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# MALAYSIA: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Essays in Honour of Syed Husin Ali



# MALAYSIA: PANDANGAN KRITIS

Esei Penghargaan untuk Syed Husin Ali

*Editors*

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**T**his book is dedicated in honour of Syed Husin Ali, formerly a professor at the University of Malaya and President of the Malaysian Social Science Association. Work on this book began several years ago, but for several reasons — not all of which were due to any one of the editors — was held up several times. Even so, the final responsibility is ours, particularly where the questions addressed by some of the authors may now seem a little dated.

No particular theme was advised to the contributors since they were each doing different things. The first five of the ten essays in this book addressed a related set of questions pertaining to the middle classes and the state. The five remaining essays are diverse in terms of focus, but share, with the first five, critical attitudes towards the subjects they address. This is what binds the book and our bond with Syed Husin Ali. It is a tribute to his contributions toward a more critical social science in Malaysia.

The editors would like to thank Ishak Shari for his kind support, as then President of the Malaysian Social Science Association, for the book. We would also like to thank Foo Ah Hiang for his patience with laying out and redoing several drafts. The final responsibility is ours.

Muhammad Ikmal Said  
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## INTRODUCTION

*Muhammad Ikmal Said and Zahid Emby*

The collection of essays in this volume is a tribute to and a token of the Malaysian Social Science Association's appreciation for Dr. Syed Husin Ali's contribution to the development of social science in Malaysia and his very able leadership of the Malaysian Social Science Association, to which he served as President between 1982 and 1991. The association thrived under his leadership, as he was able to command respect and foster friendship among a diverse set of individuals within several successive committees. More important, his tenure saw the increase in membership, regular conferences held and their proceedings published, and the association's then quarterly journal, *Ilmu Masyarakat*, published regularly. The association's healthy financial standing and the plot of land it owns today is almost single-handedly due to Syed Husin's untiring efforts as President of the Association. If not for his dedication to a larger and more formidable challenge — to lead the Parti Rakyat Malaysia in 1990 — Syed Husin would have certainly remained as the association's President for a longer period.

He supervised a large number of graduate students through his long service at the University of Malaya, where he last served as Professor at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology. Many of his students are now professors or senior lecturers at the University of Malaya and other universities in the country. Although Syed Husin was a terribly busy scholar and activist-citizen, he never failed to put his short, crisp comments on their drafts. His ability to squeeze time for his many students is a great tribute to his dedicated efforts as a teacher, resulting in a high success rate. For the undergraduate students, Syed Husin's very clear mind made his books and articles



very readable in both English and in Bahasa Malaysia, and were a great help to students who, for the first time, had to digest some very difficult ideas in Anthropology and Sociology.

Syed Husin Ali's scholarly contributions span over a broad range of concerns, including the culture and politics of class relations in the countryside, rural development, ethnicity, poverty and labour. His best known publications must surely be the two pioneering studies of class relations of rural Malay communities, *Social Stratification in Kampung Bagan*<sup>1</sup> and *Malay Peasant Society and Leadership*.<sup>2</sup> Both these publications generated a great deal of scholarly interest in the Malay peasantry among several successive cohorts of Malaysian scholars. These two studies provided a critical source of insight, reference and direction for a large number of undergraduate and graduate students at a time when the Malay peasantry formed an important object of political and academic discourse and symbol of concern for Malay underdevelopment.

Syed Husin's lasting contribution in peasant studies stems from his rich empirical analysis of the class structure of the Malay peasantry. His publications clearly established, at a time when other scholars researching on Malaysia were more interested in looking at peasant cultural institutions and values, the critical importance of class relations in understanding the backwardness of the peasantry. Although better known for the identification of peasant classes in the countryside Syed Husin's analyses are actually more enlightening in describing the cultural and political matrix of class relations. In fact, Syed Husin reminds us repeatedly that the nature of class relations among the Malay peasantry was highly complex, as they were interwoven with kinship, party, religious and status ties.

Syed Husin is equally known as an activist intellectual, and has, for a long while, been an important member of the Parti Rakyat Malaysia (previously known as the Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia and before that, the Partai Rakyat Malaya), a left-leaning political party. His activism was viewed suspiciously by the state. In fact, Syed Husin was detained without trial for almost six years between 1974 and 1980 by the Malaysian government. Although his detention was precipitated by events surrounding peasant protests in Baling and Sik and by student sympathy protests in Kuala Lumpur and Penang over low rubber prices in 1974, his extended detention had a lot more to do with the intrigues of power within UMNO.<sup>3</sup> This confusion of issues and the anti-communist mania that Malaysians were subjected to then

successfully made Syed Husin the Marxist that others should shy away from. Unfortunately, there has been very little sustained theoretical discussion about social classes in the countryside, and so much less have engaged in direct debate with Syed Husin's theoretical propositions. This relative neglect for theory and, consequently, the uncritical appreciation of his class approach must have lent some force in popularising Syed Husin as a Marxist.

Yet, Syed Husin was actually very Weberian, since classes were seen to operate principally at the level of the market rather than production. The analytical categories (class, status, party, mobility) that Syed Husin employed in his analyses of the Malay peasantry also owed more to Weber than Marx. And being the good anthropologist that he was, Syed Husin was very objective in portraying the peasantry, clearly establishing that while classes exist and that they were fairly highly polarised, they were engaged in a widely diverse set of contradictory relationships in the economic and other spheres of life.

Even so, it needs to be said that Syed Husin had often stressed, both as academic and activist, that the gap between the rich and the poor would increase. Again, there is nothing sinister about this since the same observations have been documented by government researchers, the World Bank and by non-Marxist scholars as well. The class tendencies he often portrayed were also signs of a rather different developmental trajectory, when land was the principal means of production while industrial development was still relatively backward. But times have changed, and agriculture, following rapid developments in industry, has undergone considerable change. Quite obviously, the class tendencies observed in the mid-sixties and seventies are no longer similar, and the specific theoretical propositions that were adopted by Syed Husin then may no longer prove to be as powerful today. Syed Husin had taken note of this in a little-known publication,<sup>4</sup> and was again in the forefront in enlightening scholars working on agriculture that the process of class differentiation had taken a rather different turn. The widely available opportunities for education and the increased opportunities for other forms of employment have led to an increasingly differentiated rural population. As a result, the relatively extreme inequalities in land ownership characteristic of the earlier period are no longer evident as owners of large tracts of land redistribute their lands and other lesser owners increase their relative share. Thus, a different class dynamic was

already imminent. Unfortunately, research interest in agriculture has declined. As a result, Syed Husin's highly important insight has not caught on in the same way his earlier publications did.

Syed Husin is probably more popularly known, even among some social scientists, for his studies on poverty and inequality,<sup>5</sup> particularly in terms of the distribution of landownership. These studies confirmed his earlier observations on inequality in the countryside, where land was, to a considerable extent, controlled by a relatively small group of rich landlords, rich farmers, as well as neo-feudal, bureaucratic and political functionaries. As studies by other scholars were to corroborate later, the studies by Syed Husin showed clearly that there were overlapping control of economic resources and political and social influence in the countryside. This highly important point is extended in his analyses of Malaysian politics. His intimate knowledge of key personalities in politics and in the bureaucracy, and their social and political ties are often brought together by the typically Weberian pluralist approach, including the strong emphasis upon the analytical force of class interests in fermenting conflict and change.<sup>6</sup> Thus, although the trajectory of Malaysian politics has been shaped largely by differences along ethnic lines — including cultural, religious and political differences — class interests often form the principal source of such conflicts. This emphasis upon class interests is complemented by his dependency school approach to analysing development, a powerful analytical tool that is coterminous with his well-known radical nationalist political reasoning.

The seeds Syed Husin sowed in developing Malaysian social science has shown its dividends. The large number of graduate students that he supervised and a larger number of theses and dissertations that his studies helped inspire, the thoughtful insights and highly objective appreciation of Malaysian society that his studies helped to enlighten other researchers with and the leadership that he brought into the Malaysian Social Science Association have left an indelible mark upon Malaysian social science. The very able and mature scholarship that Syed Husin showed when Malaysian social science education was still at its nascent stage was a great inspiration to subsequent scholars. Above all, Syed Husin is a man of high integrity with a great commitment to the struggle for social justice and an endearing, caring teacher and friend of considerable wit and humour.

The eventual publication has taken a lot longer than all the contributors and the editors would have wished. The responsibility

rests fully on the editors. The essays in this book are diverse, dealing with a wide range of topics from an equally diverse set of perspectives. They are brought together only by the authors' desire to dedicate their contributions in honour of Syed Husin Ali. Even so, it will be evident that the articles are all very critical of extant perspectives on the subjects they deal with, very much in the tradition that Syed Husin Ali had espoused and became known for. However, for most of us, the essays that we present in this volume stand not only for our appreciation for Syed Husin's scholarship and contributions for the development of Malaysian social science generally, but also as an expression of our respect for him as a friend.

Joel S. Kahn begins the book with an article which calls for more research on the middle classes as a field of ethnological study in Malaysia. Although the Malaysian middle classes have increased in size over the last twenty years, little research have been devoted to these groups either by Malaysian social scientists or by Malaysianists overseas. The growth of the middle classes is especially important because it is often associated with important socio-cultural changes, and is, therefore, critical to our understanding of changing consumer demands, new urban cultural forms, religious revival or for assessing the impact of the NEP in general, and its success in promoting changes in the "ethnic division of labour" in particular. It is also noted that the emergence of the middle classes has a bearing upon fertility and rates of population growth and gender relations in contemporary Malaysia. Thus, Kahn's essay shows in a very important way that the middle classes are at the core of social transitions in Malaysian society, and might, arguably, form the core of a new anthropology in the post-colonial order.

Kahn's contribution takes to task the widely popular and convenient convention of defining the middle classes as a category that is stationed, in an abstract and an empirical sense, somewhere in between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, as if they share certain defining traits, thus glossing over the distinction between ownership of the means of production and skills. It is argued that the middle classes are not an economic category in the same sense that the bourgeoisie and proletariat are. Their origins are as much political as they are economic, since a fairly sizeable section of the middle classes in the Third World owe their origins to the development of the state, and stand directly under the commands of political power. Consequently, middle class politics fall within the same construct upon

which the state rests. Since ethnic politics and the discourse on ethnic diversity is central to understanding the Malaysian state, it is argued that the middle classes are an important part of their construction.

The article by Muhammad Ikmal Said addresses the problem of ethnicity and the role of the middle classes in a more concrete way by examining the development of Malay nationalism and how its development has influenced the notions of Malaysia's national identity. It is argued that the success of Malay nationalism in spawning the Malay middle and entrepreneurial classes has taken the wind out of its own sail. As a result, the issues that once defined Malay nationalism no longer generate the clear sense of identity and mission they once did. This is evidenced by the rather muted opposition to the increased use of the English language, the stern rebukes by UMNO against the Malay royalty, once considered the critical ideological edifice of the Malay community's claim to being the definitive people and the symbol of Malay heritage and unity, the changing discourse towards a more plural notion of national culture and the decline of Islam as a Malay nationalist discourse. Thus, Malay nationalism has been transformed by its successes in promoting the development of the Malay community.

The perceptible change towards a more pluralist political climate is also observed by Jomo K.S. in his article on trends in Malaysian democracy. It is argued that the distortions created by money politics and rent appropriation necessitated severe budgetary cuts in the mid-eighties. The accompanying constrictions placed upon political participation, freedom of the press, the judiciary and the legislature fomented considerable disenchantment among opposition political parties, non-governmental organizations and among UMNO leaders and the rank and file as well. The subsequent split in UMNO subsequently led to the formation of a new, but mainstream, Malay opposition political party, the Semangat 46. However limited, this new development raised the prospects of extending the frontiers of Malaysia's democracy when Semangat 46 bridged two separate initiatives at uniting the Malay and the multi-ethnic opposition political parties, lending the latter greater "legitimacy" in public political discourse. Thus, there was a deepening of Malaysian democracy even as additional restrictions have been put in place.

The restrictions which Jomo K.S. alluded to in the previous article are examined in greater depth by Francis Loh Kok Wah and Mustafa K. Anuar in their article on the Malaysian press. The authors docu-

ment very clearly how the state appropriates control of the press through legislative provisions, ownership and control of the major publishing companies, and the cultivation of a "responsible journalism" ethic. As a result, the major dailies in Malaysia are a muzzled lot, practising self-censorship and biased reporting. The alternative press, small in resources and low in circulation, briefly profited from this situation. However, the government acted swiftly against them, bringing down their circulation and appeal. Innovations in print technology and the sophistication of aesthetic appeal among the rapidly growing middle classes have brought changes, but these are rather limited. Even so, such changes are important, since middle class tastes and interests are — being the bearers of a trendy consumerist culture that they are — important driving forces of the market, and, are, therefore, strategic targets for advertisements. However, as the authors point out, this has also meant that the dailies had to incorporate elements of what is commonly interpreted as middle class cultural and civic interests in their columns. By doing so, middle class cultural and civic interests are promoted, spreading well beyond the columns of these highly controlled dailies.

The close relationship between politics and business, the common theme pursued differently by Jomo K.S. and by Francis Loh Kok Wah and Mustafa K. Anuar, is taken up further in the next chapter by Edmund Terence Gomez. This article examines the development of patronage politics, particularly in association with the development of a new form of capital accumulation, where public investment expenditure is mobilised through a diverse range of institutions (the best known are the "non-financial public enterprises") to enable particular groups, particularly among politically connected (business or rentier) interests, to tap capital and obtain gains through an equally large number of ways. This was particularly evident in UMNO, which operated directly through the state. However, the post-1970 accumulation regime also provided other political parties (the Malaysian Chinese Association, for example) to establish public institutions (such as cooperatives) for similar gains. This meant that the incumbents of political office were given direct access either to large amounts of public capital or to the large number of contracts and licences that the new state form created. Thus, the stakes of political office are very high. The surest way to obtain political office, therefore, would be through dishing out patronage; political support is obtained in exchange for economic gain, the size of which varies directly with

the number of votes that may be swung in the patron's favour. The problem with this form of accumulation regime is that it destroys the conditions of its own reproduction, particularly when the economy runs aground during a downturn. The new accumulation regime that came out of the recession in the late eighties resolved this through privatisation. However, as Gomez points out, this new form is defined by the same forces that brought about its birth. As a result, public wealth is privatised very cheaply, as rents for private appropriation.

As it may be seen, the articles in the first half of the book deal with a number of related issues, with the middle classes, and how their emergence has patterned politics, and the nature of the state. Clearly, the middle classes referred to here are quite a varied group, including the bourgeoisie, quite like the way they were defined traditionally. This is because the bourgeoisie have only just emerged. In fact, a considerable part of the essays we have commented upon referred to new processes of accumulation, through which older forms of capital transformed and through which many more new factions of capital have emerged. They together define the primacy of these new forms of capital accumulation.

The next five articles are more varied, dealing with such widely different issues as gender and the marginalisation of the Orang Asli, the aboriginal peoples of the peninsula, industrialisation, agriculture and ASEAN and the conflict resolution process in Kampuchea.

The problems of gender and work by Wazir Jahan Karim examines the issue of women's demand for equality and justice in education and job opportunity, equal pay for the same job, a more equitable division of labour in the home and control over sexual and reproduction functions. Wazir argues that career women experience a status and role problem different from women working at home. The article discusses stereotypical views regarding career women, which are usually connected to prejudice misogyny, biology and sex. She also discusses domestic functions and social role as a structured obstruction. These structured obstacles are at times used as justifications for the introduction of policies which encourage sexual discrimination in the government and private sectors. These structural obstacles then produce a vicious cycle whereby professional women could not afford to spend all of their time to work and compete equally since society further requires women to undertake the responsibility of domestic chores as well.

Zawawi Ibrahim's essay on the impact of regional development on the Jakun, an Orang Asli (aboriginal people) group in Pahang Tenggara offers an excellent insight into their marginalisation. The Orang Asli are not just peasants subjected to patricular forms of state control and capitalist development. This is because their integration into mainstream society is articulated through ideological and political practises that deprive them of their history and their cultural identity as well. Their claims to traditional lands (and to their culture and identity) are antithetical to the very foundations of DARA's development model, and to the foundations of the modern state as well. This explains why aboriginal land claims are repeatedly ignored and why their reserves are very limited, and sometimes revoked to serve the interests of other economic and political groups. In addition, the Orang Asli are also very often deprived of the bare necessities required for the success of the regroupment programmes to which they have been coerced into. Therefore, the Orang Asli are a dispossessed, dislocated and deprived people. They have been made incomplete citizens of the modern post-colonial state.

Rajah Rasiah examines the critical processes that determine the geographical location and technological changes of the textile industry worldwide. Specifically, this article challenges the popular argument that class conflicts are central to understanding these processes. Although the role of class conflict is acknowledged, particularly as the "push factor" that led owners of the textile industry to venture beyond their national boundaries, its emergence and development, he argues, may be more appropriately assigned to the role of the state and to the role of competition between capital. The state in the countries of origin allocates the amount of imports to the various exporting countries. Therefore, the location and relocation of the textile industry are contingent upon the behaviour of the state. Recent technological changes within the textile industries in Malaysia are also due more to competition between the different owners of capital (to increase productivity as wages increase with increased demand, to reduce the impact of the increased cost of raw materials) than to the labour movement, which may be described as weak.

Ishak Shari's excellent essay on rural development treats us with a comprehensive and critical overview of Malaysia's agricultural development policies, with special focus on poverty eradication. The article identifies and describes the country's various strategies and policies since independence, specifically during the implementation of



the New Economic Policy. This is subsequently followed by a critical appraisal of the different poverty eradication programmes. It is acknowledged that a considerable proportion of public investment expenditure had been allocated to poverty eradication, and that the incidence of poverty has been reduced. However, the data supporting claims of a large reduction of poverty had been achieved within a short period remain debatable. This is because the data used may have been influenced by temporary, upward fluctuations of the price of some agricultural produce. Furthermore, poverty among rubber and rice producers, two very large groups, remain significant. In addition, the problem of relative poverty has not been addressed. Ishak's analysis of the new land development and *in situ* programmes raises a number of critical problems relating to poverty and distribution, farm size, efficiency and sustainable development. The final section of the article relates these issues to prospects for development in agriculture in the future.

The final article, by Johan Saravanamuttu, in this volume is about about the role of ASEAN and the Indochinese states in the peace process in Kampuchea. The author sets his discussion of the conflict resolution process by first detailing the circumstances surrounding the Kampuchean conflict, and subsequently, by highlighting the differences that led the two groups into a diplomatic impasse. It is argued that the foreign policy change by Thailand, the peace initiatives by Indonesia and Vietnam's military withdrawal from Kampuchea were instrumental in setting the stage for the Paris accords in 1991. It is also noted that the world political scenario had changed, enabling bridges to be built across different ideological sides.

## Notes

1. *Social Stratification in Kampong Bagan*. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Monograph No. 1. 1964.
2. *Malay Peasant Society and Leadership*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. 1975.
3. His experiences in detention are documented in a book written while in detention but published only recently. See Syed Husin Ali, *Two Faces (Detention Without Trial)*, Kuala Lumpur: Insan. 1996.
4. Syed Husin Ali, "Pola Pemilikan Tanah Kampung di Negeri Johor". *Siri Laporan No. 3, Projek Penyelidikan Masyarakat Negeri Johor*. Kuala Lumpur: Institut Pengajian Tinggi, Universiti Malaya.

5. Syed Husin Ali, *Report of a Survey of 72 Villages in Malaysia for the "Kajian Kemiskinan di Malaysia" Project*. Kuala Lumpur: Institute Pengajian Tinggi. 1986. *Apa Erti Pembangunan*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. 1979. *Kemiskinan dan Kelaparan Tanah di Kelantan*. Petaling Jaya: Karangraf. 1978. See also, Syed Husin Ali and Ishak Shari, "Kemiskinan di Malaysia: Satu Penilaian Terhadap Anggaran Rasmi dan Implikasinya" in Khadijah Muhamed and Halimah Awang (eds.), *Dasar Ekonomi Baru dan Masa Depan*. Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia. 1991.
6. See, for instance, *Social Stratification in Kampong Bagan, Malay Peasant Society and Leadership and the Malays: Their Problems and Future*. Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann. 1981.

## THE MIDDLE CLASS AS A FIELD OF ETHNOLOGICAL STUDY

Joel S. Kahn\*

*For some time we have lagged behind Indonesian stratificatory realities under the impression, once quite true, that the middle classes (or whatever we choose for the moment to call them) were too minute to make a difference. Now, suddenly, when they appear to be making some difference, or anyway are substantial enough to compel notice, we are at a loss to figure out who exactly they are, why they are important, and what difference they actually make.*

(Lev, 1990: 25)

Daniel Lev's remarks about Indonesia are doubly true in the Malaysian context, for in spite of the well-documented growth of, if anything, a relatively larger middle class, as yet there has been remarkably little interest among social scientists in the phenomenon. With a handful of exceptions, very few Malaysianists in Malaysia or overseas — have done more than mention the middle class in passing; and there have been even fewer attempts to clarify the use of the concept in Malaysian conditions, or to assess its impact on the taken-for-granted contours of Malaysian society.

In the scholarly literature on the Malays, with which I am most familiar and which for better or worse tends to predominate, we

\* This paper is based on research carried out on the emergence of an indigenous middle class. I am grateful to the Australian Research Council which has provided funds for my ongoing research in Malaysia for the last several years. I would also like to acknowledge my debt to Maila Stivens, my co-worker in this study with whom I have discussed many of the ideas in this paper, and who has given me many suggestions based on her research. I would also like to thank Pat Young and Lucy Healey for their bibliographical work which proved very useful in putting this article together, and Gaynor Thornell for help with the typing.

instead continue to witness an outpouring of studies of peasants, factory girls, ethnicity, and Islam — not unimportant in themselves, but in their distribution far from fully representative of current trends in the Malay community. As for studies of Malaysia's other main ethnic groups, lamentably fewer in number, the growth of the middle class is similarly largely ignored.

But consider the following. According to one observer:

In Malaysia, where the non-Malay component of the middle class had continued to grow as a result of economic development since independence, in the 1970s Malay representation in the middle class rose sharply following the introduction of the New Economic Policy....

(Crouch, 1985: 31)

And depending on the interpretation of census data, the size of that "substantial and prosperous" middle class was as high as 24 per cent of the work force in 1980 (*ibid*, 31-32).

The class grew in significance in the 1980s, so that, using the same calculation, Saravanamuttu estimates that by 1986, 37.2 per cent of workers were in middle class occupations. And doubtless the 1990 census will show continued growth in both the absolute and relative size of the Malaysian middle class.

### **The Significance of the Middle Class**

The fact that a loosely defined middle class has grown quite rapidly in the last fifteen to twenty years is reason enough to focus more attention on it. But more importantly it is the implication of this trend which makes it a significant topic for research. In the absence of such research it is, of course, difficult to say what those implications might be. But one area in which the new middle class has made a significant impact is in the market for consumer goods. Not surprisingly the advertising industry has discovered the middle class before the academics. In this regard a report of the findings of market researchers commissioned by *The New Straits Times* is illuminating. The firm in question, Survey Research Malaysia, employed an apparently novel approach to research based on identifying what they call "psychographic segmentation" in the consumer market, to divide the population according to what might be called different consumer cultures or subcultures.<sup>1</sup> Surprisingly, the major subdivisions identified by this research were not ethnically-determined, but bear a greater resemblance to classes. And among these, a very significant "class"

is composed of the NQTs or "Not Quite There's". To quote selectively from the article:

NQTs appear to be halfway up the ladder of success but, as the name suggests, they are not quite there.... This group is particularly introverted, spending-oriented, neurotic, unadventurous, traditional and lacking in confidence. They are also ambitious, family-oriented, religious and nationalistic....

And, after discussing the consumer preferences of the NQTs, the article goes on to say:

The NQTs have a lower average income than the Upper Echelons. While the proportion of White Collar Workers is high, they tend to be in the middle and lower levels of the group....

The impact of the emergence of the NQTs on Malaysia's consumer culture is there for all to see — in the proliferation of shopping malls, western-owned or western-style fast food outlets and, increasingly, middle range restaurants; and in the expanding demand for a wide range of consumer goods ranging from clothing, electrical and electronic goods, and cars, to tourist locales, and theme parks — all of which cater to the demand for fashions of distinction which will serve to distinguish the middle classes from the other urban (and rural) classes.

Indeed, while the two are by no means separable, the developing urban lifestyle in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and other cities is also strongly shaped by the consumer preferences and aspirations of the "new middle classes". Cultural commentators have been quicker to spot this trend than academics. Bunn's "portrait of the natives" of Kuala Lumpur is a case in point. Bunn's KL is peopled by the likes of Alec the exec, The Volvo Man, Dyn the fashion designer, Hamil the civil servant, Ragu the "dental surgeon" and his girlfriend Mary the lawyer, Azlina and Deflora — independent and fashion conscious professional women, Peter the Lothario and Porsche-owner, and more. These characters share the stage with other modern KL-ites — the Kutus, the car park attendants, the builders and the labourers, the Jinjang Joes and Jos. The interaction, even conflict, between those members of Malaysia's "new middle class" and its equally new under classes produce the culture of modern Kuala Lumpur (Bunn, 1990).

The growing size of the class of what *The New Straits Times* calls the Not Quite There's is significant for developments in areas with which social scientists have more traditionally been concerned. One such area is religion.

A recurring theme in the writings on Malaysia by historians and social scientists is of religious revival. The development and spread of Islam in particular is portrayed in terms of waves of consolidation and revival, the crest of the waves representing the successive fundamentalist movements which seem regularly to sweep over the Malay community. Sociologists with an eye to the social context of these movements have been concerned to link religious with social transformation. Hence Kessler, for example, has argued that religious revival in Kelantan has been associated both with political rivalry (between UMNO and what was the PMIP) and the economic hardships of the peasantry (see Kessler, 1978).

But the more recent Islamic resurgence, which dates from the early to middle 70s, can quite clearly not be understood without referring to the middle class. Chandra Muzaffar, for example, argues that the cultural dimensions of modern Islamic resurgence, the attitudes towards dress, food taboos and regulatory interaction between the sexes — as well as the renewed commitment to a “puristic, doctrinaire type of Islamic economy” and an “unalloyed, unadulterated” Islamic political and educational order is strongest amongst “the younger, urban, middle-class generation”. In this he echoes to some extent Nagata’s conclusion that the key players in the so-called *dakwah* movements have been the urban, tertiary-educated young (Muzaffar, 1987; 7-10; Nagata, 1984).

The nexus between religious transformation and the development of the middle class is no less marked for other religions. Consider, for example, the following comments on the recent spread of charismatic Christianity in Malaysia:

Charismatic Christian identity entails not only the attenuation of denominational divisions but also the erosion of ethnic boundaries among non-Malays. The propagation of the movement mainly through the medium of the English language has shaped its multi-ethnic, middle class character.... Identification as a Charismatic Christian is associated with middle class orientation and de-emphasises ethnic background. In Malaysia, middle-class orientation includes a preference for the use of English rather than the national language... or other vernacular, familiarity with English language mass media, and aspiration to a Western style of life.

(Ackerman and Lee, 1988: 85)

If an investigation of the expanding Malaysian middle class is important for understanding changing consumer demands, the creation of urban cultural forms and religious revival, it is equally significant

for assessing the impact of the New Economic Policy in general, and its success in promoting changes in the "ethnic division of labour" in particular. Much research has been done on the effectiveness of the NEP in transferring wealth and economic control to the Malays, one of its stated objectives.<sup>2</sup> The policy does appear at least to have had one consequence — the creation of a considerably enlarged Malay middle class. But questions are continually asked about the nature of this middle class. Does it testify to the emergence of a true class of Malay entrepreneurs who will contribute to the commercial development of the Malay community? Or has the NEP created a group dependent on the State for its continued survival? These questions were very much on the minds of the Malaysian leadership, particularly in the run up to the review of the policy a couple of years ago, as the following extract from an interview with the Prime Minister testifies:

*MB:* The NEP, notwithstanding the critics, has genuinely helped a lot of Malaysians, particularly Malays. For instance, there is now a large and growing corps of middle class Bumi professionals and entrepreneurs where there had been none before. Conversely, it has also precipitated what social scientists call a crutch or subsidy mentality. A whole new generation seems to have taken it for granted that the benefits of the NEP will continue in perpetuity.... This cannot be healthy in the long run. Comment?

*MAHATHIR:* To say that the NEP has succeeded is to be optimistic. You say it has succeeded in creating this middle-class of Malay professionals. It has not. What has happened is simply the Government makes it possible for them to survive. The economy is still basically the same. All these people depend on the Government — the Malay contractors, the Malay lawyers, the businessmen.

Now that the Government is not having a lot of projects, all of them are suffering. And they do not know what to do. Malay contractors can never get contracts other than from the Government. Perhaps it is their fault but the fact is, that is the situation. So to say that the NEP has created this permanent Malay middle class is not quite correct.

Now that the Government is cutting back, these people have reverted to being, well, the bottom rung of the middle class. A lot of them are bankrupt because they borrowed money. The NEP has only worked in the equity aspect, the nominal share aspect of wealth as characterised by PNB and so on. What we need is a genuine partnership between Malays and non-Malays, the Bumiputera and the non-Bumiputera. Then the NEP will have succeeded.

The Malays must learn how to manage, how to be thrifty. Giving money to the Malays, for them to squander, is not helping them. If you use a Malay name so that you can tender for a Government project that's not helping the Malays or anyone.

Therefore, as things go, they would need the crutch for a long time. I'm not blaming the non-Bumiputeras. I'm blaming the Bumiputeras who take the easy way out. They think that the NEP means a free gift. Once the economy slides and there are no free gifts, they're in trouble. This so-called middle class and rich Malays are all owing money to the banks. I think practically every one of them is bankrupt now.

The crutch therefore will have to remain until there is an equitable distribution of wealth. I would not like to see the crutch taken off when Malay contractors can only get contracts from the Government. Where are they to go?

(NST 1/1/1988)

Another issue on which the emergence of a middle class clearly has a bearing is that of fertility and rates of population growth. Not yet a concern in Malaysia to the extent that it is in Singapore, where falling birth and marriage rates among the middle classes have caused something of a eugenicist panic in government circles, it is nonetheless obvious that changes in the class composition of the Malaysian population as a whole, and of particular communities, will have an effect on fertility rates and hence on both overall rates of population growth, and the relative populations of different classes and ethnic groups.

According to Singapore's government, the main reason for the panic is the decline in birth rates among educated professionals, and the main explanation proffered is that educated women are taking up professional employment rather than staying home to have children. Be that as it may, quite clearly the growth of the middle class has important implications for women's position and gender relations in contemporary Malaysia. This is not to presume that women's position has been improved among the new middle classes, that is a question for research. But clearly the changes in women's employment patterns associated with the growth of this class is having an impact on gender relations, domestic structures and fertility patterns as well as on women's political participation and the discourse on gender in Malaysia. One should for example note here the prominent role played by middle class women in non-governmental organisations in general, and women's groups and Malaysia's feminist movement in particular.<sup>3</sup>

One could go on, but I think the point has been made that social scientists with an interest in social, economic, political and cultural developments in contemporary Malaysia would do well to pay more attention than they have done to the development of a growing and increasingly influential middle class.



But one might go further than this. It is possible to argue, as my title (adapted from a classic paper by the Dutch ethnologist Josselin de Jong)<sup>4</sup> indicates, not only that we need to note the arrival of a middle class in the Malaysian social scene, but that, particularly for anthropologists, research on the middle class should be given a particularly high priority, indeed might even come to constitute the core of a new anthropology in what some choose to call the post-colonial order. For it is becoming increasingly difficult to justify — either ethically or theoretically — an anthropology which takes as its object the cultures and social organisations of others, particularly when, as so often is the case, those others are by definition subordinates in the new global order. Even notions like subalternity, designed to give voice to those whose voices have been muted by colonialism, racism, patriarchy and political oppression, are increasingly being seen to be the dying gasp of a colonial mentality in which these others need the academic even to speak for them.

And to the extent that anthropology in particular justifies its knowledge by appealing to its methods of participant observation — then what better object of study than the middle class? For here the participation is real, and not that play at participation that has traditionally been called field work.<sup>5</sup>

Be this as it may, as even this brief survey shows we need to do more than take the middle class into account. We need to go further, to consider more precisely how the growth of that class is significant and, indeed, to think more clearly about the concept itself. For against those who argue that conceptual clarification is neither possible nor desirable,<sup>6</sup> I would suggest that considerable confusion has been generated by the conflicting, sometimes even contradictory ways in which the term has been used.

Some of these issues loom large in a recent article on the Malaysian middle class by Johan Saravanamuttu. Because this is one of the very small number of works by social scientists dealing directly with the developing middle class in Malaysia it is worth looking at briefly here.

### **Ethnicity, the Middle Class and the Malaysian State**

Saravanamuttu's arguments are part of a growing interest in the middle classes in Southeast Asia and particularly in their potential impact on political processes. This concern must be understood against the background of two developments — on the one hand the

more or less rapid economic growth in and industrialisation of Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and, now apparently Indonesia as well; and on the other hand the persistence or even increase in level of State authoritarianism. This combination poses problems for traditional theories of modernisation which posit a causal link between economic "development" and the emergence of democratic institutions. Against this background, at least liberal observers have placed varying degrees of hope in the growing middle classes in these countries as potential agents for democratisation. Saravanamuttu's arguments, although they tend to be couched in a Marxist rather than liberal language, fall in squarely with the liberal optimists, arguing that the emerging Malaysian middle class shows a strong "affective orientation toward democracy" (1989: 106).<sup>7</sup>

Let us see how he reaches this conclusion. Suggesting, rightly, that the term middle class is imprecise and that it is important to clarify our usage, particularly in social circumstances which differ in fundamental ways from those prevailing in the West where the concept was first articulated, Saravanamuttu opts for a definition offered by Giddens, which characterises the middle class as possessors of educational qualifications and/or technical skills, thus contrasting them with both bourgeoisie and proletariat. We shall return to the problems with this definition in a moment.<sup>8</sup>

Saravanamuttu then moves on to explore the political behaviour of this middle class, first by taking issue with the thesis of Harold Crouch that the embourgeoisement of the Malaysian middle class — exemplified by increased rates of home ownership and ownership of consumer durables — makes this class a stabilising influence which means, presumably, that it will be unlikely to resist authoritarian trends in the Malaysian State.<sup>9</sup> Contra Crouch, Saravanamuttu wishes to argue that the fact that the middle class is "senang" and not "susah" does not mean that they will not oppose the government. In defence of this he cites, among other things, support for opposition parties in the 1986 election (the DAP and PAS), and the role played by "middle class organisations" in advocating a "politics of democracy" in opposition to authoritarian moves by the State. Here he maintains that it was primarily middle class organisations which were behind opposition to the 1981 amendments to the Societies Act, the 1986 amendments to the Official Secrets Act, and the Operation Lalang detentions of October, 1987; as well as the protests, largely organised by the Bar Association, against the dismissal of the Chief Justice Tun Salleh Abas.

Finally, Saravanamuttu goes on to report the results of a survey carried out by a group of social scientists at Universiti Sains Malaysia in which questionnaires were mailed to a sample of "community leaders", i.e., the leaders of a variety of organisations including political parties. The results of the survey, Saravanamuttu maintains, show that by and large the middle classes are not ethnically-minded, but are more concerned with the issue of democracy.

I will focus the remainder of this paper on the issues raised by Saravanamuttu's paper not because it provides a satisfactory solution to the problems raised for researchers by the developing middle class in Malaysia, but because, first it is the only recent piece to tackle the sociological problems directly and, second, because in doing so it raises what are, I think, the key issues with which future researchers will have to grapple.

### A Critical Appraisal of the Saravanamuttu Thesis

On closer examination, Saravanamuttu's paper is based on two propositions which need considerable clarification in any study of the Malaysian middle class, indeed in any analysis of and research on the modern middle class, whether in the West or Asia. The first is that the middle class can be defined, in the singular, by what might be called its relations to the means of production (in this case skills, technical or otherwise). The second is that it is possible, in Lukacs' terms, to impute a consciousness to the middle class so defined (in this case a discourse which is at once *non-ethnic* and *pro-democratic*).

I propose to examine these issues here by, first, offering some remarks on the nature of what Saravanamuttu and others have chosen to call a middle class, and, second, by saying something about class and culture.

#### *A Middle Class or the Middle Classes?*

The discovery of middle strata, classes which appear to "stand between" capitalists and workers, is by no means unique to social theory in the late twentieth century. Moreover such a discovery has always been seen to pose a challenge to existing characterisations of modern social relations. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the history of the concept. Suffice it to say that, as most writers on the theory of the middle class have pointed out, Weber criticised

Marxism for its inadequate treatment of these strata, and in so doing formulated his alternative model of capitalist stratification based on the notions of class, status and party in part to rectify the situation (see Barbalet, 1980; Abercrombie and Urry, 1983).

But Weber was not the first to discover the middle strata and, on that basis, argue for a revision of existing orthodoxy. Indeed he inherited at least the "problem of the middle class", if not his particular solution, more or less directly from the earlier work of German economic historians (see Kahn, 1990). And if this is true of the German tradition, it is the case for nineteenth century French and Anglo-Saxon social theory as well.

The fact that the problem of the middle strata has a fairly long and established history, at least in European social thought, might lead us at least to be slightly sceptical of recent announcements of the arrival of the "new" middle classes.

Be that as it may, recent attempts to come to grips with the phenomenon of the middle class have generally attempted to answer the questions posed by Lev, namely "who exactly they are, why they are important, and what difference they actually make". Given that so much ink has been spilled in attempting to answer these questions, and that no definitive answers have yet been given, it would be presumptuous of me to claim to be able to provide any final answers here. Instead I would like only to refer to what I see to be some major difficulties in the way the "problem of the middle classes" is currently being posed, difficulties which are clearly manifest in Saravanamuttu's paper. These difficulties are perhaps most clearly manifest in the ambiguity in our usages of the term "middle class". Are we speaking of a singular or a plural phenomenon, of a middle class or of the middle classes?

There are a variety of reasons why we cannot decide exactly "who they exactly are". But two which have to do with the very way the problem has been posed appear to be particularly pertinent. These are, firstly, that there seems to be a widespread but on reflection highly questionable assumption that the middle class will in some formal sense resemble other modern classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And, secondly, there is in much of this literature, Weberian as well as Marxist, the problematic assumption that all spheres of modern life must be accounted for by reference to the logic of what Marx called capitalism or what Weber termed instrumental rationality.

The first assumption is clearly evident in Saravanamuttu's paper in the sense that he adopts a definition of the middle class as we have seen from Giddens. It will be noted that the Giddens definition, which appears in turn to borrow from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, characterises the middle class in a way which resembles directly and formally the prevailing definitions of capitalist and proletarian, i.e., by use of the ownership/non-ownership dichotomy. If capitalists own the means of production, then the middle class "owns" technical/educational qualifications. In this way the middle class is distinguished from capitalists, because it "owns" something different, and from the proletariat, because it "owns" something.

But this is problematic, for it presumes that people can be unambiguously assigned to the middle class, just as others can be assigned unambiguously to the other classes, according to its ownership of skills and non-ownership of means of production. Either they do or they do not "own" educational qualifications/technical skills; either they do or they do not own means of production. But can we really pursue this analogy between "skill" and "means of production" to the point of assuming that they are identical, or phenomena of a similar order? I think not. And simply reflecting on the diversity of people who "own" skills should be enough to indicate the inadequacies of the analogy. Although coming at the problem from a different direction, Barbalet shows quite clearly the inadequacies of such an approach, in maintaining forcefully that whatever may distinguish the middle class and the proletariat, it cannot be "ownership". While we may disagree with his conclusion, the logic of thereby assigning the middle class to the class of proletarians, seems to be impeccable. If the middle class is to be distinguished from the proletariat it cannot, as Barbalet convincingly shows, be something on the basis of something analogous to class in the ownership/non-ownership sense of the term. It still seems possible to argue that all owners of the means of production share something of a structural order, and that all non-owners of means of production equally share a structural location in modern society. But the same cannot be said of "owners" of skills and/or qualifications. This conceptualisation of the middle class, far from reducing the ambiguity in the concept in fact increases it. Indeed we might go further. If class is to be understood as something stemming from the ownership/non-ownership dichotomy, then there can be no middle class. But here I wish simply to point out that we will never produce conceptual clarification, much less answer the question of

"who they are" by assuming that a concept of the middle class must formally resemble the concepts of capitalist and proletarian.

To those who might want to argue that the above constitutes a sterile and formalistic critique, I would point out that Saravanamuttu's use of the Giddens definition has contributed to what seems to me to be a very misleading conclusion about the "real" issues of Malaysian political process. For it will be noted that Saravanamuttu's conclusion that the Malaysian middle classes show an "affective orientation to democracy" is derived ultimately from an observation about a very selective group of middle class people. It is important to note here that the survey to which he refers, for example, was conducted among: 1) members of organisations and, 2) largely from the executive leadership of those organisations. The presumption that these people are typical of the middle class, because like all the other members of that class they are owners of skills/qualifications, is a typical example of the way one can be misled by such conceptualisation of the category "middle class".

As I have said, there is a second difficulty in much of the recent literature on the middle class, and that stems from the attempt to derive the concept more or less directly from the logic of capitalism or by using a Weberian notion of instrumental rationality. To explain what I mean by this, I would refer to the very way one influential study has posed the problem. Abercrombie and Urry began their survey of Marxist and Weberian theories of the middle class with the following question: "[W]hat is the class position of that class or classes which is or are in some sense intermediate between labour and capital?" (1983). Attempting just to make a start, therefore, one must presuppose that the definition of the modern middle classes must start by conceptualising or reconceptualising capitalist economic relations. And given their starting point it is not surprising that Abercrombie and Urry, like many other writers on the "new middle class", then go on to explain its emergence in terms of the logic of twentieth century capitalism. In particular the stress is laid on the ways modern, as opposed to nineteenth century, capitalism has generated a vastly increased need for skilled workers because of the increased extent to which science/knowledge/information is applied in the capitalist production process. As a result we are often told about the rise of a new category of workers — workers with access to skills, workers who coordinate diverse processes of production, workers who are involved in the flow of information etc. — who differ significantly from the

proletariat of nineteenth century capitalism, or indeed unskilled workers in the twentieth century. It is this new class which is often equated with the "new middle class".

I do not wish to dismiss the significance of changes in production and distribution brought by technological change in the twentieth century. But I would suggest that the link posited between this economic development and the social phenomenon labelled the new middle class is not so straightforward as this argument would suggest. Again the problem is manifest in the use of the concept of middle class to characterise what is in fact a highly disparate collection of people — both now and historically.

For example, proclamations about the arrival of a capitalist new age (post-industrialism, the information society, etc.) notwithstanding, it is worthwhile asking about the extent to which this "economic revolution" is indeed all that new. Even in colonial Southeast Asia there is plenty of evidence to suggest that from the earliest years of the 20th century there was a fairly substantial body of people who were neither unskilled workers (in mines and plantations) or owners of colonial enterprise — overseers and managers, agronomists and agricultural extension officers, scientists and technologists, government employees, teachers, etc. How different were these people from the new "information workers" we currently hear so much about? And if this was true of colonial social formations, then it must have been even more the case for the "advanced" capitalist nations.

But similarly in the twentieth century, one would be hard put to argue that that group labelled "middle class" by writers like Saravananamuttu owes its existence entirely to the changing demands of capital. Whether or not some of the members of this "new middle classes" have a role in capitalist production and reproduction, the fact remains that at least a significant number of them are employed not in the private sector, but by the State, even in the West (see Abercrombie and Urry, 1983: 78). And this is equally true in the Malaysian context where the "middle class" identified by writers like Crouch and Saravananamuttu is composed largely not of private, self-employed entrepreneurs, or middle ranking employees of private enterprises but those employed directly or indirectly by the State (this includes of course "intellectuals", at least in those parts of the world where universities are publicly-owned and/or controlled).

The emergence of a new middle class, at least in post-colonial Malaysia then, might have as much if not more to do with the emer-

gence of the modern state then with capitalist development *per se*. Whether this is also true of the West is a question we need not deal with here.

Now it can be, and indeed has been, argued that post-colonial states in places like Malaysia are in the business of capital accumulation. This tendency to impute a capital logic to the modern state is especially evident in concepts such as "state capitalism" or in the characterisation of the Malaysian elite as a "bureaucratic bourgeoisie". And doubtless, as these terms imply, greater emphasis needs to be given to the role of states in the promotion of economic transformation than classical social theory is wont to do — deriving as it does largely from the, idealised, picture of capitalist transformation in nineteenth century Britain, driven by forces in civil society rather than the state.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless it would be equally misleading to produce a theory of the state which is entirely derived from the economic logic of capitalism. States, and the processes of state formation are not just about capitalism, they are in the business of power. And if this is the case, and if we are still to use the term class for a social position which derives primarily from the matrix of power relations, then the middle class may be a phenomenon of quite a different order from that of classes as commonly defined. This is less because the former have no economic basis (to the extent that the state must engage in material reproduction they quite clearly do), and more that the processes of social differentiation out of which the middle class arises differ markedly from the processes of class formation under capitalism at least in nineteenth century Britain. In the latter, as Marx described it, class formation is a bipolar process. In the former the pattern is more complex, which is again why when we speak of middle class it is always ambiguous whether we are speaking in the singular or the plural. In other words, in the modern post colonial state there are a whole series of positions between the elite and the typists, each distinguished from "classes" above and "classes" below by relations in the matrix of power. And since power relations are always relative there is no reason to presume that the tendency will be towards bipolarity, whether or not the poles are mediated by what "intermediate groups".

Indeed if those groups Saravanmuttu and others label "middle class" have political agendas, such as an "affective orientation towards democracy", then those agendas are more likely to be related to the position occupied by different segments of that highly diverse "middle



class" in the matrix of power relations, and has very little to do with resisting, or supporting, the logic of capitalism.

I have argued that at least as the problem of the middle class is currently being posed, we are unlikely to find much illumination in conceptual clarity. And this stems from the tendency, on the one hand, to draw analogies between the formation of classes under capitalist relations of production and the processes which have given rise to the "middle classes"; and, on the other, the tendency to analyse the middle classes in terms of a calculus of capitalist or of instrumental rationality. The identification of these difficulties in work such as Saravanamuttu's paper on its own is insufficient to produce conceptual clarity. All I can hope is that it is a step in the right direction.

In the final section of this paper, I wish now to turn to the problem of the relationship between "class position" and "consciousness" in general, and to prognoses about the likely role of the Malaysian "middle class" in the political process in particular. To do this I shall begin by looking at the relationship between the Malaysian middle class and "culture".

### **Middle Class, Culture and Ethnicity**

It will be recalled that Saravanamuttu has offered two conclusions about the "consciousness" of the developing Malaysian middle class: first, as we have seen, that it tends to be democratically-oriented (and hence likely to oppose state authoritarianism), and second, that it is not going to be particularly affected by questions of ethnicity. I take this combination to mean that Saravanamuttu is suggesting that the new middle class will articulate "enlightened", universalistic discourses in contradistinction both to the state elite (which pushes authoritarian values) and other groups who may, or may not, oppose the state but which are motivated by particularistic (ethnic) concerns. This again is not, of course, a concern unique to Saravanamuttu. As we have seen there is currently a good deal of concern with the potential role of the middle class(es) in Southeast Asia for pushing democratic reform. It is, therefore, a very important issue, and we should be grateful for Saravanamuttu for raising it in the Malaysian context.

Again, however, I want to look more closely at the way this particular issue is being posed in order to point to ways in which these questions can be more rigorously dealt with. To do so, I shall offer some remarks on the nature of universalistic ("enlightened") and parti-

cularistic ("ethnic") discourses, with particular relation to Malaysian realities.

The phenomenon of what is variously called race, communalism and ethnicity looms large in our images of Malaysia. And for most academic observers ethnic relations are the key to almost all aspects of Malaysian social organisation. The literature on the phenomenon is truly massive and it is not my intention to provide an overview here.<sup>11</sup> Instead by way of introduction to what follows I want only to offer a brief remark on ethnicity and its relation to culture and the middle classes.

It is generally observed that theories of ethnicity fall between two poles, as it were, the one epitomised by Geertz's notion of "primordial loyalties", the other by Barth's view of ethnicity as a "strategy".<sup>12</sup>

At the risk of oversimplification, the former holds that ethnic identification arises directly and unproblematically from the primordial givens of an individual's cultural life — kinship, residential proximity, clanship, etc. The latter view instead problematises the relationship between ethnic identity and its cultural infrastructure by, first, asking about the conditions under which individuals choose certain markers of ethnic identity over others and, second, answering that the reasons are to be found not primarily in the cultural infrastructure at all, but in the strategic concerns of individuals (usually economic or political).<sup>13</sup> As recent writers have pointed out, neither of these approaches is unproblematic: primordialism because by taking ethnic identity as given, it cannot deal with changing ethnic alignments, in general, and ethnic resurgence in particular; strategism because it cannot deal with the phenomenological realities of ethnicity, which are inevitably reduced to the, only apparently, more "real" substrata of economic and political "interest". The tendency in concrete analyses of Malaysian ethnicity to combine the two approaches only makes matters worse.

I do not claim here to be able to offer an approach which succeeds in overcoming this polarity. But I would suggest that new approaches to ethnicity in contemporary Malaysia must tackle an issue which both primordialist and strategic approaches have up until now largely ignored, and that is the problem of culture. Momentary reflection is enough to suggest that both the primordialist and the strategic theories of ethnicity treat culture unproblematically, as though cultures were given to social actors, immutable phenomena beyond human comprehension and control. For primordialists, certain cultural dimensions

of human existence are just that — primordial — i.e., “existing at or from the beginning, primeval, original or fundamental”, to quote from the Concise Oxford Dictionary. For the “strategists” the cultural traits which go to make up given ethnic identities are equally pre-given to social actors.

But, as recent theories of culture have persuasively demonstrated, this view of culture is highly unsatisfactory for two basic reasons. First is the fact that it is impossible, particularly in the modern world, to define discrete cultures except in a totally arbitrary way. In other words there are no more other cultures out there in the world than there are other races — they both exist only in the eye of the beholder as it were.

Second, and related to this, culture is an intellectual construct. It exists, in other words, only in the mind of an observer. Since the observer is, more often than not an anthropologist or some other member of the middle class intelligentsia, then the idea of cultural diversity becomes just another way in which the middle classes choose to construct people as different, whether that difference is perceived in racial or cultural terms.

What I am getting at, therefore, is that what observers of the Malaysian scene choose to call cultural diversity is itself an ethnic discourse, i.e., the concept that Malaysians differ from each other in radically distinct ways. In this reading “cultural diversity” is a construct. It does not, therefore, have a logical priority to ethnicity. Instead ethnicity constructs cultural diversity. And, as I have suggested, it is at least a discourse partaken of by the middle class, if not in its strict sense a purely middle class discourse.

To say that ethnicity is a middle class discourse is not to suggest that no one else constructs Malaysians as diverse. Diversity is clearly there, and does not need the middle classes to discover it. But the implications of the “constructedness” of culture and, hence, cultural diversity is important for the topic at hand for two reasons.

First, we must not forget that the so-called middle class (which includes social scientists) is by no means necessarily more “enlightened” than anyone else, if by “enlightened” we understand a tendency towards humanistic universalism. For to the extent that even those “enlightened” spokespersons for the middle class, the academics, persist in constructing the world as made up of a diversity of cultures, then the middle class can be just as “ethnic” as anybody else.<sup>14</sup> This has in fact been specifically argued for the Malaysian

middle class by Syed Husin Ali, who has suggested, contra Saravannamuttu that:

Although in its outward manifestations, inter-ethnic tension seems to be caused by non-economic, particularly cultural issues, in reality, the basic causes are economic. The wealth of the country and the key positions of political power are monopolised by a small multi-ethnic circle. Below them are the expanding groups of people, mostly from the middle class, who strive hard to break into the exclusive circle. In order to exert strong pressure, they whip up support from the majority of people by raising issues that can be most effective, — those that are ethnic or cultural. The feelings of ethnic antagonism seem to be very strong and most vocally expressed among the middle class.

(S Husin Ali, 1984: 30)

Second, it needs to be pointed out that as participants in the business of constructing cultural diversity, the middle class version of ethnic discourse, social scientists in general, and anthropologists in particular, are in a unique position to study ethnicity — as I have argued as real participant-observers.<sup>15</sup>

Having suggested that the "middle classes" are uniquely implicated in ethnic discourse, I do not wish to imply that they are inevitably so. My concern has been to show that there is no logical reason why we should expect a middle class to articulate "enlightened", i.e., universalistic ideals like democracy. It is, of course, also the case that at least some segments of the middle class may be predisposed to democratisation, or, one might add, even Marxism.<sup>16</sup> Dealing with the issue of "middle class" consciousness, therefore, must mean looking at the conditions under which middle class groups come to articulate/practice one or other of the discourses which are imputed to them.

Again this is not a topic which I feel I can confidently deal with in its entirety. But it is worth concluding this analysis by suggesting ways in which we might begin to think about the relationship between the "class position" of the middle class and consciousness in the light of my discussion above.

It will be recalled that I have maintained that a revised concept of the middle classes will have to take account, among other things, of the way groups of people are embedded in the matrix of power relations that constitute the modern state. On looking for a relation between middle class position and consciousness I would want to look more closely at the links between the varieties of middle class discourse mentioned here and that matrix. I have discussed elsewhere one way in which we might link the constitution of power relations

in the modern state and the emergence of both universalistic and particularistic discourses among its employees (see Kahn, forthcoming, Chapter 8). In the case at hand, such an exercise would involve us in looking at the way power relations in the modern Malaysian state are themselves constituted by ethnic differentiation, particularly in the period since the decline of consensual elite politics (see Kahn and Loh, forthcoming). This, in turn, would allow us more accurately to interpret the potential of various segments of the employees of that state to articulate particularistic or universalistic discourses and political practices.

This is necessarily brief and telegraphic. But my point is that once we stop trying to fit the middle class into a model of class established for nineteenth century capitalism, once we recognise that Malaysian "middle classes" are just as embedded in the state as they are in capitalist economic relations, and once we recognise that the sphere of political control is not simply reducible to the sphere of capitalist economic rationality we will be in a better position, when talking of the Malaysian middle class to understand more clearly "who exactly they are, why they are important, and what difference they actually make". And moreover it is precisely questions such as these which should be concerning anthropologists in and of contemporary Malaysia.

## Notes

1. I am indebted to Clive Kessler and Noraini Othman for drawing this article to my attention.
2. The literature here is vast. A good example, from a region in which I have done research, is found in a series of reports on the State of Negeri Sembilan (see Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, n.d.). A discussion of the impact of the NEP on urban Malays is found in Osman (1987).
3. For a discussion of Malaysian feminism together with references on women in contemporary Malaysia see Stevens, forthcoming.
4. See J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong, (1935).
5. This is a point I have developed further elsewhere (see Kahn, 1989).
6. Evidently the same view has been expressed in other contexts. In the introduction to the recent volume on the Indonesian middle class, Tanter and Young refer to a debate over the desirability of working toward greater conceptual clarity in the notion of middle class (Tanter and Young, 1990: 9-10).
7. While a similar position has been advanced in the Indonesian context by Lev, his views of the potential liberal orientation of the Indonesian middle class is considerably more nuanced (see Lev, 1990, cf Liddle, 1990).

8. This is the definition used by Saravanamuttu to estimate the size of the middle class, quoted above.
9. Although he does not devote much effort to conceptual clarification, Crouch's informed commentaries on, particularly, Malaysian and ASEAN political developments contain a careful consideration of the impact of the middle classes, and are hence a good source for those interested in pursuing the topic. See for example Crouch (1984, 1985, forthcoming).
10. This raises a more general issue about the pertinence of classical Western social and economic theory to non-European contexts. But apart from the obvious problems with the Eurocentrism of these theories, there is also the difficulty in applying concepts and theories pertinent to nineteenth century Britain. The same difficulties arise when these theories are implied to earlier industrialisers like Germany. For this reason I would agree with Kitching who has argued that a central problem in development theory has not been so much in the application of western models to non-western situations, but in the use of inappropriate western models. For this reason comparisons between Malaysia and so-called "late industrialisers" in the West, notably nineteenth century Germany, remain illuminating (see Kitching, 1982).
11. For some recent publications on the relation between ethnicity and various aspects of Malaysian society (the last few years only) see Osman (1989), Selvaratnam (1981), Lee (ed.) (1986), Jesudason (1989), and various contributions in Kahn and Loh (eds.) (1992).
12. See C. Geertz (1963) and F. Barth (ed.) (1969).
13. An example of the latter for the Malaysian case is found in Nagata (1979). But it should be noted that among so-called Marxist approaches to ethnicity, there are those which "explain" ethnicity by reference to class interest, hence implying a notion of strategy not dissimilar from that suggested by Barth.
14. Indeed Smith has argued persuasively that intellectuals have played a major role in Europe's 20th century ethnic revival (see A. Smith, 1981).
15. The above discussion of culture, ethnicity and the intelligentsia has been abbreviated for reasons of space. I have discussed these things in more detail elsewhere. See Kahn (1989, forthcoming).
16. Here it is worth recalling Alvin Gouldner's suggestion that Marxism too has been an ideology of the intelligentsia, not the proletariat (see Gouldner, 1985).

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## MALAY NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY<sup>1</sup>

*Muhammad Ikmal Said*

It is perhaps because of their novelty and perceived success in integrating diverse peoples and fostering cultural and material development that linguistically and culturally homogenous nation states of the advanced West are often portrayed as the model out of which newer nations and states arose, and against which they are compared to and judged (Chatterjee 1986; Plamenatz 1973). We continue to do this even while linguistically and culturally homogenous nation-states are actually more of an exception rather than the rule. There were only about fourteen such states before Eastern Europe disintegrated, and recent developments there<sup>2</sup> and in the west (racism, recession) raise important questions about emulating the classical Western European model to address questions about integration in post-colonial societies.<sup>3</sup>

Post-colonial states are clearly historically different from their more illustrious counterparts of Western Europe. The latter were transformed into nation-states under the impulse of a continuous growth of industry and the development of a national system of education (Gellner 1983; Silverman 1991). These together enabled them to extend the reach of the state apparatus to hitherto isolated communities, and to incorporate those that have migrated into their jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the state apparatus of post-colonial societies were already developed or centralized upon birth, with an administrative apparatus inherited from the colonial regime and a formal political structure agreed upon by the contending groups. Quite obviously, a national identity can only evolve out of the contest of the meanings (Verdery 1993) that each contending group desired from the same political structure. This protracted contest of meanings took place within a division of labour inherited from the colonial era.

Retrospection enables us to say today that the meanings each contending group wanted others to accept could not be realized within the confines of that division of labour. Thus, even before industrialization was thought possible, post-colonial societies were confronted with problems of multi-culturalism and multi-linguism.

Brought together by forces unleashed by colonialism, the peoples of these societies are usually as culturally distant to each other as they were to their colonial masters. These different cultural groups were also often assigned different roles in the economy, compounding further the distance between them. Under such circumstances, the material and ideological experiences, and the institutions they dealt with in their relationship with agents of colonial rule differed widely. As a result, the different cultural communities were each characterized by their own "sectional demands" (Furnivall 1948). They have no common myths and traditions to fall back upon, nor, at some important levels, shared a common historical experience even while under colonial rule. Thus, post-colonial states lacked a rallying economic force — with capital largely owned by foreign establishments — and a rallying political-cultural soul.

### **Malay Nationalism and the Post-Colonial *St te***

The consolidation of the newly independent states in the Third World is often associated with centralization of the state right after independence. During this process of consolidation, the state tries to forge a particular identity, in the hope that this would enhance integration among different cultural groups and the interests of the dominant political forces as well. Forging a particular identity at that stage is often characterized by intense conflict, since the democratization of the political process allows, for the first time, the mobilization of popular discontent over dislocations brought about by the colonial project and by the uncertainties of colonial privilege under independent rule. The highly intense conflict between the different cultural communities is not difficult to understand since independence opens up a highly fluid political situation, where, as Kamenka (1973: 14) observed, even the question of who can exercise political sovereignty is itself a subject of acrimonious debate. On the other hand, the economy grew moderately, varying with the prices of primary commodities, but that took place within the confines of a division of labour set previously by colonial rule.<sup>5</sup> In many instances, this contradiction develops along

a fault line represented, on the one side, by claims of privileged status by an indigenous historical-cultural nation and, on the other, by claims of equal rights by an immigrant community (Muhammad Ikmal 1992). As a result, the newly independent post-colonial state vacillated ignominiously between the different political and economic interests. In Malaysia, Malay nationalist forces were dominant politically, but were too weak economically to dictate terms to the other ethnic communities.

Malaya became independent in 1957 under the leadership of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). Although important provisions of the constitution of the Federation of Malaya reflected UMNO's political power, it failed to translate them into practice. The privileged status of Malay identity were hotly disputed and their efforts at improving the lot of the Malays failed miserably. This frustrating experience generated considerable insecurity among the Malays, which culminated in the riots of May 1969. Fortunately, the resurgence of Malay nationalism in the late sixties was met fortuitously by the discovery of oil and the emergence of a new international division of labour in the early seventies, providing Malaysia with the necessary surplus for the transfer of income for affirmative action programmes and employment. However, subsequent growth of the Malaysian economy has raised Malay nationalist concerns once again. Why has Malay nationalist concerns re-emerged when UMNO appears to have delivered what it failed to achieve in the fifties and sixties?

Unlike the nation-states of developed Europe where industrial growth was generated by their respective national bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie of post colonial Malaya (which together with Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak formed Malaysia in 1963), specifically the rising Malay bourgeoisie, latched themselves, through the state, to the new international division of labour (Jesudason, 1988). Yet, the Malay bourgeoisie is very strong politically, having emerged from the cries of Malay nationalism in the late sixties. In addition to meeting the demands of foreign capital, the Malay bourgeoisie also have to come to terms, either through direct opposition, compromise or even co-optation, with their more established Chinese compatriots. If the initiative for industrial growth is only partially attributed to the Malay bourgeoisie, then it follows that the nationalist zeal of the governing class is wrapped up in this larger compromise. Thus, the relationship between industrialization and the development of a national identity in a post-colonial context is far different from the Western European experience.

In age terms, the Malay bourgeoisie has not even been a generation old. They are, I am sure, fully conscious of the critical role Malay nationalism played in ushering their own rise and are themselves willfully active in spawning the development of another layer of Malay entrepreneurs and a school of corporate managers. Their association with UMNO, as Gomez (1990) has shown, is very close. However, they are, simultaneously, from that generation of Malays who were English-educated. They think, conduct their businesses and even converse, for the most part, in English. Consequently, the new crop of executives that the Malay business community will have to hire, particularly in an English-based business environment that Malaysia is, must also be able to do likewise. An English-educated middle class is thus reproduced to nurture the growth of the Malay business community, which, after all, is the child of Malay nationalism.

Meanwhile, that generation of intellectuals (Malay-educated journalists and school teachers mainly) who formed the critical link between the "administrative elites" (Chandra 1979) of colonial Malaya and the peasantry have themselves moved up the ladder, either as politicians, businessmen, managers in the public and private sectors, or as parents of these very upwardly mobile groups who have been trained either wholly or, for their younger children, partially in English. That generation of Malay nationalists are, paradoxically, reaping the benefits of their own failure, or more correctly, their limited influence, to successfully carve a Malay identity out of the multi-cultural state. Yet, it was through their efforts that a multi-ethnic Malay-educated middle class is spawned.

The Malay community is thus wrapped in several layers of contradictions. The discussion I offer below attempts to draw some of the contradictory pulls that have raised serious concerns and doubt about Malay nationalist aspirations in developing its own identity as the basis for Malaysia's national identity. I hope to highlight how the "main bearers", the main players, as it were, of Malay nationalist aspirations interpret, expropriate and even re-interpret the symbols of identity as the forces of Malay nationalism undergo transformation.

### **The Blending of Malay and Western Nationalism**

That "Malay nationalism" formed the basis of Malayan nationalism is clear (Cheah 1984; Wang 1992). Much of its history, including those movements that consider themselves Islamic or socialist, may be

characterized as a political-ideological movement that seeks to (a) improve the economic lot of the Malays relative to the Indian and, especially, the Chinese communities and (b) establish Malay identity as the basis of the emergent Malayan, and, subsequently, Malaysian polity. It seeks to install, in Gellner's (1983) terms, a unifying Malay political roof over multi-cultural Malaysia. Unlike western nationalism (Hobsbawm 1992; Smith 1988, 1989), Malay nationalism does not attempt to carve out a politically autonomous area for itself. Rather, it is a project that seeks to build a Malay political roof over the structures of the modern state.

These two principal features of Malay nationalist aspirations were enshrined in the country's constitution right upon independence and have, consequently, become the objects of government policy. Thus, on the basis of these achievements, Malay nationalist aspirations may be said to have blossomed fully. However, constitutional provisions and state policies, in themselves, do not provide an adequate measure for such an assessment. After all, identity is not something that may be achieved simply by legislation. Furthermore, the stamp of identity has been achieved elsewhere, in the few nation-states that exist today, without the kind of legislation that I have referred to above. In any case, I think I can rely safely on Rustam's authority (1992) that Malaysia is very far from developing its own national culture; it is neither specifically Malay or *bumiputera* (indigenous) nor Chinese, Indian or even western. Certainly a mixture of some kind.

For the nationalists, this mixture is certainly worrying since it is clear that the symbols of Malay identity has not firmly established itself as the basis of a Malaysian identity. This "worrying mixture" is as much a problem created by the class origins and educational background of the nationalist leadership as it is a problem of incorporating the idea of nationalism into our fold.

The elites that have led or successfully expropriated leadership of the forces of Malay nationalism have always been English-educated. English education has, in many important respects, set them apart from the large majority of Malays at both the ideological or material levels. This distance appears to act as an important threshold separating them from the aspirations of Malay community (Wang 1992a, 1992b; Khoo, K.K. 1992). For this reason, their ability to empathize fully with the aspirations of the Malay community is limited. UMNO under Dato Onn's leadership cleverly denied independence and popular participation, two basic tenets of nationalism,

in the Malays' most glorious hour in 1946. Instead, the Malay nation was invoked to defend itself, not against British rule, but against the large immigrant population which colonial rule had established. Tunku Abdul Rahman incurred the wrath of Malay nationalism for failing to alleviate the economic and cultural frustrations of the Malay population. And today, Mahathir's modernizing hand is slowly dismantling Bahasa Melayu its pride of place.

Under all three leaders, Malay nationalist aspirations as manifested by UMNO have been compromised. This brings me to the second point, that is, there is a relationship between the concepts we borrow from the west and the "worrying mixture" of cultures. The idea of nationalism is, as Charterjee (1986) argues, a product of western bourgeois rationalist thought. In this view, nationalism, although modern and rational, is also anti-colonial. This means that nationalism is caught between rejecting alien rule but simultaneously desiring the modern rationalist culture — progress, justice, liberty — of the West, between retaining indigenous culture and incorporating modern Western culture. An uncertain mixture of different cultures is, therefore, in keeping with the idea of nationalism, especially so when the elites are themselves westernized. However, that contradictory mixture would not be left unattended, but corrected, over time, to resemble the West, because it is seen as the most rational thing to do. Charterjee's observation (1986) of nationalism's "moment of arrival", that is, when nationalism is constituted as state ideology, is particularly relevant here. Since growth and the redistribution of wealth are critical, the state must stand above the narrow interests of society, and seek to develop a modern and scientific spirit that "is rational and progressive, a particular manifestation of the universal march of Reason..." By then the post-colonial state would have "accepted the global realities of power, accepted the fact that World History resides Elsewhere" (Charterjee 1986: 161-162).

The uncertain mixture of identities represent the constraints of our time. Plamenatz (1973), was, in a way, correct when he observed that eastern nationalism is "illiberal" or "oppressive" because it is both hostile yet imitative of western nationalism. Yet it needs to be pointed out that this arose out of the artificial, or imposed, incubation of different peoples under an illiberal western colonial regime. Malaysia's ethnic riots of 1969 clearly showed that the liberal "pluralist" model of national integration was far too inadequate to handle the contradictions of installing a pluralist political roof over a mutli-

between the two main contending groups have been simultaneously spiced and made more acrimonious by the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP), also begun in 1971. Under the NEP, the comparably economically backward indigenous (*bumiputera*) groups, particularly the politically dominant Malays, were, in addition to business and employment opportunities, also given almost exclusive admission in well-equipped residential schools, quota admissions into universities and a large number of scholarships for higher education in local and foreign universities. By adopting Bahasa Melayu as the medium of education in national schools, UMNO lifted the widely-perceived block on Malay upward mobility.

Much to the displeasure of the Malay community, the Chinese community, which had earlier flocked in considerable numbers into English schools, turned away from fully funded government English schools for government- and non-government-aided primary schools and independent Chinese secondary schools in the early seventies. Enrolment in Chinese primary schools increased dramatically from 413,270 in 1971 to 498,311 in 1978. Similarly, independent Chinese secondary schools which had earlier experienced a serious drop in the number of students from 34,400 in 1962 to 18,500 in 1972, increased its strength to 50,000 in 1986 (Tan L.E. 1992). Efforts by the Chinese community to establish, although without success, a Chinese university in the seventies and eighties was similarly seen by the Malay community as another show of reluctance on the part of the former to recognize the national language, in particular, and the historical-cultural character of Malaysia generally.

A study by my colleagues and I in 1989 (Halim *et al.* 1991) of the perceptions of opinion leaders, drawn largely from leaders of voluntary organizations in Peninsular Malaysia, indicates that the divergent sentiments of the Chinese and Malay communities were still very much alive then. Their opinions differed greatly over the desirability of adopting just one or more than one medium of instruction; about four-fifths of the Malay respondents indicated that there should only be a single medium of instruction, while just one-fourth agreed to the idea that we should have more than one medium of instruction in schools. By contrast, slightly less than one-third (30 per cent) of the Chinese respondents agreed to the former, but almost four-fifths to the latter.<sup>7</sup>

The majority of these opinion leaders concurred with the idea of limiting the national language to only one language. Although this

finding runs against the Malay-non-Malay distinction caricatured earlier, it was one that we had expected. For it was a fairly obvious and rather thinly veiled attempt to seek their attitude towards Bahasa Melayu as the national language. This is evident when a similar, but slightly different question was asked differently. When asked if several official languages should be adopted, four-fifths of the Malays objected but three-fifths of the Chinese and Indians agreed. Likewise, the preferred medium of instruction for their children showed the contrasting sentiments of the Malays and the non-Malays; 72 per cent of Malays indicated Bahasa Melayu as their first choice, but only 20 per cent of Chinese (50 per cent preferred Chinese and the remaining 30 per cent identified English as a first choice) and 35 per cent of Indians said so (50 per cent indicated English, 13 per cent preferred Tamil and the remaining two per cent went for Chinese). These Chinese and Malay leaders also consistently showed similarly divergent views on several other issues pertaining to education, which, however, are not of relevance here.

The contrasting sentiments over the status of Bahasa Melayu as the national language between the Malay and non-Malay communities have recently been complicated further by the country's accomplishments in democratising education. Increased accessibility to primary and secondary education, has meant, particularly under conditions of considerable economic growth obtained in the last twenty years or so, that more tertiary institutions are required. In 1990, enrolment in public institutions at the post-secondary or pre-university level totalled 75,140 (perhaps no less than 30,000 of the 150,000 enrolled in private secondary institutions ought to be included here) but the intake at certificate, diploma and degree level courses is considerably less, totalling 28,000 in 1990 (Malaysia 1991: 175).

As a result, thousands of Malaysians continue to obtain tertiary education abroad. It is estimated that about 52,000 Malaysians were enrolled in foreign educational institutions in 1990, down from 60,000 in 1985 (Malaysia 1991:163). Although an increasing number of Malaysians are venturing into non-English education (especially Japanese), the bulk of the country's students abroad are mostly enrolled in English-speaking countries particularly Australia, Britain, Canada, India, New Zealand, and the United States. The recent escalation of fees in these countries has impelled the state to establish its own half-way colleges (popularly called "twinning colleges", where students from these colleges undergo their first two years locally, in English,



before completing their last two and/or final years at syndicated universities overseas) particularly for Malay students. For the same reason the state has allowed private colleges to run foreign university programs locally. The number of both these types of colleges has grown dramatically in the last few years confirming Malay nationalist fears about the future of the national language. Although this has eased tension over the question of access to university education, the primary political battle-ground of Malay and non-Malay middle classes in the seventies and eighties, other questions have emerged.

As a medium of instruction, English is still restricted to private schools. But the number of private English primary and secondary schools have been on the increase in recent years. With the proliferation of private education, neither the medium of instruction nor the curriculum may be scrutinized in relation to some overall "national" objective.

The contradictions between democratizing education at the primary but not at the tertiary level, between fostering the development of a national language at one level and bilingualism at the other, reflect the growing contradiction of the state itself; the Malaysian state is getting stronger but this has been accompanied by a process of "denationalization". The fact that the national language had failed to take root in the business world even under the more favourable circumstances of the seventies and early eighties, when Malay nationalism was still very much in the air, readily suggests its prospect in the future. This paradox, as I will argue below, arises from the development of the Malay bourgeoisie and middle classes that the NEP had envisaged.

### **Language and the Middle Class**

The debates over the national language issue are certainly not centred around the political-cultural symbols of statehood alone. They are also about class interests. Any national language would only be meaningful if people trained in that language are at least equally favoured in getting jobs and promotions either in the public or private sectors. This is the litmus test. Should the results of this test prove negative, that is, if those educated in the national medium of instruction are seen either to be treated unfairly or ill-equipped to deal in the language of their employers, then, quite obviously, the success of the national language policy would be impaired.

As I had mentioned earlier, implementation of the national language policy went hand-in-hand with the NEP. Non-Malays bitterly complain that a disproportionate share of opportunities available in Malaysia's tertiary educational institutions are reserved for the indigenous communities and that employment opportunities in the public sector are exceedingly discriminatory. For example, Malay students constituted about 65 per cent of total enrolment in the country's universities between 1980 and 1985, whereas Chinese students made up about 27 per cent and Indians, about six per cent. In terms of employment in the public sector, a highly disproportionate share went to the indigenous community in the eighties (Dorall, 1992: 141). Thus, many non-Malays feel that the national language education system do not reward them sufficiently, either in terms of the number of places in local universities or in terms of getting jobs. In terms of the latter, employment opportunities in the government sector are limited by ethnic quotas. On the other hand, the private sector puts a higher premium on English education.

If, as my brief historical outline portrays, the national language problem springs from the irreconcilable enmity between Malays and Chinese over the identity of the newly independent state, then why is it that the recent controversy over the English language was provoked by Dr. Mahatir, whose reputation as a Malay nationalist surpassed all previous Prime Ministers? And why did the controversy subside so quickly, without any show of strength from any of the Malay nationalist forces?

The Malay middle classes have grown considerably in the last twenty years. In contrast to the pre-1969 era, Malays make up 29 per cent of registered professional and 33 per cent of the administrative and managerial positions in 1990. Those who graduate from foreign universities are well placed to do so much better than those equipped with only the national language. They are definitely keenly aware, as a class, that English education, even if it is only enhanced at the post upper secondary level, pays. English is definitely an asset for employment and promotion in the private sector. The state's revived interest in the English language suggests that it might not be markedly different in the public sector in the near future. The children of the middle classes are also well prepared for this transition, since they are sent to private bilingual kindergartens (Halim *et al.* 1991: 110). Many are amply supplied with English reading materials, and some even speak the language at home. It is also from among children of the

Malay middle classes who would gain access into the state's English medium twinning colleges. By doing so, the state establishes a strategy of reproducing an English-educated Malay middle class even while maintaining Bahasa Melayu as the medium of instruction. However, the very unequal awards of government scholarship for studies abroad alienates a large section of the non-Malay communities, while the expanding Malay middle classes are divided along lines drawn by their proficiency in English.

It appears, therefore, that the fairly encouraging result of increasing Malay employment in the middle and upper brackets of the economy has not clearly yielded a comforting outcome. For the English-educated group, at least for now, is not only sizeable but influential as well. Under such circumstances, the proliferation of government and private tertiary institutions would not augur well for the development of the national language. Awang Selamat, whose column became the focus of Dr. Mahathir's reply in the same newspaper (Dr. Mahathir, *Utusan Malaysia*, September 18, 1992) raised this contradictory tendency when he observed that Bahasa Melayu is no longer the language of a Malay nation who may be identified with fishermen, peasants and the poor village folk but one which has progressed considerably. But "[t]he advances made should encourage us to further bolster national pride within the country rather than forget our roots, as is evident among some sections of the *nouveau riche*."<sup>8</sup>

For the process of establishing Bahasa Melayu as a national language is as yet "incomplete", quite unlike Indonesia and Japan, where English was encouraged only "after the official language had established itself firmly in the various fields of social life..."<sup>9</sup> This dramatic turn-around by the Malay leadership is attributed to the influence of the English educated elite, including those placed highly in government, the bureaucracy and the *nouveau riche* who have "forgotten their roots" or have "lost their sense of direction" (Awang Selamat, "Khabarnya", *Mingguan Malaysia*, September 13, 1992. My translation). These English educated elites have carried out "arrogant acts" (*amalan-amalan angkuh*) and have transgressed the status of Bahasa Melayu.

By contrast, the discourse adopted by the state has made no reference to national identity and national pride or history, focussing rather on the necessity for further development. The debate over the national language is more simply reduced to rational planning within a highly competitive world. Considerably more time and resources

would be required, it is argued, to translate materials rather than to learn English, which is the international language of modern science and technology. That translations must be carried out is certain, but we cannot wait until this is done because we want to catch up with those nations that have advanced. "In order to develop the (national) language, we must develop the nation first..." (Mahahtir, *Utusan Malaysia*, September 18, 1992. My translation).

Interestingly, the discourse adopted by the leaders of UMNO in their debate with the contending Malay nationalist view refers to the importance of the English language to the competitiveness of the Malays *vis-a-vis* the non-Malays. Anwar Ibrahim, the Finance Minister, opined that without the English language, the Malays would be left behind and unable to compete "with the others" in various fields (*Utusan Malaysia*, October 4, 1992). "Eventually", as Dr. Mahahtir (*Utusan Malaysia*, September 18, 1992) rounds up his point, "the Malays will be left behind in the country and internationally. It will only be in the use of their own language that they will excel, but as a nation they will not succeed" (my translation). By contrast, proponents of Bahasa Melayu invest confidence in the ability of the Malay community to participate fully in the economy. References to the link between the development of Bahasa Melayu and the development of the Malay community is almost taken for granted. What disturbs them more is the commitment of the *nouveau riche* to their own language.

This dialogue portrays that the Malay community is today very much divided over the status of Bahasa Melayu as a national language. Those in government, the private sector and the higher echelons of the civil service view Bahasa Melayu more as an official rather than a national language. The English language, on the other hand, is the key that opens the door to modern science and technology, to further economic advance. The champions of the national language invest it with a larger role, a symbol of national identity, of intellectual discourse (Rustam, 1988, 1991).

### Modernizing Tradition: The Raja and Malay National Consciousness

It is widely established that the *raja* (or sultan, that is, the Malay monarch) and *kerajaan* (monarchical rule) formed the central component of Malay identity (Khoo 1991; Milner 1982). The Malay *negeri* and its subjects thus existed only in relation to a *raja*. Armed with the mystical

powers of the *daulat* and legitimated further by the symbols of Islam, the Malay *raja* commanded considerable loyalty among his subjects. Whether loyalty to the *raja* was absolute (Ariffin 1993; Chandra 1979; Khoo 1991; Milner 1982) or very fundamentally circumscribed by the threshold of prevailing levels of oppression (Abdul Rahman 1985; Cheah 1988) has been the subject of an important debate. Despite the wide differences of opinion, the two opposing sides in the debate agree that the *kerajaan*, and, by definition, the *raja*, was the central point of reference. Thus, as Abdul Rahman (1985: 50) concludes: "The authority of the Malay *raja* is not absolute. What is absolute and sovereign is the sultanate and not the person who occupies that institution. The sultanate is a revered institution, and is regarded as the symbol of national sovereignty". Similarly, Cheah (1988: 3) paid tribute to "the sacred position of the Sultan as religious and paramount chief" in his analysis of the slow development of Malay nationalism before the Second World War.

The continuity of the traditions of the *kerajaan* in the diverse accounts of Malay history strikes a common chord with the feelings of not an insignificant section of the Malay population towards their *raja* in the two attempts, one in 1983 and the other in 1992/93, the Malaysian government made to subsume the traditional sanctity of the *raja* in strictly constitutional terms. It is imperatively clear, therefore, that any analysis of Malay nationalism would have to address the status of the Malay *raja* in Malay political culture. This responsibility is not merely an empirical one, but is methodological as well. Khoo (1991), for example, argues that we ought to establish the links of continuity with the Melaka sultanate, either in terms of genealogy (perhaps the least important of all), similarity of the cultural and ideological practices, or the legal and political structures of the *kerajaan*. While it is indeed important to establish such similarities, it is equally, if not more, important, especially when notions of continuity are invoked, that the nature, strength and context of such similarities are examined.

What we owe to tradition, as Kessler (1992) argues, is actually what we make of the present with reference to a serviceable past. Seen from this point of view, the continuities of the history of the Malay sultanates, is, in contrast to the view put forward by Khoo (1991), more discontinuous than it is made out to be. Thus, the traditional concepts of *daulat* and *derhaka*, specifically, and the tradition of Malay kingship, generally, represent contemporary inventions that claim continuity

only in an abstract, and sometimes, manipulated, ideal-typical past. The appropriation of Malay kingship for British colonial ends provides many ready examples.

With British rule, the Malay *raja* was effectively cut off from the reins of traditional power. However, if, as Cheah (1991) has shown, "Malay feudalism" was crumbling in the nineteenth century and if real power, as Gullick (1965) testifies, was in the hands of chiefs rather than the ruler, then colonial rule might, have actually been, in some respects, a boon to the Malay *sultan*. The dignity and prestige of the *raja*, so strongly emphasized in Milner's (1982) study as the organizing principle of relations between the *raja* and his subjects, was restored and, in some ways, even augmented once the British got their act together. This was especially evident in the *sultan's* influence over Islam, made possible by the development of a religious bureaucracy following centralization of the state (Roff 1974: 72-74).

One very important way by which colonial rule restored the dignity and prestige of the sultan was by "restoring tradition", investing considerable expenditure and effort in state ceremonies. The installation ceremonies of Sultan Idris of Perak in 1889 and Sultan Sulaiman of Selangor in 1903 were lavish, and even included non-traditional, including British, practices. The installation ceremonies of these two sultans were refreshingly new, or old — tradition is amenable to such opposing labels — being the first since 1826 for Selangor and with so much less ceremony in three previous occasions in Perak. In Selangor, the royal regalia was reported to have been insufficiently splendid or had not been preserved. Consequently, a new regalia was designed and made on a lavish scale. Raja Bot [the master of ceremonies] himself went off to Riau, whence the Selangor dynasty had come as Bugis interlopers a century and a half before, to obtain from that source authentic information of the proper ceremonial for installing a ruler of Bugis descent. Earlier precedent, if any, was dismissed with contempt — "before this there was no proper procedure or protocol of installation — everything was done according to the whims and fancies of the Rajas" (Gullick 1987: 36). The colonial administration consciously rehabilitated the position of the Malay rulers, who were given "a free hand" in indulging in pomp royal ceremonies, "as compensation for what they had lost elsewhere" (Gullick 1987: 32).

The "fiction" that the British upheld in offering advice to the sultan, the pivotal institution that subsumed "traditional" authority

to colonial rule, was reproduced in an equally fictionalized way in the proceedings of the State Council. At those meetings, traditional respect for the position of the sultan — from the welcoming reception ceremony, inspection of the guard of honour, the sitting arrangement right up to the minutes of the meetings — was observed, even while it was plainly clear that the Resident was in command (Gullick 1992: 41-42). The dignity and prestige of the *raja* was thus restored. But the British also had a highly visible hand in selecting those traditions that were to be restored, deciding upon when they should be observed or even inventing new ones when the need arose.

Elaborate ceremonials thus became an important feature under colonial rule. It needs to be emphasized that the grandeur of pomp ceremonials for the Malay rulers were not merely a compensatory gesture to the displaced ruling class. It reflected, in the Malay states, the change colonial rule effected upon their political structure. If real power previously resided in the district chiefs, the British arrogated most of it to themselves. But, significantly, colonial rule also "elevated the sultans to positions of real as well as ritual authority within Malay society" (Roff 1974: 14). This was effected not only by the centralization of state power but also by the elimination of oppressive institutions (corvee labour, taxes) they once controlled. Invested with real power over increasingly influential institutions of Malay custom and religion, the "ceremonial raja" depicted in Milner's account (1982) presumed a more glamorous aura. The ever more lavish ceremonials since colonial rule thus appears to have strengthened rather than weakened the ideological presence of the Malay *raja*.

The brief outline above explains the apparent continuity of the majesty of the Malay *raja*, in whose name the British ruled. But as the rapid economic development of Malaya in the twentieth marginalized the Malays, the position of the Malay *raja* came under heavy weather from Malay religious reformers (the Kaum Muda and the like) in the first three decades of the century, and subsequently from the radical Malay intelligentsia in the third and fourth decades. Overall, however, these two forces failed, for various reasons, to make significant inroads into Malay political consciousness.

By the time the Malay Union proposals were introduced in 1946, mainstream attitude — including among the elites — towards the Malay *raja* was divided. Even Dato Onn Jaafar, the first leader of UMNO, vacillated (Stockwell 1979: 68) on whether the Sultan of Johor should be dethroned for signing the MacMichael Treaty. Many had

felt that the rulers could not be relied upon for the protection of Malay interests (Ariffin 1993: 50-54; Cheah 1988: 23-24; Stockwell 1979: 65-71). The agitation against the Malayan Union and against the rulers' acquiescence to its proposals during that critical period produced new interpretations of those traditional concepts which the British had successfully appropriated for the *raja*. It was argued that loyalty was to be reciprocal, that authority of the Malay rulers was derived from the Malay subjects and that the rulers had betrayed their subjects. Just prior to the installation of Edward Gent as Governor of the Malayan Union (April 1, 1946) Dato Onn warned the Malay rulers: "If the rajas attend and also take part in any ceremony connected with the Malayan Union, those rajas will be overthrown (*dibuang*) immediately by the people (*rakyat*)... a Malay who takes part [in the Malayan Union]... is not a person who can be counted as a member of the Malay bangsa" (*Majlis*, April 2, 1946. As quoted in Ariffin 1993: 198).

By the time the dust settled — the dramatic last minute change of mind by the Malay rulers to not attend Edward Gent's installation on that very day may be taken as the beginning of this process — the ideological position of the Malay *raja* was considerably restored. Immediately after that the *Majlis* no less dramatically remarked that "The Malay *rakyat* from all levels have united to affirm [their] loyalty to their respective rajas and also to prove their feeling for the *bangsa* and *tanah air*" (*Majlis*, April 2, 1946. As quoted in Ariffin [1993: 198]). Significantly, UMNO was formally constituted at the Johor Bharu palace on May 11, 1946, where Dato Onn remarked that "I am pleased to state that the *rakyat* are the rajas and the raja is the *rakyat*" (*Majlis*, May 14, 1946. As quoted in Ariffin [1993: 102]). How did this about-turn happen?

First, the emergent Malay nation employed the same fiction the British had used to legitimize their presence in Malaya. If the British had ruled Malaya in the name of the Malay *raja*, as a protectorate rather than a colony, then the MacMichael Treaty was an abrogation. Thus, rather than unmasking the "fiction" of British protection, UMNO, and Malay opinion generally, adopted that "serviceable" but fictionalized past as a real one. However, by adopting that fiction, the lines of conflict were clearly directed against the British rather than the *raja*. More important, that "fiction" could only be "real" if the *raja* remained in the picture.

Second, leadership at those "revolutionary" moments were seized by the Malay conservative English-educated aristocracy. Under the



terms and partial implementation of the Malayan Union, the Malay elites felt that their privileges were threatened because British and non-Malay personnel were assigned to posts which they had vied for. Furthermore, the Malayan Union — as it actually existed — had no compelling need for the Malay “administrators”, who, prior to the Second World War, figured prominently in the bureaucracy. This change was especially felt in the Unfederated States (Johor, Kelantan, Kedah and Terengganu), where the state bureaucracies were relatively more autonomous and were filled largely by Malay personnel (Stockwell 1979: 82-84).

Third, the *bangsa* was invoked against the non-Malay communities. With the Malay *raja* showing commitment to the Malayan Union proposals, the Malays, under the leadership of the aristocratic elite, indicated their loss of faith in their *raja*, and thus considered themselves the fount of Malay sovereignty. However, the aristocratic elite’s notion of Malay sovereignty was heavily compromised by its own gestures of reconciliation with the Malay *raja* (Ariffin 1993: 101-104) and thus fell far short of the demand for complete independence and a democratically elected legislature, which organizations of the Malay left had waged (Firdaus 1985). In its place, as Ariffin (1993: 106) has shown, the Malay nation was represented as a united defence against its submergence by the large immigrant communities, who were to be granted equal citizenship rights by the Malayan Union proposals. Soon after, the Malay *raja* was portrayed as “a guarantee and emblem of Malay kebangsaan *vis-a-vis* the foreign *bangsa* in Malaya” (*Majlis*, April 13, 1946. As quoted in Ariffin 1993: 198). “[T]he *rajas*”, to quote Dato Onn, “have become [a] bond or cement to unite and strengthen the *umat Melayu* as a whole” (*Majlis*, April 14. As quoted in Ariffin 1993: 199).

The Federation of Malaya idea, proclaimed in 1948 as a replacement of the Malayan Union, had originated from the rulers (Ariffin 1993: 105). Consequently, the status of the Malay *raja* as the symbol of Malay sovereignty and the interests of the aristocratic elite and other lower functionaries were restored under continued British protection.

Thus, the ideological imprints of the Malay *kerajaan* became an integral symbol of Malay nationalism. Malay claim to ownership of the country, we may recall, relies very heavily upon their mythical link with the sultanate of Melaka. This mythical link was made even stronger subsequently, when the Malay *raja* were not only elevated above the laws of the land but were also constitutionally made to be

the protectors of Malay special rights and Islam. This is because the constitutional provisions for special privileges for the Malay community could only be repealed with the consent of Malay rulers. Laws passed by representatives of the people at the federal and state legislatures were to be consented to by the *Agung* and the *Sultan* respectively. Pomp ceremonies associated with important state events were graced by these rulers. Confering "traditional" titles as state honours in elaborate ceremonies have added greater prestige.

The position of the Malay *raja* was further reinforced after 1969, when matters pertaining to the *raja* are, by the Sedition Act, kept away from public debate, for fear that the symbol of Malay integrity is questioned by an increasingly assertive non-Malay community. Increased protection of Malay interests, defined principally in economic terms under the New Economic Policy, further extended the influence of the royalty into the economy. For the royalty too — highly influential protectors of the *bumiputera* that they are — could stake their claims to Malay privileges.

### Debunking Tradition

The central symbol of Malay political culture, the *raja* has, in the last ten years, come under severe attack, first in the constitutional crisis in 1983 and more recently, in another constitutional crisis in April 1993. In 1983, the Malaysian government tried to eliminate the necessity of getting the king's consent for any declaration of emergency, on grounds that a constitutional monarch does not have such power. Again, in 1993, the Malaysian government launched a sustained effort at eliminating the immunity of Malay sultans from criminal offences.

A new interpretation of the position of the Malay *raja* is underway (Chamil 1992; Syed Husin 1993). In 1990, for the first time in the history of UMNO's General Assembly, the position of the Malay *raja* was debated critically. The Malay *kerajaan*, it is claimed today, had actually declined even before colonial rule. The empire of Melaka fell either because the *raja* and his subjects were not united or because the *raja* and the aristocrats were each indulgent in their own personal interests. Consequently, the Malay states became weak, and allowed themselves to be colonized. The *rakyat* (subjects) were a party to the blame, for "they accepted without question a system of government that was rigged with the abuse of power and corruption, in the hope

that they would themselves gain from that system" (Mahathir 1992: 241. My translation).

It is unabashedly admitted that it was none other than UMNO that restored the dignity of the Malay *kerajaan* in the form of constitutional monarchy. However, the dignity of the *raja* as the symbol of national unity is now seriously tarnished by their meddling in politics, involvement in business and even in criminal conduct (Chamil 1992). The dignity of the *raja* needs to be restored before it is despised by the people. Towards this end, the Malay *raja* will need to fully understand their responsibilities as constitutional monarchs.

Underlying the crisis between UMNO and the *raja* is the competition for wealth, status and power. With the emergence of the Malay bourgeoisie, the royalty are impelled to "involve in business and mass politics" in order to compete and to maintain their socio-economic status. In its competition for power, the executive wants to arrogate to themselves unhindered legislative power. The role of the *raja* in swaying votes towards the opposition in the 1990 general elections in the state of Kelantan has simultaneously forced UMNO to look at its own dealings with the *raja*. The *raja* has incurred UMNO's wrath because they have infringed upon the material interests of the rising Malay bourgeois class. In addition to the hundreds of million ringgit the government allocates for their annual upkeep, these royal households have also insisted upon a significant share of government, especially state-government, contracts either for their businesses or for businesses undertaken by their Chinese partners.

The Malay business community that has grown with the NEP is fairly formidable, especially in the banking and primary commodities sector (Jesudason, 1988). They are, therefore, quite ready to tussle, with the growing Malay middle classes and with the reluctant consent of the oppositionist religious elite, against the royalty. The elimination of the rulers' authority may thus be seen as one clear attempt by UMNO to redefine the relationship between the growing Malay bourgeois class and the Malay royalty. Since the royalty also formed an important part of Malay political culture, the attempt by the state to eliminate the immunity of the *raja* is thus also an attempt at redefining Malay culture. In the heat of the recent crisis, precipitated by a physical attack towards a hockey coach by the Sultan of Johor, UMNO, representing the Malay middle and bourgeois classes, launched an unprecedented attack on the conduct of the *raja*, once revered and respected with great humility. As the controversy picked

momentum, Parti Semangat 46 (The Spirit of 46 Party), a splinter of UMNO that was formed by Tengku Razaleigh, who lost narrowly to Mahathir in UMNO's 1987 elections, went to the defence of the Malay sultans. By naming their party Semangat 46, Tengku Razaleigh and his followers reminds the Malays of UMNO's birth in that year. But there is more to it than that. For Semangat 46 also emphasizes its responsibility to return to the spirit that was considered as the Malay struggle then. The Malay *raja* figures prominently as the symbols of Malay unity, of protection of Malay rights. The controversy thus provided Semangat 46 with a great opportunity to leave its mark in the Malay constituency.

### "National Culture"

The political assertion of the Malay community in 1969 also gave rise to a national culture policy in 1971. The national culture policy, which aims to forge a Malaysian cultural identity, is to be based and built upon the indigenous culture of the surrounding region, the cultures of the non-indigenous communities and Islam. The debates over national culture, like that of the national language, has centred upon the legitimacy of Malay culture as the main pillar of Malaysia's national culture and the relevance of the rights of minorities within the modern state.

Sponsoring Malay culture (but hardly of other indigenous cultures) as the dominant component of Malaysian culture clearly gives it a more-than-equal position *vis-a-vis* other minority cultures in terms not only of promotion, opportunities for development of the culture and its community, but also in terms of public display (Tan 1992). Due to the tense circumstances prevailing at the time the national culture policy was conceived, sustained public debate over issues relating to the policy only took place in the first half of the eighties when the state undertook an evaluation of its implementation. Several important Chinese and Indian organisations submitted their respective joint memoranda to the government in 1983 and 1984, calling for their rightful, that is, equal, status in forging Malaysia's national culture (Kua 1985).

The points raised by non-Malay communities in the seventies and eighties remained similar to those that were debated in the fifties and sixties. It was pointed out in the memoranda that the deliberation on the national culture policy in 1971 did not incorporate popular repre-

sentation from their respective communities. Further, as a plural democratic society, the rights of minorities to their language and culture are enshrined in the constitution. Consequently, national culture should freely and equally reflect the cultures of the minorities rather than incorporated "into a national mould narrowly defined in Malay-Muslim terms" (Chua 1988: 77). The nostalgia of the plural society under British colonial rule is sometimes invoked. Thus, as Chua reconstructs it, "[t]he British practised a liberal attitude towards cultural institutions such as temples and other places of worship, clan associations, assembly halls, community associations, and the practice of social customs for birth, marriage and death, as well as the promotion of Chinese cultural activities such as the lion dance, martial arts, traditional Chinese arts and crafts, music and even operas" (Chua 1988: 57-58).

Furthermore, Malaya, and subsequently, Malaysia, it is argued, was born out of an inter-communal construction just prior to independence, with only a remote link to the ancestral past that Malays invoke: "...in terms of a political system, we are no longer a feudal kingdom, but a country founded on Constitutional Monarchy; in terms of the system of administration, legislation and economy, it is basically a continuation of the British and not the Malay system; and in terms of the system of culture, multi-culture has long replaced the earlier Malay mono-culture" (Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall *et al.* 1985: 250-251).

The critique from the non-Malay, non-Muslim indigenous communities of Sabah and Sarawak (Francis Loh 1992; Ongkili 1993; Tangau 1993) is particularly more forceful than the "immigrant" non-Malay communities since they can lay claim to history and the status as the definitive people, demographic majority and constitutional guarantees as well. UMNO has, for some time now, harboured political designs in Sabah. In 1991, UMNO opened its branches there, initially drawing support from members of the United Sabah National Organisation. Quite obviously, the increased integration of Sabah and Sarawak into the Malaysian consciousness will definitely recast the UMNO-inspired national culture policy in a different light.

Although questions of "national dress", of obtaining land for places of worship and the like have been raised, the focus of the debate has been pegged to the question of language and the right to vernacular education. The Chinese community today finds itself being restricted, for public vernacular education is confined to the primary

level, and that the funds (development, teacher training) for such schools are often comparably lower than those made available to national schools. The declining status of vernacular languages like Kadazan and Iban in Sabah and Sarawak brought similar concerns there, but the institution of Islam as the state's official religion, the attempt to reclassify all indigenous groups under one category ("Pribumi") and control of the federal government offices by peninsular Malays probably alarmed them more. These highlight an important contradiction of the nation-building process; instead of enhancing further the rights they had acquired during the colonial era, independence thus appears to curb them.

The study of opinion leaders in the peninsular Malaysia cited earlier (Halim *et al.* 1991) reflects these sentiments. A majority of the Chinese (65 per cent) and Indian (57 per cent) opinion leaders we interviewed indicated their culture have not been promoted sufficiently. Interestingly, a significant segment of the Malays (44 per cent) had also expressed the same sentiment. However, the reasons for non-Malay and Malay dissatisfaction differ. Whereas most Malays cite the shortcomings of the national policy and the apathy within their community as the two main reasons for the insufficient promotion of their culture, the Chinese in this study attribute this to lack of state attention and support (41 per cent) and restrictions imposed (32 per cent) upon them. The majority of Indians who share this sentiment attribute it to the limitations of the policy. Thus, whereas the Malays and Indians feel that the policy is inadequate, the Chinese suggest that the national culture policy either ignores or even restricts their interests.

A large majority (81 per cent) of the opinion leaders covered in the study see the importance of forging a national culture policy, and are also aware that the country already has one. Altogether, 80 per cent of those who were aware of the existence of the policy were agreeable to it. Again, the data shows that whereas a large majority (93 per cent) of the Malays agree with that policy, a significant proportion of non-Malays (49 per cent of the Chinese and 39 per cent of Indians aware of this policy) find it objectionable. For the non-Malays, Malaysia's national culture should be based upon the cultures of the different communities instead of being based upon Malay culture alone. Interestingly, a majority (53 per cent) of the Malays also agreed, and only a minority (19 per cent) insisted that it should be based upon Malay culture.

While these contrasting views about Malaysia's national culture continue to shape the terrain of debate between the different communities, important changes are unfolding new perspectives. Gone are the days when questions about the relevance of the Chinese Lion (or should it be "Tiger" instead?) Dance was itself an issue. To the Malays, the fanfare that accompany the Lion Dance represented an assertion of Chinese arrogance. Likewise, the promotion of "Malay" traditional games (*congkak*, *main gasing*, etc.), dances, drama, motifs and even architecture were, in the seventies and eighties, often carried out (and frowned upon) as implementation of the national culture policy. These cultural activities no longer carry the same message today. They are now paraded together along with those of other smaller minorities in large cultural shows — such as those associated with Independence Day, New Year celebrations, the Visit Malaysia Year programmes — that try to portray that they are all part of the same family now, the Malaysian nation, as Dr. Mahathir sees it. That, after all, is also what tourists would like to see and what Malaysia wishes to sell now. It is surely no coincidence that the state's promotion and organization of "culture" comes under a Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

The activities and symbols that are invented or reproduced to portray a particular culture are, as Kahn (1992) shows, those of the past. While symbols of origin or of commonness form potent sources of solidarity, they are also like exhibits that do not have immediate utilitarian value. Similarly, the people, including members of the same ethnic group, who view these exhibits may not know much about that value, except as symbols of a familiar identity. These exhibits are today additionally invested with "tourist-dollar" value, and are packaged as such. Any sales person would be able to tell us that the peculiar "cultural mix" that Malaysia boasts so often may be packaged as a tourist attraction. If not for the "tourist dollar", exotic minorities, such as the Orang Asli of Taman Negara, the Baba and the Portuguese of Melaka, the Penan of Sarawak and the Bajau of Sabah would have been drowned by the bumiputera-nonbumiputera opposition. Thus, packaging this cultural mix for a common end takes away the political sting out of culture.

The sponsors of advertisements on television have played their part too. They all want to reach their markets. Some of these goods are specifically targeted to a particular ethnic group only while others cast their nets wider. Privatization under UMNO's leadership has enlarged the operating space for these groups in the electronic media.

Consequently, the preponderance of programmes in Bahasa Melayu and English has now changed slightly as more Chinese, particularly Cantonese, programmes are available. But others differ, of course. The liberalization of television programmes have their critics too. Even so, it is important to recognize that those criticisms are, in fact, a response to the changes that are taking place.

Like tourism, sports is big industry, and forms an important part of Malaysia's emerging national culture. While many sports bodies and tournaments are organized along ethnic lines, the increasing professionalization of sports impels those in the industry to draw upon sportsmen and officials of diverse ethnic backgrounds (a fairly significant number of whom are foreigners) around state-organized clubs. Spectators are following suit. The infusion of patriotism, through national publicity, nation-wide donation programmes, participation of national leaders in the preparation and attendance of international tournaments, and the Malaysian teams' victories (the Thomas Cup victory in 1992 was especially indicative) have added a new dimension to the Malaysian identity. Interestingly, multinational companies that sponsor and advertise such events have become an important part of this process.

Together these changes manifest a definite course of change. The commercialization of culture, particularly as exhibits or attractions for the tourism industry, has depoliticized the promotion of culture as a specifically ethnic project. In other words, the national culture project once envisaged by UMNO has now taken a liberal-pluralistic turn, made necessary not only by the political demands of the non-Malay community but also by the imperatives of an increasingly open, robust economy. However, it needs to be said that the liberal-pluralistic posture that the state adopts towards other cultures says nothing about how this was achieved. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that, like the national language policy, the national culture policy has undergone important changes in emphasis.

The attractions of a consumerist middle class culture has also been an important force in altering sentiments about the centrality of Malay culture. The Malay middle and upper classes are mindful of the importance of the English language, have acquired the West's high culture (ballet, classical music, jazz), prefer to live in cosmopolitan, rather than just Malay, suburbs. There is certainly a convergence of cultures among the ethnically differentiated middle classes, and it is not difficult to imagine if their common life style have altered their



respective ethnic identities. Finally, Malay nationalist insistence that their symbols (Malay sultanate, Malay language and Islam) are adopted as Malaysia's identity have been widely accepted, although perhaps not to the level that Malay nationalists desire. As a result, these symbols have become common property, and no longer just the symbols of the Malays.

### **The Islamic Challenge**

The centrality of Islam in Malay politics is a well-known fact. The two are inextricably bound to each other (Mohamad 1984, 1986; Kessler 1992). One very real reason for their compatibility was the fact that Islam formed an integral part of Malay identity. In fact, Malay nationalism owed its early development in the twenties to reformist Muslim intellectuals (Roff 1974). Malay nationalism was, therefore, an expression of the plight of Muslim Malays, and the defence of Islam. Conversely, the struggle for Islam is for Malay betterment, which must necessarily be carried out by Malays, who still form the bulk of the Muslims in the country. The bond between Islam and Malay nationalism could be seen clearly in UMNO's and the Pan Malaysian Islamic Party's (PMIP but later named the Islamic Party of Malaysia or Pas) struggles for Malay upliftment in the fifties and sixties. They even joined forces in the Barisan Nasional government between 1973 and 1978.

The commitment of the Malays, expressed politically in both UMNO and Pas, to Islam is still very evident today, but the political bond between Islam and Malay nationalism has been thawed by their contradictory ideological and concrete political struggles ever since.

Politically, PMIP and, subsequently, Pas, had always been a thorn in UMNO's flesh. UMNO's compromise with non-Malay political parties had often provided ample ammunition for Pas in the economically backward, predominantly Malay-populated northern states of Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu in the fifties right up to the late sixties. According to Pas, UMNO had never done enough for the Malays. This, as Gangwu (1992: 226) has rightly pointed out, weakened not only UMNO in the face of the PMIP, but it also weakened UMNO's ability to assert itself onto the non-Malay political parties. This became particularly evident in the late sixties when Malay support for UMNO and non-Malay support for UMNO's coalition partners set off an alarming trail of events after the 1969 elections. The ethnic riots that

broke out a few days after the 1969 elections and the rebellion that had swelled within UMNO at that time impelled UMNO's leaders to determine a more aggressive nationalist policy. In many ways UMNO was responding to Pas' radical nationalist critique, and by switching gear, it pulled the rug from under Pas' feet. Subsequently, the PMIP joined the UMNO-led coalition government in 1974. UMNO wanted more. A political crisis hatched by a freeze on Kelantan's timber concessions made earlier by the Pas government provided UMNO the opportunity to call an early election in that state in 1978. The rapid turn of events surprised the PMIP, tarnished their Islamic image (due to questionable awards for timber concessions) and lost its stronghold.

Thus, Pas' nationalist embrace with UMNO led to its downfall. Meanwhile, a more radical brand of Islam had taken root in Pas, which challenged not only UMNO but Pas' leadership as well. Isolated by UMNO's imaginative New Economic Policy for affirmative action for the Malays, the new force that emerged among the youth in Pas wanted to establish Islam, rather than Malay nationalism, as the fundamental basis for society. Nationalism was seen to not only place worldly interests above Allah's commandments but it was also seen as the source of conflict between the different ethnic groups and a fundamental obstacle to universal Muslim brotherhood. The "Young Turks" in Pas were certainly responding to the failure of their leaders to distinguish their political struggle from UMNO's and their own personal conduct from those of UMNO. Added to this was the wide-spread resurgence of Islamic consciousness that had gripped Malay youths who had, gathered very rapidly, for the first time, in large droves in higher educational centres and in employment in the urban areas (Chandra 1987; Jomo and Shabery 1992; Mohamad 1986; Nagata 1984; Zainah 1987). Pas' break-up from the Barisan Nasional coalition strengthened the radical forces within Pas, and by 1982 the "Young Turks" were securely holding its reins. Subsequently, the tenor of their campaigns against UMNO changed completely, charging that UMNO and its members are "infidels", and that, therefore, a complete break of relations between their respective members was necessary (Tun Majid 1993).<sup>10</sup>

Pas' conservative (that is, puritanical) radicalism forced UMNO to adopt an Islamist tendency (Jomo and Shabery 1992). The co-optation of personalities with Islamic credentials into UMNO's leadership,<sup>11</sup> the adoption of Islamic values<sup>12</sup> into the country's administration and the establishment of a number of important Islamic institutions (the Islamic Bank and subsequently, Islamic banking in the

country's mainstream financial system, an Islamic income tax system, the International Islamic University, Islamic research institutes and schools) and increased state (federal) control over Islam are ample proof of this. UMNO has thus established an Islamic force of its own, and the rapid increase of government religious schools and increased control over the "sekolah pondok" (independent "hut schools" run by religious teachers) will definitely deprive Pas of the "pondok tradition", to which Wang (1992) attributes considerable importance in explaining Pas' strength in the states of Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu. Funston's (1980: 103) study of UMNO and Pas lends support to this. Pas' candidates for the state legislatures of Kedah and Kelantan in 1969, for example, were mainly (54 and 80 per cent respectively) educated in religious schools. Although the educational background of Pas' leadership can be expected to have changed somewhat with the expansion of secular education, the significance of the distinction between secular and religious education appears to be still important. This is evident in the rift between Pas and the Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM or the Muslim Youth Moevment of Malaysia) in the eighties. ABIM, a modernist Islamic movement, whose members and leaders are drawn more heavily from secular schools than from religious schools, does not share with Pas the role it assigns to the *ulamak*, or religious leaders (Jomo and Ahamd Shabery 1992: 90-91). This is probably related to the fact that only those trained formally in Islamic studies are seen, as it is the case in Malaysian Islamic orthodoxy, as capable of being leaders in the Islamic movement.

The political and ideological contradictions between Malay nationalism and Islam have clearly shifted an important part of the Malays' ideological edifice, from one that was focused upon Malay economic backwardness, Malay cultural and political supremacy to one that revolves around the establishment, or restoration, as it were, of an Islamic superstructure. Pas seeks nothing less than an Islamic state, where the laws of the land are based upon the *syariah*. In this view, UMNO, therefore, is unIslamic, and its Islamic posturing a form of tokenism that subsumes Islam to secular tendencies. On the other hand, UMNO portrays itself as an Islamic party that seeks to restore the glory of the Muslims, Malays in particular, through an incremental process of modernization.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, it is only by acquiring modern knowledge and technology that Muslims can hope to sustain their faith (Mahathir 1986: 30-31, 86; 1993: 3-4), which, after all, is necessary to check their subservience to greed and inhumanity.

The point that I wish to draw here in relation to UMNO's overall ideological shift over the last five to ten years or so is, as Mohamad (1986, 1994) has observed, that the compatibility between Malay nationalism and Islam is seriously contested by an important section of the Malay community.<sup>14</sup> This has forced UMNO to extend its ideological reach to seriously incorporate Islam in its arguments and policies, and since Muslims anywhere must stand on their own in a particular spatial construct, so too must Malays.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the Malay is, in this respect, referred to only indirectly; they exist and must progress only because Islam exhorts its adherents to do so. The Malays, Mahathir tells us, must modernize to progress and to restore the glory of Islam. It is only then that the universal Muslim brotherhood may be established.

Clearly then, modernization and progress is seen as the key to maintaining one's cultural or religious identity, and not the other way around. The desire to modernize is clearly imitative of the west, but the perspective adopted by UMNO simultaneously puts the "modernization perspective", borrowed completely from West European experience, on its head. The European perspective views nations as a modern construct. This means, therefore, that as each proclaims itself as a nation, it announces its equality with other nations by claims that it too has a "national identity" that is rooted in a particular historical and cultural experience. Those claims or meanings have to be established first before a national identity can be forged, so that national progress may be embedded in indigenous culture and history (Rustam, 1991, 1992, 1993). This line of argument forms the basis of Malay nationalist resistance to Mahathir's UMNO. Interestingly, the contrast in argument between the Malay nationalist view and Mahathir's modernist approach is paradoxical. The former is modelled upon the modernization perspective. On the other hand, UMNO, through Mahathir, seeks to modernize to gain equality with other nations. It is only when the Malays modernize and become equal to the developed nations that its cultural identity would endure. The infusion of Islam also offers UMNO a critique of the West. UMNO seeks to modernize only in so far as it answers to the material needs of Muslims, in particular, and the country in general. Islam anticipates the limits of Western rationality and emphasizes the spiritual.

### **The Haunt of History and the Hunt for a New Ideology**

Recent changes within the Malay community appear to have redefined the ethnic cleavage, redirecting the conflict between Malays and non-

Malays over the national language and the symbols of statehood to one that is essentially between different groups within the Malay community. The growing English-educated Malay middle and bourgeois classes have developed new interests, some of which, as we saw earlier, have challenged the pillars of Malay identity. These are perhaps signs that the Malay nationalist movement has come to its "moment of arrival". Whether the nationalist traditions which the English-educated Malay middle and bourgeois classes upheld once before would torment their conscience is difficult to predict. For that will depend on their strength, and whether they can provide ample space for mobility among the youthful Malay-educated middle classes.

Malay nationalism has thus begun to show signs that its prized hunts (Bahasa Melayu as the national language, Malay culture as the basis of the country's national culture and the *raja* as the symbol of statehood) are beginning to lose importance. It was UMNO that constructed their importance, and it is also UMNO that is redefining their role in the country's political drama. Islam has gained greater importance but this has necessitated important ideological shifts in the way Malay nationalism might be conceived. The Malay nationalist movement had, in Gellner's terms (1983), tried to endow Malay culture with its own political roof. However, the ideological parameters of Malay culture have changed considerably, and a different political roof is in the making. If industrialization and centralization of the state delivered to the Europeans their nations, the Malay nation appears to be crushed under their might.

In their place, the Malay bourgeoisie, now very clearly represented in UMNO, are inventing a new vision: they are creating a *Melayu Baru* ("New Malay"). The New Malay, says Mahathir (1992: 258), is one "whose culture is appropriate with the times, is ready to face up to any challenge, who can compete without any assistance, is learned and knowledgeable, sophisticated, honest, disciplined, trustworthy and efficient (my translation)". A number of so many other modern attributes have been associated with this new vision. These include confidence, creativity, diligence, adaptability and progressive and proactive (Muhammad Taib 1993). Basically, the New Malay, which gained considerable political weight after Mahathir narrowly defeated Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah for UMNO's presidency in 1987 (Khoo 1992), is one who is prepared to face the highly competitive global world of the 21st century. The *Melayu Baru* thus represents a new political focus for an UMNO that has redefined the identity of its own constituency.

Like other inventions, the *Melayu Baru* idea is very poorly understood, and is associated with a number of meanings (Firdaus 1993). Even so, it is clear enough that it is a call for change that is very often associated with the demands of the corporate sector (rational, efficient, competitive, pioneering). What is also interesting is that the *Melayu Baru* idea tries to break away from the past. The "Old Malay" (*Melayu Lama*) is said to be shy, confused, uncompetitive, traditional, lacking in confidence and parochial (Muhammad 1993a). Allaying fears that they are alienating the rest (the *Melayu Lama*), proponents of *Melayu Baru* often claim "kinship" with the well-known late nineteenth and early twentieth century Malay modernists. Interestingly, history, the necessary tool of the nationalists, has not been made to rhyme with the tunes of the *Melayu Baru*. This new idea, is, after all, an invention of a future. This break with the past resonates the views expressed by the English-educated Malay middle and bourgeois classes pertaining to the language issue, the status of the *raja*, Malay culture and Islam in contemporary Malaysia. They no longer form the symbols of the Malay community alone, but are part of a larger "Bangsa Malaysia" (Malaysian nation). "This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony and full and fair partnership... with political loyalty and dedication to the nation" (Mahathir 1991).

## Conclusion

The linguistically homogenous nations of Western Europe are showing the strains of accommodating diverse cultures within a culturally defined citizenship (Silverman 1991). Post-colonial states also went through a difficult period when they tried to come up with a similar notion of citizenship.

In emulating the nations of Western Europe, the governing elites of post-colonial states discover that their nationalist rhetorics had to confront not only contending ethnic claims to equal cultural and political status but they also realize that such rhetorics do not get them very far. This is because they are impelled to fall upon the pre-existing colonial state structure to bring about change. In doing so they fall upon the English educated professionals to make up for lost time. In turn, these groups reproduce themselves within an existing global structure and eventually redefine nationalist aspirations within that construct. Therefore, nationalism in the Third World has a vastly

different meaning. It differs in the fact that a national identity is announced, but never completely settled in the European sense, after the state is formed. The battle over such a proclamation persists over a considerable period, and is redefined as the state expands and consolidates its position in relation to the different cultural groups. Thus, the idea of a nation, and, by extension, nationalism, is an ideological construct, a contest of the meanings that we assign to a nation, and through the process of legitimation, a state (Varshney 1993; Verdery 1993). As the state modernizes the dominant cultural group simultaneously finds itself in a host of contradictions that impact a change in the meaning and importance of the symbols of identity which it once proclaimed as the fount of national identity. The colonial division of labour and the life-stations of the different ethnic groups have, to a significant extent, been changed. But so has the discourse of Malay nationalism.

The analysis suggests very clearly that recent trends in Malaysia appear to depart from the "nationalistic" phase. The Malay nationalist forces have, once again, lost the initiative to the English-educated Malay middle and bourgeois classes. The gestures of appeasement they made to the nationalist forces in the seventies and early eighties are no longer evident. Instead, the state, now with UMNO firmly in command, has back-pedalled on the language and national culture issues, and the once sacrosanct sultanate system has also been demythified. The symbols of Malay nationalism have thus lost its pre-eminence. The boundaries of Malay identity have thus blurred a little. These internal pressures within UMNO must surely rate as a critical factor that accounts for UMNO's entry into Sabah and its readiness to open its membership to all *bumiputera* (not just Malays) there. The resurgence of Islam in Malaysia unfolded, although perhaps along a slightly different plane, within these changes, and accentuated the process of redefining Malay identity within a larger milieu. In their place, a futurist *Melayu Baru* was invented; the New Malay is to be bold, knowledgeable, competitive, a risk-taker, efficient, honest, diligent and global, but Muslim nonetheless.

The construction of Malay ethnicity portrayed in the analysis above may be read as a response to the changing class configuration of Malay society. Yet, I must emphasize that the construction of identity is also a contest of meanings; it is both a critique of earlier constructions of its ownself (the Malay raja) and a critique of prevailing meanings about Bahasa Melayu, Islam and development.

## Notes

1. This paper benefited from comments upon earlier drafts presented at a lecture at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Helsinki and the ASEAN Inter-University Seminars on Social Development, University Kebangsaan Malaysia, Menggatal, Sabah. I also wish to thank Abdullah Azmi Abdul Khalid and S. Jothiratnam for their useful comments.
2. The "balkanization" of Yugoslavia is especially instructive, but nationalist awakening in Estonia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have also shown exclusive tendencies.
3. It may even be argued that Western Europe — now with a significant non-European minority — is experiencing a situation similar to what post-colonial states went through upon independence.
4. Gellner's theory of nationalism, that it developed as a logic of industry, has been effectively criticized (Hall 1993; Hroch 1992) on the basis of the fact that nationalism preceded the development of industry. However, it needs to be borne in mind that even though Gellner may be faulted on this score, his argument — that nation states emerge from the development and spread of industry — remains correct. As Silverman shows (1991: 335) in the case for France, it was only with the expansion of the state in the second half of the nineteenth century, when she underwent rapid industrialization, that the construction of rights was framed within the paradigm of the nation.
5. Since the colonial division of labour was almost coterminous with ethnic boundaries, growth would have only exacerbated ethnic inequalities.
6. Mahathir (1986: 42-43) had pursued this line of argument much earlier. "Although the national language is fully able to meet these aims and purposes, to have a command of it alone and not of any other language as well constitutes a weakness.... Refusal to acquire a command of English or some other language may well be a front hiding a weak personality that is terrified of exposure".
7. These figures do not add up to one. This is because the respondents were replying to two different questions.
8. My translation.
9. My translation.
10. Tun Majid's interesting study (1993) lists some of the caste-like code of behaviour that Pas endorsed. Members of Pas were told that it was not obligatory for Muslims to pay the tithe if this was to be made to a government tithe collector. Marriages solemnized by government religious officials or marriages between members of Pas and UMNO were not recognized, and meat of animals slaughtered by UMNO members were unfit for consumption. Pas members were also encouraged to stop their everyday relations with members of UMNO. Prayers are to be led only by Pas members. They were even expected to observe the codes of party membership upon death since funerals and graveyards were to be distinguished along party lines. All these, of course, had a lot to do with elections;



whoever votes for the moon symbol (Pas) were made to feel that they were also paying their passage to heaven!

11. The most notable of these is, of course, Anwar Ibrahim, UMNO's No. 2 Man and the Deputy Prime Minister, who was brought into UMNO by the Prime Minister himself in 1982. He was previously the President of the hugely popular anti-establishment Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) or the Muslim Youth Force of Malaysia.
12. By this is meant the adoption of such values as efficiency, trustworthiness, diligence, discipline and a sense of responsibility to God and humankind.
13. As Mahathir (1992: 70) argues, "Muslims who desire for the development of an Islamic economic system must first know how to plan and employ other people's system first.... In Malaysia the Muslims are in a state of emergency because they are economically very weak. Under conditions of emergency many actions are allowed in Islam.... Through the Amanah Saham Nasional (National Trust Fund) we will be able to control a portion of the country's economy, that is 30%. The economy referred to here is the modern economy. If we were to wait until the Islamic system controls completely the country's economy, we will not achieve the 30% in 1990.... The ASN and other institutions are our tools for upholding the economic interests of the bumiputera, the Malays and Muslims". My translation.
14. Informal reports about Kelantan, now under a hugely popular Pas government, indicate that the institution of Islamic law as the basis of the state's constitution is widely accepted.
15. "Muslims, wherever they may be, are members of the same brotherhood, but local or national Muslim societies must stand on their own.... UMNO will continue to uphold nationalism because UMNO's nationalism is similar to the nationalism portrayed by the Mujahidin in Afghanistan. We will continue to defend the special privileges of the Malays and not neglect our responsibilities to fish for votes.... Those who try to do so commit treason to the Malays and Islam (Mahathir 1992: 103). My translation.

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## DEEPENING MALAYSIAN DEMOCRACY WITH MORE CHECKS AND BALANCES

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Developments since the eighties have greatly contributed to a revival of interest in democracy. The collapse of communist one-party rule in Eastern Europe, and the withdrawal of military regimes in Latin America have revived interest in the democratic agenda for such societies. In the industrialised societies with greater experience of electoral democracy, there is now greater discussion of "active citizenship", "public electoral financing", "proportional representation" and other efforts to deepen democracy and enhance democratic participation. However, the democratic agenda for any particular society cannot be pre-determined *a priori*. Rather, it should take into account the society's history, culture and other specific conditions in order to be relevant and feasible.

It will be argued that two challenges are at the top of the agenda for Malaysian democracy in the early nineties. First, the gradual, but steady and systematic erosion of democracy, human rights, civil liberties and rule of law due to a growing concentration of power in the hands of the executive, is also adversely affecting both the judiciary and even the legislative. Second, the eighties also saw the growth of "rent appropriation" and other "abuses of power" by politicians with business interests and politically well-connected businessmen. This phenomenon of "politics in business" is popularly referred to as "money politics". It includes the award of lucrative contracts to

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companies controlled by the ruling party, the use of political influence and connections to further business interests, the use of government resources to advance particular political interests of the ruling party and the use of executive and legislative powers to facilitate and advance political and business interests.

### Democracy in Malaysia

Popular perceptions of democracy in Malaysia have tended to be rather formal. Democracy is largely identified with the rule of law, and especially with the system of elected representation of the Westminster parliamentary type. The electoral system has obliged politicians, especially from the ruling coalitions, to deliver at least some goods in trying to retain and increase electoral support. Greater awareness and sensitivity in recent years to "money politics" and other "abuses of power"<sup>1</sup> have heightened consciousness about the need for greater political accountability, and hence the need for Malaysian democracy to embody a more effective system of checks and balances, particularly in response to increasing executive power. In recent years, "money politics" in Malaysia has come to be associated with blatant abuses of power for self-aggrandisement, such as the Bumiputra Malaysia Finance (BMF) scandal in Hong Kong (involving the loss of RM2.5 billion), the North-South Highway scandal (involving the privatisation of very lucrative highway toll collection rights for 30 years to an UMNO-associated company), and the deposit-taking co-operatives (DTCs) scandal involving RM1.5 billion taken from almost 600,000 depositors mainly by MCA connected politicians (see Jomo *et al.* 1989; Gomez, 1990, 1991).

Since the late colonial period, Malaysia has had regular elections to elect members of the lower house of the Federal Parliament, known as the Dewan Rakyat, as well as the state legislative assemblies. Before independence in 1957, the British colonial government held the first ever federal legislative elections in 1955. Since then, federal elections have been held in 1959, 1964, 1969, 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986 1990 and 1995. State elections have generally been held together with federal elections for the eleven states of Peninsular Malaysia.<sup>2</sup>

The states of Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo were only integrated into Malaysia in 1963. Local political developments and considerations there have been quite different from those prevailing in the peninsula. Not surprisingly then, state legislative elections in



Sabah and Sarawak have been held at different times, rarely coinciding with federal elections, especially in recent years.

It has been suggested that this simplistic identification of democracy with the electoral system is due to the absence of a historical tradition of democracy in the dominant ethnic Malay and other non-western cultures which have influenced Malaysia's political development. According to this line of argument then, colonialism is to be credited with bringing democracy to Malaysia. Such a superficial view is particularly appealing because it appears to be supported by historical evidence. In fact, however, it ignores the significant little or popular traditions in these various cultures. While it is true that the great or elite traditions of the ruling classes dominated historically, the "little traditions" — especially of the peasant masses — lived on and undoubtedly contributed to the democratic impulse which moved the peoples of Malaysia to resist colonialism and to demand civil rights, albeit expressed in non-Western idioms. British colonialism had given itself legislative and executive powers, with nominal deference to collaborating Malay rulers, at the expense of the pre-colonial systems of Malay political authority.<sup>3</sup> Also, the nationalist and anti-colonial struggles themselves contributed a great deal to strengthening and spreading this democratic tendency. However, British colonialism managed to fend off and suppress the radical nationalist movement in the post-war years. Instead, it created conditions which enabled the conservative or moderate nationalist — embodied by the Alliance — to take over the reins of power as decolonisation became inevitable. The Alliance had been established in the early 1950s as a coalition of the three main élitist ethnic-based political parties. Although not completely confident of the Alliance leaders from the UMNO, MCA and MIC, the British decided to support them against the more radical nationalist forces, many of whom had been driven underground to wage an insurgency from the late 1940s.

### *Money Politics*

The form of parliamentary democracy introduced for the post-independence era was largely based on the Westminster model adapted to the Malayan colonial condition, most specifically to the needs and interests of the Alliance leadership. This framework also involved a balance between the legislatures, the executive and the judiciary. Over the years, various amendments have been made to

the Constitution and the laws of the country to further consolidate the position of the ruling coalition, and especially the UMNO leadership which dominates it. Already, in the 1960s, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad — then an UMNO back-bencher — bitterly complained of the concentration and consolidation of power in the hands of the executive, especially the Prime Minister (Mahathir 1970). This trend has continued since then, with new implications arising from the growth of the public sector and state intervention from the 1970s. One consequence of this has been the emergence and consolidation of “money politics” and its various consequence, including corruption (Gomez 1991). It has been argued that the concentration of power in the hands of the executive has been taken to new heights under Mahathir’s leadership since 1981 (Aliran 1987; CARPA 1988), with the judiciary taking a serious battering in the late 1980s (Lawyers Committee for Human Rights 1989).

Over the years too, there has been a great deal of change introduced to the electoral system itself, again, primarily to consolidate the dominance of the Barisan Nasional (BN), or National Front, especially UMNO. Constituencies have been redelineated, with the number of registered voters varying by as much as ten-fold between two parliamentary constituencies. Election rallies have also been banned since 1978, while the campaign period has been progressively shortened. The broadcast and print media are almost exclusively owned and controlled either by the government itself or by political parties and politicians of the ruling coalition. Some government agencies have been effectively transformed into political machinery for the ruling National Front or Barisan Nasional coalition, especially UMNO ministers. These include the Information Department, KEMAS (Adult and Preschool Education), the Tatanegara (Civics Bureau) and the Religious Affairs Department of the Prime Minister’s Department, certain agencies of the Education Ministry, the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA), as well as other agencies of the state governments and regional authorities.

In the early years before and after independence, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) financed the Alliance’s electoral and other expenses. Since then, especially from the early 1970s, UMNO has consolidated its own political fund, which was also used to secure control of the New Straits Times Press (NSTP) and eventually the Fleet Holdings conglomerate built around it. Since the early 1980s, however, the use of the UMNO political fund has been increasingly active and

interventionist. The flurry of corporate activity in the 1980s, ostensibly in favour of UMNO, has apparently also greatly benefitted the UMNO trustees involved (Gomez 1990).

The growth of "money politics" has not only involved UMNO, but its Barisan Nasional coalition partners as well. Already two presidents of Barisan Nasional coalition parties have been convicted for criminal breach of trust involving corporate assets built up through political means. One of these prosecutions and the collapse of the so-called deposit taking corporatives (DTCs) in late 1986 was conveniently covered up with the connivance of the Singapore government until after the August 1986 general elections in order to protect the MCA, which might have done much worse in the elections otherwise.

Political involvement and intervention in business is now so extensive that it is generally believed that most new fortunes built from the mid-1970s have been due to "know-who" (political influence and connections), rather than "know-how" (technical ability or entrepreneurship, etc.). This widespread pervasiveness of "money politics" is a generalised phenomenon going down the line, involving national, state, divisional and even branch party leaderships as well as the women and youth wings of the parties concerned. Inevitably, it has touched upon many business and other economic activities causing fairly serious "distortions" and undermining the likelihood of enhancing efficiency to ensure international competitiveness. Such developments could not proceed inexorably without coming up against problems of its own creation, albeit unintentionally (Jomo 1990).

In the early 1980s, the public sector budget deficit grew rapidly as the government first tried to spend its way out of the recession — due to the collapse of commodity prices — during 1980-82, and then heavily financed new non-financial public enterprises (NFPEs) set up to develop heavy industries — at the Prime Minister's behest — until the mid-1980s. This spending spree was largely financed by foreign borrowings from more expensive commercial sources. During this period, Malaysia's public debt and especially the foreign debt component, grew by leaps and bounds (Jomo 1990). When the major industrial powers decided to force the US dollar to depreciate against Japanese, German and other strong currencies, the Malaysian authorities opted to depreciate the ringgit even against the US dollar. The result was the further swelling of the foreign debt, especially the component denominated in Japanese yen. Hence, the Malaysian

foreign debt continued to grow until the late 1980s, although net borrowings had virtually ceased a few years earlier.

The fiscal crisis was further exacerbated by the regressive tax reforms instituted in the mid-1980s by the new Finance Minister. On the one hand, the tax base diminished considerably as direct taxes (e.g. income tax and estate duties) were reduced, while indirect taxes on consumption were increased. The reduction in public expenditure from 1982 cut military spending, but also adversely affected infrastructure development and welfare expenditure (e.g. subsidies ostensibly for the poor). Hence, the impact of the fiscal system became increasingly regressive from the mid-1980s.

Not surprisingly, this adversely affected the previously rapid progress in poverty reduction as well as government efforts since the early 1970s to create a Malay business community and middle class through public expenditure and state interventions. This situation was worsened by the severe recession of 1985 and 1986, precipitated by the collapse of primary commodity prices, and worsened by the effectively deflationary new fiscal policies.

These economic developments were reflected by parallel political developments, and new political cleavages significantly affecting UMNO, the dominant party in the ruling coalition. In early 1986, Musa Hitam shocked the nation by resigning as Deputy Prime Minister after enjoying Mahathir's support since the latter became Prime Minister in mid-1981. For the April 1987 UMNO General Assembly, Musa ran with Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, who challenged Mahathir for the presidency of UMNO. The Razaleigh-Musa team lost by less than two per cent of the total votes to Mahathir and his new deputy, Ghafar Baba, amidst charges of electoral fraud. As expected, those who had supported the Razaleigh-Musa partnership — popularly known as "Team B" — were subsequently marginalised by Mahathir's victorious "Team A".

In October 1987, the authorities arrested over a hundred activists from a wide range of dissident groups including the opposition PAS, Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Malaysian Peoples Socialist Party (PSRM), the Chinese education movement, Christian evangelists as well as a variety of more progressive social activists (CARPA 1988). Over a third were subsequently held without trial for many months, with the parliamentary opposition leader, Lim Kit Siang, and his son released last in April 1989.

In February 1988, the lawyers representing the UMNO leadership under Mahathir caused the delegatisation of UMNO when it was

challenged in the courts by party dissidents who alleged electoral fraud. Mahathir's camp swiftly acted to establish a new party with the same name, but with a different constitution consolidating the position of the incumbent leadership. In response, the Razeleigh camp began to organise separately to re-establish the old UMNO by legal means. These efforts have failed so far and are unlikely to succeed until and unless Mahathir's UMNO is defeated in the general elections. Soon thereafter, as a number of important cases were about to come before the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General moved swiftly to replace the Lord President, the highest judge in the land, after he expressed dissent at the executive's attitude to the judiciary. Some of the other judges who came to his defence were also removed in the process. This "assault" on the judiciary is widely believed to have resulted in a Bench far more amenable to the executive (Lawyers Committee For Human Rights 1989). A former minister then aligned with the dissident UMNO faction precipitated a by-election in August 1988 by resigning his own seat, ostensibly in protest against and to test support for Mahathir's leadership. His resounding victory probably forced Mahathir to reconsider his tactics and to accept compromise with Musa and his supporters in an attempt to further weaken the Razaleigh-led movement. With this reconciliation and other efforts to project a more liberal and tolerant image, popular antagonism towards Mahathir began to subside.

### *An Opposition Bloc?*

Meanwhile, the strong economic recovery from 1987 had begun to improve economic conditions more generally, thus further softening up the anti-Mahathir sentiment. As these initiatives continued into 1989, the new political alignments began to consolidate. The Razaleigh-led old UMNO faction was finally allowed to register a political party known as Semangat 46 (Spirit of 1946, referring to the year of the establishment of the original UMNO). From late 1988, the Razaleigh group began to enter into discussion with PAS and other smaller Muslim, and hence Malay-based parties with a view to closer political cooperation. In 1989, these groups came together to formally announce the establishment of the Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah (APU, or the Movement of Community Unity). After APU was formed, Semangat 46 initiated parallel discussions for cooperation with other opposition political parties in Peninsular Malaysia not confined to

Muslims. Despite the inability of PAS and the DAP to cooperate directly, a *de facto* multi-ethnic and multi-religious opposition coalition in Peninsular Malaysia — led by Semangat 46 — has emerged, albeit not without serious organizational and image problems, exacerbated by government propaganda, harassment and efforts to undermine it.

If cooperation among opposition parties continues to consolidate, this would effectively mean two rival, multi-ethnic and multi-religious political coalitions, both under Muslim-Malay leadership, in Peninsular Malaysia. While such a situation would still not preclude all efforts at irresponsible racial and/or religious politicking, it is already clear that protagonists on both sides have been effectively deterred from the more extremist ethnic/religious posturing they were previously more inclined to. Such extremism used to be justified by Barisan Nasional politicians, who could refer to the existence of the predominantly Chinese DAP on the one hand and the exclusively Muslim PAS on the other hand. With these two now effectively in alliance, albeit only indirectly, politicians on both sides of the new divide have become less wont to play the old racial and religious games. Undoubtedly, many still do, whether due to force of habit or out of desperation. But the trend is clear and unlikely to be reversed in the near future. If for nothing else, this alone would be an important reason to welcome the development of opposition cooperation and the consequent emergence of the two rival political blocs. But there are other reasons as well.

One might cynically argue that since both Semangat 46 and Mahathir's UMNO share their origins in the old UMNO, there is really no significant difference between the two rivals. At one level, this is true in so far as both claim to be representing and advancing Malay interests, and neither would explicitly criticise, let alone oppose the New Economic Policy (NEP), which has dominated economic policy-making and political debate more generally over the last two decades. The NEP was announced in 1970 — after the post-election race riots of May 1969 — to create the socio-economic conditions for improved ethnic relations by reducing poverty and "restructuring society" to eliminate the identification of race with economic function, especially through state intervention to accelerate the growth of Malay business and professional communities (Jomo 1989).

However, there are important differences beyond this point, at least judging by past policy and practice associated with the two main

protagonists, Mahathir and Razaleigh. Mahathir appears to be far more supportive of foreign investments, probably because he sees foreigners as a preferable partner for the ascendance of Malay capital compared to Chinese business interests, whereas Razaleigh is probably more indifferent between the two choices of partners. Since 1982, Mahathir has been identified with and has been responsible for drastic cuts in public spending and efforts to eliminate what he terms as the "subsidy mentality" by reducing public welfare expenditures except in so far as they are considered necessary to finance the system of political patronage over which his UMNO prevails. Razaleigh, on the other hand, was associated with the growth of public expenditure in the late 1970s as well as the counter-cyclical deficit budget spending of the early 1980s, causing him to be described as more Keynesian in economic policy temperament. Of course, to be fair, Mahathir too was a big spender as far as his heavy industrialisation was concerned — a policy about which Razaleigh was lukewarm at best.

Also, economic policies introduced since mid-1984 by Daim Zainuddin — Razaleigh's replacement as Finance Minister — have often been attributed to Mahathir, rightly or wrongly. Hence, the regressive fiscal reforms since the mid-1980s, apparently inspired by rightwing supply side economic philosophy, plus policies such as privatisation have been identified with Mahathir. Likewise, the reduction of subsidies ostensibly for the poor and the increase of incentives for private investments, especially from abroad, are identified with the Prime Minister (Jomo 1989).

Hence, while Mahathir has not explicitly renounced the NEP, he announced its suspension in early 1986, probably referring to the 30 per cent Bumiputra corporate share target, during the midst of the recent recession, in an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), only reported domestically by the Chinese vernacular press. Quite understandably, such an announcement was to be made only for foreign and domestic Chinese consumption for political reasons. In other words, while Mahathir cannot afford to explicitly abandon the NEP, he has certainly gone about prioritising his own economic policy agenda, necessarily at the expense of the NEP.

Not surprisingly then, while poverty incidence fell from 49 per cent in 1970 to 18 per cent in 1984, it only declined to 17 per cent in 1987. Similarly, the Bumiputera (Malay and other indigenous people's) share of corporate wealth rose from 2.4 per cent in 1970 to 18.7 per cent in 1983, but only increased to 19.4 per cent in 1988, though the

proportion of Bumiputera wealth in private hands rose from 41 per cent in 1983 to 67 per cent in 1988 (Jomo 1989b), reflecting Mahathir's enthusiasm for private, rather than collective, wealth accumulation.

The difference between the two is now emerging more clearly as Razaleigh calls for the reaffirmation of the NEP while Mahathir has initiated the process to formulate a new economic policy for the period after 1990 when the NEP's Outline Perspective Plan (OPP) for the period 1971-90 runs out. While Mahathir is anxious to get on with his own bolder, but also more controversial economic policy priorities — though, of course, without forsaking his political support, especially from the Malay community, by abandoning the NEP — Razaleigh is keen to reaffirm the NEP's original philosophy and objectives while criticising defects in its implementation, especially in the last decade, when Mahathir was the chief steward. This stance may well prove popular with a generation of Malays brought up on and almost addicted to the NEP. Yet, by only reaffirming the NEP's philosophy and objectives, which are broadly acceptable even to the non-Malays, while distancing himself from much of what has been done in the name of the NEP, Razaleigh's commitment to the NEP may not alienate the non-Malays.

But the differences do not simply end here. While some of those who have joined Semangat 46 have done so because of failure within the old UMNO or rejection by Mahathir, key leaders recognise that they cannot get very far simply by wanting to replace Mahathir personally with their own leadership without any substantive or significant policy change. In other words, they recognise that they must offer a combination of both leadership and policy change, and hence are more amenable to alternative policy proposals. Most of those in the old UMNO with damaging skeletons in the closets generally did not dare risk the sanctions which they feared might be imposed against them if they broke with Mahathir's new UMNO and went into the opposition. Those who dared to make the break were probably reasonably confident that they could survive the political and other pressures of breaking ranks. In this sense then, there is some difference between those who joined Semangat 46 compared to those who opted to join Mahathir's UMNO regardless of their sentiments about his leadership.

Perhaps more importantly, Semangat 46 does not dominate the opposition in the same way that UMNO dominates the Barisan Nasional. While UMNO is able to impose its political, economic and



other agenda on the rest of the ruling coalition, Semangat 46 is not in such a commanding position, and hence the cooperation among the opposition parties is among partners who genuinely need one another, and hence is far more equitable than what prevails in the Barisan Nasional.

Historically, PAS has been identified with seeking supposedly Islamic solutions to contemporary Malaysian problems. For many years, especially during the 1970s, under Asri's leadership, its rhetoric was as much Malay as Muslim. However, with the Islamic resurgence sweeping the country from the 1970s, more authentically Islamic ideas began to grow in influence. Asri was ousted in 1982 by a new *ulamak* leadership, somewhat influenced by the then recent Iranian Revolution. Among other things, the new PAS leadership made increasingly strident calls for socio-economic justice, and even sought to mobilise the *mustadhafin* (the meek) against the *mustakbirin* (the powerful). In the mid-1980s, PAS also began to criticise narrow Malay chauvinism, misleadingly termed *assabiyah* (communal solidarity). In mid-1986, PAS forged a limited electoral pact with some of the smaller opposition parties in Peninsular Malaysia other than the DAP (which explicitly rejected cooperation, ostensibly because of PAS's call for an Islamic state), consistent with this line of reasoning. In short, by the mid-1980s, PAS had begun to espouse a progressive populist socio-economic position once again and at least rhetorically rejected Malay chauvinism in favour of more universal and progressive Islamic values.

Besides Semangat 46 and PAS, the other two component parties of APU are Berjasa (To Serve) and Hamim (Muslim Party). Both are splinters from PAS. Berjasa broke away during the 1977-78 Kelantan crisis to join Barisan Nasional to defeat PAS, then under the leadership of Asri. Hamim, on the other hand, was established by Asri when he sensed impending marginalisation by the younger *ulamak* leadership in 1982. Berjasa supported and joined APU from the outset. After Asri unsuccessfully tried to dissolve Hamim to facilitate joining UMNO, the new leadership opted out of the Barisan Nasional to join APU. APU then has all the Islamic parties in the country in its camp, plus Semangat 46, which is composed entirely of Muslim Malays.

During the 1980s, the DAP also underwent some transformation. Originally, the DAP was the Peninsular Malaysian component of Singapore's ruling Peoples Action Party (PAP), but was left stranded after Singapore seceded in August 1965. During Singapore's brief stint as part of Malaysia, the PAP espoused a "Malaysian Malaysia",

hoping to supplant the MCA as UMNO's Chinese partner while also offering itself as an anti-communist alternative to the strongest opposition party outside the East Coast then, the Socialist Front. The DAP continued to be identified with this slogan and corresponding demands through the 1970s. However, after its poor performance in the April 1982 elections, it began to emphasise a new role and image as the main parliamentary opposition party, as a safeguard against the abuses and corruption rapidly growing with the spread of "money politics".

Furthermore, the DAP is, at least nominally, multi-ethnic, and has made occasional serious efforts to recruit Malays into its leadership, which is far more than the non-Malay-based Barisan Nasional parties, including the nominally multi-racial ones, such as the Gerakan, can say for themselves. Also, the DAP has a social democratic political programme inherited indirectly from the PAP's early days as an opposition anti-colonial movement in the 1950s. Although barely known and not given much significance by most DAP leaders, a renewed commitment to this programme could well serve as the basis for more meaningful cooperation with the other opposition parties including PAS. Since PAS has already conceded that it does not envisage the immediate establishment of an Islamic state, while APU is only committed to upholding Islam as a way of life (*ad-deen*), the DAP could well cooperate with PAS without either side compromising principles. A sizeable splinter faction from the MIC under the leadership of M.G. Pandithan — the former "low caste" MIC vice president sacked by MIC president, Samy Vellu — formed the All-Malaysian Indian Progressive Front, or IPF, in mid-1990. The IPF succeeded in mobilising many Indians in a relatively short time, mainly from among relatively poor, working class Indians. While the Indians do not constitute a demographic majority in any electoral constituency, they have a sizeable presence, especially in some urban and rural plantation areas.

The Parti Rakyat (Peoples Party) (PRM) has long advocated and supported the idea of opposition cooperation, having actively participated in the limited electoral pact of 1986. Some of its leaders have been closely identified with the round of opposition unity efforts since late 1988. The party itself changed its political programme and name in 1990 in line with its actual commitment to a Malay-led radical nationalism. However, it has only been able to demonstrate limited electoral support in recent years, in Penang, Johore Baru and Kuala

Lumpur, despite the more widely respected quality of its political analysis and leadership. Some other opposition political parties could well join the emerging opposition coalition, including dissident parties shut out of the ruling BN coalition in Sabah and Sarawak.

Thus, it is clear that the emerging opposition coalition represents a split right through Malaysian society involving all ethnic groups. The emergence of two Malay-led, multi-ethnic, multi-religious blocs is a development without precedent in the Malaysian context. The effort which has come closest historically was probably the Socialist Front (SF), which thrived from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, before it broke up under pressure from official repression, when most of its national leaders were arrested and detained indefinitely without trial, as well as inter-ethnic suspicions and differences on ethnic, language and other related policies. However, the Socialist Front enjoyed more support from the Chinese compared to the other ethnic groups.

#### *Back to the Future*

Some of the more important initiatives from the aftermath of May 1969, i.e. the Razak era, are worthy of reconsideration. A progressive interpretation of the original New Economic Policy (NEP) objectives is still broadly acceptable, i.e. poverty eradication regardless of race and restructuring society to eliminate racial identification with economic function (and class) to create the socio-economic bases for national unity. However, safeguards to avoid abuses in implementation must be introduced, especially to ensure that the real priority is achieving, rather than undermining national unity.

Similarly, the national ideology, the Rukunegara, commits the nation to achieving greater unity, maintaining a democratic way of life, creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation shall be equitably shared, ensuring a liberal approach to Malaysia's rich and diverse cultural traditions, and building a progressive society.

During the Razak period too, the government broadened the ruling coalition and its social base, for example, by trying to develop a framework for cooperation by encouraging tripartism with trade unions and management, supported by a Code of Industrial Harmony. At about the same time, the government became committed to the idea of a "house-owning democracy".

At the international level, Malaysia's non-alignment came to be taken more seriously as it led ASEAN to declare Southeast Asia a zone

of peace, freedom and neutrality (ZOPFAN). Diplomatic relations were established with China, and in 1975, the nationalistic Petroleum Development Act was passed.

To be sure, much more could have been done, and some of these apparently progressive initiatives were either flawed in conception or half-heartedly implemented, while others have actually been reversed since Tun Razak's untimely death in early 1976. The point, however, is that even UMNO's political heritage is not entirely reactionary. Similarly, despite their opportunism, some other component parties in the ruling BN are not without some redeeming value when measured by a progressive political yardstick. Such elements should be encouraged to work with progressive opposition elements to fundamentally reshape the Malaysian political agenda in line with a progressive democratic alternative.

In the case of the existing opposition too, concessions will need to be made all around to deepen Malaysian democracy. The leading opposition party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), secured a fifth of the total votes cast in the 1986 general elections. However, it's seemingly just demand for a "Malaysian Malaysia", with which it has secured considerable non-Malay support, threatens the vast majority of Malays. Yet, by taking its official social democratic platform more seriously, and by continuing to expose and reject corruption and other abuses of power (usually associated with "money politics"), the DAP can become more broadly acceptable, as has already begun to happen in recent years.

The main Malay-based opposition party, the Islamic Party, PAS, secured 17 per cent, or a sixth, of the votes in the 1986 election. The government's Islamisation policy has enabled UMNO to outflank PAS on a range of Muslim issues, driving PAS into an ideological corner. It is also increasingly clear that PAS has enjoyed electoral support mainly because it was the main Malay-based opposition party, rather than because of its ideological platform. In any case, if it can develop a better-informed and more comprehensive critique of the *status quo*, premised on progressive and universal Islamic values, and can compromise on its rhetorical and theologically-unnecessary demand for a theocratic state, PAS will not only be strengthened, but the existing ideological obstacles to closer cooperation with the non-Muslim opposition parties can be overcome.

The 1987 split within UMNO, resulting in the emergence of Semangat 46, has undoubtedly been a development of great signifi-

cance. It is now increasingly clear that the split is irreconcilable, at least in the medium term. Consequently, the entire Malaysian political scenario has been changing, raising the likelihood of the consolidation of a variant of bipartisan politics, with two rival Malay-led, multi-ethnic coalitions. Even if the two UMNO factions are essentially the same (which is not the case), the very fact of open competition between the two factions is likely to eventually result in some democratization, widening of political space for independent and new initiatives, as well as the strengthening of the independent and neutral institutions so crucial to democratization. Although this development could temporarily exacerbate competing Malay claims to legitimacy, involving more extremist posturing, it could result in a longer-run decline in ethnic politicking, as policy issues and governance practices increasingly become the subject of debate between the ethnically similar rival camps — thus reducing the far more explosive trend towards ethnic politicking.

In the October 1990 general election, there was a significant decline in Malay political support for the ruling Barisan Nasional, as well as a further decline in Chinese electoral support for it. However, the gain in Malay support for the opposition in a heavily gerrymandered first past the post electoral system was insufficient to deprive the BN of success in the elections. In Malaysia's electoral system, the opposition was only able to secure open support in Sabah — arguably at the expense of Muslim Malay support in the peninsula — but was unable to do so in Sarawak because of the different nature of political interests involved there. Furthermore, the virtual (print and broadcast) media monopoly enjoyed by the BN continued to undermine efforts for more comprehensive coalescing of the opposition involving both the DAP and PAS.

Although Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM), the People's Party, has lost by relatively slim margins wherever it stood, it can only mount good candidates in a few areas. Moreover, it is unclear to what extent people voted for the credible opposition candidates it fielded rather than for the party platform. Given the repression against the left over several decades, PRM's lack of access to the mass media, the declining credibility of socialism, both nationally and internationally (especially since the seventies), and the overwhelming significance of ethnic and religious politics in recent decades, it correctly recognised that there is not a tremendous socialist groundswell just waiting to be unleashed. In trying to be more relevant to the contemporary political situation, in early 1990, after reappraising the situation, the

PRM "diluted" its socialist goals, and dropped the word "Socialist" from its name, thus resuming its original, populist name, and pledged to work for feasible progressive social change, in cooperation with the existing opposition political parties as well as other sympathetic and open-minded political forces.

The Communist Party of Malaya's peace treaty with the Malaysian government in December 1989 has officially brought an end to the hostilities prevailing since June 1948. The Mahathir administration's acknowledgement of the CPM's role in and contribution to the anti-colonial struggles against British and Japanese rule is a promising sign of its willingness to undertake bold initiatives with the long-term national interest in mind.

Perhaps even more importantly, with the end of the armed insurgency, there will probably be greater recognition of the dangers of communal politics. This could well lead to new repression ostensibly to stem communal conflict, but it could also contribute to the resurgence of new political rivalries along ideological and policy, rather than ethnic lines, thus helping to reverse the growth and triumph of communalism which occurred due to the virtual elimination of the multi-ethnic parliamentary left in the mid-sixties.

With repression against leftist political parties, trade unions and personalities, ethnic politics soon dominated Malaysian political culture by the late sixties, erupting in the ugly race riots of May 1969. From the early seventies, new dissenting public interest organisations began to grow in significance, especially in the urban centres. Although constrained by government restrictions as well as their own terms of reference and limited constituencies, such movements have mobilised new constituencies and raised new kinds of issues, especially among the urban middle class, but also among workers and squatters, and even among rural communities. These social movements can provide useful input into the necessary discourse involved in formulating a progressive alternative.

Of course, all this is easier said than done. To make matters worse, ethnic divisions, religious tensions and ideological differences are often further complicated by personal rancour. The tasks seem quite formidable.

### *Democratisation in Malaysia?*

The question to be posed then is what do these political developments have to do with democratisation. The recent political developments

reviewed above have been accompanied by a deepening of democratic sensibilities among the Malaysian population generally, and especially the Malay majority. Musa's resignation in early 1986, the narrow defeat of Team B in the April 1987 UMNO elections, the arrest and detention without trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA) of a broad variety of dissidents from October 1987, the dismissal of the Lord President of the Supreme Court and some of the judges who rallied to his cause, in the late eighties, and the media campaign against the seemingly helpless Malay hereditary rulers in early 1993 have heightened awareness of civic rights, the rule of law, media bias and a sense of fair-play among the Malaysian population, which seemed to be rather indifferent to such concerns previously. There is growing widespread repugnance of the manifestations of "money politics", whether it involves vote-buying at the community level, self-aggrandisement of politicians from the ruling coalition or the disbursement of lucrative contracts and privatisation opportunities.

However, it should be emphasised that many of these concerns have not necessarily involved a deepening appreciation of democratisation involving active citizenship. There is very little widespread criticism of the ostensibly democratic institutions in the country, but mainly grumbling regret and muted outrage at how these institutions have been abused. One cannot really speak of a generalised widespread desire among members of the public to recapture control over their own lives. Most of the existing opposition politicians have not made such a critique, let alone tried to popularise it. It has been much easier, and therefore more tempting to make criticisms of the abuses which have taken place without fundamentally challenging the framework and institutions.

In this respect, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have not done much better. Aliran — the leading social reform organisation, which has a small membership, but a considerable following, especially among the educated urban middle-class — has long advocated a return to the original Constitution at the time of independence. But even this has not animated much popular interest, except among a few interested in issues of constitutional law. In recent years, Aliran has advanced a more profound and comprehensive "green" critique of Malaysian development and modernisation. But this too has made little impact on popular thinking except among the very limited circles who have long been interested in or have advocated alternative lifestyles.

Other NGOs have had even less of an impact on popular political thinking. The Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) and its many related organisations have a tremendous reputation internationally and a huge machinery by Malaysian NGO standards. It has widely circulated its monthly newsletters among school children as well as members of the public. Through these means, it has successfully highlighted many corporate abuses, adversely affecting consumers and the environment, as well as many instances of government oversight and neglect. Yet, it has not been able to significantly enhance democratic sensibilities more generally, perhaps because its main efforts at mobilisation are limited to school children and a few of the many communities adversely affected by such abuses, and its deliberate eschewing of politics and political analysis.

Perhaps most importantly, ethnic, religious, language and other differences and their political manipulation have continued to ensure that the sense of nationhood among most Malaysians has been limited and distorted. This has seriously undermined an important prerequisite for the development of active citizenship. It is difficult to advance a greater sense of civic rights and responsibilities in a polity to which one has an ambiguous relationship. In Malaysia, it is widely believed that citizenship rights are ethnically differentiated. There are also growing perceptions of further differentiation along religious, linguistic, regional, gender as well as class lines, and of course, political affiliation and influence. All this retards the popular assertion of democratic rights and distorts the public's sense of civic responsibility, and ultimately undermines any serious efforts at a more profound democratisation.

The challenge for democratic Malaysians, then, is how to deepen the democratisation process in Malaysia's specific conditions. Firstly, it would be crucial to support, encourage, deepen and spread the existing ferment due to the political crises of the late 1980s because all the main issues involved heighten the popular sense of the violation of democracy (see CARPA 1988). But the added task for democrats would be to advance the process and popular aspirations much further by promoting critical popular analysis of the problems and inadequacies of the existing democratic institutions.

Although likely to be considered utopian or premature in the context of contemporary Malaysian political culture(s), democracy must be eventually understood as involving more than electoral rituals, the outcomes of which have been increasingly influenced, over time, by



the balance of (economic and political) power. Far more accountable institutions and processes need to be developed, not only at federal and state levels, but also at municipal, community and workplace levels. Apart from industrial democracy, the notion of economic democracy has to be broadened to also include greater worker participation and control of the workplace. Correspondingly, questions of peasant access to land and other agrarian reforms can be easily reformulated and recast within a broader framework of democratisation involving all spheres of life. Similarly, issues of accountability as well as checks and balances fit very well into a programme of greater economic democracy. Measures to develop a fairer electoral system are also likely to be broadly welcomed, even among Malays, if Malay pre-eminence is not directly threatened. Already, there is considerable concern about:

- the urgent need for strict restrictions on electoral campaign financing. Alternatively, limited financing by the government alone will be well received by a population increasingly sickened by "money-politics".
- the accuracy of electoral rolls, serious accusations of double registration, continued registration of long deceased persons, and the inability of the Elections Commission to function effectively to ensure that all citizens desiring to vote can actually exercise their right to vote. In these circumstances, it may be desirable to eliminate the separate exercise of voter registration, and simply rely on existing national registration to determine voter eligibility.
- the election campaign period has been significantly reduced over time. Also, public rallies, which were disallowed from 1978, ostensibly because of the communist insurgency, should now be allowed with the Government's peace treaty with the Communist Party of Malaya in December 1989.
- the abuse of government personnel, machinery and other resources, especially by political parties and candidates of the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition. On the other hand, existing restrictions on political participation by trade unionists and academics should be withdrawn in the interest of fuller democratic participation.
- the print, and especially the broadcast media are owned and controlled mainly by political interests associated with the ruling coalition as well as the government itself, and have records of biased and tendentious reporting and non-reporting of political statements and developments, in favour of the ruling coalition.

This problem can only be overcome by ensuring greater freedom to publish and broadcast regulated by journalist ethics, rather than by political preferences or ownership. The modern media can play an important constructive role in enhancing participatory democracy, instead of merely serving as propaganda tools for the powers that be.

- there is also great concern about abuse in the voting and vote-counting procedures. Postal votes have tended to be overwhelmingly in favour of the ruling coalition; the new procedures for vote counting at the polling stations themselves will favour parties and candidates with large machineries, and also the ruling coalition, because voters may fear penalisation of their communities for voting for the opposition.
- the Dewan Negara (Senate, or upper house of parliament) is currently fully appointed. Instead, most members of the upper house should be elected on the basis of proportional representation according to party slates. Additionally, some members of the upper house should be elected by certain restricted constituencies or special interest groups for more effective representation of their particular interests, for example, women, trade unions, small minority ethnic groups (e.g. the aboriginal Orang Asli and the smaller tribal communities in Sabah and Sarawak), the handicapped, religious communities and so on.
- municipal, village and other councils should be duly elected, and their proceedings should also be open to the public and well-publicised. This can help ensure greater participation, transparency and accountability of elected representatives in much smaller and more intimate communities compared to elected representatives in the state assemblies and federal parliament.

Besides such measures to strengthen checks and balances, many other reforms affecting other spheres of Malaysian political life are urgently required to create conditions for more truly participatory democracy. The existing heritage of repressive legislation, which has been arbitrarily abused by those in power to consolidate their own positions, must be systematically dismantled. Legislation such as the Internal Security Act (ISA), the Printing Presses and Publications Act, the Police Act, the Universities and University Colleges Act, the Official Secrets Act, the Broadcasting Act and so on must be repealed or amended drastically to ensure basic freedoms, civil liberties and human rights.

Perhaps even more importantly, there is a great deal of work that has to be done to create the political and cultural conditions for the citizenry to actively participate in democratic life. The most obvious areas of urgent reform in this regard are clearly the educational system and the media, but a great number of other institutions and practices will also have to be subject to profound progressive transformation to create an institutional framework conducive to popular democratic initiatives. The problem, of course, is that all these reforms are unlikely to be initiated without tremendous pressure for such reforms. And as long as Malaysians allow themselves to be manipulated by politicians playing ethnic boogies, it is difficult to envisage greater pressures for democratisation.

Yet, quite unexpectedly, the political crises of the second half of the 1980s have undermined the old ethnic political institutional framework, heightened some democratic sensibilities and may inadvertently strengthen checks and balances in the long run (by increasing and changing the character of political competition), due to the desperate or self-aggrandising abuses of power which have come to public attention. All the political forces responsible for these developments are not particularly democratic or progressive-minded. Yet, there is little doubt that these developments have brought about a profound sea change in Malaysian, especially Malay politics. Whether the democratic agenda will be significantly enhanced by this turn of events remains to be seen, and will depend greatly on whether and how democratic and other progressive forces choose to participate in what is going on at this critical juncture in Malaysian history.

## Notes

1. For definitions and details, see Gomez (1990, 1991), Jomo (1989), Mehmet (1986) Chandra.
2. However, in 1978, the state of Kelantan had state legislative assembly elections soon after a state of emergency was declared in late 1977. These circumstances ensured that the ruling federal Barisan Nasional (BN or National Front) coalition successfully defeated the Islamic Party (PAS), which had dominated the Kelantan state government since 1959.
3. The United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) was set up in 1946 by a broad coalition of nationalist Malays to resist the British colonial Malayan Union proposal. In 1956, its leadership changed and its slogan switched from Malay survival (*Hidup Melayu*) to Independence (*Merdeka*) (Funston 1980). Later, the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was set up by the conservative Chinese business-based elite with British support, as an

alternative to the predominantly Chinese Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) (Heng 1988). The Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) started off in 1946 with the nationalist aspirations of the Indian Congress, and aligned itself with the more radical movements in the 1940s. In the 1950s, however, Dravidian and then Hindu and Tamil chauvinism were used by an ambitious new leadership to take over the party and change its orientation to more conservative goals (Stenson 1980).

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## THE PRESS IN MALAYSIA IN THE EARLY 1990s Corporatisation, Technological Innovation and the Middle Class

*Francis Loh Kok Wah and Mustafa K Anuar*

The press and other mass media are rightly regarded as social institutions that wield considerable power and influence. They are seen as having significant roles in modern society. This image of the media has brought forth different reactions from different categories of people. In the Third World in particular, the ruling elites generally contend that the media must be consciously "guided" and subsequently harnessed and used profitably as instruments to promote "national development" and maintain "national security". Critics of government, on the other hand, fear that a controlled mass media — which at times are considered as ideological state apparatuses — would be used to promote the interests of the political and economic elites, and that this therefore leads to marginalization of the welfare of the poor, needy and minority groups. Still others, private entrepreneurs in particular, propound rather optimistically, that the media should be left to market forces in order to ensure that the media provide better coverage and equal opportunities for the "sovereign consumers". These opinions regarding the mass media imply a common recognition of the power and influence of the omnipresent media.

The origin of this recognition of the role and status of the media can be traced to the period between the two World Wars when intellectuals, particularly those in Europe, expressed grave concern over the powerful influence wielded by the "mass media of communication", then very much a new phenomenon (Curran *et al.*, 1982: 11). Certain factors account for this concern then. For one, the new technology of communications, in the forms of rotary press, film and radio, had in its wake created mass audiences unprecedented in the history of human communication. The new communication media,

in other words, appeared to have had a greater and more penetrative reach: hence, the fear of media power. Secondly, the process of rapid urbanization and industrialization in Europe was thought to have given birth to "a society that was volatile, unstable, rootless, alienated and inherently susceptible to manipulation" (Curran *et al.*, 1982: 11). An individual in such a society was seen to be atomized and, accordingly, an easy victim of mass communication; a notion that was made popular and reinforced by what was happening in Nazi Germany and those parts of Europe that fell under fascist rule.

In their efforts to seek explanations for the rise and triumph of fascism, a group of German intellectuals (which included Herbert Marcuse and Theodor Adorno) who had opposed Nazism, and who later were collectively referred to as the "Frankfurt School" theorists, focused their attention on the role of the media. They argued that the mass media of film and radio were crucial in influencing people in a mass society that was created out of industrialization. From their point of view, therefore, the media were all-powerful propaganda machines capable of brainwashing what seemed to be defenceless people.

These Frankfurt School thinkers were also worried that the American mass culture, the creature created by the new mass media, was capable of destroying what was deemed as superior European cultural traditions. English literary critic F.R. Leavis and cultural theorist Matthew Arnold shared similar apprehensions of the dangers posed by mass culture (Curran *et al.* 1982).

This notion of mass society was later criticized because it assumed that an industrialized society necessarily consists of isolated individuals who have lost their political, cultural and moral moorings. Individuals in such a society are seen as not only dispossessed of social differences such as race, class, sex, and age, but are also assumed to be devoid of professional, religious and cultural affiliations, political alliances, and social, local and regional groupings, etc. However, for the critics, modern society is not made up of such homogenous and rootless individuals. There exist social differences and different social groupings, some of which may be formal interest groups. Consequently, the effect of mass media on modern society is uneven. Responses to them are also varied.

Such criticism paved the way for liberal-pluralist theorists to challenge the gloomy analysis of the Frankfurt School. Some even argued that the media had little influence on public opinion. And if the media had any influence, asserted pluralists like Lazarsfeld and

Schramm (Curran et al 1988), they only reinforced opinions already present among the people concerned.

But subsequent studies using this approach brought forth conflicting conclusions. It was found, for instance, that there were people whose views were influenced and changed to a certain degree by the media. Other studies suggested that people were selective and they consciously and actively made use of the media for their own purposes and gratifications. Media effects are indeed a complex matter, and they need to be examined within specific historical contexts. As Seaton (1988: 233-4) maintained, "[t]he media may exert great influence over one group, but have little impact on the other members of a society". At any rate, latter-day liberal-pluralist theorists are less dismissive of the influential role of the media.

Communications and cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1977) is of the opinion that the media reinforces and legitimizes the present power structure. He believed that the media divert the public's attention from real social problems by reporting pseudo-events and magnifying trivial issues. In addition, the structuring and selection of media content have the effect of making the media a powerful agency of social control. They dampen opposition to the *status quo*, apart from maintaining and rectifying consensus when the occasion warrants. In a sense, he returns us to the criticism of the media as first raised by the Frankfurt School theorists without, however, sharing their negative attitudes towards mass culture. Although Raymond Williams shares Hall's orientations in this regard, he was, however, more positive about human agency (cited in Curran *et al.*, 1982). While people, particularly the working class, are receivers of media texts, nonetheless, he maintained that they still have some freedom to negotiate the meanings emanating from these texts. In other words, the reader concerned has the opportunity and capacity to re-interpret a given media text within his/her own ideological orientation. Human agency has to be taken into account.

What these liberal-pluralists and cultural critics have in common is that they view the media as having a political role in society. But here's where their commonality ends. For the pluralists believe that all groups in society have equal opportunity to express their views via the mass media, whereas the cultural critics contend that the unequal power structure would necessarily restrict the movement of the media in such a way as to promote the interests of the dominant class.

Political economists such as Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (1991: 28) asserted that it is highly misguided for the pluralists to hail the notion of "free market" as being unproblematic, and as having the capability of providing opportunities for the consumers to exercise their options. But they also criticize the cultural critics for over-emphasizing the audiences' freedom to negotiate meanings found in texts. Both approaches, they added, leave the false impression that there is such a thing as consumer sovereignty, as these approaches do not adequately locate their discussions within the wider social contexts where limits to re-reading and re-interpretation of texts can be seen.

### **Our Approach**

While we recognize that the media do have influence over our hearts and minds, and that there exist structures that frame the shape of the media products and texts, nonetheless we argue that there is still some space for the consuming public to exercise their own reading and interpretation.

In this study of the Malaysian press over the past decade with particular emphasis on developments in the early 1990s, we assume the existence of powerful print media which are able to influence a wide range of the Malaysian reading public. Wary of this, the ruling coalition in Malaysia has taken various steps to ensure its control over the Malaysian press. This is in line with other kinds of controls which have been introduced over the years, the sum of which has led to a general erosion of civil liberties that others have discussed elsewhere (Chandra 1986 and 1989; Saravanamuttu 1987; Means 1991 and Kahn and Loh 1992). The particular mechanisms utilised to achieve control of the press is discussed in section one of this article. Section two focuses on the alternative press in Malaysia which, it is argued, is very weak. The following third section discusses technological innovations in the print media in the early 1990s. It is suggested that this turn, in part, was an attempt to make an otherwise predictable muzzled press more attractive. More importantly it marked the corporatisation of the Malaysian press, including its increasing dependence on, and competition for advertising revenue. These points are elaborated upon in the fourth section. Taken together, sections three and four, therefore, focus our attention on the role of market forces in shaping the nature of the mainstream press. Finally, we discuss the rapid



growth of industrial capitalism and the consolidation of the middle class in Malaysia, and their effects on the nature of the press generally.

Hence while we acknowledge the hegemonic tendencies of the government-controlled Malaysian press, nonetheless, there is recognition of the role of market forces, of class formation and change, and of counter-hegemonic interventions by fractions of the non-ruling social classes. The analysis attempted here, therefore, is a combination of the political economy and cultural theory approaches.

### **The Muzzled Malaysian Press**

Government control of the press is common in many developing countries, achieved through closure of critical publications, and harassment and sometimes detention of journalists. In Malaysia, this is achieved in three ways: through coercive legislations, ownership and control of the major publications, and through promotion of a culture of "responsible development journalism" among practitioners of the profession.

Legislations to control the press were inherited from the colonial regime and have been enforced since the first days of Independence. Over the years these have been amended, each time resulting in more control of the press. The justification for introducing these controls, traditionally, have been the threats posed by communism and communalism.

The principal law with regards to press control is the Printing Presses Ordinance 1948 which was revised in 1971 as the Printing Press Act. This was further revised as the Printing Presses and Publication Act in 1984 and amended again in 1988.<sup>1</sup> Under the Act all newspapers and regular publications are to possess a publishing permit issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which has to be re-applied for annually. The Act further permits the Minister to revoke the permit should it be deemed that the publication concerned was acting in a way that was prejudicial to the nation's security. It was under this provision that the permits of four newspapers were suddenly revoked in October 1987 following "Operasi Lalang" when 106 people were detained.<sup>2</sup> One of these newspapers had developed a reputation for investigative reporting. It was not until a reshuffle of its managerial and editorial staff had been conducted that it was allowed to resume publication in March 1988. Since then it has lost all semblance of its former liberal self.

The Act was amended in 1988 to disallow judicial review of the Home Minister's decision in revoking or suspending a permit if he considers it prejudicial to public order. In late 1991, a new condition was imposed upon the publishing permits of *Rocket* and *Harakah*, respectively, the organs of the opposition parties, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Parti Islam (PAS). Henceforth their distribution are to be restricted to party members. The same ruling was also applied upon the new publications of two other opposition parties, Parti Rakyat and Semangat '46, when permits for these new publications were approved. Following this, the DAP applied to the High Court for a declaration that the new condition imposed by the Home Minister was null and void and contrary to constitutional provisions for freedom of expression. Significantly, the Court rejected the application declaring that the Minister's imposition of the new condition is in keeping with the new law. Most recently in 1992, the permit of a new publication *Mingguan Waktu* was revoked on grounds that its very first issue had contained reports prejudicial to public order: it had carried a critical review of the Prime Minister's tenure in office. From the above discussion it can be concluded that strict legislations<sup>3</sup> exist to control the press. And contrary to the call by the opposition parties and critics that the government replace the Official Secrets Act with a Freedom of Information Act, the government has announced plans to draft a "National Information Policy" instead. According to the Information Minister Mohamed Rahmat, the policy will "act as a guideline for all government agencies, the private sector and the mass media towards producing a well-informed society and a progressive nation" (*NST*, 7 September 1992)

A second way of controlling the press nowadays is through ownership and control of the major newspapers in the country by the component parties of the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN). This effectively began in the early 1970s, following an amendment to the Printing Presses Act 1971.

Actually UMNO's (United Malays National Organisation, the dominant party in BN) involvement in the press began much earlier in 1961 when certain leaders took over control of *Utusan Melayu* and its printing company. But its involvement became especially significant in 1972 when it acquired an 80 per cent stake in the Straits Times Sdn Bhd (owned by non-Malaysians) which it then renamed the New Straits Times Press (NSTP). This move was justified on grounds that locals should control the major presses in an independent country. A

new company Fleet Holdings was set up for this purpose. In 1973 NSTP was listed as a public company and a percentage of Fleet's shares sold to the public. However, UMNO's stake was further increased in 1984 when the Singapore-based Straits Times sold off its 20 per cent share of the company. It should be noted that UMNO's stake in Fleet Holdings is represented through trustees and nominee companies (Gomez 1990: 52-66). The control of Utusan Melayu Press by individual politicians was subsequently transferred to Fleet Holdings as well.<sup>4</sup>

A year later in June 1985 NSTP acquired a 70 per cent stake in Shin Min Daily News Sdn Bhd which produces the third largest Chinese language newspaper in the country. In December 1988 this stake was further increased to almost 90 per cent (Gomez 1990: 62). In April 1990, many of these interests were handed over to Renong Bhd, the new investment arm of UMNO Baru<sup>5</sup> (Gomez 1991a). In this way, therefore, UMNO Baru now owns and has the final editorial say over a large stable of publications in the NSTP<sup>6</sup> and Utusan Melayu groups. In January 1993, Renong sold its stake in NSTP and Sistem Televisyen Malaysia Berhad (STMB, which owns the only private television station TV3) for RM800 million (RM616.6 million for NSTP and RM183.4 million for STMB) to the top executives of the two units who, after a few days, named Malaysian Resources Corporation Berhad (MRCB, up till then a property development company controlled by the Hong Leong Group) as the takeover vehicle. Although these changes have important financial implications (see Gomez 1993), and "transfer[red] control of the powerful media and broadcasting operations to a group of executives close to Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim" (*Star*, 5 January 1993), they did not disrupt UMNO Baru's control of NSTP (and TV3) whatsoever. Among other things, the NSTP chairman (a new person, the former one being named to head TV3) has been appointed the new MRCB chairman while the top NSTP and STMB executives have all been named to the MRCB board (*Star*, 9 January 1993). Furthermore, through Hume Industries, UMNO Baru has also been able to exert a measure of control over the Nanyang Press which publishes the *Nanyang Siang Pau*, one of the two major Chinese-language dailies.<sup>7</sup> And in July 1992, it was announced that Nanyang Press, in turn, has taken over 95 per cent control of China Press (which publishes another Chinese daily) and Life Publishers for RM57.2 million (*Star*, 19 July 1992).

Meanwhile, Huaren Holdings Sdn Bhd, an investment subsidiary of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA, the major Chinese party

in the BN), acquired 67.35 per cent of Star Publications (M) Sdn Bhd in 1979 which publishes the English daily *The Star* and other magazines.<sup>8</sup> In 1981, it further acquired the Chinese daily *Malaya Thung Pao* which it renamed *Tong Pao* (Gomez 1992: 399-400). By 1987, Huaren Holdings' stake in Star Publications was 78 per cent. This was reduced to 58 per cent in January 1990 when a 20 per cent stake was sold to IGB Corp, which later sold the stake to Berjaya Corporation (Gomez 1992: 400).<sup>9</sup>

In turn, three Tamil dailies (financially less lucrative and not corporatised) are in the hands of present and past leaders of the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), the Indian-based party in the BN coalition. One of these is *Thinamurasu*. Because of a split in the MIC in the late 1980s, one of these dailies has fallen into the hands of a group opposed to the present MIC leadership. This is the *Malaysia Nanban*, in a sense the replacement to *Tamil Osai* which went defunct in the late 1980s but whose editor now heads *Nanban*. But the cream of Tamil dailies, the *Tamil Nesan* continues to be owned by Datin Indirani (the wife of Datuk Samy Vellu, the present MIC president) and other family members (Ramanathan 1992: 11).

The situation *vis-a-vis* the Sabah and Sarawak dailies is not very different. As regional newspapers, they are less lucrative and therefore they remain uncorporatised. In Sarawak, interests related to the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), the dominant partner in the ruling BN Tiga coalition, own and control the *Sarawak Tribune* and *People's Mirror* today. The third English daily *Borneo Post* is principally owned by the See Hua Group headed by Lau Hui Siong who is closely related to SUPP (Sarawak United Peoples Party, the Chinese component party in the BN Tiga Sarawak government). The group also publishes the *See Hua Daily News*, and from February 1993, the *Sin Hua Evening News* as well (NST, 9 February 1993).

In Sabah, the oldest newspaper *The Sabah Times* was principally owned by interests related to Harris Salleh (the former Chief Minister and leader of Parti Berjaya, the ruling BN component party in the state) up until the late 1980s. It has now passed into the hands of Kopeks, a cooperative whose members comprise government employees and a local management company, Pacific Strategic Sdn Bhd, closely identified with leaders of UMNO Sabah (NST, 21 January 1993). In turn, the present ruling party, Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS, which is opposed to the BN) has control over a new newspaper *Borneo Mail* which is owned by interests associated with the party. Another

newspaper, *The Daily Express* and most of the Chinese presses with limited circulation are generally owned by private companies and editorially independent (Loh 1992: 10-13).

It can be concluded, therefore, that the restructuring of the press that has occurred since the early 1970s has resulted in clear control of the major Malay, English and Tamil newspapers by BN parties. It is only a small Tamil daily and a Sabah regional newspaper that have ended up in the hands of non-BN parties. In the case of the Chinese newspapers, however, the situation is slightly different. Apart from the *Nanyang*, *Shin Min*, and *China Press*, most of the other Chinese dailies remain independent.<sup>10</sup> This includes the *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, one of the two major Chinese dailies. In 1988, however, when *Sin Chew* was experiencing cash problems following its closure by the government under "Operasi Lalang", it was resuscitated by Sibu-based Rimbanan Hijau under the control of the Sarawak Tiong family (*Star*, 4 December 1992) which is principally involved in the timber industry and which has very close ties with the Sarawak BN Chief Minister, Taib Mahmud and other members of his cabinet.<sup>11</sup>

Yet another way in which control is exerted over the press is via the promotion and internalization of a culture of "responsible development journalism" among Malaysian journalists themselves. Government leaders have always stressed the inappropriateness of Western-style journalism for a multi-ethnic developing nation like Malaysia and have encouraged the development of a "journalism with social responsibility" instead. In fact, the present Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamed, has questioned the extent to which freedom of the press really exists in the West on the grounds that the press is monopolised by particular interests.<sup>12</sup> He has been critical, too, of foreign journalists whom he accuses of misreporting, sometimes with malicious intent, on Malaysia thereby abusing that press freedom (Lent 1991: 39-40). Leaders like Anwar Ibrahim, the Finance Minister, have made similar comments (*BH*, 22 January 1992).

What this implies is that there is no such thing as absolute press freedom in the West itself, that Western journalists tend to abuse the freedom they have, and that controls in Malaysia are not so out of place after all. For instance, Dr Mahathir Mohamed has told journalists that "we would not die if we did not know about something. Don't be too fanatic about the right to know" (cited in Lent 1991: 39).<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the local press should be supportive of government efforts to maintain political stability and promote economic development on the one hand, and practise self-censorship on the other.

But it is not only the government leaders who harbour such opinions. Senior practising journalists themselves have said the same. Samad Ismail, the former managing editor of NST for one rejects the Western notion of "unrestricted press freedom" which theoretically allows for "a free market place of ideas". For him this notion is based on the false assumption that all groups and individuals have equal access to the media. Additionally, a plural society like Malaysia's cannot for long withstand the rigours of unrestricted press since irresponsible reporting on sensitive matters can easily pit one community against another. He advocates instead "development journalism" and citing William Hacten in *The World News Prism* (1981) defines it as a medium which "is controlled by the Government and mobilised to serve national goals in development, political integration, and the elimination of poverty, diseases and illiteracy" (Samad Ismail in NST, 12 Oct 1992). This kind of journalism:

...challenges the idea that news must be sensational or exciting or gripping. While its practitioners agree that the media should hold up a mirror to society, they question the tendency of the Western press to angle the looking glass in such a way as to highlight the least flattering features of Asia and exaggerate the warts....

As practised in this country, it does not preclude investigative reporting although our approach is a lot more cautious than that of our Western counterparts.

We may point to a possible wrong but we do not endeavour to play judge, jury and executioner.

Malaysian media practitioners are cautious for good reason.

Opinions such as this, therefore, have come to dominate the thinking of most of the managers of Malaysian media including those in control of the press. While the criticisms of the Western media are valid and the goals of development journalism as stated by Samad Ismail noble and worth adopting, its practice does not square up to the pronounced theory.<sup>14</sup> A quick survey of the opinions expressed by some of these press managers in their regular columns — NST's Kadir Jasin in "Other Thots" and *The Star's* V.K. Chin in "Comments" (discontinued as of July 1993) for instance — readily reveals that they rarely ever take on the government even when development goals are thwarted.<sup>15</sup> Whichever the case, this notion of responsible development journalism is certainly taking hold over many press managers and journalists.<sup>16</sup>

For Zaharom Nain (1990), an observer of the Malaysian media, this almost total abandonment of some of the most basic canons of

professional journalism is recent. It followed in the wake of "Operasi Lalang" in 1987. Prior to that, *The Star* at least, engaged in what it itself termed "constructive criticism" of the government. It provided space as well in the shape of its "Letters Page" for alternative, even oppositional viewpoints. Popular columns previously written by respected critics such as Tan Sri Tan Chee Khoo (a former Opposition Leader in Parliament) and Tunku Abdul Rahman (the first Prime Minister of Malaysia who, prior to his death in December 1990, had become increasingly critical of Dr Mahathir's government) have also disappeared from its pages. Hence the mainstream mass media nowadays "obliquely toe the line, purportedly for 'progress, national stability and national interest' — without much assessment as to what these terms mean" (*Ibid*: 20).

Whichever the case, the net effect of coercive legislations — in particular the Printing Presses and Publications Act, ownership and control of the major newspapers by the ruling BN parties, and the emergence of a culture of "responsible development journalism" among at least press managers — is a muzzled press. Consequently, there are several noticeable characteristics of Malaysian newspapers. Firstly, apart from important foreign news, the major stories of the day are matters pertaining to the government and the ruling parties: these range from serious developments favourable to themselves as well as trivia. Scandals and other incidents detrimental to the government's or ruling parties' reputation, however, are rarely reported.

Secondly, and in contrast to the above, only negative news of the opposition are widely reported, and often, sensationalised. Facts are even distorted to paint the opposition parties and sometimes, the unions and public interest societies as well, in bad light. In most instances, these parties are denied any opportunity whatsoever to reply to these accusations and distortions. This was clearly evident in the 1990 general elections (Mustafa 1990 and Tan 1991). The only time when treatment of the opposition appears fair is when there occurs a coincidence of opinion between the opposition and the government. This occurred in January and February 1993, for instance, when some of the opposition parties supported the government's effort to remove the legal immunity of the Malay rulers. Otherwise, there is almost a complete lack of information about the opinions and activities of these groups.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, there is little investigative reporting on the various scandals and serious problems that besiege the government from time

to time. Neither is there critical commentary and analysis of important local political and economic developments.<sup>18</sup>

### The Alternative Press

There does exist an alternative press in Malaysia. However, it is by no means comparable to the mainstream press. Circulation of such publications is very limited and circumscribed. The alternative press does not include a single daily. They are weeklies or monthlies. In fact, some of them are not even published regularly.

Moreover, in contrast to the mainstream press, those in the alternative press are not corporatised and have access to very limited financial resources.<sup>19</sup> This means that they are unable to employ large full-time, let alone well-trained staff, or maintain a network of offices throughout the country for reporting, distribution and production duties.

It is misleading therefore to argue, as government spokespeople are wont to do, that the presence of the alternative press is evidence that freedom of the press exists in Malaysia. The fact of the matter is that the future of the alternative press is a precarious one.

The alternative press may be divided into three types. The first group comprises the publications of the opposition parties: PAS' *Harakah* (a weekly), DAP's *Rocket* (a monthly) and Parti Rakyat's *Berita Rakyat* (a monthly which, however, has been rather irregular). The first two have been in existence since the 1980s while the last only began publishing in late 1991. *Media Malaysia*, a magazine belonging to Semangat '46, began publishing even later, beginning from late 1992.

The circulation of *Rocket* and *Harakah* rose rapidly from October 1987 as a result of "Operasi Lalang", the closure of four newspapers and the reticence of the remaining dailies in reporting about the ISA arrests and its aftermath. Subsequent events like the amendments to various laws — the Printing Presses and Publications Act, the Police Act and the Societies Act, the government's assault on the judiciary, and the UMNO split were highlighted in the two publications allowing them to maintain good sales. Their circulation probably peaked in 1990 as the nation prepared for general elections.

A substantial part of the *Rocket* was devoted to reproducing the parliamentary speeches and press statements of the DAP leaders dealing with the issues mentioned above, and on other political developments. In this regard it was a useful source of alternative



views. Good sales during this period allowed the DAP to use multi-coloured pictures occasionally in its front and back pages making it more attractive. At any rate it maintained only two full-time staff members and largely depended on the party's branches and members to help distribute the publication. Because it was a monthly, however, it tended to be late in some of these commentaries.

This posed less of a problem to *Harakah* since it is a weekly. Apart from speeches and statements of PAS leaders on many of the same national issues and reports of developments within the party, the weekly also carries features on foreign affairs especially in Muslim countries. Articles on Islamic matters are also featured.

With the conclusion of the 1990 elections and the BN's return to power, sales of the *Rocket*, in particular, faltered. This was less true of *Harakah* since it came to power in the state of Kelantan. However, the imposition of the new regulation prohibiting sale of these publications to the public in 1991 has hurt the two publications alike. Whereas they used to be available in newsvendor stalls throughout the country, that is no longer the case. Nowadays, they are only made available to the public at party functions, at their premises and through subscriptions. Consequently, the *Rocket* has run into financial difficulties and is no longer produced as regularly as before. *Berita Rakyat*, as well, in many ways a more critical and probing publication than the other two, has also been hampered by financial difficulties and the various restrictions.

The second set of publications that may be considered part of the alternative press are the weeklies, *Watan* and a new publication *Mingguan Politik*. Both are tabloids and only easily available in the Klang Valley and the larger towns. They have normally given coverage to events and opinions of both the ruling and opposition parties and sometimes, the public interest societies as well. In its 26 September 1992 issue for instance, *Mingguan Politik* carried statements by UMNO, PAS and the DAP under the column "Suara". There were also reports and commentaries favourable as well as unfavourable of the ruling and opposition parties. This more balanced reporting is also evident in *Watan*.<sup>20</sup> It was also true of *Mingguan Waktu* prior to its closure and of another weekly *Mingguan Kota*, very popular in the late 1980s before it became defunct.

The folding of *Mingguan Kota* and other independent weeklies and monthlies (like *Era*, *Diskusi* and *Panji Masyarakat* for instance) returns us to the problem of their limited financial resources, partly because

they are unable to draw advertisers on a regular basis. Consequently, in contrast to the party organs and the mainstream media, there has been a tendency for these independent weeklies to engage in political gossip and sensational reporting in order to improve sales. In so doing, however, they undermine their own credibility and invite punitive measures by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Finally there are the publications of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress, *Suara Buruh*, and of public interest societies like the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP), *Utusan Konsumer* and *Utusan Pengguna*, and *Aliran*, *Aliran Monthly* and *Majalah Aliran*.

The first issues of *Suara Buruh* were produced in 1955. Copies of the cyclo-styled publication were then made available only to unionists. Over the following decades various improvements were made. In the late 1980s, a significant reorganisation of the editorial board and production unit occurred, as a result of which *Suara Buruh* assumed a new magazine format and began to be made available to the public at large. Predictably, its staple comprises articles about worker-related issues, speeches of labour leaders, and reports of union activities at home and abroad. Beginning from the late 1980s, the involvement of women in the labour force and in unions is also featured. But it also carries statements of opposition leaders and public interest societies on other matters with a view to making labour in Malaysia more informed. Because of the close association between certain key MTUC leaders and the opposition parties, however, there is a tendency to view *Suara Buruh* as an anti-BN publication.<sup>21</sup> This has had the effect of hampering its sales among pro-BN members of the public whether they themselves are unionists or not. As for *Rocket* and *Harakah*, *Suara Buruh's* sales dramatically declined following the 1990 elections after the BN was returned to power. Because of the BN's victory, and perhaps also, rapid growth of the economy over the next few years, enthusiasm within the MTUC itself has dissipated. Consequently, *Suara Buruh* has failed to emerge as regularly as before.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, it continues to be a useful source of alternative information especially with regards to labour-related issues.

*Utusan Konsumer* (a fortnightly) and its Malay equivalent *Utusan Pengguna* (a monthly), have generally shied away from overtly political issues. Instead, they focus on socio-economic issues: health and nutrition, environment, education, housing, transport, modern technology and consumerism in general. Each issue is filled with reports and investigations of complaints by readers regarding products in the

market, features on the various topics mentioned above with regards to Malaysia or another country, and useful advice on these topics.<sup>23</sup>

*Utusan Konsumer* which has been published regularly and has maintained good sales for almost a decade now provides alternative information on many socio-economic issues. Over the years, it has built up a small full-time staff who work on these two publications. It has conducted publicly useful investigative journalism which the mainstream press has shied away from under the banner of responsible development journalism. It is certainly the most established of the non-political alternative publications.

Finally, *Aliran Monthly* (which in its quarterly version first appeared in 1981) and its sister-publication in Malay, *Majalah Aliran* (which was first published in 1991), also play important roles in providing alternative information to the Malaysian public. In contrast to *Utusan*, however, the *Aliran* publications are certainly more political. But unlike the opposition party organs, they are non-partisan. The articles in the *Monthly* and *Majalah* report and comment on the undemocratic practices of the government, worsening ethnic relations and religious polarisation, injustices committed against marginalised groups, corruption and money politics in high places, etc. The articles on foreign affairs generally assume an anti-imperialist stance. Their special contribution to the building of a harmonious Malaysian society is the promotion of universal values which *Aliran* believes is contained in all the spiritual traditions. Consequently, the publications carry regular features on these values in the different traditions in the hope of cultivating Malaysians who are better informed and tolerant of each others' beliefs and values.

As for the other more political publications, *Aliran Monthly* sales also peaked in 1990 and have subsequently declined. Although operating without access to advertisement revenue, nonetheless it does not as yet face any financial difficulty in producing the magazine regularly. And despite reliance on volunteers (rather than paid staff) it has emerged as the most successful of independent political publications today. As of early 1993, some 10,000 copies of the *Monthly*, and some 3,000 copies of the *Majalah* are sold each month, rather creditable figures for any Malaysian magazine.

The discussion in this section indicates two points: firstly, there exists an alternative press in Malaysia. Financially weak and limited in circulation, it is by no means a serious competitor to the mainstream media. Still less is it an indicator that the Malaysian press is free. The

discourse on politics in Malaysia is clearly dominated by the mainstream media including the mainstream press. But some inroads have been made to include certain social issues on the agenda.

Secondly, weak though this alternative press might be, nonetheless, it is important to note its existence. This highlights the ability of the non-ruling groups, in particular, the middle class to negotiate the meanings emanating from the dominant discourse, and as has been shown, mount a counter discourse via the alternative press. Hegemony, therefore, is never total. In this regard, it is pertinent to indicate that the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), which is dominated by journalists of the mainstream press have seasonally challenged the government, and sometimes their press managers as well, on various issues relating to their profession. Among other things, they have opposed the amendments to the Official Secrets Act and the Printing Presses and Publications Act, condemned the closure of publications, and acted on behalf of colleagues detained under the ISA or taken to court under the OSA.<sup>24</sup>

### Technological Innovations in the 1990s

Since early 1991, a number of Malaysia's mainstream newspapers have undergone dramatic changes in an apparent attempt to look different and more attractive. One change that is very marked and common amongst newspapers such as the *New Straits Times*, *The Star*, *Berita Harian*, *Utusan Malaysia*, *Nanyang Siang Pau* and *Sin Chew Jit Poh* is the use of colourful photographs on the front and back pages, and sometimes in their inside pages as well.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from the addition of colour pages, the *NST* since March 1991 has also trimmed slightly its regular physical size to transform itself into something that is called junior broadsheet. The format of the newspaper has also been revamped. It is now divided into three sections: the first section carries news reports, features, business pages and sport.

The second section, entitled "Lifestyle", consists largely of features pertaining to the arts, literary world, TV, film and record reviews, women, comics, education, health and travel, etc. But the paper also carries from time-to-time a crossword puzzle contest offering attractive prize money to its readers. Yet another item in this section is a peculiar feature which appears on Monday. Entitled "Maxima", it is a page devoted to the holders of Maxima card (which is sponsored by the

NSTP group). Discounts on a variety of goods and services (books and stationery, subscription to local and foreign publications, audio-visual and other electrical equipment, flowers and gift items, dining and even tours) are announced. Many, though not all, of the companies offering these discounts come under the fold of the NSTP and Renong groups. But the page also announces the birthdays of members and feature the achievements and activities of members.<sup>26</sup> Another part of this section, appearing daily is called "Appointments". Here can be found major advertisements of jobs, especially in the corporate sector. Leading off these pages of advertisements are features on particular professions and sometimes advice to readers seeking jobs as well.

The third section "City Extra", offers regional news and features, and also often splashes colour photographs of the rich, powerful and famous having a good time. They include politicians, entertainers, personalities, top officials, business people and captains of industry, both local and foreign. This particular sub-section is pretentiously subtitled "City Society".

Finally, a new section "Computimes" appears on Monday and Thursday. It caters to the needs and interests of computer enthusiasts and advertisers as well.

As if not to be outdone, NST's close rival, *The Star*, too, has undergone somewhat similar changes since September 1991. Apart from the colourful news photographs, the paper has also revamped its format and made some editorial changes.

Nowadays the paper is broadly divided into three sections: the first comprises the regular news, features and sports reports while the second, called simply "Section 2", is the paper's answer to NST's "Lifestyle". It carries features on the environment, education, women, lifestyle and the arts, the daily crossword puzzle, entertainment — comics, TV, book and film comments — and even a weekly column on *feng shui* (geomancy).

The third section presents the business and economic pages which provide analyses of the stock and commodities markets, economic commentaries and weekly write-ups under such rubrics as Transport, Insurance, Banking, Manpower, Property, Company News, Marketing, and Billings on different days of the week.

Once a week the "In-Tech" section surfaces to offer readers information regarding computer development, computer education, the latest computer products and games, and of course computer-

related advertisements including announcements on the perennial computer fair.

*The Star* has also given a new format, design and layout to its Saturday edition. It now has a restructured section called the "Weekender", which consists of reports and features on entertainment, adventure, food, leisure, etc. Given the popularity of sports in the country, in part caused by its own commercialisation, a "Starsport Special" pullout appears on Wednesday for sports fans. This specialised section certainly invites advertisements of sports and games products in the tabloid.

Social issues that are popular and much talked about not only by social critics but especially by government leaders seem to have caught the attention of the paper's editors. One such issue is the environment.<sup>27</sup> Coverage of such issues not only would "advertise" the paper's concern to the public but also impress upon the general public that the paper concerned is very much in touch with life's harsh reality. In yet another case, *The Star*, beginning from October 1992, launched a page "Missing" devoted to locating missing young women.

Like its stablemate NST, *Berita Harian (BH)* also has introduced some changes so as to give its readers a feeling of something new, something exciting. So it gives them more colour, a new masthead and a change of format. Like the others, the paper has also mounted a crossword puzzle contest.

The first section consists of national and international news, the economics pages (essentially a business section which reports on the stockmarket and business people and companies on the move) and features on women issues, literary and cultural affairs, Islamic matters, etc. The second section covers regional news, the classifieds, sports, and under the "Pusparia" pages, TV, music and entertainment news and features. The "new" *BH* has divided its editorial operation into three regional editions, namely "Utara", "Tengah" and "Selatan" such that more regional news and advertisers are presented in the particular regional edition.<sup>28</sup>

In response to the *BH*'s recent changes, *Utusan Malaysia* too has assumed a "new look". It too utilises more colour in its front, back and inside pages. But it does not appear that it has re-packaged itself into clearly demarcated sections yet.

The main body includes national and international news and features, regional and sports news, TV and radio highlights, art and entertainment stories, crossword puzzle contest, economic news

(mainly stock market and business matters), classified advertisements and a forum (letters) section.

As in the past, the broadsheet continues to have a major body and a separate section called "Panca". "Panca" usually carries news and stories about lifestyle and fashion, family and educational matters, regional stories and the comics. Occasionally, a "special" is also presented in "Panca" focusing on some aspect of everyday, usually urban, life. In January, for instance, the special was on mini-buses — the operators, commuters, etc.

The increasingly corporatised Malay world and the constant encouragement to the Malays to be active in the business world have made it necessary for Malay papers like the *Utusan Malaysia* and the *BH* to provide reports of the stock market and other business activities in the country.

And given the potentially large market of school-going children, particularly those in secondary schools, *Utusan Malaysia* has found it rewarding, financially or otherwise, to cater to the needs of such readers. Thus the "Bimbingan Utusan" section provides educational guidance to the examination-oriented secondary school students.

On Sundays, the *Mingguan Malaysia* provides a "Panca Mingguan" pullout where the highlights are entertainment, fashion, travel, motorcars and motorbikes. In the main pages, the paper, apart from publishing features on foreign and domestic events, also provides a literary section where short stories and poems are published, and literary discourse is conducted.

Similar kinds of change have been noted in the Chinese dailies especially *Nanyang* and *Sin Chew*, the two leading Chinese newspapers. The use of colour photographs in the front, back and inside pages are nowadays common.

The major sections of the Chinese newspapers carry national, international, entertainment and sports news. Included here too are "forum pages" and commentary columns. The issues discussed range from political, economic, educational to moral issues. Apart from this, they also carry supplements (*fukan*) which carry works of Chinese literature (poems, proses, fiction, etc.) both local and foreign. Women's issues tend also to be included often. Both the *Nanyang* and *Sin Chew* contain business sections and have also organised special "additional" sections termed *zengban*. For instance, *Sin Chew* offers a special "Metro" section almost daily and another section called "New Planning" on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Under this section

environmental issues in planning for instance are featured. On its part *Nanyang* offers regional (north, central and south) *zengban*. Once a week there also appears the "Nanyang Secondary School Students Weekly".

Finally, it is clear that both these and other Chinese newspapers are carrying more advertisements nowadays. Many are also often in full colour.

In contrast to the Malay, English and Chinese dailies, there have been few changes in the Tamil dailies. The use of colour photographs is an occasional event even for *Tamil Nesan* which has the largest circulation.

This lack of change is related to the limited financial resources of the Tamil newspaper companies, none of which have been corporatised. The circulation of Tamil dailies is also small and the buying power of the solely Tamil-reading public limited. All these hamper the ability of Tamil dailies to attract advertisements which might allow them to introduce changes. As K. Ramanathan (1992: 13), an observer of Tamil dailies notes:

Those [advertisements] that appear announce sales in Indian saree stores, the availability of special foods from India in a particular shop, tours to India, on upcoming religious function, release of latest films and videos, and the latest films and their runs at the respective local cinemas. Noticeably absent are advertisements of the big companies (emphasis added).

Not surprisingly, the financial state of two of the three Tamil dailies is somewhat precarious at this point, causing the same observer to remark: "One often wonders how, inspite of the odds, a small group of people have been able to maintain the Tamil newspapers for so long" (Ramanathan 1992).

The status of the Sabah and Sarawak regional dailies lies somewhere in between the Malay, English and Chinese newspaper on the one hand, and the Tamil newspapers on the other.

By no means are the regional newspapers on the verge of closing. But their circulation remains limited. Moreover, the peninsular Malay, English and Chinese newspapers are fast improving on their sales in Sabah and Sarawak and posing new challenges to the regional newspapers. Consequently, much of the wizardry of moden information technology has still not caught up with them. Most are still presented in a dull black and white. The newsprint used is noticeably of a poorer quality and the black ink dirties one's hands more easily. Only two of them, the *Borneo Post* which claims to be "the most widely



distributed and read English daily in Borneo", and its Chinese sister-newspaper *See Hua Daily News* use colour photographs on a regular basis.

None of them have undergone a recent revamp in their format. Thus news reports, features and business pages are mixed with the TV guide, horoscope columns, comics and entertainment features on the one hand, and with the classifieds, advertisements, MAS flight schedules, SPM government examination guide, and sports on the other. They do not offer special sections focusing on business, literary or educational matters. Neither are there weekly specials catering to, say, computer enthusiasts. It is only the *Borneo Mail* of Sabah which, under a separate daily section called "2nd Take", pools together the comics, horoscope, TV guide, several pages of cinema advertisements, crossword puzzle and the occasional feature. But this section on entertainment is no comparison in terms of layout and content to the NST's "Lifestyle" or *The Star's* "Section 2"<sup>29</sup>

Although they carry more advertisements (including from the corporate sector) than do the Tamil dailies, nonetheless the revenue they earn, because of limited circulation, remains small. All in all, therefore, the Sabah and Sarawak newspapers appear to lag behind the major peninsular newspapers (Loh 1992).

The discussion that follows, which attempts to explain the dramatic changes in the Malaysian press since 1991, pertains in particular to the Malay, English and Chinese peninsular dailies.

What can we surmise of these changes? Changes such as these are inevitable and constitute a part of the growing process of newspapers. It is most unfortunate that underneath this colourful veneer and elegant reorganisation we find that these changes are less fundamental than cosmetic, less substance than form, and less concern for a meaningful intellectual exchange than a conscious display of the wizardry of information technology. If anything, certain things have gone worse, and in the process have jeopardised the overall social and intellectual standing of the newspapers concerned. Put another way, they are becoming even less journalistic. Substantively speaking, therefore, things are the same, if not on the slide.

Why then the need for these essentially technological innovations? For one, it is quite possible that the political controls since 1987 have made it urgent and necessary for the newspapers concerned to make some changes, no matter how cosmetic they may be, so as to boost their image and credibility.

Put another way, these changes make up for the newspapers' weaknesses in the crucial area of investigative journalism and incisive and illuminating commentaries. Such weaknesses can make the difference between an authoritative newspaper and a semi-political party organ. The situation is particularly acute since it is a fact, and public knowledge, that these major newspapers are owned and controlled by BN component parties. The muzzled Malaysian print media were becoming predictable and uninteresting. The colour and new format, therefore, was to help excite and attract the Malaysian readers again, despite the lack of substantive reporting.<sup>30</sup>

In this regard, it would be most instructive to remember the cautionary note of the former NST Editor-in-Chief, Tan Sri Lee Siew Yee: "...yet in the end it is the content, not the packaging, not the hardware, that determines the worth and quality of a paper" (*NST*, 4 March 1991).

### **Corporatisation and Competition for Advertising Revenue**

A more important reason is the corporatisation of these papers and the fact that they are profit-making ventures. The following statistics give us a sense of the financial resources of the mainstream press and the total investments involved. For instance, the NSTP group's turnover in 1990 was RM295.74 million which rose to RM332.56 million in 1991. Pre-tax profit for year ended 31 August 1991 was RM82.01 million. The comparable figures for year ended 31 August 1992 are RM375.636 million turnover, and RM96.034 million pre-tax profit (*NST*, 4 February and 17 November 1992). Among the NSTP's assets is the RM64 million Balai Berita building equipped with the latest print technology. And as mentioned earlier, Renong Bhd sold the NSTP for RM616.6 million in January 1993. While some financial analysts consider the sale price to be somewhat inflated, nonetheless, it does not detract from our general point of the corporatisation of the major newspapers.

Two other UMNO related publishing companies also are multi-million dollar concerns. Nanyang Press (M) Bhd recorded a pre-tax profit of RM22.6 million for the preceding 18-month period ended 30 June 1992 (*NST*, 29 October 1992). Utusan Melayu Bhd group was expected to reach a pre-tax profit of RM20 million for 1992 after having recorded RM9.3 million profit for the first six months ending 30 June. For those six months its turnover had been RM70.2 million (*Star*, 21

September 1992). The turnover for MCA's Star Publications was RM105.43 million in 1990, its pre-tax profit RM34.28 million for year ending 31 December (*Star*, 8 August 1991). Hence they have to find ways and means, whatever their political and economic constraints, to maximise profits.

Advertisements are the major source of revenue for these newspapers. The creation of various sections, and also regional editions, in some of these newspapers is one way of segmenting the audience for the benefit of the advertisers and, of course, the owners of the newspapers ultimately.

This factor of market segmentation helps explain the logic of the kinds of editorial sections that have been established. Whilst these sections make reading relatively easy for most readers, they also facilitate packaging an attractive deal for the advertisers. Computer companies, for instance, can be sold advertising deals which ensure notice by the people who matter by simply advertising once a week in *The Star's* "In-tech Section" or twice a week in the NST's "Computimes". Those smaller businesses which need to attract only local audiences can advertise in the specific regional edition pullouts of the various dailies. Likewise, producers or dealers in sports equipment need only advertise once a week in sports sections or pullouts for maximum exposure. Or again, the many private twinning colleges can, if they prefer, simply advertise in the educational supplements.

As well, in a situation where a particular newspaper is part of a business conglomeration,<sup>31</sup> whose interests range from hotel and media-related activities to information technology, the formation of such sections can play a vital role in promoting the interests of certain sister companies. For instance, the NSTP (M) Berhad has a wholly-owned subsidiary, Bisofware Sdn. Bhd., that is involved in computer systems designing and software development. The Computimes section of the NST has become a convenient vehicle to mobilise information technology-related activities (*NST*, 28 December 1991) in which this particular subsidiary is heavily involved.

The argument that these innovations mark the increasing corporatisation of the Malaysian press should not be understated. One of the interesting developments pertaining to the mainstream press in Malaysia today are the claims and counter-claims among the different newspapers regarding readership statistics. While there were no disputes over readership figures for Malay and Tamil newspapers,<sup>32</sup>

there certainly were in the cases of the English and Chinese newspapers. Citing the SRM Index, *The Star* claimed that it had 674,000 readers, ahead of the *New Straits Times* (NST) which recorded 658,000 readers), and therefore, the leading English newspaper for the twelve months ended June 1991. Subsequently, SRM conducted a 4-month survey (March to June 1991) for the NST, which showed that the NST had surged ahead of *The Star*. The NST's readership was estimated at 729,000 while *The Star's* at 684,000 readers, (NST, 20 September 1991). This surge was attributed to the NST's new format, introduced in March, and heavy television advertising over the following months. As has been discussed above, *The Star* revamped its own format in September 1991. Citing different survey findings, the two newspapers went on to claim for the rest of the year that each was the leading English newspaper.

The 1991 SRM Index also indicated that *Nanyang Siang Pau* with 684,000 readers was the widest read Chinese newspaper. However, this finding was disputed by *Sin Chew Jit Poh* which, according to the SRM Index, reached 572,000 readers (NST, 3 November 1992). Citing the results of a separate two months' (July and August 1991) survey on Chinese dailies conducted on its behalf by Frank Small and Associates (FSA), *Sin Chew* claimed that it was the leading Chinese newspaper instead. According to the FSA findings, *Sin Chew's* readership was 698,000 while that for *Nanyang* was 671,000 (*The Star*, 19 September 1991). Competition between the two leading Chinese dailies was so intense that they even openly carried news and comments against one another. Discounts and gifts were even offered to promote sales, and hence enhance readership figures (Tan 1992: 11). This dispute continued into 1992.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, the detailed findings of the SRM survey are keenly sought after by advertising agencies. This is because readership figures are correlated to data about the readers themselves, such as urban/rural background, monthly household income, and ownership of consumer durables like motorcar, colour TV, refrigerator, washing machine, camera and so on.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, advertising expenditure in Malaysia grew at an average rate of more than 20 per cent per annum in the late 1980s: according to one source, from RM382.8 million in 1987 to RM740 million in 1990. Growth has been so rapid that the managing director of Ogilvy and Mather, one of the major advertising agencies remarked that it had contributed to a "serious clutter of advertisement on TV,

radio and other media" which, he warned, could impede the industry's growth (*The Star*, 28 September 1991).

However, competition is stiff. Not least because an increasingly large proportion of advertising expenditure is siphoned off by the television networks. Whereas in 1987 some 47 per cent of all advertising expenditure went to the newspapers, 39.5 per cent to TV and 13.5 per cent to Others, by 1990, TV's share had increased to 48 per cent and that of newspapers reduced to 43 per cent (with the remaining 9 per cent going to Others) (*The Star*, 12 April 1991). Significantly, the reorganisation of the mainstream newspapers appears to have reversed the trend. In 1991, 52.4 per cent of the RM1,128 million advertising revenue accrued to the print media (including magazines) while TV's share of this dropped to 40.4 per cent. In 1992, print media's share of a slightly lower total figure of RM1,016 million was maintained at 52.4 per cent while that for TV further dropped to 39.6 per cent (*Star*, 6 February 1993). With such amounts involved, projecting one's self as the Number One newspaper and/or with an upmarket middleclass readership would certainly help to draw in the advertisers.

In conclusion, we note that there exists fierce competition among the newspapers today. However, this competition for wider readership is not conducted on the basis of which among them conduct better investigative reporting. Neither is it one over which of them provide more comprehensive commentary and analysis. Still less is it over which more consistently champions the cause of freedom and justice. Instead, it is a competition to attract the advertising *ringgit* plain and simple. For this reason the muzzled press has repackaged itself into colourful new sections and special supplements. A newspaper's pride of place is now the extent to which its readership may be considered upmarket.

Unfortunately, however, as advertisements begin to clutter our newspapers, and as they become more colourful and attractive, newspapers begin to influence the readers in a new materialistic way. Without access to important political news, Malaysians have already developed "tidak-apathy" (a couldn't care less attitude *vis-a-vis* important social issues). With the corporatisation of the muzzled newspapers and their competition for the advertisement *ringgit*, readers are unabashedly treated as, and encouraged to become materialist consumers as well (Mustafa 1993). There is a real danger that the newspapers and their advertisers are succeeding.

### **Economic Growth and the Middle Class**

Finally, it needs to be mentioned that this trend towards corporatisation of the press is also a general reflection of the rapid growth of industrial capitalism in Malaysia as it moves towards NICdom.

The structure of the Malaysian economy has changed dramatically since 1970.<sup>35</sup> Whereas in 1970, manufacturing only accounted for 13.4 per cent of GDP, in 1990 it had increased to 27 per cent. The numbers employed in manufacturing has also increased: from 11.4 per cent of total employed in 1970 to 19.5 per cent in 1990. In numerical terms this meant more than 1.29 million people were employed in manufacturing that year.

An additional and related aspect is the size of the tertiary cum service sectors in the overall economy which in 1990 accounted for 41.7 per cent of GDP and 52 per cent of total employed. The corollary to all this is the significant drop in the size of the agricultural sector: this has fallen from 30 per cent in 1970 to 18.7 per cent in 1990. And for those years, the numbers employed in the agricultural sector fell from 44.8 per cent to 27.8 per cent of total employed.

The nature of Malaysia's exports has also changed dramatically. Whereas in the past rubber and tin, and later, other commodities like palm oil, timber and petroleum, were the main export revenue earners, by 1990, 60.4 per cent of total export earnings derived from manufacturing, in particular, came from the electronics and electrical sector.

What all this means is that Malaysia has experienced rapid capitalist industrialization as have the NICs of East Asia. And as for the latter GDP per capita has also risen dramatically. Indeed, government statistics indicate that absolute poverty has been reduced quite substantially. The index of poverty for the peninsula has dropped from 50 per cent in 1970 to 15 per cent in 1990.

As a result of this capitalist industrialization, the structure of Malaysian society has also changed. We have mentioned the changes that occurred in the different employment sectors. We wish to stress now the rapid growth of the middle class which is also very multi-ethnic in its composition. It is this middle class that accounts for the housing boom, traffic jams, supermarkets, department stores and fast food chains found throughout the urban centres of Malaysia. It is also the reason for the sales in personal computers, audio-visual and other electrical appliances, the explosion in sports and recreational activities and clubs, the credit card craze, etc. It relates in turn to the demand for higher education in the local universities and private colleges and the large numbers of Malaysians studying abroad.

An estimate of the size of this middle class can be derived from collapsing together those involved in professional and technical, sales, clerical and services related occupations. In 1990, this added up to 44.1 per cent of those employed. Assuming that one-half of those involved in these occupations are considered middle class, we have a middle class amounting to some 22 per cent of those employed, and by extension, the population as a whole (see also Saravanamuttu 1989 and Mohd Nor Nawawi 1991).

We argue that the rapid rise of industrial capitalism and the growth of the middle class on the one hand, and the related corporatization of the Malaysian press on the other, explains the recent technological innovations in the press. In other words, market forces, in the nature of businesses purchasing advertising space to sell their services and products, have played a crucial role in shaping the mainstream Malaysian press into what it is today. That these businesses should desire to advertise their products and services in such a major way, in turn, is a result of the consolidation of the Malaysian middle class which possesses substantial purchasing power.

It is in this way that we explain why, also, in repackaging the mainstream newspapers, much more space has also been given to literary and cultural matters, environmental and women issues, travel leisure and entertainment features, all essentially middle class (though in the western industrialized countries these could also be working class) concerns. This is particularly true of the content of *NST's* "Lifestyle" and *The Star's* "Section 2". The opinions of this middle class are sometimes also manifested in the letters columns of these and other mainstream dailies.

Additionally, it is also the arrival of the middle class, or at least a critical faction of it, that has given rise to the public interest societies in Malaysia in the 1980s (Saravanamuttu 1989, Lev 1990 and Lawrence 1992). Together with the opposition parties, some of these public interest societies like CAP and Aliran are responsible for the alternative press in Malaysia. It is not surprising too that their readership is largely limited to the middle class as well.

## Conclusion

Our study began with a review of how the Malaysian press has become increasingly muzzled via coercive legislations, ownership and control of the major newspapers by the BN parties, and the inculcation

of so-called "responsible development journalism" among journalists, in particular the press managers. Through these control mechanisms the ruling coalition can, whenever it wishes, ensure that the press is used to facilitate its political goals.

This study next discussed technological changes that occurred in the mainstream press in the early 1990s. We showed that intense competition also occurred during this time. These developments we argue are a result of the corporatization of the press. Accordingly the nature of the Malaysian press is also determined by market forces both in terms of increasing advertising revenue as well as enhancing sales of the newspaper itself. The two are related. For the better the paper is distributed, the more likely will advertising revenue be increased.

But the newspaper proprietors and the advertisers also link up in another way: both appear to be targeting the growing middle class, which in turn, is a result of the rapid industrial capitalization of Malaysia. The Malaysian press, has been reorganized, therefore, not only to persuade the middle class to buy. It has also begun to address certain leisure and social concerns of the middle class.

But the middle class has also arrived in another way. Frustrated with the lack of critical commentary and political analysis in the mainstream papers, they resort to the regional magazines. Not only that, a small faction of this middle class has also begun to develop an alternative press, at this point still a very weak one. Thus, larger social forces also impinge upon the nature of the press in a particular setting.

## Notes

1. For a more complete discussion of these amendments in 1984 and 1988 and of the amendments to other laws which affected the status of the media in Malaysia, see Chandra (1986: 1-5) and Lent (1991: 45-6).
2. Prior to this, other publications had also been banned. For instance, in September 1983, *Nadi Insan* was banned after being given three warnings earlier in the year. The official reason was that it had published articles detrimental to diplomatic relations between Malaysia and its neighbours.
3. There are two other relevant Acts that assist the government in its control of the press: the Official Secrets Act and the Control of Imported Publications Act. Under the latter all foreign news coming through the wires are required to be distributed by Bernama, the Malaysian national news agency.
4. Utusan Melayu Press publishes two dailies, *Utusan Malaysia* (in Rumi script) and *Utusan Melayu* (in Jawi script) and several other magazines like *Mastika* and *Wanita*.

As of December 1992 Utusan Melayu (M) Bhd was seeking listing in the



Kuala Lumpur Stock Market. Plans to launch an English daily by June 1993 have also been announced (*Star*, 23 July 1992).

5. UMNO broke up into UMNO Baru and Semangat '46 in 1988 following a court order declaring the original UMNO defunct. This episode was preceded by intense factional infighting which finally culminated in Tengku Razaleigh's challenge of Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the UMNO presidency. The best discussion of this episode can be found in Khoo (1992).
6. Among the publications of NSTP are *The New Straits Times*, *New Sunday Times*, *Malay Mail*, *Sunday Mail*, *Harian Metro*, *Berita Harian*, *Berita Minggu*, *Business Times*, *Shin Min Daily News*, *Her World*, *Malaysian Business*, *Jelita*, *Her World Cookbook*, *Her World Annual*, *NST Annual*, *Home Scene* and *Information Malaysia*.
7. Hume Industries, one of Hong Leong's four listed flagship companies, has a 49.9 per cent controlling stake in Nanyang Press. In turn, Jaguh Mutiara, a wholly owned unit of Renong's Fleet Group has 27 per cent interest in Hume (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 March 1991). Following the transfer of NSTP and STMB to MRCB, Renong Bhd, apparently, divested its entire shareholding in Hume Industries (*NST*, 16 February 1993). Whether Jaguh Mutiara no longer has an interest in Hume Industries cannot be confirmed.
8. These include *Kuntum*, *Galaxie*, *Scoop*, *Shang Hai* and *Papyrus*.
9. An indirect linkage with UMNO Baru might have been established as a result of Berjaya's purchase into Star Publications. Berjaya is 70 per cent owned by Inter Pacific on whose Board sits Tun Daim Zainuddin, the former Finance Minister and UMNO treasurer (*Star*, 21 December 1990 and 8 August 1991).  
 In mid-1992, Malaya Thung Pau Sdn Bhd, publisher of *Tong Bao*, which was wholly-owned by MCA and which had not been performing well, was sold to an unlisted company Stock Trade Sdn Bhd for RM1.7 million. With effect from 1 January 1993, the paper was renamed *Sin Tong Bao* (*NST*, 8 July 1992 and *Star*, 19 December 1992).
10. These independent Chinese dailies have been criticised by UMNO leaders on several occasions as "pro-opposition" or "racist". One such charge was made by the Prime Minister himself during his opening address at the UMNO general assembly in December 1990 shortly after the October general elections. Anwar Ibrahim, then Education Minister, welcomed the criticism as timely. He stated:

I have gone through the synopses of the reports of the Chinese papers. Some are responsible but some of them are really extremist and very racist in their tendencies. They take a very negative view of everything that is being done by the government.

I can safely say, for example, in matters pertaining to education, that what is said (in the Chinese press) is grossly misrepresented. It is extremely unfair because every decision you take will be seen from a very negative racial angle (*Star*, 2 December 1990).

In response to these accusations, the Chinese Editors Association declared that the Chinese newspapers merely played the role of a "communicator"

and "reflected truthfully the will and opinion of the people". They carried reports and comments on the political platforms and activities of all parties from both the caretaker government and the challenger" during the 1990 elections (*Star*, 2 December 1990).

On yet another occasion, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs Megat Junid claimed that the Chinese press had incited racial sentiments through their reports of two incidents in Johore involving the shifting of a temple in Johore Baru, and marine police operations against trawler boat operations which gave the impression that the Chinese community was being oppressed (*NST*, 24 January 1992).

For an analysis that the Chinese press has a definite Chinese orientation when it comes to news and features but which in no way implies that the Chinese dailies are biased and racial, including on the two occasions mentioned, see Tan Chee Beng (1991 and 1992).

Tan (1991) shows instead that the UMNO owned newspapers in particular were extremely racist in the 1990 general elections. See also Mustafa Anuar (1990).

11. In December 1992 it was announced that Rimbunan Hijau was in the process of purchasing the Penang-based Chinese daily, *Guang Ming* (*Star*, 4 and 8 December 1992).
12. This point is essentially correct. The independent newspapers in Britain, in the final instance, are partisan, at least over particular major issues. However, there remains a crucial difference. While taking a partisan stand, nonetheless, the British newspapers would still report on the activities and opinions of those opposing their position somewhat even-handedly. In the case of Malaysia, however, the ruling parties assert their ownership and control of the mainstream press by virtually blacking out the opinions of the opposition parties and critics. The biased role of the media, and press in particular, during elections and government-sponsored campaigns, is indicative of this point.
13. However, Dr Mahathir has also been reported to say that "the Government has never tried to suppress the freedom of the Press despite negative reports in some of the media about the Government". As well, he has claimed that although "there were papers that support the Government, this was done because it was their (the papers') policy and not because they were told to do so by the Government" (*NST*, 8 September 1992).  
Likewise, during the move by the government to remove the Malay rulers' legal immunity in January-February 1993, Ghafar Baba, the deputy premier, in response to the overwhelming support it received from the media, remarked that the government had not directed the media to do so. It was simply a case of the media acting independently in a "freedom of the press" situation (*Berita Harian*, 1 February 1993).
14. To be fair Samad Ismail has criticised local journalists for relying too much on press conferences in their preparation of news reports and features. He believes that there are still adequate opportunities and the freedom for hardworking journalists to conduct investigative journalism and file critical

stories in Malaysia. See his opinions expressed in an interview to the *Utusan Malaysia*, 17 April 1992.

15. For the opinion of Mazlan Nordin, the manager of *Bernama*, along the same lines, see his article "Journalists enjoying greater freedom" in *NST*, 12 October 1990.
16. Of late, as a result of increasing criticism in the Western media of the environmental consequences of Malaysia's timber industry and its effects on the indigenous peoples in Sarawak, some of these press managers have argued a need for the local media to counter these "half truths". See for instance Samad Ismail's comments in his paper "Mass Media by the Year 2020" (*NST*, 26 January 1992) and comments in the article "Western Media Bad-mouthing the Third World" (*Star*, 21 April 1992).
17. An excellent case in point is Lee Lam Thye who was widely regarded as a very responsible MP. However, because he was from the opposition DAP, his efforts and opinions were hardly ever reported in the mainstream media. Since leaving the DAP, however, he writes a weekly column for the *NST* and his statement/letters are almost fully reproduced in *The Star*, be they comments on important or insignificant issues.

Another occasional *NST* columnist nowadays who specialises on criticism of the opposition DAP is K Gurnathan, the *Rocket's* former editor.

18. For similar conclusions see Chandra (1986: 44-54 and 1989: 180-87), Lent (1984 and 1991) and Mustafa Anuar (1990).
19. For some statistics on the financial standing of the major mainstream papers, see the discussion at the end of the next section.
20. In December 1992, *Watan* was sold to Gagasan Baiduri Sdn Bhd for RM1.8 million. The new executive chairman of Gagasan is Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, the treasurer of UMNO Youth. Under the new management, *Watan* has assumed a new look, giving more coverage to business, sports and foreign news, and has announced plans to turn into a daily within six months. As of early 1993, it was still continuing to give greater coverage to the opposition parties than the mainstream press.

It should be noted that Gagasan Baiduri, linked to the Berjaya Group through Tengku Adnan himself, already owns *Malaysian Post*, *Corporate World* and *Vista Pop*. Adnan has also announced plans to purchase a locally-published defence journal (*Star*, 11 December 1992 and *NST*, 30 November 1992).

With this takeover by Tengku Adnan and the increasing corporatisation of *Watan*, it is most likely that it will develop into a poorer cousin of the existing mainstream papers.

21. Zainal Rampak, the president of MTUC, is a leader of Semangat '46 and had contested in the 1990 elections under its banner. V. David, until January 1993 the secretary-general of MTUC, is a DAP member of parliament. When Ahmad Nor was elected as an MP in October 1990, he was the MTUC's deputy-president. However, he stepped down from his MTUC post in December 1990.

22. Although V. David continued to be editor, the composition of the editorial board was reshuffled several times after 1990.
23. In its November 1992 issue for instance, the lead story in *Utusan Konsumer* was on pollution of the Penang seas including a report on high levels of (E-coli) bacteria commonly contained in human waste found in seafood. The following mid-November issue featured how an established Malaysian company was misleading and luring poor illiterate estate workers to participate in a questionable "easy payment" scheme. The lead stories in the two December issues featured, respectively, "unsafe imitation retread tyres", and how many insurance companies were overcharging on their premiums and not following the central bank's guidelines.

Other stories over the two-month period alerted consumers of the chemicals contained in beauty products, of a company which abused the Islamic concept of interest-free loan, and even of needles found in a loaf of bread. Still others touched on environmental pollution ("Mini Bhopals in Malaysia", pollution in Langkawi, illegal toxic dumping in Pantai Remis), on healthy eating and traditional medicine. There were also tips on buying a used car.
24. In October 1992 in its 8th Biennial Delegates Conference held in Kuala Lumpur for instance, the NUJ reiterated its call for amendments to the OSA and the Printing Presses and Publications Act. In declaring that the NUJ would not compromise on national security and stability, nonetheless, the NUJ felt that journalists should not be forced to operate under fear of laws "that tend to restrict the citizens' right to know", especially in this era of "information explosion" (*NST*, 5 October 1992).
25. In most cases, the costs of printing colour would have been greatly reduced by the fact that there would be paid colour advertisements sharing the same plate.
26. Without probing further, it is difficult to reach a conclusion about the intentions of Maxima Club. But it appears that it is geared towards developing among particular groups of middle class Malaysians a sense of attachment to and identification with the *NST*, and perhaps the *NSTP* group as a whole.
27. Apart from presenting similar interesting features promoting concern and care for the environment, the *NST* also carries a regular news column "NST National Environment Education" which reports on recycling and other environmental activities conducted in particular schools from different parts of the nation.
28. In mid-1992, *BH* further streamlined its operations so as to provide a special pullout for each day of the week: "Berita Pelajar" for students appears on Monday; "Berita Wanita" on women affairs appear on Tuesday; "Berita Teknologi" on Wednesday; "Jaguh" on sports on Thursday; "Perspektif" on literary and cultural affairs on Friday; and "Berita Dunia" on international affairs on Saturday. Each of these pullouts have attractive mastheads and carry colour photographs and related advertisements.

29. However, some of the regional newspapers have special sections of a different sort. In Sabah, all three English newspapers carry sections in Malay and Kadazan while in Sarawak two of the English dailies have Malay sections. See Loh (1992).
30. In this regard, it is important to note that a considerable proportion of the Malaysian middle class has access to outside sources of information. For the first six months of 1992, 10,900 copies of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* were sold in Malaysia, the highest in Southeast Asia. During the same period, *Asiatweek* sold 18,793 copies, second only to its circulation in the Philippines. Malaysia is also *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines' third largest market in Southeast Asia (*NST*, 17 January 1993).
- It is generally agreed that many middle class Malaysians resorted to the local alternative press and these regional publications for information on various financial scandals, *Operasi Lalang*, the assault on the judiciary, the UMNO split, etc., during the late 1980s.
31. For a discussion of the corporate web enmeshing the major newspaper corporations and their relations with other corporations and holding companies owned by the ruling political parties, see Gomez (1990, 1991a and 1992) and Lent (1984 and 1991).
32. According to Survey Research Malaysia (SRM)'s Media Index for 1991 *Berita Harian* (*BH*) with a readership of 1,736,000 had a larger readership than *Utusan Malaysia* (*UM*) estimated at 1,440,000. The Index also indicated that these two Bahasa Malaysia newspapers were still the two widest read dailies in the whole country. These findings were undisputed (*NST*, 3 November 1991).
- A further finding that *Tamil Nesan* (with a circulation of about 50,000) remained the leading Tamil newspaper was also unchallenged. *Malaysia Nanyan*'s circulation was estimated at 26,000 and that for *Tinamurusu* about 10,000 (*NST*, 1 January 1992).
33. Whichever the case and whatever the ethical implications, such readership figures are different from circulation ones. A securities company acting on behalf of the NSTP group has reported these circulation figures for the following newspapers in April 1991: *Berita Harian* 280,000; *New Straits Times* 180,000; and *Sin Min* 45,000 (*The Star*, 12 April 1991). When these circulation figures are matched to the readership figures presented in the SRM Index for 1991, we discover that the multiplying factors for the newspapers are, respectively, 6.2, 3.67 and 4.42. In other words, it is estimated that an average of 6.2 persons read each copy of the *BH* in circulation; an average of 3.67 persons each copy of the *NST*; and so on.
- Additionally, these estimates are based on a limited sample of people interviewed. The numbers involved in the above cases are not known. But in the case of the 1991 PSA survey on behalf of *Sin Chew*, only a total of 3,410 people were interviewed. Not surprisingly, the company acknowledged "an error margin of plus or minus 30,000 readers" (*The Star*, 19 September 1991). But an error of such a size would have tipped the scales the other way! And according to SRM's own media research director, its Media Index is a

random survey which data collection method needs to be "upgraded" (*The Star*, 6 June 1992).

Such readership claims, therefore, are highly questionable. Moreover they do not tell us anything substantive about the newspapers themselves. However, they are extremely important for the newspapers concerned in their pursuit of the advertising *ringgit*.

34. On the basis of these findings, the NST (on several occasions in March 1992) for instance, unabashedly declared to potential advertisers thus:

- 71 per cent upmarket coverage of professionals, executives and senior government officers;
- 57 per cent coverage of the urban segment;
- an affluent readership with 67 per cent of its readers living in households with a monthly income of above RM1000.

On another occasion the NSTP group declared in full-page announcements in its dailies on 18 April 1992 "More car owners read *Berita Harian*". The announcement went on:

It's true. An independent survey shows that more readers of *Berita Harian* own cars compared to any other daily in the country. A fact that allows you to focus advertising at a select group for maximum benefit. Plus with the advantage of a readership in excess of 1.7 million, your advertising package gets the backing of a newspaper that leads all other dailies in Malaysia. *Berita Harian* Malaysia's No. 1 Newspaper (emphases added).

The benefits of advertising in *Berita Harian* continued to be carried from time-to-time, and sometimes in intense fashion as in December 1992 and January 1993 when two-third page full-colour announcements were carried in the NST several times in a particular week.

35. Statistics from this section have been taken from the *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975* and the *Sixth Malaysia Plan, 1991-1995*. See also Jomo (1990) for an overview of these structural changes.

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## CHANGING OWNERSHIP PATTERNS, PATRONAGE AND THE NEP

*Edmund Terence Gomez*

**T**he twenty year New Economic Policy (NEP) was promulgated in 1970, following the communal riots of May 1969, with the ultimate aim of achieving national unity. Referred to in the Mid-Term Review of the Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981-85) as "the economic foundation of Malaysian society", the NEP was to have significant economic consequences as well as important impacts upon the political realm.

In order to achieve national unity, the NEP had a two-prong objective — poverty eradication, irrespective of race, and a restructuring exercise to correct imbalances to achieve inter-ethnic economic parity. The latter objective of wealth restructuring through social engineering, clearly the main emphasis of the NEP, was targetted at creating a viable commercial and industrial Malay business community and 30 per cent Bumiputera ownership in all sectors of the economy. This represented a means to redress the ownership patterns that had developed before independence was achieved in 1957.

### **The Pre-NEP Period**

During British rule in Malaya, the colonial economy was concentrated in the areas of modern trade, rubber production and tin mining. These were predominantly controlled by Europeans, particularly the British, and, to a lesser extent, the Chinese. The more traditional, rural-based sectors of the economy, primarily rice and fish production, was dominated by the Malays (Ness, 1967: 29-31). By the early 1950s, European companies had control of 65 to 75 per cent of export trade and 60 to 70 per cent of import trade, while Chinese firms owned around 10 per cent of the import agencies. European companies

controlled 60 per cent of tin output, while the balance of 40 per cent was in the hands of the Chinese. About 83 per cent of plantation acreage was European-owned, while the Chinese share amounted to 14 per cent (Puthucheary, 1960: xiv-xvi). During this period, rubber and tin accounted for more than 80 per cent of Malaya's gross export earnings (Chong, 1982: 185).

The Malayan economy after independence could best be described as being neo-colonial, as it still remained heavily dependent on foreign, particularly British, investment. In fact, between 1960 and 1971, British capital in Malaysia increased from \$946.9 million to \$1,439.8 million, an increase of about 77.3 per cent (Junid, 1980: 25). Under the leadership of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the tripartite Alliance Party subscribed to the private enterprise system which entailed minimal state intervention. There was also a simultaneous and extensive promotion of rural infrastructure development owing to the fact that UMNO obtained its largest political support from the rural areas where the bulk of the voters, comprising primarily the Malays, were situated (Snodgrass, 1980: 167).

With the rise of Malay expectations, however, the state's non-interventionist policy became more untenable and was strongly criticized by the "young turks" within UMNO, represented by second echelon leaders which included current Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and his erstwhile deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam (Jomo, 1991: 470). These critics were of the view that political power which was held largely by the Malays could be used to expand their control over major sectors of the economy by enlarging the size, scope and functions of the state. Such sentiments were expounded at the first and second Bumiputera Economic Congresses, held in 1965 and 1968 respectively, which advocated greater state participation in the economy, through the use of state agencies, to acquire and control private corporations which could then be divested to private individuals (Lim, 1989).

The demands of these congresses were reflected in the First Malaysia Plan (1966-70), where state allocations were made for the Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) a reconstituted version of the Rural and Industrial Development Authority (RIDA) established in the 1950s to promote Malay economic development, but which had failed to make much progress to provide for the establishment and management of new industrial enterprises for the eventual transfer over to Bumiputeras; and Bank Bumiputra, which was established in 1966, to

encourage and develop Malay businesses, especially through financial assistance. The setting up of Bank Bumiputra was also an attempt to break Chinese and foreign monopoly of the banking industry (Snodgrass, 1980: 53).

These increased efforts by the state did not, however, help increase Malay ownership of assets in the corporate sector. By 1970, as Table 1 indicates, Malay ownership of shares in all major sectors of the economy was still very insignificant. Dominant control of the economy continued to lie with foreigners who had a 60.7 per cent stake, while the Chinese, controlling a significant 22.5 per cent, remained a distant second. Inclusive of shares owned by the state agencies, Bumiputera control of the economy still amounted to only a meagre 2.4 per cent.

Apart from the problem of penetrating the corporate economy, the manpower development of the Malays was still not producing entrepreneurs nor corporate leaders; the predominant occupations of Malays continued to be in low productivity peasant agriculture and government bureaucracy. Also, during the period between 1957 and

Table 1  
Ownership of Share Capital of Limited Companies by  
Race and Sector, Peninsular Malaysia, 1970 (in %)

Sector	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Foreign
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	0.9	22.4	0.1	75.3
Mining and Quarrying	0.7	16.8	0.4	72.4
Manufacturing	2.5	22.0	0.7	59.6
Construction	2.2	52.8	0.8	24.1
Transport and Communications	13.3	43.4	2.3	12.0
Commerce	0.8	30.4	0.7	63.5
Banking and Insurance	3.3	24.3	0.6	52.2
Others	2.3	37.8	2.3	31.4
Total	1.9	22.5	1.0	60.7

Note: The shares owned by the ethnic groups in each sector do not include the shares held by the state agencies and nominee companies.

Source: Low, 1985: 26.

1970, there was an overall decline in the income of all ethnic groups, with Malays comprising the largest group in the poverty category. More significantly, intra-ethnic income distribution deteriorated (Low, 1985: 25). Under such conditions, it was not surprising that the ruling Alliance encountered its worst electoral performance in the May 1969 general elections.

The election results, the ensuing ethnic riots and the declaration of emergency provided UMNO leaders time to reconstitute and the opportunity to implement as policy the ideas suggested at the Bumiputera congresses. This rapid sequence of events heralded many political changes; the eventual change of national leadership with Tun Razak taking over from Tunku Abdul Rahman; the regrouping of the Alliance into an enlarged coalition party, the Barisan Nasional; and the implementation of the NEP which mandated the extensive use of state apparatus for capital accumulation and the creation of the long awaited Bumiputera capitalists.

### **Implementation of the NEP**

The 1970 decade marked the rapid proliferation of public enterprises involved in activities that spawned the entire range of the economy. These enterprises, supposed engines of growth for the economy, could be classified under two major groupings — non-financial public enterprises (NFPEs) and Bumiputera trust agencies. The NFPEs, which constituted the larger category, were primarily responsible for accelerating socio-economic development and participating directly in commerce and industry. Among the more prominent NFPEs were Petroliaam Nasional or Petronas (the national oil corporation), Perbadanan Nasional or Pernas (National Corporation), Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia (HICOM), Urban Development Authority (UDA) and the Food Industries of Malaysia (FIMA). In addition to these, State Economic Development Corporations (SEDCs) were set up in every state. The other category — the trust agencies — was responsible for advancing the Bumiputera share of corporate equity by purchasing and holding shares on behalf of the community. The major trust agencies established for this task were Permodalan Nasional Bhd or PNB (National Equity Corporation) and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Amanah Saham Nasional (ASN), the national unit trust scheme (Toh, 1989: 245). These groupings did not include the other already existing, more "traditional" state enterprises responsible

for providing services such as telecommunications, public utilities and transportation.

While there were only ten public enterprises in 1957, the total number of major enterprises owned by federal, state and regional authorities had risen to 841 by 1986. This, however, also meant an inevitable increase in public development expenditure. The First Malaysia Plan (1966-70) allocated \$4.6 billion for this, while under the Second Malaysia Plan (1971-75) the figure more than doubled to \$10.3 billion. In the Third Malaysia Plan (1976-80), this amount tripled to \$31.1 billion, while the allocation under the Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981-85) stood at \$39.3 billion. Although \$74 billion was allocated for public development under the Fifth Malaysia Plan (1986-90), the figure was eventually revised to \$57.5 billion (Jomo, 1990: 111).

The utilisation of the funds generated under the five Malaysia Plans for such development is most evident in the growth of two of the state's most successful agencies — Pernas and PNB. Pernas, incorporated in 1969, functioned primarily as a holding company, began acquiring some of the country's major publicly-listed companies. By the end of the 1970s, Pernas had in its stable of assets controlling interests in Sime Darby Bhd, the plantation conglomerate, Malaysia Mining Corporation Bhd (MMC), the country's leading tin mining concern, and other major companies such as Goodyear (M) Bhd, Island & Peninsular Bhd, Highlands & Lowlands Bhd and Kontena Nasional Bhd. The assets helped contribute to Pernas registering profits which in 1981 peaked at a massive \$179 million (*Malaysian Business*, 1/5/91).

After the establishment of PNB in 1978, however, Pernas was compelled to transfer thirteen of its major companies, including Sime Darby and MMC, to the former at cost. This contributed to Pernas registering losses for a number of years, a reverse which was compounded by the economic recession of the mid-1980s and some questionable deals such as the purchase in 1984 of a 40 per cent stake in Malaysia's third largest bank, United Malayan Banking Corporation (UMBC), from then Finance Minister (now Tun) Daim Zainuddin for almost \$350 million with off-shore loans it could ill afford.

Pernas has since been revitalised; by the end of 1990 it listed among its assets four major publicly-listed companies — Malayawata Steel, Tradewinds (M), United Malayan Flour Mills and Pernas International Hotels and Properties. Pernas' major investment, however, remains its 85 per cent stake in UMBC which constitutes 74 per cent of its total assets (*Malaysian Business*, 1/5/91).

In order to accelerate Bumiputera equity ownership, PNB was incorporated in 1978 by the state-controlled Bumiputera Investment Foundation to purchase shares in limited companies to be held in trust for subsequent sale, through the ASN, to individual Bumiputera investors. ASN, incorporated in May 1979, would help ensure wider dispersion of ownership of shares acquired by PNB.

Since the initial transfer, between 1982 and 1985, of Pernas' thirteen most important investments to PNB for a mere \$350 million when the market value was then over a billion ringgit (*Malaysian Business*, 1/5/91), the latter has become Malaysia's largest institutional investor and the most aggressive player on the local stock exchange. At the end of 1990, PNB held shares in 162 companies, 107 of which were publicly-listed (*New Straits Times*, 11/6/91), and the group's corporate resources amounted to \$12 billion at cost. These resources comprised 20.6 per cent of the finance sector, 26.4 per cent of the manufacturing sector, 37.6 per cent of the plantation sector, 9.4 per cent of the property sector and 5 per cent of the mining sector (*Investors Digest*, 12/90). Among its prized assets were 55.3 per cent control of Malayan Banking Bhd, Malaysia's largest banking group, 93 per cent of Kumpulan Guthrie, the country's largest plantation company and 56.2 per cent of MMC. PNB also had a major stake in Bank Bumiputra, Malaysia's second largest banking group, but eventually sold it off to Petronas, thus leaving it to the oil corporation of having to absorb the bank's losses following the infamous BMF scandal.

### The Rise of Patron-Client Relationship and Clientelism

As the implementation of the NEP effectively centered greater economic resources and power in the hands of the state, it enabled the political elite to use it as a mechanism of exchange. Since the state machinery could now be used to purvey patronage to groups and individuals in return for political support, it inevitably led to the rise of patron-client relationship and clientelism (Clapham, 1982: 2).

Clientelism can be defined as a relationship of exchange between unequals. More detailed definitions are provided by Weingrod who notes that patronage refers "to the ways in which party politicians distribute public jobs and special favours in exchange for electoral support" (quoted in Medard, 1982: 166); and by Scott who states that "the patron-client relationship — an exchange between roles — may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two persons) ties involving a

largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influences and resources to provide protection and benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron" (quoted in Clapham, 1982: 4).

The NEP's attempt to restructure ownership patterns resulted in the development of a "subsidy mentality" among the Bumiputeras as they increasingly began to look to the state as a potential instrument of their own aspirations. This was enhanced by the fact that the politically influential had access to extensive resources from the generous allocations made available to the public enterprises, which could be used for patronage.

Another facet of such patronage was that it could also be extended at party level to garner support from members. The increased degree of state control over economic resources allowed those in power to dispense government licences, finances, contracts, high level appointments and other such concessions to gain political ascendancy in the party hierarchy.

The development of clientelism and patron-client relationships arose out of the increasing use of public enterprises to help Bumiputeras. In turn, these led non-Malay political parties venturing into business, ostensibly to protect the economic interests of the communities they claim to represent. The first party to do this was the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) which in 1968 established the Koperatif Serbaguna (M) Bhd (KSM), during the same period that UMNO members, through the Bumiputera congresses, were calling for increased state intervention in the economy.

While the Chinese business community had been able to integrate itself and develop rather well within the relatively unfettered economic environment of the 1960s, it became increasingly fearful, with the implementation of the NEP and growing state involvement in the economy, that its economic interests were being infringed upon. Among the first sectors that the state agencies ventured into were those traditionally dominated by the Chinese, namely construction and transportation. Compounding this were the unsuccessful attempts by Chinese capitalists to convince the state that public enterprises should instead concentrate on business areas controlled by foreigners (Jesudason, 1989: 128-32).

Thus, began a concerted campaign by the MCA spearheaded by

Tan Koon Swan to convince the Chinese that their predominantly family-owned enterprises would, under conditions of an increasingly politicised economy, end up with a predominant share of inferior businesses in 1990. Therefore, their traditionally small and predominantly sole proprietorship business operations, characterized by "traditional" management techniques, had to be reviewed. By pooling the resources of the Chinese, a giant modern corporation backed by large funds could be established instead (Gale, 1985: 103). This eventually led to the incorporation of Multi-Purpose Holdings Bhd (MPHB) in 1975, controlled mainly by the MCA-backed KSM, led by MCA leaders and which was to function as an organisation for a collective business strategy.

The large financial base which the Chinese provided MPHB with was effectively utilised by Tan Koon Swan to acquire a number of publicly-listed companies. Centralising these acquisitions under MPHB, Tan Koon Swan hoped to maximise stock market capitalisation of various assets under one holding company. After only seven years, MPHB had achieved public-listing and was acknowledged in 1982 as one of the largest conglomerates on the local stock exchange with interests in major sectors of the economy. Among its list of assets were significant interests in Magnum Corporation Bhd, a gaming concern also involved in wholesaling, manufacturing and shipping; Bandar Raya Development, a leading property development company; and the Malaysian French Bank.

Using similar arguments, the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) launched Maika Holdings Bhd in 1984. Although the MIC had, during the 1970s, already established a number of minor cooperatives which were controlled by individual MIC leaders, its very weak financial base did not allow these cooperatives to make much in-road into the corporate sector.

With the financial resources pooled from the Indians, cash-rich Maika also went on an acquisition drive. After just three years, Maika managed to obtain a 10 per cent stake in the United Asian Bank, a 22 per cent interest in United Oriental Assurance, a 12.5 per cent interest in publicly-listed Tongkah Harbour, a 10 per cent equity of Sistem Televisyen (M) Bhd (TV3) and a significant interest in state-controlled, publicly-listed Malaysia Airlines System, Malaysian International Shipping Corporation and, later, Syarikat Telekom (M) Bhd. However, unlike MPHB, Maika did not move actively into the corporate sector, preferring instead to play a more precautionary role by remaining just



a holding company. Occasionally though, Maika directors, most of whom are comprised of MIC leaders, have suggested some grandiose plans for the development of the company, most of which, however, have remained on the drawing board (*Malaysian Business*, 1/8/87).

The increased involvement of political parties in business has not been limited to the MCA and MIC. Since 1972, UMNO, through its holding company, Fleet Holdings, has also acquired equity in some major companies. However, unlike the MCA and MIC, UMNO's explicit reasons for its business involvement were to seek financial independence from the MCA and Chinese businessmen and to gain control of the national press, *The Straits Times*, then controlled by Singaporeans (Gomez, 1990: 52).

The growing involvement of ruling political parties in business also became another means to dispense patronage. This gave rise to numerous conflict-of-interest situations, allegations of favouritism and corruption. "Politics in business" was also rapidly becoming a mechanism which allowed influential individuals controlling such politically-linked companies to increase their personal wealth.

### **The Development of Bumiputera Conglomerates**

When Mahathir became Prime Minister in July 1981, it marked the ascendancy to power of an acknowledged strong advocate for the development of Malay capitalism through political patronage. This is evidenced in his controversial and once banned publication, *The Malay Dilemma*. While he was undoubtedly a strong supporter of the NEP, particularly its use of public enterprises and trust agencies to acquire assets on behalf of the Bumiputeras, Mahathir felt that this alone was not enough. He also felt that the creation of a Malay entrepreneurial group was an important means through which the Bumiputera community would acquire knowledge and expertise necessary to maintain and develop their hold over these assets. To quote Mahathir on this point: "The best way to keep the shares between the Bumiputera hands is to hand them over to the Bumiputera most capable of retaining them, which means the well-to-do" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13/4/79).

However, Mahathir was also aware that although the NEP had catapulted a significant number of Bumiputeras into business positions, the "functional" company directors were still overwhelmingly Chinese, while the Bumiputeras were playing merely "symbolic" roles.

In addition, the state was increasingly worried that some Bumiputera entrepreneurs, with their "get-rich-quick" mentality, preferred to collect rentier profits as frontmen to Chinese and other capitalists without contributing to the production process, thus subverting the goals of the NEP (Hing, 1984: 312).

This led Mahathir to strongly expound the need for Bumiputeras to move away from the dependency syndrome and subsidy mentality created by the NEP and instead become active participants in the corporate sector and management of businesses. A telling example of his desire was through the accomplishments of UMNO's Fleet Holdings.

Incorporated in 1972 by former UMNO treasurer, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, now president of the opposition party, Semangat 46, Fleet Holdings functioned primarily as an investment holding company. By the end of the 1970s, Fleet Holdings' major assets, apart from the New Straits Times Press Bhd (NSTP), were just two relatively minor financial institutions — Bank of Commerce and American Malaysian Insurance. Dissatisfied with the company's slow growth, Mahathir in 1982 appointed Daim to the helm of Fleet Holdings which, after a complicated series of share-swaps, takeovers and mergers, had turned into a holding company to one of the country's largest conglomerates, Renong Bhd. Through an intriguing network of cross-holdings, Renong and its subsidiaries have effective control over the construction, media and financial sectors and are currently led by a coterie of young, well-qualified Bumiputera executives groomed by Daim during his days as a businessman (Gomez, 1991a: 8-11).

The rapid conglomeratisation of the Renong Group, however, is undeniably attributable to the extensive patronage practised by the ruling elite, particularly in the form of soft loans from state-owned banks, the award of major construction projects and licences. The Group's subsidiaries have also benefitted from preferential treatment, during the allocation of Bumiputera loan stocks and rights issues and when foreign and Chinese firms had to restructure their stock holding to ensure at least 30 per cent Bumiputera control as required under the NEP.

Such methods have also led to the rapid rise of a number of other major conglomerates controlled by Bumiputeras with close links to the ruling elite. Notable examples of these are the Antah Holdings Group and the Melewar Group, both controlled by Negeri Sembilan royalty, the Arab Malaysian Group controlled by Tan Sri Datuk Azman

Hashim, the RJ Reynolds and General Lumber Groups controlled by Wan Azmi Wan Hamzah and the Rashid Hussain Group led by Rashid Hussain. In most instances, these conglomerates were seldom initiated and developed through active involvement in the production process. The repercussions to the political and economic realms due to the patronage-based growth of companies were most felt when the Malaysian economy went into recession.

### **The Economic Recession**

Since the implementation of the NEP, the Malaysian economy had been registering an average annual growth rate of 7.8 per cent between 1971 and 1980. By the early 1980s, however, Malaysia's export-oriented economy was beginning to be plagued by the adverse effects of what was to be the most severe post-war recession in the West. From 1980, the country began to borrow heavily from abroad in a vain effort to spend its way out of the recession. Over the next two years, dependency on foreign loans grew immensely, during which time Malaysia's foreign debt doubled from \$11 billion to more than \$25 billion. Faced with this gargantuan debt and the severe recession, Mahathir embarked on an austerity drive, cutting government spending after winning the 1982 general elections. This, however, did not hinder Mahathir from launching some of his pet heavy industry projects which were part of his industrialization strategy, spearheaded primarily through HICOM and its subsidiaries. These projects, however, necessitated costly investments, financed through foreign loans which exacerbated the debt problem.

A major contributor to Malaysia's foreign debt problem was in fact the public enterprises. Although meant to be the country's engines of growth, most of these enterprises were then proving to be mediocre economic performers due primarily to weak financial discipline and poor management. Bank Bumiputra, Pernas, UDA, the various SEDCs and HICOM and its subsidiaries registered losses totalling billions. In fact, by 1987, public enterprises accounted for more than one-third of the public sector's outstanding debt and for more than 30 per cent of total debt servicing (Gomez, 1991b).

Added to the financial drain were revelations that state involvement in business had led to deliberate misappropriation and diversion of funds by ministers and politicians for political ends. A noted example was the allegation that UMNO politicians had benefitted from

some of the funds lost in the \$2.5 billion BMF scandal. BMF was a Hong Kong-based subsidiary of state-owned Bank Bumiputra which eventually had to be bailed out by Petronas. Another issue of prominence was when state-owned Pernas was used to purchase then Finance Minister Daim's controversially acquired stake in UMBC with massive off-shore loans. Such incidents indicated the rapidly growing phenomenon of "money politics".

The downturn of the economy and the rise of money politics had a major impact on the political scene. The creation of a Malay middle and upper class through political patronage raised the stakes in politics, for control over political posts began to determine access to benefices to be distributed (Lim, 1989). Mahathir himself acknowledged the phenomenon of money politics when he stated that "with more Malays becoming rich, the contests for posts (in the UMNO Supreme Council) are being carried out by using large amounts of money" (Shamsul, 1988: 91). In fact, even during the contest for the post of divisional heads, it was reported that aspiring leaders were prepared to spend between \$400,000 and \$600,000 (*New Straits Times*, 7/2/86).

When Musa Hitam resigned as Deputy Prime Minister in 1986, among the reasons he cited for his decision was his weariness of the growing influence of "money brokers" in the party and the extensive web of political patronage that was increasingly centralised in the hands of the UMNO leaders (Means, 1991: 175). The rise of money politics is also attributable to the change in UMNO's membership; once dominated by teachers and civil servants, there has been an influx of Malay businessmen and professionals into the party. The dominance of businessmen is particularly evident at UMNO's general assemblies, most of whom are aligned to different "patrons" whom they feel could provide the greatest benefits.

As the impact of the recession resulted in growth rates falling to minus one per cent in 1985 and rising to a meagre one per cent in 1986, this significantly reduced the economic privileges that could be distributed. In turn, this contributed greatly to an increasingly factionalised UMNO. This inevitably led to a major power struggle, culminating in 1987 in two factions led by Mahathir and Razaleigh respectively. A major criticism levelled during the campaign by Razaleigh's faction was that only some Malays had benefitted from the NEP, the most favoured being those closely aligned to the party president. Daim, a close friend of the Prime Minister, was particularly

singled out with accusations of abusing Fleet Holdings for his own benefit. The deterioration of the economy had revealed a highly geared Fleet Holdings with most of its assets pledged as collateral for massive loans.

A similar pattern is discernible in the MCA during the power struggle between Tan Koon Swan and Datuk Neo Yee Pan in late 1985. Tan Koon Swan had effectively utilised his position in MPHB to soundly trounce Neo Yee Pan who was a major critic of politicians who combined their business interests with politics for personal ends. However, soon after his victory, Tan Koon Swan was arrested and jailed in Singapore after admitting guilt to fraudulent business malpractices. He later also served a jail sentence in Malaysia for trying to abuse MPHB's funds to resolve his business problems in Singapore. With a change of leadership under Datuk Ling Liong Sik in August 1986, a promise was also made that the mix between politics and business would cease.

In the MIC, which has seen a leadership struggle that has spanned a number of years, each leader has alleged abuse of funds in cooperatives led by the other. Some credence were given to these allegations when two MIC-related cooperatives, Koperasi Belia Majujaya and Syarikat Peibagi Nesa, were put under receivership by Bank Negara in 1989 following allegations of misappropriation of funds (*The Star*, 24/2/89). When Maika Holdings began chalking up after-tax losses after 1987, it was attributed to poor fiscal management, high operating costs and allegations, even by MIC President Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, that factions within the party had been using Maika's funds for political purposes (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23/5/91). Despite this, Samy Vellu continues to promote politically-controlled companies and has even suggested the setting up of another MIC investment arm in 1992 to acquire shares in privatised state agencies (*New Sunday Times*, 30/6/91).

Forced to address the economic problems caused by the recession, then Finance Minister Daim acted by cutting government spending and reassured investors that the government would be flexible and reasonable when implementing the NEP. He also introduced deregulation to increase foreign investment and thereby stimulate growth. The public enterprises, in particular, incurred massive funding cuts and were instructed to improve efficiency and increase competitiveness. The management of HICOM and its subsidiaries, among the major loss-making NFPEs, was handed over to foreigners

and local Chinese businessmen. Due to increasing budget deficits, Daim suggested three options for financially-weak state entities — closure, rehabilitation, or privatisation, the last of which was first mooted by Mahathir in 1983.

### **Privatisation**

Privatisation, defined by Mahathir (1989: 10) as "the transfer of government services and enterprises to the private sector", was viewed as the solution for many of Malaysia's economic problems. This signalled a major shift in state policy for henceforth the private sector would have to play a more significant role in the country's economic development.

Among the objectives of privatisation were that it would cut the number of public sector personnel, reduce the financial and administrative burden of the government, promote competition and improve efficiency, stimulate private entrepreneurship, encourage investment, and reduce the size and presence of the public sector. However, privatisation, in effect, meant denationalisation, it was also stressed that privatisation would go hand in hand with the NEP; Mahathir promised that Bumiputera companies would be given preference when companies or projects were to be privatised. According to the Prime Minister, "...it (privatisation) would not negate the objectives of the NEP. The Bumiputeras will get their share, both in terms of equity and in employment" (Gomez, 1991b).

Among the more prominent projects which have been privatised to date are indicated in Table 2. As can be noted, it was only after 1984 that the implementation of privatisation took on greater intensity, due primarily to the severity of the economic recession and to the appointment of Daim as Finance Minister in July 1984 who initiated the reform.

Since then at least 22 public enterprises have been privatised and the government has also relinquished its monopoly and control of infrastructure projects. Under the Privatisation Master Plan, released in February 1991, nearly eight years after the policy was announced, 37 public enterprises and projects will be privatised over the next two years and 56 more to be restructured.

A closer examination of the implementation of privatisation, however, also reveals extensive political patronage. The NEP requirement of at least 30 per cent Bumiputera control in privatised

Table 2  
Privatised Projects and Forms of Privatisation

Privatised Project	Year of Privatisation	Form of Privatisation
Sistem Televisyen (M) Bhd (TV3)	1983	Licensing out
Jalan Kuching/Jalan Kepong Interchange	1984	Build-Operate-Transfer
Malaysia Airlines System (MAS)	1985	Sale of Equity
Syarikat Telekom (M) Bhd	1985	Sale of Equity
Tenaga Elektrik Nasional	1985	Corporatisation
Airod	1985	Lease
Sports Toto (M) Bhd	1985	Sale of Equity
Malaysia International Shipping Corporation (MISC)	1986	Sale of Equity
Kuala Lumpur Interchange	1987	Build-Operate-Transfer
Rural Water Supply	1987	Contracting Out
North-South Highway	1987	Build-Operate Transfer
Edaran Otomobil Nasional	1990	Sale of Equity
Cement Industries of Malaysia	1990	Sale of Equity
Food Industries of Malaysia	1990	Management Buy-out
Peremba	1990	Management Buy-out

projects became an ideal loophole for political leaders and politically-connected businessmen to gain priority and gather corporate assets. Since privatisation in most cases did not even involve the formalities of an open tender system, many beneficiaries were chosen on the basis of political and personal connections.

Several cases can be cited as evidence of such patronage. In 1983, a licence was issued to a then newly incorporated joint venture company, Sistem Televisyen (M) Bhd (STMB), to operate a private third broadcasting network, TV3. Among STMB's major shareholders were Fleet Group (40 per cent), then a wholly-owned subsidiary of UMNO's Fleet Holdings; MIC's Maika Holdings (10 per cent); and Daim (10 per cent), who was then also chairman of Fleet Holdings (Gomez, 1990: 72-78). In 1987, the \$86 million Jalan Kuching/Jalan

Kepong interchange project was contracted to a \$2 Bumiputera company, Seri Angkasa, which was 35 per cent owned by a brother of Daim and one of his former business associates, Hassan Abas. Seri Angkasa, which had never done any business before, promptly subcontracted the project to a Japanese construction company (*Asian Wall Street Journal*, 31/5/88). In October 1990, two public enterprises, Food Industries of Malaysia (FIMA) and Peremba were privatised under the management buyout system to a Bumiputera management team which included Mohd Razali, an acknowledged UMNO business trustee and close associate of Daim, Hassan Abas and Tan Sri Basir Ismail. Interestingly also, Mahathir had been chairman of FIMA before becoming Prime Minister and Daim had been chairman of Peremba (Gomez, 1991a: 23-27). The most controversial case involved the multi-billion ringgit North-South Highway project contracted in 1987 to United Engineers (M) Bhd (UEM), then an ailing publicly-listed company with a poor track record in the construction industry and no experience in highway building. UEM was, however, then majority-owned by an UMNO holding company, Hatibudi (*Asian Wall Street Journal*, 28/1/88).

Despite such extensive patronage, the state could argue that privatisation was working. According to official estimates, the number of public sector personnel had been reduced by 54,000 since the mid-1980s; proceeds from the sale of state equity in privatised companies had generated \$814 million; and about \$7.45 billion of the state's outstanding debt had been transferred to the private sector (Gomez, 1991b).

However, it is questionable whether Malaysians were well served when the state awarded contracts without competitive bidding or sold assets without seeking the best offer, for it may have eliminated competition which would have benefitted consumers and tax-payers; instead, it was leading to a case of private monopolies evolving to replace public monopolies (*Investors Digest*, 8/89). The development of Bumiputera entrepreneurship was also not advanced when contracts awarded to them were promptly subcontracted to foreigners and non-Bumiputeras (Gomez, 1991b). Interestingly also, the state's better run and more profitable agencies are being sold, leaving the less viable entities under its control, which could aggravate its financial standing (Jomo, 1991: 485).

Despite privatisation, state involvement in the economy remains extensive; the state still owns 70 per cent of MAS, 45 per cent of MISC



and 82 per cent of Syarikat Telekom (M) Bhd, all of which operate as monopolies. The creation of such monopolies and cornering of certain sectors of the economy is not limited to state-owned companies. With the help of privatisation and the NEP, control of the economy by political parties and businessmen with political ties is increasing, particularly in property development, construction, finance and publishing sectors. A case study of the financial sector indicates this increasing trend of centralisation of control of important economic sectors.

### **Case Study of Control of the Financial Sector**

As indicated in Table 1, Malay ownership of share capital of companies involved in banking and insurance in 1970 amounted to only 3.3 per cent. The Chinese had 24.3 per cent control, Indians 0.6 per cent and foreigners 52.2 per cent.

Since then, control of the leading local banks has witnessed a major shift in ownership. Malayan Banking Bhd (MBB), currently Malaysia's largest bank and once controlled by prominent Chinese tycoon, Khoo Teck Puat, came under state control in 1966 following a run on the bank. Ownership of MBB was later transferred to PNB (Jesudason, 1989, 126). The country's second largest bank, Bank Bumiputra has remained under state control although its equity has been shifted around. Currently, Bank Bumiputra is controlled by the Ministry of Finance Inc., a holding company under the Finance Ministry, which bought the bank from Petronas.

UMBC, the country's third largest bank, was controlled by Chang Ming Thien, a Singaporean, who in June 1981 sold a significant stake in the bank to then MCA-controlled MPHB. Earlier, in 1976, when directors of UMBC were suspected of diverting the bank's funds for themselves, Bank Negara intervened to restructure the management and ownership of UMBC. Pernas was then brought in as a 30 per cent shareholder (Jesudason, 1989: 93, 107). When MPHB bought a 41 per cent stake in UMBC in 1981, making it co-equal shareholder with Pernas, the former learnt that another state entity, Petronas, had also acquired a 9 per cent stake in the bank. Realising that this would curtail its management of UMBC, MPHB sold its interests in the bank in 1984 to companies controlled by Daim Zainuddin for \$125 million cash and a 51 per cent equity of the Malaysian French Bank. In late 1986, Daim divested his stake in UMBC to Pernas for almost \$350

million (*Asian Wall Street Journal*, 31/5/88). Pernas currently owns 85 per cent equity of UMBC.

Early in 1991, a merger was proposed between UMBC and the Development & Commercial Bank (D&C), the country's fifth largest bank. D&C Bank was established in 1965 by Tun H.S. Lee, an MCA member who was also the country's first Finance Minister. By the early 1980s, control of D&C Bank was equally balanced between Lee's family and Datuk Syed Kechik, an UMNO politician who had ventured into business. By 1984, state-controlled PNB also had 10 per cent equity of D&C Bank. That same year, Lee and his son, Alex Lee, presently a Gerakan deputy minister, transferred their 33 per cent stake in D&C Bank to Roxy Bhd, a publicly-listed company they had then just acquired. Badly affected by the 1985-86 recession which exacerbated its debt problem, Roxy sold 20 per cent equity of D&C Bank to a Singaporean company, United Industrial Corporation, which in turn later sold this stake to the publicly-listed stock-broking concern, Rashid Hussain Bhd. The merger between UMBC and D&C Bank will make the enlarged entity Malaysia's third largest bank which will be controlled by state and Bumiputera companies (Gomez, 1991c).

In September 1990, it was announced that Malaysia's sixth largest bank, United Asian Bank (UAB), would be involved with Bank of Commerce (BCB) in a share-swapping exercise which would result in the merger of the two banks. Renong, reputedly still under the control of UMNO through proxies, has a 64 per cent stake in BCB through two of its subsidiaries. MIC's Maika Holdings reportedly holds a 2.7 per cent stake in UAB, and in June 1991 also acquired 11.17 million shares in BCB (*New Straits Times*, 15/6/91).

UAB, a once Indian controlled bank which had passed into majority Malay ownership, came perilously close to receivership in 1986. When Bank Negara could not convince any of UAB's shareholders to inject funds into the ailing bank to keep it afloat, the central bank ended up pumping in almost \$363 million to revive UAB. Since then, Bank Negara has always been open about its intention to divest its 74 per cent stake in UAB for cash, provided an appropriate bid is made (*Malaysian Business*, 1/10/90).

The UAB-BCB merger will make the new entity, to be called Commerce Investments Bhd, the fifth largest bank in the country. Following the merger, Renong, through its subsidiaries is expected to hold a controlling 33 per cent stake in the new financial entity (*Malaysian Business*, 1/10/90).

Thus, within just two decades, five of the top six local banks (the exception being publicly-listed Public Bank Bhd), once primarily dominated by Chinese and foreign interests, are now controlled by major Bumiputera and state companies. The Mid-Term Review of the Fifth Malaysia Plan (1986-90: 73) indicates that Bumiputera interests in the commercial banking sector constitute more than 50 per cent equity in 10 out of 22 domestic banks. The quoted figure does not, however, take into account these recent series of mergers.

The change in the ownership distribution of share capital in the corporate sector by ethnicity between 1970 and 1990 (as shown in Table 3) indicates that the Bumiputera share has risen significantly from 2.4 per cent in 1970 to 20.3 per cent in 1990, though falling considerably short of the NEP's 30 per cent target. Of this 20.3 per cent, Bumiputera individuals hold 14 per cent and the trust agencies the balance. While Chinese equity ownership increased significantly from 27.2 per cent in 1970 to 44.9 per cent in 1990, the Indian share fell marginally, from 1.1 to 1.0 per cent, during the same period. The most significant change was the fall in equity owned by foreign residents, from 63.4 per cent in 1970 to 25.1 per cent in 1990. The shares held by nominee companies which cannot be assigned to specific ethnic groups has grown from 6.0 per cent to 8.4 per cent in 1990.

These figures, however, do not appear to indicate the true position of ownership patterns. For example, the shares held by nominee companies are deemed to belong to non-Bumiputera Malaysian residents although this may not necessarily be the case. In fact, it is likely that Bumiputera politicians and others are also resorting to the use of nominee companies, as clearly shown in the study of UMNO's corporate investments (see Gomez, 1990). There is also some evidence of Bumiputera ownership through foreign-domiciled companies. One example is the case of a Hong Kong-based company, Yung Pui Co., controlled by Basir Ismail and Wan Azmi Wan Hamzah who used it to buy a stake in publicly-listed Cycle & Carriage Ltd from PNB. Later, Cycle & Carriage was used to acquire an interest in another publicly-listed company, Cold Storage Bhd (Gomez, 1991a: 25-26). There is also some reason to presume that Chinese Malaysians are investing from abroad (Jomo, 1991: 476).

The figures in Table 3 also indicate the NEP's success in expanding the Malaysian middle-class. Although this expansion may have favoured the Bumiputeras more than it did the Chinese, the latter's dominance over the economy remains significant. Although official

Table 3  
 Difference in Ownership of Share Capital between  
 Bumiputeras and Non-Bumiputeras: 1970-90 (in %)

Ownership Group	1970	1990
Bumiputera individuals	1.6	14.0
Trust Agencies	0.8	6.3
Chinese	27.2	44.9
Indians	1.1	1.0
Others	-	0.3
Foreigners	63.4	25.1
Nominee Companies	6.0	8.4

Sources: *Second Malaysia Plan* (1971-75: 40); *NST*, 18/6/91.

figures are scarce, the Chinese are estimated to have 50 per cent control of the construction sector, 82 per cent of wholesale trade, 58 per cent of retail trade, around 70 per cent interests in small scale enterprises and approximately 40 per cent control of the manufacturing sector. Despite the in-roads made by Bumiputeras and public enterprises into the financial sector, Chinese presence in banking, stock-broking, leasing and insurance is not insignificant (*Malaysian Business*, 16/1/91).

### Conclusion

Whether equitable intra-ethnic wealth distribution has been achieved is arguable. In fact, the current form of wealth distribution appears to indicate that there has been extensive concentration of ownership in the hands of an elite minority, not solely Bumiputeras, particularly those with strong political ties. For example, the NEP requirement that privatised projects must have at least 30 per cent Bumiputera interests has helped centralisation of state-developed companies under politically-linked Bumiputera businessmen which have, ironically, in turn obliterated the other NEP objective of encouraging equitable distribution of wealth.<sup>1</sup>

Another significant outcome of the NEP, the emergence of the large corporation, also indicates wealth concentration. The increasing

trend of conglomeratisation has been achieved by easy access to funds, especially from state-owned banks, and market strategies such as mergers, takeovers and share-swapping. This has led to concentration of stock ownership and monopolisation of the economy. The mainstream media and publishing sector is already well consolidated under the Renong Group, which also appears to be cornering the construction sector. The increasing centralisation of the financial and property development sectors under a small network of well interlocked companies, either through joint stock control or directorships, is also rapidly developing. Such conglomerates only serve to highlight the concentration of wealth-generating activities in the hands of an elite minority.

The implementation of the NEP has evidently reshaped significantly the ownership patterns of shares in the corporate sector. While more corporate equity may indeed be in the name of Bumiputeras because of the NEP, it is doubtful if, in the process, equitable intra and inter-ethnic wealth distribution has been achieved.

#### Note

1. This is evident even within the ASN unit trust scheme which is supposed to ensure wider dispersion of equity among Bumiputeras. Although 45 per cent of all eligible Bumiputeras participate in the ASN, only 1.3 per cent of them owned 75 per cent of ASN shares in the late 1980s, despite the \$50,000 ceiling for individual ownership to constrain wealth concentration (Jomo, 1991: 477).

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## WANITA DAN KERJA: SATU PENDEKATAN TEORITIS\*

*Wazir Jahan Karim*

**T**ajuk "Wanita dan Kerja" mungkin sesuai didedikasikan kepada Dr. Syed Husin Ali, memandangkan bahawa dikemuncak kerjayanya sebagai Profesor Antropologi, beliau telah menyelia beberapa tesis kedoktoran dalam bidang "Pengajian Wanita." Beliau secara langsung telah menggalakkan perkembangan Pengajian Wanita di peringkat Ijazah Tinggi di universiti-universiti Malaysia dan saya percaya bahawa beliau boleh diperakui sebagai "mentor" golongan akademia wanita di Malaysia dan secara tidak langsung juga sebagai peserta gerakan wanita di Malaysia. Pergerakan wanita, ataupun apa yang dipopularkan sebagai "the women's movement" ialah satu aliran pergabungan individu dan kelompok-kelompok wanita yang cuba membangunkan kesedaran dan keinsafan mengenai kedudukan wanita di dunia dan negara. Di antara sebab-sebab mengapa gerakan ini wujud dan berkembang di peringkat dunia ialah diskriminasi mengikut biologi dan seks. Justeru, golongan feminis dalam dekad-dekad keenam puluhan dan ketujuh puluhan telah mengasaskan teori diskriminasi seks dalam keluarga dan meminjam ide-ide Engels (1884) untuk menjelaskan keadaan ini. Menurut mereka, patriarki berpunca dari perbezaan fungsi-fungsi di antara wanita dan lelaki dalam keluarga (Gough 1975; Leibowits 1975; M. Rosaldo 1974).

- \* Bab ini telah mula-mulanya muncul sebagai satu kertaskerja bertajuk "Wanita, Keluarga dan Kerja: Satu Pendekatan Teoritis" yang telah dibentangkan dalam seminar "Wanita, Keluarga dan Kerja" anjuran Persatuan Wanita Universiti Malaya dan Jabatan Antropologi/Sosiologi Universiti Malaya pada 9 Januari 1988. Kertas kerja ini telah diulaskan semula diakhir tahun 1991 untuk buku ini.



Walaupun setiap golongan wanita di peringkat dunia dan negara mendedahkan masalah ini dengan cara dan strategi yang berbeza, namun kesemua bersetuju bahawa kesamaan dan keadilan ialah apa yang dituntut — peluang pendidikan dan perkerajaan yang sama, gaji sama untuk pekerjaan yang sama, pembahagian kerja yang seimbang dan munasabah dalam rumahtangga serta penguasaan yang sama terhadap fungsi-fungsi seksual dan reproduksi (Lewenhak 1980; Holter 1984). Dalam konteks ini, wanita profesyenal dan bukan-profesyenal yang berkerjaya mengalami masalah status dan peranan yang berbeza apabila dibandingkan dengan wanita yang bekerja di rumah.

### **Stereotaip, Prasangka dan Misogini Biologi dan Seks**

Apakah pandangan dan fikiran stereotaip yang berkait dengan wanita berkerjaya? Pertama, perbezaan biologi digunakan sebagai satu ukuran kebolehan. Justeru, pandangan bahawa kaum wanita tidak boleh menjalankan pekerjaan berkait dengan penyelenggaraan jentera dan alat-alat mekanikal kecuali mesin-mesin kecil, seperti mesin menaip dan komputer, menimbulkan andaian-andaian dan prasangka-prasangka di tempat kerja yang berasaskan perbezaan fizikal di antara lelaki dan perempuan. Seterusnya pengasingan kaum wanita dari teknologi baru dan kejenteraan telah menimbulkan pengasingan yang lain dalam bidang pendidikan kejuruteraan, polisains, elektrik dan elektronik. Umpamanya, perkembangan teknologi elektronik membayangkan teknologi dan kemahiran kaum lelaki yang membangunkan semua rancangan "software" dan "hardware" di dunia. Walaupun kaum wanita masih lagi digunakan dalam pejabat sebagai operator mesin-mesin elektronik ini, "literasi saintifik" ataupun kebolehan mereka mencipta dan membaiki model-model mesin elektronik sangat lemah jika dibandingkan dengan kaum lelaki. Ini termasuk mesin-mesin yang biasa digunakan oleh kaum wanita seperti mesin jahit, mesin basuh baju, microwave, blender dan sebagainya. Walaupun pengguna mesin-mesin ini adalah wanita, pencipta-penciptanya tetap lelaki. Selagi biologi dijadikan ukuran kebolehan dan kaum wanita sendiri tidak mengubah aliran-aliran pembahagian kerja, taraf dan peranan mereka dalam bidang profesyenal, khususnya saintifik dan teknikal tidak akan berubah dari keadaan dahulu (lihat M.M. Garskorfed, 1971: 2-3).

### Fungsi-Fungsi Domestik dan Peranan Sosial: Satu Penghalang Struktur

Saya tidak menafikan sama sekali bahawa dari segi bentuk dan rupa, kaum wanita memang berbeza daripada kaum lelaki. Fungsi reproduksi dihadkan kepada kaum wanita. Tetapi selain itu beban pengasuhan dan pendidikan kanak-kanak umumnya juga jatuh ke atas riba ibu-ibu, walaupun sebahagian daripada golongan ibu ini mempunyai kerjaya dan tanggungjawab lain di luar rumah. Dalam zaman industri kaum wanita juga terpaksa bekerja untuk membangunkan taraf ekonomi keluarga. Satu cara bagaimana peranan sosial ibu dalam rumahtangga diselaraskan dengan peranan ekonomi dan pekerjaan formal ialah dengan mencari profesyen-profesyen yang boleh disesuaikan dengan peranan dan fungsi kaum wanita dan ibu. Oleh itu, ramai dari kaum wanita memilih menjadi guru, jururawat, jurutrengkas, pengasuh kanak-kanak dan sebagainya. Ini menimbulkan masalah kedua dalam kerjaya wanita. Pihak lelaki menggunakan kecenderungan ini sebagai indikator bahawa kaum wanita tetap memilih pekerjaan yang berbentuk domestik, yang dipandang oleh kaum lelaki sebagai lebih mudah dan ringan, iaitu pekerjaan yang tidak memerlukan kemahiran-kemahiran teknikal dan mental yang luar biasa. Akhirnya ini menimbulkan satu putaran di mana huraian kerja pekerjaan-pekerjaan ini menjadi "engendered", iaitu mengkhususkan pekerjaan-pekerjaan ini untuk wanita. Cabaran meneroka bidang-bidang lain seperti sains penciptaan tidak menjadi satu realiti kerana proses pelaziman struktur ini, di mana pekerjaan-pekerjaan disusun mengikut kebolehan-kebolehan tradisional yang berasaskan biologi.

Kerana andaian-andaian tradisional mengenai pekerjaan wanita masih lagi meluas dalam zaman industri, maka masyarakat lebih mengutamakan pekerjaan lelaki daripada wanita atau suami lebih daripada isteri (lihat Rogers, 1979: 13). Kenyataan bahawa, "Wanita bekerja cuma untuk membantu suami dan keluarga tetapi kaum lelaki bekerja untuk menanggung isteri dan keluarga", sering kedengaran, walaupun gaji isteri itu sama ataupun lebih tinggi daripada gaji suami. Satu kenyataan lain yang berbunyi "Seorang wanita tidak harus merebut pangkat malah patut biar kaum lelaki muncul ke depan kerana mereka yang menanggung keluarga" juga sering dapat dikesan dalam masyarakat kita. Alasan ini digunakan oleh pemimpin-pemimpin

agama, awam dan swasta, walaupun kaum wanita yang bekerja itu mungkin mempunyai kelayakan, bakat dan sikap bertanggungjawab dan pencapaian yang sama. Komen-komen lain bahawa kaum wanita mudah sahaja meletak jawatan kerana mereka bersuami yang menanggung keluarga, atau wanita tidak kekal dalam jawatan kerana mengikut kehendak suami membangunkan prasangka-prasangka terhadap wanita yang bekerja. Sebenarnya, ini satu helah kaum lelaki yang hebat bersaing sesama sendiri. Dengan mengeneipkan kaum wanita daripada persaingan ini, tekanan persaingan yang mereka hadapi dapat dikurangkan. Inilah sebabnya nilai-nilai negatif tentang wanita yang bekerja diteruskan oleh kaum lelaki. Isu-isu seks dan seksualiti sering menjadi strategi pekerja lelaki mengurangkan persaingan di sektor pekerjaan formal (Roger 1979; Lewenhak 1980; Caplan 1987).

Kaum wanita harus menunjukkan semangat persaingan yang sama, bersikap serius terhadap pekerjaan dan mobiliti pekerjaan agar kaum lelaki mengubah sikap mereka terhadap wanita berkerjaya. Justeru, apabila kemahuan dan pencapaian golongan "terpinggir" ini tidak dapat dipertikaikan, mereka mungkin boleh fokus dengan lebih mudah lagi kepada matlamat baru bahawa pertandingan dalam tempat kerja tidak lagi mengikut biologi tetapi kebolehan. Ini membayangkan masalah-masalah misogini lelaki khususnya dan masyarakat umum amnya terhadap peranan wanita, satu masalah yang meluas di seluruh dunia, bukan masalah sesuatu budaya. Renunglah misogini Prof. Higgins dalam karya Bernard Shaw *Pygmalion* yang dipopularkan dalam pementasan "My Fair Lady" di London Barat dalam tahun-tahun enam puluhan.

"Why can't a woman be more like a man,  
 Women are irrational,  
 Their heads full of cotton, hay and rags.  
 Why can't a woman learn to use her head?  
 Why is thinking something woman can never do?"

Menurut Marina S. Horner (1971: 105) Presiden Radcliffe College dan Prof. Psikologi di Universiti Harvard, sikap misogini membantu kaum lelaki mengesahkan kedudukan lemah kaum wanita dalam masyarakat dan sebaliknya, menambahkan perasaan di kalangan wanita bahawa mereka tidak boleh memegang kuasa dan pangkat sementara kaum lelaki boleh berbuat demikian.

## Dasar Diskriminasi Seksual

Penghalang-penghalang "struktural" ini juga boleh digunakan dengan cara-cara lain oleh pihak majikan. Umpamanya, sewaktu masalah pengangguran serius, permohonan-permohonan wanita diketepikan begitu sahaja. Keutamaan diberi kepada kaum lelaki yang sudah berkeluarga, diikuti dengan lelaki bujang, wanita bujang dan akhirnya wanita yang sudah berkahwin. Proses pemilihan seperti ini dijustifikasikan atas sebab-sebab keperluan ekonomi, walaupun kaum wanita mempunyai kelayakan yang sama, kalau tidak lebih tinggi daripada kaum lelaki. Sebagai contoh, Setiausaha National Union of Teaching Profession, Encik Abdul Karim Abdul Majid (*New Straits Times*, 3hb Mei, 1988), telah menyatakan bahawa dasar baru kerajaan untuk mengurangkan guru-guru wanita di Malaysia (dari 60% ke 50%) ialah satu dasar diskriminasi seksual. Ini kerana:

- 1) Alasan kerajaan tidak membenarkan guru wanita mengguna perkahwinan sebagai satu sebab menolak pemindahan tempat kerja khususnya ke Sabah dan Sarawak tidak munasabah kerana guru lelaki tidak payah menggunakan sebab ini. Isteri mereka boleh mengikut mereka dengan mudah, walhal *adat* di sini ialah keadaan sebaliknya. Bukannya mudah seseorang isteri menyuruh suami mengikutnya ke tempat pekerjaan baru. Seseorang suami yang memohon pertukaran tempat kerja kerana mahu mengikut isterinya tidak akan diberi layanan dan perhatian serius, kecuali dalam keadaan-keadaan luarbiasa, umpamanya kalau dia seorang Profesor, Pengurus Bank atau Menteri.
- 2) Guru-guru pelatih yang memohon menjadi guru mempunyai kelayakan yang lebih baik daripada guru-guru lelaki. Apabila jantina digunakan sebagai sebab penerimaan dan kelayakan diketepikan, taraf pengajaran di sekolah-sekolah akan terjejas.
- 3) UNESCO telah menunjukkan bahawa guru wanita adalah lebih baik dari kaum lelaki dari segi dedikasi, toleransi, kesabaran dan kerjasama.

Satu laporan Organisasi Buruh Antarabangsa (ILO) yang berjudul, "Diversification and Women's Employment and Training" (1986) telah mengatakan bahawa dasar-dasar dan rancangan-rancangan menstruktur-semula biasanya ditujukan kepada pekerjaan yang dimonopoli oleh kaum wanita. Jarang sekali sesuatu negara memberi perhatian kepada pekerjaan-pekerjaan yang dimonopoli oleh kaum

lelaki dan menyusun semula dasar untuk menambahkan penyertaan wanita dalam pekerjaan-pekerjaan itu. Sikap patriarki dalam dasar dan pelaksanaan dasar memperkecilkan sumbangan wanita kepada ekonomi. Dalam keadaan gunatenaga penuh kekurangan pekerja wanita dalam sektor-sektor perkhidmatan dan industri menimbulkan kesedaran bahawa sumbangan wanita terhadap pembangunan ekonomi amat penting. Walau bagaimanapun sistem gaji jarang menaikkan taraf dan kedudukan mereka. Umpamanya, di Malaysia sistem remunerasi baru untuk jururawat tempatan berbeza sekali dengan jururawat asing walaupun diakui bahawa tenaga wanita tempatan dalam perkhidmatan kejururawatan sangatlah kurang. Keadaan ini tidak membayangkan diskriminasi jantina tetapi diskriminasi dalam suatu sektor pekerjaan yang dimonopoli oleh kaum wanita. Taraf dan kedudukan jururawat tempatan dapat diperbaiki sekiranya sistem gaji diselaraskan menurut pengalaman dan kelayakan. Diskriminasi seperti ini menggalakkan lebih ramai jururawat meninggalkan profesyennya. Ini tentunya merumitkan lagi masalah kekurangan tenaga yang dihadapi sekarang.

Diskriminasi seksual dan pengabaian wanita profesyenal sering menimbulkan salah faham di antara wanita dan lelaki mengenai tugas dan tanggungjawab masing-masing. Hasil kajian tentang diskriminasi seksual pekerjaan yang saya kendalikan pada 1986 di sepuluh pertubuhan terpilih (di antaranya ialah Pusat Sains Pengurusan di salah sebuah universiti di Malaysia) menyokong hal ini. Sebagai contoh pensyarah Pengurusan lelaki dan perempuan di Pusat Sains Pengurusan yang dimaksudkan menunjukkan adanya perselisihan faham di antara mereka mengenai isi-isu pekerjaan, pangkat dan taraf;

- 1) Pensyarah-pensyarah lelaki bersetuju bahawa pensyarah wanita mengalami diskriminasi seksual. Mereka tidak akan teragak untuk menyokong pensyarah wanita menjadi Dekan atau jawatan-jawatan tinggi lain, jika pensyarah-pensyarah wanita layak memegang jawatan-jawatan itu. Walau bagaimanapun, pensyarah wanita, sebaliknya, tidak yakin mereka akan diberi sokongan demikian, malah menyatakan bahawa mereka terpaksa membuktikan kelayakan mereka dengan bekerja lebih kuat lagi.
- 2) Pensyarah lelaki menyatakan bahawa salah satu sebab mengapa pensyarah wanita membayangkan imej pasif dalam pekerjaan mereka ialah kerana mereka enggan memegang jawatan-jawatan pentadbiran. Justeru, mereka selalu rasa terasing. Pensyarah wanita pula menyatakan bahawa mereka tidak diberi peluang

- memegang jawatan-jawatan ini dan ingin diberi peluang oleh ketua-ketua jabatan yang semuanya terdiri daripada kaum lelaki.
- 3) Pensyarah lelaki merasa bahawa pensyarah wanita terlalu "berkelompok", iaitu lebih suka bergaul dengan pensyarah-pensyarah wanita daripada pensyarah lelaki. Sekiranya mereka rasa terasing, mereka sendiri yang salah. Bidang Pengurusan khususnya tidak menggalakkan sikap berkelompok. Ini kerana perhubungan sosial yang erat diwajibkan untuk menjayakan prinsip-prinsip pengurusan itu sendiri. Pensyarah wanita pula percaya bahawa kaum lelakilah yang terlalu mengasingkan diri dan berorientasi "kelelakian", iaitu, lebih suka mencari pensyarah lelaki lain untuk bergiat dalam sesuatu projek atau aktiviti. Bagi mereka, ini ialah kerana sebahagian besar daripada pensyarah lelaki adalah manipulatif dan lebih memburu kuasa iaitu ingin berkuasa dan pandai memanipulasi keadaan untuk munafaat diri sendiri. Ini dilakukan melalui sistem "perikatan" dan jalinan hubungan sesama "member". Sistem ini lebih sukar dikesan di kalangan kaum wanita kerana mereka lebih berorientasi terhadap kerja daripada kuasa.
  - 4) Akhirnya, satu pertentangan serius di antara persepsi wanita dan lelaki dalam bidang akademik ialah pandangan kaum lelaki bahawa kaum wanita membelah-bahagikan masa, tenaga dan tanggungjawab di antara pekerjaan dan tugas-tugas rumahtangga. Mereka tetap bersimpati dengan pensyarah wanita dan menganggap ini sebagai satu dilema yang sukar diatasi. Faktor ini dijelaskan sebagai "role incongruence" yang sentiasa didebatkan (B.A. Stead, 1985: 58). Walau bagaimanapun, pensyarah wanita merasa bahawa ini bukan punca masalah mereka. Mereka menyatakan bahawa mereka tidak membahagikan masa, tenaga dan tanggungjawab di antara pekerjaan dan keluarga dalam waktu kerja. Malah, mereka berusaha lebih kuat lagi untuk membuktikan daya pengeluaran. Bagi mereka, keluarga dan anak-anak tidak menjadi masalah asas. Yang menjadi masalah ialah struktur patriarki dalam pekerjaan.

Justeru, kenyataan beberapa wanita yang bekerja seperti "Saya tidak tahu apa saya akan buat tanpa keluarga dan anak-anak saya yang disayangi" ataupun "Syukurlah saya berkeluarga" membayangkan cara-cara bagaimana wanita profesyenal mencari kompensasi ataupun eskapisme dari sekatan-sekatan struktur ini yang membawa rasa hampa dan pesimisme dalam pekerjaan.

### Sosialisasi Politik dan Pertentangan Peranan

Sekatan-sekatan struktur ini menimbulkan masalah besar dalam pekerjaan. Keadaan ini mewujudkan suatu putaran ganas di mana seseorang wanita profesional tidak berupaya bertanding, dan bekerja sekadar "mencari makan" sahaja, lalu memberi lebih masa kepada anak-anak; mereka tidak lagi mahu meningkatkan daya pengeluaran. Wanita seperti ini juga mudah meletak jawatan apabila ada konflik dalam pekerjaan. Sikap ini seterusnya menyediakan bukti kepada pihak majikan bahawa pekerja wanita lembab dan pasif dan tidak menaikkan imej majikan. Salah satu sekatan struktur yang tidak difahami oleh wanita profesional ialah sosialisasi dan jalinan korporat, satu sistem yang menerima ahli-ahlinya atas dasar perkongsian satu profesyen dan jantina (Stead, B.N. ed., 1985: 61). Jalinan ini dibentuk melalui sistem lobi dan melalui perbincangan hal-hal kerja di kelab, padang golf, pusat sukan dan sauna mewujudkan sempadan-sempadan eksklusif berdasarkan jantina, dan secara tidak langsung mengasingkan kelompok wanita daripada proses membuat keputusan. Kaum wanita mungkin boleh mengatasi masalah ini dengan mengambil sikap "tidak kisah" bahawa mereka sama taraf dan tidak berbeza daripada orang lelaki, tetapi ini pula melahirkan rasa gelisah di kalangan kaum lelaki. Mereka akan merasa kaku dengan eksekutif-eksekutif wanita ini, malah akan mengelak daripada mereka kerana suasana pergaulan itu berubah.

Dalam dunia korporat yang menggunakan jalinan-jalinan kemasyarakatan politik seperti ini, wanita biasanya muncul sebagai setiausaha, pelayan, penghibur, atau pelacur. Justeru, imej eksekutif wanita bercanggah dengan imej wanita lain ini. Tambahan lagi, eksekutif wanita itu mungkin tidak rela melihat imej wanita umum dicemar oleh peranan yang dimainkan oleh wanita-wanita lain yang disebutkan tadi, dan akan cuba membangunkan ide-ide keinsafan dan feminis dalam perbincangan dan dialog. Kerana tidak mahu mendengar atau tidak larat mendengar ide-ide keinsafan ini kaum eksekutif lelaki menjauhkan diri mereka daripada eksekutif-eksekutif wanita yang digelar "feminis". Walaupun keadaan ini sedang berubah melalui sistem "orientasi keluarga" yang digunakan oleh beberapa korporasi Amerika Syarikat, di mana isteri-isteri diberi peranan yang lebih berkesan demi membaiki imej korporat dan membolehkan eksekutif wanita bergaul dengan lebih mudah dalam satu suasana mesra yang penuh dengan semangat "kekeluargaan", suasana

"seksual" dan "seksis" tetap wujud dalam birokrasi perniagaan dan perusahaan Asia, khususnya Asia Barat dan Timur.

Mungkin satu cara kaum wanita profesional Timur boleh mengatasi masalah ini ialah dengan memajukan sistem-sistem jalinan sosial yang lebih memunafaat mereka seperti sistem jalinan kekeluargaan dan sistem penghiburan yang tidak melibatkan seks dan lain-lain. Di Malaysia, dalam konteks birokrasi kerajaan, telah wujudnya sistem jalinan sosial berbentuk agama yang mengeratkan lagi perhubungan di antara kaum lelaki Islam. Di sini saya memaksudkan kegiatan-kegiatan kebajikan Islam, bantuan "saudara baru" melalui ABIM Outreach dan Perkim, Majlis Usrah, dan beberapa Majlis doa selamat, buka puasa, Marhaban, tahlil, kenduri dan sebagainya. Biasanya aktiviti-aktiviti ini diuruskan oleh pihak lelaki dengan bantuan wanita. Keadaan sebaliknya di mana aktiviti-aktiviti ini diuruskan oleh pihak wanita dengan bantuan lelaki tidak pernah wujud dan cuma dalam konteks ketidakhadiran kaum lelaki boleh kaum wanita menguruskan aktiviti-aktiviti ini sendiri. Dalam aktiviti-aktiviti yang melibatkan kehadiran lelaki Islam, wanita Islam tetap memainkan peranan domestik walaupun taraf mereka di tempat pekerjaan sama atau lebih tinggi daripada kaum lelaki ini. Ini membangunkan kesedaran perbezaan taraf dan status mengikut seks.

Penulis sendiri pernah menghadiri kenduri yang diuruskan oleh pensyarah-pensyarah universiti di mana pensyarah-pensyarah wanita kesemuanya turut ke dapur membantu menghidang makanan dan melayan pensyarah-pensyarah lelaki dan lelaki lain di bahagian teknikal dan pentadbiran rendah seperti peon, pembantu makmal dan pemandu. Perbezaan jantina tidak mungkin wujud sekiranya pihak lelaki turut sama membantu pensyarah-pensyarah wanita melayan tetamu. Tentunya dalam suasana di mana perbezaan jantina diutamakan, wanita profesional tidak boleh mengguna aktiviti-aktiviti ini untuk mengeratkan perhubungan mereka dengan kaum profesional lelaki. Untuk mengelakkan keadaan demikian, wanita profesional mungkin boleh menempah makanan supaya mereka dibebaskan daripada peranan domestik. Walau bagaimanapun mereka tetap diasingkan daripada kaum lelaki dalam upacara amal Islam. Akhir kata, walaupun seseorang wanita profesional boleh memajukan satu imej yang segar, peramah, bijak dan berkompromi, beliau tidak dapat menggunakan institusi-institusi sosial dengan cara yang berkesan dan produktif selagi struktur pergaulan itu berbentuk patriarki.



## Dasar Swasta yang Menggalakkan Diskriminasi Seksual

Satu faktor yang kini menjadi satu isu hangat di rantau ini serta di negeri-negeri Barat ialah dasar kerajaan dan pihak swasta yang tidak mengambilkira masalah dan dilema wanita yang bekerja. Laporan UNESCO, 1980 tentang Dekad Wanita 1975-1985 telah menghuraikan ketidakseimbangan yang menimpa wanita yang bekerja:

"In many countries, positions held by women, which are often temporary or part-time remain concentrated in a few branches of activity and in a few limited number of occupations. Although the number of women in professional and managerial posts have increased, the vast majority of them remain confined to the lower rungs of the hierarchy, and their chances of attaining positions of responsibility are slender....

...in a period of crisis, the image of women as 'job stealers' reemerges with all its force. Although, it is well known that women are the first to suffer from unemployment owing to their lower qualification and more restricted geographical and occupational mobility, current economic difficulties have been instrumental in reviving the ideology of 'a woman's place is in the home', which is hardly likely to speed progress towards equal opportunity.

...It is therefore to be feared that in the coming years, the trend now taking shape throughout the world will gather momentum, with the result that an increasing number of women are made redundant and transferred from the organized sector of the economy to the peripheral labour market in industrialized countries or to the non-organized sectors of subsistence farming or craft work in developing countries" (UNESCO, 1980).

### Terjemahan

Dalam banyak negara jawatan-jawatan yang dipegang oleh wanita, yang biasanya sementara atau separa masa, adalah terhad kepada beberapa jenis pekerjaan. Walaupun jumlah wanita dalam bidang profesyenal dan pengurusan telah meningkat, sebahagian besar daripadanya terhad kepada tangga hiraki yang rendah, dan peluang memegang jawatan-jawatan bertanggungjawab adalah kurang....

...dalam masa krisis, imej wanita sebagai "pencuri kerja" tonjol semula sepenuhnya. Walaupun diketahui umum bahawa wanita adalah golongan pertama yang menjadi mangsa pengangguran kerana kelayakan rendah dan mobiliti geografi dan pekerjaan yang terhad, kemerosotan ekonomi semasa adalah faktor penting yang menghidupkan kembali ideologi bahawa "tempat wanita adalah di rumah", satu pandangan yang tidak akan membaiki kemajuan mereka mencapai peluang yang sama.

...Apa yang membimbangkan dalam tahun-tahun akan datang, ialah tren sekarang akan berkembang di seluruh dunia, yang seterusnya menyebabkan lebih ramai tidak diperlukan ("redundant") dan dipindahkan dari sektor

formal ke pasaran buruh yang periferi di negara-negara industri, atau ke sektor tak formal dalam pertanian sara-diri atau kerja-kerja kraf, di negara-negara membangun (UNESCO, 1980).

Ramalan ini memang ketara memandangkan bahawa pembangunan teknologi robotik dan otomasi pejabat akan sama ada menambah pengangguran di kalangan pekerja pejabat wanita atau mengubah taraf pekerjaan tetap ke arah pekerja sambilan atau sementara. Satu lagi kesan kemerosotan ekonomi yang telah saya bincangkan ialah cara-cara mengubahsuai bilangan wanita dalam bidang-bidang profesyen tertentu, seperti sektor perguruan dan kejururawatan, tanpa menambah bilangan wanita dalam sektor-sektor lain yang didominasi oleh kaum lelaki, seperti polis, tentera, pentadbiran awam dan kejuruteraan. Sesebuah kerajaan yang menyatakan bahawa ia mahu mengurangkan ketidakadilan dan meningkatkan keseimbangan profesyen-profesyen awam tetapi melaksanakan dasar ini dengan cara seksis (dimana pekerjaan-pekerjaan yang didominasi oleh kaum lelaki diberi lebih perhatian) akan terus mengukuhkan lagi sistem patriarki dalam tempat pekerjaan.

Inilah mengapa kesan-kesan kemerosotan ekonomi di Malaysia pada satu masa dulu lebih menjejaskan pekerja-pekerja wanita. Sektor-sektor yang dimonopoli oleh kaum lelaki seperti tentera, tidak menambah tetapi menghalang peluang wanita (*New Straits Times*, 7hb Mei, 1988). Umpamanya, selepas mengambil rekrut-rekrut wanita selama 20 tahun, General Tan Sri Hashim telah mengumumkan bahawa kuota empat peratus wanita dalam tentera telah dipenuhi. Di Malaysia peranan wanita dalam tentera membayangkan keadaan yang sama di negeri-negeri Barat di mana wanita tidak memainkan peranan penting dalam pembangunan tentera. Pasukan polis belum lagi membuat pengumuman seperti ini, tetapi memandangkan bahawa keganasan terhadap wanita dan kanak-kanak semakin meningkat, adalah lebih wajar sekiranya bilangan wanita ditambah. Walaupun bilangan siswazah menganggur telah meningkat ke 52,000 dalam tahun 1988 (*The Star*, Jun, 1988), pihak kerajaan tidak terdaya menyerap mereka. Oleh itu, mereka terpaksa mencari kerja sendiri di pihak swasta atau memulakan perusahaannya sendiri. Maka, kemelesetan ekonomi, secara langsung membuat wanita lebih terdedah kepada diskriminasi seksual dari segi jenis dan kategori pekerjaan, gaji, keadaan kerja, mobiliti dan kenaikan pangkat.

Kemelesetan ekonomi juga sering menggerak kerajaan negara-negara Dunia Ketiga mengguna strategi-strategi tertentu untuk

mengurangkan pengangguran. Antaranya ialah dengan menghadkan bilangan wanita yang mencari pekerjaan (Iglehart, A.P., 1979; Joseph, G., 1983). Isu-isu kekeluargaan dan peranan domestik wanita dibangkitkan melalui dasar-dasar kependudukan, agama dan lain-lain. Negeri-negeri tertentu seperti Poland pada satu ketika dulu pernah membayar kaum wanita untuk duduk di rumah dan berkahwin. Negeri-negeri lain seperti England, Amerika Syarikat, Jepun, Taiwan dan sebagainya telah membanyakkan jenis-jenis pekerjaan yang berdasarkan unit rumah, di mana pihak majikan tidak payah mematuhi undang-undang buruh negeri-negeri itu termasuk hak menganggotai kesatuan sekerja. Beberapa kajian telah menunjukkan bahawa, dasar-dasar sewaktu ekonomi meleset mengancam kaum wanita dan keluarga kelas bawahan (Pa Mullo, P. dan Mackie, L., 1977; Joseph, G., 1983; Jose, A.V., 1986; ESCAP, 1986).

### **Nilai Ekonomi Wanita dan Lelaki**

Tidak boleh kita nafikan bahawa peranan wanita dalam keluarga adalah penting. Walau bagaimanapun harus juga kita tekankan bahawa peranan lelaki juga sama penting dalam pembangunan keluarga. Ini bukan sahaja dari segi menjaga taraf ekonomi seisi keluarga tetapi juga dari segi pendidikan dan pengasuhan, dan pengawalan kesihatan pemakanan kanak-kanak. Tugas-tugas ini telah lama menjadi beban wanita, dan pemindahan sebahagian daripada tanggungjawab domestik, pendidikan dan kesihatan kepada kaum lelaki belum lagi ketara, kecuali di kalangan kelas profesyenal. Dari segi pembangunan dan perkembangan jasmani, intelek dan kerohanian kanak-kanak memerlukan kemahiran dan pengalaman ibu-bapa. Kanak-kanak yang dididik tanpa kerjasama dan panduan kedua-dua pihak ini mengalami beberapa kesulitan apabila menapak dari satu tahap perkembangan sahiah ke satu tahap lain. Tambahan lagi, untuk menjaga taraf ekonomi, pendidikan dan kesihatan sesuatu keluarga, pihak lelaki perlu menerima bantuan kewangan isteri agar anak-anak mendapat kemudahan yang mencukupi. Khususnya, keluarga asas di peringkat kelas bawahan dan pertengahan tidak boleh membangun tanpa bantuan ekonomi dan kewangan kaum wanita, baik melalui sumbangan gaji atau melalui aktiviti-aktiviti yang menghasilkan wang dan makanan seperti pekerjaan pertanian, pekerjaan perusahaan kecil, upah dan sebagainya. Seseorang isteri yang membantu menambahkan taraf ekonomi keluarga tetapi tidak dibantu oleh suami menjalankan

aktiviti-aktiviti domestik dan pendidikan anak-anak mengalami beban "double day" ataupun tugas "berganda".

Kini satu masalah besar dalam penentuan nilai ekonomi kaum wanita ialah bahawa kebanyakan aktiviti ekonomi wanita yang bernilai komersial diserapkan sebagai aktiviti "sosial" atau "domestik" kerana beberapa sebab. Pertamanya, mereka tidak bergaji walaupun menyumbang kepada perusahaan rumahtangga. Keduanya tenaga buruh mereka di pasarkan oleh kaum lelaki yang menyimpan dan mengumpul hasil perusahaan mereka. Justeru, rekod-rekod daya pengeluaran dihitung di bawah daya pengeluaran suami. Ketiganya, aktiviti-aktiviti ekonomi diselaraskan di bawah aktiviti-aktiviti "ketua rumahtangga" yang biasanya menamakan "suami" sebagai ketua (Proceedings, UNU Workshop/KANITA, 1986; Mukhopadhyay, S.R dan Ghosh, B., 1987; Acharya, S. dan Shah, I., 1987). Dalam Pengajian Wanita, konsep "penyertaan tenaga buruh" menjadi satu punca kontroversi perbahasan kerana ketidaksetujuan terhadap komponen-komponen buruh wanita di sektor domestik yang harus diambilkira dalam perhitungan "penyertaan tenaga buruh", memandangkan bahawa sumbangan ekonomi wanita akan berlipatganda jika penyertaan "tak formal" mereka di sektor pertanian, perindustrian dan sektor domestik diambilkira. Justeru itu, jelaslah bahawa statistik-statistik ekonomi nasional kini tidak membayangkan sumbangan wanita sebenar dalam ekonomi.

Dasar-dasar awam yang menggalakkan kaum wanita duduk di rumah dan melahirkan anak tidak mengurangkan beban ekonomi wanita, malah menambahkan lagi bebannya; kaum wanita terpaksa meneruskan aktiviti-aktiviti ekonomi tanpa gaji dan tanpa pengiktirafan mana-mana pihak sambil terpaksa menanggung tugas-tugas domestik.

Gambaran ini dapat saya bayangkan dengan pengalaman saya. Saya tidak dapat melupakan wajah seorang perempuan muda yang mempunyai lima orang anak di sebuah kampung di Korea Selatan. Saya melawat kampung itu pada tahun 1981 kerana kampung ini terkenal dengan perusahaan-perusahaan kecil dan besar yang telah dijayakan di bawah Rancangan Samael Undong (Gerakan Petani) di antara tahun 1978 ke 1983 (lihat Nan-Gap-Lee, 1981). Kata orang lelaki di kampung itu yang sentiasa sibuk dengan pelawat-pelawat sambil wanita bekerja, "semua perusahaan di sini, termasuk bank kampung dan Pejabat Pos diusahakan oleh kaum wanita". Apabila saya menyoal wanita muda itu yang memerhati kami sambil menyusu anaknya,

bagaimana mereka boleh berbuat demikian, beliau telah menjawab dengan senyum, "dulu kita bangun pukul lima pagi untuk memasak dan mencuci baju, sekarang kita bangun pukul tiga setengah pagi." Apa yang menyedihkan pelawat-pelawat masa itu ialah bahawa mereka bekerja untuk "Samael Undong" tanpa gaji, taraf dan pangkat dan tanpa menerima bantuan apa-apa dari kaum lelaki di peringkat keluarga dan kampung.

### **Sikap Kaum Wanita Menerima Cabaran**

Peranan wanita dalam keluarga tetap menjadi satu isu yang hangat. Kaum wanita sedar bahawa mereka berpotensi mencapai taraf ekonomi dan profesyenal yang sama dengan kaum lelaki jika mereka diberi peluang dan galakan yang sama. Walau bagaimanapun, masih banyak lagi yang enggan bersaing dengan kaum lelaki kerana percaya bahawa mereka harus memelihara sifat-sifat kewanitaan, keibuan dan sebagainya dalam pekerjaan. Di sini, sekatan-sekatan struktur yang wujud dan sikap kaum lelaki — misogini, prasangka, sosialisasi politik dan dasar tidak menjadi penghalang. Kaum wanita sendiri menjadi penghalang kepada kemajuan mereka. Kenyataan-kenyataan seperti, "Tak payahlah kita membentangkan ide-ide kita depan mereka, nanti mereka anggap kita sebagai agresif", "Kalau saya jadi boss, saya tidak akan jadi 'populer' lagi", "Bila dah naik pangkat, kaum wanita jadi garang dan cengil dan menyekat kaum wanita lain pula" selalunya tidak berasaskan bukti dan cuma mencerminkan perasaan ketidak-yakinan kaum wanita menerima cabaran dalam bidang pekerjaan. Ketidakyakinan ini diserap dari nilai-nilai umum masyarakat terhadap wanita yang bekerja.

Satu cara bagaimana perasaan-perasaan seperti ini dapat diatasi ialah dengan menggalakan wanita membandingkan kedudukan kejayaan mereka di pekerjaan dan rumahtangga dengan wanita lain di dalam dan di luar kaum, negeri dan peringkat antarabangsa. Tentunya mereka akan mendapati bahawa walaupun kedudukan mereka lebih sempurna daripada beribu-ribu wanita lain yang mengalami masalah pengangguran, kemiskinan dan keganasan dalam beberapa bentuk dan cara, wanita-wanita susah ini dapat mencapai hasrat hidup mereka dalam keadaan-keadaan yang buruk. Walau bagaimanapun, penghidupan mereka tidak menjadi hampa, malah mencabarkan mereka berdikari menanggung keluarga. Tiap-tiap kejayaan harus dipertimbangkan dengan kemudahan-kemudahan dan peluang-

peluang yang sedia ada. Apabila wanita yang miskin berjaya menjalankan sesuatu perusahaan dengan daya usaha mereka sendiri, kejayaan mereka ini adalah berganda kali lebih ketara dan bernilai daripada wanita lain yang ada peluang dan kemudahan tetapi kurang berusaha mencapai hasrat hidup mereka.

Pada suatu ketika dahulu, Hubert Humphery telah menyatakan bahawa "Women are the most undiscovered precious resource in the country". Kini, sumber manusia wanita telahpun diperakui bernilai dalam sektor domestik dan formal dan terpulunglah kepada kaum wanita sendiri untuk mempertahankan dan memperjuangkan nilai ini.

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## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL MALAYSIA AND THE "TRIBAL QUESTION"

*Zawawi Ibrahim\**

In the field of research and studies pertaining to Malaysian<sup>1</sup> rural society, there has traditionally been a dominant emphasis, especially by local scholars, on the analysis of the indigenous Malay peasantry rather than on the equally indigenous "tribal" minorities, that is the Orang Asli.<sup>2</sup> This has also meant that the new theoretical directions and perspectives developed in the various inter-related fields (such as "the New Economic Anthropology", "Peasant Studies", and Political Economy, including the Neo-Marxist School of Development and Underdevelopment) have been applied with rigour only to those issues arising from "the peasant question" in Malaysia.<sup>3</sup> To date, no scholar has seriously attempted to address "the agrarian question" in Malaysian society by also incorporating in their theoretical analysis the position of its "tribal" minorities.

Lately however, there have emerged several pioneering attempts that have paved the beginning of new theoretical thinking in the study

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of Orang Asli.<sup>4</sup> At both the empirical and theoretical level, these studies are more concerned with the socio-economic changes arising out of the interplay between the state and capital, and their impact on these rural communities. Hopefully, the field of Orang Asli studies will no longer be preoccupied with only a concern towards reconstructing "primitive culture"<sup>5</sup> as such but rightfully also attempts to understand and analyse the transformation "on the ground", both at the level of concrete culture and the social relations of real people in the context of these new changes.

At the global level, these changes have spurred scholars to focus on the plight and fate of the world indigenous "tribal" (or "frontier") minorities living on the periphery of national boundaries,<sup>6</sup> who are being increasingly incorporated into mainstream development processes, which gradually but surely encroach upon their terrains of natural economy and eco-cultural system. At the level of the nation-state, such as in Malaysia, the single-minded pursuit of an "integrationist" model of development leaves little room for indigenous minorities to evolve and actualise their own dreams and notion of "development" from below. More often they carry with them into the modern era the fetters of a past colonial legacy which "ideologically" reproduces them as "incomplete citizens" of today's society, in relation to the position of other indigenous and non-indigenous citizens of the nation-state.

The main objective of the paper is to critically examine the impact of regional development on the Orang Asli and to explore some of the theoretical implications for the "tribal question" in Peninsular Malaysia. For the purpose of research, the area chosen is the Pahang Tenggara region, situated in the south-eastern part of Pahang state, and occupying an area of approximately 1,000 hectares or 10,000 square kilometers — 60 per cent of which is suitable for agricultural development. The indigenous minority who inhabit this region and form the focus of research are the Orang Asli people of the Jakun group.<sup>7</sup> Prior to the region being systematically developed under the aegis of a Regional Development Authority, namely *Lembaga Kemajuan Pahang Tenggara* or DARA, formed in 1972, the Orang Asli population was estimated to be about 5,000 living in the 60 or so villages (*kampung*) scattered throughout the Pahang Tenggara region. By the time of research, that is 1990, their numbers had increased to about 13,000 and the settlements had also grown to 93 villages.

## PART ONE: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT ON "TRIBAL" MINORITIES

### A: DARA — Essential Features

The Development Authority for Pahang Tenggara, or in short, DARA, is the first regional development agency to be established in Malaysia. Constituted as a statutory body under the Ministry of Land and Regional Development in March 1972, DARA represents the bureaucratic arm of the state in the task of planning, co-ordinating and monitoring the development of the south-eastern part of the state of Pahang into agriculture, forestry, townships, industries and infra-structural facilities.

DARA, via the role of other state agencies, co-ordinates the mobilisation of capital (private, public and state) investment and penetration into the region, and in the process, re-organises the existing resources, both human and natural, into plantations, industries and urbanising centres. With the creation of estates (predominantly oil palm) and the provision of roads and houses, the development of plantation townships, integral to the urbanizing thrust, became essential, the townships being potential growth centres to allow for the concentration of resources and development inputs as well as for economies of scale. These townships, with their own system of hierarchy, become the centre not only of infrastructural facilities but also of other social services and amenities for the resident populace. Up until 1990, 30 of such townships were planned, with the main administrative base being Muadzam Shah. To date, a total of 17 townships with a total population of 188,180 have been developed, supported by a network of good quality roads linking them to major ports and towns.

The aims of Malaysia's New Economic Policy have also been incorporated into DARA, but the main thrust of the Pahang Tenggara development, is to come from agriculture, the approach being one of opening up large scale virgin jungle to generate economic development for the whole region. The participation of various sectors of the business community are encouraged. Thus by December 1988 for instance, public sector involvement amounted to 176,051 hectares, whilst private and joint-venture enterprises developed 146,605 hectares. DARA also develops its own subsidiary companies to invest in these business activities, either on their own or in joint-ventures

with other companies. In addition, DARA has also been able to encourage and attract foreign investment from abroad, such as Taiwan. The state government of Pahang investment interest is also represented by *Yayasan Pahang* and *Lembaga Kemajuan Perusahaan Pertanian* (LKPP), whereas Federal participation is through FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority).

In the final analysis, the development of the Pahang Tenggara region also means the re-organisation of existing traditional communities in relation to DARA's thrust and concept of development. For the Malay peasantry living in their own traditional villages, such as along the Pahang river or in the coastal area of the South China Sea, the above type of development also plans for their involvement either as FELDA settlers, labourers or in other forms of economic activities.

For the Orang Asli, it is pertinent to observe that the Pahang Tenggara is more than just a purveyor of capital, townships, estates and roads. Most importantly, its presence dictates a specific type of development model "from above", that is, the regroupment scheme, the RPS (*Rancangan Pengumpulan Semula*). The ideal scenario is one where most if not all the Orang Asli families living in their traditional villages will eventually be regrouped in these centres, the latter being the focus of concentrated development inputs and infrastructure from various government agencies, built around a plantation crop base (that is, oil palm) as the primary source of economic mainstay and income for the rest of their lives and for the generations to come. Such a model seems to fit the Pahang Tenggara overall concept of creating plantation townships throughout the region. Such is the way in which the state, through DARA, perceives in "integrating" the Orang Asli into the economic mainstream of modern society. Orang Asli will remain in exclusively Orang Asli RPS "townships" in the midst of the other DARA plantation townships. In short, from the state viewpoint, "development" for the Orang Asli of Pahang Tenggara only begins with the RPS.

#### **B. Indigenous People as Historical Communities: Variants of "Development" from Within**

In the following discussion, I wish to question some of the assumptions and misconceptions underlying such a view of development, especially its ahistorical nature and its total detachment from the

sentiments and notion of development as historically expressed by the Orang Asli themselves. Contrary to the official view that the Orang Asli of Pahang Tenggara's path towards "integration" must, of necessity, be via the RPS, I am of the view that the RPS represents only *one* of a number of alternatives of development for these indigenous people. The above perspective is based on the argument and observation that the so-called traditional Orang Asli communities before Pahang Tenggara development were by no means static or isolated from economic relations with the outside world. Given whatever resources they had at hand and the constraints of control they were subjected to, the Orang Asli had adapted themselves, though not all the time with vantage. But the diversity of economic pursuits they managed to evolve, create and combine, and oftentimes efforts of genuinely trying to promote a viable self-sustaining agricultural community in the past, do give some insights into some of the possibilities or potentialities of indigenous variants of "development".

The development potential of the Orang Asli has always been coloured by the pejorative labelling of "*pindah-randah*" (literally: "moving around"), a popular official description of the alleged "nomadic" or "shifting" habits of the Orang Asli.<sup>8</sup> Yet, listening to reminiscences of the past by the elders, one hears of the existence of Orang Asli communities by the Rompin river such as Kedaik and Kampung Aur, functioning as important centres of contact between merchant capital and the Orang Asli, the latter pursuing the collection of *jelutong* rubber which grew wild in the hills in exchange for rice, other goods and money. A certain European *Tuan* apparently plied with his big boat from Kuala Rompin to Kampung Aur where a Chinese *Kepala* (head), Apong, had organised Orang Asli and their *Batin* (headman) in various riverine villages to gather *jelutong* for the *Tuan*.

The elders could also recall the old days of rattan collection. They would construct a raft (*rakit*) to take their rattan to the town at the river mouth, Kuala Rompin, the whole journey lasting almost a week. At Kuala Rompin, they would obtain their goods or money from the Chinese *Towkay* and would row back to Kedaik in their small *sampan* (which they brought with the *rakit*), the return journey normally taking three days. By the sixties, logging had already come into the picture and at Kedaik about 500 acres of area were opened for logging by a certain Tan Teng Wat from Rompin, utilising some of the Orang

Asli youth in Kedaik. By the seventies the logging activities moved to the nearby Lesong Forest and also Merchung. For the Orang Asli, logging activities brought in the most money, more so with the introduction of chainsaws.

By the seventies too, scented wood (*gaharu*) also became a much-sought after commodity in the Arabic countries, the trade being transacted through agents in Singapore and through Malaysian counterparts in Kuantan. In the Kedaik area, a Chinese and a Malay worked together as agents. At this time, a few "sponsors" took advantage of the *gaharu* "explosion" — utilising local Orang Asli labour; although some made quick money, others who persisted lost out after ploughing back their profits into *gaharu* expeditions. From about the eighties, it became much harder to find *gaharu*, and it could no longer sustain a full-time economic pursuit.

Between 1973 and 1979, many of the Orang Asli at Kampung Kedaik were also involved in mining at Lesong, using the primitive dish or *dulang* method. They apparently worked for some Chinese companies based in Kuantan and Trengganu; their respective towkays organised their food and license for them.

In terms of agriculture, one finds that the orientation of the Orang Asli differs with location. The coastal villages, much of which are surrounded with sandy soil, would only be suitable for coconut growing and other related activities. In the past, these coastal folks had also developed expertise in *padi paya* (swamp rice). In comparison, those in the interior (*pendalaman*) would have their ancestral land (*tanah saka*) based on *dusun* or orchards of fruits such as *durian*, *langsat*, *rambutan*, *cempedak*, apart from the usual tapioca. Others have also opted for rubber, although as we shall see later, attempts towards any form of permanent or long-term cultivation on the part of the Orang Asli may require more agricultural inputs and outside help from governmental agencies, which are not always available or accessible. The interior also used to be the home of *padi bukit* or hill padi, but most Orang Asli now prefer to buy their rice.

The cultivation of vegetables that do not require a high level of technology (for example, those that thrive just by "scattering") is fairly widespread. However, market gardening is only a recent phenomenon among the Orang Asli or Jakun of Pahang Tenggara: "They see other people grow vegetables, they also try and do the same. Sometimes, they work with Chinese... wage labour. From this experience, they try to go into market gardening". But the "commercial"

efforts of the Orang Asli were oftentimes thwarted by lack of financial support or sponsorship:

"At one time, at Batu 3, there was *kacang* (long beans) farming, but after they grew it, you want to say that it's a lot, it is not, but you still can't finish eating them. From the market (commercial) point of view, people want to come and collect in one lorry, its not enough. This is the problem with Orang Asli agriculture... you can't eat all of them, neither can you sell them. Not enough to make it economical to sell. Also the inputs from the JHEOA for the Orang Asli, they only gave a small package of seeds... just enough to plant around the house, with a bit of fertiliser and a bottle of pesticides — only as a secondary item, just enough for personal consumption. Those who want, if you are interested, you have to go to the office, they'll give you a small bit. On top of that, lately... there's nothing anymore because of RPS."

Given the above constraints of resources, it is not surprising to find that by aligning themselves with the Chinese, especially through inter-marriage, the Orang Asli are laid open to new economic alternatives. Thus at Batu 8 village, for instance, the success of the Orang Asli community in market gardening and the cultivation of watermelon, is perceived as being based on the "Chinese factor":

"... because Chinese have relations with Orang Asli.... If the Chinese come asking for the girl's hand, he will definitely be accepted, doesn't matter whether he is young or old. Why it is so is purely economic-money — if she is married to an Orang Asli, it is possible that one day, her situation is going to be hard (*susah*) — because his economic position is not as strong as the Chinese. If you marry a Chinese, the Chinese will give you contract farming... parents and relatives can become workers for him and they will be paid a salary.... In fact most of the Chinese at Rompin are not independent (*berdikari*) — they are contract farmers for big Towkays from Johore and Singapore. It so happens that at Batu 8, these Chinese have relations with the Orang Asli there, so they don't have to pay rentals for the land... they can use the land there for free....

"Its to do with the marketing network. Most of the towkays who come and buy the vegetable produce, they normally invest capital to find clients to grow for them — they will supply all the inputs — they will then take the finished products. So from the beginning they will control.... At Batu 8, a lot is like that. Not only the Chinese but even the Malays who grow vegetables, including watermelon in Rompin are also in contract form.... Because to grow this thing will cost a lot of money, for example, if you want to grow watermelon... for one acre, you need at least RM1,000 or RM1,500 as capital. You not only grow one acre at a time but 10 to 20 acres. So if the towkays themselves want to grow on their own, it will be a problem. They must have people who are residents here.

At the same time, Rompin already has a longstanding reputation for its watermelon — if you mention Rompin, people will think of its watermelon...

it so happens that most of the Chinese who marry Orang Asli at Batu 8 have relations with these towkays. At least 70 to 80 per cent of the Orang Asli there have mixed marriage with the Chinese, mainly on the father's side."

It is because of the "Chinese connection" factor, that local government authorities are always very quick to point to the influence of *orang asing* (aliens) whenever an Orang Asli community or village does "develop". Whilst it is true that the economic hold of the Chinese "middlemen" in Orang Asli society is a well-known fact, the "Chinese bogeyman" is resorted far too often by authorities, denying the self-sustaining capacity of Orang Asli to strive and develop in their own way and with whom they choose as economic partners. But at the unofficial level, it is however the "Chinese factor" that often colours the sentiments of government authorities when they consider the granting of personal land titles to the Orang Asli. As such, they see the RPS as a way of checking and controlling the Orang Asli from "exploitation" by outsiders.

When the local environmental resources are not conducive to pursue a reasonable economic life on a long-term basis, the Orang Asli may also look for another area which can sustain them on a more permanent basis. In the past, the Orang Asli might have had a tradition of *pindah-randah*. Obviously in a context where land was still abundant and where large-scale land development programmes were not the order of the day, such movements would have been easier. But the situation may not be as easy these days. Even so, records prior to the DARA years, from the mid-sixties onwards, indicate that there was a growing concern among the Orang Asli to evolve a more permanent village settlement (*kampung kekal*), and with it, a desire to secure rights over the land on a long-term basis. This would normally translate into a request for the area to be declared a *kampung kekal* (permanent village) by the JHEOA (the Department of Orang Asli Affairs), which would apply to the District Officer or Land Office to be approved as a reserve area for the Orang Asli. For example, Batin Leman and his people, who had been moved from their original settlement in Sg. Kembar, Endau to Kampung Aman, Sg. Buah Keras, Pontian during the fifties owing to the Emergency, decided to move to another village — Kampung Kemendol in 1964. The JHEOA reported that the good Batin with 60 of his followers (about 11 families) had moved to the new area

"to open up 60 acres of land and planted with fruit trees; — 250 coconuts, 50 rambutan trees, 500 pineapples, tapioca, bananas and others. They have

also cultivated 15 acres of swampy rice. It is found that the crops cultivated are thriving well.

Batin Leman said that the reason why he left Kampong Aman is because he cannot plant crops. Whenever it rains, the area will always be under 3 feet of water, and when the dry season comes, the crop will die because of sandy ground. Batin Leman and his followers plead for the land on which they have now settled to be turned into an Orang Asli Special Reserve (*Tanah Kawasan Khas Orang Asli*) so as to enable them to grow permanent crops." (1969).

A more recent example of a similar move is provided by about 42 Orang Asli families (about 186 people) who decided to shift from the more sandy and coastal villages of Serun and Jong to the inland, yet undeveloped government land at Api Larat. As testified in one of their letters to the authorities:

"...we left Kg. Serun and Jong because the village is not suitable for us to grow crops owing to its sandy soil. At that time, our life was dependent on *kayu bakau* (mangrove) and rattan only. When we could not work because of illness or rain, "our kitchen will not smoke" (*dapor kami tidak berasap*). The suffering led us to think and we became aware of the need to find another suitable area for the purpose of agriculture. At this place (Api Larat) may be found orchards of our ancestors (*saka*) from the forties, for example, *cempedak* and others, which would be inherited by the rightful descendants. In the middle of 1973, we moved out of Kg. Serun and Jong to Api Larat, with the spirit and aim to develop the area with agriculture, so that we can be self-sustaining (*berdikari*), without having to depend our life on the middleman" (1980).

In another letter, they explained that:

"...in contrast, Api Larat has hilly land and is very suitable for long-term crops. Until now the crops that have been cultivated are *durian*, *rambutan*, *duku*, *mata kucing*, *cempedak*, *mempelam* and short-term crops such as *tapioca*, *padi*, bananas, and others...."

and ended up with the usual request:

"Therefore my people and I have arrived at a singular voice to look after this village properly and with care so that it could be inherited by the grandchildren to come; so we hope that *Tuan* will not hesitate to propose the above land to be reserved for my people" (1986).

The above letter was written to the DARA authorities. All in all 2000 acres were requested. The JHEOA had evidently received the application earlier but there was some delay before it was forwarded to the Land Office. Because of the delay, an application for group farming of about 960 acres by the Malay village JKK of Mercong for



the same land area arrived earlier. The Orang Asli of Api Larat argued that:

"before we opened up the above land, they (the Malays) were not at all interested in the land. But in 1977, after they saw the development of agriculture we achieved in such a short time, only then did they decide to make an application for the above land."

Sometime in 1987, DARA, heading the RPS Technical Committee (which incorporates other government agencies, including JHEOA) made a decision not to support the application of the Api Larat Orang Asli since those villagers were eventually going to be moved and relocated in RPS Kedaik. There was however a proposal by the District Office of Pekan to reserve 400-500 acres of the Api Larat area for the Orang Asli.

Over the years Api Larat has acquired a reputation for its pineapples, with each pineapple fetching a price of RM1.00, and an acre plot may be planted with 1000 trees. But without agricultural inputs and technology, it is difficult to maintain the self-sustaining development of the above crop as a continuous source of income for the village, and at a consistent level of profits, as explained and observed by an Orang Asli leader:

"At one stage, all the new villages of the Orang Asli in this interior were like Api Larat — the soil was still fertile — easy to plant crops, big jungle — once you cut it down, it takes a year to grow back.... So the short-term crop that is least taxing is pineapples, because with pineapples, after you cut down the trees, just let it be, just wait for the fruits in 9 months time. During that time you can do other work. It so happens that the soil is very suitable, and the fruit of good taste, everybody starts getting the pineapple from there. Once that becomes an attraction, people will want to continue it as an on-going concern. But if you notice at Api Larat, every pineapple grower moves to a new land. Why? Because of soil — and weeds (*lalang*). He shifts to another area to overcome the problems of weeds. But you take a look at the first stage area — that they planted before — now its gone back to *belukar* (secondary growth)... and in the *belukar* there's their *campedak*, and *dusun*. You want to grow like before, you need high technology. After the second stage, when all the pineapples are gone, you want to plant again, you'll have problems. This second stage is like what is happening in other existing Orang Asli villages outside... their land requires pesticides, fertilisers, agricultural technology-inputs from government agencies, the Department of Agriculture and others. But they cannot get... and that is the main problem.

So you'll find that Batu 3 is worse than Api Larat. So are many other traditional villages such as Sembayan, Belangkap, Tanam, Kerpal — because the land is old — old land — "dead land" (*tanah kontang*).

If you want to overcome it — you need a good project and plan it carefully, you can evolve a circular agricultural system, say first stage, pineapples, after a certain period, harvest, okay — then start a new project, the same place, the same land — put in new technology, fertilisers and so on but the Orang Asli don't have these inputs, so what comes out is that — people say Orang Asli practise agriculture in nomadic form. The fact is — they move about in order to avoid the cost of pesticides, fertilisers and so on. So shifting agriculture is because they don't have access to such technology. Because they don't have the inputs; if they have, they can continue as before. In fact that is what they really want.... This should have been taken care of by the JHEOA... the Department of Agriculture cannot come in — Orang Asli don't have grant (that is, ownership grant of the land that they occupy). Agricultural inputs they only give to those who have ownership — until such time as the land has grant — the situation will remain...."

The JHEOA realises too well what is likely to happen. From Api Larat, it has already been receiving continuous request for such items as fertilisers, even rubber seedlings. As commented by the district JHEOA official:

"This thing will become a problem one day. When they no longer can get new land, they will have to find a way to upgrade the quality of the existing land...."

Before we used to have certain agricultural inputs for traditional villages — but now with the RPS, no more... except small projects.... These people want to be more commercial.... When they ask us for assistance, we don't have. They want fertilisers — they can't get. We don't have the programme. Before the Agriculture Department used to have its programme... so did RISDA (Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority). They would give inputs with my certification... but for rubber replanting, you can't".

The relationship of the Orang Asli with modern rubber is an interesting one, since, as in the case of the Malay peasantry, it could also become a long-term cash crop that would enable sustainable development for the Orang Asli communities. But the problem why these Orang Asli villagers have been rather "slow" in developing into efficient smallholders has a lot to do with the status of "their" land rather than attitude or for lack of trying. As a matter of policy both RISDA and the Department of Agriculture will not entertain request for agricultural inputs or subsidies unless the occupants have legitimate personal land titles or ownership over the land. RISDA, for instance, is adamant that "Applicants must have legitimate ownership for the smallholding to be replanted.... For Orang Asli settlements, these have to be first gazetted and confirmed by the Land Office".

The villages of Tanggalong and Simpai are examples often cited to demonstrate the Orang Asli's attempts in this region to be self-sustaining in rubber cultivation. As commented by an Orang Asli leader:

"At Tanggalong, its true that they are totally committed to rubber... its therefore apt that they do replanting there. They are tapping rubber that are no longer productive. All of them have rubber... 20 families fully self-sustaining (*berdikari*) on rubber. In the beginning they planted themselves, same as in Kg. Simpai. Initially, they were probably given seeds by the JHEOA. From these seeds, they grew their own seedlings and planted themselves. So it means, if we were to think about it, they have actually managed to get something out of rubber — rubber has given them something to sustain themselves with — that means there's development in themselves... even though they were not asked to grow, they grew... but RISDA cannot come until there's a letter from the land office. They depend totally on rubber, just like in Simpai — but the trees were planted with no system... the seeds were not of good quality either. Technology cannot come in because of land problem not because of attitude. They have long been *berdikari* and have done it on their own."

In 1987, the Orang Asli community of Tanggalong applied for their 200-acre area to be gazetted as an Orang Asli Reserve area to enable them to be "legally" eligible for the replanting scheme under RISDA's programme. Although this application was supported by the JHEOA, the Pahang State Land and Mines Authorities (the government authority on state land) did not entertain the request. However, through some "royal intervention" by the Sultan of Pahang, the latter adopted a more positive approach. The JHEOA office at the district level recommended the Pahang JHEOA authorities to push for the Tanggalong area to be gazetted. All this while, there was apparently an understanding that the villagers were to be incorporated into a new RPS, but by early 1989, DARA decided that there was "not enough land" to accommodate for these villagers in RPS Bukit Serok. The JHEOA was more or less given a free hand to decide over the fate of the Tanggalong application but in late 1990, it apparently recommended the Land Office to delay the process "so as to avoid some problems which may arise." The JHEOA, it would seem, was directed by the political authorities of Pahang to embark on a review of existing land settlements of Orang Asli in the state, with the objective that land division for the Orang Asli be based on "fairness and based on their 'needs'." Until today, the dream of the Tanggalong Orang Asli to replant their old rubber trees remains unfulfilled.

The above section presents the Orang Asli case for a middle-range model of development, that is, one which seeks to be self-sustaining agricultural communities based on some notion of control over land resources and access to agricultural inputs which have been made available to other citizen agriculturalists such as the Malay peasantry. The discussion shows the abilities of Orang Asli to evolve their own variants of "development", albeit in the context of an encapsulated political economy.

### C. The Impact of Regional Development — A General Overview

Regional development, as in the case of DARA, is an expression of a rational-legal type of development which directs, controls and reorganizes the most important ingredient of natural resources, that is, land, for large-scale capitalist development. Hence the free-wheeling and pre-capitalist form of Orang Asli development, *pindah-randah*, is seen as antithetical to the mainstream development process. Logically then, the first initial impact of DARA is to further contain the existing land space of the Orang Asli. Thus, whilst their "rights", as stipulated in the Aboriginal Peoples Ordinance 1954, "of occupancy", or to "Aboriginal Areas" and "Reserves" were recognized<sup>9</sup> at the initial stage of DARA's planning in 1972, there was already a decision to reduce the number of aboriginal reserves for the Orang Asli in Pahang Tenggara from 30, as was proposed by the JHEOA, to 17.<sup>10</sup> By 1982, the earlier reserve proposals had apparently been modified further to suit the needs of the time, and were reduced to nine RPS, of which by 1990, only three had been developed. Of the three, only two of these schemes have been gazetted. Indeed, very few of the so-called "reserves" in Pahang Tenggara have been gazetted.

It would appear that right from the initial phase of planning, DARA was keen to avoid any deliberate encroachment upon Orang Asli settlement, but "on the ground" things may not turn out to be as they were originally intended, as in the case of the Paloh Hinai. In this particular case, a certain DC-II land of about 506 hectares (1250 acres) had been legally approved by the state government of Pahang to be developed by the Shamelin Co-operative. The above land had been inhabited by the Orang Asli for the last 30 years on an area of about 200 acres in size. About 47 families from five different villages (Bangkong, Bedaling, Kiak, Gasak and Semambu) had been subsisting there by cultivating rubber and orchard (*dusun*). The problem arose

when the state government directed that the designated land should be developed within two years, failing which it would be taken back by the government. It was obvious that the application to develop the land was made without a careful ground survey by the authorities. As a result, the land was legally approved and Shamelin had been paying premium for the land (including the one occupied by the Orang Asli) since 1982. The Orang Asli community refused to move because that part of the DC-II which they occupied was *saka* land and they too were making their living from the rubber plots. They did not want to shift to a new place for fear that they would lose their livelihood.

It would appear that encroachment upon the Orang Asli occurs because there is really no "official" record or information kept by the Land Office of all Orang Asli settlement areas, unless it has been communicated by the JHEOA in the course of its management and dealings on matters pertaining to specific Orang Asli requests. In the Shamelin case, the Land Office must have had no official record or information of Orang Asli settlement on the land before it approved the land for development.

In other cases, the absence of an official boundary marker (*tanda sempadan*) could also create a real loss of land for the Orang Asli. In Kg. Simpai, for instance, the area allocated for Orang Asli settlement was originally 2,000 acres but this has been decreased to a mere 80 acres, to make way for an estate for Yayasan Pahang.

The encroachers are not always big companies or estates. With the felling of Pahang Tenggara's virgin jungle for the development of plantations, new townships, and an efficient infrastructure, the new area attracts outsiders (*orang luar*) from all parts of the country. Some may indeed join the ranks of settlers or workers living in the townships, but others are also attracted to the new land and may stake their own claims on those that have been occupied or claimed earlier by the Orang Asli. The Api Larat situation cited earlier is a case in point involving the Malay peasantry. For the Orang Asli, these new Malay agriculturalists are the "outsiders". However, since the land occupied by the Orang Asli do not have any private grant or official status (at least as normally recognized to be "legitimate" by the Malay peasantry), and are often left unattended during some part of the year, encroachments occur. The absence of any official boundary marker enhances this chance. For example, Kg. Mencupu's initial area of 1,000 acres has been reduced to 375 acres only, supporting a

population of 150. This area has attracted many "outsiders" because of its suitability.

Theoretically, even a gazetted Orang Asli Reserve land is not secure since it could always be revoked by the State Legislative Assembly. A 245 hectare area gazetted as a reserve in Permatang Keledang in 1974 and inhabited by 50 families was revoked by the authorities. Apparently, the revocation was to facilitate the shifting of the above community to RPS Runcang. However, there was no prior discussion of the matter with the Orang Asli community. A similar dislocation was also experienced by the villagers of Kg. Denai, who were asked to move elsewhere for the development of a large-scale prawn-rearing industry by the Lion Group. Since Orang Asli do not "legally" own the land, any form of compensation is based only upon the trees they lose. Compensation to underwrite the cost of moving and building of new homes, however small, may not necessarily be part of the bargain.

The increasing number of outsiders has also led to the encroachment upon Orang Asli food resources from the rivers. Poaching is increasingly becoming a common occurrence with the opening up of Pahang Tenggara by DARA. These poachers, travelling in fast boats, use poison and various forms of chemicals, and "shock current", to kill fish, depleting and polluting the water-based resources of the Orang Asli.

The new factories also contribute to the degradation of the environment. For instance, the Orang Asli officially complained to FELDA at Cini for fear that the factory pollutants released into Tasik Mentega had killed the fish and made the water unusable for consumption. Sungai Dusun is another example when wastes from the water plant were released into the river when it was being cleaned.

Loggers are also blatant culprits. At Sungai Mentenang, loggers in the area "dumped at will" unused logs in the river and deliberately spilled earth into the river, thus preventing its normal flow. Such irresponsibility had apparently dried out the lower stream, and stagnated the upper stream of the river.

With new development also comes new rubbish, and some Orang Asli villages, such as in Kg. Permatang Keledang Pekan, Kg. Batu 55 Maran and Kg. Sebayan Rompin have become "village dumps" (*kampung sampah*) — thus exposing the Orang Asli to diseases and other infections.

The replacement of virgin jungle by plantation crops would most certainly deplete the existing space for Orang Asli in their traditional relationship with the jungle, especially in pursuing their economic livelihood of rattan, *gaharu* and other jungle produce. Now they have to travel further; even at Lesong Forest, which has been spared from being turned into an estate, rattan and other jungle produce have gradually become exhausted. Even in this area of traditional occupation, they often face competition from cheap foreign labour.

The felling of the forest for the development of Pahang Tenggara also ushers in a new type of employment for the Orang Asli. Some Orang Asli lament the fact that they are making short-term gains from the very process that is killing their traditional way of life. For the Orang Asli, logging, though it is hard work, brings in money. Indeed for someone working with the chainsaw, he can make between RM1,500 to RM3,000 per month. But these gains are only temporary for these resources too are fast depleting. Often they have to travel much further since the nearby areas have already been logged.

Logging also brings its own related vices. Traditionally, logging was dominated by the Chinese. Some of the early Chinese loggers were said to have taken Orang Asli women to stay and cook for them in their *kongsis* in the jungle. They might have married them "Orang Asli style", but when they had to move to a new place, these women were left behind to fend for themselves and their children. Some of these women have apparently become prostitutes. Some of them also work in entertainment centres in the various towns of Pahang, Negeri Sembilan and Johore. Indeed, the RPS is often seen as a captive market for its young employable girls to be taken in by labour brokers as workers in factories in the bigger towns.

As I have argued earlier, the Orang Asli did not live in economic isolation prior to DARA. But it is a known fact that with the development of Pahang Tenggara region, the economy of the Orang Asli has become more "open" to the outside world. Indeed, they have become more exposed socially and economically. While the new economy has also opened new opportunities for some Orang Asli to cultivate and use new political connections to their advantage, (for instance by doing contractor work, or some form of "shop" business), the role of "outsiders" as "middlemen" has also strengthened considerably, mediating the Orang Asli economy with the outside world.

On the other hand, the Orang Asli have also become more politicized. The new development has generated new problems which

must find articulation and outlet. The insecurity over land tenure and other rights have made them more vocal and concerned over their future as citizens and as the real *bumiputeras* (sons of the soil) on the land. In this context the development of POASM (the Association of Orang Asli Peninsular Malaysia) branch in Pahang as a vocal and active champion of the Orang Asli cause is to be expected. At the same time, the increasing participation of Orang Asli in the UMNO party (the dominant Malay-based party in the ruling coalition) branches at the village level is also an expression of that search for political leadership which would be sympathetic to their plight. In this respect, the role of the more "control" and "security" oriented JHEOA is fast becoming redundant in the context of a more development-oriented Pahang Tenggara.

#### D. RPS Kedaik: From Dispossession to Dislocation

##### (i) *The Dispossession*

On September 6, 1990 amidst pomp and ceremony, and accompanied by so much public fuss, and media coverage, for the first time in history the Prime Minister of Malaysia officially "met" the Orang Asli people. RPS Kedaik, the first of its kind in the region,<sup>11</sup> and simultaneously symbolising the new Orang Asli way of life, was given the honour of being the venue for this grand occasion. Orang Asli from all over the country, represented by their *Batin* and their own entourage came to be presented to the Prime Minister. The Kedaik people and those in the surrounding area had to stop working for three days to attend the event, as a way of showing support and loyalty to the political leadership.

But RPS Kedaik is a story based on "dispossession". People from the old Kedaik had to move to the new RPS area to start a new life. By 1987 the first phase was ready to accept the first batch of Orang Asli. Not everybody moved. *Batin Bogi* and his followers refused though his other brother, *Batin Boh Suan* went along. The old Kedaik apparently already had its own school and hostel, clinic, and village hall and even electric poles had already been laid. People still have their *saka* there. The sentiments of the old Kedaik are expressed in the words of *Batin Bogi*:

"Once I was told by the protector of the Orang Asli — he said: "This is Orang Asli reserve area. You don't need a grant!" For me I don't consider



my staying here as taking shelter in someone else's land.... I must say I am not good with talking. Please forgive me if I'm a bit rough with my language. They asked me: 'Why don't you move?' "Why should I move?", I said. "I am not a refugee from Vietnam. I'm not a refugee from Kampuchea. This is my birth-place — I feel comfortable living here, even though I'm poor, I'm happy.... It seems to me its the policy of the government today to make us *pindah-randah*. Because long ago, people were scattered — then moved here to make village — easy access to medicine, school. Then when everybody have moved here, they make another project, they ask us to move again — so my fate as an Orang Asli is like the fate of a cow — brought to the field, eat the grass, finish, then chased to another again.... I am hardheaded (*keras kepala*) to defend my rights.... If I go too, I will suffer the same hardship... (referring to the Kedaik RPS settlement). It's like staying in the desert, in the middle of the sun.... Here there is *dusun*, its cooling — here too the fish is near — no need to travel for miles. All of us also have our own *sampan*.... The children are no longer schooling — they feel rejected (*merajuk*). There is even a school already so close, right by the doorstep, but they shifted it so far away... why should we chase it? It will make us look stupid. Well, let us be stupid forever, they say".

On 17th June 1987, the land allocated for RPS Kedaik, about 1,746 hectares (4,314 acres), was gazetted under Section 7 of The Aboriginal Peoples Act (1954) as the Kedaik Aboriginal People Area for Rompin District of Pahang state. The status of old Kedaik as *tanah asal* (the original settlement) or what might happen to the *saka* land of the Orang Asli there have yet to be resolved. An ideal situation would have been to combine the old settlement with the new, as was subsequently done in the second RPS at Bukit Serok. Apparently, the old Kedaik could not be treated in the same way because of the discovery of tin deposits in the area. Indeed on 30th May 1978, the Land Office at Rompin had already approved a company, *Permodalan dan Perusahaan Pahang Bhd.* (SPPPB) to mine these deposits in an area totalling 280 acres in old Kedaik. The above land apparently includes rubber and *dusun* cultivation of the Orang Asli and even some buildings that serves the JHEOA. During the months of May and June 1978, the villagers of Kedaik, through their leader Batin Boh Suan, appealed to the *Menteri Besar* (Chief Minister) of Pahang state to intervene so that the Orang Asli would not be moved out of the village and that they too would be given a share of the wealth found on their land. A part of the letter reads:

"After my return from Kuantan, my kinsmen (*anakbuah*), altogether 75 families in Kedaik village, informed me that this village would be mined by a company because this area has precious minerals... that recently some

Chinese came to dig and survey this area, and according to them the government is going to chase (*menghalau*) us Orang Asli from this area.

After reflecting deeply over the matter, we feel that in the long run, we are the ones who will be losing out... the coconut trees are already bearing fruits, the rubber trees can be tapped, and our reason for being here in the first place was also organised by the government so that we could be regrouped together. Before this we lived scattered all over the place (*berselerak*), but since then our children can go to school, and a village hall (*balai raya*) has also been built, and there is also a playing field for our children.

The past has taught us Orang Asli a lot of lessons; this is evident from the way logging concessions have been allocated in this district. We Orang Asli have always been mere spectators (*berputih mata*); only those who are already wealthy live lavishly and are smart.

If the government wants to assist us Orang Asli, who is already well-known to be loyal and obedient, poor and stupid, and whose life always revolves around "chasing" a living (*memburu hidup*), then we suggest that the mining ownership (*milik perlombongan*) of the reserve area of the Orang Asli at Kampung Kedaik be given to all the Orang Asli here, and the government, on its part should provide help by way of capital and other facilities to make the mine a success. In this way we can at least taste some of the natural wealth of our country, what more when it is already in existence in our own area. This would do us justice and it would prevent all the riches from being diverted to those who are already wealthy, what more to those who are not bumiputera."

The letter appeals for a review of the situation, to prevent the Orang Asli from becoming "fugitives in their own country" (*berdagang di tanah air sendiri*).

Sometime in January 1980, SPPPB, the mining company, communicated to the JHEOA of their mining schedule for the period 1980-1984. Among other things, the company wanted the JHEOA to ensure that the mining area leased to them would be cleared of buildings and rubber cultivation by September 1980, so that their "mining schedule would be on time". The company further suggested that the existing mining area be enlarged. There was also some promise of compensation. On the nights of 10th and 11th April 1980, a group representing JHEOA national headquarters, headed by the Director himself, and the villagers met to discuss the problem, only to find that the company had already cut down the trees without any negotiation with the Orang Asli, and without any payment of compensation for the losses. The villagers were adamant that the existing mining area should not be enlarged beyond what was given since they were not going to gain anything. They would only agree to leave if

the authorities would also agree to accept the Kedaik villagers as "shareholders" (*pemegang saham*) in the mining company. They argued that it was illogical if they could not gain anything out of an industry that "originates" from their own area.

In desperation, the villagers wrote, in July 1980, to the then Minister of Internal Affairs. Part of the letter reads:

"Kg. Kedaik has been an Orang Asli area since 1950; the government on its part had gone through great expense to ensure the existence of basic facilities here, such as the village hall, school, clinic and hostel located on Orang Asli Reserve and we live here with our families and kinsmen, in peace and harmony, aspiring with dreams of a future and with hopes, but only to be dashed recently because our village (Kedaik), the Orang Asli reserve has been given to a company... to mine in the area, for under the ground over which we live there is tin ore... our crops have been dug and shoved away with no compensation, an inhumane act that corresponds with that of a robber.

Honourable Tan Sri, we feel that from the perspective of justice as practised by the government, Orang Asli land and area would definitely not be passed on to others but to Orang Asli themselves for it is we Orang Asli who slogged to cut and clear the land. But when they found that our village has precious minerals then these capitalists who are capable of imposing hardship on those who are already living in hardship would rush to accumulate profits, and those who authorise and give them permission without thinking of the consequences it would bring upon others, would only generate perpetual suffering.

It is indeed a tragedy for us Orang Asli, to always watch, as mere spectators, by the side, as the natural wealth in our own land is being dug, loaded and taken away by those who are already rich; what is left for us to taste is dust and humiliation only, nothing less than that, and definitely so far away from justice.

So... we appeal to the honourable *Tan Sri* to have the mining in our village (Kedaik) discontinued and the mine closed down. This is the only village that has given happiness to our people, and one day, our children who will be educated will at least savour a small trinkle of the wealth, much of which would have already been appropriated by those who are already rich, yet always want to get richer."

The JHEOA on its part defended the rights of the Kedaik people and insisted that the company pay for all the expenses of relocating the Orang Asli in a new place, in addition to paying full compensation for the losses experienced by them. The Department felt that the company could bear the costs for it estimated the company would gross about RM7.5 million in the years of its operation. For its part, the JHEOA agreed to assist in relocating the Orang Asli as well as

prepare a scheme for the involvement of the villagers in the mining company. In its recommendation, the Department felt that:

"it is clear that there is 'a moral side to the whole issue'. What is meant here is that the authorities must give consideration to welfare and 'moral justice' to the Orang Asli community in Kampong Kedaik and not only evaluate solely from the view of law. 'Moral justice' states that the people of Kampong Kedaik must receive the gains/benefits from the said project".

The JHEOA proposed that the involvement of the Orang Asli was via the latter holding an equity capital share of 30 per cent of the total, the "capital" of the Kedaik folks being the crops and whatever compensation they would receive for losses rendered in their area. The Department argued that with an Orang Asli stake in the mine, the relocation of these people into the proposed RPS would no longer be a problem since "The Kedaik villagers will willingly move to a new area knowing that they have a share in the activity that is being operated in their own village".

The recommendation concludes rather strongly in the following way:

"The Orang Asli people realise that the *saka* (ancestral land) on which they live and work contain a lot of valuable natural resources, that should be shared with them. The Orang Asli people are now aware that the opportunity to enjoy this wealth on a continuous basis should be their basic right. All this while, the Orang Asli have not really tasted the fruits and gains from the natural resources of their areas. *Neglect of their basic rights will most certainly give rise to social and political problems and questions which could be manipulated by the enemies of the nation in time to come* (original emphasis retained). All attention should be given and action should be taken to avoid the experiences of countries such as New Zealand, Australia, the United States where the 'original people' in these countries are making claims over their ancestral land (and the natural wealth of these areas).

What is being done now by SPPPB (a government agency) at Kampong Kedaik can be regarded as an act which is not proper (*tidak wajar*). There is no reason why the people of Kedaik should not be given the opportunity to enjoy the wealth arising from their own village. There is no reason why the government should act to turn a *bumiputera* group in their own country into fugitives. Nevertheless, the time is still not too late, and the authorities can still determine that the people of Kedaik could also share the wealth of the country together with other communities."

Well that is history now. The Kedaik people lost out — they have no share in the company — but they still have to move out to RPS Kedaik where their new life, where a better future, was promised to them.

*(ii) The Dislocation*

It is interesting to note that the RPS is based on a modified FELDA model and theoretically it is based on rational economic footing. The argument is that Orang Asli should not be deprived of mainstream development inputs and basic needs, but it will cost a lot of money to bring all these items to every Orang Asli village scattered in the region. The RPS represents a centralised area of development, regrouping various dispersed village communities under "a single roof". There will be economies of scale, and inputs from all government agencies could be converged, ranging from basic essentials such as houses, water and electricity, roads, medical care, a new schooling system which comes directly under the Ministry of Education, and in addition, a steady income from a plantation cash crop base. As mentioned earlier, this perspective denies the self-sustaining capacity for development amongst the Orang Asli. In addition, it also closes off other "developmental" options for them. Even so, the RPS, if properly implemented could be one of the alternatives for the Orang Asli. However, the problem with most of the RPS that have been implemented in the region (3 by 1990, and 9 in all) thus far is that none of them appear to be viable. Most have been beset with innumerable problems and RPS Kedaik is no exception.

The budget allocation for the RPS is provided in stages, beginning from the Fourth Malaysia Plan onwards. This provision is in terms of a "grant" which, unlike FELDA, need not be paid back by the Orang Asli. Under the RPS scheme, each Orang Asli settler will have access to a six acre plot of oil palm, a two acre plot of *dusun* land, and a one-quarter acre house plot. It is estimated that the net proceeds would amount to RM450 to RM500 ringgit per month. FELCRA (Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority) functions as the operation arm of the JHEOA; all field tasks — from clearing to planting and harvesting are undertaken by FELCRA. FELCRA charges the JHEOA for the costs it incurs; what remains after is distributed amongst the participants.

At RPS Kedaik, the scheme was a problem right from the beginning. First, the Orang Asli were moved to the scheme when only the house was ready; all the other facilities were not completed. They had to wait until 1991, four years after the budget was allocated, before they received piped water supply. In the meantime, the villagers had to use a well system (*perigi*), and on higher ground, the wells have to be dug deeper. There was always a problem of water shortage during

the dry season, and the community had to resort to sourcing water in run-offs or *paya* (swamp).

Land was only cleared for the cultivation of oil palm at about the same time they joined the RPS. This contrasts directly with the situation in the FELDA schemes, where the settlers come in when the fruits are ready for harvesting. As a result, there were years of waiting during which time the Orang Asli had literally nothing much to do in relation to work at the RPS. In the initial period, some were involved in the clearing and burning, and later on in some of the weeding, or planting work. But as time passed, FELCRA found it convenient to employ contractors who would then opt for cheaper illegal labour from Indonesia. As a result, only very few of the Orang Asli could find work in the plantation proper. The authorities often cite the excuse that the "Orang Asli cannot work in the sun" as a way of explaining the low employment of Orang Asli in the fields. Even work on the *dusun* that was eventually going to be allocated to them was given to a contractor. The *dusun* was a total failure; it was ill-managed by the contractor, and the JHEOA made no effort to allocate the *dusun* area at the beginning, in order to inculcate a sense of belonging or "ownership" into them. The *dusun* land was worked many times over by the contractor; there was no Orang Asli involvement — they merely watched as their *dusun* land failed to be grown with anything.

As the RPS fail to provide the settlers with a regular income, the community found that they have to practise their old ways. Those who have rubber trees in old Kedaik would continue tapping even though it is much further. Others continue to gather rattan by attaching themselves to a contractor and a work gang. Still others do odd labouring jobs in neighbouring DARA estates; the younger and more hardworking ones would continue to earn good money by joining the chainsaw group of loggers. With the rainy season at the end of the year when the river swells, it would be the time for everybody to fish. Some would stay for a while in their raft houses (*rumah rakit*) by the river bringing with them their wives and children. Thus, although the RPS did not provide the Orang Asli with plantation work, life had to go on. Throughout the year, every individual would opt for various alternatives, combining them in their own way according to the resources available.

The project promises a regular income when the oil palm trees bear fruits. But the situation is a lot more complex. First, the number of

oil palm trees allocated to settlers at RPS Kedaik may be less than what is promised on paper. This is because many young oil palm trees die when planted on unsuitable land. Elephants that wander in the jungle fringe often encroach and damage the trees. There is also a problem of management. FELCRA appears to be quite understaffed and no attempt is made to utilise the many JHEOA staff staying at the RPS in plantation work. Thus, JHEOA field officers receive no training in plantation work since their work are confined to social rather than development programmes. Neither are JHEOA prepared for plantation life. Indeed, there is still some uncertainty over their role when the RPS becomes fully operational, and when the Orang Asli settlers (assuming, for the moment, that they would eventually be "working" on their plots) begin to tend their matured crops. There is talk that such "work" would still be carried out by FELCRA and whoever they choose to employ. In the end, it may be possible that the Orang Asli will earn their income merely through a "share" system without themselves being directly involved in plantation work as such. At the time of research, these questions could not be addressed to by the RPS authorities in Kedaik.

It was evident that there was an air of disappointment among the settlers over the RPS. This could have partially been due to the high expectations, created perhaps by the enthusiasm of JHEOA officials when they initially campaigned for people to move out of their traditional villages. Those who could not cope with the situation went back to their old village, Kedaik:

"I didn't want to go back to the jungle for rattan... but if I didn't go to the jungle, there'll be no rice, no money, kids can't go to school...."

It's difficult living at the RPS... if we stay there, there must be work. It's not that when we live there, we expect them (the authorities) to support us. We couldn't last without work... we were forced to go back to the jungle. If no rattan... no food.

I was a farmer... I am prepared to work in the fields. But if the wages are low... I won't. I am most comfortable tapping rubber ... I've been doing it since I was small... six acres. Start at six, finish at 2.30 — then I would go fishing.... I sold my rubber to RISDA... they would take my rubber — once every three weeks or once a month. I have not replanted. I was thinking of doing so, when I had to move to RPS. They said that RPS would be good... as the old saying goes... "Chasing two birds in flight, but the monkeys at your own feet have run away...."

Some obviously had to evolve a way of moving in and out of the RPS. Indeed, these movements have affected the children's attendance

at the RPS new school. Children are often absent for weeks from school, as they have to follow their father to the jungle in search of rattan.

There are also others, who, after finding it hard to make ends meet, have become likely clients to a Christian missionary group operating in the proximity. A priest who comes quite regularly to the area has opened a small "settlement" nearby, providing Orang Asli converts regular food supply and a home.

The Orang Asli are also concerned about the future status of their *saka* land. In addition, they are still unsure of their rights over RPS land although they expect to have some form of "ownership" over it. Some fear that by staying at the RPS they would lose out their claim over the land in the village; this was especially heightened during the last election when there was talk that the government was going to grant them personal land titles.

The RPS appears to be the assigned development model for the Orang Asli in the region. However, the Orang Asli remain puzzled over why the whole operation is staggered and organised haphazardly. For the Orang Asli, it is important that the RPS demonstrates its viability. The RPS would have been more credible (like FELDA is to the Malay peasantry) and their coordination and implementation would have been better if all nine projects were to be established simultaneously. The Orang Asli are also puzzled over why the JHEOA could not wait for the crops to be planted or harvested before bringing the Orang Asli into the RPS. Meanwhile, the remaining Orang Asli do not know what to do in their respective villages while waiting for their "turn" to come. For to further invest would be futile, since they would be moved to the RPS eventually. On the other hand, to carry on without proper access to agricultural inputs and assistance, and without yet hope that their economy can be self-sustained and that, one day, they would be given personal titles to the land is also an uncertain prospect. These are some of the dilemmas created by the RPS. The land issue, the most crucial item on the agenda for the Orang Asli, may turn out to be an explosive political issue. Caught in a limbo and without any inroads into the RPS nor in the villages the Orang Asli may feel desperate.

DARA is clear about the direction the JHEOA should undertake, that is, to give priority to the development of the RPS, and let the state government handle the issue of land titles subsequently. But the bottom line is very clear: the Orang Asli, unlike the Malay peasantry, though "indigenous", are a small minority that does not have much



political clout and representation. Although the problems of the Orang Asli are real and require urgent attention, the reality is that the Orang Asli do not enjoy any priority under the present political matrix.

### PART TWO: ORANG ASLI "PEASANTIZATION" AND THE "TRIBAL QUESTION"

The early "debate" pertaining to the African situation resolved the "tribal question" by pinpointing specifically how "the logic of capitalist development" not only "defines" and "creates" a peasantry out of "tribal" society but also how ultimately, it "phased out" the very peasantry it helped to foster.<sup>12</sup> Others,<sup>13</sup> subjecting the issue to a more critical theoretical overview, dismiss the popular "tribal" and "peasant" categories in Economic Anthropology as mere "descriptive" and "human type" constructs. It is argued that the common basis upon which these "diverse forms of non-capitalist production" or "human types" can be meaningfully theorised only in their "relationship with capitalism".<sup>14</sup> This means that "tribal" and "peasant" producers do not belong to distinct economies; under peripheral capitalism, they differ only in the degree to which they are being dominated by the same capitalist relations. Thus, from an idealised "natural economy"<sup>15</sup> to its eventual "destruction" via the "different stages of capitalist articulation"<sup>16</sup> (the distinction between merchant and productive capital here being extremely crucial),<sup>17</sup> such producers will logically be reconstituted into different "fractions" of labour<sup>18</sup> (wage and non-waged), but both undoubtedly "working" (either directly, or indirectly) for capital.<sup>19</sup>

In the context of the Malaysian rural formation, the above framework provides a common theoretical basis when analysing both the "tribal" and "peasant" components. Recent studies<sup>20</sup> have shown that, like the Malay peasantry, Orang Asli conditions of production and reproduction too are increasingly being dictated by capital, mediated via the circuit of merchant capital. This remains true even where their activities revolve around the collection of jungle produce: commoditization has certainly deepened its hold of the Orang Asli social reproduction process. Under such conditions, even the persistence of use-values or subsistence production cannot be inferred as an expression of autonomy within a "natural economy" setting. Instead, it reflects the process of simple reproduction squeeze where Orang Asli surplus (including labour-power) is subtly appropriated by capital

through the sphere of exchange. Indeed, the ethos "looking for money"<sup>21</sup> (*cari duit/wang*) expresses not only the dominance of simple commodity production in the present Orang Asli economy but at once underlies their current conception of "work" (*kerja*) or "looking for work" (*cari kerja*).

From the perspective outlined above, the Pahang Tenggara regional development scheme represents a systematic undertaking by which the state facilitates the penetration of capital into rural society and further integrates its traditional producers (including the Orang Asli) into the money economy. Although only a few have been absorbed into the new plantations, these could very well represent "proletarian outlets" for the resolution of the "tribal question" in the region. Theoretically, the RPS strategy could be viewed as a type of post-colonial development whereby the state, via its various agencies (DARA, JHEOA, FELCRA, and others) provide not only the economic, but also the political and ideological conditions for organising and mobilising "tribal" labour or households for commodity production. In the meantime, household members have to pursue, "chase" (*kejar*) and combine various economic activities in order to acquire sufficient subsistence and exchange values to meet their reproduction requirements. It is not surprising, therefore, that under these conditions, some Orang Asli in the RPS households have been known to continuously suffer from a "crisis" of simple reproduction.

Clearly then, as commodity relations become more generalised, the Orang Asli will transform into a full-fledged peasantry in the midst of an established indigenous peasantry. A few scholars contend that this process is already transforming the Orang Asli to be like Malay peasants.<sup>22</sup> However, this process of "peasantization" does not resolve the "tribal question". For although the Orang Asli are similarly subordinated to the dictates of capital (hence their "shared" economic location or "peasantness"), there are other important aspects of their existence (especially those which relate to the state, land rights and the law) that make the Orang Asli appear more like "incomplete citizens" rather than "peasant counterparts" or "equals" of the Malay peasantry. Indeed, their "similar" location in the capital-labour/producer nexus does little to explain the marginal status of the Orang Asli in "civil society"..

In the traditional economy of the Malay world,<sup>23</sup> the Orang Asli were often essential mediating links in the pre-colonial trading network, especially those which spread to tap the products of the

jungle. Though they enjoyed a certain degree of freedom in their jungle habitat, and therefore were subjected to less formal control from the state as compared to the Malay peasantry, the Orang Asli were also incorporated into the pre-colonial social structure as slaves.<sup>24</sup> Relegated to the very bottom rung of the traditional status system, their marginal ethnic and cultural position was compounded further by their equally peripheralised location *vis-a-vis* the "little" and "great tradition" of the Malay World<sup>25</sup> as presided by Islam and shared between the Malay peasantry and their Malay ruling class who dominated the traditional state and polity.

Although British colonial rule abolished slavery, it was paternalistic. Its policies and laws pertaining to the Orang Asli, however "noble" in its intention of "protecting" these people, only served to further accentuate the stigma and the marginality that was already associated with the Orang Asli. Administered through a special Department of the state, the JHEOA, the Orang Asli became almost an invisible community in the eyes of other governmental or administrative bodies. Legislated to live in special reserves,<sup>26</sup> they not only became "ethnicised" and alienated from other citizens (to be the object of tourist consumption and "primitive exotica") but were also continuously treated as a security risk (especially during the Malayan Communist Emergency period). As a result, they were constantly subjected to control and regulation by the state, and were, therefore, forced to depend on the JHEOA for almost everything. This sense of political powerlessness, nurtured and conditioned further through socialised dependence is akin to a form of "internal colonialism" and has had long-term effects on the psyche of Orang Asli people. These fetters of colonial legacy are still with the Orang Asli in the post-colonial period. Thus, in an era when large-scale development of the land is the order of the day, the Orang Asli are still excluded from ownership over their "reserves", (by contrast, Malay peasants are conferred with individual land titles in their reserves). As a result, their tenureship over such land would continue to remain in a state of perpetual insecurity.

In the Pahang Tenggara region, it is no secret that the Orang Asli communities, unlike their Malay peasant counterparts, are in a "grey" and catch-22 situation. Being specially administered under the "custody" and "protection" of the JHEOA, the Orang Asli are seen first and foremost as being under the jurisdiction of the Department, for their development inputs and support. At least, this is how it has been

traditionally perceived by various district development authorities. Indeed, what is consistent about the Orang Asli village communities in the region is the lack and often, absence of basic needs and social amenities. While the JHEOA often complains over their lack of funds, it is a known fact that at least about two-thirds of its fund allocation goes to feed its bureaucracy.<sup>27</sup> But the traditional identification of Orang Asli problems with JHEOA does not help the situation. Other agencies also help the Orang Asli, but not as a matter of policy or principle.

As the Batin of Mencupu writes about the problems facing his village:

"How can this kind of thing happen here? The *kampung* folks here are very sad because the Malay villagers in Kampung RPS Lepar and the Kampung Tebat both get water and electric supply. But between Lepar and Kampung Tebat, the distance is only two miles; the Orang Asli village of Mencupu is in between, but when the electric line gets close to Mencupu, it gets cut off. Does the government feel that the Orang Asli cannot afford to pay water and electricity bills? Recently the UMNO Youth leader of Kampung Banjar Lepas branch... suggested that maybe this village is not suitable to be supplied with water and electricity because the Orang Asli houses here are too old and worn down (*buruk*), but I have seen Malay villages such as... where they also have houses like in my village. But such houses have electricity. I feel that if we are going to wait for our houses to be like our *Yang Berhormat* (referring to politicians), then until the end of the world, Orang Asli will not be able to afford it.... Its no use for us to sleep on the same pillow, but our dreams are different. Better sleep on different pillows, so long as our dreams are the same" (1990).

As POASM formally complains to the District Office in Pekan about the situation in Mencupu:

"All the villages on the left and right side of the village (Mencupu) have electricity but the line is somehow "cut-off" in the middle as it approaches the village, but continues again on the other end. We hope that in bringing development to the community, discrimination should not be practised and stringent terms of land development should not be applied, for this would mean that our people would forever be in darkness" (1990).

The Malay peasantry, unlike the Orang Asli traditional villagers, are linked from the village base upwards by a more direct administrative and political network, as explained by a perceptive DARA officer:

"With the traditional Malay villages, they have JKKK (the village committee) — this works through the *penghulu* (headman) of the *kampung* — then to the district — if you want to ask for a bridge — everything will go through the

district office. By right the Orang Asli should have had the same network. Now that you have the RPS, automatically all development will only be channelled to the RPS — the rest of the Orang Asli will be neglected. But the network such as the JKKK should be there — it all depends on the JHEOA's initiative" (1990).

It is DARA's latest move which really drives home the difference between the Malay peasantry and the Orang Asli. The DARA Master Plan apparently assumes that with the development of new townships and all their facilities, the Malays would move out of their traditional villages. After 10 years, this assumption was found to be unfounded.

"Most of the new towns are filled up by outsiders from outside this area.... Not from our traditional villages. Malay people in Pahang don't want to migrate to the new towns because they still love their villages — their land — their trees, their values...."

So DARA has undertaken a new role of planning a new strategy of development for these Malay traditional villages, the first being the Planned Village Project or *Rancangan Kampung Tersusun* (RKT) at Salong, affecting the various traditional villages along the Pahang river. The main thrust would be to promote *in situ* development, through FELCRA, by re-organising both ownership and production of the traditional land resources around these villages in a more efficient and economical manner for self-sustained agricultural development. Indeed, this is a model of "middle-range" development that deviates from the original DARA concept of development for the traditional Malay villages. In this respect, the Malay village grassroot sentiments of development are no different from their rural counterparts, the Orang Asli.<sup>28</sup>

For the Orang Asli, the Malay-dominated FELDA schemes are far superior to the RPS. As an Orang Asli leader remarks:

"The Malays on FELDA still get the *pusaka* (ancestral inheritance) of parents' land in the village, but Orang Asli will lose their *saka* land. If RPS is in full swing, if they have dependents, where will they go — the next generation — when all their *saka* land is gone?"

Sometime in April 1990, the Director of Land and Mines in Pahang recommended to the State Director of JHEOA that the time had come for "ownership" to be conferred upon the Orang Asli, in view of their growing consciousness about land ownership and that the number of government agencies which provide inputs and development have also increased. Sometime in August the same year, a meeting was held

between these two authorities. Unfortunately, it was decided that it was not, as yet, necessary for the authorities to evolve a specific policy to grant land ownership to Orang Asli society.

To reflect on our earlier argument, it is apparent that regional development, such as in Pahang Tenggara, tends to accentuate, rather than solve, the existing problems of the Orang Asli. In many ways, the RPS approach avoids a real confrontation with some of the basic questions (such as rights of land ownership) faced by the Orang Asli at the grassroots level. It shifts the existing problems to a different plane. The choice of development becomes much more determinate; it freezes all the other options, alternatives and possibilities of human development. It takes an either-or approach rather than balance the different choices that should be made available to the Orang Asli. Considerations of rational economic choices, economies of scale, economic integration: all these express capitalist forms of development that are alien to the small Orang Asli who wants to be self-reliant on his lot. Indeed, the Orang Asli is worse off than his Malay peasant counterpart; he has no personal land title to his so-called land — he is a dispossessed non-owner.

The urgency of the problems faced by the Orang Asli in Pahang Tenggara may, for reasons due to differences in the pace of development, be dissimilar elsewhere. It is no small wonder (even though the paper only alludes to it) that this part of the peninsula has seen the emergence of a rather active group of young Orang Asli leaders, through the formation of Pahang POASM, campaigning at the grassroots, almost from village to village, to ascertain the real depth and diversity of the problems faced by the above indigenous communities in this region. The JHEOA has assumed the traditional role of "protector". The conditions today are a lot more complex. Where social control and security were once the main concerns of the Department, today development dominates its attention. Unfortunately, the Department has not been able to display the required leadership qualities, nor vision and commitment. It has been too caught up in bureaucracy, and lately too detached, indifferent, and no longer fired by zeal or emotion. For many, it is just a job.

In Pahang Tenggara, views of the Orang Asli towards the JHEOA are rather ambivalent. They can cite so many instances when personal self interest or corrupt practices of officials override their sense of responsibility to the people they are supposed to protect. The Orang Asli no longer look upon them with the same deference and

awe. In contrast, POASM leaders are on the ground to listen to their problems, record their woes and grievances, and write to various institutions and organisations on their behalf. All these have led the Orang Asli to communicate with their own organisation more frequently about their problems. They now see POASM as a viable alternative. But this new leadership is in no position to dictate terms. They can vocalize issues, and indeed where the present political leadership (at least in Pahang) finds it convenient (such as during election time), they will have no qualms in giving POASM the social space and recognition. At present these leaders are testing the waters — to see how far their alliance with the UMNO leadership will bear fruit and good tidings for their people. The future will increasingly push POASM into the political arena, for it is on this terrain of political struggle that some of the crucial issues confronting the Orang Asli must find some real solution.

### Conclusion

The "peasant bias" in the anthropological studies of the Malaysian rural landscape must be overcome. Capitalist development engendered by the post-colonial state, through its large-scale regional development programmes, affects both land resources and people. The present capitalist encroachment goes beyond the existing peasantry and in the process also reconstitutes the indigenous "tribal" minorities into various forms. Any analysis of the "agrarian question" must not ignore the current juxtaposition between the different components of "labour/producer" on the land. Yet, there is also a danger in seeking our answers purely at the level of economic relations. In the context of the Orang Asli "tribal question" — the "peasantization" process is obviously important — and will require more empirical data and comparative material for future analysis. But the "tribal question" is more than just a "theoretical" problematic — it is also a question of praxis. In this respect, the problem must be approached in its totality, which therefore necessitates a consideration of the Orang Asli or "tribal question" not just at the level of the "economy" but also on the terrains of culture and politics, their historical specificity and their struggle. In the long term, such an approach would hopefully allow for some convergence between theory and human praxis in our search for understanding and solution.

## Notes and Bibliography

1. The term "Malaysia" in the context of the article refers only to Peninsular Malaysia, or what was before "Malaya".
2. "Orang Asli" (A Malay term which means "original" people) is the current official and more acceptable term to describe the "Aboriginal People" of Peninsular Malaysia. The Orang Asli are by no means a homogenous ethnic entity. They are divided into three different ethnic groups — the Negritos, the Senoi and the Proto-Malays. These in turn can be sub-divided into different "tribal" groups of which the major ones are the Senoi, Temiar, Jakun, Semelai and Negrito. The Orang Asli was estimated to number about 72,000 by 1990. Though they are citizens and are eligible to vote and lately, also considered as *Bumiputeras* (sons of soil) like the Malays, they are however governed by a specific set of laws when compared to the Malay peasantry, especially those pertaining to land. They are also under the custody of a special department, the JHEOA (the Department of Aboriginal Affairs).
3. Some of these include: R. Bach, "Historical Patterns of Capitalist Penetration in Malaysia", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1976; Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, "The Development and the Underdevelopment of the Malaysian Peasantry," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1979; Zawawi Ibrahim, "Perspectives on Capitalist Penetration and the Reconstitution of the Malay Peasantry," *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia*, No. 5, 1982; idem, "Malay Peasants and Proletarian Consciousness," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 1983; idem, "Perspectives Towards Investigating Malay Peasant Ideology and the Bases of Its Production in Contemporary Malaysia", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1983; idem, "Investigating Peasant Consciousness in Contemporary Malaysia," in *History and Peasant Consciousness in South East Asia*, Senri Ethnological Studies 13, (eds.) Andrew Turton and Shigeharu Tanabe, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, 1984; K. S. Jomo, *A Question of Class; Capital, the State and Uneven Development in Malaysia*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1986; Rudolphe De Koninck, *Malay Peasants Coping with the World*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1992; Diana Wong, *Peasants in the Making. Malaysia's Green Revolution*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1987; Lim Mah Hui, "Ethnic and Class Relations in Malaysia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2, 1982; Muhammad Ikmal Said, "Household Organization of Capitalist Farms and Capitalist Development in Agriculture," *Kajian Malaysia*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1985; Wan Hashim, *Peasants Under Peripheral Capitalism*, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 1988; Hua Wu Yin, *Class & Communalism in Malaysia*, Zed Books, London, 1983.
4. I refer especially to recent work published and undertaken by local Malaysian scholars, Colin G. Nicholas and Alberto G. Gomes. See for instance:

Nicholas, C., "From Subsistence to Simple Commodity Production:



Economic Relations in Two Semai Settlements", Unpublished M.Sc. thesis, Faculty of Resource Economics and Agribusiness, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, 1985; idem, "Theories of Development and the Underdevelopment of the Orang Asli", *Akademika*, No. 35, July, 1989; idem, "In the Name of Semai? The State and Semai Society in Peninsular Malaysia", *Tribal Peoples and Development in Southeast Asia*, special issue of the Journal, "Manusia & Masyarakat", eds. Lim Teck Ghee & Alberto Gomes, Dept. of Anthropology & Sociology, University of Malaya, 1990; idem, "Merchant Capital and the Simple Reproduction Squeeze in Semai Society", *Ilmu Masyarakat*, Journal of Malaysian Social Science Association, No. 21, October 1991 - June 1992. Alberto G. Gomes, "Looking-For-Money: Simple Commodity Production in the Economy of the Tapah Semai of Malaysia", Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Dept. of Prehistory and Anthropology, Australian National University, 1986; Idem, "Confrontation and Continuity: Simple Commodity Production among the Orang Asli, "in *Tribal Peoples...* 1990, *op. cit.*; idem, "Things are not what they seem: Semai Economy in the 1980s", *Akademika*, 35, 1989.

Other related analyses include: Susan McLellan, "Analysis of State Penetration and Development Plans on Aboriginal Peoples of West Malaysia", *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1985; Rohini Talalla, "Ethnodevelopment and the Orang Asli of Malaysia: A Case Study of the Betau Settlement for Semai-Senoi", *Antipode*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1984; 3/4 Gordon Means, "The Orang Asli: Aboriginal Policies in Malaysia", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 4, 1985-1986; Kirk Endicott, "The Impact of Economic Modernization on the Orang Asli (Aborigines) of Northern Peninsular Malaysia", in *Issues in Malaysian Development*, eds. James C. Jackson & Martin Rudner, Heinemann, Singapore, 1979. Marie-Andree Couillard, *Tradition in Tension: Carving in a Jah Hut Community*, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, 1980.

5. In the field of Anthropology, one of the earliest call for such a focus comes from Gough, K., "New Proposals for Anthropologists," *Current Anthropology*, 9, 1968. For a continuing dialogue on the subject matter, see various articles in *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, (ed.) Talal Asad, Ithaca Press, London, 1973.
6. See for instance, Julian Burger, *Report From the Frontier: The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*, Zed Books, London 1987; Also Lee Swepston & Roger Plant, "International Standards and the Protection of the Land Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Populations", *International Labour Review*, Vol. 124, No. 1, 1985; eds. Lim Teck Ghee & Alberto Gomes, *Tribal Peoples and Development in Southeast Asia*, *op. cit.*, 1990.
7. The Jakun indigenous people constitute the largest of the Proto-Malays, the majority of whom are found in Pahang, and a significant number in Johor. In the literature of Orang Asli, these people apparently tend to refer to themselves as *Orang Dusun*, *Orang Dalam*, or *Orang Hulu*. The Jakun are an economically differentiated people but many of them have settled down to lead a life rather akin to the ordinary Malay peasantry in the villages. In 1990, the Jakun component was about 11,163 of the total Orang Asli population of 72,049.

For good accounts and discussion of the Jakun people in their traditional setting and in the context of some of the changes that have taken place, see: Iskandar Carey, *Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976 (Introduction and Chapter III); Narifumi Maeda, *Authority and Leadership among the Orang Hulu*, Discussion Paper No. 24, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan, 1971; idem, *Economic Activities Among the Orang Hulu*, Discussion Paper No. 23, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan, 1971; see also various articles in *Microcosms of Indigenous Development*, edited and revised by C.E.R. Abraham, School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, 1982; Bryan P. Sharpe, *Interim Report on the Economic Conditions and Prospects of the Orang Asli of Southeast Pahang*, Lembaga Kemajuan Pahang Tenggara, 1976.

8. For an alternative perspective and discussion on such a controversial issue, see Evelyne Hong, *Natives of Sarawak* (Chapter 3, "Swidden as a Rational. Agricultural System"), Institut Masyarakat Malaysia, Penang, 1987; also Marcus Colchester, *Pirates, Squatters and Poachers: The Political Ecology of Dispossession of the Native Peoples of Sarawak*, Survival International, Insan, 1989; pp. 48-53.
9. See *Laws of Malaysia*, Act 134, Aboriginal Peoples Act, 1954 (revised — 1974) Government of Malaysia; for an analysis of these provisions, see S. Sothi Rachagan, "Constitutional and Statutory Provisions Governing the Orang Asli", in *Tribal Peoples...*, 1990, *op. cit.*; M.B. Hooker, "The Orang Asli and the Laws of Malaysia with special reference to Land", *Ilmu Masyarakat*, No. 18, 1991.
10. *Op. cit.*, p. 86.
11. RPS Kedaik is by no means the first regroupment scheme in Peninsular Malaysia. The earlier Titiwangsa Development Scheme in central Peninsular Malaysia was however more driven by reasons of security, whilst those proposed under the Pahang Tenggara are more development-oriented. For a discussion of some of these earlier schemes towards "regrouping" the Orang Asli, see, Rohini Talalla..., *op. cit.*; Iskandar Carey, "The Resettlement of the Orang Asli From a Historical Perspective", *Federation Museums Journal*, 24, 1979; S.H. Khoo and P.K. Voon, "Resettlement: An Aspect of the Orang Asli Settlement in Peninsular Malaysia", *Geography Bulletin*, July, 1986.
12. John Saul & Roger Woods, "African Peasantries", in *Peasants and Peasant Societies* (ed.) Teodor Shanin, Penguin, Middlesex, 1979 (p. 107). The initial paper on the subject matter is the classic, Fallers, L.A., "Are African Cultivators to be called 'peasants'?", *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1961. See also, Ken Post, "Peasantization and Rural Political Movements in Western Africa", *European Journal of Sociology*, XIII, 2, 1972; *Peasants in Africa*, ed. Martin A. Klein, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, 1980.
13. See especially: Ennew, Hirst and Tribe, "Peasantry as an Economic Category," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1977.
14. *Ibid.* p. 319.

15. See Bradby, B., "The Destruction of Natural Economy," *Economy and Society*, 2, 2, 1973.
16. See Foster-Carter, A., "The Mode of Production Controversy," *New Left Review*, 107, 1978.
17. See Kay, G. *Development and Underdevelopment, A Marxist Analysis*, Macmillan, London, 1975.
18. See Harry Cleaver, "Internationalization of Capital and the Mode of Production in Agriculture," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Agriculture Supplement, A2-A16, March 1976 (p. A9).
19. Henry Bernstein, "Underdevelopment and the Law of Value: A Critique of Kay", *Review of African Political Economy*, 6, 1976; idem, "Notes on Capital and Peasantry", *Review of African Political Economy*, 10, 1977; idem, "African Peasants: A Theoretical Perspective", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 6, 4, 1979.
20. See Nicholas, C., 1985; 1991-1992, *op. cit.*
21. See Alberto Gomes, 1985; 1990, *op. cit.*
22. See Hood Mohd Salleh, "Orang Asli as Peasants," paper presented at the Conference on the Peasantry and Development in the ASEAN Region, U.K.M. Bangi, 28-29 May, 1980; idem, "Roads are for Development? Some Aspect of Jah Hut Social Change," UNESCO regional workshop on socio-cultural change in communities resulting from economic development and technology programmes, 1982; idem, "Orang Asli Perceptions of the Malay World. A Historical Perspective", *Ilmu Masyarakat*, 6, 1984.
23. For a detailed discussion of Orang Asli-Malay relations in traditional society, see Couillard, M. "The Malays and the "Sakais": Some Comments on their Social Relations in the Malay Peasantry", *Kajian Malaysia*, 2, 1984; Nicholas N. Dodge, "The Malay-Aborigine Nexus under Malay Rule", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-land-en Volkenkunde* 137, 1981; K.Endicott, "The Effects of Slave Raiding on the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsular", in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid, University of Queensland Press, Queensland, 1983; Benjamin, G. "In the Long Term: Three Themes in Malayan Cultural Ecology", in *Cultural Values and Human Ecology in Southeast Asia* (eds.) Hutterer, Rambo and Lovelace, Center for South & Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1985; Dr. F.L. Dunn, *Rain-Forest Collectors and Traders: A study of Resource Utilization in Modern and Ancient Malaya*, Monographs of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, No. 5, 1975.
24. See K. Endicott, 1983, *op. cit.*
25. Even today, I feel there is still some ambiguity of the Orang Asli position in this sphere of Malay social relations. Whilst in the area of culture and religion, there is an official "documentation" of policy towards integrating the Orang Asli through Islam, on the ground, the situation is one of "negotiation" rather than "superimposition". I detect a reluctance on the part of JHEOA officials to really "push" the issue, as they consider it "sensitive". The Orang Asli, at least those whom I talked to seem to be quite

"liberal" and "open-minded" in their views on religion; to them all religion are good, and they do not show animosity towards Islam or other religions as such, and indeed are able to exercise much of their personal discretion and choice when it comes to religion. For instance, at Batu 8 village, inter-marriage with the Chinese and Orang Asli adoption or display of Chinese religious rituals and symbols, testifies to such freedom of choice and preference.

In the case of Orang Asli embracing Islam, there is however expectation of some "economic gains" on their part. At Kampung Gadak, for instance, the initial "conversion" efforts by both JHEOA and DARA went sour as the authorities were not able to provide much of the promised economic improvement to the villagers. DARA is now attempting to salvage the situation by allocating a budget to improve their lot. Bukit Serdang is perhaps the only example so far in the Pahang Tenggara region of "successful" Islamization of Orang Asli. The Imam who leads the prayer is himself an Orang Asli and has already gone for Umrah in Mecca. Involved households in the village were apparently granted personal titles to the land. As a general rule, however, most of the Jakun people are not Muslim even though they are quite close to the Malays in terms of their language and even their physical appearance. Their traditional culture of *joget lambak* (a dance form), based on the *biola* (violin), interwoven with the singing of Malay *pantuns* (rhymes) shows very clear affinities with the culture of the Malay world. Yet their traditional fondness for dogs could also make the average Malay villager not so culturally at ease with their way of life.

26. For more detailed discussion on Orang Asli issues pertaining to land and the law, see Sothi Rachagan, *op. cit.*; and M.B. Hooker, *op. cit.*
27. See Bah Tony Williams-Hunt, "Adakah Dasar Ekonomi Baru Memberi Faedah kepada Orang Asli?" (Does the New Economic Policy Benefit the Orang Asli?), Paper presented to the Seminar "Pembangunan Sosial dan Ekonomi Orang Asli: Pencapaian yang Lalu dan Prioriti untuk 1990an", Organized by POASM, 4th November, 1989, Gombak (p. 11).
28. For an interesting discussion of how traditional local-level institutions could be utilized as building blocks of modern development, see, R.A. Cramb and I.R. Wills, "The Role of Traditional Institutions in Rural Development: Community Based Land Tenure and Government Land Policy in Sarawak, Malaysia", *World Development*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1990.

# PERSAINGAN, PERANAN NEGARA DAN PERGOLAKAN KELAS: TINJAUAN KEADAAN KERJA DI INDUSTRI TEKSTIL DAN PAKAIAN DI MALAYSIA

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Sebahagian besar daripadapenulisan tentang proses kerja di Malaysia hanya tertumpu kepada pergolakan kelas dan peranan negara. Penulisan-penulisan ini menggambarkan bahawa keadaan kerja semata-mata ditentukan oleh tentangan kelas di peringkat kilang, dan negara melindungi kepentingan modal. Walaupun pertentangan kelas amat penting untuk memahami perubahan-perubahan keadaan kerja, ia harus dilihat dalam konteks yang lebih luas; satu faktor penting sehubungan ini ialah persaingan antara modal.

Walaupun kesatuan sekerja tekstil dan pakaian Malaysia terkenal dengan kelantangannya, peranannya (dan pertentangan pekerja) terbatas kerana perlindungan yang diberi oleh negara kepada pemodal.<sup>1</sup> Kertas kerja ini cuba menunjukkan bahawa persaingan antara modal lebih penting daripada pergolakan kelas untuk memahami peralihan kerja di Malaysia.

## **Rangka Analisis**

Analisis artikel ini berdasarkan tiga bahagian. Pertama, saya meninjau perkembangan makro terhadap persaingan dan peranan negara. Kedua, saya bentangkan struktur modal dan buruh. Seterusnya, di bahagian ketiga saya menganalisis kesan persaingan, peranan negara dan pergolakan kelas. Perbincangan di bahagian kedua dan ketiga berdasarkan hasil penyelidikan saya ke atas 36 syarikat di antara tahun 1989-90.<sup>2</sup> Kajian saya melibatkan temubual dengan pengurus, pekerja, pegawai kesatuan sekerja dan bekas pekerja tekstil dan pakaian.

## Persaingan dan Campurtangan Negara Maju

Persaingan dan campurtangan negara maju dalam mengawal perdagangan tekstil dan pakaian banyak mempengaruhi penstrukturan pembahagian kerja antarabangsa. Industri tekstil dan pakaian merupakan antara contoh terbaik kerana faedah berbanding semulajadi kurang mempengaruhi pembahagian kerja antarabangsa. Lancashire yang tidak mengeluarkan kapas, telah menjadi ibukota tekstil dan pakaian dunia sepanjang abad ke 19 dan awal abad ke 20. Britain menggunakan teknologinya yang jauh lebih maju daripada pengeluar semasa lain ketika itu (khususnya negara benua Asia seperti India dan China) (Marx, 1964), serta kuasa tentera dan sekatan perdagangan untuk merombak pembahagian kerja antarabangsa tekstil dan pakaian. (Harnetty, 1972).<sup>3</sup>

Kemudian, pembahagian kerja antarabangsa ini dikongsi bersama oleh negara-negara Eropah Barat lain dan Amerika Syarikat meskipun masing-masing lebih menguasai di kawasan pengaruh sendiri. Tekanan awal terhadap pembahagian kerja ini adalah dari Jepun, Hong Kong, India dan Pakistan pada dekad 1950an (Chisolm *et al.* 1986: 54).<sup>4</sup> Seterusnya Perjanjian Jangka Pendek (STA) dan Perjanjian Jangka Panjang (LTA) muncul pada tahun 1962 untuk mengawal perdagangan tekstil, terutamanya dari negara membangun (United Nations, 1987: 21).<sup>5</sup> Perjanjian Pelbagai Gantian (MFA) menggantikan LTA pada tahun 1974. MFA I pada prinsipnya membenarkan negara membangun kenaikan tahunan sebanyak 6 peratus. Tetapi, sejak kemelesetan ekonomi berikutan krisis minyak tahun 1973, sekatan eksport duahala terhadap negara-negara membangun memungkinkan negara maju menambahkan eksport sebanyak 160 peratus antara tahun 1970-77. Bagaimanapun, MFA I dan layanan istimewa kepada negara-negara terpilih sejak Pusingan Kennedy membolehkan negara Asia Timur meluaskan eksport mereka.

Tetapi pada jangkamasa MFA II (1978-81) kadar kenaikan perdagangan tekstil dan pakaian negara membangun menurun kurang tiga peratus. Kejatuhan ini menyebabkan negara membangun mendesak supaya satu perjanjian dirunding. Berikutan MFA III (1982-86), Amerika Syarikat membenarkan kadar kenaikan eksport tahunan sebanyak 6-7 peratus (United Nations, 1987: 22). Bagaimanapun, menurut amalan sebenar, kuota eksport tahunan berubah antara 0-7 peratus. Walaupun MFA IV (1986-91) kurang menyekat eksport ke negara-negara maju ia masih tidak melonggarkan sekatan per-

dagangan tekstil dan pakaian dunia. Salah satu isu penting yang muncul daripada corak penetapan kuota MFA adalah peranan negara dalam melindungi modal nasional masing-masing.

Persaingan antara modal dan campurtangan negara seterusnya memberi implikasi besar kepada automasi<sup>6</sup> dan penempatan pengeluaran di negara membangun. Dalam satu artikel lain (Rasiah, akan datang), saya menghujah bahawa peruntukan kuota tidak kurang mustahak daripada buruh murah dalam penempatan cawangan tekstil asing di negara-negara Asia Tenggara.<sup>7</sup>

### **Peranan Negara Tuanrumah**

Peranan negara melindungi modal nasionalnya telah saya sebut di bahagian pertama. Oleh kerana perkembangan industri tekstil di Malaysia banyak dipengaruhi oleh penempatan anak syarikat asing, di bahagian ini saya mendekati peranan negara tuanrumah dalam menjemput syarikat asing.

Industri tekstil dan pakaian merupakan antara industri utama yang berkembang dengan pesat di Malaysia apabila kerajaan, melalui Akta Galakan Pelaburan pada tahun 1968 menukar asas dasar industrinya daripada berteraskan import (1958-68) kepada berteraskan eksport (Malaysia, 1976: 366).<sup>8</sup> Akta ini memberi elaun kredit cukai pelaburan dan percepatan susutan, dan pengecualian beberapa cukai termasuk cukai syarikat dan import (Malaysia, 1970: 149). Kemudian, kerajaan memperkenalkan Akta Zon Perdagangan Bebas (ZPB)<sup>9</sup> dan Gudang Perkilangan Berlesen (GPB)<sup>10</sup> pada tahun 1971 untuk mendorong perkembangan eksport.

Perkembangan industri tekstil dan pakaian setelah pengenalan dasar jempunan agresif kerajaan dapat dilihat dengan kenaikan keluaran dan pekerjaan. Jelas sekali perkembangan ini bertambah pesat sejak hujung dekad 1960an.

### **Hak Milik dan Kawalan Nasional**

Bahagian ini menghurai struktur hak milik dan kawalan nasional modal industri tekstil dan pakaian di Malaysia berdasarkan sampel kajian.

Dari segi hakmilik 56 peratus daripada syarikat yang dikaji menunjukkan ekuiti Malaysia mengatasi 50 peratus (lihat Jadual 1). Jepun (19%), Hong Kong (17%) dan Britain (3%) merupakan pemilik utama yang lain. Dari segi kawalan pula, pecahannya adalah 47

Jadual 1  
Hakmilik dan Kawalan Syarikat Sampel, 1989

Negara	Hakmilik	Kawalan
Malaysia	20	17
Jepun	7	8
Hong Kong	6	8
Britain	2	2
Lain*	1	1
Jumlah	36	36

Nota: \* Hakmilik dan kawalan sebuah syarikat tidak ketara.

Sumber: Tinjauan Mida Tak Terbit (1989); Tinjauan Perbadanan Pembangunan Pulau Pinang (PDC) Tak Terbit (1990).

peratus Malaysia, 22 peratus Jepun, 22 peratus Hong Kong dan 3 peratus Britain. Maklumat ini jelas sekali memperlihatkan penyertaan pemodal Malaysia secara meluas.

Walau bagaimanapun, jika dilihat dari segi pecahan skel equiti, 71 peratus daripada modal Malaysia terdiri daripada syarikat-syarikat kecil dengan ekuiti kurang RM2 juta (lihat Jadual 2).<sup>11</sup> Modal Hong Kong juga memperlihatkan penumpuan di lapisan ekuiti rendah — 63 peratus syarikat kawalannya mempunyai ekuiti kurang RM2 juta. Sementara itu, modal Jepun lebih luas tersibar antara ekuiti tinggi dan rendah.<sup>12</sup>

Dari segi pecahan industri, industri pakaian memperlihatkan ekuiti yang paling rendah — 65 peratus daripada syarikat yang dikaji mempunyai ekuiti kurang daripada RM2 juta (lihat Jadual 3). Industri tekstil mengait pula memperlihatkan 50 peratus syarikat di lapisan ekuiti kurang daripada RM2 juta. Dalam pada itu, pecahan ekuiti industri tekstil tenunan pula lebih merata.

### Struktur Buruh<sup>13</sup>

Dari segi agihan tenaga buruh, kaum Melayu paling ramai tertumpu di industri tenunan; 57 peratus daripada tenaga buruh industri tenunan terdiri pekerja Melayu, sementara pekerja Cina 20 peratus, India 14 peratus dan lain-lain 9 peratus (lihat Jadual 4).<sup>14</sup> Di industri



Jadual 2  
Pecahan Ekuiti Syarikat Sampel, 1989\*

Ekuiti (RM juta)	Malaysia	Jepun	Hong Kong	Britain	Lain-lain	Jumlah
<2	12	2	5	-	-	19
2-10	2	2	1	1	1	7
11-20	2	2	1	1	-	6
>20	1	2	1	-	-	4
Jumlah	17	8	8	2	1	36

Nota: \* Berdasarkan kawalan.

Sumber: Seperti di Jadual 1.

Jadual 3  
Pecahan Ekuiti Syarikat Sampel, 1989\*

Ekuiti (RM juta)	Tekstil tenunan	Tekstil mengait	Pakaian	Jumlah
<2	2	4	13	19
2-10	2	1	4	7
11-20	2	2	2	6
>20	2	1	1	4

Nota: \* Berdasarkan kawalan.

Sumber: Seperti di Jadual 1.

Jadual 4  
Pecahan Pekerjaan Berdasarkan Kaum, 1989

Cabang	Melayu	Cina	India	Lain-lain*	Asing	Jumlah
Tekstil tenunan	3,569	1,269	891	16	25	6,270
Tekstil Mengait	300	475	182	1	7	966
Pakaian	3,083	4,256	513	5	18	7,875
Jumlah	6,452	6,000	1,586	22	50	15,611

Nota: \* Kaum Malaysia lain.

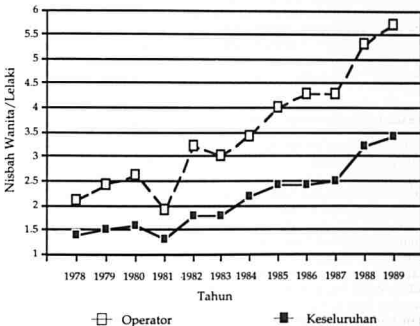
Sumber: Seperti di Jadual 1.

pakaian, sebaliknya, pekerja Cina (54 peratus) adalah paling ramai berbanding 39 peratus pekerja Melayu, 6.5 peratus pekerja India dan kurang satu peratus kaum lain. Ramai daripada pekerja Cina di industri pakaian terbabit dalam kerja jahitan. Saya juga mendapati bahawa tenaga keluarga (wanita dan kanak-kanak) diguna dalam kerja-kerja intensif buruh di industri yang sama.<sup>15</sup>

Dari segi pembahagian kerja menegak, 80 peratus (51% pekerja mahir) daripada jumlah kakitangan terdiri daripada pekerja-pekerja pengeluaran, manakala juruteknik dan penyelia (10 peratus), kakitangan perkeranian dan buruh am (7 peratus) sementara 3 peratus tenaga profesyenal dan pengurusan.<sup>16</sup>

Kakitangan wanita secara relatif semakin bertambah antara tahun 1978-89 (lihat Rajah 1). Sebab utama tren ini ialah perkembangan industri pakaian yang lebih intensif buruh. Pekerja wanita adalah yang paling ramai khususnya di kalangan pekerja pengeluaran.

Rajah 1  
Pembahagian Jantina Syarikat Sampel, 1978-89



Sumber: Seperti di Jadual 1.

### **Kesatuan Sekerja**

Sejak dari awal lagi kesatuan sekerja di industri tekstil dan pakaian telah dikawal. Ini kerana mereka dikategorikan dalam industri perintis yang diperuntukkan di bawah Pindaan Akta Hubungan Perindustrian tahun 1967 (yang menyusuli Ordinan Kesatuan Sekerja tahun 1959). Akta ini membolehkan Menteri Buruh meluluskan kesatuan-kesatuan sekerja individu dan melindungi syarikat perintis daripada sebarang desakan kesatuan sekerja (Shoosmith, 1986: 116). Sejak akta ini digubal, industri perintis dikesualikan daripada syarat-syarat pendaftaran kesatuan sekerja. Bagaimanapun, sejak hujung dekad 1970an, kesatuan sekerja berjaya didaftarkan di kalangan pekerja-pekerja tekstil dan pakaian di kebanyakan syarikat-syarikat perintis. Pada bulan Mac tahun 1978, 2,300 pekerja Woodard Textile Mills menjadi anggota Kesatuan Sekerja Pekerja Tekstil (TWU) Pulau Pinang (Shoosmith, 1986: 178). Ini disusuli oleh Pentex pada bulan Disember tahun 1978. Kini hampir semua pekerja tekstil dan pakaian menganggotai kesatuan itu.

Pekerja-pekerja tekstil dan pakaian bebas memilih wakil-wakil guaman; ini jauh berbeza kalau dibandingkan dengan pekerja-pekerja industri lain (seperti elektronik), yang banyak bergantung kepada peranan negara.<sup>17</sup> Dalam keadaan ini, khususnya di negara yang "menjaga disiplin industri demi menggerakkan pertumbuhan per-kilangan", kedudukan kesatuan sekerja adalah lemah.

### **Keadaan dan Peralihan Kerja**

Dalam bahagian ini saya menganalisis pengaruh persaingan, peranan negara dan kelas-kelas sosial terhadap keadaan kerja. Seperti telah saya hujahkan sebelum ini, kedudukan pekerja di Malaysia lemah kerana kerajaan jauh lebih melindungi kepentingan pemodal. Hasil kajian saya jelas menunjukkan bahawa tentangan buruh di negara maju terhadap pencemaran (bunyi, udara dan sisa cecair) di lantai kilang sebagai salah satu sebab penting mengapa pengeluaran dialihkan di luar Jepun. Syarikat-syarikat Hong Kong pula menyatakan bahawa pencemaran (walaupun penting) tidaklah sepenting peruntukan kuota yang diberikan kepada Malaysia. Manakala, syarikat-syarikat Britain pula menegaskan pentingnya pasaran dalam negeri dan buruh murah berpendidikan (tetapi hanya di kawasan infrastruktur yang baik dan terdapat kestabilan politik) sebagai sebab utama mengapa pengeluaran ditempatkan di Malaysia.

Oleh kerana penyediaan peluang pekerjaan menjadi tunjang dasar negara menjemput pemodal-pemodal asing, bentuk kerja di industri tekstil dan pakaian adalah intensif buruh. Kecuali empat syarikat tekstil tenunan (Jepun), lapan syarikat mengait (empat tempatan dan tiga Hong Kong) dan enam syarikat pakaian (satu tempatan, tiga Hong Kong dan dua Britain) asing, teknologi konvensional masih digunakan secara penuh di syarikat lain dalam sampel. Teknologi automasi mula diperkenalkan hanya sejak tahun 1983. Menurut keenam-enam syarikat pakaian yang mula mengautomasi, harga kain kini antara 60-70 peratus kos pengeluaran langsung. Kemunculan syarikat-syarikat pakaian secara meluas serta kenaikan tarif di negara pengekspor (demi melindungi modal nasional masing-masing) merupakan sebab-sebab utama mengapa harga gantián kapas dan kain melambung naik.<sup>18</sup>

Semua syarikat asing dalam sampel membawa mesin terpakai ketika kilang mereka ditubuhkan. Syarikat Jepun dan Hong Kong menyatakan bahawa mereka membawa mesin yang telah dipakai di Hong Kong.<sup>19</sup> Beberapa mesin lama ini masih dipakai di semua syarikat tekstil tenunan. Walaupun mesin tenun pancutan-angin telah menggantikan mesin tenun pancutan-air di empat syarikat tekstil tenunan Jepun,<sup>20</sup> beberapa bahagian kerja penyediaan gantian dan pemintal masih dikendalikan dengan jentera konvensional. Syarikat tekstil tenunan tempatan juga masih menggunakan mesin konvensional.

Di industri pakaian pula, penyerapan automasi berlaku secara pesat hanya di tiga syarikat asing (Hong Kong dan Britain). Pengukuran dan pemotongan kain telah pun diautomasi di syarikat-syarikat ini. Namun tugas jahitan yang intensif kemahiran masih dikendalikan dengan mesin konvensional elektrik.

Perubahan teknologi paling meluas dikesan di kilang-kilang tekstil mengait juga bermula sejak 1983. Sebuah syarikat Hong Kong memperkenalkan mesin mengait automasi pada tahun 1983. Kini semua tujuh kilang (empat daripadanya ditubuhkan antara tahun 1985-88) menggunakan mesin mengait automatik. Oleh itu, kilang-kilang mengait adalah cabang industri tekstil yang paling diautomasi di Malaysia. Ini kelihatan kerana kerja mengait lebih ringkas dan mudah diprogram, dan mesin automasi keluaran terbaik mudah diperolehi dalam pasaran.<sup>21</sup>

Berbanding dengan syarikat tekstil mengait dan pakaian yang menggunakan mesin yang baru, syarikat-syarikat tenunan nampaknya mengekalkan pola awal, iaitu memindahkan mesin terpakai ke

Malaysia. Menurut seorang pengurus, mesin tenun amat mahal dan memerlukan beberapa tahun sebelum tercapai keupayaan penuhnya. Tetapi, ini mungkin juga disebabkan penguasaan industri ini oleh beberapa syarikat gergasi yang mampu menggunakan teknologi tinggi.<sup>22</sup>

Penggunaan teknologi konvensional di sebahagian besar syarikat tekstil tenunan dan pakaian sememangnya menggambarkan bahawa proses automasi di Malaysia masih dalam tahap awal. Walaupun demikian, pengenalan automasi setakat ini masih boleh dikatakan pesat memandangkan bahawa industri ini mudah dikendalikan oleh jentera konvensional. Automasi merupakan antara perkara yang paling meninggalkan kesan ke atas bentuk kerja sejak pertengahan dekad 1980an.

Perubahan bentuk ganjaran kerja satu perubahan penting lain yang berlaku sejak tahun 1983. Kenaikan upah benar pekerja sebanyak 0.3 peratus antara tahun 1980-82 adalah rendah apabila dibandingkan dengan 3.6 peratus antara tahun 1983-89.<sup>23</sup> Begitu juga dengan keadaan kerja di lantai kilang. Proses kerja sehingga tahun 1983 tidak banyak berubah. Ini kerana bentuk teknologi dan mesin terpakai dibawa dari Hong Kong dan Jepun. Nisbah modal-buruh menurun sebanyak 2 peratus antara tahun 1980-82 (lihat Jadual 5). Begitu juga dengan daya pengeluaran buruh yang turun naik dalam jangkamasa ini (pada puratanya menurun sebanyak 0.5 peratus): tanda ini berubah sejak 1983. Nisbah modal-buruh dan daya pengeluaran buruh mula naik sejak tahun 1983.<sup>24</sup>

Dari segi suasana kerja, kilang yang mengautomasi melaporkan pengurangan pencemaran bunyi dan sisa cecair kimia. Umpamanya, pengenalan mesin tenun pancutan-angin telah mengurangkan keadaan bising.<sup>25</sup> Dari apa yang dapat diperhatikan syarikat-syarikat asing yang mengguna proses-proses automasi lebih menekankan ciri kerja bersih dan selamat. Empat syarikat tekstil tenunan asing telah membelanja antara RM3-6 juta ringgit untuk memasang jentera penapis sisa. Bagaimanapun, disebabkan kurang perubahan dalam pembuangan habuk, kerja tenunan masih mencemarkan.<sup>26</sup>

Walaupun penggunaan teknologi canggih masih tidak meluas, perbincangan di atas memperlihatkan beberapa aspek kerja syarikat, tertentu, terutamanya di syarikat yang mula mengautomasi sejak tahun 1983. Apakah punca utama perubahan kerja ini? Dua punca utama yang menggerakkan perubahan ini ialah persaingan antara modal dan pergolakan kelas. Tetapi, disebabkan peranan negara melindungi pemodal, tekanan buruh tidak memainkan peranan yang penting

Jadual 5  
 Nisbah Modal-Buruh dan Keluaran-Buruh,  
 Syarikat Sampel, 1980-89 (Harga 1985)

Tahun	Nisbah Modal-Buruh (RM Juta/pekerja)	Nisbah Keluaran-Buruh (RM Juta/pekerja)
1980	12.61	0.0093
1981	12.59	0.0096
1982	12.11	0.0092
1983	12.14	0.0094
1984	12.50	0.0104
1985	13.08	0.0109
1986	13.18	0.0116
1987	13.22	0.0126
1988	13.28	0.0137
1989	13.36	0.0149

Sumber: Seperti di Jadual 1.

dalam menggerakkan perubahan teknologi yang dimaksudkan. Peranan kesatuan sekerja menjadi penting cuma dalam penyelenggaraan syarat kerja seperti bayaran ganti rugi kemalangan dan pembuangan kerja.<sup>27</sup> Oleh itu, persaingan antara modal merupakan lebih penting untuk menjelaskan peralihan kerja ini.

Kajian saya memperlihatkan tiga sebab utama yang mempengaruhi peralihan ini. Pertama, peningkatan permintaan memberi peluang untuk memperkenalkan mesin automatik. Dalam konteks ini, usaha pemodal asing terutamanya Hong Kong untuk mencari peruntukan kuota di pasaran eksport utama Amerika Utara dan Eropah Barat memerlukan peluang subkontrak di Malaysia. Kenaikan permintaan ini menambahkan permintaan untuk jentera automasi sejak tahun 1983. Tiga sebab penting membolehkan pengenalan jentera automasi di syarikat mengait. Pertama, kebanyakan syarikat mengait tempatan ditubuhkan antara tahun 1985-88. Dengan itu, majikan masing-masing mempunyai peluang untuk membeli mesin yang terbaik (berdasarkan kos dan keupayaan) ketika itu. Kedua, jentera automasi mengait dikeluarkan dan dipasarkan oleh syarikat

berasingan. Persaingan antara syarikat ini memungkinkan mesin-mesin dijual dengan murah dan perkhidmatan panduan pengendalian percuma.<sup>28</sup>

Bagi pemodal, teknologi automasi dalam tekstil mengait meningkatkan daya pengeluaran beberapa kali ganda. Umpamanya, daya pengeluaran mesin "weft" melebihi daya pengeluaran mesin tenun sebanyak 3-5 kali ganda (United Nations, 1987: 77), dan daya pengeluaran mesin "warp", pula melebihi daya pengeluaran mesin tenun sebanyak 30-60 kali ganda. Peningkatan daya pengeluaran juga dikesan di industri tekstil tenun. Daya pengeluaran mesin tenun pancutan-angin melebihi daya pengeluaran mesin tenun konvensional sebanyak 3-4 kali ganda. Kenaikan daya pengeluaran buruh (agregat sampel) sejak tahun 1983 dapat dilihat dalam Jadual 5.

Sebab kedua ialah kerana kenaikan harga gentian dan kain import.<sup>29</sup> Oleh kerana kain dan gentian menyumbang sebahagian besar daripada kos pengeluaran, kenaikan kos bahan-bahan mentah ini memaksa pengeluar-pengeluar mengurangkan kos dengan cara lain, iaitu mengautomasi mendorong pengamalan teknologi proses pengeluaran demi untuk mengurangkan kerosakan. Tiga syarikat pakaian melaporkan bahawa kenaikan kos kain (yang menyumbang sebanyak 60-70 peratus daripada kos jumlah pengeluaran langsung) adalah sebab yang mendorong mereka memperkenalkan teknologi automasi.

Ketiga, persaingan antara syarikat telah mengurangkan bekalan pekerja mahir dan ini seterusnya telah menyebabkan kadar upah naik.<sup>30</sup> Enam syarikat dalam sampel menyatakan kekurangan pekerja adalah sebab utama mengapa teknologi automasi diperkenalkan. Oleh kerana daya pengeluaran industri tekstil dan pakaian (terutamanya pakaian) bergantung kuat kepada ketangkasan pekerja, pemberhentian kerja boleh menjejaskan prestasi syarikat-syarikat. Tukaran buruh dalam syarikat yang dikaji adalah di antara antara 15-65 peratus. Dalam konteks ini salah seorang pengurus menyatakan bahawa:

Syarikat pakaian kami terpaksa meningkatkan gaji dan memperbaiki suasana kerja supaya pekerja kami kekal. Namun, usaha kami itu kurang berkesan disebabkan perkembangan perkilangan secara pesat, terutamanya industri elektronik cip. Jadi, kami hanya mempunyai tiga pilihan: mengautomasi, memperbaiki lagi keadaan kerja atau memindahkan pengeluaran ke kawasan pedalaman. Setakat ini kami memilih yang pertama dan kedua.

Keterangan pengurus ini menggambarkan secara ringkas tekanan semasa yang dihadapi oleh industri tekstil dan pakaian. Sementara persaingan antara modal mengurangkan pekerjaan (disebabkan automasi) kilang individu, ianya memberi pekerja peluang untuk memperbaiki keadaan kerja dan gaji. Bagaimanapun, memandangkan percantuman kerja secara mendatar atau menegak masih belum berlaku, maka peralihan ini tidak boleh ditafsirkan sebagai post-Fordist. Ini bermakna, peralihan kerja yang berlaku di industri tekstil dan pakaian cuma memperbaiki kebajikan tanpa meningkatkan kemahiran.

### **Ringkasan dan Kesimpulan**

Perbincangan kertaskerja ini pada amnya tidak memperlihatkan perubahan meluas dalam proses kerja industri tekstil dan pakaian. Namun, tanda-tanda peralihan sudahpun timbul. Walaupun peralihan ini tidak memperlihatkan percantuman kerja, ianya telah memperbaiki kebajikan pekerja, walaupun tarafnya masih kurang memuaskan. Adalah ketara dari kertaskerja ini, bahawa pertentangan pekerja dan kesatuan sekerja terbatas (disebabkan peranan negara). Ini menjadikan persaingan antara modal merupakan sebab utama peralihan ini.

Perubahan ini memberi implikasi besar kepada perjuangan pekerja. Apabila permintaan dan ekonomi negara berkembang pesat, kekurangan buruh akan meningkatkan upah dan taraf kebajikan pekerja. Dalam konteks ini, sungguhpun teknologi automasi mengurangkan permintaan untuk peranan buruh, selagi pertumbuhan ekonomi dapat menampung permintaan kerja, perubahan ke arah intensif modal tidak akan menggugat peluang pekerjaan.

Bagaimanapun, disebabkan automasi di industri tekstil dan pakaian kurang menampakkan percantuman kerja (baik menegak mahupun mendatar), peralihan ini adalah ke arah pengurangan tangkasan dalam beberapa aspek kerja. Justeru itu, peralihan ini tidak kelihatan memberi lapisan pekerja kedudukan yang semakin kuat dalam jangka masa panjang.

### **Nota**

1. Lihat Shoemith (1986).
2. Oleh kerana peluang untuk menjalankan penyelidikan amali di kilang tekstil dan pakaian tipis, saya terpaksa menggunakan sampel tak rambang, tetapi berdasarkan tujuan.



3. Ini merupakan antara sifat asas penyerapan kapitalis di mana susunan pengeluaran teknologi tinggi menggantikan susunan pengeluaran teknologi rendah.
4. Umpamanya, Jepun terpaksa menghadkan eksport tekstil kapas ke Amerika Syarikat. Sementara itu, Hong Kong, India dan Pakistan terpaksa berbuat demikian terhadap Britain (Chisolm *et al.*, 1986: 54).
5. Matlamat yang diumumkan adalah untuk menjamin pemasaran teratur antara negara yang terlibat.
6. Automasi dan penutupan beberapa kilang di Amerika Utara dan negara Komuniti Ekonomi Eropah (EEC) (kecuali Yunani dan Luxembourg) menyebabkan pembuangan kerja yang sungguh besar dalam jangkamasa 1970-79 — 57 peratus di Belanda, 31 peratus di Britain, 27 peratus di Jerman Barat, dan 10 peratus di Amerika Syarikat (United Nations, 1987: 30).
7. Temuduga dengan semua syarikat asing dalam sampel pengarang disokong oleh penempatan cawangan asing yang agak sama di Thailand, Indonesia dan Malaysia.
8. Badan kerajaan utama yang terlibat dalam mendorong penempatan syarikat perkilangan ialah Lembaga Perkembangan industri Malaysia (MIDA) yang ditubuhkan pada tahun 1965 (mula-mula sebagai Lembaga Perkembangan Industri Persekutuan).
9. ZPB (untuk syarikat yang mengeksport seluruh keluaran tetapi dalam kes terpilih mengeksport tidak kurang daripada 80 peratus boleh dipertimbangkan untuk kelulusan) wujud di luar tempat kastam utama. Dengan itu, barangan yang diimport dan eksport ke tempat kastam utama akan dikenakan cukai kastam (Malaysia, 1988: 55). Tambahan pula, ZPB diberi galakan yang sungguh istimewa seperti taraf perintis (yang memberi pengecualian cukai syarikat dan pembangunan selama 5-10 tahun) dan elaun cukai pelaburan.
10. GPB diperkenalkan untuk menggalakkan penyibaran industri dan memungkinkan penempatan syarikat (khususnya untuk eksport tidak kurang 80 peratus, dan bahan mentah kebanyakannya diimport), di mana penubuhan ZPB tidak sesuai. Kilang di GPB diberi galakan yang sama seperti di ZPB (Malaysia, 1988: 56).
11. Kami menggunakan pecahan kawalan (berbanding dengan pecahan hakmilik) untuk analisis kerana corak pengeluaran dan pembentukan keputusan majikan lebih dipengaruhi oleh pengawal syarikat.
12. Kami tidak dapat mengumpul data harta tetap untuk seluruh syarikat yang dikaji untuk memungkinkan analisis skel pengeluaran yang lebih dinamik.
13. Maklumat temuduga saya yang agak terbatas tidak memungkinkan pembentangan pembahagian kerja berdasarkan kemahiran.
14. Semua kakitangan asing terdapat dalam lapisan kerja profesional dan pengurusan.
15. Disebabkan 17 daripada 19 syarikat pakaian dalam sampel terletak di Pulau Pinang di mana penduduk kaum Cina paling ramai.

16. Kami tidak dapat mengumpul data pembahagian menegak berdasarkan jantina dan kaum.
17. Perlu dinyatakan di sini bahawa kakitangan Jabatan Hubungan Perindustrian dan wakil syarikat biasanya terdiri daripada bekas pegawai kerajaan.
18. Malaysia tidak mengeluarkan sebarang bahan mentah gentian selain daripada gentian tiruan polester yang dikeluarkan oleh syarikat Penfibre (cawangan Jepun) di Pulau Pinang.
19. Menurut salah seorang pengarah syarikat tekstil, usia beberapa mesin yang digunakan sekarang adalah lebih daripada 30 tahun.
20. Mesin tenun pancutan-udara diperkenalkan di tiga syarikat Jepun ini antara tahun 1987-90.
21. Mesin mengait Jerman dan Jepun paling banyak digunakan di Malaysia.
22. Perbezaan teknologi antara syarikat begitu meluas. Umpamanya, perbezaan antara ini memungkinkan sebuah syarikat Jepun (ketika mesin pancutan-udara diperkenalkan) di Malaysia untuk menjual mesin pancutan-air konvensional (yang dijangka lebih 30 tahun tua) kepada sebuah syarikat tempatan.
23. Kami mengguna upah benar (yang mustahak untuk pekerja) walaupun upah nominal lebih dititikberatkan oleh syarikat. Angka agregat upah sejam diseleraskan dengan indeks harga pengguna tahun 1973 dalam ukuran kadar kenaikan.
24. Kenaikan sejak 1983 juga dipengaruhi oleh perkembangan permintaan dan eksport. Namun, hanya sejak tahun 1985 mesin automasi mula diperkenalkan di syarikat sampel kami.
25. Tan (1988: 4) melaporkan bahawa paras bising mesin tenun pancutan-angin telah menurun daripada 106dBA (untuk mesin konvensional) kepada 99dBA. Bagaimanapun, paras ini masih lebih daripada 90dBA yang dibenarkan.
26. Umpamanya Tan (1988: 3) melaporkan bahawa paras habuk di bilik tiupan di empat loji tekstil mencatatkan 2.01 mg<sup>-3</sup> yang mengatasi paras dibenarkan sebanyak 10 kali ganda.
27. Peranan agresif kesatuan sekerja dalam memperjuangkan hak pekerja terbatas kepada syarat yang ditetapkan oleh kerajaan. Bagaimanapun, syarikat tekstil dan pakaian asing mengurangkan pembayaran ini dan gangguan kerja (sebab kemalangan) dengan mengenalkan mesin automasi dan memperbaiki latihan dan suasana kerja. Dalam konteks ini, salah sebuah syarikat tekstil tenunan Jepun berjaya mengurangkan bilangan kemalangan setiap tahun sejak 1984: 179 pada tahun 1984; 133 pada tahun 1985; 88 pada tahun 1986; 26 pada tahun 1987; dan 11 pada tahun 1988.
28. Mesin mengait dijual oleh beberapa syarikat jentera berasingan.
29. Kesemua syarikat pakaian dalam sampel menyatakan bahawa harga gentian telah melambung tinggi sejak dekad 1980an disebabkan perkembangan industri pakaian di negara pengekспорт.

30. Dua syarikat asing melaporkan bahawa persaingan ini telah menaikkan gaji nominal (yang mustahak untuk syarikat) penjahit pakaian kepada RM900-1,000 sebulan pada tahun 1989, berbanding daripada RM450-600 sebulan pada tahun 1986.

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## PEMBANGUNAN DESA DAN KEMISKINAN DI MALAYSIA DALAM TEMPOH DASAR EKONOMI BARU, 1972-1990

*Ishak Shari*

Dalam masa kira-kira 40 tahun yang lalu, pemerintah di negara-negara sedang membangun melaksanakan beberapa pendekatan pembangunan desa dalam usaha mengatasi masalah kemunduran dan kemiskinan di kawasan desa di negara masing-masing.<sup>1</sup> Di Malaysia, strategi pembangunan desanya adalah lebih bermirip atau lebih bersandarkan kepada apa yang dikenali sebagai pendekatan teknokratik. Pendekatan ini menghubungkan pembangunan desa dengan pertumbuhan ekonomi dan pembekalan berbagai-bagai input serta khidmat sokongan lain dan pemberian insentif kepada petani. Kemunduran desa disifatkan olehnya sebagai mempunyai pertalian rapat dengan beberapa faktor seperti amalan dan teknik pertanian tradisional kuno, kekurangan kemudahan pengeluaran serta kekurangan infrastruktur, ketidaktepatan harga faktor pengeluaran dan juga sikap serta pegangan nilai dan tradisi petani yang dikatakan bertentangan dengan kehendak pertanian moden. Faktor-faktor ini dianggap bukan sahaja membantut pembangunan desa dan pertanian, malah meletakkan kawasan desa ke dalam keadaan kemunduran yang berkekalan. Oleh itu, faktor penghalang ini harus dibenteras jika kawasan desa ingin dimajukan dan taraf hidup penduduk desa ditingkatkan. Dengan lain perkataan, pendekatan ini melihat pembangunan desa dan pertanian dalam konteks pembekalan teknologi baru dan moden serta penyusunan atau perombakan jentera pentadbiran kerajaan untuk mencapai tahap pembangunan yang dicapai.

Makalah ini bertujuan menilai keberkesanan strategi pembangunan desa yang dilaksanakan oleh pemerintah Malaysia sejak merdeka, khususnya dalam tempoh pelaksanaan Dasar Ekonomi Baru (1971-1990), dalam mengatasi masalah kemiskinan di kawasan

desa negara ini. Seterusnya, makalah ini akan cuba mengenalpasti beberapa isu penting yang harus diberi perhatian dalam usaha mengatasi masalah kemiskinan desa di Malaysia pada masa depan.

### Strategi dan Rancangan Pembangunan Desa di Malaysia

Ternyata daripada dokumen-dokumen Rancangan Pembangunan Lima Tahun negara bahawa pihak pemerintah di Malaysia memberi perhatian berat kepada soal pembangunan desa dan pembangunan pertanian di negara ini sejak merdeka. Perhatian kerajaan yang semakin meningkat kepada masyarakat di kawasan perdesaan ini dikatakan mempunyai pertalian rapat dengan latarbelakang sejarah negara dan juga sistem demokrasi berparlimen yang diamalkan di negara ini. Secara khususnya, oleh kerana penduduk luar bandar merupakan penduduk majoriti negara ini, maka pihak pemerintah perlulah menawan hati mereka sekiranya ingin mendapat sokongan berterusan dalam pilihanraya umum yang diadakan setiap lima tahun.

Sungguhpun begitu, pada awal tahun-tahun 1960-an, terdapat sedikit konflik di kalangan pemimpin kerajaan berhubung strategi pembangunan desa yang ingin dilaksanakan di negara ini. Keadaan ini timbul apabila Menteri Pertanian pada masa itu, Encik Aziz Ishak, merancang membasmi kemiskinan di kalangan kaum tani di negara ini dengan menubuhkan lebih banyak koperasi di bidang pemasaran, kredit dan pemprosesan dan mengurangkan penindasan golongan orang tengah ke atas masyarakat tani. Beliau juga cuba mengatasi penguasaan monopoli modal asing ke atas pengeluaran baja dengan rancangannya untuk menubuhkan sebuah kilang baja urea tempatan yang dimiliki oleh koperatif petani. Akan tetapi, strategi dan rancangan beliau itu ditolak oleh kabinet pada masa itu. Akibatnya, teras utama strategi pembangunan desa adalah dalam bentuk pembangunan tanah baru oleh Lembaga Kemajuan Tanah Persekutuan (FELDA) dan penyediaan kemudahan seperti jalan raya, sekolah, klinik desa, dan lain-lain. Pihak perancang berharap bahawa strategi ini akan mengurangkan jurang perbezaan pendapatan antara kawasan bandar dan desa dan juga memastikan supaya faedah pertumbuhan ekonomi negara turut juga dinikmati oleh penduduk-penduduk desa.

Pada masa yang sama, usaha juga dijalankan untuk mengurangkan pergantungan keterlaluan penduduk desa kepada getah, yang harganya sering mengalami keadaan turun naik yang hebat. Oleh demikian, semakin banyak kawasan rancangan kemajuan tanah

FELDA ditanam dengan kelapa sawit. Sungguhpun terdapat usaha mempelbagaikan tanaman di kalangan penduduk desa, tetapi pergantungan pengeluar kecil kepada pasaran dunia masih berterusan. Oleh itu, mereka terpaksa menghadapi masalah-masalah yang timbul akibat ketidakstabilan harga getah.

Satu komponen penting strategi pembangunan desa pada masa itu berkait rapat dengan matlamat menjadikan negara ini cukup diri dalam pengeluaran beras. Sejarah matlamat itu, serta akibat pengaruh program "revolusi hijau" pada pertengahan tahun 1960-an, kemudahan taliair dan perparitan secara besar-besaran telah dibina di kawasan tanaman padi utama di negara ini dengan bantuan kewangan Bank Dunia. Langkah ini juga merupakan sebahagian daripada usaha untuk memoden dan mewujudkan pengeluaran secara kegiatan komersial dalam sektor padi (Mehmet, 1986).

Dengan pengenalan DEB pada tahun 1970, pembasmian kemiskinan menjadi matlamat eksplisit rancangan pembangunan desa di negara ini. Sungguhpun demikian, butir-butir terperinci tentang strategi perancangan jangka panjang kerajaan untuk mengurangkan kemiskinan desa hanya diketahui umum setelah terbitnya dokumen *Rancangan Malaysia Ketiga, 1976-1980 (RMK3)* pada tahun 1976. Strategi perancangan jangka panjang kerajaan itu mempunyai empat unsur-unsur asas, iaitu:

1. Kekurangan aset produktif dianggap sebagai faktor utama yang menyebabkan daya pengeluaran dan pendapatan yang rendah di kalangan penduduk desa. Seterusnya, strategi perancangan menitikberatkan penyediaan bantuan kepada golongan miskin untuk menambah aset produktif dan menggunakannya dengan cekap. Untuk mencapai tujuan ini, maka Rangka Rancangan Jangka Panjang 1971-1990 (RRJP) merencanakan, antara lain:
  - (a) Pembukaan kawasan tanah baru seluas lebih daripada empat juta ekar untuk menempatkan mereka yang tidak bertanah atau mempunyai tanah yang luasnya tidak ekonomik;
  - (b) Penyediaan kemudahan taliair untuk 300,000 ekar lagi bagi kawasan penanam padi untuk membolehkan penanaman padi dua musim setahun dan dengan langkah ini kawasan tanaman padi dua kali setahun dapat ditingkatkan kepada 700,000 ekar pada tahun 1990;
  - (c) Penanaman semula, pemulihan dan pembangunan semula kawasan pertanian seluas 1.8 juta ekar untuk tanaman getah

yang berhasil tinggi, kelapa dan nanas dalam tempoh 20 tahun;

- (d) Menggalakkan usaha-usaha tanaman luar musim, tanam selingan dan pelbagai jenis tanaman untuk menambahkan pendapatan petani; dan
- (e) Memberi peluang luas kepada golongan miskin untuk bergiat di bidang pertanian moden yang produktif.

Dalam pelaksanaan kesemua rancangan ini, penyediaan perkhidmatan pengembangan, pemasaran dan kredit dipergiatkan untuk meningkatkan penggunaan teknologi yang lebih baik di samping memberi perhatian kepada usaha-usaha penyelidikan tentang masalah teknikal yang mempengaruhi daya pengeluaran golongan miskin supaya daya pengeluaran dan pendapatan mereka dapat ditingkatkan. Selain itu, usaha-usaha untuk meninggikan kebolehan dan kemahiran golongan miskin juga dirancangan.

2. Mengurangkan tekanan pertambahan penduduk di kawasan desa. Strategi ini melibatkan usaha penyediaan peluang-peluang bagi golongan miskin yang tidak bertanah atau mempunyai tanah yang tidak ekonomik, serta kaum nelayan miskin, untuk bergiat dalam sektor pertanian dan bukan pertanian yang lebih produktif.
3. Memodenkan kawasan desa melalui usaha menyediakan perkhidmatan yang lebih baik dan cekap di bidang perusahaannya, pengangkutan, bekalan air dan elektrik, pelajaran, kesihatan, zat makanan dan perancangan keluarga.
4. Mempercepatkan lagi usaha penyediaan peluang-peluang pekerjaan yang produktif dalam sektor-sektor ekonomi di peringkat kedua dan ketiga.

Jika kita meneliti matlamat rancangan pembasmian kemiskinan pada tahun 1990, ternyata bahawa cara utama yang digunakan oleh kerajaan untuk mengurangkan kemiskinan desa adalah melalui penggalakkan proses perindustrian dan usaha pembukaan tanah baru supaya lebih tenaga buruh di kawasan desa dapat digalakkan berhijrah ke sektor industri dan perkhidmatan serta tanah rancangan baru dan seterusnya membolehkan mereka mendapat pendapatan yang lebih tinggi. Pendekatan ini agak berbeza dengan pendekatan yang digunakan sebelum ini apabila pihak pemerintah cuba mengatasi masalah kemunduran dan kemiskinan di kawasan desa hanya melalui usaha-usaha yang tertumpu di kawasan desa sahaja dan tidak meneken usaha meluaskan peluang pekerjaan di sektor industri.<sup>2</sup>



Oleh itu, dalam tempoh 1971-1990, pelunjuran rasmi kerajaan menetapkan bahawa bilangan isirumah di kawasan desa bertambah secara puratanya sebanyak 1.7 peratus setahun berbanding pertambahan purata isirumah bandar sebanyak 6.4 peratus setahun (lihat Jadual 1). Sekiranya matlamat yang ditetapkan ini tercapai, ini bermakna akan terdapat penghijrahan keluar bersih sebanyak kira-kira 600 ribu isi rumah dari kawasan desa ke kawasan bandar dalam tempoh 1971-1990. Penghijrahan keluar penduduk desa ini diharapkan dapat mengurangkan kemiskinan desa melalui dua cara, iaitu: (a) pendapatan yang lebih tinggi selepas diserap ke dalam sektor industri dan perkhidmatan, dan (b) pertambahan peluang-peluang ekonomi bagi mereka yang masih tinggal di kawasan desa. Oleh itu, RMK3 meramalkan bahawa bilangan isirumah miskin di kawasan desa akan berkurangan sebanyak 317,000 dalam tempoh 1971-1990.

Pada masa itu juga, berasaskan tanggapan bahawa putaran ganas kemiskinan di kawasan desa hanya boleh dipecahkan oleh satu pimpinan yang berpengetahuan, pihak kerajaan juga telah mewujudkan satu birokrasi yang besar di pusat untuk mengurus satu sistem penyaluran yang disifatkan oleh setengah pengkaji sebagai "top-heavy" (Ozay Mehmet, 1988). Sementara diakui hakikat bahawa pendekatan yang diambil oleh kerajaan dalam melaksanakan rancangan desanya memang telah lama bersifat "top-down", tetapi usaha mewujudkan jentera birokrasi yang besar ini untuk memerangi kemiskinan telah semakin dipergiatkan sejak peraksanaan DEB. Sebagai contoh, kini terdapat lima buah kementerian utama yang terlibat dengan kerja-kerja merancang dan melaksanakan dasar dan program untuk membasmi kemiskinan di sektor pertanian, iaitu Kementerian Pertanian (untuk sektor-sektor padi, kelapa, koko dan perikanan, kegiatan koperasi di luar bandar, sistem kredit pertanian dan Program Pembangunan Pertanian Bersepadu), Kementerian Perusahaan Awam (terutama untuk sektor getah, kelapa sawit, tembakau dan nanas), Kementerian Tanah dan Pembangunan Wilayah (untuk FELDA, FELCRA, RISDA dan Lembaga-Lembaga Pembangunan Wilayah), Kementerian Perusahaan Awam (untuk prosesan dan pemasaran padi dan beras) dan Kementerian Kewangan (terutama dalam menentukan pemberian subsidi dan menetapkan cukai).

Rancangan-rancangan pembasmian kemiskinan yang terkandung dalam RRJP terus dilaksanakan dalam tempoh Rancangan Malaysia Keempat, 1981-1985 (RMK4) dan Rancangan Malaysia Kelima, 1986-1990 (RMK5) sungguhpun dari masa ke semasa terdapat pengenalan

Jadual 1  
 Anggaran Kadar Kemiskinan Mengikut Strata, Semenanjung Malaysia, 1970-1990

	Bilangan Isirumah ('000)						Peratus Perubahan Tahunan Purata (%)					
	1970	1976	1984	1987	Matlamat 1990		1971- 76	1977- 84	1985- 87	1971- 87	1971- 87	1971- 90
<i>Kawasan Desa</i>												
Jumlah Isirumah	1203.4	1400.8	1629.4	1800.0	1689.7		2.6	1.9	3.4	2.0	2.0	1.7
Miskin	705.9	669.6	402.0	403.2	388.9		-0.9	-6.2	0.1	-3.2	-3.2	2.9
Bukan Miskin	497.5	731.2	1227.4	1396.8	1300.8		6.6	6.7	4.4	6.3	6.3	4.9
<i>Kawasan Bandar</i>												
Jumlah Isirumah	402.6	530.6	991.7	1019.7	1381.1		4.7	8.1	0.9	4.8	4.8	6.4
Miskin	85.9	94.9	81.3	82.6	125.0		1.7	-1.9	0.5	-0.2	-0.2	1.0
Bukan Miskin	316.7	435.7	910.4	937.1	1256.1		5.5	9.6	1.0	6.6	6.6	7.1
<i>Keseluruhan</i>												
Jumlah Isirumah	1606.0	1931.4	2621.1	2819.7	3070.8		3.1	3.9	2.5	2.8	2.8	3.3
Miskin	791.8	764.4	483.3	485.8	513.9		-0.6	-5.6	0.2	-2.8	-2.8	-2.1
Bukan Miskin	814.2	1167.0	2137.8	2333.9	2556.9		6.2	7.9	3.0	6.4	6.4	5.9
Kadar pertumbuhan tahunan purata KDNK (%)							7.5	7.2	1.8	-	-	-

Sumber: Snodgrass (1980); Malaysia (1989); Kumpulan Penelitian Sosial (1990).

strategi baru ataupun perubahan dalam penekanan yang diberikan kepada sesuatu rancangan. Sebagai contoh, usaha-usaha yang bertujuan untuk meninggikan daya pengeluaran melalui pembangunan bersepadu bagi kawasan pertanian yang sedia ada telah diberi tumpuan dalam tempoh pelaksanaan RMK4. Selain itu, tumpuan usaha-usaha pembasmian kemiskinan dalam tempoh 1981-1990 ialah untuk memperbaiki golongan termiskin seperti isirumah pertanian yang memiliki keluasan tanah yang tidak ekonomik, buruh-buruh pertanian, nelayan, petani-petani yang menjalankan kegiatan secara berpindah dan petani tanaman campuran.

Pada tahun 1984, pihak kerajaan telah melancarkan Dasar Pertanian Negara (DPN) dengan tema utama memoden dan mempergiatkan semula sektor pertanian negara yang telah mengalami kemerosotan. Matlamat DPN ialah untuk meningkatkan pendapatan daripada kegiatan pertanian ke paras yang maksimum menerusi penggunaan sumber-sumber secara cekap. Formula yang diperkenalkan oleh DPN untuk mempergiatkan sektor pertanian melibatkan pengurangan peranan kerajaan kepada tugas-tugas menyediakan kemudahan infrastruktur asas (seperti kemudahan perairan petani padi dan jeti-jeti pendaratan ikan bagi kaum nelayan) dan perkhidmatan sokongan yang penting (seperti penyelidikan, pengembangan dan penyediaan maklumat-maklumat pemasaran) dan menggalakkan penglibatan sektor swasta secara lebih luas dalam sektor pertanian, khususnya dalam kegiatan pertanian komersil yang besar. Pihak kerajaan berharap pelaksanaan DPN meningkatkan daya pengeluaran, kecekapan dan daya persaingan dalam pembangunan sumber pertanian yang baru serta penggunaan sepenuhnya sumber yang sedia ada, dan seterusnya menyumbang ke arah mengurangkan masalah kemiskinan desa.

Mulai tahun 1984 juga, kerajaan memperkenalkan satu halacara baru dalam usaha pembangunan kampung dan desa. Halacara ini melibatkan tiga aspek iaitu:

- (a) Kemajuan pertanian dengan mengadakan cara pengurusan perladangan bagi kebun-kebun kecil.<sup>3</sup>
- (b) Pengjudan industri kampung dan perusahaan kecil atau kegiatan ekonomi bukan-pertanian yang lain, dan
- (c) Pengelompokan dan penyusunan semula kampung-kampung secara teratur untuk menyokong pusat-pusat pertumbuhan baru.<sup>4</sup>

Di samping itu, selaras usaha memastikan isirumah termiskin mendapat kemudahan yang lebih luas dan mendapat faedah secara

langsung daripada sumber sektor awam, pihak kerajaan telah mengkaji semula bentuk program pembasmian kemiskinan di bawah Rancangan Malaysia Kelima, 1986-1990 (RMK5), terutama di bidang perumahan, pendidikan dan latihan serta kegiatan-kegiatan yang menghasilkan pendapatan dan infrastruktur asas. Sebagai sebahagian daripada langkah untuk memperbaiki penyaluran sumber sektor awam kepada kumpulan miskin utama dan kawasan miskin, konsep MERAHDUA telah diperkenalkan pada tahun 1987. Langkah ini bertujuan mewujudkan kesedaran di kalangan pelbagai peringkat kerajaan akan perlunya satu pendekatan yang lebih bersepadu bagi menyelesaikan masalah pelaksanaan di sesuatu kawasan dan tempat. Seterusnya, Projek Ikhtiar, yang pada asasnya memberi pinjaman tanpa faedah kepada golongan miskin dan mula diperkenalkan di Selangor, telah diperluaskan ke kawasan-kawasan lain di Pulau Pinang dan Kedah pada tahun 1988.

Sejajar dengan perhatian beratnya terhadap rancangan pembangunan desa, pihak kerajaan menyediakan peruntukan kewangan yang besar dalam setiap rancangan lima tahunnya untuk menjayakan rancangan pembasmian kemiskinan di kawasan desa negara ini. Jumlah peruntukan pembangunan kerajaan Persekutuan untuk rancangan pembasmian kemiskinan telah meningkat daripada RM2.4 bilion dalam tempoh RMK2 kepada RM6.4 bilion dalam tempoh RMK3, RM11.6 bilion dalam tempoh RMK4 dan kepada RM13.7 bilion bagi tempoh RMK5. Ini bermakna bahawa jumlah peruntukan kerajaan pusat untuk projek-projek pembangunan kemiskinan dalam tempoh 1971-1990 ialah kira-kira RM34 bilion (lihat Jadual 2).

Walaupun begitu, jika dilihat peruntukan kewangan untuk pembangunan pertanian dan desa sebagai peratus daripada jumlah perbelanjaan pembangunan Kerajaan Persekutuan, kita akan dapati angkanya telah merosot, iaitu daripada 29.3 peratus dalam tempoh RMK2 kepada 21 peratus dalam tempoh RMK3 dan seterusnya 15.4 peratus dalam tempoh RMK5. Seterusnya, perlu juga dinyatakan bahawa peratusan daripada jumlah peruntukan untuk projek-projek pembasmian kemiskinan yang disalurkan untuk rancangan pertanian dan desa telah merosot daripada 90.5 peratus dalam tempoh RMK2 kepada 69.7 peratus dalam RMK3 dan kepada hanya 55.7 peratus dalam tempoh RMK5. Sebaliknya, peratusan daripada jumlah peruntukan untuk projek-projek pembasmian kemiskinan yang disalurkan untuk penyediaan perkhidmatan sosial telah meningkat daripada 4.8 peratus kepada 19.0 peratus. Peratusan daripada jumlah

Jadual 2  
 Malaysia: Peruntukan Perbelanjaan Kerajaan Persekutuan untuk  
 Program Pembasmian Kemiskinan, 1970-1990 (RM juta)

	RMK2 (1971-75)	RMK3 (1976-80)	RMK4 (1981-85)	RMK5 (1986-90)
Projek-Projek Pembasmian Kemiskinan (A)	2350	6373	11618	13661
Pembangunan Pertanian dan Desa (B)	2127	4443	-	7611
Perdagangan dan Perindustrian	-	176	-	71
Sosial	113	781	-	2597
Infrastruktur	110	974	-	3382
Jumlah Peruntukan Pembantuan (C)	7250	21202	49025	49262
A sebagai % daripada B	90.5	69.7	-	55.7
B sebagai % daripada C	29.3	21.0	-	15.4

Sumber: Malaysia (1971; 1976; 1981; 1989).

peruntukan untuk projek-projek pembasmian kemiskinan yang disalurkan bagi tujuan penyediaan infrastruktur juga meningkat daripada 4.7 peratus dalam tempoh RMK2 kepada 24.8 peratus dalam tempoh RMK5. Kejatuhan dalam peratus peruntukan untuk rancangan pembangunan pertanian dan desa ini mencerminkan perubahan tumpuan kerajaan kepada usaha untuk membolehkan lebih ramai isirumah miskin mendapat perkhidmatan asas seperti pelajaran, kesihatan dan bekalan air dan elektrik serta penekanan kepada pembinaan jalanraya di kawasan desa dalam tempoh RMK4 dan RMK5.

#### Kemajuan Usaha Pembasmian Kemiskinan Desa, 1971-1990

Data kemiskinan yang diterbitkan oleh pihak Kerajaan menunjukkan bahawa kadar kemiskinan di Semenanjung Malaysia telah menurun sedikit daripada 49.7 peratus dalam tahun 1970 kepada 43 peratus

dalam tahun 1976. Selepas itu, kadar kemiskinan di Semenanjung Malaysia dilaporkan berkurangan dengan begitu pesat kepada 18.4 peratus dalam tahun 1984, 17.3 peratus dalam tahun 1987 dan 15.0 peratus pada tahun 1989 (lihat Jadual 3). Bilangan isirumah miskin di Semenanjung Malaysia telah berkurangan daripada 791,000 pada tahun 1970 kepada 764,400 pada tahun 1976 dan 483,300 pada tahun 1984 tetapi telah meningkat sedikit kepada 485,800 pada tahun 1987 sebelum menurun semula kepada 448,900 pada tahun 1989. Ternyata daripada data ini bahawa matlamat Dasar Ekonomi Baru untuk mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan di Semenanjung Malaysia kepada 15.0 peratus dalam tahun 1990 sudah tercapai.

Data rasmi juga menunjukkan bahawa usaha-usaha mengurangkan kemiskinan di Sabah dan Sarawak juga mencapai kemajuan. Kadar kemiskinan di Sarawak dilaporkan berkurangan daripada 51.7 peratus dalam tahun 1976 kepada 31.9 peratus dalam tahun 1984, 24.7 peratus dalam tahun 1987 dan 21.0 peratus dalam tahun 1989. Kemajuan usaha membasmikan kemiskinan di Sabah berbeza sedikit. Data dalam Jadual 3 menunjukkan bahawa kadar kemiskinan di negeri itu berkurangan daripada 51.2 peratus dalam tahun 1976 kepada 33.1 peratus dalam tahun 1984 tetapi meningkat semula kepada 35.3 peratus dalam tahun 1987 sebelum menurun kepada 34.3 peratus.

Jika diteliti pula data kemiskinan di kawasan luar bandar Semenanjung Malaysia, kita dapati kadar kemiskinannya berkurangan daripada 58.2 peratus dalam tahun 1970 kepada 47.8 peratus dalam tahun 1976, 24.7 peratus dalam tahun 1984, 22.4 peratus dalam tahun 1987 dan 19.3 peratus pada tahun 1989. Di kawasan luar bandar Sarawak pula, kadar kemiskinannya berkurangan daripada 60.0 peratus pada tahun 1976 kepada 37.3 peratus pada tahun 1984, 29.0 peratus pada tahun 1987 dan 24.7 peratus dalam tahun 1989. Di Sabah pula, kadar kemiskinan di kawasan luar bandarnya berkurangan daripada 58.6 peratus pada tahun 1976 kepada 38.6 peratus pada tahun 1984 dan meningkat kepada 39.9 peratus pada tahun 1987. Kadar kemiskinan di kawasan luar bandar negeri itu menurun sedikit kepada 39.1 peratus pada tahun 1989. Oleh demikian, kadar kemiskinan di kawasan luar bandar Malaysia telah berkurangan daripada 49.9 peratus pada tahun 1976 kepada 27.3 peratus pada tahun 1984, 24.7 peratus pada tahun 1987 dan 21.8 peratus pada tahun 1989. Bilangan isirumah miskin di kawasan luar bandar negara ini jatuh daripada 848,300 pada tahun 1976 kepada 556,400 pada tahun 1984, 553,900 pada tahun 1987 dan 530,300 pada tahun 1989.

Jadual 3  
 Malaysia: Kadar Kemiskinan Mengikut Kawasan-kawasan Bandar-Luar Bandar, 1970, 1976, 1984, 1987 dan 1989

	1970			1976			1984			1987			1989		
	Jumlah sistemah ('000)	Kadar ke- sistemah (%)	Jumlah ke- sistemah ('000)	Jumlah ke- sistemah ('000)	Kadar ke- sistemah (%)	Jumlah ke- sistemah ('000)	Jumlah ke- sistemah ('000)	Kadar ke- sistemah (%)	Jumlah ke- sistemah ('000)	Jumlah ke- sistemah ('000)	Kadar ke- sistemah (%)	Jumlah ke- sistemah ('000)	Jumlah ke- sistemah ('000)	Kadar ke- sistemah (%)	
<i>Semenanjung Malaysia</i>															
Luar bandar	1203.4	705.9	58.7	1400.6	669.6	47.8	1629.4	402.0	24.7	1800.0	403.2	22.4	1924.2	371.4	19.3
Kumpulan Sasaran:															
Pekubua kecil getah	350.0	226.4	64.7	126.7	73.8	58.2	160.4	68.5	48.7	207.8	63.1	40.0	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.
Prenanam padi	148.0	123.4	88.1	187.9	150.9	80.3	122.2	70.5	57.7	108.4	56.4	50.2	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.
Pekerja esiat	148.4	59.4	40.0	-	-	-	83.7	16.4	19.6	76.0	11.7	15.1	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.
Nelayan	38.4	28.1	73.2	28.0	17.6	62.7	41.0	10.7	26.1	43.7	10.7	24.5	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.
Pekubua kecil kelapa	32.0	16.9	52.8	19.3	12.4	64.0	10.4	6.7	46.2	12.5	4.9	39.2	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.
Bandar	402.6	85.9	21.3	530.8	94.9	17.9	991.7	81.3	8.2	1808.1	82.6	8.1	1062.2	77.5	7.3
Jumlah kecil	1606.0	791.8	49.3	1931.4	764.4	39.6	2621.1	483.3	18.4	2808.1	485.8	17.3	2986.4	448.9	15.0
<i>Sabah</i>															
Luar bandar	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.	133.0	78.0	58.6	177.4	68.5	38.6	80.9	39.9	233.1	91.1	39.1	
Bandar	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.	30.7	5.9	19.2	52.4	7.5	14.3	8.1	16.4	57.7	5.5	14.7	
Jumlah	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.	163.7	83.9	51.2	229.8	76.0	33.1	252.2	89.0	35.3	290.8	96.6	34.3
<i>Sarawak</i>															
Luar bandar	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.	167.8	100.7	60.0	231.2	85.9	37.3	69.8	29.0	274.6	67.8	24.7	
Bandar	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.	39.3	6.4	16.3	51.2	4.2	8.2	4.5	7.5	62.8	3.1	5.0	
Jumlah	t.m.	t.m.	t.m.	207.1	107.1	51.7	282.4	90.1	37.3	300.7	74.3	24.7	337.4	70.9	21.0

Nota: t.m. — tiada maklumat.

Sumber: Malaysia (1981, 1986, 1989, 1991a, 1991b).

Sungguhpun diterima secara umum hakikat bahawa kadar kemiskinan di negara ini telah berkurangan sejak pelaksanaan Dasar Ekonomi Baru, tetapi beberapa persoalan penting perlu diberi perhatian dalam membuat penilaian objektif tentang kemajuan yang sebenarnya tercapai dalam usaha membasmi kemiskinan di negara ini.

Pertama, setengah pengkaji masih meragui kepesatan penurunan kadar kemiskinan di Semenanjung Malaysia dalam tempoh 1976-1987. Mereka merasakan bahawa sebahagian daripada pengurangan itu berpunca daripada masa pengukuran kadar kemiskinan itu dibuat. Secara khususnya, apabila pengukuran itu dibuat ketika harga barangan utama, seperti getah dan kelapa sawit, meningkat naik, seperti pada tahun 1984 (lihat Rajah 1 dalam lampiran), sudah tentulah kadar kemiskinan itu akan turun kerana pendapatan rakyat dikatakan naik semata-mata kerana harga barangan itu naik.<sup>5</sup>

Kedua, sementara kadar kemiskinan secara keseluruhannya berkurangan dengan pesat dalam tempoh 1970-1987, tetapi tidak semua kumpulan sasaran dan negeri di Malaysia mengalami perkembangan yang serupa. Jadual 3 menunjukkan kadar kemiskinan yang masih tinggi di kalangan petani padi (50.2 peratus), pekebun kecil getah (40.0 peratus) dan pekebun kecil kelapa (39.2 peratus). Di samping itu, kadar kemiskinan di beberapa buah negeri (khususnya negeri-negeri yang masih mempunyai sektor luar bandar yang besar) pada tahun 1989 masih juga tinggi lagi, iaitu 34.3 peratus di Sabah, 29.9 peratus di Kelantan, 31.2 peratus di Terengganu dan 30.0 peratus di Kedah. Seterusnya, kajian kemiskinan yang dijalankan di beberapa daerah termiskin di negeri Kedah, Kelantan, Perak, Perlis dan Terengganu mendapat kadar kemiskinan adalah tinggi, iaitu dalam lingkungan 41 hingga 68 peratus (Chamhuri dan Zainul, 1992).

Ketiga, persoalan berkaitan dengan konsep kemiskinan yang digunakan. Sehingga kini, kadar kemiskinan di Malaysia adalah diukur dengan menggunakan konsep kemiskinan mutlak. Tegasnya, kadar itu diukur berasaskan satu peringkat perbelanjaan minimum untuk mendapatkan keperluan hidup (atau apa yang sering dipanggil pendapatan garis kemiskinan) yang memisahkan antara isirumah miskin dengan bukan-miskin. Sungguhpun pendekatan ini berguna dan masih perlu, tetapi sering ditegaskan juga bahawa perhatian seharusnya lebih ditumpukan kepada kemiskinan relatif yang mengambil kira keadaan ketidaksetaraan. Pandangan sebegini di- asaskan kepada kenyataan bahawa kemiskinan dan ketidaksetaraan



Jadual 4  
 Agihan Pendapatan Mengikut Kawasan, Semenanjung Malaysia, 1970-1990

Kumpulan Isirumah	Peratusan daripada Jumlah Pendapatan																		
	Keseluruhan						Luar Bandar						Bandar						
	1970	1976	1979	1984	1987	1989	1970	1976	1979	1984	1987	1989	1970	1976	1979	1984	1987	1989	
20% Terendah	3.5	3.3	3.7	4.2	4.5	-4.8	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.6	4.9	5.4	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.9	5.0	
40% Terendah	11.5	11.1	11.9	12.8	13.0	14.1	13.1	11.8	12.4	14.1	14.8	15.8	12.3	11.9	12.3	13.4	14.1	14.0	
40% Menengah	32.9	31.2	32.3	34.0	34.8	34.9	35.9	33.7	34.4	36.4	36.6	37.1	31.8	32.2	32.1	34.5	35.0	35.0	
20% Teratas	55.7	57.7	55.8	53.2	51.6	51.0	51.0	54.5	53.2	49.5	48.6	47.1	55.9	55.9	55.9	55.6	52.1	50.9	50.0
Pendapatan Min (RM)	264	513	693	1095	1174	1163	200	392	550	824	853	927	407	829	975	1541	1466	1530	
Pendapatan Menengah (RM)	166	318	436	723	738	808	139	262	369	596	629	697	265	495	600	1027	1003	1104	
Nisbah Gini	0.153	0.529	0.508	0.480	0.456	0.445	0.469	0.500	0.482	0.440	0.427	0.403	0.504	0.512	0.501	0.466	0.499	0.445	

adalah saling berkait rapat. Oleh itu, sungguhpun kemiskinan mutlak boleh dikurangkan apabila berlaku pertumbuhan ekonomi yang pesat, tetapi jika pada waktu yang sama jurang perbezaan pendapatan tidak dikurangkan juga, golongan bawahan dalam susunlapis masyarakat akan terus merasakan diri mereka ketinggalan dalam kemiskinan. Malahan, anggapan wujudnya kemiskinan relatif ini bukanlah tidak berasas. Seperti yang ditunjukkan oleh data dalam Jadual 4, golongan bawahan 40 peratus dalam masyarakat di Semenanjung Malaysia mendapati bahagian yang kecil daripada jumlah pendapatan sungguhpun bahagian pendapatan yang diperoleh oleh golongan tersebut meningkat sejak penghujung tahun 1970an. Di samping itu, ketidaksetaraan agihan kekayaan juga boleh mengakibatkan pemindahan pendapatan daripada yang miskin kepada yang bukan-miskin (misalnya bayaran sewa oleh petani miskin kepada tuan-tanah yang tidak miskin). Oleh itu, sekiranya ketidaksetaraan dalam agihan kekayaan dan pendapatan tidak dikurangkan, maka usaha mencapai keadilan sosial akan turut terjejas.

### **Keberkesanan Rancangan Pembangunan Desa Utama dalam Membasmi Kemiskinan Desa**

Dalam bahagian ini, tumpuan kita adalah untuk menilai keberkesanan rancangan pembangunan desa yang utama dalam membasmi kemiskinan di negara ini. Secara khususnya, perbincangan bahagian ini akan mengkaji peranan rancangan pembangunan kawasan tanah baru dalam usaha untuk mengurang dan membasmi kemiskinan desa serta rancangan-rancangan utama yang dilaksanakan untuk mengurangkan kemiskinan di kalangan penanam padi dan pekebun kecil getah, iaitu dua kumpulan miskin yang terbesar di kawasan desa Malaysia.

#### *Rancangan Pembangunan Tanah Baru*

Salah satu strategi utama yang dilaksanakan di bawah DEB untuk mengurang dan membasmi kemiskinan di kawasan luar bandar adalah rancangan pembangunan tanah baru. Rancangan ini dirangka untuk membantu golongan miskin dengan (a) meningkatkan daya pengeluaran dan tingkat pengeluaran, (b) menambah peluang pekerjaan, (c) meningkatkan pendapatan, dan (d) meningkatkan kualiti hidup dan pembangunan sosial mereka. Pentingnya rancangan ini dapat dilihat dari segi peratus yang besar (iaitu 50 peratus)

daripada peruntukan untuk pembangunan luar bandar yang disalurkan kepadanya dalam setiap rancangan lima tahun negara tempoh 1971-1990.

Dalam tempoh 1955-1990, seluas 2.07 juta hektar tanah baru telah dibuka. Rancangan ini juga dilaporkan telah memberi peluang pekerjaan secara langsung kepada kira-kira 224,700 keluarga peneroka sehingga penghujung tahun 1988. Sebahagian besar daripada rancangan tanah baru ini diuruskan oleh FELDA. Oleh itu, rancangan pembangunan tanah FELDA dianggap paling berjaya di antara beberapa bentuk rancangan pembangunan tanah di negara ini. Malahan, FELDA dianggap satu contoh kejayaan strategi pembangunan desa negara ini untuk mengatasi masalah kemiskinan luar bandar dalam tempoh kira-kira 30 tahun lalu.

Keupayaan FELDA memajukan rancangan pembangunan tanah baru memang tidak dapat dinafikan lagi (lihat Jadual 5). Adalah menjadi satu kenyataan bahawa FELDA berjaya memajukan jumlah keluasan tanah baru yang dirancang di bawah setiap rancangan pembangunan lima tahun negara sejak 1970. Pada waktu yang sama, pihak FELDA juga berjaya meningkatkan daya pengeluaran pekebun kecil dalam tanah rancangannya ke paras yang lebih tinggi. Misalnya, Jadual 6 menunjukkan bahawa keluaran per hektar kebun-kebun kecil kelapa sawit di tanah rancangan FELDA sudahpun melebihi apa yang tercapai di sektor estet. Walaupun begitu, beberapa isu dasar telah timbul daripada pengalaman pelaksanaan rancangan pembangunan tanah FELDA, iaitu:

- i) Rancangan FELDA, yang dilaksanakan melalui satu birokrasi besar yang bergantung kepada kontraktor swasta untuk memajukan tanah pada peringkat awal rancangan, sering dianggap satu cara yang menelan belanja yang tinggi untuk mengurangkan kemiskinan di luar bandar. Bank Dunia (1987) pernah melaporkan bahawa bilangan penerima faedah daripada rancangan ini nampaknya kecil apabila diambilkira jumlah wang yang dilaburkan. Misalnya, pada penghujung tahun 1981, FELDA telah membelanjakan kira-kira RM3.0 bilion untuk menempatkan kira-kira 70,000 peneroka. Mengikut anggaran yang dibuat pada tahun 1984, kos purata untuk menempat satu keluarga peneroka di rancangan FELDA adalah kira-kira RM55,000. Jika diandaikan bahawa kos ini tidak berubah, maka kerajaan memerlukan lebih daripada RM29.2 bilion untuk menempatkan kira-kira 530,300 isirumah miskin yang terdapat di kawasan luar bandar negara ini

Jadual 5

Kemajuan dalam Projek Pembangunan Tanah Baru oleh  
Berbagai-bagai Agensi, Malaysia, 1955-1990 (hektar)

Agensi/ Program	1955-60	1961-65	1966-70	1971-75	1976-80	1981-85	1986-90	Jumlah (1955-1990)
Program Kerajaan Persekutuan								
FELDA	12141	48280	72440	166732	206973	161600	175745	668166
FELCRA	-	-	-	23593	27117	31100	-	81810
RISDA	-	-	-	19142	12321	9770	-	41233
Program Kerajaan Negeri <sup>1</sup>	-	107890	53540	143867	146266	158000	160000	769563
Usahasama Kerajaan dan Sektor Swasta <sup>2</sup>	-	67219	73856	55523	64524	57100	17551	335773
Jumlah	12141	223389	199836	408857	457201	417570	353296	2072290

Nota: 1 Program Perbadanan Kemajuan Pertanian Negeri, Lembaga Kemajuan Tanah Sabah, dan Lembaga Kemajuan Tanah Sarawak.

2 Merujuk hanya kepada tanah yang dibangunkan dalam kawasan di bawah Lembaga Kemajuan Wilayah.  
Sumber: Malaysia (1971, 1976, 1981, 1991b).

Jadual 6  
 Keluaran per Hektar oleh Pekebun Kecil Kelapa Sawit di  
 Beberapa Rancangan Kemajuan Tanah Terpilih, 1983-1987  
 (ton metrik/hektar)

Jenis Rancangan	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Rancangan FELDA	10.85	14.09	16.88	17.48	16.85	16.82	18.33	18.66
Rancangan Belia FELCRA	11.77	16.50	18.51	15.89	15.68	14.45	t.m	t.m
Rancangan RISDA	12.64	13.83	17.65	19.32	18.26	16.00	19.00	17.00
Rancangan Kerajaan Negeri	5.81	8.57	12.08	12.09	10.31	t.m	t.m	t.m
Usahasama dengan Swasta	4.18	5.55	9.35	13.57	15.20	t.m	t.m	t.m
Swasta	7.69	11.03	8.07	19.25	19.52	t.m	t.m	t.m
Jumlah	8.71	11.31	13.87	16.40	16.13	17.73	t.m	t.m
Keluaran Sehektar di Estet	15.90	18.20	18.69	18.98	17.91	18.13	19.57	18.53

Sumber: Laporan Tahunan FELDA dan agensi berkenaan lain (beberapa isu).

pada tahun 1989. Jumlah perbelanjaan yang diperlukan ini adalah kira-kira tiga kali ganda jumlah peruntukan Kerajaan Persekutuan untuk rancangan pembangunan pertanian dan luar bandar dalam tempoh RMK5. Andaikan wang sejumlah ini dapat dicari, pelaksanaan rancangan ini di masa hadapan juga akan menghadapi masalah mencari kawasan tanah baru yang sesuai dan tempoh masa yang terlalu panjang yang diperlukan untuk melaksanakannya. Menurut satu anggaran, FELDA akan mengambil masa kira-kira 90 tahun untuk menempatkan kesemua isirumah di kawasan desa yang terdapat pada tahun 1987 jika kadar penempatan peneroka yang terdapat sekarang, iaitu seramai kira-kira 6,000 keluarga peneroka setahun, dikekalkan.

- ii) Struktur dan corak sistem perladangan yang digunakan oleh FELDA menimbulkan berbagai-bagai masalah. Misalnya, penetapan nisbah buruh-tanah yang tetap oleh FELDA menimbulkan masalah pengangguran di kalangan masyarakat muda di rancangan FELDA. Oleh itu, ramai anak-anak peneroka FELDA terpaksa menghadapi masalah pengangguran tak ketara ataupun terpaksa berhijrah keluar dari kawasan rancangan itu.
- iii) Rancangan ini didapati tidak begitu berjaya mengatasi masalah ketidakstabilan pendapatan yang timbul akibat daripada harga barangan utama, khususnya getah dan kelapa, yang sentiasa turun naik. Misalnya, apabila harga kedua-dua komoditi itu jatuh dengan teruk pada tahun 1985-86, ramai peneroka FELDA mendapati pendapatan mereka berkurangan sebanyak 60 peratus. Mengikut anggaran Bank Negara (1987), pendapatan purata sebuah keluarga FELDA yang mengusahakan kebun kelapa sawit telah jatuh daripada RM1225 sebulan pada tahun 1984 kepada RM889 pada tahun 1985 dan RM376 pada tahun 1986. Akibatnya, FELDA terpaksa membelanjakan kira-kira RM7 juta sebulan untuk membantu keluarga peneroka membeli barang makanan.
- iv) Cara pemilihan para peneroka FELDA dikatakan mempunyai beberapa kelemahan dan sering kali mengakibatkan mereka yang tidak layak menerima bantuan dipilih untuk memasuki rancangan ini (Thillainathan, 1976; Ozay Mehmet, 1986). Selain itu, keutamaan yang diberikan oleh setiap kerajaan negeri kepada rakyat negerinya sendiri telah mengakibatkan hanya peratusan yang kecil sahaja daripada peneroka yang dipilih berasal dari negeri-negeri yang mempunyai kadar kemiskinan yang tinggi dan tidak kaya dengan tanah pertanian seperti Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan dan

Terengganu. Misalnya, sehingga akhir tahun 1986, hanya 17,495 daripada 100,413 keluarga peneroka FELDA (iaitu kira-kira 17.4 peratus) berasal dari empat buah negeri yang disebutkan.

- v) Sehingga kini masih terdapat banyak masalah tentang soal sistem hak milik tanah di kalangan para peneroka FELDA. Misalnya, sistem blok yang diperkenalkan oleh FELDA telah tidak disenangi oleh para peneroka. Akibatnya, di beberapa buah tanah rancangan, FELDA mendapati sukar mendapat kerjasama daripada para peneroka dan terpaksa bergantung kepada kontraktor buruh untuk mendapat tenaga kerja yang diperlukan.

Sebagai kesimpulan, sungguhpun terdapat beberapa masalah dalam pelaksanaan rancangan pembangunan tanah baru oleh FELDA, namun perlu diakui bahawa rancangan tersebut telah memberi sumbangan ke arah meningkatkan pendapatan golongan petani dan mengurangkan kemiskinan desa. Tetapi, seperti mana diuraikan di atas, rancangan ini memerlukan perbelanjaan wang sektor awam yang besar dan bilangan isirumah yang mendapat faedah daripadanya hanya merupakan sebahagian yang masih kecil sahaja penduduk miskin di kawasan desa negara ini.

Kini FELDA memutuskan untuk menguruskan ladang-ladang barunya mengikut sistem yang diamalkan oleh syarikat swasta. Di bawah sistem baru ini, FELDA tidak akan mengambil peneroka baru. Sebaliknya, FELDA akan mengupah para pekerja untuk mengerjakan ladang miliknya. Mengikut rancangan FELDA, para pekerja itu diberi pelbagai kemudahan seperti diperuntukan di bawah undang-undang buruh dan juga diberi peluang memiliki sebahagian daripada saham syarikat yang menguruskan ladang berkenaan. Sistem baru ini mungkin tidak lagi perlu menghadapi masalah soal hak milik tanah seperti yang dialami oleh FELDA kini. Tetapi, kesannya terhadap daya pengeluaran, kos pengeluaran dan tingkat pendapatan pekerja yang akan diambil untuk menyerta rancangan baru ini masih belum boleh dinilai pada peringkat ini.

### **Rancangan Pembangunan Pertanian *In-Situ***

Satu pendekatan utama lain yang diguna untuk mengatasi masalah kemiskinan di kawasan luar bandar melibatkan usaha-usaha meningkatkan daya pengeluaran dan pendapatan golongan miskin di kawasan pertanian yang sedia ada, iaitu melalui rancangan pembangunan pertanian *in-situ*. Rancangan ini sebenarnya terbahagi

kepada dua bentuk, iaitu rancangan pembangunan pertanian bersepadu (seperti di kawasan Muda, Kedah dan kawasan Kemubu di Kelantan) dan rancangan Jabatan Kerajaan biasa (seperti rancangan tanam semula getah). Keberkesanan rancangan-rancangan ini akan dinilai dengan mengkaji keberkesanan rancangan yang dilaksanakan di sektor padi dan sektor getah untuk membasmi kemiskinan sejak 1971.

### *Sektor Padi*

Seperti yang ditunjukkan dalam Jadual 3, penanam padi masih kekal sebagai golongan miskin yang kedua terbesar di kawasan desa Semenanjung Malaysia pada tahun 1987. Kadar kemiskinan di kalangan penanam padi adalah yang tertinggi di kawasan desa. Keadaan ini memang menyedihkan terutama apabila kita mengambilkira hakiakt bahawa banyak wang sektor awam telah dibelanjakan untuk memajukan sektor padi di negara ini (Goldman, 1975; Mokhtar Tamin, 1981; Muhammad Ikmal, 1987). Selain meningkatkan jumlah pengeluaran beras negara, perbelanjaan yang besar itu juga diharap dapat meninggikan pendapatan dan seterusnya mengurangkan kemiskinan di kalangan petani padi.

Sebenarnya, ramai pengkaji mendapati bahawa salah satu faktor utama yang menyebabkan ramai petani padi berada dalam kemiskinan adalah kecilnya luas sawah padi yang diusahakan (Ahmad Mahzan, 1969; World Bank, 1980; Shukor *et al.*, 1983; Salleh Ismail, 1985; Mokhtar Tamin, 1986; S. Husin Ali, 1986). Walaupun begitu, dasar dan rancangan kerajaan untuk membasmi kemiskinan di sektor ini tertumpu kepada usaha meningkatkan daya pengeluaran dan tingkatan keluaran petani padi dengan memperkenalkan sistem perairan dan parit yang lebih besar dan lebih baik yang membolehkan tanaman padi dua kali setahun, benih padi bermutu tinggi, teknologi baru dan kemudahan kredit. Satu rancangan penting lain yang dilaksanakan untuk membasmi kemiskinan dalam sektor padi ialah skim subsidi input dan subsidi harga. Sebelum pengumuman kenaikan subsidi harga yang dibuat baru-baru ini, pengeluar padi di negara ini boleh menjual hasil mereka pada harga RM496 setan dan menerima bayaran bonus sebanyak RM165 bagi setiap tan padi yang dipasarkan. Rancangan subsidi harga bagi sektor padi ini dikendalikan oleh LPN.

Jadual 7 menunjukkan anggaran jumlah bantuan langsung yang diberi oleh kerajaan kepada sektor padi di Malaysia dalam tempoh 1980-87. Sungguhpun data ini tidak menunjukkan keberkesanan



Jadual 7  
 Malaysia: Anggaran Kos Bantuan Langsung kepada Industri Padi dan Beras, 1983-1987  
 (RM juta)

Jenis Bantuan Langsung	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
<i>Subsidi Input</i>								
Baja	72.0	114.6	112.6	92.4	62.0	82.2	94.4	80.0
Pengantaraan Baja	7.2	7.7	6.7	5.4	10.7	4.9	7.6	t.m
Kredit	10.0	12.3	14.9	24.9	22.1	18.5	18.0	t.m
P&P Sistem Perairan	36.0	38.0	42.0	37.0	36.0	39.0	51.0	42.0
Penjenteraan	5.0	5.0	27.0	20.0	16.0	6.0	1.4	1.7
Jumlah Kecil	130.2	177.6	203.2	179.7	147.7	150.6	176.4	t.m
<i>Subsidi Harga</i>								
Bonus Padi	88.0	177.0	180.0	175.0	164.0	201.0	219.0	205.0
Kerugian LPN Memasarkan Padi Tempatan	t.m	t.m	54.1	63.2	31.4	95.0	96.2	t.m
Jumlah Kecil	t.m	t.m	234.1	238.2	195.4	296.0	315.2	t.m
Jumlah Kos	t.m	t.m	437.3	417.3	343.1	446.0	491.6	t.m

Nota: t.m — tiada maklumat.  
 Sumber: Muhammad Ikmal (1988).

rancangan bantuan kerajaan kepada sektor padi, tetapi maklumat itu dapat memberi gambaran tentang jumlah wang yang terlibat. Ternyata daripada jadual itu bahawa jumlah subsidi — kedua-dua subsidi input dan subsidi harga — yang diberikan kepada sektor padi meningkat daripada RM437.3 juta pada tahun 1982 kepada RM491.6 juta pada tahun 1986. Perlu diingatkan bahawa anggaran kos ini tidak termasuk perbelanjaan sebanyak RM300 juta setahun untuk pengendalian sistem perairan yang baru dalam tempoh 1981-85 dan juga bantuan racun serangga dan benih serta bantuan kepada koperatif. Anggaran ini juga tidak mengambilkira keuntungan LPN daripada kegiatan menjual beras import yang diguna untuk menampung sebahagian daripada kerugian dalam mengurus pemasaran beras tempatan.

Selanjutnya, usaha untuk menilai keberkesanan berbagai-bagai rancangan yang dilaksanakan untuk membasmi kemiskinan di sektor padi akan ditumpukan kepada kemajuan yang tercapai di kawasan Muda, iaitu kawasan jelapang padi yang terbesar di negara ini. Maklumat yang dikumpulkan oleh para pengkaji menunjukkan bahawa rancangan kerajaan di kawasan Muda berjaya untuk meningkatkan pengeluaran dan pendapatan petani padi kawasan itu. Pendapatan bersih purata sekeluarga yang diperolehi daripada kegiatan menanam padi telah meningkat daripada RM609 setahun pada tahun 1966 kepada RM3,557 setahun pada tahun 1985 dan RM5,755 setahun pada tahun 1991 (dengan peningkatan besar pada tahun 1991) disebabkan oleh dua faktor, iaitu kenaikan subsidi pada tahun 1990 dan peningkatan saiz sawah yang diusahakan). Sungguhpun demikian, beberapa kajian mendapati kadar kemiskinan di kawasan itu masih lagi tinggi. Sebagai contoh, Syed Ahmad dan Robiah (1990) melaporkan bahawa "secara keseluruhannya 40.55 peratus (musim 1, 1981) dan 46 peratus (musim 2, 1986) daripada petani (padi di kawasan Muda) masih berada di bawah pendapatan garis kemiskinan dengan 16.5 peratus (musim 1, 1981) dan 15 peratus (musim 2, 1986) benar-benar miskin, yang menerima pendapatan per kapita kurang daripada RM30 sebulan". Mereka juga mendapati golongan penyewa merupakan golongan yang mempunyai kadar kemiskinan yang paling tinggi, iaitu 53.1 peratus pada musim 1, 1981 dan 60.6 peratus pada musim 2, 1986.<sup>7</sup>

Harus diingatkan bahawa anggaran yang dibuat ini mengambilkira bantuan subsidi yang diberikan oleh kerajaan. Oleh itu, tanpa berbagai-bagai subsidi, yang bernilai kira-kira RM989 sehektar

semusim, atau sebanyak RM178 juta setahun, yang diberikan kepada penanam padi, kadar kemiskinan di kalangan petani akan menjadi lebih tinggi lagi. Menurut anggaran yang dibuat oleh Muhammad Ikmal (1988), kadar kemiskiniannya di kalangan isirumah penanam padi di kawasan Muda akan meningkat kepada 56 peratus jika kerajaan tidak memberi sebarang bentuk subsidi. Pentingnya berbagai-bagai bentuk subsidi yang diberikan oleh kerajaan kepada penanam padi juga dapat dilihat dari segi sumbangannya kepada jumlah pendapatan penanam padi. Menurut kajian yang sama oleh Muhammad Ikmal (1988), subsidi menyumbang kira-kira 36 peratus daripada jumlah pendapatan petani padi yang dalam kategori pemilik-pengusaha, 54 peratus bagi kategori penyewa dan 43 peratus bagi kategori pemilik-penyewa.

Sungguhpun pemberian subsidi yang tinggi memainkan peranan penting dalam mengurangkan kemiskinan petani padi dan mengekalkan kemajuan ekonomi kawasan Muda, tetapi cara subsidi itu diagihkan jelas juga tidak memberi kesan yang lebih besar kepada usaha pembasmian kemiskinan di sektor padi, terutama di kalangan petani-petani yang mengusahakan sawah-sawah yang kecil. Sebab utama kenapa perbelanjaan awam yang besar tidak begitu berkesan mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan di kawasan itu ialah hakikat bahawa subsidi diberi berasaskan luas tanah yang dimiliki. Oleh kerana golongan petani miskin tidak memiliki tanah atau hanya memiliki saiz tanah yang kecil, maka jumlah subsidi yang diterima adalah kecil. Akibatnya, hanya peratusan yang kecil sahaja daripada petani miskin ini yang dapat meningkatkan pendapatan mereka dan seterusnya terkeluar daripada keadaan kemiskinan. Sebaliknya pula, kita dapati golongan petani dalam kumpulan bukan-miskin mendapat faedah yang besar daripada rancangan pemberian subsidi ini. Misalnya, sungguhpun pemberian subsidi baja tertakluk kepada hak maksimum keluasan sawah tidak melebihi 2.4 hektar, tetapi semua petani yang mengusahakan sawah padi yang lebih luas daripada itu juga turut menerima bantuan subsidi tersebut. Kajian Muhammad Ikmal (1988) di kawasan itu menunjukkan semua pengusaha sawah-sawah besar yang dikajinya, termasuk seorang yang mengusahakan seluas 55 hektar, menerima bekalan baja subsidi untuk keseluruhan kawasan sawah yang diusahakan. Akibatnya, sebahagian besar peruntukan untuk rancangan bantuan subsidi ini diperolehi oleh pengusaha sawah-sawah yang besar. Menurut anggaran Muhammad Ikmal (1988), hampir 50 peratus daripada petani di kawasan itu yang mengusahakan sawah

kurang daripada 1.1 hektar hanya menerima 17 peratus daripada jumlah subsidi harga yang dikeluarkan sementara 10 peratus daripada petani di kawasan yang mengusahakan sawah yang luasnya melebihi 3.5 hektar memperoleh 30 peratus daripada jumlah subsidi tersebut. Kenyataan ini menjelaskan kenapa jumlah subsidi yang kecil yang diterima oleh petani miskin tidak mencukupi untuk mengeluarkan mereka daripada kemiskinan. Oleh kerana itu, mengikut anggaran Muhammad Ikmal (1988), jumlah subsidi padi yang besar yang dikeluarkan oleh pihak pemerintah hanya berjaya mengurangkan kemiskinan di kawasan Muda daripada 56 peratus kepada 40 peratus sahaja pada tahun 1981/82.

Selain itu, terdapat beberapa masalah baru yang harus diberi perhatian juga dalam merangka dasar dan strategi untuk membasmi kemiskinan di sektor padi selepas 1990. Pertama, rancangan subsidi harga dan input pengeluaran turut menyumbang kepada keadaan ketegalan di pasaran tanah. Rancangan subsidi padi, berserta dengan perluasan kawasan perumahan dan perumahan di kawasan jelang padi, dikatakan menaikkan harga tanah sawah di kawasan yang terlibat sungguhpun tanah itu tidak diusahakan. Oleh demikian, pemberian subsidi menjadikan tanah sawah padi satu aset yang berharga untuk dipegang. Akibatnya, ramai pemilik tanah tersebut sanggup melihat tanah sawah milik mereka menjadi tanah terbiar daripada menjual atau memajaknya. Dengan perkembangan ini, masalah saiz tanah yang tidak ekonomik amat sukar diatasi. Tetapi, masalah ketiadaan tanah atau saiz tanah yang kecil merupakan masalah struktur yang utama di sektor padi (S. Husin Ali, 1989).

Kedua, sungguhpun pihak kerajaan mencuba satu pendekatan baru untuk meninggikan daya pengeluaran dan pendapatan petani padi, iaitu dengan menyatukan kawasan sawah padi menjadi "mini-estate" yang diletakkan di bawah satu badan pengurusan, tetapi masih terdapat masalah besar yang perlu diatasi sebelum pendekatan ini boleh diperkenalkan secara meluas. Sebagai contoh, percubaan yang dilaksanakan di Mulong Lanting, Kelantan (melibatkan 456 lot tanah seluas 107 hektar yang dimiliki oleh 492 orang individu berjaya meningkat hasil purata padi di kawasan itu kepada 6 tan sehektar berbanding dengan 4.5 tan sehektar di kawasan Muda. Tetapi, kos untuk melaksanakan projek itu didapati terlalu tinggi dan sukar dilaksanakan ke seluruh kawasan padi di negara ini.

Ketiga, harus diingatkan juga bahawa rancangan subsidi harga padi dibiayai sebahagiannya dengan mensyaratkan para pengimport

beras membeli beras keluaran tempatan sebelum mereka diberi lesen untuk mengimport beras yang lebih murah dari luar negeri. Para pengimport akan memindahkan kos yang lebih tinggi yang terpaksa ditanggung oleh mereka apabila membeli beras tempatan kepada para pengguna. Oleh kerana beras dibeli oleh hampir semua penduduk negara ini, termasuk golongan miskin yang tidak mengeluarkan beras sendiri, maka pelaksanaan rancangan subsidi ini mempunyai kesan negatif kepada kumpulan miskin yang lain.

#### *Sektor Pekebun Kecil Getah*

Salah satu usaha utama kerajaan untuk membantu pekebun kecil getah ialah rancangan penanaman semula. Sungguhpun rancangan ini diperkenalkan pada tahun 1953, tetapi kadar penglibatan pekebun kecil dalam rancangan ini adalah rendah. Misalnya, pada tahun 1970, hanya 59 peratus sahaja daripada kawasan kebun getah yang diusahakan oleh pekebun-pekebun kecil ditanam semula dengan benih getah yang bermutu. Oleh kerana itu, kerajaan menubuh RISDA pada tahun 1972 untuk meningkatkan penglibatan pekebun kecil getah dalam rancangan penanaman semula ini dan seterusnya membantu ke arah membasmi kemiskinan di kalangan pekebun kecil getah.

Sumber kewangan RISDA untuk melaksanakan rancangan ini ialah ses penanam semula yang dikenakan ke atas semua getah yang dieksport dari negara ini. Kutipan ses ini membiayai 60 peratus daripada perbelanjaan RISDA untuk rancangan penanaman semula manakala baki 40 peratus lagi diperolehi daripada peruntukan kerajaan.

Rancangan penanaman semula ini memang didapati menyumbang kepada peningkatan hasil purata pekebun-pekebun kecil getah di negara ini. Pada tahun 1988, misalnya, hasil purata sektor pekebun kecil di Semenanjung Malaysia ialah 900 kg. sehektar berbanding dengan 400-500 kg. sehektar bagi kebun kecil yang tidak ditanam semula.

Walaupun demikian, beberapa isu penting timbul dalam melaksanakan rancangan ini. Isu-isu ini berkaitan dengan sistem pengutipan ses, sistem pemberian bantuan menanam semula dan kadar cukai ke atas getah yang dieksport. Pertama, pekebun-pekebun kecil yang mempunyai kebun getah yang kecil dan tidak menanam semula (dan besar kemungkinan merupakan golongan miskin dalam sektor ini) didapati memberi subsidi kepada mereka yang telah

menanam semula dan menerima bantuan penanaman semula. Malahan, kajian Bank Dunia (1989) tentang kesan bersih sistem kutipan ses dan sistem pemberian bantuan penanam semula mendapati bahawa pelaksanaan rancangan bantuan tanaman semula ini secara puratanya lebih merupakan beban dan bukan bantuan kepada pekebun kecil getah (lihat Jadual 8). Kajian itu mendapati campurtangan kerajaan merugikan pekebun-pekebun kecil yang mengusahakan tanaman eksport.

Pengumuman kerajaan dalam Belanjawan 1990 tentang penghapusan duti eksport ke atas getah akan mengurangkan bebanan pekebun kecil getah. Namun demikian, berdasarkan kajian RISDA (1990), pekebun kecil getah yang menghasilkan jumlah keluaran lebih daripada 1,000 kg. sehektar setahun dalam jangka masa penorehan melebihi 21 tahun akan mendapati sumbangan ses mereka setelah diambilkira kadar faedah kompaun 8 peratus adalah lebih tinggi daripada bantuan semula yang diterima. Dengan perkataan lain, sistem kutipan ses yang dikenakan ke atas pengeluaran getah di negara ini mempunyai kesan negatif ke atas pekebun kecil yang produktif.

Selain itu, Ozay Mehmet (1988) mengutara hujah bahawa penyertaan pekebun kecil getah dalam rancangan tanaman semula getah RISDA adalah kurang daripada yang diharapkan. Daripada data banci pekebun kecil getah yang dijalankan oleh RISDA pada tahun 1977, beliau mendapati daripada sejumlah 490,460 pekebun kecil getah yang berdaftar di Semenanjung Malaysia, 124,590 pekebun kecil mengusahakan kebun yang mengandungi pokok getah muda kerana penglibatan mereka dalam tanah rancangan baru ataupun hasil usaha penanaman semula secara persendirian. Daripada baki 365,870 pekebun kecil, beliau mendapati 29.4 peratus daripada mereka mempunyai kebun getah yang perlu ditanam semula tetapi tidak menyertai rancangan penanaman semula RISDA. Lebih daripada 80 peratus daripada mereka yang tidak menyertai rancangan penanaman semula itu terdiri daripada pekebun kecil getah Melayu dan kira-kira 50 peratus daripada mereka mempunyai kebun yang kurang daripada 2 hektar. Sehingga akhir 1984 pula, 801,656 hektar kebun getah, atau kurang daripada 65 peratus daripada jumlah, ditanam semula (RISDA, 1988). Sepintas lalu, perangkaan ini memberi gambaran yang tidak membimbangkan. Tetapi, daripada jumlah ini, didapati hanya 7 peratus (iaitu 58,347 hektar sahaja yang telah ditanam semula buat kali kedua. Memandangkan bahawa kurang daripada 300,000 hektar ditanam semula semenjak 1973 (Syed Barkat Ali, 1985), maka ini

Jadual 8  
 Impak Campur Tindakan Kerajaan Dalam Penentuan Harga  
 Ke Atas Pendapatan Petani Miskin

	Saiz kebun (ha.)	Kawasan tanaman utama (%)	Pendapatan isirumah		Subsidi (+)/ cukai (-) sebagai peratus dari- pada jumlah pendapatan	Pulangan bagi seorang buruh keluarga dari- pada pertanian <sup>a</sup> (RM/hari)	
			Luar ladang				
			Jumlah (RM/setahun)	Ladang Jumlah (%)			
<i>Padi</i>							
Hasil Tinggi	1.4	100	5,318	4,630	13	+42	72
Hasil Sederhana	1.6	100	5,971	4,188	30	+33	41
Hasil Rendah	2.4	58	4,637	3,882	16	+29	20
<i>Getah</i>							
Hasil Tinggi	4.5	89	5,258	5,258	0	-34 <sup>b</sup>	11
Hasil Sederhana	2.7	57	5,333	3,133	41	-11 <sup>b</sup>	13
Hasil Rendah	2.7	57	4,120	1,920	53	-8 <sup>b</sup>	9
<i>Kelapa</i>							
Hasil Tinggi <sup>c</sup>	1.7	59	7,820	3,404	57	+1	19
Hasil Rendah	1.0	100	3,089	1,089	65	+2	15

Nota: <sup>a</sup> Berasaskan saiz purata isirumah di sesuatu kawasan dan data tentang buruh yang ada.

<sup>b</sup> Mewakili bantuan bersih (subsidi kurang cukai ses dan duti eksport) kepada pekebun kecil.

<sup>c</sup> Dengan cocoa sebagai tanaman selingan.

Sumber: Bank Dunia (1984).

memberi gambaran jauh lebih banyak tanaman kebun kecil yang masih belum ditanam semula untuk kali kedua. Seandainya keadaan ini benar, maka sebahagian yang besar daripada pekebun kecil menghadapi masalah untuk terus mengekalkan pengusahaan mereka.

### Faktor Penyumbang Kepada Pengurangan Masalah Kemiskinan

Ternyata daripada perbincangan di atas bahawa kadar kemiskinan di kawasan desa negara ini banyak berkurangan sejak pelaksanaan DEB, khususnya dalam tempoh 1976-1984. Hakikat ini akan mendorong seseorang itu membuat kesimpulan bahawa rancangan pembasmian kemiskinan, khususnya rancangan pembangunan desa, yang dilaksanakan di negara ini dalam tempoh DEB amat berkesan dalam memberi faedah kepada golongan miskin dan seterusnya mengurangkan bilangan mereka. Sememangnya kita perlu akui bahawa pelaksanaan berbagai-bagai rancangan itu dalam tempoh pelaksanaan DEB dapat membantu penduduk desa, termasuk golongan miskin, meningkatkan pendapatan mereka dan dengan itu menyumbang kepada pengurangan kadar kemiskinan di kawasan desa di negara ini.

Walaupun begitu, perbincangan di atas menimbulkan beberapa persoalan tentang keberkesanan dan kecekapan rancangan yang dilaksanakan, termasuk: (a) kos rancangan yang terlalu tinggi, (b) pembaziran sumber kerana terdapat kelemahan pelaksanaan oleh agensi-agensi yang terlibat, (c) kebocoran faedah yang agak besar daripada berbagai-bagai rancangan tersebut kepada golongan yang bukan-miskin dan (d) tidak terhapusnya punca-punca kemiskinan desa yang bersifat struktural (seperti masalah ketiadaan atau kekurangan tanah dan penindasan).

Selanjutnya, harus ditegaskan bahawa faktor-faktor lain turut menyumbang kepada pengurangan kadar kemiskinan di negara ini. Pertama, kemiskinan desa di negara ini dapat dikurangkan hasil daripada penghijrahan keluar golongan muda yang lebih terpelajar daripada sektor pertanian ke sektor-sektor industri dan perkhidmatan di kawasan bandar. Peningkatan kegiatan industri yang berorientasikan eksport dan berintensif buruh, perkembangan pesat sektor awam dalam tahun-tahun 1970an dan 1980an dan keperluan kemudahan pelajaran telah membolehkan penghijrah-penghijrah muda kawasan desa mendapat pekerjaan di kawasan bandar. Perkembangan ini memberi kesan mengurangkan masalah lebihan buruh di desa. Selain itu, pengiriman wang daripada penghijrah-penghijrah



ini kepada keluarga mereka di kampung-kampung juga meningkatkan pendapatan sebahagian daripada isirumah desa. Akibatnya, kadar kemiskinan di kawasan desa dapat dikurangkan.

Keduanya, perubahan harga barangan utama juga memainkan peranan penting dalam mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan di kawasan luar bandar pada tahun-tahun tertentu, khususnya dalam tempoh 1976-84. Sebagai contoh, cuba kita lihat kesan perubahan harga getah terhadap kejatuhan kadar kemiskinan di kalangan pekebun kecil getah. Data rasmi menunjukkan bahawa harga getah sekilogram telah meningkat daripada 128 sen pada tahun 1970 kepada 191 sen pada tahun 1976 dan 302 sen pada tahun 1980 sebelum jatuh kepada 231 sen pada tahun 1984. Dalam tempoh yang sama, hasil getah sehektar dianggarkan meningkat daripada 475 kg. pada tahun 1970 kepada 667 kg. pada tahun 1976 dan 669 kg. pada tahun 1984. Ternyata daripada data-data ini bahawa harga getah yang tinggi, khususnya pada tahun-tahun 1979-81, merupakan salah satu faktor penting yang mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan di kalangan pekebun kecil getah di negara ini. Satu kajian oleh Bank Dunia (1991) juga mendapati satu korelasi di antara kadar kenaikan kuasa beli pendapatan pertanian, yang amat dipengaruhi oleh perubahan harga barangan utama, dan kadar kejatuhan dalam kadar kemiskinan (lihat Jadual 9).

Jadual 9  
Kuasa Beli Pendapatan Pertanian dan  
Kemiskinan di Asia Tenggara

Negara	Tempoh masa	Pengurangan kadar kemiskinan (mata peratusan)	Pengurangan kuasa beli pendapatan pertanian per kapita (%)
Indonesia	1970-84	30	38
	1984-87	11	15
Malaysia	1973-84	22	26
	1984-87	1	1
Negeri Thai	1962-81	39	37
	1981-86	6	-10

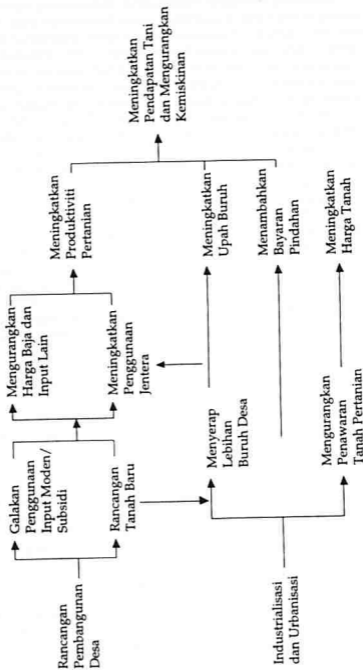
Sumber: World Bank (1991).

Sementara mengakui terdapatnya faktor-faktor lain yang turut menyumbang kepada kejatuhan kadar kemiskinan desa, namun ini tidak bermakna pandangan sesetengah pihak, khususnya Bank Dunia (1992), yang menyatakan bahawa faktor pertumbuhan ekonomi merupakan faktor terpenting dalam mengurangkan kemiskinan di kawasan desa di negara ini dipersetujui. Sebaliknya, penulis ingin menegaskan bahawa peranan pemerintah mengurangkan kemiskinan desa di negara ini dalam tempoh pelaksanaan DEB (1971-90) adalah penting sungguhpun terdapat kelemahan yang disebutkan di atas. Seperti yang ditunjukkan oleh Rajah 1, program pembangunan desa yang menekankan rancangan pembangunan tanah baru, pemberian subsidi dan penggalakan penggunaan teknologi moden memberi sumbangan penting kepada peningkatan daya pengeluaran para petani, dan seterusnya meningkatkan pendapatan mereka, dan mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan di kawasan desa. Selain itu, rancangan pembangunan tanah baru juga turut menyumbang kepada pengurangan lebih buruh di sektor desa. Rancangan pemerintah memperluaskan kemudahan pendidikan juga membolehkan sebilangan yang agak besar tenaga buruh muda di kawasan desa mendapat pendidikan dan seterusnya membolehkan mereka mengambil peluang hasil proses perindustrian dan urbanisasi yang pesat berlaku di negara ini. Oleh itu, boleh disimpulkan bahawa tiga faktor — iaitu penglibatan pemerintah secara besar-besaran dalam usaha membasmi kemiskinan, perkembangan pesat sektor perindustrian dan sektor awam serta keadaan harga barangan utama yang baik pada masa-masa tertentu — turut sama-sama menyumbang ke arah kejayaan mengurangkan masalah kemiskinan di kawasan desa negara ini.

### **Beberapa Isu Dasar Selepas 1990**

Sungguhpun penghijrahan penduduk desa ke bandar untuk mengambil peluang pekerjaan berjaya membantu usaha mengurangkan kemiskinan di kawasan desa, namun masalah baru mungkin timbul hasil daripada proses tersebut. Secara khususnya, hasil proses penghijrahan keluar golongan muda dari kawasan desa ke bandar, kita dapati sebahagian yang semakin besar daripada tenaga kerja di kawasan desa terdiri daripada golongan tua. Pada masa yang sama, golongan muda yang masih terdapat di kawasan luar bandar didapati semakin tidak berminat untuk menyertai kegiatan pertanian. Perkembangan ini akan membawa sektor pekebun kecil memasuki satu fasa di mana terdapat

Rajah 1  
Kesan Perindustrian dan Rancangan Pembangunan Desa  
Ke Atas Penduduk Desa Malaysia



hubungan rapat antara masalah kemiskinan dengan masalah kekurangan tenaga buruh atau masalah tenaga buruh yang sudah tua dan lebih cenderung untuk mengelak diri mereka daripada menghadapi risiko. Dalam keadaan sedemikian, rancangan pembasmian kemiskinan yang sedang dilaksanakan sekarang mungkin menjadi kurang berkesan atau memerlukan perbelanjaan yang terlalu besar untuk mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan secara bermakna, terutama apabila sebahagian besar daripada golongan miskin terdiri daripada golongan termiskin.

Dengan berlakunya proses penghijrah bandar-desa, berserta dengan perluasan kegiatan pertanian secara perdagangan, proses perindustrian dan perbandaran, sistem kebajikan masyarakat tradisional yang wujud dalam bentuk hubungan kekeluargaan atau hubungan kekitaan dalam masyarakat desa semakin tercabar. Keadaan ini menyebabkan golongan miskin di kawasan desa, khususnya di kalangan orang-orang tua yang dhaif, akan terbiar tanpa pembelaan. Oleh itu, mungkin perlu pihak kerajaan menjadikan rancangan kebajikan masyarakat sebagai satu komponen penting dalam rancangan pembangunan desa di negara ini selepas 1990.

Berkaitan dengan masalah di kawasan desa, satu analisis tentang perkembangan sektor pertanian negara ini mendapati bahawa keluasan tanah padi dan kebun-kebun kecil getah merosot dan bilangan unit pengeluaran pertanian kecil mengalami pengurangan yang agak nyata. Sungguhpun angka-angka tentang jumlah keluasan yang diusahakan oleh pekebun kecil getah memperlihatkan suatu peningkatan, sebahagian besar daripadanya adalah tanah yang dimajukan oleh perbadanan-perbadanan kerajaan seperti FELDA, RISDA dan FELCRA. Oleh itu, jika sumbangan perbadanan-perbadanan kerajaan ini tidak diambilkira, keluasan kebun getah yang diusahakan oleh pekebun-pekebun kecil tentunya akan jelas kelihatan merosot. Kemerosotan pengusahaan pekebun-pekebun kecil getah ini sudahpun disahkan oleh kajian-kajian di peringkat kampung (Asmah, 1987; Azizah, 1988). Menurut Muhammad Ikmal (1990), pengurangan bilangan pekebun-pekebun kecil ini berpunca daripada hakikat bahawa kegiatan mereka tidak menghasilkan pulangan yang boleh menampung diri dan keluarga mereka. Keadaan ini dikatakan berlaku kerana pekebun-pekebun kecil itu tidak dapat bersaing dengan unit pengeluaran pertanian besar. Akibatnya, pendapatan mereka merosot dan seterusnya menyebabkan sebahagian besar daripada

mereka meninggalkan kebun kecil mereka untuk mencari pekerjaan lain. Perkembangan ini menambahkan lagi masalah tanah terbiar di negara ini.

Sementara penglibatan semakin ramai tenaga buruh dalam sektor industri dan sektor perkhidmatan turut membantu usaha ke arah pengurangan kemiskinan desa, namun harus diingat bahawa memasukkan pekerja-pekerja asing, sama ada secara sah atau haram, dari negara-negara jiran berkemungkinan besar menafikan peluang-peluang pekerjaan dalam sektor-sektor tertentu kepada rakyat tempatan, termasuk golongan penghijrah baru daripada kawasan desa. Selain itu, peningkatan bilangan pekerja asing ini juga berkemungkinan meningkatkan penawaran buruh dan menghalang kenaikan upah para pekerja dalam sektor pembuatan dan perkhidmatan. Pada waktu yang sama, pertumbuhan ekonomi negara yang pesat sejak tahun 1987 meningkatkan paras harga umum dan membebankan kehidupan para pekerja di kawasan badnar. Keadaan ini berkemungkinan meningkatkan masalah kemiskinan dan melebarkan jurang perbezaan pendapatan di kawasan bandar pada masa depan. Seterusnya, pertambahan bilangan pekerja asing juga akan mengakibatkan peningkatan permintaan terhadap kemudahan asas seperti bekalan air dan perumahan. Sekiranya perkembangan yang sedemikian terus kekal wujud dalam tahun-tahun selepas 1990, usaha mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan di negara ini pada masa hadapan akan bertambah sulit.

Jelas juga daripada perbincangan di atas, harga barangan utama turut memainkan peranan yang agak penting dalam mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan di kawasan desa. Tetapi, seperti yang disedari oleh banyak pihak, harga barangan utama tidak akan terus kekal di paras yang tinggi untuk satu tempoh yang panjang. Oleh itu, kita tidak boleh mengharapkan kenaikan harga yang sementara itu akan terus membantu kita dalam usaha membasmi kemiskinan di negara ini. Kenyataan ini dapat dilihat dengan jelas apabila ekonomi negara dilanda kemerosotan ekonomi pada tahun 1985-86. Satu kajian kemiskinan yang meliputi 71 buah kampung di Semenanjung Malaysia dan dijalankan pada tahun 1985, mendapati kadar kemiskinan di kalangan isirumah yang dikaji adalah setinggi 49.8 peratus (S. Husin Ali dan Ishak, 1989).

Sementara harga barangan utama mengalami keadaan turun naik, harga input-input dan alat pertanian yang diimport dari luar negeri didapati terus meningkat. Oleh kerana kaum tani di negara ini

semakin banyak menggunakan alat pembajak, baja, racun serangga dan input pertanian lain yang diimport, maka kos pengeluaran mereka didapati semakin meningkat. Akibatnya pendapatan yang diperoleh oleh kaum tani di negara ini menjadi semakin berkurangan. Dengan harga barang-barang di pasaran dalam negeri dijangka meningkat pada tahun-tahun 1990an, kaum tani di negara ini akan mendapati diri mereka tersepit antara dua keadaan yang merugikan mereka, iaitu kejatuhan harga barangan utama yang mereka keluarkan di satu pihak dan kenaikan harga barang-barang keperluan yang terpaksa mereka beli di pihak lain. Perkembangan ini akan mempunyai implikasi besar terhadap masalah kemiskinan di negara ini pada tahun-tahun 1990an.

Sepertimana yang dinyatakan di atas, usaha untuk mengatasi kemiskinan yang dilaksanakan sehingga ini lebih tertumpu kepada langkah-langkah untuk meningkatkan daya pengeluaran dan jumlah pendapatan kaum tani. Oleh demikian, sungguhpun rancangan-rancangan pembangunan desa tersebut menyumbang ke arah mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan di negara ini sehingga penghujung tempoh perlaksanaan DEB, tetapi ternyata bahawa rancangan ini kurang berjaya mengurang atau menghapuskan punca kemiskinan yang bersifat struktural. Berhubung perkara ini, soal saiz tanah yang kecil yang diusahakan oleh para petani di negara ini harus diberi perhatian yang serius. Satu pengubahsuaian struktur perlu dilaksanakan dalam sektor pertanian supaya saiz tanah yang diusahakan oleh para petani, atau/dan intensiti penggunaan tanah oleh mereka, dapat ditingkatkan. Selain usaha menggalakkan pertanian berkelompok dengan mengatasi masalah-masalah yang dihadapi oleh projek-projek percubaan yang terdapat kini, pihak perancangan perlu juga memikirkan cara-cara lain yang dapat mengatasi proses pengubahsuaian struktur ini.

Sementara itu, salah satu perubahan dasar kerajaan yang berlaku sejak pertengahan tahun 1980an dan awal 1990an adalah langkah untuk mengurangkan peranan sektor awam (atau pemerintah) dalam kegiatan ekonomi dan membuka peluang yang luas kepada sektor swasta untuk membolehkannya memainkan peranan utama dalam pembangunan ekonomi negara, termasuk di kawasan luar bandar. Antara manifestasi yang nyata tentang perubahan ini ialah dasar penswastan yang diperkenalkan sejak tahun 1984 dan langkah kerajaan mengurangkan pemberian subsidi kepada para petani dan nelayan, seperti penarikan balik subsidi diesel (walaupun pada waktu

yang sama terus memberi "insentif" kepada pemodal besar yang sebenarnya merupakan subsidi juga). Perkembangan sedemikian menimbulkan kebimbangan di kalangan banyak pihak. Secara khususnya, mereka khuatir pihak swasta yang mengendalikan perusahaan mereka dengan lebih mengutamakan matlamat memaksimumkan keuntungan, mungkin kurang peka kepada masalah golongan miskin terutama mereka yang berada di kawasan desa.

Pada waktu yang sama, terdapat juga kebimbangan bahawa usaha pemerintah untuk menjadikan Malaysia sebagai negara industri dengan menggalakkan penglibatan besar sektor swasta akan mengakibatkan perkembangan yang lebih tidak seimbangan di antara kawasan bandar dan desa. Malah, lebih malang lagi jika sektor desa akhirnya terabai dalam usaha memesatkan kemajuan sektor industri di negara ini. Dalam hal ini, pengalaman Korea Selatan perlu dijadikan panduan kepada kita. Pada satu ketika, sementara meneruskan usaha membangunkan sektor pembuatannya, pemerintah Korea Selatan berjaya mengimbangi pembangunan bandar antara kawasan bandar dan desanya. Oleh itu, pembangunan desa dan industrinya didapati saling melengkapi dan membolehkan Korea Selatan mencapai kadar pertumbuhan ekonomi yang pesat di samping mencapai matlamat pengagihan pendapatan. Akan tetapi, apabila pihak pemerintah hanya memberi penekanan kepada sektor industri sahaja, maka timbul semula masalah ketidakseimbangan antara kawasan desa-bandar dan menyumbangkan kepada masalah kejatuhan taraf hidup penduduk desanya (Lie, 1990). Sungguhpun pengalaman Korea Selatan tidak semestinya akan berlaku di negara-negara lain yang amat menekankan hanya perkembangan sektor industri mereka, namun kita harus mengambil pengajaran daripada pengalaman itu supaya masalah yang dihadapi oleh negara itu dapat dielakkan di negara kita pada masa depan.

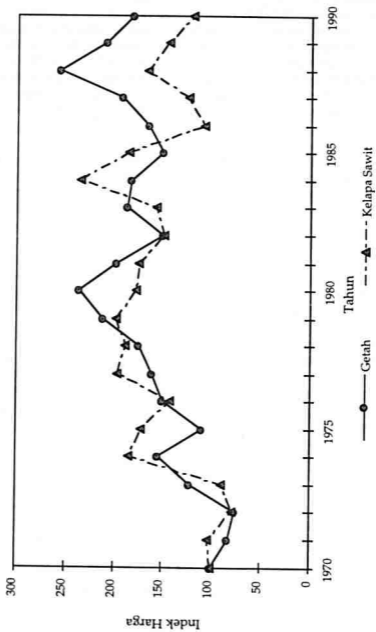
Pada akhir-akhir ini pula, terdapat pengkaji yang cuba menarik perhatian kita kepada hakikat bahawa masalah kemiskinan di luar bandar di negara ini adalah semakin berkait rapat dengan masalah pencemaran alam sekitar (Khor Kok Peng, 1987). Menurut mereka, proses pembangunan negara yang semakin pesat berlaku dalam tempoh DEB, dan mengabaikan prinsip ekologi, telah mengakibatkan keadaan alam sekitar di negara ini menjadi bertambah buruk. Oleh demikian, sungguhpun proses pembangunan ini berjaya meningkatkan pendapatan sebahagian daripada penduduk negara ini, tetapi pada waktu yang sama mengwujudkan masalah kemiskinan di

kalangan penduduk yang lain. Mangsa pembangunan ini biasanya terdiri daripada apa yang kini disebut sebagai golongan "mudah terancam" yang biasanya merupakan golongan bawahan dalam susunlapis masyarakat. Misalnya, golongan petani kecil dan nelayan mendapati pendapatan mereka terjejas akibat pencemaran sungai. Dengan perkataan lain, proses pembangunan yang sedemikian menjadikan sesetengah golongan masyarakat terjerumus ke lembah kemiskinan. Oleh kerana terdapat banyak bukti berhubung dengan masalah ini, maka adalah wajar isu ini diberi perhatian dalam usaha untuk membasmi kemiskinan desa selepas 1990.

Sepertimana yang dinyatakan, sejak 1987 terdapat perubahan haluan dalam pendekatan yang digunakan oleh kerajaan untuk membasmi kemiskinan di kawasan desa negara. Kini kerajaan berusaha untuk mengatasi masalah golongan rakyat termiskin secara langsung dengan memberi berbagai-bagai bentuk bantuan kepada golongan ini. Perubahan pendekatan ini ternyata mengatasi masalah-masalah yang timbul apabila golongan sasaran dikenalpasti secara longgar seperti yang dilakukan pada awal pelaksanaan DEB (misalnya penanam-penanam padi dan pekebun-pekebun kecil getah disifatkan sebagai kumpulan sasaran rancangan pembasmian kemiskinan sedangkan kedua-dua kelompok penduduk desa itu merupakan kumpulan yang bukan homogen). Pendekatan yang awal itu jelas mengakibatkan berlakunya kebocoran faedah daripada projek pembangunan desa kepada golongan bukan miskin. Oleh demikian, pendekatan baru ini akan menjamin faedah daripada program-program yang dilaksanakan sampai terus kepada golongan yang termiskin. Walaupun begitu, selain masalah pelaksanaan, terdapat juga kebimbangan bahawa dengan pendekatan baru itu boleh menimbulkan sikap negatif di kalangan para perancang, iaitu sikap yang tidak lagi mengutamakan matlamat pembasmian kemiskinan diambilkira dalam merangka dasar-dasar utama ekonomi negara. Para perancang itu mungkin akan mengandaikan bahawa masalah kemiskinan sudahpun cuba diselesaikan oleh program-program pembasmian kemiskinan yang khusus dan tidak perlu diberi perhatian oleh dasar ekonomi utama negara. Pemikiran yang sedemikian berkemungkinan melemahkan usaha membawa perubahan-perubahan institusi yang perlu untuk mengatasi masalah kemiskinan desa. Akibatnya, usaha untuk mencapai matlamat membasmi kemiskinan di negara ini pada tahun 2020 mungkin tidak akan tercapai.



Lampiran 1  
Indek Harga Eksport Getah dan Kelapa Sawit



## Nota

1. Menurut kerangka konsep yang diutarakan oleh Griffin (1974) dan Barraclough (1971), strategi-strategi pembangunan desa telah dibahagikan kepada tiga pendekatan utama, iaitu (a) teknokratik, (b) reformis dan (c) revolusioner.
2. Kenyataan ini dinyatakan oleh Fisk (1963) seperti berikut:  
 "...it is significant, and to the point, the major policy plank in relation to the Malay question is not industrialization, expansion of opportunities in estate labour, or anything else, but to improve their lot as peasants. This contention receives further support, if any is required, from the Second Five Year Plan, and from the heavy emphasis in proposed government investment on development projects for the peasant agricultural sector, and on amenities, roads, schools and health services for the rural areas."
3. Dalam tempoh 1986-90, FELCRA dijangka memajukan seluas 110,000 hektar tanah bukan padi yang terbiar di bawah program pembangunan di kawasan sedia ada, manakala seluas 51,000 hektar tanah padi yang terbiar juga akan dimajukan secara berkelompok dengan tanaman padi, koko, kelapa dan tanaman lain. Kira-kira 43,500 hektar pula akan dimajukan oleh RISDA sebagai mini estet dan pembandaran kawasan luar bandar.
4. Dalam tempoh 1986-90, misalnya, Lembaga Kemajuan Pembangunan Wilayah Kedah (KEDA) akan menaikkan taraf lima buah bandar dan tujuh buah pusat pertumbuhan luar bandar yang dijangka akan membantu menggalakkan kegiatan-kegiatan bandar supaya dapat menyediakan peluang pekerjaan bukan pertanian kepada isirumah berpendapatan rendah di kawasan luar bandar.
5. Di samping itu, satu persoalan tentang garis kemiskinan yang digunakan dalam membuat anggaran kadar kemiskinan telah ditimbulkan, iaitu: Kenapakah garis kemiskinan yang sama digunakan bagi kawasan bandar dan luar bandar? Pada tahun 1987, pendapatan garis kemiskinan yang digunakan bagi Semenanjung Malaysia ialah RM350 sebulan bagi sebuah isirumah yang terdiri daripada 5.14 orang. Tetapi, dokumen *Rancangan Malaysia Kelima, 1986-1990* sendiri mengakui tentang terdapatnya perbezaan paras harga dan kos hidup antara kawasan bandar dan kawasan luar bandar. Menurut dokumen itu lagi, berasaskan kepada pengiraan Indeks Harga Pengguna yang berasingan bagi kawasan bandar dan luar bandar, kos hidup di bandar dianggarkan kira-kira 10-12 peratus lebih tinggi daripada di luar bandar. Oleh itu, sekiranya hakikat ini diambilkira, dan pendapatan garis kemiskinan yang lebih tinggi digunakan bagi kawasan bandar, maka bilangan isirumah miskin dan kadar kemiskinan di kawasan bandar, dan seterusnya bilangan isirumah miskin dan kadar kemiskinan di Semenanjung, akan menjadi lebih tinggi daripada apa yang dinyatakan oleh anggaran rasmi seperti yang terdapat dalam Jadual 3.
6. Sementara itu, peratusan isirumah miskin yang terdapat dalam negeri maju seperti Pulau Pinang, Selangor dan Wilayah Persekutuan juga semakin meningkat, iaitu daripada 14.3 peratus dalam tahun 1976 kepada 16.7 peratus dalam tahun 1987. Perkembangan ini dimanifestasikan juga oleh

peningkatan dalam peratus daripada isirumah miskin yang terdapat di kawasan bandar. Data rasmi menunjukkan bahawa peratus daripada jumlah isirumah miskin di kawasan bandar telah meningkat daripada 10.8 peratus dalam tahun 1970 kepada 12.4 peratus dalam tahun 1976, 16.8 peratus dalam tahun 1984 dan 17 peratus dalam tahun 1987. Ini bermakna bahawa kemiskinan bandar akan menjadi satu isu penting selepas 1990.

7. Kajian Gibbons (1984) juga mendapati 46.2 peratus daripada isirumah penanam padi di kawasan itu masih berada dalam kemiskinan pada tahun 1982. Menurutnya, kebanyakan daripada isirumah miskin ini terdiri daripada penanam padi yang mengusahakan kurang daripada 1.1 hektar sawah padi.

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## PERANAN INDOCHINA DAN ASEAN DALAM PROSES PERDAMAIAN KEMBOJA\*

Johan Saravanamuttu

**K**ertaskerja ini bertujuan meneliti proses perdamaian dalam konflik Kemboja (Kampuchea) sejak 1979 dari perspektif negara-negara Indochina dan ASEAN. Analisis ini akan merangkumi pendirian kedua-dua kumpulan negara demi melahirkan suatu kefahaman yang menyeluruh tentang perbezaan dan persetujuan yang wujud di antara kedua-dua pihak terhadap konflik Kemboja. Pendapat saya juga akan menumpukan perhatian terhadap proses dan dinamik resolusi konflik di antara kedua-dua pihak ini. Ini akan saya lakukan dengan menganalisis dasar-dasar, langkah-langkah dan tindakan tertentu yang pernah dilaksanakan oleh kedua-dua pihak ke arah penyelesaian konflik ini. Dengan berbuat demikian, analisis saya akan berupaya mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang telah menyumbang terhadap penyelesaian konflik Kemboja dari perspektif Indochina dan ASEAN.

Bahagian pertama merupakan huraian dan kronologi tentang tindakan, pendirian dan dasar Indochina dan ASEAN terhadap Kemboja sejak 1979. Ia dibahagikan kepada beberapa jangka masa yang tertentu. Huraian bermula dengan perbincangan tentang konflik militer di antara Kemboja dan Vietnam pada 1975. Ini berakhir dengan campurtangan militer Vietnam yang menggulingkan Kerajaan Demokratik Kampuchea (DK) yang diterajui oleh Khmer Merah (Khmer Rouge). Kemudian dasar dan pendirian negara Indochina dihuraikan untuk jangka masa 1979 hingga 1987. Seterusnya, tindakbalas serta dasar dan pendirian ASEAN dihuraikan untuk jangka waktu yang sama. Isu-isu yang menonjol dan yang menggariskan perbezaan Indochina dan ASEAN diketengahkan dalam huraian ini.

\* Suatu versi kertas ini telah dibentangkan di *Seminar Politik Malaysia Ke-V*, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, pada 29hb Feb-1hb Mac 1992.

Dalam bahagian kedua, artikel ini beralih kepada jangka masa dinamik yang menggerakkan proses perdamaian, iaitu daripada 1988 hingga 1991. Saya akan menumpukan perhatian kepada usaha-usaha yang membawa pihak berkonflik ke meja perundingan, terutama sekali oleh negara-negara ASEAN dan Indochina sendiri. Peranan yang dimainkan oleh negara-negara lain dan Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu (PBB) juga disentuh.

Bahagian akhir membincangkan proses perdamaian konflik Kemboja dari sudut dan teori resolusi konflik. Soalan yang cuba dijawab di bahagian ini ialah: apakah yang memungkinkan dan menggerakkan proses yang membawa kepada resolusi konflik Kemboja? Apakah faktor-faktor terpenting yang menghalang proses perdamaian dan apakah peranan ASEAN dan Indochina sebenar yang menyumbangkan kepada proses perdamaian? Kertaskerja ini mengakhiri dengan menyentuh tahap hubungan Indochina dan ASEAN pasca-konflik Kemboja.

### **Konflik Kemboja, 1979-1987: Kebuntuan<sup>1</sup>**

#### *Pertempuran Vietnam-Kemboja dan Campurtangan Vietnam, 1979*

Vietnam dan Kemboja mula bertempur secara militer di sempadan masing-masing sebaik pihak Khmer Merah menjatuhkan kerajaan bukan-komunis Lon Nol dan mengambilalih kuasa pada April 17, 1975 di Phnom Penh. Pertempuran ini berlarutan sehingga 1978 sungguhpun beberapa usaha dilakukan untuk menyelesaikannya oleh kedua-dua negara komunis itu. Salah satu kesan pertelingkahan ke atas Kemboja sendiri ialah penyingkiran ramai kalangan penduduknya dari Zon Timur ke sempadan Vietnam. Oleh itu, tidaklah menghairankan apabila sebuah pertubuhan penentang yang bergelar Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS) telah ditubuhkan pada 2 Disember 1978. KNUFNS menganggap dirinya sebagai pergerakan yang berperanan untuk menyelamatkan Kemboja dari suatu pemerintahan yang zalim.

Pada Disember 25, 1978, lebih kurang 100,000 askar tentera Vietnam dengan sokongan 20,000 askar tentera KNUFNS mencero bohi Kemboja. Dalam masa yang singkat, iaitu pada 7 Januari 1979, Phnom Penh jatuh ke tangan Vietnam dan KNUFNS. Satu kerajaan sementara di bawah Majlis Revolusioner Rakyat telah ditubuhkan oleh KNUFNS pada 8 Januari. Kemudian, nama rasmi Kemboja ditukar daripada Democratik Kampuchea kepada Republik Rakyat Kampuchea (RRK).

Vietnam menjelaskan bahawa tindakannya adalah tindakbalas pencerobohan DK terhadap wilayah Vietnam, yang seterusnya telah mencetuskan perang sempadan dengan jirannya. Vietnam juga menyatakan bahawa kebangkitan rakyat Kemboja sendiri yang menggulingkan kerajaan DK. Malah, Vietnam sekadar menyempurnakan bantuan yang diminta oleh kerajaan baru RRK melalui Perjanjian Persahabatan Kemboja-Vietnam yang telah terjalin sejak Februari 1979. Anggaran bilangan askar Vietnam yang berada di Kemboja pada jangka masa ini ialah di antara 180,000 hingga 200,000. Sejak 1980an, Vietnam merujuk askar-askarnya di Kemboja sebagai "sukarelawan" (volunteers) yang telah diundang oleh RRK.

#### *Dasar dan Pendirian Indochina, 1979-1982*

Dasar dan pendirian kerajaan Vietnam, Laos and Kemboja (RRK) yang penting pada tahap ini berkisar kepada tiga isu:

- \* Cadangan-cadangan tiga negara ini yang bertujuan memperbaiki hubungan dengan negara-negara ASEAN.
- \* Kehadiran tentera Vietnam di Kemboja dan syarat-syarat yang perlu untuk pengunduran tentera berkenaan.
- \* Persepsi negara-negara Indochina terhadap keputusan PBB mengenai Kemboja.

Tahap ini memperlihatkan beberapa saranan Indochina yang cuba memperbaiki hubungannya dengan ASEAN, yang berdasarkan keinginannya menjalin "persahabatan dan kerjasama berpanjangan" melalui perjanjian dua-hala dan pelbagai-hala antara ASEAN dan Indochina. Satu langkah penting terhadap usaha ini ialah usul Laos tentang "Principles governing the peaceful co-existence between the two groups of countries, Indochinese and ASEAN for peace, friendship and cooperation in Southeast Asia" yang telah dibentangkan di Perhimpunan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu pada 1981 (Saravanamuttu dan Amer, 1992: 7-10). Negara-negara Indochina selalu merujuk kepada tujuh prinsip tersebut sebagai asas penting bukan sahaja untuk menubuh satu zon yang damai dan stabil di Asia Tenggara, tetapi juga untuk mempersalahkan kuasa-kuasa "imperialis" seperti Amerika Syarikat dan China yang sering menghalang pencapaian matlamat tersebut. Sehubungan ini, negara-negara Indochina juga telah mengesyorkan di Persidangan Menteri Luar Indochina Keenam, di Kota Ho Chi Minh pada Julai 1982 supaya satu zon bebas tentera ditubuhkan



di sempadan Thailand dan Kemboja. Menurut syor ini, zon tersebut boleh dikawal oleh pihak antarabangsa jika dipersetujui oleh Indochina dan ASEAN.

Berkenaan isu kehadiran tentera Vietnam di Kemboja, perkara ini selalu disebut sebagai langkah yang "sementara" di mana tentera tersebut boleh ditarik balik sebaik sahaja "ancaman" China menyusut. Persidangan Menteri Luar Indochina Keenam juga telah mengumumkan bahawa langkah-langkah pertama akan dilaksanakan untuk mengundurkan askar-askar Vietnam "sebagai tanda budibaiik" Indochina demi mencapai kedamaian.

Isu keputusan PBB terhadap Kemboja berkisar di sekitar perwakilan Kemboja di PBB, iaitu kerajaan manakah yang patut menduduki kerusi Kemboja di PBB. Negara-negara Indochina mendesak supaya kerusi ini "dipulangkan" kepada RRK yang mereka anggap sebagai kerajaan yang sah dan berwibawa di Kemboja. Mereka mengutuk dasar PBB yang mengekalkan perwakilan "kuncu Pol Pot," walau apa nama sekalipun yang digunakan untuk kerajaan DK itu. Malah, tindakan PBB itu dianggap tidak sah dan mencabuli Carta PBB sendiri. Kenyataan ini merujuk kepada pembentukan kerajaan campuran Kemboja dengan nama Kerajaan Campuran Demokratik Kampuchea (KCDK) yang disokong oleh ASEAN dan kuasa-kuasa Barat di PBB sejak 1982.

#### *Dasar Indochina, 1983-1987*

Kebanyakan dasar dan pengumuman pada tahap ini tertumpu kepada kehadiran askar Vietnam di Kemboja dan langkah-langkah yang perlu bagi pengunduran askar tersebut. Dasar asal terhadap pengunduran askar sering kali diulangi tetapi dengan menggariskan bahawa proses ini telah pun bermula sejak 1982. Malah, pada 1985, negara-negara Indochina mengumumkan kesanggupan menarik balik semua askar Vietnam pada 1990.

Satu isu baru yang timbul ialah pilihanraya bebas yang dicadangkan oleh PBB. Jawapan kerajaan RRK ialah bahawa ia sanggup berunding dengan pihak penentang kerajaan (kecuali kumpulan Pol Pot) untuk menentukan cara melaksanakan pilihanraya tersebut. Menyentuh tentang rumusan damai Kemboja, Persidangan Menteri Luar Indochina yang Keduabelas pada 1986 menyatakan:

[A]n agreement should be reached on the setting up of a zone of peace and stability in Southeast Asia wherein states with different social systems would

coexist peacefully on the basis of the principles mentioned in the declarations of Bandung in 1955, Kuala Lumpur in 1971; of Bali in 1976 and in the declaration of the three Indochinese countries put forward by the Lao Foreign Minister in 1981, before the General Assembly of the United Nations and an end must be put to foreign aggression, intervention and threat against the countries of the region (Dipetik dari Saravanamuttu dan Amer, 1992: 16).

Seterusnya, pada penghujung 1980an, negara-negara Indochina yang menurut kepimpinan Vietnam berlembut terhadap perlunya kehadiran tentera Vietnam di Kemboja. Malah, Vietnam telah menarik balik sebahagian daripada tenteranya dari wilayah Kemboja sejak 1982. Walau bagaimanapun, perdamaian daripada kacamata Vietnam, tidak dapat tercapai selagi ancaman "keganasan asing", khususnya sokongan kuasa-kuasa besar kepada puak-puak penentang kerajaan Phnom Penh masih wujud.

#### **Dasar ASEAN Terhadap Kemboja, 1979-1981**

Sebaik sahaja Vietnam campurtangan di Kemboja pada hujung 1978 ASEAN segera bertindak balas dengan tegas. Satu mesyuarat khas Menteri-Menteri Luar yang diadakan di Bangkok pada Januari 12-13, 1979 menggariskan lima perkara:

- mengutuk sekeras-kerasnya campurtangan Vietnam yang mencabuli kemerdekaan, kedaulatan dan keutuhan wilayah Kemboja.
- mengesahkan hak rakyat Kemboja untuk menentukan masa depan mereka sendiri, bebas daripada campurtangan atau pengaruh kuasa luar menurut prinsip penentuan nasib sendiri (self-determination).
- menggesa penarikan balik askar asing dari wilayah Kemboja.
- mengalu-alukan keputusan Majlis Keselamatan PBB untuk menilai keadaan di Kemboja dengan segera dan menggesa sekuat-kuatnya Majlis Keselamatan mengambil langkah yang perlu dan berpatutan untuk mengembalikan keamanan, keselamatan dan kestabilan di Kemboja.

(Saravanamuttu dan Amer, 1992: 17).

Pada tahap ini negara-negara ASEAN banyak mengadakan kegiatan diplomasi untuk mencapai "rumusan politik" bagi konflik Kemboja. Pada akhir 1979, ASEAN telah berusaha dan berjaya mendesak komuniti antarabangsa untuk mengadakan satu persidangan

antarabangsa mengenai Kemboja berdasarkan ketetapan PBB bertarikh 14 November 1979.

#### *Persidangan Antarabangsa Kemboja, 1981*

Persidangan ini (Persidangan Antarabangsa mengenai Kampuchea — PAK) diadakan pada 17 Julai, 1981 dan keputusan dan deklarasinya untuk “perdamaian menyeluruh melalui rundingan” mencerminkan pendirian dan dasar ASEAN terhadap konflik Kemboja. Secara ringkas PAK memutuskan:

- persetujuan semua pihak yang bersengketa di Kemboja menerima satu gencatan senjata dan pengunduran tentera asing di bawah pengawalan angkatan PBB dalam masa yang sesingkat mungkin.
- diadakan pilihanraya bebas di bawah penyeliaan PBB berasaskan prinsip penentuan nasib sendiri.
- lima anggota tetap Majlis Keselamatan dan negara-negara Asia Tenggara harus menghormati dan menjamin kemerdekaan, kedaulatan, keutuhan wilayah dan status berkecuali Kemboja serta keutuhan sempadan negara itu.
- menjamin bahawa Kemboja tidak terbabit dengan mana-mana pakatan militer dan pengkalan militer asing atau membenarkan kehadiran tentera asing di wilayahnya.

(Weatherbee, 1985: 109-110).

#### *Dasar PBB, ASEAN dan Pembentukan Kerajaan KCDK, 1982*

Di samping mendesak supaya persidangan PAK diadakan, dasar ASEAN di PBB berkisar pada isu perwakilan Kemboja. Umpamanya, Malaysia, Singapura dan Thailand memainkan peranan penting di Perhimpunan Agung Ke-34 membantah kelulusan cadangan India supaya kerusi Kemboja dikosongkan selagi konflik itu tidak selesai. Ketiga-tiga negara ASEAN berjaya menjamin kerusi itu terus dipegang oleh Democratic Kampuchea (Amer, 1989: 11-14).

Perkara ini mempunyai perkaitan rapat dengan usaha ASEAN menyokong pembentukan KCDK. Pada April 1981 Kerajaan Singapura mengundang Sonn Sann, pemimpin Barisan Pembebasan Kebangsaan Rakyat Khmer (BPKRK) dan beberapa wakil lain untuk menyertai satu perbincangan mengenai pembentukan kerajaan campuran Kemboja. Pada bulan yang sama, Menteri Luar Thailand selaku pengerusi tetap ASEAN melawat Washington untuk mendapat

sokongan untuk gagasan KCDK. Pada September 1981, Putera Norodom Sihanouk, pemimpin FUNCINPEC (Fron Uni National pour un Cambodge Independant, Neutre, Pacifique et Cooperatif), Son Sann dan pemimpin Khmer Merah, Khieu Samphan, telah membuat pengumuman bersama di Singapura mengenai pembentukan kerajaan campuran KCDK. Kerajaan buangan Kampuchea ini dirasmikan pada 22 Jun 1982 di Kuala Lumpur, dengan Sihanouk sebagai Presiden, Khieu Samphan sebagai Naib-Presiden dan Son Sann sebagai Perdana Menteri. Matlamat KCDK ialah:

- \* menggembleng segala usaha dalam perjuangan bersama untuk membebaskan Kemboja daripada penceroboh-penceroboh Vietnam supaya negara dibentuk semula sebagai tanahair yang berdaulat dan merdeka.
- \* berusaha melaksanakan deklarasi PAK dan ketetapan PBB lain yang relevan.

(“The Democratic Kampuchea Coalition Government Agreement” seperti yang tercatat dalam Bilveer Singh, 1989: 150).

#### *Dasar ASEAN, 1983-1987*

Deklarasi PAK dan pembentukan KCDK merupakan tulang belakang dasar Kemboja ASEAN sepanjang tahap ini. Namun, terdapat beberapa usaha dan gagasan baru yang telah dikemukakan tanpa apa-apa penyelesaian. Sebagai contoh, satu cadangan untuk mengadakan persidangan serantau di antara Indochina dan ASEAN pada 1983 tertinggal begitu sahaja. Mungkin sesuatu yang boleh dianggap baru yang timbul pada tahap ini ialah “cadangan lapan-mata” yang dikemukakan oleh KCDK pada 17 Mac 1985, yang disokong kuat oleh ASEAN. Cadangan ini menyentuh perkara-perkara yang berikut:

- \* pengunduran tentera Vietnam
  - \* gencatan senjata
  - \* pengawalan perdamaian antarabangsa
  - \* pembentukan kerajaan campuran sebagai kerajaan sementara
  - \* pilihanraya bebas di bawah pengawalan PBB
  - \* pembentukan semula Kemboja yang bebas, berkecuali dan demokratik
  - \* bantuan asing untuk pembangunan semula Kemboja
  - \* ketidakagasan dan hidup bersama secara damai dengan Vietnam
- (Amer *et al.*, 1988: 248-249).

Sehingga akhir tahap ini, negara-negara ASEAN menganggap cadangan KCDK sebagai pelan yang boleh membawa "penyelesaian nasional" (national reconciliation) untuk Kemboja. Tetapi Kerajaan Campuran KCDK anjuran ASEAN bermakna kumpulan negara-negara ini tidak merestui kerajaan RRK di Phnom Penh. Ini bermakna bahawa negara-negara Indochina dan ASEAN masing-masing tidak mengiktiraf kerajaan Kemboja yang sama, bahkan bertindak untuk mewujudkan dua kerajaan yang tidak sah dari kacamata masing-masing! Hakikat ini jelas menggambarkan kebuntuan proses perdamaian pada tahap ini.

### **Perbezaan Utama antara Indochina dan ASEAN, 1979-1987**

Berpandukan huraian dasar dan pendirian Indochina dan ASEAN terhadap konflik Kemboja, adalah jelas bahawa perbezaan-perbezaan di antara kedua-dua pihak itu amat serius. Kita dapat menggariskan lima perkara penting:

1. Campurtangan Vietnam di Kemboja
2. Persoalan kewibawaan (legitimacy) kerajaan Kemboja
3. Kehadiran dan pengunduran askar-askar Vietnam
4. Isu sempadan Thai-Kemboja
5. Isu keamanan serantau

Sungguhpun kedua-dua pihak inginkan penubuhan zon yang aman, bebas dan berkecuali di Asia Tenggara menurut perjanjian dua-hala dan berbagai-hala, namun, selagi ASEAN tidak mengiktiraf RRK dan Indochina tidak mengiktirafkan KCDK, selagi itulah usaha penyelesaian konflik akan terus menghadapi kebuntuan.

Bagi ASEAN, nampaknya cuma dua kemungkinan yang boleh mengatasi kebuntuan ini; pertama ialah mengiktiraf RRK atau kedua, mencampurtangan dalam apa cara sekalipun supaya RRK digantikan dengan kerajaan yang "sah". Langkah yang kedua inilah yang dipilih oleh ASEAN. Menurut beberapa pendapat, pilihan ini agak aneh kerana ia hampir sama dengan dasar China dan Amerika Syarikat. Ini bermakna bahawa ASEAN menyokong sebuah kerajaan yang melibatkan Khmer Merah, yang bukan sahaja berhaluan komunis, tetapi juga merupakan bekas rejim yang dikutuk hebat oleh masyarakat dunia sebagai zalim kerana bertanggungjawab ke atas kematian lebih kurang sejuta rakyat Kemboja.

Dari kacamata negara-negara Indochina, penerimaan cadangan ASEAN dan/atau permintaan PBB-PAK, seolah-olah suatu pilihan untuk membunuh diri. Ini kerana cadangan ASEAN mahukan kerajaan RRK dibubar dan rejim Khmer Merah dihidupkan kembali. Memandang hakikat ini, taktik mereka ialah untuk menawan hati ASEAN melalui beberapa gagasan yang menjalin perjanjian dua-hala dan berbagai-bagai hala dengan harapan bahawa lambat laun kerajaan RRK dapat diiktirafkan oleh ASEAN. Pengumuman pengunduran askar Vietnam selaras dengan tujuan ini.

Tahap ini memperlihatkan dengan jelas betapa sukarnya bagi kedua-dua pihak untuk mencapai persetujuan di meja perundingan. Oleh itu, konflik Kemboja berterusan dan tidak melahirkan dinamik-dinamik baru yang mungkin boleh menggerakkan penyelesaiannya. Walau bagaimanapun tanda-tanda ini mula menjelma selepas 1988.

#### **Ke Arah Perdamaian, 1988-1990<sup>2</sup>**

Memang sudah nyata bahawa politik antarabangsa amat banyak berubah pada penghujung dasawarsa 1980an. Perkembangan politik yang paling tidak diduga ialah keruntuhan sistem politik Eropah Timur yang akhirnya merebak ke Kesatuan Soviet. Kejadian ini banyak membawa perubahan politik serantau di Asia Tenggara. Konflik Kemboja tidak terlepas daripada perubahan-perubahan ini. Adalah di luar skop kertaskerja ini untuk meneliti secara menyeluruh kesan rombakan politik dunia sebagai pengaruh di sebalik proses penyelesaian konflik Kemboja. Walaupun kepentingan faktor ini tidak dinafikan, kita tidak harus lupa bahawa hubungan Indochina-ASEAN sendiri yang semakin baik pada tahap ini membawa perubahan yang kritikal kepada proses perdamaian.

Kebuntuan yang menghantui konflik Kemboja selama hampir sepuluh tahun mula diatasi selepas Vietnam mengumumkan bahawa ia akan mengundurkan askar-askarnya dari wilayah Kemboja bermula 1985. Pada 1988, perkembangan politik di Thailand juga menyebabkan perubahan iklim politik di rantau Asia Tenggara. Kerajaan Chatichai Choonhavan, memperkenalkan satu dasar baru flexibel yang turut menunjukkan keinginan untuk berbaik dengan Indochina. Cogankata Choonhavan ialah "mengubah medan perang Indochina menjadi medan pasaran." Hubungan Thailand dengan Kemboja semakin bertambah baik atas sebab-sebab ekonomi, tetapi ia juga memainkan peranan penting dalam menggalakkan beberapa dialog dan akhirnya

menganjurkan pertemuan Majelis Nasional Agung (MNA) Kemboja pada June 1991 di Pattaya.

Tetapi sebelum itupun Indonesia telah memainkan peranan yang besar melalui usaha menganjur "Jakarta Informal Meetings" (JIM). Pada Julai 1987, Vietnam, yang mewakili Indochina, dan Indonesia, yang mewakili ASEAN, bersetuju dengan konsep pertemuan bersemuka dan perbincangan antara pihak yang berkonflik di Kemboja. Ekoran pertemuan Perdana Menteri Hun Sen, yang mewakili NK (Negara Kemboja, iaitu nama baru RRK sejak 1989), dengan Putera Sihanouk di Paris, Indonesia menganjurkan JIM pertama selama empat hari dalam bulan Julai 1988. Selain Kemboja, JIM juga membabitkan penyertaan Vietnam, Laos dan negara-negara ASEAN. Dari satu segi, ini merupakan persidangan serantau yang pertama di antara Indochina dan ASEAN sejak tercetusnya konflik Kemboja. Walaupun perbezaan-perbezaan utama tidak dapat diatasi di JIM pertama, pertemuan ini telah menggerakkan satu dinamik baru dalam proses perdamaian. Perbincangan-perbincangan lain selanjutnya termasuk: antara Sihanouk, Son Sann dan Hun Sen di Paris pada November 1988, antara Thailand dan Vietnam pada Januari 1989 dan antara Vietnam dan China sejak Januari 1989.

Pertemuan kedua JIM diadakan pada Februari 1989 tetapi pendirian yang jauh berbeza terhadap pengunduran askar Vietnam tanpa syarat dan isu pembubaran kerajaan Phnom Penh menyulitkan pencapaian persetujuan. Pada 24 Julai 1989, Sihanouk dan Hun Sen bertemu sekali lagi di Paris berikutan mesyuarat empat pihak yang berkonflik di Kemboja, ASEAN, Indochina, lima kuasa tetap Majlis Keselamatan PBB, Australia, Canada, India, Zimbabwe (mewakili negara-negara berkecuali) dan seorang wakil Setiausaha Agung PBB. Mesyuarat ini bermula pada 30 Julai dan berjalan selama sebulan. Sungguhpun mereka bersetuju menerima satu rangka perdamaian (blueprint for peace) yang dari segi prinsip mewajibkan peranan PBB dalam proses ini, Pelan Ogos ini menurut Frost, masih memperlihatkan ketidaksetujuan terhadap beberapa isu-isu:

The conference, however, failed to bridge differences over key issues, including the international supervision of Vietnam's withdrawal and peace in Cambodia, the future make-up of the government coalition. Hun Sen adamantly opposed Khmer Rouge participation; Sihanouk argued that excluding Khmer Rouge would guarantee continued armed conflict, while including them would go further towards insuring the stability of an interim quadripartite government. At the end of August, the Paris conference suspended its proceedings without a comprehensive settlement, although

it did not formally adjourn and left open the possibility of reconvening (Frost, 1991: 141).

Isu paling pokok yang tidak dapat diatasi ialah penyertaan Khmer Merah manakala isu lain, menurut hemat saya, lebih merupakan isu teknikal atau tatacara yang tidak begitu sukar diatasi. Pada tahun 1990, beberapa pertemuan lain diadakan di antara 26-28 Februari, 19-20 September, dan 9-10 November di Jakarta; dan pada 23-26 November dan 19-23 Disember di Paris, dengan tujuan untuk menghalusi dan membetulkan Pelan Ogos ini. Namun, penyelesaian secara rasmi hanya tercapai pada tahun 1991.

### *Penyelesaian, 1991*

Apabila diimbas kembali Perjanjian Perdamaian yang ditandatangani di Paris pada 23 Oktober 1991, persidangan yang berakhir pada Ogos 1989 di Paris boleh dianggap sebagai peristiwa yang membawa penyelesaian. Proses perdamaian sebenar masih belum selesai lagi dan banyak langkah lain harus dilintasi oleh PBB dan negara asing yang terlibat dalam proses ini serta pemerintah dan rakyat Kemboja sendiri untuk menjadikan Kemboja benar-benar damai pada masa depan (lihat *FEER*, 7 November 1991).

Proses perdamaian seterusnya bergerak dengan pesat sepanjang 1991 dan terdapat beberapa perkembangan penting yang berlaku pada tahun ini yang membabitkan peranan penting negara-negara ASEAN. Antaranya ialah Perbincangan di Jakarta pada 2-4 Jun 1991 dan Mesyuarat Pattaya pada 24-26 Jun 1991. Di antara perkembangan yang paling penting ialah beberapa persetujuan yang dicapai di Pattaya yang diringkaskan oleh Frost seperti berikut:

The Talks produced several decisions. The Cambodian parties agreed on a conditional ceasefire, a cessation of foreign arms supplies (both from 24 June) and on the continued operation of the SNC with Prince Sihanouk as its convenor and Chairman. An SNC delegation, led by Prince Sihanouk would occupy the Cambodian seat in the United Nations. It was also agreed that the SNC would be physically located in Phnom Penh and that each party (including the Khmer Rouge) would be permitted to have its own personnel located in the capital, guarded by its own forces. When the SNC was established in Phnom Penh, foreign governments, including the UN Permanent five members, would be invited to send diplomatic representatives. The Cambodian parties also agreed on a new flag and national anthem for the SNC, which would operate above, but not replace the SOC and the NGC of the resistance (Frost, 1991: 155).



Kebanyakan keputusan Pattaya ini telahpun dicapai pada hari ini, dan negara-negara ASEAN, termasuk Malaysia, telah menjalin semula hubungan diplomatik dengan Kemboja. Dengan perjanjian Paris pada Oktober 1991, yang ditandatangani oleh 19 buah negara, hubungan diplomatik kuasa-kuasa besar seperti Amerika Syarikat, Jepun dan negara-negara Barat dengan Kemboja sudahpun dipulih semula. Harapan Kemboja ialah proses normalisasi hubungan antarabangsa yang tergantung selama 13 tahun akan terus menggalakkan perkembangan peluang-peluang lain. Namun, seperti yang saya huraikan di atas, pencapaian keamanan dan kestabilan di negara itu sekarang bersandar kepada isu penyelesaian nasional yang cuma boleh dicapai secara bermakna oleh pihak-pihak berkonflik Kemboja dan rakyatnya sendiri.

### **Resolusi Konflik: Peranan Indochina dan ASEAN**

Dari perspektif peranan resolusi konflik yang dimainkan oleh negara Indochina dan ASEAN masalah Kemboja memperlihatkan beberapa pernyataan dan pengajaran yang menarik.

Apa yang terserlah dari huraian kertaskerja ini ialah masalah utama proses perdamaian sepanjang jangka masa 1979 hingga 1987 ialah kegagalan pihak Indochina dan ASEAN untuk bersemuka secara rasmi sebagai dua kumpulan negara yang terlibat secara langsung dan tidak langsung dalam konflik Kemboja. Walaupun perbezaan-perbezaan pendapat jauh lebih serius daripada kemungkinan mencapai persetujuan terhadap beberapa isu, tanpa perundingan atau kesanggupan bersemuka, jurang perbezaan dua kumpulan negara itu tentunya berterusan bahkan bertambah besar. Perkara ini memang terbukti pada tahap pertama perkembangan konflik Kemboja.

Selepas tahap kebuntuan itu, perubahan dasar Thailand dan daya usaha Indonesia dalam dasarnya terhadap Indochina menjadi "catalyst" yang menggerakkan dinamik baru dalam proses penyelesaian konflik Kemboja.

Malah pengunduran tentera Vietnam yang tercapai setahun sebelum tarikh yang ditetapkan oleh Vietnam sendiri mempercepatkan lagi proses perdamaian pada tahun 1989 sehingga 1991. Perasaan saling curiga-mencurigai antara Indochina dan ASEAN yang wujud sepanjang tahap pertama berkurangan apabila Thailand dan Indonesia menghulurkan tangan persahabatan kepada Vietnam dan kerajaan

Phnom Penh melalui "tindakan-tindakan perdamaian" oleh dua negara ASEAN itu.

Isu yang paling rumit dan substantif dalam konflik Kemboja ialah isu pihak mana yang mempunyai kewibawaan dan patut mewakili Kemboja. Perkara ini cuma dapat diselesaikan peringkat demi peringkat, khususnya kebuntuan yang paling serius, iaitu mengenai kedudukan "Khmer Merah". Perkara ini diselesaikan dengan penyertaan Khmer Merah dalam SNC tetapi ini masih menghantui proses perdamaian dalam negeri selagi keupayaan militer Khmer Merah tidak dapat diatasi atau dibendung oleh pihak PBB. Isu Khmer Merah juga menyulitkan konsep penyelesaian nasional (*national reconciliation*) yang merupakan persetujuan substantif dan asas proses perdamaian. Perkara-perkara lain seperti isu pilihanraya dan peranan PBB cuma merupakan isu-isu tatacara setelah asas-asas penyelesaian nasional dan juga prinsip bahawa semua pihak Kemboja (termasuk Khmer Merah) berhak terlibat dalam proses itu secara damai diterima. Masalah yang timbul dari masa ke semasa ialah pihak Khmer Merah kononnya tidak begitu peka terhadap prinsip damai dalam proses penyelesaian konflik.

Implikasi perdamaian di Kemboja untuk hubungan Indochina-ASEAN amat besar. Sekiranya perdamaian berpanjangan tercapai dan terus dihormati oleh semua pihak berkonflik, politik serantau akan pertama kali menjadi aman dan tidak lagi dihantui oleh konflik antarabangsa serantau buat pertama kali sejak Perang Dunia Ke Dua. Malah, perdamaian ini akan membawa makna besar kepada organisasi serantau ASEAN yang semakin tidak dapat mengenyahkan penyertaan negara-negara Indochina. Langkah pertama bagi kemungkinan ini ialah penyertaan negara-negara Indochina dalam Perjanjian Persahabatan dan Kerjasama ASEAN (Bali 1976) yang telah disentuh oleh beberapa pemimpin ASEAN, termasuk pemimpin Malaysia, Dato Sri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Deklarasi Singapura di Persidangan Kemuncak ASEAN pada 28 Januari, 1992 telah menawarkan perjanjian tersebut kepada semua negara di rantau Asia Tenggara. Langkah kedua ialah penerimaan kemasukan negara-negara Indochina sepenuhnya ke dalam ASEAN. Perkara ini pun telah digariskan dalam perbincangan dan deklarasi Singapura. Adalah jelas bahawa selagi negara-negara Indochina tidak menyertai ASEAN, selagi itulah konsep ZOPFAN yang telah lama diidam-idamkan oleh negara-negara Asia Tenggara tidak akan tercapai sepenuhnya.

## Nota

1. Lihat Saravanamuttu dan Amer (1992) untuk huraian yang terperinci mengenai dasar Indochina pada tahap ini.
2. Lihat Frost (199) untuk huraian dan gambaran yang terperinci dan tepat tentang proses perdamaian di Kemboja pada tahap ini.

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