally the nation as one shouldering burdens together, and meeting confrontation in unity, with determination and fortitude. Such a situation, however, could only have arisen had the Minister risen to the challenge and chosen to distribute the burdens of confrontation in proportion to the capacity to bear them. The opportunity has been lost and the nation, though it may prove richer by \$153 million (which of course is still problematical) will prove infinitely poorer in morale, through these ill-conceived taxes, except for the rich businessmen, who alone and by themselves are totally unable to confront Soekarno.

I said that the opportunity has been lost. I may correct myself and say that it still need not be lost, provided the Minister will consider most seriously and sincerely the criticisms that have been offered in this House.



## A Trip into the Realms of LSD

*Speech by C. V. Dewan Nair in Dewan Ra'ayat  
on Supply Bill 1968.*

AT LAST YEAR'S budget session, as we sat and listened to the Finance Minister, some of us thought that at long last he had found the necessary courage and an adequate grasp of the virtues of realism. We felt that, pushed against the wall as the nation was, the Finance Minister might ultimately rise to the occasion, focus his vision, identify objectives and tackle our immense and daunting problems in a spirit of courage and expedition.

I, for one, waited eagerly for this budget session to see whether the embryonic promise of 1967 would develop, if not mature, in 1968. *But alas, instead of acquiring the virtues of solidity and sobriety, the Finance Minister appears to have wandered off in a trance into the realms of LSD. If he is not a victim of hallucinogenic agents, then this can only be described as a bogus budget. It is almost certainly an election budget, and it is in the nature of election budgets to lead the people up the garden path, to paint the dim twilight in the colours of sunrise.*

*In fact, this House has not been given a budget to debate. Parliament has merely been asked to give the Government licence for an overdraft—and what is worse, an overdraft that may not even be acquired—thus committing the nation to a possible additional debt of at least another \$600 million. There is no sign of an estimate of income and there is even less visible effort on estimation of expenditure.*

We all remember the pride and the aplomb with which the Finance Minister flaunted a profusion of figures in previous budget speeches. We were given figures relating to our balance of payments, the state of our reserves, and so on. But this year the

an attempt at such an impressive display of relevant figures, and for obvious reasons. *Our national debt clearly exceeds our known resources. The cumulative Federal Government debt at the end of 1967 was \$3,514 million, or nearly equivalent to two years' revenue.* Instead of facts and figures, this year's budget speech is a long essay chock-full of false hopes and meaningless platitudes, starting in the first paragraph with an euphoric assessment of the political, social and economic progress achieved in the last decade, and ending with a final paragraph in which the people are asked to bear more sacrifices as they are now in the process of going through a tunnel. *Only the Hon'ble Minister can see the light at the end of the tunnel. There are many others, however, who feel that it is not a tunnel we are in, but a labyrinthine cave without an outlet, in which we are lost with little hope of tracing our way back. There is no Ariadne's thread to guide us back.*

How the Minister of Finance has arrived at some of his estimates is anybody's guess. Income, for example, is apparently estimated to yield a sum somewhere close to that of last year's. But everyone in this country knows, and even the Finance Minister is apparently semi-conscious of it, that in 1967 the economy contracted as a result of sharply falling commodity prices. *There was a decrease of 17% in the unit price for rubber; a 7½% decrease in the unit price of tin, and a 5¼% decrease in the unit price of palm oil. In the last few months of 1967, the reports issued by various limited companies engaged in the production of rubber, tin and palm oil, indicated that profits had either declined sharply or, in some cases, even losses were incurred.* THEREFORE, TO ESTIMATE REVENUE AS CAPABLE OF YIELDING THE SAME QUANTUM THAT WAS PRODUCED IN A BETTER YEAR, WITHOUT INCREASING RATES, IS, TO SAY THE LEAST, AN ESTIMATE BASED ON PIE-IN-THE-SKY.

The alleged estimates of expenditure can at best be classified as hopeful guesses. Everyone in this country knows, and the Finance Minister is again apparently semi-conscious of it, that *recurrent expenditure increases by at least 5% a year on personal emoluments. Even assuming that Government in 1968 can withstand the pressure*

*and the need of not employing new people, expenditure on personnel emoluments alone must increase by the sheer operation of salary scales and increased pensions. The wonder of it all, in the circumstances, is that the ordinary expenditure estimated for 1968, is less than the total appropriated for 1967.*

A quick glance at the Development Estimates for 1968 reveals a large number of new buildings and installations for various departments. For instance, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is provided with huge sums for new television and radio stations, while the Ministry of Defence has been allocated over \$200 million for the purchase of ships and \$59 million for the purchase of aircraft. And yet, in the ordinary Estimates of Expenditure, no provision is made for the staff that will be required to man the television and radio stations, the ships and the aircraft. Are we to assume that we are going to acquire captainless ships or pilotless electronic aircraft? In other words, if similar and deliberate playing down of estimates has been applied in respect of other ministries and departments, this year's deficit must in fact be very much larger than what the Finance Minister has cared to indicate. *Among other things, the legitimate suspicion must be entertained that this budget is also a budget of hidden deficits.*

*All in all, the budget presented this year is an impossible one. It neither attempts to estimate income nor does it attempt to estimate expenditure. It only speculates on both. Even so, the budget balances only on the basis of the hope that a further \$600 million can be borrowed. Assuming, even though there is really no basis for any such assumption, that income and expenditure will turn out to be as estimated, the country will be faced with serious inflationary tendencies. We are already severely in debt. Our annual interest payable on the public debt have already come to nearly \$260 million or nearly 14% of our revenue. With additional borrowing, we will be placing our future generations under such a load of debt that they will be only working to pay off the interest element on debts that we have incurred. In short, we are not only placing an unbearable burden on our progeny, but we are at the same time making ourselves a bankrupt.*

*tion. In the event of inflationary tendencies being released by the deficit financing proposed by the Finance Minister, it is more than likely that not only will our economic stability be jeopardised, but the stability of our currency will also be seriously questioned.*

I therefore rise sadly to reject this alleged budget before the House, but as usual, the myopic majority commanded by the Government will no doubt approve it. This however should not prevent me from recording my views, for what they are worth. I say that even now it may not be too late to salvage our fortunes, provided that we find the determination and the wisdom to reverse our steps from the downward path we have been treading, provided also that once and for all, we decide not to bluff the people or ourselves, election year or no election year!

The increase in the gross national product in 1965 was 9.7%, and that for 1966 was 5.9%. The Minister himself declares that the main stimulant for economic growth in the last few years came from the public sector. This House knows, and everybody else knows, that in the last few years, we have been borrowing heavily both from domestic and foreign sources. In other words, even the 2½% increase in the G.N.P. in 1967 would not have been possible had it not been for the massive borrowing of over \$500 million. The House should also bear in mind that in 1967 the population growth was 3%, and the harsh fact of life is that in spite of getting deeper into debt, we are in fact worse off than before.

Everybody knows that the G.N.P. does not provide a complete picture of the country's economic health. Neither does it indicate the state of social welfare. *The Finance Minister talks of far-reaching political, social and economic progress in the last decade. But in the next breath he tells the House that unemployment in 1967 increased to 6½ from 6% in 1962. He also says that under-employment in the rural areas is not only widespread but is also increasing. Thus, on the one hand, it is claimed that the country has prospered, while on the other hand comes the disconcerting statement that the common man is worse off. I have had occasion to say in this House before that is not the G.N.P. that matters so much as the sharing of the*

*G.N.P. by the people of the country. I have had occasion to urge upon the Government to take adequate steps to distribute the G.N.P. in a more equitable manner, not only from considerations of equity and fairness, but also from the point of view of economic progress, through the diffusion of purchasing power to a wider group so as to stimulate consumption and industrial growth.*

I might be permitted an aside here on the actual extent of employment and under-employment. The Minister has not cared to divulge the sources of the figures on which he bases his assessment of current unemployment and under-employment. Neither have we been given any figures relating to the actual number of new jobs created in the last few years in both the private and public sectors. *If we are to take into account the decline in economic growth, together with the average of around 50,000 youths who leave school every year and are thrown on to the employment market, the indications are that unemployment and under-employment in both the urban and rural areas must have risen to quite alarming proportions. In other words, this Government does not seem to have an accurate assessment of the vast number of unemployed and under-employed who are bound to constitute an effective revolutionary potential for skilful exploitation by the forces of anti-national subversion.*

The Minister of Finance laments the fact that the manufacturing sector has not expanded as fast as he would have liked. He therefore proposes to give further incentives to manufacturers. This is all to the good, but until the bill is prepared and presented, it will not be possible for us to give our comments. I might, however, hazard the following observation. *Fiscal incentives alone, however desirable, will not bring in more industries. What is required more urgently than anything else is the restoration of confidence in the Government. I do not think that it is possible to dispute the fact that with the passing of the years, the Government's credibility gap has so widened that hardly anyone is inclined to take it seriously.* For example, when the price of rubber plunged below 50 cents a pound, the Government announced that it would support the price of

rubber and that as far as the Government purchases were concerned, the sky was the limit. Later, it turned out that Government purchases totalled only around \$10 million. Rubber is still below the 50 cents level. In the circumstances, rubber producers and rubber traders could not but come to the conclusion that as far as the Malaysian Government was concerned, the sky had a very low ceiling.

*This very budget before us is calculated to widen the credibility gap even further. Nobody in his right mind will believe that this budget is not a stunt.*

The Minister has made a rather interesting analysis of rubber consumption patterns and trends. *He hopes that if China and India can increase their consumption from the present per capita rate of ½ lb. per annum, the future of rubber would be bright. Apart from forgetting the possibility of even fiercer competition from synthetic in the coming years, the Minister has clearly forgotten about palm oil. China and India are going to use much more edible oils long before they use more tyres. And if this country had possessed the requisite foresight in its leadership, we might have embarked quite some time ago on a palm oil replanting scheme similar to the rubber replanting scheme - and with far more promise of success!*

Next to the restoration of confidence in the Government, is the urgent need of wiping out corruption and inefficiency. I am glad to note that the Anti-Corruption Agency has shown signs of new activity and vitality. *But one wonders whether the Agency has got the stature and authority not merely to look into and swoop down on corrupt practices among the small fry, but also to look among the really big fish in the country.* I would suggest the immediate appointment of an Ombudsman with full powers to investigate the activities of even Cabinet Ministers.

The Finance Minister has said, and I think the House will agree, that the country is in a bad shape. We need very stern measures to pull ourselves out from the present mess, and we all need to work much harder than we have been working before. The Government must set the lead and it must set a lead by pruning its

expenditure. The Minister declares that the Government proposes to make ends meet but in the very next breath, he tells the House that he proposes to borrow a further \$600 million. This is not the type of courage and leadership that I am speaking of. I am referring to a genuine and pressing determination to make ends meet, of which there are few signs to date.

The Finance Minister has not proposed any major fiscal policy changes for the moment. *He says that he does not envisage any such changes this year. If his word can be accepted, the country can be thankful that at least for this year no disastrous innovations will be made. It might be recalled that of all the innovations the Finance Minister made in the last few years, only the payroll tax remains intact. All other innovations have been either scrapped or modified beyond recognition.*

For 1968 he proposes to modify his development tax by raising exemption limits for individuals from \$500 to \$2,000 a year. It will be recalled that when he proposed the development tax, I urged him to consider carefully the consequences of levying the tax on people of low incomes. I specifically urged him to consider the equity aspect in which an employee of less than \$2,000 income per year is not taxed whilst a trader with over \$500 is taxed. I also specifically urged him to consider the cost of collection and the difficulties imposed on the taxpayer. He waved me aside and now he admits, in fact that he was wrong. He has back-dated the exemption to 1st January 1967. This means that large numbers of people have been unnecessarily harassed and that all the work of the Inland Revenue Department would have now to be set right by further work. If we want a classic example of unplanned taxation, this is it. If ever there was a gross example of wasteful efforts, this is it.

The Finance Minister proposes to get some \$5 million from varying the duty and registration fees for cars and commercial vehicles. With the difficult economic conditions faced by the country I have no serious objections to private car users paying more for the use of cars. *But one must have grave reservations*

*the wisdom of raising more revenue from commercial vehicles. On the one hand we say we would like to stimulate economic activity and on the other hand we raise an obstacle to economic expansion. The Finance Minister piously hopes that his variation of the duty and registration fees of private vehicles will induce greater use of domestically assembled cars and that the retail price of such cars will not rise. If the Finance Minister had prepared his budget without tongue in cheek, I would have been prepared to accept his forecast, but the budget being what it is, I can only attribute his forecast to mere wishful thinking. The gap between the domestically assembled car and the imported one comes to about 25 per cent. of the cost of the imported car, and it is extremely doubtful whether our car assemblers will not attempt to narrow this gap by raising retail prices. I hope the Minister will think of measures to restrain any such manifestation of overweening greed on the part of the car assemblers.*

The Finance Minister has decided that the time has now come for excise to play a greater part in keeping his coffers filled. He therefore proposes, of all things, to start with basic articles. *He slaps one cent per pound on ordinary soap and two cents per pound on toilet soap. He puts up tooth paste and powder by one cent per ounce. He even makes it harder for people to sleep off their sorrows by raising foam rubber products by 10 cents per pound. And if people find their food stale and tasteless, he makes it more difficult for them to use Ajinomoto or monosodium glutamate. He raises the rate to 50 cents per pound, excise. Even if it is agreed that the Treasury needs additional funds, which I dispute from the point of view that expenses can and should be drastically cut, it surely is not in the best interest of the country to try and raise revenue from necessities. I would have preferred the Finance Minister to have turned his attention to upper class luxuries such as perfumes, liquor and other luxury items, instead of hitting people in the lower-income brackets with rises on toilet soap, tooth-powder, Aji-no-moto and mattresses.*

In presenting the budget this year, the Government has been



guilty of a signal and tragic failure. The occasion might have been utilised to present to the people the stark and naked reality of the nation's frightening economic problems and prospects, and on the basis of such courageous and unabashed honesty and truth, to have appealed to the public, with some chance of success, for the vital and urgent response of harder work and greater sacrifice from all sections and strata of our multi-racial society, starting from the political leadership – in order to ensure the national salvation.

But the truth has not been told, and the leadership and sense of direction which the Government might have given to the country has not been given! Instead, there has been a resort to feeble subterfuges and dangerous half-truths.

*After a decade of independence, can we honestly boast of anything but a declining political, economic and military situation. The projected withdrawal of the British military presence from South-East Asia by 1971 has caused the vigorous expression of distress and concern in Australia and New Zealand, but in Kuala Lumpur we have only had the consolation of a barren calm. Quite apart from the military vacuum that might endanger our security, let us also not forget that imperialism retreats in the same order as it came in. First came the gunboats and the flag, next came the traders and merchants, and lastly came the missionaries. The gunboats will go by 1971, but are we so sure that the traders and merchants will not follow the gunboats? Perhaps only the missionaries might remain to provide spiritual consolation when all material consolation would have failed.*

Lest I be misconstrued, I might point out that I am no lover of Imperialism. I too have played my small part and have spent five years of my life in British jails, in helping to rid the country of British rulers. We detested the British as colonial masters, but we welcomed them as equals and friends. And it is their continued presence as friends in our midst, both militarily and economically, that has now become extremely dubious and uncertain.

*The size of the economic and security crisis and challenge that faces the nation is painfully apparent to most thinking Malaysians, but*

it seems to have washed off our Government like water off a duck's back. The challenge is there, but with no adequate response! The economic crisis is already upon us and again there is no response! The security crisis may also be upon us, but we took in vain for any determined and intelligent response!

Experience has shown that appeals in this House are futile and unrewarding. I can only pray that by some miracle, the leaders of this nation may wake up in time, rise to the occasion, and give the leadership, the sense of national purposes and direction which our country so tragically lacks today. If, however, there are signs of this happening, then my colleagues and I in the D.A.P. will not be found wanting in creative and constructive co-operation.

## **Timber Barons versus The Faceless Masses**

*Speech by the Member of Parliament for Bungsar, C. V. Devan Nair, in the Dewan Ra'ayat in the Debate on the 1967 Finance Act on 4th February, 1967.*

NOTHING REVEALS SO vividly the lop-sided nature of the representation of social classes in this chamber than the reactions to the new tax proposals.

On the one hand, Alliance government members from Sabah, representing the interests of the big timber barons, who have become obscenely wealthy through the exploitation of the natural resources, have been vehement in their objections to the Finance Minister's tame attempt to get them to contribute a very small portion of their phenomenal profits to the national revenue. On the other hand, the nameless and faceless masses of the people of this country who earn just over \$500/- a year or just below \$1.39 a day and are being called upon to pay a Development Tax of 5% a year, have very few voices indeed raised to speak on their behalf.

The timber barons have their lobbies. The \$1.39-a-day trishaw peddlers, taxi drivers, satay-men and kachang putch sellers and a whole lot of struggling bumiputras trying to increase their standards of living have no lobbies of any kind. They don't have Chief Ministers of State Governments to speak up for them. The Chief Ministers are more concerned about the timber barons, I have in mind the Chief Minister of Sabah himself, as well as the Finance Minister of Sabah, brazenly and shamelessly offering to use the money collected from the faceless and \$1.39-a-day multitude to pay income tax for the timber barons. Let alone socialists, but even enlightened and compassionate capitalists must squirm in agony and shame at this exhibition of monumental

selfishness and absolute absence of social conscience of any kind. And this is exactly what the offer made by the Alliance Government of Sabah to off-set from state funds any additional income tax due from loggers boils down to. The bulk of Sabah's state revenue is derived from indirect taxes and the bulk of such taxes is derived from the ordinary man. In other words, tax the poor to subsidise the fabulously rich loggers. I am happy that the Finance Minister has rejected out of hand the protestations of the timber barons.

It will be recalled that in my Budget speech I had stated that "until the Bill is presented, and the full exemptions, if any, are known, it is difficult to offer any constructive criticism." The Bill has now been presented, and no exemptions have been made. It is now possible to offer serious and constructive criticism of the Development Tax proposals as enunciated in this Bill.

The Development Tax is founded as an income tax, or put in another way, a tax on income. The Bill before us seeks to amend our income tax ordinances by introducing new schedules that will place a new tax on incomes in Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak. The schedules specify that Development Tax shall be deemed for all purposes to be income tax. As a corollary, or perhaps, because of it, Development Tax is not a deductible expense against the income tax.

Applied to companies, it assumes the form of a surtax, and departs fundamentally and drastically from our present logic of income tax. No credit is given to share-holders when they receive their dividends, whereas in the case of income tax, companies merely act as collection agents when profits are paid out as dividends.

This departure in itself is not a bad thing, if further departures have been sensible and logical. Unfortunately grave doubts will be generated over whether the first departure is a considered and calculated one. The Development Tax when applied to individuals, immediately loses the progressive nature inherent in income tax.

The basic principle of taxing the rich at a higher rate is thrown

out. We have instead the inequitable practice of taxing the rich and poor on the same basis of a common flat rate. In other words, the poor man is asked to sacrifice his child's milk while the rich man is only asked to forego his after-dinner cigar. Put another way, a man with an annual income of only \$1,000 pays an additional tax at an infinitely higher rate than a man with an annual income of \$1 million. I use the word 'infinitely' deliberately, for the man of \$1,000 per annum was never called on to pay income tax in the past. But now he has to pay \$50 Development Tax.

Not only is there a regressive departure from the progressive nature of income tax, but the Development Tax is (a) costly, not only in terms of money, but also in terms of social effort to collect and (b) kills the much-heralded efforts of the Alliance government to develop bumiputras as businessmen.

As I said during the Budget debate, the cost of collection of Development Tax from trishaw peddlers, kachang puteh men and a whole lot of up-and-coming bumiputras will be exorbitant. The Finance Minister in his speech winding up the debate replied that costs of collection are estimated to amount to only 1% and that his exemption figure at \$500 income a year should, and quote, "take care of the smaller business." He did not reply to the point on the question of overall social costs.

The latest annual report I have of the Inland Revenue department of the States of Malaya refers to the assessment year 1965. This Report was published in 1966. Abstract F of this Report shows that assessments raised on companies both resident and non-resident up to 31st March, 1965, for year of assessment 1965 totalled nearly \$450 million of income.

Let us assume that non-development sources are negligible. Let us further assume and hope that income in 1966 will rise to say \$500 million. Development Tax on companies will then yield some \$25 million. The cost of collection here is low, as it means only the application of simple arithmetic and an additional line typed on every assessment. But what about the numer-

trishaw-peddlers, petty traders, hawkers, etc., and the self-employed, like taxi drivers. These people can easily number over 100,000. A great number of them do not have fixed addresses. Some of them may even have their addresses as unnumbered huts. All these people are expected to contribute collectively \$25 million. The cost of collection here is bound to prove fantastically high, and whether the Finance Minister can keep his over-all costs to 1% would appear to be highly dubious.

What I am concerned with here is the social effort that has to be put in. I shudder to think of the tens and thousands of \$1.39-a-day multitude, being frantically traced by the Inland Revenue Department through the luckless postmen, and who would themselves be hurrying hither and thither in quest of persons to fill in their forms for them. I must respectfully submit that the Treasury boys have failed to calculate all these sterile and wasteful effort.

The Finance Minister said that this \$500-a-year exemption limit would take care of the small businesses. He seeks to impose a Development Tax on all those with annual income of \$500 from any trade, business, profession or vocation. Is it seriously contended that any trishaw peddler, or hawker or petty trader, does not earn more than \$500 a year? After all, it works out to only \$41.66 a month, or less than \$1.39 a day. Indeed, the generosity of Malaysians is such that a number of beggars get more than that.

This brings me to the third departure. Apparently, the basis of our income tax on individuals allowing for personal relief is not to be applied to the Development Tax. Those who derive unearned incomes, such as from interests, will be accorded personal reliefs in their income tax, whereas those who peddle a trishaw will not get any such relief in their Development Tax.

The next departure I wish to touch on concerns those persons, legal and real, who have to pay a fixed minimum, no matter what happens to their businesses. This is no income tax. This is no tax on income. There may be no income, and the man is still asked to pay. Is it really possible to salve our consciences by

calling this a Development Tax, while at the same time deeming it as income tax.

Then there is the case of the family partnerships. Everybody puts in a hand, and nobody earns enough to be required to pay income tax. And yet, each and everyone is required to pay at least \$100. There is also the case of the unfortunate barber marrying a hairdresser, and setting up a partnership business with no employees. Here, even their combined income is insufficient to attract any income tax, and yet, they will have the hair-raising experience of being asked to pay a minimum of \$200 Development Tax.

To crown it all, the Finance Minister explained that these departures were made because of the proneness of businessmen to evade taxes. I have spoken about the \$1.39-a-day multitude whose income clearly put them beyond any need to evade income tax. Where there have been evasions, it is largely the big fish who have been guilty. The bigger the business, the bigger the capacity and the incentive to evade. This Development Tax therefore discourages nobody, but penalises everybody, especially the small-businessmen.

Anti-evasion has always been and is everywhere more an administrative rather than a legislative matter. But our Finance Minister appears to think otherwise.

I had toyed with the idea of moving an amendment to this Bill. But in the context of this House, I think it is preferable for the government to do so. I appreciate the Treasury's need for money, though I criticised the past extravagances that led us to such a sorry situation. May I therefore suggest that the Development Tax be raised to a flat rate of 10% in the case of companies, who in the present already pay a flat rate in income tax. There can be no criticism of inconsistency here. As for individuals, I suggest only those chargeable to income tax should be levied a Development Tax. In other words, let only those whose incomes exceed their dues in personal reliefs pay Development Tax.

I further suggest that those who, in this obviously fairer way, have to pay the Development Tax, pay on a progressive scale, beginning with 5% on those with lower chargeable incomes and increasing to 10% for those who pay on the maximum of the income tax rates. In this way, we shall be fair, and we shall be saved the costs, the inequity and the odium of setting the inland revenue hounds to run down the faceless and voiceless multitudes.



## **Is Malaysia's Administrative Structure Development Oriented?**

*A paper presented by Goh Hock Guan at a symposium conducted by the University of Malaya Economic Society, on 3rd October 1967.*

IN 1965, at the request of the Malaysian Government, the Ford Foundation provided two eminent Professors to answer this very question. They were provided all facilities, they met all the important people and they saw all they wanted to see. This is what they found:

"The machinery of government in independent Malaysia is a direct descendant of the colonial regime. Installed piecemeal since 1890s, it has never been systematically reviewed. Our limited observations supported by the preponderance of opinion among knowledgeable persons in Malaysia, suggest that existing administrative systems urgently need modernisation. They are not producing adequate results, largely because they have not incorporated many modern and progressive management practices employed by other governments."

Of the men in the public services, the Professors found some virtues such as "relative freedom from corruption," "esprit de corps," and "patience, forbearance and dedication of a select corps of some four hundred top level MCS administrators," but that "there are ingrown attitudes of a comfortable conservatism among many members of the corps of administrators that conflict with performance orientation that is now demanded by the present leadership. In some departments and agencies, routine has become a ritual, decisions are delayed, issues are stalemated and programs are truncated. We have seen concrete evidence that the

potential of present public servants is much higher than present reality. The Government is not getting the performance that it needs and that it could have with comparatively little additional effort."

Of the "fundamental administrative system," the Professors found that:

(a) *The Budget System*

"The budgetting process now resembles a poker game in which the departments over-estimate their requirements and the Treasury attempts to call their bluff."

(b) *The Expenditure Control System*

"This system of expenditure controls cannot be effectively enforced in a large and complex government without creating inordinate delays."

(c) *Purchasing and Inventory Control*

"The present Treasury staff is unequipped to check specifications or to facilitate and control departmental purchasing. The current requirement that numerous requests for prior approval of purchasing authority must pass through Treasury hands results in very long delays for the departments, but it still does not produce effective Treasury controls."

(d) *The Personnel System*

"At present virtually every personnel function from the establishment and the grading of individual positions to the recruitment and the promotion of personnel is beset with complex procedures and long delays."

(e) *The Career Development System*

"Important economies in the use of personnel could be achieved by developing mid-career training programs for Division I personnel... We recommend also that some imaginative and aggres-

sive in-service training be developed for Divisions II and III personnel. . . . We have encountered many references to on-the-job training, but little evidence that such training actually exists."

The eminent professors who made all these findings are Professor John D. Montgomery of Harvard University and Professor Milton J. Esman of the University of Pittsburgh. Their Report was presented to the Government in October 1965 and has received approval in principle. A committee of senior officials was appointed to study in detail and make recommendations for the implementation of the report. The recommendations of this committee, if any, have not been made public.

The report the professors presented was published by the Government in 1966. It is couched in simple terms, polite in tone, restrained in language, concise in manner and completely readable. It runs for only 27 pages, including a three page appendix of names of people interviewed by the professors. I commend this report to all those interested in the administrative system of our country.

As I have said before, the report is rather short. But its findings are pregnant with implications and it is worth our while to delve behind the lines and discover the full impact of those implications. First of all, I should like to discuss the characteristics of colonial administration in order that we may fully appreciate the professors' finding that our present administration requires urgent modernising.

A colonial society is essentially asymmetrical in that administration is imposed and paramount. The bureaucrats in the administration view themselves as rulers by virtue of superior virtues, knowledge and competence, according to Confucian concepts, as guardians as espoused by Plato, as a small elite group of gentlemen in the Victorian sense and as an institution governed by regularity, fairness and a holy respect for precedence. In this there are of course multiple and varying yardsticks, one for the

locals, one for the expatriates, and one for the locals and expatriates versus home interests.

From this, it can be seen that the colonial administration does everything that it, and mind you not what the society, thinks is necessary. It is the only significant employer. It runs schools, universities, hospitals and trains. Those outside government are lawyers, landlords and businessmen. Monopolising activity the system produces an inert and abject reliance on the bureaucracy by the people and an elitist, exclusivist attitude among the administrators. There is hardly any dialogue and even less interplay of forces between the administered and administrators.

We have just celebrated ten years of independence. We have spent a million dollars on processions, floats and fireworks. Ten years have gone by. Can we see any change or even the motion of a change in our administrative system? Instead, time and time again, Ministers decline public participation, reject public advice, tell us to leave things to them and in turn, leave things to the administrative machine. Professors Montgomery and Esman found a select, and I emphasise select, corps of four hundred. These people, headed by their Ministers, are as remote from the people as their predecessors were ten years ago. In saying this, I am not saying that this is their fault. Obviously, the fault lies with their Ministers, who as elected representatives of the people, failed to re-orientate the administration. Today, as before, there is no dialogue and no interplay of forces between the administrators and the public.

Another characteristic of the colonial administration is the achievement and ascriptive criteria in employment. By this is meant that admission into the service is by merit selection but once admitted, promotion beyond clearly defined caste groups is impossible or extremely difficult. The colonial administrative system deliberately adopts ascription to preserve the power and prestige of the ruling elite. Is our system now different? How many Division IV people ever get to Division III; how many Division

III people ever rise to Division II; and how many Division II people are ever promoted to Division I?

What training facilities are there to equip people for promotion? Eight years after independence, Professors Montgomery and Esman find that the "potential of present public servants is much higher than present reality" and see little evidence that in-training actually exists.

Recruitment to the public service is still governed by the "Scheme of Service," published in 1956. There has been an attempt to re-orientate recruitment policy towards modernising the services. New entrants are still selected and immediately given carte tags which are worn throughout working life. Thus recruitment policy continues to serve a purpose that has ceased to be valid, and which conflicts with the aspirations of an independent country.

The only noticeable change is not in the wasteful ascriptive criteria in employment, but in the selection of recruits. Now instead of merit selection, there has been super-imposed a racial quality. Mr. E. L. Wheelwright, in his book *Industrialisation in Malaysia*, published in 1965, says in page 120,

"The biggest single scarce resource in the Federation is the all-important 'managerial cadre' - in Government and both private and public enterprise - and in its selection, training and development, the government cannot afford to discriminate on any grounds other than ability, if it is to meet the challenge it faces in two years ahead."

I do not know whether Professors Montgomery and Esman cynically demonstrate racial discrimination in the public service by publishing a list of top people they met. Of the nine top men interviewed in the Malaysian Establishment Office which is responsible for recruitment and promotion policies and administration, eight were Malays and one was Indian. In the Staff Training Centre at Petaling Jaya all three persons interviewed were Malays. Top employees of three state governments were

interviewed and all were Malays. Of the six interviewed from the National Whitley Council (Staff), none were Malays. The lack of balance in the public services needs no further proof.

Yet another characteristic of the colonial administration is that it is oriented towards prevention of wrong-doing rather than to the marshalling and energising of right-doing. This point is forcefully dramatised by John P. Lewis in his book *Quiet Crisis in India*. That this heritage has not been changed is recognised by the existence of the profusion of agencies created for specific purposes. There is the M.I.D.F.L., the F.L.D.A., the F.I.D.A., Bank Negara, etc. All these are perhaps necessary but they do point to the fact that ten years after Merdeka the administration is still found incapable of coping or coping fast enough with development plans and projects.

Judging by the number of letters in the Press, most of us must have the frequent irritation and frustration of not getting a reply for a long time for a simple request. It would appear therefore that not only is the present administrative system unable to cope with the urgent demands of national development, but that in many cases, is even an obstacle to progress. There is an operations room which attempts to expedite projects but if routine administration is not geared to service the needs of the projects, then the projects may well be retarded or even aborted.

Imagine a farmer or smallholder struggling not with the tools of his livelihood but with forms and applications that Government requires, and one will appreciate that he has to contend more with red-tape and inaction than with the forces of nature. One will also be able to appreciate why E. K. Fisk, in his article "Rural Development Problems in Malaya," published in December 1962 in the *Australian Outlook*, Volume 16, No. III, found that disposal incomes of most of the peasantry have decreased, not increased. But if you think that it is only the defenceless peasantry that has suffered, I invite you to turn to page 45, paragraph 178 of the Auditor-General's Report for 1964, published in 1966. I have not been given a later Report and I assume the 1964 Report

is the latest one available. I will just quote a few lines to illustrate the delays, frustration and unnecessary correspondence in government offices in their dealings with other government offices. The Auditor-General reports that, "For years there have been complaints by departmental officers of delays in the receipt of Allocation Warrants and equivalent authorities, without which works and services should not be undertaken."

Another characteristic, though by no means confined to the colonial administrative system, is the over-centralisation of authority and decision making. In colonial systems, it is perhaps inevitable. The Governor is there as representative of the Queen. From him stems all laws, all action and all initiatives. In an independent country, especially an emerging one with hopes and plans of development, over-centralisation can only mean burdensome bureaucracy, a lack of flexibility and reduced efficiency. Albert Waterston in his book *Development Planning* which draws from the experience of development planning in over 100 countries, says:

"It is exceptional when regional, state or local authorities are able to make any but the most unimportant decision on development matters without referring them back to the centre of government, where the action files move with exasperating slowness up the hierarchical ladder to the top administrative rungs."

How true this statement is! How often have we heard in Parliament and outside, the moan from component states that Kuala Lumpur chokes their plans to death. Sabah and Sarawak have consistently complained that even trifles have to be referred to Kuala Lumpur for approval.

And in Kuala Lumpur itself, Professors Montgomery and Esma have this to say,

"As soon as possible all the major operating activities of government must be scrutinised for organisation, efficiency

effectiveness and costs . . . Many of the traditional and inherited workways of this government, such as detailed minuting and passing of files with their accompanying clerical routines, have become obsolete in the context of modern administration . . . We have been impressed by the absence of serious thinking about unit costs, quantitative data and systems analysis in most departments of the Government."

While still in Kuala Lumpur, let us refresh our memory with what Professors Montgomery and Esman have to say on the five systems constituting the infrastructure of government administration. I do not want to quote at great length, as I am sure many of you have either read the report or will read it later. It will be a fair summary to say that they think the Budget System does not perform the function it is supposed to; the Expenditure Control System cannot be effectively enforced without creating inordinate delays; the Purchasing and Inventory Control System is unequipped for its function and requires a modern central procurement service; the Personnel System is beset with complex procedures and long delays; and the Career Development System exists only in theory and talk.

Professors Montgomery and Esman remarked on only one aspect of the budget system. Their observations are confined to the expenditure side. Their omission can be expected as estimates of income are predominantly dependent on political decisions on what the government can extract without losing power. We may expect visiting professors, or for that matter, other guests to refrain from passing adverse remarks on the political acumen of our Ministers. But, except for Professor Esman we here are not guests, and we can note that since Merdeka, there was no year in which revenue estimates were not revised and still found misplaced. As an illustration, the recent crisis as a result of the drop in the price of rubber ought never to have been allowed to develop to such a critical pitch.

Mr. P. F. Adams in his "Report on the Future of the National



Rubber Industry" anticipated a fall in the price of natural rubber to 50 cents a pound by 1970, if competition with synthetic rubber is to be met. This report is undated and is understood to have been drawn up at the request of the Rubber Growers' Association. The figure of 50 cents and the date of 1970, have apparently been accepted by our government. I am of course unaware if any critical appraisal was made before the price and data were accepted for fiscal planning. One thing is, however, clear and that is there has been no revision by the administration of the forecast in spite of mounting evidence to indicate that the fall would be reached much sooner. If the Treasury, which is responsible for the economic welfare of this country, were a little more alert, the forecast would have been revised and the present crisis would have been less severe. And if the Treasury were development oriented, it would have prepared its own forecast and taken measures. The Rueff Report, otherwise known as the I.B.R.D. Report in 1963, found it essential that Malaysia should have "more diversified agricultural production." To-date, there is no comparable incentive scheme for other agricultural activities such as found in the rubber replanting scheme.

The Professors' observations of budgetting played as a poker game was made in 1965. One may wonder whether after their Report was made and accepted, any improvements have been made. For the optimists, I am afraid there are no joyful tidings. The Budget Speech this year by the Finance Minister, Tun Tan Siew Sin, contains a poignant indication, and I quote, "... the original bid from the Ministry of Defence came to \$380 million and I would like, at this stage to pay a tribute to my Honourable colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, who, to the dismay of his own military advisers, helped the Treasury to reduce it to the final figure of \$250 million." The use of the word "bid" does confuse bridge with poker and the final result leaves one in doubt as to whether Defence trumped Treasury or the latter called the bluff with a "see you."

This bridge-poker game extends even to development estimates

I have compiled the following table and I think it rather demonstrates the point forcefully. My figures are obtained from the Auditor-General's Report on the Federal and State Governments:

(in \$ Millions)

	1963		1964		1965	
	Provision	Spent	Provision	Spent	Provision	Spent
Federal	601	455	791	509	871	590
Kelantan	10	8	10	7	16	8
Trengganu	16	13	20	10	16	6
Pahang	23	14	23	13	22	11
Negeri Sembilan	22	6	19	9	13	6
Selangor	28	15	39	27	38	24
Perak	37	19	26	12	21	11
Kedah	15	9	15	10	17	6
Perlis	3	2	4	2	4	2
Penang	16	8	16	7	16	6
Malacca	10	3	7	3	5	3

Finally, if you are still in the mood for figures, I should like to give some extracted from the Malaysian Year Book for 1965 and the Federation of Malaya Annual Report for 1957. I should like to give you figures for later years, but the administration being what it is, I am afraid you will have to hold a symposium in 1969 or later, for 1967 figures.

The population of Malaya increased from 6.3 million in 1957 to 7.9 million in 1964, an increase of over 25%. People employed in rubber estates (over 100 acres) declined over this time from 276,740 to 275,410. Those in coconut estates dropped from 9,470 to 6,160. Those in oil palms increased from 14,310 to 18,190. Those in tea plantations increased from 4,320 to 4,660 and those in pineapple plantations increased from 2,170 to 2,260. In the agricultural sector covered by these industries the overall picture is that over the years 1957 to 1964, there was a slight decrease in the number of people employed. In the mining

sector, the tin industry employed 37,990 in 1957 and 34,830 in 1964; the iron mines employed 4,080 in 1957 and 6,100 in 1964. Overall, employment dropped by over a thousand. In the transport industry covered by the railways and road haulage, employment dropped by some 500. The figures are for railways, 14,470 in 1957 and 12,430 in 1964 and for road haulage, 5,150 in 1957 and 6,740 in 1964. As for the manufacturing sector, the two Reports do not give figures that are comparable. However, the Budget Speech of the Finance Minister in 1967, gives an equally dismaying picture. Tun Tan Siew Sin said, "It is clear that the manufacturing sector has not been expanding fast enough to make a significant impact on the economy, particularly in the matter of more extensive and more and more rapid import substitution and the creation of employment opportunities."

To summarise, I may say that our administration is anachronistic in that it has not evolved itself sufficiently to change goals and needs. It still bears the characteristics of a colonial administration that is oriented towards the prevention of 'wrong-doing' rather than the generating of 'right-doing.' It requires, in the words of the eminent professors, 'urgent modernisation.' The eminent professors probably had in mind the 'Nuclei Approach' though they do not specifically say so. They recommend that a Development Administration Unit be formed to plan and guide programmes of administrative improvement. Presumably, this Unit will select a few large or important projects and concentrate on improving administration to the extent required to facilitate the operation of those projects. The establishment of such 'nuclei' will of course provide only modest initial improvements, but they create spring boards for wider reforms later.

Finally, all the development administration brains in the world will come to nought if the racial consideration in staff recruitment and promotion overrides considerations of merit, qualification and performance. The DAP has always maintained that problems of administration, like all the other problems related to nation-building, can only be effectively solved when the racial intriguers

of both the Malay and Chinese varieties are replaced by broad-minded Malaysian nationalists. That is a question of political leadership and it is the subject for another debate.

## **Siew Sin's Volte Face (or the Tail-twister gets his tail Twisted!)**

BY C. V. DEVAN NAIR



MALAYSIAN EYES GOGGLED and boggled at newspaper headlines on October 5, 1966. The proud, unbending and unyielding Minister of Finance, Inche Tan Siew Sin, was reported as saying in London, without apparently batting an eyelid, that Malaysia would "sink or swim with sterling."

Why this miraculous metamorphosis to sweet reasonableness on the part of the top Alliance tail-twister of the decrepit British lion?

What happened between Washington and London to evoke this loud squawk of loyalty to sterling from the man who lords it over Malaysian fiscal destiny, from the man who had, only a few weeks ago, slammed down a whole range of Commonwealth preferences, and talked grandiloquently of "diversifying" Malaysia's reserves?

According to reports, "Mr. Tan said he wished to make it clear that there was no intention on Malaysia's part to diversify at all."

What happened? Did the tail-twister find his own tail twisted, and rather painfully too, in Washington or in London, or in both capitals? Several possibilities tease the imagination.

Were the massive American releases from the rubber and tin backpiles purely coincidental, or did they begin with a vengeance after the Malaysian government's clamp-down on Commonwealth preferences, almost immediately after which the price of rubber took a nose-dive by about 12 cents to 58 cents per pound? Did Uncle Sam decide to oblige wily old John Bull and agree to administer a salutary lesson in arm-twisting to the Malaysian tail-ster?

The answer to these questions may never be revealed, for the cold-blooded and calculating operators of international high finance are uncommunicative by nature. They kill, cure, maim and mangle with a swift and silent ruthlessness! All that may be hazarded is that our Finance Minister went through some dramatic experience, and has returned a sadder if not a wiser man. The tragedy is that the stewardship of the nation's fiscal policies should be in the hands of those who adopt empty-headed, juvenile and intransigent postures, and manage to tread on the corns of friends and foes alike, with equal aplomb, to the nation's eventual embarrassment.

Self-respecting Malaysians squirm in embarrassment, watching our Finance Minister publicly eating his words in foreign capitals. Mr. Tan can spare himself and his fellow-Malaysians similar ordeals in future by observing the simple precept that unuttered words need never be eaten. In other words, only choose to utter words which you will never have to eat later.

But alas, this betokens a capacity for intelligent anticipation which one will look for in vain among the members of our government!

(From the "Rocket," October 1966.)



## A Revolution Betrayed

LIM KIT SIANG

FOR THE LAST ten years since the attainment of Merdeka, the people have been subjected to the daily barrage of government propaganda through the press, radio and recently, the television, extolling the achievements of the Alliance government.

*Suara Malaysia*, the weekly organ of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, carries in every issue two pages of government activities under the heading "the Silent Revolution," attempting to show the revolutionary changes being wrought on the national landscape under the Alliance stewardship.

It is worth examining whether the government's claim is borne out by the facts or is mere wishful thinking of the Alliance propagandists.

A revolution involves a radical change in society, affecting either the political, economic, social or cultural sphere.

It is as much nonsense to say that it is a revolution when an adult education class is started (*Suara Malaysia*, November 17) or when 24,000 acres of land were being opened up in Perak (*Suara Malaysia*, November 24) as it is to call it a revolution when a junior

reactionary of a reactionary regime is eliminated from the political scene.

In fact, if more land is being opened up to add wealth to the rich, what we have is not revolution but stark reaction.

Let us make a broad survey of the economic front to see whether a "silent revolution" has taken place.

The biggest problem in Malaysia is how to bridge the ever-widening gap between the have-s and the have-not-s. The Alliance's rural development policy breeds a new middle class at the expense of the mass of dispossessed peasantry.

The peasants continue to be rack-rented, impaled on the twin evils of landlordism and indebtedness.

The most exploited of the rural workers are the padi tenants. It is ironical that a government, which draws its support largely from the rural base, has done virtually nothing to relieve the padi tenants from their grinding poverty.

The government's much-vaunted progress in new padi strains, double cropping and increased productivity have no meaning to them as they have to turn over half their harvests to the landlord, apart from paying off their debts incurred off season.

The main beneficiaries of increased productivity are not the peasants, but the absentee landlords, who contribute to the Alliance campaign funds.

This is also the reason why the feudalist-compradore Alliance has done nothing to emancipate the padi tenants from their extreme insecurity of tenure.

A paper gesture was made in 1955, when the Padi Cultivators (Control of Rent and Security of Tenure) Ordinance was enacted which set a maximum rent at one-third of the harvest. No sooner was it made law than the Ordinance became dead as a dodo. No attempt was ever made to enforce the provisions to give a fair deal to the toiling tillers of the land, because this would affect the landlords who form the backbone of the Alliance party.

The government's attitude towards the dispossessed, regardless of race, is clearly illustrated by its unconscionable indifference to



the plight of the padi tenants since the paper gesture in 1955. Despite repeated appeals, nothing was done to alleviate the misery and poverty of the peasants. Two experts submitted a report in April 1965 on reforms to the Padi Cultivators (Control of Rent and Security of Tenure) Ordinance to free the rice growers from the grips of insecurity and exploitation. To date, there is complete inaction on the Report apart from government assurances that the Report is being studied and considered.

Compare the government's tardiness in this respect to the swiftness with which the Alliance acted to alter the constitution to transfer powers of promotion and discipline from the Public Services Commission and to legalise its illegal take-over of the Penang City Council. Indeed, when asked to legislate to remove inequalities and injustice, the Alliance Government behaves exactly like a capitalist being asked to give a wage increase to his sweated labourers.

The public is often treated to a recital of the achievements of the FLDA schemes where, it is claimed, settlers earn \$300 a month.

This is undoubtedly an impressive figure by rural standards. However, when it is considered that it costs about \$18,000 to put a settler on a producing FLDA farm, one wonders whether this is a luxury we can afford. Our objective must be to uplift the standard of living of the five million rural people and not to expend considerable financial outlay to benefit hardly one percent. of the rural population.

The 50,000 people who have been so expensively settled in FLDA schemes in the last five years are only slightly more than the annual increase in rural population. Furthermore, as a result of chronic indebtedness, peasants are losing land at a rate outdistancing the government's ability to open new land.

Instead of tackling the basic root of rural poverty by a sincere and whole-hearted assault against rural exploitation, the government chose to develop expensive land schemes to impress visiting dignitaries.

Instead of adopting a rational economic approach to the prob

of rural poverty, the Alliance politicians spouted a racialist solution by the creation of Malay middlemen to replace Chinese middlemen.

One suspects that the advocates of this racialist doctrine are actually bidding for the shoes of the middlemen. There is no reason to believe that Malay middlemen will exploit the Malay peasants any less than non-Malay middlemen. Daily-life observations will bear this out that the Chinese middlemen are no less demanding with Chinese farmers or the Indian money-lenders no less rapacious with Indian debtors.

The government's bias toward vested interests is further shown by its attitude to the serious problem of the fragmentation of estates.

Repeated appeals to the government to introduce legislation to control fragmentation to avoid adverse socio-economic effects fall on the deaf ears of those who have time only for the have-s.

In the three years from 1957 to 1959, about 8,000 people lost their jobs as a result of fragmentation. In the last four years, 6,500 people were rendered jobless. More rice-bowls are in danger of being broken.

An inquiry committee appointed by the government to assess the economic effects of fragmentation submitted a majority report in 1963 recommending appropriate legislation to control fragmentation and to embark on a rehabilitation programme to remedy the ill effects of sub-division.

But true to its character, the government rejected the majority report and accepted instead the minority report of the propertied interests which opposed government legislation. Vested interests had triumphed once again!

On December 12 this year, the Menteri Besar of Selangor, Dato Harun bin Haji Idris, hit news headlines with his warning about fragmentation and his call to the Central Government to take strong measures against it.

Two days later, apparently after having discovered during the interval that the power to allow fragmentation applications had

been transferred to state governments for more than two months, Dato Harun tried to retrieve the situation by promising to scrutinise every future application.

What is the real reason for this transfer of power to the State governments? Is it to enable the Central Government in future to disclaim responsibility for the ill effects of fragmentation, on the ground that these are State matters?

Is it likely that the State governments will succeed where the Central Government has so conspicuously failed to deal with the problem of fragmentation?

The government's lack of will to deal with this problem reflects its inability to think and work for the welfare of the have-nots.

The government's economic experiment is more marked by extravagance and waste than by austerity and efficiency. As a whole, although the government has put up several expensive showpieces in rural development, in the battle against poverty, the Alliance government has failed to deliver the goods. Under the Alliance in the last decade, what we had was not a revolution but a revolution betrayed!

(From the "Rocket," December 1966.)

## Siew Sin Sins Again

BY C. V. DEVAN NAIR

"SHOPKEEPERS who know nothing of finance" is hardly the way to refer to the bankers and Chambers of Commerce in both Malaysia and Singapore who have pleaded for the preservation of the 60-year-old common currency system.

Even the World Bank, which sent an official mission to assist both governments to preserve a common currency, was disappointed when the dollar-splitting decision was announced.

Furthermore, every reputable economic journal overseas, including the London *Economist* has questioned the wisdom of the currency split. It would therefore appear that Mr. Tan is not the infallible financial wizard that he makes himself out to be.

The tragic truth is that the decision to split our 60-year-old dollar was a direct consequence of the political vendetta between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, and not an act of financial wisdom. Bankers and merchants in both countries who have no political axe to grind know better, and it is "unadulterated rubbish" (to use Mr. Tan's own words) to pretend otherwise.

In his latest outburst, Mr. Tan has only served to enhance the apprehensions of business circles. It will be recalled that when the decision to split the currency was first announced, undertakings were freely given in both Kuala Lumpur and in Singapore regarding parity and free convertibility between the proposed two new currencies. We were told that it was the declared firm intention of both governments to establish and maintain dollars that will be worth neither more nor less than the dollars that we use today and have used for the last 60 years."

Mr. Tan now makes nonsense of this undertaking by suggesting that if the financial and economic policies of both countries diverge,

then they will not be able to maintain parity of value in their currencies. This was precisely what everybody warned about in the first place, a warning which was then greeted with indifference by both governments.

Let us assume that the values of the currencies do diverge sometime in the future. Has Mr. Tan considered the outward flow of financial capital from Malaysia if by some not altogether unlikely miscalculation, the Malaysian dollar came to rate in exchange value below the Singapore dollar? Mr. Tan's counterpart in Singapore does not also appear to have considered the implications for Singapore, if the same thing happened there. But the non-political "petty shopkeepers," as Mr. Tan endearingly refers to our Chambers of Commerce, have in fact visualised such possibilities. Hence their apprehension which Mr. Tan has now successfully doubled.

Mr. Tan says that having a common currency without a political union is like a divorced couple continuing to have the same banking account. His analogy is surely misleading. The more correct analogy is that the divorced couple, in this case, operate separate accounts, but in the same bank. And what is so exceptional about a divorced couple operating separate accounts in the same bank, enjoying common securities to guarantee their separate deposits?

The plain unvarnished truth is that a common currency will help to promote not only economic co-operation between the two countries but also to facilitate the vital development of new private enterprises in both.

The DAP hopes that bankers, businessmen and lay men in both territories continue to keep up pressure for the preservation of a common currency. They have everything to lose if things go wrong. Mr. Tan Siew Sin and Mr. Lim Kim San have only their political faces to lose if common sense does manage in the end to prevail over political prejudices.

(From "The Rocket," December 1966)

## Normalisation and Abnormalisation

*Speech in the Dewan Ra'ayat by C. V. Devan Nair on 26th August 1966, on the Normalisation of Relations with Indonesia.*

*C. V. Devan Nair :* MR. SPEAKER, SIR, might I suggest that the Ministers can go for their dinner parties because we do have a quorum. The Deputy Prime Minister will have, of course, to bear with us.

*Mr. Speaker :* If the Honourable Member will keep to the subject and not bring in extraneous matters, I think he will achieve more results. *(Laughter.)*

*C. V. Devan Nair :* Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been rankling under some heartburn, because first of all, this morning we were told that the House was going to adjourn *sine die* at its rising today and we made plans for tomorrow; and now it is going on till tomorrow. I am really upset.

*Mr. Speaker :* I suppose that is the lot of all Honourable Members of Parliament!

*C. V. Devan Nair :* It need not be, if the Government were a bit more sensible about these matters. But, nevertheless, I shall be brief, so that the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister may have more time than I will. First of all, let it be said that the DAP welcomes this Agreement - I am sorry, welcome this - what do you call it?

*Dr. Lim Chong Eu :* Normalisation.

*C. V. Devan Nair :* Normalisation *(Laughter)* - that was the word - in relations. Unlike other political parties like the Labour Party and the Socialist Front before them, we have always stood by the Government's stand in opposing confrontation, and I personally have had the privilege of upholding Malaysia's cause abroad on several occasions. But in this normalisation of rela-

tions, there is an ironical symbolism about what has happened today, for instance, that we should be discussing the normalisation of relations with Indonesia immediately after this House has been discussing and approving the abnormalisation of relations with Singapore (*Laughter*). That, Sir, is an ironical symbolism about which outsiders, I believe, will comment upon because one confrontation has ended and another confrontation seems to begin. (*Interruption*) I would suggest to the Member for Johore Tenggara that if he wants to give his Deputy Prime Minister ample time to reply the less he says the better.

Sir, I hope that this normalisation of relations will lead to normalisation of certain conditions in this country. Various regulations and restrictions had been imposed in the name of confrontation, on the excuse of Indonesian confrontation: Emergency Regulations relating to the trade unions, the abolition of Local Council elections, again, on the ground of confrontation, security and so on, and certain other restrictions which just escape me at the moment, but there have been a whole lot of restrictions, regulations, which have been imposed in the name of confrontation – I remember now, no rallies for Opposition parties – again, because of confrontation! So, let us have with this normalisation of relations with Indonesia a simultaneous normalisation of conditions within this country.

However, I want to impress this on the Government, Sir, and this will be the burthen of the DAP's stand now and in the coming months. Sir, I do not want to be accused of imputing anything but the proper motives to the present administration in Indonesia, as it would be irresponsible for any Opposition leader to impute motives, improper motives, to the leaders of the Government of Indonesia. But let us not succumb to the euphoria which befell the Alliance benches, when the ending of confrontation was announced, in that things are not going to be all that static, assured, and stable in Indonesia. Things can go wrong. Peace between nations is not everlasting. The whole of human history is evidence, is witness to the fact, testifies to the fact, that no peace is

everlasting; things can go wrong. There may be forces in Indonesia itself, who have not given up President Soekarno's ambition – and, please, I qualify myself again that these remarks are not aimed at the present Indonesian administration – there may be elements who may come up in future in Indonesia, who still subscribe to Soekarno's version of 'Indonesia Raya' in which we are all absorbed willy-nilly, and such empire builders may not have been entirely eliminated. So, I hope that our leaders, and the Alliance Government and Cabinet, will not allow themselves to completely succumb to this euphoria of everlasting brotherhood. Let us have proper relations with Indonesia, friendly relations, but let us also watch, for God's sake and for our sakes, which is more important than God's sake, because He is able to look after Himself. The serious doubt is as to whether we will be able to look after ourselves. The situation in this part of the world is dynamic – just two minutes more, Sir, though the profundity of what I am trying to say cannot be expressed or concentrated in just two minutes, but I do hope that I can put across to the Government benches this: do not let us succumb completely to this euphoria; we welcome the end of this confrontation, we hope peaceful relations can be strengthened and extended; but for the sake of the people of this country, for our own stability, let us be sober and realistic. There are 'Talleyrands' and 'Machiavellis' in Indonesia. We may think that we are making rings round them, but the chances may be that they are making rings round us, and let there be no occasion given for any external forces, outside this country, to subvert the basis of our nation, our administration, our loyalties. I hope, Sir, that message, brief as it is, has gone in, and on that basis I do welcome the ending of confrontation and the normalisation of relations.



## The New Confrontation

*Speech by C. V. Devan Nair, M.P. for Bungsar at the Dewan Ra'ayat on 16th October, 1968.*

WE ARE IN a happier situation in this House, as well as in the country at large, over President Marcos's claim to Sabah, than we were during the confrontation of Malaysia by Soekarno. It will be recalled that during the period of Indonesian confrontation there were not wanting members in this House as well as political groups in the country, who publicly and vociferously subscribed to Soekarno's notion that Malaysia was 'a neo-colonialist plot.

Again, during the period of Indonesian confrontation, the nations of the world, including the big powers, found themselves on different sides. The communist powers generally, and a number of Afro-Asian nations, upheld Soekarno's position that Malaysia was a neo-colonialist creation. But today, the Soviet Union maintains an Embassy in the very same Malaysia which had once, not so very long ago, considered 'a neo-colonialist plot.

And thus, as Shakespeare puts it, 'the world wags on from day to day.' In the case of the Indonesians, the confrontationists of yesterday have become the blood-brothers of today! But in the case of the Philippines, the 'Maphilindo' blood-brothers of the day-before-yesterday, have become the confrontationists of today.

We live in a world of mad-hatters, at least where power-politics are concerned. Those who once called us neo-colonialists, today set up embassies in Kuala Lumpur. And confrontationists turn into blood-brothers and vice-versa with an incredible rapidity all in the short space of three or four years. Exactly who our new confrontationists will be, in this turbulent and very unsettled part of the world, is anybody's guess!

Today, President Marcos replaces ex-President Soekarno

Malaysia's confrontationist. And as I said, we find ourselves, both in this House as well as in the country at large, in a somewhat happier situation. Nobody, either in this House or outside it, finds himself on the side of President Marcos, and cares to declare that Malaysia, including Sabah, is a neo-colonialist plot.

Internationally too, President Marcos does not enjoy the kind of support and endorsement which ex-president Sockarno had once enjoyed. Even the Russian Ambassador to Malaysia is reported in the *Malaysian Press Digest* of September 30, 1968 as very generously declaring (notwithstanding Czechoslovakia, of course!) that "the wishes of the people of Sabah should be given consideration in the Sabah dispute." I suppose we must be thankful for such small blessings, and it is therefore perhaps pointless to recall now that his Government did not entertain the same admirable attitude during the period of Indonesian confrontation.

The Americans and some Commonwealth allies are trying hard to at least appear neutral, which is understandable. For there is no diplomatic way of telling President Marcos publicly not to be a silly ass. This has perhaps been done behind the scenes, which probably explains the come-down on the part of the Philippines Government in the readiness it displays for its Foreign Secretary, Mr. Ramos, to meet our Deputy Prime Minister without preconditions.

The biggest mistake that President Marcos has made was to assume that international opinion, whether East or West, North or South, communist or non-communist, would care a tinker's cuss, as to what the Sultan of Sulu or his heirs did or did not do with regard to the disposition of the territory of Sabah. Ideological barriers notwithstanding, this is a day and age in which everybody feels obliged, at least by way of lip-service, to uphold the sanctity of the principle of the self-determination of peoples. The time when Sultans, princes and potentates could dispose of the destinies of a people are forever gone, and President Marcos has forfeited the right to any kind of international hearing by assuming otherwise. The only material consideration is not

what the Sultan of Sulu did or did not do, but what the people of Sabah have freely chosen to do. We have the word of no less a person than the Secretary-General of the United Nations himself, U Thant, quite apart from our own intimate knowledge, that the people of Sabah have freely and overwhelmingly chosen to merge with the Federation of Malaysia. And this, the principle of self-determination, is the only principle that matters in the world of today. But President Marcos has chosen to present a Stone-Age argument in justification of a 20th century case.

We have survived ex-President Sockarno's confrontation, and there is little doubt that we shall survive the Marcos confrontation. But there is one lesson that the political leaders of this nation ought to learn from these bitter experiences. And it is this: the vagaries of international relations being what they are, erstwhile foes can become blood-brothers, and erstwhile blood-brothers can become foes. Those who once accused us of being neo-colonialist can today talk soothingly about the right of self-determination. The game of power-politics is a game played on shifting sands. That is the way the world is.

The safest insurance that Malaysia can have in such a shifting world is for Malaysians to rely, always and forever, only on their fellow-Malaysians, whatever their race, colour or creed may be.

The solidarity with which Malaysians of all races have reacted to the Marcos confrontation provides the only enduring basis for our national survival. This is the most precious asset we have in our possession. Not only should it not be wasted, but it deserves the most careful, the most meticulous nurturing and cultivation. One hopes that even the most communal-minded of our politicians will have learned this lesson from the experience of the last half a decade. If we fail to learn this lesson, then a time must inevitably come when we shall succumb, as a nation, to some more serious confrontation in future, for we would have failed to justify our existence as a nation. Let us pray that such a situation never comes to pass.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Action Party joins everybody else

giving full support to the motion standing in the name of the Prime Minister, and in endorsing the efforts he has made and will continue to make towards upholding the integrity and sanctity of our territorial frontiers, and in order to secure the return to normalcy and harmonious relations among nations in the South East Asian region.

## Labour's Unenforceable Rights

*Speech by the Member of Parliament for Bungsar, C. V. Devan Naidu (DAP) on the Industrial Relations Bill in the Dewan Ra'ayat.*

I HAD EXPECTED, on the basis of promises given in this House, to welcome a constructive and forward-looking piece of legislation to govern the conduct of industrial relations in this country. I regret that I am unable to do anything of the kind. With the best will in the world, I find it impossible to say kind things about some of the astounding sins, both of commission as well as of omission, contained in this Bill.

The explanatory statement claims that "the Bill seeks to strengthen and continue the voluntary system of industrial relations." This is a piece of euphemism which I had thought that the Minister of Labour could never bring himself to be guilty of.

The truth is that the enactment of this Bill will have nothing in common with any kind of voluntary system. On the contrary, it will serve to regulate labour relations, in the public as well as private sectors, in an astoundingly unjust and thoroughgoing manner. I have no quarrel with any legislation which seeks to regulate industrial relations in a civilised community. I am aware that an unregulated and so-called 'voluntary' system is a sacred cow in the eyes of certain labour circles in the country. It seems to me, however, impossible particularly for any developing country to do without a set of laws to regulate and govern the conduct of industrial relations. In the absence of such regulation and governance, an anarchic scheme of things must prevail to the prejudice of industrial and social development, and to the prejudice of the smaller and weaker trade unions in the country.

My quarrel, therefore, with this Bill is not that it seeks to

regulate industrial relations as such, but that it seeks to regulate industrial relations in such a manner as to either (a) flagrantly violate the rights of labour, or (b) to make unenforceable certain basic rights, responsibilities and prohibitions recognised in the body of the Bill.

Let me explain. I read Parts II, III and IV with some elation, but the elation was knocked out of me when I came to Section 55 in Part IX of the Bill which provides for general penalties.

Part II for instance deals with the rights of workmen and employers and their trade unions, and contains an imposing list of rights and prohibitions which, among other things, provide that no workman may be discriminated against in regard to his appointment, promotion etc. or that no workman may be victimised in any manner whatsoever by reason of the circumstance that he is or proposes to become, or seeks to persuade any other person to become a member or officer of a trade union, or participates in the promotion, formation or activities of a trade union.

At last, I thought, trade unionism will become respectable in this country and workers will never again be subject to acts of victimisation because of legitimate trade unionism.

Parts III and IV, dealing with recognition of trade unions also contain certain desirable features. But every good that might have ensued from the rights and prohibitions contained in these first parts of the Bill is completely negated by Clause 55 of the Bill, which provides for general penalties for contravention of the Act, and says blandly, as follows:

“Provided that no contravention of or failure to comply with any provision of parts II, III or IV (other than Section 14) shall be deemed to be an offence punishable under this section.”

And we note that the contravention of these major rights and prohibitions provided in the first parts of the Bill are not punishable under any section either.

In other words, the earlier parts of the Bill, and especially

Part II are no more than a declaration of rights, which the subsequent parts of the Bill make specifically unenforceable through the absence of penalty provisions. Any legislation worth the name must provide for rights, responsibilities and prohibitions, as well as for the enforcement of such rights, responsibilities and prohibitions. This is not done. You might as well say, "It is wrong to steal. Nevertheless, those who steal will not be punished."

On closer reading of the Bill, the first favourable impressions are steadily eroded, and the contents of the Bill reduce themselves to a catalogue of cunning, and a first class exercise in duplicity.

Let us take Clause 5 (2) (c) which should be read in conjunction with Clause 4 (1). On the one hand, Clause 4 (1) guarantees the right to organise workers and trade unions. On the other hand, Clause 5 (2) (c) stipulates that workmen employed in "confidential capacity in matters relating to staff relations" are prohibited from becoming members of a trade union. Nowhere is the term 'staff relations' defined, and this vagueness is surely calculated to give headaches to the industrial courts. "Workmen employed in confidential capacity in matters relating to staff relations" might include even a typist who has to type a confidential report of staff relations.

While the language in Clause 5 (2) (c) of the Bill is not absolutely clear, it does suggest that in respect of a particular class of workmen (i.e. those employed in confidential capacity in matters relating to staff relations) there is a total restraint imposed. We note, however, the language used in the preceding sub-clause (b) whereby a workman in a managerial position may be prohibited from being a member of a general union, he is nevertheless free to join a union catering specifically for employees in managerial positions.

There is a difference between partial restraint and total restraint, and I must ask the Minister to clarify the intention in Clause 5 (2) (c) of the Bill. Since workmen in managerial positions can join a union catering for managerial staff, why not allow persons employed "in confidential capacity in matters relating to staff

relations" to join a separate union? In this connection, we might observe Clause 9 (1) (a) of the Bill in which an industrial court is required to exclude from recognition workers "employed in confidential capacity in matters relating to staff relations" from being represented by a trade union.

Clause 6 (a) provides that no trade union of workmen shall except with the consent of the employer persuade at the employers' place of business during working hours a workman of the employer to join or refrain from joining a trade union."

This clause should again be considered in conjunction with Clause 4 (1) of the Bill which lays down guarantees relating to the right to organise trade unions.

Practically every trade union in the world was born on the workspot. I have yet to hear of a trade union being organised by interested people visiting the homes of workers in the evenings. Indeed, many trade union functions, like those of the shop steward, are performed on the workspot. I have never heard of a shop steward who operates from his bedroom.

I contend that this provision will provide a handle for anti-union employers to victimise organisers of unions, particularly new unions in new industries. I think that the Minister will be aware that what happened to certain workmen in Ajinomoto is a case in point.

It must be noted that unlike the provisions of the Singapore Industrial Relations Ordinance, there is no time off for union officials to do union work. I might mention that in most countries where trade unions are recognised institutions, time off for union work is granted by law. And in other countries, time off for union work is tolerated as a matter of general practice.

In this country at present, time off is granted and recognised for trade unionists who have to attend Whitley Council meetings. I must call on the Minister to delete the phrase "with the consent of the employer" as a retrograde provision, and to consider introducing provision for time off for trade union work, as obtains in Singapore.



*Clause 8 (4)*: Part III of the Bill stipulates the procedures to be followed on the recognition of trade unions. But the explanatory statement is surely misleading when it states that "where a dispute over recognition is not resolved, the Minister is required to refer that dispute to the industrial court for decision."

A reading of Clause 8 (4) reveals that no such mandatory requirement is placed upon the Minister. On the contrary, all that it provides is that the Minister "may take such steps as may be necessary or expedient to resolve the matter." After the Minister fails in his efforts (which mind you, may or may not be made entirely at his discretion) then there is a mandatory provision that he "shall refer it to court."

So the question may be asked: why the permissive word "may" and not the mandatory "shall?" Is it a prerogative of the Minister to be the repository of cases of recognition of trade unions, which have not been resolved? What is the purpose of it all, if the Minister can with legal impunity sit on a case of recognition and refuse to do anything about it, so that it need never be referred to the court.

It must be recalled that Clause 41 (e) specifically prohibits strike action in respect of any dispute over the claim for recognition of a trade union. If the workers are to be deprived of this last weapon, then it would clearly be vital to make recognition procedures mandatory at every level. "The Minister shall" and not "the Minister may" should be the operative phrase right through. If this cannot be done, then, in all fairness to workers, the right to strike over recognition must be restored.

It is also distressing that the Bill does not include provision for the compulsory recognition by an employer of a trade union which has satisfied the Ministry of Labour, after a secret ballot has been taken, that it represents the majority of the workmen employed in that particular place. It would be recollected that such a provision for compulsory recognition is made in the Singapore Industrial Relations Ordinance. Why can't it be done here?

Clause 12 (4) stipulates that where an invitation to comment

collective bargaining has been made and a reply notifying acceptance has been given, the parties shall commence collective bargaining "without undue delay." Again, no specific time limit, as in other countries, is provided for. We all know in this House what the government, for example, means by the words "without undue delay."

It might mean a long wait of a year or two or more. If the employers decide to take a cue from the government, then I am afraid the trade unions would have had it!

*Clause 13 (2) (b):* While the Bill provides for the minimum period during which a collective agreement remains in force, there is no maximum period prescribed for the duration of a collective agreement.

This is bound to make the task of the industrial court exceedingly difficult. A maximum period should clearly be prescribed for the duration of a collective agreement, as is done in other countries.

*Clause 18 (1):* This is an unusual clause, providing for a four-member court, made up of (a) a president, (b) a member from a panel of independent persons, (c) a person from a panel of persons representing employers and, (d) a person from a panel of persons representing workmen.

Nobody has yet thought of a quadripartite court. The principle of an industrial tribunal is that the president of the tribunal is an independent and impartial person, while the other two persons of the tribunal represent workmen and employers respectively. But, here, we have a fourth member of the court who is supposed to be chosen from a panel of independent persons. So you have two theoretically independent persons in a four-member court. And if the two independents differ with the two partisans, the president is given a casting vote.

Why must the Minister of Labour embark on such an unprecedented experiment? Can it be seriously held that it is possible to find an adequate supply of independent persons, who will have neither a pro-labour bias nor a pro-employer bias?

In any case, these so-called independent persons cannot be independent of the government, for it is the Minister who appoints this panel, and he does not have to consult anybody before he does so. If the so-called independent person entertains a pro-employer bias, then it must mean that the court is weighted against labour. In the reverse situation, it would be weighted against employers.

In the event of the industrial court having to hear a dispute in which the government is involved as an employer, this would mean that the government as employer would have two nominees on the court, while the government employees would have only one. I must therefore call on the government to do away with this completely unjustified innovation.

It is also distressing to note that before appointing the panels of persons representing employers, and of persons representing workmen, there is no mandatory requirement that the Minister should consult recognised organisations representing employers and workmen respectively. The clause only provides that "the Minister may consult such organisation representing employers and workmen respectively as he may think fit."

This is not the case with the Industrial Relations Ordinance of Singapore, where it is mandatory for the Minister to approach the Trades Union Congress and the employer's organisation to nominate persons for appointment to the respective panels.

It is no use for the Minister to tell us that he will not abuse his discretion. Industrial justice requires, even more than other courts, the full application of the maxim that justice must not only be done but be seen to be done.

One also notes the omission of a significant provision in the clause relating to the appointment of various panels. There is no specific prohibition against non-citizens of the country or those who are bankrupts from being appointed as members of the various panels. Non-citizens in particular cannot be expected to have the same concern for industrial justice in this country as citizens. This would apply particularly in the case of expatriate employers.

There is also no provision to prevent the appointment to the workers' panel of a person who is an employer or a director of a company which is an employer, or is employed by a trade union of employers.

I would submit that this must be a necessary provision, as otherwise we may have the ludicrous situation of an employer sitting on the employee panel.

*Clause 24:* This clause allows a legal practitioner to represent any party to a trade dispute at proceedings before the court, subject to the permission of the president.

I have time and again appealed in this House that lawyers should be disallowed from appearing before the industrial court on two grounds:

- (1) Trade unions must be able to meet employers on equal terms before the industrial court. Most trade unions in the country, especially smaller ones, do not have the same financial and other resources which employers' organisations can muster, with the result that while it may be possible for employers to engage highly qualified legal practitioners to represent them, a similar course of action would be beyond the means of most trade unions.
- (2) Industrial arbitration involves the use of other criteria than those employed by the law courts. The dispensation of industrial justice does not depend on the exercise of interpretative forensic skills. It must depend on the exposition of social, economic and even cultural factors. The procedures of industrial arbitration courts, wherever such courts have become successful social institutions, are therefore much more flexible than the pro-

cedures of the law courts. There is a very real danger that if we start off on the wrong foot, and on the wrong premises, our industrial court might degenerate into a rigid institution which, whatever else it might do, would be incapable of dispensing industrial justice.

It is because of the consciousness of these dangers that the industrial arbitration systems in other countries, notably in Australia, specifically excluded, at least in the vital initial stages, lawyers from appearing before them.

There is yet another reason why legal practitioners should be excluded from the industrial court. It is vital that we should train our own trade unionists and employers to depend on their own talents of advocacy in industrial cases. Such education and training will be discouraged if employers and trade unionists are encouraged to be dependent on professional legal practitioners for the advocacy of industrial cases.

Clause 26 (f) stipulates that the court is obliged to consult the Minister before it can call in the aid of one or more experts to assist in the determination of a trade dispute. Now, why in the name of heaven should it be necessary for the court to consult the Minister?

The High Court, or even the lower courts, do not have to consult the Minister of Justice before deciding to summon one or more experts in the determination of any civil or criminal case. This is a matter which must clearly be left to the discretion of the court itself.

I would go even further and suggest that the President of the Court should be specifically empowered to summon the evidence of experts, either on his own volition or on the request of any of the parties to the dispute before the court.

Either the Minister allows the court full jurisdiction and the exercise of its discretion in this matter, or scrap the court

together. There is no need for the Minister to insist on having his finger in every pie.

The resolution of industrial disputes requires very often the summoning of expert evidence on a whole variety of issues. And this responsibility of the court must not be hamstrung or inhibited by any obligation to refer to the Minister for a ruling on the matter. In fact, the Minister might prove to be the very last person the court ought to consult on such matters.

Clause 27 (7) places a restriction on the retrospective date of an award, so that such date may not be earlier than six months from the date on which the dispute was referred to the court. This is an unfair stipulation when it is considered that a trade union may have served claims on the employer long before any dispute is referred to the court. By the time the claims of a union end up in court, it may well have taken several months.

We may also consider that circumstances might exist in which ample justification exists for retrospective effect to be given to wage or salary increases long before the union may have submitted its claims to the employer.

In the circumstances, it would be wiser not to tie down the industrial court to any stipulation in regard to the retrospective effect of an award, so that industrial justice might not find itself hamstrung. The better part of wisdom would be to delete this retrospective provision altogether, and to leave it to the discretion of the court to determine the retrospective effect of an award in accordance with the principles of justice and equity.

*Clause 30 (1):* This clause deals with the interpretation of an award or collective agreement. We observe with some astonishment that the Minister may refer the matter to the court in relation to the interpretation of an award or collective agreement. Normally, only parties to an agreement or parties bound by an award can apply to the court for an interpretation. No outside party, not even the Minister, has any business to refer any dispute on interpretation to the court.

To allow this would be to run counter to the basic principles of

privity of contract. I therefore call for the deletion of this provision, and to leave it entirely to either of the parties concerned to apply directly to the court for a decision on questions of interpretation.

*Clause 41 (c):* It seems to me that this clause makes quite certain that no union of public servants can ever go on strike in future. It stipulates that no workman shall go on strike after the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, in the case of a trade dispute relating to any government service, has withheld consent to the reference of the dispute to the court.

In other words, the public service union may well find that no avenue whatsoever is open to it in order to secure the redress of its grievances. Negotiations will have failed, arbitration is denied, and it can take no further action in pursuit of its claims or grievances.

If my reading is correct, and I see no reason to believe otherwise, then this provision constitutes a flagrant and outright denial of the essential trade union rights of government employees in the country.

I can think of nothing which is more stupidly calculated to drive government employees in their desperation to revolutionary forces in society who will not propose to act in accordance with constitutional methods of redressing grievances. I find it absolutely incredible that the government should have thought of such a draconian method of denial and repression in relation to its own employees.

In conclusion, I might reiterate that the major defect of this Bill is the absence of penalty provisions for the contravention of certain essential rights, responsibilities and prohibitions provided by the Bill. No penalty is prescribed for employers who discriminate against members of trade unions or victimises them in any way because of their union membership.

If the rights which the Bill provides are to be upheld, then there must be provision for Sessions Court jurisdiction to entertain complaints about their contraventions. Such provisions are

included in industrial legislation in other countries, and there is no reason why they should be left out in our legislation.

I am given to understand that the trade union movement generally is unhappy about the provisions of this Bill. Public opinion too has not yet had time to be informed about the pros and cons of the Bill. In the circumstances, I must ask the Minister to agree to refer this Bill to Select Committee, so that public representations can be made on various aspects of the Bill by all interested sections of the community, and particularly by trade unions of workmen as well as of employers.



## Nuts Galore

A review of Trade Union Classification

*Speech by the Member of Parliament for Bungsar, C. V. Devan Nair, at the 4th Annual General Meeting of the Chemical Workers' Union of Malaya on 17th July, 1966.*

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR recently talked about the vital need to strike a balance between the human factors of production and the material factors. An excellent thought on paper, but woefully distorted in practice.

Now, there is an honest and a dishonest way to strike a balance. The honest way would be to weigh both sides with the same material, with gold for instance. The dishonest way would be to weigh one side with gold and the other side with stones. A balance has been struck, but clearly to the detriment of one party. This is precisely what has happened in the labour field. The government side, and the employer side, are weighted with discriminatory anti-labour laws and regulations and an overwhelmingly anti-labour Parliament. A heavy-handed Registrar of Trade Unions is also thrown in for good effect—a gentleman who would be quite capable of usurping the functions of the Divinity itself if given half the chance.

Let us now look at the labour side of the scales. It also has been weighted, but with a whole lot of peanut unions with squabbling leaders, some of whom have either been browbeaten into submission, or may even be found licking the hands which strike them or kissing the feet which kick them.

If we cut out all the cant and the hypocrisy, if we cut out the platitudes churned out by the Ministry of Labour for use by the

Minister, what exactly do we see with regard to the labour situation in this country?

The following stark and naked facts emerge from our scrutiny: In September 1965, there were 286 trade unions with 320,386 members. Four trade unions account for approximately 70 per cent of the total trade union membership of 320,386. The remaining 30 per cent. of the membership is distributed among 282 peanut unions. The current estimate of the total working population is 1.2 million, which means that approximately 75 per cent of labour is without organisation.

A growing labour movement, would you say? The brute facts of the matter do not justify any such claim. A growing Labour Ministry certainly, for the votes for the bullying bureaucrats in the Labour Ministry have gone up year by year. A growing Labour Ministry and a stagnant labour movement! That is the situation.

We might well ask: "What has the government done through its Registry of Trade Unions to (a) consolidate the trade union movement in broad national categories, and (b) to encourage the reorganisation of the 75 per cent of unorganised labour in the country?" The answer is: "Practically nothing!"

Indeed, what the Government has in fact done has turned out to be counter-productive of its professed policy to encourage the emergence of a strong, united and responsible trade union movement in the country.

Let us consider the major source of weakness in the trade union movement today. This is the multiplicity of trade unions, and indeed, the increasing proliferation of trade union groups. For example, instead of one single teachers' union in the country, uniting all members of the noble profession in a single organisation, you have over 30 teachers' unions, many engaged in ignoble squabbles with each other.

Who is responsible for this state of affairs? The tree must be known by its fruits, and the Government's labour policy must be judged by the fruits of that policy: The multitude of peanuts,

doughnuts, cashew nuts, coconuts and so forth, present indeed an altogether nutty situation! Those who are responsible for this are themselves nuts! One very hard nut is the Registrar of Trade Unions himself who sports a nut which is the nuttiest of them all, and cries out for examination by professional nut-examiners.

Let me justify the charges that we have made. The Registrar of Trade Unions apparently believes in numbers rather than in quality, in internationally accepted patterns of trade union classification and organisation. Generally, the international practice is to encourage the organisation of workers on a trade, occupation or industry basis.

I will give some examples of the Registrar's caprice. Now you all know Ajinomoto. It is a chemical appetiser which housewives use to render soups and dishes more tasty. Nobody eats Ajinomoto by itself as a food. You can live on bread and water, but you cannot live on Ajinomoto and water. If you tried, you would only succeed in poisoning your system. Ajinomoto is not grown like vegetables nor bred like chicken or cattle or pigs for food. Every chemist will tell you that it is the product of a chemical formula. But not our Registrar. He has decided that it is a food and not a chemical, with the result that 200 workers who produce Ajinomoto are not allowed to join the Chemical Workers' Union. One way of getting rid of the Registrar of Trade Unions would be to take him at his own definition and invite him to eat only Ajinomoto for a week. He would end up either in the hospital or the graveyard.

Coca-Cola is a soft drink, which is like orange crush, lemonade, Seven-Up, Red Lion, Green Spot, and so on. One would have thought that Coca-Cola workers would be advised by the Registrar to join the Soft Drink Workers' Union, which represents workers employed by other soft-drink manufacturers. But no, the Registrar has instead allowed the Coca-Cola workers to join the National Union of Commercial Workers.

Here is another beauty! Workers in the cable industry recently applied to join the Metal Workers' Union. Indeed, in other

countries, cable workers do belong to metal workers' unions. But our Registrar, in his infinite caprice, has decided that cable workers cannot join metal workers on the ground that while the core of the cable may be made of metal wires, they are nonetheless insulated by rubber material. But he hasn't told them whether they can join workers in the rubber industry.

There are several other examples of this kind of idiocy. All the evidence clearly points to one inescapable conclusion, that the Government's intention is to systematically emasculate the labour movement by converting it into a multitude of peanut unions.

But sometimes, very, very rarely, I'm afraid the Registrar does make a sound decision, taking everyone by surprise. We all remember how very obstinately he once insisted that the petroleum, chemical and gas industry was not one inter-related industry as justified by international precedent, but three separate industries. Now, suddenly, he has changed his mind and given his approval for petroleum, chemical and gas workers to come together in one union. This is all to the good. Only, one does have a suspicion that this sudden change of front on the part of the Registrar was dictated, not by sound industrial commonsense, but by political expediency. The Registrar probably feels that the leadership of a unified organisation of petroleum, gas and chemical workers would not invite troublesome gentlemen like the Member of Parliament for Bungsar to address their annual general meetings, as you have done. Who knows that they may, on the other hand, decide to invite the Registrar himself to tell everybody about all the glorious things that he and his colleagues in the Ministry of Labour have done for the labour movement. I wouldn't grudge him such simple joys and I sincerely wish him the best of luck.

The Trade Unions Ordinance of 1959 confers arbitrary powers on the Registrar. The relevant article in this Ordinance defines a trade union as "an association of workmen . . . within a particular trade, occupation or industry or within similar trades, occupations or industries." This is roughly the same definition as in other

countries, where "similar trades, occupations or industries" are intelligently defined by an enlightened social and industrial opinion. But here is the rub. Under the same article in our Ordinance, the word 'similar' means "similar in the opinion of the Registrar." And if you have a nutty man with nutty opinions who holds that post, with the blessings of the Minister and of the Government, then you have had it!

No intelligent criteria appears to exist, on the basis of which trade unions may be classified. The Minister may talk grandiloquently about the Philadelphia Declaration and so forth, but if no enlightened industrial guidelines are laid down for the Registrar of Trade Unions, the mess in the labour movement will never be cleared up. The Minister should know that what the Registrar has done so far constitutes gross violations of I.L.O. Convention No. 87 which provides that workers' organisations shall have the right to draw up their constitutions and rules, elect their officials, plan their programmes and activities, without government interference or restrictions.

Peanut unions are not to be confined to Malaya alone apparently. They are now for export to Sabah and Sarawak in Eastern Malaysia. In Sarawak all unions were recently de-registered and no union has to date been re-registered.

In Sabah, only 8 out of 35 de-registered trade unions have been re-registered. The other 27 unions have been told to split their unions up craftwise and to register them separately. For instance, bank employees in Sabah have been told that they will no longer be regarded as commercial workers, and that they should split from the Commercial Workers' Union, and form a separate union by themselves. So also staff in timber undertakings and estates have been told that they are no longer regarded as commercial workers and have been asked to split away from the old Commercial Workers' Union. Thus, the old Commercial Workers' Union has been asked to reduce to only one-third of its former size. The other two-thirds of its members are now required to form themselves into six small and separate unions.

The same standards of course do not apply to employers, who are allowed to associate on far more favourable terms.

These are the brute facts of the situation. All the mealy-mouthed platitudes, the cant and the hypocrisy, which periodically emanate from the Ministry of Labour, must be judged on the basis of these brute facts. The emasculation of organised labour appears to be the aim of government policy, not its strengthening. In the office of the Registrar, you have a man who does not think in broad terms of categorisation and classification of trade unions in accordance with overwhelming international precedent and practice. Instead of such a Registrar, what in fact we have in that office is a peanut-manufacturer, who might even conceivably convert himself, if he is not stopped by the weight of public opinion, into an atom-smasher.

What hope is there that the Government might see its way to overhaul its thinking on trade union classification and categorisation? I am afraid there is little, and trade union leaders are themselves partly to blame. Their bickerings, their squabbles and their inability to pull together is partly to blame. Also to blame is the foolish way in which trade union leaders keep themselves aloof from political issues. One result is a Parliament in which the interests of employers and of capital generally are profusely represented, but in which trade union interests are conspicuous by their absence. So let us not blame the Government if we have an anti-union Parliament, which resounds at every sitting with anti-union speeches. Trade union leaders must understand that workers are an electoral force in this country, and can, if properly led, exercise an influence in electing a more balanced Parliament, in which there will be members to voice the aspirations of labour in our country. If the representation in our Parliament is weighted against labour, then trade union leaders have only themselves to blame.

## The Need for Self-Reliance

*Speech by C. V. Devan Nair, M.P. for Bungsar, at the Annual General Meeting of the National Union of Gas Workers of Malaya on 18.7.65.*

TODAY TRADE UNIONISTS in Malaya have to prepare themselves to advocate union cases before the recently instituted Arbitration Tribunal.

It is imperative that workers and their unions should depend more on their own representatives and specialists than on practising advocates and solicitors for the presentation and argument of their cases before the new Arbitration Tribunal.

The ordinary law courts and the formal categories of law they employ are rigid, blunt instruments that have been found by experience in all advanced countries to be woefully inadequate to the tasks of solving the complex economic, social and legal problems that are encompassed in modern industrial relations. Any industrial arbitration court or tribunal in any progressive state is meant to help in equitably solving these economic, social and legal problems in employer-employee relations. Hence the jurisdiction given to an Industrial Arbitration Court is special and in a sense wider than the jurisdiction vested in the traditional law courts of Malaya. Trade unionists must therefore become alive to the danger that lawyers, used to the practice of their more rarefied creed in the traditional law courts, would immediately introduce a legalistic narrowness and rectitude in the practice and procedure of the new Industrial Arbitration Tribunal, which would result in frustrations and the ultimate collapse of the arbitral machinery that has now been set up.

It is necessary and vital that the trade union movement in Malaysia should come to depend upon its own specialists-

economists, sociologists and lawyers – or to put it in another way, its own civil service to run its potentially vast machinery and affairs. A significant start in this direction has been made in Singapore where they have been obliged to face this problem squarely a few years ago.

The newly-appointed President of the Industrial Arbitration Tribunal, Dato Sir George Oehlers, is a man of intelligence and breadth of vision, and we may expect him to know that the special nature and problems of industrial relations require for their resolution machinery that is altogether more subtle and flexible than the system of law and law courts that obtain in Malaysia today. The new Industrial Arbitration Tribunal should be a court of EQUITY first and last, speedily solving the manifold problems that will come before it in the normal course of employer-employee relations. It is not the job of the Arbitration Tribunal to decide on points of law, but to determine the best means of ensuring industrial peace and stability, on the basis of industrial justice and fair play. But it is up to the trade unions to contribute to the correct evolution of the practice and procedure of the Arbitration Tribunal, by relying more on trade unionists themselves to present cases. Any dependence on lawyers, whose services are in any case more expensive than those of trade union leaders, would give a false and harmful orientation to the arbitration tribunal at the very outset. And this would prove prejudicial to the real interests of labour.



## **The Role of the Opposition in Emerging Nations**

*A Talk to the Lions Club of Kluang on 10th April, 1968 by  
C. V. Devan Nair, M.P. for Bungsar.*

THIS IS RATHER a stereotyped title. Everybody talks these days about "The Role of this" and "The Role of that" in society or in politics. But no textbook prescriptions exist for the role of individuals or of organised groups in society. All that may be said is that the roles vary from society to society, depending on the historical, social, economic and cultural factors which have influenced the shaping of values in each society. And the ultimate criterion to judge the value of any political opposition is whether it has been a creative and constructive opposition, or a negative and destructive one.

We might also bear in mind the grim fact that there are fewer and fewer emerging nations in the world which subscribe to the idea of a constitutionally-based opposition. Many developing nations of Africa and Asia, which started off on the basis of parliamentary institutions, have jettisoned them, and taken to rule by military juntas and one-party dictatorships of various kinds. The principle of one-man-one-vote no longer operates in these countries, and today only a minority of emerging nations can continue to boast of parliamentary institutions.

Not all the Afro-Asian nations who have given up parliamentary institutions can claim that they have done better as a result. In nearly all cases, the constitutional opposition has been replaced by an unconstitutional opposition operating from the underground. Instead of opposition M.P.'s shouting away in Parliament, you have armed uprisings, bloody tribal and communal clashes, resulting in more and more repression. And thus the vicious circle goes on in deeper and deeper grooves.

We cannot claim that modern-minded and forward-looking societies can only come into being through the institutions of parliamentary democracy. It has to be acknowledged, as an objective fact, that modernising influences can operate successfully in societies which have not adopted the institutions of parliamentary democracy. The Soviet Union is an outstanding example of a backward nation which pushed itself into the forefront of nations and established its credentials to modernity and progress, to social and economic expansion and technological superiority, on the basis of quite different political institutions.

What may be laid down as a general rule is that any nation which desires to get on in this technological age must so institutionalise its political, social and economic life as to accommodate all sections and classes of the community, in a generally accepted framework of a common and creative endeavour towards a prosperous and more enlightened future.

Being a social democrat, I personally prefer, as most of us do, to achieve desirable political, social and economic changes in our country through peaceful and constitutional means. But leaving value judgements aside for the moment, we must appreciate the fact that there are instances on record to show that an enlightened dictatorship might show more fruitful results in terms of social, economic, cultural and technological progress than an inefficient parliamentary democracy in which the ruling party is backward-looking and obscurantist in its approach to these problems. The Soviet Union is a political dictatorship and India a nation based on parliamentary institutions. But hordes of cows, monkeys and holy men do not stand in the way of progress in the Soviet Union, whereas in India they unfortunately do. The Soviet Union sends its spaceships to explore the stars, while the Indian Parliament debates the fundamental rights of cows and monkeys, with a whole lot of so-called holy men conducting themselves in a most unholy fashion. The conclusion to be drawn, plainly, is that parliamentary institutions are not, in themselves, an infallible

recipe for progress. In the last analysis, the success of a parliamentary democracy depends on the quality and fibre of the political leadership which uses these institutions, and the goals and standards which they set for themselves.

Nonetheless, parliamentary institutions do possess advantages over political dictatorships. An enlightened political dictatorship is an exception rather than the rule. In any case, the chances of kicking the scoundrels out in a political dictatorship are much more slender and always more risky than in a parliamentary democracy.

In the developing countries, in particular, political dictatorships have tended to be anything but forward-looking, enlightened and modern-minded. They represent instead, narrow tribal and communal interests, operating through the control of the armed forces.

The possibility of a political dictatorship in Malaysia is an appalling thought, for the chances are that if such an event did come about, it would represent the forces, not of Malaysian national integration, but of racial intolerance and obscurantism, with catastrophic consequences all round.

For us in Malaysia, the best bet for our entry into the modern age of science and technology, are the values and institutions of political democracy which we obtained from the British connection. Our troubles will arise, not from the institutions of parliamentary democracy, but from whether the political leadership which uses them, choose to move forward into the future or backward into the past.

In considering the role of the opposition in Malaysian politics, we would do well to bear in mind the fact that there is in existence in our country an unconstitutional opposition as well. The recent racial riots in Penang and Malacca were handiwork of racial and communist groups who are not in the least inclined towards constitutional methods of political action.

It is infinitely unlikely, for example, that the Communist Party of Malaya will ever develop a desire to apply to the Registrar of Societies for permission to conduct their activities.

We have therefore to start off on the assumption that an incipient unconstitutional opposition already exists in the country, made up of racialists and communists. The extent of the growth and the degree of success that this unconstitutional opposition meets with in the country at large, depends on the policies pursued by the political leadership of the Alliance Government. The appeal of the unconstitutional opposition increases in direct proportion to the disillusionment with constitutional processes, and with the failure of the Government's political, social and economic policies. No objective observer can deny that such disillusionment is on the increase in the country. You cannot divide the people into bumiputras and non-bumiputras, into first-class citizens and second-class citizens, and you cannot deny equality of opportunity and of rights to Malaysians on the grounds of race, language and religion, with the seal and sanction of Parliament itself, without derogation of the value of Parliament in our multi-racial society. You will ensure the emasculation of parliamentary democracy if you use parliamentary institutions, not as vehicles for creative social and economic change directed towards multi-racial integration and modernisation, but as a protective cover behind which the forces of social and communal reaction gather strength and consolidate themselves.

Every time the seal of Parliamentary approval is given to discriminatory or repressive policies, the communists and the racialists must add to their list of supporters. The hogging of the mass media of communications, of radio, T.V. and the press by the propaganda of the ruling party, and the denial of time or adequate space to the constitutional opposition, means that the prospects of a constitutional alternative to the present policies also diminish in the eyes of the people.

One of the defects of the democratic system as it operates in this country is the relative weakness of an open and articulate public opinion – thanks to the indecent hogging of the mass media of communications by the Government! In such a situation, the effectiveness of a constitutional opposition must diminish, and

the appeal of an unconstitutional opposition correspondingly increase. In the absence of an articulate public opinion, there must take its place an underground public opinion, fed on wild rumours and on hates and frustrations, whether imaginary or real.

A foreign scholar told me that he could not make out what Malaysian public opinion really was on major issues, until he gave up reliance on the radio, T.V. and press, and took instead to the coffee shops, hawkers' stalls, barber shops and taxi drivers. He was appalled by what he found, for what he heard would have delighted the hearts of the communists and the racialists. One of the things he found was that the chief topics of conversation everywhere were issues of racial division, discrimination and the like. He asked many people whether they followed the reports of parliamentary proceedings in the newspapers. They said they did, but merely to find out what the latest item of bad news was.

It will be generally agreed that Malaysia's most vital problem is that of nation-building in a multi-racial society. Are we to move forward to an integrated multi-racial nation, or are we to move backwards to a climate of inter-racial distrust and suspicion? This is the major political question for Malaysia, and the answer to it will decide, more than anything else, the future of this multi-racial nation. The role of opposition political parties will be judged on the basis of the contributions they can make to the solution of the problems of integration in a multi-racial society.

Opposition parties, at least the professedly non-communal and multi-racial parties, have an advantage in this respect, over the Alliance. The ruling party is in fact a collection of communal parties. By the very fact of their history and their communally exclusive membership, the U.M.N.O., the M.C.A. and M.I.C are inhibited in their approach to the problem of integration. These parties came into being in order to ensure that Malays shall remain Malays, Chinese shall remain Chinese and Indians shall remain Indians. What they sought to achieve was not anything so far-sighted as the national integration of a multi-racial people. At

best, they are committed to no more than a mutual accommodation of separate racial interests and values. In the long run, however, such an accommodation can only prove to be of a dubious and temporary value.

After ten years of independence, the distressing fact is that the Malay has been made to feel that he is a bumiputra first, and a Malaysian only incidentally, while the non-bumiputras have been made to feel that they are non-bumiputras first, and Malaysians only incidentally. This position must be altered and reversed if the nation-building process is to have any chance of success. Either we all come to feel, whatever our racial origins may be, that we are Malaysians first and foremost, and Malays, Chinese and Indians only as a matter of historical accident, or we will never get off the launching pad as a nation.

Opposition political parties can seek to serve one of two political objectives. They can seek to serve the exclusive interests of a particular community, as the P.M.I.P. does, in which case they perform a negative and even dangerous role in terms of nation-building. Or they can seek to serve the larger interests of all Malaysians, whatever their racial origins may be, in which case they could make a significant and creative contribution to the emergence of an integrated Malaysian nation. If the opposition refuse to pander to the forces of racial exclusivism and separation, whatever the provocation may be, then they can serve as a vital catalyst in the nation-building process.

*It is a sad commentary on our political development as a nation, and indeed a serious indictment of the policies pursued by the political leadership over the last ten years, that innumerable Malaysians would find it difficult today to give a satisfactory answer to the question - "Which comes first, my racial origin or my nationality?" You all remember the futile question which the philosophers of old used to play about with - "Which comes first, the hen or the egg?" The realistic answer to this would be - "Both, and the cock!" And the cockerel here, the fertilising principle in nation-building, is the spirit and approach of multi-racialism.*

*The hen, the egg and the cockerel are all parts of the same integral process. Remove the cockerel, and you will very soon be left with neither hens nor eggs. Similarly, your racial origin, your Malaysian nationality and the spirit of multi-racialism are the three elements in one integral process of nation-building. Without the creative spirit and approach of multi-racialism, very soon neither you nor your nation will be able to generate the common future which we all desire.*

*This is what the rulers of our nation must understand. There is no incompatibility between my racial origin and my nationality, any more than there is any incompatibility between the Scotsman and his British nationality, or between the Swiss German and his Swiss nationality. Nowhere in the world is it considered that the one cancels out the other, for if it did, very few nations would be left in the world. What we should seek is the integration of our multi-racial people in a common national consciousness and identity, and not assimilation.*

*The communalist of course takes a different view. He wants assimilation, and not integration. He says, "I remain what I am, but you change into what I am. If you cannot do that, you nonetheless change into something else, much diminished from what you are now, so that I can watch, control and, if need be, squat upon you."*

*Now, that is not a process which can possibly succeed in this country. Such an attitude would be an invitation to a mutually destructive clash and conflict. The rational answer is integration. In order to integrate the different communities in a new identity, there is no need to abolish their different cultural legacies. Integration means the transcendence of lower terms and categories in a higher term, and any mathematician will tell you that the higher terms and the lower terms do not cancel each other out. The higher term is the integral fulfilment of the lower terms.*

When all is said and done, the only possible conclusion that all Malaysians of goodwill can come to is that Malaysia's survival and progress must depend on the successful integration of our multi-racial people in a Malaysian national identity and consciousness. Either we press forward towards this goal, and strengthen the

foundations of political democracy in the process, or we fold up the constitutional game and leave the political stage to be taken over for a catastrophic contest between the racialists on the one hand and the communists on the other. But those who love this country, and want it to succeed, cannot fold our hands and watch as bystanders. None of us are spectators or bystanders. We are in the thick of the arena itself, and we must need take a stand, and play our parts, if we are to survive.



## Sarawak Betrayed!

*Speech by the Member of Parliament for Bungsar, C. V. Devan Nair,  
on the Emergency (Federal Constitution and Constitution of Sarawak)  
Bill, 1966 in the Dewan Ra'ayat on 19th September 1966.*

THE PROCLAMATION of the emergency in Sarawak, together with this Bill, seeking to amend the constitution, shall stand or fall in the public eye, depending on the validity of the arguments advanced by the government in their justification, viz:

- (i) the moral and constitutional propriety of the measures taken;
- (ii) the threat posed to the security of Sarawak if the objectives of the Bill are not attained.

It is my submission that on both counts, the government has not only failed, most dismally, to establish a valid case, but has in fact scored several indictments against itself.

Let us take first the moral and constitutional propriety of the Bill. It is claimed that the passage of this Bill will restore to Sarawak a government enjoying majority support in the legislature. Against this can be advanced the more cogent and crucial question as to whether the present legislature in the state continues to command the confidence of the country at large. The ultimate question, surely, is not whether Dato Stephen-Kalong Ningkan enjoys the confidence of the Alliance majority in the Council Negri, but whether the supposed Alliance majority in the Council Negri enjoy the confidence of the country. Considering the appalling behaviour of many of these gentlemen, who have shifted and re-shifted their loyalties (*Laughter*), this would appear to be highly dubious.

A Chief Minister, who finds that there has been a shift in the loyalties of his erstwhile supporters, due to pressures and pulls exercised on them from outside his state, is allowed by convention and the constitution to recommend to the Head of State the dissolution of the legislature, and seek elections to a new legislature. This has been done. But let us grant, for the moment, that practical difficulties exist in the way of holding immediate general elections. The next best thing to do in the circumstances would have been to appeal to the next nearest fountain of ultimate authority in the set-up in Sarawak, and these are the five divisional advisory councils, who under the present three-tier system, act as electoral colleges to the Council Negri. It stands to reason that if immediate reference to the ultimate source of power in the state, the electorate of Sarawak, is not feasible, then reference could at least be made to the penultimate source of power in the present set-up in the State, the five divisional advisory councils. This would have helped to determine whether the supposed Alliance majority in the Council Negri enjoy the support and the confidence of those who put them there in the first place. This recommendation of the Chief Minister has also been ignored by the Central Government. Instead the Central Government has had recourse to the unilateral and highly arbitrary proclamation of an Emergency in the state and the introduction of this Bill.

The question arises, "Does the constitution govern the conduct of the ruling party, or does the ruling party govern the conduct of the constitution?" (*Laughter*). It would appear that once again, the Alliance Central Government has shown that when it comes to party interests, the sanctity of the constitution is thrown to the winds, and party interests are allowed to supercede the normal workings of the constitution.

Granted that there is an undoubted security threat posed by the communists in Sarawak! But if public confidence in the sanctity of constitutional processes is shaken, as it has been by the actions of the Central Government, then the communist threat is sorely aggravated! The communists and their allies will now be

able to say to the people of Sarawak and with justification: "Look, don't be fooled by all these senseless pratings about constitutional democracy by the Alliance chiefs in Kuala Lumpur. You have seen for yourselves more than once that they change the rules of the game whenever they want to score goals, not only against the communists, but against State government and Chief Minister who had originally been with them, and who in fact have always been anti-communist. Do you want to continue supporting a Central Government which tampers so shamelessly with the rules of the game? Do you want Sarawak to be a football at the feet of Kuala Lumpur, or do you want to retain some dignity and self-respect? Better join us, give a bashing to the Central Government and let us all get the hell out of Malaysia!"

Such are the powerfully potent weapons the Central Government has presented to its communist enemies on a gift platter through the proclamation of the emergency and the presentation of this Bill.

Simple commonsense should have dictated to the Central Government the vital need to exercise forbearance, patience, tact and intelligence in the face of an undoubtedly difficult situation, and to have refrained from fiddling about with the sacred rules of the constitutional game and thereby shaking the foundations of confidence in constitutional processes not only in Sarawak, but in Malaysia as a whole.

Frankly, I don't believe that anyone in the constitutional opposition can feel safe after this alarming exhibition of sneering political cynicism. To attempt to provide a constitutional opposition in this country is clearly an exercise in the most utter futility, if the constitution is always subject to immolation before the altar of Alliance party interests. And when constitutional law-abiding birds like those of us in the opposition begin more and more to feel in this manner, the stage is set and prepared for sole occupation by those who believe in resort to extra constitutional methods of political action - the communists!

The whole chain of events, beginning with the first illegal dis-

dismissal of the Chief Minister, constitutes a story of blunder piled on blunder, until today the Central Government stands indicted of directly contributing to the aggravation of the security threat in Sarawak. It is a sordid tale of narrow party interests dominating policy and conduct at every turn. First of all, you illegally dismiss the Chief Minister, after wilfully and deliberately by-passing the Council Negri. A High Court ruling subsequently declares the dismissal to have been illegal. Meanwhile, there have been frantic comings and goings between Kuching and Kuala Lumpur, until the Central Government feels that the Alliance has secured or suborned a comfortable majority of members in the Council Negri. Then you amend the constitution in order to compel a vote in the Council Negri, which you had avoided in the first instance. You stage pathetic demonstrations, described by one member as "no more crowded than a pauper's funeral," in order to spread the impression that law and order were threatened. And you end up making your communist enemies whoop in joy, for even they had never expected that you would so successfully score so many goals into your own net!

The ground is further cut from under the Government's feet when we consider the fact that the Council Negri will have to be called into session, in any case, after three months or so from now. This will have to be done in order to consider the State's Budget, and also to comply with a provision in the State constitution that there could not be a lapse of more than six months between meetings of the Council Negri. Is three months too long to wait? Or is it feared, as alleged by the Chief Minister's party, that within these three months, another shift of loyalties might take place among Alliance members of the Council Negri, and thus upset the Central Government's appletcart in Sarawak?

The most charitable explanation of the government's actions would be that Kuala Lumpur has committed a series of monumental blunders. But this is perhaps a little too lenient. The more realistic assessment would be that those who rule the destinies of the Malaysian people have become so thick-skinned

in their cynicism as to have lost all sense of perspective and tolerance.

I believe that most members of the opposition in this Parliament must feel that whatever we may say or do here is a sheer waste of time, that the most eloquent pleas for sanity must inevitably be debased or rendered ineffective in the fetid atmosphere of this Alliance-dominated Chamber. But lest the whole country should lose out by our default, it is perhaps wiser to put on a brave face and to attempt the impossible.

In the best interests of Malaysia, and the integrity and survival of this nation, the Government must ignore short-sighted partisanship in what started off essentially as a squalid intra-party quarrel. All that has happened so far presents merely the superficial symptoms of a deep-rooted disease. The basic diagnosis of this disease is the increasingly widespread disenchantment and discontentment of the people of Sarawak with regard to their role and place in Malaysia. It is not a role or place which self-respecting Sarawakians can be expected to endure for long with equanimity. The lack of autonomy, the bullying and coercion from Kuala Lumpur, and the too-obvious string pulling from Kuala Lumpur, manipulating local puppets in Sarawak - all these factors offend strongly-felt and entrenched Sarawakian sentiments. The blame for all this must be placed squarely at Kuala Lumpur's door. The communist enemies of Malaysia are the sole and inevitable beneficiaries.

The remedy is clearly not to exacerbate such feelings. Unfortunately, this has precisely been the effect of the Central Government's actions so far. The remedy must lie in returning dignity and self-respect to the people of Sarawak, in respecting and accommodating local Sarawakian sentiments and loyalties within the context of the larger Malaysian loyalty and identity. Such is the political formula that the Central Government must devise in order to retain the allegiance of Sarawak to Malaysia. I plead for such a rational approach before the situation deteriorates to the point of no return. Perhaps there is still time, given

will, the intelligence and the determination to devise and to apply such a formula. It may mean adjustments to the constitution to provide for a greater degree of autonomy for Sarawak. Amendments to the constitution to bring this about will be far more welcome than the amendments presented to this House today, which are calculated to bring exactly the opposite result.

If, however, the intention is to provoke a further disintegration of Malaysia, by applying draconian methods of coercion, and by saying to the people of Sarawak, "Take us on our own impossible terms, or not at all," then the Central Government could not have done better than what it has done. In such a case, there is little to be said, apart from consigning the whole sordid situation to the lap of the Gods!



## Malayanisation — Not Malayisation!

*Speech by Goh Hock Guan, Secretary General, DAP, to the Australian and New Zealand Graduates Association, Penang, on 28th September 1968.*

IN TALKING ABOUT Malayanisation we are talking about the transfer of political, management, professional and military power from the hands of the previous British colonial masters to the hands of Malaysians then, and Malaysians now.

Malayanisation is the logical outcome following the attainment of Merdeka and the withdrawal of British colonialism from Malaysia.

What must be borne in mind here is that the transfer of power is to Malaysians, not to Chinese, Malays and Indians or Eurasians. Hence the term "**MALAYANISATION**" not **CHINESISATION**, **INDIANISATION**, or **MALAYISATION**." This is the vital difference and any departure from this meaning would only be creating more problems for this already problem-overloaded country.

It is therefore against this background that I want to discuss today's topic with you.

Management and the elite roles of graduates is what you are interested in under the Malayanisation scheme. In showing this

interest you are expressing a commendable desire to seek ways and means whereby your talent, education and knowledge could be put to play their proper leadership role in building a prosperous and independent Malaysia.

Unfortunately, this is a role which has been denied many of you and the increasing brain drain with graduates and professional men migrating to Australia, Canada or the U.S. and the increasing frustrations of those who remain behind are eloquent testimonies to this failure of Malayisation.

Why is this so, and why has the mood of disillusionment replaced the joy and the great expectations which independence and the prospects of Malayisation, have engendered?

*In a nutshell, the answer lies not so much in the failure of Malayisation, or the inability of Malaysians to carry out the new management tasks, but in the fact that Malayisation has replaced Malayisation. This is the root cause of the problem for graduates, just as much as it is the root cause of the major political, educational, economic and cultural problems facing Malaysia.*

This is a simple statement of fact, not an expression of anti-Malay feeling. Indeed for any political party that aspires to be the ruling party in Malaysia, it cannot afford to be anti-Malay, anti-Chinese or anti-Indian. And the DAP aspires to be the ruling party in the future, very much unlike the Gerakan Party which in the words of its Chairman, Professor Alatas, is "only interested to make the Alliance worry and that the Gerakan agrees with the policies of the Alliance except their implementation." The DAP rejects the racial policies of the Alliance and would seek to replace them by more broad-minded multi-racial policies in keeping with the multi-racial character of Malaysia's population.

Malayisation of management positions has created a great deal of unhappiness among the non-Malays and also has failed to do justice to the Malays for two reasons:

- (1) It will generate the wrong attitudes in our Malay brothers that the top positions in management are



reserved for the Malays because they are Malays and so because of this their qualities of resourcefulness, perseverance and hard work are not given the chance to develop, and the mental revolution which is needed to modernise Malay society from its feudal grip remains unfulfilled.

- (2) The top posts are necessarily limited and while in the first instance able non-Malays are passed over in favour of Malays, the Malays themselves have now found that able Malays are rejected in favour of influential Malays. It is a vicious process and an inevitable one when the basis of selection is not merit but race and influence. Instead of striving for excellence and the acquisition of knowledge and skills, people will be encouraged to strive for political influence and connections.

This is a disastrous policy where special rights have been abused for the benefit of a few influential Malays while the majority of the Malays and non-Malays continue to live in poverty and despair. The DAP can help them just as we can help the have-nots of other races by intelligent democratic socialist policies based not on a man's race but on his needs and his talents.

The recent Bumiputra Congress, for instance, attended by only the Malay management and political elite illustrates only too well how narrow and intolerant economic policies can be pursued once politicians are communally inspired.

Not even the MCA and the MIC, so-called equal partners of the Alliance are permitted to be present or have any say in the Bumiputra Congress. What a shame! The whole thing was dominated by UMNO and the UMNO-controlled MARA and non-Malays who really want to help the Malays are not welcome to make their contributions. Is poverty exclusive to only one group of people? Is wealth also the monopoly of only one race? There are indeed some very rich Malays, Chinese and Europeans! This brings us to you and what kind of role you can play to correct this unhappy and increasingly unfortunate racial trend. Do you have

role to play at all since political considerations carry more weight than mere technical or management considerations?

I believe you have, however minor that role may appear to be. Your greatest asset is that you and your colleagues from the other graduates societies and the professional men represent the most educated group of people in the country. If you can therefore make a collective study on the nature of Malay poverty in the objective manner in which your scholarship has qualified you then you may come out with the answer that **Malayanisation** rather than **Malayisation** is the answer to our problems. Of course, in spite of your objective investigation the Alliance Government may still just brush it aside. Let them. But you would have produced a document of incalculable value for all to see. You would have pin-pointed and defined the problems and we in the DAP would be quite happy to incorporate your findings in our manifesto and programme.

I feel sad to note the total absence of interest and the silence of your graduate association, of the University of Malaya Graduate Society, of the American Graduates Club, of the Nanyang and Formosan University Graduates towards this problem of Malayanisation and the other equally grave problems of economics and politics in the country.

If only for your own enlightened selfish interests to protect yourselves as the elite management and professional group in the country, do something, start thinking and act in a purposeful organised manner to save yourselves and the country.

Of all groups of people, you have the most to lose if stable and equitable conditions are non-existent. Because then you cannot exercise your skills; your talents as managers, economists or technocrats are useless in a world which is crumbling all around, and the rules of the jungle, of threats and emotional outbursts have replaced the rules of logic, sanity and intelligence – qualities which you prize and rightly so because it is only through them that we will have any hope of building this country.

Finally, let me end by drawing your attention to some of the

hysterical nonsense that went on inside the recent Bumiputra Congress, so reminiscent of Indonesia before that country went to ruins. There was a suggestion, for instance, at that Bumiputra Congress to take over all British firms and properties as a short cut to wealth even though at the same time the Government is literally begging more British investment to come to Malaysia. This suggestion, so similar to the Indonesian grab of Dutch properties apparently was not good enough for the ex-Secretary-General of UMNO, Tan Sri Syed Ja'afar. He got a better idea. Why not, he suggested, put an end to free enterprise which means of course taking over the business of all non-Malays so that MARA and the UMNO can run all the business of the country? Again, similar to what the Indonesians did when they found that grabbing Dutch firms didn't work, they kicked out the Chinese first from the rural areas, and then controlled them in the urban areas.

So you see we are heading the way of Indonesia. Why, even in Indonesia the new Indonesian leaders like Adam Malik realized that grabbing things from others is not the way to solve your problems. But here, far from learning the Indonesian lessons, Malaysia may yet have to repeat the same tragedy and heartbreaks before men can become wiser.

So my friends, in that kind of world you have no place at all. You must reject those disastrous policies just as Tengku and Razak rejected the appropriation of British and non-Malay firms, properties and posts. You must go out and educate the people and the politicians, especially illiterate Alliance politicians that the way to economic equality between the Malays and non-Malays is not to create a few more Malay millionaires and capitalists or by giving the top management jobs to them on the basis of their race, but to really help the Malays, which we all must. Intelligent socialist principles must be applied so that the majority of our Malay brothers will benefit and not as at present - a tiny minority of Malay, Chinese and Indian millionaires monopolising the wealth of the land to the despair of the majority of Malays, Chinese and Indians who are less fortunate.

## Racialist Galleries and Communal Lobbies

*Speech by the Member of Parliament for Bungsar, C. V. Devan Nair (DAP) on the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's Royal Address during the Dewan Ra'ayat debate on Motion of Thanks on 16.6.1967.*

THE TROUBLE with the royal address to Parliament this year is not that it should have attempted to paper over the cracks, as it were. All governments do that, and ours is no exception to the general rule.

What troubles me is that so many wide and gaping cracks should have been completely ignored, their very existence practically denied. The truth as it appears to many intelligent Malaysian eyes is that the national wall is made up of an extremely intricate pattern of cracks, small and big, all slowly widening. Indeed, it would appear that before long, bits of wall plaster must come tumbling down, to be followed later by larger and larger chunks of wall.

Only Malaysians with the death-wish upon them can gloat over all this. But for those of us who think that this country has more than a fighting chance to survive unscathed, with our political values intact and with our economic and social standards also intact, and improving, in what is potentially the most turbulent region of a troubled and swiftly-changing world, the cracks in the national wall can give no cause for satisfaction.

I said that we have more than a fighting chance to survive, but the distressing thought is that with every passing year, with every internal or international setback, and with every new example of political or economic blundering on the part of the nation's leaders, our chances diminish.

A look at the world around us gives no cause for comfort and security. In the past one year alone, portentous changes have

taken place all round.

China is convulsed by a frightening ferment of nearly lunatic proportions and the pressures generated in that vast country could portend ill for the peace of the whole world.

India shows more and more signs of political, social and economic anemia, and the great Indian experiment in political democracy, which began hopefully under the most auspicious signs twenty years ago, today totters weakly on spindly legs, with incalculable consequences for the future of democratic values in Asia.

The Huk revival in the Philippines does not speak well for economic or political progress in that region.

The world is in transition, and most important for us, Asia as a whole, and South East Asia in particular, is in transition. It would be a comfort, of course, to know precisely where we are transiting to. We don't. And neither does anybody else.

We might be transiting to a new international balance and accommodation, in which case we must find ourselves a worthy and honourable place in that new balance and accommodation. Or we might be transiting into a generally dark age for Asia, but even then, a sturdy, united and self-reliant nation can somehow manage to survive. Finally, we might be in transition towards World War Three, in which case we can only pray!

There are so many imponderables in the situation facing this country that no prophet, neither Alliance nor DAP nor Labour, can honestly attempt to predict the future. But the most fearsome imponderable of all is whether the political leadership of our multi-racial nation will possess the wisdom, capacity and sagacity to keep this nation alive and to steer it safely through the troubled waters of the future. The conduct of the Alliance leadership thus gives room for serious doubt and uncertainty on this score.

One wonders whether the rulers of this nation are even dimly aware of the difficulties of survival a small nation like Malaysia must face in an increasingly difficult and rapidly changing world. One wonders whether they have worked out in their own minds a

system and order of priorities in both national and international affairs. Much can and will be forgiven them, if they did possess such essential wisdom. But nothing can or will be forgiven them if it eventually turns out that they never did possess anything of the kind.

*Relations with Singapore is a case in point. Here are two small nations, with so much in common, facing much the same uncertainties, and likely to become the common victims of the same international forces and circumstances, behaving like frogs in the well. Being frogs in the well is bad enough, but to be like quarrelling frogs in the same well is absolutely incredible!*

The sixty-year-old common currency has been broken up. Passports for travel between the two territories will soon be introduced. And economically, both countries show a readiness to cut off their noses in order to spite their faces. We can ask, in all sincerity, whether such behaviour can be deemed to constitute wisdom by any standards whatsoever. One would have thought that co-operation between the two territories would have been dictated by sheer self-interest alone, if by nothing else.

History has repeatedly shown that only those nations and peoples survive and prosper which show a capacity for cohesion, self-respect and sturdy self-reliance. A small nation like Malaysia, surrounded by hostile or unfavourable international circumstances, must deliberately and systematically cultivate precisely these collective virtues if it is to survive as a viable economic and political entity.

If we are to achieve national cohesion and solidarity in our multi-racial nation, then it is basic and fundamental that we get our principles of nation-building correct. And these principles of nation-building in a multi-racial society must in application and effect lead to an increasing sense of a common national identity and consciousness among our multi-racial people.

Can we honestly say that this has been done? I submit that it has not. Can I plead that it is not too late, and indeed, that it is vital, for the government to find out why this has not been achieved?

ved, and what defects and shortcomings in our educational and cultural policies might be rectified or removed in order to achieve this cardinal aim.

If it is agreed that the achievement of national solidarity and cohesion is a basic and fundamental goal of national policy, then members of the Alliance government must firmly and categorically refuse to respond in future to any temptation to play to the racialist gallery or to succumb to communal lobbies. While this might bring the temporary euphoria of a transient communal success, it would in the long run mean providing hostages to fortune where the task of nation-building is concerned.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that our strongest line of defence against communism or any form of subversion must be the creation of national cohesion and solidarity. If we failed, I said that we would be providing hostages to fortune. But to put it more bluntly and crudely, we would in fact be providing hostages to the communists.

Another equally vital and important line of defence against internal dangers must be progress and stability on the economic front. It is gratifying to note from His Majesty's address that the government has at last become aware of the vital importance of financial discipline, if a satisfactory rate of economic growth is to be achieved. Last year's budget was in deficit even on current account. We might safely assume that the deficit in the 1967 estimates will greatly exceed \$29 million. Even our redoubtable Finance Minister has confessed that he will find it impossible to increase taxation in 1968 by as much as he raised in 1967.

Whether it will at all be possible in the foreseeable future to go back to surplus budgets is highly dubious. But the Government's determination to practise rigorous financial discipline is still praiseworthy, if only because it is vital not to have too alarming a deficit. It is to be hoped that the Finance Minister's insistence on financial discipline will be shared by all his Cabinet colleagues.

If national co-operation is sought to implement the rigorous measures of financial discipline which the Government seem to

have in mind, then it is important to show that the discipline is exercised from the top downwards. The man in the street will not feel obliged to tighten his belt if he finds that there is no similar tightening of belts in the top echelons of society.

It is difficult to avoid the impression that the success of the National Development Plan is somewhat exaggerated. The fall in commodity prices, the diminished outlay on the Malaysian Development Plan to the tune of about \$163 million below the estimated five-year average for 1966, the disappointment with regard to the volume of technical assistance from overseas, and the still relatively modest contribution of domestic manufacturers to the national economy, must all have variously and adversely affected the national development programme.

It must also be admitted that the diversification of the economy has not proceeded as fast as it should. The price of rubber is already low, but if it should go below 50 cents, then the economy of the country will really begin to go haywire, unless we have managed in the meanwhile to shift the basis of our economy to a much more significant extent. In the absence of any statistical information, it is impossible to gauge the extent of unemployment and underemployment in West Malaysia, and in the absence of such information, it must be difficult for our economic planners and policy makers to determine priorities in economic planning. In view of the fact that pioneer industries, including the factories still to go into production, are providing only 20,000 jobs, and also considering the dislocation arising from the fragmentation of estates, it can safely be assumed that there has in fact been an alarming increase in unemployment.

No statistical information is available either, to determine changes in the per capita income of the Malay peasantry. It must be agreed that it is only on the basis of such information that it would be possible to decide whether in fact the government has made any headway in dealing with the problem of Malay poverty.

With regard to the advancement of the Malays, which is vital to the eradication of economic imbalance in the country, His



Majesty's address does not contain any indication as to what the government proposes to do in order to encourage and secure the direction of Malay students to modern subjects like science, technology and medicine.

All in all, there is a lack of balance and of ballast in the royal address this year. The address is remarkable only for the welcome awareness on the part of the government that financial stringency is getting more serious and that there must be drastic curbs on recurrent expenditure and "a real increase in productivity and efficiency in all fields of human endeavour." But as to how all these challenges to the nation's survival are to be met, there does not appear to be much of a clue.

There is some fulmination against labour, but not much indication as to how the co-operation of labour is to be won in the tasks of national construction and regeneration. It is needless to say that such co-operation must be won, and not enforced.

His Majesty's Address deals with the continued communist threat to the nation. There is little doubt that this threat is real and growing. There is, however, a great deal of doubt as to whether the communist threat is being countered effectively at the political level. It is sometimes possible to meet the communist threat in a manner which is counter-productive of good results. It seems to me that the government's insistence on suitability certificates for admission to higher centres of learning serves as a good example of a counter-productive measure.

Let me state that I am not concerned about what a neighbouring country like Singapore does or does not do in this respect. But it does seem to me that the insistence on suitability certificates is humiliating and unnecessary, in view of the fact that infiltration by subversive elements into the higher centres of learning can easily be eliminated under the existing laws of the land. Is it really necessary to regularly humiliate numerous respectable families by obliging them to apply for certificates of suitability for their sons and daughters to seek admission to the university and colleges? This measure has been proved by experience to be clearly and

positively counter-productive, and the government would be well advised to do away with it, and to seek more rational ways of keeping the university campus free from subversive agents.

Another encouraging feature in the royal address is the apparent determination of the government to come to more serious grips with corruption. Venality in public life and corruption in public administration have proved to be the beginning of inglorious ends for the governments of many developing countries. It is to be sincerely hoped that the government's new-found determination to stamp out corruption will be translated into effective practice. No one who is guilty must be spared – not even those who today might move among the highest ranks of the government.

It is to be regretted that His Majesty's address did not give much information about the government's intentions with regard to the creation of a new and enlarged regional alignment for regional co-operation in South East Asia, to replace ASA. A stable and enduring grouping for regional economic co-operation would certainly serve to enhance Malaysia's security in the South East Asian context.

I hate to use a well-worn cliché; but Malaysia does stand at the crossroads of history. The old certainties and securities are gone. To guide us safely forward we must seek, and seek with a sense of the utmost urgency, for the most effective way to establish and consolidate national cohesion and solidarity in a multi-racial society, and to ensure our economic viability and progress.

Whether we will succeed in this effort or not will depend on the maturity, wisdom, intelligence and resolution which the leaders of our nation can muster. Let us all hope, even if hope sometimes appears unjustified, that they will show themselves capable of rising to the occasion. For if they don't, we are all sunk, in any case!

## **Integration or Assimilation?**

*A talk by the Deputy Secretary-General, Goh Hock Guan, at a forum on "The integration of the multi-racial peoples into a united nation in Singapore and Malaysia - achievements, problems and prospects" organised by the University of Singapore Students' Union on 15th June, 1967.*

*Nation-building:* THE INTEGRATION of the multi-racial peoples into a united nation is the most urgent problem facing both Malaysia and Singapore - how to integrate the diverse immigrant stocks, Malays, Chinese, Indians and Ceylonese together, and with the indigenous natives, the Orang Asli, Kadazans, Ibans and Dayaks into a harmonious nation of people sharing common aspirations, common loyalty, common love of country, and facing a common future with all the hazards and promises but still practising and retaining different religions, different customs and different languages.

This is the most urgent task because even if all else succeed, national prosperity, full employment, universal education, efficient administration, a dynamic government, all these would come to nought if a nation of united people is not created in the process.

Now that Singapore and Malaysia are apart, the whole world watch with interest to see whether the Singapore style of nation-building is going to succeed better than Malaysia's style, or whether in fact both countries need different solutions to suit the relevant needs of two different countries.

Singapore attempts to build a nation by integration, an acknowledgement of the multi-racial make-up of the population, a deliberate emphasis on the equal contribution that each component of her citizens can offer, and a clear statement of the equal stake that each citizen possesses towards the soil of Singapore.

*Dollar notes*: Nowhere is this more dramatically brought out than in the new Singapore notes that are now in circulation. The illustration on the notes show four hands, brown, yellow and white, clasped in unison – a powerful symbol of unity through integration against a background of Singapore's beauty as seen through her famous orchid flowers.

Malaysia's experiment in nation building is by assimilation in which nationhood is to be achieved by submerging other cultures, other aspirations to Malay culture, Malay aspirations, an emphasis on Malay sovereignty, Malay supremacy, Malay rights. Again the new currency notes of Malaysia are symbolic of these. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong's vignette is clearly printed on all the notes.

By themselves these illustrations on the notes may not mean much, but they faithfully represent the values and political philosophies of the two countries.

It has been argued that the Singapore situation is dissimilar to the Malaysian one – Singapore is an island state, small territory, closer contact between the people hence easier administration, people therefore easier to govern and the PAP's method may be all right. Malaysia by comparison is a big country, difficult communications, the Malays have been neglected and left behind, there are more Malays, Singapore has got more Chinese and so on.

While the points relating to physical size and the demographic and social structure are correct, while the analysis itself may be even correct, but crude, the solution advocated for Malaysia, i.e. nation building by assimilation, is in my view and the view of the DAP, wrong.

*Assimilation*: For assimilation means that you jolly well follow what I say and do, that I have the mandate of heaven to rule through the right of my birth, my religion, my race – hence my sovereignty. If you don't like it, if you do not like to submerge yourself to me – the clearest exposition of this is given by Musa Hitam when he says that a Malaysian culture must be based on Malay culture and Inche Senu's contention that a Malaysian nation could be based on Malay nationalism via UMNO's ideology

of 'democratic nationalism' - then you can get put and go somewhere else if you don't like it.

Now we say this is wrong, not because the PAP says that it is wrong, but because we believe that in a multi-racial society this is not the way to build a nation.

Even before Malaysia was formed, even before the PAP went into Malaysia, a group of students in Melbourne had already declared that there can only be a Malayan nation (at that time Malaya) and that Malaya cannot be a Malay nation, a Chinese nation or an Indian nation.

It is on record in the Australian journal known as the *Hemisphere* that I have said, in speaking about Architecture in Malaya, that a Malayan Architecture which truly reflects the artistic aspirations of Malaya cannot be based only on Malay Architecture, Chinese Architecture or Indian Architecture. It must be based on all, extract the best of each and fuse these into something new altogether which can only be described as Malayan.

*Examples:* Many other people share this view and even if the PAP had not gone into Malaysia, has not adopted this policy of integration for Singapore, we would have propounded this policy of a Malaysian Malaysia ourselves in our own right and through our own analysis - simply because this represents the fairest, the happiest and the most intelligent approach to nation-building in a plural society.

Other countries which have become successful nations can furnish us with telling examples. America has become a great nation because she has succeeded in integrating the English, the Irish, the Italians, the Germans, the Swedes, the French, not to mention the Jews, into one people, giving them all an equal stake in the country - the land of promise, the land of freedom, America boasts. And again America, where she has failed and is now reaping the bitter fruits of that failure, the Negroes were left out, were discriminated against and unwanted, and so the recent bloody riots and probably more to come - a hideous tarnish on America's otherwise fair image.

*Japan*: You might say: that is a Western example, our circumstances are different. Japan, where I was recently, is an Asian example. There you have a strong feudal society before with a lot of chieftains and an Emperor to pay homage to. There you have a multi-racial population also in its early days, though not so diverse, but nevertheless there were a lot of Chinese, some local natives and, this is what I was most astounded to discover, a fair sprinkling of Malays and Polynesians who have migrated northwards.

Japan would have become just another Chinese nation if she had adopted a policy of assimilation – assimilate the Malays, Polynesians and Natives and be done with it. But thank goodness she didn't. She integrated them all and the result is a Japanese language different from Chinese, an architecture that is not Chinese but a combination of the best of Chinese and Malay architecture and hence a new civilization that is distinctly Japanese, superior to anything the Chinese or Malays have got. This Japanese capacity to integrate the best of all is repeated again today in the successful manner in which the know-how of science and technology has been fused into the Japanese make-up without the loss of either.

*Racialism*: So Malaysia today is on the crossroads of nation-building. While Tan Siew Sin says that the Alliance does not practise communalism, the Malays must be less Malay and the Chinese less Chinese, Seow Loong Hin, Publicity Director of MCA in a policy speech says that "the Chinese must be more united in the true sense of the word especially when others are coming closer in some spheres and that the economic survival of the Chinese could be affected by the stroke of the pen by Malays who hold the political power." This is pure Chinese racialism.

And so in the same way while Khir Johari was telling the Sabahans that Malaysia belongs to all Malaysians, the Sultan of Perak says as so many UMNO leaders and the PMIP have said the same before him: "The Malays must unite through religion, racial and social channels to prepare themselves to meet any unpleasant eventuality."

"The Malays," said His Highness, "were left far behind, so much so that they were neither drowned nor floating."

This then is Malay racialism and when you have Chinese racialism of the MCA brand and Malay racialism of the UMNO variety, Malaysia will not integrate and will always be a divided country with all the agonies, frustrations, and downright danger attendant to an explosive situation. By no stretch of the imagination could this be described as responsible nation building. If anything it is the opposite.

The DAP therefore says that there is no substitute to integration, no alternative to a Malaysian Malaysia. We preach inter-racial harmony, non-communal politics, constitutional process. Not only must Indians and Chinese become Malaysians, so must the Malays become Malaysians.

*Inequalities*: Right now there are two big inequalities – one an economic one, and the other the political one and together they constitute the major stumbling blocks towards integration. The Malays feel that they are not getting a proportionate share of the wealth of the country and that therefore they must not relinquish political power. The non-Malays feel that political power is in the hands of the Malays and that this is not fair either. As long as these two big inequalities remain, it is hard to see how a nation could emerge from the mutual distrust that pervades every level of thinking.

Our view is that this is a disastrous situation. Surely we must make every effective effort to raise the standard of life of the Malays as is their right. Similarly a greater equality should be given as of right to the non-Malays in the administration and political running of the country. And the only way to tackle these twin problems successfully is through the Malaysian way, the non-racial way.

There are many progressive Malays who realise this just as there are many progressive non-Malays who share the same view. But there are also others who see in extreme racialist postures the path to power and wealth and I am told that these twin forces of good

and evil can also be discerned in both the Universities of Singapore and Kuala Lumpur among the student population.

And here I say that you, as University students and intelligent men and women, are faced with an opportunity and a wonderful challenge to determine whether here in this community of learning, sharing similar problems and a common future, whether you could work out a successful formula of multi-racial integrated living.

If you can, and you must really try, then there is a future for the peoples of Malaysia and Singapore; if you fail or worse you do not try, then there is no future for all of us, Malays, Indians, Chinese or Eurasians.



## The Politics of Irresponsibility

BY DR. S. SEEVARATNAM, NATIONAL TREASURER.

"I give this solemn pledge to the people of Batu that if you elect an Alliance MP for Batu and the State Assemblyman in the coming elections, they will be able to see me personally or Dato Harun, the Menteri Besar, for all kinds of Federal and State projects to be implemented."

- *Tun Razak speaking at a MCA reception in Jinjang on July 20, 1968.*

THIS IS POLITICAL ABUSE, bribery and corruption in its most blatant and unashamed form.

It is a solemn declaration of the political creed of the Alliance Government - to use public funds to reward Alliance friends and punish Alliance enemies.

What is most shocking is that none other than the Deputy Prime Minister, the heir-designate to Tunku Abdul Rahman, should have expounded this political philosophy of irresponsibility.

Whatever trust and confidence the people may have in Tun Razak and the Alliance government to carry out efficiently the task of national development and reconstruction have been shattered.

What trust and confidence are left when Tun Razak, the Minister for National and Rural Development, openly confessed that Federal and State projects are approved and implemented not on their individual merits, but on whether their applicants are pro- or anti-Alliance.

*Alliance Operations Room*: Is the much-vaunted Operations Room in the Ministry of National and Rural Development no more than an Alliance Operations Room to map out the strategy to buy

maximum votes through the allocation of Federal and State development projects?

Tun Razak's statement also revealed that development projects are implemented regardless of the financial cost or ability of the nation. The overriding consideration is not national interest, but Alliance party interest.

With Tun Razak laying down the line, there is no wonder that Alliance henchmen throughout the country have stepped up their campaign of misappropriating public funds and resources for Alliance electoral ends.

Ministers and Alliance leaders have bestirred themselves from their air-conditioned offices, and are making frequent trips to meet the people and disburse funds for school projects, temples, mosques, community halls, golf courses etc. They are not interested whether a project had been well-planned or whether the public funds would be well-utilised.

They are only interested in buying up votes, even if community halls degenerate into cowsheds overnight or funds are never utilised.

In some cases, Alliance henchmen are even more blatant in their disregard of proper form.

In Batu Pahat, for instance, the MCA secured a \$5,000 grant for the building of a temple. When the temple was completed, the MCA immediately opened a branch in the temple.

*Alliance party cards*: Alliance henchmen also behaved as if they, and not the Rulers, are owners of the virgin land in Malaysia. Landless are warned that if they want land, they must join the MCA, UMNO or the MIC. Otherwise, they would never be given land.

The public are told that if they want to get State or Federal honours, they must join the ruling party. As proof, they point to the thousands of recipients of State and Federal honours whose sole claim to public service is their slavish party hack-work.

We are fast reaching a stage where applicants for lands, grants,

loans, development projects or aspirants to State and Federal honours, must produce their Alliance Party cards.

This is a serious erosion of democratic practice in Malaysia. Unless this trend is reversed, democratic principles and the democratic way of life will be buried by the Alliance.

(From The "Rocket" July 20-August 20, 1968.)

## Islam and Socialism

BY MOHAMED NOR JETTY,  
NATIONAL VICE-CHAIRMAN, DAP.



MORE THAN MOST religions, Islam preaches brotherhood and equality of peoples of all races, colours and nations within its fold. The Prophet Mohamed himself was probably exactly of the same skin as Jesus, but today His followers embrace all colours: peoples from Africa, China, South East Asia, Europe and America.

I have deliberately introduced my subject on this note of internationalism because as a Muslim and someone who believes profoundly in the teachings of Islam, I feel that the ideals which I have imbibed in my upbringing as a Muslim are completely synonymous with the ideals and principles of socialism.

Almost half the population of Malaysia comprise peoples of the Islamic faith and yet there is a lack of appreciation amongst non-Muslim Malaysians that Islam is partly founded on the words and certainly very close to the teachings of four Prophets who lived before Prophet Mohamed, namely Christ, Noah, Abraham and Moses.

The Qur'an does not acknowledge that Jesus was the Son of God and that he suffered death upon the Cross; for if Jesus were

acknowledged as the child of God, Muslims believe it would compromise God's oneness, a belief which is the very cornerstone of Islam.

It is not my intention to deal with the many aspects of Islam which are misunderstood by non-Muslims in our country. I shall leave that to more learned Muslim leaders and scholars. I wish only to emphasise the closeness of Islam to democratic socialism in the twentieth century.

I might begin with some verses from the Holy Qur'an and a few sayings of the Prophet of Islam:

"God is the Creator of everything, and He has charge over everything." (The Holy Qur'an - 39:62.)

"All people are a single nation."

"God has commanded me to show humility so that no one may rise above one another, or behave haughtily towards others."

"Your servants are your brothers and stewards. Feed them and clothe them like yourselves. Compel them not to do work too hard for them, but if you so compel them, then help them in doing it."

"Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and free the captive."

"Verily truth is goodness and goodness leads to Paradise."

"Resolve that if people do good to you, you will do good to them, and if they oppress you, you won't oppress them."

"Islam does not allow asceticism. A Muslim who mixes with others and shares their burden is better than the one who lives a life of seclusion and contemplation."

"Actions shall be judged according to motives. No man is true in the truest sense of the word save he who is true in word and thought."

"Dost thou love thy Creator? Love thy fellow-creatures first."

"Who is the most favoured of God? He from whom the greatest good cometh to His creatures."

"All God's creatures are his family."

"Seek for my goodwill in that of the poor and indigent."

I have deliberately quoted from the sayings of the Prophet of Islam with the express purpose of outlining the cardinal Islamic

virtues, because as socialists who believe in equality, fraternity, social justice and democracy, what we are struggling for is in many ways similar to the ideals and the teachings of Islam.

To me the Prophet was in his day a leader of men who wanted to right the wrongs in society. The Prophet sought to change the unjust and undesirable social conditions he found prevalent around him to one guided by justice, equality, fraternity and love for all men regardless of race, colour or creed.

These are the very ideals which we as socialists strive to achieve in our own multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural society, a society which we want perfected into a stable, tolerant and permissive one, where Malaysians of all races, religions and cultures can live as one peaceful and harmonious family.

The universality and brotherhood of Islam is the very thing which we democratic socialists are seeking to establish in our country, still so rampant with inequality and lacking in social justice. The desire to put a stop to oppression of man by his fellowman is in fact an old Islamic ideal nowadays very often couched in socialist language.

I wish to quote a paragraph written by G. Wright Mills in his book entitled *The Marxists* –

“You do not have to be poor any longer. Everywhere men have always lived as exploiters and exploited – you are poor not because of anything you have done or anything you have failed to do, not because of original sin or the will of God because of bad luck, you are poor because of economic and political conditions. These conditions are called capitalism.

“At first capitalism was a great progressive force in man’s history; under it men built enormous facilities for the production of all the things they needed. You are poor and you are exploited and you are going to be exploited as long as capitalism prevails. For capitalism is the system that exploits you.

“You do not have to be poor. The conditions that make you poor can be changed. They are going to be changed. By the revolution you can eliminate once and for all the exploitation of

man by man. You can enter into a socialist society in which mankind conquers nature. And no man any longer will know poverty and exploitation."

The very essence in the above quotation is cool, logical and incisive. The subject of interest is the same. Man and poverty continue to be the focal point of attention – both for socialism as well as for Islam.

The close proximity of this quotation and the earlier Islamic ones is in fact a projection and furtherance of religious decrees on the brotherhood of man. To Muslims both categories of quotations carry the message of truth, love and the equality of man. To the Muslim's mind they are one. The Muslim most easily comprehends and supports both.

Democratic socialism is completely in keeping with the psychological make-up of the Malays in our country, brought up as they are on the Islamic principles of justice and equality. There is nothing whatsoever in the democratic socialist ideology which is antagonistic to the teachings of the Prophet and the obligations of a Muslim to his religion of Islam.

As a matter of fact, the capitalist system, in which the large proportion of wealth produced is intercepted and hoarded by non-producers through rent, interests or profits, tends to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, which we as socialists decry and is precisely what Islam also abhors.

Usury is forbidden and hated in Islam. Incidentally, it is through this capitalist system of exploitation that large numbers of Malaysians, particularly rural Malays, are reduced to a state of abject poverty by being gradually dispossessed of their land, property, tools and equipment by exploiters and 'middlemen' in the form of interest, rent and profits. Unfortunately, Malays as Muslims are permitted to pay interest, although they are forbidden to earn it.

We have at our door-step a very concrete example of the sin of capitalism and its ill-effects on its victims.

I refer to the example of exploitation of poverty-stricken

farmers and fishermen and even small-holders throughout the length and breadth of our country in both West and East Malaysia by money-lenders and other exploiters charging exorbitant rates of interest.

Many of the victims are themselves Muslims. But they are helpless and cannot get out of the tentacles of the exploiters because the Alliance Government in power is dedicated to uphold the capitalist system and thereby to protect the interest of those who perpetrate the evils of the capitalist system.

This example clearly shows that even in a state which proclaims Islam as its official religion, un-Islamic practices in the field of economy can bring untold misery and suffering to its peoples if the Government in power merely pays lip service to its profession to help the poor. A good Muslim is someone who genuinely aspires to and actively works for the realisation of an equal and just socialist society.

It will be readily seen that although socialism as an ideology may be irreligious or has nothing to do with religion, it is certainly not unethical.

An ideology like democratic socialism, which is so much dedicated to human well-being, can be fairly described as the most ethical of political doctrines.

Socialism, like Islam, has a strong moral and ethical basis, the foundation being concern for man's progress and his future. Socialism indeed aims to raise our standard of living in the material sense in order that we may be better able to worship Allah and execute the precepts of the teachings of Islam and the Prophet in a more effective manner. The economic and material factors on the one hand and the spiritual factors in our lives on the other are equally important. The former can be a complement to the latter.

Islam preaches equality of man before God, and socialism, like Islam, is against the God of wealth and the religion of exploitation which is the practice of capitalism.

Both socialism and Islam emerged as a protest against man's inhumanity towards his fellowmen. Both uphold liberty, equality



and fraternity. Responsible and meaningful freedom of the individual and nations is dear to both.

Islam has many ethical, economic and political concepts in common with democratic socialism.

Capitalism on the other hand is a decadent, degenerate and out-of-date system which makes a mockery of religion and what is worse brings about conflicts and contradictions in society.

I must in fairness also add that communism is equally decadent, degenerate and contradictory to Islamic principles. Communism as preached by Marx and propagated by Lenin and the communists of today maintain that religion opiates man's mind and is therefore a hindrance to progress. This is an attack on Islam.

On the other hand, socialism is permissive and tolerant of religion and its followers. In a democratic socialist society, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and other believers are completely free to believe and propagate their respective faiths without interference from the state.

The socialist ideology, unlike communism, does not arrogate to itself the end-all and be-all for solutions to social, economic and political ills which beset society. In a democratic socialist state, economic, social and political problems are tackled by socialists in a practical and realistic manner and never worked out on the basis of dogma and doctrinaire theories.

Above all, democratic socialism allows believers freedom of worship. Thus democratic socialism in practice is completely in accord with Islam and the obligations which Muslims have to fulfil.

The principles and practices of democratic socialism are not antagonistic to, but are in accord with, the Islamic way of life.

I say this with conviction and without fear of contradiction, because both Islam and democratic socialism believe in a course of persuasion and social legislation to achieve all their aims of a just, equal and tolerant society.

Islam, as is the case with democratic socialism, seeks to create by consent the material environment in human society most

conducive to the growth of harmonious and constructive relations among men. In Malaysia this is precisely what must be established.

As a Muslim who is at the same time a socialist, I feel strongly that inter-racial harmony in our country, particularly harmony between Malays and Chinese, is not attainable within the present scope of a profit-motivated society and system where the Chinese capitalists by and large reap the profits and exploit the rural Malays.

The correcting of this imbalance is both Islamic as well as socialistic. There must be a gradual transformation of the present capitalistic economic structure in this country to reduce to the minimum the contradictions in the race problem and then to establish truly everlasting inter-racial harmony and peace by using socialist solutions.

(From the "Rocket," August 1967.)

## **Drill Sergeants or Nation Builders ?**

BY C. V. DEVAN NAIR

IT IS SADDENING to hear about people who rudely walk out when the National Anthem is being played. It is even more saddening to hear government ministers fulminating like drill sergeants on the parade ground, invoking fire and brimstones on unpatriotic heads.

Recently, one of the leading drill sergeants in the Alliance cabinet, Inche Senu bin Abdul Rahman, delivered himself of a threat which must have made the gods weep in despair. He threatened to legislate patriotism into being.

"It is needless to say that every citizen of a free country should have the love and respect for both (the National Anthem and Flag)," said Inche Senu.

"Should this situation not improve in the near future, there is no alternative for the government but to consider necessary legislation so as to ensure that our people show due respect for these symbols of our sovereignty."

### **Questions for the Alliance**

God knows that the leaders of our nation have not been over-endowed by Providence with the capacity for intelligent thought and comprehension. But it must come as a shock to the average citizen to encounter such a staggering absence of intelligence in a Minister of His Majesty's Government. Have we really come to such a sorry mental and spiritual pass that it can be seriously contended that desirable virtues like patriotism and respect for the National Anthem can be created, engendered or enforced by Act of Parliament?

Frankly, we are flabbergasted! If this is the kind of characteristic thinking at the helm of the nation, then nation-building in our country must be doomed to failure.

Granted that it is a matter for shame that some Malaysian citizens behave deplorably when the National Anthem is played. But one would have thought that the intelligent and constructive reaction to such behaviour would have been somewhat as follows:

"Now, why do people behave in this way? Not that Malaysian citizens are any worse as human beings compared to the citizens of other countries! Then why do people behave in this fashion? Is it perhaps an absence of national identification on the part of many Malaysian citizens, and if so, why? Is it possible that these people feel that they don't have an equal or honourable place under the Malaysian sun? What has gone wrong with the process of nation-building in our multi-racial society? Clearly something has gone wrong! What then is it that has gone wrong? Let us try and find out, so that our attempts at nation-building may not come to grief. All the higher things of existence - things like love, patriotism, friendship, kindness, forbearance and tolerance, grow secretly and spontaneously in human souls. They cannot be enforced, cannot be brought into being by compulsion or by Act of Parliament.

"What malady then afflicts these Malaysian souls, in whom the national song fails to arouse feelings of love, veneration and a sense of solidarity with fellow Malaysians?"

These would have been the reactions of an intelligent national leadership, seriously concerned with the problems and the spiritual mechanics of nation-building. But we don't have inspired leaders, who look for the secret levers which release the higher human virtues. We have instead bullying and cantankerous drill sergeants who seriously think that the higher emotions of man can be created under pressure of threats and coercion.

Let us repeat! We are aghast and flabbergasted! Drill sergeants have never brought any nation into being. Only men

of inspired vision and idealism have done so, and one looks in vain for such attributes in the ranks of the Alliance government.

To Inche Senu, we can only quote with a sense of shock – “Who is this that darkeneth counsel, by words without knowledge?”

(From The “Rocket”, April 1967.)

## Justice Abolished

*Why the Alliance proposes to do away with appeals to the Privy Council.*

BY LIM KIT SIANG, ORGANISING SECRETARY

THE FIRST TIME the Alliance government tried to abolish constitutional appeals to the Privy Council was in 1965, when the Alliance government was known to be seriously thinking of resorting to unconstitutional methods to take over the Singapore government from the People's Action Party.

For over a year previously, the People's Action Party had mounted in Malaysia an ever-growing political and democratic challenge to the very basis of Alliance power.

The Alliance and the MCA were at a loss as to how to counter the superior ideology, organisation, dedication and leadership of the People's Action Party.

Unable to match the PAP in the political debate and argument, the Alliance leadership began to think of unconstitutional methods to deal with the PAP challenge.

Hence the move in the middle of 1965 to abolish appeals to the Privy Council in cases of constitutional law.

The opposition parties and the Malaysian Bar Council protested against the proposed abolition. But what saved the Privy Council in 1965 were not the protests of opposition parties or the Bar Council, but the disappearance of the political motive of the Alliance for such a move.

For on August 9, 1965, Singapore was kicked out of Malaysia. With Singapore and PAP out of the Malaysian Federation, and no more posing a political threat to Alliance power, the Alliance

lost interest in pressing for the abolition of appeal to the Privy Council.

Today, three years after, the Alliance has revived its move to abolish constitutional appeals to the Privy Council.

As in 1965, the openly stated reasons for such a move are not the true reasons.

Tun Razak and Alliance leaders have argued that the continuance of the Privy Council is a derogation of Malaysian sovereignty.

There are eleven other Commonwealth countries including Singapore, which have retained the Privy Council. Is the Alliance government suggesting that these countries are not sovereign nations?

If by sovereignty, the Alliance means absolute independence in all fields, why then should the Alliance government call for five-nation Defence Talks in an effort to get Commonwealth help in Malaysian defence after British withdrawal?

Similarly, why should Malaysian Ministers go round advanced countries to beg for loans and financial assistance? Isn't this a derogation of Malaysian sovereignty?

As in 1965, the present attempt to abolish constitutional appeals to the Privy Council is purely motivated by political reasons.

The Alliance has in recent months realised that it is not as popular with the people as it had thought.

The Education Minister and Alliance election strategist and superman, Inche Khir Johari, has listed Negri Sembilan as a "danger state for Alliance.

In his speech to the Johor UMNO in Negri Sembilan on June 30, Inche Khir Johari warned Alliance members to double up their work to prevent the Democratic Action Party from capturing the State Government in the next elections.

The Alliance and UMNO are equally worried about the Selangor State, where the DAP has struck deep roots and received wide general support from the people.

The next general elections may also see the Alliance losing the Sarawak state to the opposition.

What the Alliance is apparently trying to do is to prepare the ground to enable them to take unconstitutional action against opposition-run state governments, as they were thinking of doing against the Singapore Government when it was still in Malaysia.

The abolition of the constitutional appeals to the Privy Council is a threat to the fundamental liberties and rights of the people of Malaysia.

This is a matter which all Malaysians and all organisations, whether civic or political, must oppose, condemn and fight against. Otherwise, the people will find that in 1964, the Malaysian voters had put into office a new tyranny – the tyranny of the Alliance majority, which would not allow its power to be removed by peaceful, democratic and constitutional means.

We therefore call on all Malaysians to come forward and organise themselves to fight against the proposed abolition of appeals to the Privy Council in constitutional cases.

(From The "Rocket," July/August 1968.)





## **A Government White Paper – for LBJ ?**

BY DR. CHEN MAN HIN

UNPRECEDENTED CARE and organisation went into the government's reception for American President Lyndon B. Johnson. Very little was left to chance. Flags, buntings and arches, free buses and flag-waving children, glittering banquets were there aplenty.

Unashamed U.S. dollar greed glittered in Alliance eyes, and old LBJ was treated to a lavish profusion of dollar inviting smiles and glances, speeches and remarks by Alliance government ministers and Foreign Ministry dignitaries, all looking brighter and better briefed than usual about the art of attracting American dollars.

Nothing, we said, was left to chance. Everybody knows that just as moths flock to a flame, American dollars will flock to warning cries and screams about the communist threat.

And lo and behold! Just five days before LBJ's much-heralded arrival (by one of those contrived coincidences for which the Alliance government is famous) a government White Paper called "The militant communist threat to West Malaysia" was slapped down on an unwary Parliament, and the local press was full of

atures and editorials about the White Paper and the communist threat for the few days before LBJ's arrival.

Parliaments normally debate White Papers, especially nerve-shattering ones like "The militant communist threat to West Malaysia." But not our Parliament.

The oracles who prepared the White Paper had spoken, and Parliament could either like it or lump it. The mindless Alliance majority in Parliament did both. They like what they lump and they lump what they like. And before opposition MPs could even think of demanding a debate, the House was adjourned *in die* after completing only two days of a projected four-day sitting. In any case, the intention was not to start a parliamentary debate on the militant communist threat to West Malaysia, but to yell out for American dollar aid.

The Alliance government hopes to go all the way with LBJ, but whether LBJ will go all the way with the Alliance government, on the strength of 24 hours of unabashed and high-powered Alliance wooing, remains to be seen.

What is significant is not the contents of the White Paper, but its timing. The White Paper did not contain anything which the government had not known for a long time.

The crucial question for intelligent Malaysians is whether U.S. dollars, even if they become available in sufficient quantities, can succeed in deterring or countering the communist threat. American dollars plus arms have so far succeeded in doing neither in South Vietnam.

The challenges posed by the Communist Party of Malaya are fundamentally political, cultural, social and economic challenges. In the final analysis, the political challenge of communism can never be met by bullets and dollars. They can only be met and countered by more meaningful and more valid political, social and economic measures.

The fundamental question the Alliance government should ask is not "Can we get sufficient American dollars to fight the com-

munists?" but "Do we have sufficient political, social and economic counters to meet the communist challenges?"

Do the communists exploit racial issues, like questions of language, education and culture? Then for God's sake don't give them such issues to exploit! The correct thing to do would be to accept in principle as well as in practice the ideal of racial equality, cultural accommodation and tolerance. But every time some of our Alliance politicians open their mouths on sensitive issues like language, education and culture, they serve as the best recruiting agents for the Communist Party.

The Communists are anti-Malaysia? Then don't go about brow-beating and humiliating fellow-Malaysians simply because they happen to be 'non-bumiputras.' Give every Malaysian a stake in Malaysia. Give all Malaysians equality of rights and opportunities, irrespective of race or religion. Improve genuinely the standards of living of the rural areas.

Do the communists exploit political frustrations! Then don't reduce democratic institutions to a sham and mockery. Don't change the constitution whenever Alliance party interests are affected.

Do communists exploit poverty? Then try and ensure a more equitable distribution of the national wealth through more intelligent and flexible fiscal policies and ensure a clean administration.

Do communists seek public sympathy by staging demonstrations? Then don't provide them with more sympathy by shooting one of the demonstrators through the eyes and then gleefully saying what a wonderful job it was!

Such are the basic ways to counter the communist challenge. Dollars and bullets cannot be the sole or even the chief answer. In and by themselves, they only feed the flames of revolution.

If the choice is between a decent living and a meaningful democracy on the one hand, and communism on the other, Malaysians will find their choice easy and straightforward. But if the choice is merely between American dollars and bullets on the one hand (with the Alliance to spend it) and communism on the other,

Malaysians will find the choice impossible. If anything, under such circumstances communism will enjoy a slight edge, as South Vietnam has shown and continues to show. That is a lesson which we can ignore only at our peril.

(From The "Rocket," November, 1966.)

## One Doctor to Another

DR. CHEN MAN HIN ON DR. MAHATHIR

DR. MAHATHIR, like me, is a doctor, trained in an analytical discipline. In our profession, we are obliged to base our diagnosis of a patient's ailment, on the basis of a careful study and correlation of symptoms and signs. Otherwise, we may make a wrong diagnosis and prescribe the wrong medicine to the (perhaps fatal) detriment of the patient.

As physicians, we have to avoid baseless assumptions and fantastic presumptions. There is no reason to believe that Dr. Mahathir violated this sound medical principle in the practice of his profession. But it is abundantly clear from his reply to my "Opinion" piece that he does not apply the same precision and care, called for in the practice of our common profession of medicine, to his political diagnosis of the D.A.P.

*Dr. Mahathir's disease* : His reply constitutes a classic example of the most astounding illogicality. Indeed, it might be said of Dr. Mahathir that when it comes to political diagnosis, he is certainly not the doctor. He is, in fact, the disease.

It is the disease of the communalist who objects to every kind of communalism except his own. It is the disease of one who sees the mote in other people's eyes, but cannot see the beam in his own.

We in the D.A.P. object to every kind of communalism. We do not regard Chinese chauvinism as any more or less objectionable than Malay or Indian chauvinism. They are all equally vicious in our eyes. But we have yet to hear Dr. Mahathir decrying Malay communalism at the same time as he decries Chinese chauvinism. He clearly believes that the one is acceptable, while the other is not.

Let us take some of Dr. Mahathir's most glaring distortions of

reality. He refers to "D.A.P. Chinese chauvinist claims to dominate the country exclusively." When or where, in Heaven's name, have we ever made such a fantastic claim?

The truth is that no political party in the country has so consistently and persistently pointed out the utter futility of any community in Malaysia trying to lord it over the others. The demographic structure of the nation makes this impossible.

The simple truth is that every community by itself constitutes a minority in relation to the rest. The non-Chinese, taken together, constitute a majority. The non-Malays, taken together, constitute a majority. The non-Indians, taken together, constitute a majority. And thus it is that we have consistently preached from every available platform the vital need for mutual accommodation and tolerance on the part of all Malaysian communities, as the only means of national survival and progress. Need we say that Dr. Mahathir's own political party is conspicuous by its failure to take the same rational line?

Next, Dr. Mahathir asserts that the D.A.P. "in the pursuit of its chauvinist interest is quite prepared to make common cause with the communists." The communists will laugh loudest at this particular joke.

In what way have we made common cause with the communists? On the language issue? Dr. Mahathir apparently does not know that the latest policy outline of the Communist Party of Malaya does not even refer to Malay as the National Language. They only refer to it as "a lingua franca."

But the D.A.P. accepts Malay as the National Language, and supports its emergence as the chief official language in the country. We contend however, that this need not and should not mean that the other major languages in the country, namely Chinese, Tamil and English, are not accorded official status and use in the country.

Does Dr. Mahathir claim that we have made common cause with the communists over Vietnam? We have condemned the American bombing of North Vietnam. But so did Dr. Mahathir at the Winneba conference of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity

Organisation. And so have Premier Indira Gandhi of India and President Nasser of the U.A.R. Dare Dr. Mahathir claim that the Indians and the Egyptians, and for that matter the rest of the non-aligned nations of the world, have made common cause with the communists?

*'Ali Baba' and 'Ali John'* : Dr. Mahathir claims that "the D.A.P. feels that Chinese chauvinism is worthwhile policy because the Chinese make up about 38 per cent. of the population and are many times richer and materially advanced than all the other communities."

Come! Come! Dr. Mahathir! Not all the Malays are Datos and Tan Sris and Tuns, with directorships in "Ali-Baba" and "Ali-John" undertakings, anymore than all the Chinese are towkays and tycoons, or all the Indians are chettiers and moneylenders.

Dr. Mahathir must admit that the great majority of Malays, Chinese and Indians, belong to the unprivileged mass of our nation. Both Malay peasants and Chinese and Indian workers would do much better without the feudal-compradore Alliance which today rules the country, and which Dr. Mahathir regrettably supports.

Dr. Mahathir refers to Singapore as though it were a citadel of Chinese chauvinism. We beg to differ, and would point out that if this were so, then Chinese would be the national language as well as the sole official language in Singapore. This is not the case. Instead, that country, with an overwhelming Chinese majority in its population, has accepted Malay as the national language, and has given official status to all the other languages.

Is this Chinese chauvinism, or a sane and rational multi-racial policy, leaving the communists with no racial issues to exploit successfully, unlike the situation in our own country! The communists no doubt shout in Singapore, but one cannot see them offering any substantial challenge to the government there. Dr. Mahathir would be foolish to assume that the communist capacity for mischief is greater in Singapore than in Malaysia.

As I said in my "Opinion" piece, "everytime some of our Alliance politicians open their mouths on sensitive issues like language, education and culture, they serve as the best recruiting agents for the Communist Party."

Dr. Mahathir clearly misunderstands our thesis on the LBJ visit to Malaysia, and on the nature of the counters to communism. We are not against courtesy to a visiting head of state. What we did object to was the unabashed and undignified wooing of American dollars by the Alliance leaders, and the deliberate and shameless timing of a government White Paper on "The militant communist threat to West Malaysia" to coincide with the presidential visit.

*Counters to Communism*: I had gone on to state: "In the final analysis, the political challenge of communism can never be met by bullets and dollars. They can only be met and countered by more meaningful and more valid political, social and economic measures . . .

"If the choice is between a living and a meaningful democracy on the one hand, and communism on the other, Malaysians will find their choice easy and straightforward. But if the choice is merely between American bullets and dollars on the one hand and communism on the other, Malaysians will find the choice impossible. If anything, under such circumstances communism will enjoy a slight edge, as South Vietnam has shown and continues to show. That is a lesson which we will ignore at our peril."

Dr. Mahathir does not seem to know that a strong and vocal section of American public opinion is critical of American policy in Vietnam on precisely the same grounds. But Dr. Mahathir says that we are playing "racial politics." Try as we may, we simply fail to see the connection.

*United front of democrats*: A united front against communism is well and good, provided it is a united front of democrats. We confess that we are unable to work up any enthusiasm for a united anti-communist front if it means having to rub shoulders with militarist cliques, fascist regimes, American dollars and bullets.



We are just as anxious as Dr. Mahathir to counter the communist threat, only we say that the best counter is a democratic regime which pursues intelligent, social, political and economic policies. Nobody in his senses could possibly disagree. But Dr. Mahathir does!

One further remark by Dr. Mahathir left us groggy with incomprehension. Dr. Mahathir says "Malaysia did not win the 12-year war against the communists by persuasion or negotiation. We won a decisive military campaign." Who are the "we"? As far as we can remember, there was no Malaysia during the greater part of the war against the communists. We can only recall a British colonial administration conducting the war against the communists. No doubt Malayan police and personnel were also involved, but we recall that British troops, Gurkhas and Commonwealth contingents bore the brunt. We also seem to remember that the political battle against the communists was won by the skilful British offer of independence to Malaya. We do not believe that our memory is weak. But Dr. Mahathir is certainly suffering from political amnesia.

(From "The Rocket," December 1966.)

## The Pusillanimous Pundits or our Muzzled "Free" Press

C. V. DEVAN NAIR

MALAYSIANS GREET with understandable cynicism the polite praise bestowed by distinguished foreign visitors on the virtues and achievements of Malaysian democracy. Most foreign visitors do not suspect that what they see in Malaysia is a very pale reflection of the democracy enjoyed by their own more fortunate countries.

We know that Malaysian democracy creaks loudly and painfully in every one of its joints. And one of the creakiest of its joints is the Press. It would be wrong to blame journalists and editors for the anaemic state of Malaysian journalism. By and large, the blood-letting leeches are not to be looked for in their ranks. They are to be found among the powers-that-be, the persons who are responsible for the policies and programmes of Malaysia, at the very highest levels of Government.

Newspaper licences are renewable annually – and woe betide any newspaper which fails to play the Government game. Playing the Government game means playing down, even to the point of completely ignoring, the democratic and loyal opposition.

One looks in vain in the columns of the *Straits Times*, for example, for opposition views and comments on matters of public interest. What little of the opposition does manage to get through, after the editorial red pencils have finished, is garbled and mutilated beyond recognition.

One can understand the nervousness of the editorial big-wigs of this particular newspaper, who pass their days in mortal dread of those ominous phone calls from Authority, demanding an explanation for any inadvertent signs of fair-play to the Opposition.

But understanding must give way to contempt when these same gentlemen allow their leader-writers on occasion to editorially bemoan the absence of effective opposition in the country.

One of the most vital functions of the Press in a democratic country is clearly to give reasonable play to the democratic and loyal opposition in the country, so that an informed and objective public opinion may emerge. But when this vital function has been almost paralysed, it is surely contemptible cowardice to pretend otherwise.

Opposition parties have no access to radio or T.V. which are Government monopolies. And if even the so-called "free" Press in our country behave as if they were no more than Government propaganda broadsheets, then democracy in this country will soon become completely dead.

It must be said to the credit of the vernacular Press in the country, especially of the Chinese newspapers, that they do at least try, in the face of considerable difficulties, to give a semblance of fairness and objectivity in their presentation of Opposition statements and views. But if rumour has it right, it would appear that their difficulties are on the increase.

### **Treatment of the D.A.P's policy statement on language, education and culture by the Straits Times**

A recent glaring example of the treatment accorded to an opposition party by the *Straits Times* was in respect of the D.A.P's policy statement on "The Question of Language, Education and Culture in a multi-racial society," which appears on the front page of this issue of the *Rocket*.

Statements and fulminations galore by Government leaders have been given the widest possible coverage by the *Straits Times*, but when a loyal opposition party like ours puts out a reasoned statement on a matter of such grave public concern, it is dismissed in a few miserably inadequate paragraphs.

A free and responsible 'national' newspaper, do they say? They are welcome to their pretensions. But as far as we are concerned, every time one of the pusillanimous pundits of the *Straits Times* pontificates editorially upon the desirability of an effective opposition in this country, we seem to hear, rolling over the centuries, echoes of that famous cry, first uttered two thousand years ago, in the temple of Jerusalem:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!  
for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed  
appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's  
bones . . ."

If an effective opposition does manage to eventually emerge in this country, then newspapers like the *Straits Times* may be quite certain that it will be in spite of their gross dereliction of journalistic responsibility and rectitude.

(From 'The "Rocket,"' November 1966.)

## 'The Silent Revolution'—Illusion and Reality

C. V. DEVAN NAIR

THE ALLIANCE LEADERS periodically prate about what they call "the silent revolution," a revolution which exists only in the pages of *Suara Malaysia* and other Alliance propaganda sheets.

Illusions, however, like alcohol, provide only a transient glow, an artificial stimulation. Inevitably, inexorably, reality catches up, in the shape of that dreadful feeling in the pit of the stomach on the morning after the night before. It does not require a prophet to predict that it will not be too long before the time of awful awakening comes for the Alliance leaders.

As against the illusory "silent revolution" of the Alliance, there is the grim reality of a genuine silent revolution, stirring in the depths of the nation's life. It is a revolution which can have incalculable (and possibly disastrous) consequences for the future of the nation.

It is a ferment compounded of insecurity, of an increasingly bitter disenchantment among large sections of Malaysians, who have never hitherto been infected by revolutionary sentiment of any kind. It is the kind of ferment which recently led a normally docile group, like the teachers, to man the picket lines—an event which would have been unthinkable only five years ago!

It is a turbulence and distress of spirit which ought to terrify the Alliance leaders out of their wits—assuming, of course, that they possess any.

But alas! When talking about Alliance leaders, we can only talk about myopic men, who cannot see more than two inches in front of their noses; men devoid of any sense or vision of history—without even the faintest conception of the psychological and spiritual prerequisites of nation building in a multi-racial and

multi-cultural society; men who live only for the day and take no thought for the morrow.

They are men who fail to see that they lead a government which suffers a growing credibility gap in the eyes of innumerable Malaysians. Performance never seems to match professions.

They preach unity but practise division! They mouth slogans about "national loyalty" and "national unity," but proceed to systematically subvert and undermine national loyalty and unity by dividing Malaysian citizens into 'bumiputras' and 'non-bumiputras.'

They claim to be men of intelligence, but seriously suggest that national loyalty and respect for the national anthem can be created by Act of Parliament.

They talk grandiloquently about "unity in diversity" in relation to our multi-racial and multi-cultural situation, when they actually mean "uniformity through hegemony."

They talk about "the free use of other languages in the country" when in fact they do not accord to the Chinese and Tamil languages the status of media of instruction and examination in national-type secondary schools.

They talk about "special rights for Malays" when in fact they mean the creation of a privileged class of Malay feudal-compradores.

They talk about the educational progress of Malays, but do nothing to encourage Malay students to take up modern subjects, the sciences and technology in the university.

They talk about "Malaysian defence forces," but deliberately build up defence forces on a racial basis.

They talk about "economy" and "tightening of belts" but have built the largest and most luxurious airport in South Asia but with the smallest air traffic.

They froth about corruption in the civil service, but say nothing about the rumoured existence of big-time political operators and sharks.

They complain about inefficiency in the civil service, but continue to make appointments and promotions, not on the basis of merit and qualifications, but on the basis of race.

They boast about Malaysia as a show-piece of democracy but suspend local council elections. They talk about the sanctity of the Constitution, but have no qualms about tampering with it whenever it suits them.

And as the credibility gap of the Alliance Government widens, the silent revolution in the hearts and minds of Malaysian citizens gathers momentum.

The tragedy for Malaysia is not that discontent and dissatisfaction are growing, but that they can and will undoubtedly be exploited by extremist communal and ideological forces. For waiting in the wings, ever ready to pounce, are three rapacious beasts of prey – the three Cs as they have been called – the communalists, crooks and communists! And a revolution exploited and led by such elements can only prove to be fatally counter-productive.

It is here that a party like the DAP can play a historic role. Our job must be to try our best to ensure that the silent Malaysian revolution is never betrayed into the hands of conflicting racialists, be they of the Malay, Chinese or Indian varieties, or betrayed into the hands of the communists and the external enemies of Malaysia. Our role must be to provide a focus for Malaysians of all races to channel the silent revolution along constructive Malaysian national lines.

Racialism in one quarter must stimulate counter-racialism in other quarters. It must therefore be a cardinal rule for the DAP never to respond to any issue on a communal basis, whatever the provocation may be. If we allow ourselves to do this, then we would go the way of other political parties in the country which began in a brave way, but ended like damp squibs.

Only a Malaysian party can serve Malaysians of all races. If Malaysia does go down the drain, as many fear it might, it would be because of communal parties. But if Malaysia succeeds, as

we must all hope, even against hope, that it will, it can only be because of the emergence of a non-racial and loyal Malaysian political movements.

Even a cursory study of the political arithmetic of Malaysia will convince one that communal politics in this country must be doomed to disaster or futility or both. Non-Malays, taken together, are in the majority. Non-Chinese, taken together, are in the majority. Non-Indians, taken together, are in the majority. Each community, by itself, constitutes a minority. But Malaysians, taken together, should never be in a minority. They must ultimately be in a majority. If they are not, if Malaysians are to be forever outnumbered by the different breeds of communalists, then Malaysia must go down the drain.

We have therefore a gruelling race to run. Malaysians of all races must collectively outnumber the communalists of all races. Can we find such Malaysians in sufficient numbers, with sufficient convictions, and in sufficient time? That is the crucial question.

If we succeed, well and good for everybody! If we don't, this nation will be relegated into the dustbin of history – as a disastrous failure in a multi-racial experiment, as an object lesson and a dire warning to future generations of mankind.

(From The "Rocket," May 1967.)



## Housing for Malaysians

GOH HOCK GUAN

PREVIOUS ISSUES of the *Rocket* (December 1966 and January 1967) have shown that the much-vaunted "silent revolution" in rural development amounts to no more than a 3% Alliance achievement.

The housing record of the Alliance is no better. The urban achievement is even worse.

By the end of the second Five-year Plan period in 1965, a total of 8,500 low-cost dwellings ranging from timber detached houses to multi-storey flats were built. That is to say in ten years, the Alliance Government has managed to build something less than 10,000 low-cost dwellings.

We must now compare the need for low-cost housing by the people as with what has been built by the Alliance. In this way we will see whether the "silent revolution" and "unrivalled achievement" (phrases frequently used by *Suara Malaysia* and the Alliance propaganda paper *The Alliance*) is truly a revolution and an achievement.

There has been no survey made to assess accurately the national housing needs of the country—a remarkable situation for a Government which has been working on public housing for more than ten years. In spite of this it is still possible for us to make an assessment and see what these needs are.

Population statistics show that by the end of 1964, the population of Malaya was eight million and on the basis of a 3.3% rate of natural increase, the annual population increase works out to 265,000. Of this figure only about 10% could afford to buy their own homes, 30% would need financial assistance from banks, finance companies, the Borneo Building Society etc. The remaining

60% (166,950 people) therefore can be said to need public subsidised low-cost housing. At six persons per house, this means that 27,875 dwellings are needed every year to cope with the annual increase of population throughout Malaya.

But what of the back-log? The number of Malaysians living in squatter settlements and overcrowded conditions? A study of aerial photographs showing the extent of squatter housing and a sample survey of over-crowded housing in Kuala Lumpur's town area like Pudu Road or Sultan Street show that at least 60% of the people are living in squalor and fantastic congestion, sometimes as many as 15 to 20 persons living in one room.

The other towns in Malaya are no better off than Kuala Lumpur. It is possible to estimate therefore that of the 3.5 million urban population, and assuming the same ratio of 60%, two million Malaysians are presently in need of low-cost housing. Again basing on six persons per dwelling, the back-log represents something like 330,000 housing units.

If we assume that it would take 15 years to clear away this back-log, then every year the Government must build at least 22,000 units. And this does not include the housing needs of the rural folks!

So the requirement in low-cost housing every year amounts to (back-log) 22,000 plus (population increase) 27,875 dwelling units which give us a total of approximately 50,000. Compare this 50,000 units requirement therefore with the 1,000 units a year which have been built and that represents the measure of achievement of the Alliance. It is a 2% performance, an unrivalled achievement! Truly a silent (far too silent) revolution of rising expectations for a better life.

The excuse could of course be offered that it was only lately that attention was given to urban poverty. Until the Ministry of Local Government and Housing was founded in 1964, emphasis had been given to rural development.

A study of the performance after 1964 does not present an encouraging picture. A total of \$150 million was made available.

Hopes rose and expectations sharpened as several trips were made to study low-cost housing techniques overseas. Then came the astounding announcement that the Alliance Government was going to utilise the system of "industrialised housing" (meaning prefabricated houses) to break the back of the housing shortage. Proudly it was made known that the system holds three main advantages: speed of construction, lower costs (which can be achieved only after a period of time) and quality control.

Unfortunately the promise and the boasts have so far proved both hollow and empty. Of the long lists of proposed projects that adorn the newspaper headlines every now and then, almost none has got off the ground. May 1964, when the Ministry was formed and March 1967 to-day represents a time-lag of almost three years. We may well ask, what is the use of employing the latest industrialised housing technique, which is supposed to be both fast and cheap when after three years the Government's effort is both slow and costly.

It is debatable whether the industrialised technique of housing is appropriate for Malaysia. Industrialised housing is essentially a system of housing based on factory prefabrication of the component parts of the building. Whole walls incorporating windows, doors and plumbing are pre-cast in the factory and are then merely assembled on the site. Sometimes the entire housing units are factory-made and then merely dropped onto the site. This is in direct contrast to the conventional method of construction in which buildings are erected brick by brick and most of the actual work is done on the site itself.

The industrialised method has been developed by the West to overcome their shortage of labour and to reduce cost and to make maximum use of their advanced management and mechanised technology. These four conditions of labour shortage, high cost of labour, advanced technology and a dynamic management are all absent in this country. It is therefore doubtful whether the concept of industrialised housing for Malaysia makes any sense at all at the moment.

On the other hand, the traditional method of building has been proved to be successful in Malaysia. It does not involve big capital investment and the traditional skills of bricklaying, carpentry, concreting etc. are well known to our local workers. It also creates employment for a big section of the population.

There is nothing wrong with the industrialised technique if the conditions are favourable as they are in the West; but here, as Singapore has shown, the housing shortage can be effectively and quickly overcome by the traditional method of construction – indeed as fast as 45 minutes a dwelling unit can be achieved.

Singapore also had tried the industrialised technique in its Macpherson Road project, but after building only two blocks, the method was found to be unsuitable and abandoned. The rest of the eight blocks were built in the conventional manner.

Malaysia would do well to study why this method failed in our local conditions before we pour a lot of money into it. Singapore found that the industrialised method could not compete with the conventional local methods in speed or in cost.

The Alliance Government is allocating \$150 million for its low-cost housing programme in the Malaysia Five-year Plan with the aim of building 30,000 low-cost units. Even assuming that the target is achieved (which is unlikely as none of the projects has got off the ground) it would still fall far short of what is really required, i.e. 50,000 units a year! At this rate the housing famine can never be solved.

The provision of shelter, a roof over one's head, is one of the fundamental duties of Government. Any Government that cannot do this is a failure and where the failure is spectacular as in this case, only two conclusions can be drawn: one, that the Alliance, as usual does not care for the people, especially the poor people who constitute the majority; two, the Alliance is incapable of solving the housing problem in the same way that it cannot solve the rural and cultural problems of the country.

“Silent Revolution” hence becomes an apt phrase chosen by

the Alliance to describe its silent achievements – so silent indeed that it can hardly be seen, felt, or enjoyed.

The reasons for the poor performance of the Alliance could be summarised as follows:

1. For the period before the formation of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, little attention was paid to the needs of the urban Malaysians.
2. After 1964, officials of the new Ministry were more interested in having a good time overseas on the pretext of studying overseas techniques of low-cost housing.
3. The countries visited are mainly industrially-advanced European nations with conditions vastly different from our local conditions of poverty, mass unemployment, and poor technology.
4. The industrialised housing system selected in preference to conventional local method was wrongly-timed and inappropriate and has turned out to be more costly and slower.
5. Too many restrictive devices, outmoded by-laws, and an unimaginative bureaucracy inhibit severely the contribution which the private sector might have made to overcome the low cost housing problem.

The DAP believes that the target of 50,000 low cost units a year could be achieved if the necessary dedication, drive and organisation coupled with the right choice of men to execute the programme are applied. A solution must be found, or the alternative is grim. For a failure to meet the rising aspirations of hungry men and women for shelter and food would create not happiness or stability, but a rising tide of discontent.

(From The "Rocket," March 1967.)

## **The proposed "Student visas" for students going abroad**

*Adjournment speech by the DAP Member of Parliament for Bungsar, C. V. Devan Nair, in the Dewan Ra'ayat on 15th November, 1967.*

WE CLAIM to be an open democratic society, and not a closed one. One of the marks of an open society is the recognition of the right to freedom in the search for knowledge. All the windows of learning and knowledge, in this country as well as internationally, should be open to those who seek to advance in the various pursuits and disciplines of modern knowledge.

One of the marks of a closed society, on the other hand, is the rejection of this right to freedom in the search for knowledge and for professional attainments overseas. In a closed society, as evidenced by the practice of totalitarian states, all windows of knowledge opening out to the world without, are shut to the student.

I would submit that the recently announced intention of the Hon'ble the Minister of Education requiring students who wish to proceed overseas for studies to obtain prior clearance from the Ministry of Education is a step in the direction of a closed society, and must and will be condemned as a totally reprehensible and altogether unwarranted interference with the hopes and aspirations of Malaysian parents as well as students.

It may even be regarded as a kind of suitability certificate for students who wish to proceed overseas for studies, and with infinitely less apparent justification than suitability certificates may have had in their initial application internally.

The ostensible reason for the introduction of the proposed measure is that several Malaysian students obtain admission to

foreign universities with either inadequate resources or without an understanding of whether the degrees and diplomas they seek to acquire will secure recognition on their return.

I grant that there is some truth in this charge. It doesn't apply to everybody of course, but there are a few students who probably underestimate the required resources for the pursuit of studies abroad, and who take up courses which may have no bearing on their eventual prospects in Malaysia.

But the way to go about this is surely for the Ministry of Education to set up an advisory body to advise students on these matters.

Such a body could help to put students and their parents in the right regarding the amount of resources required for students in foreign countries, and regarding the kind of universities and the degree and diploma courses which will benefit and enable them to make an effective contribution to Malaysia on their return.

This is the kind of advisory service that Malaysian parents and students have a right to expect from the Ministry of Education. But instead of this sane and rational approach, the Ministry of Education has apparently decided to introduce arbitrary requirements on all students wishing to proceed overseas. There is no use in claiming that the government will not abuse this right which it intends to confer upon itself. Not everybody in this country is prepared to respect the bona fides of the government.

Totally unmerited compulsions and curbs seem to be the Education Minister's way of doing things. I must warn him that his announced intention is characteristic only of the proponents of a closed society, and will do grave harm to the image which the government seeks to project of a liberal, tolerant and open society.

## **The Lessons of Penang and North Malayan Disturbances**

LIM KIT SIANG

ON NOVEMBER 19, the Alliance government announced its decision to devalue the old Malayan currency by 14.3 per cent. following the British sterling devaluation.

Widespread confusion, frustration and discontent spread throughout the country. On the fifth day—November 23, everyone, except the Chief Minister and his administration, knew that a hartal was being called in Penang the next day.

On November 24, violence erupted and within the first 24 hours, according to official reports, 11 died and 126 were injured. What started as a hartal swiftly turned into a racial conflict in a matter of hours.

Curfew was imposed continuously for 58 hours in Penang before it was relaxed by two hours, and it was not completely lifted until 12th December, 18 days after the start of the disturbances.

Trouble spread to Kedah a day after the Penang disturbances. A state of danger was declared in Kedah on November 28, while curfews were imposed in several districts in Kedah and North Perak after further loss of lives, injury and destruction of property.

How did violence of such a proportion take place in Malaysia, a country which the Alliance is fond of boasting to the world, is an example of racial harmony, peace and tolerance? Will such racial conflicts happen again?

It is vital that we draw the correct lessons from the Penang and North Malayan disturbances. If we do, then we will be preparing the ground for a united and peaceful Malaysian nation. If we don't, then what happened in Penang and North Malaya would repeat themselves, on a bigger and bloodier scale.



There is no doubt that the incompetence and ineptitude of the State Alliance Government and the State Police allowed an explosive situation to erupt before they woke up to the seriousness of the problem.

The incompetence and ineptitude of the Penang Government, however, was only symptomatic of the grave malady of the Alliance government, both at national and state levels.

Some top Alliance leaders, like the Tunku, believe their own propaganda that Malaysia is a peaceful and harmonious multi-racial nation, while others who are less blinkered refuse to admit that the Alliance policies and measures in the past ten years have strengthened, and not weakened, racial animosities.

The Penang disturbances resulted from the hartal, called purportedly in protest against the unconscionable devaluation of the old Malayan currency, which was a serious blow to the small-timers like the businessmen, the petty-traders, the hawkers, the workers, the farmers and the fishermen.

There was a sizable section of the Penang public who, although they did not support the hartal, were not opposed to it. This was because they were utterly fed up with the policies of the Alliance government on a whole range of subjects, including language, education, culture, taxation, racial bias, employment and the erosion of democratic rights like the suspension of local council elections.

The devaluation of the old currency was, so to speak, the straw that broke the camel's back.

In other words, the government has lost the support and confidence of larger and larger sections of the public, and many felt that protests against the Alliance, either in the form of a hartal or any other peaceful and non-violent manner, might be useful in opening the eyes of the Alliance about their unpopular policies.

The Labour Party capitalised on this mood, and decided to launch a hartal. Within a few hours, the hartal became a racial conflict.

The pertinent questions are: (1) did the Labour Party deliberately intend the hartal to become a racial conflict? And (2) did the Malay communalists exploit the tension in Penang and engineer a racial conflict?

In the absence of concrete information, it is not possible to give a categorical answer to both questions.

But there could be no question that after the Penang hartal had degenerated into a racial conflict, the Labour Party did not desist from calling hartals in other West Malaysian towns, as in Taiping, Rawang and Kuala Lumpur, although racial bloodbaths would definitely have taken place if they had succeeded. This showed that the Labour Party organisers were not concerned about the possibility of racial clashes, and were prepared to let them happen to pursue their own ends.

There could also be no question that Malay communalists were largely responsible for the spread of the disturbances to Kedah and North Perak, with awful consequences.

Without definite evidence, it is not possible to convict the Labour Party or the Malay communalists for starting the racial violence. This is one reason why we called for a Commission of Inquiry.

However, one thing is clear: Although it is uncertain as to which one of the two sparked off racial violence, both are guilty of enlarging the racial conflict once it had started.

The Penang and North Malayan disturbances have been put down. Unless we identify and remove their root causes, then what happened last month will be a prelude to greater disturbances and racial violence in Malaysia.

For those who have eyes to see, the signs of danger are many and serious. Malaysia is in a crisis. If present developments are not halted, they will lead to the break-up of Malaysia.

The basic cause of the Malaysian crisis is the failure of the Alliance government to create a nation of Malaysians.

When Malaya achieved independence on August 31, 1957, the Alliance leaders dedicated themselves to the task of making one

people out of the diverse races in the country. But the first thing they did was to permanently divide the people by creating a new distinction – bumiputras and non-bumiputras.

Instead of encouraging the non-Malays to give undivided loyalty to Malaysia, the Alliance set out systematically to undermine their loyalty by adopting a racialist policy on language, education and culture.

Instead of encouraging the Malays to adjust themselves to become Malaysians, they are told that to be a Malay is a Malaysian, and to be a Malaysian is to be a Malay.

Instead of removing the sense of economic insecurity of the Malays by abolishing rural Malay poverty and backwardness, the Alliance set out to reinforce it so as to secure their political hold on the Malay masses.

As a result, no durable bridge was constructed to draw the various races together as one people. On the contrary, racial feelings were brought out from below the surface more and more into the open, ready for exploitation by the communist-inspired advocates of violence and Malay communalists.

Racial animosities and grievances have been heightened and not de-fused, since 1957. Hence the Penang and North Malayan disturbances. Those who started the racial violence are guilty of lighting a powder-keg. But the Alliance is guilty of creating the powder-keg.

We appeal to the Alliance government to make a searching reappraisal of their policies, and abandon all those which divide, and not unite, the people of Malaysia.

It is equally important, however, that the people of the various races should wake up to the fact that they are sitting on a powder-keg, and collectively endeavour to put the nation on the right tracks again. It is after all the people who will eventually suffer.

The Malays, the Chinese and the Indians and all others who have made Malaysia their home must realise that only a policy of accommodation and multi-racialism can succeed to the benefit of

all. The only road to successful multi-racialism must be through dynamic and concerted peaceful action, and never by violent means.

There are Malays who reject the concept of multi-racialism in Malaysia. They look towards Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia as models which Malaysia should follow. In these countries, nationals of Chinese origin are deculturated, made politically impotent and economically discriminated against.

With the failure of the government to solve the problem of Malay rural poverty, more and more Malays are attracted to this idea. More and more Malay leaders are toying with it, because it provides a convenient scapegoat to divert responsibility for their own economic failures.

There are Chinese who feel that the only way to secure a proper and honourable place in the Malaysian nation is through violence.

It does not require an intelligent man to realise that neither a policy of violence, as advocated by the Malayan Communist Party, nor a policy of subservience, as preached by the MCA, can solve Malaysia's multi-racial problems.

A policy of violence will polarise the racial situation, and set one race against another.

A policy of subservience will be rejected by the majority of Chinese, and will build up raw material for exploitation by the advocates of violence.

Only a policy of accommodation and integration, as advanced by the Democratic Action Party, can remove the curse of racialism from Malaysian society.

This applies equally to the Malays as well. A policy of domination by overt or covert force will be rejected by the majority of the non-Malays and will lead to national disintegration. A policy of subservience for the Malays, economically and politically, will be rejected by the majority of Malays and will not work.

Finally, whether Malaysia succeeds as a nation depends on the people themselves. If the people are conscious of the Malaysian crisis, the crisis of a Malaysian identity, and are prepared to stand up and support the forces of sanity and accommodation to achieve

a nation of Malaysians through integration, and repudiate the racialist policies of the Alliance and the suicidal policies of the advocates of violence, then there is still hope for the emergence of a peaceful and prosperous Malaysian nation.

It is regrettable, however, that to date, there has been no such upsurge of Malaysian consciousness. The next decade would be crucial for Malaysia. If by 1977, we have not gone beyond our present stage of racial compartmentalisation towards a more united Malaysian identity, then the racialists, the communists and the advocates of violence among themselves will succeed to destroy the Malaysian nation and people.

(From 'The "Rocket," January, 1968.)

## **Unemployment in Malaysia**

*Speech by DAP Organising Secretary, Lim Kit Siang, at the General Meeting of the DAP Labour Bureau in Kuala Lumpur, on February 9, 1969.*

LAST MONTH, when the Ipoh Municipal Council wanted to fill 21 vacancies for labourers, over 2,000 people jammed the Municipal Padang for the posts.

Later in the month, when a new hotel in Kuala Lumpur advertised for 110 vacancies for waiters, receptionists, cashiers, bellboys and supervisors, over 4,500 people, including 3,000 School Certificate holders, applied for the positions.

These are not exceptional cases. They have become normal occurrences. They illustrate the gravity and seriousness of the rising unemployment problem in Malaysia.

What is shocking is that the Alliance leaders do not seem concerned about the seriousness of this unemployment problem.

In October last year, the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman said there was unemployment in Malaysia not because of the lack of jobs, but because people were 'so choosy.'

Were the 2,000 people who rushed for the 21 vacancies for labourers choosy? Were the 4,000 people who applied for the 110 jobs to become waiters, bellboys, receptionists choosy?

Of course, if the Alliance leaders succeed in convincing themselves that there is no unemployment problem in Malaysia, except the problem of 'choosiness', then Alliance leaders can concentrate on their pleasures, luxuries and fun with a free conscience — when hundreds of thousands of unemployed in the country are sentenced to a life imprisonment of poverty and social disgrace.

The Alliance government is deliberately trying to hide the truth

of the rising unemployment problem from the people for fear of unpopular reactions from the public.

This is why all that the Finance Minister, Tun Tan Siew Sin, said in his recent budget speech about unemployment was: "Although the Malaysian economy expanded in 1968, the indications are that there was some deterioration in the unemployment situation last year."

Tun Tan did not explain how serious was this "some deterioration in the unemployment situation." Why?

Compared to 1966, when the First Malaysian Plan was launched to create 380,000 new jobs in the next five-year period, the unemployment problem today has dangerously worsened.

This is why the Mid-Term Review of the First National Malaysian Plan released by the government last week conspicuously omitted to mention the number of new jobs estimated to have been generated between 1966 and 1968, although it boasted that the Malaysian economy grew by 6.7% per annum, at constant prices, and that real per capita income grew by over 1% per annum, during the period under review.

If the First Malaysian Plan is on schedule, with regard to its objective to create 380,000 new jobs in five years, then from 1966 to 1968, the government should have created 228,000 new jobs.

It is doubtful, however, whether in these three years, 100,000 new jobs had been created.

When it is remembered that over 100,000 youths enter the labour market every year, this means that in the 1966-1968 period, at least 200,000 youths had added to the backlog of unemployed - given by the government as 175,000, which is bound to be a conservative figure. The two figures added together will bring the total of unemployed today to the region of 375,000.

But the problem is even worse than this, for in the last three years, in some major sections of Malaysian economy, like the rubber industry, job opportunities have shrunken, because of mass retrenchments and dismissals.

For instance, in December 1965, there was a total of 292,137

workers in the rubber estates. But by September 1968, this has fallen to 205,330 – retrenchment of over 56,800 workers.

When this figure is added to the 375,000 unemployed today, the total unemployment figure exceeds 400,000!

Contrary to Alliance propaganda, therefore, unemployment in Malaysia has become a grave problem. The Alliance government is not only unable to find jobs for the new job-seekers, it is also unable to safeguard and protect the jobs of present workers.

Retrenchment is looming large as a serious problem for Malaysian workers. There is retrenchment not only in the rubber industry, but also in the commercial sector, where over 500 workers were retrenched as a result of 'mergers, reorganisations and closures,' last year alone. More may be retrenched this year.

There is also retrenchment arising from British defence withdrawal, which will affect 30,000 Malaysians by 1971.

It is therefore astounding that the Alliance government has taken a 'couldn't-care-less' attitude, not only to the unemployment problem, but to the retrenchment problem as well.

The 56,800 estate workers who were retrenched from 1966 were not given any assistance whatsoever by the Alliance government to find alternative employment, or given land to farm and survive. They were completely left to their own suffering, hardship and misery.

The DAP calls on the Alliance government to discharge its government responsibility to help the retrenched and to-be-retrenched workers, either by finding alternative jobs for them, rehabilitating them, or granting land for them to work.

The magnitude of the retrenchment problem facing Malaysian workers deserve special government attention, and I call on the government to establish a new department in the Labour Ministry to deal specially with the problem of retrenchment, whether it be from the rubber industry, commercial sector or British defence establishments.

This department should investigate every batch of retrenchments, to establish that they are *bona fide*, secure for the workers a



fair and just settlement, and be responsible for finding alternative means of livelihood for them.

The government should also immediately enact a Retrenchment Payments Act in Parliament to protect retrenched workers from getting a raw deal at the hand of the employers, after having served in many cases a whole life of faithful service.

This is an urgent problem, and I hope the government will give it immediate attention.

