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Hussin Mutalib

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To the memory of
Abdullah bin Hussin

Preface

THIS book is, in more ways than one, a culmination of some years of observation and research on the issue of 'Islamic reassertion' in general and the revivalism of the Islamic ethos in Malaysia in particular.

I first took a keen scholarly interest in the phenomenon of 'Islamic reassertion' (or 'Islamic revivalism') in Malaysia in 1980 upon registering as a MA candidate at the Australian National University in Canberra. At that time, it was the Australian academics such as Manning Nash, John Funston, Clive Kessler, and Margo Lyon who mostly wrote about the phenomenon. In late 1981, I submitted my dissertation on the theme of 'Resurgent Islam and Ethnic Relations in Malaysia', a study which was later substantially enlarged to cover a wider focus and subjected to a more intensive and rigorous treatment when I decided on my Ph.D. topic. I spent about four years on the study but later recast it to incorporate the factor of ethnicity in the final thesis submission. During the preparation of the study, I had the opportunity to participate in Islamic camps and seminars in many places.

Upon returning to Singapore from my doctoral studies in Australia, further opportunities awaited me in my scholarly pursuit of trying to fathom the Faith and its multifaceted characteristics, particularly its relationship with politics. For about a year I served as the Executive Director of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore and, since 1987, have taught a new course for third-year and honours students at the National University of Singapore entitled 'Islamic Political Thought'. I hope, and believe, that these opportunities and exposure have broadened my understanding of the happenings, meanings, and ramifications of the phenomenon of Islamic reassertion, as well as of how the Faith has become the vortex of life to many Muslims in different parts of the world. It is with the intention of wanting to share my thoughts and perspectives on the matter in question with a much wider audience, that I write this book.

Anyone writing a book on issues relating to religion, ethnicity, and politics is bound to face problems, given the currency, sensitivity, and controversy of such issues. This was precisely the situation in Malaysia at the time of my study. The first problem encountered was the limited availability of certain materials relating to the subject. Despite the impressive array of literature (both primary and secondary) which is stored in the National Archives (Arkib Negara) in Kuala Lumpur, many of the documents, par-

ticularly those relating to government policies and the implementation of such policies, were not readily accessible, because of a 25-year embargo (only five years less than that imposed by the Public Record Office in London). For a study on a contemporary topic, this legal imposition is obviously a handicap to the smooth preparation of the study.

Secondly, in cases where the literature is available, it has to be treated with caution, since the scoring of political points has been a perennial obsession of the two Malay-based political parties in the country, UMNO and PAS. Even the validity of such an essential source-material as newspapers has to be placed under close scrutiny, since, like most newspapers in developing countries, they are, more often than not, government regulated.

Thirdly, and related to this general disadvantage of researching a topic of such sensitivity in Malaysia, is the added problem of securing the trust and consent of the authorities (for example, in the government and in some *dakwah* organizations) to be interviewed, and more so, once interviewed, to be acknowledged by name. A case in point is my inability, despite numerous attempts, to have a meeting with the leader (*Sheikh*) of Darul Arqam, a well-known Muslim organization. It is against this background that, in spite of being a most valuable source of research material for this study, only the names of about thirty of the fifty interviewees (mainly government officials and *dakwah* activists) can be revealed in this study. This was a solemn undertaking made by me, and honour it I must.

The many interviews referred to earlier were only a fraction, albeit an important one, of the overall source materials that I used throughout the period of the study. During that time, despite my general familiarity with Malay culture and politics, I had felt it necessary to make further visits to Malaysia. I visited the country on three separate occasions, in 1981, 1983, and 1987; the first two periods averaged about seven months each. Most of my time was spent in Kuala Lumpur since it is the centre of both the government and the *dakwah* organizations. However, shorter visits were also made to Kelantan, Trengganu, Penang, and Johore, thus covering, for the purpose of the research, most of the 'strategic' spots in the peninsula.

The major secondary sources used for this study included the usual books and articles on each of the themes of Islam, Ethnicity, and Politics. These 'core' material were supplemented by regular references to Malaysian journals, serials, and newspapers. These included sources of a 'primary' nature, such as the early *Jawi* newspapers like *al-Imam* and *al-Hikmah*, to the current ones, like *Berita Harian*, *Utusan Melayu*, and *Utusan Malaysia*. Useful guidance was derived from bibliographies and catalogues like the *Bibliography of Islam in Malay Civilization* (in Malay), produced by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in 1976, and *Katalog Koleksi Melayu*, published by the University of Malaya in 1980.

The most significant materials, naturally, were the primary sources. As indicated earlier, a most important category must be the more than fifty interviews that I managed to conduct (with prominent figures including Tunku Abdul Rahman, Anwar Ibrahim, Tan Chee Khoon, Lee Kim Sai, Yusuf Rawa, and Siddiq Fadhil) and the six Islamic camps in which I par-

ticipated during the period of the study—three in Malaysia and the rest in Australia, organized by Malay-Muslim university students and attended also by representatives from UMNO (United Malays National Organisation), PAS (Parti Islam Se Malaysia or Islamic Party), and the *dakwah* organizations from Malaysia. I was particularly fortunate to have had access to some classified materials which are not readily available through the government channels or the National Archives. These were made possible by the *dakwah* organizations like ABIM and Perkim and the Opposition political parties, as well as component partners within the government coalition, like the MCA.

Before explaining the main points covered in every chapter, it may be useful to define here the aims and 'context' of this study. This study is limited to Peninsular Malaysia (sometimes referred to as 'West Malaysia') and excludes Sabah and Sarawak. The primary objective of the study is to analyse how the two forces in the Malay ethos—Islam and Malay ethnic nationalism—function in the Malaysian political system, from the formation of Malaysia in 1963 to 1987. Such a study cannot ignore the salient features of that country, and one of the most conspicuous is the pluralistic, multi-ethnic character of both the government and the Malaysian polity. Closely related to this is the fragility of ethnic relations in Malaysia, particularly since the ethnic riots in 1969 which pitted the two largest ethnic communities, the Malays and the Chinese, against each other. In spite of this cultural heterogeneity and plurality of the country, the Malays form the largest ethnic group, comprising about half of the total population of Malaysia. Hence, the focus of the study is on the Malays. Malays are generally Muslim and have dominated, although to varying degrees, Malaysian politics since the beginning of recorded Malayan history. Their position was reinforced during the Independence of the country in 1957, when clauses were added to the country's Constitution elevating them to a special status *vis-à-vis* non-Malays.

Chapter 1 attempts to provide a general overview of Malay society and the place of Islam in Malay political culture compared to other forces, in particular ethnicity, up to the formation of Malaysia in 1963. I shall define the kinds of constraints that impede the role of Islam in traditional Malay society. I shall also refer to the role of the Islamic reformers as the vanguard of the modernist movement and how they interpreted and responded to the Malay practice of Islam, as well as the status of Islam at the time of the country's Independence. Following this will be a theoretical discussion of ethnicity, and an analysis of the extent to which ethnicity has shaped Malaysian politics, and how Islam fits into Malay ethnic identity.

Subsequent developments from 1963 to the early 1970s are covered in Chapter 2, which is aimed at taking up further the tensions evident in the Malay–Islam symbiosis. The chapter focuses on the theme of 'Islam, Malay ethnicity, and political power' from the time of the formation of Malaysia, an episode which brought major structural changes to the country, to post-1969, a period equally momentous and significant in modern Malaysian history because of the ethnic riots and the unbridled political turbulence which ensued. The effects that such turbulence and

radical restructuring of the society have had upon the ethnic communities in the country, and the government's treatment of Islam *vis-à-vis* ethnic nationalist cravings, are also discussed.

Chapter 3 focuses on and analyses the extent to which Islam, through the Malays, asserts itself in Malaysian society as a whole, particularly since the early 1970s. One way of determining this is by studying the activities and orientations of the most prominent *dakwah* organizations, comparing and contrasting their objectives, dominant ideologies and activities, leadership, political attitudes and other proclivities, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. The analysis will also again seek to gauge the relative influence of Islam and Malay ethnic considerations in the orientation and activities of these *dakwah* organizations, and the ramifications of the *dakwah* phenomenon to Malaysian politics.

Chapters 4 and 5 attempt to weigh the influence of Islam on the politics of the Malaysian State by looking at those factors which have contributed towards the intensification of the role of the Faith since the early 1970s. Other than the *dakwah* phenomenon, two factors are deemed the most significant. First is the factionalism and cleavage within PAS, which eventually led to a new approach in the party's ideological platforms and tactics. The party's oft-quoted call for the 'Islamic State' will also be discussed within a wider theoretical framework. In addition, the significance of the political rehabilitation of Dr Mahathir Mohamad for Malaysian Islam will be analysed. The two chapters will also indicate whether or not the reassertiveness of Islam there in the 1970s succeeded in erasing the gravitational pull of ethnicity in Malay identity.

Chapter 6 gives a summary of the roles of Islam and Malay ethnic nationalism in Malay politics until 1986. The focus will be enlarged to include an analysis of the Islam–ethnic dialectic, as well as the main issues and determinants which have shaped the 'Islamization' of Malaysia in more recent times when Islam has occupied centrestage in Malaysian politics. The chapter will end by posing, and later seeking to answer, the contentious issue which has occupied the minds of many Malaysians since the 1970s: whether or not the 'Islamic State' may be a feasible alternative to the current ethnic-oriented political framework upon which Malaysian politics has been based since before Independence.

The Postscript updates the study with an analysis of developments that occurred after the completion of the study but which had a direct bearing on the period covered as well as the conclusions of the study.

It remains for me now to acknowledge, with appreciation, the *do'a* of my parents and family which have made this research less burdensome. Above all, the patience, sacrifice, and encouragement of my wife, Salimah, have meant more to me than I can say.

With all these helpers contributing to whatever assets this book may have, I alone am left to answer for its liabilities. I hope others will be encouraged to come up with more scholastic efforts and cover up whatever loose ends that this study may have.

Singapore
May 1989

HUSSIN MUTALIB

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia
ALIRAN	Persatuan Aliran Kesedaran Negara
AN	Arkib Negara (National Archives, Malaysia)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BERJASA	Barisan Jamaah Islamiah Se Malaysia
BTLV	*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*
DA	Darul Arqam
DAP	Democratic Action Party
DBP	Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka
FEER	*Far Eastern Economic Review*
FOSIS	Federation of the Organisation of Islamic Societies
Gerakan	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia
HAMIM	Parti Hizbul Muslimin Malaysia
IRC	Islamic Representative Council
JKT	Jakarta
JMBRAS	*Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSEAS	*Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*
KL	Kuala Lumpur
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
MKHUIM	Majlis Kebangsaan Halehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia
MSA	Muslim Students Association
NEP	New Economic Policy
NST	*New Straits Times* (Malaysia)
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OUP	Oxford University Press
PAS	Parti Islam Se Malaysia
PBS	Parti Bersatu Sabah
Perkim	Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Se Malaysia
PMIP	Pan Malayan Islamic Party
PPIM	Pusat Penyelidekan Islam Malaysia
RISEAP	Regional Islamic Dakwah Council for Southeast Asia and the Pacific
ST	*Straits Times* (Singapore)

UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
UM	University of Malaya
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
USNO	United Sabah National Organization

Note

In this book, 'Malay(si)a' means Malaya, and subsequently Malaysia. 'Malaysian Islam' means Islam as it is practised in Malaysia.

Introduction

The Problem Defined

RELIGION and ethnicity are important and significant factors in contemporary Malaysian society and politics. This fact can be demonstrated and understood by studying the politics of the Malays, the politically dominant community in the country. In this regard, it is obvious that both Islam and ethnic nationalism are forces of central significance in Malay culture and identity. Islam is not only the faith of the Malays; it serves also as one of the core foundations upon which their self-identity is based. Since the country attained Independence in 1957, the position of the Faith within the political system has become more prominent: it has been accorded a special place in the Malay(si)an Constitution, which stipulates that 'Islam is the religion of the Federation' (Mohamed Suffian, Lee, and Trindade, 1978).[1] In addition, the Sultan is the head of the Islamic religion in his own state. Islam has also become a major reference point in political conflict in contemporary Malaysia, not only between the Malay and non-Malay parties, but also within each Malay party, evident, for instance, in the perennial UMNO–PAS struggle for Malay support and legitimacy (Funston, 1980; Kessler, 1978).[2]

The specific function, strength, and significance of that faith in Malaysian politics, however, can be meaningfully and realistically appraised only if one relates it to numerous other factors which have asserted their influence over Islam at different stages of Malaysian history. Of these factors, and taking cognizance of ethnicity as an integral aspect of the Malay cultural ethos, the role played by Malay ethnic nationalism has been especially clear. By the term 'ethnic nationalism' is meant the close attachment that Malays accord to the safeguarding of their Malay ethnic primordial ties or parochial interests in their dealings with others, especially non-Malays. Although this attachment may include Islamic values and universal principles like the emphasis on equity, tolerance, fair play and justice irrespective of race or creed, frequently, Malay ethnic nationalists tend to dispense with these Islamic values in the defence of their ethnic, particularistic interests, and unique cultural heritage. In addition to ethnicity (herewith used interchangeably with 'ethnic nationalism'), there are other, perhaps lesser, factors which have moulded the role of Islam in Malay(si)a.[3]

A study of Malay politics must come to grips with Malay culture and

identity. In this regard, central to Malay identity has been the inherent ambiguity, if not tension, between Malays as an ethnic community separate from all non-Malays, and Malays as Muslims belonging to a universal brotherhood or *umma*, although the distinction between the two has not been something of which Malays are generally conscious. While Islam has always been a major source of Malay identity—in the Federal Constitution, for instance, one of the main criteria in the definition of a 'Malay' is that he or she must be Muslim[4]—'Malay' itself is an exclusive, ethnic-based, term which is contrary to the philosophical spirit and the universal and non-ethnic foundations of Islam; hence the Islam–Malay ethnicity dialectic in the Malay search for identity. It is important to emphasize here that the use of the word 'dialectic' throughout this study to explain the Malay–Islam relationship, implies that such a relationship is not necessarily dichotomous and conflicting in nature, but one which can be mutually supportive at a given time or in a particular situation, and contradictory at another.

It is this dialectic which has been a major recurrent theme throughout modern Malay history, including the period of greater concern to this study, that is, from 1963 to 1987. The Malays have never fully come to terms with this 'balance of power' between the two major reference points of their identity. More often than not, the Malays have tended to perceive the issue as one and the same instead of it being dialectical in nature. Of added significance is the fact that this Malay–Islam 'tension' filters through the wider issues of contemporary Malaysian politics as a whole, because the Malays dominate Malaysian politics. Given this background to the relationship between Islam and Malay ethnicity, it is important to examine and analyse how these two most salient traits or facets of Malay identity coalesce, and relate this coalescence to the wider context of Malaysian politics.

Malay harmony has long been taken for granted, despite the fact that Malay politics, particularly the politics within the UMNO, has had unstable moments as detailed in the present writer's study of UMNO (Muhammad Hussin Mutalib, 1977). However, with the reaffirmation of the Islamic ethos especially since the 1970s, tension has been generated because of the greater awareness of Malays that they are both Malay and Muslim. The problem has been exacerbated by the aforesaid argument that these two factors or forces, given their intertwining relationship, were not generally perceived as two different elements by Malays—and non-Malays in particular—although they are, ideologically, inherently diametrically contradictory to each other—that is, particularism versus universalism. To understand this 'contradiction' in the Malay–Islam relationship, as well as in the Malay–non-Malay dichotomy, one has not only to fathom the Malay psyche, but also to refer to previous Malay political experiences, especially in their encounters with non-Malays from the time of colonial rule. In this regard, a salient aspect of the Malay political culture and search for identity is the uneasy interplay between two equally important variables or forces—Islam and Malay ethnicity or ethnic nationalism. Although Malays generally perceive no clear distinction between the two because they are enmeshed and embedded in the Malay psyche,

the political experiences of the Malays and government policies (both historically and in the more contemporary setting) cause the pull of Malay ethnic interests to override and take precedence over Islamic considerations and values.

Because of the relative importance of Islam and Malay ethnicity in Malay political culture, along with the political dominance of Malays in Malaysian politics, serious studies of various facets of Islam in Malay life need to be undertaken. Other than clarifying the precise nature of the Islam–ethnicity relationship, such studies can also indicate the type of Islam that 'Malays' adhere to. Such a need has been made even more urgent in view of the world-wide 'revival of Islam' precipitated by major developments in the 'Muslim world'. It will be interesting and useful to see in what way, if any, these extraneous forces have an impact on Islam in Malaysia. Many writers, such as Ayoob (1981), Braibanti (1979), Cudsi and Dessouki (1982), Esposito (1980), and Jansen (1979), have elucidated this reaffirmation and its significance to global Islamic politics.[5]

This is not meant to imply that such studies of Malaysian Islam are completely absent. On the contrary, there have been some notable contributions. These contributions, however, have been mostly confined either to a particular state in Malaysia, or to the pre-1975 period, or provide inadequate coverage of the influence of ethnicity upon Malaysian Islam. In addition, given the sensitivity and political climate in Malaysia, there has been a noticeable dearth, if not absence, of scholarly work on the theme of 'Islam and Politics in Malaysia' by Malaysian writers.

Studies on Islam in Contemporary Malaysia

A general study of contemporary Malaysian Islam was in fact initiated by Charles Gallagher (1966) as part of the American Universities' Field Staff Reports. Writing at a time when Singapore had been forced out of the Malaysian federation amid the intense polarization of ethnic chauvinistic sentiments there, it was quite understandable that Gallagher (p. 46) found it fit to view Islam as a frontier of communalism and that 'the purely Malay and Islamic symbols . . . determine to a large extent, the characterisitics of the Malaysian national identity'.

R. L. Winzeler's (1970) Ph.D. thesis on 'Malay Religion, Society and Politics in Kelantan', must qualify as the earliest study of the theme of 'Islam, Malays, and the State' after the ethnic confrontation in 1969. His conclusions were that Islam was a destabilizing factor in Malay life in conflict with traditional *adat*-based Malay cultural values and practices. Notwithstanding the seriousness and relevance of that research, it was restricted to the rule of PAS in the eastern peninsular state of Kelantan, and the study was actually conducted in 1966 and 1967, prior to the ethnic clashes.

Four years after the completion of Winzeler's thesis, there appeared two other important contributions, though again confined to Kelantan. The first, entitled *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, was a compendium of some stimulating articles by 'Malaysianist' scholars such as Kessler, Nash, and Winzeler which was edited by William Roff. The

second, by Manning Nash himself, was a short monograph entitled *Peasant Citizens: Politics, Religion and Modernization in Kelantan, Malaysia*, in which he concluded that the process of cultural change in a tradition-bound society, like Kelantan, led to tensions and cleavages among Malays. The peasants, lacking modern skills, were led by the traditional élites in PAS towards opposition politics against UMNO. Nash argued that true class or interest politics, as opposed to communal politics, had not really developed in Kelantan. A major strength of Nash's work was his practical application of some theoretical concepts, combining them with extensive field-work. Nash's contribution was, however, limited in that the work focused only on one town within Kelantan, namely, Pasir Mas. Moreover, the major part of the study had been concluded prior to the 1969 ethnic riots and well before PAS suddenly decided to align with the Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition government, thereby depriving Nash of the opportunity to reflect upon these significant developments as they relate to PAS and Islam in the Malaysian state in general.

In 1978, Clive Kessler published *Islam and Politics in a Malay State: Kelantan, 1838–1969*. Kessler's main contribution to the theme was his perception of Islamic developments in Kelantan as a manifestation of 'class' conflict—hence, a strong challenge to Nash's conclusion.

In 1980 there appeared a work which can be regarded as the closest to the kind of focus and scope that the present writer has in mind for this study. This work was John Funston's *Malay Politics in Malaysia: UMNO and PAS*. Funston's study of the two major Malay political parties in Malaysia provided a useful insight into the working of the Malaysian political system as a whole, since it is these two Malay-based parties—and more particularly UMNO—which largely determine the content and direction of Malaysian politics. Funston's conclusions were that both UMNO and PAS had different ideas and strategies in conceptualizing their role in Malaysian politics. For UMNO, the protection and propagation of Malay nationalism was of paramount importance, whereas PAS, while similarly wanting to uphold this priority, also stressed Islamic principles and values. Like Kessler, Funston further argued that the main explanation for their contrasting approaches was their different class backgrounds.

The focus, and interest, of the present book, however, is directed more towards the politics of Malay identity: how Islam coalesces with Malay ethnic sentiments, and how this fusion of forces in Malay identity in turn affects politics, rather than Malays and their political parties, although they are invariably related in some ways. In addition, while Funston has concentrated on the pre-1970 period and stops at the end of 1975, the emphasis of this present study is on developments since 1970, namely the proliferation of *dakwah* activities, the appointment of Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Prime Minister in 1981 and its significance for Malaysian politics and Islam in the country, the impact that Islamic developments in the 'Muslim world' have had upon Malaysia from about that time, and the political reverberations caused by the Islamic Party, PAS, upon the Malaysian scene as it went through internal crises. These events have been of great significance to both Islam and politics in Malaysia.

Apart from Funston's book, and those mentioned earlier, there are works on a related theme, written before 1980, which have been useful to the present writer's own research-interests, albeit in a limited and indirect way, since many of them are BA (Hons.) graduation exercises.[6] There was also substantive work, though again only of general relevance to this present work, by seven doctoral candidates during the 1970s.[7] Throughout the 1980s, there were other relevant, though short, articles or monographs, which provide some useful insights on the theme of 'Islam and Malaysian Politics'. These include writings by Barraclough (1983), Dusuki Ahmad (1980), Mohamed Abu Bakar (1981 and 1982), Muhammad Kamal Hassan (1981), Chandra Muzaffar (1987), Sharon Siddique (1980 and 1981), von der Mehden (1980), and Zainah Anwar (1987).[8] The recent writings by Chandra Muzaffar and Zainah Anwar did make some useful contributions but they were relatively short monographs confined more to Malaysian Islam than the specific interplay between Islam, ethnicity, and Malay politics.

Zainah Anwar's emphasis on the pluralistic and changing nature of *dakwah* confirmed the findings of earlier scholars studying Islam in Malaysia, although her analysis of the role of students in the *dakwah* movement is to be noted. For Chandra Muzaffar, linking the *dakwah* phenomenon directly to the context, circumstances, and complexities of Malaysian society and politics was an admirable aspect of his study. However, his inference on the direct correlation between Islamic revivalism and the quest for ethnic expressions on the part of Malays, is a conclusion that could be further debated.

It is to be conceded that this latter aspect of ethnicity is also, to some extent, argued by the present writer in this book. However, while giving due cognizance to ethnicity (more specifically, ethnic parochialism) as an important factor in explaining, sociologically, the phenomenon of Islamic reassertion in Malaysia, it will also be acknowledged in this book that such an ethnic predisposition on the part of Malays is only one way of analysing the multifarious and complex nature of the phenomenon.

It was in late 1984 that another major work on Islam in Malaysia of relevance to the present writer's study was published. This was Judith Nagata's *The Re-flowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and Their Roots*. Although her study has similarities with the conclusions drawn in the present book—such as her analysis of the roots and some aspects of the outcome of the 'Islamic revival' in Malaysia—her approach, as in fact noted by her (p. ix), is mainly an 'anthropological endeavour'. Given the relevance of her work to this present study, it is useful to discuss and respond to, if only briefly, her conclusions and assertions. Despite the importance of Islam in Malay life, she maintained (p. 232) that the contemporary 'revival' of Islam in Malaysia 'has never managed to totally eclipse pristine Malayness'. While not totally putting aside the issue of class, she maintained (p. 234) that, in the main, the overriding force tended to be that of Malay ethnicity: 'The *dakwah* revitalisation was, and continues to be in large measure, a closing of ranks against the non-Malay . . . a nativistic reaffirmation of Malayness in a new form.' This present writer is in fundamental agreement with her insofar as the salience of Malay ethnic feelings

are concerned, but is of the opinion that this attachment cannot be generalized about since one cannot talk of one type or one definition of Islam as perceived by 'Malays'; it is more useful to categorize Malays into different groups according to the degree of their attachment to Malay ethnic nationalism in comparison to other forces, Islam in particular. It is also obvious that Nagata's focus was more on the *dakwah* phenomenon, as may be seen from the fact that she devoted five out of nine chapters to it. Other issues, like the roles of the government and other Muslim pressure groups, and PAS, as well as other socio-political determinants which have shaped the course of Islam in Malaysia, were not covered by her in any great detail.

In a sense, this present study and Nagata's may be seen as complementing each other. In addition to attempting to explain and rationalize the 'roots' of the *dakwah* phenomenon as did Nagata, the present study examines, through primary as well as secondary sources of research, the internal dynamics in the politics of Malay identity and their ramifications for both the Islamization process in Malaysia and Malaysian politics as a whole. It is hoped that this will fill a conspicuous gap in studies of contemporary Malaysian Islam.

Framework, Objectives, and Methodology of Study

No specific theoretical framework has been adopted in this study given the methodological problems that may arise in a study of this nature. Islam is viewed here as more than a 'religion' in the Western sense; it is a comprehensive system (*shumul*) encompassing politics, laws, and socio-cultural values and practices. Islam, it should be noted, unlike other universal religions, proclaims its inseparability from politics in that religion and politics are organically linked. The *umma* (people) and *imamah* (leaders) are at once both political and religious concepts. Islam is *al-din*: it is belief and law (*'aqidah wa shar'iah*), religion and state (*din wa daulah*), and a system of values which brings spiritual and temporal affairs together (*din wa dunya*). Despite the general acceptance by Muslim scholars of Islam being more than just a code which governs the moral conduct of the individual, but rather a corpus of rules and regulations which provides for every need and all requirements, the debate, however, continues, as to the precise relationship between Islam and politics. Against this background, and given the difficulties that arise from adopting one of several models since these are not mutually exclusive—as argued, for instance, in a recent work by Piscatori[9]—it was decided to view the political relevance of Islam through different approaches. Islam is hereby viewed from the perspectives of history (as a civilization) and ideology, a system which is seen to be distinct from other existing ideologies, demanding a complete and subservient adherence to its injunctions.

The focus and primary concern of this study is politics: the impact and implications that the politics of Malay identity have upon Peninsular Malaysian politics,[10] and Malay politics in particular. Among the major concerns, this study seeks to gauge the extent of the Malay–Islam tension and the forces that pushed for the rise of Islamic ethos there, and what all

these mean to the Malays and to the wider Malaysian polity at large. It is also intended to examine how Islam functions within Malay political culture in particular, and Malaysian politics in general, and to explore the power of Malay ethnicity in shaping the role and strength of the Faith, especially from the formation of the Malaysian federation in 1963, to 1987. In the process, it is useful to see the extent of strain between the universalistic claims and directions of Islam and the particularistic demands or pressures of Malay ethnicity. In this regard, the study will probe further the relationship between, and relative strength of, the two most dominant factors in Malay identity: Islam and ethnicity. The latter connotes the tendency to protect, preserve and defend Malay interest as an ethnic or racial group *vis-à-vis* other ethnic and religious groups in Malay(si)a.

Although for the purpose of manageability, the study concentrates on the period since the formation of Malaysia in 1963, it actually begins in the period prior to that. Setting the historical background in perspective is useful, if not necessary, in order to provide an adequate understanding of the pre-1963 period; this understanding, in turn, will lead to a more balanced analysis of the issues and events which happened henceforth.

The approach adopted for this study is thematic and dialectical. Although the analysis of the events and issues in each chapter follows a chronological order, greater emphasis is placed on developing the main themes as they relate to the central argument or 'thesis' of the study such that the chronological order is not always adhered to. This approach is adopted since the topic is about the dialectic of the Islam–Malay ethnicity relationship; this dialectic implies both the process of continuity and change, as well as the supportive–contradictory nature of the relationship between factors or societal forces, and hence a historical–chronological approach may not capture adequately the changes and the dynamics inherent in the dialectical process.

At this stage, it should be mentioned that this study will not make frequent references to, say, Islamic developments in other countries for the purpose of comparison despite the availability of studies on such developments (Ayoob, 1981; Esposito and Donohue, 1982; Fazlur Rahman, 1982; Kedourie, 1980; Stoddard, 1981; Piscatori, 1983; and Pipes, 1981).[11] It is simply a specific study of Islam and politics in a given country, Malaysia. The major consideration here is one of manageability. In addition, the usefulness of comparative references is limited. For one thing, Islam means different things to different people, not only between Muslims and non-Muslims,[12] but even among Muslims themselves; for another, the factors that determine the role of Islam in different countries may vary considerably from one country to the other. An attempt, however, will be made to raise and discuss a core issue of considerable interest to all Muslim countries or to countries like Malaysia, with sizeable Muslim populations—the issue of the 'Islamic State'. Against the current interest in the 'Islamization' process of many countries, it is pertinent to assess the feasibility of such a state to a situation like Malaysia where Muslims at best constitute a marginal majority and where Western secular systems have permeated and become deeply entrenched in the society.

Given the complexity of the subject-matter, and especially the element of subjectivity involved in such a study, it is perhaps relevant at this juncture to mention that, like other researchers, this writer has his own inclinations and biases, shaped in part by the extent of his involvement with the Malay–Muslim community. Having said this, it is hoped that the demands of objective academic study have been met adequately. This reminder is the more pressing in this study in view of the highly emotive and sensitive nature—particularly in Malaysia ever since the 1969 episode—of each of the three closely related variables under investigation here—Religion, Ethnicity, and Politics.[13]

Clarification of Definitions

At this juncture, it may help to explain the terms used quite frequently in this study, for the purpose of clarity and consistency in their use.

Bumiputra (literally, 'son-of-the-soil') is a legal term used to mean Malays and indigenes (such as the *orang asli* peoples) who are, under the Malaysian Constitution, accorded special privileges. The use of 'Malay' here follows its definition in the Constitution, namely, anyone born in the Federation (or Singapore) before Independence (or the offspring of any such person), who professes the Muslim faith, habitually speaks the Malay language, and practises Malay culture. This definition is resorted to despite the many ambiguities and theoretical and methodological problems that may arise. This definitional problem must be noted because 'Malay' had often been used to denote different things: an ethnic community, a cultural system, or a society with a distinctive social history. Much of this problem has been dealt with by Mohamed Aris Othman (1983), Syed Husin Ali (1981), and Sharon Siddique (1981).

As a generic term, *dakwah* (as it is spelt in Malay from the original Arabic) has also been used in a restricted sense in Malaysia: instead of referring to any Islamic activity calling people to the Faith, it is often meant only to refer to the activities of specific Muslim organizations and groups (Lyon, 1977; Nagata, 1984).[14] This limited definition should be noted when the *dakwah* phenomenon in Malaysia is discussed. A similar situation applies to *shar'iah* which is used mainly to refer to the religious law of Islam as applied officially in Malaysia, instead of its wider meaning of the 'clear path' (ordained by God) which people must follow for their salvation. Although in the general Islamic sense, *ulama* (singular '*alim*) refers to anyone who possesses a high level of 'religious' knowledge, within Malaysia, there is a tendency to include under this category, people other than possessors of this quality—people who are often elderly, have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, are proficient in Arabic, and have been 'traditionally' trained only in the *shar'iah* (as distinct from secular) religious subjects. 'Sunnah' refers to the life-style and practices of Prophet Muhammad which are mainly presented in the Hadith, a (written) collection of sayings of the Prophet.

Clarification is also called for in the terms frequently used since the 1970s: 'Islamic revival' and 'Islamic State'. Since a 'revival', latent or manifest,

has the implied notion of Islam having been dormant and remained moribund and thus needing to be 'revived'—which is certainly not the case in Malaysia especially if Islam is referred to as *al-din* or a way of life—terms such as 'Islamic reassertion' or 'reaffirmation' will be used instead.[15] The point to note here is that the 'revival' does not refer so much to the Faith, but to its adherents, who, for various reasons and in various circumstances, and in differing degrees, have decided to follow more closely Islamic tenets and principles in their daily lives. In addition, this 'religious' awareness has usually coincided with a more active interest in politics. Details of the 'Islamic State' will be discussed in the later chapters but for the moment it may be noted that such a State adheres to the following guide-lines: it is a non-territorial, transcendental, and ideologically based state; its main sources of law are the Qur'an and Sunnah; its governance is by a system of *shura* (consultation); and its policies emphasize equity, justice, love, and peace for all. The specific structure of the Islamic State that will materialize, however, may vary from one country to another—for instance, in the methods of choosing the government—so long as the general principles mentioned above are adhered to (El-Awa, 1980; Maududi, 1960, 1964). In the Islamic conception of the world or international political system, there are three types of State, namely the Islamic State (*Darul Islam*), the non-Islamic (religious) State (*Darul Harb*), and the rest of the world (*Darul Ahd*). Peaceful relations and trade dealings are allowed with the *Darul Harb* and *Darul Ahd*.

Finally, the term 'ethnicity' is used quite frequently throughout this study. 'Ethnicity' is preferred to 'race' since the latter not only connotes a more generalized reference, but tends to have lost its currency and relevance. Studies have also indicated that not only is there no definite causal relationship between race, language and culture, but that even within defined 'races', differences exist (Boas, 1955, 1963; UNESCO, 1961). Hence, throughout the study, communities will be referred to as *ethnic* groups, not racial groups. Although 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic groups' have been defined differently by scholars (a theoretical explanation of these terms will be discussed in Chapter 1), this study adopts the classical definition of ethnicity—to mean groups which exhibit a primordial, parochial and innate predisposition *vis-à-vis* other ethnic groups.

1. Cf. Hashim Yeop Sani (1978) and Ahmad Ibrahim (1982).

2. For the Malays, Islam is a symbol of Malayness; in fact, to become a Malay and to become a Muslim are inseparable.

3. These include Malay feudalism, *adat*, secularism, and the pluralism of the society.

4. Federal Constitution, Article 160(2): see Mohamed Suffian, Lee, and Trindade (1978).

5. Notable of the events were the renewal of the Arab–Israeli war and the Israeli onslaught of Jerusalem; the Islamic revolution in Iran; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; the seizure of Islam's holiest mosque; the assassination of the Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, by Muslim militants; and the professed declaration to adhere more strictly to Islamic principles in the governance of the state by countries such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

6. These include Sulaiman Daud's (1974) exposition of the 'innovative', un-Islamic

practices of Muslims in the country; Radziah A. Samad's similar criticisms of the Malay Muslims there but this time being levelled at the bureaucrats (1975); Mohamed Ya's brief (1979) comparison of the Islamic attitudes of the three Malay-based political parties in Malaysia; Kamariah Musa's (1977) contention that Islam hindered the process of national identity in Malaysia; and Salim Osman's (1979) study on UMNO–PAS rivalries.

7. See Newmann (1971a), Mohamed A. Zaki (1971), Mohamed Aris Othman (1973), Reagan (1977), Yegar (1977a), Abdullah Taib (1978), and finally, Wan Ibrahim Othman (1979). Of the MA theses on aspects of Malaysian Islam, three were referred to by the present writer in various parts of the book: Ramlah Adam (1976), Safie Ibrahim (1978) and Mohamed Sarim (1979).

8. There was a thesis on the radical Malay opposition movements by Firdaus Abdullah (1981).

9. Piscatori (1963), especially the Introduction.

10. For a reasonably good account of Sabah and Sarawak, see Michael Leigh (1974), Margaret Roff (1974), Sanib Said (1984), and Tregonning (1965). Harrisson (1973) provides a brief insight into the introduction of Islam to North Borneo.

11. There were two Ph.D. theses on the relationship between Islam and nationalism: in the Philippines (Bauzon, 1981) and Thailand (Pitsuwan, 1982). For Islam in Indonesia, see Karl D. Jackson (1980), S. R. Jones (1980), Muhammad Kamal Hassan (1980), Mintaredja (1972), Deliar Noer (1973), and Taufik Abdullah (1974). For an illustration, albeit brief, of Islam in ASEAN, see Sharon Siddique (1980).

12. Some non-Muslims, including Orientalist scholars, tended to view Islam as a potentially destabilizing faith that must be checked. See for example, Lewis (1976), Trocki (1980), Said (1979), and Worsthorne (1978). A more sympathetic treatment is adopted in the writings of Chaker (1983), Maryam Jameelah (1971), Sayyid Qutb (1974), and Tibawi (1980).

13. Given the sensitivity of these issues since the riots, the Malaysian Parliament passed a law (Sedition Act, 1971) placing these issues out of public debate. Any attempt to flout this ruling is deemed seditious and punishable by stiff penalties, including detention without trial.

14. The present writer's field-work research in Malaysia confirms this particular usage of the term.

15. These terms were also referred to by Mohamed Ayoob (1981) and Judith Nagata (1984). See also Hopwood (1983), p. 110.

I

Islam and Ethnicity in Traditional Malay Society

ISLAM was introduced to the Malay archipelago (*Nusantara*)—that part of South-East Asia covering present-day Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and the southern parts of Thailand and the Philippines—through several gradual, complex processes. This new faith, particularly from the fifteenth century, not only transformed some key aspects of Malay values and norms, but also became a major factor in Malay self-identity. The role and influence of Islam in Malay life, however, was limited by numerous historical, political, cultural, and institutional constraints. These include colonialism, Malay traditional mores and value-systems or *adat*, Malay feudalism, and, especially in the twentieth century, the strong force of ethnic nationalism. Since the early 1900s, despite many attempts by certain Muslim groups (particularly the reformists) to elevate the role of Islam in the life of the Malays and in the affairs of the country, the influence of the Faith has continued to be checked by the strength of articulation of Malay ethnic demands in a plural context.

Origins of Islamization

There are various theories as to when and from where Islam first spread to this region, by such scholars as Syed M. Naguib Al-Attas (1969), Blasdell (1942), Johns (1975b), Majul (1962), and Muhammad Abdul Rauf (1964). Equally numerous hypotheses and arguments have been put forward by others like Fatimi (1963), Wertheim (1959), and Winstedt (1982a) which claim that Islam first arrived between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries, with most scholars arguing for a date nearer the thirteenth century. Other sources of speculation are the ways and circumstances in which the Islamization of the 'Malays' took place.[1] Of the origins of its spread, academic debate centres on Arabia and India.[2] Within the immediate Malay region itself, the role of coastal cities like Pasai, Malacca, and Acheh has been acknowledged and much documented.

The role of Malacca can hardly be exaggerated as the conversion of the Malays took place mainly during the period of the Malaccan Empire in the fifteenth century, from approximately 1403 to 1511 (Zainal Abidin Wahid, 1970). It was through Malacca that Malays (and Muslims generally) made

their presence felt in the region for more than a century, and it was from this position of strength that Malacca assumed some degree of importance as a centre of Islam at that time. *The Malay Annals* (*Sejarah Melayu*), as well as accounts from Portuguese and Chinese sources, also speak in glowing terms, although in exaggerated fashion, of the splendour and extent of the economic standing and power of Malacca, an influence which was checked by the Majapahit empire based in Java.[3] Some Malay scholars, like Zainal Abidin Wahid and Mohamed Taib Osman, have even opined that Malacca was one of the key centres from which Islam spread along the littoral to regions as far as the Sulu archipelago in the Philippines, providing the Malays with some sense of belonging to a wider Muslim world (*ummat Islam*) (Zainal Abidin Wahid, 1970: 23).[4] This spread may have occurred after Sultan Muzaffar Shah's declaration, around 1450, of Islam as the official religion of the Malaccan Kingdom.[5] Muslim scholars enjoyed high status at the time. For example, the Arab religious teacher, Makhdum Sadr Johan, could refuse to teach the Malaccan ruler, Sultan Mahmud Shah, when the latter came to his Islamic lesson riding an elephant. The same happened to the Chief Minister (Bendahara), when he came to the class drunk. Another Malaccan ruler, Sultan Mansur Shah, was known to seek religious advice from Makhdum Patakan, the well-known Pasai sufi '*alim* (religious scholar) (Zainal Abidin Wahid, 1970: 32). Sufism, in general, had tremendous influence upon Islam then.[6] Such was Islam's special position in the affairs of the government.[7]

Syed M. Naguib Al-Attas (1970 and 1972) has maintained that Islam marked a crucial stage in the modernization of the Malays. He has argued that it was Islam which gave new and positive universal values to the Malays. In this regard, one may say that Islam gave content to the definition of 'Malayness' and to Malay values. Previously known for their blind loyalty to their rulers — 'it is un-Malay to rebel!' (*'pantang Melayu menderhaka!'*) — once Islamized, the Malays began to call for a conditional clause for their obedience. Thus, the common Malay proverb was transformed to: 'A just king is obeyed, an unjust one is challenged!' (*'Raja adil raja disembah, raja zalim raja disanggah!'*)[8] Hence, Islam not only provided a vehicle of dissent against the Malay feudal system and checked the ruler's excesses, but also made possible some radical changes to the Malay social stratification system by introducing new Islamic values (and vocabulary) into Malay culture, such as *adil* (just) and *amanah* (trustworthiness).[9] Malay literature was similarly transformed, for, since the arrival of the Faith to this region, and especially since the glorious days of the Malaccan Empire, 'the literary heritage of the Malays has been exclusively written in the Perso-Arabic script' (Mohamed Taib Osman, 1980).

Islam in Traditional Malay Society

From the 'beginning'[10] of its spread to the region, however, the religion had to grapple with 'traditional' norms, practices, and conventions already well entrenched in Malay culture, commonly referred to as *adat*.[11] In many ways, the relationship between *adat* and Islam was dialectical because of

the continuous ambiguity, if not ambivalence, that has characterized these two mutually related forces. The result was a kind of hybrid or variegated Islamic doctrine, consisting of a heavy mixture of both Islamic and un-Islamic practices, which was adopted by the Malays.

Prior to the coming of Islam to South-East Asia, the Malays were followers of animism and Hinduism, which explains the extent of Hindu-based antiquated practices in Malay culture and language.[12] Given its significance, it is necessary at this juncture to discuss the type of society that Malays lived in before Islam made substantial inroads in Malay life. The influence of *adat* was especially evident in traditional Malay society and politics—specifically in the *Adat Perpateh* and the *Adat Temenggong* political systems, both of which are mostly either non-Islamic or un-Islamic. This is illustrated by the socio-political practices in these two systems, for instance, in matters involving inheritance, succession, divorce and family law (Gullick, 1965; Reid and Castles, 1975). These restrictions were even more pronounced in the political realm which incorporated the *Adat Temenggong* system, as practised in most states in Malaysia. In his penetrating study, Gullick (1965) demonstrated the traits of this political system: strictly regulated, rigid and ascriptive, and a system which accorded tremendous power to the ruler and his chiefs, particularly in early Malay society.[13] One major method resorted to by the feudal Malay rulers to ensure the continuation of their power and status was through a wide resort to myths. For example, the Sultan's legitimacy and perpetuation of rule were reinforced by the practice of glorifying his magical powers, sometimes even of his *daulat* or divinity and the threat of retribution (Gullick, 1965; Milner, 1977; Shellabear, 1982). To rebel against the Sultan was considered an act of high treason (*derhaka*) and an unpardonable sin. A study (1977) by Chandrasekaran Pillay of the values of traditional Malay society concluded that 'although the ruling class did have some notion of justice . . . the aim has always been the preservation of its power *vis-à-vis* others'. If there was any force significant enough to check the excesses of the regime, it was Islam; its success, however, was limited, given the pervasiveness of feudal sentiments and repressive actions taken against the ordinary class (*rakyat*) who chose to ignore the law. The role of Islam here took the form of dissent with criticism hinting at the ruling class's decadence and oppressive tendencies—evident, for instance, in Abdullah Munshi's criticisms of the excesses of the Malay royalty and feudal leadership (Kassim Ahmad, 1960, 1968).

In general, however, in the feudal setting, Malays continued to adhere strictly to these *adat* norms, while at the same time acknowledging their complementarity with Islamic principles.[14] As in the case of other less developed societies, both Eastern and Western, magic, superstitions, spirit-worship, taboos, resort to the power of the shamans and medicine-men (*pawang* and *bomoh*), *jin* and *iblis* (evil spirits) pervaded the daily life of most Malays, especially in the rural areas (Alwi bin Sheikh al-Hady, 1962; Josselin de Jong, 1960; Knappert, 1980; and Winstedt, 1982b).[15] Symbols of Malay authority and legitimacy in those times—such as the kris, yellow attire reserved only to the royal family, and the Malay *tanjak*

(headgear symbolizing authority)—clearly demonstrate the salience of Malayness over Islam. Malay respect for these legitimating symbols and traditions and their resistance to the incursion of the Islamic faith is indicated quite clearly by the popular proverb known by all Malays: '*Biar mati anak, jangan mati adat!*' ('Let the child die but not the *adat*!')[16] Being integral to Malay life, *adat* cannot be neglected without misgivings from the community. Given the strength and persistence of these non-Islamic or un-Islamic values and norms in Malay culture, it is thus to be expected that the role of Islam in Malay life and politics would be necessarily limited. This point should be understood, in the light of its significance to the discussion of the role of Islam in the politics of Malay identity in subsequent chapters. In many ways, this strong Malay attachment to non-Islamic values before the advent of colonialism has not undergone any epochal or radical change.

Islam in Colonial Malaya

For 130 years from 1511, Portuguese policy in Malacca (then the religio-political centre of the peninsula) was characterized by the desire to check the spread of Islam and Muslim trading enterprise. The Portuguese failed in these tasks mainly because Portuguese occupation was continuously resisted by Malays. It could have been this unwavering resistance by the Malay Muslims that led the Dutch, when they overthrew the Portuguese in 1641, to tolerate traditional Malay rulers who, at that time, were divided because of competing state rivalries (Andaya and Andaya, 1982; Khasnor Johan, 1978).[17] Dutch Malacca was handed over to British forces in 1795. In 1824, under the terms of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty, both powers decided to demarcate their spheres of influence in the Malay archipelago. Soon after, in 1874, in the Pangkor Treaty, Britain promised not to interfere in matters affecting Malay custom and religion (Cowan and Wolters, 1961; Sadka, 1968).[18] However, under the terms of the Treaty, a pro-British ruler, Raja Abdullah, was recognized as the Sultan of Perak in place of his rival, Sultan Ismail, who was known to be suspicious of the British. In addition, the Treaty accelerated the process of British involvement in the Malay States, a process which started with Stamford Raffles' landing in Singapore in 1819.

Thus began British occupation, an occupation which was of great significance for subsequent developments in the Malay peninsula, particularly in shaping the course of Islam in Malay society. What began with only indirect intervention in 1786 when Penang was acquired from Kedah, led later to more direct forms of intervention in areas which were traditionally the domain of the Malay Sultans—including Islam. Although in comparison with the Portuguese and the Dutch, British policies were more sympathetic to Islam, a noted Malay scholar, Syed Husin Ali (1981: 27), echoed the sentiment expressed by a group of scholars of Malayan history when he opined that under British Malaya, 'Sultans became only symbols of Malay political sovereignty but without any authority to make decisions'. Yegar's Ph.D. study (1976: 52) also concluded that British officials were

stationed in the country (beginning with the Federated Malay States, but gradually including the Unfederated) with roles no longer restricted to 'advice' (*nasihat*) and consultation (*bicara*) but 'whose advice must be asked and acted upon' on all matters—including, in practice, Islam and Malay culture.[19]

Understandably, the creation of a modern governmental administration and other reforms by British officials invariably meant that they had to regulate many aspects of indigenous life—including religion. Thus, the declared contractual abstinence from the cultural and religious affairs of the Malays proved impossible to uphold in practice. On at least three important issues integral to Malay culture and Islam, this regulation took place with telling effect. The first relates to the introduction of a plural society into Malaya and the lack of integrative efforts to bring the different ethnic communities together; the second refers to British policies towards Malay education (including Islamic education); and the third, the administration of Islamic law.

Let us first look briefly at the issue of British treatment of the ethnic communities. One of the main outcomes of British rule in Malaya was the emergence of a 'plural society', the result of non-Malays, principally Chinese and Indians, being brought into Malaya in large numbers. Since these immigrant groups were primarily brought in to serve British economic interests, they were not integrated into the mainstream of the indigenous Malay environment. Perhaps this had to do also with the assumption on the part of British officials that they were merely 'birds of passage' who would return to their motherlands once the political and economic climate in those countries began to improve. Consequently, the Chinese, Malays, and Indians were left much to themselves within their ethnic enclaves—in residence, type of work, and education. Writers like Caldwell and Mohamed Amin (1977), and Sadka (1968) believe that this approach retarded inter-ethnic relations.[20] In the twentieth century, for the first time, the Malays found themselves outnumbered by an 'open-door' immigration policy. In the 1921 census, Malays became a minority in their own country, constituting less than half of the total population (Mills, 1942: 25; Sabarudin Cik, 1978).[21] Moreover, among the Malays, their different dialect and State loyalties, as opposed to a wider pan-Malayan Muslim unity, were sustained during British rule.

The second aspect of British policy relevant to this discussion is the treatment of Malay and Islamic education. Prior to the independence of Malaya in 1957, the first formal education for Malay children was religious, beginning in the mosque or *masjid*. This was the case particularly in the smaller mosques in the rural areas, known as *surau*. Religious education was also conducted at the institution of the *pondok* (Islamic boarding school), sometimes called 'Sekolah Al-Qur'an' (Abdul Rashid Ahmad, 1966; Winzeler, 1975).[22] The significance to Islam in Malaya of colonial educational policies hinges upon the fact that British schools and secularist policies, in general, not only contributed to the relative passivity of the Islamic factor in the life of Malays, but also added a new and unsettling dimension to Malay education in the country and created a cultural schism

among the Malays. This came about through a policy of differential education—a policy viewed by some Malay scholars as élitist and exclusive (Khasnor Johan, 1978). Studies of British educational policies, such as those by Willer (1975) and Yegar (1976), have confirmed that while the majority of Malays were encouraged to be content with a basic primary 'Islamic' education (mainly learning by rote and memorization of Qur'anic verses) in a rural setting, sons of aristocrats were accorded facilities and opportunities to acquire secular English education to the highest level, including tertiary education in Britain. The Malay aristocracy responded favourably to this opportunity to secure a secular education. Understandably, however, the ordinary Malay peasant did not (Isahak Haron, 1978; Loh Fook Seng, 1974).[23] For instance, in Malacca in 1886, only 5 (male) Malays attended secular Malay schools, that is, schools which offered secular subjects and where lessons were conducted in the Malay medium. In 1938, the number of Malays attending secular schools was 239, of which 30 were girls—a very small fraction of the total of 9,939 Malays, including 378 girls, enrolled in all schools in Malacca (Khoo Kay Kim, 1980a: 98).[24]

British officials did not seem keen to encourage the ordinary, non-aristocratic Malays to venture out of their traditional vocations. It is on record that George Maxwell, the Chief Secretary, and Frank Swettenham, who held various posts like Resident-General, Governor, and High Commissioner, viewed education for the Malays as a means to reorientate and prepare them to accept their place in colonial society.[25] Studies by Willer (1975) and Yegar (1976) further observed that exposure of secular-trained Malay students to Islam was limited because most of the secular schools were run by Christian missionaries (Za'aba, 1958: 277; Khoo Kay Kim, 1980a).[26]

Education, obviously, was not the only area in which the British presence was felt. A related area was Islam, specifically in the limited role accorded to Islamic law or *shar'iah*. It should, however, be noted that British rule did, in some ways, assist the development of Islam and the Malays. Administrative reforms led to the co-ordination and regulation of Muslim institutions such as the *zakat* and *wakaf* collection, the Islamic court system, and pilgrimage procedures. In such a hierarchically stratified society where Malay masses were essentially 'servants' (*hamba*) to the feudal rulers (sultans) and their chiefs, the increasing clarity in legal matters brought about by such British reforms, as well as the delineation of the duties and responsibilities of the traditional Malay political élites, did check their abuse of political power. The extent of British control in Malay-Muslim affairs, however, also meant that much of the influence of the Islamic *shar'iah* on Malay life was curtailed.

The Majlis Agama or Religious Council formed to assist the Sultan in administering his state, was, in a major way, controlled by British officials. This has been the conclusion of many scholars including Ahmad Ibrahim (1982), Funston (1979), Syed Husin Ali (1981), Willer (1975), and Yegar (1976); to Yegar, for instance, Britain's officially declared policy to refrain from interfering in religious matters eroded in the face of pressures that brought about just such interference. For example, although the powers

and functions of the Islamic Courts in Malaya were not as inconsequential as, say, in Indonesia where 'the "landraden" alone could issue order to execute contested decisions' (Lev, 1972: 13), such courts in Malaya had only a fiduciary role and influence. Important rulings affecting the Islamic Courts and Islamic law in Malaya were subject to British sanction—in particular, the concurrence and approval of the British Resident. The powers of the *kadhi* (Islamic judge) were limited by the provisions of British-influenced state enactments, almost replicas of British Codes and Ordinances, thus setting a maximum penalty which they could impose (Ahmad Ibrahim, 1982: 207; Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 173; Sadka, 1968: 265).[27]

Moreover, Civil magistrates, in explaining their decisions, tended to refer to the precedents of British statutory law practices in preference to those of *shar'iah* and *adat* laws (Ahmad Ibrahim, 1965: 22–4; Sadka, 1968: 156). Likewise, Islamic Courts had their roles made secondary to Civil Courts. It has been observed that Muslim children declared illegitimate by Islamic Courts were made legitimate by British judges and the granting of custody of children to the father under Islamic Court rulings was similarly overruled (Ahmad Ibrahim, 1982). This state of affairs was perhaps predictable because all the senior judges were appointed by the Resident-General with the approval of the High Commissioner. Trained in the British legal system, it became natural for them to refer to and apply English law in their deliberations.[28]

The above examples should suffice to illustrate the extent of British influence in Islamic law in Malaya and the *shar'iah* in general. Seen together with the earlier explanation of differential ethnic policies and the lack of encouragement in upgrading the education of the Malays, the picture of British policy towards the Malays and Islam is thus clear. Hence, if Malayan leaders and administrators continued to neglect Islamic principles in governing the state after colonialism ended, or if the confidence of Malay masses in the feasibility of Islamic principles in guiding their lives was lacking, part of the reason for such neglect, or the preference for the secular alternative, may be attributed to British rule. Against this background, it is not surprising to note the lukewarm response from Malays when British forces returned to Malaya after the Japanese surrender in 1945. Unlike the British, during their four-year occupation from 1941 to 1945,[29] Japanese troops treated Malays favourably compared to the Chinese and Indians. Ironically, this preferential treatment later proved detrimental not only to relations among the ethnic communities (Malays did not join the mainly Chinese guerrilla forces formed to resist the Occupation) but to the Malay–Islam relationship as well. This was because, like the British, Japanese officials too regarded Malays as an ethnic category distinct from non-Malays in general. As such, Malays were denied the opportunity to be close to, or at least to identify their status with respect to, non-Malay Muslims in the country. For instance, the two major Islamic conferences convened during the Japanese interregnum, took on the form of Malay gatherings which discussed the problems of Malay unity[30] instead of focusing on issues involving all Muslims in Malaya.

Islamic Reformism

Ironically, the changing circumstances of the Malays during the colonial administration—new forms of economic activity, urbanization, the spread of modern bureaucracy, and secular educational policies—contributed to Malay awareness of themselves as an ethnic group *vis-à-vis* others. Against the background of this state of bewilderment and frustration over their general backwardness and plight, came proposals to alleviate their problems from a group of concerned Muslims in the country. These were the Muslim literati, arguably the earliest modern educated sector of the Muslim élite who were later to become known in Malaya as Islamic reformists.

Obviously, the genesis of the Islamic reformist movement in Malaya can be traced to the heartland of Islam encompassing present-day Arabia, especially during the late nineteenth century when Islam was generally on the decline in the face of the Western onslaught, both militarily and economically. This was in sharp contrast to the period from the eighth to the sixteenth centuries when Muslims dominated at least three large empires, namely the Ottomans in South-East Europe and the Middle East, the Safavids in Iran, and the Moghuls in India.[31] What ensued was the birth of movements such as Pan-Islamism and Arabism, particularly the former.

For the reformist movement, the leading figures must include Jamaluddin al-Afghani (d. 1897), Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), and Rashid Ridha (d. 1935). Their message was principally that Muslims should be better equipped for the challenges of the modern world; a rejection of later accretions in conformity with Islamic principles; and the need to search for renewed strength from within.[32] In calling for the unity of Muslims to oust colonialism and imperialism and preserve their identity at a time when Muslim countries were colonized, al-Afghani also defined the idea of a dynamic Muslim: one who values science ('spirit of philosophy'), reason, and action. To him, the central problem was how to persuade Muslims to understand their religion well and to live in accordance with its teachings. He was convinced that while Western secularist tendencies had to be checked, civilization itself was universal and that Muslims must either adopt it fully or remain backward and lose their independence. They had to get rid of the illusion of the conservative *ulama* who, in forbidding the pursuit of modern science and technology, 'are really the enemies of Islam' (Esposito and Donohue, 1982: 19; Keddie, 1971). Al-Afghani's close friend and disciple, Muhammad Abduh (formerly the Mufti of Egypt and Rector of Al-Azhar University in Cairo), and Rashid Ridha, a faithful guardian of Muhammad Abduh's ideas, echoed these sentiments. The way out was clear: Islam had to be restored to its original unadulterated form and regain its outward-looking and progressive approach. This could be done, they argued, if Muslims were prepared to accept change and link that change to Islamic injunctions.[33]

Although these calls to regenerate the Islamic spirit and identity were also pursued by reformers outside the Arab lands, it was the radicalism of al-Afghani and his followers in particular that deeply touched the Islamic world from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The dynamism of

Islam and the promise of the future which these men conjured up acted like a cleansing wind in much of the Islamic world, and Malaysia (then Malaya) was no exception. It should be borne in mind that Malay scholars had gone to Mecca, Medina, and Cairo to study since early times, while numerous others had either migrated there or performed the pilgrimage (*haj*) (William Roff, 1962, 1977; Mohamed Sarim, 1979: 167–70; Safie Ibrahim, 1978b). The scholars and élite were especially significant because of their exposure to Islamic reformism whilst there and their contribution to the spread of similar ideas upon their return to Malaya. Egypt was particularly important in this respect: one active student remarked that in Mecca, one could study religion only; but in Cairo, politics as well (William Roff, 1970: 73–87). Al-Azhar University in Cairo served as a centre of activism for Malay–Indonesian Muslim students. William Roff, in his study of Indonesian and Malayan students in Cairo (1970), mentioned Indonesian personalities such as Djanin Taib, Kahar Muzakkar, Farid Ma'ruf, and Ilyas Yunus who all played a part in the anti-Dutch struggle in Indonesia. Both William Roff (1970) and Mohamed Sarim (1979) observed that throughout the 1920s and 1930s, newsletters and Islamic bulletins produced by the Malay and Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University, especially *Seruan Azhar* (Call from Azhar), contained the message of reformist Islam and pan-Islamism, which was conveyed to Muslim religious teachers, Majlis Agama officials and Al-Azhar graduates in Malaya. This was possible because of the regular flow of Indonesians (mainly Al-Azhar students and pilgrims) to Malaya (Mohamed Sarim, 1979: 149–73).

However, upon analysis, it is quite obvious that the reformist message, despite its approximately four decades of activism, was not very successful in broadening or opening up new vistas to the ethnic-oriented culture of the Malays. A major reason for this was that the message was delivered against the backdrop of a less developed and parochial, feudal Malay society. Moreover, the language of the reformers was Malay (and Indonesian), and Malay symbols, through proverbs and Malay experiences, were the reference points, thereby constricting consciousness of Malay ethnic horizons.

The type of impact that Islamic reformism had upon Malaya in general, and Malayan Islam in particular, can be illustrated by highlighting, briefly, the propagation of reformist ideas among some of the most notable Islamic reformists in the Malay archipelago (Mohamed Sarim, 1979; Hamka, 1958; Mohamed A. Zaki, 1971; William Roff, 1962; Wertheim, 1974). The three to be singled out here—al-Hadi (b. 1862), Tahir Jalaluddin (b. 1869), and Abas Taha (b. 1885)—were all proficient in both Arabic and Malay, had spent a considerable period of their lives in the Arabian heartland, particularly in Cairo and Mecca, and acknowledged the influence of Islamic reformism upon their thoughts. Their contribution to the spread of reformist ideas in the Malay world lay mainly in their role as founders and editors of reformist journals and newspapers of the time. The most notable of these was *al-Imam*, a monthly, founded by al-Hadi himself. Although the evidence is few and far between, it is possible that the name *al-Imam* was inspired by a similar name by which Muhammad Abduh himself was best known; the *al-Imam* newspaper came into being only a year after

Muhammad Abduh's death in 1905. Although the first Malay newspaper was the *Jawi Peranakan*,[34] the birth of *al-Imam* in 1906 was a significant point for Malay journalism. To begin with, *al-Imam* was, according to William Roff in his oftquoted *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, the most vocal, radical, and vigorous Malay-language newspaper, whose birth was 'a bombshell on the quiet Malayan scene of Islam' (S. H. Tan, 1961: 10).[35] The newspaper closely resembled the journal *al-Manar* launched by Rashid Ridha in Cairo in 1898 (William Roff, 1967: 59).

Over the next three decades from the launching of *al-Imam*, Malay reformists, against the backdrop of a traditional and conservative-oriented Malay society, propagated the spirit of the Islamic reformist philosophy. Al-Hadi, being a frequent and incisive contributor to *al-Imam*, emphasized the importance of education and modernity for the Malays, and the need for them to get rid of un-Islamic practices in their daily lives (*al-Imam*, 19 September 1906: 48–52).[36] He also chastised Malay leaders for their failure to act as effective 'referent groups' or models for their community, and their indulgence in un-Islamic acts like the consumption of liquor and dancing (*al-Imam*, 19 September 1906: 48–52).[37] Tahir Jalaluddin, in his many writings, called for a return to the true principles of Islam based on the Qur'an and Sunnah as the only solution to Malay backwardness (*al-Imam*, 23 July 1906). He was particularly incensed at the *ulama*'s passivity, their failure to perform their role, and their perversion of Islam with un-Islamic aspects of the *adat*, and consequently, their perpetuation of Malay decadence.[38] In a similar vein, Abas Taha, who succeeded Tahir as the editor of *al-Imam* and particularly in the role of editor of his own newspaper, *Neracha* (1911), clearly indicated his concern and opposition to the heavy accretions of folk Islam and traditional eclecticism. A Malaysian writer who has studied Malay periodicals aptly summed up Abas's role: 'Like Syed Sheikh (al-Hadi), he was a staunch advocate of modernism . . . frequently emphasised that Islam was a dynamic religion and was not opposed to progress. He urged the necessity of reforms . . . he attributed the Malay backwardness to their neglect of their religion' (Nik Ahmad Hassan, 1958: 48).

Islamic Reformism and Malay Ethnic Nationalism

The influence of Islamic reformism in Malaya, however, was checked by many factors that lay in its path.

Of these factors, the ethnic, communal orientation of Malays *vis-à-vis* non-Malay Muslims is the most telling. By this is meant the Malay eagerness to defend their ethnic interests against other communities, even if Muslim. A more detailed analysis of ethnicity as a socio-political concept will be undertaken later in this chapter, but for the moment, it is to be noted that although it was the reformists who were instrumental in germinating the seeds of Malay nationalism, it was this same nationalism which held back the growth of Islam reformism in Malaya. A major explanation for this was that though the defence of both Islam and Malay interests coexisted in the nationalist struggle for Independence, the struggle was more ethnic- rather

than religious-based. Islamic universal and humanistic principles like equity, justice, peace, and love were not adequately propagated to the Malays. The struggle for Malayan independence, for instance, was not geared at giving freedom to the people to manage their own affairs but more of ensuring that Malays did not lose the Malay land to non-Malays and aliens.

Paradoxically, the earliest and most vocal champions of the Malay plight were Muslims of Indian–Arab descent. They were the journalists and writers who came on the scene after *al-Imam*'s debut in 1906, to the 1930s—the golden era of Malay journalism. Over the years, however, this non-Malay leadership of Malay affairs was resented by many Malay leaders, who did not regard the former as 'true Malays' (*Melayu jati*). The first political party in Malaya and Singapore, the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (Singapore Malay Association), and the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Malay Youths Association), both led by the Malay-educated, came into being in 1925 and 1937 respectively partly to resist non-Malay Muslim leadership in Malay affairs (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 249). Almost immediately after 1937, numerous Malay Clubs and Associations mushroomed throughout the Malay peninsula. The climax of this Malay antagonism towards non-Malay Muslim leadership came in the form of conferences in 1939 and 1940 convened in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore respectively, to discuss the problems of the Malays (Soenarno Soenaryo, 1971; Mohamed Sarim, 1979). Disgusted at Arab–Indian leadership of Malay organizations (such as the 10,000 strong Persatuan Sahabat Pena or Pen-Friends Association), in the late 1930s Abdul Rahim Kajai, regarded by many Malay scholars as the father of modern Malay journalism (Hashim Awang, 1975; Ali bin Ahmad, 1970), coined the derogatory terms for the Indian and Arab Muslims—the DKK (*Darah Keturunan Keling* or Indian blood) and DKA (*Darah Keturunan Arab* or Arab blood) (Yunus Hamidi, 1961; Ali bin Ahmad, 1970; William Roff, 1967).[39] Ironically, despite the influence of Malay ethnic consciousness over Islamic consciousness, in the matter of deciding names for their children, the Islamic/Arabic suffix of *ibn* ('child of') and not any other Malay alternative was used by Malay parents, to symbolize their distinction from non-Malay Muslims. *Ibni* and 'son-of' were instead used for Arab and Indian Muslims respectively.[40]

Perhaps, from the point of view of the Muslim reformist movement, much of what they had fought for and sowed during the first half of the twentieth century in Malaya vanished—or at least was submerged—when leadership of the community was assumed by Malay leaders with a strong ethnic nationalist tendency, under the aegis of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), after 1946. UMNO was formed as a direct result of Malay opposition to the British 'Malayan Union' proposal (Simandjuntak, 1969: 33–4). That it was precipitated by Malay as distinct from Islamic considerations is also obvious—as the following will illustrate.

The slogan that was used to mobilize the Malay masses and organizations against the 'Malayan Union', and which later became the party's official platform, was '*Hidup Melayu!*' ('Long Live the Malays!') It was this overarching concern to safeguard Malay communal interests *vis-à-vis* non-

Malays that later became the *raison d'être* of the party. It was also this same awareness of being Malays that brought together the divergent strands in the Malay anti-colonial nationalist movement. Once successful in aborting the British plan, the otherwise disparate groups were brought together under the UMNO umbrella. The party leadership pledged its commitment to pursue the goals of Malay ethnic nationalism, which meant essentially the educational, economic, social, cultural, and political upliftment and dominance of the Malay community in Malayan affairs. Although UMNO initially had an Ulama Section, the latter played a limited role in influencing the leadership towards any kind of Islamic aspirations. As noted by one writer, UMNO's commitment to Islam was of a limited nature, manifested most clearly in the overwhelming opposition to a proposal by the Singapore Malay Association that UMNO should strive for the establishment of an Islamic State (Funston, 1980: 92).

The party's charismatic founder, Onn Ja'afar (his father was Arab) even had to resign from the party when his proposal to open the doors of the party to non-Malays angered other Malay leaders tremendously, particularly Malay teachers and graduates, led by the GPMS or Federation of Peninsular Malay Graduates (Tunku Abdul Rahman, 1978: 103–4). From time to time, the party leadership was faced with the difficult task of having to please its Malay members on the one hand, and (especially after UMNO joined forces with the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) in the Alliance coalition party) securing the support of non-Malays on the other. The continued retention of the party's English name, UMNO, may be seen as an indicator of this uneasiness, particularly for a party which, since its formation, took on the role of leading the affairs of the country.

It was clear right from the beginning that UMNO was a centre of tension between its secularist-ethnic nationalist leaders and its more Islamic ones like Ahmad Fuad and Syed Amin Hadi, and later, Abdullah Pa'him and Syed Nasir Ismail. Together with Islamic-oriented leaders from the PKPMM and those related to the Ma'ahad Ihya Islamic college (in Gunong Semanggol, Perak),[41] leaders of the Ulama Section decided to establish the Hizbul Muslimin (HAMIM) or Islamic Party, in 1948. Under the chairmanship of Sheikh Abubakar al-Baqir, HAMIM became the first Islamic party in the country. Its motto was declared to be 'to fight for Malayan independence . . . build a Muslim society based on Islamic principles . . . and Malaya as an Islamic state' (Mansoor Marican, 1976: 31–4; Chandrasekaran Pillay, 1974: 186–92; Ahmad Boestamam, 1972). Its leaders were later arrested and the party disbanded before it was proscribed. Its spirit, however, was reborn in 1951 when the Pertubuhan Islam Setanah Melayu (PAS) or the Islamic Party of Malaya came into being after some leaders of the Ulama Section of UMNO revolted against the party's leadership on the grounds of the party's secular-nationalist leanings.

Thus, it was this Malay ethnic nationalism—as opposed to an Islamic orientation—coupled with opposition from the ruling establishment (Malay Sultans, conservative *ulama*, or the *Kaum Tua*, as well as colonialists)—and, as present in all societies, the forces of tradition or *adat*—that, for the most part, checked the growth of Islamic religio-political influence in Malaya

prior to the country's independence. For purposes of securing its legitimacy in the eyes of the Malay–Muslim masses, however, and perhaps realizing too the integral nature of Islam to Malay identity, UMNO included Islam as one of its primary objectives. It also established a department of religious affairs and education, appointed Syed Sheikh al-Hadi's son, Syed Alwi, as its liaison officer, and installed some of its Islamic leaders, like Syed Jaafar Albar and Abdullah Pa'him, in its Executive Council.[42] The party's main stalwarts, however, did not endeavour to make their Islamic struggle explicit as did PAS, preferring to continue its 'Long Live the Malays' traditional slogan, although in anticipation of Independence, in 1951, the motto was changed to '*Merdeka!*' ('Independence!')

Islam in Independent Malaya

Thus, it was only to be expected that when UMNO won Independence for Malaya on 31 August 1957, Islam was not granted a prominent role in the governance of the state. The need to address the more pressing issues of nation-building also resulted in government policies which did not pay much attention to Islamic principles, nor to the development of Islamic socio-economic infrastructures and institutions. This is evident from the extent to which Islamic principles were incorporated in the Constitution. The Constitution was, given the realization on the part of British officials of the plural composition of the country, not meant to be guided by Islamic principles and considerations.

To begin with, there was not a single Malayan Muslim citizen in the five-member Constitutional Commission established in London under the chairmanship of Lord Reid. Of added significance is that the Commission did not originally recommend that Islam be made the religion of the Federation; this was only incorporated later in the Constitution based on the comments of the Working Committee which called for the inclusion of the clause (Article 3(1)), 'Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practised ... in the Federation'.[43] Secondly, although some 130 representations were received from groups and individuals, the final version was actually determined by the three groups in the Working Committee, particularly the Alliance, comprising component members of the government under UMNO's leadership.[44] These groups were not known for their Islamic inclinations; after all, only UMNO was a Muslim party and even then, it was more ethnic-nationalist oriented than Islamic. This nationalist-secularist orientation of the Constitution was quite telling with the inclusion of the sentiment that although Islam shall be the state religion, this shall not imply that the state is not secular (Mohamed Suffian Hashim, 1962: 8). The first Malay Chief Justice after Independence, Tun Mohamed Suffian Hashim, interpreted, in 1962, the type of role that Islam should play under the terms of the Constitution: 'primarily for ceremonial purposes, for instance, to enable prayers to be offered in the Islamic way on official public occasions such as the installation or the birthday of the *Yang diPertuan Agong* (king), Independence Day and similar occasions' (Mohamed Suffian Hashim, 1962).

Thirdly, although in principle Islamic affairs were under the jurisdiction of the Sultan in each individual state (Article 11(4)), the Constitution gave the Federal Parliament power to overrule Islamic laws decided by these states. For instance, Articles 3(4) and 4(1) stated that nothing in the Articles should derogate from any other provision in the Constitution; Article 4(1) states that 'all laws in conflict with Federal laws are automatically null and void' (Ahmad Ibrahim, 1976, 1982). 'Islamic law' was not even expressly included in the definition of law of Article 160 of the said Constitution.

Fourthly, the 'terms of reference' as well as the final adopted provisions granting unconditional special rights and privileges to a particular community—the Malays (after the formation of Malaysia in 1963, other *bumiputra* were included) and their Rulers—went contrary to the Islamic principle as ordained in the Qur'an and Sunnah which, in the realm of law and justice, deplored both the notion of a 'special people' and their 'special treatment'. The tremendous power accorded to the Sultans as the 'protectors' of Islam (Article 42(1) of the *Merdeka* (Independence) Constitution of 1957, later incorporated in the Malaysia Constitution of 1963) led to a situation whereby Sultans, elevated to a special status, were not only granted the final decision in matters of pardons, reprieves, and respites for all offences, but also could not, as a general rule, be prosecuted in the courts.[45]

This secular-ethnic nationalist tilt of the Constitution is also significant for the present discussion on the influence of Islam and ethnicity in Malay identity, and Malaysian society in general, because it moulds the mentality and actions of Malays, including their leaders. Although Malays are Muslims, and seem proud to be so, they have tended to bend towards this secular-ethnic nationalist approach in deciding the course of their actions. In addition, while continuing to subscribe to the *shar'iah* in their affairs as a matter of custom, their interpretation of Islam is restricted and limited to issues peripheral in nature, such as those relating to personal and family matters like laws governing marriage and divorce. In major aspects of the law, like contract, tort, property, and international law, civil laws take precedent over the *shar'iah* (Ahmad Ibrahim, 1976, 1982; Abdul Majeed Mackeen, 1969).

Essentially then, paralleling other developing Muslim-dominated states like Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Tunisia, and Indonesia (Kedourie, 1980; Khadduri, 1970; Lev, 1972; Ramadan, 1963),[46] Islamic laws, upon and since Independence, were made subservient to non-Islamic value-systems. This kind of orientation not only influenced the nature of the country's Constitution and legal systems in general, it became a prominent trait in the mentality of Malay political leaders in independent Malaya. What was to perpetuate this particular approach towards resolving the problems of the Malays, was the power of the Malay ethnic pull in the Malay *weltanschauung*, or world-view.

Ethnicity and Ethnic Politics: Theoretical Framework

Although scholars like Burgess (1978), Cohen (1974), Schermerhorn (1970), and Young (1976) made a distinction between ethnicity and ethnic groups,

as well as arguing that ethnic positions and allegiances are never permanent (the 'situationalist' paradigm), others have opined that the primordial force of ethnicity is a 'given' reality and that there are signs of convergence in the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic groups. This latter approach (the 'primordial-autonomy' paradigm) will be followed in the present analysis; it is an approach adopted by scholars like Barth (1969), Connor (1972), Isaac (1975), and Greeley (1974).

Ethnicity becomes the character, quality, or condition of belonging to an ethnic group, or the ethnic group itself. Geertz has identified several ascriptive characteristics around which much ethnic conflict has revolved: blood ties, race, patterns of domination, language, religion, custom, geography and history (Geertz, 1963: 109–11). An ethnic group is a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture—broadly defined to include habits, norms, and general life-style—is usually different from its own. In the classical sense, ethnicity is viewed essentially as a primordial, innate, instinctive predisposition. Ethnic relations become complex and problematic when groups are separated from each other by distinctive characteristics which provide a consciousness of difference, in factors like religious affiliation, language, socio-economic status, nationality, or related congruities. Frederick Barth in his 1969 study concluded that belonging to an ethnic group constrains the incumbent in all activities.

There have been numerous studies which confirmed that ethnicity (the general sense of 'belonging, and being different' to others) does not disappear despite the modernization process of societies, even a plural one. Enloe, Le Vine, Glazer, Moynihan, Connor, Said, van den Berghe, and Nagata, for instance, state that ethnic consciousness and conflicts cannot be treated superficially as ephemeral nuisances that will disappear with modernization, since other loyalties, like class, do not eclipse ethnic ones (Connor, 1972: 319–55; Nagata, 1976). Improvements in socio-economic infrastructures, Western education, and the resultant increase in social and economic interactions do not lead to the fading of interethnic tension. As Barth has observed,

> Boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them . . . categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories . . . ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite to the contrary often the very foundation on which embracing social systems are built. Interaction in such social systems does not lead to its liquidation through change and acculturation; cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence.[47]

The reality and strength of ethnic groups in the political process has to do with both the continuing sustenance of primordial ties among ethnic communities, as well as the politicization of ethnicity in the affairs of the state, especially by the process of stressing, ideologizing, reifying, and modifying the distinctive and unique cultural heritages of the ethnic groups. In Malaysia, too, the dialectical tension that characterizes the ethnicity–modernization relationship is quite obvious: ethnic groups are

preserved by the emphasis on their singularity and yet these groups are transformed into political conflict groups, where they must deploy cosmopolitan modern skills and resources (Rothschild, 1981: 3). Given the persistence of ethnic sentiments and their potential for upsetting political stability, governments of plural societies spend considerable resources in trying to manage and resolve this 'ethnic problem'. Many different approaches have been adopted by governments and regimes towards this end. Three of the most conventional strategies are assimilation, majority-domination, and accommodation.[48] The last category is the one most closely adopted in plural societies like Malaysia. The consequence of this accommodationist framework is usually a consensual and deliberative posture practised by the dominant ethnic regime.

The development of ethnic relations in Malay(si)a, as indicated previously, cannot be fully understood without a comprehension of the broader social system or milieu; it must be seen against the context of the plural society there. Although interethnic conflict was curtailed in the early years of British rule because of the existence of a single administrative system and the British recognition (though only symbolic) of Malay political dominance, ethnicity as an issue of political debate surfaced sharply whenever Malays felt threatened by non-Malay challenge of such dominance. An examination of the ethnic group composition and group relations in Malaysia since the pre-war years shows the primacy and existential pervasiveness of ethnic identities and polarization. Ethnicity, more than other cultural forces, continues to be the most readily identifiable social-structural characteristic of Malaysian politics.

Islam and Ethnicity in Plural Malaya

To explain Malaysian politics simply in terms of ethnic communal bargaining is an over-simplification of a highly complex situation, but one does nothing to advance an understanding of Malaysian politics by ignoring this crucial factor. Of the complex amalgam of forces which shape Malaysian politics—such as class and religion, to mention the notable ones—ethnicity (manifest in communalism) is the predominant determinant. A study by Nagata concluded that even where objective class stratification exists, local perceptions of society and social conflict are often phrased in an ethnic idiom (Nagata: 1976: 242–60). Thus in Malaysia, issues like inequality and exploitation tend to be expressed in the familiar ethnic antagonism between Malay and Chinese identities.

Malaysia exemplifies the phenomenon of social and cultural pluralism. This diversity extends beyond the simple ethnic composition of the population; it includes differences in religion, attire, food and eating habits, attitude, and social customs. Most Chinese reside in urban centres, are connected with business at some level, have a Chinese dialect for their first language, and are generally followers of a Chinese religion, such as Confucianism and Taoism. Their perception of society fundamentally reflects their social history and culture. The Malays, too, possess similar patterns of cultural identification: they are Muslims, speak and are proud of their

Malay language, eat only *halal* (permissible to Islam) food, and reside, in large part, in rural areas. They are also the poorest of the three main ethnic groups and, particularly in the pre-Independent era, were primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture. Intra-Malay cleavages tend to be maintained through an endogamous and culturally exclusive mode of social practice, by a marked sense of what Nagata terms 'situational switching' in that individuals will identify with a different group in different situations best suited to their interest, and, at least on the surface, a preference for strictly culturally defined friendships and associations (Nagata, 1976). Of the Indian minority population, many are employed in sugar and rubber plantations and as railway workers and petty shopkeepers. About two-thirds of Indians are Hindus while the rest are generally Muslim. A small proportion came to Malaya equipped with the administrative experience they had gained from British rule in India.

The economic imbalances and the stark socio-cultural differences among these ethnic communities are compounded by disparities in their political stature. Malays dominate, and, because of their indigenous, centuries-old status as a community and as political leaders of the land, have assumed a symbolic role in government and politics in general, although this leadership role does not necessarily accord them the legitimacy, particularly from non-Malays. However, legally, because of Malay leadership in achieving independence for Malaya and UMNO's consistent victory in general elections which gave the party the mandate to lead the coalition government, Malay right to lead, if not to rule, has been assured. Since the revelation in 1921 that Malays constituted less than 50 per cent of the total population, the Malay proportion, Malaysia-wide, has been only marginally more than non-Malays (Wan Hashim Wan Teh, 1983: 79; Vasil, 1980: 18). In Peninsular Malaysia, the Malays have a slight numerical superiority. But numbers alone are an incomplete and insufficient explanation for the political primacy of Malays. There are other reasons—reasons which may be useful to note given their relevance to subsequent discussion in later chapters.

First, historically, the Malay peninsula was a Malay land ruled by nine independent Sultanates prior to the arrival of the British. Colonialism did not result in any radical change in the status quo. In separate treaties with the Sultans, the British undertook to uphold the integrity and monopoly of Malay rule, at least in name and in public ceremonies involving the Sultans. The Malays were to be regarded as a special people with special rights: hence, the Malays' claim that the long period of growth and settlement of their community in the peninsula makes them the indigenous group and that therefore they have a right to political hegemony (Silcock, 1963: 6–7).

Another historical factor to explain Malay political paramountcy lies in the negotiations for the Federation of Malaya Agreement in 1948 between the British and the Malays. Under that Agreement, the special position of the Malays regarding land, administration and the status of the Sultans was not to be disputed. This represented a clear victory for the Malays as it re-established the implicit British recognition of the Malays as the indigenous community. Soon after, the Alliance leaders, under Tunku Abdul

Rahman ('Tunku' and 'Tengku' are sometimes used interchangeably by writers although the former is of a higher rank), adopted a compromise, though somewhat ambiguous, formula in an attempt to appease both Malay and non-Malay uneasiness of their position *vis-à-vis* each other. As part of the 'bargain', conditions under which the non-Malays were granted citizenship were made less stringent while the Malays were recognized as *primus inter pares* (first among equals); their political leadership of Malaya being assumed, in return for the Malay agreement on *jus soli* for non-Malay citizenship (Means, 1970: 198). Some of the terms of this 'bargain' were later incorporated into the 1957 Federation of Malaya Constitution: Malays continue to receive 'special status' treatment in matters of language, culture, and the position of their Sultans.

Yet another reason that may help explain Malay political primacy is that the Malays were the first to be politically mobilized, which led to their successful struggle for the independence of the country. Indeed, UMNO, formed in 1946 to agitate against the British 'Malayan Union' scheme, had been instrumental in arousing and galvanizing Malay ethnic and nationalistic fervour to a pitch leading to the plan being cancelled although it should be added that the earlier Chinese anti-Japanese guerrilla actions also contributed to laying the ground for Independence (Pye, 1956). Malay political dominance has also to do with the rural weighting in the electoral process that has resulted in stronger Malay political representation in the legislature, since the majority of Malays reside in rural areas. This delimitation of constituencies for the Malaysian Parliament gives a stronger weighting in favour of the Malay electorate.[49]

Finally, Malays exercise greater political dominance than others because of the relative disunity of the non-Malay communities. Thus, unified Chinese political activity has been difficult and organizations seeking the support of all Chinese are frequently plagued by rival factions forming along linguistic, class, provincial, or clan lines. The Indians, like the Chinese, became politically involved in Malaya at a later stage but were generally ignored, given their small numbers and the impression that they have somewhat inchoate attachments to the country. Indian Muslims (and to a lesser extent, Arabs), however, being hereditary Muslims and not converts, were more easily assimilated into the Malay community. This integrative process is even smoother if they marry Malays, speak Malay, and live in Malay-majority surroundings. In such situations, they have invited, and been invited by, Malays to Malay cultural occasions and activities such as weddings and other ceremonies. After a few generations, many Indian (and Arab) Muslims have, culturally, become Malays.

Other than the political primacy of Malays, another salient trait of Malayan politics is its communal diversity. The most obvious political manifestation of Malaysian pluralism can be seen in the structure and functions of the country's political parties. The Alliance Party, Perikatan, the forerunner of the Barisan Nasional (National Front coalition government, formed in 1974), was actually an élite fusion of three compartmentalized communal parties, representing and appealing to the three major ethnic groups in the country; these parties are UMNO, MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association),

and MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress). The areas of contention in their relations, particularly between the two largest groups, the Malays and the Chinese, encompass practically the whole gamut of political, economic, and social activities in the country. This ethnic problem assumes greater significance because of the relative backwardness of the Malays, the size of the Chinese minority, and the latter's historical association with the communist issue in Malaysia.

Historically, the course of Malay–non-Malay relations was charted by colonial policies: first, the British, and then the Japanese. The entry of large numbers of immigrant Chinese[50] who had initially regarded their stay in Malaya as a temporary measure and a time to amass wealth until conditions improved in China,[51] was a direct consequence of Britain's 'open-door' policy of encouraging an unlimited flow of Chinese into Malaya (Mills, 1942: 25). This immigrant factor became a matter of serious concern to Malays in 1921 when they realized that they had become a minority in their own country (Mills, 1942). The Aliens Ordinance of 1933, promulgated to control the arrival of immigrants in the country, restricted intake to a maximum of 2,300 people per month, but this regulatory measure was enacted too late to have any real effect, since by the 1930s, the number of immigrants was already so substantial that they formed viable, growing communities (Mills, 1942).[52]

Confronting the colonial order and the perceived threat of Chinese immigrants made ethnicity a more salient political aspect of identity for the Malays. The realization among Malay leaders that their people faced a problem in being outnumbered in Malaya came at a time of quickening political life in the country. As mentioned above, early political stirrings among Malays had been inspired by religious protagonists or Islamic reformists. When this force was blunted in the 1920s, the mantle of leadership within Malay politics passed to Malay teachers, students, and the alumni of Malay educational institutions[53] concerned with producing modern, secular-oriented graduates intended for career positions in the civil service. By the 1930s, this second wave of political activity was challenged by a more strident movement openly clamouring for independence from colonial rule. The small but influential group of Malay nationalists, partially inspired by the work of their counterparts in Indonesia and the Philippines, spoke of the need for freedom from British dictates and exploitation, but of significance to the present discussion was the impact that this rhetoric had in making Malays turn against the Chinese. Much has been written about the development and results of the Malay political movement which ultimately led to independence,[54] but in the years before 1940, while it is an exaggeration to dismiss Malay ethnic nationalism as little more than 'sporadic violence and hostility towards the Chinese' (Allen, 1968: 79), such a nationalism was not very widespread nor well organized.

The antagonism between the Malays and the Chinese, hardened under the British, grew still stronger when the Japanese occupied Malaya. Because of the long-standing conflict and enmity between Japan and China, Malaya's large Chinese community suffered badly during the Japanese interregnum. Malays, meanwhile, were generally spared any difficulty, and many of

them even collaborated with the Japanese: an obvious example was the formation of PETA, an organization of Malay and Japanese soldiers formed to quell any resistance to Japanese rule. Malays joined PETA not only to obtain military and administrative exposure, but also to express their disgust at increasing Chinese penetration into the affairs of Malaya. The Occupation also led to the migration of many Chinese into rural areas at the same time that some Malays were moving out of those areas because of new occupational opportunities. The result of this movement was greater Chinese involvement in the agricultural sector, which was traditionally the domain of the Malays, and the ensuing scramble for farming lands further aggravated Malay–Chinese ethnic hostility. In addition, Malay co-operation with the Japanese was regarded by the Chinese as a sell-out of Malayan integrity at a time when many Chinese were taking to the jungle to become involved in communist-led anti-Japanese guerrilla activities. The military actions that followed worsened Malay–Chinese relations (William Roff, 1967; Wan Hashim Wan Teh, 1983).

When the British returned to Malaya after the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, they found to their surprise that the Malays were better organized and far more determined than they had been to oust colonialism. The Malay anti-colonial opposition succeeded, because the community was far more organized and unified than the Chinese community and because Malay leaders succeeded in projecting the struggle as a defence of Malay ethnic interests (von Vorys, 1975: 67). For the Chinese, their pressure for a more equitable representation of their interests bore fruit when UMNO agreed to concede some revisions to the constitutional draft which led to the signing of the Federation of Malaya Agreement in February 1948. However, when the Chinese demands for an increase in representation in the Federal Legislative Council and related moves failed, some of them opted for the violent, communist-inspired campaign to bring about an independent Malaya.[55] This led to the proclamation of the Emergency Laws of July 1948 and to an internal war which lasted for twelve years. The Emergency, which stemmed in part from the Malayan Union confrontations, not only worsened post-war reconstruction and economic development, but exacerbated Malay–Chinese fragmentation. The reason for this was that the majority of the communist insurgents were ethnic Chinese while many in the armed forces deployed to counter the communist threat were Malays.

During the Emergency, ethnic-oriented politics were however curtailed among those who remained loyal to the colonial government. In the years just before independence was granted to Malaya in 1957, interest in self-rule picked up in both the Chinese and the Malay communities. The need to prepare for governing a new state while still waging an internal war brought the leaders from the two ethnic groups together in such a way as to enable them to appraise and grow accustomed to one another's interests and traits. When the British turned control of the country over to Malayans, the government receiving it was a coalition—the Alliance, formed in 1951 by the ethnic-based political parties. Because of their cohesion and their more effective mobilization of the Malay population, the Malay leaders in

UMNO had a greater say than their Alliance partners, but together the three parties managed to put up the united front needed to secure independence and to provide effective early guidance.

The Alliance won the first election in 1955 convincingly by capturing all except one of the 52 seats. Their confidence boosted by this victory, the Alliance leaders immediately went to London for negotiations on self-rule with the British government. All was not well, however, with the combined Alliance front. The front tended to be a mere façade with the struggle for communal bargaining and advantage still continuing and at an even greater pace.

Malay Identity: Islam and/or Malay Ethnicity?

For the Malays, apart from ethnic communalism, the force of Islam is also to be noted. One could perhaps explain the relationship between Islam and Malay ethnicity in terms of their dialectical nature. Both are ingrained in the Malay psyche and pitted together in a kind of 'balance of power'. The Malays seem to be pulled, often unconsciously, by the force of these two different 'gravities' in spite of the fact that the two are inextricably interlinked. At times the Malay may lean closer towards Islam, while at other times the ethnic pull becomes too strong for him to contain. Similarly, at times the two forces act as integrative mechanisms for Malay unity, while at other times, they divide the community. On balance, however, the evidence is that the ethnic force is the more powerful.

Malay Identity: The Islamic Pull

That Islam is an integral and significant factor in Malay culture is beyond dispute. Earlier, it was illustrated how the Faith, after its gradual penetration of Malay life, became part and parcel of the Malay world-view or *weltanschauung*. The vocabulary of Malay literature and oral traditions is full of Islamic terms and values. Malays—despite their varying degrees of Islamic commitment—know the five basic principles or tenets of Islam, namely, the declaration of the Faith (the *shahadah*), five daily prayers, fasting throughout the month of Ramadan, 'alms'-giving (or tithe), and pilgrimage to Mecca. Legally, a major prerequisite to be a Malay as defined in the Constitution, is that one must be Muslim and one automatically loses one's 'Malayness' if one relinquishes Islam.

Throughout history, this close association of Islam with Malay culture has been something generally accepted. Other than the constitutional requirement, the Malays' identification with the Islamic faith is also attributable to the nature of the traditional Malay political leadership, predominated by the Sultans (monarchy), as well as to the Malay system of education. Since the Sultans are Muslim—the word 'Sultan' is an Arabic/Turkish word—and symbolize the rule of Islam in the country, it goes without saying that Islam will also be accorded some degree of prominence in the state's laws, institutions, and symbols. In addition, traditional Malay education was 'Islamic-based'—despite there being little emphasis on

universal, humanistic values of the Faith—because Malay children, at a very young age, were sent to the religious and educational institutions (*pondok*, *surau*, and *masjid*). Upon graduating from this elementary type of Islamic education, they enrolled in the *madrasah* (Islamic schools at which subjects are taught at the primary and secondary levels). Despite some changes to the general orientation and emphasis of the Malayan education system in the post-Independence period with the opening up of secular schools, Islam has continued to be taught in Malay primary and secondary schools. Hence, Islam has continued to be closely identified with Malay culture and, in some ways, has served to integrate Malays.

Further evidence of this integrative function of Islam in key aspects of Malay life is not difficult to find and thus Malay–non-Malay separateness is emphasized. To start with, Islam provides a common religion where none existed before. Hence, the Faith lays down a common bond of unity among Malays in general. In addition, Islam provides the institutions for communication and socialization and generates a sense of solidarity and togetherness among Malays, for instance in the activities organized by mosques, as well as in the practice of common laws, the *shar'iah*. In Malay–non-Malay relations, Islamic norms provide a certain degree of distinctiveness, if not separateness. Not only does Islam, by its very nature, claim to be superior to all other religions, some Malays, moreover, being Muslim, tend to perceive non-Malays negatively, as *kafir* or infidels who are destined to spend eternity in Hell. Malays are also required to refrain from consuming non-*halal* food cooked or served by non-Malays and cannot marry freely because of conditions imposed by their faith. In the context of Malay(si)a, what was to buttress this unifying role of Islam in Malay culture was the attitudes and platforms of Malay political parties and pressure groups. This especially occurs when Islam is exploited for political ends such as during election rallies and campaigns: the Faith is often used as a vote-catching tool by Malay politicians or Malay religious teachers turned politicians.

Malay Identity: The Ethnic Pull

After Malays realized their minority status as a result of the 1921 Census revelation, almost overnight, Malay associations and groups such as the Kesatuan Melayu mushroomed throughout the peninsula. From a community known in history books for their passivity and acquiescent lifestyle,[56] the Malays banded together in response to what they viewed as a threat to their traditional dominance of the land by the 'aliens'. The Malay revolt against the British 'Malayan Union' scheme, which aimed at limiting the traditional powers of the Monarchy, was another obvious example of how Malays, despite intra-Malay problems, would not hesitate to join forces and put aside their differences, whenever other forces or communities were seen to act in ways that could jeopardize Malay identity and political hegemony.

The birth of UMNO and the conflict between ethnic-oriented nationalists and the Islamists, manifest in the Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda schism

during the 1950s, were other examples. The well-known case of Dato' Onn Ja'afar, the founder of UMNO, was yet another telling manifestation of the Malay tendency to opt for their ethnic identification *vis-à-vis* Islam in resolving their problems.

A charismatic leader from an aristocratic background, Onn Ja'afar succeeded in mobilizing Malays throughout the peninsula to oppose the Malayan Union proposal. In anticipation of eventual independence from British rule, and on realizing that non-Malay support for Malay political leadership was necessary for such an eventuality, he thought it timely to open the doors of UMNO to non-Malays. Almost immediately, there was a hue and cry at his proposal from the very same organizations which had previously rallied behind him in bringing down the British plan. There was open hostility from UMNO's leaders; some even branded him a traitor to the Malays. Sardon Jubir, then a senior UMNO leader, charged that 'if they (non-Malays) are accepted, the Malay race will fade into obscurity ...' (Vasil, 1971: 47). To satisfy himself that the Malay rejection of him did not come from a segmented minority, Onn Ja'afar decided to test his multiracial idea by forming yet another political party, which was not confined to the Malays only, the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP), in 1951. Although his idea did receive the public support of the Chinese leader, Tan Cheng Lock, and many members of the Malayan Chinese Association, this supra communal statesmanship of his, however, seemed to be too far ahead of his time. He was again snubbed by the Malays and, later, by the Chinese too (von Vorys, 1975: 106–7). It was the same story when, three years after the failure of the IMP to woo the non-Malays, he formed yet another party, the Parti Negara, one which tried to limit the non-Malay participation by imposing a 10-year residential clause for their joining. Even this safeguard to appease the Malays failed to secure their endorsement; their sense of Malayness and their desire to preserve such sentiments were too strong to be changed, let alone erased.

Against that background, and after the downfall of Onn Ja'afar, Tunku Abdul Rahman was offered the leadership of UMNO. To protect himself from experiencing the same fate as his predecessor, the Tunku made the defence of Malay interests the pinnacle of UMNO. Realizing, however, that to secure Independence from Britain he must win the non-Malay support too, he formed the Alliance, a coalition party comprising UMNO, MCA, and MIC. This initiative did not receive opposition of the scale shown against Onn Ja'afar's proposal, perhaps because the Tunku was not seen as opening up UMNO's doors but as incorporating the non-Malays in preparation for Independence under the control and leadership of Malay leaders. However, even with such a cautious approach, some Malay associations were equally vehement at his Alliance proposal, again demonstrating the Malay tendency to want to preserve and protect their own ethnic shell from others even if it meant that their actions went against Islamic universal principles—such as equity, justice, and a non-racial approach in resolving problems. No sooner had the Tunku unveiled the plan than the chief delegate from the Peninsular Malays Union, Hashim Ghani, publicly criticized the Alliance proposal: 'I am quite afraid that UMNO had done a big

blunder of making meaningless alliance with a race whose sincerity to this country has yet to be checked' (von Vorys, 1975: 112). The same sentiment was adopted by PAS (then the PMIP) when, in its 1959 election rally, its President, Burhanuddin al-Helmy, decided to opt for the communal line instead of the Islamic (which must be the *raison d'être* of any Islamic party), when he accused UMNO of giving away the birthright of Malays with its multiracial approach to party politics. He also criticized UMNO for granting citizenship concessions to non-Malays (which he regarded as a betrayal of Malay rights), and demanded the exclusion of non-Malays from top political and military positions (von Vorys, 1975: 147; Milne and Mauzy, 1980: 143–4).[57]

The message from the above illustrations was clear: communally moderate personalities or groups within Malay political parties and institutions which seemed prepared to accommodate the interests of the non-Malays risked being outflanked by other Malay ethnic militants. Such was the salience and persistence of Malay communal mentality in pre-Independent Malaya, a situation which did not witness any radical change even after independence was won.

Islam in the Post-Independence Era

The leaders of UMNO who were entrusted with the responsibility of leading the nation at Independence were former civil servants trained in the Malayan bureaucracy, which was, 'right up to the time of Independence, very largely dominated by British officials' (Puthucheary, 1980: 41).[58] Many of them either had an Anglicized aristocratic background or were Malay teachers.[59] These Malay teachers — especially the graduates of the famed Sultan Idris Training College (SITC, the Maktab Perguruan Sultan Idris) and the Malay College of Kuala Kangsar (MCKK, the Maktab Melayu Kuala Kangsar) — were said to constitute '99.9 per cent of UMNO members . . . and 70 per cent of all delegates in its annual assemblies'.[60] They also played an important role in mobilizing the Malay masses against the Malayan Union scheme. Although in the context of Malaya, the struggle for Malay interests coincided with a concern for Islam, in confronting the Malay–Islam tension, however, the priorities of the Malay leaders did not seem to be headed by Islam; it was, first and foremost, safeguarding the welfare of the Malays as an ethnic community.

Studies of the Malayan bureaucracy, while confirming the Malay-nationalist orientation of Malay bureaucrats, have also noted the colonialist-secularist tendencies in their thinking and actions (Scott, 1968: 8; Syed Husin Ali, 1983: 31). In this regard, Geertz's findings in 1963, though concerning Ceylon after Independence, are quite similar to the situation in Malaya–that the bureaucrats who took over from the colonialists resembled them in practically everything, except the colour of their skin (Geertz, 1963; Scott, 1968). After Independence in Malaya, it was the common practice for Malayan civil servants to spend their considerable free time at the British-style clubs and societies, such as the Selangor Club in the capital city, Kuala Lumpur (Scott, 1968). Interestingly enough, the founder

of UMNO and the man who played a major part in the Independence of the country, Onn Ja'afar, acknowledged that 'when I returned from England, I found myself more a British (sic) than a Malay!' (Morais, 1982b: 2).

The hectic pace of development that occurred after Independence and the politics of accommodation and communal bargaining within the ruling Alliance party, under UMNO leadership, further contributed to the low priority given to Islam in comparison to other political and economic considerations. After Independence, Malay leadership of the state (via UMNO and the Sultans) was never challenged by non-Malays. This Malay leadership was in fact further reinforced when the 'bargain' was concluded by Alliance leaders in preparation for Independence; in that 'gentlemen's agreement', liberal citizenship opportunities were to be granted to non-Malays in return for some form of recognition of the special position of the Malays and Malay political supremacy (Means, 1970: 198).

UMNO and Islam: Constraining Factors

For Islam, it seemed that the Faith was still considered important by UMNO leaders, but at a superficial level. Islam was taken for granted and given prominence only during election times when UMNO sought to counter PAS, since UMNO realized that it could only ignore the Faith at its peril, given the integral nature of Islam in Malay culture and identity. Although in the UMNO Constitution of 1960 the party vowed to promote the advancement of Islam as the 'modus vivendi' (quoted in UMNO's official publication and perhaps meant as 'manner of living') for all Muslims in Malaya,[61] and, as an extension of that, built the first national mosque in 1961, as well as organizing the first-ever National Qur'an Competition soon after, the general attitude of their leaders remained secular and communalistic. UMNO's President and the country's first and longest-serving Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, on occasions, publicly stated his lack of confidence in the ability of Islam to solve the country's problems. He is on record as having stated in 1962 that 'I would like to make it clear that this country is not an Islamic State as it is generally understood; we merely provide that Islam shall be the official religion of the State' (Mohamed Suffian Hashim, 1962: 18). It is similarly recorded that a Malay member of his Cabinet extolled the virtues of alcohol, without due regard to the Malay-Muslim abhorrence for this or to the Qur'anic prohibition of it (von der Mehden, 1963). By and large, UMNO adopted Islamic policies that were largely symbolic and nominal in nature, mainly to placate the pro-Islamic elements in the political arena, and in particular to dampen the Islamic appeal or advantage that PAS might have had over it (von der Mehden, 1963: 164). These 'symbolic' policies included the building of mosques and government support of Islamic ceremonial functions such as the Prophet Muhammad's birthday celebration and organizing Qur'an recitation competitions. In more ways than one, the type of Islam adopted by UMNO has been quite consistent since the time of the writing of the Constitution when it recommended that Islam be made the religion of the Federation but within a secular state (Funston, 1980: 146).

Other than the ethnic-secularist orientation of the UMNO leaders, there were also other more immediate priorities which afforded them little choice but to accord Islam a secondary priority in the first few years after Independence. Of these, the necessity of preserving the country's tenuous communal cohesion was the most pressing concern. Events after 1957 would indicate how the vexing and destabilizing factor of communalism (the polarization of ethnic tension and animosity), and its relationship to communism and racial chauvinism, preoccupied the thinking and energies of the Alliance leaders (Indorf, 1969).

The difficult situation faced by the UMNO élite was clearly illustrated when, in their attempt to compromise with the non-Malay members of the Alliance, they incurred the wrath of many of the party's members and supporters. Only a year after Independence, some 10,000 of its members (perhaps, a suspiciously rounded figure), primarily Malay teachers, resigned *en masse* because of their dissatisfaction with the party leadership's handling of Malay education.[62] This action again tended to point to not only the importance of the communal over the religious question in the mentality of the Malays, but provides further justification to the present argument thus far about the Islam–Malay symbiosis.

Further straining the already fragile ethnic relations in the country, were the activities and strength of the communists. The end of Emergency rule in Malaya (from 1948 to 1960) seemed too recent to Alliance leaders to take the communist threat lightly. With this danger looming in the background and the reality of an uneasy relationship among Malaya's ethnic communities, it was surprising to many, when, in a talk to the Foreign Press Club in Singapore in May 1961, the Tunku, having secured the agreement of Singapore's Prime Minister, publicly raised the idea of an expanded Malaya (Lee Kuan Yew, 1963a: 38; Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, 1974: 127; Tunku Abdul Rahman, 1978: 12, 42). In effect, this meant the incorporation of Singapore, North Borneo (now Sabah), Brunei, and Sarawak into a single federal state. Although this idea was not new—it had been broached and propagated by nationalists since the 1930s (Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, 1974; Bedlington, 1978)—the timing of the proposal caught many off guard. More surprising was the idea of admitting Singapore, given the implications that this move would have on the ethnic arithmetic: because of the island's large Chinese population, the move could tilt the ethnic balance in their favour and thereby probably create further tensions in the country.

Ironically, it was this same concern about the probable rise of Chinese chauvinism and especially communism (most Communists in Malaya were Chinese), that finally convinced both the Tunku and Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's Prime Minister, to bring Singapore into a Malaysian federation. It was argued that this would help to contain the spread of communism in other parts of the Federation, thereby preventing Singapore from becoming a 'second Cuba' and ensuring the security of both countries.[63] The inclusion of Singapore, however, and the events that took shape as soon as the idea of the enlarged federation was officially declared, became instrumental, to a large extent, in determining the content and direction of Malaysian politics throughout the 1960s.

1. In many ways, this lack of consensus among scholars is understandable. After all, a major problem in studying Islam in this region is, in the words of Johns (1975a: 163), 'the sheer diversity and extent of the region . . . where in fact, not even every area or each part of it are [*sic*] equally well known, rendering the dangers of distortion of emphases, anachronisms and faulty extrapolation even more threatening'; Tregonning (1962: 14) also highlighted this problem.

2. The following points could be offered for the author's preference for the influence of Arabia *vis-à-vis* India. First, the Malays adopt the Shafi'i jurisprudence (*fiqh*) as in Arabia at the time; secondly, it is common to find Malay names similar to Arab family names, such as Fatimah, Rahman, Hassan, and Ridwan; thirdly, the types of *tariqa* (religious 'sects' or streams) found in the Malay world are mostly of Arab–Persian origin, such as Muhammadiah, Kadiriya, Naqshabandiah, and Ahmadiyah; and fourthly, from at least the seventeenth century, there was an enormous amount of Islamic religious books written in the Malay language but using Arabic (*Jawi*) characters: see Mohamed Nor Ngah (1982), Winstedt (1920b), and Beg (1979).

3. *Sejarah Melayu*: Shellabear's version (1982). In the early sixteenth century, Tomé Pires remarked that 'Malacca is of such importance and profit that it seems to me that it has no equal in the world'. To Duarte Barbosa, 'Malacca is the richest seaport with the greatest number of wholesale merchants and abundance of shipping that can be found in the whole world.' (Quoted from Zainal Abidin Wahid, 1980: 18.) Although these accolades were perhaps meant to convince Portugal to occupy Malacca, the city was an important centre of inter-Asian trade; from at least 1403, Chinese–Malacca official (exchange) visits were quite frequent: Zainal Abidin Wahid (1980). See also Bastin and Winks (1966), pp. 21 and 24.

4. Cf. Mohamed Taib Osman (1980). (Although the correct Arabic word is *umma*, in Malay writings, either *ummat* or *umat* has been used instead.)

5. Sultan Muzaffar Shah ruled from 1445 to 1459. See, for example, Miller (1965), p. 351, for a description of this rule. The Malaccan state was managed well: it had at least two Legal Digests, commonly known as the *Hukum Kanun Melaka* and *Undang-undang Islam*. These laws were later copied in subsequent state laws in other Malay states. See Liaw (1976), especially pp. 1 and 828 onwards; Andaya and Andaya (1982), pp. 53–5; Ahmad Ibrahim (1982), pp. 203–10; and Zainal Abidin Wahid (1970), p. 22.

6. The Arab–Persian spiritual traditions and Sufi masters whose ideas influenced the Malay Sufi scholars, include al-Basri (d. 728), al-Bistami (d. 874), al-Ghazali (d. 1111), Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), Ibn Ata Allah (d. 1309) and al-Jili (d. 1417). See Jamaliah Taib (1974) and Syed M. Naguib Al-Attas (1957 and 1969). For more general information on Sufism, see Nicholson (1921) and Trimingham (1971).

7. Some of the later Sultans, however, were tyrants and did not observe Islamic principles. See, for instance, Kassim Ahmad (1968), where he discussed the concept of hero in Malay culture and elevated the position of the rebel of Malay folk stories, Hang Jebat, above the popularly accepted hero, Hang Tuah. Jebat was known for his rebellious personality—against injustice, oppression, and blind subservience to leadership. Cf. Syed Hussein Al-Attas (1968) and Milner (1977).

8. Kassim Ahmad (1968).

9. This limit of obedience to rulers is actually clearly defined in many verses of the Qur'an which carry the message 'No obedience for a creature if it involves disobedience to the Creator'. Islam as an important agent of social change during this Malaccan period was also highlighted by Chandrasekaran Pillay (alias Chandra Muzaffar) in his Ph.D. thesis (1977).

10. The spread of a faith is a continuous, ongoing process whose beginning and arrival are often difficult to pinpoint in terms of exact dates and years.

11. It is perhaps necessary to emphasize here that although many aspects of the *adat* tend to be un-Islamic, it is incorrect to refer to *adat* in general as if it is necessarily always in direct contrast to Islamic law, as is the tendency of many Western writers, such as Josselin de Jong (1960), Hooker (1972), and Wilkinson (1908). Cf. Hamka (n.d.). In addition, there is nothing peculiar about Malay *adat* being generally superstitious and 'irrational' because all traditional societies in both East and West exhibited similar tendencies.

12. Many Malay words were Hindu in origin—like *denda*, *neraka*, *Perdana Menteri*, *sastera*, *syurga*, *satria*, *warna*, *raja*, *cerita*, *Maha*, and *duta*.

13. The importance of *adat* and *kerajaan* are also highlighted in yet another detailed analysis of traditional Malay society: see Milner (1977).

14. The Malay saying goes:

Adat bersendi hukum, hukum bersendi kitabullah;
Kuat adat tak gaduh hukum, kuat hukum tak gaduh adat.

The translation:
Customary law is based on religious law
Religious law is based on the Book of Allah
If custom is strong, it does not upset religion
If religion is strong, it does not upset custom.
See, for instance, Alisjahbana (1982), Othman Ishak (1979), and Winstedt (1982b).

15. The strength of *adat* was also evident in traditional Malay poetry: see Alisjahbana (1982).

16. Knappert (1980); Winstedt (1982b).

17. Andaya and Andaya (1982), pp. 55–6. It was noted by Portuguese officials that there were times when the men were in arms day and night—'surrounded by enemies on nearly every side'. Quoted in Bastin and Winks (1966), pp. 60 and 68. See also Reid (1967), pp. 267–8.

18. The origins and causes of the British intervention range from the official claim to end the succession disputes among the Malay sultans, to the fear of other European (particularly Dutch) control of the region: cf. different views of Cowan and Wolters (1961), especially pp. 144–221, Sadka (1968), pp. 38–118, Turnbull (1964), Caldwell and Mohamed Amin (1977), and Emerson (1937).

19. See also Ahmad Ibrahim (1982), p. 205, and Andaya and Andaya (1982), pp. 154–5.

20. Cf. the equally strong views of Cowan and Wolters (1961) and Emerson (1937). It should be noted, however, that there have been other works which were more sympathetic of British rule in Malaya.

21. The percentage remained almost constant, not passing the 50 per cent mark until Independence, when according to the *Population Census of 1957*, there were 3,126,706 Malays and 2,456,072 non-Malays. See also Andaya and Andaya (1982), p. 252, where it was stated that in 1931, there were 1,709,392 Chinese and 1,644,173 Malays. (It is, however, uncertain whether or not the 1957 statistics refer to the same territorial region as those for 1921–31, which included both Federated and Unfederated States of British Malaya.)

22. To Malays as to Muslims all over, and since the time of Prophet Muhammad, the mosque has been not only the centre of catechism for the young, it is everything, particularly as the symbol of the collectivity and the consensus of the Muslim community or *umma*. One could in fact say that the mosque and the community coexist: one cannot live without the other. Mosques cannot be privately owned, rented, or sold, and to desecrate it is as bad as to defile the community.

23. Despite laws introduced by British officials to force Malay parents to send their children to these secular schools (by way of fines and penalties imposed by the Board of Education Ordinance), the Malay response was poor and slow in coming: Abdullah Munshi (1883), Stevenson (1975), and Khoo Kay Kim (1980a).

24. Some explanations could be offered here: first, the Malay-Muslim distrust of the British, dubbing them as *kafir* (infidel), was generally known, perhaps due to the fact that these schools were run by Christian missionaries who used the Bible as the main textbook (Willer, 1975, p. 69); secondly, residing in the deep outlying areas of the countryside, poor Malay children could not possibly travel to urban centres where these schools were mostly located; and finally, there was the real issue of manpower in the case of sons of Malay farmers and fishermen.

25. *Federated Malay States Annual Report of 1920*, quoted from Bedlington (1978), p. 52, and Andaya and Andaya (1982), p. 231.

26. Some of the earliest missionary schools (administered mainly by priests and nuns) include the Anglo-Chinese College (1818), the Malacca Free School (1826), and the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus (1860). Other than Christianity, secular subjects were also taught in these schools. Cf. Willer (1975) and Yegar (1976).

27. From 1874 onwards, particularly in the Federated Malay States (such as Perak and Selangor), even the important issues of royal succession and choice of Ruler—traditionally the prerogative of the major chiefs and the royal family—were swayed by and made subservient to British political interests.

28. Even the recently retired and long-serving Lord President of Malaysia, Tun Mohamed Suffian Hashim, was widely known for his strong British inclination. See, for instance, Ahmad Ibrahim's criticism of him back in 1965: Ahmad Ibrahim (1965), p. 25.

29. It is necessary to correct a common misconception that Japanese forces ruled the whole of Malaya from 1941 to 1945. In fact, from 1943 to 1945, the rule of the four northern states of Malaya was handed over to the Thais by the Japanese. See Itagaki (1962 and 1966).

30. The first meeting, in 1943, led to the formation of the Central Economic Committee for Malaya (PEPERMAS) and the National Supreme Council of Islam (MATA), while the second meeting, in 1944, for the first time attempted to co-ordinate and streamline all Majlis Agama throughout the country. See Itagaki (1962 and 1966), and Tregonning (1962).

31. Much has been written of this early period of Muslim glory. See also Obaid ul Haq (1986), p. 337.

32. Interestingly, although there is no direct correlation, Islamic reformism had some similarities with the Wahabbiah movement (*Muwahidun*) in the late eighteenth century. This movement arose amid Muslim stagnation and laxity of Islamic life in Arabia. Perhaps it was this concern to preserve communal consciousness on the one hand, and the search for social change on the other, that resulted in a kind of symbiosis between Wahabbism and modernism, particularly for the next generation of reformists in the 1920s, such as Hassan al-Banna, founder of the *Ikhwanul Muslimin*: Maryam Jameelah (1980). For information on the reformist movement and their key figures, see Gibb (1971), especially pp. 618–20, Kedourie (1966), and Esposito (1983).

33. See Muhammad Abduh's and Rashid Ridha's writings in Esposito and Donohue (1982), pp. 24–8 and 57–9 respectively. Cf. Nikki Keddie's (1968) account of the life and times of these reformists, and Hourani's (1962).

34. This newspaper was published in Singapore in 1876.

35. William Roff assessed *al-Imam*'s contribution: in terms of intellectual stature, intensity of purpose, and philosophical orientation, it was certainly a radical departure in the field of Malay publications then. See William Roff (1967), especially p. 57 onwards. Cf. Simon (1911) and Iskandar Hj. Ahmad (1978). The other collaborators (other than al-Hadi) were Syed Md. Agil, an '*alim*, Sheikh Awad Saidan, a merchant, and its two editors, Tahir Jalaluddin and Abas Taha.

36. The literature on al-Hadi was obtained from *Syed Sheikh al-Hadi Papers* in the National Malaysian Archives, Malaysia (under the number SP 18, document no. 43); Merina Merican (1960); Alwi bin Sheikh al-Hady (1916); and S. H. Tan (1961).

37. Al-Hadi was, however, a controversial figure since he also wrote stories on the sexual lusts of youths and the liberalization of the status of women. See his novel, *Faridah Hanum*: al-Hadi (1925). Cf. Arkib Negara SP 18, and S. H. Tan (1961).

38. Information on Tahir Jalaluddin is from Malaysian Archives (*Sheikh Tahir Papers 1900–1958*) ed. by Mukhtar Ramli (1980); Hamdan Hassan (1973); Deliar Noer (1973); Ismail Ibrahim (1977); and Tahir's articles and books—see, for instance, Tahir Jalaluddin (1932 and 1953).

39. Cf. studies of nationalistic trends in other Muslim countries: Khadduri (1970); Esposito and Donohue (1982); and Said Ramadan (1963). It is interesting to note that there are parallels to this rise of Malay ethnic nationalism in other parts of the world throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. At times, this nationalistic fervour even took the form of racism, as in the case of Nazism and Fascism in Europe at that time.

40. As an example, a Malay would be given a name like Karim *bin* (Malay version of Arabic *ibni*) Awang, whereas for an Indian Muslim, it would be, say, Abdul Rahim son of Mohamed Maidin.

41. For information on the important role that this institution played in helping to sow the seeds of Islamic modernism in Malaya, see Nabir Abdullah (1976).

42. *UMNO (Collection of Speeches and Statements by UMNO leaders)* and *Perlembagaan UMNO*.

43. Cf. Means (1976), pp. 163–7, and Ahmad Ibrahim (1982).

44. The constitutional proposals were rushed: the Committee took barely six months to present its recommendations. See Andaya and Andaya (1982), p. 265, and Milne and Mauzy (1980), pp. 36–8.

45. Federal Constitution, Article 159 (5).

46. For an elucidating argument on the conflict between Islam and Nationalism, see Abul ala Maududi, in Esposito and Donohue (1982), pp. 94–8, and Abdul Bari Sarker (1983).

47. Barth (1969), pp. 9–10.

48. For the assimilation strategy, the ruling ethnic group, through deliberate government policies and socialization programmes, tries to absorb the minority ethnic groups into a higher level of identification with the state. Majority-domination refers to situations where minority ethnic groups are subordinated to governmental authority although the minorities usually try to resist it. In the accommodation strategy, the majority ethnic group dominates politics, but within a political framework whereby minority communities can bargain and pressure the government on issues affecting their interests.

49. To quote an example, in Peninsular Malaysia in the 1979 election, 79 out of the 114 parliamentary seats had at least an absolute Malay majority. In only 22 constituencies did the Chinese form more than 50 per cent of the electorate. See Ismail Kassim (1979), pp. 3–5.

50. Some Chinese immigrants were initially involved in secret society activities and, as argued by Ratnam in his 1965 study, many were not really concerned with the Independence movement and politics in the peninsula in general. This had to do, in the main, with their 'outpost nationalism'; they looked to China as their motherland.

51. In 1941, for instance, an estimated M$100 million was brought back to China: *Dewan Masyarakat*, Vol. 17, No. 11 (15 November 1979), p. 9.

52. The Malay percentage further eroded to 44.7 per cent in 1931.

53. The well-known ones include the Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) and the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar (MCKK).

54. The more organized groups were the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS) formed in 1926; the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM, 1937); and the PKMM and PMS. The most radical was the KMM: see Khoo Kay Kim (1973), pp. 96–103, and Roff (1967).

55. At that time, the Chinese had only 14 out of the 75 committee members in the Council.

56. See the classical Malay texts: *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Abdullah*.

57. This view was again confirmed in an interview Mohamed Asri—who succeeded Burhanuddin as President—gave in 1978: the sharing of political power would imply a 'tragic end to Malay fundamental rights'; see Salim Osman (1979), p. 16.

58. In Malaysia and perhaps in other newly independent nations, too, the bureaucracy has always acted as a major source of recruitment to the political élite. In the first Cabinet formed after Malayan Independence in 1957, all except one of the Malay ministers were bureaucrats.

59. *Dewan Masyarakat*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (1979); Puthucheary (1980), p. 34.

60. *Dewan Masyarakat*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (1979), pp. 7–12. It should be noted, however, that this large percentage could be 'an inflated figure . . . perhaps 85 per cent is more accurate'. (Interview with Adib Adam, December 1980.)

61. See *Perlembagaan UMNO*. Even this inclusion of Islam as one of its slogans in the party's 1960 Constitution can be seen in the context of its defeat by PAS in the eastern states in the 1959 federal election.

62. *Dewan Masyarakat*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (May 1979), p. 14. Again, here, according to Adib Adam, 6,000 to 7,000 would be a more accurate figure.

63. For details on various aspects of the 'Malaysia' idea as well as the attitudes of Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak, and Brunei, see Mohamed Noordin Sopiee (1974), Fletcher (1969), Bedlington (1978), Milne (1966), and Lee Kuan Yew (1963a and 1963b).

2

Islam, Ethnicity, and Political Power from 1963 to the Early 1970s

THE emergence of ethnic-oriented leaders after the formation of Malaysia in 1963 and the outbreak of ethnic riots six years later, as well as changes in the socio-economic circumstances of Malays, resulted in a paradoxical situation for Islam: on the one hand, its low-profile role in the affairs of the state; on the other, sowing the seeds for its later reassertion.

Formation of Malaysia—and Ethnicity

Of all the motives—political, religious, and security—which precipitated the idea of Malaysia, about which much has been written,[1] one is particularly relevant to the present discussion—the ethnic dimension. Interethnic friction within Malaysia's plural polity, especially between the Malays and the Chinese, which had already surfaced during the colonial era, was further exacerbated by successive political leaders in the country. Even at Independence, the situation was far from resolved; this was quite reminiscent of the pre-Independent era as described by Rupert Emerson in his classic study: 'Divided from each other in almost every respect, the peoples of Malaya have in common essentially the fact that they live in the same country!' (quoted in King, 1957: v). The formation of political parties aggravated these precarious Malay–non-Malay relations because their platforms laid heavy emphasis on their own ethnic interests and allegiances.

It may be argued that it was this same ethnic factor which, in no small way, had influenced the thinking of the political leaders when the idea of Malaysia was first mooted.[2] Although the numerous Bornean ethnic communities (like the Kadazans, Kajangs, Ibans, and Dayaks) were non-Malay, and historically had had unpleasant experiences with the 'Malays' when Brunei dominated the surrounding states, the thinking among the UMNO leadership then was that these ethnic groups at least physically resembled Malays and could be regarded as their 'brothers' (Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, 1974: 125–44).[3] As early as 1956, the Malay political élite within UMNO was convinced that the Malay proportion of the total population could be substantially increased if these 'Malays' of the Borneo states could be incorporated into the new Federation. By 1960, such a decision had been firmly agreed upon by the UMNO leadership (Mohamed

Noordin Sopiee, 1974). Similarly, the later inclusion of Singapore, with its big Chinese population, into the Federation was vehemently opposed by many UMNO and PAS leaders on the grounds that this would negate moves to increase the Malay population proportionally.[4] The island-state had not been included in the original concept of Malaysia for precisely that reason.

One consequence arising from this ethnic factor in the formation of Malaysia (due particularly to the preoccupation with the stability of ethnic relations) was the government's relegation of Islam to a secondary position. Upon closer examination, this becomes more understandable. Numerous problems confronted the UMNO-dominated government (the Alliance) soon after the idea of Malaysia was first raised. Although opposition to the idea of a larger Federation (to include Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak) by some political parties and groups within the proposed Federation was quickly suppressed, the challenge that arose from outside the Federation, particularly from Indonesia and the Philippines, was much harder to face.

In January 1962, the Philippines strongly opposed the idea of 'Malaysia', claiming that Sabah (incorporated under the Federation of Malaysia) was legally and historically the Republic's; specifically, because the Philippines were the successors in sovereignty to the Sulu Sultans. For various domestic reasons, President Diosdado Macapagal chose to link the Philippines' opposition to the threat of communism spreading to his country. Another neighbour, Indonesia, decided to conduct a paramilitary campaign known as *Konfrontasi* or Confrontation (Mackie, 1974: 200–17). After a revolt in Brunei in December 1962, Indonesia labelled the proposed Federation of Malaysia a neo-colonialist plot aimed at inhibiting the growth of genuine nationalism in the region (Mackie, 1974). Although the British government's fact-finding mission (the Cobbold Commission) in mid-1962 reported that the people were in favour of Malaysia (Means, 1976: 316), and this finding was confirmed by an independent United Nations delegation sent there as a result of an agreement by the Presidents of Indonesia and the Philippines, and the Tunku, both countries refused to accept these findings. Indonesian paramilitary forces landed in various parts of Malaysia, including Borneo and the Malay peninsula, creating considerable alarm when they exploded bombs in parts of the Federation (Mackie, 1974).

These external threats were also instrumental in limiting the role of Islam in Malaysian politics in at least two ways. First, they preoccupied the minds of the Malaysian government. The need to do everything possible to resolve these external challenges meant that political and security matters were given priority over other matters, including Islam and its development. As it turned out, the official inauguration of Malaysia, originally scheduled for 31 August 1963 (to coincide with the anniversary of Malaya's Independence Day), had to be delayed to 16 September 1963 because of the security threat to the new nation. Secondly, *Konfrontasi*, in particular, also led to a complete halt to the previously uninterrupted flow of Indonesian *ulama* to Malaysia for *dakwah* work. The symbiotic, although ambivalent, relationship characteristic of Malay–Indonesian contacts even before the twentieth century—described by Mackie (1974) as oscil-

lating from conflict to complementarity—was evident in the significant role that Indonesian *ulama* had played in the Islamization process of the Malays in the twentieth century. Not only was the close relationship between Malay and Indonesian religious students and scholars in the Middle East long-standing,[5] but after the waning influence of Islamic reformists in Malaya in the 1930s and 1940s until the period before *Konfrontasi*, these *ulama* had frequently visited Malaya to help continue the propagation of reformist Islam. They presented religious talks and publicized their Islamic books to the Malays. Apart from the pleasant and forceful manner in which their *ceramah* were presented (being quite similar to the Malay language, Bahasa Indonesia can be understood without much difficulty, at least orally, by Malays), the wide support that Malays gave to the talks and books of these *ulama* could also be due to the fact that Muslim opposition to colonialism in Indonesia had developed earlier than in Malaya.[6]

Some of the well-known Indonesian religious scholars who regularly visited the Malaya–Singapore region throughout the 1960s were Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah), Kiayi Anwar Mussaddad, and Fadlullah Harun. Hamka, whose father, Karim Amrullah, was a colleague of Tahir Jalaluddin, was particularly influential, as evidenced by the large attendances that his speeches attracted from Malays in Malaya and Singapore until the time of *Konfrontasi*.[7] Similarly, Islamic books in the Indonesian language were widely read in both these territories from the 1950s as attested to by the large exhibition and sale of these books in those areas.[8] Besides Hamka, other well-known writers whose books were much read by the Malays were Bey Ariffin, Hasbi Asshidiqqi, Toha Yahya, Mahmud Yunus, Munawar Chalil, and Sidi Ghazalba. The anti-Malaysia stance adopted by the Indonesian government at least temporarily halted the free flow of these *ulama* to Malaya in their role as a major visible 'organized Islam' force of the period, and as propagators of Islam in general.

The limited influence of Islam during the period 1963-9, however, was actually attributable more to internal factors within Malaysia than to the external threats just outlined. Of these local factors, the resurfacing of Malay ethnic consciousness *vis-à-vis* non-Malays, even if Muslim, continued to act as a major check on the role of Islam during the 1960s. This came about because of the emergence of socio-economic and political factors, as well as the appearance of personalities and groups which pushed policies towards the ethnic extreme instead of towards Islam.

Communal Developments in the 1960s

To understand this rise of Malay ethnic consciousness in its proper perspective, it is important to note some significant events which occurred a decade earlier. In Chapter 1 it was shown how, since the 1940s in particular, Malays were concerned with their plight as a backward people in a plural Malaya. This concern was expressed, for instance, in the criticisms levelled by Malay leaders against non-Malay Muslim leadership of Malay affairs. A parallel current, indicative of similar Malay ethnic concerns, was the peculiar direction in which Malay literature was moving at that time. This

became evident after Malay literary figures banded themselves in an organization which was to transform not only the course of modern Malay literature but that of Islam in Malaya, too.

The organization in question was Angkatan Sasterawan '50 (ASAS '50) or 'The Generation of Literary Scholars of the '50s', formed, and was prominent, in the 1950s in Singapore (Li, 1967; Shafie Abu Bakar, 1980: 42–71).[9] ASAS '50 was seen by some scholars and writers as contributing in two main ways to the declining role of Islam in Malay life. First, ASAS '50 writers did not find it necessary to include Islam as one of the major themes of their work; this was perhaps understandable since a more pressing issue then was the struggle for the country's Independence. It was observed that 'the 1950s and 1960s in general, were periods where Malay literary contributions were lacking of [*sic*] Islamic norms, if not total absence of them' (Shafie Abu Bakar, 1980: 63).[10] Another reason could have been the philosophical orientations of the group, manifested in the slogans '*Seni untuk Masyarakat*' ('Art for Society') and its variant, '*Seni untuk Seni*' ('Art for Art's sake'). The essence of both these objectives was described, although quite misleadingly, by a prominent Malay novelist, Shahnon Ahmad, as leaning towards socialism, nationalism, secularism, and a form of humanism originating from the West (Shahnon Ahmad, 1980: 72–86).[11] Another Malay writer opined that the goals of ASAS '50 were un-Islamic because ideas on God and the 'Islamic spirit' were absent in the group's objectives (Shafie Abu Bakar, 1980). Shahnon Ahmad even suggested that ASAS '50 (Malay) nationalistic tendencies actually divided the Muslims in the country (Shahnon Ahmad, 1980: 79).

Secondly, despite its significant literary and nationalist contributions, ASAS '50 was seen to have buttressed the Malay ethnic bias instead of Islam when it pushed for the official use of *Rumi* (romanized Malay script) in preference to the *Jawi* script (Arabic characters given a Malay form) as the standard form of Malay writing. This sentiment, officially adopted as a proposal by the Singapore Malay Teachers Union (KGMS) at the second Kongres Bahasa dan Persuratan Melayu (Malay Language and Literary Congress) in 1954, was later incorporated as a major recommendation in the government's Review Committee on Malay education, otherwise known as the 'Razak Report' of 1956,[12] and henceforth was implemented in the Malay education system of Malaya (Li, 1967: 166–7). This move broke the centuries-old tradition of the *Jawi* script as the sole source of writings on Islam for the Malays, and, by inference, uprooted an important and integral aspect of the Malay cultural heritage.

This Malay nationalist-ethnic trend initiated by ASAS '50 was later pursued with even greater zeal by the government when, at ASAS '50's recommendation, it established the Language and Literary Council or the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) in 1966 to replace the Balai Pustaka (Language Board). The leaders of the DBP were all Malay literary figures like A. Samad Said, Arena Wati, Abdullah Hussain, Shahnon Ahmad, and Syed Nasir Ismail, who later became its Head for about a decade. Ironically, instead of using the Malay language (through the *Rumi* script) as the medium for forging interethnic solidarity by broadening the ethnic access of Bahasa Melayu, the DBP conducted its activities as if the institu-

tion was created for the Malays only, to the detriment of Malay–non-Malay relations (Chandra Muzaffar, 1979a; Gapena, 1980: 64). The main preoccupation of the DBP since its formation has been the preservation and encouragement of Malay language and culture, not Islam, symptomatic of the general sense of Malay insecurity and their search for a communal identity in that period (Skinner, 1969; Ali bin Ahmad, 1970).

The 1960s were also characterized by the hardening of ethnic issues, particularly between Malays and Chinese, without Islam becoming a major issue of political debate. This ethnic tension, it will be remembered, had to do with the Malaysian Federation experiment, specifically, the role of Singapore in the Federation. As indicated earlier, Singapore's inclusion in Malaysia was vehemently opposed by some leading Malay politicians in both UMNO and PAS (Ahmad Boestamam, 1972). They feared that the inclusion of Singapore would increase the numerical strength of the Chinese and thereby threaten Malay political paramountcy. Furthermore, the staunch opposition of Lee Kuan Yew (and his party, the People's Action Party, PAP) to the constitutional clause with regard to 'Malay special rights', his criticism of the King's official address in Parliament in 1964 outlining the government's plans to provide greater support for the Malays to uplift their socio-economic status, and his championing of the idea of a 'Malaysian Malaysia', were perceived by the Malays as an affront to their traditional political leadership of the country (Mauzy, 1983: 32; Milne and Mauzy, 1980; Lee Kuan Yew, 1963a, 1965a; Turnbull, 1980: 287–93; Chan, 1971: 8–10).[13] Lee Kuan Yew also, in May 1965, initiated the formation of the 'Malaysian Solidarity Convention' consisting of opposition parties in the Federation, aimed at bringing home the message of 'Malaysia for all Malaysians' without preference for any ethnic community.[14] In an attempt to gain international recognition of this idea, he led a Malaysian delegation to Africa in mid-1965 (Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, 1974).

Ethnic relations in Malaysia were brought to a very low ebb when UMNO's leaders, especially its Secretary-General, Syed Jaafar Albar, decided to play up the ethnic sentiment. Syed Jaafar Albar charged Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP with trying to break the backbone of the Malay community in Singapore,[15] while Lee challenged the historical basis of the Malay claim as the indigenes of the country (Mauzy, 1983: 32).[16] Utterances of this nature by both Malaysian (Malay) and Singapore leaders seriously threatened the stability of the Federation. Fearing further bloodshed (since ethnic skirmishes between Malays and Chinese had already occurred twice in Singapore in 1964 and twice in Peninsular Malaysia in 1965), the Tunku, in August 1965, asked Singapore to leave the Federation (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 276; Milne and Mauzy, 1980: 67–76).[17]

Singapore's separation abruptly terminated the Alliance–PAP conflict, but its residue has lingered on, with important political consequences. The separation, instead of 'cooling down' the tense interethnic animosity, made it irreconcilable. Of greater relevance to the present discussion was the fact that the Singapore episode speeded the spread of Malay communal demands in Malaysian politics. In such a setting, Islam did not become a major issue of political debate.

Singapore's departure—which coincided roughly with the end of

Confrontation—forced the Malays to reassess their position and plight. What followed from this mood of self-analysis of their situation was the gradual move towards the intensification of their own identity as *bumiputra*. First coined during the formation of Malaysia to distinguish Malays and the indigenes such as the *orang asli* (a term sometimes regarded as derogatory by the indigenous majority, given its connotation of 'backwardness') peoples of Sabah and Sarawak, this *bumiputra* issue was later widely articulated in many gatherings and meetings.

In the Malay search for the sources of their backwardness, attention was invariably directed to UMNO's inability to serve them well, and for this, Tunku Abdul Rahman, as the party's head, became the prime target. Although written documentary evidence is scanty, rumblings of discontent among UMNO's rank and file had apparently reached such proportions that the party's credibility, and the Tunku's leadership in particular, were at stake.[18] The first public demonstration of this loss of faith by some UMNO figures in their leader came when the party's Secretary-General, Syed Jaafar Albar, resigned in protest at the Tunku's decision to let Singapore leaders off without 'punishing' them (*Straits Times*, 11 and 12 August 1965). Another notable protester against the decision was Tun Razak's Political Secretary, Abdullah Ahmad, who boycotted the party organized by UMNO to celebrate the separation. It soon became clear that these rebellious figures—dubbed (perhaps arbitrarily) by the Prime Minister as the 'ultras'[19]—had garnered sufficient support among the party's leadership and they included the Tunku's closest colleagues, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, the second and third most senior in the UMNO hierarchy. An early indication of the rift occurred when Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Musa Hitam, both Supreme Council members of UMNO, led an unofficial Malaysian delegation to the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference in Ghana in 1965, a mission of which the Prime Minister later denied any knowledge (Saravanamuttu, 1983: 73). Dr Ismail's sudden resignation from his Cabinet post in 1968[20] and the support he garnered for his 'neutralization of Southeast Asia' proposal from the Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, were other indications of the dwindling power of the Prime Minister (Saravanamuttu, 1983: 75).[21]

This cleavage within UMNO gave rise to the beginnings of political unrest and a more pronounced assertiveness among the Malays as an ethnic community as opposed to their being Muslims. In these unbridled communal drives, the wider universalistic aspects of the Faith, like its non-particularistic and non-racist principles, as well as its emphasis on justice and equity for all, were sacrificed in preference of a more 'Malay-first' ethnic posture. Subsequent events lend credence to this observation. An important incident took place around 1967 when Parliament passed a Bill making Malay the sole official language, but at the same time, continued to allow the use of English for some official purposes (Mauzy, 1983: 35). (It should be noted here that where Islamic principles are concerned, usage of either Malay or English is immaterial and should not be a cause of dispute between communities.) Almost immediately after the passing of

this Bill—Akta Bahasa Kebangsaan—the 'ultras', backed by Malay literary associations, demonstrated their disgust at the provisions which guaranteed the continued use of English by mobilizing Malay antagonism towards these provisions. Consequently, in 1968, the Malay National Writers Association, PENA (Persatuan Penulis Nasional), launched a national forum to discuss what has always been a sensitive and highly volatile issue, the special rights of ethnic Malays (*hak istimewa orang Melayu*) (*Dewan Masyarakat*, 15 April 1968).[22] The widely read Malay literary mass journal, *Dewan Masyarakat*, echoed these communal murmurings: it galvanized Malay ethnic feelings by devoting its April 1968 issue solely to this subject (*Dewan Masyarakat*, 15 April 1968).

At about the same time, instead of moulding a new Malaysian nation whose citizens would give their utmost loyalty to the country, UMNO leaders, succumbing to the incessant pressure from their supporters, and concerned with their legitimacy in the minds of Malays, gave greater attention to the Malay traditional heritage. Malay language and culture were propagated as the primary vehicle for creating a new Malaysian identity, no doubt to the dismay of non-Malays, and the many Malay seminars organized by local Malay bodies were officially sanctioned by the government. The DBP, for instance, was expanded, and even took on the task of encouraging the proliferation of Malay cultural activities such as launching the first-ever annual 'National Festival of Drama and Dance' in 1968.[23] Although Malay is the only language spoken and understood by all ethnic communities, its potential to act as a bridge towards building a cohesive Malaysian polity was not utilized. In 1965, for the first time, Malay was adopted to complement English as a medium in the School Certificate examination and a year later, in the Higher School Certificate examination (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 279). In the 1968–9 period, the DBP initiated a joint co-operation with the Indonesian authorities to standardize the spelling and terminology of their two languages (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 278).[24] In spite of these pro-Malay gestures from the government, the 'ultras' continued their criticisms, particularly of the Tunku and his role in the aforesaid 1967 Language Bill. In these public protests, the 'ultras' claimed that the Tunku's compromising attitude to the MCA led to the 'watered down' modification of the Language Bill (Goh Cheng Teik, 1971: 29). It was not surprising, under the circumstances, to find the Tunku charged by many Malay leaders with giving too much leeway to the Chinese (Means, 1976: 392), again indicative of the Malay communalistic (as distinct from Islamic) tendency.

The Tunku's image as the leader of the Malays further deteriorated when his warnings to the 'ultras' were not only ignored but openly challenged (*Utusan Melayu*, 18 February 1968). Dr Mahathir Mohamad and other 'ultras' in fact issued a statement in the Malay-language newspaper *Utusan Melayu* demanding the expulsion of the MCA from the Cabinet (von Vorys, 1975: 371–7). In a letter to the Tunku in June 1969, Mahathir wrote: 'You have always compromised by giving in to the Chinese . . . you have given these people too much face' (Slimming, 1969: 68–9). UMNO Youth, in response to pressure from some Chinese leaders for a better deal

for Chinese language and education culminating in the proposal for a Chinese university, demanded a government review of the constitutional provisions granting citizenship to non-Malays. The UMNO branch in Johore even accused the Prime Minister of being too soft towards the Chinese and inattentive to Malay feelings (Slimming, 1969). With the approaching general elections, the Tunku had no choice but reluctantly to bow before these claims (*Dewan Masyarakat*, 15 April 1968); apparently, the Tunku must have rationalized that ignoring these demands might cost him, and UMNO, Malay political support in the elections.

During that 1967–8 period, too, the sensitive issue of the *bumiputra* and their state of backwardness and deprivation was again widely raised by the Malays. It was even argued by some Malay scholars—in spite of insufficient data and a tendency towards oversimplifying the issue of peasant land-ownership—that, although Malays accounted for 85 per cent of all agricultural workers and 95 per cent of all padi cultivators, their average income was only M$50.00 per month, well below the other non-Malay urban dwellers, and that only 20 per cent of Malay peasants owned the land they cultivated (*Dewan Masyarakat*, 15 April 1968). It was also revealed that, in 1966, although there were 2,325 Malay-language primary schools compared to 517 English primary schools, only 91,871 out of the total of 575,991 Malay primary students actually continued to the secondary level. This was in sharp contrast to the 276,342 students who had found places in the English-medium secondary schools. It was further noted that 98 per cent of all malaria patients in the country (in the 1960–8 period) were Malays.

Saddled with such problems, some Malay leaders found it fitting even to remind the non-Malays that they should not be unduly jealous of policies to assist the Malays since, if implemented true to their spirit, they would not harm them (Dawson, 1968: 12, 56). These arguments were contrary to the Tunku's claims that UMNO and the government had done much for the Malays since Independence.[25] The government responded to these charges by launching numerous Malay economic institutions such as MARA or the Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Council of Trust for the Indigenous), Bank Bumiputra (Indigenous Bank) and Bank Pertanian (Agriculture Bank), aimed at assisting more Malays to venture into economic activities. In 1968, UMNO even tried a 'socio-psychological' approach to the Malay plight by producing a book entitled *Revolusi Mental* (Mental Revolution), being a compilation of articles reflecting the official attitude, calling upon Malays to change radically their outlook to life in order to benefit from government policies aimed at improving their socio-economic status (Senu Abdul Rahman, 1968). The Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, called upon the Malays to take up the challenge of modernization as a solution to their socio-economic backwardness (*Dewan Masyarakat*, 15 April 1968: 13–19).

Thus far, it should be noted that these clamourings for a better life for the Malays by both the government and by Malay 'ultras' did not see Islam as an alternative, let alone a panacea, for resolving the socio-economic problems of the Malays. One may ask why, in spite of being Muslim, and disgruntled with the ethnic-oriented approach to solving Malay problems, the 'ultras' did not consider arguing their case on the grounds of, say,

Islamic justice and equity instead of championing the interests of Malays as an ethnic community. If this had been attempted, at least the general non-Malay view of Islam as just another form of self-promotion by the Malays might not have arisen. The answer is not difficult to find: the 'ultras' themselves were similarly ethnic-oriented, if not more than the ruling faction of the time. The government, too, did not help erase this non-Malay perception; it treated Islam in such a manner by concentrating on matters which were mainly symbolic and peripheral to the Faith—though with some effect on popular religious consciousness—such as the building of mosques and Islamic administrative institutions and structures like the Majlis Kebangsaan Halehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia (MKHUIM; National Council for Islamic Affairs) in 1969.[26] Islam as *al-din*, as a comprehensive system, or a 'way of life' encompassing universal humanistic values, such as justice, love and equity, the pursuit of knowledge, and the ideas of progress and modernity, was not accepted, let alone implemented, by the UMNO political leadership.

Malaysia's Foreign Policy: Pro-Islamic or Pro-Muslim?

In essence, Islam was not a major issue of concern in the Malay search for identity in the 1960s. Not only was the challenge of PAS under control, but Malay–non-Malay relations in Malaysia took on a turn for the worse. However, interestingly, insofar as Malaysia's foreign policy was concerned, relations with Muslim countries, particularly the Arab nations, saw some change towards the later part of the 1960s. Especially noticeable since the Arab–Israeli War of 1967, this increasing tilt towards the Arabs must, however, be understood by reference to the new circumstances and challenges faced by Malaysia which necessitated a change in its foreign policy.[27]

Although officially declared to be 'independent and non-aligned',[28] the cornerstone of Malaysia's foreign policy throughout the 1960s, like that of most newly independent nations of the Third World, was its special relations with, and dependence upon, the Western nations like those of Europe and the United States. This dependence was clearly discernible in Malaysia's trade and security dealings, with Britain in particular. Malaysia's long-standing relations with Muslim Middle East states, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia, discussed in Chapter 1, were mainly 'religious' and educational in nature, involving sending its students there and the Malays' performance of the haj. Despite Malaysia's aggressive diplomatic offensive to solicit support from Middle East and Afro-Asian nations because of its exclusion from the Non-Aligned movement (an exclusion initiated by Indonesia in 1964) (Boyce, 1968: 37; Ghazali Shafie, 1966), both politically and economically, the Middle East was not deemed by the government as relevant at that time (Boyce, 1968: 175). So staunchly pro-West was Malaysia's foreign policy posture that the Singapore delegate to the United Nations in 1965, Dr Toh Chin Chye, remarked that 'many Afro-Asian nations cannot understand why Malaysia, which is newly independent, is too conservative in outlook towards world affairs' (*Straits Times*, 31 December 1965: 5).

This criticism was, in many ways, valid. The country's political leaders

could not throw off the vestiges of colonialism easily: Malaysia voted with the Western powers (especially Britain and the United States) on most issues at the United Nations; its security and political stability were dependent upon Britain and its allies in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and, from 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), though this latter grouping cannot be seen as pro-West and, obviously, is not related to colonialism. Again, compared to the West, Malaysia's trade dealings with the Middle East countries were marginal indeed. The government itself conceded that 'Malaysia as a place for investment was not well-known among Arab investors'.[29] As a matter of fact, despite the Malay familiarity with the Arabs, the latter in general did not find Malaysia sufficiently attractive even as a tourist destination, let alone as a trading partner. This was borne out by the fact that only 0.1 per cent of all tourist arrivals to Malaysia in 1969 were from the Gulf region of the Middle East: a mere 61 out of a total of 53,000 tourists.[30]

After the Arabs' defeat by Israel in 1967, Malaysia's neglect of Arab-Muslim affairs changed to being supportive of the Arabs, and the Palestinians in particular. Malaysia took every opportunity to call for, if not demand, 'the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories' and declared that 'such violations cannot be condoned' (*Straits Times*, 7 July 1967: 3). This was in sharp contrast to Malaysia–Israeli relations before that war, when Malaysia was on record as having stated that 'we recognise Israel because she is a member of the United Nations (*Suara Malaysia*, 3 September 1965: 6), a comment made in reciprocity to Israel's congratulatory messages on Malaysia's second anniversary of Independence. However, Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak declared in October 1967 that 'to change the political status quo of the region through the force of military might is an anachronism and militates against a cardinal tenet of the United Nations' (*Suara Malaysia*, 26 October 1967: 8). The government promptly made an initial grant of $60,000 in support of Palestinian refugees and Jordanian war victims (*Straits Times*, 7 July 1967: 3).

Malaysia even tried to exercise a measure of leadership in the Muslim world, though with little success. An obvious example of this desire was Malaysia's role in the International Qur'an Recitation Competition held in its capital, Kuala Lumpur (*Malaysian Digest*, 30 November 1969: 1). In 1969, for instance, in officially launching the competition, the Yang diPertuan Agong (King) called for 'closer and stronger co-operation between Muslim nations' (*Malaysian Digest*, 30 November 1969), a sentiment echoed by the Prime Minister when he proposed the idea of a 'Muslim Commonwealth' aimed at fostering a 'stronger bond of brotherhood among Muslims all over the world' (*Malaysian Digest*, 30 November 1969). Obviously, the competition helped to publicize Malaysia in the eyes of Middle East nations as well as broaden the ethnic horizons of Malaysian Muslims beyond Malaysia. Every year, the main judges of the competition came from Egypt and Saudi Arabia and winners of the competition—usually Malaysians[31]—accompanied by an official Malaysian goodwill delegation, toured Arab Middle East countries where they were treated well and accorded wide media coverage.[32]

An early indication of Malaysia's interest in establishing stronger identification with the 'Muslim bloc' came in 1968 when Malaysia first participated in the then 25-nation gathering of Muslim Heads of State in Rabat, and also offered to host a similar gathering in the following year (*Dewan Masyarakat*, Vol. 6, No. 7).[33] As host in April 1969, Malaysia became one of the first countries to allow the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate as an official delegate and also to establish an official diplomatic mission in Kuala Lumpur (*Dewan Masyarakat*, Vol. 6, No. 7). In an attempt to remedy negligible Malaysia–Arab economic dealings—out of 24 countries granted 'pioneer industry status' (a status which accords substantial tax-deductions to the industry concerned) in Malaysia, none was from the Middle East[34]—Malaysia sent an official delegation led by Raja Mohar Badiozaman, Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister, to those countries in 1969.[35]

It should be noted here that Malaysia's support for Islam in the international Muslim community should not be interpreted to mean that the government was committed to Islamic principles in its policies. Here again, one sees the ambiguities and contradictions in the Malay–Islam dialectic and in the Malay search for identity. After all, the government's support for the Arabs in their war with Israel was no different from that shown by the majority of Third World countries at that time. Even then, the support for the Middle East was actually directed more to the Arabs, and the Palestinians in particular. The ambivalence of Malaysia's 'Islamic policy' was evident especially within Malaysia, where Islam, for reasons outlined below, was not accorded as high a profile by the government as it was in its foreign policy.

Islam in Domestic Politics

As mentioned earlier, the government made considerable electoral gains against PAS in the 1964 general election, and, with the leadership problems faced by PAS at that time after the demise of its two top figures, the party did not pose a serious threat to UMNO during the later part of the 1960s. In addition, the anti-Malaysia opposition from Indonesia and the Philippines had not been resolved by the time of the Arab–Israeli War of 1967. With these problems in hand, the Malaysian government could not accord greater attention to Islam domestically.

There were other reasons for the government's neglect of Islam within Malaysia. As illustrated in Chapter 1, not only were UMNO leaders and bureaucrats ethnic-secularist oriented, but by 1967, as the country celebrated its first decade of independence, interethnic tension among its disparate ethno-religious groups, especially between Malays and Chinese, was still a salient feature of Malaysian daily life. In such a setting, Islam did not make inroads into the political system or into Malay identity politics. With the separation of Singapore in 1965, tension within the political parties over ethnic issues heightened, as rumblings of discontent, at one time confined within the UMNO, began to spill over to the other major component of the Alliance, the MCA. Certain factions of the MCA, in their

attempt to win greater concessions for the Chinese, began to cast doubts on the capability of the MCA leadership to safeguard Chinese interests. Amidst demands and pressure from Chinese youth, guilds, and teacher associations for Chinese interests, and sensing the danger of these demands, Tun Tan Siew Sin, the MCA President, warned the Chinese that if they were unwilling to back off from their demands, 'there will be a head-on collision with UMNO' (*Straits Times*, 2 August 1965). This warning, as well as many others by Alliance leaders, fell on deaf ears at a time when the nation was gearing itself for the general election. Meanwhile, in an attempt, perhaps, to offer an alternative to the MCA, another political party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), was formed in 1966. The DAP was actually a reconstituted PAP, and like the MCA, tended to champion Chinese interests. It was its preoccupation with getting a better deal for the Chinese—though it was also vocal over issues such as democracy and justice—that led to it being labelled by the Alliance as communal and racialist (*Berita Harian*, 1 May 1969).

Some other parties were formed during this time which either capitalized on the growing disenchantment of the Chinese with the MCA in particular or offered a multiracial, non-ethnic alternative to the existing ethnic platform championed by other parties in general. One such party was the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People's Movement), inaugurated in April 1968, which initially fared better than the DAP in projecting itself as a non-communal political party (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 280; Mauzy, 1983). Part of the reason for its success was the inclusion of prominent Malay Muslims (like Professor Syed Hussein Al-Attas) in leadership positions, as well as its concern for the broader social issues of equality, justice, and a non-corrupt political leadership. Its objectives of ethnic equality and cultural pluralism for all Malaysians were echoed by yet another party, the People's Progressive Party (PPP), based in the tin-mining state of Perak. For the Parti Buruh (Labour Party), linked with the outlawed Malayan Communist Party, and one which had earlier called for a boycott of the election, the opportunity to capitalize on the anti-government mood then was not to be missed: it mobilized a 10,000-strong funeral procession following the death of one of its workers, a Chinese, shot by police for painting anti-election slogans (Rudner, 1970: 18; Comber, 1983). The procession was marked by open racial epithets and anti-Malay gestures.

Other political parties too, in preparing themselves for the approaching 1969 general election, had one thing in common: they questioned the pro-Malay policies of UMNO with great audacity, and tried to offer a 'Malaysian Malaysia' platform, which had first been articulated by Singapore's PAP. In addition, irrespective of their ideological underpinnings, given the importance of ethnic relations to the state structure, these parties could not resist the temptation of harping on ethnic issues. Although adopting such postures was itself not surprising since that was the very *raison d'être* of the parties, exploiting the precarious situation by openly challenging Malay policies and symbols worsened the already tenuous Malay–non-Malay relationship. The May 1969 general election campaign was thus filled with blatant expressions of communal sentiment and recriminations by all

parties. Sensitive issues such as language, culture, Malay special privileges and education were not only openly debated, but debated with much bitterness. As a corollary, ethnic tension reigned, leading to a further deterioration in the country's political stability. Eventually, the country was plunged into a severe political crisis.

The 1969 Riots: Impact on Islam and Ethnicity

This was a crisis which pitted the two largest ethnic communities, the Malays and the Chinese, against each other in what was later described by the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, as 'the darkest period in our national history' (Comber, 1983: 82).[36] That incident was significant because it became a launching pad, if not a historical watershed, for Malays in particular, and one which left an indelible mark in Malaysian politics: it led to radical changes in the government's overall policy-priorities for the years immediately following the riots, at least up to 1975. In particular, an immediate aftermath of the riots was the start of an era when the *bumiputra*, especially Malays, zealously fought for, and won, their demands for a more equitable life in plural Malaysia. Of greater relevance to the present discussion is that, ironically, against this post-1969 setting, both aspects of Malay identity—ethnic communalism and Islamic assertiveness—in varying degrees and for different reasons, came to the fore. Hence, the Malay quest for 'more Islam' in the context of the aftermath of the riots had an ethnic dimension. This serves to demonstrate, and reinforces the argument so far, that Malay (ethnic) communalism and Islam constituted two dialectical strands which, consciously or otherwise, complement each other in a 'balance of power' situation, although in the majority of cases, the former seems to have had the edge in the Malay resolution of their socio-economic problems.

A vast literature already exists on the factors that started the riots.[37] However, since an understanding of these factors is important to an analysis of events that occurred soon after 1969, a brief recapitulation is in order. The events described in the first chapter—the internal bickering and factional strife between the 'old guard' (older-generation leaders, led by the Tunku) and the 'new guard' (the new breed of radical and younger politicians) that engulfed the ruling UMNO-led government; the increasing frustration of the Malays with their economic condition; and the unusually open, provocative, and bitter polarization of communal grievances by all ethnic groups and parties in the 1969 general election campaigns—were factors which contributed to the ethnic fermentation and violence. Underlying the riots, however, was the big election losses suffered by the ruling Alliance and the tension that ensued as a result of this unexpected outcome. For the first time, opposition political candidates made substantial inroads into the Malaysian Parliament (Gagliano, 1970: 9).[38] Moreover, for the first time, too, since Independence, the government lost its two-thirds majority in Parliament by means of which it could amend the Constitution at will.

Caught by surprise and inundated with a sense of insecurity at the

election results, the government desperately resorted to whatever means still in its power—such as discretionary use of the Internal Security Act—to silence opposition (Rudner, 1970: 18). However, instead of dampening the spirit of non-Malay opposition parties such as the DAP, Gerakan, and PPP, such measures increased their wrath, at a time when their confidence, despite their lack of unity, was at its highest. To many Malays, the large pre-election procession by the Labour Party, with its slanderous, acrimonious outcries and gestures against the Malay-dominated government, represented a challenge and an affront to their special position in the country (Rudner, 1970: 18; Comber, 1983). Never before had this position been so openly threatened by the non-Malays.

Amidst this anti-government atmosphere came a further incident: the jubilant rallies organized by the opposition parties to celebrate their election victories. The scene was thus set for an explosion when Chinese opposition parties, especially, resorted to abusive anti-Malay slogans.[39] Official figures gave the toll of the rioting which followed (from 13 May to 31 July 1969) as 196 dead, most of whom were Chinese, and 1,109 injured,[40] but these seem to be deflated figures—it was observed that the figure could have been four times as high (Slimming, 1969: 47–8).

Whatever the remote and proximate causes of the riots, their consequences were clear: they heralded major structural changes in the country, intensified communal antipathies, pushed ethnicity to the fore in the Malay identity quest, and accentuated the tension both between the Malays and the State (Funston, 1980; Kessler, 1980; Mohamed Abu Bakar, 1981; Ratnam, 1969), and between Malays and Chinese. First, the 1969 incident led to a crystallization of the Malay identity crisis, as Malays began frantically to search for solutions to their problems in plural Malaysia. Secondly, the demands and incessant pressure from the Malays for greater opportunities for themselves resulted in the dawn of an era when government policies aimed at restructuring the economic control of the country in a communally equitable fashion became the norm, and in the process, greater encouragement of the *bumiputra* economic participation in Malaysia was ensured. Thirdly, and perhaps paradoxically, the many economic and educational opportunities accorded to Malays, especially those from rural areas, backfired for the government. They led not only to an increase in the number of Malay youths who found solace in pursuing the Islamic cause, but who also became increasingly critical of the government. Finally, to entrench and legitimize its position within the Malay community as well as to match the rigour of PAS and benefit from the political and economic power of Muslim nations in international politics after 1973, UMNO had, perforce, adopted a more supportive stance towards Islam in the country.

Before discussing these developments in detail, it is useful to refer briefly to the sequence of events that occurred immediately after the riots.[41] During the riots, parliamentary democracy was suspended, and a state of Emergency proclaimed. An interim government, the Majlis Gerakan Negara (MAGERAN) or the National Operations Council (NOC), was formed two days later, under the direction of Tun Abdul Razak, then Deputy Prime Minister.[42] Although the Cabinet continued to exist, it was no longer

responsible to Parliament; in effect, the NOC was the 'government', having been granted wide discretionary executive powers to establish law and order, and having only to seek advice from the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman.[43] Its major task was to restore political stability and prevent a recurrence of violence. In line with this goal, immediate steps were taken to foster Malay–non-Malay relations, as well as to limit the scope of legal political activity, through the amendment of the Sedition Ordinance of 1948, as well as a curtailment of parliamentary privilege (von Vorys, 1975; Means, 1976).

Post-1969 and Malay Ethnicity

With these institutional and legal mechanisms, Tun Abdul Razak managed to restore political order and boosted his image as a strong national leader; the climax came in September 1970 when the Tunku handed him the leadership of UMNO and the government.[44] Under Tun Razak, many of the demands of the 'ultras', principally those aimed at improving the socio-economic status of the Malays, not only became government policy, but the leading 'ultras' like Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Musa Hitam, who had been publicly disgraced by the Tunku and expelled from either UMNO or their government posts,[45] were re-instated. With their return to political prominence, ethnicity took on a more forceful front. Their political rehabilitation also alarmed the non-Malays (principally the Chinese), given the probability of a heightening of Malay chauvinist demands. The Chinese, for instance, could not forget that one of the new leaders, Dr Mahathir, had an 'anti-Chinese' image, epitomized in his widely circulated letter to the Tunku soon after the riots, in which he charged that: 'Your "give and take" policy gives the Chinese everything they ask for. The Malays whom you thought would never rebel, went berserk, and they hate you for giving too much face (to the Chinese)' (von Vorys, 1975: 273–4).

Under such circumstances, it was natural that uppermost among Tun Razak's priorities was the need to unite the multiracial and multireligious polity. Towards this end, significant institutions and policies were developed. In July 1969 the Department of National Unity (Jabatan Perpaduan Negara) was formed,[46] and one of its immediate actions was the recommendation for a new national ideology, the Rukunegara (Principles of Nationhood), officially adopted in August 1970 to coincide with the country's thirteenth Independence anniversary (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 281; Means, 1970). The basic principles of the Rukunegara are the belief in God; loyalty to the King and country; upholding the Constitution and rule of law; and good behaviour and morality.[47]

Another fundamental step was the establishment of the Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition government, an enlarged version of the earlier Alliance. Some opposition political parties like the PPP (People's Progressive Party) and the Gerakan decided to join the government. The Barisan Nasional reflected a desire for political accommodation, unity, and consensus on the part of the parties which joined it. By offering them portfolios in the government, UMNO thus could have greater control over the actions

of the former opposition parties. Another major government initiative was the formation of numerous government and quasi-government 'National-unity' institutions in an attempt to mend the fragile and volatile state of ethnic relations then. They included the Majlis Perundingan Negara or the National Consultative Council and the Majlis Perpaduan Negara or the National Unity Council, both established in 1970.[48] For a while, the intense communal polarization was subdued, though far from resolved. With social order restored, the government articulated and vigorously pursued the matter of economic imbalance among the ethnic communities, with the avowed aim of restructuring the country's socio-economic system to give the Malays and other *bumiputra* (including those in Sabah and Sarawak) a better deal. This culminated in the official announcement, in July 1969, of the largest and most ambitious development plan yet undertaken in the country, the New Economic Policy (NEP).[49] Details of the NEP were revealed after the publication of the Second Malaysia Plan in June 1971.

Briefly, the objectives of the NEP are twofold. The first is 'the eradication of poverty among all Malaysians' and the second is the 'restructuring of Malaysian society in order to reduce and ultimately eliminate the identification of race with economic function and geographical location' (*Second Malaysia Plan*, 1971). The government hoped that by 1990, the proportional share of the national economic cake would be at least 30 per cent for Malays (*bumiputra*), 40 per cent for non-Malays (Chinese and Indians), with foreigners (like investors and multinational corporations) taking up the balance of 30 per cent (*Second Malaysia Plan*, 1971).

The government's commitment to assist the Malays should be understood by referring to the general state of Malay poverty, particularly in the eastern states, such as Trengganu.[50] At a more general level, it may also be noted that, although the one economic sector dominated by Malays—agriculture—accounted for one-third of Malaysia's Gross National Product and two-thirds of its exports, Malay remuneration was the lowest in the country.[51] At the time of the riots in 1969, as a community *vis-à-vis* non-Malays, Malays were the poorest, with 84.5 per cent earning below M$100.00 per month.[52] In 1970, the total number of Malay-owned business firms was only 365 compared with 10,489 for others, with approved capital of M$48 million and M$1,219 million respectively (*Second Malaysia Plan*, 1971). A study in the same year concluded that, of the total households living under the poverty line (estimated at M$33.00 per capita monthly), 75 per cent were Malays (Ishak Sha'ari, 1979: 51). Official government figures in 1970 stated that the *bumiputra* share was a mere 24 per cent of total employment in the commercial sector (*Second Malaysia Plan*, 1971: 335; Milne and Mauzy, 1980: 334).

One must view the NEP—the centrepiece of the government's economic programmes—against this background of benign neglect of the Malays. The government went one step further: it not only talked about the need to improve the Malays' economic plight, it related this issue directly to the whole question of national unity; hence the earnestness of the official declarations to go full steam ahead with the NEP, subsequently embodied in the (five-year) 'Malaysia Plans'.

In the very first sitting of Parliament after the riots, the Yang diPertuan Agong emphasized that: 'So long as the economic imbalance between the races is not resolved, it is almost impossible to achieve national unity. With this in mind, the government will assist in ensuring that Malays and other bumiputra entrepreneurs will play their role . . . in all fields of the economy.'[53]

In the same parliamentary session, Ghazali Shafie, one of the important final draftsmen of the NEP, and one of the country's most influential ideologues, echoed the same sentiment:

> National unity is not attainable without equity and balance between Malaysia's ethnic groups as regards their participation in the development of the country and the sharing of the benefits of the national modernization efforts . . . Malays and other indigenous people must move into the modern sectors of the economy not merely as workers and not merely as employees. They must eventually have a roughly proportionate stake in ownership and control of urban-type activities . . . the background must be laid now and the means for such structural change must be set in motion without delay.[54]

The Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, finally put a stop to whatever doubts that may have remained among Malaysians as to the government's seriousness by insisting that the successful implementation of the NEP was a vital prerequisite to Malaysia's survival, progress, and unity (*Second Malaysia Plan*, 1971: 36–47).

The way to achieve the stated objectives was through the establishment of numerous large government and quasi-government corporations, especially trading and finance corporations, for the training and employment of Malays; increased opportunities for Malays to obtain tertiary education, both locally and abroad; as well as offers of incentives (such as tax reductions) to non-Malay companies receptive to these government's moves (*Second Malaysia Plan*, 1971).[55] Some of these large public corporations and schemes included CGC, PERNAS, MAJUIKAN, UDA, SEDC, NIDF, MIEC, FAMA, MARDI, FIDA, and FIMA, to mention the well-known ones. Institutions which had existed prior to the NEP—like FELDA, MARA, and RIDA—were upgraded to assume a higher profile in helping the *bumiputra*.[56] Some of the projects undertaken by these corporations have been extensive. By 1973, for instance, FELDA had resettled 174,000 people on its lands and MARA had sponsored the education of some 5,000 Malay students (Rudner, 1979: 381; Ishak Sha'ari, 1979: 209). Many financial institutions (banks, in particular) were also soon established to assist the *bumiputra*: Bank Bumiputra (now one of the largest banks in the country), Bank Pertanian, Bank Kerjasama Rakyat, Bank Pembangunan, and Credit Guarantee Corporation. These institutions cover such diverse fields as banking, insurance, trade, construction, transport, mining, oil exploration, forestry, land development, import–export, urban renewal, and large-scale rural development projects.[57] To complement these, there was a system of quotas for Malay participation and the provision of special training for *bumiputra* in all the commercial and industrial enterprises in the country, including privately owned ones, and many other sponsorship programmes and assistance schemes.[58]

All these pro-Malay policies orchestrated by the government are relevant and significant to the present discussion because they indicate the power of Malay ethnicity or Malay ethnic nationalism in Malay life, as well as the necessity for the Malay-led government to satisfy this Malay ethnic pull if it wants its credibility in Malay eyes to remain intact. Although Islam was a factor as noted by Funston (1981: 171–3), and the Faith was, to an extent, sought out as an 'antidote' to the Malay plight, ethnic policies, more than other factors or forces, surfaced prominently during this period because of the backdrop of the 1969 ethnic riots and the subsequent drumming up of Malay ethnic issues by Malay ultras and nationalists for a better deal for the Malays. The government must have realized, however, that the (vertical) mobility of the Malays had to come from something more than its economic initiatives, something more tangible in form, and providing better guarantees to the overall improvement of the Malays, in the long run. The way out seemed clear: education—specifically, higher education.

To see the extent of the government's support for *bumiputra* education since 1969, it is necessary to refer to educational statistics for Malays prior the riots. Despite the fact that education was, according to a survey, already the main concern of all ethnic groups in the country at the time of Independence, the Malay concern for higher education remained unachievable until 1969 (Arun and van Ness, 1964: 181–5). In 1963, combined total Malay enrolment in the two existing universities in Malaya and Singapore was only 11 per cent although the community constituted half of the total population (Dawson, 1968: 33).

In the University of Malaya itself—the country's first—Malays constituted 20.6 per cent of the student population in 1963. Although five years later, at the outbreak of the riots, 2,373 out of the total of 6,672 students in that university were Malays, they were predominantly concentrated in the Arts Faculty (approximately 90 per cent), and only 6.3 per cent and 0.4 per cent of the total enrolment in the Science and Engineering faculties respectively were Malays.[59] This under-representation in the universities and tertiary education in general (including the polytechnics and colleges) is now a thing of the past.

The government wasted no time in implementing measures to fulfil its desire to assist the Malays. Soon after parliamentary rule was reinstituted in Malaysia in early 1971, both the King and Ghazali Shafie took great pains to highlight the neglect of Malay education in the past and the government's commitment to remedy this neglect. In his inaugural address to the new Parliament in 1971, the King declared that 'Education is a crucial factor for national unity and security . . . the government will implement, to the fullest extent, the National Education Policy.'[60] Ghazali Shafie (for almost two decades since Independence, an articulate figure in Malaysia's foreign policy) reminded parliamentarians of the relevance of history, in this case, the attitude of the colonial government to Malay education:

> Any long term administrative policy must be rooted in the field of education. Hence the infamous educational policy of the colonial government. . . . The Malay, according to Winstedt—it is on record—should be made a better farmer than his father; that is all. . . . At all costs he must be discouraged to enter the realm of

commerce. By 1957 when we became independent . . . in an age of machines and fast advancing technology, the Malays found themselves dregs of society in their own country, knowing no better than to plant rice and to fish in the most primitive manner.[61]

To prevent further deterioration of their plight, the government quickly promised that 'More scholarships and bursaries would be made available to these people (Malays) to pursue courses of study in colleges and universities in Malaysia and abroad.'[62] Moreover, since the passing of the (revised) Sedition Act of 1970, it was illegal for anyone, including parliamentarians, to question policies considered to be sensitive in nature, among which was the system of quotas in the allocation of university places.[63] In effect, this Act (debated under the 'Constitutional Amendment Bill') granted the King tremendous powers to determine quotas for the *bumiputra* in all aspects of social and economic life, especially in education and employment.[64]

What followed from these assurances was the channelling of considerable resources to upgrade the educational level of Malays in particular, and other *bumiputra* in general. In 1972, for instance, barely three years after the riots, the government's expenditure for education in proportion to the total national expenditure for all ministries was the highest in its history, unequalled to this day.[65] In a similar vein, the rapid rise of *bumiputra* enrolment in the universities, both local and abroad, was unprecedented. This writer's computation of available government statistics reveals a big increase in the enrolment of the local universities with a high proportion of Malays during the 1970–5 period. Both Universiti Pertanian and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia recorded a hefty 150 per cent increase in 1972 over 1970. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, which in 1970 was the smallest in the country (in terms of student intake), registered the highest percentage increase of all five universities in Malaysia in 1975 (David Lim, 1983: 19),[66] although this is not totally surprising because of its recent establishment. Overall, however, Malay tertiary enrolment increased 65 per cent in 1975 from the total Malay enrolment in 1970 while that of non-Malays actually declined to 35 per cent from 50 per cent during the same period. Again, over the period 1970–5, the Malay increase for degree courses was 58 per cent, and at diploma level, 85 per cent (*Third Malaysia Plan*, 1976: 399–404). In 1975, out of a total intake of 14,254 into the five universities, the ethnic proportions were: Malays 57.2 per cent, Chinese 36.6 per cent, Indians 5.2 per cent, and others 1 per cent (Chai, 1977: 49). More significantly, Malay students have branched out into areas where their representation was traditionally small since the *bumiputra* enrolment for the science stream at the upper secondary level saw a hefty 94 per cent increase between 1969 and 1975 (*Third Malaysia Plan*, 1976: 399).

The government also showed great interest in sponsoring Malays and other *bumiputra* to attend overseas educational institutions. By 1975, there were 31,500 Malaysian students (both private and government-sponsored) in Western universities (*Third Malaysia Plan*, 1976: 406; *New Straits Times*, 23 January 1983); this was more than twice the combined total enrolment of all the universities in Malaysia, although the non-Malay proportion in

overseas institutions was also high. Practically all Malay students abroad were sponsored—either by the government (Federal or State levels) or by its many agencies, which during the period 1970–5, awarded a total of 6,050 scholarships to Malays and other *bumiputra*.[67]

Post-1969 and Islam

One may pause here to ask yet again, what is the significance of all this pro-Malay educational support to our discussion of Islam and ethnicity in Malaysia? The relevance lies here: against the backdrop of a rising Malay ethnic-communal consciousness, there arose a parallel current in the politics of Malay identity—Islamic consciousness of Malay students and youth. Increasingly educated and urbanized, and exposed to the wider dimensions of Islam, such as its universal and humanistic principles of justice, tolerance, love and peace, to mention the notable ones (Chandra Muzaffar, 1979b), and Islamic developments elsewhere, they became more committed to the Faith. The evidence of this greater commitment is not hard to find, either locally or in universities abroad which have sizeable Malay student populations. More will be said of these in later chapters but suffice it to say here that in these overseas universities, Malay students from Malaysia have become the main driving force of Islamic student activities on the campuses, such as the Federation of the Organisation of Islamic Societies (FOSIS) and the Islamic Representative Council (IRC) in Britain, and the Muslim Students Associations (MSAs) in Australia, Canada, the United States, and the Middle East. While in Australia, the present writer had the opportunity to observe the activism of these MSAs. The same development, namely a Malay youth population more committed towards Islam, was also evident within Malaysia, given the penetration of Malay graduates (both secular and religious trained) in Muslim organizations like Darul Arqam, ABIM, and Islamic Committees in the government ministries. Their involvement in these organizations and the assertiveness of the organizations in pushing for Islamic norms and principles will be covered in the next chapter.

Ironically, the increased involvement of Malay youth in Islamic activities could be said to have been 'assisted' by the government itself. In the wake of the 1969 riots, the government, as has been argued thus far, found it necessary to impose stringent curbs on political activity and freedom. However, the clampdown on student activism on the campuses and the promulgation of the revised (amended) Sedition Ordinance of 1970 boosted Islamic activities instead of dampening them.[68] The irony is that religion and religious issues were, in general, not regarded as 'sensitive', thereby enabling Muslim students to resort to Islam as a strong vehicle for expressing Malay-Muslim grievances and ideas. At least within the campuses, Islam was the only tool to which dissatisfied Malay youths could resort (Kessler, 1980; Funston, 1981). The writer's discussions with active members of the Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar-pelajar Islam Malaysia (PKPIM or the Malaysian National Association of Muslim Students) and the Persatuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya (PBMUM or the Malay

Language Society of University of Malaya) revealed that Islam, and particularly its role in the activities of the Malays on the campuses, was a key issue that characterized the factional strife in the University of Malaya soon after the riots; hence, here again, the struggle of the Islam–ethnicity dialectic. That strife pitted the PKPIM and PBMUM, the two biggest Malay groups on that campus, against each other.[69] The NEP's emphasis on assisting rural Malays also led to the increasing strength of the PKPIM as its ranks were swelled by students from the rural areas who were more committed to Islam, being long exposed to Islamic teachings in the *kampung*, and who had gained entry into the university because of the NEP. The interviews which this present writer conducted also confirmed that Islamic activities had been on the rise in the rural areas since the mid-1960s, but the lack of documentary evidence does not allow this development to be analysed here. Evidence is more readily available, however, in the matter of Islamic developments involving local Malay youth and students during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

One consequence of the PKPIM–PBMUM cleavage was the increasing Islamic assertiveness of the PKPIM, an association first established in 1961. This began to surface in August 1969 at the PKPIM's Annual General Meeting where its leaders proposed the formation of an enlarged PKPIM in the form of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia or Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM).

The PKPIM's leaders had decided to form an association of alumni to act as a continuing forum for their unity and activities, as upon graduation they would no longer be able to hold positions in the PKPIM. These leaders, via their involvement in PEMIAT (Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Asia Tenggara), the Association of Muslim Undergraduates of Southeast Asia, had been inspired by the influential Indonesian Muslim Undergraduate Assembly (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia, HMI)[70]. It is as well to remember that after the 1969 riots, there were many government curbs on university activities and other societies. The Universities and Colleges Act not only prohibited university student bodies from affiliation with outside organizations and political parties; it also gave tremendous powers to University Councils to suspend or dissolve Student Unions at will (Funston, 1980: 272–3). Having little confidence in the effectiveness of the existing Muslim organizations in Malaysia, and wishing to continue their relationship with PEMIAT, the PKPIM leaders decided to form a national Islamic movement 'to supplement the existing Islamic institutions more vigorously, for the benefit of all Muslims in Malaysia and the region'.[71] By an 'Islamic movement' ABIM's leaders were referring to the upholding of Islamic principles as enshrined in the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as embarking upon a systematic education programme for the members, and active participation in all aspects of life in Malaysia, including politics.[72]

ABIM's motto, first declared in 1970, was to strive 'towards building a society which is based on the principles of Islam' and, in particular, 'presenting Islam as *al-din*'.[73] The movement, however, was not officially approved by the government until 1971, after a long wait for registration. By the time the 1973 oil crisis erupted (which also brought with it a more

powerful 'Muslim bloc'), ABIM's stature as a highly organized and motivated Muslim organization had become well accepted in Malaysia. It was also around that time that its declaration to uphold and strive for the realization of Islamic objectives, as well as to champion the cause of Islamic justice for everyone, gained considerable attention on the part of both the Malaysian government and the public as the movement's reputation began to spread at home and to Islamic organizations abroad.[74]

ABIM was not the only Muslim organization in Malaysia at that time. At about the same time as ABIM was launched, in 1969, another Muslim organization came into being, the Darul Arqam or House of Arqam. Like ABIM, the professed aim of Darul Arqam was 'to live in Islam as a way of life, in all respects'.[75] By this was meant adhering to Islamic precepts and principles in the organization's policies and activities, and in the behaviour and actions of members of the organization. It was especially during 1973–4, when Darul Arqam's strength grew, that its leaders began to make their presence known to a much wider audience—in schools, associations, government offices, colleges, and universities. In 1973 too, the organization moved its headquarters from Kampung Datuk Keramat in Kuala Lumpur to larger grounds in Sungai Pencala to cater for the increasing demand from the Muslim public for its many innovative educational and economic endeavours. Since then, Darul Arqam's name and that of its new headquarters, Sungai Pencala, have become household words among the Muslims.

Other equally significant factors and developments came into play in explaining the Islamic assertiveness of Malay youth in particular, and the Muslim populace in general, in their identity quest. One was the radical environmental change experienced by Malay students from the *kampung* when they went to the cities, and the other was the process of urbanization in Malaysia during the period of the early 1970s.

Coming from the rural areas, where, as we have seen, educational facilities were inadequate, some of these youths were placed in a disadvantaged situation when they enrolled in large numbers at the universities as a result of the NEP and its *bumiputra* emphasis. Not only did they find the new secular orientation of the university system unpalatable, they probably had some difficulty coping with the relatively high educational standards in the universities. This difficulty was not confined to Malays in local universities, but was experienced by Malays in universities in the West as well.

Transported from their rural environment in Malaysia to a totally alien setting and ambience with its attendant Western liberal values and norms, these Malay students were trapped in a state of 'anomie'—a combined sense of bewilderment, disillusionment, alienation, loneliness, and confusion. Overawed and ill-equipped to face the 'cultural shock' of Western society, some developed a sense of disillusionment and even revulsion against things associated with Western liberal values and life-style.[76] The result of the conflict with all these aspects of the new environment, new values, and new educational standards, was, for some of them, a 'return' to Islam. In the case of students from rural areas, both in Malaysian and

overseas universities, there was a strengthening and better articulation of Islamic sentiments, mainly expressed through their involvement in the Muslim Students Associations (MSAs). Students were exposed to the wider issues of Islam and events in the Muslim world generally, through a variety of ways and measures—the availability of a wide range of Islamic literature in English by prominent leaders of the Islamic movement such as Maududi, Hasan alBanna, Sayyid Qutb, and Mutahari; the opportunity to meet internationally renowned Muslim scholars and the local *ulama*; attendance at Islamic training camps and seminars and even participation in demonstrations held in support of the peoples of Afghanistan, Iran, Lebanon, and elsewhere.[77] From all these exposures and experiences came the desire to re-establish an Islamic society in its complete form—through values, laws, institutions, and behaviour of Muslims.

Apart from this wide exposure to the issues of the Muslim *umma* that Malay students gained while attending Western universities, the Islamic reassertiveness within Malaysia in general can also be explained from a socio-political perspective. The rejuvenation of Islam (as with other religious phenomena) is more than just a religious reawakening of Muslims wanting to reaffirm their commitment to the Faith; it is one which can be related to the context or circumstances of the Muslims' existing conditions and milieu. In this regard, modernization, specifically urbanization, had its impact. If one realizes that by 1979, approximately 30 per cent of Malays had migrated to the cities, one will be able to gauge the depth of the impact of urbanization on Malay-Muslim life (*The Star*, 20 March 1979). The concomitant spiritual emptiness in a metropolitan setting was highlighted, for instance, by Vatikiotis, in his analysis of the global phenomenon of the Islamic resurgence:

> It is modernisation which in the last thirty years produced the new urban masses that now express their economic and political grievances in Islamic idiom and identity from their rural origins to their new urban environment. Many of them moved from their traditional participation in popular Islam in the countryside (religious brotherhoods) to membership in more militant populist religio-political movements in the cities. With their greater involvement in politics the formulation of political demands and political life itself have become, naturally, more Islamic. Their demands are modern, while their formulation remains traditionally Islamic. They carry with them a cultural idiom which, by sheer weight of numbers, overwhelms the secular one adhered to by tiny elites. The greater the involvement of these new urban masses in politics the more intense the demand for the religious over the secular ambiance (Cudsi and Dessouki, 1982: 175).

This general factor of urbanization aside, the reaffirmation of Islam must also be seen contextually, that is, within Malaysia itself. In this latter regard, the 1969 crisis and the NEP were also instrumental in this Islamic assertiveness in another way. Despite the general benefit to the *bumiputra*, some PAS members have alleged that, because of the strain in the PAS–UMNO relationship, they were denied the benefits reserved for Malays under the NEP.[78] Their frustration came to the boil when their party itself decided to join the Barisan Nasional coalition government in 1974. There was consternation, particularly from members in the rural areas (and some of its

leaders, too, like Abu Bakar Hamzah, the Secretary-General), about that decision (Kessler, 1980). Indeed, all subsequent PAS Annual General Assemblies continued to debate the issue, thereby exacerbating the UMNO–PAS cleavage.[79] As always, Islam, being central to this cleavage, came to the fore again as a result of the implementation of the NEP and PAS's entry into the Barisan. (This decision by PAS to join the Barisan Nasional and the significance of this move to Islam in Malaysia will be pursued in greater detail in Chapter 4.)

For the moment, it is necessary to note that the NEP, too, led to a situation where an increasing number of young Malay intellectuals also found much solace and contentment in Islam. The material benefits that Malays in general had gained since the launching of the NEP became a cause of continuing concern to these young, educated Malays, given the kind of excesses (corruption, nepotism, and extravagant life-style) that some of the rich and powerful Malay élites, beneficiaries of the NEP, exhibited in their daily lives (Syed Hussein Al-Attas, 1975).[80] The reality in front of them—that rich Malays became richer while poorer and small-scale Malay traders continued in their vocations—was a sore point and tended to intensify the 'class' gap between them. As with some PAS members and Muslim youth activists described earlier, Islam seemed to them to offer a solution to redress what they perceived to be their inequitable position despite the NEP. In addition, the endless political squabbles between and within PAS and UMNO for Malay votes denied them a satisfactory model of Islamic leadership. The appeal that Islam seemed to hold began to attract their attention (Kessler, 1980).

Government Policies and Islam

The mobilization of Muslim consciousness in Malay politics, as well as in the Malay search for identity, came not only from the NEP. Apart from its clampdown on student activism which led to a rise in the level of 'Islamicity' of Malay youths, the government itself could be said to have contributed to the relative 'Islamization' of the country in more specific ways. This it did by publicly expressing its support for the development of Islam in the country, as well as by launching policies which were intended to counter PAS charges that it is neglecting Islam.

At the foreign policy level, as explained in the previous chapter, Malaysia's attitude, at least until 1967, was pro-West. There was, however, a slight change in favour of the Muslim nations after the 1969 riots (Muhammad Hussin Mutalib, 1981a; Saravanamuttu, 1983). Perhaps the riots led many Malays to see some similarities between their own situation in the country and the Arab-Palestinian plight. The resultant Malay identity questions, 'Who are we?' and 'Where are we heading?', signalled to the government that the time had come to reassess its foreign policy. Malaysia was among the key initiators of the first-ever 'Islamic Solidarity Conference' held in Morocco in 1969, a few months after the riots.[81] This was after Malaysia's hosting of an international Islamic gathering in Kuala Lumpur in April 1969.[82] The drastic drop in the country's GNP growth from 9 per cent in

1969 to only 5.2 per cent in 1971 also contributed to Malaysia's eagerness to find new overseas markets to uplift Malaysia's economy.[83] In March 1973, in a direct response to the resolutions of the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference (IFMC) held in Libya, Malaysia announced a total ban on trade with Israel and, after the outbreak of the October 1973 Arab–Israeli war and the ensuing oil crisis,[84] Malaysia took the opportunity to again denounce Israel's 'naked aggression and acquisition by force of (Arab-Muslim) territories'.[85] Six months later, at the Non-Aligned Conference in Algeria, the Prime Minister criticized Israel's 'brazen defiance' of international efforts to settle the conflict.[86]

That October war gave Malaysia the opportunity to increase and diversify its trade contacts, particularly with the Middle Eastern Muslim nations. Consequently, Malaysia had to accord greater attention to its foreign policy relations with the Middle East, projecting Malaysia's image as an 'Islamic' nation.[87] This was made even more clear when Malaysia hosted the IFMC in June 1974. In officially opening the conference, Tun Razak called on all Muslim nations to co-operate and co-ordinate their efforts in a wide range of social, economic, and political activities. He also proposed the abolition of visas among Muslim nations and a joint study of the Qur'an and, for the first time, invited the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to attend the conference while at the same time calling Muslim nations to 'declare to the world our solidarity . . . and oppose Israel at all costs'.[88] As mentioned earlier, in an attempt to benefit from the newly acquired international economic influence that these states held, Malaysia sent a ministerial delegation, led by the Prime Minister's Economic Adviser, Raja Mohar Badiozaman, to Saudi Arabia (and Pakistan) in 1974.[89] Although the causal relationship between Malaysia's pro-Muslim foreign policy since 1973 and the country's stable economic growth was difficult to ascertain—since there was an economic boom for the region then—one could hazard a guess at its correlation. After all, during that period, Malaysia registered a healthy 8 per cent rate of annual growth (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 289). The increasing strength secured by Tun Razak after the weakening of the old guard within UMNO, as well as PAS's entry into the Barisan Nasional, were other factors that may have encouraged the newly installed Prime Minister to carve new directions in the country's foreign policy.

Within Malaysia, the same Islamic interest was evident from the early 1970s, though the government's emphasis continued to remain either on the 'symbolic' level or as a response to PAS manoeuvres. These 'symbolic' stances included (from 1969 to 1975) the building of more mosques, the upgrading of the Qur'an international recitation contests (a greater number of countries were invited to participate), daily broadcast of *azan* (the call for prayer) over radio and television, and a high public profile adopted by UMNO leaders in Islamic activities and festivals.[90] In 1969, the government launched the National Council of Islamic Affairs already referred to earlier. In 1971, the Pusat Penyelidekan Islam Malaysia (Islamic Research Centre of Malaysia) was entrusted with the task of co-ordinating research on Islamic matters of interest to the government.[91] In 1974, Tun Razak officially declared open the Pusat Dakwah Islamiah (Islamic

Missionary Foundation) which was aimed at supporting *dakwah* activities.[92] The launching of these institutions was meant to indicate that the government was an ardent supporter of Islam. The Prime Minister even declared in 1972 that 'Islam had guided the actions of the government both in its domestic and international affairs', and that 'the NEP was guided by the Qur'an'.[93]

Of significance here is that, although these declarations and formation of Islamic institutions, as well as government sanctions such as imposing fines on Malays for consuming alcohol and for not fasting during Ramadan, did matter, they merely reinforced the concept of the Muslim-Malay. By this is meant that government policies regarding Islam did not go beyond promoting Islam as a bastion of Malay identity, but were intended to further the interests of the Malays *vis-à-vis* non-Malays. In fact, throughout the first five years following the riots, the government, in its attempt to resolve its dilemma of whether to support the Malay cause on the one hand, or Islam on the other, chose primarily to highlight the Malays as an ethnic community separate from non-Malays (as opposed to the status of Malays as Muslims), rather than assisting them on the grounds of, say, justice and equity. Evidence abounds as to the 'Malayness' of the government's policies.

From 1971 to 1975, the government (in essence, UMNO) officially organized or sanctioned numerous Malay-based cultural activities. In 1971, as a direct response to the Malay National Cultural Congress (Konggres Kebangsaan Kebudayaan Melayu) held a few months earlier, the government initiated the study of Malay culture and even secured a grant of US$70,000 from UNESCO for the various projects associated with it (*Straits Times*, 29 September 1972). Malay traditional arts were revived and popularized at much cost. These include traditional dances (such as *memora*, *wayang siam*, and *Mak Yong*) and music and song (such as *dondang sayang*, *keroncong*, and *ghazal*). In addition, traditional Malay games (like *gasing* and *layang-layang*) and a nation-wide *Dendang Rakyat* (Musical Folk Festival) were launched and accorded extensive media coverage (*Straits Times*, 16 January, 3 November, 11 December 1974). Both Tun Razak and his successor, Hussein Onn, openly supported the resolutions by Malay cultural and literary groups, as well as by at least ten states, to revive Malay *adat* and Malay culture generally (*Straits Times*, 26 and 30 July 1974; 4 June 1976). In 1975, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports sponsored a *wayang kulit* (shadow-play, heavily influenced by Hinduism) performance trip to the United States and Europe (*Straits Times*, 26 September 1974). In 1975, the government sent official representatives all over the world in search of materials (such as books and archival materials) relating to Malay culture (*New Straits Times*, 7 January 1975).

However, although this Malay assertiveness has continued to influence government policy since then, domestic and international events (especially the former) since the mid-1970s have compelled the government to adopt a more supportive and conciliatory position towards the Faith. Widely evident since the mid-1970s, a new organized force appeared on the Malaysian

scene bringing together Malay-Muslim identification in a most powerful way. This was the phenomenon of the *da'wa* (in Malaysia, it is spelt *dakwah*).[94]

1. Compare versions and interpretations from Bedlington (1978), Fletcher (1969), Lee Kuan Yew (1963a), Milne (1966), and Mohamed Noordin Sopiee (1974).

2. The Malay zeal to preserve and protect their position has been a constant feature of the Malay political culture even before the coming of colonialism (illustrated, for instance, in the many stories of Malay revolts against foreign incursions in the *Sejarah Melayu*), and has never wavered much since then. See the thesis of Chandrasekaran Pillay (1974); cf. *Sejarah Melayu* ed. by Shellabear (1982).

3. For information regarding the inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak in the Malaysian federation, as well as on the more recent political development of these states, see Leigh (1974), Milne and Mauzy (1980), Margaret Roff (1974), and Searle (1983).

4. At that time, PAS, with the political mandate to rule Kelantan, refused to abide by the federal government's decision to declare 16 September 1963 a public holiday.

5. In Chapter 1, it was noted how these scholars were, in general, very active in championing both the independence of Malaya and Indonesia, and in expressing their unreserved support for the Islamic reformists in Malaya.

6. The uprising of the Achehnese against colonial powers, for instance, was well known. The Malay craving for religious writings of polemical nature found its satisfaction in the Indonesian Islamic books. Common issues highlighted were Islam and modernization, Islamic contributions to science and human civilization, the meaning of freedom and equality in Islam, and related issues.

7. The present writer remembers attending at least three of his religious talks in Singapore during 1960–2, and all those talks were much publicized and attended by an average of 10,000 people.

8. Some of Hamka's most widely read books are listed in the Bibliography: see the entries listed under 'Hamka'. The author also remembers sifting through these Islamic books from Indonesia at the roadside bookstalls in Singapore in the 1960s.

9. ASAS '50 leaders included MAS, Masuri, Asraf, and Hamzah.

10. The same applies to Malay poetry (Ali bin Ahmad, 1970), Malay short stories (Hashim Awang, 1975), and Malay literature in general (Li, 1967, and Kamaludin Zain, 1975).

11. In refuting the prominence that Malay writers in the 1950s and 1960s gave to Rahim Kajai, Abdullah Munshi, and al-Hadi, Shahnon in fact echoed Naguib al-Attas's contention that apart from Hamzah Fansuri, no Malay writer qualifies as an Islamic writer. See Syed M. Naguib Al-Attas (1972).

12. Arkib Negara, AN: P/JP 2.

13. During the writer's interview with him, the former Prime Minister alleged that Lee Kuan Yew betrayed the trust he had in him, that the PAP would not participate in the Malaysian Federal elections of 1964 against Alliance candidates. (See also Tunku's parliamentary speech on the 'Singapore breakaway' (Department of Information, Kuala Lumpur), 1965.)

14. Despite the attempt by Lee Kuan Yew to project a non-communal image of the Convention, the fact that all but one of the Opposition parties relied heavily on Chinese votes seemed to have alarmed the Malays. See Andaya and Andaya (1982), p. 276, and Mauzy (1983), pp. 31–2.

15. See *UMNO 20 Tahun* (1967), p. 10.

16. Cf. Lee Kuan Yew (1965a), p. 39; Fletcher (1969), which quoted *The Straits Times* of 11 May 1965; and Tunku Abdul Rahman (1978), p. 42.

17. This was again confirmed by Tunku Abdul Rahman during an interview with the author. Cf. George (1973) for a critical assessment of Lee Kuan Yew's leadership.

18. Interview with Tunku: he stated that criticisms of his leadership, though not publicly

expressed, were not new. However, according to him, opposition was stronger than usual when his idea to include Singapore was raised.

19. These 'ultras'—known for their vociferous criticism of the UMNO 'traditional' leadership, particularly that of Tunku Abdul Rahman—included, at that time, Harun Idris, Menteri Besar of Selangor state and UMNO Youth Chief; Syed Jaafar Albar, UMNO Secretary-General; Syed Nasir Ismail, influential Head of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Language and Literary Agency); and Dr Mahathir and Musa Hitam, both Supreme Council members of the party.

20. It was later suggested by the then leader of the Opposition, Dr Tan Chee Khoon, that Dr Ismail resigned not because of ill health as officially claimed, but because of his disappointment that Tunku did not appoint him Foreign Minister. Cf. Saravanamuttu (1983), p. 75. This was reconfirmed during the writer's interview with Dr Tan (Kuala Lumpur, March 1983).

21. When Tun Razak later assumed the Prime Ministership, this issue was one of his foreign policy priorities.

22. It devoted the entire issue to coverage of the matter.

23. Arkib Negara, AN: SP/18/21.

24. A series of discussions were held between Malaysian and Indonesian political and literary figures on this move.

25. The plight of the Malays was further explained in the official government release, *The Second Malaysia Plan*. In describing the decade between 1960 and 1970, it says: 'Indications are that wide gaps in income and living conditions between the traditional sector and the modern sector continued to exist. They arose from differing opportunities for education, employment and ownership of and access to entrepreneurial resources. These differences were accentuated by the concentration of Malays and other indigenous peoples in the low-income activities.' See *Second Malaysia Plan* (1971), p. 15, and *Mid-Term Review of Second Malaysia Plan*.

26. For details of the structures and functions of this MKHUIM, see Arkib Negara, AN: P/PM (UG)4 (1973); this Council comes under the purview of the Prime Minister's Department, and was primarily formed to co-ordinate Islamic activities throughout Malaysia.

27. These include the country's admission as a member of the United Nations' Security Council in 1965, the ending of Indonesia's *Konfrontasi* in 1966, its membership of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) in 1967, and the withdrawal of Western forces from the Far East and the Suez. In addition, Singapore's separation, and Britain's refusal to continue granting military aid to Malaysia, led it to diversify its foreign relations to include even the Communist bloc, thus changing Malaysia's earlier anti-communist posture to one of 'peaceful coexistence'. See Saravanamuttu (1983) and Hazra (1965).

28. The foreign policy orientation of Malaysia has been discussed by Ghazali Shafie (1966), Tilman (1969), Saravanamuttu (1983), Pathmanathan and Lazarus (1984). See also *Malaysia–Arab Relationship: Past and Potential.*

29. *Malaysia–Arab Relationship: Past and Potential*, p. 29.

30. Ibid., p. 34.

31. It was only in the thirteenth year of the competition, in 1973, that a non-Malaysian, Taghi Morowat of Iran, won the first prize: *Straits Times*, 27 September 1973.

32. See, for instance, the reports of this delegation, in *Straits Times* of 29 September and 9 October 1974.

33. Cf. *The New York Times*, 25 May 1970, p. 8.

34. *Malaysia–Arab Relationship: Past and Potential.*

35. Ibid.

36. Despite its high death toll, it is to be noted that the number of deaths in the racial clashes in 1945 was higher.

37. Numerous interpretations have been offered as to what actually caused the riots. See Tunku Abdul Rahman (1969), Bass (1973), Comber (1983), von Vorys (1975), *The May 13 Tragedy: A Report*, Rudner (1970), Gagliano (1970), Goh (1971), Butcher (1982), Parker (1979), and Slimming (1969).

38. In 1964 the Alliance Party won 89 of the 104 seats, PAS 9, PPP 2, SF 2. In 1969, however, the Alliance won 66 seats securing only 48.5 per cent of the popular vote, mainly

because of the heavy losses of its partner, the MCA, which won only 13 of the 33 seats it contested. PAS won 12, PPP 4, while Gerakan and DAP (which failed to win a single seat in 1964) won 8 and 13 seats respectively.

39. The National Operations Council's Report quoted some of these abusive slogans: 'Death to Malays!'; 'Return to Jungle!'; and 'KL now belongs to the Chinese!'. See *The May 13 Tragedy: A Report*, pp. 30–2. Tunku Abdul Rahman (1969) blamed 'communists' for starting the riots.

40. *Foreign Affairs Malaysia* (December 1972), p. 7. More than 10,000 were arrested and thousands lost their homes.

41. For some useful accounts of these sequential developments, see Milne and Mauzy (1980), especially pp. 84–100, and Comber (1983), pp. 63–88.

42. The NOC was composed of 5 ministers, 2 senior bureaucrats, 2 army heads, and the Chief of Police. Unlike the Cabinet, the NOC met frequently: first, daily; and later, twice weekly. For details of the NOC, see Goh Cheng Teik (1971), von Vorys (1975), and Means (1976).

43. Statement by Ghazali Shafie, one of the key figures then, in a talk at the National University of Singapore in 1986, attended by this writer.

44. The communal violence persisted intermittently for two months after 13 May.

45. Public demonstrations in support of the 'ultras', especially by Malay university students, were held from July to September 1970. See Comber (1983) and von Vorys (1975).

46. Information on the objectives and operations of the Department of National Unity were secured during the present writer's interview with the then chairman of the department, Lee Kim Sai (Kuala Lumpur, March 1983).

47. It is important to note that, in order to stress the plurality of religious belief in the country, *Tuhan* (God) was used instead of (the Islamic) *Allah*: see *Rukunegara* (Jabatan Cetak Kerajaan, Kuala Lumpur, 1970).

48. In July 1971, these two Councils were merged into one body, the Majlis Kebangsaan Penasihat Perpaduan (the National Unity Advisory Council). For some of the composition and deliberations of these Councils, refer to *Malaysian Digest* (January to September 1970, July 1971, and December 1972). Interview with Lee Kim Sai. Cf. Gagliano (1970).

49. Details of the objectives of the NEP became available only in June 1971 with the publication of the *Rancangan Malaysia Kedua* (*Second Malaysia Plan*, 1971).

50. As recently as 1966, a study of the plight of rural Malays in Trengganu state, for instance, confirmed this: rapid population growth, high unemployment, problems of land-ownership, and poor irrigation, water, sewerage, and health amenities. Refer *Anggaran perbelanjaan bagi lima tahun pertama, 1966–70* (Trengganu; Penggal I; AN: /PKPNL/T2). Cf. Andaya and Andaya (1982), p. 284; Hasmah Mohd. Ali (Dr Mahathir's wife) (1964).

51. This, however, did not include the plantation sector where the majority of workers were Indians.

52. This point was emphasized in many parts of the *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan, 1971–75*.

53. The Malay original: '*Selagi kedudukan ekonomi yang tidak seimbang dikalangan berbagai kaum tidak diatasi, maka selama itulah sukar diwujudkan perpaduan negara yang kukoh. Beralaskan pendapat ini, kerajaan akan melaksanakan rancangan-rancangan yang akan mewujudkan golongan pengusaha dan perdagangan dikalangan orang-orang Melayu dan bumiputra yang lain . . . dalam semua lapangan ekonomi*' (*Parliamentary Debates*, February 1971, Kuala Lumpur, pp. 19–22).

54. Ibid., pp. 50–3. The Malay text: '*Perpaduan negara tidak akan tercapai tanpa keadilan dan perseimbangan antara rakyat berbilang kaum Malaysia mengenai sumbangan mereka dalam pembangunan negara dan pembahagian secara saksama rancangan modenisasi negara. . . . Orang Melayu dan lain-lain rakyat bumiputra mestilah mengambil bahagian dalam sektor moden ekonomi negara bukan hanya sebagai pekerja biasa. . . .*'

55. In 1971, the 1968 Investment Incentives Act (commonly known as the Labour Utilization Relief) was extended to cover the period of exemption from corporate tax for any firm employing a certain number of Malay workers.

56. FELDA: Federal Land Development Authority; MAJUIKAN: Fisheries Development Unit; MIEL: Malaysian Industrial-Engineering Limited; FIMA: Food Industries of

Malaysia; RIDA: Rural Industrial Development Authority; PERNAS: Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (National Corporation Limited); CGC: Credit Guarantee Corporation; UDA: Urban Development Authority; SEDC: State Economic Development Corporation; MIDF: Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Ltd.; FIDA: Federal Industrial Development Authority; MARA: Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Council of Trust for Indigenous Peoples).

57. FELDA's importance in these rural development projects, too, cannot be underrated. Not only was it the largest land developer in the country, its activities were wide and diverse; by 1973, it was already the largest exporter of palm oil in the world. See MacAndrews (1977), pp. 61–74; Rudner (1979); Ishak Sha'ari (1979); Beaglehole (1969), pp. 216–45; Tham (1973).

58. If the NEP succeeds in achieving the 30 per cent Malay proportion by its target date of 1990 (though it is now publicly stated that the target is not likely to be reached), the Malay socio-economic status will be on par with other ethnic groups; this might perhaps even alarm them. The projected figures for Malay employment alone speak for themselves:

Sector	*1970*	*1990*
Mining and quarrying	24.8%	50.3%
Manufacturing	28.9%	50.0%
Construction	21.6%	50.0%
Commerce	23.5%	48.0%
Administrative and Managerial jobs	22.4%	49.3%

Across the board, while Malay figures go up, the Chinese share will go down to a maximum of 40 per cent for all types of jobs. See *Third Malaysia Plan, 1976–1980*, pp. 182 and 187, and *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971–1975*, p. 79, for details. Interestingly, however, it was argued by a scholar that only 3 per cent of *bumiputra* would benefit from the restructuring of the society because half of the Malay population are poor and a mere 7.6 per cent of *bumiputra* holdings of equities were bought by *bumiputra* individuals; the larger share was taken up by trust agencies. See Jomo (1985), pp. 86–7.

59. 'Laporan Jawatankuasa Majlis Gerakan Negara, mengkaji kehidupan penuntut-penuntut dikampus Universiti Malaya' (Kuala Lumpur, 1971): NA: P/PM (PA), especially pp. 35–6; Bock (1970). In 1970, Malays constituted 50.8 per cent of the total population in Peninsular Malaysia (Population and Housing Census, Statistics Department, Kuala Lumpur, 1972).

60. 'Pelajaran adalah faktor penting bagi menjamin kekukuhan dan perpaduan negara . . . kerajaan akan melaksanakan dengan tegas Dasar Pelajaran Kebangsaan' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 1971, p. 22: AN/P/P (DN) 1).

61. Ibid., pp. 43–4. (The quotation was in English.) For a general discussion on the subject, see Emerson (1937); Loh Fook Seng (1974); Tham (1979); Mohamed Yusoff R. (1960).

62. Prime Minister's Message, *Second Malaysia Plan*, p. 44.

63. Although the implementation of these issues can be queried in Parliament, its principles are beyond debate.

64. *Constitutional Amendment Bill* (1970) (*Parliamentary Debates*, 1970, Kuala Lumpur, Pejabat Percetakan Negara, 1970).

65. *Educational Statistics of Malaysia* (Ministry of Education, 1974–5), p. 12. Cf. Chai (1977), David Lim (1973 and 1983).

66. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's increase from 1970, was a 1,300 per cent jump. (In 1970, its total enrolment was only 191.) See also *Second Malaysia Plan*, p. 234, and *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan* (1973), p. 387.

67. Some of these agencies include PETRONAS, the national oil company, and MARA, and all the Malay-based banks. See *Second Malaysia Plan* for details, especially p. 350 onwards. The amount of loss in foreign exchange incurred in the maintenance of overseas government institutions was quite considerable: in 1975, the expenditure for staff salaries and student welfare alone amounted to M$45,428,950 million. See *Education Statistics 1974–75* (Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Education).

68. To indicate that the government means business in legalizing the Act, it warns potential

violaters in no uncertain terms that it will have no compunction in dealing mercilessly with those who chose to go against it. In fact, some politicians have been arrested since then, such as Lim Kit Siang and Fan Yew Teng. See, for instance, *Malaysian Digest*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (15 March 1971), p. 1.

69. Discussions with Anwar Ibrahim and Kamarudin Nor (Kuala Lumpur, 1983); the former was the president of PKPIM at that time.

70. During a meeting with the present writer, Anwar acknowledged the significance of this regional–international factor in the formation of ABIM. Cf. AN: AP/139.

71. ABIM's pamphlet: see *Persatuan Islam Setanah Melayu (PAS)*.

72. Interviews with Kamarudin Nor, Vice-President, and Kamarudin Jaafar, Secretary-General (Kuala Lumpur, 1981 and 1983).

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.; cf. *Watan*, 5 August 1978, p. 6.

75. Interview with Mohamed Zakaria (Director, International Relations, Darul Arqam, Kuala Lumpur, 1983). Darul Arqam will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

76. This revulsion was highlighted in several issues of the bulletins published by these students. See *Majlis Shura Muslimin* (UK), Vol. 2, No. 3 (1983), and *Salam* (Australia), February 1981.

77. The writer's observation of the activities of the MSAs in Australia confirmed the Islamic commitment of the Malays in the MSAs. Cf. Barraclough (1983), Kessler (1980), Funston (1981), and Lyon (1977).

78. Because of its sensitivity, written evidence is scanty. The writer, however, was told of this in interviews with PAS stalwarts such as Yusuf Rawa and Mustapha Ali (Sydney, October 1982).

79. These were the writer's findings after talking to PAS leaders, Yusuf Rawa and Ustadz Hadi (1982) and PAS members in Kuala Lumpur and Trengganu, in the course of two field research trips there, in 1981 and 1985. See also 'Siapakah pemecah perpaduan Melayu dan Islam?' (Barisan Nasional HQ, KL; AN: /AGP/7/F). As a result of the move to join Barisan Nasional, as expected, PAS leaders were made ministers, parliamentary secretaries, and ambassadors, and sat in numerous government and quasi-government agencies.

80. Cf. his other (1968 and 1979) articles on Malaysian leadership, and corruption in general.

81. A more 'independent' source for this claim was unavailable to support the alleged proposal by Tun Razak himself. See 'Selayang Pandang Dasar Luar Malaysia' (A glimpse of Malaysia's foreign policy) (Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Information, 1974).

82. *Lima Tahun PPIM, 1974–1979* (Kuala Lumpur, Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 1980).

83. *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (December 1972), p. 7.

84. The fivefold increase in oil prices by OPEC caught the Western powers and their allies by surprise. Their own vulnerability to, and dependence on, oil led them drastically to modify their foreign policy postures in response to the threat of Arab oil embargoes. See Tietzel and Melcher (1975) and Tietzel (1976).

85. *Straits Times*, 21 November 1973, and *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (March 1973), p. 59.

86. *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 1973), p. 16.

87. Two other major Malaysian foreign policy moves must be mentioned here: firstly, the 'neutralization of Southeast Asia' in 1971 and the normalization of relations with the Peoples Republic of China (and its one-China policy), in 1974. See, for instance, Funston (1980), p. 276, and Ghazali Shafie (1971b).

88. Tun Razak's speech on 25 June 1974 (Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Information press release).

89. Arkib Negara, AN P/KPP4 1974.

90. Johore and Negri Sembilan were among the states that pursued these matters vigorously.

91. Interviews with Secretary-General of MKHUIM (1983) and Director of PPIM (1983). See also *Lima Tahun PPIM, 1974–1979*.

92. *Kemajuan Islam di Malaysia* (Official booklet published by Information Ministry, Kuala Lumpur, 1978, and AN: P/PEN 8; *New Straits Times*, 18 and 26 January 1974.

93. *Malaysian Digest*, 4 September 1972, pp. 2–3; and AN P/PEN 10, 1973; *Straits Times*, 26 October 1972.

94. An Arabic noun which means 'call' or 'propagation'. In its derivative forms, it appears several times in Al-Qur'an, for instance, in Surah Al-i-Imran, III, verse 104: 'Let there arise among you a community, *umma*, inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity.'

3
Islamic Reassertion, Ethnicity, and Politics: A Case Study of ABIM, Darul Arqam, and Perkim

THE many events and radical changes unleashed by the Muslim-dominated countries in the Middle East in particular, and in the world-wide Muslim *umma* in general, since the 1970s, had some impact on Islam in Malaysia. The most notable of these events were the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Soviet invasion of predominantly Muslim Afghanistan, and the political and economic leverage that the Muslim nations in the Middle East exerted in international politics as a result of the oil crisis. In a way, these events had a catalytic effect—they led to a similar rejuvenation of the Islamic ethos in Malaysian politics since the later part of the 1970s. The reassertiveness or revivalism of Islam in the politics of Malaysia, however, was also due, in no small measure, to domestic events occurring in the country itself throughout that decade, because these later events led to the mobilization and politicization of Muslim consciousness there on a scale never witnessed in recent decades. A major manifestation of this heightened Muslim consciousness was the activities of Muslim organizations, commonly known as *dakwah* organizations.

The Dakwah Phenomenon in Malaysia

By that time, it became increasingly unthinkable for Malays, especially the educated, to distance themselves from Islam. It would appear that the Faith assumed the role of a rallying force in confronting the vicissitudes of life. Since then, indications of this increasing, activist form of Islamic inclination have become discernible to even the casual observer. At the general level, a large number of Malays have returned to the *masjid* and *surau* for prayers and Islamic lessons, and taken to wearing the *purdah* (head-dress and veil), *mini-telekong* (mini veil), *serban* ('turban'), and other forms of clothing clearly associated with a Muslim identity. There has been the penchant for the Islamic form of greeting and concern for *halal* food. A more qualitative development has been a noticeable interest in internalizing and practising Islamic teachings by educated Malays, evident from their participation in Islamic talks, seminars, and forums. Perhaps

the quintessence, or the most typical indicator of this rise in Muslim consciousness, has been the intensification and influence of the *dakwah* phenomenon as demonstrated in the activities of *dakwah* organizations like ABIM, Darul Arqam, Jama'at Tabligh, and Perkim.

As a religious and political concept, the significance of *dakwah* cannot be underestimated. *Dakwah*, in the context of Malaysia, more often than not refers to the activities and organizations connected with Muslim 'missionary' activity (Lyon, 1977; Nagata, 1984: 243), but those focusing more on Muslims themselves than on non-Muslims. A more general and wider meaning of the term implies the invitation to people (both Muslims and non-Muslims) to practise God's commandments, though defined and interpreted from the Muslim point of view. Hence, *dakwah* is the propagation of the Islamic message and call on Muslims to upgrade their Islamicity. This author's field-work in many states within Peninsular Malaysia, such as in Selangor, Kelantan, the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, and Johore, confirmed not only the complexity of this phenomenon, but its salience among the Malay community.

Dakwah, however, is neither a monolithic nor unilinear activity. There are three main types of *dakwah* activities in Malaysia: those that are loosely organized and operate within members' homes and are aimed primarily at self-education; those which are more formal or structured, and bent on propagating the Islamic message to others; and those which combine the traits of the above two categories. It is the last category which has been most commonly identified by scholars such as Nagata (1984), Mohamed Abu Bakar (1981), Chandra Muzaffar (1987), and von der Mehden (1980) with the *dakwah* phenomenon in Malaysia and whose orientation and general activities have much political significance. Three of the largest of these organizations are ABIM, Darul Arqam, and Perkim.

Although there have been numerous writings on Malaysian Islam in general (this includes the present writer's MA dissertation on 'Resurgent Islam and Ethnic Relations in Malaysia' in 1981), the literature on *dakwah* in Malaysia is scarce. The only detailed study has been by Judith Nagata in 1984 entitled *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam*. This was followed by shorter monographs by Chandra Muzaffar (1987) and Zainah Anwar (1987) centring on the issue of 'Islamic revivalism'. Chandra Muzaffar's study argued, in the main, the ethnic, non-universalist trend of the Islamization process there, whereas Zainah Anwar highlighted the role of students in such a process. Shorter articles have been written by Kessler (1980), Lyon (1977), Mohamed Abu Bakar (1980 and 1981), Sharon Siddique (1980), and von der Mehden (1980). Their preoccupation seems to be with two main aspects of the *dakwah* phenomenon, namely an explanation of the causes of the 'revival' and the implications of such a revival on Malaysian society. The causes or origins of *dakwah* were neither accidental nor fortuitous. Nagata has attributed them to the strains and stresses in Malay political culture of the earlier years, and Kessler has rationalized it through a class explanation. Insofar as what *dakwah* means to Malaysian society, Nagata (in both her 1982 and 1984 writings) has two main conclusions. First, the *dakwah* phenomenon is urban-based, and secondly, it creates

problems of legitimacy for the traditional Malay élites (for instance, the *ulama*) in the rural areas. Similarly, all the other writers have argued that *dakwah* activities are centred in the cities. Mohamed Abu Bakar in his 1981 article also drew attention to another problem which might arise as a result of the *dakwah* phenomenon: the issue of national integration in a plural society like Malaysia, where the proportions of Muslims and non-Muslims are about equal.

ABIM

Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, was only officially approved as a registered organization by the Malaysian government in 1971 although it had been launched in 1969. ABIM was formed to defend and propagate the message of Islam, especially its comprehensiveness (*al-din*), universal and humanistic content, and its feasibility in resolving issues of nation-building.

Organizational Structure, Leadership, and Activities

Structurally, ABIM's policy-making body is composed of a President, his two Deputies, a Secretary-General, Treasurer, and other executive members who are usually heads of sections such as Education, Publications, and Women's Affairs (ABIM Constitution, 1979). Its decision-making machinery operates by means of *shura*, a method of constant consultation and counselling made obligatory upon leaders in Islam by Qur'anic injunction.[1] Although all its major policies are decided upon by the Executive Committee, the post of the President is the most important. Within ABIM much trust and support is accorded to the President, since it is an Islamic rule to obey the leader so long as he obeys Allah and the practices (Sunnah) of Prophet Muhammad.[2] In practice, too, from the writer's discussions with ABIM leaders and members, it seems that this rule, particularly since 1976, helped to promote the image of its first President, Anwar Ibrahim, whose personal appeal—arising from his oratory, personality, and ability to articulate issues—was his strongest point.

It is plausible to argue here that Anwar Ibrahim's overall motivations and general orientations tended to oscillate between two strands: Islam on the one side and Malay radicalism on the other. In some ways, he was a leader who tried to fuse and integrate the two factors of the dialectic. Perhaps, this dual, albeit contradictory, image has to do with the particular political environment of the time, dictated by the immediate aftermath of the 1969 ethnic riots—the upsurge of Malay ethnic consciousness. Thus, on the one hand, it would have made sense, politically, for Anwar to broach and drum up Malay ethnic sentiments to fit himself within that particular consciousness. On the other hand, when occasions have demanded that he be less bothered with Malay communal sentiments but instead act as an Islamic leader, he has not hesitated to do so. This was precisely what he did upon his return to ABIM to resume the presidency in 1976. Reiterating

his commitment to continue his struggle for the Islamic cause, he publicly vowed:

> . . . to arouse the awareness of the public, to return their dignity wrested by a leadership which was negligent, materialistic, and one which, because of its ignorance of Islam, distorted the Islamic image. As an insignificant being, I want to revive this true Islamic spirit. The masses must free themselves from being enslaved by narrow chauvinism and materialism. They must revive the Islamic spirit which is essential for any meaningful change to take place in this country. In Malaysia . . . we cannot afford to be prisoners to narrow chauvinism, greedy in the pursuance of wealth or pride and aloof in implementing any policy.[3]

The boldness of such remarks (seen against the traditional Malay loyalty to their leaders) indicates Anwar's influence on the ideological orientation and policies of ABIM. His contribution was obviously important to the development of the Islamic factor in the Malay identity search in Malaysia. His credibility as an Islamic leader, however, was a hard-won victory after a gradual struggle. The fact that ABIM's leadership, at least in principle, was a collective one (*qiyadah jamiyah*) which consisted of people with better religious credentials than he, was a major constraint to his legitimacy as an Islamic leader. The lack of a formal religious education and an earlier involvement in championing Malay ethnic interests (as distinct from Islamic) were other limitations. In this latter regard, he was instrumental in the launching of the Gerakan Kesedaran Kebangsaan (National Consciousness Movement) in 1968 and Yayasan Anda, a Malay educational institute, in 1971, meant to assist particularly the poor and less fortunate Malay students and youths.

Of all the other members of the ABIM Majlis Shura, Siddiq Fadhil's role as Anwar's successor warrants brief mention here. Being Anwar's deputy until his formal elevation to the presidency in 1983, Siddiq was an equally capable leader in his own right, although, for some years, he was overshadowed by Anwar. Through Anwar's persuasion, Siddiq, a neighbour of Anwar, joined ABIM in 1974 as its Information Head.[4]

There are some differences of style between these two ABIM leaders, perhaps due to their different educational background. Siddiq Fadhil benefited from his exposure to both secular and religious education as well as from his position as an academic member of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, having joined the university upon graduation. His main strength lies in his knowledge of Islam and his proficiency in Arabic, qualities which Anwar Ibrahim could not match. Although Siddiq, like most ABIM leaders including Anwar, is not readily accepted as an *'alim* by the older generation of Malays and those from the rural areas, his regular and deliberate resort to quotations from the Qur'an and Sunnah in his speeches has tended to promote his image as a leader in the eyes of many Muslims. As head of an organization which claims to spread the Islamic message, these constant references to the two most authoritative sources of Islamic *shar'iah* accorded him increasing credibility as a leader.

From Siddiq's many writings and speeches since becoming President and this writer's interviews with him, it is possible to fathom his thoughts and priorities. He has adopted a discerning and uncompromising stand

against nationalist and secularist tendencies and has displayed a determination to make Islam the governing norm in the country. In him one sees a strategist, a planner, and a man who values highly the principles of wisdom (*hikmah*), discipline, and organization. To him, not only are these qualities the basic prerequisites to any Islamic activity; they are also well enshrined in the Qur'an and Sunnah and practised successfully by all prophets (Siddiq Fadhil, 1977a: 67–77).[5] He has also taken time to emphasize the distinction between *mehnah* and *bencana*, between failure which is fated and predetermined by God and failure which is due to a movement's own faults.[6] Some of his main philosophical beliefs, particularly his contention that the political role of ABIM is as a force for change, were contained in a policy speech on the occasion of ABIM's Annual General Meeting (*Muktamar Senawi*) in December 1984:

> A serious *dakwah* movement is not only a mere additional actor in history, but a force, an historical force which is capable of acting as agents of change . . . pointing to the direction such a change should take place. . . . The role of an Islamic worker is to convey what is right and what is wrong to society even though its message is not welcomed (Siddiq Fadhil, 1984: 2–3).[7]

Siddiq's grip on the ABIM leadership has been further reinforced by the fact that his wife, Siti Zulaika, was the head of ABIM's Women's wing, Seksi Wanita, until 1984, when she relinquished it to concentrate on her Ph.D. studies. Also a lecturer in the same university as her husband (Islamic Law Faculty), she holds an MA degree from the Law Faculty of the University of Malaya. Her courage in openly criticizing the Malaysian government's policies is also known in Muslim circles in the country.[8] So, too, is her conviction—and that of ABIM's leadership in general—that, despite the encouragement that Islam accords to Muslim women to be fully employed and educated, these must not be pursued at the expense of their primary roles as wives and mothers (Nagata, 1984: 99).

Although it would be too simplistic to attribute ABIM's success solely to its presidents, their impact upon the movement has been, none the less, great. It was these presidents, as forceful personalities, who helped push for the strengthening of the Islamic ethos in contemporary Malaysia. However, the influence of Anwar Ibrahim and Siddiq Fadhil is also attributable to the complementary role played by other Majlis Shura members; they include Ustadz Ghani Shamsudin, Kamarudin Nor, and Kamarudin Jaafar, at that time the Deputy President, Vice-President, and Secretary-General respectively.[9] In addition, the size (about 40,000 members), youth, and diversity of its membership are also continuing sources of strength for the organization. By 1985, the organization had about 100 branches.

From ABIM's publications and its official newsletter, *Risalah*, one is able to distinguish the movement's *modus operandi*. These cover the principal message contained in the Qur'anic verse (Al-i-Imran, 'Chapter' III, 'verse' 104), which calls for good and righteous deeds and warns against evil and falsehood in all fields of human endeavour. It is thus understandable that ABIM's policies reflect this Qur'anic call. ABIM also emphasizes the beauty, practicality, simplicity, and relevance of Islam to the daily

lives of Muslims in particular. Fully realizing the country's multiracial and multireligious mix, ABIM promises to take quick action 'in expressing its dissatisfaction whenever there is any irrational act or intolerance towards other religions or whenever there is injustice in general'.[10] This point of policy was reiterated by other ABIM leaders in the organization's Islamic training camps.

Obviously this is sometimes easier said than done, given the difficulty of such a stance in a multi-ethnic and multireligious Malaysia. As a matter of fact, ABIM has not been very successful in this area of wooing non-Muslims to its cause. Other than two reasonably noticeable attempts on its part to gain non-Malay (non-Muslim) support—namely, in 1979 and 1981, when ABIM devoted its annual convention to discussing the issue of 'Islam and Multi-racialism' and spearheaded the 'Anti-Societies Act' public demonstration respectively—ABIM's target-group does not seem to include non-Malays, let alone non-Muslims. This has probably to do with both the nature of ABIM's organizational structure and areas of emphasis, as well as the stark reality of Malaysia's ethnic-based politics. Not only are the majority of ABIM's members Malays—in a discussion with the author, Kamarudin Nor stated that '95% of our members are Malays'[11]—the Majlis Shura is conspicuously Malay-led with only a few non-Malay (Arab and Indian) leaders given key responsibilities and portfolios in the leadership hierarchy. Furthermore, for the organization to branch out towards an active involvement in non-Muslim affairs would entail the readiness of ABIM's (Malay) members to engage in dialogues with the non-Muslims confidently, as well as a similar readiness on the part of the non-Muslim public to be convinced of ABIM's non-racial image. As it is, on both these issues, that readiness is lacking.

The organization has made its mark, especially among Muslims in the country, since 1974. This progression can perhaps be explained as follows. First, in the wake of PAS's unexpected entry into the government's Barisan Nasional coalition in 1974, there were very few Islamic organizations capable of filling PAS's traditional role, that is, as a watchdog and critic of government policies in general and as the 'conscience' of the Muslims in the country. This gave ABIM a rare opportunity to assume the role of an opposition, especially in defending the interests of the Islamic religion and Muslims in Malaysia. This opportunity was capitalized on by ABIM much to its benefit. Secondly, the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim in 1974, rather than paralysing the movement as many members had initially feared, instead attracted much wider public support, including that of overseas Islamic organizations.

Instead of weakening its morale, the leadership, following Anwar's arrest, mapped out its strategy and immediately launched a vigorous campaign aimed not only at boosting the confidence of its members but also securing the sympathy and support of the Malay masses. *Usrah* or Islamic discussion groups were intensified among members. Beginning from 1975, on the occasion of its fourth annual general meeting, ABIM unveiled a comprehensive programme to bring about an Islamic order, argued by the leadership to be the only alternative towards resolving the many ills affecting

Malaysian society.[12] The organization called for the full implementation of the *shar'iah Islam* (Islamic law) in the country, and decided to upgrade its activities to a cause-centred Islamic organization (*harakah*), with well laid-out and co-ordinated training programmes for its members. Through its subsequent rigour in responding to any government policy which it found contrary to Islamic justice and Islam in general, ABIM has made it clear that it wants to move away from the traditional practice of many Malays who regard religion and politics as separate entities. The impact of all these activities and discourses is that the Malay search for identity took on a greater Islamic emphasis or shape.

Relations with the International Umma

One reason for ABIM's prominence and vanguard position among Muslim organizations would seem to be its stand on issues affecting Muslims wherever they are. This stand is as clear as it is forceful, evident in a recent ABIM pamphlet:

> In line with the teachings of Al-Qur'an for us to uphold the unity of the followers of Muhammad on the principles of *ukhuwwah Islamiah* (Islamic brotherhood), ABIM asserts that the fate of the Muslim community of this country cannot be separated from those of brother Muslims the world over. As such there must exist close co-operation and association based on Islamic principles in solving problems in every field of development encountered by brother Muslims everywhere. ABIM views the suppression and cruelty done into [*sic*] Muslim minorities as unpardonable acts meant to weaken and destroy the Muslim community, as well as contrary to the Declaration of the United Nations on fundamental Human Rights. ABIM fully supports the struggle of Muslims all over the world to achieve justice and the freedom to practise the Islamic way of life.[13]

Essentially, then, to ABIM, all Muslims in the world are 'part and parcel of one single community' (*Salam*, 1981: 5). Officially, by 1980, the movement had established links with a total of 24 Muslim organizations overseas.[14] Some of these are well-known organizations: Jama'at-i-Islami in Pakistan and India (formerly led by Abul ala Maududi); al-Ikhwanul Muslimun in Egypt and other Arab countries (originally founded by Hasan al-Banna); and the Muhammadiah and, particularly, the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI), both from Indonesia. The relationship with these overseas Islamic organizations has been expressed in at least four ways: first, ABIM's support for their causes; secondly, ABIM's denunciation of the policies of any government directed against these organizations; thirdly, adopting some of their educational (*tarbiyah*) programmes and methodologies (*manhaj*) of *dakwah* work; and, finally, ABIM's participation in numerous international Islamic seminars and gatherings.

Provision of evidence is necessary here to justify the above observations. Let us take the example of ABIM–HMI relations. As indicated in Chapter 2, the HMI was largely instrumental in the formation of ABIM, given the close rapport that had existed between leaders of both the HMI and the PKPIM, which was the predecessor of ABIM. The HMI and PKPIM have served as feeder organizations to bigger, mass-based organizations

like ABIM in Malaysia and the Muhammadiah and Nahdatul Ulama in Indonesia.[15] One major area of co-operation between ABIM and the HMI comes in the form of participation in each other's seminars and conferences. In 1983, for instance, Siddiq Fadhil presented a paper at the HMI Conference in Medan, and other ABIM leaders have attended training programmes in Jakarta and Bandung, the latter an important centre of Islamic revivalism among Indonesian students.[16]

Indications of ABIM's concern at the plight of the *umma* in general are also not difficult to find. One such ongoing concern has been the issue of the Palestinians. Since the mid-1970s, when the issue was very topical, the organization has demonstrated its support for the PLO but this was not widely known because circulation of its official Malay newsletter, *Risalah*, was limited to members only from 1975 to 1981. None the less, support for the PLO was conveyed through training camps organized by ABIM or its participation in public seminars.[17] In 1979, its English newsletter, *Perspective*, was launched, and on the occasion of the (annual) 'International Solidarity Day with the Struggle for Palestine' in November of the same year, ABIM issued strong denunciations of Israel and reiterated its 'firm support for the struggle to re-establish Palestine and liberate Al-Quds from the Zionist hold' (*Perspective*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1979: 1). A fund-raising appeal led by ABIM in 1981 netted M$170,000; this was handed over to the PLO representative in Kuala Lumpur (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 7, Nos. 3 and 4: 7; *Berita Harian*, 15 August 1982). Although the PLO can hardly be described as an Islamic movement, the Islamic dimension of its struggle appeals to many Muslims in Malaysia since that struggle involves the plight of a people who are in the main Muslims.

In similar vein, ABIM's leaders and members have not only pledged their unequivocal support for the Afghan *mujahideen* against the Soviet-installed regime but have also donated M$50,000 as a token of its support for the *mujahideen* struggle (*Perspective*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1979: 1; Morais, 1983: 15). Carrying banners and marching to the Soviet Embassy in Kuala Lumpur in 1979, ABIM leaders denounced 'the blatant act of direct aggression against the Muslim people of Afghanistan' (*Perspective*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1980: 1). In a rally in 1981 attended by some 6,000 people, Anwar Ibrahim called for 'a more aggressive and protracted struggle against all Soviet interests until final victory is achieved and the rule of oppression and violence destroyed' (*Perspective*, Vol. 1, No. 7, 1981). The Soviet Union was not the only superpower criticized. The United States was likewise attacked by ABIM for its complicity and collaboration with Israel on the Palestinian issue. Subsequently, ABIM launched a national campaign calling on all Malaysians to boycott American goods in the country (*Utusan Malaysia*, 23 September 1982).

Of all its dealings with and general concern for the Muslim *umma*, something should be said about ABIM's links with the Islamic Republic of Iran. This Iranian dimension is most sensitive in Malaysia given the government's fears of the spread of revolutionary fervour in the light of the inspiration that PAS has received from the revolution as was acknowledged by the Party President (*Straits Times*, 4 January 1983). Given its dilemma in wanting to

avoid antagonizing both the Islamic Republic and the Malaysian government (and non-Muslims in Malaysia), ABIM has adopted a cautious position with regards to Iran—again, symptomatic of the tension that characterizes the Malay–Islam and the Muslim–non-Muslim relationship. On the one hand, ABIM has expressed its general support for the Islamic revolution there, particularly soon after its success, while on the other, it was quick to criticize the alleged excesses and shortcomings of that revolution in the mid-1980s.[18]

The dilemma that ABIM faces in its attitude to Iran may perhaps be better understood if both the political and ideological ramifications that such a relationship entails were referred to. First is the divided opinion within the ABIM leadership itself on the degree of support that the organization should accord to Iran; the pro-PAS group within ABIM's leadership[19] and the rank and file in general, if they could have their way, would like to declare their sympathies for the Islamic Republic more openly, but for the moment, they cannot, as they are not in full control. Second is the different *mazhab* (schools of thought) followed in the two countries; for ABIM and for Malaysian Malays in general, the one that is practised is the Shafi'i (Sunni) *mazhab* whereas the majority of Iranian Muslims uphold the Ja'fari (Shi'a) *mazhab*. Thirdly, if ABIM is dubbed as pro-Iran, the Malaysian government may be tempted to brand ABIM as a violent, revolutionary organization planning to topple it through non-democratic means, a tactic sometimes used against PAS. Under these circumstances, it becomes understandable that ABIM was quick to declare that it had not invited a single Iranian to Malaysia—'they came on their own and their visas were issued by the government'.[20] Since the late 1980s, ABIM's position has been, in the words of its President, a 'wait-and-see' one. In a meeting with this writer, Siddiq Fadhil insisted that, unlike its strong support for the Islamic revolution in the 1979–80 period, ABIM is no longer prepared to support Iran blindly.

On the domestic front, too, although there has been some co-operation with the government, ABIM has often been quite critical of the government on a variety of issues and has pressured the government to implement Islamic-oriented policies in all fields (*Salam*, 1981: 49; *Dewan Masyarakat*, 1976). In economics, for instance, it has called for strict adherence to the Qur'anic system 'since it places morality as the basic determining factor and man as the trustee of all wealth a nation has, to be utilised for the social well-being'.[21] Casting doubts on the philosophical thrust of the government's NEP, the organization has called for a non-racial approach to solve Malaysia's perennial problem of economic disequilibrium among the country's multiracial polity. In an interview with this writer, Kamarudin Nor said that to ABIM, the NEP tended to breed nepotism and favouritism, and hence is un-Islamic in its implementation. The ABIM thinking is that if the Malays and *bumiputra* in general are to be assisted, it must be done on the grounds of justice, and not because they are the 'rightful owners of the land'; additional government assistance is due to them to help them recover from their economic plight after decades of neglect or inattentiveness on the part of colonial officials.[22] This approach obviously differs

from that generally adopted by other Malay-based parties and organizations which saw in the NEP an issue of Malay right, *vis-à-vis* non-Malays.

On legal questions, ABIM has argued that 'Islamic law must replace the Western-based laws now in operation, as only the laws of Allah can create justice and world peace', and that an 'Islamic State' is the only state that can ensure a genuine multiracial society.[23] The concept of the 'Islamic State' has received much attention since the Islamic revolution in Iran and much has been written about it, by both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars such as Maududi (1964), Khurshid Ahmad (1982), Sayyid Qutb (1974), Pipes (1981), Jansen (1979), and Esposito (1983). The concept refers to the Islamic political order established by Muslim political leaders, and guided by Islamic principles and injunctions, the *Shar'iah*. The main sources of law and morality of the state come from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and *ijma* (consensus of Muslim scholars and jurists). Unlike the Western democratic system, for instance, in the Islamic State, sovereignty belongs to God; there is no separation between religion and politics; human beings are equal in the eyes of the law and justice must prevail at all times; every believer is a vicegerent of God and no one can escape accountability in God's eyes; governance or the exercise of leadership is by the *ulama* and through consultation and consensus (*shura*); and legitimacy is derived through adherence to the *shar'iah*.

ABIM's support for the 'Islamic State' and Islamic laws has been a matter of policy. This was not only made obvious to the present writer in his discussions with all the key figures in the leadership, such as Anwar Ibrahim, Siddiq Fadhil, Ghani Shamsudin, Kamarudin Nor, and Kamarudin Jaafar, but was propagated by ABIM as and when it was expected or requested to make its position known on the above issue. There were at least four occasions when ABIM came out strongly with statements defending and rationalizing the issues of the 'Islamic State' and the *shar'iah*. Two such occasions were the training camps which the writer attended in Melbourne and Sydney where ABIM leaders were guest speakers, the third was the Islamic cadre course in Kuala Lumpur in 1983 (Latihan perkaderan Islam), and the final one was the keynote address of the ABIM President in 1984 at its Annual Convention or *Muktamar*.

In spite of its belief in and commitment to the idea of an Islamic state, ABIM does not seem to place high hopes of seeing its implementation, in view of the ignorance of the majority of Malaysians of the idea of the 'Islamic State', and the salience of ethnic-based politics in the country as well as the unpreparedness on the part of the government to venture into a radically different political experiment. Furthermore, ABIM recognizes the pervading secular culture of the country's socio-economic and political systems. In discussions with Anwar Ibrahim and Kamarudin Nor on separate occasions, it was impressed upon this writer that since the concept of the Islamic State, especially its principles of justice and equity, was not sufficiently understood by non-Malays, and many Malays too, ABIM would rather not raise the issue publicly at the slightest prompting from others for fear of further confusing the people. Discussions on the issue were limited to closed and serious gatherings like seminars, training camps, and meetings,

as mentioned above. The adoption of this cautious approach further confirms the existence of tension in the Islam–Malay relationship in the Malay psyche and identity.

Relations with the Government

Much of the respect that ABIM attracts from the Malay–Muslim public, such as support for its public rallies and the increase in the organization's membership figures, may also be due to its courage in publicly criticizing the government, a practice not generally adopted by any other Muslim organization in Malaysia. Using its newsletter, *Risalah* (which has the subtitle 'In the defence of Truth and Justice') as its main medium, in 1981, ABIM denounced the government as 'un-Islamic' (*Risalah*, Vols. 1 and 2, 1981),[24] claiming that corruption, misuse of political power, exploitation of workers, and other practices repugnant to Islamic justice were rife among the élite.[25] ABIM charged that the Internal Security Act (ISA) and, later, the Societies Act Bill (1981) were against principles of human justice and equality (*Risalah*, Vols. 1 and 2, 1981),[26] and called for the ISA articles in the Constitution to be expunged. ABIM also believes that the government's nationalist-secularist approach towards nation-building cannot solve the country's communal problems. Only an 'Islamic one'—defined by ABIM as one based on justice for all people—could do so.[27] In addition, the organization repudiated the criticisms by some UMNO Cabinet members on Muslim extremist activities by saying that such criticisms arose out of the government's anti-*dakwah* stand and its sheer ignorance of such activities (Anwar Ibrahim, 1981b: 3). In 1983, again through *Risalah*, ABIM was one of the few organizations in the country which criticized, perhaps out of misinterpretation, the government's much publicized 'Look East' policy, saying that the government's concern should be with Islamization, not 'Japanization'.[28] In February 1984, amidst the accolades given by the government to former Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, ABIM became the first organization in Malaysia which openly chastised the former Prime Minister for his remarks calling for the continuation of the country's secular political system (*Risalah*, Vol. 1, 1984: 1, 17).[29] The organization also condemned the passing of the Printing Process and Publication Act of 1984 on the grounds of its alleged curtailment of the people's freedom of expression.

With such a critical political–religious public stance, it is little wonder that the government has not only acted as if ABIM were an opposition party but also has found it necessary to retaliate. In general, ABIM's activities have seldom found their way into the national newspapers. *Risalah*, approved for circulation since 1971, was later restricted to members only between 1975 and 1981 on the grounds of 'national security and public order' and harming communal relations (*New Straits Times*, 25 November 1979). Although in interviews with the author, ABIM's Vice-President and Secretary charged that the government's action was motivated by its embarrassment at ABIM's revelation of government's unjust policies and practices, examination of various issues of *Risalah* in some years did lend credence to the

government's fears of communal fermentation by ABIM. For instance, in some of the issues, in what may seem contradictory to ABIM's Islamic *raison d'être*, *Risalah* warned Malaysians, including non-Malays, that the Malay patience in securing economic justice had its limits. Raising the threat of 'Malay' patience running out also demonstrates the salience of the ethnic gravitational pull, as compared to Islam, in the search for identity even for organizations or groups bent upon spreading the Islamic non-particularistic, universal message. The explanation for this ambiguity and contradiction is that in Malaysia, the religious identification cannot be divorced from its cultural, ethnic bias.

Anwar Ibrahim's Co-optation: Motives and Impact

The government's actions indicated its concern about ABIM's influence among Muslims, both locally and abroad. Of late though, particularly since Dr Mahathir Mohamad became Prime Minister in 1981 and after his co-optation of Anwar Ibrahim into the government, such regulatory measures have eased considerably. It is useful at this juncture, given the significance of Anwar's decision, to explore his motivations. From Anwar's own statements, it seems that he was guided by both political and religious considerations. He admitted that he was convinced of Dr Mahathir's sincerity and efficiency as a political leader — 'he is like my father whenever I come to express my concerns to him' (*Utusan Melayu*, 27 and 28 June 1983). He also seemed convinced that he could contribute to the development of both Islam and Malay welfare: 'I believe I can do something in areas like building an effective government, having more definitive policies about Islam, anti-corruption and the defence of the Malays' (*Utusan Melayu*, 27 and 28 June 1983). It is not easy to say which of the above two motivations—Islam or Malay welfare—came first. In Anwar's discussions with the author, it seemed to this writer that both were interlinked. Here again, the significance and the 'contradiction' in the Malay–Islam relationship in his justification for joining UMNO, a Malay-first party, is evident. As someone whose credentials as an Islamic-oriented leader were already known, given his presidency of ABIM, Anwar could have confined his statement to the pursuit of Islamic principles. The fact that he also found it necessary to include 'the defence of the Malays' was understandable since he needed to justify to his ABIM supporters and Muslim activists in Malaysia the rationale for his unexpected entry into a party known for being the custodian of Malay ethnic interests.

To a certain extent, a case can be made that the Malaysian government has eased considerably its confrontationist attitude to ABIM by becoming more tolerant of ABIM's activities since Anwar joined the government fold. When ABIM openly supported the plight of Muslim minorities in Thailand and Philippines and criticized Singapore for allegedly becoming the centre of Israel's secret service operations in South-East Asia (*Risalah*, Vol. 1, 1983: 8, 18, 22), Mahathir simply permitted these criticisms to pass without any comment. This acquiescence was in sharp contrast to the attitude of his predecessors, or at least the attitude prevalent before Anwar

joined the government. Siddiq Fadhil himself has admitted privately that ABIM considers Dr Mahathir more committed to Islam than his predecessors, and that after Anwar joined the government, '*ABIM kurang ditekan*' (ABIM was less suppressed).

The above points, however, should not be interpreted to mean that Anwar's entry did not have any adverse effect at all upon ABIM. On the contrary, initially at least, his decision left serious doubts about the organization's continued effectiveness, if not survival. To many Malaysians, ABIM was synonymous with Anwar, and his move shook the organization for some months. The Majlis Shura meeting to discuss Anwar's move to join the government was not only a 'marathon meeting' and a tense one, but also the decision to 'release' him was arrived at only after much heated debate. This debate later filtered through to ABIM members as well as Muslims in Malaysia and international Islamic organizations generally. Secondly, although ABIM leaders have denied that Anwar's decision had widened the rift between pro-PAS and pro-UMNO sympathizers within the Executive Committee, the denial was not convincing. It seemed clear that the two Kamarudins for instance (Vice-President and Secretary until 1986) have been much more supportive of Anwar Ibrahim's decision than have other leaders. Thirdly, Anwar's decision again brought to bear the issue of ABIM's independence and identity, since his joining a Malay-first party led to some confusion on ABIM's actual position regarding Islam. Consequently, ABIM had to grapple with the difficulty of recruiting new members and a declining role in Muslim affairs.

Darul Arqam

Darul Arqam (House of Arqam) is named after the Muslim who first offered his house to Prophet Muhammad to be used as a hideout to plan the Islamic revolution, thus indicative of the symbol of secrecy in Darul Arqam's activities. It came into being in 1969 in Kampong Datuk Keramat, Kuala Lumpur, with the aim of putting into practice the teachings of Islam.[30]

Organizational Structure, Leadership, and Activities

The leader, Ustadz Asha'ari Muhammad, affectionately addressed by Darul Arqam's members as 'Sheikul Arqam', has a lot of experience as an Islamic figure in Malaysia. Born in 1938 in Negri Sembilan, Asha'ari came from a religious family. His father, Muhammad, was an established *'alim* (religious scholar) in Seremban. As in many Muslim families prior to the Independence of Malaya, Asha'ari was pressured into marrying when he was barely 20 years old and still studying in seventh class of an Arab (Islamic) college, the Maktab Hishamuddin in Klang. As a young man, Asha'ari must have excelled in Islamic Studies because when he was just 18 years old and still in college, he was offered (and accepted) a job as a government religious (Islamic Studies) teacher, a prestigious post in the 1950s for a Malay; due to the low level of educational attainment by Malays then, a teacher was held in high esteem. He began furthering his interest

in politics when he joined PAS in 1958, but left the party in the mid-1960s after the departure of its stalwarts like Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy and Dr Zulkifli Mohamed, whom he much respected, unlike their successors with whom he could not get along.[31] He then joined the Jamiyah Dakwatul Islamiah (Islamic Missionary Association) and served as its Information Head for three years. Again disillusioned with the leadership and ideological emphasis of the Association, which concentrated more on welfare activities than a broader approach to the Faith, he left in 1968 to form his own Islamic association (Asha'ari Muhammad, 1982). Thus began Darul Arqam.

The reasons for Asha'ari's disillusionment with his involvement in other Islamic organizations are important because they say something about the ideology of Darul Arqam. This is an ideology (*'aqeedah*), as Asha'ari later spelt out, which emphasizes the all-embracing nature of Islam, a comprehensive system which makes Muslims cohere as a community and guides their thoughts and actions.[32] In 1971, the year that the government officially recognized ABIM as a national Muslim organization,[33] Asha'ari, seeing many similarities in ABIM's general philosophy to that of Darul Arqam, brought his organization into ABIM. Although he was almost immediately made the *Dakwah* Head of ABIM's Federal Territory branch, despair at his limited role in the formulation of ABIM policies soon led him to leave ABIM.[34] Henceforth, there were no more experiments for him and he decided to devote himself full-time to Darul Arqam. As an indication of his seriousness, he resigned from all his other jobs and responsibilities, including his two-decade career as a government religious teacher, to assume the role of Darul Arqam's spokesman and leader.

Soon, Asha'ari's popularity as an orator and author began to grow as a result of his zeal in delivering religious talks, as well as his captivating personality, and of the development of Muslim consciousness in the country. He found himself being invited to address Muslim groups outside Malaysia too; initially, in Singapore and Brunei. His talks (and poems) on Islam were also transmitted through cassette-tapes, books, articles, as well as through the official publications of the organization. His writings usually came in the form of short articles or epistles of about 40 pages, mostly condensed from his numerous religious talks (Asha'ari Muhammad, 1982).[35]

Through these writings and his many talks, one can gauge his main concerns—concerns which serve as the main platform of Darul Arqam's activities in the light of Asha'ari's strong hold of the organization. These include the necessity to have abiding faith in God and His prophets; the need to strengthen Islamic brotherhood; the need for parents to bring up their children according to Islamic principles; the need for Muslims to be economically independent; the belief in the return of the *Imam Mahdi*; and the short span of life of humans on Earth and their accountability to God in the Hereafter (Asha'ari Muhammad, 1981, 1982).

A 28-member (8 deputies and 20 directors of various projects and portfolios) Majlis Shura has been formed to assist Ustadz Asha'ari in coping with the extensive range of activities to which Darul Arqam has devoted itself, activities which have tended to push the mobilization of the Islamic

ethos in Malaysia even further. These portfolios include education, information, medical services, welfare, secretariat, and trade and industry. Many of its leaders are graduates from either Al-Azhar University in Cairo or Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (Nagata, 1984: 111).

Activities and Programmes

Sales of the organization's newsletter and other publications provide an additional source of income for Darul Arqam. Larger sources of income, however, come from sympathizers and especially from its numerous economic projects like the production of chilli and soy sauce, condiments, bread, beancurd, noodles, toothpaste, and soap. These products, made by Darul Arqam's members themselves at the organization's headquarters (which, in 1986, shifted to a village near Bentong, Pahang) and at the organization's other state branches, are sold throughout Malaysia, with smaller amounts marketed in Singapore and to Malay student centres overseas.[36] Since 1983, sales of the goods distributed through its 20-odd retail shops have been good because of the furore about *halal* (Islamically permissible) and *haram* (opposite of *halal*) food issue.[37] In Malaysia since the early 1980s, many Muslims have expressed fear that many common foodstuffs and toiletries contain *haram* ingredients in the form of chemicals and additives such as gelatine, shortening, and emulsifiers. Darul Arqam has expressed its concern not only by calling on Muslims to be wary of the contents of what they eat or use, but also by upgrading the organization's production of these goods.[38]

By 1983, in addition to the three 'Islamic villages' (the biggest being in Kampung Sempadan), Darul Arqam also had nine agricultural communes growing fruit and vegetables and raising domestic animals such as cows, goats, and poultry.[39] The communes are in Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Perak, Pahang, and Johore, and there are plans for new sites to be opened in other states in the near future. Its breeding farms in Selangor and Johore and a fish-farming project in Perak are well known to the Malays. Significantly, although not aired publicly, the main aim of the establishment of these economic ventures was, to inculcate among the Malays a spirit of economic independence from non-Malay control despite the apparent difficulty in a situation like Malaysia (*Dewan Masyarakat*, December 1976: 7–10). Obviously, since in the Malaysian context, ethnic and religious identifications are so intertwined, by inference, this implies the desire of Darul Arqam not to be economically dependent on the non-Muslims, too.

A Darul Arqam commune is more than just a place of abode—it is a community, housing the movement's schools, members' residences, a mosque, a clinic, and factories. In the commune, the rules which have become the hallmark of Darul Arqam are strictly obeyed—in dress, manners of greeting, and segregation of the sexes. So different is this commune from the headquarters of other Muslim organizations that visitors would be tempted to draw conclusions about the conservativeness of the organization and also feel a siege mentality on visiting the commune: 'patrols at

the entrance screen all comers with some suspicion and many questions . . . members tend to be extremely defensive about themselves and their community' (Nagata, 1984: 105).[40] The commune is flanked by a totally different Malay *kampung* environment, where the villagers, particularly the women (as in many other parts of the country), do not usually dress or behave in the manner propagated by Darul Arqam, and especially by Ustadz Asha'ari Muhammad himself.[41]

Relations with the Umma and the Government

An International Relations bureau supervises and monitors Darul Arqam's relationship with overseas Muslim organizations. Like ABIM, Darul Arqam leaders have been invited to speak at many overseas Islamic gatherings and training camps organized by bodies such as FOSIS (Federation of the Organisation of Islamic Societies), Ittihad al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiah Australia (Australian Federation of Islamic Societies), and at functions organized by Islamic organizations in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Pakistan, Fiji, Brunei, Singapore, and Hong Kong.[42] If not for his inability to speak English well, Asha'ari Muhammad himself would be in much greater demand overseas.[43] He has visited many Islamic centres and countries abroad, including Iran in 1983, to reciprocate an earlier visit to Malaysia by an Iranian scholar, Ali Tashkiri, in 1982 (*Salam*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1983; Vol. 1, No. 3, 1984). As a matter of fact, like ABIM, and given the sensitivity of the situation, much caution has been exercised by Darul Arqam in its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Upon Asha'ari's return from Iran, Darul Arqam was quick to issue an official press release stating that 'he did not bring home the Iranian revolution!' (*Akhbar Al-Arqam*, February 1983: 20).

Insofar as its relations with other overseas Muslim organizations are concerned, Darul Arqam has made no secret of its links with major organizations in the Muslim world, as well as international student organizations and Islamic bodies in Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. Darul Arqam leaders have participated in seminars organized by RABITAH (Saudi Arabia) and FOSIS (United Kingdom). In Australia, Darul Arqam leaders have presented talks in Melbourne, Sydney, and Canberra, and have conducted an intensive Islamic training camp in Perth, where almost the whole leadership including Asha'ari, came in December 1983, and a smaller contingent in 1984 (*Salam*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1983).[44] Its leaders always visit Malaysian students' centres abroad to deliver its message to both Malay students as well as to Malay consulate staff located there.

Public criticism of the organization by its members is not taken lightly by the Darul Arqam leadership. In 1979 seven active *dakwah* workers were sacked after they openly indicated their dissatisfaction with some of Darul Arqam's leaders.[45] A more recent incident involved conflicts amongst the leaders in 1986. Difficult as it may be for any Muslim organization, particularly an Islamic movement, to keep religion and politics separate—this difficulty has been debated for centuries by Muslims—it is, none the less, being adopted as policy by Darul Arqam. Sources in Malaysia indicate that this policy, obviously carried out with a great deal of uneasiness given

the inseparability of religious and non-religious matters in the Islamic scheme of things, has been practised as a tactical move until such time when Darul Arqam can be directly involved in politics.[46] This policy stance is evident in Darul Arqam's practice not to comment on, let alone criticize, government policies, even when they are considered to be against Islam, unlike ABIM. Instead, Darul Arqam's leaders opine that it is better for them to set an example and practise what they preach, such as directly engaging in their economic initiatives, rather than merely come up with proposals which remain in theory only.[47] One gets the impression that the organization likes to be seen to be on good terms with the government. Consequently, unlike ABIM, Darul Arqam has not encountered major retaliatory measures from the Malaysian government.

To this end, Darul Arqam got wide publicity when the former Minister of Trade and Industry, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, met Darul Arqam leaders at a Darul Arqam function (*Akhbar Al-Arqam*, February 1983). The attendance of the Mayor of Kuala Lumpur, Elyas Omar, at a talk by Sheikul Arqam, the Health Ministry's documentary film on Darul Arqam's medical clinic, the organization's purchase of supplies from government marketing agencies, and its retail outlets in the new mini-markets provided by the government (Nagata, 1984: 112) were also widely publicized by Darul Arqam. Although this friendly relationship could simply be a calculated strategy on the part of Darul Arqam, it makes it difficult for the organization to maintain its exclusiveness. While Darul Arqam gives the impression that all talks by its Sheikh are open to the public, its leadership *usrah* are not.[48] The impact that Darul Arqam's politics has had on Islam and Malay ethnicity is that the Islamic consciousness of its members and supporters has increased — but, so too has the non-Muslim perception that Darul Arqam is nothing more than a parochial, ethnic-based organization. Hence, the dialectical strain and ambiguity in Malay identity continues.

Perkim

The main platform of Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam SeMalaysia (Perkim) is similar to that of ABIM and Darul Arqam, that is, to preach Islam and be of service to Muslims and society. In fulfilling these general expressed aims, however, its approach and emphasis are markedly different. It may be useful to first examine Perkim's historical background.[49]

Perkim has a longer history than ABIM or Darul Arqam. However, it has been active only since 1975. Founded by the then Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, Perkim officially came into being in August 1960 as the Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam SeMalaya, the All-Malaya Muslim Welfare Organisation. Its declared aim was to spread Islamic teachings and to be involved in social and welfare activities in the country.[50] Although he was based in Jeddah for five years as Secretary-General of the OIC, from 1970 to 1975,[51] the Tunku continued to be Chairman of Perkim.

Organizational Structure, Leadership, and Activities

Other co-founders of Perkim with Tunku were Tan Sri S. O. K. Ubaidullah (an Indian Muslim), Haji Ibrahim Ma (a Chinese Muslim), and Tan Sri Mubin Sheppard (a European Muslim), all close personal friends of the Tunku. The different ethnic backgrounds of the co-founders may indicate that, at least on the surface of it, Perkim's image or identity is one of Islam, not communalistic. The organization is governed by a 17-member Jawatankuasa Pusat (National Executive Council) and a 4-member Majlis Penasihat Islam (Islamic Advisory Council). This Advisory Council, though small in size and performing only an advisory function—its advice is not binding upon the National Executive Council—consisted of men whose Islamic credentials were quite impressive from the Muslim viewpoint. They were Tan Sri Professor Abdul Jalil Hassan, a well-known Islamic scholar who was also the Chairman of the Majlis Fatwa Negara or the National *Fatwa* (formal religious ruling by a Mufti and binding upon Muslims) Council, Professor Majeed Mackeen (Dean of Islamic Studies at the University of Malaya), Dr Ismail Ibrahim (Dean of the Islamic Faculty at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia), and Sheikh Haji Mohsein Salleh (the former Mufti of the Federal Territory) (*Perkim Annual General Report*, 1981).

Besides the Secretariat, there are two other main sections in the organization, those for *Dakwah*, and Education and Welfare. The former has jurisdiction over activities like Islamic schools such as *Balai Islam* and the Institut Dakwah (Islamic Propagation Institute). The latter offers *dakwah* training to students of the Asia–Pacific region and supervises religious teachers and missionaries. These students are taught aspects of Islamic jurisprudence, as well as the skills to be Islamic *du'at* (Islamic workers; plural of *da'i*). The Welfare section occupies some prominence *vis-à-vis* other sections because it caters for a wide range of facilities and services mainly (though not exclusively) aimed at assisting converts. These include medical and legal aid, adoption by Muslim families, general counselling, financial assistance, and publication of its official newsletter, in three languages—Malay (*Suara Perkim*), Chinese (*Nur Islam*), and English (*Islamic Herald*).[52]

Much of Perkim's activity is concentrated in one major area, that of conversion and the welfare of converts. Converts automatically become 'members' of the organization. Given this peculiar system of membership, it is almost impossible to gauge the extent of commitment of these members to Perkim. However, the Tunku lamented, in discussions with the present writer, how 'dead' Perkim was during his five-year overseas stint.[53] The situation improved henceforth: by 1984, through the organization's branches in every state in the country, as well as more than 50 sub-branches,[54] Perkim's facilities and services expanded to include Islamic classes for converts, an educational institute which prepares students for various government exams (mainly via the Perkim-Goon Institute), drug rehabilitation units, and clinics.

Interestingly, although Perkim's headquarters is in Kuala Lumpur, the majority of its 'members', the converts, are not in the peninsula, but in Sarawak and, particularly, Sabah. These two states deserve special mention

here, because, of Perkim's estimated total of 160,000 'conversions' from its formation in 1960 to 1980, more than half were in Sabah alone (*Perkim Annual General Report*, 1981: 3).[55] At a glance, this achievement was impressive, given the existence of a relatively high non-Muslim *asli* (indigenous) population, the established and active Christian missionary work there, and the fact that these two states have been, comparatively, economically neglected in the whole of Malaysia.

Highlighting the large number of conversions in Sabah, however, is incomplete without bringing to the fore the role played by the man behind it all—Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun. Ironically, at a time when he had already lost office in 1976, under his leadership as Perkim's Representative, as many as 5,000 Sabahans were reported to have been converted in a single day (*Asiaweek*, Vol. 6, No. 20, 1980: 27),[56] usually under the aegis of the United Sabah Islamic Association (USIA). Admittedly, it is difficult to prove whether or not these were done voluntarily; for some time, rumours of Mustapha's tactics in encouraging these conversions for religious and political purposes, have been alleged even within Perkim, although documentary evidence is unavailable. Not only was Mustapha alleged to have brought thousands of Muslim Filipinos from Mindanao to settle in Sabah apparently to beef up the Muslim population in that state, it was claimed that he paid both the 'converts' and the local leaders who succeeded in persuading the native Kadazans to participate in mass conversion ceremonies.

Tun Datu Mustapha did not only spearhead mass conversions through USIA, he even saved Perkim at a time when it was almost bankrupt by handling over a M$6 million grant during 1975–6 (*The Star*, 1 November 1982), not long before he lost political office. A similar controversy surrounds the role of Sarawak's former Head of State, Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'acob (the nation's Education Minister in 1969/70), and to a lesser extent, the present Chief Minister and political opponent of his, Datuk Patinggi Taib Mahmud. The two most significant contributions by Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahmad Ya'acob seem to be his initiative in forming the Badan Dakwah Islamiah (Islamic Dakwah Body) in 1977, a body which co-ordinated all conversion work in both Sabah and Sarawak, and his role in the conversion of the Governor of Sarawak, Abang Louis (*Suara Perkim*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1983: 5). The rigour of USIA seems to have borne fruit: of Sabah's traditional tribal people, 42 per cent allegedly were converted to Islam between 1975 and 1980, and more were becoming Muslims in 1984 (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 4, No. 9, 1980: 13).[57] It should be conceded, however, that whether or not a high percentage of this figure actually became Muslim as a result of the appeal that Islam offered them or because of other socio-cultural, financial, and political factors, remains uncertain.

Chinese Conversions and the Malay Identity Issue

Within Peninsular Malaysia, since 1977, 70 per cent of all new converts have been Chinese, followed by Indians and others (*New Straits Times*, 23 June 1977), a factor which is not insignificant to the present discussion of the politics of Malay identity given its implications for the ethnic–religious

ratio and ethnic relations in Malaysia. In 1981 out of a total of 587 conversions handled by Perkim's headquarters, 319 were Chinese and 130 Indians; 357 of this total were male. Malaysia-wide, the daily average of conversions was 15 in 1980 and an estimated 25 in 1984 (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 4, No. 8, 1981).[58] The rate of these conversions was such that by 1979, the Tunku claimed, despite conversion trends in places like Africa, 'the combined total number of conversions in other parts of the world is less than 20 per cent of Perkim's total' (*New Straits Times*, 23 April 1979).[59] Given the demand for greater services for the converts, in 1982, Perkim, through the financial assistance of the Rabitah Alam Islami (World Muslim League), brought to Malaysia even Chinese Muslims from Taiwan to help teach the religion to the Chinese converts.[60]

That the majority of converts have been Chinese is significant in view of the polarization of Malay–Chinese relations in Malaysia. On the whole, as discussed earlier, while non-Malay Muslims like Arabs and Indians have been quite assimilated into the mainstream of the Malay-dominated national politics in Malaysia, the same cannot be said of Chinese Muslims. The explanation for this may lie in the fact that not only are Chinese culturally different from Malays as evident from their food habits, dress, and language, but many Chinese converts prefer to retain their (Chinese) identity after conversion. Perhaps, their dilemma—and the dilemma of the Malays too—is that, while on the one hand, they would like to assume a new Islamic, non-racial identity, on the other, in the context of plural Malaysia where Malay–Chinese prejudices are salient, they cannot. That is why, unlike Arabs and Indian Muslims, Chinese converts tend to be conveniently dubbed by Malays as '*masuk Melayu*' (enter into the Malay fold or becoming Malay) or '*saudara baru*' ('new brothers'), a position also adopted by Perkim, perhaps with a tinge of uneasiness, given the parity of treatment that all Muslims (including converts) are entitled to in the Islamic perspective. This Malay dilemma illustrates most clearly the power of ethnicity over Islam in Malay identity, and this is evidenced even in a Muslim organization like Perkim whose founders hailed from different ethnic backgrounds. To assist the Chinese Muslim plight, the Tunku has, on some occasions, even suggested that Chinese converts should receive similar privileges as Malays and should be treated like *bumiputra* (Tunku Abdul Rahman, 1978: 157). As expected, this proposal fell on the deaf ears of Malays in general and the UMNO-dominated government in particular, given its political ramifications. For this proposal to be accepted, not only must the government's NEP be radically altered, but the very basis of UMNO's existence—in defence of Malay rights—will be put into question. Hence, it is evident again how, when the crux comes, Islam becomes subsumed under Malay ethnic parochial considerations in the Malay quest for identity.

Thus, Perkim's general difficulty in assisting the Chinese converts must be viewed against the above situation. Still, the organization has continued to be the largest Muslim group catering for Chinese converts in Malaysia—and the richest, if its financial status is anything to go by.[61] Perkim has shares and investment schemes, as well as other forms of business conducted by its business enterprise, the Perkim Niaga. By 1981, this enterprise

already owned 10 medium-sized trading offices and multi-purpose co-operatives operating businesses like supermarkets and stationery shops. All these, it was argued by Tunku Abdul Rahman, will in no time make Perkim 'the strongest welfare body in Southeast Asia'.[62]

Relations with Other Governments

Libya heads the list of donors to Perkim, especially after the Tunku himself, on two occasions, personally went to see Muammar Qhadafi.[63] Perkim's ultra-modern headquarters building in Kuala Lumpur bears testimony to the support extended by Libya—an interest-free loan of M$23 million and an additional grant of M$3 million, channelled through the 'Libya–Malaysia Dakwah Islamiah Fund' (*Perkim Annual General Report*, 1981).[64] The headquarters building now houses offices, restaurants, and shops, as well as the office of the Regional Islamic Dakwah Council for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (RISEAP), which the Tunku himself initiated but which does not have any kind of direct relationship with Perkim. Perkim's other main sponsors are Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait. Unlike other Muslim organizations in the country, Perkim is never hesitant to openly acknowledge and declare the large amount of money it receives from abroad.[65] Expressions of gratitude to these states are a prominent and regular feature of its annual Assemblies (*Perkim Annual General Report*, 1981: 19). Other than the above grant of M$23 million from Libya in 1980, Saudi Arabia in 1981 (through Rabitah Alam Islami and the Islamic Solidarity Fund) contributed M$396,000 to Perkim's building fund and M$500,000 to Wanita Perkim, Perkim's Women's wing (*Perkim Annual General Report*, 1981: 137–9).[66] Additionally, M$300,000 came from the Islamic Secretariat (once headed by the Tunku himself), and M$100,000 from Iraq (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 4, Nos. 8–9, 1981: 29–36; *Straits Times*, 5 September 1979). In addition to all the above, in 1980, a combined sum of M$20 million was donated to RISEAP (through Perkim) by Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Kuwait (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 3, Nos. 10–11, 1980: 30).[67]

With the exception of Sabah and Sarawak which donated M$6 million and M$500,000 respectively during 1976–80, and small grants (averaging M$1,600) from other Malaysian states like Selangor and Perak (*Perkim Annual General Report*, 1981),[68] most donors within Malaysia are non-government corporations and financial institutions. An exception was Petronas (the national oil company) which contributed M$50,000 in the 1980–1 period. A major local donor in the same period was Komplek Kewangan Malaysia (Malaysian Financial Complex) with M$200,000.[69] Unlike ABIM and Darul Arqam, Perkim does not rely on its 'membership' (they are not members as such) for its finance. Not only are the membership fees small as in the case of the other two organizations, but Perkim's subscriptions are kept by the organization's branches instead of being forwarded to the headquarters.

With such enormous wealth and access to financial resources, it is not surprising that Perkim expanded its activities into areas beyond its initial aims. Thus, since the mid-1970s, noted Tunku in a meeting with this

author, it was Perkim—not the Malaysian government—which took on responsibility for assisting Indo-Chinese refugees, principally Kampuchean Muslims. Given the sensitivity of this issue in the country because it involved matters of race (ethnicity) and religion and the government's attitude towards it, the issue was deliberately played down in Malaysia. In spite of an earlier declaration by the Home Affairs Ministry that 'all refugees from Vietnam are illegal immigrants . . . and they will be dealt with accordingly', the government, through Perkim's efforts, admitted some of them, and importantly, under Perkim's charge, only Muslim refugees were granted residence in Malaysia (Tunku Abdul Rahman, 1978: 158). This illustrates yet again the tension and ambivalence of the Malay–Islam issue there. By 1978, the Tunku's concern for the plight of the refugees was expressed internationally after he dispatched Perkim's Secretary-General Ahmad Noordin to the Asian Islamic Conference in Karachi, Pakistan. At that Conference, Ahmad Noordin proposed a resolution to the delegates 'to defend the 800,000 uprooted Muslims from Cambodia', a call later officially adopted by the participating nations (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 3, Nos. 10–11, 1978: 29–30). He argued that 'if no action was [*sic*] taken to remedy the present situation, the Muslims remaining in Cambodia will soon be wiped out as a distinct religious community, and with them, Islam' (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 3, Nos. 10–11, 1978: 29–30).

The Conference went further than that. It agreed to assist Muslim refugees in other states as well—in Burma, southern Thailand, and the Philippines (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 3, Nos. 10–11, 1978: 29–30),[70] although these assurances were not followed through after the Conference. Where the plight of the Muslim refugees is concerned, Perkim has been more effective. The first Indo-Chinese refugees started arriving in Malaysia in 1975 but the great influx came in 1979 (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1976: 18). In the following two years, Perkim sponsored a total of 3,951 official arrivals and settled them at the Perkim's Pusat Pelarian Indochina, the Centre for Indo-Chinese Refugees (officially opened by the Tunku in May 1976) in Kelantan, and in the Cherating Camp in Pahang.[71]

With the moral and financial support of such institutions as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—which in 1980 applauded Perkim for its good work—and Saudi-based Muslim organizations such as the Islamic Development Bank, Rabitah Alam Islami, and Islamic Solidarity Fund, Perkim streamlined its refugee operations with greater earnestness. In 1975, it chartered a ship to bring stranded Muslim refugees from Thailand to Malaysia, at a cost of M$100,000 (*Straits Times*, 31 July 1975).[72] Once resettled at the camps in Malaysia, these refugees were offered various facilities such as classes in Malay language and Malaysian culture to familiarize them with local conditions, vocational training, choice of resettlement areas (the majority of refugees from that operation in 1975 chose to stay in Trengganu), and financial support of M$350 for the head of each family plus an additional M$50 and M$30 for each adult and child respectively. In 1975 alone, the total daily cost of supporting these Kampuchean refugees was M$4,500 (*New Straits Times*, 28 July 1975). The bulk of the financial resources were used for the provision of camp

facilities such as housing, schools, offices, and transport (*Straits Times*, 31 July 1975; *Islamic Herald*, Vol. 5, Nos. 11–12, 1982: 32).

Perkim's Identity Crisis: Religion or Politics?

What is Perkim's attitude to politics and Islam in general? For ABIM and Darul Arqam, the position is clear. Perkim's stance is ambivalent. On the one hand, as shown earlier, its leadership, and the Tunku in particular, took an unequivocal stand on the plight of Muslims everywhere: in Indo-China, Burma, Thailand, the Philippines, Palestine, and Taiwan.[73] On the matter of the Israeli attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1980, the Tunku, in his capacity as President of both Perkim and RISEAP, condemned it as 'against all norms of civilized behaviour . . .' (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 3, Nos. 10–11, 1980: 42). As for the Arab–Israeli conflict, in 1982, he called upon the Arabs to form not only a 'defence and military pact . . . but to set a target date for the fight to recover Jerusalem and the lost territories from the Israelis' (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 5, Nos. 11–12, 1982: 10).

There have been many other occasions when the Tunku and the organizations he heads, Perkim and RISEAP, took a keen interest in international political issues. Within Malaysia, however, Perkim's leadership has made it plain to its members that Perkim must not get involved in politics: 'There cannot be any politics in PERKIM. PERKIM is only interested in religion and in fulfilling its responsibilities to Allah. Politics is in the hands of politicians and religion in the hands of religious people' (*New Straits Times*, 15 May 1979; cf. *Utusan Malaysia*, 27–29 April 1980).

Obviously, this was an important paradox. The Tunku, according to Ahmad Noordin, on at least one occasion in 1982, expressed regret at political statements made by some of Perkim's branch leaders. He also reprimanded a high Perkim official and ordered him to either withdraw a statement of support for Iran in the Iran–Iraq war or face expulsion; in the face of the Tunku's power, the official complied. In this case, perhaps Iraq's position as one of the financial backers of Perkim explained the Tunku's warning.

Against the backdrop of the Islamic reassertion in Malaysia, it is not surprising that the Tunku's attitude towards Islam as a theology has been criticized by many Muslims. In spite of his claims that Perkim's approach to Islam is 'moderate' and informing the present writer that he himself prays regularly, organizations like ABIM and the MSAs (Muslim Student Associations, especially in overseas campuses) find his overall understanding of and attitude to Islam rather shallow and restrictive (*Risalah*, Vol. 1, 1984: 1, 17).[74] Their criticism was also due to the Tunku's view that only Perkim-type Islamic activities should be allowed to flourish and his insistence that Malaysia is not an Islamic state but a secular one: 'Our nation is actually a secular nation, not an Islamic one like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, although our official religion is Islam' (*The Star*, 10 February 1983).

It must be noted that the Tunku has done something for the Muslims at the international level in the area of co-ordinating Muslim actions and

financial resources, and in his calls for solidarity as a single *umma*. These were made possible by the appointments he held, like the Secretary-General of the OIC, and the director of the Islamic Development Bank (*Perkim Annual General Report*, 1981; *Islamic Herald*, Vol. 7, Nos. 1–2, 1983: 5). Despite his dissatisfaction with the limited role and power he was allowed to exercise when he was Secretary-General of the OIC,[75] he used his position to initiate numerous schemes of much benefit to the Muslim world generally. Many of the existing international Islamic institutions owe their genesis to his initiatives: the Islamic Development Bank, Islamic Solidarity Fund, Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference, King Faisal Foundation, Islamic Research and News Agency, World Islamic Missionary Organisation and, as earlier indicated, RISEAP.[76] It was undoubtedly in recognition of these contributions that two major international Muslim awards were conferred on him in 1983: the inaugural 'Hijrah Award' from Pakistan and the 'King Faisal Award' from Saudi Arabia. The citations in these awards acclaim him most highly (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 7, Nos. 5–6, 1983). In Malaysia itself, some of his Islamic initiatives have gone unnoticed:[77] his commissioning of the first-ever Malay translation of the holy Qur'an in 1968,[78] the launching of the national Qur'an recitation competition in 1960 (and later, the international Qur'an recitation competition) which he declared was aimed at making the country a centre of Islam both regionally and internationally,[79] and his role, as head of the Alliance delegation, in making Islam the country's official religion during the constitutional deliberations in London in preparation for Malayan Independence. However, in spite of all his contributions, the Tunku was never perceived internationally as an Islamic leader on the level of figures like Abul ala Maududi, Hassan al Banna, and Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi, and other religious scholars or personalities, who had formed Islamic movements with wide followings such as the Jamaat al-Islami and Ikhwanul Muslimin.

Within Perkim, it is not known to what extent the organization's other leaders in the National Executive Council have given their support to the Tunku's concept of Islam. It seems that there is at least tacit approval of his attitude towards Islam, and its relationship to politics.[80] This is because these leaders were former politicians and bureaucrats from the same generation and with the same upbringing as the Tunku, and chosen by the Tunku to be in Perkim because of their close association with him. However, despite their silence, it is unthinkable that members of Perkim's Advisory Council could have similar views about Islam as the Tunku's, given their background and the respect they carry in Muslim eyes in their positions as heads of Islamic institutions in Malaysia. Within the rank and file of Perkim's 'members', dissatisfaction is rife, at least among many converts in Kuala Lumpur, as to this attitude of its leadership, their level of commitment to Islam, and their neglect of converts.[81]

In the author's four meetings with three different groups of converts, mainly Chinese and totalling about 30 people, in Kuala Lumpur in 1983, there were allegations of insufficient attention being given by Perkim to matters like finding alternative jobs and accommodation for them after they were forced to leave their homes upon their conversion. They also

claimed that the courses on Islam organized for them by Perkim were mediocre in content and poorly administered, that Malay course organizers did not understand the culture of Chinese converts, and that Perkim's leadership (including some of its Secretariat staff) did not observe the five daily obligatory prayers.[82] This last point might not be significant to non-Muslims, but in Muslim eyes, and in the Muslim search for identity, since prayer is considered the 'pillar of faith', Muslim leaders who are found wanting in this respect automatically lose their credibility; this is especially true for leaders of Muslim organizations.

On the grievances of the converts, the Tunku himself admitted in 1979 that neglect of converts had led as many as 20,000 of them to revert to their original faiths, and that not only were they shunned by both their parents and Malays, they were mostly jobless, too (*New Straits Times*, 30 July 1976; 21 May 1979). Given these frustrations, the high rate of resignations of Chinese *du'at* and *muballigh* (Islamic propagators or 'missionaries') in the 1980–1 period, as reported in Perkim's 1981 *Annual Report*, comes as no surprise. In 1983, dissatisfied Perkim members and former active *muballigh*, the majority of whom were Chinese, decided to form a breakaway group.[83]

Relations with the Government

We now come to the issue of the Perkim–Malaysian government relationship. On the whole, this relationship may be described as cordial. This was made possible by the attitude of the Tunku himself in his dealings with the government. Ironically, he chose to tolerate his leadership rivals and his critics despite the allegedly shabby treatment he received at the hands of his successor, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, and the government's religious scholars in general. He confided to the present writer that 'even the *ulama* in the National mosque ignored me now that I'm no longer Prime Minister' and that some government leaders 'treated me like a political pariah' when he was in the OIC (Tunku Abdul Rahman, 1978: 43) and that some even tried to topple him from his leadership of Perkim (*New Straits Times*, 15 August 1977).[84]

The cordial relationship between Perkim and the Malaysian government is the more understandable if certain factors are considered. First, the government must have realized that the Tunku has some influence over the oil-rich Arab countries by virtue of his former capacity as the Secretary-General of the OIC and his cordial relations with the Saudi ruling regime,[85] an asset the government, for political and economic reasons, would certainly like to maintain. The government therefore cannot risk damaging its relations with these Muslim countries by adopting a hard-line approach with Perkim. Secondly, the government must have recognized the wide support that non-Muslims in Malaysia accord the Tunku as the 'Father of Independence'.[86] Thirdly, the leadership of Perkim itself is composed of men who, at one time or other, held high positions in the government, up to the level of Cabinet Minister. Finally, the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is the organization's patron. Although all previous

Prime Ministers have agreed to be patrons, for Mahathir there is another reason for his acceptance: his wife, Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd. Ali, has been a regular volunteer doctor in Perkim's clinic (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 7, No. 5, 1983). It is obvious that Perkim's *dakwah* activities have been used by the government to demonstrate its support for Islam. With all these mutually supportive roles and interests, it does make sense that Perkim, unlike ABIM, has never been embroiled in any controversy with the Malaysian government.

Contesting Approaches among Dakwah Organizations

Although some leaders of the *dakwah* organizations have participated in each other's seminars and forums, there is no evidence that these organizations have ever jointly organized any Islamic public activity or co-operated directly in their Islamic work.

Much has to do with the different (at times, even competing) approaches adopted by the three organizations in defining the role of Islam in their identity and in their *modus operandi*. It is the author's assessment, as his research in Malaysia has revealed, that ABIM, for example, has never been eager to identify its Islamic work with that of Perkim's. Ideologically, the ABIM leadership is at odds with the Tunku's views on Islam; to align its work with Perkim (which is known more as a welfare organization than as an Islamic movement like ABIM) under Tunku's leadership would put ABIM's credibility at stake in the perception of other serious-minded and similar *harakah* organizations elsewhere, both in Malaysia and overseas where ABIM has strong links.[87] Politically, too, while ABIM does not have to be apologetic or on the defensive to please certain Muslim nations whose actions against Muslims could not be left uncommented on by ABIM, Perkim has no such liberty in view of the financial donations those nations have rendered to the organization. It is also probable that at a personal level, the Tunku might have an axe to grind with Anwar Ibrahim because of the latter's contribution to his 'retirement'. ABIM actually criticized the Tunku in 1983, for advising UMNO leaders to be wary of those who joined the party in order to Islamize it, and for his insistence that Perkim must continue its 'moderate' Islamic policy (*New Straits Times*, 20 February 1983).[88] It was no secret who he was referring to because the advice came less than a year after Anwar Ibrahim had joined UMNO and was seen to be behind the government's Islamization programmes.

In spite of Darul Arqam's public statement that it wanted to be on good terms with other *dakwah* organizations for the sake of Muslim unity (*Akhbar Al-Arqam*, February 1983: 20), it sometimes targeted criticisms at ABIM. From speeches by Darul Arqam's leaders (recorded on cassette-tapes) in the early 1970s, it can be deduced that Darul Arqam was not particularly pleased with ABIM; in one of his talks then, Ustadz Asha'ari Muhammad accused ABIM's operations of being pro-Jewish, and hence un-Islamic, in character. This is perhaps understandable since his remark came not long after he had left ABIM to form Darul Arqam. However, in 1982–3, both these organizations participated in a meeting to discuss the lack of unity

among Muslims in Malaysia.[89] From this writer's field research in Malaysia, it appears that ABIM's pro-PAS stance has been the object of criticism from at least Darul Arqam.[90]

The moves by former ABIM leaders such as Fadhil Nor and Nakha'ie Ahmad (Vice-President and Deputy President respectively) to leadership positions in PAS in 1978, and Anwar Ibrahim's alleged support for PAS in the general election that year, gave credence to these accusations (*New Straits Times*, 1 April 1982).[91] UMNO's subsequent co-optation into its ranks of Sanusi Junid (a former ABIM Vice-President), of ABIM's divisional heads in Kelantan, and, more recently, of Anwar Ibrahim and the two Kamarudins, has created further problems for the organization's image of independence. As policy, however, ABIM's leadership still maintains that it is independent of any other organization and any leader who wants to go into active politics must first resign from ABIM. This was also the step that Anwar Ibrahim, Kamarudin Nor, and Kamarudin Jaafar had to take when they joined UMNO and the government.[92] Some Darul Arqam members who were members of ABIM when Asha'ari Muhammad was associated with the organization began to gradually leave ABIM after 1982. This could be the result of a new distinctiveness (in terms of approach and independence) adopted by Darul Arqam since that period. Apparently, Darul Arqam does not seem to have succeeded in resolving the contradiction between its individuality and isolationist position on the one hand, and its leaders' call for Muslim unity on the other.

Impact and Implications of Dakwah

From the above illustrations and analyses, it should be clear that the *dakwah* phenomenon is neither a temporary, passing fad nor an insignificant development in Malaysian society. On the contrary, the phenomenon, especially as an organized movement and a social force, has wide-ranging implications for both Malaysian Islam and Malay identity issues. The significance of *dakwah* may be seen in four main ways. First, *dakwah* is neither a monolithic movement nor a static one. The above discussion of the three most prominent *dakwah* organizations indicates that the phenomenon has undergone some changes, especially in the 1980s.[93] In addition, although the *dakwah* groups all aspire to serve Islam in one way or another, they differ from each other in most other areas—particularly in conceptualizing Islam and the kind of role that the Faith should play in the political development of the state. ABIM appears to be highly political in its outlook as well as *dakwah*-oriented; Darul Arqam tends to want to project a non-political image despite the apparent difficulties; while Perkim is strongly non-political (officially, and in its local Islamization programmes) but dedicated to conversions and international contacts with Muslim countries and institutions. Insofar as their identity or image is concerned, at least in non-Malay eyes, with the probable exception of Perkim (given the general non-Malay acceptance of the Tunku) all the *dakwah* organizations were viewed more as Malay- than Islamic-based. This diversity of approach regarding Islam

and politics of the various *dakwah* organizations means intra-Muslim unity will continue to be problematic.

Secondly, the fact that *dakwah* is urban-based implies that there is now a radical shift of organized Islamic activities in Malaysia, from the traditional, *ulama*-based type confined to the rural *kampung*, to one which is led by a new breed of tertiary-educated Malays, some of whom are secular-trained, like the leaders of ABIM and Perkim. Unlike the traditional *tok guru* or *lebai* whose main preoccupation was to provide a strictly religious kind of education and training for their followers, the *dakwah* organizations in the cities, especially in the federal capital of Kuala Lumpur, have operated along socio-economic and political dimensions, in varying degrees. The shift to an Islamic activity which is urban-based will undoubtedly affect the political fortunes of both UMNO and, especially, PAS. Since PAS's strength has always been in the rural areas (such as in the less-developed northern Malay states of Kelantan, Trengganu, and Kedah), it is probable that until and unless the party can receive the support of the secular- and tertiary-educated Malays, or establish a more direct relationship with the urban-based *dakwah* groups in the hope of securing their support and enlarging its membership base, its long-term survival will be in question. The current pace of urbanization and the expected continuation of the NEP after 1990 (though perhaps with a more national orientation) will also exacerbate the problems confronting PAS.

This brings us to the third significance of *dakwah*; these urban-based organizations are all politically relevant since Islam has been highly politicized and brought to the centrestage of Malaysian politics. What is meant here is that these Muslim organizations, in spite of denials by say, Darul Arqam and Perkim, are acting as political pressure groups, trying to influence the decision-making process, or, in cases where they have vouched to remain 'apolitical', performing some political function from the government's point of view. As an example, ABIM's constant criticisms of government policies and the organization's perceived collaboration or, at the minimum, possibility of alignment with PAS, worry the government, given the background of the perennial UMNO–PAS conflict and the quest for Malay Muslim votes and legitimacy. In order for UMNO (the government) to counter any swing of the Malay-Muslim vote to PAS, and to outbid the party, it has no alternative but to spend considerable resources in upgrading Islamization programmes in the country. The greater the manifestations of *dakwah* and the more mobilized the Islamic consciousness, the more necessary it is for the ruling regime to be seen to be 'Islamic', which can be translated to mean more pro-Islam policies. The Malay-led UMNO government may lose its religious legitimacy—and hence moral right to rule from the Islamic perspective—if the Malays are convinced of the 'un-Islamic' charges levelled at the ruling regime by *dakwah* groups.

A fourth and final major implication that this study of the *dakwah* phenomenon reveals and one which is of direct relevance to the discussion of the politics of Malay identity is this: the salience and persistence of tensions and contradictions that characterize the Malay identity quest. It has been shown how the *dakwah* organizations, in trying to resolve the apparent

dilemma of wanting to defend both Islam and Malay ethnic interests, not only have had to tackle friction within their organizations, but have been 'caught' implementing programmes which contradict one another. In the process, the Islamic reassertion in Malaysia has its regressive features; Islam has not succeeded in submerging the parochial and ethnic-oriented culture of the Malays. In the case of ABIM, the tension has come in the form of the struggle between two identities: between pro-PAS and pro-UMNO leanings within the organization (between 'Islam' and 'Malay ethnic nationalism' respectively)—which became deeper as a result of Anwar Ibrahim's entry into UMNO and the government. More significantly, despite ABIM's participation in championing the interests of non-Malays and non-Muslims (such as its leadership of the 'Anti-Societies Bill of 1981' public protest), the organization continues to find it difficult to escape the charge from many non-Malays that it is nothing but another Malay organization. For Darul Arqam, the identity tension manifests itself in the ambiguous posture with which its leadership tries to project itself: calling for universal Islamic values in place of Western secular values considered inimical to Muslim interests but, at the same time, maintaining an insular Malay particularistic image by retreating from the larger society. Hence, its numerous economic projects can also be interpreted to mean more than just Islamic ventures; it has to do with the implicit desire to be economically independent from non-Malay control since, in the context of Malaysia, the religious identification is clearly an ethnic one as well. Similarly, Perkim's contribution to conversion activities of non-Malays is contrasted with its dubbing of these converts as '*saudara baru*', and the general reluctance of Malay Muslims to treat converts as fellow Muslims who should enjoy equal treatment. Consequently, the higher the Islamic consciousness of the Malays, the more distinct they become from other ethnic communities. In this regard, *dakwah* in Malaysia has invariably inhibited interethnic and interreligious relations and widened social distance between communities. Although national integration and political stability have never been a major problem of earlier and equally plural Islamic states in Islamic history, the same cannot be said of the present-day situation in Malaysia.

1. Al-Qur'an, Yusuf Ali's translation (1978): *Surah* 'Shura', XLII, especially *ayat* 38.

2. It is because of this conditional clause that Sultans in Malaysia, for instance, in spite of being constitutional protectors of the Islamic faith, are bound to face problems of Malay legitimacy if they transgress Islamic injunctions. In the pre-Independent era, however, given the strength of *adat* and other factors, Malays generally did not make an issue of this conditional rule in their loyalty to the Sultans.

3. *Dewan Masyarakat*, October 1976, p. 25. For insights of Anwar Ibrahim's philosophical outlook, see Anwar Ibrahim (1981a) and (1981b) and Morais (1983).

4. Interview with Siddiq Fadhil (1985).

5. This latter paper seems to be made compulsory reading at many of ABIM's training camps.

6. Interview with Siddiq Fadhil (1985).

7. The Malay original: '*Gerakan dakwah adalah suatu "historical force", suatu kekuatan*

sejarah yang harus mampu menjadi "agents of change", membawa perubahan, memberikan arah dan haluan kepada arus perjalanan sejarah.'

8. Speech delivered at ABIM's Seminar in Malacca (20 February 1983); also available on video-tape.

9. Kamarudin Nor and Kamarudin Jaafar left ABIM to join UMNO in 1986. The latter is now attached to the Institute of Policy Studies as well as being the Political Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister.

10. *New Straits Times*, 30 December 1979 (in ABIM Files): a statement by Anwar Ibrahim at a forum on 'Religious tolerance in a multiracial society' in Kuala Lumpur.

11. ABIM does not maintain an ethnic breakdown of its membership; this may be due perhaps to Kamarudin's statement that the majority of ABIM members are Malays, anyway.

12. ABIM's files and newspaper clippings (1975–80) referred to by the writer at ABIM's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur in 1983 which contained speeches by ABIM leaders on these Islamic programmes.

13. ABIM's pamphlet (undated: see *Persatuan Islam Setanah Melayu (PAS)*, but indicated as 'around 1982' by Kamarudin Nor in an interview with the author (1983).

14. *Risalah* ('For Members Only' copy), No. 5, 1980, p. 20, and *Berita Harian*, 8 January 1981.

15. Interview with Anwar Ibrahim. The present author participated in one such seminar in Malaysia which PKPIM (later to take the form of ABIM) hosted, and attended by the Muslim Undergraduates Associations of Indonesia (HMI) and Singapore (USMS).

16. Interview with Siddiq Fadhil. That Bandung was the centre of Islamic revivalism was noted by Naipaul (1981) and Tamara (1986).

17. Confirmed by Kamarudin Nor in discussions with the author.

18. *Salam* (1981), p. 6, and interview with Kamarudin Nor (1983 and 1985). For some background information on the Islamic revolution and Imam Khomeini, see Algar (1982), Keddie (1981), Mahmood (1980), K. Siddique (1982), Meriam (1981), and Kedourie (1980).

19. The pro-PAS leader in ABIM is a well-known personality among Muslims in Malaysia. Admittedly, it is difficult to identify the pro-PAS members but their preference for wearing long robes and headgear, as well as their religious educational background, are some indicators.

20. Interview with Kamarudin Nor (Kuala Lumpur, 1983).

21. ABIM's officially produced leaflet explaining the main objectives and activities of the organization (undated), especially section on 'ABIM on issues facing our society'.

22. Interview with the Vice-President and Secretary-General respectively.

23. Interview with the Vice-President and Secretary-General. Cf. *Asiaweek*, 24 August 1979, p. 21.

24. Cf. an earlier statement in *Asiaweek* (24 August 1979), pp. 21–9.

25. Ibid., pp. 19–20.

26. Cf. *The Star*, 5 September 1982; also interview (on tape) with Kamarudin Nor (1983).

27. Anwar's speech in *Readings in Islam*, No. 6 (1979), p. 52, entitled 'Islam: Solutions to the problems of a multiracial society'. This was echoed by Siddiq Fadhil at an ABIM seminar in Malacca on 20 February 1983.

28. This was a misinterpretation since the government policy was meant to inculcate positive work ethics and discipline among Malaysians and these attributes are very much encouraged in Islam. For the policy, see Pathmanathan and Lazarus (1984), p. 46.

29. Cf. Muhammad Hussin Mutalib (1983) for a similar comment.

30. Information on Darul Arqam is derived from the writer's many meetings with Md. Zakaria, its Director of International Relations, both in Sydney (1982) and at Darul Arqam's headquarters (1983); Hashim Ahmad, Vice-President (Sydney, 1982); Shuib Sulaiman, Director of *Dakwah* and Registrar (Darul Arqam's Headquarters, 1983). The writer has consulted most issues of its official newsletter, *Akhbar Al-Arqam*, from 1981 to 1984, and the tapes and books by its Sheikh. A request to see him, however (when the writer was visiting Darul Arqam's headquarters), was politely turned down by the Registrar, because 'the Sheikh, as a policy, no longer grants interviews to writers!'. The National Archives in Kuala Lumpur also stores some materials and earlier issues of Darul Arqam's newsletter.

31. This is contained in the 'blurb' on the back cover of some of his books; for instance, '*Huraian apa itu masyarakat Islam*' (1981). Some glimpses of his early life are also reflected in an interview published in his book (1982), especially pp. 8–13.

32. Interview with Muhammad Zakaria (1983).

33. Interview with Kamarudin Jaafar (1981).

34. Ibid.

35. His early articles, written between 1976 and 1980, include 'Mengapa manusia hidup' (The reason for man's existence), 'Bagaimana mencari kebahagiaan' (The secret of happiness), 'Gunung Tujuh' (The Seven 'Mountains'; being seven major tests for a Muslim), and 'Huraian apa itu masyarakat Islam' (An analysis of what constitutes an Islamic community). See Asha'ari Muhammad (1981) and (1982).

36. The present writer bought some of these products (perfume, soap, etc.) whilst in Sydney.

37. Interview with Shuib Sulaiman (1983).

38. Arkib Negara, AN: AP64 and AU8, being official publications and news of Darul Arqam stored in the National Archives.

39. Ibid. By 1988 the organization had 30 communes and more than 20 overseas centres in the United States, Britain, Australia, and Singapore (*Straits Times*, 9 June 1989).

40. This was also the impression of the present writer upon visiting the commune in 1983.

41. It was rumoured that Ustadz Asha'ari Muhammad has four wives — from a source who declined to be identified. (In Islamic *shariah*, this is the maximum permissible, but with extremely stringent conditions, making it rare for Muslims to have more than one wife.)

42. Interview with Muhammad Zakaria (1983).

43. Interview with Shuib Sulaiman, Registrar of Arqam's schools in Sungai Pencala (1983). The author is still uncertain of this 'fact' since Asha'ari Muhammad did attend the Islamic training camp in Perth in May 1983 although he spoke Malay and Arabic while there: *Salam*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1983).

44. This author attended two of these sessions, in 1982 and 1983.

45. From sources who requested their names to be withheld.

46. Ibid.

47. Interview with Muhammad Zakaria (1983).

48. From informants in Malaysia. In 1988, one of Ustadz Asha'ari's books, *Aurat Muhammad*, created controversy in Malaysia because of its mystical and allegedly deviant teachings, and some states banned the book (*Straits Times*, 9 June 1989). Asha'ari then mysteriously left the country.

49. Information on Perkim consists of both primary and secondary sources. These include the present writer's interview with Tunku Abdul Rahman at his residence in Penang in March 1983; interview with Secretary-General Ahmad Noordin of Perkim at its headquarters in March–April 1983; and discussions with converts in Kuala Lumpur, including Mokhtar Stork, a former active *dai* with Perkim. Other valuable sources of primary materials are the organization's official newsletter *Suara Perkim* (Malay) and *Islamic Herald* (English); its *Annual General Report of 1981* (its only 'Annual Report' for a long time); as well as film-interviews with the Tunku kept in the Malaysian National Archives (1977 and 1983). The Archives also store literature on Perkim (though these are scanty and not arranged systematically) under the number of AP126.

50. Interview with Tunku Abdul Rahman (Penang, 1983). The Tunku first held the post of Chief Minister in 1955 and was Prime Minister from Independence in 1957 to 1970. Amidst the turbulence of the ethnic riots in 1969, he was pressured to relinquish his post, although officially, he 'retired'.

51. Interview with Tunku (1983); *Islamic Herald*, Vol. 7, Nos. 1–2, p. 5: his contributions to OIC and his close association with the Saudi royal family are publicly expressed in this report.

52. The last-named is now in its twelfth year.

53. Interview with the Tunku (1983) and AN: AP126.

54. Interview with Ahmad Noordin (1983).

55. In his paper in the RISEAP seminar, however, the Vice-President stated that there are 'some 100,000 natives' from Sabah and Sarawak alone being converted to Islam and 30,000 in Peninsular Malaysia: *Islamic Herald*, Vol. 4, Nos. 9–10 (1980), p. 4. Cf. also the figure of 160,000 for 1979 given by the Tunku (*New Straits Times*, 23 April 1979).

56. Some converts active in Islamic work in Kuala Lumpur indicated their reservations on the voluntary nature of some of the conversions.

57. In Sabah, Perkim's affiliate is USIA (United Sabah Islamic Association), while in Sarawak, it is BINA or United Nahdatul Islam Association.

58. In that year, interestingly, 75 were Koreans who converted *en masse* on their trip to Malaysia at the initiative of a Malaysian Indian Muslim trader: *Islamic Herald*, Vol. 4, Nos. 8–9, p. 29; also interview with Secretary-General (1983). On figures of Orang Asli conversions, see *New Straits Times*, 23 June 1977.

59. The rate and total conversions in Malaysia are much higher, because figures released by Perkim do not include conversions conducted by the Islamic Council of the thirteen states in the country. In Perak, for instance, the total in 1977 was about 3,000: *New Straits Times*, 23 June 1977. (For the rapid conversion rate in Africa, see Weekes (1978), p. xxxii.)

60. Interview with Ahmad Noordin (1983).

61. It is even envisaged that the prospective cash-flows from its building complex (mainly by way of rents charged for the use of its offices) will strengthen its financial situation. (Interview Ahmad Noordin (1983).)

62. Interview with Tunku (1983). Cf. *New Straits Times*, 15 August 1977 and 23 April 1979.

63. *The Star*, 1 November 1982: 'Perkim's mission' by the Tunku; the Tunku was last there in 1980.

64. Confirmed by the Tunku at a meeting with the present writer.

65. Much of Saudi money was secured through the intermediary of the then Ambassador in Kuala Lumpur, Mohamed Al-Hamed Shubaili, an influential diplomat given his 'Deanship' of the Diplomatic Corps in Malaysia. Saudi money not only goes to Perkim, but to the government, too; for instance, Saudi Arabia was one of the sponsors of the International Islamic University in the country.

66. See also *Islamic Herald*, Vol. 4, Nos. 9–10 (1981), pp. 13 and 37, and Vol. 3, Nos. 10–11, pp. 29–30.

67. This writer's discussions with many Muslim intellectuals in Malaysia seem to indicate that RISEAP has a better image than Perkim. Information on RISEAP was also secured from its journal, *Al-Nahdah*, and from interviews with its officials, Ashfaq Ahmad and Fadlullah Wilmot.

68. Also from an interview with Ahmad Noordin (1983).

69. Donations to Perkim also come from non-Muslims in Malaysia and are exempted from tax.

70. The Tunku's concern for Filipino Muslim refugees actually started in 1974 when he tried to seek the assistance of the Pope to pressure the Philippine government into giving a fairer deal to these Muslims. When this failed, he solicited the help of Sabah's Chief Minister, Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun, and brought in 12,000 of them into Sabah. This was related to the present writer by Tunku in an interview (1983).

71. Tape-interview with Tunku (1983): he gave the total figure of these refugees up to that year as 6,000. Cf. earlier figures: *New Straits Times*, 13 May 1979; and *Annual General Report 1981*, pp. 76–7.

72. According to Ahmad Noordin in an interview (1983), the ship carried 'an estimated 1,500 refugees'.

73. Interview with Secretary-General (1983), as well as numerous issues of *Islamic Herald*: refer, for instance, to Vol. 4, Nos. 8–9, and Vol. 3, Nos. 10–11, p. 30.

74. MSAs throughout Australia at their meeting in Sydney in May 1984 (where the present writer was in attendance) also condemned the Tunku's secularist values. (For the Tunku's ideas on important national issues, including Islam, see also his books, (1978) and (1983).)

75. Interview with the Tunku (1983); *New Straits Times*, 21 May 1979.

76. Although initiated by the Tunku, RISEAP is not related to Perkim. It has its own governing board comprising representatives of Muslim organizations in the Asia and Pacific region. However, it can be noted that, as with Perkim, the Tunku dominated the organization until 1988.

77. It will be interesting to see the completion of the Ph.D. thesis (on Dato' Onn Ja'afar, the founder of UMNO) by Ramlah Adam who, in a discussion with this writer, claimed that the Tunku's contribution to the country has been unduly exaggerated over that of his predecessor in UMNO, Dato' Onn.

78. See the acknowledgement in Abdullah Basmeih's translation of the Qur'an (Kuala Lumpur, Jabatan Agama, Pejabat Perdana Menteri, 1980).

79. Souvenir issue marking the twentieth anniversary of the 'Qur'an Reading Competition' in Malaysia (Department of Information, Kuala Lumpur, 1978: NA P/PEN 10, p. 6).

80. There has never been a case when members of the Executive Council disagreed with the Tunku in public.

81. Interviews with Mokhtar Stork and separate discussions with a cross-section of converts in Kuala Lumpur on three occasions in 1983.

82. A high-ranking source who prefers to remain anonymous.

83. As for note 82 above. For some of the common problems faced by the converts, refer to a study by Muhammad Abdullah @ Lee Fook Ching (1982/3).

84. The Tunku confirmed this during a discussion with the author at his residence in Penang in 1983. In Chapter 2 it was noted how many of the views of the 'ultras' (those who could not get along with the Tunku) became government policy after the Tunku was succeeded by Tun Razak.

85. That the Tunku knew the Saudi royal family (and Qhadafi) quite well was stated in *Islamic Herald*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1983), p. 5. See also *The Star*, 1 November 1982.

86. The MCA, for instance, in 1983, in commemoration of the Tunku's eightieth birthday, held a big party in Tunku's honour at the MCA headquarters, which was attended by most cabinet ministers including the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

87. In an interview with the writer, two of ABIM's leaders, who requested anonymity, echoed these sentiments.

88. Cf. Muhammad Hussin Mutalib (1983), pp. 32–3. See also *New Straits Times*, 23 April 1979, for the Tunku's statement on the 'moderate' Islamic policy of Perkim.

89. Interview with Siddiq Fadhil.

90. Views of Hashim Ahmad and Md. Zakaria, Vice-President and Director of International Relations respectively, at a meeting with the author in 1982.

91. Anwar Ibrahim's victory in 1983 in the contest for the UMNO Youth Presidency against the incumbent, Suhaimi Kamarudin, achieved so soon after his entry into UMNO, was perhaps also attributed to the fact that many UMNO activists were former supporters of Anwar when the latter was ABIM President.

92. ABIM's official press release (29 March 1982), and *Risalah*, No. 2, 1982, p. 1; later reiterated by Siddiq Fadhil when he assumed the Presidency, and by Kamarudin Jaafar at a meeting with the author in 1983 and 1985 at ABIM's headquarters.

93. See, for instance, the recent book by Zainah Anwar (1987).

4

Islam, Ethnicity, and Politics since the 1970s: The PAS Challenge

THE influence and significance of Islam in Malaysian politics in general, and in Malay politics in particular, has heightened quite dramatically since the early 1970s. Apart from the *dakwah* influence described earlier, two factors have been the most important in effecting this change in the role of Islam:[1] the decade-long factional strife within PAS, and the 'Islamic' orientation of the Mahathir-led government administration. Despite attempts by the leadership of both UMNO and PAS to erase Malay communal tendencies, the ascent of Islam was, however, again subject to the strong Malay ethnic gravitational pull.

PAS: Cleavage and Challenge

The main 'contribution' of PAS to the regeneration of the Islamic ethos in Malaysia from the 1970s was its internal fragmentation. As a result of the wide publicity given by the mass media, these PAS crises served to heighten Muslim consciousness, as well as promote the Islamic factor prominently in the political affairs of the country.

Although these internal cleavages were laid wide open during the 1973–4 period, one could argue that the party, the most vocal champion of the Islamic cause since winning Kelantan and Trengganu in the 1959 election, had never been at peace since the 1964 general election—if not earlier, since 1961, when Trengganu was lost to UMNO. Three major events centring around that 1964 general election limited the party's influence among Malaysian Muslims although the party continued to be a force to reckon with in the 1960s. First was the disqualification of its President, Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy, as a candidate in the election. The second was the death of the party's Deputy President, Dr Zulkifli Mohamed, in a car accident soon after winning his parliamentary seat in the election. Thirdly, after losing Trengganu, the party reached the point of bankruptcy while ruling Kelantan (Milne, 1967; Kamarudin Jaafar, 1980; Mansoor Marican, 1976). A discussion of the role and strength of PAS before the 1964 election will help provide a better perspective of the role and influence of PAS from the 1970s.

Much has been written about the party's founding members, particularly

Dr Burhanuddin (Kamarudin Jaafar, 1980: 8; Mansoor Marican, 1976). Burhanuddin was the man responsible for bringing the Islamic dissidents out of UMNO in March 1947, less than a year after UMNO was established. He subsequently formed the Majlis Agama Tertinggi SeMalaya (MATA) or the National Supreme Islamic Council. It was from MATA that the first Islamic political party in Malaya, Hizbul Muslimin, came into being, and from Hizbul Muslimin that PAS (initially known as the Parti Islam Se-Tanah Melayu (or Pan Malayan Islamic Party, PMIP) was born, in 1951. Burhanuddin's role as a popular Islamic personality could have been far greater but for his disqualification as a candidate in the 1964 election on the grounds of his alleged financial involvement in a commercial enterprise for which he was later fined (Kamarudin Jaafar, 1980: 8; Ahmad Boestamam, 1972).

One could perhaps describe Burhanuddin as an Islamic-Malay nationalist leader: despite the difficulty, he somehow managed to combine both the ideals of Islam and ethnic Malay nationalism. This was most evident in his statements that 'Islamic politics cannot be divorced from *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*' (Kamarudin Jaafar, 1980: 182) while still maintaining the strident philosophy of 'Malaya for the Malays', although Funston argued that his involvement in politics was more nationalist-motivated than religious (Funston, 1980: 120).[2] In ways to be examined below, Burhanuddin's philosophical orientation was actually an echo of the very *raison d'être* of the party he led. These were spelt out in the PAS Constitution: first, to promote Malay as the national and sole official language; secondly, to establish a national culture with Malay culture as the core but without contradicting Islamic teachings; and thirdly, to protect the rights of the Malays in the process of achieving interethnic harmony.[3]

Burhanuddin was a prominent Malay Muslim political leader of his time although he was more a 'popular' leader than an activist one. He might have become Malaya's first Prime Minister if not for the unexpected Japanese surrender and early declaration of Indonesia's Independence. He had met Sukarno and Hatta and they had planned a joint declaration of Independence by Indonesia and Malaya, and it was obvious that Sukarno had some influence over Burhanuddin's thinking (Funston, 1980: 120). Where Islamic orientation was concerned, his sympathies lay with the reformists discussed earlier. This was understandable, as his teacher was none other than Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin. PAS would not have made significant inroads in the states of Kelantan and Trengganu if not for his contribution, a contribution cut short by his disqualification in the election. Soon after, in January 1965, he was arrested under the Internal Security Act and charged with being involved in an anti-Malaysia plot (Kamarudin Jaafar, 1980).[4] During his detention, his deputy, Dr Zulkifli Mohamed, distinguished himself as an Islamic leader as well as a sharp opposition critic of the government.

Zulkifli was a better intellectual force than Burhanuddin, and, as revealed by the party's Vice-President in the late 1950s, Hassan Adli, was considered the 'brain' of the party.[5] On numerous occasions, he even cautioned Burhanuddin against making certain statements in Parliament which

might place PAS in a poor light.[6] Zulkifli's intellectualism was understandable because of the breadth of his educational training, proficiency in Arabic, Malay, and English, and his literary (mainly journalistic and political) output, having produced at least thirteen papers on various aspects of Islam and politics during 1962 and 1963 alone. Some of the present Islamic institutions in Malaysia owe their genesis to his ideas: the International Islamic University, Islamic Bank, and Pilgrims Board.[7]

It was, however, his role as a spokesman for PAS and Islam in Parliament which is most significant to the present discussion because, in this capacity, he articulated many ideas in defence of Islam and the Malays. In 1963, for instance, he called for the streamlining of Islamic education in all English-language schools, as well as championing the cause of Malaysia as an Islamic state to be ruled by the Qur'an.[8] Having started as one of the earliest members of UMNO when it was formed in 1946, he eventually became one of its foremost critics, forever finding fault with what he considered to be the party's neglect of Islam and the Malays.[9]

Of significance to the discussion of Malay identity is that, like Burhanuddin, he too tried to fuse Islam with Malay ethnic clamourings. Hence, he echoed Burhanuddin in opposing the idea of Malaysia, in particular the inclusion of Singapore in the Federation, mainly because of his fear of the increase in the Chinese population. From his speeches stored in the National Archives (*Inventori surat-surat Zulkifli* . . .), it becomes obvious that he was one of the earliest to urge that Malay be made the main medium of instruction in all schools. Such was his influence in the party that it was only to be expected that PAS, already without Burhanuddin, was bound to face a crisis of leadership when he was killed in a car accident in 1964.

Although the party retained its grip on the state of Kelantan, its control of Trengganu state (which it won in 1959) began to wane after 1961 when some PAS activists defected to UMNO. Consequently, Trengganu was taken over by UMNO in the 1964 general election. Even within Kelantan, its strength was gradually fading because of the federal government's delaying tactics in responding to requests for aid in its development projects and for capitation grants (Milne and Mauzy, 1980: 107–11; Mansoor Marican, 1976: 213). Long disputes between the state and federal governments followed on the matter of the conditions imposed by the latter on loans. In 1967, for instance, the same strict conditions towards its repayment were applied by the federal government when it reluctantly gave M$1.5 million to Kelantan to pay the salaries of its officers. Because of its near bankruptcy, the state had no choice but to accept it. The image of PAS during that post-1964 period was further dented when UMNO tried to cast serious doubt in the minds of the Malays on the credibility of PAS leaders by resorting to Malay communal sentiments: it charged, despite insufficient evidence, that PAS had quietly sold 375,000 acres of Kelantan state land to Chinese interests at minimal cost.[10] Faced with these tactics, PAS's capacity to manage the state, as well as its views of ethnic relations in plural Malaysia, were put in question and its image in the eyes of its very own supporters debilitated and discredited.

Most significant to the present discussion is that, even when oppor-

tunities for scoring political points over UMNO (and later, the Alliance) did arise, PAS, in its desperation for Malay votes, abandoned its Islamic banner and ignored important Islamic sentiments within the community. Hence one can see the Malay–Islam dialectic again, manifested in PAS's response to UMNO's criticism of its ethnic-communal inclination. Choosing to indulge in ethnic chauvinism, PAS accused UMNO of leaning towards the Chinese and the Indians to the detriment of the Malays. Obviously, this was an echo of PAS's earlier ethnic leanings and demands: that the clause 'the country belongs to the Malays' be included in the Constitution (*Dewan Negara Reports*, 1971: 80); that UMNO had sold out Malay rights; and that non-Malays should be excluded from top political and military positions (Milne and Mauzy, 1980). This early indulgence in communal sentiments tended to minimize the party's standing in the eyes of the other non-Malay Muslims in the country.

That was the background to PAS's early ideological orientation and political strength. Bearing that background in mind, let us now discuss the situation of the party after a change of leadership which saw Mohamed Asri Muda being voted Acting President in 1964. In many ways, it may be argued that the problems faced by the party in those pre-1964 years were never fully resolved even after Asri was confirmed as President in 1971. This was one of the major conclusions arrived at by Ahmad Kamar (1984a) in his Ph.D. thesis.[11] Henceforth from the early 1970s, the stability of PAS was again put to the test. This time, however, the challenge to the party was quite different: intra-party factional strife or cleavage.

The first indication of a serious rift within the party under Asri's leadership surfaced at the party's General Assembly in 1972 when Asri dismissed PAS's Secretary-General, Abu Bakar Hamzah, at a time when PAS and UMNO leaders were discussing the possibility of the two parties working together (Funston, 1980: 245; Mauzy, 1983: 75–84). Asri and the party's leader in Kelantan, Ishak Lotfi, were subsequently openly accused of corruption by a group of PAS leaders. The challenge led to the group's expulsion from the party (Funston, 1980: 281–2).

PAS in the Barisan Nasional and the Identity Struggle

The breaking point for PAS came in June 1974, when Asri, after agreeing to collaborate with UMNO on many issues of mutual benefit to both parties, decided to bring PAS officially into the Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition government formed that year by the Alliance government led by Tun Abdul Razak. There was actually an earlier mandate given to Asri by the party for a coalition with UMNO in 1972—out of 352 votes, 143 opposed it, 19 abstained, 190 were in favour (Alias Mohamed, 1978: 170; Salim Osman, 1979: 67; Mauzy, 1983: 75–84).[12] However, many key party stalwarts, such as Abu Bakar Hamzah (Secretary-General), Amaludin Darus (PAS Senator for 15 years), and Ahmad Fakhruddin (former President of the party's Youth Wing), left the party. Some party members for the first time even voted for either the Parti Rakyat (People's Party) or stood as Independent candidates against the Barisan Nasional in the gen-

eral election held a few months after PAS became a Barisan Nasional member (Mauzy, 1983: 75–84; Funston, 1980: 294). Abu Bakar Hamzah charged Asri with '*kekurangan modal*' (literally, 'no more ideas or substance to sell'), only to be rebutted by Asri that 'merging' with UMNO was meant to achieve Malay unity (Ahmad Kamar, 1984a: Chapter 5), demonstrating yet again that PAS, in spite of its Islamic ideals, could not totally discard its Malay ethnic mould; that ensuring Malay dominance was more important than spreading Islamic humanistic and universal principles.

The government's many concessions to the party, including appointment of its leaders to senior posts like Cabinet Ministers (Asri became Minister of Land and Regional Development, and Hassan Adli, Minister of Local Government and of the Federal Territory) and ambassadors (Yusuf Rawa became Ambassador to Iran) and ensuring that the 'Islamic view' of PAS was represented in numerous government and quasi-government boards and institutions, help explain the increasing assertiveness of Islam then, but did not help to heal the wounds of many PAS members resulting from Asri's move. On the contrary, since that decision in 1974, at every PAS Annual General Assembly, the party's partnership with the Barisan Nasional has been one of the most contentious issues among delegates. A major bone of contention was the charge that UMNO and the government belittled PAS's role in the coalition,[13] and that under UMNO's leadership, Malay dominance received a higher priority than Islam.

The problem worsened in 1977 when PAS, despite being a component of the National Front government, rejected the government's nominee, Mohammad Nasir, as Chief Minister (Menteri Besar) of Kelantan state. Of the 21 Executive Council members belonging to PAS, 13 supported the motion of 'no-confidence' in Muhammad Nasir and the legality of the government nomination was even challenged in court.[14] The tension that ensued between Malay supporters of both UMNO and PAS on this issue could only be cooled down by the declaration of a state of emergency by the Federal government.[15] After further battles in court and counter-insinuations from both parties, the government introduced a parliamentary bill in November of that year, placing Kelantan under Federal rule.[16] Disgusted, and faced with the threat of expulsion from the Front unless the party disciplined its members who had voted against the bill, PAS immediately withdrew from the government. The decision widened the rifts within the party, especially among its leadership. Some of its leaders (such as Hassan Adli) who refused to resign from the government, were sacked from the party (Funston, 1980; Yahya Ismail, 1977).

Sensing a rare opportunity, the government capitalized on PAS's problems by announcing a snap state election for Kelantan in March and a general (federal) election in July 1978. Muhammad Nasir, encouraged by Tun Razak's public endorsement of his leadership in Kelantan, formed a rival breakaway party, Barisan Jamaah Islamiah Malaysia (BERJASA) or the Islamic Front of Malaysia. PAS, in disarray, was soundly defeated, including Asri (in July federal elections) in the constituency of Padang Terap, Kedah. The party even lost Kelantan state, its strongest base which it had ruled continuously since 1959 (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 295),

managing to retain only 2 seats in the 36-seat Kelantan State Assembly. A similarly dismal performance was registered by the party at parliamentary level: it was returned in only 5 parliamentary seats of the 87 it contested in that 1978 election, and only 9 out of 203 state seats.

A new dimension that may have contributed to the PAS defeat was the 'co-option' of Muhammad Nasir's BERJASA party into the Barisan Nasional and the splitting of votes between UMNO-supported BERJASA and PAS supporters. Although PAS still managed to garner 40.3 per cent of the total votes in seats it stood for in Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, and Trengganu, BERJASA took away 11 seats which were traditionally strongholds of PAS. Significantly, Asri, in the midst of these defeats, was openly challenged by some PAS leaders who regarded his leadership as a liability to the party, particularly to its Islamic image, as well as a source of its disunity.[17]

The year 1978 was also significant for PAS in that it heralded a major transformation in the nature and composition of the party leadership—from one which emphasized Malay dominance to one which championed the Islamic identity. Shortly before the election that year, two senior leaders of ABIM, Ustadz Fadhil Nor (Deputy President) and Ustadz Nakha'ie Ahmad (Vice-President), joined PAS. They were followed by another prominent Islamic activist, Ustadz Yahya Othman, a Muslim scholar with a Master's degree who had been brought up and educated in Mecca and was Anwar Ibrahim's predecessor as the representative of World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY) for the Asia–Pacific region. They decided that it was time for them to heed the appeals of PAS members that they assume leadership positions within the party in preparation for the 1978 election. Although they were later defeated, these new leaders saw the need to revamp the party machinery and ensure a more effective, Islamic-oriented leadership. Out of these situations emerged the *ulama*, the group of religious leaders who played only a secondary role under Asri's leadership. The Majlis Shura Ulama (Consultative Council of Religious Scholars) was formed, charged with the responsibility of putting into operation two aspects of decision-making of the party, namely the right of the *ulama* to lead the party, and a collective and consultative (*shura*) form of arriving at party decisions. This new decision-making concept was significant because it marked the beginning of a more united and hence stronger PAS, which also tended to be more Islamic in outlook.

Given the importance of this new development in the party's leadership and identity struggle, it is necessary to discuss the background of the new leaders. Notable among these *ulama* were Ustadz Abdul Hadi Awang and Ustadz Nik Abdul Aziz. Ustadz Hadi, after graduating from Medina University, went on to secure an MA degree in Islamic *shar'iah* from Al-Azhar University. In the early 1970s he was the ABIM head in Trengganu and, soon after winning his seat in Trengganu in the just concluded election, was elected into the party's Majlis Shura. Ustadz Nik Aziz, also an MA Islamic law graduate from Al-Azhar University, is the son of the well-known Islamic scholar, Haji Nik Mat, and, since 1967, had been returned at every election as a PAS candidate in Kelantan. A respected Islamic figure

in his own right, he had also been a long-term Executive member of the National Fatwa Council of Malaysia. Other younger personalities, already described earlier, include former ABIM leaders, Fadhil Nor—made one of two Vice-Presidents after the 1978 election—Ustadz Nakha'ie, and Yahya Othman. Amongst the non-*ulama* leaders, three Executive Committee members stood out quite prominently: Yusuf Rawa (remembered for his defeat of Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the Kedah elections in 1969 and a former Ambassador to Iran when PAS was in the Barisan Nasional), Mustapha Ali, and Hassan Shukri.

For Asri, his days were numbered when PAS was routed by UMNO in the 1978 elections. His influence further deteriorated when, after bringing PAS out of the Barisan Nasional, he later suggested, in late 1980, that PAS should co-operate with yet another party that it had long opposed. This was the Chinese-based Democratic Action Party (DAP) with which Asri had hoped to work in combined opposition to the government's Barisan Nasional (*New Straits Times*, 30 January 1981),[18] a move seen by many members as sacrificing PAS's Islamic–Malay interests. In what was an expected development, at the PAS Annual General Assembly in 1981, the old guard in the party, including both Asri and his deputy, Abu Bakar Umar, were openly challenged by a younger new guard when nominations were opened for leadership positions in the party. In discussions with Yusuf Rawa, Ustadz Hadi, and Mustapha Ali, the present writer was given the impression that the challenge to Asri's presidency was later dropped as a tactical move, but all of Asri's allies were deposed by this new guard. The new guard included Fadhil Nor and Nakha'ie Ahmad, Hassan Shukri, and Mustapha Ali, the last two being the Secretary-General and Youth head respectively. Although still its leader, Asri faced serious problems. Not only were many PAS members defecting to BERJASA, Gerakan, and UMNO, many of those who remained were hostile to his leadership style and ideological approach to Islam.

Asri may have sensed the pressure for a change of his traditional ethnic-communal approach to an Islamic-oriented one, as indicated in his presidential address at that Assembly when he conceded some of the failings in the party's approach to Islam (*Straits Times*, 20 April 1981). In early 1982, all the members of Asri's faction failed to secure party nomination for the approaching 1982 general election and a realignment of the anti-Asri faction immediately took shape (*New Straits Times*, 22 July 1981).[19] It was during this time that names like Yusuf Rawa, Hadi Awang, Nik Aziz, and Anwar Ibrahim were mentioned as possible successors to Asri (*Straits Times*, 22 July 1981). This came at a time when Anwar Ibrahim was hinting at the possibility of his retirement as ABIM's President, but later, to the disappointment of many younger and educated members of PAS, chose UMNO instead (Crouch, 1982: 41). Their disappointment may be understood and justified because Anwar and other ABIM leaders were reported to have campaigned for PAS in the 1978 election, though rather discreetly in few selected constituencies only (Salim Osman, 1979: 69–71). After PAS failed again in the 1982 election, despite a percentage increase in votes for State Assemblies (compared to the previous election),[20] Asri grudgingly re-

signed, charging the new leaders with plotting to overthrow him and aiming to change the party into a revolutionary Islamic movement like that in Iran under Imam Khomeini (*Utusan Malaysia*, 2 April 1982; *Mastika*, January 1983: 8–12).

A New, Revitalized PAS

Asri admitted that for some time, the major sections of the party, such as its Youth, Secretariat, and Ulama sections, had not been working well with him (*Mastika*, January 1983: 8–12). This Ulama Section is important to a discussion of PAS's identity politics, because it was composed of men who not only possessed better Islamic credentials than Asri and played a major part in his downfall, but were leaders who could match Asri's forte: oratorical skills and 'charisma'. In addition, these were also the leaders whose ideas and personalities pushed for the Islamic variable *vis-à-vis* the ethnic one in Malay political identity, although they have not been fully successful in integrating the two factors of the dialectic. They included Hadi Awang, Fadhil Nor, and Nik Aziz. With the members yearning for solutions to the party's falling image, these new Islamic-oriented leaders quickly became an alternative focus of loyalty. In an attempt to canvass support from sympathizers, principally Malays, Hadi Awang (who later became Vice-President), together with Yusuf Rawa (President) and Mustapha Ali (Youth Head), went far and wide to bring their case to the Malays. Besides a concerted effort locally to offer the PAS alternative vision to government, the new leadership even travelled abroad, particularly to meet the sizeable number of Malay students in the Gulf States, Britain, the United States, and Australia.

In discussions with the author in late 1982 in Sydney, the three-member PAS delegation of Yusuf Rawa, Hadi Awang and Mustapha Ali stated that although it was the 'younger blood' who occupied most of the leadership positions, the policies of PAS would be determined by the *ulama* comprising men like Hadi Awang, Nik Aziz, and Fadhil Nor, thereby institutionalizing the dominance of the *ulama* in the party leadership. Fadhil Nor, an influential leader, upon assuming the post of Deputy President and asked whether the newly reformed party would follow the goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran, replied that PAS would follow any country or policy which adhered to the three main sources of Islamic law—the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Ijtihad (informed opinions of the *ulama*) (*Mastika*, January 1983: 17).[21] At least three of its new leaders, Nik Aziz, Mustapha Ali, and Nakha'ie Ahmad have officially visited Iran at the invitation of the Islamic Republic. Upon his return in 1983, Nakha'ie was full of support for the revolution and the achievements made by Iran since the return of Imam Khomeini in 1979. He did, however, indicate his reservations over the leadership succession issue in Shi'ite ideology whereby Caliph Ali is deemed to be the rightful successor to Prophet Muhammad, rather than the three other *khalifah* who preceded Ali, as accepted by Sunni Muslims.[22]

Whether or not the 1979 revolution in Iran speeded Asri's downfall or drove the new PAS's *ulama* to remodel PAS's struggle after that of the

new Iranian regime under the *mullah*, is uncertain. However, in interviews in late 1982 and early 1983, Asri emphatically charged that the new PAS leaders were 'obsessed with the idea of Shi'ite rule and would adopt the Iranian system by violent means if necessary' (*Asiaweek*, 3 December 1982) and that 'they are too radical . . . and highly dangerous to the Muslims as well as to others' (*Utusan Melayu*, 27 April 1983). The new party leadership denied Asri's charges, but newly elected party President Yusuf Rawa conceded that 'perhaps we have been inspired by the developments in Iran' (*Straits Times*, 4 January 1983). In an interview with the author in October 1982, Yusuf Rawa (who was Ambassador to Iran in 1975), while singing praises for the revolution, said that the Iranian experience could not be transferred wholesale to the Malaysian context.

For Asri, in desperation, the need to mobilize whatever remaining support he could muster, led to his formation of what came to be known as the 'Group of 13', comprising the former old guard of PAS. Their task was to wrest control of the leadership again. When this attempt failed and they were expelled from PAS for breaching party rules, Asri announced the formation of a new party, the Hizbul Muslimin or HAMIM (Islamic Party), in March 1983 (*Utusan Malaysia*, 10 and 14 March 1983). Perhaps one of the gravest mistakes committed by Asri's group was their criticism of Nik Aziz, an *'alim* of some repute and a much respected Islamic personality in the country. Nik Aziz, as mentioned earlier, was one of the longest-serving members of the National Fatwa Council which makes religious rulings on important issues for the Muslim community. The meagre support that Asri received—only 150 close friends and relatives came to the founding meeting of HAMIM (*Utusan Malaysia*, 22 August 1984—and the fact that he was already 60 years old, indicated that the long-term prospects for both HAMIM and himself were questionable. Whatever political initiatives he may have in mind (he joined UMNO in 1989), Asri's political future must necessarily be dated. All earlier attempts by breakaway Malay parties in the past—since the 1940s—have ended in failure; some may have survived longer than others but very few thrived longer than the period between general elections. For HAMIM, there is the added difficulty in the competition it has to face from earlier and more established parties, all of which have declared their support, albeit in different degrees, for Islam—PAS, UMNO, and BERJASA.

The 'Islamic State' Rekindled

For the new PAS leadership under the *ulama*, it was time to rekindle the whole issue of the 'Islamic State' since this is calculably one of the approaches which UMNO is ill-equipped to adopt to improve its image or identity among Muslims, given the party's ethnic-nationalist *raison d'être*. This alternative vision has been announced on numerous occasions since 1983, an expected development since Yusuf Rawa had, in 1982, signalled the party's plan to launch an aggressive campaign to 'reform the Muslim community as a basis for the transformation into an Islamic country'.[23] In line with such a call, PAS invariably rejected the secular nature of the

existing Malaysian state, where religion has no significant role in the politics of the country, and where man-made laws predominate over God-made laws. In spite of the difficulties of implementing the laws in a bimodal, plural context like Malaysia and the nihilistic response from non-Muslims in general, the cultural and symbolic appeal that an Islamic state has upon some Malays—especially those in the *kampung*—cannot be underestimated. In the words of Nash (1974: 98):

> What the symbolism of the demand for an Islamic State does on the cultural and psychic sides of politics is to give PAS an élan that is lacking in UMNO. It gives pride to the ordinary kampung dweller in that his belief system is shown to contain the ingredients from which a better, more hopeful, and morally superior economic and political system will rise.

Since this issue was much highlighted by the revamped PAS and knowledge of its main features is still not well understood by many, a discussion of the salient characteristics of what an 'Islamic State' entails and the position of non-Muslims in such a state is in order.

Islamic State: Theoretical Features

Supported by guide-lines in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, numerous Muslim scholars, such as Muhamed S. El-Awa (1980), Ajijola (1977), Enayat (1982), Ismail R. al-Faruqi (1983, 1986), and Maududi (1976), have argued for the relevance and equitable nature of Islamic doctrines and principles in the governance of the state, and this includes matters of Muslim–non-Muslim relations. In order not to pre-judge the issue, it may be useful first to recapitulate briefly the ideological foundations and guide-lines of an 'Islamic State'.

Western (secular) political theory defines the state as consisting of four elements: territory, people with common features, government, and sovereignty.[24] Such a state is the very antithesis of the Islamic state. The latter can have a 'territory' but this is not essential. Its citizens need not all be Muslim; in fact, the history of all earlier Islamic states indicates that their citizens have hardly ever been all Muslim or comprised only people from a homogeneous ethnic community. What is important is that the citizens include all those who agree to live under the auspices of the Islamic state because they approve of its order and policies. The Islamic state never binds people to its citizenship against their will. They are free to move out, together with all their people, relatives, dependants, and everything they possess. The Islamic state derives its constitution from the 'Covenant of Madinah (Medina)' which Prophet Muhammad granted to the city upon his emigration there in the year 622. The main features of this Constitution (*Al Dustur al-Madinah*) include the following: first, the replacement of tribal and ethnic ties by the ties of Islam, with all Muslims categorized as one (ideological) 'nation' or *umma*; secondly, all decisions must be guided by the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, as well as by mutual consultation and consensus between the rulers and the people, or *shura*; thirdly, the principles of equity and justice are to be equally applied to all in the state, both Muslim and non-Muslim (Muhammad Hussin Mutalib, 1988).

A significant difference between an Islamic state and a secular state is the concept of *khalifah* (vicegerency) which replaces the Western idea of sovereignty: the ruler or rulers are not vested with powers other than those delegated by God, who alone is considered the Master and Sovereign of the Universe; and legislation can only be made within the Divine limits and framework laid down by God (*Hudud* Allah); the power to rule belongs to the whole community of believers and not to a particular person or class. In addition, rulers are chosen on the basis of their piety and capability and obedience to them is conditional upon their adherence to Islamic principles; and every individual is held personally answerable to God for his or her actions. Hence, the Islamic State is a morally based State and politics and religion are inextricably interwoven.

These are some of the governing principles of the Islamic state, a state which existed in its classic form during Prophet Muhammad's rule of Medina. Today, such a state in its true form does not exist, although there are attempts by countries such as Iran and Pakistan towards this goal. The Iranian experiment could have been a useful testing case of an Islamic state existing in this moment of history. However, its seven-year war with Iraq, which 'ended' only in 1988, has deprived the world of the opportunity to test the feasibility of such a model in a modern-day environment. Because of the absence of such a model, it is not surprising to find Islamic organizations and political parties in Malaysia adopting an evasive approach whenever details of the operational aspects of the Islamic state are discussed. Even PAS, as the only self-declared Islamic political party in Malaysia, has tended to harp on generalities and offer few convincing examples of how such a state may be plausible in a plural society such as Malaysia where the proportion of Muslims and non-Muslims is about equal.

Non-Muslims in an Islamic State

What is the status and position of non-Muslims in an Islamic state? To start with—and again here we are still explaining the features at a theoretical level—whoever accepts the policies of the Islamic state, no matter to what religion, race, nation, or country he or she belongs, can join the community that runs the Islamic state. Those who do not accept the policies, however, are not entitled to have any say in shaping the major programmes of the state. They still can live within the confines of the state as non-Muslim citizens or *dhimmi*. A *dhimmi*'s life, property, and honour will be fully protected, and if he is capable of any service or contribution, his services will be sought and acknowledged. In addition, the non-Muslims are regarded as constituting another *umma* on par with the Muslim *umma*. It will be given full and equal rights, and the freedom to realize itself according to its own legacy and genius. It can have its own religion, social institutions, laws and courts to administer them, language and culture, ambiance and schools; in other words, it will be allowed to enjoy all that is necessary to perpetuate itself.[25] However, non-Muslims are required to pay some form of tax (*jizyah*) to the state in lieu of military service which, because of their rejection of Islam as the ideology of the State, they are not compelled

to render; however, they may serve if they so desire. Non-Muslims who choose to live as citizens of the Muslim 'nation' will be protected from foreign aggression as well as from internal subversion and suppression. In this way, the Islamic state is thus not an exclusively Muslim state, but a federation of *umma* of different religions and cultures, committed to live harmoniously and in peace with one another, under the leadership of Islamic leaders.

The principle which makes all this possible (without contradicting anything that has been said so far) is that of personal freedom and justice. The Islamic attitude towards the non-believer is governed by the religious foundations of humanism in that all men (and women) are ontologically the creatures of God and all of them are equal partakers of the religion of God; the revelation of universalism in that all men (and women) are recognized as possessors of the same divine revelation; and the identification of Islam with much of the historical revelation of Judaism and Christianity. Insofar as religious conviction is concerned, that is entirely a personal affair; each person is free to convince and be convinced, and no form of coercive proselytization to others is permitted. Should the non-believer not be convinced of the truth of Islam, he is entitled to an undiminished degree of respect to retain his own ideology, but he cannot contest the Islamic nature of the state. In Muslim–non-Muslim relations, the Islamic state does not allow any encroachment of one *umma* over another. Its duty is the same towards all: to keep the peace, to run public services, to defend the security of the state, and to protect the rights and privileges of the persons and their *umma* which make up the state.

Finally, to indicate again the importance that Islam attaches to the factor of justice and fairness to all, including non-Muslims, the following are some relevant quotations from Prophet Muhammad and verses from the Qur'an. Some of these were noted by (1981 and 1983) Abdul Rahman I. Dol.[26]

'Whoever persecuted a *dhimmi* or usurps his rights, or took something from him, I shall be a complainant against him on the Day of Resurrection'; 'one who hurts a *dhimmi*, hurts me, and one who hurts me, hurts Allah'; (*Hadith*); and, 'Let not the hatred of a people incite you to act unjustly' and 'verily Allah enjoins to do justice and kindness. O ye who believe, be upholders of justice, bearers of witness for Allah's sake, though it be against yourselves—or parents or near relations' (Qur'an).

The above exhortations, and the more general guide-lines governing Muslim–non-Muslim relations, are meant to indicate that, at least at the ideological and theoretical level, there are sufficient provisions in Islam guaranteeing the rights, safety, and security of the *dhimmi*. The question here is, if the above guide-lines were to be applied to the Malaysian context, would this 'Islamic alternative' to the current ethnic-based approach adopted by the government to resolving problems of integration in Malaysia, be feasible? This and related questions and issues will be taken up in the final chapter.

At this juncture, let us again return to the discussion on PAS. The sig-

nificance of PAS's new tactics for reaffirming Islam and Islamic identity in Malaysian politics since the early 1970s, may be seen in at least three main ways. First, the newly structured leadership managed to pose a serious challenge to the UMNO regime. This it did by the tactic of circumventing and outbidding its rival by offering a new style of Islamic leadership and a new non-ethnic approach in propagating its Islamic goal. Secondly, this new approach to an Islam without its ethnic cultural bias—at least as declared by PAS—not only created a lot of excitement and anxiety, but also heralded a new type of ideological Malay identity struggle. Thirdly, its membership in the coalition government, though relatively short, resulted in a rise in Islamic consciousness in the country because PAS's leaders used the opportunity given them (as members of quasi-government Islamic institutions) to defend and propagate Islam and the interests of Muslims. Let us now elaborate and analyse the above three PAS contributions to Malaysian Islam.

The Quest for a New Islamic Identity

While continuing to charge the government with laxity—and even collusion (*New Straits Times* and *Utusan Malaysia*, 10 March 1983)—in redressing social ills, the new PAS has started to single out ethnic Malay nationalism for attack. Unlike in the past, PAS has now condemned UMNO's narrow communalistic outlook, associating it with the notion of *assabiyah*—racial chauvinism or communal exclusiveness—which is much frowned upon in Islam.[27] Thus, in effect, the traditional UMNO–PAS ideological divide has taken on a new twist; the new PAS approach to a more universal Islam has put UMNO on the defensive about its very *raison d'être*. UMNO was quick to charge PAS with deliberately interpreting nationalism narrowly by equating it with *assabiyah* (Mohamed Abu Bakar, 1980). Ironically, this UMNO defence was similar to the one given by the former President of PAS, Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy, when he defended his involvement in the Malay nationalist ethnic struggle, in a speech delivered in 1954:

> Many people are confused with the word *assabiyah*. They equate it with nationalism and they thus say there is no nationalism in Islam. . . . Actually *assabiyah* connotes fanaticism or parochial tendencies or communalism, and these are not the same with the broader interpretation of nationalism which is supported in Al-Qur'an (Kamarudin Jaafar, 1980: 97–8).

In any case, during the present writer's discussions in 1983 with Yusuf Rawa, Hadi Awang, and Mustapha Ali, it became clear that the new leaders were bent on erasing this nationalist, Malay-first image that Mohamed Asri had earlier cultivated for the party,[28] because Malays were better off economically, and Malay-educated youth were showing increasing interest in Islam. While conceding that this new course was fraught with difficulties given PAS's traditional communal image, 'they seemed determined to embark on a course of wooing non-Malay support for the party by laying emphasis on issues of justice and equality for all communities in line with Islamic injunctions. Consequent upon this new emphasis, these leaders even introduced new slogans and symbols; criticisms against anti-Islamic and

oppressive elements were translated into political vocabulary never used before—*mustakbirin* (wealthy), *mustadzafin* (powerless), *jahilliyah* (ignorant), *taghut* (corrupt), *saghirin* (mean), and *ghafilin* (heedless)—aimed, among other motives, at indicating their Islamic orientation and aligning such an orientation to developments in other parts of the Muslim world where such vocabulary has been used. The party also seized upon such themes of equality, justice, and fairness as the basis of societal order, although its explanation of these terms continues to be at the level of conjectures rather than through well-defined, analytical, and feasible means and perspectives.

Discussions with these PAS stalwarts also afforded some idea to the present writer of the other principles which have since guided the new leadership. One major tactic that the party has decided to adopt yet again is to increase its criticisms of the government's 'Islamization' programmes. Hence, on many occasions in 1984, the party habitually dismissed such programmes as 'cosmetic', 'piecemeal', and 'inconsequential', and not aimed at implementing Islamic principles in the governance of the state (*Straits Times*, 12 April 1984; *Utusan Malaysia*, 30 August 1984). It also criticized the absence in the Federal Constitution of any provision for the Qur'an and Sunnah to be made the chief source of public law in Malaysia; called upon the government to replace the secular system of education with an Islamic education system; chastised the government for implementing policies which led to immorality, blind pursuit of materialism, and poverty, and called for Islamic laws to be made applicable also to non-Muslims (*Straits Times*, 12 April 1984).[29]

It has also become clear that the new leadership has intensified its primary activities through numerous channels and agencies. Besides the usual grassroots programmes like *usrah* and prayer sessions, there has been an increase in *ceramah* (political rally-cum-dialogue in closed environments), and more rapport with religious teachers such as the *tok guru* and *lebai*, and the *imam* of mosques in the rural areas. Highly respected in traditional Malay society because of their religious knowledge and piety, these traditional religious élites may now be even more receptive to PAS since the newly reformed PAS leadership consists not merely of politicians but of their own kind, the *ulama*. In addition, the party has upgraded its channels of communication, via the dissemination of religious talks and political speeches through cassette tapes and pamphlets, and a more open dialogue with non-Malays and non-Muslims throughout the peninsula. This new determination has to do with both the question of a new approach and the desire of the leadership to cultivate the confidence of non-Malays, being mindful of the party's future political survival. A large number of trips to student centres and university campuses with large Malay student populations in Europe, the United States, and Australia has also been planned to explain to these potential members and sympathizers the changes now being worked out by the party leadership. This new vigorous tactic of winning support for the PAS struggle was made clear when, in answer to UMNO criticisms that PAS was even more eager to echo the Iranian revolutionary experiment, Ustadz Hadi remarked that 'we go everywhere,

we see everybody and we talk about all things' (*New Straits Times*, 13 November 1983).

Relations with local Muslim bodies, like ABIM, Perkim, and Darul Arqam, are not expected to be close because these bodies, particularly the first two, are now seen as pro-UMNO in orientation. The author's discussions with both Anwar Ibrahim and Nakha'ie Ahmad (then Vice-President of PAS), however, revealed that Anwar Ibrahim and his former ABIM colleagues now in PAS were still on good terms with each other—they still embrace when they meet—although Nakha'ie was quick to say that 'officially, we have nothing to do with each other'. Beginning in 1984, relations with non-Malays have seen a radical transformation as PAS gears itself for a long campaign to attract their support, aware that it can no longer depend entirely on its traditional rural Malay votes. Finally, PAS has decided to counter UMNO's strategies more aggressively since UMNO, in an attempt to discredit PAS and make its presence increasingly irrelevant, has decided to employ Islamic values in the administration of the state. (More of this UMNO strategy will be discussed in the next chapter.)

During this author's discussion with Ustadz Nakha'ie (who in 1989 moved over to UMNO), he reiterated the party's seriousness in wanting to replace its ethnic, nationalist image with a 'more Islamic one'.[30] He also remarked that the party intends to engage in a more assertive programme of action to woo the non-Malays/non-Muslims, especially the Chinese. Some analysis here of the probable underlying motives of PAS in embarking on such a move is necessary.

One major consideration could be the need to resolve the perennial problems faced by PAS at every election, namely the dearth of support from the non-Muslims. This support may be crucial in deciding the victory or defeat of UMNO or PAS candidates in marginal constituencies where both parties have about the same proportion of the Malay vote. In the 1982 election in Kelantan, for instance, the ten odd constituency seats which were won by UMNO could have gone to PAS if not for the non-Malay voters siding with UMNO, because the victory margin was only about 500 votes in each case (*Utusan Malaysia*, 25 October 1982). This point has been further driven home by the revelation of a study by Vasil (1972: 38–40) that in constituencies where non-Malay voters accounted for more than 10 per cent of the electorate, UMNO had a distinct advantage, whereas PAS generally fared better where the non-Malay voters constituted less than 10 per cent.

Although the political strength of PAS, to a large extent, depended on its capacity to better represent Malay interests than UMNO, for the future, PAS must secure some degree of support from the non-Malays. Until and unless their support is forthcoming, PAS can never hope to become a credible party acceptable to a wider cross-section of Malaysians. However, given the general non-Muslim rejection of the party in the elections, this new experiment will obviously be a formidable task, if not an impossible one, when weighed against the salience of the ethnic factor in the Malay psyche and in Malaysian society in general. This is a big gamble for the party because if its Malay supporters and members are not sufficiently

persuaded, they might regard this new approach as a threat to Malay identity in general, and to PAS's traditional image of protecting Malay interests in particular. In this regard, PAS has tended to resort either to communal politics cloaked under religious symbolism, or to incorporating its different ideals and political pursuits into one all-encompassing slogan. This latter tactic was evident in the party's election slogan for the 1978 general election: '*Menyelamatkan Agama, Bangsa dan Tanahair*' ('To safeguard Islam, Malays and Nation').

PAS Not Yet Past

PAS's defeat by UMNO in the 1978 election and the tension and fragmentation that have beset the party since then, have not led to PAS becoming a past phenomenon. On the contrary, instead of paralysing the party, the change-over to a new leadership in the early 1980s has led to an increase of attention, if not support, for the party, making UMNO more vulnerable and more determined to revise its secular orientation in favour of Islam. For once, the hitherto 'fence-sitters'—those who have sympathized with the overall thrust of PAS but have refrained from getting directly involved because of squabbles within the party and because of the authoritarian style of Mohamed Asri[31]—have tended to support the new leaders, if assurances from the leadership may be accepted as sufficient evidence.[32] One could offer other explanations for this renewed sense of confidence on the part of the 'reformed' PAS. The opportunity for PAS members and sympathizers to be led by a new breed of leaders, is one such explanation. As it turned out, Ustadz Abdul Hadi's many *ceramah* have drawn huge crowds both in Malaysia and at Malaysian student centres overseas, as this author himself has witnessed, and his taped speeches have been in great demand.[33] This was despite the fact that his message (and that of PAS) is not a new one: the demand for an Islamic state and Islamic sovereignty in Malaysia, however nebulous and untenable these may be to its critics. The other tactic has been to project PAS as the only remaining voice and conscience of the Malay Muslims in Malaysia. By this is meant that, since the *dakwah* organizations either have been kept relatively quiet by the government's regulatory measures, or have preferred to temporarily insulate their activities from the political arena, only PAS can be depended upon by Muslims to represent their interests, particularly in putting pressure to bear on the government.

Yet another explanation for the continuing influence of PAS among Malays, particularly in the rural areas, could lie in the government's rapid modernization programmes in states like Kelantan and Trengganu, former PAS strongholds, where the building of hotels and supermarkets and the consumer culture that has ensued, have angered many Malays who have been accustomed to a rural and 'traditional' way of life. The strategy of PAS in these states in emphasizing the loss of Malay Muslim identity and cultural values, has had a great appeal to many rural Malays who have found themselves deprived of their traditional means of livelihood because of the government's rapid modernization efforts (Chandra Muzaffar, 1982:

86–106). Furthermore, the respectability of Hadi Awang in Trengganu and Nik Aziz in Kelantan, as well as the youthful vigour of Al-Azhar University graduates Fadhil Nor and Nakha'ie Ahmad in Kedah—which, despite being Mahathir's home-state, witnessed a sizeable anti-government demonstration in 1974—have contributed to the continuing appeal of PAS to Malays, especially in the rural areas.[34]

In the 1982 general election, at a time when the party was embroiled in an internal leadership conflict, compared to its poor 1978 performance, PAS won an additional 6 seats (8 in Kelantan and 5 in Trengganu, both with about 90 per cent Malay majority) at the State Assembly level while retaining its 5 seats in the Federal Parliament. The 46.5 per cent total votes it received (compared to 52.8 per cent for UMNO) from the electorate in Kelantan and Trengganu (Chandra Muzaffar, 1982: 86–106) naturally raised considerable concern in Kuala Lumpur. Out of a total of 36 State Assembly seats PAS contested in Kelantan (a state it controlled from 1959 to 1977) it won 10, gaining close to 50 per cent of the popular votes cast, and in 10 seats won by UMNO, the margin was less that 500 votes. By comparison, in the 1978 election in Kelantan, PAS won only 2 of the 36 seats it contested. In fact, the leadership's reading of the situation was that its 1982 electoral gains would have been even greater had it not been for Asri's leadership (*Utusan Malaysia*, 25 October 1982).[35]

In order to gauge the extent of PAS's performance in the 1982 elections *vis-à-vis* UMNO (and the National Front government), it is useful to refer to results in earlier elections. After winning 43.5 per cent of the total Malay vote in the 1969 election, the PAS electoral record has seen a gradual decline. In 1974, PAS won only about 20 per cent (13 seats compared to 62 won by UMNO); this performance must, however, be seen against the backdrop of the party's membership of the government's Barisan Nasional coalition government. The real test of its credibility and political strength has to be the 1978 election, when the party was out of the coalition. It lost quite miserably. This is clear from its share of the vote in that election; securing only 5 parliamentary and 9 state seats, PAS won a dismal 14.9 per cent of the total votes, which was even less than that obtained by the DAP (18.5 per cent). At the state level, PAS strongholds in Kelantan and Trengganu were lost to UMNO; PAS only managed to win 9 out of the 203 seats it contested (Ismail Kassim, 1979; Crouch, 1982).

Elections come and go but irrespective of the outcome—with UMNO consistently maintaining its edge over PAS—the battle for Malay legitimacy goes on ceaselessly between these two major Malay-based parties. For example, as soon as the 1982 election results became known, both parties were embroiled in a bitter controversy on the 'two-*imam*' issue and the *kafir-mengkafir* slander of one another.

PAS's Identity Struggle: The 'UMNO an Un-Islamic Party' Charge

At the centre of the above controversy were charges made by some PAS leaders that UMNO was a *kafir* (infidel) party. From an Islamic standpoint, this was a most serious charge, tantamount to saying that UMNO was un-Islamic and hence calling in question the latter's moral right and legitimacy to govern. Given the effect of the charge on UMNO's legitimacy in Muslim eyes, UMNO was quick to retaliate by counter-charging PAS with not acting as an Islamic party. This UMNO–PAS divide was exacerbated by the decision taken by some PAS members in 1984, not to pray behind an UMNO *imam* (prayer leader), again on the alleged charge of the un-Islamic orientation of UMNO. Although the issue started during his last months in PAS, Mohamed Asri claimed that he was in total disagreement with the tactic of calling UMNO leaders and members *kafir*.[36] This claim was justified because Asri even pledged police action to bring those responsible to justice (*Straits Times*, 4 August 1982). From UMNO's point of view, the man to single out was Ustadz Abdul Hadi Awang, PAS's Vice-President, whom UMNO charged with being responsible for the two-*imam* incident and, consequently, causing disunity among the Malays (*Utusan Malaysia*, 29 August 1984). This charge was not categorically denied by PAS.

Although PAS allegations that UMNO is *kafir* were not new as they had surfaced in the 1960s, this was more worrisome than in the past, when it became obvious that there were intense splits along party lines in the Malay community in the rural areas. At stake was not only the credibility and legitimacy of the parties, but Malay-Muslim unity and solidarity in the country. Mass (*jemaah*) prayers, which are important in fostering the sense of Muslim brotherhood, began to be conducted separately by the two groups of supporters and PAS rallies throughout the country attracted major interest. Grassroot supporters, taking a cue from their leaders, were soon engaged in bitter, condemnatory verbal attacks and counter-attacks of infidelity (*kafir*). As if that was not enough, both PAS and UMNO supporters even talked of doing things never previously contemplated: burying their dead in separate cemeteries, refusing to eat food cooked by rival supporters, and breaking up marriages, all because of their allegiance to different parties, although both are Muslim.

The intensity of the PAS attack generated an angry response from the government, which denounced PAS as a deviationist party comprised of fanatics and extremists. The government also responded with arrests under the Internal Security Act. Prime Minister and UMNO President Dr Mahathir Mohamad, clearly irked by PAS's tauntings, in November 1984, challenged PAS to a television debate to settle the issue in the open and resolve once and for all 'who is more Islamic than the other'. However, before the debate could take place, the Malaysian King invoked his constitutional powers to cancel it, for fear of its security consequences[37]—and, perhaps, of endangering UMNO's political advantage in view of PAS's image as a defender of Islam and their *ulama*'s knowledge of the Faith. Apart from indicating the intensity of the UMNO–PAS cleavage, these

crises are significant to the present discussion of Malay identity, because they confirm the ongoing tension between Islam and Malay ethnicity in Malay political culture. On the one hand, both parties want to prove their support for Islam while on the other, they are equally concerned that their cleavage could jeopardize their other common cause, that of the preservation of Malay ethnic unity and identity.

A third and final contributory role that PAS's internal conflict has played in the elevation of Islam in Malaysia resulted from the opportunity given to the party to participate in the administration of Islam in the country after its entry into the Barisan Nasional government in 1974. In the 'Memorandum of Understanding' between the two parties, agreed upon before PAS officially joined Barisan Nasional, PAS was given guarantees that the party could question policies which were un-Islamic (Halim Mahmood, 1983a). That opportunity was not missed by PAS leaders during their membership of the coalition government as PAS was directly involved in the forefront of Islamic activities. PAS leaders sat in numerous government and quasi-government bodies and Islamic councils (including the National Council for Islamic Affairs, MKHUIM), and naturally, took advantage of the opportunity to perform the role of watchdog where Islamic matters were concerned and ensure that Islamic values were given their due share in the formulation and implementation of national policies.[38] Consequently, Muslim consciousness was mobilized and Islam occupied centrestage in national politics.

The above are some of the internal dynamics in PAS which, for reasons already argued, have projected Islam as a primary factor in Malaysian politics, especially from the 1970s. The crises themselves had a reinforcing effect because of the wide publicity accorded to them and because they were long drawn-out affairs, lasting almost a full decade from 1973 to 1982. During that period, all the major newspapers and radio and television stations highlighted the crises, even sensationalizing them.[39] This kind of news coverage was especially evident since the early 1980s and made possible because during that period, the Malaysian government seemed to have tolerated an increasing measure of press 'liberalism'.

The media's obsession with PAS was also understandable since the crises were not simply a PAS affair but involved UMNO and Malays in general. UMNO has always depicted PAS as an irrational, even dangerous, political party, whose actions must be curtailed for the sake of national security and stability.[40] PAS, in turn, in order to win the hearts of Malay voters, and to woo the non-Malays, has tried to steer away from its traditional 'Islam-cum-ethnic nationalist' tactic to one of a broader, universalist Islamic alternative.

All the above illustrations and analyses of the crises within PAS have contributed to the reaffirmation of Islam in the politics of Malaysia since the 1970s. However, they cannot fully explain a parallel assertiveness by Islam in the wider affairs of the Malaysian state since that period. Besides PAS, another contributory factor in the 're-birth' of Islam in Malaysian politics was the return of Dr Mahathir Mohamad to the Malaysian political leadership. In the next chapter, an attempt will be made to demonstrate

the significance of his return for Malaysian Islam especially in giving further icing to the vibrancy of the Islamic ethos there.

1. The developments of Islam in Malaysia cannot be divorced totally from similar developments besetting the Muslim world since the 1960s. They include the Arab–Israeli conflict and events since the late 1970s, such as the Islamic revolution in Iran, the attack on Islam's holiest mosque in Mecca, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

2. Acknowledged also by an early PAS leader, Amaludin Darus (PAS Senator for 15 years until 1982) in *Dewan Negara Reports* (1971), p. 80. See also Means (1969), p. 227.

3. See *Persatuan Islam Setanah Melayu (PAS)* (Constitution of PAS; 2nd reprint, 1977), p. 3.

4. Released in March 1966, he died of illness in 1969.

5. Interview given by Hassan Adli, PAS Vice-President in 1958: See Arkib Negara Oral History recording with Hassan Adli (PR 60, 197), and the 'Introduction' by Zakiah Hanum in *Inventori Surat-surat Persendirian Zulkifli Mohd. 1980* stored at the Arkib Negara (AN).

6. The main information on Zulkifli is obtained from the Malaysian Archives' collection of his papers as above; these papers were mainly written for seminars and journals.

7. He studied law at Al-Azhar University and also at the American University in Beirut, and, when in Cairo, was the President of the Malay Students Association there (1950). See AN: *Inventori Surat-surat Persendirian Zulkifli Mohd. 1980*, especially pp. 12–14.

8. AN: *Inventori ... Zulkifli Mohd. 1980*, p. 8: his other essays include 'Islam and Society' (1953), 'Islamic Economics' (1961), and 'Return of Islamic Society' (1980).

9. AN: *Inventori ... Zulkifli Mohd. 1980*, especially SP/19.

10. AN: AGP/7/F, no date, but probably during 1967–9; a Barisan Nasional release entitled 'Siapa Pemecah Perpaduan Melayu-Islam?' (Who is the culprit in breaking Malay-Muslim society?).

11. Cf. Kessler (1978) and Funston (1980).

12. In that 1972 voting, there were 30 absentees.

13. Interview with Yusuf Rawa and Mustapha Ali (Sydney, 1982).

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.; cf. Ahmad Kamar (1984b).

18. This PAS–DAP 'unholy alliance' was again made an issue of by the government in the 1982 election. See *New Straits Times*, 5 April 1982.

19. On the ouster of Asri's allies, see *Berita Harian*, 2 April 1982 and *New Straits Times*, 6 April 1982.

20. For an analysis of the elections, see Crouch (1982), p. 41 and Chandra Muzaffar (1982), pp. 86–106. See also *Utusan Malaysia*, 2 April 1982.

21. Halim Mahmood (1983a) discussed PAS's new leadership.

22. Writer's interview with Ustadz Nakha'ie. (It is to be noted that the Sunni Muslims—as in the case of Malaysian Malays—do not accept this Shi'a version.)

23. Interviews with Yusuf Rawa, Ustadz Abdul Hadi, and Mustapha Ali (October 1982).

24. See Deutsch (1970), pp. 139–40, and Easton (1953). Cf. Enayat (1982), Chapter 1, and Muhamed S. El-Awa (1980).

25. Prophet Muhammad's treatment of the Christians of Najran, and Umar ibn al Khattab's handling of the Jews and the Christians of Byzantium after the conquest of their territories, were emphasized lucidly in the document signed between the Muslim victors, and Sophronius, Patriarch of the city, on behalf of the Christians. See Ismail R. al-Faruqi (1986), p. 39.

26. For other contributors on this issue see Abdul Aziz Kamil (1970), Ajijola (1977), Ezzati (1976), AlMadani M. Muhammad (1967), Muhammad Hamidullah (1973), and Sayyid Qutb (1974).

27. Interview with Asri: *Utusan Melayu*, 4 April 1983.

28. Interviews with Yusuf Rawa, Ustadz Hadi, and Mustapha Ali (October 1982).

29. Statements by Yusuf Rawa; cf. Pipes (1983), pp. 131–2.

30. Interview with Ustadz Nakha'ie. (He subsequently joined UMNO in early 1989.)

31. See *Straits Times* of 20 April 1981 for indications of the mounting pressure felt by Asri for such a change of image, in his General Assembly speech.

32. The present writer's impressions after three interviews with PAS sympathizers (and members) in Malaysia (1983).

33. Ibid. His talk (in Arabic and Malay) at a mosque in Sydney in 1982 (at which the writer was asked to be the interpreter) was attended by an estimated 600 people, including many Malaysian (Malay) students.

34. These were the present writer's findings during field-work research in Trengganu and Kelantan in 1983.

35. For accounts of the challenge to Asri, see Halim Mahmood (1983a and 1983b). For detailed figures of the electoral performance of PAS, UMNO, and the National Front government, 1969–82, see Ismail Kassim (1979); Chandrasekaran Pillay (1974); and Crouch (1982).

36. Interview with Asri: *Utusan Melayu*, 4 April 1983.

37. Much has been reported on this issue: *Asiaweek*, 23 November 1984, 18 January and 22 March 1985; *Utusan Melayu*, 4 April 1983; and Lim Eng Hai's 1986 study.

38. In interviews with Yusuf Rawa, Ustadz Hadi, and Mustapha Ali (1982), they said that they have been active participants in the meetings of the Islamic institutions of which they were members. (The author is, however, unable to confirm this.)

39. See, for instance, *Straits Times*, 4 August 1982, *Utusan Malaysia*, 9 December 1982, *Utusan Melayu*, 4 April 1983, and *Asiaweek*, 23 November 1984.

40. For UMNO's criticisms and accusations toward PAS, see AN: AGP/7/B, AGP/7/F and AGP/1/A.

5
UMNO and the Government Response

It is obviously a difficult task to fathom the real intentions of Muslim political leaders and governments and how genuinely Islamic they are in their policies.[1] However, if their policies *per se* are used as indicators symptomatic of their Islamic inclinations, then the Malaysian government's interest in Islam would seem quite revealing, especially under the Mahathir administration. The following discussion hopes to shed more light on the generally supportive nature of the UMNO and Mahathir government's response towards Islam. It must be added, however, that this pro-Islamic attitude has tended to be ambivalent and, at times, even punitive towards radical Muslims. For want of a better caption, the UMNO–government's attitude towards the Faith can perhaps be described as 'cautious support'. By this is meant that while on the one hand the Malaysian government, under Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has been generally supportive of pressures exerted by Muslim groups, organizations, and PAS for a more pronounced Islamic emphasis in the government policies, on the other, the government has been equally vigilant in regulating and curbing Muslim individuals and groups whose Islamic activities have been considered potentially dangerous to the country's political stability. This ambivalence in the government's posture, again indicative of the stresses and strains that characterize the Malay–Islam dialectic, has been evident in the government's domestic and foreign policies from the early 1970s.

As Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad has provided a clear contrast to his predecessors, Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, and Tun Hussein Onn. To start with, unlike them, he was not educated in Britain, nor is he a golfer, an ex-civil servant, or a lawyer. In addition, his values and preferences and his style of governance—described by one writer as frank, bold and brash (Rahmanmat, 1982: 34, 37, 42)[2]—have been, in the main, markedly different, too. Starting off as a medical doctor turned politician instead of an Islamic leader (one who has a strong religious orientation and whose leadership is guided by Islamic universal principles in the Qur'an), the seriousness of Mahathir's efforts at Islamizing the government machinery has sometimes not been well received by segments of the Malaysian polity. This is understandable because of his strident pro-Malay temperament described in an earlier chapter. The non-

Malays cannot be expected to forget easily his uncompromising stand and demands—conveyed, for instance, via his *Malay Dilemma*—that non-Malays accept the issue of Malay rights and privileges without any reservation. His role in the post-1969 period was quite crucial to the development of the ethnic variable in Malay political identity of that time. However, it may be argued that he has gradually toned down this 'ultra' image since the time he joined the Cabinet, first as Education Minister in 1974 and then Deputy Prime Minister in 1976. A further shift away from his previous communal stand was evident especially after 1981 when he assumed the Prime Ministership, although it must be conceded here the difficulty in distinguishing Mahathir the politician and Mahathir the Islamic leader, given their overlapping nature.

However, Mahathir must have realized that as head of a multi-ethnic coalition government, he had no alternative but to adopt a communally moderate stance. Much of this change in temperament, however, is due not only to his pragmatism and political acumen but also to his vision of a modern Malaysia. Whatever the case may be and whatever his motives are, it is the contention of this writer that the strength of his leadership has made Islam a more assertive force in Malaysian politics, as well as bringing out into sharp focus the Malay–Islam identity crisis. It should be noted that although he returned to active politics only in 1974, Mahathir's influence in the government rose rapidly until his elevation to Prime Minister in 1981. This was because, even when he was the Deputy Prime Minister, Hussein Onn's poor health meant that his deputy was delegated a major role in the formulation and implementation of government policies.

Pro-Muslim Foreign Policy

It has been observed by some Malaysian scholars that in the area of foreign policy, with the coming of Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the whole spectrum of Malaysia's involvement in international affairs began to be reshaped. Such important shifts of emphasis in policy occurred because Mahathir's dominance in the foreign policy of Malaysia was much more pronounced than all his predecessors' (Pathmanathan and Lazarus, 1984: 40, 55). One of the most noticeable of these foreign policy shifts has been the tilt towards the Muslim world, where in recent years Malaysia has carved out a niche for itself as an activist member, wanting to identify itself with the issues of the Muslim world.

The most significant foreign policy statement made by the government under Mahathir's leadership was the declaration in 1983 that the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth were no longer as important to Malaysia as the Muslim bloc.[3] Although this was typical of several Muslim governments, it was still significant because the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth had been accorded the top two positions in Malaysia's foreign policy since Independence. This major foreign policy transformation should not come as a surprise if one follows Mahathir's increasing interest in Islam, especially after becoming Prime Minister.

At the 1981 Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Jeddah, Saudi

Arabia, Mahathir urged the Muslims to translate their slogans into action, not through rhetoric and pious resolutions: 'talking endlessly about Islamic solidarity is . . . meaningless without concrete co-operation' (Morais, 1982a: 51). At that same conference, he even called upon Muslim nations to try to be self-reliant and less dependent on foreign Western powers, particularly in defence and security matters. For instance, in calling for greater economic and, especially, military aid to Afghan Muslims in their struggle against the Soviet occupation and Soviet-installed regime, Mahathir had this to say:

> What they need is arms and these we are not able to supply because we ourselves depend on others who tie us to all kinds of conditions. Indeed some of us cannot even sympathise with the Afghans fighting to liberate their country because we are dependent on the aggressor nation for military support. Again we see how our own incapacity to manufacture our own defense equipment, limits our freedom and ability to help our brothers (quoted in Morais, 1982a).

A year later, in his opening address to representatives of sixteen countries who were attending the first General Assembly of RISEAP in Kuala Lumpur, Mahathir again indicated his Islamic inclination:

> It is always our intention to play an active role in the Islamic *dakwah* movement, both locally and internationally. It is our policy to be closely associated with Islamic nations and to support Islamic causes. In this regard, we believe that our participation should not only be active but also truly effective in the true sense of the word. . . . We in Malaysia will continue to do everything within our means to assist in the struggle of the Muslim *ummah*, for the right to live the life of true Muslims.[4]

Attitude towards the PLO and Israel

To put into practice his words and promises, Mahathir has gradually increased Malaysia's economic and political dealings with the Muslim nations, especially the Arab countries. Although trade dealings cannot be accepted as an integral aspect of foreign policy, they do, to an extent, indicate the nature of relationships between nations. Economically, Malaysia's exports to the West (mainly Western Europe) dropped drastically from a hefty M$2,300 million in 1974 to only M$839.8 million in 1979, in inverse proportion to the increase of Malaysia's trade with the Middle East nations.[5] Although trade figures with the latter during the 1974–9 period were not computed by this writer, it was found that Malaysia's exports to the Middle East increased from M$159 million in 1972 to M$504 million in 1974, and during the same period, its imports doubled.[6] In 1975 Malaysia was the first country in South-East Asia deliberately chosen by Kuwait when it decided to launch economic ventures in the region.[7]

More important than foreign trade as an indication of foreign policy emphasis was the realm of political relationships. In this regard, Malaysia's strongest support was extended to the PLO, on terms more favourable than those in the Razak era when such support had begun to take shape. After Dr Mahathir became Prime Minister, the PLO representation was upgraded to an embassy status. In May 1983, Malaysia hosted an 'International Conference on Palestine' attended by delegates from 40 countries.

The conference not only resolved to extend its fullest support to the Palestinian struggle but also confirmed Malaysia's leading role in spearheading such support for the Palestinians (Pathmanathan and Lazarus, 1984). In his speech at the conference, Mahathir again criticized Israel:

> There has never been a parallel in history where a political entity has been created to supplant an existing rightful state and the new entity supplied with the most lethal weapons to perpetuate aggression against the people they had displaced. If the world continues to be blind and deaf to Israeli expansionism and aggression, others will be encouraged to commit similar crimes elsewhere (quoted in Pathmanathan and Lazarus, 1984: 218–19).

It was thus not surprising that, a month after Mahathir's speech, Anwar Ibrahim, then the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office (later a full Cabinet Minister), participated in the PLO Summit meeting in Algiers. At the meeting, Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, remarked that 'Malaysia is even closer to us than some of the Arab nations' (*Berita Minggu*, 23 January 1983). More indications of Malaysian support for the PLO struggle came in the form of wide publicity in the country's mass media for the PLO's struggle. A series of articles supporting the PLO appeared in the UMNO-backed *Utusan Malaysia* national newspaper, and slogans like '*Hidup Rakyat Palestin!*' ('Long Live the Palestinians!') were telecast over the (government) television station. In 1982, to further demonstrate Malaysia's seriousness in endorsing the PLO struggle, the government observed 5 April as 'Palestine Solidarity Day' (*New Straits Times*, 6 April 1982; *The Star*, 17 February 1983). In July 1984, Yasser Arafat himself was given a rousing welcome when he made an official visit to Malaysia at the invitation of Mahathir. At a state banquet hosted by the Malaysian government in Arafat's honour, Mahathir reiterated Malaysia's unqualified support for the Palestinian struggle; this was followed by an officially sanctioned mass rally at Stadium Negara, the National Stadium (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 8, Nos. 5–6, 1984). If ever the PLO struggle is finally resolved, the PLO must certainly remember Malaysia as one of its most ardent backers.

Since the Arab–Israeli war of 1973, and as a natural corollary to this, the Malaysian government's position towards Israel has been consistent, in that Malaysia has attributed the state of instability in the Middle East to Israel's actions in that region. Evidence supporting this observation includes the following official policy statements and declarations. In August 1982, the Deputy Prime Minister, Musa Hitam, attacked Israel's 'rape of Lebanon', its 'arrogance in killing thousands of innocent people, including mothers and children', and its blatant defiance of the international community (*The Sunday Times*, 8 August 1982). A month later, Mahathir, in a widely publicized Muslim *Eid* (New Year) greeting to the Mulims in the country, urged them to 'bear in mind the atrocities being committed toward fellow Muslims in the Middle East by Israel', and to 'unite and find ways to end the suppression and oppression committed against our brothers and sisters there' (*New Straits Times*, 28 September 1982). In August 1984, a performance by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in Kuala Lumpur was cancelled, because the Orchestra would not accede to the government's

directive that it should not include a piece subtitled 'A Hebrew Rhapsody' by a Jewish composer in its proposed repertoire (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1984). Paradoxical it may be (since Mahathir said he was anti-Zionist, not anti-Jewish), this move came only a month after Yasser Arafat and Sheikh Zaki Yamani, then the Saudi Oil Minister, had made official visits to Malaysia (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 8, Nos. 5–6, 1984).

The increasing emphasis by the Malaysian government on better relations with the Muslim countries is further borne out by policy changes it has undertaken in its relations with other countries; take Afghanistan and Brunei, for instance. In December 1979, in response to a question by PAS in Parliament on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the government replied that it was 'an internal affair of the country' and that it was Afghanistan's problem in trying to oust the Soviets (*New Straits Times*, 6 December 1979). However, in 1981, and especially in 1983, the Malaysian government condemned the invasion in no uncertain terms (*Malaysia*, September–October 1983). Since then, this has been the official policy. Similarly, after Brunei became independent in 1984 (henceforth it assumed the new name of Negara Brunei Darussalam),[8] the Malaysian king visited Brunei and promised the government's technical aid to Brunei's development (*Malaysia*, September–October 1983). This was in sharp contrast to the Malaysian government's earlier tacit support for the Partai Rakyat (Peoples' Party), which was banned by the Brunei administration, and the permission for the exiled Peoples' Party deputy leader, Zaini, to stay in Malaysia (Milne and Mauzy, 1980: 315). In response to protests by Brunei, the government banned the 'social-critic' journal, *Nadi Insan*, when it published an article belittling Brunei's independence, and highlighting the plight of rubber tappers there (*Nadi Insan*, No. 47, 1983).[9]

'Cautious Islam': Malaysia–Iran Relations

Despite the solid support that the Mahathir government has extended to Muslim countries, it must be noted that this support was not undertaken without reference to Malaysia's national interest and sensitivities in the domestic situation.

It is this fear of domestic political instability that makes Malaysia withhold its support for radical Muslim countries in the Middle East—those especially eager to exercise their independence from the United States and the West, like Libya, Syria, and Iran—compared with the more moderate countries such as Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies. The case of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian model of the 'Islamic State' deserves special mention here because of their significance to Islam in Malaysia, highlighted in the earlier chapters. At this juncture, it is important to reiterate that none of Malaysia's previous Prime Ministers has ever wanted an Islamic State for Malaysia. This also seems to be the position taken by Dr Mahathir Mohamad with his statement that 'Islamic laws can only be imposed if all the people agree to it' (*New Straits Times*, 16 July 1983; *Utusan Melayu*, 26–27 October 1984).[10]

In contrast to Malaysia's experience with the Arab states in general, the

government has faced difficulties in dealing with Iran since the Islamic revolution there in late 1979. The government fears that the Iranian revolutionary fervour and Iran's symbolic status as an 'Islamic State' will pose a threat to Malaysia and its secular 'democratic' institutions. This fear was expressed, for instance, during a 1980 by-election in Mahathir's home state of Kedah, when UMNO, in contesting the election against PAS, chose to put up a huge banner which read 'Do you want our country to turn into another Iran?' (*Asiaweek*, Vol. 6, No. 5, 18 April 1980). This came barely three months after Mahathir had warned Muslims in the country to be careful of 'Malay religious opportunists' who were determined to overthrow the government by extra-constitutional means (*Straits Times*, 7 July 1979). The situation is all the more pressing in Malaysia because of the challenge that PAS posed to the legitimacy of UMNO (and the government) especially when, under its new leadership, the party had hinted that it is looking towards Iran as an example to emulate.[11] Even Anwar Ibrahim, who had personally met Ayatollah Khomeini and, as ABIM's President, had expressed great sympathy for the Islamic Republic,[12] had later to modify his position because of the necessity to balance conflicting demands over the Malaysian government's dealings with Iran. He indicated this on at least two occasions in 1982 alone. In August, he said that, because of the different history of the two countries, an 'Islamic revolution like that in Iran is not suitable for this country', and in October, while conceding his support for the Islamic administrative system in Iran, added quickly that 'such a system would not necessarily be suitable for adoption in Malaysia' (*New Straits Times*, 22 August 1982; *The Star*, 28 October 1982).

In 1983, the Malaysian government publicly expressed its intention of imposing a ban on its Muslim citizens from travelling to Iran after claiming that a West Asian country had launched a campaign to brainwash Muslim students abroad and foment revolution to turn Malaysia into an Islamic state (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 November 1983; *Malaysia*, November 1983). Although this proposed ban was finally not imposed, Malaysia even went to the extent of proposing to Iran a formal agreement to control Malaysians from going to Iran and vice-versa (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 August 1984). At the height of the constitutional crisis in Malaysia in late 1983, Musa Hitam, the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Affairs Minister in charge of national security, obliquely charged Iran with meddling in Malaysian affairs (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 August 1984). In January 1984, upon receiving an official Iranian delegation, he reiterated that 'Malaysia was very much aware of the dangers in the misinterpretation and application of the Iranian experience and situation, in the context of individual countries', and 'when the Malaysian government or its leaders expressed their concern over Iran, we really had our country in mind' (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 August 1984; *Islamic Herald*, Vol. 7, Nos. 11–12, 1984). Mahathir, too, did not mince his words in indicating his disagreement with some of the excesses of the Iranian revolutionary experience: 'What has happened to Iran now? We cannot build a nation only on rhetoric' (*Utusan Melayu*, 27 October 1984). Later, in April 1984, the Foreign Minister, Ghazali Shafie, again voiced to his counterpart,

Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati, Malaysia's intention to 'regularize' the flow of visitors between the two countries (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 May 1984). Three months later, the Menteri Besar of Kedah state charged that 'religious extremists' from Kelantan and Trengganu had launched an Iranian-style campaign against the Sultans and the government (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 August 1984). An added difficulty here for Malaysia's relations with the Islamic Republic stems from Malaysia's role in the mediation efforts aimed at resolving the Iran–Iraq war; being chairman of the mediation committee (formed by the OIC) (Pathmanathan and Lazarus, 1984: 50), Malaysia cannot be seen to be pro-Iran.

Understandably, this cautious foreign policy approach can also be discerned in its domestic policies, some of which have been discussed by Barraclough (1983), Means (1978), and Nagata (1980, 1984). However, one must quickly add that while the government has always been anxious to regulate and control Islamic activities in the country and re-channel dissent into support for the status quo the Islamic stance of the Malaysian government practised during the pre-Mahathir period,[13] has never been stronger than under Mahathir's leadership. This has been demonstrated through concrete, consistent, and substantive Islamic programmes and activities, on a scale not matched by his predecessors.

Domestic Policies towards Islam: A New Islamic Identity?

Under Mahathir, the government's support for Islam within Malaysia goes beyond symbolic support such as building mosques, organizing Qur'an recitation competitions and celebrations marking Islamic ceremonies and important events. On balance, however, it may be argued that the Mahathir government's general patronage towards the furtherance of Islam in the country does indicate that Mahathir has been both an ardent supporter of Islam and an astute politician. The following illustrations may shed some light to this claim.

From the time of his elevation to the highest political office in the land in 1981, not a year has passed without the government announcing policies aimed at convincing the Malays and Muslims that the government (and UMNO) is serious in its support for the cause of Islam. In order that one may have a sense of the intensity and consistency of the Mahathir government's Islamic policies and programmes, as well as have a clear indication of Mahathir's views on various issues of Islam and the Muslims, the government policies will be highlighted *chronologically*, for a full decade, from 1978 to 1988. However, a typology of the Mahathir government's pro-Islamic programmes in point-form (see Table 1) may be useful here before the sequence of programmes launched by the government is discussed.

TABLE 1

The Mahathir Administration's Islamization Policies, 1978–1988

1. Government's declaration to revise the national legal system to make it more in line with Islamic Law (1978)
2. Government's declaration to establish the M$26 million Southeast Asian Islamic Research Centre (1979)
3. Islamic religious knowledge made an examination subject at the SPM level (1979)
4. Official launching of the National Dakwah Month (1979)
5. Policy declaration to remodel Malaysia's economic system into an Islamic one (1980)
6. Building of first Islamic Teachers' College costing M$22 million (1980)
7. Establishment of Islamic Bank, Islamic Pawnshop, Islamic Insurance, Islamic Economic Foundation, and setting up of the Islamic Resources Group and the Special Islamic Enforcement Group (1981–2)
8. Sharp increase in Islamic programmes over radio and television since 1981
9. Permanent site for the International Islamic Training Camp (1982)
10. Anwar Ibrahim joined UMNO and government (1982)
11. Government sponsorship of the Islamic Medical Centre (1983)
12. Challenge to the 'protectors' of the Malays, the Sultans (Monarchy) (1983)
13. Establishment of the International Islamic University (1983)
14. Upgrading of 'Pusat Islam', the nerve centre of the Islamic bureaucracy (1984)
15. Official declaration of 'Islamization of Government Machinery' (1984)
16. Declaration that 'Only Islam will get air time over Radio and TV Malaysia' (1988)
17. Status of Islamic judges and courts to be made on par with their counterparts in the civil judiciary (1988)
18. Beginning of a programme to build 'Islamic Villages' in the cities throughout Malaysia (1988)

Chronological List of Major Islamic Programmes

It is conceded that Mahathir's more substantive contributions to the development of Islam in Malaysia took shape after his appointment as Prime Minister in 1981. However, Mahathir had been involved in Islamic programmes much earlier, though perhaps not in a direct way since he was only a Cabinet member. Soon after assuming the post of Education Minister in 1974, and finding 'the system of imparting religious knowledge in the past, ineffective and unsuitable', Dr Mahathir initiated a review of religious (Islamic) education and formed the Advisory Council for Islamic Education to correct the situation (*Straits Times*, 31 October 1974, 22 November 1974, 12 August 1977). The main aim of this Council was to make Islam relevant to the modernizing needs of the Muslims in the country, and to do so in a co-ordinated and systematic manner. Most symbolically, in the year of his return to Cabinet, 1974, the government announced the establishment of the Pusat Islam (Islamic Centre), a Centre which co-ordinates all national Islamic activities in the country.[14] In the same year too, perhaps influenced also by the new presence of PAS in the coalition government, Mahathir called upon Muslim scholars in the country to help Islamize the teaching

of science in schools,[15] and his Ministry implemented a standardized Islamic textbook system for all school levels up to the Higher School Certificate.[16] In the following year, his Ministry also approved M$22 million special expenditure for the specific purpose of upgrading the training of Islamic schoolteachers (*New Straits Times*, 14 January 1975) and the launching of the Dakwah Foundation or Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah. In 1976, he announced the government take-over of the top ten leading Islamic schools in the country with the expressed aim of streamlining and improving their performance, although his declaration soon after, that Malaysia's national culture must be based on the culture of the Malays (*New Straits Times*, 24 December 1976),[17] did indicate that remnants of his earlier Malay tendencies still existed. In the same year, Mahathir's close ally, Syed Nasir Ismail—one of the few 'ultras' associated with him—as the influential Head of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), made newspaper headlines by imposing a ban on the sale and consumption of all forms of liquor and *haram* food, as well as prohibiting Western liberal dances, in the halls of the DBP.[18] As if that was not enough, Syed Nasir also pressured Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM), then the sole television station in the country, to set up a code of conduct for all artistes appearing on the station's programmes, reminding them to show decency in what they wore, said, and did on the screen (*New Straits Times*, 8 August 1977). In 1977, mainly as a response to demands by PAS, the government directed all its women employees to be 'properly dressed' (*New Straits Times*, 12 July 1977). At another level, the government also conducted a thorough investigation of the Freemason movement in Malaysia to prevent its spread (*New Straits Times*, 12 July 1977), and expanded the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

For the first time, in 1977, as host of the ASEAN Heads of Government conference, no liquor was served. This move came not long after the government officially changed, symbolically, the widely accepted logo of medical aid in the non-Muslim countries—the Red Cross—to the Red Crescent after the matter was raised by PAS in the coalition government and supported by Mahathir (*New Straits Times*, 20 February 1979).[19]

Although PAS and some other Muslim opponents of the government, like *dakwah* organizations, may regard these examples as nothing more than ceremonial gestures, there are more substantive indications of the government's increasing tilt towards Islam. By 1978, the government-regulated Radio and Television Malaysia's Islamic Propagation Unit, Unit Dakwah Islamiah, was already producing more than 125 Islamic programmes per month, some of which were in English, Chinese, and Tamil,[20] and since 1979, there has been a noticeable increase in Islamic programmes over RTM. They include the broadcast of *azan* (call for prayer) five times a day, Qur'anic exegesis, live coverage of the *khutbah* ('sermon') in the Friday congregational prayers, and important celebrations in the Islamic calendar, as well as numerous talks and forums on Islam and Islamic issues. The inclusion of a series of Islamic talks by notable Islamic scholars from Indonesia, such as Anwar Mussaddad and, particularly, Dr Hamka, was in line with this trend. The *Jawi* script was also promoted in schools and

government departments, and the National Dakwah Month was officially launched.

There may not be a direct correlation, but one significant consequence of these federal Islamic initiatives was that they began to be echoed by the individual states within the federation, given the zeal with which such initiatives were adopted by the federal government. This development is especially understandable since, under the Federal Constitution, Islam is a State matter, with all matters affecting the Faith in a particular state the prerogative of that state and its Sultan. So active were these states in trying to implement Islam that there seemed to be keen competition among them to show which was more Islamic. The events of 1979 alone substantiate this observation. In Kedah, the Majlis Agama proposed that the *khalwat* (close proximity) laws governing Muslims in the state be extended to include non-Muslims too (*New Nation* (Singapore), 5 September 1979). In Johore, Majlis officials sought to prosecute Muslims who drank liquor in public or failed to attend the Friday congregational prayers, and Rukun Tetangga (neighbourhood patrol) men even made *khalwat* arrests—a power far beyond their security role (*New Straits Times*, 1 and 18 February and 24 September 1979). In Negri Sembilan, the Majlis issued a *fatwa* forbidding Muslims from working as bartenders and waiters in places of entertainment, and threatening employers of these establishments with severe fines if they recruited Muslim workers (*New Straits Times*, 13 April 1979). Perak started building a M$12 million Islamic complex in the state and allocated another half a million ringgit for a Perak state Islamic hostel in Cairo in that year. In Kelantan, dancing was prohibited in nightclubs, and, on Thursday nights and during the month of Ramadan, the ban was extended to include music and singing (*New Straits Times*, 3 December 1979). In the state of Pahang, circulars were sent to all hotel proprietors directing them not to allow any unmarried Muslim couples to stay in the same room, no doubt to the consternation of these proprietors given the difficulty of confirming the marital status of couples (*New Straits Times*, 6 and 8 October 1979). Finally, in Penang, otherwise a liberal state in administering Islamic laws (possibly due to its island status and rule by a non-Muslim Chief Minister),[21] for the first time in living memory a Muslim was fined for consuming liquor in public, and the total number of *khalwat* prosecutions rose ten times compared to the previous year (*New Straits Times*, 20 February and 12 March 1979).

In many ways, the impetus for this increasing eagerness to implement the Islamic moral code of behaviour could be said to have been precipitated by the general mood and added momentum of Islamization generated by the federal government in Kuala Lumpur. The following illustrations and analyses will further demonstrate this role of the government in mobilizing and heightening Muslim consciousness there and in giving government policies a more Islamic content. Traditionally symbolic in nature, under Mahathir's administration, the government's treatment of the Faith took on a more substantive dimension. This may be seen in the emphasis on research, planning, and systematic launching of programmes meant to equip Muslims with advances in modern life, and in the process, perhaps

broadening Malay horizons of their Faith. It appears that the government had to counter the oft-heard criticisms, by PAS in particular, that UMNO's development programmes were pursued at the expense of Islamic values. As the challenge of Islam was met with more Islam, politics therefore assumed an increasingly religious colouring, and consequently Islam, particularly in more recent times, has been dynamically propelled to the centre-stage of Malaysian politics.

The emphasis in the government's Third and Fourth Malaysia Plans for 1976–81 and 1981–6 respectively, provides some indication of the seriousness of the government's response to this Islamic reassertion. In the Third Plan, for instance, the inclusion of the clause 'Islam continues to be a source of strength for the nation'[22] was translated into real terms in the form of increased government funding and moral encouragement in areas such as the teaching of Islam in schools as well as the building of mosques and other Islamic institutions (*Malaysian Digest*, Vol. 8, No. 5, 30 April 1976). By 1980 Kuala Lumpur alone had 25 mosques and 121 *surau*.[23] More importantly, in that same year, the Finance Minister unveiled a more concrete government policy: to remodel the country's economic system on Islamic tenets which include the no-interest principle in financial transactions (*New Straits Times*, 8 December 1980). It was argued by the government that the Islamic economic system was a system which would benefit both Muslims and non-Muslims equally. In the same year, too, Kuala Lumpur established its first ever Islamic Teachers' College (Maktab Perguruan Islam), costing M$22 million, from where promising students were sent to Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia to further their studies (*New Straits Times*, 30 May 1980).

Another major expression of the government's interest in Islam that year was the celebrations marking the one thousand and five hundredth year of *Hijrah*, the beginning of the Islamic calendar, in which the government participated in joint projects with other Islamic countries. Within the country itself, the event was celebrated on a grand scale: ceremonies in Parliament House officially launched by the King and participated in by all Muslim Cabinet Ministers and parliamentarians; an exhibition of Islamic books; the printing of official commemorative stamps; and the holding of an international Islamic seminar in Kuala Lumpur to which the Malaysian government contributed US$200,000 (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 1, Nos. 3–4, 1980). The celebration of the Bulan Dakwah Negara, the National Dakwah Month, during which there was a series of Islamic seminars, talks, exhibitions, and processions, accompanied by a wide media blitz, was further upgraded, this time with the theme of 'Islam guarantees the nation's security' (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 1, Nos. 3–4, 1980). A further move by Mahathir, though conducted without much publicity, was the decision of the Cabinet Review Committee of the School Curriculum—chaired by Mahathir himself—that Islamic religious knowledge be made an examination subject at the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia level (equivalent to GCE 'O' level), and that religious and moral studies (such as the 'Islamic Civilization' course) be made compulsory for all students (*New Straits Times*, 27 October 1979).

Taking advantage of the reaffirmation of the Islamic spirit, in 1980, not only did Mahathir remark that Malaysia would 'continue to be a strong Islamic nation' (*New Straits Times*, 15 March 1980), he laid down the foundations of what later became a tenet of the official Malaysian development strategy: that economic development would not be at the expense of spiritual progress, a philosophy repeated by him throughout that year.[24] Although such a strategy had actually been adopted by UMNO since the early 1970s, in the current context of Islam in Malaysia, this policy announcement implies universal moral values in general and Islamic norms in particular. More significantly, implementation of such a policy began to be followed quite vigorously. In January 1981, Mahathir invited prominent international Muslim scholars to come to Malaysia and he later accepted their recommendations on how the government could Islamize the administrative machinery of the country, by setting up Islamic institutions such as the Islamic Bank (Bank Islam) and an Islamic University (Universiti Islam Antarabangsa) (*New Straits Times*, 4 January 1981 and 7 December 1982).[25] Two months later, at a national seminar on the 'Concept of Development in Islam', he proposed the setting up of an Islamic Resource Group (think-tank) and a Special Enforcement Group with the task of conducting research on all issues relating to an Islamic economic system, as well as assisting the government's developmental projects by ensuring that they conform to Islamic principles (*Utusan Malaysia*, 11–13 March 1981). To further secure Malay-Muslim support, the government stepped up its other initiatives in 1981. These included the annual Qur'an recitation competition (usually telecast live to many Muslim countries), the equally widely publicized Prophet Muhammad's birthday celebration in which the King and the Prime Minister led an average 60,000 strong procession from Stadium Negara,[26] and ceremonies marking the beginning of the fasting month and the two Muslim *Eid* (Idilfitri and Idiladha) and the *Hijrah*. In more ways than one, Mahathir's task in inculcating Islamic norms and principles in government policies was made less problematic, because the Malays were, by that time, sufficiently stirred to allow such policies to take form.

The Islamic Bank and the International Islamic University came to fruition in 1982 and 1983 respectively. The Islamic Bank, with a paid-up capital of M$100 million and an authorized capital of M$500 million (and operating under a no-interest policy), was described by the Finance Minister in Parliament as the 'first step' in the government's efforts to instil Islamic values into the country's economic and financial systems as a replacement for the current 'Western-based economic system' (*New Straits Times*, 6 July 1982). This was reiterated by him five months later with even greater conviction (*New Straits Times*, 8 December 1982). The government envisaged that, in the near future, there would be as many as 100 such banks throughout the country.[27]

The International Islamic University, financed from the government's General and Revenue Funds and with Arab support, spent M$500 million in its first three years (*New Straits Times*, 5 December 1982). Its objectives were to inculcate Islamic values among its staff and students as well as

produce highly qualified Muslim professionals in all fields of knowledge. Housed at the former Maktab Perguruan Islam in Petaling Jaya, the University plans to move to a prestigious hill-side location near the Pahang border in 1989 or 1990. Although the objective is to train undergraduates in Islamic principles and values in all disciplines, admission to the University is open to non-Muslims, too. Interestingly, the University, run by an international Board of Directors, was initially headed by Tun Hussein Onn, Mahathir's predecessor.[28]

It is perhaps significant that not long before he officially assumed the Prime Ministership in July 1981, Dr Mahathir had made his views on Islam clear to both Malaysians and the international Muslim community at large. In January of that year, he launched UMNO's grand *Hijrah* celebrations, as well as delivering a speech at the OIC meeting in Saudi Arabia (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 2, 1981). It was thus not surprising that the Malaysian government sanctioned the staging of the International Islamic Youth Camp in August 1981—one month after Mahathir's election as Prime Minister—which Mahathir himself officially opened. In his speech to the camp-participants, he urged them to put a high premium on science and technology in order that they could relive earlier Muslim glories in these fields (Pathmanathan and Lazarus, 1984: 87–92). He also berated Muslims for their passive role in the modernization drives in their countries, which he attributed to their failure to equip themselves with modern skills. The result of all these, according to him, was the continued Muslim dependence upon the West despite the abundance of natural resources in their countries (Pathmanathan and Lazarus, 1984). He concluded by calling the OIC and WAMY to make the camp an annual affair and even promised Malaysia's willingness to donate a permanent site for the camp (*New Straits Times*, 24 August 1981). In an attempt to project his personality as a Muslim leader, and not merely as a Malay nationalist, Mahathir, in his first official speech as UMNO President in the same year, made it plain that he regarded the post as *amanah* (obligation from God) carrying both a big responsibility and accountability to God in the Hereafter. For this he sought 'Allah's blessings and guidance' in the performance of his duty (Morais, 1982a: 90–1). Such vocabulary, symptomatic of his Islamic preferences and inclinations, was not all, since he continued to harp upon the ideals of Islamic universalism and unveil yet more plans and strategies meant to grant Islam a firmer footing in the country, as well as a more active role in the formulation and implementation of government policies. The result was the further galvanizing of Muslim consciousness in the country.

Co-optation of Anwar Ibrahim: Pressures for a More Islamic Identity

Of the Mahathir administration's many Islamic moves and initiatives, the most dramatic was its success in persuading Anwar Ibrahim, ABIM's President, to join UMNO and the government in 1982 as an UMNO candidate in the general elections (Morais, 1983). One important consequence of Anwar Ibrahim's entry has been that the government became even more

committed to Islam and the greater prominence of the Islamic factor in Malay political identity. Although a case can be made that Anwar's entry into the government was simply part of the government's attempt to control and silence PAS and contain Islamic dissent in general,[29] it also established and vindicated Mahathir's personal Islamic preferences. Anwar's entry—he subsequently became UMNO's Youth President and an ex-officio Vice-President in the UMNO Supreme Council—encouraged Mahathir even further in launching numerous policies of ever-increasing boldness in support of Islam. Although conclusive evidence is difficult to produce on the actual extent of Anwar's (and Mahathir's) influence, since governments, particularly in Cabinet-type systems, do not normally attribute their policies to any particular leader within the government—especially a new leader—it can be reasonably deduced that Anwar played a part in the government's decision to launch the Islamic Bank and the International Islamic University.[30] It will be recalled that Anwar, when he was ABIM's President, had made his demand for the establishment of such institutions in Malaysia. The services of Anwar's contacts overseas, such as (the late) Professor Ismail al-Faruqi and Ahmad Totonji, and Islamic scholars active in the IIFSO (International Islamic Federation of Student Organisations) and WAMY are constantly being called upon by the government in its Islamization drives. An executive member of ABIM, Razali Nawawi, on Anwar's recommendation, was made the Dean of the Economics Faculty of the International Islamic University.[31] In 1988, Anwar took over the chairmanship of the University's Board of Governors and replaced Professor Mohamed Rauf with Professor Abul Hamed Abu Sulayman as the new Rector.

Similarly, Anwar's objections to the Societies Amendments Bill (1982) on the grounds of (Islamic) justice eventually bore fruit after he joined the government: some of the controversial sections of the Bill, such as those which accorded extensive powers to the Home Affairs Minister and the Registrar of Societies, were later amended in Parliament.[32] Anwar was also instrumental in paving the way for many other subsequent Islamic policies in 1983–4 (Nagata, 1984: 159).[33] Other than Mahathir himself, it was Anwar who was made to declare all the government's other Islamic policies. These included the building of the permanent site for the International Islamic Youth Camp in September 1982 (*New Straits Times*, 3 September 1982),[34] the relocation of Turf Clubs far away from the City, the decision not to approve any new applications for gambling establishments (*The Star*, 21 March 1983), and the launching of Islamic pawnshops, Islamic insurance (*Sharikat Takaful*), as well as the ban on Muslims patronizing the only casino in the country (*New Straits Times*, 15 April 1983; *Malaysian Digest*, July 1983 and October 1984). Anwar must have had a major say in the government's Islamization policies, because he was, after all, occupying the Cabinet post relating to Islamic Affairs for some time before the responsibility was transferred to Dr Yusof Nor's charge in late 1987.

On the part of Mahathir, his rule in the 1982–4 period was equally characterized by his active involvement in the Islamic events in Malaysia.[35] In

what is relevant to the present discussion on the Islam–Malay identity issue, in December 1982 Mahathir argued that since Islam is integral to Malay culture, Malay (ethnic) culture should thus be the basis of the national culture, and warned others not to make a political issue of it anymore (*Malaysia*, January 1983). This declaration came only a month after another statement by the head of UMNO's Islamic bureau, Hj. Wan Mokhtar Ahmad (who is also the Menteri Besar of Trengganu state), that Mahathir was very eager to implement 'anything' in the name of Islam (*New Straits Times*, November 1982). Hj. Wan Mokhtar also announced, in 1982, the setting up of Yayasan Ekonomi Islam, the Islamic Economic Foundation, agreed upon by all the Rulers and Chief Ministers, to assist needy Muslims (*The Star*, 5 August 1982).[36]

Two other events in 1983–4 involving Mahathir's Islamic predisposition warrant some discussion here because of their significance towards an understanding of contemporary Malaysian Islam and the Malay–Islam tension in Malay identity. These were his defiant stand against a most powerful institution in Malay politics, particularly at the state-level — the Monarchy — which led to a constitutional impasse, and his equally bold public declaration that he would proceed zealously in Islamizing the government machinery (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 1983; *Malaysia*, January and February 1984).

Crisis with the Monarchy: The Pull of Ethnicity

That the Sultans, because of historical and constitutional reasons, are powerful rulers in their states is beyond any doubt. After all, the country has been ruled for some centuries by the Sultans (Sultans are heads of religion in their states) and the nation is today headed by a constitutional monarchy. A powerful Sultan can ignore the Federal government in any matter involving Islamic affairs in his particular state. One such case to indicate the power of the Sultans was the unilateral declaration of the Muslim *Hari Raya*, the celebration marking the completion of a month of fasting, by the Perak Sultan for Muslims in his state (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 1983; *Malaysia*, January and February 1984). The same power is exercised by the King. Constitutionally, the Yang diPertuan Agong (King) is the source of all authority, whether legislative, executive, or judicial (Milne and Mauzy, 1980: 243), and since Independence, bills passed in Parliament become law only after he has assented to them, and he is not liable to any proceeding whatsoever in court under clause (1) of Article 32 of the Constitution.

Against this power of the Sultans (and the deference that Malays traditionally accord them), one could note the courage of Dr Mahathir in the constitutional crisis of 1983–4 when he not only publicly confronted their power but made it clear that, as Muslims, the people have a right to criticize the Sultans if the latter have been misled or been mistaken in any of their actions.[37] The relevance of this episode to the Malay–Islam relationship had to do with more than just Mahathir's leadership qualities; in a way, the episode was also a good test of the strength of the Malay ethnic idiom

relative to their attachment to Islam. It must have dawned upon Mahathir that something had to be done regarding the powers of the then forthcoming King whose independent style *vis-à-vis* government was well known to Malaysians in general, but the Prime Minister also knew that to challenge the King was 'un-Malay' because Malays have traditionally been obedient to their rulers and in the plural context of Malaysia, the King is a symbol of 'Malayness'. That he decided to bring to the open discussion of the Monarch's powers and responsibilities was rather indicative of his personality.

It may be argued that the crisis was both a victory and a defeat for the government in general and Mahathir's leadership in particular. On the one hand, politically, Mahathir could be said to have won because the power of the Sultans at the federal level was curtailed: the Bill, passed in Parliament, prevents the King from indefinitely withholding assent to legislation passed by Parliament. Now, royal assent is still necessary and Rulers cannot delay implementation of Bills beyond 30 days; after that time, they must go back to Parliament if they have new proposals. If the King does not seek a review of the policies, a Bill automatically becomes legally binding (law) 30 days after it is passed without royal assent. On the other hand, the incident could also be interpreted as a defeat for the government because the King's powers in relation to Parliament, traditionally and constitutionally obscure, have been now clarified, giving due recognition to the King's power over Parliament in some matters.

More germane to the present discussion is that the crisis also indicated how strong Malays (both at the level of political leadership and masses) have not discarded their ethnic loyalty *vis-à-vis* Islam, in this case, symbolized by their deference to their Sultans or King. That a large number of Malays and some Malay Cabinet ministers openly indicated their pro-Royal stance—the public rallies in support of the Sultans were as large as those in support of Mahathir—implies that Mahathir was not receiving the kind of support from the Malays that he would have liked. Hence, although the contemporary Islamic reassertion may have placed the 'Islamic' image of the Royalty in less positive terms, it has not totally eclipsed the power of the royalty. Why is this so? One strong reason could be that the Monarchy, and Sultans especially, with their traditional legitimacy, provide a focus for Malay identity in a country where Malays do not have a clear majority. Sultans are important symbols of 'protection'—to use Chandra Muzaffar's term—to a community where symbols are still important arbiters of Malay custom and culture (Chandra Muzaffar, 1979a).

Islamizing Government Machinery: The Pull of Islam

The Malaysian government's other Islamic policies throughout the 1983–4 period may be regarded as an adjunct to Mahathir's public declaration in 1984 that he was serious in his attempts at 'Islamizing the government machinery'. Mahathir himself, in an interview, clarified what he meant:

> What we mean by Islamisation is the inculcation of Islamic values in government administration. Such an inculcation is not the same as implementation of Islamic

laws in the country. Islamic laws are for Muslims and meant for their personal laws. But laws of the nation, although not Islamic-based, can be used so long as they do not come into conflict with Islamic principles. Islamic laws can only be implemented if all the people agree to them. We cannot force because there is no compulsion in Islam (*Utusan Melayu*, 26 and 27 October 1984).

Although Islamic laws were not intended to include non-Muslims, what followed from the policy announcement was a series of Islamic-related programmes and directives in favour of Islam and the Muslims. Consequently, by all these policy directives, both the Malay–non-Malay divide and Islamic consciousness were heightened. In 1983, the practice that all ministries permit Muslim employees time-off between 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. every Friday to enable them to perform their compulsory congregational prayers, was upgraded when even banks had to follow suit. In the same year, the Ministry of Education sent a circular to all schools to allow Muslim students to dress according to the Islamic code (*Utusan Melayu*, 26 and 27 October 1984). Cinema proprietors were reminded to erect separate ticket-booths for men and women. Government employees, once appointed, were required to attend courses on Islamic law irrespective of their faiths (*New Straits Times*, 22 April 1983). Malaysia's capital city, in 1983 acquired its first Islamic Medical Centre, where, among its services, Muslim mothers can have their babies delivered by women doctors (*Islamic Herald*, Vols. 2–3, 1983). In another sphere, the government has elevated the status of *kadhi* (Muslim judges) to a par with other Western-trained judges, and recruited 850 religious teachers; 100 of these teachers, most of whom are young graduates, were attached to the Islamic Unit of the Prime Minister's Office while 750 others were in the Education Ministry (*New Straits Times*, 1 November 1982).

Increasingly, the Mahathir government has referred to Islamic history and past Islamic contributions to human civilization to justify its Islamic initiatives. Mahathir's public reference in 1983 at a gathering of Muslim youths to the Medina Constitution (arguably the first written Constitution in the world laying down the basic principles of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims) was one such example.[38] This occurred a few months after the government made the study of Islamic culture and civilization compulsory for all students in colleges and universities (*New Straits Times*, 1 November 1982). Mahathir has since, and together with Anwar from 1982, encouraged the 'Islamization' of the UMNO party itself, seen in the many Islamic seminars and training sessions conducted at all levels of the party.[39] In July 1984 the government organized two major international conferences. The first was the 'Conference of Imams' attended by delegates from the Asia–Pacific region and jointly sponsored with Libya, and the second was the 'International Seminar of Islamic Thought'. Mahathir himself officially opened the latter seminar, where he urged Muslim planners to 'work out a practical blueprint for the implementation of the Islamic system, taking into account today's practical realities' (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 8, Nos. 5–6, 1984). The government also announced in mid-1984 that it was preparing a 'Guidebook on Islamic Ethics' and 'Islamic development in Malaysia' which would put across the message that develop-

ment projects carried out by the government were in line with Islamic doctrines, and 'will also become the basis for the government in drafting the forthcoming Fifth Malaysia Plan . . . to ensure that the assimilation of Islamic principles will continue to be adopted in drafting the programmes involved' (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 8, Nos. 5–6, 1984). Although Mahathir himself has been quite cautious not to call for the establishment of an Islamic State, he has stated, on occasions, that the nation really operates under the code and values of the Islamic faith. By means of all these pro-Islam policies, both Mahathir and Anwar have played a crucial part in heightening Muslim consciousness in Malaysia. However, despite their attempts, they both have not fully succeeded in integrating the Islamic–ethnic variables of the dialectic.

Motives of Islamization Policies

Reference to the Mahathir government's Islamization policies is incomplete without an analysis of some of the motives behind these policies. It appears to this author that two underlying reasons may have guided the government's Islamization programmes. The first was the desire to outwit PAS and check PAS's Islamic appeal among Malays, and the second was the necessity to regulate Islamic activities in Malaysia to ensure interethnic stability.

Cognizant of the political ramifications of the intensification of the Islamic ethos in general and the necessity to placate PAS in particular, the UMNO-led ruling élite stepped up its support for Islam. In an apparent reference to charges by PAS that UMNO and the government have not done enough for Islam, and amidst the backdrop of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, Mahathir, then the Deputy Prime Minister, claimed in October 1979 that, unlike others, the Malaysian government not only talked about Islam but implemented it (*The Star*, 2 June 1979). Significantly, later in that year, the Prime Minister, Tun Hussein Onn, for once openly admitted that UMNO's Islamization drives were mainly precipitated by the political threat that PAS posed to the government: 'You may wonder why we spend so much money on Islam . . . if we don't, PAS will get us. The party will, and does claim, that we are not religious, and the people will lose faith' (*Berita Harian*, 21 October 1979).

The above statement came only a few months after Mahathir responded to mounting criticism by some Muslim organizations (including ABIM) and PAS that the NEP was conceptually un-Islamic; Mahathir replied that 'UMNO championed the accumulation of wealth, power and knowledge, because these were necessary for the defence of Islam' (*New Straits Times*, 1 June 1979).[40] UMNO deliberately wanted to outbid PAS's tactics by staging a six-week National Islamic Exhibition as a major event to celebrate the 1979 National Day; the theme of the exhibition was the advent of Islam in Malaysia and its contribution to the political, economic, and cultural life of the country (*New Straits Times*, 8 July 1979). This was followed, four months later, with an allotment of M$26 million for a Southeast Asian Islamic Research Centre.[41]

In 1982, a year after becoming Prime Minister, Mahathir invited PAS to rejoin the coalition government, which he justified by reference to verses from the Qur'an on Muslim unity (*The Star*, 6 March 1982 and 9 August 1982). He even claimed that, with a membership of 750,000, UMNO was the 'world's third largest Islamic party' and that PAS was actually a splinter of UMNO (*The Star*, 6 March 1982 and 9 August 1982). When all these political overtures failed and PAS continued its open criticism of UMNO and the government, Mahathir's tempo also changed. He accused PAS of being influenced by extremism and wanting to force Islamic laws on non-Muslims (*Utusan Melayu*, 26 and 27 October 1984). Significantly, the UMNO strategy in securing Malay legitimacy *vis-à-vis* PAS has been to project the party as the champion of the two core ingredients of Malay identity: Islam and ethnic Malay nationalism. This contrasts with PAS's more recent broadening of its Islamic approach which has been to emphasize Islamic universalism and play down Malay ethnic sentiments.

Regulation of Islamic Activities

The other major motive for UMNO's Islamization programmes since Mahathir became Prime Minister has been to guide, if not regulate, Islamic activities in the country so that Islam will not become a source of interethnic instability. Dr Mahathir himself, on many occasions in 1984, was aware of the non-Muslim fears of his Islamization programmes, and wanting to allay such fears, categorically ruled out imposition of Islamic laws throughout the nation: 'if the end result of the imposition of Islamic laws is chaos ... it is not any good' (*Straits Times*, 9 October 1984), and 'Malaysia's multi-racial society ruled out Islamic laws being imposed ...' (*The Star*, 10 October 1984). Thus, the government's moves to regulate, control, and even, in the analysis of Barraclough, coerce Islamic activities in the country,[42] must be viewed against this concern for communal stability, although there seemed to be a tinge of ambiguity in the above assurances. This is perhaps due to the fact that while adopting the above measures against other Muslim organizations and activists, the Mahathir government has always wanted to secure greater support for its own Islamic programmes. In this regard, it (via UMNO) finds it necessary either to establish its own new Islamic institutions or to upgrade existing ones.

Notable among these are the National Council for Islamic Affairs (Majlis Kebangsaan Halehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia, MKHUIM) and the National Islamic Research Centre (Pusat Penyelidekan Islam Malaysia, PPIM) briefly referred to in Chapter 2. Both of these national governing bodies were housed in the multistorey Islamic Centre (Pusat Islam). Besides serving as a symbol of the government's aspirations to propagate Islam more seriously, the Centre functions as the nerve-centre of the government's Islamic administrative bureaucracy which comes under the direct jurisdiction of the Prime Minister's Office (*New Straits Times*, 12 September and 1 November 1982). Despite facing some difficulty in having to interfere in what is constitutionally the domain of the individual states, the Centre still manages to incorporate Islamic activities within the

country into areas of government regulation and control. This has been done by conducting research and relaying feedback-information to the relevant authorities.[43] In 1984, the Centre was greatly expanded to incorporate seven major units, including a Dakwah Institute and a Qur'anic Institute.[44]

In an interview with the present author, the Secretary-General of MKHUIM mentioned that MKHUIM was influential in the eventual birth of numerous government Islamic establishments and training schemes. These include the Islamic Missionary and Training Institute (Indah or Institut Dakwah) which has organized various courses for civil servants, youth groups and the Malaysian diplomatic corps; the Islamic Dakwah Foundation; the Islamic Development Economics Foundation; the Islamic Teachers' Training College; and the Pilgrims Management Fund Board (LUTH). The PPIM was formed mainly to conduct research on Islamic activities and issues although it also vets and censors Islamic publications. Its regulatory and control roles can be indicated by reference to the numerous studies it conducted from 1977 to 1987. They include Freemasonry (1977), Bahaism (1979), mosques in Malaysia (1979), Muslim marriage and divorce (1979), the state of Islamic schools in Malaysia (1980), *dakwah* activities of university students (1980), the religion of Orang Asli tribes (1980), unauthentic (alleged) Islamic teachings (1980), and *khalwat* and adultery (1981).[45]

The findings of these studies and research are then referred to the Prime Minister's Office for necessary action. Many of the recommendations of these studies have been adopted by the government, true to the stated objectives of the PPIM, 'to make Islam as a guide to government policies, especially where it relates to Muslims'.[46] These recommendations included a crackdown on false or unauthentic Islamic teachings, elevating the status of *kadhi*, the *halal–haram* food regulations, *dakwah* among the Orang Asli tribes, and rules governing student involvement in *dakwah* activities both locally and in overseas universities.[47]

The impact of these studies and the influence of the government Islamic bureaucracy are as considerable as they are understandable, because, not only do all these institutions operate under the close scrutiny of the Prime Minister's Office, but the Prime Minister himself is the Chairman of the MKHUIM. It is thus only natural that these institutions serve as organs of government co-ordination and regulation of Islamic institutions and activities in the country.

Apart from the above strategy, there are more substantive methods of regulating the direction of Islam in the country. One such method is by co-opting prominent Islamic personalities and organizations. One may thus see in these methods or measures, how Mahathir the politician (as opposed to Mahathir, the Muslim leader) confronts the pressures of Islam in Malaysia and responds to the Malay–Muslim identity issue. From time to time, many such leaders have either joined the government (through UMNO) as ministers, or sat in the government's numerous Islamic bodies, including the MKHUIM and the PPIM. Sanusi Junid, for instance, a Cabinet minister and UMNO's Secretary-General, was an ABIM vice-president in 1972–3.

Syed Nasir Ismail, the former Speaker of Parliament and a most vocal Muslim campaigner, sat on many of the government's Islamic bodies such as the Institut Dakwah and was for some time chairman of the Qur'an recitation competition. The government's conciliatory approach towards some *dakwah* organizations described earlier, such as Darul Arqam and Perkim, was undertaken with the same motive in mind; so too with PAS's earlier partnership in the Barisan Nasional. Thus, the co-optation of Anwar Ibrahim in 1982 was used by UMNO to support the claim that the party is 'Islamic' and 'as an indication of his acceptance that UMNO is able to play its role as a strong Islamic party' (*New Straits Times*, 20 February 1980).[48]

A further measure adopted by the Malaysian government in regulating Islamic activities in the country, especially those that it regards as potentially destructive to the country's stability, has been harsh legal prohibitions and arrests. These include the Sedition Act (1970), the Internal Security Act (Revised, 1972), and the Societies Act (1981). They have been used by the government to threaten, control, or even silence opposition, including PAS and Muslim dissent in general (Barraclough, 1985: 15–20). In addition, the constitutional emergency provisions, such as Article 150 of the Federal Constitution, empower the Malaysian King to have the final decision in emergency situations and his decision cannot be changed.[49]

Such punitive measures are often widely publicized to discredit Islamic dissent or indicate the potentially dangerous nature of extra-constitutional moves to change the status quo. These harsh measures have been a consistent government tactic ever since the political force of Islam heightened in Malaysia, particularly from the late 1970s, with the attacks by deviant Muslim groups on Hindu temples (1979) and a police station in Batu Pahat in 1980. At the UMNO's 1979 General Assembly for instance, the government was urged to take a much tougher stand against extremist Islamic teachings and activities. As the government took seriously the resolutions of the annual UMNO Assemblies, it was to be expected that government policies soon followed suit in respect of these demands. Throughout 1980, if there was any single explanation to describe the UMNO and government's main concerns, it must be its obsession with Muslim militants seen as a threat to the status quo.

Tun Hussein Onn, the Prime Minister, called upon all Muslims in the country to be wary of those who were bent on destroying the unity of Muslims in Malaysia, reminding religious leaders 'not to allow religion to be made a political tool' (*Malaysia*, Vol. 22, No. 80, 1980: 3). Mahathir, after issuing his warning to 'religious opportunists', devoted his entire address to the party's Youth and Women Assemblies in 1980 to the issue of narrow, ritualized and dogmatic interpretations of Islam. He took some *dakwah* groups to task for acting in ways that caused unnecessary misunderstandings about Islam to the extent of even alienating the non-Muslims (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 February 1980: 10). The Malaysian King's official address to the 1980 Islamic Missionary Conference for Southeast Asia and the Pacific was similar in tone—that the purpose of *dakwah* was 'to bring back to sanity, the bewildered and confused Muslims of our times' (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 February 1980: 10). Three

months later, in a speech to the nation to mark his fiftieth birthday, His Majesty broached the need for Muslims to uphold the principles of solidarity, tolerance, and sensible actions, argued by him as being essential traits of decent community living in a multiracial and multireligious country like Malaysia (*Malaysian Digest*, 15 June 1980: 1). In June of the same year, he urged Muslim *dakwah* groups to place greater emphasis on their responsibility for the continuing prosperity for all Malaysians (*Malaysian Digest*, 15 June 1980: 5). Almost immediately, the Finance Minister urged Muslims to have the 'true spirit of Islam' and reminded them not to act in such a way as to create the impression among non-Muslims that Islam is a backward religion (*Berita Harian*, 8 June 1980; *New Straits Times*, 16 June 1980).

In the same year, too, soon after the government rejected demands by PAS and other *dakwah* groups for a ban on liquor in the armed forces mess (*Sunday Times*, 23 June 1980), UMNO leaders sounded the alarm on the growth of extremist Islamic doctrines among the police and the armed forces (*New Straits Times*, 23 August 1980 and 16 December 1980). When these verbal 'notices' did not produce the desired results, the government decided to be more adventurous. It embarked upon punitive measures to curb the tide of what it called 'deviant', 'fundamentalist', and 'extremist' groups and activities, commonly referring to them by their pejorative Malay names *dakwah songsang* or *dakwah sesat* (misled *dakwah*) (*Berita Harian*, 16 December 1980; *New Straits Times*, 30 December 1980). A major government weapon was the Internal Security Act (ISA) which was used to arrest those charged with threatening the political stability and security of the nation.[50] The government justified its hard-line approach by a series of revelations about the existence of numerous deviant Muslim groups in the country. In January 1980, it was announced that some 500 undesirable elements wearing flowing robes had been arrested (*New Straits Times*, 1 January 1979; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 February 1979; Morais, 1982a: 52). When Hindu temples were smashed, UMNO leaders alleged that some of these 'extremist' groups were even planning to assassinate government leaders as well as to set up a completely Islamic system of government in the country (*New Straits Times*, 26 November 1980). In October that year, too, a fanatical group—this time led by two Indo-Chinese Muslim refugees—attacked a police station in Batu Pahat in Johore, and, in the ensuing melée, six of them were shot dead. In a further operation, the police killed another two. For reasons unknown, the government, despite the threat to national order, did not resort to the ISA in this case, much to the bewilderment of non-Muslims. They were instead tried under the normal court procedure and later sentenced to 26 strokes of the rotan and 10 years' jail (Kamal Amir, 1980; *New Straits Times*, 25 and 26 November 1980, and 4 January 1981). In December 1982, the government passed an amendment to the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code aimed at legitimizing government action against 'those who use religion to create enmity and disunity and teach religion without authorisation' (*The Star*, 2 October 1983). In 1983, the government claimed that in Selangor state alone, there were at least 45 such groups with a combined total of

40,000 members (*Tanahair*, 16 February 1983). In 1985, government troops were sent to Kampung Memali in Kedah to violently quash the alleged pro-PAS *guru*, Ibrahim Libya, and his movement, resulting in 18 deaths, including 4 policemen. A government White Paper was later published to emphasize the danger of such extremist tendencies to the country's stability.

Besides the above mechanisms, there have been, for some time, other means of government regulation and control. The government has directed, since the late 1970s, that at least once (out of four) a month, the weekly Friday *khutbah* be read from the text supplied by the Islamic Centre (*The Star*, 8 August 1982; cf. *New Straits Times*, 4 January 1977). Another circular by the Secretary of the Islamic Council of Kuala Lumpur to all mosque administrators, dated March 1982, warned that 'no one without official permits from the Council is allowed to preach Islam in mosques and *suraus* . . . and mosque/*surau* administrators are liable to either jail or fine for breach of this law'.[51] Musa Hitam, then the Deputy Prime Minister, by virtue of his additional position as Home Affairs Minister, was the government's spokesman and main expounder of numerous moves aimed at curbing Islamic populist drives in the country, particularly against Islamic extremists. In November 1982, he tabled a Bill in Parliament (Akta Salah Ugama) making it illegal for any Muslim to challenge the authority of the Islamic Council or initiate talk in mosques and *surau* of religious matters which could lead to public unrest. The Bill also prohibited the building of any mosque or *surau* without government approval (*New Straits Times*, 16 July 1982; *Nadi Insan*, March 1983: 13). The hardest hit by this Bill was naturally PAS, which had been building new *surau* in areas under its control, as well as using these places as the focus of its activities. After the passing of the Bill, many of its *surau* were closed (*New Straits Times*, 3 September 1982). In October 1983, after exposing the existence of 'highly educated radical Muslim republicans' in Malaysia and viewing their actions as a 'threat to the social order', Musa Hitam again warned of severe government reprisals (*Malaysia*, November 1983: 11). In October 1984, when he was Acting Prime Minister (Mahathir was overseas), stringent curbs were put on religious talks organized by PAS, particularly those by Ustadz Abdul Hadi, its vice-president, making it illegal for these talks to be given without police permits (*Malaysia*, November 1984). The arrest of some PAS branch activists under the ISA in late 1983 for organizing a seminar in which pictures of Imam Khomeini were displayed[52] was a signal to its national leaders that the government would not hesitate to take action against them despite PAS's status as a political party.

The government's other regulatory measures included a ban on any journal or publication which contained materials considered prejudicial to the national interest. Islamic articles overly critical of the government were not exempted from this ruling. In this regard, ABIM's *Risalah*, indicated earlier, and the *Nadi Insan* social-critic journal have been banned (*Nadi Insan*, March 1983). Nor have students been spared. Since 1983, all prospective overseas-bound students have been required to attend preparatory courses aimed at equipping them for living in their new environment,

and some, after their first two years abroad, are given airline tickets to return to Kuala Lumpur for what are dubbed 're-socialisation' programmes.[53] That Malay students are the target groups for this programme indicate that the government's concern is directed more at the Malay students (especially those active in Islamic activities) than the non-Malays. The posting of government *ulama* to overseas student centres soon after the announcement of this scheme was a further confirmation of the government's intentions and designs.

Obviously, all these measures benefited the government. By publicly exposing the more extreme, deviant activities of the lesser known Muslim groups, the government may have hoped to discredit some of the more committed Islamic organizations like ABIM and Darul Arqam. Furthermore, the fact that these groups are often linked to PAS could place the party in a poor light, and this in turn could benefit UMNO.[54]

This 'cautious support' for Islam (a combination of support and control) of the Mahathir government in Malaysia's domestic and foreign policies becomes understandable if the perennial struggle of the forces of Islam and ethnicity in the politics of Malay identity are borne in mind. Of equal significance is the fact that the government has had to face numerous constraints and impediments, both latent and manifest, ingrained in the Malaysian political system as a whole. Mahathir's confrontation with the Sultans in the constitutional crisis of 1983–4, and the incessant UMNO struggle with PAS, were only two of many such hindrances. The gravitational pull of ethnic parochialism (as opposed to Islam) among Malays in general, and the tenuous nature of Malay–non-Malay relations, are other restraining factors. So too with the difficulty, despite the Islamic banks and other Islamic economic measures, of remodelling an economic system which is heavily dependent upon a 'free enterprise'[55] capitalist framework. These and other determinants of Islam in Malaysia are the subject of our analysis in the concluding chapter, where we shall also, against the backdrop of Islamic reassertion there, assess the feasibility of the 'Islamic alternative' to governing plural Malaysia.

1. The task is easier if one were to judge, say *dakwah* organizations, because they were formed for the explicit and expressed purpose of spreading Islam, although whether or not they were guided by political motives may be similarly problematic.

2. Information on his early life and developments leading to his return to Malaysian politics, were obtained from books, all written in 1982, by Mokhtar Petah, Morais, and Rahmanmat. His biography is also listed in *Malaysian Digest*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 15 April 1976.

3. Ever since its formation in 1967, ASEAN has occupied the number one spot in Malaysia's foreign policy.

4. Press release of Mahathir's speech in that conference; the present writer attended the conference.

5. *Malaysia's External Trade* (1974 and 1979) (Kuala Lumpur, Department of Trade and Industry). Admittedly, it would have been more meaningful to have comparative figures over a similar period of time.

6. *Malaysia's External Trade*, 1974, p. 277.

7. AN P/PM/PPP/2 1975 (in Bibliography), being a speech by Abdul Latif Hamed, Director-General of Kuwait Committee for Arab Economic Development.

8. Ironically, despite using the Islamic symbolic word 'Darussalam' (A Country of Peace), it has a hereditary monarchy, an institution or practice alien to the Islamic principle of governing a state.

9. It is also for this same reason that Dr Mahathir, scheduled to address the seminar on 'Politics and Modernization' two months before Brunei's Independence, decided at the last moment not to attend, because of the possibility that he might offend Brunei during question time, since there was a paper on Brunei by the Peoples' Party representative. (The present writer was told this by an official of the Organizing Committee.)

10. *The Star* of 10 February 1983: that 'Malaysia is a secular state' was reiterated by former Prime Ministers Tunku and Hussein Onn.

11. This was the impression this writer had after meeting the then new leadership: Yusuf Rawa, Ustadz Hadi, and Mustapha Ali.

12. The present writer's impression after discussions with Anwar Ibrahim.

13. One of the strongest statements was made by the then Prime Minister, Hussein Onn; he insisted that Islam must form the basis of the country's national culture, argued by him to be for the sake of national security and the survival of the Malays: *New Straits Times*, 15 March 1975.

14. From a paper entitled 'Aktiviti Pusat Islam', unpublished, by Dr Hamid Othman, then Head of the Islamic Centre, 1984.

15. Ibid.; cf. *Straits Times*, 22 November 1974.

16. Ibid.

17. See also *Malaysia*, January 1983, p. 1, where Mahathir again reiterated the decision that the Malay-Muslim culture must form the basis of Malaysia's national culture.

18. Syed Nasir was the former Speaker of Parliament and the chairman of many Islamic bodies associated with the government: *New Straits Times*, 10 June 1977.

19. Yusuf Rawa, PAS President (until 1989), mentioned this in discussion with the author.

20. See *Kemajuan Islam di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Kementerian Penerangan, 1978).

21. In Penang, UMNO has the majority of seats in the State Assembly but allows Lim Chong Eu to remain as Chief Minister. The Governor, however, is a Muslim.

22. *Third Malaysia Plan* (Kuala Lumpur, Jabatan Cetakan Negara, 1976), especially Article 117.

23. It was envisaged by the authorities that by the end of 1986, these would already have been increased by a further 44 new mosques and *surau*. See *Fourth Malaysia Plan* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printing Office, 1981); *Dakwah*, January 1980, p. 45.

24. See 'Islam Payung dan Pedoman Hidup' (Kuala Lumpur, Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia, 1980), pp. 7–8; Vol. 35 (January 1980), p. 54, *Serial Media Dakwah*, Vol. 6 (Jakarta, March 1980), pp. 11–14, and *New Straits Times*, 4 June 1980, p. 5.

25. This writer found out that one of those regular invitees was Professor Ismail al-Faruqi of Temple University in Philadelphia, an author of Muslim books, as well as, since 1983, the President of the International Muslim Social Science Association. He was assassinated in early 1986. This writer was told by a government source that the Malaysian government offered to bear all funeral expenses.

26. The writer managed to witness the procession at the Stadium Negara during research in Malaysia in 1983–5.

27. The writer had two interviews in 1983 with the governing Board, who included the initial co-ordinator, Professor Ariffin Suhaimi; the Registrar, Md. Nawawi; and Deputy Registrar, Affandi Johan.

28. Hussein Onn headed the IIU from its inception in 1983 to 1988.

29. This was naturally denied by the government; see the Deputy Prime Minister's statement in *Mingguan Malaysia*, 8 February 1983, p. 1.

30. Interview with Kamarudin Nor (Kuala Lumpur, 1983); ABIM (like PAS) had called for these institutions on numerous occasions in the past, as mentioned in Chapter 3.

31. Interview with Ariffin Suhaimi, the University's co-ordinator (Kuala Lumpur, 1983).

32. Although opposition parties and pressure groups may not see much change in these amendments, ABIM was quite pleased: interview with Kamarudin Nor (1983).

33. This was the present writer's impression after three meetings with Anwar Ibrahim although it must be conceded that Anwar was quite cautious not to claim that it was he who had initiated the launching of these institutions.

34. The other two sites are in Cyprus and Saudi Arabia.

35. See Table 5.1.

36. Datuk Haji Wan Mokhtar was the former president of the Malaysian Muslim Graduates Association in Cairo, and is now the Menteri Besar of Trengganu state, and an UMNO Vice-President.

37. The crisis has been widely documented. See, for example, Lim Kit Siang (1983), *Berita Harian*, 12 December 1983; and *Mingguan Perdana*, 13 November 1983. Ironically, Mahathir had earlier supported the feudal Malay leadership system. See Mahathir (1968).

38. This reference by Mahathir was mentioned by Anwar in interviews with the present writer (Kuala Lumpur, 1983). The Constitution was formulated and introduced by Prophet Muhammad, detailing the rules and regulations in the governance of the Islamic state. For an explanation of this Medina Constitution, see Watt (1956).

39. The present writer's interview with Anwar Ibrahim (Kuala Lumpur, 1983).

40. That some Muslim groups regard the NEP as un-Islamic is also revealed in Musa Hitam's public statements in December 1979: *New Straits Times*, 15 December 1979. Cf. *Berita Harian*, 16 December 1979.

41. For information regarding this Centre, see *New Straits Times*, 21 December 1979 and *The Star*, 3 and 10 January 1980.

42. For an analysis of the application of coercion in the Malaysian political system, see Barraclough (1985).

43. See 'Lima Tahun PPIM, 1974–79' (Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 1980). The writer also had an interview with the PPIM Director (1983) and the Secretary-General of the MKHUIM (1983).

44. From an unpublished paper by the Head of the Centre, 1984.

45. From *PPIM Files* referred to by writer at PPIM headquarters in Kuala Lumpur (1983).

46. Quotation taken from 'Anggaran Belanjawan Kerajaan Persekutuan' (Perbendaharaan Malaysia: Kumpulan Sdn. Bhd. Printers, 1977), pp. 89–90 and 102.

47. Interviews with Syed Husin Ali and Mahsin Haji Mansor, and *PPIM Files*.

48. At our meetings, Anwar, however, maintained that his entry into UMNO was mainly due to his trust of Mahathir's interest in Islam, his personality and capabilities, and that he was different from other secularists and nationalists in UMNO; see also *New Straits Times*, 9 April 1982.

49. Federal Constitution of Malaysia (Amendment, 1981), especially clauses 1 and 2.

50. For a good account of how the mechanism of control is used as the basis of social order, see Sites (1973).

51. The writer found this circular posted on the notice boards of many mosques in Kuala Lumpur in 1982 and 1983.

52. They were arrested in Trengganu: from an UMNO source who did not want to be named.

53. Information gathered from students who participated in these programmes; main topics covered in the programme include Malaysian culture, religion, and politics.

54. In 1980, for instance, the government exposed the work of an underground Muslim organization alleged to be waging a campaign to turn Malaysia into a 'militant Islamic state'. The organization, the Pertubuhan Angkatan Sabilullah or 'The Warriors of Allah', was linked to PAS through a similar acronym, PAS. See *Straits Times*, 9 April 1980.

55. Obviously the sponsored nature of the government's pro-Malay NEP may mean a slight qualification if the Malaysian economic system were to be described as a 'free enterprise' system.

6

Islam and Malay Ethnicity in the 1980s: Tensions and Consequences for Malaysian Politics

THIS study of the politics of Malay identity in Malaysia—of the dynamics in the Islam–Malay ethnicity relationship—especially from 1963 to 1986, concludes that Islam and ethnicity have been central factors in Malay politics. For Islam, the study confirms that the Faith has been both an integrative and divisive factor in Malay political culture. The study has also demonstrated that the actual role and influence of Islam in Malaysian politics has been moulded by numerous forces and conditions which regulate such influence. Of these forces, the ethnic idiom (referred throughout the study as 'ethnic Malay nationalism') is particularly significant, given its salience and persistence.

To have a better understanding of the strength of the ethnic factor, one must refer to Malay history, political culture, the ethnic arithmetic of Malaysia, the political philosophy and policies of the government, and to the intricacies of the Malay–Islam complexion. Such a complexion or temperament has been characterized by the recurrent, dialectical tension that Malays are subject to, as an ethnic community on the one hand, and as members of an universal, non-ethnic Islamic community on the other. What this implies is the existence of a continuous ambiguity, if not ambivalence, between two mutually interdependent (and at times 'contradictory') terms of identity for Malays, a situation or condition which, it has been argued, is something which the Malays are not openly conscious of. These dialectics were evident, for instance, in the following: between the (Islamic) *umma* and the (Malay-ethnic) *bumiputra*, between *shar'iah* and *adat*, between PAS and UMNO, and between reformists and Malay ethnic nationalists, to mention just the obvious examples.

Summing up

By way of conclusion in this final chapter, we shall attempt to integrate, briefly, some of the salient points made in the preceding chapters prior to offering some explanations as to why the Malay–Islam relationship in Malaysia has taken its particular shape and course. Following this we shall

appraise the feasibility of replacing the present ethnic-oriented approach in Malaysian politics with the radical alternative, of the 'Islamic State'. Finally, it is hoped to posit some views as to the probable course of Malaysian Islam in the near future, taking cognizance of the strength of the ethnic idiom and other factors and forces in Malaysian political culture.

The centrality of Islam in Malay life and in the Malaysian political process became more pronounced especially from the early 1970s, although it must be added that such a development of Malaysian Islam was not unilinear. Let us first recapitulate those factors that led to this reassertion of the Islamic ethos there. Given the integral role of Islam in the Malay *weltanschauung*, it was not surprising that Malays, like Muslims elsewhere, could not escape the impact of the international reassertion of Islam since the 1973 Arab–Israeli war and the oil crisis which ensued, but particularly the events during the 1979–80 period, such as the Islamic euphoria unleashed by the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the increasing power of the Gulf States since the oil crisis. The resort to the 'oil weapon' by the Muslim Gulf States against the Western powers and their allies, and expressions of Muslim support and sympathy for the Iranian and Afghan episodes, contributed to a growing reaffirmation of Islam as a political force internationally, as well as in countries with sizeable Muslim populations (Ayoob, 1981; Braibanti, 1979; Cudsi and Dessouki, 1982; Jansen, 1979; Naff, 1981; Tietzel, 1976). The ways and means in which this world-wide Islamic reassertion of the 1970s influenced events within Malaysia were evident in at least two major ways. First, in the subsequent support, through demonstrations, financial donations, speeches, and publications extended by Muslim groups and organizations in Malaysia to those international crises situations affecting the Muslim *umma*, and secondly, the rise of Muslim consciousness among Malay masses in general, and Malay–Muslim tertiary students and youth in particular. It was argued earlier how such students had a cathartic experience while studying in the West and how the Malay-dominated Muslim Student Associations, both locally and in overseas universities, were in some ways influenced by the above events. This was due to their wide exposure to the *ulama* from the Gulf and Indian sub-continent who visited them in their campuses, and through their access to a wide array of Islamic publications sympathetic to the Islamic struggle. Returning to Malaysia upon graduation, and occupying some form of leadership positions in government ministries (aided by pro-Malay government policies), these Islamic-oriented graduates initiated or participated in Islamic activities in the ministries or in Muslim organizations like ABIM.

Furthermore, these youth returned home at a time when the Malaysian government itself, for economic and political reasons, decided to have closer relations with the Gulf States. In addition, for its own legitimacy, it had to demonstrate its support for Islam to prevent loss of substantial Malay votes by default to PAS. Hence, inelegant and inaccurate it may be as a term (given the implied notion of the earlier dormant condition of Islam as a faith (Muhammad Hussin Mutalib, 1981b), this Islamic 'revival' became a noticeable feature in many countries, not just restricted to the

Muslim-dominated countries. For Malaysia, however, there was yet another significant explanation: the circumstances prevalent in Malaysian society at that time, particularly events that ensued after the 1969 ethnic riots. Although at that time it was mainly the Malay university students who looked to Islam as the solution to the Malay plight, manifestations of the reaffirmation of Islam among Malays in general increased dramatically soon after the riots. A visit to Malaysia would have confirmed that Malays in increasing numbers donned Arab-style attire and 'returned' to the *masjid* and *surau*. The quintessence, or a more obvious indicator of this trend, and a more significant development politically, however, was the heightening and mobilization of organized Muslim activities and consciousness on a scale never seen before in the country.

The Dakwah Phenomenon and Its Implications

Such Muslim organizations like ABIM, Perkim, and Darul Arqam, generically referred to as *dakwah* organizations, collectively did contribute to this reassertion. Since the 1970s, the reassertion, although not linear in development, has had tremendous implications for Malaysian politics in general and for the issue of Malay identity in particular. First, since *dakwah* is not a monolithic phenomenon, the Malays, as Muslims, will continue to be a divided, if not fractious community. Secondly, the fact that *dakwah* activities are no longer primarily concentrated in the traditional *kampung* or rural areas may result in PAS, whose political support has always been rural-based, losing its political grip of the Malay electorate. The party, in its competition with UMNO, is therefore posed with the problem of its future survival and it must adopt new approaches and strategies to combat this trend. Thirdly, since *dakwah* organizations are potent sources of pressure on the government, their demands for more Islamically oriented policies have to be accommodated by the government, especially the UMNO leadership, if the latter's legitimacy is to stay intact in Malay eyes. Finally, the rise of the Islamic ethos there further exacerbates the tension between the two most salient forces in the politics of Malay identity: Islam and ethnic Malay nationalism.

In many ways, the discourses of *dakwah* organizations led to the strengthening of Islam since Muslim consciousness was mobilized as a direct result of *dakwah* activities. In this context, one can deduce that the *dakwah* phenomenon (and Islamic reassertion in general) can no longer be seen as an ephemeral and transient development. That is one general conclusion. However, the rise of the Islamic ethos in Malaysia does not necessarily imply that in the politics of Malay identity, the importance of Islam has finally succeeded in overshadowing or submerging the other integral component of Malay identity, namely Malay ethnic, parochial, and particularistic inclination. As a matter of fact, on the contrary, in the majority of cases (as our study has demonstrated) *dakwah* actually heightened the Malay–Islam tension in the politics of Malay identity. It has become obvious that Malay ethnic sentiments have tended to prevail over the Islamic, particularly at times when Malays, as an ethnic commu-

nity, are confronted with the non-Malay threat.

From the above analysis, it should be clear that the *dakwah* phenomenon has wide-ranging implications for the Malay identity issue in particular, and Malaysian politics in general.

The Malaysian Government and Islamic Reassertion

Other than this *dakwah* factor, the Malaysian government, specifically under the leadership of the Malay political élite in UMNO, perhaps inadvertently, also helped to push further the Islamic factor in the political affairs of the country. Throughout the present study, an attempt has been made to demonstrate how the UMNO-led government actually had no alternative but to support Islam. This has to do not only with the backdrop of the global Islamic reaffirmation in recent years which the government cannot prevent from affecting Malaysian Muslims, but also with the legitimacy of UMNO as the dominant Malay party in a country where Malays, to a large extent, dictate the content and direction of politics. Both the closeness of Malays, despite their varying degrees of commitment, to the Faith, as well as the perennial UMNO–PAS conflict, explain, if not necessitate, the pro-Islam bias of the ruling regime. In what may have been an expected development, the government's Islamization policies have had spill-over effects: they have become catalysts to a similar assertiveness of the Faith at the state (as opposed the federal) level, with Islam being left, as it were, to the Sultans. Conscious of the trust placed on them in the Constitution as the guardians or 'protectors of Malay culture and religion' (Hashim Yeop Sani, 1978; Hickling, 1962; Mohamed Suffian, Lee, and Trindade, 1978; Chandra Muzaffar, 1979a), they have embarked upon a series of 'Islamic' moves which tends to give the impression that they are actively engaged in a competition to show which of them is more Islamic than the other.[1] They had no choice but to publicly portray this 'protector' image because, since the 1969 riots, and especially after the 1983–4 constitutional crisis, their political role and influence has waned in the politics of the federation. This implies that, even at the state level, Islam has, in more recent times, accentuated the Malay identity struggle.

However, all Malaysian governments (the present one under Dr Mahathir Mohamad differs slightly to some extent), as this study indicates, have treated Islam not as a living, vital faith, but more as a legitimizing instrument. The annual National and International Qur'an recitation competitions, the celebrations marking Prophet Muhammad's birthday, the investitures of the Sultans, the building of mosques and *surau*, and support for other Islamic symbols and rituals, may thus be seen in this context of securing legitimacy.[2] In addition, the Islam that has been adopted by successive Malaysian governments has had, as its focus, an ethnic, insular dimension, an approach or orientation which has made it difficult for an Islamic social order to emerge. The overriding concern has been to protect and preserve the interests of the Malays in multiracial Malaysia *via-à-vis* other ethnic communities. The wider philosophical dimensions and principles of the Faith such as its universality, and modernity, and its emphasis

on equity, justice, tolerance, acquisition of knowledge and the strife for excellence in life's endeavours, have been rarely brought forward, let alone encouraged to a significant level, by the government. The idea of Islam being part and parcel of the politics of the country have been viewed with much caution, if not suspicion, by the ruling regime.

This wariness of the explosive potential of Islamic populism on the one hand, and official support of the Faith on the other, again indicate the 'contradiction' ('dialectic' is perhaps more apt) that exists in the Malay–Islam relationship, and in the politics of Malay identity. In cases where the use of Islam by Muslims might create instability and loss of legitimacy from the multireligious polity, the government will demand that Islam not be mixed with politics. When, however, the occasion demanded, the government would go all the way to project its 'Islamic' image, as adopted by both the governments of Tun Razak (1970–6) and Hussein Onn (1976–81), and evident, for instance, in Malaysia's pro-Muslim foreign policy since the Arab–Israeli war of 1973.[3] What resulted from the government's attempt to appease both the Malays (Muslims) and non-Malays (non-Muslims, generally), was policies characterized by their ambiguity, if not ambivalence. The recent demands for greater implementation of Islamic laws by the Ulama Association and the National Muslim Students Association (*Straits Times*, 23 January 1987: 10), as well as expressions of concern by other organizations, like ABIM, over Malay ethnic nationalist and secularist tendencies which they consider a misrepresentation of the Islamic spirit itself (*Salam*, Vol. 2, No. 5, 1984: 1–3), seen against the remarks by UMNO leaders defending nationalism in Islam, indicate the extent of the matter: that ethnic tendencies are still held by Malays in high government positions despite the official government support for Islamization in general. It was this same ethnic nationalism, interpreted by some as *assabiyah*, that was vehemently criticized by Muslim scholars as a major source of problems for modern Muslim societies (Abdul Bari Sarkar, 1983; Abdul Aziz Kamil, 1970; Maududi, 1976; Ramadhan, 1963).[4] This ethnic tendency, among other problems and issues, may inhibit the growth and development of a critical mass, which is necessary for the modernization and Islamization process to be successful.

Of some significance to the regime's ambiguous attitude to Islam has been its regulation of, and, at times, clampdown on, Islamic activism in general. This is illustrated in many of the government's moves: its resort to the controversial Internal Security Act and the Sedition Act, and in the passage of the Akta Salah Ugama (Misuse of Religion) Bill in 1983; its tendency to equate Islamic commitment with extremism and PAS; its 're-socialization' schemes for Malay students in overseas educational institutions; and its frequent and widely publicized exposure of deviant Muslim groups and the so-called demagogues.[5] Where Malaysia's foreign policy is concerned, its cautious—though, in the circumstances, very much understandable—attitude towards the Islamic Republic of Iran under Imam Khomeini's leadership in contrast to the warmth it extended to the Arab states, as well as its differential treatment of the plight of Muslim minorities, are further confirmation of the ambivalence of its Islamic orientation. From the above

illustrations and analysis, it has also become obvious which type of Islam the government favours.

Malays and Islam: The Ethnic Force

Islam has served different functions and purposes to the Malays in Malaysia and there is no unanimity among Malays on the type of Islam they prefer. Consequently, while on the one hand, Islam has acted as an integrative bastion and further extension of their ethnic identity, on the other, Islam has also divided the community. This intriguing, albeit paradoxical, role of Islam in Malay identity has been demonstrated in the many instances of the Malay–Islam dialectic. For instance, the Malay response to the 1969 riots took the form of a return to an Islam heavily coloured by 'Malayness'. The mushrooming of Malay activities throughout the 1970s like the *silat*[6] and officially sanctioned Malay cultural activities, such as seminars on Malay civilization and the revival of traditional Malay sports and games, were other manifestations. It is thus apt for Judith Nagata in her (1984) book, to coin the caption 'Born Again Malay' as opposed to 'Born Again Muslim' to describe the Malay response to the reaffirmation of Islam in contemporary Malaysia. Granted that religions in general are not free from cultural bias and variations, in Malaysia, however, given the political experiences of the Malays (both historically and in more recent times), the Muslim religiosity has tended to be tainted with an unusually heavy ethnic colouring; while both Islam and Malay ethnicity coalesce, the pull of the latter factor has seemed to be stronger. To facilitate easy recollection of the 'contradictions' and tension in the Malay ethnicity–Islam dialectic, it may be useful to tabulate here some examples of the salient characteristics (see Table 2). In trying to carve and safeguard their own niche in plural Malaysia, the Malays found a unifying quality in Islam. This may be seen in at least two main ways: provision of Islamic laws and institutions which emphasize their superiority and distinctiveness over other faiths and ideologies, and the Malay resort to the use of Islam as a rallying point in moments of perceived non-Malay threat.

Yet, Islam has often divided the Malays, too. This has happened because of the different perception and commitment that different categories of Malays have of their faith, and the role that Islam should play in politics. Muslim Malays are divided between modernists and traditionists, Islamicists and secularists, and Islamicists and ethnic nationalists, as well as between those who call for an Islamic State and those who reject it. The PAS–UMNO ideological divide is an excellent illustration of these contesting perceptions and definitions of Islam. The strains among the Malays—termed an 'Islamic identity crisis' by Muhammad Kamal Hassan (1981)—are by no means confined only to the political élites in UMNO and PAS. Their conflict filters down to the level of the Malay masses themselves as Malays have been divided, since earlier times, in their allegiance to different categories of leadership—to the individual state, to UMNO and PAS,[7] and to the institution of the Monarchy, traditionally regarded as their 'Protector'. Like their political leaders, the Malay masses could not come

to a consensus as to how and to what extent they were prepared to see Islam play a role in the country. This, of course, was itself again directly related to the type of Islam being practised by Malays, an Islam seen by the reformists as confined mainly to rituals and taboos. So too with the strength of *adat*, much of which was un-Islamic or non-Islamic, and especially, to the power of the ethnic idiom in Malay traditions and culture generally (Mohamed Aris Othman, 1973 and 1983; Sulaiman Daud, 1974). It will be recalled that this practice of and approach to Islam was the main issue on which the earlier *Kaum Tua* versus *Kaum Muda* dichotomy centred. Reformists such as al-Hadi, Tahir Jalaluddin, and Abas Taha also chastised traditional *ulama* for the *taqlid* or blind imitation (as distinct from *ijtihad* or a liberal interpretation of Islam in solving problems) and *bida'ah* or perverted accretions which are, in substance, pre-eminently un-Islamic. As recent as the early 1970s, echoes of these charges were heard, such as that by Za'aba, the renowned Malay intellectual who similarly criticized the Malay corruption of Islam (Adnan Awang, 1980; Za'aba, 1975b).

Even in the common (legally obscure) issue like the definition of a 'Malay', Malay scholars themselves have accepted Pillay's conclusion that 'Malays have exhibited a revulsion against others wanting to be similarly defined as such (Mohamed Aris Othman, 1973 and 1983; Syed Husin Ali, 1981; Pillay, 1974). This study has also demonstrated, by way of illustrations, how at the height of Malay ethnic-nationalist fervour in the 1930s, for instance, 'Malays' with Indian and Arab blood, despite their significant contribution

TABLE 2

Examples of Tensions and Contradictions in the Malay–Islam Relationship (Malayness/ethnicity *versus* Islamicity)

1. Adat (e.g. animistic and Hindu elements) *vs*. Shar'iah.
2. Communal identity (ethnic nationalism) *vs*. Universalism.
3. Special bumiputra rights and privileges *vs*. Protection and justice for all.
4. Strong feudal element in leader–led relationships (e.g. Sultanate) *vs*. Leader is 'khalif'; a vicegerent of God, and leader within Islamic law and tradition.
5. Malay territorial individual state boundaries *vs*. Umma, an ideological community transcending political and geographical boundaries.
6. Emphasis on 'Malay Muslim' (as opposed to non-Malay Muslim) *vs*. Non-racist creed.
7. 'Malay(si)a belongs to the Malays' (an early PAS slogan) *vs*. 'Malay(si)a belongs to all citizens', irrespective of racial and religious affiliation.
8. 'Politics and religion should be separate' (statement by Tunku) *vs*. Islam as 'al-din', encompassing politics and other pursuits in life.
9. 'Masuk Melayu' (non-Malay converts) *vs*. 'Masuk Islam' (joining a universal 'umma').
10. 'Hidup Melayu' (UMNO slogan) *vs*. 'Hiduplah keadilan'.
11. 'Malaysia's national culture must be based on Malay culture' (Mahathir's statement) *vs*. All cultures allowed to flourish side by side with Islamic culture.
12. Malay Sultans cannot be prosecuted in courts *vs*. Nobody is above law.
13. Malay extremist, chauvinistic, communal tendencies *vs*. Moderation, and fairness to all, irrespective of race, religion, or creed.

to Malay journalism and spread of Islamic reformism in Malaya, were openly kept at a distance by 'Malay' nationalist figures. Essentially, Islam has always been subjected to the force of Malay ethnic, parochial sentiments in the politics of Malay identity. Nothing substantive has changed since then: today, the Islam that is being practised by the majority of Malays is usually without any attendant understanding of the universal, humanistic, philosophical principles and dimensions of the faith.[8] In this regard, one could say that the Islamic revivalist phenomenon since the late 1970s was more of a revival of a general sense of religiosity rather than Islamicity. In a way, this can help explain the constraints under which modern intellectual thought generally—and a critical, progressive Islamic intellectual tradition specifically—have had to develop in Malaysia. In a similar vein, such an ethnic-oriented culture may inhibit the emergence of an Islamic social order, an order or foundation upon which an Islamic state can hope to develop and flourish. Clearly then, the Malay conception of Islam has been heavily tainted with 'Malayness', and if the words of the former Lord President, Tun Mohamed Suffian Hashim, can be taken seriously, then greater problems await the Islamization process: 'there is no desire among the majority of Muslims for more Islamic laws . . .' (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 September 1979: 22).

In this regard, upon reflection, some of the *dakwah* organizations, and PAS, have not fared much better. Although it is difficult to agree fully with Nagata's generalized statement that *dakwah* itself is a manifestation of 'a closing of ranks against non-Malays' (Nagata, 1984: 234), the deliberate exclusiveness and introversion adopted by some *dakwah* organizations, seems to lend credence to her claim. Some of the modernizing elements of government policies under the Mahathir administration, such as *Kepimpinan Melalui Tauladan* ('Leadership by Example'), *Pandang Timur* ('Look East'), and *Cekap, Bersih dan Amanah* ('Efficient, Non-corrupt and Trustworthy'), and Mahathir's repeated stress that the community should be guided by a realistic, moderate, and pragmatic approach to religion, were not much supported by *dakwah* organizations. ABIM, despite its conscious desire to propagate the universal message of Islam, even belittled the government's 'Look East' policy in spite of its declared aim of imbibing the positive qualities of hard work, thrift, and discipline (Pathmanathan and Lazarus, 1984: 46). So too with Darul Arqam's refusal to draw its members into the mainstream of national, multicultural activities, and the Tunku's contradictory postures on Islam. The dearth of non-Malay Muslim leaders in all three *dakwah* organizations further reinforces the poor image that many non-Malays have not only of the organizations, but of the 'Islamic message' that they propagate.

Even PAS, known for its avowed Islamic *raison d'être*, has sometimes been unable to resist the temptation of harping on ethnic-chauvinistic sentiments although these were more often than not couched in Islamic language. The party's traditional communal insularity and parochialism were especially obvious during the almost two decades of Asri's leadership from 1964 to 1982. They include the *assabiyah* tendency, and the contra-

diction between the struggle for Islamic principles on the one hand, and the criticism of UMNO's pro-Chinese leanings on the other. One may recall also the party's ethnic justification for joining UMNO and the coalition government in 1974. The impact of all these ambiguous stances was the further blurring of the party's so-called 'Islamic' position—oscillating between Islam and Malayness.

Governing Malaysia: The 'Islamic State' Alternative?

Given this ethnic, particularistic tendency of Malays that stands in the way of granting a greater role for Islam in Malaysia today, can the 'Islamic alternative' be a viable option for governing Malaysia? In recent years, particularly after the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran, there has been considerable pressure from Muslim organizations and groups (such as the 'Islamic Republic' group in the campuses) and the Islamic Party, PAS, for the Malaysian government under the UMNO leadership, to embark on an 'Islamization' experiment, even leading to an 'Islamic State' for Malaysia. The Islamization trends in the 1980s may have also led people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to feel that we are witnessing the beginnings of the Islamic State for Malaysia. In the pages that follow, we shall briefly discuss and assess this pertinent issue.[9]

It is the view of this author that at the practical level of implementing an 'Islamic solution' in Malaysia, things would not be as clear-cut or straightforward as they appear theoretically. It is not that Islam, as an ideology, cannot resolve or does not have the answers to the problems associated with the process of nation-building of plural societies. That is a different issue. As a matter of fact, all the early Islamic states, without exception, have been plural, multi-ethnic and multireligious states. The point here is that, in the circumstances of Malaysia, and for reasons to be indicated and elaborated on below, Islam has tended to be a divisive factor both among the Malays and in Malay–non-Malay relations although the Faith has been a uniting force for Malays whenever they were confronted with the non-Malay challenge. The difficulty in trying to implement strictly Islamic guide-lines in Malaysia also lies in the realities or determinants, and circumstances, which help shape the course and direction of Malaysian politics. What are being referred to here are the 'givens' or realities prevalent in contemporary Malaysian society which tend to put in question the viability of the 'Islamic State' or 'Islamic alternative' to the present nature of governance there. These include pluralism and the bimodal nature of the polity, the different society and cultural ethos that exist in Sabah and Sarawak, purveying secular systems and institutions, and especially the parochialism and primordialism of the Malays. To be successful or effective, Islamization programmes and policies cannot be at sharp variance with these harsh socio-political realities of the country.

Communalism and UMNO's Dilemma

Central to an understanding of Malaysia is the plural nature of its society. A plural society is not necessarily an obstacle to the achievement of harmonious interethnic relations. From the standpoint of Islam too, pluralism is actually a deliberate act of God, aimed at encouraging peoples from different backgrounds to know each other.[10] However, pluralism becomes an invidious factor when it takes the form of communalism. In the Malaysian setting, unfortunately, this is precisely what has taken place because the different ethnic groups, particularly the Malays and the Chinese, tend to be contemptuous of one another. A notable manifestation is the communal, ethnic-based nature of most (if not all) political parties in the country, despite their support, in principle, of the concept of multiracialism. Communal sensitivities, heightened by the entry of Singapore in 1963 into the federation, became especially intense after the 1969 ethnic riots, an observation already discussed by Malaysianist scholars like Enloe (1967), MacDougall (1968), Ratnam (1965), Snyder (1972), and Vasil (1980).

Despite its leadership of a coalition party encompassing every ethnic group in the country (first through Perikatan or Alliance and later, the Barisan Nasional or National Front), the UMNO party tended to be in the forefront of communal politicking, demonstrated in its oft-quoted defence of the slogan '*Hidup Melayu*' ('Long Live the Malays') (Lotfi Ismail, 1978; Mohamed Ya, 1979; Pillay, 1974). UMNO's dilemma is obvious: on the one hand, formed as a Malay party it must be seen to be projecting and delivering the goods to the Malays; on the other, as leader of a multiracial coalition government, it must also consider the interests and anxieties of non-Malays. The Tunku's calls for UMNO not to forget its ethnic-nationalist and secularist base are symptomatic of the difficulty that the party faces in having to consider and balance the interests of both Malays and non-Malays. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that even national policies formulated by the UMNO-led government have often been tainted with an ethnic bias or have arisen from an ethnic predisposition.

Bimodal Society and the Non-Malay Factor

The second reality which must be taken into account in an attempt to understand the role of Islam in contemporary Malaysian society, is this: not only do Malaysians have an ethnically divided polity, the division, in numbers, is almost about equal. Statistically, Malaysia is not a Muslim state, and still less, a Malay state. In the 1980s Malays, despite their indigenous status and political dominance, constitute at best, a marginal majority. The two states of Sabah and Sarawak, it is worth noting, have neither Malay majorities nor Malay political domination and have had some problems with the Federal government in Kuala Lumpur. The official *Information Malaysia Yearbook* (1985: 240) indicated that out of a total population of 15.6 million people throughout Malaysia (including Sabah and Sarawak), Malays constituted only 7.3 million. The *Population Census* in 1980 revealed that there were 6,315,000 Malays and 5,111,000 non-

Malays in Peninsular Malaysia: the peninsular figure for Malays at Independence was 49.3 per cent (*Information Malaysia Yearbook*, 1986; Wan Hashim, 1983: 79; Vasil, 1980: 18). Although Malay birth rates in the peninsula have been on the rise in recent years (constituting 57.7 per cent of all births in 1988),[11] this demographic (non-Muslim) factor should be given its due attention in any design to Islamize the country.

Of significance here is that, in the context of Malaysia, and for various reasons, Islam, particularly its fundamental principles and philosophical and universal concerns as a religion for mankind[12]—not only reserved for the Muslims—does not seem to be sufficiently understood, let alone practised, by many of its (Malay) adherents. It is only natural that one finds in the case of Malaysia, not only a general ignorance of the Faith among non-Malays (including what it may offer to them by way of say, improving their quality of life), but also a certain suspicion about the whole Islamization process. More often than not, Islam has tended to conjure negative images; the Faith has been perceived by the non-Malays as a Malay religion and Islamization as nothing more than an assertion of Malay identity, despite the fact that there are more Chinese Muslims than Malay Muslims in the world, and that Islam fundamentally abhors any form of racism or communal sectarianism.[13]

News of fanatical and 'extremist' (Muslim) actions in Malaysia such as the killings of policemen and desecration of Hindu temples, as well as strict segregation of sexes, rigid dress codes and incessant intra-Malay political schism, tend to cement further non-Malay prejudices against the Malays and their Faith. In fact, it was as a direct response to such deviant, extremist Muslim actions that, in 1986, there was formed the 'Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism' (MCCBCHS), something quite unprecedented in Malaysia.[14] Even non-Malay Muslims, such as the converts, seem to find it difficult to integrate into the Malay-dominated Muslim community.[15]

It is against such a background, and such impressions of Islam and the Malays, that attempts to Islamize Malaysian politics may be regarded as highly problematic. From the non-Malay (non-Muslim) point of view, Islam could not assist in minimizing their sense of trepidation and vulnerability posed by the 'Malay-nization' of the state.

The outcome of all this is a further hardening not only of the tension between Malays and Chinese, but within each of the communities. Indeed, in all these internal cleavages, Islam has always been considered positively or negatively as a major issue of debate. Within the Chinese-based political parties for example, the MCA, Gerakan, and DAP could never agree on their perception of Islam or their willingness to let Islam play a certain role in the affairs of the country. Being in the government coalition and working with UMNO right from the declaration of Independence of the country, the MCA has tended to be more conciliatory to the government's Islamic moves, whereas the DAP, especially through its leader, Lim Kit Siang, has made it plain that more Islam means more trouble.[16] The attitude of the Gerakan party may perhaps be seen as lying somewhere between these two positions, trying to resolve its dilemma of propagating a multiracial

front on the one hand, and reliance on Chinese support for its political survival, on the other. On the whole, the greater the Islamic consciousness, the more non-Muslims are driven to emphasize their own ethnic and religious distinctiveness. Consequently, there has been a noticeable decrease in social interaction amongst the country's ethno-religious plural polity, and the prospect of bridging it appears to be rather daunting.

Secular Values and Institutions

The third basic factor which is responsible for defining the role and influence of Islam in Malaysian politics is the existence and influence of numerous Western and secular systems deeply entrenched and institutionalized in Malaysian political culture. These include the Constitution, 'democracy', and the economic, as well as pro-*bumiputra* policies of the state. For example, from the point of view of many Muslim organizations such as ABIM and PAS, these institutions are incompatible with, if not inimical to, the universal, morally inclined principles of the Faith, and, by implication, unsuitable for Muslims and non-Muslims. Obviously though, ABIM and PAS cannot, in this regard, blandly assume that they have both the right and capacity to decide what is suitable for non-Malays and non-Muslims, especially in a situation where Malay Muslims form, at best, a slight majority.[17]

Insofar as the Constitution is concerned, despite the general, even if grudging, non-Malay acceptance of it in principle, the author's research in Malaysia indicates that there is strong opposition among many of the non-Malays to aspects of the constitution regarded as detrimental to their interests.[18] These include issues so patently obvious that any detailed discussion of them does not seem necessary here: issues like the special position of the Malays and their insistence on exclusive political leadership, and other matters deemed seditious; all of which have been made non-negotiable. In Chapter 1, it was argued that even from the point of view of Islam, on at least four grounds, the Malaysian Constitution is un-Islamic. To become an Islamic state, radical changes to the Constitution will have to be made—such as clauses which relate to supremacy of Federal laws; the power of Sultans as final arbiters in matters of Islam and Malay culture and in being protected from court charges; the philosophy of the NEP which favours a particular group on the grounds of race or ethnicity; and other changes which, if implemented, would have serious repercussions and ramifications in the country.

There are other institutional and systemic inadequacies. Politically, democracy itself—specifically, the 'consociational' (to use Milne and Mauzy's controversial term) framework of élite accommodation and compromise within which the Barisan Nasional coalition government operates[19]—is yet another, almost permanent, source of communal strain. This is so because the different component ethnic groupings within the coalition, each representing the interests of its ethnic community, are constantly pitted against each other for the advancement of their own particularistic interests. Each coalition member (including 'Big Brother', UMNO)

continues to press for communal policies, and their ethnic supporters tend to see things from the perspective of gains and losses to their respective ethnic cravings (Syed Husin Ali, 1981: 114).

In the economic sphere, whatever role or alternative model that Islam may offer to the present system (argued by some Muslim scholars as a non-exploitative, interest-free, and collective-sharing system) (Khurshid Ahmad and Zafar I. Ansari, 1979: 223–41; Sayyid Qutb, 1974),[20] will have its limitations and inherent problems. The whole economic infrastructure in Malaysia—like all other Third World countries—is almost fully dependent upon a free-enterprise, world-wide capitalist framework which is alien to the Faith and which can be restructured, Islamically, only if the country is prepared to shoulder the wide-ranging consequences.

It is precisely the sheer complexity and the radical changes that have to be made in transforming what is basically a secular state (with Western secular institutions) to one which is totally its opposite—the Islamic State—that explains why today all the attempts by Muslim governments, including that of Malaysia, to 'Islamize the government machinery', have not been successful. Opponents of these Western systems should not have a jaundiced view of these systems and would do well to remember that these systems, despite their inadequacies and weaknesses, have been strongly ingrained and entrenched in the country's political culture for a considerable period of time. Thus, if any real catharsis is to take place in 'Islamizing' the country, such changes have to be implemented gradually, incrementally, and judiciously, by concrete, feasible alternative proposals and by adequately convincing non-Muslims that under such new arrangements their fundamental rights as citizens will not be sacrificed.

The above constraints (which set the parameters of Islam in Malaysia) do not seem to augur well for any intensification of the Islamization programmes implemented by the Malaysian government. Although it is an exaggeration to say that the government has reached the tolerable limit in such programmes, indications are that Islam will continue to be a destabilizing force in Malaysian politics and the tensions in ethnic relations are bound to continue, if not increase. The problems associated with these programmes are numerous and complex. To start with, Malays, as the politically dominant community, have first to resolve their dilemma in their search for identity: as Malays on the one hand, and Muslims on the other. So long as their ethnic clamourings take precedence over their Islamic identity, they are bound to fail if they intend to embark upon experiments aimed at changing the present ethnic-oriented approach to nation-building, to an Islamic one. The Islamic social order—which must be shaped by the Malays given their predominance in Malaysian life—has first to emerge prior to the gradual evolution of the Islamic State. Pushing through the Islamic programmes without taking cognizance of the socio-political fabric and undercurrents of Malaysian society, may lead to a situation which may be politically destabilizing.

Whither Islam in Malaysia?

Given all the constraints and impediments which restrict the role of Islam in Malaysia, what prospect will the Faith have in the future? How far is the Islamization process likely to go—and what can we extrapolate for its long-term implications to Malaysian politics and society? Of all the factors that must be considered, the most important is the level and security of commitment to Islamic universal principles—as distinct from narrow, communal sentiments—that the Malay political leadership under UMNO is prepared to undertake. In this regard, the picture is rather hazy. Much will depend on Dr Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim, assuming that they will continue to wield tremendous political influence in determining the future direction of the country, bearing in mind the factional (at times, fractious) nature of UMNO.[21] This study has tended to indicate that they have a long way to go in the resolution of their predicament: wanting to see that Islamic principles have a part to play in the governance of the state, but at the same time not yet prepared to divorce themselves from the ethno-centric pull of their community. Hence, the Mahathir administration's Islamization policies have their share of ambiguity and ambivalence. Mahathir's widely publicized call to UMNO members in 1978, some two years after becoming the Deputy Prime Minister, to 'practice Islam fully and sincerely'[22] has been translated into concrete, well-coordinated programmes and institutions to inculcate the 'Islamic spirit' particularly among Malays in the country. Through his policies and programmes, he has managed to highlight some of the main principles of the Faith: its universalism, its call for planning and discipline in life's pursuits, its support for modernity, and its moderation, fairness, and justice. In mid-1984, his government reiterated its stand that in the implementation of the Fifth Malaysia Plan (1986–90), Islamic values were not to be neglected (*Islamic Herald*, Vol. 8 (5–6), 1984: 43).

Having said this of the Mahathir government, it must be acknowledged, however, that governments are, in general, conservative, since their main interest is the preservation of their power and status quo, usually at any cost. A cursory glance at 'Islamic' governments in recent history, such as in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab states, will show us, too, how much Muslim leaders changed once they were in control. They will not hesitate to demonstrate their authority, such as through legal prohibitions and other severe controls and measures, once it is challenged by Islamic activists and movements of which they themselves at one time could even have been ardent supporters. On this score, a big test is now placed upon Mahathir and Anwar to see how similar or different they will be in their treatment of Islamic dissent, as well as how much they have discarded their earlier Malay-first tendencies. As it is, especially since 1983, punitive government measures against Islamic dissent in general and PAS in particular, have been increasing and UMNO's 'Islamization' policies are still subjected to the Malay ethnic cultural bias. It can also be expected, if the history of UMNO (and Malays in general) is any measure of the future actions of the party, that the Malay–Islam dialectic will again

tilt towards the former whenever and if ever UMNO and the Malays feel threatened by non-Malay ethnic demands and pressures.

Of the other Malay forces and institutions whose actions may also shape the future role of Malaysian Islam, the relative strength of three of them appears to be crucial: PAS, the *dakwah* movement as a whole, and the Monarchy. This study indicates that PAS may not have performed as well as expected, but the party is far from being a spent force. Particularly under its new leadership of the *ulama*, the party may still be a potent factor in Malaysian politics despite severe set-backs in the recent general elections; this latter aspect will be discussed in the Postscript. The influence of PAS can be expected to continue to threaten UMNO's legitimacy especially if PAS succeeds in upgrading its leadership to include the more urban-based *dakwah* leaders, tapping the larger reservoir of tertiary-educated Malays,[23] aligning itself with Islamic-orientated but disenchanted UMNO members, and winning the hearts and minds of deprived and down-trodden Malays as well as the many Malays who have not benefited from the government's pro-*bumiputra* policies.[24] In addition, PAS, for its own political survival, may be expected to try to secure support from non-Malays in the coming years, although it must be conceded that this could only be a long-term strategy given the continuing reality of communalism in Malaysia and the failure of earlier attempts at forming truly multiracial political parties.

Insofar as *dakwah* organizations are concerned, collectively, as a movement and a social force, they may be expected to thrive. The Islamization process since the 1970s has permeated Malay society and culture deep enough, though in varying degrees, that it is unrealistic to expect the phenomenon to fizzle out in the near future. On the contrary, perhaps, given the 'holier than thou' posture of some *dakwah* groups and the differing approaches toward Islam, new forms of *dakwah* forces may even surface, leading to further changes in the religious scene in the country. One such probability is the alignment of highly educated and Islamic-oriented Malay youths with *harakah*-type (movement- and cause-orientated) politicized organizations, ABIM in particular, given its potential to be an Islamic party in opposition to UMNO and the government. Whether or not the type of *dakwah* movement in the near future will be radical or more 'devotional' will depend much on factors like the directions in which the UMNO–PAS divide proceeds; the orientation of both the government and the *dakwah* leadership; and the general development of ethnic relations there. It is possible, for instance, that mass-based religious forces like the *dakwah* movement may be heightened as a natural response to a new reality in Malay society: the growth of a newly emergent Malay wealthy 'class'. A visit to Kuala Lumpur will show how affluent some Malay bureaucrats and capitalists have become in their life-style compared to pre-1969. Hence, taking all the above factors into consideration, it may be plausible to conclude that the current mobilization of Muslim consciousness may be expected to continue alongside Malay ethnic demands and pressures, in the coming years.

Yet another force will be the institution of the Monarchy, whose power was evident, for example, in the 1983–4 constitutional crisis. Traditionally

very powerful at the state level, this time the Sultans might have an axe to grind with Dr Mahathir after his public affront to their authority in that crisis. The irony for Mahathir and for UMNO was that in the historic 'Malayan Union' episode, UMNO used the Sultans for the purpose of securing for itself Malay political legitimacy. Having used the institution of the Monarchy, UMNO is now stuck with it and has to account for its excesses and political challenge. Now that, arguably, the Sultans' power in Federal politics has waned as a result of that crisis (for example, the King can no longer withhold royal assent to Bills indefinitely), it may be expected that they would want to protect and preserve whatever is remaining to them in their own individual states. If this were to materialize, and noting that constitutionally, Islam and Malay culture in the states come under the jurisdiction of the respective Sultans, the process will not be smooth if the Federal government intends to centralize and integrate individual states into mainstream federal politics. It should also be remembered that Mahathir, despite his capabilities and contributions, is not ethnically Malay, and some Malays, given the strength of their ethnic pull, and at an opportune time, may choose to highlight his 'non-Malay' ancestry,[25] a liability for the Prime Minister in a community known for its Malay-first culture and traditional deference to its Sultans.

What all these probabilities imply is that Islam and Malay ethnicity will continue to be factors of central significance in Malay political culture in particular, and in Malaysian politics in general. Where the politics of Malay identity is concerned, whether or not one is going to see an epochal transformation in the nature of the current ethnic Malay–Islam dialectical relationship, remains, for the moment, an intriguing question. Much will depend on the type of forces, institutions, and personalities that will occupy the forefront of Malay–Muslim leadership in both government and non-government institutions and organizations as well as the kind of issues and challenges they will be confronted with, in the years ahead.

1. The illustrations from seven states in 1979 alone (see Chapter 5) bear testimony to this observation.

2. Edelman (1974) elaborates much of the role of symbolism in politics; his theory on how regimes and leaders manipulated symbols to secure legitimacy can be applied to the Malaysian context.

3. Numerous illustrations have been offered throughout the study to confirm Malaysia's pro-Islam and anti-Israel foreign policy stance.

4. Cf. Jansen (1979), especially pp. 127–9. (In July 1985 the Muslim Institute in London organized an international Islamic seminar on the same theme of 'Nationalism and Islam'.)

5. For some of these punitive, legal measures adopted by the Malaysian government against the opposition, see Barraclough (1985). On 9 November 1984, a government 'White Paper on Muslim extremism' not only considered such extremism a serious threat to national security, but singled out PAS for allegedly creating splits among the Malays. On 18 November, Mahathir himself charged PAS leaders as 'power crazy . . . snakes with forked tongues'. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 29 November 1984, p. 10.

6. An interview with Hanif Ahmad, the President of the largest *silat* organization in Malaysia, during which he confirmed this increasing interest of Malays in martial arts.

7. The severity of the cleavage between supporters of both parties came to a boil in 1983 when it was widely publicized that these supporters pray behind their own *imam* in the same mosque! Naturally, this alarmed many sections of the Muslim community in the country.

8. Interestingly, much of this universal message of Islam was raised by a non-Muslim group in Malaysia, the Aliran. Many of Aliran's publications carry this message: see, for example, Aliran (1982), pp. 51–87. Cf. Sulaiman Daud (1974). (Although the president of Aliran is a Muslim, it is inaccurate to include the group as an 'Islamic' organization, more so a *dakwah* organization, as adopted by Nagata (1984: 122–4). What distinguish an Islamic organization from a non-Islamic one are its ideological sources, objectives, and activities. In the case of the former, the guiding sources are the Qur'an and Sunnah.)

9. This brief analysis of the issue of the 'Islamic State' in Malaysia will be expanded more thoroughly in a book now being prepared by the present writer.

10. This is a common theme in many verses of the Qur'an. See, for example, *Surah* Al-Shura, XLII: 8.

11. Department of Statistics, Malaysia, reported in *Straits Times*, 16 February 1989, p. 9.

12. Other than Abdul Rahman I. Dol, notable contributors on this aspect of Islamic characteristic were made by Abdul Aziz Kamil (1970), Ajijola (1977), Ezzati (1976), Muhammad AlMadani (1967), Muhammad Hamidullah (1973), Muhammad Qutb (1978), and Sayyid Qutb (1974).

13. See, for instance, Abdul Aziz Kamil's (1970) arguments on the fundamental opposition of the Faith to racism or communal, chauvinistic tendencies.

14. It is uncertain whether or not a similar 'religious revival' among Chinese and Indians in Malaysia in recent years, is a form of ethnic backlash against the Malays. Malaysian Chinese emigration, too (despite the lack of documented figures), could be another indicator of this problem.

15. Even the Tunku admitted the poor reception that Malays extended to Chinese converts: *New Straits Times*, 30 July 1976 and 21 May 1979. See also studies by Chinese Muslim converts themselves: Muhammad Abdullah (1983) and Mokhtar Ali (1973). The present writer's many discussions with the converts in Kuala Lumpur tended to confirm these problems.

16. See, for instance, Lim Kit Siang (1978 and 1982) for the DAP views, and Tan Koon Swan (1982) for MCA's. In this latter book by Tan Koon Swan, the MCA's position and grievances were stated more vigorously than usual.

17. A major difficulty in resolving interethnic tension in Malaysia is precisely this posture of superiority adopted by one religious group over the other.

18. This is the view of many non-Malays with whom the present writer had discussions during field-work in Malaysia.

19. This term is used by Milne and Mauzy (1980) to describe the nature of coalition politics comprising two communities, Malays and non-Malays, as well as the nature of élite accommodation within the coalition. It is, however, debatable whether or not the Barisan Nasional displays the characteristics of the consociational democracies of Europe.

20. Cf. the writing of Rodinson on *Islam and Capitalism* (1974).

21. The UMNO General Assembly in April 1987 to elect the party's leadership, in which the party split into two factions of equal strength, was an excellent demonstration of factionalism in UMNO. The constitutional crisis in 1983–4 which saw UMNO Cabinet ministers taking different sides, and the open conflict between Mahathir and his deputy, Musa Hitam, in 1986 (leading to the latter's departure from the government leadership) were other recent examples of the fractious nature of the party.

22. Annual General Meeting of UMNO Youth and Women's Sections, 14 September 1978.

23. For instance, by 1980 Malay students comprised 70 per cent of all students in tertiary institutions; many non-Malays had to go overseas for lack of places in local universities: Milne and Mauzy (1980: 94).

24. Jomo (1985: 86–7) argued that only about 3 per cent of *bumiputra* actually benefited from the restructuring of society; not only were half of the Malays poor, the majority of *bumiputra* holdings of equities are held by trust agencies rather than by *bumiputra* individuals.

25. It may be possible to argue, however, that at least two of Malaysia's prime ministers are not 'pure' Malay.

Postscript: Recent Developments

Four major events which occurred since 1986 may lend credence to the central argument of this study: the strength of the ethnic Malay factor in Malay identity despite its dialectical coalescence with Islam. The recent events referred to here are the general election in August 1986; a speech made in Singapore by a prominent Malaysian politician, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad, soon after the election results were known; the tone of the UMNO General Assembly in September; and the UMNO Party Election in 1987.

The 1986 General Election and Ethnicity

The 1986 election captured much interest and publicity given the widespread prediction that the coalition government, Barisan Nasional, particularly UMNO which represents the Malays, and MCA–Gerakan which represent the Chinese, would suffer its biggest electoral losses since the 1969 election because of the people's frustrations with the government.[1]

The final outcome of the election was a pleasant surprise for UMNO because it reaffirmed the party's hold on Malay votes, winning all except one of its 84 parliamentary seats contested against the Islamic party, PAS. The MCA and Gerakan, as predicted, lost heavily to the DAP, which won 24 parliamentary seats compared to only 6 in the 1982 election. (See Table 3.) Although the popular vote for PAS actually increased slightly in every state except Kelantan—an increase of 0.8 per cent compared to the previous election in 1982—the fact that it won a dismal 1 seat compared to 5 in the previous election, caught many people by surprise.[2] PAS faced the same fate at the state level where it won only 15 out of the 265 seats contested; by contrast, UMNO won 228 out of 240 seats.

What could have been the reason for PAS's defeat? What lessons may be derived from the 1986 election in terms of the main arguments put forward in this book?

Comments by Malaysian scholars and journalists, via the media and forums soon after the official announcement of the results (*Asiaweek*, 17 August 1986; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 August 1986), attributed PAS's defeat to factors like the efficiency of the UMNO election machinery,

TABLE 3
The 1986 General Election: Parliamentary Results

		Top Ten Parties by Number of Votes Received			
	Party	*Valid Votes*	*Seats Contested*	*Seats Won*	*Percentage*
1	UMNO	1,474,063	84	83	31.06
2	DAP	968,009	64	24	20.39
3	PAS	718,891	98	1	15.15
4	MCA	589,289	32	17	12.42
5	Gerakan	149,644	9	5	3.15
6	Independent	146,903	51	4	3.09
7	MIC	104,701	6	6	2.21
8	SUPP	93,018	7	4	1.96
9	PBS	73,786	14	10	1.55
10	PSRM	59,156	4	0	1.25

	Parliamentary Majority		*Percentage of Parliamentary Seats*	*Racial Percentage of Voters*
1	Malay Majority	92	70	55
2	Chinese Majority	26	20	36
3	Mixed Seats	14	10	9

Source: *National Union of Journalists–Office Automation Bhd., 1986.*

UMNO control of the mass media, and the fivefold increase in election deposits required of parliamentary candidates, from M$1,000 to M$5,000. It is the author's view, however, that while these arguments may be accepted, a more profound explanation is ethnicity—specifically, the Malay decision to opt for their ethnic communal interests *vis-à-vis* Islam in the voting.

A radical strategy aimed at winning more votes was espoused by PAS soon after the election date was officially announced by the government. This was the plan to woo Chinese voters and to put up an Islamic identity front rather than its traditional Malay-cum-Islamic image. This was done because of the realization that PAS could not increase its votes substantially without non-Malay support and this support could be even crucial in Malay-dominated constituencies where UMNO and PAS are equally matched. From this new desire came the 'Chinese Consultative Council' (CCC), an auxiliary organization with a network of some 50 state-level branches nationwide. What this CCC essentially meant was that the party, for the first time since its formation, was opening its doors to non-Malay Muslims, principally Chinese. In addition, PAS also signed an electoral pact with the (non-Muslim) DAP not to contest each other's candidates in the 1986 election.

PAS's Information Head, Subky Latif, has justified this outward move on the grounds that 'PAS is an Islamic movement dedicated to justice and equality for all people irrespective of their race' (*New Straits Times*, 29 June 1986). Ustadz Hadi made it plain that if non-Malays support PAS and the party becomes the government, the concept of *bumiputra* and its

political, economic, and social ramifications would cease to exist—and so, too, Malay special rights and privileges and the NEP! (*Straits Times*, 24 September 1985; *The Star*, 12 February 1986.) Obviously, these remarks, and the PAS–CCC convergence, signal a dramatic turn in ethnic-based politics in Malaysia; the very fundamental basis of communalistic orientation to politics and government has been challenged by the appeal to the universalism of Islam.

It is the assessment of the author that this move was the major cause of PAS's defeat, prompting Malays (including PAS supporters and sympathizers) to vote against PAS. It will be recalled that this was the same fate encountered by other earlier multiracial experiments, like that by UMNO's founder, Onn Jaafar. The Chinese did not support PAS, given the long-held ethnic prejudice, as well as the fear of an untried system based on a religion which has been a conspicuous symbol of Malay identity. UMNO, too, did not want to let go of the opportunity to make Malays suspicious of PAS: it played up its *raison d'être* against PAS's bold, albeit 'un-Malay' move. Anwar Ibrahim decided to put aside his Islamic image by charging that PAS could no longer be trusted by Malays as it was prepared to betray the Malay race by dispensing with Malay rights and privileges (*New Straits Times*, 16 June 1986). Ghafar Baba, the UMNO Deputy President, went so far as to say that if PAS were to get into power, the party would even change the Constitution so that no distinction would be made between Malays and non-Malays (*New Straits Times*, 14 June 1986). It was obvious that the above remarks were meant to rebut the PAS challenge by evoking the Malay ethnic sentiment to the detriment of PAS in the latter's 'unholy alliance' with non-Malay and non-Muslim groups and political parties.

It may be argued that these remarks struck a chord amongst the Malays, whose sense of 'Malayness' has been demonstrated time and again, particularly in situations of perceived non-Malay threat. PAS's appeal to universal Islam to overcome the barriers of ethnicity was one such threat and must have led the party's supporters to seek recourse to Malay ethnic nationalism. Ghafar Baba's statement reflects also UMNO's own ideological belief that Malays as an ethnic group (*bangsa*) would be 'protected',[3] by which is meant essentially the pursuit of the goals of this same Malay ethnic nationalism, a particularistic distinctiveness ingrained in Malay culture and psyche. It is this aspect of Malay identity that UMNO often chose to arouse in attempting to draw away support from PAS and its Islamic ideological stand. UMNO's tactic of intertwining both commitment to the Malays and to Islam seemed to have placed the party on a better footing than PAS.

The favourable election results for UMNO clearly demonstrated that on balance, Malays would prefer, and have been accustomed to, some kind of accommodation between Islam and Malay ethnic sentiments, to the PAS's recent approach of an 'universalist Islam' only. Thus, the PAS-CCC collaboration and electoral co-operation, in all probability, may have been viewed as treacherous to the Malay cause. Herein lies the irony in Malaysian politics: while all national leaders and political parties from different ethnic

communities have called for a multiracial approach to politics, these leaders and the political parties find it impossible to survive if they pursue such exhortations. The main explanation has to do with the ethnic-oriented culture of the polity.

Two Other Significant Events in 1986

Datuk Abdullah Ahmad's address to a packed élite group of Singaporean leaders, academics, and journalists drew much attention from both Malays and Chinese on both sides of the Causeway, and is relevant to the present discussion because of its significance to and understanding of Malaysian domestic politics. Although he does not at present hold any Cabinet post, he is seen by some Malaysian scholars as a close confidant of some of the top UMNO leaders, including the Prime Minister and the Education Minister. At one time the political secretary of the late Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, Datuk Abdullah, imprisoned for his alleged involvement in communist activities from 1976 to 1981, won the seat of Kok Lanas (Kelantan) in the recent election. His talk, organized by the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, touched on the following points (many of which have been considered taboo all this while) of direct relevance to the findings of this study.

First, it is dangerous and foolhardy for the non-Malays to challenge the present system of Malay political dominance in Malaysia. He warned that any threat to such a dominance could trigger off a repeat of the 1969 ethnic riots. Secondly, UMNO must not be pushed by the non-Malays to the wall lest it turn radical in its duty of protecting Malay rights. He even went so far as to suggest that Malays as a whole might even decide to merge with Indonesia rather than share their dominance with the non-Malays, particularly the Chinese. Thirdly, the granting of greater opportunities to Malays as stipulated in the NEP must never be questioned, let alone challenged. In this regard, he told the non-Malays that 'there are no two ways about it' and warned Chinese parties within the National Front government not to make the NEP a scapegoat for their recent electoral setbacks. To make sure his message and signal were well understood, he ended his talk with these parting words: 'I say to all, don't play with fire!' (*Sunday Times*, 31 August 1986.)[4]

Given the tenor of his remarks and the backdrop of Malay–Chinese tension after the election of that year, naturally the Chinese were agitated. The DAP, whose confidence was boosted by its fine showing in the election, even talked of the possibility of suing him in the courts for making seditious statements prejudicial to interethnic harmony, while the MCA Youth wing lodged a police report against him (*Straits Times*, 20 September 1986). When pressed for their responses, UMNO leaders, including Dr Mahathir, in an apparent attempt to reassure non-Malays, tried to distance themselves from Abdullah's sentiments. However, the suspicion that Abdullah's racial promptings and views were endorsed by UMNO, were confirmed less than a month after his talk.

At the Thirty-seventh UMNO General Assembly in September, many

UMNO leaders echoed Abdullah's warnings and veiled threats to the Chinese.[5] Their change of posture on ethnic issues from one which was quite evasive to one clearly pro-Malay, was understandable, since the UMNO General Assembly has been an occasion where UMNO leaders had to demonstrate to their members that they have not forgotten the very purpose of UMNO's existence. Dr Mahathir, in a tenor almost identical to Abdullah's, did not mince his words when he told non-Malays not to take Malays for granted—because the Malays' patience was running out. Malays, he said, wanted harmony but not at any cost. Those attending the Assembly understood that he was referring directly to UMNO's Chinese partners in the National Front and the Opposition Chinese parties in general for their rejection of the government in the August general election.

UMNO Vice-President and Education Minister, as well as, arguably, prospective Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, called for an extension of the NEP beyond 1990, the date commonly understood to be the target date set by the ethnic community leaders when the policy was officially first launched in 1970. He reminded Malaysians not to forget how Malays had been treated as orphans in their own land since colonial rule. Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin did not want to be left out: he, too, harped on the issue of Malay rights and privileges by using the terms 'they' and 'us' to refer to the Chinese and Malays respectively.

The UMNO Party Election of 1987

The results of the April 1987 UMNO election indicated in no uncertain terms that the struggle of Islam and Malay ethnicity continue unabated in the politics of Malay identity. In addition, while both forces—Islam and Malayness—may be seen to be making inroads in recent Malay political culture, the force of Malayness or Malay ethnic nationalism continues to be very powerful even against the background of the Islamic reassertion in contemporary Malaysia.

Commentators dubbed the election as the most hotly contested affair in UMNO's 40-year history.[6] The two factions, headed by Mahathir and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah respectively, had to battle it out for the leadership positions in UMNO and whichever leader won would automatically become Prime Minister. The Mahathir faction included Ghafar Baba ('caretaker' Deputy Prime Minister after Musa Hitam resigned in February 1986 as a result of his quarrel with Mahathir) and Anwar Ibrahim, the Education Minister and the then UMNO Youth head. Tengku Razaleigh was joined by his former arch-rival who had previously beaten him in the contest for UMNO Deputy President, Musa Hitam, and Abdullah Badawi, the Defence Minister. Both Islam and Malay ethnic nationalism figured prominently in the struggle for votes from UMNO delegates because the struggle pitted factions who had been identified to belong to either of these two ideological camps, a point emphasized by Anwar prior to the voting.[7] Hence, the results of the election may, to a large extent, indicate which of the two forces in Malay culture and identity have influenced UMNO leaders and supporters.

TABLE 4

The 1987 UMNO Election: Results

(Mahathir's faction members in bold)

	Votes
For President:	
Dr Mahathir Mohamed	761
Tengku Razaleigh	718
For Deputy President:	
Ghafar Baba	739
Musa Hitam	699
For 3 Vice-Presidents:	
Wan Mokhtar Ahmad	935
Abdullah Badawi	879
Anwar Ibrahim	850
Rais Yatim	690
Ramli Ngah Talib	667
Harun Idris	398
For Supreme Council Members:	
17 of the 25 elected Members come from Mahathir's faction, headed by Dr Yusof Nor who won the highest vote of 1,030.	

Source: *Berita Harian*, 25 April 1987.

The result? Mahathir won and so, too, did the majority of his faction members—but only by a slim majority. Mahathir beat Tengku Razaleigh by only 43 votes (761 to 718), whereas Ghafar Baba beat Musa Hitam by 40 votes for the Deputy President's post—739 to 699, with 41 spoilt votes. (See Table 4.) On the surface of it, Islam seemed to have won the day against Malayness because other than Mahathir and Anwar, the candidates who polled the highest votes for the posts of UMNO Vice-President and Supreme Council Members were Mahathir's men whose Islamic credentials were known in Malaysia. They were Wan Mokhtar and Dr Yusof Nor respectively; the latter was made a Cabinet minister in the Cabinet reshuffle which took place soon after the election. Upon closer analysis, however, it may also be argued that the fact that the Razaleigh–Musa combination, known for their ethnic–nationalist tendencies rather than Islamic, could garner a high 48.6 per cent of total votes and came very close to winning the highest offices in the party (and government), demonstrated the strength of the Malay ethnic force in the Malay psyche and culture. Their achievement—and the strength of the ethnic idiom—was even more striking if one were to note the backdrop of Islamic reassertion among Malays in Malaysia as well as their breaking of Malay-Islamic tradition by openly challenging their leaders—in this case, leaders whose Islamic preferences were quite conspicuous.

What all the above recent developments convincingly suggest, if not prove, is the point argued throughout this book: the politics of Malay identity is characterized by the stresses and strains of the Islam–ethnic Malay dialectic, but one which tends to bend towards the force of the latter.

1. The Chinese frustrations against the coalition government, and the MCA and Gerakan coalition members in particular, had to do with the following factors and incidences: their loss of confidence in the ability of both the MCA and the Gerakan to foster their interests within the government coalition; the factional strife that riddled MCA; the million-dollar Pan El financial collapse and the subsequent imprisonment of the MCA President Tan Koon Swan on corruption charges. For the Malays, too, the anti-UMNO mood was high, given the billion-dollar Bank Bumiputra corruption scandal; the constitutional crisis which pitted the Monarchy against the Mahathir Administration; the open conflict between the two top UMNO leaders, Mahathir and his deputy, Musa Hitam; and the Memali incident in which PAS supporters clashed with government security forces, resulting in 18 dead and more than 100 arrested.

2. See the details of the official results in Table 3. For a more detailed breakdown of the results, see *Straits Times*, 4 August 1986, and *Berita Harian*, 5 August 1986.

3. The concept of UMNO as the 'protector' of Malays was highlighted by Pillay in his 1974 MA thesis.

4. The present writer attended his talk held at a prominent hotel in Singapore. His responses to the questions from the floor were even more blunt. For the whole text of his speech and responses from the local and regional press, see Abdullah Ahmad, *Issues in Malaysian Politics* (Singapore Institute of International Affairs, 1988). He reiterated the importance of Malay unity in August 1988: see *Straits Times*, 11 August 1988. Datuk Abdullah was, of late, one of UMNO's nominees in the 150-member National Economic Consultative Committee formed by the government to formulate an economic policy to replace the NEP after 1990: *Straits Times*, 18 January 1989.

5. News coverage of the Assembly may be found in all the major Malaysian newspapers during the third and fourth week of September 1986, such as *Utusan Malaysia*, *Berita Harian*, and *New Straits Times*.

6. Information in this section is secured from the numerous newspaper reports and bulletins. See, for instance, *Straits Times*, 24–28 April 1987; *Asiaweek*, 3 May 1987; *Berita Harian*, 25 April 1987; and *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 May 1987.

7. To Anwar, the contest is between those who want more Islam and those who want more Malay nationalism: *Straits Times*, 26 April 1987. (Throughout 1988 and 1989, the issue of Malay unity and the need to preserve and foster Malay ethnic supremacy in Malaysia continued to be harped upon by many UMNO leaders. For a further demonstration of such sentiments see *Straits Times*, 29 October 1988 and *Asiaweek*, 11 November 1988, which carried reports of the New UMNO inaugural General Assembly, including Dr Mahathir Mohamad's emphasis on how crucial Malay unity is to the political stability of the country.)

Glossary

adat norms, customs, conventions, and oral traditions

adil just (equitable and fair)

al-din a (complete and comprehensive) way of life; '*ad-din*'

al-dustur al Madinah Madinah Constitution (arguably the first written Constitution in the world)

al-Imam monthly newspaper first published in Singapore in 1906

Al-Qur'an divine and highest reference source of Islamic law

amanah trustworthiness (or a religious responsibility which must be carried out)

aqidah world-view/ideology

assabiyah communal (ethnic) parochialism

ayat 'verse' in Al-Qur'an

azan call to prayer (usually done by muezzin)

bangsa race or nation

berita news

bumiputra indigenous, or 'prince of the soil', legally defined and accorded preferential treatment under the New Economic Policy

ceramah (religious) talk, usually delivered by religious leaders

dakwah Muslim 'missionary' activity; from Arabic *Da'wah* which means 'to invite' or call people to Islam

Darul Islam Islamic State

darul harb Non-Islamic (Religious) State

Datuk (Dato') the highest honorific title given by the Ruler or Sultan of a State in Malaysia; in some States, the highest title is 'Datuk Seri'

dewan hall (or auditorium)

Dewan Negara Senate; Upper House of Parliament

Dewan Rakyat House of Representatives; Lower House of Parliament

dhimmi non-Muslim in an Islamic State; sometimes spelt *zimmi*

faqih scholar of or expert on Islamic jurisprudence; plural is *fuqaha*

fatwa an Islamic ruling considered legally binding upon Muslims

fiqh Islamic jurisprudence

ghafilin heedless

hadith written compilation or narrative of Prophet Muhammad's sayings and instructions; second to the Qur'an as source of Islamic Law and jurisprudence

haj	pilgrimage (to Mecca); in Malaysia sometimes spelt as *haji*
halal	(religiously) permissible
hamba	servant
harakah	Islamic cause-orientated movement
haram	(religiously) not permissible
hikmah	wisdom or the proper approach to doing things
imam	prayer leader in a mosque or (in Shi'a thought) undisputed leader of Islamic community
jizyah	'tax' imposed by an Islamic state on non-Muslims in lieu of national (military) service
kafir	unbeliever; infidel
kampung	village
kaum	ethnic community
Kaum Tua	old (conservative) generation—as opposed to *Kaum Muda*
khalifah	vicegerent ('God's representative on earth')
khalwat	close (sexual) proximity
madrasah	Islamic school (smaller boarding schools are called *pondok*)
majlis	council
Majlis Agama	Islamic (Religious) Council
masjid	mosque (congregational prayers are usually held in mosques, not in *surau* which are smaller forms of mosques)
masyarakat	community or society
Melayu	Malays (of the Malay race/ethnic group)
Menteri Besar	Chief Minister or Head of government of a State within the Federation which has a hereditary Ruler or Sultan
mazhab	school of thought; for example, the Sunni and Shi'a *mazhab*
mesyuarat	discussion or consultation
mustadhafin	powerless
mustakbirin	(materially) wealthy
nasihat	advice
pondok	Islamic boarding school (usually in rural areas and smaller than *madrasah*)
penghulu	headman or village chief
Pusat Islam	Islamic Centre
Raja	King or Ruler of a State
rakyat	citizens or ordinary people/class
saghirin	weak and mean
sejarah	history
shahadah	declaration of faith; the first principle or pillar of Islam
Shar'iah	Islamic Laws
shura	consultation and consensus
shumul	complete and comprehensive
sunnah	life-style and practices of Prophet Muhammad
surah	'Chapter' in Al-Qur'an
surau	smaller mosques
tanjak	headgear symbolizing authority

tariqa	religious streams or 'sects'
Tunku	a hereditary title denoting royalty ('Tengku' is of a lower rank than 'Tunku')
ulama	Islamic (religious) scholars; the singular form is '*alim*
umma	a community bonded by religious/ideological affiliation (sometimes spelt as *ummah*)
usrah	a small study group
ustaz	a religious teacher
Yang di-Pertuan Agong	'King'. A Sultan chosen by the other Sultans every five years to assume this position of Paramount Ruler of Malaysia

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Zacher, M. W. and Milne, R. S. (eds.) (1974), *Conflict and Stability in Southeast Asia* (New York, Anchor Press).
Zainah Anwar (1987), *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia: Dakwah among Students* (Kuala Lumpur, Pelanduk Publications).
Zainal Abidin Ahmad (1974), *Negara Adil, Makmur Menurut Ibn Sina* (Djakarta, Bulan Bintang).
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Zainal Abidin Wahid (1968), 'Problems of Malay-medium Education', in *Opinion* (January).
——— (1969), 'Random Thoughts on Education', in *Opinion* (April–May).
——— (ed.) (1970), *Glimpses of Malaysian History* (Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka).
Zalikhah Md. Nor (1982), 'Peranan Wanita Islam—Satu Pandangan', in *Reflection*, Vol. 9, No. 1.
Zuraini Majid (ed.) (1982), *Masyarakat Malaysia: Tinjauan dan Perbincangan terhadap Beberapa Isu dan Topik Semasa* (Penang, Universiti Sains Malaysia).

Newspapers and Serials

Note: This list includes only those frequently consulted.

Al-Hikmah
Kelantan: 1934–41; Malay newspaper; thrice monthly, later fortnightly; some influence of Islamic reformism.

Al-Ikhwan
Penang: 1926; 1931; monthly; both years consulted.

Al-Imam
Singapore: 1906–1908; first religious reform Malay-Muslim newspaper, all consulted.

Al-Nahdah
Kuala Lumpur: official journal of Regional Islamic Dakwah Council for South-east Asia and the Pacific (RISEAP); consulted almost every issue for 1983–4.

Asiaweek
Hong Kong: weekly; selective readings, especially from 1980.

Berita Harian
Kuala Lumpur: Times Publishers; daily Malay newspaper; much consulted, especially from 1969.

Crescent International
Canada: quarterly bulletin of Muslim affairs; regularly referred to from 1982.

Dewan Masyarakat
Kuala Lumpur: DBP; monthly; selective readings, especially from 1969.

Far Eastern Economic Review
Hong Kong: weekly; much consulted, from 1979 onwards.

Intisari
Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute; 1961–5; banned by the government.

Islamic Herald
Kuala Lumpur: Perkim; bi-monthly in English; regularly referred to especially from 1976.

Ittihad
Official journal of the Muslim Students Association of USA and Canada; quarterly; period consulted: 1977–81.

Jawi Peranakan
Singapore: earliest newspaper in Malay archipelago; 1876–95; read through selectively.

JMBRAS
Journal of the Malayan (later Malaysian) branch of the Royal Asiatic Society; much referred to for information on Malay history and culture, especially 1965–70.

Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur: Times Publishers; official monthly bulletin in English and Malay; formerly called *Malaysian Bulletin*; regularly consulted for information on Malaysian government's policies; ceased publication around 1985.

Nadi Insan
Institut Analisa Sosial, Malaysia; a 'social critic' bulletin; period consulted: 1982–4, banned by Malaysian government in mid-1984.

Neracha
Singapore: Malay newspaper; 1912–15; fortnightly, then weekly; consulted all issues.

New Straits Times
Kuala Lumpur: Times Publishers; daily; regularly referred to especially from 1965; formerly called *The Straits Times* and based in Singapore.

Perspective
Kuala Lumpur: ABIM's official international-release bulletin, in English; most issues from 1975.

Reflection
London: Malaysian Islamic Study Group; quarterly; selective readings, especially 1980–4.

Risalah
Kuala Lumpur: ABIM's official Malay newsletter; monthly; consulted most issues for 1975–84.

Saudara
Penang: Malay newspaper, 1928–41; weekly; selective readings regarding influence of Islamic reformism.

Southeast Asian Affairs
Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; selectively.

The Star
Malaysia: daily English newspaper; period consulted: 1980–4.

Straits Times
Singapore: daily English newspaper; frequently referred to, since, for a long time, it was the sole English newspaper in Malaysia–Singapore.

Suara Perkim
Kuala Lumpur: official newsletter of Perkim, in Malay; period consulted: 1980–4.

Utusan Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Melayu Press; daily Malay newspaper; much consulted, especially after 1979.

Utusan Melayu
Kuala Lumpur: daily Malay newspaper in Jawi script; regularly referred to, especially for 1968–80.

Bibliographies and Catalogues on Malaysia, Islam, and the Malays

Ahmad Nik Yaacob (1972), *Adat Perpateh: Satu Bibliographi beranotasi* (BA (Hons.) thesis, University of Malaya).
A useful starting point for the student of Malay *adat* (in both Malaysia and Indonesia) although literature is limited to only the *Adat Perpateh*, excluding the *Adat Temenggong* which in fact is the more commonly practised political system in Malaysia.

BISA: Bibliographic Information on Southeast Asia (Sydney University).
An on-going cataloguing and storage of literature on South-East Asia (including those published in *FEER*) in many languages. Useful database-information for pursuing materials on the region, and available through the conventional micro-film and microfile as well as a 'computer link-up' service to the Australian Information Network.

Catalogue of the Singapore/Malaysia Collection (University of Singapore library).
A useful source for materials on Singapore and Malaysia, covering the usual subject-headings as well as guiding the researcher on the location(s) where these literature can be found.

Chandran, J. (1979), 'Index Malaysia in History', in *Malaysia in History*, Vol. 22 (May).
A compilation of source-materials on Malaysia. Titled as 'Malaysia in History' but includes some materials on politics and sociology, too.

Ding Choo Ming (1960), *Bibliography of Bibliographies on Malaysia* (Hexagon Elite Publications, Kuala Lumpur).
One of the earliest attempts in bibliography-compilation of Malaysia by a Malaysian. Author later co-produced a more complete listing: see *Islam dalam Peradaban Melayu: Suatu Bibliographi*.

Harris, L. J. (1967), *Guide to Malaysian Serials* (University of Malaya library, Kuala Lumpur).
Includes mostly English-language sources, and has now been superseded by subsequent bibliographic listings.

Islam dalam Peradaban Melayu: Suatu Bibliographi (1976) (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi).
Quite an extensive collection of source-titles on Islam and the Malays in the Malay archipelago. Arranged in two parts—'Subjects' and 'Classical Malay Literature'—but excludes general materials on Islam outside the South-East Asian region. (In Malay and English.)

Karni, R. S. (1980), *Bibliography of Malaysia and Singapore* (University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur).
Quite a good information-source of works done on the Singapore–Malaysia region. Categories listed include 'Religion', 'Social Science', 'Natural Science', and 'Applied Science'. About 1,000 pages.

Katalog Koleksi Melayu (1980) (University of Malaya library, Kuala Lumpur).

An excellent—and the most up-to-date—collection of literature sources on the Malays in the Malay archipelago and their life and cultures in general. Professionally compiled by librarians of the university and includes subject areas such as Malay language, religion, arts, literature, and politics. An almost updated listing of Karni's (above) and produced in the same year.

Kee Kum Ping (1981), *Dissertasi Kedoktoran mengenai Asia Tenggara.*

A listing of Ph.D. and Masters' theses on South-East Asia, arranged under country-headings. Most are stored in microfilm print-outs and secured from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan. These theses, however, are mostly those submitted to American and Canadian universities from 1934 to 1979.

National Library of Australia (1983), *Area Studies: Current Awareness Bulletin.*

An on-going compilation of materials on South-East Asia, arranged under country-headings, as well as indicating the locations/holdings where they can be secured in the other libraries throughout Australia. Two headings are especially useful for researchers on South-East Asia, Islam, and the Malays: 'Islam—a select list of books in the National Library' (May 1980), and 'Newspapers in Australian Libraries' (Overseas newspapers; 4th ed., 1977).

Pearson, J. D. (1975–80), *Index Islamicus* (Heffer and Sons, Cambridge).

A catalogue of articles on Islamic subjects in periodicals and other collective publications, arranged according to subject as well as country-headings. A useful source-reference on Islam generally, but the section on Malaysian Islam is, compared to other countries, very limited.

Peretz, Rene (1972), *Malaysian Politics and Planning: A Selected Bibliography* (Council of Planning Librarians, Illinois).

As indicated in the title, most listings come under the category of 'Politics' generally.

Persuratkhabaran Melayu, 1876–1968 (1980) (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka).

Quite a good quick-reference source for most Malay newspapers produced in Singapore and Malaysia, up to 1968.

Roff, William (1970), *Bibliography of Malay Periodicals* (Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur).

A good listing of the early periodicals not otherwise found in other Malay bibliographies and catalogues.

——— (1972), *Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals Published in the Straits Settlements, 1876–1941* (Oxford University Press, London).

An updated version of the above 1970 bibliography. The time-frame is, however, limited to 1941. Arranged under 'Arabic', 'Malay', and 'Missionary'.

Interviews

This list does not include the names of everyone interviewed since many preferred to remain anonymous.

Abdul Ghani Shamsudin (Deputy President, ABIM): Kuala Lumpur, December 1980; Sydney: June 1983.

Abdul Hadi, Ustadz (Vice-President, PAS): Sydney, October 1982.

Adib Adam (former Minister of Information): Kuala Lumpur, UMNO Headquarters, December 1980.

Ahmad Ibrahim (Dean, Law Faculty, International Islamic University, Malaysia): Kuala Lumpur, April and May 1983.

Ahmad Noordin (Secretary-General, Perkim): Kuala Lumpur, Perkim Headquarters, March 1983.

Amriah Buang (Deputy Head, ABIM's Women's Section): Kuala Lumpur, April 1983.
Anwar Ibrahim (Minister of Education and former President, ABIM): Kuala Lumpur, Pusat Islam, April 1983; residence, May 1983.
Ariffin Suhaimi (Deputy Rector, International Islamic University, Malaysia): Kuala Lumpur, April 1983.
Ashfaq Ahmad (former Executive Committee member, RISEAP): Sydney, June 1983.
Chandra Muzaffar (President, Aliran): Penang, Universiti Sains Malaysia, May 1983.
Fadlullah Wilmot (Director of Information, RISEAP): Kuala Lumpur, RISEAP Headquarters, April 1983.
Ghazali Shafie (former Foreign Minister of Malaysia): Singapore, 1985.
Hanif Ahmad (President, Seni Silat Gayong Malaysia): Kuala Lumpur, March 1983.
Hashim Ahmad (Vice-President, Darul Arqam): Sydney, January 1982.
Kamaruddin Jaafar (Secretary-General, ABIM; since 1987, Political Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister): Melbourne, May 1981; Kuala Lumpur, April 1983.
Kamaruddin Md. Nor (Vice-President, ABIM): Canberra, May 1980; Kuala Lumpur, February 1982; Hobart, May 1982; Kuala Lumpur, April 1983.
Lee Kim Sai (Vice-President, MCA; formerly Head of MCA Youth): Kuala Lumpur, MCA Headquarters, March 1983.
Mahsin Hj. Mansor (Director, Pusat Penyelidekan Islam Malaysia): Kuala Lumpur, March 1983.
Mokhtar Stork (Active Muslim convert in Kuala Lumpur and formerly with Perkim): Kuala Lumpur, March 1983.
Muhammad Isa (Secretary-General, National Council of Islamic Affairs Malaysia): Kuala Lumpur, April 1983.
Muhammad Zakaria (Director of International Relations, Darul Arqam): Melbourne, May 1981; Sydney, November 1982; Kuala Lumpur, April 1983.
Mustapha Ali (Head, PAS Youths): Sydney, October 1982.
Nakha'ie Ahmad (Vice-President, PAS): Kuala Lumpur, 1984.
Shuib Sulaiman (Registrar, Darul Arqam): Kuala Lumpur, April 1983.
Siddiq Fadhil (President, ABIM): Kuala Lumpur, 1985.
Syed Husin Ali (School of Advanced Studies, University of Malaya): Kuala Lumpur, May 1983.
Tan Chee Khoon (former 'Mr Opposition', Malaysia): Kuala Lumpur, March 1983.
Tunku Abdul Rahman (first Prime Minister of Malaysia): Penang, residence, March 1983.
Yusuf Rawa (former President, PAS): Sydney, October 1982.
Zahrah Za'aba (Za'aba's daughter): Petaling Jaya, February 1985.

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