The Malays

Their Problems and Future

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Tel: 03-7920466, 7920803

Associated companies, branches and representatives
throughout the world.

First published 1981
Reprinted 1981, 1982, 1985, 1987

ISBN 0 582 69550 3

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Text set in 10/12 pt Baskerville.
Printed by Syarikat United Book Sdn. Bhd., Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

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Preface

The Malay people are now at an important crossroad. Many problems and challenges confront them which will result in different responses and reactions. More often than not they may lose their sense of direction and thereby lose sight of their objectives. Much emotional heat may be generated, which, if not properly managed, will lead to chaos and destruction.

I believe that the majority of people in this country wish to see big changes taking place. The targets they aspire to and the routes they choose may be different. But it is imperative that they have the facts of the situation, and possess clear analyses as well as correct attitudes in order to guide their course of action. They cannot rely on emotions alone.

In this book I shall attempt to analyse various major problems facing the Malay people, covering religious, social, economic, political and other related fields. I shall also try to envisage the possible future. In order to secure a bright future for the country, the people, especially its leaders, must place national interests before anything else, and pay greater attention to the plight of the ordinary citizens who form the majority rather than the fortunes of the small minority in the upper class. I submit this with the most sincere intentions, based on my own field-study and observation on the current position of the Malays. Of course this analysis reflects my own attitudes towards the problems in the first place.

It is relevant to state here that the book was planned and executed under oppressive conditions. I was detained at 2.00 a.m. on 7 December 1974, following a spate of student demonstrations protesting against poverty, inflation and corruption. These demonstrations came in the wake of hunger marches by thousands of disenchanted peasants in Baling, Sik and many other places in the northern part of the country. On 2 July 1976, after being detained without trial for eighteen months in Kamunting, Perak, I was taken by Special Branch operatives to an unknown place in Kuala Lumpur. For over six months I was in solitary confinement, denied all facilities for reading and writing and decent human life. It was under these trying circumstances that I planned this book. When I

was sent back to Kamunting on 13 January 1977, I started writing the original version in Malay and completed it within a month. This translation was done during *Ramadan* (Fasting Month) in August of 1978. I thank fellow-detainee Abdullah Majid for his help in going through it so meticulously.

I am aware of the many shortcomings in this book. It is written for popular consumption. My main focus of attention is on social, economic and political issues, not only because I feel more conversant with them, but also because I hold that the future of the Malays depends largely on changes in these areas. This does not mean that I am underestimating the importance of other aspects, especially religion, cultural values and education. My only hope is that more competent persons will write on them.

I have no doubt that many will not agree with some, if not all, of the views expressed in this book. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that, in order to seek truth, the differences of views should be discussed openly and dissenting opinions should not be suppressed. I have been detained for nearly four years now as a political prisoner for holding some of the views that I have expressed. But I have no reason to fear. I should be most gratified if this book could stimulate sane and serious discussion and provoke thought on the problems and future of the Malays.

As mentioned earlier, the Malay people are at an important crossroad and they desire major changes in their lives. Let us all make sure that they will be able to proceed along the right path towards progress and freedom from imperialism, exploitation, poverty, corruption and injustice.

Taiping Detention Camp
23 September 1978

Dr. S. Husin Ali

I Malays?

This book sets out to discuss the problems of the Malays and their future. At the outset it is important to define and clarify who the Malays really are. Superficially it is easy to identify them. They are normally brown in skin-colour, of moderate physical build but tough, and often gentle-mannered. We also know that in the Malay Peninsula they are regarded as the sons of the soil. They live together with various immigrant groups, most of whom were encouraged to come here by the British colonial rulers. At present the Malays constitute only half of the population in the Peninsula. According to the 1970 Census, out of a total population of 8,810,348, only 4,685,838 (or 53.2 percent) are Malays. The rest are Chinese (35.4 percent), Indians (10.6 percent) and Others 0.8 percent (see Table I).

In different contexts the term 'Malay' has many meanings. Taking a wide social and cultural definition, the term refers not only to those who are settled in the Peninsula, but also includes those in the larger area of the Malay Archipelago, embracing the Malay Peninsula and thousands of islands which today form the Republics of Indonesia and the Philippines. Although they are divided into many sub-groups, and perhaps as many dialects, linguistic and cultural experts always consider them as belonging to the same stock, known as the Malays or Malayo-Indonesians. Indeed the Malay world covers a wide area, and its people constitute one of the major racial groups of the world.

History tells us that there have been ebbs and flows in the old kingdoms which existed in the Malay Archipelago. During the ebbs the kingdoms were small and dispersed, with their jurisdictions confined only to limited areas. But during the flows big empires existed, namely Sriwijaya, Majapahit and lastly Melaka, whose areas of jurisdiction radiated from their centres and throughout the Archipelago. The boundaries of these kingdoms were not clearly marked and often varied according to their power at any particular time. All areas under their domain acknowledged their supremacy and these dominions increased or decreased with each kingdom's rise or fall. Their final disintegration was brought about

by the advent of western colonialism.

The arrival of colonialism introduced new political boundaries which divided the peoples of the Malay stock into new nation-states. Portugal was the first western power to set foot in this area, but by the mid-seventeenth century the Portuguese were ousted by the Dutch and the English. Holland took possession of the myriad islands from Sabang to Merauke which today form Indonesia; Britain controlled the peninsular Malay states and formed Malaya, which in 1963 was renamed Malaysia with the inclusion of the Borneo territories of Sabah and Sarawak. Spain and later the U.S.A. controlled the many islands which are now the Philippines. It was colonialism which separated the peoples of the Malay stock into groups confined within the boundaries of their new states. Quite often when we refer to the term Malay, we think only of the 4.7 million people living in the Peninsula. Descendants of the Malays in the Philippines are now known as Filipinos, while those in the former Dutch territories are called Indonesians. Our eyes have been shaded by these separate political boundaries to such an extent that we lose sight of the similarities in ancestry, of culture and history which are the common heritage of all the inhabitants of the Malay Archipelago.

The definition of Malay becomes more complex in the context of two other issues, namely, its legal definition and the newly coined term *bumiputra* (son of the soil). According to the Malaysian constitution, a Malay is defined as meaning "a person who professes the Muslim religion, habitually speaks Malay, conforms to Malay custom and: (a) was born before Merdeka Day, in the Federation or Singapore or born of parents one of whom was born in the Federation or Singapore, or was on Merdeka Day domiciled in the Federation or Singapore; or (b) is the issue of such a person." (Article 160).

It is not the intention here to challenge the constitution. But let us stop to ponder the implication of this definition. In theory a Malay, from the point of law, can be anybody of any origin so long as he is a Muslim, speaks Malay and practises Malay customs in his daily life. An ex-British Adviser who has embraced Islam, married a Malay, speaks in Malay to his wife and children, and follows Malay customs in his everyday life, can be considered a Malay by virtue of the constitutional provision. Similarly a new Chinese or Indian convert to Islam who lives with a Malay family, speaks Malay and practises Malay customs has the right to be regarded as

a Malay. So there is a difference between the definition of a Malay according to the constitution and the historical and socio-cultural definition.

Consistent with the constitution, the Malays are guaranteed a special position, which it is the responsibility of the Yang Dipertuan Agung to protect. It covers recruitment into the Civil Service, awards of scholarships, opportunities for education and training, and issue of licences and permits. The Yang Dipertuan Agung has the power to determine the appropriate quota to be reserved for the Malays. As the legal definition of Malay includes such people as the ex-British Adviser and the Chinese or Indian convert mentioned above, does it mean that they too have the right to this special position?

It is not surprising, therefore, that some people have been advocating that new converts into Islam should be regarded as Malays, and granted the same special privileges. However, it may be argued that merely embracing Islam does not fulfill all the conditions of being a Malay. Should the new convert continue to speak his mother tongue, then he has not fully satisfied the constitutional provision. It is quite correct, therefore, to say in this case that 'becoming a Muslim' does not mean the same thing as 'becoming a Malay', although there are some people who tend to regard the two as one and the same. Only if the new convert and his children later speak solely in Malay and follow Malay customs in their everyday life can they be regarded as Malays and have the right to enjoy the special privileges. This must be a *sine qua non* so long as the constitution remains unchanged.

What happens if a Malay takes to another religion? This rarely happens, but there were reports not so long ago of Malay youths who embraced Christianity. By so doing, their position as Malays becomes questionable. In theory the government can deny them the Malay-reserved scholarships, for instance, even if they have the necessary qualifications. But what does belief in Islam really mean? Does it suffice just to be born a Muslim, without taking into consideration whether the person knows the fundamental teachings and practises the true faith of Islam? As for the youths who embraced Christianity, should they be regarded as *bumiputras*, just as those aborigines who are converts to Christianity?

We now turn to Malay custom. What does this exactly mean? What aspects of Malay custom are we referring to? There are groups of people such as the rustic village folk, who cling tenacious-

ly to old customs; on the other hand there are those members of the urban Malay middle class who lead an entirely Western way of life. A question may be asked: Can a Melaka Chinese *(Baba)* who speaks Malay, sings Malay melodies *(dondang sayang)*, wears a *sarung* at home, eats cross-legged on the floor using his fingers, and marries his child according to Malay ceremonies, be called a Malay? Again, what about a Malay officer who has an English wife, speaks English at home, eats at table using fork and spoon, drinks beer, wears pyjamas in bed, and marries his daughter in Western style with a reception at the Hilton? Is he not a contrast to the Melaka *Baba?* Nobody will deny that he is a Malay or question his background if, on retirement, he becomes a politician claiming to champion Malay rights, but uses his special position to get logging permits for himself, or to get appointed to the board of a foreign-owned company, and finally to be made a *Datuk* or *Tan Sri*. All this, despite his totally alien (non-Malay) life-style and associations.

Now, what happens to the immigrants from various parts of the Archipelago, who by virtue of their history and socio-cultural backgrounds are identified as Malays? There are many ethnic groups in Malaysia such as the Javanese, Minangkabau, Acehnese, Bugis, Banjarese and so forth. Many have lived here since early childhood, but there are also some recent arrivals. Among them there are many who speak only their own dialects but not Malay. In other words, they do not fulfill the language requirement. Does this *ipso facto* mean that they are not Malays and cannot be accorded special privileges? Yet it can be argued that their groups are part of the bigger entity known as the Malay stock, and their dialects belong to the bigger family of the Malayo-Indonesian language. Culturally speaking, they must be regarded as Malays. But this follows the socio-cultural and not the legal definition. There is nothing in the constitution that recognises the Javanese, Minangkabau or Acehnese tongues as being akin to the Malay language.

Shall we just categorise all these ethnic groups as *bumiputra?* Once again we need to refer to the constitution which states that in Borneo those considered to be *bumiputra* are: "(a) in relation to Sarawak, a person who is a citizen and either belongs to one of the indigenous groups listed in Article 7 or is of mixed blood deriving exclusively from these groups; and (b) in relation to Sabah, a person who is a citizen, is a child or grandchild of a person of a race in-

digenous to Sabah (whether on or after Malaysia Day or not) either in Sabah or to a father domiciled in Sabah at the time of birth." (Article 161A [6]).

It is clear that for the Borneo states those included in the definition of *bumiputra* are the indigenous groups, sometimes also referred to as the 'natives'. In Sarawak there is a list of such groups, but there is none for Sabah. In the Peninsula the aborigines are also regarded as *bumiputras*. Those who are not defined under the term are the Javanese, Minangkabau, Acehnese, Bugis, Banjarese and so forth, who speak their own dialects. Their position is not clear. They cannot be regarded as local aborigines because most of them are immigrants or descendants of immigrants, most of whom came not more than a hundred years ago. They are different from the aborigines like the Jakun, Senoi, Temiar and Semang, for example, who have been here for centuries. Nor are these aborigines referred to as Malays because most of them are animists and have their own languages and cultures. This applies even to those few who have embraced Islam.

The term *bumiputra* has gained a special legal meaning, especially since the formation of Malaysia. Previously the term was generally used in reference to the Malays, to distinguish them from the Chinese and Indian immigrants who are not the sons of the soil. Now the term legally includes the Malays, as defined by the constitution, the indigenous or *bumiputra* groups in Sabah and Sarawak, and the aborigines of the Peninsula. Socio-culturally, they and the immigrant groups from various parts of the Archipelago are regarded as belonging to the same Malay stock. But a large number of the indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak, like the majority of the aborigines in the Peninsula too, are not Muslims. Many are animists, and there are many more Christians than Muslims among them.

Before Malaysia was formed, only the Malays were guaranteed special privileges by the constitution. For the purpose of according the same privileges to the indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak after Malaysia was formed, it was not possible under the constitution to regard them as Malays. There are indigenous Malays in the two Borneo states. The Ibans in Sarawak and the Kadazans in Sabah do not want to be called Malays; they have their own names and identities. The feeling is particularly strong with the Ibans, who historically regarded the Malays as their enemies. However, if the constitutional lacunae is simply because they are not Muslims

and have their own language and culture, what about those among them who have embraced Islam and adopted the Malay language and culture? Do they qualify as Malays? The same yardstick should apply to the Muslim aborigines in the Peninsula. Fortunately the discrepancy was rectified when the constitution extended the special position to all *bumiputras*.

Our discussion up to now has brought to light that: (i) the term Malay as defined in historical and socio-cultural contexts is different from that in the constitution, and (ii) the definition according to the constitution, if closely followed, gives rise to a number of complications, because, by this definition, those who are regarded as akin historically and socio-culturally may have to be legally divided into several sub-groups, while those who do not belong historically and socio-culturally to the Malay stock have to be regarded as Malays merely because they fulfill the conditions laid down in the constitution. Precisely, if we wish to know who the Malays really are, we cannot depend entirely on the socio-cultural or the legal factors alone; instead, both these factors have to be considered together. The Malay stock exists as an entity for the whole of the Archipelago, but as a result of separation and segregation brought about by colonialism and the ensuing historical and political changes, we now have different nation-states with their own identities, viz. Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia, each having its own laws and constitution.

In the Peninsula, religion, language and custom have been instituted as the yardsticks for identifying the Malays. If both socio-cultural and legal factors are taken together to determine who should be included or excluded as a Malay, then many of the questions that have been raised earlier can be easily answered. The Javanese who only speaks his mother tongue or the Malay officer with Westernised ways can both be categorised as Malays since they are descendants of the same Malay stock. Similarly, the Melaka *Baba* who has embraced Islam can gradually be assimilated as a Malay, in the same way as descendants of Pakistanis, Indian Muslims and Arabs have been regarded as Malays and accorded the same privileges as the hereditary Malays.

As explained earlier the Malays constitute only half of the total population in this country. They form an identifiable ethnic group. They also form part of what is regarded as the nation. The national question in Malaya (now Malaysia) has long caused confusion among the people, even the leaders. At one time leaders like

Dr. Burhanuddin advocated that the national identity for the country should be *Melayu* (Malay). Unfortunately he and his political movement failed to gain power at that time. After the Federation of Malaya was formed in 1948, the term 'Malayan' was used to identify the nation. But in reality the Malayan nation never emerged, as the Malays, Chinese and Indians remained separate entities. Even the administration referred to each group as a *bangsa* (nation). In effect, the term Malayan (or Malaysian now) refers mainly to citizenship.

When Malaysia was formed, the term 'Malaysian' replaced 'Malayan' to identify the people. It was merely a change of name, not of substance. Perhaps it was due to the confusion between 'nation' and 'nationality' that Dato Onn Jaafar at one time was reported to have asked: "What is the form of the Malayan nation, is it a dragon or a snake?" The formation of a united nation will indeed take a long time to materialise in a multi-racial or multi-ethnic country. In our case, the struggle against colonialism was never as intense or as heroic as in some other Asian or African countries; hence it did not evoke a sense of pride or arouse a spirit of nationalism which could serve as a strong bond of unity for the people.

Even today there is still a widespread use of the terms *bangsa Melayu, bangsa Cina* and *bangsa India*, which literally mean Malay, Chinese and Indian nations. Malays often refer to non-Malays as *bangsa asing* (foreign nation) or *orang asing* (foreign people) in everyday political exhortations. What is referred to as a 'nation' here is no more than just an ethnic or racial group. In fact, the concept of nation in its general sense, which embraces all the various constituent ethnic groups, has not emerged as a reality in this country. For an anthropologist or sociologist each ethnic group constitutes a social entity which regards itself and is regarded by others as having similarities owing to common descent. Members of an ethnic group have the same language, culture and religion, display strong emotional ties with one another, and always want to defend their solidarity as a separate and identifiable group. This will be discussed further in Chapter VIII.

The Malays as an ethnic group in this country face many problems and challenges. Their ability and degree of success in meeting these will not only influence their future, but will also have a far-reaching effect in determining their relationship with other ethnic groups for the formation of a truly united and progressive nation.

II History

We have already examined the concept of "Malay" from the legal and socio-cultural points of view. It is now necessary to trace the history of the Malays in outline, as a background to understanding the problems they are facing today. It was Bernard Shaw who said something to the effect that the past reflects the present while the present reflects the future. To understand the present problems and the future of the Malays it is imperative that we trace their history. But it is not the intention here to go into the various phases of Malay history in a detailed manner, as a historian would do.

Some people in the past have contended that the Malays have no history. Such people were mostly ex-colonial civil servants and orientalists whose attitudes towards local history were prejudiced by an ethnocentric and colonial bias. This attitude was common amongst most colonial historians who wrote about the history of the colonies. They usually regarded their own country as being the most advanced and civilized, while the colonised people on the other hand were dismissed as backward and primitive. History to them began only with the arrival of the colonisers, bringing progress and development on their civilizing mission. It is this point that is most often stressed in their writings.

Here, as in other ex-colonial territories, orientalists and former colonial civil servants focused their attention on the colonial exploits and successes, not on the changes among the colonised peoples. This trend has now changed. Indigenous historians, as in other newly-independent countries, have unmasked the shallow views of the orientalists and ex-colonial civil servants. They have successfully advocated that a nation's history should be studied and written from the local point of view, and should not be influenced by colonial or other foreign interests. It is now well established that long before the arrival of western colonialism, the indigenous peoples had their own history which, more often than not, was older and more illustrious than that of the foreign colonialists.

Apart from orientalists and ex-colonial civil servants there are also others, including some local and neighbouring politicians, who assert that the Malays not only have no history, but are also not the

"sons of the soil" and thus have no claim over this country. The views of these politicians have influenced many contemporary political and social scientists, usually from western countries, who normally stay for brief periods to study local society, and then come out with what they claim to be definitive studies. In fact these politicians, like the visiting political and social scientists, do not differ from the orientalists and ex-colonial civil servants in their objectives, which are to undermine and humiliate the indigenous population. Although they are aware of the truth, they deliberately manipulate it in their own interests: these people should be viewed with concern. On the other hand there are others who are genuinely ignorant of the truth, and it is hoped that they will ultimately change their attitude and not continue to propagate their mistaken views.

The Malays have existed as a society for thousands of years in the Peninsula. The evidence is clear from archaeological remains, among the oldest of which are human and animal skeletons and stone adzes from the Stone Age, especially from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. Many of the remains from the Mesolithic period have been found in caves, indicating that the early settlers lived in small groups in those caves. At these same sites bones of wild animals believed to have been hunted by these settlers for food have also been found. These small bands of people moved from place to place collecting fruits and plants and hunting wild animals. They did not domesticate animals or plant crops. It is possible that the life they led was quite similar to that of the few Stone Age communities that still exist in some parts of the world to this day.

The most important artifacts from the Neolithic period are rectangular adzes that have been polished. These have been found in open country as well as in caves. In certain sites, believed to have been used for burial, skeletons, well-designed pots made of clay and also remains of cereals, particularly rice have been found. It is believed that the Neolithic communities were not solely cave dwellers, but lived in huts or shelters on the land. Unfortunately their homes have been destroyed by time. It is possible that they had begun to domesticate animals and plant crops, in other words they had already started to master their environment and were not dependent entirely on it as was the case with the Mesolithic people. The size and extent of these communities depended on the amount of crops they could produce. As they became more settled, and no longer had to move from place to place, they had more time for

producing more refined artifacts and for expressing their artistic talent. It seems they lived peacefully, as there is no evidence that they fought battles among themselves. Clearly the quality of life during the Neolithic period was better than that during the Mesolithic period.

Many theories have been put forward by archaeologists and anthropologists regarding the origins of the Mesolithic and Neolithic communities in the Peninsula. The most widely accepted theory is that the Mesolithic groups of people came from the Hoabinh area of Indochina. Their southward migration started about 5,000 to 3,000 years ago, and their culture is often referred to as the Hoabinhian Culture. These groups were made up of people with small but tough physique, dark skin and woolly hair. They spread downwards into the Peninsula, and some of them crossed over to Sumatra while others proceeded further south to the Melanesian islands in the Pacific.

More waves of migration of the Neolithic people took place between about 3,000 to 1,500 years ago. There are two theories regarding these migrations. The first is that again they originated from an area in Indochina, flowed down the Peninsula and then crossed to the nearby islands of Sumatra, Borneo and the Philippines. The second theory is that they originated from South China and moved across to Borneo and the Philippines. Both these theories are based on archaeological evidence, especially stone adzes dispersed in these areas. It is possible that both these theories can be taken together, since both migrations could have taken place during different periods. What is important is that, whether the theories are correct or not, for thousands of years there were people living in the Peninsula, and these peoples were undoubtedly the true ancestors of the present-day Malays. The Neolithic groups are often described as proto-Malays.

Besides the stone axes and adzes, some other artifacts made of iron and bronze have also been found. One of the most interesting is a drum-like item made of bronze, beautifully and finely decorated, found in the Klang area. There are similarities between this and the bronze drums found in Dongson, an area in Indochina. It is believed that they are the products of what is often referred to as the Dongson Culture. There is a theory that at one time Klang was part of the Langkasuka Empire. There is nothing definite about this historically, but this empire is thought to have existed around the area of present day Kedah.

At the time when these early people were making and using artifacts and trinkets of iron and bronze instead of stone or clay, various other developments were taking place. Proto-Malay communities had already started to settle in big groups along the banks or mouths of rivers. They tilled vast rice fields, domesticated animals, fished in rivers and the sea, and also carried out limited exchanges and barter. In these coastal communities there emerged individual groups who were accepted as leaders, as they had greater power and higher status than the other communities.

Indian traders began to arrive at some of these coastal communities, bringing along with them not only commodities for trade, but also Hindu priests whose role was to spread their beliefs. Some of these traders married with the local people, while a number of the priests remained behind. In Java, for instance, Hindu influence was dominant in several kingdoms like Majapahit, as manifested by the many spectacular temples in that region. But in the Peninsula, their influence was more limited. Hindu influence left little trace at the theological and intellectual levels, but expressed itself more clearly in the creative arts, government and in several aspects of social ritual and ceremony. In the arts, especially literature, the stories of Sri Rama are inspired by Hindu epics. In architecture there are temple remains and other monuments that were built to symbolise Hindu philosophy and the belief in the achievement of *nirvana*. One such Hindu-influenced monument is the Candi Batu Pahat in Kedah. As for rituals we find that names of Hindu gods are still invoked in prayers and verses related to traditional rites and ceremonies carried out by peasants or fishermen before going to the rice field or the sea, and also when rulers are installed. In government, the close affinity of Hindu priests to the ruling class and the spread of the belief that the rulers possessed supernatural qualities and must be highly revered strengthened the institution of kingship among the Malays. Hindu influence has seeped into Malay culture and further enriched it. At this stage of development the Malays are often referred to as deutero-Malays.

The Malay feudal system, with its traditional leaders or rulers, reached its apex after Melaka was established. The ruler who founded Melaka was a royal refugee from Temasik (ancient Singapore) who was a Hindu, but who later embraced Islam. Melaka grew quickly as a centre for trade and culture in this region. Traders from the East and West stopped here. In the diplomatic field the rulers of Melaka made contacts with their counterparts in

Siam, Java and China. The Malay language spread far and wide as the *lingua franca* for trade and government; it became as important for the region as Latin did in Europe. What is more important in terms of modern Malay social and cultural development is that Melaka eventually became the centre for the spread of Islam.

It can be said that, because of the role played by Melaka at the beginning, followed by other centres such as Bantam in Java and Aceh in Sumatra, Islam became very strongly established in the Archipelago. In contrast with Hinduism, which transformed early Malay society only superficially, Islam can be said to have really taken root in the hearts and minds of the Malays. For the first time the Malays became part of a bigger community of Muslims which dominated Asia Minor and North Africa as well as parts of Europe. Islam, a religion that has a strong rational and philosophical basis, infused its influence into the whole life of the Malays and their artistic expression. In their daily life Islamic teachings, as well as values consistent with Islam, became important sources of guidance. Inspired by Islam, the Malays of this time wrote many outstanding works of literature, and the Malay language was enriched by a new vocabulary of philosophical and administrative terms. It is true, as has often been expressed, that Islam introduced a significant process of modernisation among the Malays.

At its height Melaka had an integrated feudal system, extending its jurisdiction over various areas of the Peninsula and large parts of the Archipelago. But this feudal political system gradually disintegrated after the Portuguese captured Melaka in 1511. The era of western colonialism over the Malays had begun. Portuguese influence on Malay society and culture, in spite of its domination of more than one hundred years, was minimal. When the Portuguese were replaced by the Dutch in 1641, the former had left only a few new words in the Malay vocabulary and a small Portuguese community in Melaka. The Dutch likewise did not leave behind many traces. Historically, the main area of Dutch influence was in Indonesia; in the Malay Peninsula the strongest influence came from the British.

The British established a foothold in Penang in 1786. This island together with what became known as Province Wellesley was sold by the Sultan of Kedah to the East India Company for only $10,000! The British occupied Singapore in 1819 and took over Melaka from the Dutch in 1824. Penang and Melaka together with Singapore formed what was known as the Straits Settlements. For a

time the main objective of the British was to trade; they tried not to involve themselves with Malay politics in the Malay Peninsula. The first active involvement began in Perak in 1873. By taking sides in conflicts among the rulers and chieftains, the British were able to spread their political influence. In 1874 the Pangkor Agreement was signed by British officials from the Straits Settlements and the Sultan and chiefs of Perak. Following this agreement the Perak ruler agreed to accept a British official to advise him on political and administrative matters. But the British were not allowed to interfere with matters of Muslim religion and Malay custom. After Perak, the rulers of Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang signed similar agreements with the British. All these four states were brought together to form the Federated Malay States in 1895.

The four northern states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu were under Siamese suzerainty at that time, and every year they had to send tribute to Bangkok in the form of gold leaves. In 1909 an agreement was made between the British and Siamese governments, as a result of which all the four states came under the protection of the British Crown. Not long after, in 1914, Johore concluded a similar agreement with the British. All these five states later came to be known collectively as the Unfederated Malay States. While the Federated States accepted British officials assigned as Residents and Assistant Residents, the Unfederated States had Advisers and Assistant Advisers. Although the designations differed, their functions, influence and powers were almost the same.

The British entry into the Malay states took effect not without resistance. In Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang the main thrust of the resistance came from the Malay feudal chiefs and their followers. In Perak a rebellion broke out, led by Maharaja Lela, who, with his followers, killed a British Resident by the name of Birch in 1875. In Selangor, Syed Mashur and Raja Mahadi, together with some other chiefs took up arms against the British. In Negri Sembilan, Datuk Naning led his people to battle against the Indian Sepoys sent by the British. The history of Pahang is redolent with the epics of Datuk Bahaman, Tok Gajah and Mat Kilau, who bravely led an armed uprising against the British, and finally found refuge in Thailand.

Almost all the leaders of the resistance movement came from the nobility. They did not want to see the sovereignty of their own states and their own privileged positions being undermined by

foreigners of different race and religion. Undoubtedly they were also motivated by personal interests, for, with the coming of the British and the introduction of colonial administration, the noblemen could no longer collect revenues and retain their own soldiers in their respective territories. Unfortunately, it is this aspect of personal interest that has been highlighted by many a writer, as the main cause for their armed resistance, rather than their determination to defend their power and sovereignty.

Many chiefs who collaborated with the British were rewarded with positions and pensions. But those who resisted were suppressed and severely punished. Maharaja Lela and a few of his followers were hanged. Sultan Abdullah of Perak and his family were banished to the Seychelles. Datuk Bahaman, Tok Gajah and Mat Kilau became hunted refugees; in fact, Mat Kilau was sentenced to death and would have been hanged had he been captured. From these events we can clearly perceive that there was a parallel development of two traditions among the Malay nobility. One was the tradition of collaboration or cooperation with the British colonialists. The other was the tradition of resistance or opposition to them. In the historical circumstances then prevailing the first tradition emerged as victor.

It is an accepted fact that with the coming of the British, many changes took place. The pattern of British rule in the Malay states is often described as indirect, being carried out through the rulers and chiefs. But whether the rule was indirect or otherwise, the fact remains that the British were able to plan and execute their designs as they pleased. Initially, the British stabilised the position of the Malay rulers. Then they set up various departments and appointed British officials for the purpose of collecting revenue, administering land and maintaining law and order. The departmental heads were British; only much later were some Malays taken or recruited from the nobility and given the opportunity for education and for subordinate posts. British officers carried out geological surveys and studied the soil for agricultural purposes. Favourable discoveries led to large scale tin mining and rubber planting later.

British-owned companies were formed to work the world's richest tin field in Kinta. These huge companies existed side by side with much smaller ones owned mostly by Chinese capitalists and some Malay noblemen, who had carried out mining activities long before the British. British companies were established to undertake the opening of rubber estates, some of which are the

largest in the world up to this day. Tin and rubber were produced for export and at the same time the import of manufactured goods from Britain was encouraged. To facilitate the growing import-export trade many agency houses were formed.

Concurrent with the development and progress in administration, new towns emerged as a result of these activities. Roads and railways were built to connect mines and estates with towns and ports. As business and administrative centres, these new towns had hospitals, schools and offices. The country appeared to prosper.

But what about the position of the Malays amidst all these changes? As will be seen in Chapter VI, the big tin mines, rubber estates and commercial enterprises were controlled by British monopoly-capitalists. The medium and small ones were mostly owned and operated by the Chinese. The Malays did not own anything significant. Most of their participation in trade was confined to small sundry-goods shops in the villages. Most of the British-owned mines and estates employed Chinese and Indian workers who were brought in large numbers from their homelands as contract labourers. Some Malays were employed, but not in significant numbers. The Malays continued to live mainly in the villages, pursuing their traditional agricultural and fishing activities. But there was a growing number who did go in for small scale rubber planting. The rapid development of the towns had the effect of widening the economic gap between the urban and rural areas, and within the urban community, between the rich and the poor. The penetration of a money economy to the rural areas resulted in the peasants being more exposed to exploitation both in production and marketing. From the point of view of development, the villages remained largely neglected. In absolute and comparative terms, life among the rural Malays became more depressed.

The myth prevailed that the Malays were protected by the British. But the condition of the Malays became more compromised; their villages and, in fact, the whole country were mortgaged to the colonial power. The rural Malays saw the Chinese shopkeepers and Indian moneylenders growing more affluent, and so looked upon them as a threat to their own future survival. The urban Malays who were mostly middle or lower rung government employees saw how the Chinese, Indians and even Arabs controlled much of the country's economy. This increased their feeling of insecurity which they often expressed in newspapers and magazines and through those organisations which were set up to look

after the welfare of the Malays. Malay feelings of discontent were directed not towards the dominant colonial power but towards the Chinese, Indians and Arabs, whom they regarded as exploiters and 'foreign people' *(orang asing)*. This is understandable because the simple-minded Malays would see them leading an affluent life, owning big mansions with posh motorcars, and running big businesses. The wealth and power of the British was too remote for them to perceive clearly. Furthermore, the rulers and chiefs, whose positions were propped up by the British, as well as the Malay officials who were given a chance to serve the colonial government, regarded the British as protectors whose position should not be questioned.

But conditions soon changed. In several Muslim countries radical political movements arose which, among other things, regarded colonialism as a great threat to Islam. In the Peninsula there were religious teachers like Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Syed Sheikh Alhady who studied under the Muslim modernists, Jamaluddin Al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, in the Middle East. Through lectures, writings in newspapers, magazines and books, and teaching in schools, they were able to convey the message of change and nationalism to the Malays. Prior to World War II the waves of national struggle had reached their height in several Asian countries, including this region. The call for independence became louder. The effects were felt in this country. From among the ranks of the Malay teachers and journalists emerged the *Kesatuan Melayu Muda* (KMM or Young Malays Association) whose aim was to achieve independence within the framework of a bigger entity including Indonesia, known as Melayu Raya. The outbreak of the Pacific War and the short occupation by the Japanese changed the situation. Just as in several other countries, in the Peninsula the Japanese victory shattered the myth of the impregnable West. However, the cruelties perpetrated by the Japanese rulers made people realise how inhuman a colonial power can be, and how important it was for a nation to achieve independence quickly so that it could determine its own destiny.

After the War, national consciousness heightened and the movement for independence gained further momentum. Leaders like Sutan Djenain inspired a number of young people here. In the beginning nationalist activities were carried out under the wings of the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP) led by Dr. Burhanuddin Alhelmy and Ishak Haji Muhammad. The Women's Section known

as AWAS was led by Shamsiah Fakeh, while the Youth Section known as API was led by Ahmad Boestaman. Many of the leaders of these three organisations were onetime members of KMM. So it is not surprising that most of them leaned politically towards Indonesia, and they aspired for the country's independence within Melayu Raya. Their movement was well-received, not only by ordinary villagers, teachers and leading officials, but also by one or two sultans. It is obvious that this movement and its radical demands were not received favourably by the British.

In fact the struggle for independence within Melayu Raya as initiated by KMM became blurred as a result of a new development when the British tried to introduce some constitutional changes immediately after the War ended. This was the Malayan Union proposal. A colonial official by the name of McMichael was sent from London to secure the consent and signatures of the nine Malay Rulers of the Peninsular states. Among the provisions of the Malayan Union scheme were: the Malay states and Straits Settlements, except Singapore, were to be placed under the same administration and have a common citizenship; automatic citizenship status was to be granted to Chinese and Indians born in the country; all powers and privileges of the Rulers of the Malay states were to be transferred to the British; and each Ruler was to serve only as chairman of an Advisory Council in his own state, which was to have no power over any matter other than Islam and Malay custom.

The first Ruler to give his signature was the Sultan of Johore. A group of senior officers in the state rose up in protest and contended strongly that the Sultan had no power to transfer the state to the British or to any other foreign power. They regarded the document signed by the Sultan as invalid. This group formed the Johore Malay Union *(Kesatuan Melayu Johore)*, issued a declaration in February 1946 criticising the Sultan for his action, and called upon the people of Johore not to recognise the Sultan anymore. The action of the Sultan of Johore was followed by the Rulers of the other states. The anger of the people grew all over the country and finally the Rulers themselves had to retract and give their support to the movement against the Malayan Union, claiming that they were forced to sign the McMichael documents. In March 1946, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) was formed, following a gathering of 48 state organisations including the MNP. They elected Dato Onn Jaafar as president. Two months later the

MNP left UMNO when no consensus was reached regarding the flag and slogan to be used by the organisation; UMNO wanted the slogan *Hidup Melayu* (Long Live the Malays) while the MNP wanted *Merdeka* (Independence). MNP also wanted the red and white flag of Indonesia.

From the start the leaders of UMNO were mainly government servants. In August, five months after MNP walked out of UMNO, the Chief Secretary, A. Newbolt, on behalf of the British government, gave his assurance to UMNO that government officers would not be disciplined if they participated in politics. Before that the Deputy Chief Secretary had sent a confidential circular to all heads of departments which stated that: "no restrictions should be placed on civil servants and that GO III banning civil servants from calling public meetings to consider any action of government should not be enforced for the time being."* So, government officers were free to be active in UMNO. In England a number of senior ex-colonial officers gathered support for UMNO against the Malayan Union.

The cooperation received by UMNO from the various sultans and the support of the people, together with the helping hand of the British government and ex-colonial officers, given either directly or indirectly, all contributed towards the success of UMNO. In February 1948 the Federation Agreement was signed to replace the Malayan Union Agreement. With this new agreement the position of the Rulers was restored, the Federation administration was established to include all the Malay states and former Straits Settlements, except Singapore, with a Legislative Council consisting of 74 members nominated from among British officials, representatives of the Rulers and various groups in the country. The success of UMNO further increased its influence among the Malays. In June 1948 the British government proclaimed the Emergency Laws, following an armed uprising against the British led by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). Several mass organisations, trade unions and political parties including MNP, API and AWAS were banned. Many leaders and members of these organisations were arrested and detained for many years. Among those who evaded arrest, a number went into the jungles and many others joined UMNO. It can be seen that the struggles of the MNP and

*Malayan union/confidential 74/1946, in National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

UMNO represented the continuation of the two traditions among the Malays under the leadership of their traditional chiefs generations before. Whereas MNP continued the tradition of resistance, UMNO can be said to have continued the tradition of cooperation, if not collaboration.

By their action in suppressing the genuine nationalist movement and leaders at that time, the British opened the door wide to UMNO to monopolise the role of Malay leadership. About three years after the Emergency was declared, UMNO changed its slogan from *Hidup Melayu* to *Merdeka*. UMNO increased in strength. But in the same year there was a split in the party. Dato Onn wanted to open UMNO to non-Malays because he was convinced, perhaps, with the advice of top level colonial officers like Malcolm McDonald, then British Commissioner General in Southeast Asia, that the British government would not agree to give Malaya self-government unless there was cooperation between the Malays and the non-Malays. When this move was opposed by members of the party, Dato Onn left and formed the Independence for Malaya Party (IMP). The launching pad for the IMP was the Communities Liaison Committee, which was initiated by McDonald with Onn, Tan Cheng Lock and Thuraisingam as leaders. This split seriously affected the UMNO leadership, with the majority of the Chief Ministers *(Mentri Besar)* from the different states and senior government servants who formerly supported UMNO leaving together with Dato Onn. A number of non-Malay businessmen and community leaders, including Cheng Lock and Thuraisingam, also supported IMP. But the majority of the middle rung leadership of UMNO and the rank and file members remained with the party. They wanted early independence, whereas Dato Onn believed in the gradual process — *festina lente*. After the split new leaders were elected headed by Tunku Abdul Rahman and Dato Abdul Razak Hussein.

The rejection of the Malayan Union and also of Dato Onn showed that the Malay leadership in UMNO at that time did not want to share their position with the non-Malays. When IMP failed, Dato Onn formed Parti Negara (PN), membership of which was limited only to Malays with its sole objective to fight for Malay rights and interests. But Onn's tactic was a bit too late and he did not gain much support. On the other hand UMNO eventually came to realise that independence could not be obtained without cooperation between the Malays and the non-Malays. The method

they adopted to achieve inter-ethnic unity was not by opening the door of UMNO to non-Malays but by forming an Alliance with the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). The first test for the Alliance was the Municipal Elections in Kuala Lumpur in 1952. The Alliance won handsomely and so the cooperation was extended throughout the country. When the first partial General Election was held in 1955 to elect 52 of the 74 members of the new Legislature, the Alliance, with UMNO as its backbone, won 51 of the 52 seats.

Following the election Tunku Abdul Rahman was made Chief Minister of the Federation. In December 1955, on British advice, he attempted to end the Emergency by inviting the MCP leader Chin Peng to surrender and end the fighting. He met Chin Peng in Baling but his proposals were flatly rejected by Chin Peng. Later the Tunku led a delegation to London consisting of representatives of the nine Rulers and the Alliance to negotiate Malaya's independence. The British fixed 31 August 1957 as Independence Day. A Commission was set up comprising eminent jurists from some Commonwealth countries to draft the constitution for Malaya. Among other things, the Commission proposed: the election of a Paramount Ruler every five years from among the Rulers to serve as a symbol of sovereignty; a fully elected Parliament; protection of Malay rights and privileges; a more liberal procedure for enabling non-Malays to become citizens; and determination of the role of the civil service as executors only of the decisions made by politicians in government. Action was then taken to phase out colonial officers and to replace them with local officers through the process of Malayanisation. A large amount of money was paid out in compensation during the process, but it gave local officers wide opportunities for promotion or recruitment into senior positions. In other words, the first group of people who immediately benefited from independence were the Alliance leaders and senior government servants.

Elections were held in 1959 under the new Constitution for the Federal Parliament and the respective State Legislatures. The Alliance again proved that it was still influential, although its popularity had declined notably. In 1955 the Alliance collected 79.6 percent of the votes cast, while in 1959 it dropped to 51.5 percent. Two opposition parties emerged with quite a sizeable share of the votes, namely, Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) with 21.2 percent of the votes and thirteen Parliamentary seats, and the Socialist Front

(SF) with 13 percent of the votes and eight seats. The PMIP obtained a majority in the Legislative Councils for Trengganu and Kelantan, and so formed the governments in those two states. The Socialist Front controlled the Municipal Councils of Penang and Melaka.

PMIP actually originated partly from the Council of Theologians in the UMNO which left the party in 1951. At the beginning it was led by Haji Ahmad Fuad but later the leadership was taken over by Dr. Burhanuddin in 1956. After this change PMIP expanded rapidly. The party platform was to champion Islam and the establishment of an Islamic form of government. It accused UMNO of selling out the Malays and of being controlled by the MCA through the Alliance. The clarion call of the PMIP received support from the Malays particularly in areas of traditional economy where the position of Islam was strongly entrenched, in states such as Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah and Perlis. The Socialist Front, formed in 1957, was made up of the Malayan Peoples Party (Partai Rakyat Malaya — PRM) and the Labour Party of Malaya (LPM), the former then led by A. Boestamam and the latter by Ishak Hj. Muhammad. The support for LPM came mainly from the urban Chinese, while the PRM received limited support from the Malays. Right from the beginning the Socialist Front based its platform on socialistic principles and on the cooperation between the lower classes of people of all races, championing the interests of the poor people who formed the majority.

Following the election victory of 1959, the Alliance formed the government with Tunku Abdul Rahman as Prime Minister. During his tenure of office, which lasted until 1970, two major events took place: the Confrontation by Indonesia and the May Thirteenth Incident. Both episodes had a tremendous effect on the Malays. Tunku first advocated the concept of Malaysia at a luncheon address to the Singapore Journalists Union in May 1961; it was evident that he was inspired by none other than Malcolm McDonald. Confrontation took place soon after the formation of Malaysia in 1963 which incorporated Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore together with Malaya. The Malaysia concept was opposed internally by the PMIP and the Socialist Front and externally by Indonesia, which considered it a threat to its politics and security. The PMIP and Socialist Front while recognising the evil intentions of the British imperialists, also thought that this new grouping could cause several problems, namely: (a) it might upset the

population balance and give rise to more acute communal politics, (b) it could cause economic difficulty to the Peninsula because much of its revenue would have to be channelled to Sabah and Sarawak for their development, and (c) it could result in grave political and administrative complications since the level of development of the various states was varied and unequal. Demands were made for referendums in Sabah and Sarawak to determine the will of the people.

Opposition from PMIP and the Socialist Front together with Indonesian Confrontation led to the mass arrests of many of the leaders and members of the opposition parties; among those detained was former Agricultural Minister Abdul Aziz Ishak. In the midst of this crisis and the widespread allegations that the arrested leaders was conspiring with Indonesia to topple the government, an election was held in 1964 resulting in a landslide victory for the Alliance. As predicted by the opposition parties, many problems arose between Malaya and Singapore which exacerbated communal tensions. This eventually led to the ousting of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965. Confrontation came to an end following the Gestapu affair in Indonesia; diplomatic relations were renewed, and most of the detainees were released.

The May Thirteenth Incident took place a few days after the 1969 Elections. Communal clashes erupted in Kuala Lumpur, with many lives lost and much property destroyed. Some government leaders, among them Tun Ismail, declared that democracy was dead. Parliament was dissolved and a National Operations Council (NOC) was formed with Tun Abdul Razak Hussein as Director. Many UMNO members and the Malays blamed the Tunku for the incident. They accused him of being too liberal towards the Chinese, and as a result the influence of UMNO began to decline, and it lost out to the PMIP. Because he strongly opposed Tunku, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad was expelled from UMNO. On the other hand, many Malays believed that it was due to Tunku's indecisiveness and liberalism that the Chinese became more outspoken in their demands. The Democratic Action Party (DAP), which claims to be a socialist democratic organisation but which in fact is racialistic, was able to cut the ground out from under the feet of the MCA, especially in urban centres.

The tide against Tunku Abdul Rahman was so strong that he finally resigned as Premier in 1970, but only after it was agreed that a handsome pension would be paid to him — which was rather

ironic for someone regarded as a nationalist fighter. Tun Abdul Razak, who was elected as the new UMNO President, became Prime Minister. Parliament was reconvened in January 1971. Many laws were passed to prohibit open discussion of sensitive issues, such as the position of the Malay Rulers, Malay privileges, the national language and so forth. The new leaders exhorted that politicking should be reduced and full attention given to development. Tun Abdul Razak together with Tun Dr. Ismail tried successfully to integrate opposition parties like PMIP, Gerakan, PPP, SUPP and SNAP in order to join the National Front. Under its banner, and using the scale of justice as a symbol, the National Front achieved a tremendous electoral victory in 1974.

III Politics

Some of the aspects of Malay political development and problems outlined in the last chapter will be examined in greater detail here. The basic questions relating to the politics of the Malays in particular and the country as a whole will be stressed. Before doing so it may be useful to examine first the Malay traditional political system, for this will provide the background necessary to understand many of the present day problems faced by the Malays and the nature of political changes which have taken place, especially as a result of colonialism and then independence. These changes and problems can be perceived with greater clarity if viewed against the traditional political system and its later transformation.

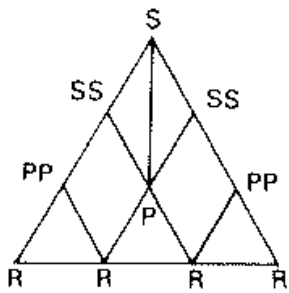
The political system during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods was very simple. Local communities then were small and did not require a complex politico-administrative structure with a large number of personnel to keep them going. As mentioned earlier the leaders in each community were the older members; each group chose its own leaders but these leaders were not connected with one another in any form of centralised structure. The elders were respected and influential, for it was taken for granted that wisdom came with age. They had gathered knowledge and experience on various customs and beliefs, and knew how to live and maintain security within a threatening environment. These leaders seldom exercised their function by use of force: in fact in this kind of society, in particular amongst the men, there was a great deal of consultation and discussion. This form of government seems to continue still within some of the simple communities that still exist in this region.

With further development these small political units merged into bigger communities under a chief or even a ruler. Each component unit continued to have its own chief known by various names, such as *batin*, *ketua* or *penghulu*. These local chiefs continued to function as leaders of their own units, but besides that they also began to serve as subordinates to their more powerful superiors, and very often had to carry out the commands of these overlords. The overlords could wield influence because they had gathered into

their hands political and economic power and had their own fighting men. With the power they had, these chiefs could easily collect taxes and gifts, which further strengthened their positions economically. Increasing wealth enabled them to expand their fighting forces and their areas of jurisdiction. Some of the chiefs eventually became powerful rulers.

As explained earlier, in the Peninsula, Melaka marked the zenith of the old Malay kingdoms. By then the political system had become quite complex. The Sultan of Melaka was powerful and was respected by many smaller kingdoms. He had many minor rulers under him, who were often linked to him by blood or marriage ties. Besides this, there were also several chiefs who could be categorised: (a) those who had well-defined functions, such as *Bendahara, Laksamana, Shahbandar* and *Temenggung;* and (b) those who were appointed by their ruler to lead the people and represent them in the outlying areas. Through these chiefs the Sultan ruled and maintained contact with the people.

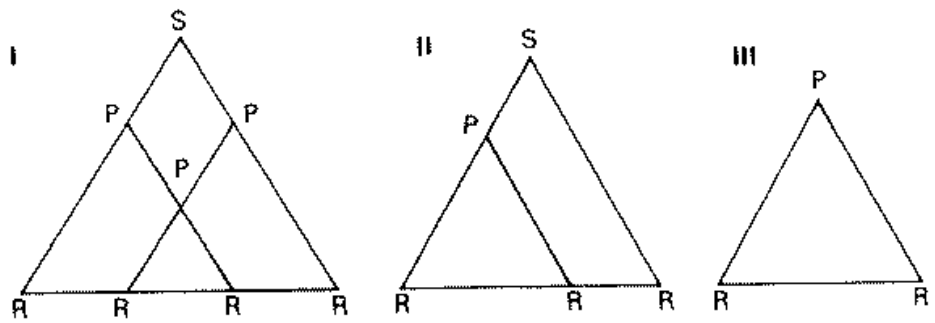
It can be said that, in the hierarchy of that time, the Sultan of Melaka, the various rulers under him, the chiefs and their relatives constituted the upper class of society. Their respective positions were determined by tradition. They were acknowledged leaders and all political, economic and military power was concentrated in their hands. Obviously at the apex of all power was the Sultan himself. The chiefs were in a slightly different role. Although they exercised authority in their own area, as middlemen between the ruler and the people, they also served as a kind of cog in the administrative machinery. If the political system is represented in the form of a pyramid then we get the following picture:



In this figure S is the Sultan and R his people. Between them are SS who were rulers subjected to the main ruler S; P and PP are chiefs. The Melaka Sultan (S) and the subordinate rulers (SS) had

their own chiefs, namely P and PP. The relationship between S and P was direct while the relationship between S and PP was through SS.

The political and administrative system of Melaka can be regarded as an integrated feudal system. This system disintegrated after the fall of Melaka. Subsidiary kingdoms and provinces became fragmented, each with its own ruler and chiefs. There were also communities subordinate only to their own chiefs. Their structure can be represented by a series of smaller pyramids which are independent of each other, as illustrated in the following figure. The three pyramids represent three political structures that existed. Figure I shows a rather big kingdom but not as big as Melaka, for example the Johore-Riau Sultanate, which had its own Sultan (S), chiefs (P and PP) and people (R). Figure II presents a much smaller kingdom, and Figure III shows a small community led only by a chief.



Between different governments, states or social groups there could be a relationship of harmony or conflict, resulting in integration or disintegration. There could be a situation when a state or group — often the latter — might be completely isolated and so did not have any relations, either of harmony or conflict, with another. Harmonious relations could occur between two kingdoms when there was an agreement or a kinship tie between their rulers. They mutually visited each other, sending delegations and presents, and arranging marriages between members of their families. But a ruler need not be subordinate to another ruler. The superior-subordinate relationship often occurred between rulers and chiefs. A chief who recognised the legitimacy of a sultan might place himself willingly under a sultan. So he became part of an integrated structure, however small. Relationships of conflict occurred more often between sultans, but could also happen between a ruler and his

chief. The conflict between rulers could arise from competition over political and economic power and resources. The conflict between a ruler and his chiefs often took place when the latter did not recognise the legitimacy of the former; or, there might also be a chief who felt strong enough to challenge a weak ruler. Although in the disintegrated feudal system the scope and area of jurisdiction was small and limited, nevertheless each ruler or chief played an important role and had great influence over political, economic and military matters.

What happened after the coming of the British? As indicated earlier, the British destroyed all opposition and removed all sultans or chiefs who rose against them. The sultans recognised by the British were given some power over their own states, whose boundaries were then clearly demarcated. Because the chiefs and kinsmen of the deposed sultans had been stripped of their powers, the position of the rulers who were propped up by the British became more stable. Some degree of peace and order was also maintained through colonial administration. But the real power of the sultans had been removed. Politically they began to serve only as symbols of Malay political sovereignty, but without any authority to make their own decisions or have them carried out, because they always had to refer matters to the British Residents or Advisers. Economically, they could no longer collect revenues from their own people, for such collections were already made by specific departments in the administration. They only received salaries and allowances paid from part of the revenues collected. Furthermore, they did not have their own fighting men because police and military forces were formed to maintain security and defence, which were no longer the responsibility of the sultan to provide. Finally, most of the rulers did not have many other economic resources, as these were beginning to be controlled by foreign traders or capitalists.

Real power such as that which was in the hands of the sultans in the past, is no longer theirs. They function as symbols only during state ceremonies. The fate of the chiefs is worse. Only their titles remain with them; the rest has been removed. Nevertheless, some of them were given pensions in place of the revenues that their ancestors used to collect for themselves. For instance, in 1903 it was reported that 2,876 chiefs and members of royal families were paid a total of $939,722 annually (Puthucheary, 1973:20). Their role was limited to attending state functions, unless of course they were

absorbed into the new administrative structure set up by the British.

In the new administration the most important officials of the Federated States were Residents and Assistant Residents, while their equivalents in the Unfederated States were Advisers and Assistant Advisers. At first colonial officers were assigned to one particular state, but after 1895 they were transferable from one state to another. The highest officer for all the Malay states was the High Commissioner, while his equivalent for the Straits Settlements was the Governor, but in fact he was one and the same person until 1942. In 1909 a Federal Council was formed under the chairmanship of the High Commissioner, whose members consisted of the Resident-General, the four Sultans and the four Residents of the Federated States, and four persons appointed as unofficial members representing plantation and business interests. In the first Council there were nine Europeans (British), six as official and three as unofficial members, four Malays and one Chinese. The arrival of the Rulers was usually accompanied by pomp and ceremony, after which they returned home and the Council proceeded to meet. In 1927 the places of the Rulers were taken over by unofficial Malay members. The function of the Federal Council was mainly to advise the High Commissioner on the introduction of new policies and regulations. Clearly, in matters of legislation the British were the most influential; at the level of administration or implementation of policies and laws the senior officers were also British. Obviously British rule was carried out not indirectly, as often claimed, but directly.

As administration increased in volume and became more complex, there was a shortage of British officers. The Malayan Civil Service (MCS), from the beginning, was confined only to British citizens or their offspring. The positions that were open to the Malays were in the Malay Administrative Service (MAS), which was lower in status and salary than the MCS. MAS officers could be admitted into the MCS, but this could be done only after crossing several barriers and serving more than ten years in the MAS. Thus the possible time served by Malay officers in the MCS was always ten years shorter than that served by their British counterparts; thus there was only a remote possibility for them to reach the top-most positions. A Malay could never be a Resident. Most of the Malay officers in the MAS and MCS were recruited from royal and aristocratic families. The Malay College of Kuala

Kangsar (MCKK), opened in 1905, was established to train and educate Malays to be recruited into these services. But later the door to the MAS was opened to commoners.

British officials combined political (making policies) and administrative (implementing policies) functions. This was especially true of the senior officers such as the Residents or Advisers. Within the administrative hierarchy they came under the Secretary of State for the colonies and carried out his orders; however, they had quite a free hand in making political decisions in the places where they served. Furthermore, the Residents were also members of the Federal Council and so participated in the formulation of policies. On the other hand, Malay officers functioned only to implement policies and directions from the top. Their role in determining policy was practically nil but this was to be expected because they were always subordinate to the British. Only in 1927 did some change occur when the four Sultans were replaced by non-official Malay members in the Federal Council. Since the Malay administrative officers were the most able and educated group among the Malays, it was from this group that the four members were nominated. One of the most outstanding members of the Legislative Council was Raja Sir Chulan. Unlike British officials, these four Malays were not official members of the Council.

Between 1937 and 1939 several Malay associations were formed in the Malay states, led mostly by government officers. The main objectives of these associations were not political but welfare; they aimed to advance the interests of the Malays in various social fields, especially education. It is believed that most of these associations received encouragement from the British. After the Second World War these associations were galvanised into political organisations such as MNP and UMNO. As already explained in Chapter Two, there were many MCS and MAS officers who participated in UMNO as leaders at the state and national level to fight against the Malayan Union scheme. They were given unrecorded leave to attend UMNO meetings. These government officers played a major role in Malay politics at that time. When the new Legislative Council was established following the Federation Agreement of 1948, many officers who had been active in UMNO became influential members of the Council. Out of 75 members of the Legislative Council, 25 were official and 50 non-official members. There were 33 Malays in all: nine official members who were Chief Ministers representing the Sultans and 24 unofficial

members; out of the 33 members, 25 were from the civil service. Then in 1951, when steps were taken by the British to introduce the Member System, three leading Malays were appointed to hold portfolios, all from the civil service.

The Malay officer corps participated not only in political organisations and legislative bodies but also in competitive interparty politics. This started after Dato Onn left UMNO, an event which precipitated a split among these officers. Then in 1954-55, when the local and national elections were held, competition among them became more intense. The most acute competition was between the supporters of UMNO and Parti Negara. Many resigned from the civil service to stand as candidates in the 1955 Election, and out of 103 Malays who stood, 53 were ex-civil servants. More than 80 percent of UMNO candidates were from this category. UMNO won 51 of the 52 contested seats, capturing about 80 percent of the voters.

Direct involvement of civil servants in politics ended after independence. The civil service had increased in size and number. With Malayanisation, many Malay officers were promoted to take over the places vacated by expatriate officers. At the beginning many of the Malay officers had connections with upper class families, but after independence there was a greater intake of graduates with middle and lower class backgrounds. The constitution adopted after independence stressed the importance of restricting the function of civil servants to administration only; they should execute the decisions made by the politicians in the government; however, civil servants could remain as ordinary members of political parties. The politicians now took over the former role of the British; some of them became ministers, members of Executive Councils and parliamentarians. At first quite a few of them were members of the royalty or ex-civil servants, but slowly the participation of professionals and others from the middle class increased. The most important function of these politicians was to determine the policies which had to be implemented by civil servants. At the same time the armed forces were also expanded to ensure peace and security. Although the army and police were under the control of the government, under normal circumstances their professional competence and specialisation caused them to be regarded as immune from interference by administrators and politicians.

The thing to be stressed here is that politics, administration and the military (including police) have now become separate, having

their own functions and officers. Before the coming of the British, all three spheres and their functions were under the control of the sultans and chiefs; but after independence the groups controlling each of these spheres have become quite distinct from one another. Nevertheless, at the very top level there is very close cooperation between these groups. This happens not only because they are all Malays; they also have a common background and school ties, and among some of the senior officers and politicians there is also a common royal or civil service background. The bonds among some of them are further strengthened by blood and marriage relationships as well as membership in certain exclusive clubs.

But at the lower levels, especially between the administrators and the politicians, misunderstandings and conflicts are quite common. At this level there are fewer of the ties and relationships which are found at the higher levels. Furthermore, political pressures are more strongly felt. Party leaders or 'people's representatives' *(wakil rakyat)* who have promised land or licences to their supporters, for example, are sometimes disappointed because they find administrators tend to be slow and bogged down by rules and procedures. On the other hand, the administrators often feel that the politicians always interfere with their work and show little respect for these rules and procedures.

Some conclusions can be drawn from the development of political leadership after independence. As already indicated, many of the senior politicians were ex-civil servants who had links with the royal households. The nobility and civil service groups have a history of cooperation or collaboration with the British colonial rulers. Furthermore, the leaders who received independence from the British were mainly educated in the West, and so in their lifestyle and outlook tended to be westernised. They knew more about the glories of the British empire than about the rise and fall of the Malay kingdoms, and they enjoyed horse-racing or a round of golf more than kite flying or top spinning. Many among them had confidence in their ex-colonial masters as friends, nay, even as protectors of the Malays. It is this category of leaders who followed the tradition of cooperation with the British. Their backgrounds and attitudes were reflected in the political philosophy and policies that they chose for the country and the people. They were extended versions of the tradition of cooperation or collaboration which became manifest when the British arrived towards the end of the last century. The group which continued the tradition of resistance, or at

least non-cooperation with the British was drawn mainly from the MNP, API and AWAS — organisations which later were weakened through the mass arrests of their leaders or by being banned following the start of the Emergency in 1948.

In politics, the leaders who held the reins of power at the beginning of independence were pro-Western. This was the result not only of their confidence in Western political systems, but also because they felt pressured by the Communist insurrection, which gave them a *raison d'etre* for taking a pro-Western stance, at least for the purpose of getting economic support and military aid. In the economic field the *laissez-faire* or free enterprise system was continued. This system acknowledges the importance of the private sector and foreign investment. This explains why British economic interests in the country were left untouched, leaving British control in three quarters of the big estates, two thirds of the mines and more than one half of the commercial houses of the country. The development of the private sector was further encouraged and wide opportunities were given not only to foreign concerns but also to local capitalists, especially the Chinese.

The political line taken by UMNO leaders on certain major issues caused discontent among a large section of the Malays. From the beginning some Malay teachers were unhappy with the government's policy on language and education. They wanted a higher status and an economic value for Malay language and education, consistent with the nation's independence. Much noise was made about the importance of the national language and local education, but the position and economic value remained inferior to the English language and education. There was a strong divergence of views between the government and the Persatuan Guru-Guru Melayu Semenanjung (PGMS), a major teachers' union at that time. When the Minister of Education announced a policy that was unacceptable to them, the union finally decided to advise all its members to leave UMNO or at least to resign from their positions in the party.

The 'revolt' of the Malay teachers indirectly strengthened the position of the PMIP, which was unhappy not only over the question of the Malay language and education, but more so over the Muslim religion. They held that UMNO, through the Alliance, had sold out to the Chinese; time and again they raised the complaint that UMNO had been too liberal in granting citizenship to non-Malays. They argued that the plight of the Malays compared

to other communities had deteriorated; a saying was quoted: "They were like ducks dying of thirst in the pond." Actually the sentiments voiced by the PMIP were widely shared among a large section of the Malay population which was disenchanted with *Merdeka*, for it did not bring any substantial changes as promised.

The disenchanted shifted their support to the PMIP and to a lesser extent to some other opposition parties. This could be seen from the results of the 1959 election. The Alliance collected only 51.5 percent of the vote and 74 out of 104 seats, while the PMIP collected 36.2 percent in the areas they contested, or 21.2 percent of the total vote, and won 13 seats. There were also expressions of dissatisfaction from other quarters. The Socialist Front emphasized economic issues and criticised the Alliance policies which favoured foreign and local capitalists while neglecting the lot of the local poor. At the same time, the Malay voice in the Front grew stronger through the Partai Rakyat Malaya, although the Front received more urban Chinese support through the Malayan Labour Party. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that there was latent discontent among the Malays centred on the economic and political issues affecting the poor as a group rather than appealing to narrow communal sentiments. The Socialist Front also managed to get substantial Malay support. In the 1959 elections the Front collected 34.8 percent of the vote in the areas they contested, or 13 percent of all the votes cast in the whole country, winning eight seats in Parliament.

Two interesting points emerged from the results of this election. First, the influence of the ruling elite in UMNO (or the Alliance) was beginning to be challenged, though only slightly, and UMNO had lost much support, to the PMIP in particular. Second, there were two trends in the opposition against UMNO policies: the first trend with an Islamic basis was led by the PMIP, and the second, with a socialist basis, was led by the Socialist Front. Both these trends could be offset and continued by UMNO and the government, particularly during Confrontation, when both the PMIP and the Front were accused of conspiring with Indonesia, followed by the mass arrests of opposition leaders. At the time, a split occurred between the Partai Rakyat and the Labour Party owing to differences of views on language and education as well as dissatisfaction over the allocation of seats and resources during the 1964 Election. The problems became more serious because the leaders who could have solved them had been detained.

After Confrontation communal politics became more rampant. The PMIP became more outspoken in expressing Malay disappointment with UMNO and the government. At the same time the DAP and Gerakan voiced Chinese disgruntlement with greater audacity. One community was always blamed for the backwardness or difficulties faced by the other. By that time the Labour Party had become ineffective as an open party because many of its branches and divisions had closed down, following demonstrations and the *hartal* launched in connection with the currency devaluation in 1967. The Malays were talking about the need for Malay unity, while at the same time the Chinese expressed the need for unity within their community. Communal feelings reached their zenith just before and during the 1969 Election. With so much heat generated by public utterances about emotional issues it was not surprising that the May Thirteenth Incident erupted.

As we already know, following the disturbances Parliament and political activities were suspended for about 18 months and the National Operations Council (NOC) became the highest and most powerful body governing the country. It is interesting to note how the NOC brought the political, administrative and military elite into close cooperation, although the leading roles in it were played by politicians. In the traditional political system political, administrative and military powers were concentrated in the hands of the traditional ruling elite with the sultan as its apex. Now, when the government was faced with a crisis the three groups were united under the NOC, which comprised the new ruling elites with the Director as its apex. There seems to be some continuation of the traditional structure in the new format when facing a crisis situation. This becomes more significant when we examine the roles played by members of the bureaucracy.

As could be seen in another crisis situation, namely the opposition to the Malayan Union, the British who were then in control allowed Malay administrators to be involved in politics. At that time a large number of Malays thought that their political power and future were threatened by the changes brought by the Malayan Union, which could open the door wide for non-Malays to participate freely in the political life of the country. After the May Thirteenth Incident the ruling elite also felt that their position was being threatened; this was interpreted as being a life and death matter for the Malays themselves. The ruling political groups took steps to strengthen themselves by incorporating the administrative and

military groups into the NOC. This interesting development is a good indicator of how the ruling political elite might react in facing any future crisis, namely by suspending the parliamentary process and seizing power with the help of the administrative and military (including police) elite.

After the NOC was dissolved and Parliament reinstated, some of the administrative officers in the NOC began their careers as UMNO politicians and were given high positions in government or important posts in statutory bodies which were established with the objective of improving the Malay economy. This was a cause of great concern to UMNO rank and file and Malays in the opposition parties. The leadership of UMNO itself changed hands. Tunku Abdul Rahman and some of his stalwarts who were accused of being too lenient to the non-Malays and not firm enough in carrying out pro-Malay policies were 'removed'. The Tunku's critics emerged as the new power group in the UMNO leadership led by Tun Abdul Razak, who was feared at the beginning by a large section of the Chinese as being too pro-Malay.

Actually the changes that were taking place in the UMNO leadership were not entirely due to the challenge from PMIP or the May Thirteenth Incident. In fact, they were signals of transformations that were taking place within the society itself. After independence political changes gave greater opportunities to the Chinese to participate in national politics and the government. In terms of statistics the change might be perceived from the increasing number of new citizens among the non-Malays who were given the franchise. For instance, during the 1955 Election, out of 1,280,000 voters 84.2 percent were Malays and only 11.2 percent were Chinese. But by the 1959 Election the number of voters increased to about 2,144,000, with the Malay proportion shrinking to 56.8 percent and the Chinese expanding to 35.6 percent. Non-Malay political parties like the PPP and the DAP were set up to fight for the interests of the Chinese. Inside and outside UMNO this development was seen as a threat to the Malays.

Economically, independence had also opened more opportunities for some people to become rich quickly. Development projects, carried out in greater numbers and on a bigger scale, incurred large expenditures. Timber was and is an important source of state revenue. Opportunities to get contracts and tenders were almost unlimited. But many felt that these opportunities were monopolised by a few people, mainly non-Malays. There were some Malay

entrepreneurs who obtained contracts and concessions, but in a great number of cases they farmed these out to non-Malays. Through political influence, and the use of money and women in corrupt ways, several Chinese businessmen quickly seized the chance to make wealth quickly. The expanding Malay middle class managed to get some of these opportunities, but in most cases they felt that they were outbidded or outplayed by the more powerful Chinese capitalists. Malay failures in the face of Chinese competition led to widespread dissatisfaction and they blamed the government for not implementing effectively the constitutional provisions regarding Malay special privileges.

From the social point of view, in addition to the new middle class groups involved in trade and industry, there also emerged a professional group including lawyers, doctors, accountants, executives and administrators. Most of them had graduated from local universities, and a large number originated from the villages and were well aware of the Malay rural situation. They had a strong desire to improve the lot of their own people. Some of them regarded the non-Malays as a threat, or at least an obstacle to the progress of the Malays in the economic and business fields. Many of them became or were already members of UMNO. There were some who really wanted to bring about changes in UMNO, but there were others who had more opportunistic motives and saw UMNO as the quickest means to reach the top. The pressure from members of this new middle class who wanted power, or at least a share in the political and economic leadership, was one of the main factors which caused the change in UMNO. They strengthened their position by mouthing pro-Malay slogans, for they knew this could attract wider support and would cause them to attain more influence among the lower strata of people and society as a whole.

It was stated earlier that, through the NOC, various members of the Malay elite were brought together. It was hoped that this new basis of organisation and politics could give a greater boost to UMNO's becoming a much stronger and bigger Malay political party. No doubt cooperation and integration already existed among the elites themselves, but there were several differences and even conflicts of interest among leaders inside and outside the government, particularly as regards UMNO and the PMIP. These political differences and conflicts of interest were regarded by government leaders as the main cause for disunity among the Malays. Hence immediate steps were taken to find a basis for

cooperation and integration between the two big Malay political parties.

As mentioned already, after the NOC was dissolved and Parliament revived, several new laws were passed to restrict public discussion of issues that were regarded as sensitive — such as the position of the Malay rulers, Malay special privileges, Islam and the national language — because these issues could arouse strong communal sentiments. These were also some of the main issues raised by the PMIP in their election campaign in 1969. The new laws restricted the movements of the PMIP and threatened to weaken its position. Further, PMIP, which controlled Kelantan, was faced with serious financial difficulties. Allocations from the Central Government were greatly needed not only for carrying out development projects, but also to pay the salaries of the state's government servants. The new laws as well as the financial difficulties of Kelantan were effectively used by UMNO as leverage to pressure the PMIP into giving its cooperation and, finally, into joining the National Front. But more important was the personal commitment of the president of the PMIP, Dato Asri, who did not have any choice but to join the National Front government in order to forestall possible government action on alleged corruption within the PMIP leadership.

There were other factors as well. It is possible that UMNO leaders were successful in convincing PMIP leaders that UMNO was already undergoing policy and leadership changes that would make it more acceptable to the PMIP. Further, the continuation of the decade-long political conflict between UMNO and PMIP would only threaten the present political power balance as well as the future of the Malays, about which the PMIP was supposed to be most concerned. It was also stressed that politicking should be reduced so that more attention could be paid to development and security. Of course the lure of participation in government as ministers, deputy ministers and parliamentary secretaries must have attracted the PMIP leaders too. So in 1973 PMIP agreed to join the government at the state level and became a component party of the National Front in 1974.

Malay unity has been the hope and dream of many people, especially the politicians. Almost every predominantly Malay party talks about the necessity of Malay unity under its own leadership. There are many reasons for this. First, there is the belief that now all that the Malays have left is their political power. The number of

Malay voters at present exceeds that of the non-Malays. There are many constituencies with Malay majorities. So, within the framework of the parliamentary democracy now in existence UMNO (or more exactly, the National Front) can remain in power only as long as the Malays are united in supporting it. That is why many UMNO leaders always remind the Malays about the unity achieved previously in opposing the Malayan Union, as an inspiration for Malay unity today. The question of Malay unity has often been associated with Malay power.

Second, political power is considered to be of vital importance in determining policies in other spheres such as economics and education, which are believed to have great potential to enhance or at least to maintain the special rights and interests of the Malays. UMNO, for instance, strongly believes that only with united Malay support will it be able to carry out programmes designed for Malay interests. If the Malays are disunited and their support is divided among the different opposing parties, their power and influence will be reduced, with the result that the policies and programmes claimed to benefit the Malays cannot be carried out. So runs the usual argument.

Third, from the point of view of security, which is closely linked to national politics and economics, it is often stressed that the country is constantly faced with the danger of communist insurrection. The government hopes that the Malays, with their strong belief in Islam, will serve as a bastion against communism. Some government leaders and security officers often stress that "the communists are Chinese and Chinese are communists". Such views are more often expressed at small, closed-door meetings, deliberately aimed at arousing Malay feelings so that they will stand united against the communists.

Various tactics and strategies may be employed to promote Malay unity for Malay power. One way is by arousing fear of other ethnic groups. Another is by using government and non-government organs to bamboozle the Malays concerning the importance of unity for the purpose of promoting the economic, political and security interests of the country as a whole, but particularly for the Malays. But the most common method is by cajoling and convincing the Malays that policies and programmes are for their interests alone. It is recognised that religion, race, language and culture are issues that can easily arouse the emotions of particular groups of people. That is why some political parties, be they Malay

or non-Malay, often exploit such issues in order to gain popular support. During the movement against the Malayan Union, the question of the Malays' survival as a race was raised as the magic slogan to mobilise united Malay support. Not long after independence, language and education became hot issues. Now the question of religion is exploited to the full as a means of achieving unity and maintaining security. Whatever the issue — religion, race or culture — all are open to political manipulation and exploitation. But this does not deny the fact that there are some individuals and groups who are sincere in their intentions over these same issues.

As political objectives, Malay unity and power are indeed laudable. Nevertheless, a number of basic questions have to be satisfactorily answered first. In the first place, unity for whom? Quite often the call for unity ultimately benefits only the leaders and not the common people. Malay 'unity' which successfully aborted the Malayan Union and later gained independence did not change the colonial economic structure, although it opened up opportunities for businessmen, contractors and capitalists to become rich. It gave more power and influence to senior politicians and better positions to civil servants, but gave little cause for happiness among the Malay school and religious teachers, for example. As for the peasantry of Kelantan, Kedah, Trengganu and Perlis, they were by and large disappointed because the earnest support they gave to the call for unity and independence did not bring the socio-economic improvement for which they had hoped. The disenchantment and frustration felt by an increasing number of people manifested itself in the declining popularity of UMNO, which was reflected by the reduced percentage of votes it obtained in 1959. One can shout all kinds of slogans in the name of Malay unity, but this is a futile effort if ultimately it only promotes self-interest and perpetuates the ruling elite.

The next question: what are the bases of unity and what effects will they have on the country and people? It is necessary to ensure that any move to unite a particular ethnic group will not result in dissension or conflict with other ethnic groups. Political and economic issues can cut across ethnic or racial lines and positively contribute towards unity within a group and also with other groups. But even these issues can create tension and cause dissension if they are influenced by ethnic or racial considerations. We have seen, during the May Thirteenth Incident, how racial politics can cause bloodshed among innocent people, destruction of pro-

perty and social dissension.

Fourth, we must define what type of leadership will hold the reins of Malay power. There are leaders who shout slogans about national independence and sovereignty, but who actually sell out the country to imperialists, neo-colonialists or big capitalists. This type of leadership is certainly unacceptable. Nor do we want leaders who talk only about poverty and development, while at the same time encouraging policies whereby the rich can freely exploit the poor. Similarly the people do not want leaders who merely mouth honesty and integrity, but who are corrupt, swearing readily in the name of Allah, but constantly living in sin. "Power to the people" must have more meaning than just being able to vote once in five years. That phrase must signify the people's ability to determine the nature of leadership in the country. Malay power must be based on the power of the less-privileged and the poor.

Actually total unity within a particular ethnic group or between different ethnic groups cannot be easily achieved. Under normal circumstances there will always be differences and conflicts of view. When referring to Malay power, it has often been alleged by certain groups, inside and outside the country, that the Malays monopolise political power which they use to benefit their own community. These allegations are based on the fact that the sultans and most ministers and civil servants are Malay, and also on the fact that the constitution safeguards Malay privileges. In fact there are even a few among the Malay ruling elite who make similar claims, just to appeal to the Malay masses in order to ensure the success of their policies. But not all those who are in power are Malays. In traditional society the sultans and chiefs were in power and they were Malays, but they constituted only a small fraction of the total Malay population; therefore this fact did not mean that all the Malays held political power. Today, the majority of the ruling political elite are Malays, but they constitute a minor fraction of the Malay society. Most of them are in the upper class or upper-middle class. They provide many opportunities to the non-Malay economic elite to share power with them. The ideology that they promote has an inherent quality which protects and furthers their own class interests, and the policies that they carry out are often for their own advantage, not for that of the masses of people in the lower classes.

From the above discussion it is clear that the political objectives of promoting Malay unity and power are meaningless unless they are oriented to the type of ideology, politics and leadership that can

really benefit the common people, especially the poor. Nor should they serve to strengthen the position of foreign monopoly-capitalists together with local capitalists so that they can continue to exploit the country and the poor. The politics of Malay power can only be meaningful if they are directed towards achieving genuine unity based on the unity of the less privileged lower class who form the majority of the population, not to cause dissension and bloodshed; they can be meaningful only if used genuinely to safeguard national independence and not to encourage imperialism and neo-colonialism to persist in new forms.

IV Religion

In this country almost all Malays are Muslims. Although Hindu beliefs were widespread in this part of the world many centuries ago, we do not often hear of a Malay being a Hindu today. This is quite different from Indonesia where the spread of Hinduism and its culture have left many adherents, particularly in East Java and Bali. The influence of Islam on the Malays is very deep-seated; from the time they discarded their animistic beliefs and embraced Islam during the days of the Melaka kingdom, the Malays have never changed their religion. Before and after the coming of the British, Christian missions were active especially through schools. Initially, Malays were reluctant to send their children to English-medium schools for fear of their being converted to Christianity; but eventually they became wiser and adopted English education. No Malay pupil became a Christian. Not so with the Chinese and Indians, many of whom left their faiths to embrace Christianity or at least adopted Christian names.

Any Malay who tries to change his religion will face strong sanctions or downright condemnation from his family and community. The fact that we never hear about conflicts within the family or the community over this issue proves that the Malays hold to the Muslim faith very firmly. However, the attitude of an individual toward his religion differs from person to person; there are those who believe deeply and practise it fervently and there are those who hardly practise it at all, whose faith is only skin-deep, despite the fact that they have been born Muslims. We have seen many Malays, who seldom pray or fast as required by Islam, but become emotionally upset when Islam is criticised, especially by a non-Muslim. At the same time there are Malays who may not know even the "ABC's" of Islam, who literally live in sin, but who, when asked about their faith, will proudly say, "I am a Muslim". The constitution does not allow others to induce Malays to leave Islam; the consequences are serious when a Malay leaves his religion, even of his own volition (Constitution, II [4]).

Although Malays are Muslims, the influence of traditional beliefs is still strong among them. Manifestations of these beliefs

can be seen in all aspects of Malay life — social, economic, political, in health practices and even in love. These traditional beliefs, widespread among the Malays of today, are the continuation of the belief systems which existed before the spread of Islam in this region. It is difficult to reconstruct the old belief systems which are based on what is called animism. In animism it is believed that there exist many types of supernatural powers which inhabit or protect everything surrounding man — the mountains, hills, — even molehills — lakes, rivers and streams, the sea and sky, trees, and even a worm-eaten tree trunk. Man makes all kinds of requests to these supernatural powers through persons who have expertise in supernatural affairs, and who resort to all kinds of ritual in which members of the community concerned sometimes participate.

At a glance it is clear that animistic beliefs are opposed to Islam. But how is it that they persist until today in Malay society? Why do the Malays, with their faith in Islam, hold on to these traditional beliefs? These questions can be answered if we look at this system of belief or religion from three aspects: (a) ritual, (b) functionaries, and (c) doctrine. These three levels are not isolated from but are related to one another. At each level one can perceive the processes of conflict and accommodation between traditional beliefs and religion.

At the ritual level we can see many forms of activities carried out in Malay society. Let us take three examples, namely, marriage (social), cultivation (economic) and curing the sick (medical). In marriage there are many rituals such as "sounding out" *(merisik)*, asking for the hand in marriage *(meminang)*, delivery of expenses *(hantar belanja)*, the ceremonial sitting on the dais *(bersanding)*, eating face to face *(makan beradap)* and so forth. These rituals have been carried out for generations as part of the cultural heritage of the Malays. There is nothing in Islam that expressly states whether these should or should not be done. If ever there is anything that seems to go against the spirit of Islam, it is the lavish expense of some of these rituals, which creates waste *(membazir)* and encourages haughtiness *(riak)*. But generally speaking if they are performed in a moderate manner, they are permissible *(harus)*. It should be remembered that even if all the traditional rituals are carried out in the best manner possible, the marriage is not considered legitimised until and unless all the conditions of marriage according to Islam (such as the utterance of the marriage contract [*ijab kabul*] in front of witnesses) are faithfully fulfilled by the bride and groom. Among the Malays

we can see the integration of both the traditional rituals and Islam. As in the case of marriage, the demands of both tradition and religion are met.

In cultivation there are also several rituals that have become part and parcel of the traditional belief system associated with economic matters. There are rituals for every stage of cultivation: during planting, during the interim and during harvest. For example, in certain places, when the time comes for planting rice seedlings, the peasants collect some leaves, yellow rice and a handful of *padi* to be blessed by the magician *(pawang)*. The leaves are planted in the nursery beds with the following utterances: "Praise be to you, *(salam)* Oh my Father, the Sky and my Mother, the Earth, please take care of our gems." The yellow rice is scattered over the beds followed by three invocations to Muhammad *(salawat)*. The *salam* and *salawat* are Islamic elements that have been integrated into the traditional ritual. But the ritual itself can lead to belief in powers other than God *(syirik)* if the help sought for protecting the plants is made to the spirits of the land and not to Allah. Perhaps the *salam* and *salawat* signify that the ritual is subordinated to the Islamic faith, as will be discussed later.

So also is the case with curing illness. According to traditional belief, illness is caused by spirits or devils entering a person as a result of sorcery. The way to cure the illness is by chasing away the spirits, and only a magician or "medicine man" *(dukun)* has the supernatural power to do this. He carries out his own rituals when treating the sick person. Usually incense is burnt and the medicine man chants his verses; sometimes he goes into a trance, and it is during such a state that he treats his patient. A piece of yellow or black cloth, according to the individual choice or practice of the medicine man, is used to flog the body of the patient and drive away the spirit that has caused the illness. In some of these rituals the only elements of Islam found are the invocation of praise to Allah *(Bismillah)* and the names of God and His prophets in the magical verses. In some other cases the prayers may be in Arabic, sometimes quotations from the Quran, and the element of supernatural power induced to drive away the spirits is the Muslim jinn.

The second aspect concerns the functionaries who play the leading role in the various rituals explained above. For cultivation there is the specialist who invokes the prayers and for treating illness there is the medicine man. They are actually the function-

aries in the belief system, and the most important among them are known as *pawang* or *bomoh*. They have acquired this specialised magical knowledge and supernatural power in various ways, from their elders, or through dreams or by living in seclusion. This magical knowledge holds guarded secrets and has very little to do with Islam. The prayers and verses that are invoked and the symbols that are used on a talisman are sometimes based on quotations from the Quran or various appellations of Allah. Some may not know much about Islam, but a few are quite religious and claim that their source of knowledge is Islam, particularly the Quran.

Between those who rely on the Quran and those who do not, there exist differences and conflict regarding their source of power, ability and the type of medium they use. Those relying on the Quran are easily accepted at village level by such religious functionaries as the prayer leaders *(imam)*, religious teachers and others; however, those who do not base their practice on Islam are looked upon with suspicion. Whatever the religious functionaries may think of them, the *pawang* and *bomoh* retain a special niche in the hearts and minds of the Malays, especially amongst the village folks. The functionaries of traditional beliefs exist side by side with the religious functionaries, each playing his role in his own area of expertise. In fact there are some religious functionaries who also have roles as functionaries in the traditional belief system.

Although there seems to be some integration of traditional and Islamic elements, in addition to some coexistence between the religious and traditional functionaries, the relationship is quite different from the third aspect of doctrine. According to the principal doctrine of Islam, Allah is One and Omnipotent, and He is the source and cause of everything. He gives life and causes death; He creates and destroys. Any contrary belief to the effect that there is another power which makes plants grow well or causes a man to be ill or die is against Islam. In the traditional system there are beliefs in supernatural powers that can cause certain things to happen: ghosts, satans and evil spirits. There are the functionaries who claim that they can make use of these powers as mediums to perform their will for good or evil. Quite a few Malays strongly hold to these traditional beliefs and have great faith in their functionaries. How do they allow these beliefs to exist side by side with Islam? And how do traditional functionaries rationalise their position and role?

There are two explanations. First, they contend that it is indeed

Allah who causes everything, while the ghosts, spirits and satans are only the means. Therefore, if someone wants to hurt anyone he dislikes by using spirits and ghosts, he will not succeed unless Allah wills it so. In other words, the powers that the spirits and ghosts possess are limited, and whether they are effective or not depends on the Power and Will of Allah. Second, whatever help is sought from traditional functionaries is considered merely an initiative *(akhtiar)*. So when the *pawang* or *bomoh* carries out his functions, he is just acting on his own initiative. Whether the initiative succeeds or not depends entirely on Allah. It is clear therefore that traditional beliefs are subjected to the belief in Islam. But whether the ordinary Malay really puts his faith in the *pawang* or *bomoh*, or places his faith in the Will of Allah, or whether he is conscious that he is only making a personal initiative when he resorts to traditional belief, is hard to say. It is entirely up to the individual.

Although there is a trend that allows for traditional rituals and their functionaries to exist on the basis that they are subjected and do not exist as alternatives to the Power of God, there is also another trend that calls for the elimination of the traditional belief system. Ghosts, satans and spirits do not exist within the context of Islamic doctrine, and believing in them is against Islam. Of course the Quran speaks about such supernatural beings as angels, jinns and devils *(iblis)*, but their forms, origins and functions are not the same as those held within the traditional system. Furthermore, since belief in Islam is not really very deep among the common people, there is always the possibility that their beliefs in ghosts and spirits will supersede their belief in Allah, which is tantamount to polytheism *(syirik)*, a cardinal sin in Islam.

But why do traditional beliefs still persist in Malay society? Probably they have become part and parcel of Malay life, part of the Malay cultural heritage. They are related to social and economic values and to the activities of the Malays, and as long as these exist so also will traditional beliefs remain. Although there are counter trends to traditional beliefs, they have not become very strong or effective. At the village level not many religious people really understand or can effectively argue that traditional beliefs are contrary to Islam and should be rejected. At the supra-village level, although there are authorities like the religious departments, and movements like the missionary groups, they have not been able to eradicate traditional beliefs from Malay society.

As traditional beliefs are still strongly rooted in Malay society, it

may not be wrong to imply that Islam as generally practised among the Malays is only skin-deep. The roots lie in the history of Islam itself and in its development in the region. Islam was spread in this region in an informal and rather unsystematic way. During the peak of the Melaka kingdom, the position of Islam was closely linked with the power of that kingdom. The upper class, particularly the sultan, played an active role in spreading the teachings of Islam. Some teachers and religious men were brought all the way from Arabia or India, and, under the sultan's patronage, taught the fundamentals of the religion to the aristocrats and chiefs. The common people merely followed and thus never gained a sophisticated understanding of the laws and philosophy of Islam. This pattern of development also took place during the time of the Acehnese sultanate. But after the decline of these kingdoms, following the expansion of colonialism, the situation changed. Nevertheless Islam has become an integral part of Malay life and culture. It has been passed down through each generation and has gathered a large following among the people. An important channel through which the teachings of Islam are transmitted is, of course, the family.

It is a well-known fact that the family is an important institution for the perpetuation of culture in society. The transmission of cultural elements from parents to children takes place through the process of socialisation. Through this process the children observe, imitate and participate in the activities of the parents. There are social controls in the family and society to ensure that the children will not deviate from what is practised by the parents. Islam makes it incumbent upon the parents, especially the father, to advise and teach their children who have come of age to perform all the compulsory religious rituals. Instruction on the practice of the important rites, especially those pertaining to the five daily prayers and fasting, takes place at home. When the father prays the little children will follow, and during fasting month they share in the joys of breaking fast. The elder children participate, either through conviction, out of respect or because they have no choice. There are some family heads who are knowledgeable about the fundamentals of Islam, and so are able to enlighten their family members as to the whys and wherefores of performing certain rituals. But their number is relatively small. Most of them just follow blindly *(taklid)* and for them performing the prayers and fasting is merely to avoid the criticism and sanctions of other members of society. For

some, these rituals have even less significance.

The common tendency is for Islam to spread as a cultural trait, emphasis being placed more on the rituals which are performed, without full understanding of their significance. Islam has become an important factor for promoting social relations, and its significance in maintaining unity and solidarity at the village level cannot be underestimated. Usually the village mosque or *surau* serves as an important centre for religious as well as social activities. Even those who do not normally perform the daily prayers will attend the mosque on Fridays, and particularly so in the case of the Id congregations. For them the prayer is nothing more than mere ritual. So, when they perform it occasionally in public, members of society will take note that they are faithful to Islam. In other words prayer serves a social purpose. It becomes a way of identifying oneself with and not isolating oneself from existing social values. But then this devalues the real significance of Islam itself. Due to the lack of knowledge and understanding of the philosophy behind prayer, its social aspect is made paramount.

This is also true with regard to the non-compulsory aspects of Islam. For example, when a death occurs in the village, all the villagers will visit the family and pay their respects to the departed. The family of the deceased, who may not be the praying type, and may be quite ignorant of the fundamentals of Islam, will usually insist on reciting the *tahlil*. A feast will follow, and they will feel disappointed if it ends too soon, as if the ritual has not been satisfactorily performed. Rituals and again rituals. They are always uppermost with most Malays. The true essence of the teachings of Islam tends to be ignored. But villagers may not be the only guilty ones. The lavishly organised, annual Prophet's birthday celebrations and the Quran-reading competitions have become part of the national life and amply demonstrate that the leaders themselves, who ought to know better, also lay greater stress on ritual and ceremony rather than on the essential teachings and philosophy of Islam.

When Islam, or for that matter any religion, is thus degraded to the level of ritual, what then can really distinguish it from the traditional beliefs? How can it be asserted over and above the traditional beliefs which are contradictory to Islam? The day may come when Islam, like the traditional beliefs, may be regarded as nothing more than just one aspect of the total culture. As a "cultural aspect" it can exist side by side with other aspects of the cultural milieu. It will be a sad day indeed when the status of Islam is down-graded to

the level of traditional belief, regarded as nothing more than another aspect of Malay culture.

Lest I may be misunderstood, it must be emphasised that it is not my intention here to put forward the view that religion is no more than ritual or ceremony. The point is that among a large proportion of Malays the ritual or ceremonial aspects are often more emphasised than the true doctrine and philosophy. In other words, the social rather than the theological significance of religion is of greater concern to them. It would be misleading to say that efforts and institutions for the spreading of Islam are non-existent in the village. In fact we can find in most villages, especially in Kedah and Kelantan, the traditional centres for teaching and learning Islam have been long established. These are the *pondok* schools. One cannot miss seeing this picturesque institution, an interesting residential teaching system in which the students live in a cluster of huts around the house of the *guru* or the main "school building". These schools are mostly in the rice-growing areas. The *pondok* institutions are usually situated in predominately Malay areas. This is understandable since these institutions and their *gurus* have to depend on tithes *(zakat)* of padi in order to sustain themselves.

Some of the religious teachers and elders in the *pondok* schools are well-known for their extensive knowledge of Islam and a few have written noteworthy religious tracts. Many are also highly respected as Sufi mystics. But unfortunately these institutions do not seem to be progressive if viewed from the methods and content of their instruction. In fact, many of those who have completed their studies at such schools have a narrow view of the world. For a long time the *pondok* communities have been closed to the outside world and not very much involved with many of the happenings around them. The method of teaching and learning is by rote which does not encourage critical thinking. What is emphasised are the rules and laws pertaining to Islamic practices. This is necessary, of course, but at least it should be balanced by some studies in depth of the history and philosophy of Islam, in comparison with other religions and also with a knowledge of science and other modern subjects.

As was explained earlier, when the British came it was agreed that all matters of administration in the Malay states, except those pertaining to Islam and Malay customs, would be taken over by the British. According to the agreement, religion was clearly separated from secular matters such as politics, administration, law,

economics, education and so forth. Islam and Malay customs were under the jurisdiction of the sultans while the rest came under the British. There were two implications from this agreement as far as the position of Islam in the country was concerned. First, development in all matters other than religion was to be implemented along lines determined by the British and according to their own models. The effect of this on Islam in Malay society was negative. I shall elaborate. Second, under the sultan the management and administration of Islam was organised according to modern lines. Superficially this sounds attractive, but what really happened?

One of the first steps taken was the formation of Islamic Councils or Departments in all the Malay states. Melaka and Penang did not have similar councils until after independence, probably because it was not thought possible without a sultan; the British governors for both these states were not appropriate authorities to symbolise the protection of Islam. In the Malay states the religious councils became the administrative centres for all religious affairs. They administered the collection of religious tithes which were the main source of their income. Each religious council had its own treasury to collect revenue and disburse expenditure. From the tithes the councils financed the building of mosques, religious courts and schools; officials of the councils and subsidiary bodies were paid from the same sources.

For the administration of its day-to-day affairs, the religious council has a head or president, secretary and several officials. They need not be religiously qualified or educated, for they act only as ordinary administrators and so need no such qualification. For them the council is no more than an administrative structure and they are the staff responsible for its smooth running. The person responsible for all religious matters in the states is a *mufti*. Sometimes the *mufti*'s department is situated in the council building itself and sometimes not, but the important thing is that he and his department are both under the Religious Council. His appointment is made by the sultan. He is responsible for giving religious opinions *(fatwa)* and views on various problems, and he is the source of advice and direction on all religious matters in the state. Under the *mufti* is a *kadzi* who is head of religious administration in the district and a judge for the religious court. There is usually a *kadzi* for each district, and his office also serves as the court. To administer the office there are often some officers and clerks. Under the *kadzi* is the *imam*, whose normal duties are to lead group

prayers, read sermons to Friday congregations, officiate in Muslim marriages, and serve as the tithe collector. In the mosque, under the *imam* is the *bilal* whose special duty is to make the call for prayers and also occasionally bathe the dead. Below him is the *noja*, serving as caretaker to look after the cleanliness of the mosque.

The religious functionaries from the *mufti* and the *kadzi* right down to the *imam*, *bilal* and *noja* are holders of positions that have been bureaucratised. They have become government servants who are paid monthly salaries, appointed on the basis of selection and merit, and can be promoted or demoted, depending on circumstances. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of them have become mere tools of the government in the name of religion, and are not courageous enough to criticise the various anti-religious practices that are widespread in society, especially if such criticism would reflect badly on the government. But the bureaucratisation process has not reached the villages. Most of the old village mosques and prayer houses were built by the villagers themselves or by their forefathers, from their own collections, and it was only after independence and the introduction of the rural development schemes that mosques were built with government aid. Except for the state and district mosques, until this day almost none of the village *imam* and *bilal* are regarded as officers of the Religious Council, and thus do not receive fixed salaries although their letters of authority are issued by the same body. Nevertheless they take orders from and abide by the decisions of officers from the Council.

Although all states have their own *mufti*, *kadzi*, mosques and religious courts, not every state has schools administered under the religious councils. Among the states where religious schools are well organized are Johore and Kelantan. In Johore the religious schools sessions are held in the afternoon using the same premises used by the Malay schools in the morning. Religious education lasts six years, and the curriculum covers various aspects of Islam — its doctrine, law, economy and so forth. After the sixth year promising pupils attend another extra year when classes are held on Saturdays; those who pass will have the chance to become religious teachers. The situation is quite different in Kelantan. The schools built by the religious council there are often referred to as council schools. Although the core of education provided centres around Islam, subjects like mathematics, history and geography are also taught. There are not many of these schools, and now they are

slowly being replaced by the new national and national-type schools under the Ministry of Education. In Johore the religious teachers are paid by the state government, while in Kelantan, they are paid by the religious council. In other words they have been absorbed into the bureaucracy.

We turn now to the first implication of the agreement between the sultans and the British. As has been mentioned above, all non-religious or secular matters were administered under the British along the British model. Various departments were established to administer land, education, law and order, security and other civil matters. These departments and their serving officers far outnumbered the religious departments. The expenses of all of them were met from revenues collected by the states. These state revenues, which were in the form of different types of taxes, totalled much more than the religious tithes collected by the religious departments. The financial basis of secular administration was therefore always more firm and secure. All the laws and regulations introduced were taken almost *in toto* from the British, and they were separated from the Muslim laws, which were used only by the relevant religious departments to deal with matters affecting Muslims. Courts of all levels were established and magistrates and judges were appointed. None of the civil and criminal laws and codes adopted by these courts contained any element of Islam. Furthermore, under the British a strong educational system was established from primary to university levels; the buildings were bigger, the equipment better and the teachers better qualified than those in the religious or council schools. The secular schools used the English medium and certificates issued by them were valued more than those from the religious schools.

The point to emphasise here is that, although religious administration appeared organised, and in theory should have been stronger, in practice it was limited in scope and not firmly based. The religious and secular administrations existed side by side, with the latter having wider jurisdiction, more staff and better finance. Secular administration was based entirely on the British model. Although it appeared that religious administration was strengthened under the sultan, it was actually weakened by the competition from the secular administration, which was always strongly supported by the government. Elements of Western colonialism have resulted in the weakening or even obstruction of Islam and its administration in the country.

Turning from administrative organisation to its personnel, we also find that developments in various fields also had some negative influence on the level of religiousity among members of society. As was explained earlier, towards the end of the last century and at the beginning of the present one, many towns sprang up. The process of urbanisation naturally has had its effects on the Malays. There is a tendency for religious values not to be strongly adhered to by urban people. Sometimes, owing to the wide generation gap, a family becomes ineffective as an institution for carrying out the process of religious socialisation. At the same time life in the town is more individualistic and often even neighbours do not care about one another.

Unlike those living in the rural areas, urban people normally do not impose strong sanctions on those, for instance, who do not pray. A person in the town feels more free to do whatever he likes, whether walking hand in hand with a girl-friend into a cinema during the time for Friday prayer, drinking beer or stout in a coffee shop or consuming one glass of whisky after another in a hotel, gambling in a small way in an amusement park or on a big scale in Genting Highlands. There are many places for doing all kinds of things that are considered to be sinful by Islam. The position of Islam being what it is in this country, it has no effective control over all these activities. Besides that, the kind of job and working hours in some factories or departments make it difficult for workers to perform regular prayers, and only those who are deeply religious will replace the prayers missed when they return home. Furthermore, the influence of secular education makes youth cynical towards the role of religion and its functionaries.

The discussion hitherto has shown that in the villages and among people of the lower class Islam has been diluted by traditional beliefs, while in the towns and especially among the upper and middle classes it has been weakened by the style of life associated with the more modern West which came in with colonialism and which still persists today. The capitalists, who are strongly motivated by the desire to make quick money, are ever willing to build hotels, tourist complexes and even gambling centres, all of which also provide facilities for prostitution and other kinds of vices. But none of this matters according to them; after all, more tourists can be attracted, state revenues will increase and naturally people will become richer. In the same way different kinds of attire, which attract youth especially, flood the market. Various patterns

of trousers and shirts are advertised by exploiting sexy pictures of young girls, in order to entice the young. Indeed the Coca-cola and dungaree culture is widely disseminated here by the West. Through the mass media a way of life and values that are actually opposed to Eastern lifestyles and religious morals are widely propagated. The process of cultural subversion is widespread. All this helps to weaken morals and religious convictions.

A deep sense of unease about the negative influences of traditional beliefs on one hand, and the evil effects of sensual imperialist culture on the other, has long been felt by some groups, including religious leaders. At the turn of the century there emerged people like Syed Sheikh Alhady and Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin, who desired to see progressive changes among the Muslims here. They started movements which were inspired by Muslim modernists who were beginning to be influential in the Middle East. They both regarded Islam as being opposed to imperialism, and wanted to see the Malays rise and modernise on their own strength by following the tenets of Islam. They also maintained that traditional beliefs weakened the spirit of the Malays. Syed Sheikh and Tahir Jalaluddin published books and magazines, opened schools and carried out polemics against what they considered to be wrongful practices among the Malays. They were often referred to as modernists, and the modernist movement was widespread not only in this country but also in Indonesia, where a number of such leaders were accused of opposing the Dutch, and were arrested. In the Peninsula there were no such arrests, but the movement was obstructed, especially by the patrons and leaders of the new religious institutions which were encouraged by the British right from their early colonial intervention. Probably the modernist movement was considered dangerous because it was beginning to challenge the *status quo*.

Lately there has been a new wave of development towards what appears to be a religious revivalism among Muslims in this country. In the past one or two decades, many Muslim countries (i.e. those with majority Muslim population) have been holding summit meetings in order to organise themselves as a united force. The struggle of the Palestinian people against Zionism and for their birthright has also given rise to a new consciousness among most Muslim states that they should be united in support of this struggle. Some of the Arab states have emerged as economic powers that should not be underestimated owing to their control over huge oil

resources. Earnings from petrol have enabled these states to help other Muslim and Third World countries, and also to support the Muslim missionary movements in various parts of the world. In many of these Muslim states there have emerged organisations which carry out research and missionary activities that they consider to be essential to meet the ever-growing challenges of what they consider to be destructive and decadent Western culture.

External developments have also had some influence over developments within the country. But even here conditions already exist which have encouraged religious missionary activities. There is a large body of people who are dissatisfied with the position of Islam in this country, even though it has been given official status. They see that the new secular developments have weakened Islam among the Malays. They do not want to see Islam continue to decline and the Malays become more ignorant of its tenets. They are also unhappy over various influences that are undermining morality, especially among the young. An interesting phenomenon is that the process of religious revivalism is active now particularly among students in institutions of higher learning as well as among graduates from these institutions. Other aspects of this movement are not entirely religious in nature, but have social and political implications as well. The increase in missionary *(dakwah)* groups and activities in this country has risen dramatically, especially after the May Thirteenth Incident. This traumatic event caused many people to revert to traditional beliefs which are felt to possess the potential for uniting the Malays, wherein unity is regarded as strength.

It was during the National Operations Council (NOC) administration that the PMIP, which is regarded by many Malays as a champion of their rights and of Islam, cooperated with the Alliance in the National Consultative Committee (NCC), and later in 1974 joined the National Front government. The move by the PMIP was looked upon by some of its followers as a betrayal of the original party policies. As was mentioned before, following this, issues such as the national language, Malay privileges and citizenship, which had often been raised by the PMIP before, were banned from public discussion. So, the PMIP was left only with religion through which to take up cudgels with the government. It is not surprising that some groups later raised the issue of religion to criticise the PMIP leadership and the National Front, and by so doing they claimed they were championing the cause of Islam.

Another factor which further strengthened the religious trend

was the encouragement given by the government itself, which wanted to disseminate Islamic teachings among the Malays as a shield against the threat of communist ideology. The Third Malaysia Plan expresses this succinctly in the passage that reads: "An additional source of strength is that Islam and the other religions practised in this country continue to provide a strong bulwark against insidious communist propaganda. The youths in both rural and urban areas of the country have an important role in this regard" (1976:101). According to government sources, even the communists are using religion in order to gain influence.

Clearly the encouragement and motivation for the widespread religious activities and missionary movements of today are many and varied. The activities encouraged by socio-political factors will not have a lasting effect in the long run on the development of Islam within society or in the creating of a true Muslim. Those who are involved usually conceive of religion only as a political issue; as long as religion can draw support and votes it will be exploited to the full. But after political success is achieved, that which they can implement in the religious field is limited, limited by their own political stand and by the consideration of loss and gain if religious issues continue to be whipped up. We have seen how the PMIP, in spite of its earlier claim to be the champion of Islam and the Malays, was unable to bring any change consistent with Islam when it achieved power in Kelantan. Under its administration, immoral activities which had been so rampant in the state before were neither reduced nor even brought under control. For about four years, as a member of the National Front government, the PMIP cooperated with parties whose policies it had branded as anti-Islamic, heretical and a sellout to the Chinese, and in fact supported many policies to which it had been formerly opposed. What has happened to this party can happen to any other which uses Islam only as a tool for gaining power.

The problem is quite different for groups which carry out missionary activities with the idea of disseminating Islam without any involvement in party politics. Their activities have two objectives. The first is to strengthen religious convictions among Muslims who are encouraged to study Islam more deeply, to carry out its teachings, and as far as possible, to follow the path of the Prophet in their daily lives. It is true that among highly-educated youths and those in the upper and middle classes who used to be influenced by materialistic and western values, there are an in-

creasing number now who have turned to religion in a serious way. But among many of them most of the activities are concentrated at the ritualistic and ceremonial level. Really deep knowledge about Islam is still lacking. That is why some of them are easily misled into extreme postures. Some mistakenly believe that a good Muslim must pray all the time, isolating himself from all worldly things, leaving behind his responsibilities to family and society, and rejecting all the pleasures bestowed by God on this earth. This trend is not widespread yet, but certainly it should not be encouraged by religious movements today.

The second objective deals with questions that are external to the self. Among many Muslims there exists the desire to establish an Islamic social system, and a state power based on the principles laid down in the Quran and the Hadith (Traditions). The groups which try to achieve this objective must first of all overcome the two problems which tend to weaken Islam: the negative influences of traditional beliefs and of westernised culture. Besides that they must be convinced that their objective is not merely a beautiful dream but actually something that can be achieved politically. What is meant by Islamic social, economic and political systems must be clarified, and the concept of the Islamic state must be explained thoroughly. It is not easy to wipe out the internal and external influences which weaken Islam. But it is more difficult to establish an Islamic social system and an Islamic state. This objective cannot be achieved merely by fervent missionary work, attractive ways of influencing people, or persuasive methods of winning over the minds of those in authority.

In the final analysis it is clear that political power is essential. It is at this point that the Muslim missionary activities will be faced with a dilemma. Do they want to participate in politics? If they do, how and when should they begin? By themselves or by affiliating with existing parties? What should be the nature of their political philosophy? If based on Islam, what form should it take? Which model should it follow out of the various states which claim now to be based on Islam? Arabia? Egypt? Libya? Algeria? Pakistan? It is not possible to follow all at the same time. But which one? If none of them should serve as a model, what then? The Quran and Hadith provide only the foundation. But what sort of structure is going to be built on it? All the above questions need to be analysed and answered. It is necessary to give clear and convincing answers and to demonstrate firm stands. These stands will determine the

future positions of the missionary groups in the country. The *dakwah* activities cannot afford to play hide-and-seek with politics much longer.

V Society

According to social scientists there are at least four important social groups in human society, each based on the following factors: (a) family, (b) locality, (c) ethnic background, and (d) shared interests. The family group is determined by sanguineal and affinal relationships. There are small nuclear families comprising husband, wife and children, and there are big extended families consisting of husband, wife, children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, in-laws and so forth. In some societies it is the family group that is most important. The family members carry out their socio-economic activities together, and if they do not have a fixed place to stay they move from one area to another without breaking up. Groups based on factor (b) usually take the form of communities with fixed places of residence. They are much bigger than families and have more members. In any community there may be some who have family ties within the community while others do not. In addition, there may also be those who have relatives in different localities. In these cases it is the locality or place of residence that is the most important binding factor and which serves as a basis for social, economic and political activities.

Groups based on factor (c), which are based on common descent, are known often as ethnic or communal groups. They consist of members from different families and locality groups. Group members as well as non-members believe they have a common ancestry. They have strong group feelings, not only because of the common descent but also because they inherit a common culture, religion and language. These common elements are often a pride to them and readily defended.

If an ethnic group can take a vertical form, an interest group, (d), may be pictured horizontally. A society with different interest groups may be perceived as being stratified according to various groups with different status ranking. Economic and political power as well as social prestige are different from one group to another, and more often than not these factors are concentrated more in the higher than the lower strata. So, differences in interests may exist between different social strata, and similar interests may exist

within the same stratum. Any society with different interest groups which can be ranked hierarchically is often said to be a stratified society.

In this chapter we shall turn our attention to groups (a), (b) and (d), concentrating mainly on their development and problems. The discussion on group (c) will follow in Chapter VIII.

Before any misunderstanding arises it may be well to emphasise that each group need not exist separately. It is also untrue to say that one factor determines or forms the basis of one group. For example, there may be locality groups whose members have close family relationships, and there may be locality groups that have economic, political and social differences existing to such an extent that we can clearly see its stratification system. A village society, for instance, is based on common locality, and whereas its stratification system may not be clearly seen, more often than not its members have close kinship ties. In the same manner it is possible to have certain members in a particular interest group who form only one stratum in society having family ties. Furthermore, although it is common to have people of the same interest group living in a common locality, it is also possible to have them staying in different localities. The point is that the type of group is categorised according to which factor is most dominant in determining its form. If the family factor is most dominant, and there is no basis for social stratification, then we say that the group is primarily a family group. But on the other hand if the factor of interest overrides all others in determining group formation, or if factors of kinship and locality further buttress the position of interest groups, then we say that the society has a stratified system where each stratum constitutes an interest group.

In the old Malay society, family and locality groups tended to dominate. During the Mesolithic age, for instance, it is believed that the social groups were in the form of extended families made up of a number of smaller families. But during the Neolithic period, these groups became bigger and more settled, forming communities by the rivers or coasts and in the middle of agricultural areas. Economic and social cooperation was carried out by members of the communities based on different factors, the most important being family ties. Differences in interests led to the formation of a stratified system. Therefore, there began to be members of the community who were looked upon as being of higher status than other members. This situation was clearly seen

during the Melaka kingdom and also in other Malay societies before the arrival of British colonial rule. To facilitate discussion, the type of Malay social system existing before this colonial intrusion may be referred to as the traditional system.

The traditional Malay society may be said to have been feudal in form; it was strong and integrated at the height of the Melaka kingdom, but later weakened and disintegrated after the kingdom's collapse. Under the feudal system there existed two main strata of society, the ruling or upper class and the ruled or lower class. The upper class was made up of the sultan, his family and chiefs. This group was rather small, but as already explained in Chapter III, it had extensive political and economic power. Socially it was highly respected and a refined form of language was used for addressing its members. The lower class was made up of common people, including slaves. They lived outside the palace compounds, or in villages where they undertook agricultural or fishing activities. They did not have any political power and economically they often owned only enough land and equipment to provide for their own needs.

Between the upper and lower classes there was a wide social gap. The two groups did not mix. They lived separately, with the sultan and his family living inside the palace compound. Marriage occurred only among those of the same status, and usually these marriages further strengthened the social links among members of the upper class. Men from the upper class could take a wife or concubine from among the lower class women, but it was impossible for a lower class man to take a wife from the upper class. This was to preserve the royal descent, and it was this factor that determined the position inherited by a person, because status was ascribed. Achievement was not important. But it was possible for a person from among the lower class to be presented with a new attire *(persalinan)* and appointed as chief because of the services he had rendered to the sultan. Upward mobility was difficult although it sometimes occurred. But downward mobility was more common. For instance, a once powerful ruler might slide down in prestige and power should he be defeated in battle, forcing him to live as a common refugee or even a slave to his conqueror. This uncertain situation was quite a common feature of the Malay sultanates, especially when they started to decline after the fall of Melaka.

Although it was clear that society was stratified, with the upper class having and controlling economic and political interests quite

separately from the lower class, the family and locality factors still had some role to play. But these roles were different for different classes. For example, among the upper ruling class there existed strong family ties between its members, and these strengthened the solidarity of the class. But these family ties never cut across the social boundaries to reach the lower class. Likewise, among the lower class there was an important locality unit in the village, which indicated close kinship ties between some of its members. On the basis of these social ties many activities were carried out by members of the same village, such as mutual assistance and feasting, and various forms of cooperation in the economic field. Besides that, they also participated in rituals that were organised amongst themselves. For example, before the fishermen went to sea or the farmers began a new planting of the rice fields or in order to drive away evil spirits believed to be the cause of illness, certain rituals would be performed by village members. With these social ties and mutual participation in ritualistic and economic activities, the relations among members of the village were further consolidated.

What about the position of women in society at that time? On the whole their status was low, but there were distinct differences in the context of the upper and lower classes. In the royal court a woman served merely as an adornment or as a source of entertainment. Members of the upper class, especially the sultan, always had an unremitting desire for beautiful women, whom they had the power to obtain. The queen usually had to share the ruler's love with his legal wives and numerous concubines. Some of them were presented to the ruler either as a sign of friendship or reverence, while others were forcibly taken away from their parents or husbands the moment they caught the ruler's eyes. Palace maids and servants also were forced to provide constant companionship and pleasure.

Among the lower class the position was somewhat different. Women played a key role in the family, serving their husbands and children and undertaking many domestic duties. They also helped in economic activities, such as planting *padi* or harvesting. In certain communities which carried out small-scale trade, women participated actively. It cannot be denied that women were subordinate to, and dependent on men. As a group they had lower social status; by tradition they had to accept a lower status than their menfolk, but women in the lower class were, in many ways, nearly

equal to the men in spite of the fact that they could be easily divorced by their husbands. The upper class ladies — including the sultan's wives sometimes — were treated as mere chattels and could be given away as rewards. There were, nevertheless, outstanding figures such as Permaisuri Tun Fatimah, who asserted her position in the face of her weakling consort.

Many changes took place after the coming of the British. Several factors influenced these changes, among them (a) urbanisation, (b) industrialisation, (c) administration and politics, and (d) education. Although these factors began to appear long before independence, all four played bigger roles after that period. Their effects on the social structure were many and have continued to this day. In the following pages these factors and their influences in society will be discussed without distinguishing between the pre- and post-independence periods. As we know, the process of change has been one of constant momentum and what exists today is, in fact, the climax of changes which have been building up till now.

I have explained earlier that, with the expansion of economic and administrative activities under British rule, old towns grew and new ones emerged. Some Malays were drawn to these towns, attracted by new job opportunities there. But on the whole the percentage of Malays in the towns has not been large; in 1911 it was 17.8 percent, in 1947 it was 17.4 percent, in 1957 it was 19.3 percent and in 1970 it was 21.7 percent. These percentages represent the proportion of Malays compared with the other groups living in the towns. But if we compare the Malays in the towns with their total number in the Peninsula, then we find that the percentages are much smaller: 7.3 percent in 1947, 11.2 percent in 1957, and 14.9 percent in 1970. Although the percentage increase is small, in terms of real numbers the Malay urban population increased quite substantially. The current government policy under the New Economic Policy seeks to open new towns in order to expedite the process of urbanisation among the Malays.

The British introduced rubber and further exploited the tin mining industry. But most of the workers employed in these industries in the early days were imported from other countries. In spite of the participation of some quasi-government bodies like SEDC and PERNAS, the number of Malays working in mines today is still small, and in the estates the Malay workers made up only about 25 percent of the total number of workers. Manufacturing activities were encouraged and many factories have been opened

during the last decade or two in or near the towns of Kuala Lumpur, Georgetown, Ipoh, Seremban and Johore Bahru. This has since been extended to the smaller towns. These factories have opened up new opportunities for employment of Malay workers, and their relocation to their places of work also constitutes a process of urbanisation. Malay women are also employed in some of these factories.

Turning to the third factor, the new system of administration was introduced during British rule, and this also provided many job openings for the Malays. Many members of the upper class were recruited to be administrators under the British. Many more were taken into the clerical services. But the biggest number came from the lower class, recruited into the uniformed services of various types, from office boys and postmen right up to policemen and soldiers. Since the towns also served as administrative centres, the job-seekers in the administration became town-dwellers. After independence the elite civil service (now known as Administrative and Diplomatic Service) was filled largely by Malays; there were further openings in the other services and the lower echelons. But the most important element in the post-independence Malay society has been the emergence of new politicians.

Finally, there is the factor of education. The British recognised that schools were needed to provide some education for those to be recruited into government service. Naturally priority was given to English-medium schools. Among the earliest schools that were set up was the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar (MCKK), the aim of which was to educate and train children from the upper class to become government servants. It was patterned after Eton. When the suggestion was made that the College should open its doors to the common people, the dominant upper class opposed the idea, for they felt that each place given to a commoner would rob one of their own children of the opportunity. Of course there were other institutions of equal importance, i.e., Victoria Institution in Kuala Lumpur, King Edward VII in Taiping, King George V in Seremban and Clifford in Kuala Lipis. The University of Malaya was established in 1949 in Singapore, and the University played a key role in producing graduates needed to fill the place left vacant by the expatriate officers. The Malay language began to take a more important place as the medium of instruction in the schools. More universities and colleges were built in the late sixties and early seventies, and all of them contributed to the pool of administrators,

technicians and other professionals required in various spheres.

As for the newly-emerging politicians, most of the early leaders received their education in Arabic or Malay. As the independence movement gathered momentum and UMNO was formed, a number of English-educated Malays, especially those who had received higher education in England, left the civil service which they had joined earlier, to take up its leadership. Later, particularly during the last decade or two, many graduates of local universities have entered politics and become leading politicians either in the government or opposition parties. Most of the Malay- and religious-educated were pushed back to serve as middle-rung leaders. But a good number of the Arabic-educated, especially those graduating from the Middle East, have provided leadership for the PMIP.

Changes that have taken place can be examined from three aspects, namely: (a) transformations in the traditional social structure, (b) social problems that have arisen, and (c) new social groups that have emerged in contemporary society. Regarding (a), attention will be paid to the position of family groups. As for (b), a close look will be taken at the problem of slums, unemployment and crime; and regarding (c), new groups that have emerged and altered the stratification system will be examined.

Let us focus our attention now on the changes occurring in the traditional society. As has already been explained, the family and village groups are important in that society. In fact the influence of these groups is still strongly felt even now, especially among rural Malays. The reason is that the process of social transformation has not seeped deeply into the villages. But for the rural Malays who have migrated to the towns, the forms of family have changed somewhat. Among the urban migrants there are those who went alone first. Later they returned to the villages to fetch their wives and children, or to get married. But there are also those who marry urban girls who work in the same place with them, but this tendency is not widespread yet. The newly-weds set up their own homes far away from their relatives and villages. They form small nuclear families. In the towns their families form part of the urban community, usually much bigger than their former village. Their neighbours are strangers, not relatives or long-standing friends, and their relationships with neighbours are often not very warm, although there is usually closer affinity and solidarity among ordinary working class families than among the more affluent families.

Life in the town can sometimes be lonely and so occasionally many of them return to their families in the village, especially during illness, before childbirth or during holidays to celebrate such festivals as the *Hari Raya*.

Clearly the link with the village is still strong, even after living many years in the town. A young man or woman looking for a job in the town will often contact his relatives or friends in town, where he can expect free board and lodging while waiting to find employment. Sometimes, even after securing employment, they still try to rent or build a house near the relative's or friend's house. Because this happens quite often, we find that in certain towns, particularly in the slum areas, there exist communities where the people are related or at least come from the same state, if not the same village. In this way the atmosphere of their village of origin can be maintained. Such a continuation of the village social environment is also found in many of the Malay enclaves established in some of the towns. Besides that, the family and the village elements also have their influence on the upper class. Although not very common, we still find the practice of taking relatives or people from the same village or district for certain jobs. This practice is more widespread in political compared to administrative appointments. Even in the choice of Cabinet and Executive Council members, family as well as place of origin continue to show some influence, sometimes leading to open nepotism.

The position of women has also changed. In the village a married woman usually helps her husband in the field. But in the town the wife, unless she is working, usually remains at home while the husband goes to work. A large proportion of women, especially from the lower and middle classes, do domestic work. They cook, wash, look after the children and serve their husbands when they return home. So they have become more tied to the kitchen. The upper class wives, because their husbands have high positions and salaries, can afford to have servants and maids, and thus they do not have to do domestic work themselves, although sometimes they render some help or supervision. They have plenty of free time which they utilise by involving themselves in voluntary organisations, doing welfare work and so forth. Although some wives remain at home, there are also those who go to work, usually in places different from their husbands. The working husbands and wives meet at home only for brief periods, particularly when their working hours are different. This happens especially among

workers in the lower class. Besides going out to work the women still have to look after the home. So the burden is much heavier on them than on the husbands.

At the same time women continue to be the objects and symbols of entertainment, though in a different form and style. Their physical beauty is often exploited like an ordinary commodity. They are often shown half-exposed in advertisements. There are also many women who fall prey to prostitution. The chauvinistic males within society look down rather contemptuously upon women as a whole. The degradation of women is also manifested in the practice of providing lower wages and less facilities to those who work. There are some industries, like electronics, which prefer to take women because they are hardworking and loyal, and because they do not involve themselves very much in trade union activities. They are paid very badly.

On the other hand, there are also many women who have gone for higher education and can compete with men for high positions in administration and business. Although their work and responsibilities are the same as those of men, the opportunities open to them for promotion and lucrative positions are limited. So generally speaking, the changes that have taken place continued to keep the status of women lower than that of men.

As for social problems, many have reared their ugly heads. In Chapter II it was pointed out that in the villages, poverty has become more rampant, and the gap between the village and town folk, or the rich and the poor, is ever-increasing. The pace of migration from village to town is growing, due to growth of industries, administration and education. Not all those who go to town possess adequate qualifications or manage to get good positions and high salaries, which will enable them to live comfortably. Many of the poor in the village come to try their luck in the town. They do not possess sufficient — or sometimes any — education at all. So, at best they become labourers, office boys, gardeners, drivers, guards, policemen, soldiers and the like. Because of their low incomes they cannot afford to rent or build a decent place to live in. That is why many of them land in slum areas which are found in abundance on the fringes of bigger towns. As the flow of urban migration increases, so also the slum areas become bigger and more numerous. For example, in the Federal Territory in 1973, the total number of squatter families reached about 36,000, a total of about 200,000 people. This is more than 30 percent of the

total population of the territory. An estimate shows that about 20.4 percent of the slum dwellers were Malays.

Slum squatters continue to form the majority of the urban poor. They are from the lower class with small incomes and little prestige, and although they live in the towns they lack modern facilities. In the slums there are often no proper roads and drains, the surrounding areas are full of rubbish and filth and dirty water. Life is miserable. The situation becomes worse because many of the young squatters are unemployed. They do not have much education. Employment is hard to find. In the village an unemployed person can still help in the field, but in the town unemployment means no job and no income.

Unemployment gives rise to various social problems. One of the most serious is robbery, but there are other related criminal activities.

Unemployed youths have no income, but they have many needs. So they always feel oppressed. It is not difficult for them to gang up and indulge in drugs and crime. At first it may be done on a small scale, but later it can develop into something big and serious. Their parents cannot control them. It is true that the family can serve as a social control, but in the urban areas the traditional values that teach respect for the old have been much eroded. The sanctions in society which restrain a person from acting wildly have been weakened. So, once a social disease has set in, it easily becomes chronic and society itself feels incapable of curing it. Over and above these problems, the slum communities are not stable. On many occasions squatter homes have been demolished by the authorities. Some of these unfortunate squatters have been given small flats which are also lacking in facilities, or have shifted to other areas which are further away. Who are the poor who have to face the problems? Are they the victims of the policy of encouraging Malay urbanisation?

Among the young women and girls who have left their villages to work in factories, the problems are quite different. Usually, because of the small incomes that they earn, they have to share a house or room with their fellow workers. Life in the town, away from parental control, gives them a sense of false freedom. They readily imitate others to get some joy out of life, buying expensive dresses and going out with newly-acquired male friends. Unfortunately not all these men have noble intentions. Many a woman worker has fallen victim to some irresponsible young man and has

been left stranded and pregnant, out of wedlock. There are quite a few men who act as pimps to drag the girls into prostitution. Weak religious or moral principles, the sense of false freedom and the desire to "ensnare" a man in the wrong way, can lead these young women to all sorts of misfortunes. Many of them are sexually exploited by irresponsible pleasure-seekers, because in the town there is no protection at all for the young woman who has just left her village in search of her fortune.

Turning now to new groups that have emerged, we can discuss them within the framework of the system of social stratification existing now. Within this system three classes can be found, namely the upper, middle and lower classes. In traditional society the upper class consisted only of royalty and the chiefs, but at present there are other categories too, such as senior government politicians, administrators and entrepreneurs. The sultans still exist as symbols of sovereignty in the Malay states, while the governors head the former Straits Settlements of Penang and Melaka. The sultans and their families continue to enjoy a privileged position, but the influence of the chiefs can be said to have declined into insignificance. Politicians have emerged as a significant phenomenon after independence, the most senior among them serving at national level as cabinet ministers and as executive councillors. Some of them have family ties with members of the traditional upper class. At present most of the leading politicians have plebeian backgrounds and have attained their position more through achievement than ascription.

Administrators had already emerged and played a significant role during the time of British rule. At the beginning, status or recruitment into the civil service was through ascription, but after independence higher education has become the most important factor determining the level of achievement. Following Malayanisation, many senior positions in the civil service, judiciary, military and police have been occupied by Malaysians. Secretaries of ministries and their deputies, state secretaries, generals, and senior police officers all make up the upper crust of the bureaucracy. As for the entrepreneurs, they are the most successful in business and industries; some of them are owners or directors of various companies. After independence their number has increased, many of them coming from the ranks of active government politicians or those who have retired from politics and administration.

The middle class, which did not exist in traditional society, has

emerged now as a result of economic, politico-administrative and educational developments which took place during British rule and since independence. The middle class fills fewer political and social positions than the upper class but more than the lower class. Many of the Malays belonging to this class are government servants. This is because the Malays were always given preference in recruitment to the civil service, and after independence the Constitution fixed a quota of three Malays to one non-Malay in the service. Although most officials in administration are Malays, in the professional fields their numbers are few, for example only 13 percent of the executives, 13.5 percent of the engineers, 17.9 percent of the accountants, 11.6 percent of the scientists and 7.6 percent of the doctors are Malays (Table V). Many of these professionals work in the private sector, and they constitute an important category in the middle class of any society. In fact some of them can be categorised as being in the upper class. Other categories of people included in the middle class are those who are active in business and industries, serving as managers and executives. The Malays also form a small minority in this category, as observed in the same table.

Within the lower class, the biggest group is the Malays. The two most important categories included in this class are the peasants and workers. The working class has emerged from the growth of towns and industries. The present-day peasants are the continuation of their traditional counterparts, and now they form the largest economic category in Malay society. A large number still concentrate on traditional *padi* cultivation, but now nearly half of the Malay peasants are involved in cash crops like rubber and oil palm. They still live in the villages, but an increasing number have gone into new land settlements where community life is both planned and organised.

The workers consist of two categories, namely, those working with the government and those in the private sector. Those in government service occupy lower positions as labourers or office boys in various departments, or as rank and file in the uniformed and armed services. As for those in the private sector, they work as labourers in estates and in factories. This group is increasing in size in Malay society, especially with the growth of industries in the urban areas.

The differences between one class and another within the stratification system, viewed from their political influence, type of work, amount of income and social prestige, distinguish them clearly as

classes. This will be discussed further. For the time being it is sufficient to note that differences can also be seen between individuals and groups within the same class. For example, socio-economic differences can be seen clearly among the villagers, the majority of whom are peasants. There are peasants who own land and those who do not. There are those who rent out part of their land or work on their own land, and those who work on land belonging to others. Their incomes and styles of life are quite different. In fact even the evaluation of members of the society according to their social positions is different; in other words, there are some who are more respected than others. Thus even among the peasants, people are divided into the rich, middle or poor peasants. There are social scientists who further divide the upper class into the upper-upper and lower-upper categories, and also subdivide the middle and lower classes into the same type of two-layer category.

The existence of categories within each of the three classes does not reduce the significance or importance of each class as a social reality within the social stratification system existing in contemporary Malay society. The social distances between various classes are distinct, especially between the upper and lower classes. Just as in the days before British rule, the present upper class is also the focus of political, economic and social influence and power. Only two differences between that time and now can be perceived. First, although the sultans had real power previously, nowadays that power remains only as a symbol, because real power has been transferred to a new group. Second, if in the past power and influence tended to concentrate on the same person or group, nowadays there is specialisation; there are certain people or groups having only certain powers or influence in certain fields, for instance, the politicians in politics, the administrators in administration, and the capitalists in economics. But between these groups there are overlapping areas which link them together. There are some politicians, although their number is decreasing, who have a traditional upper class background. There are senior politicians and administrators who involve themselves in economic activities, and as capitalists or entrepreneurs they try or hope to get the help of other politicians to enable their business or industry to succeed. As for the politicians, some of them look for aid or contributions from the capitalists when they want to improve their party's or their own financial standing. There are many ties of common interest which strongly bind members of the upper class.

The upper class live in luxurious style. They have high incomes which enable them to live in a more opulent style than other classes. They live in exclusive areas like Kenny Hill or Damansara Heights in Kuala Lumpur. Their houses are big, complete with all kinds of modern equipment and sometimes decorated with expensive antiques. They become members of clubs exclusively for people with similar status, such as the Lake Club and Royal Golf Club. Through these clubs they are also able to further strengthen their social relationships, occasionally drinking and golfing together, and sometimes discussing or even concluding political and business deals.

The middle class, as has already been mentioned, emerged only recently and is more prominent in the urban than the rural areas. There might be some similar characteristics between the lower-upper and upper-middle categories, or between the lower-middle and the upper-lower categories. But on the whole it can be said that the middle class stands out quite distinctly from the upper and lower classes. Politically and administratively they do not have as much power as the ruling elite, most of whom are from the upper class. But they tend to be closely linked with the elite because they often provide services to this group. They sometimes serve as middlemen or even as leaders at the state or district level; only a few of them, especially those from the professional group, manage to achieve positions of national leadership. Economically their position is midway, their incomes being neither too high nor too low. In their daily life they are influenced by Western ways, probably as a result of the education that they received. But at the same time they are also attracted to some traditional ways. Some of them appear to have dual personalities because the opposite pulls of traditional and modern life, or between rural and urban values, often put them in a great dilemma. The middle class are often considered to "bend with the wind".

In contrast with the other two classes, the lower class has little or no power and influence at all in economic and political spheres. They are only approached and persuaded to give their votes once every five years. That is the only recognised influence that they have. After the election they are never asked about or consulted on any problem; everything is determined by the ruling elite from the upper class, who wield the real power and influence. The common factor among members of the lower class is their low position on the economic and social scale. Their living conditions are depressed

and in sharp contrast to those of the upper class. In the villages the peasants live in small houses or huts without piped water and electricity. There is little furniture or other equipment. In the towns the workers live in small flats and barracks, or more often, in overcrowded slum areas. In terms of health, the slum environment is always miserable and oppressive.

Even though life is difficult for them and their status is low, most members of the lower class, especially the peasants and workers, do not yet have many common social ties or shared sentiments. First, they constitute a much bigger segment of society than the upper and middle classes and most of them are widely scattered, not concentrated in the towns. In fact, the poor are segmented. Second, although many of the workers who have drifted to the towns still have relatives and friends in the villages, they actually live in two different worlds. They work in places distant from one another and in different occupations; in the padi fields or rubber smallholdings, and in factories or offices. Their social environments are no longer the same and thereby their attitudes and values become divergent. Politics among the two subgroups tends to emphasise their common ethnic identity, but seldom stresses their common fate and destiny as members of the lower class, as victims of exploitation and suffering.

The stratification system in Malay society is not static. In fact members of the same class are not always from the same families generation after generation. There is a possibility for change to occur; some climb upwards, others slide downwards. There is social mobility. For example, a few from the peasant background may succeed in higher education and get into jobs which elevate them to the middle class; they may be teachers or administrative officers, for example, who succeed in politics, eventually becoming ministers, and thus moving into the upper class. On the other hand, there may be some members of the royalty who will slide downwards and end up having nothing except their royal titles, which in themselves are insignificant. Then there may be businessmen who become bankrupt and end up as manual workers. Generally the most important factors that influence social mobility today are education and politics. Mobility can occur within one generation or intergenerationally.

Although social mobility exists and there is opportuniy for those in the lower class to climb upwards, this opportunity is limited. Within the same generation the opportunities for those in the upper

class to strengthen their own positions are better than the opportunities of their counterparts in the other classes to move upward. For example, an ex-minister or retired senior civil servant can easily sit on the board of foreign or local companies or in statutory bodies. In this way he merely changes role without affecting his class position. In Malay society today, a handful of retired officers and politicians monopolise most company directorships. A study of the Registry of Companies shows that out of 1,526 Malays who have become directors 45 persons (or 3 percent) own shares valued at $7,480,000 or 50 percent of the shares of all registered Malay directors, and many of these were in politics or administration before. Members of the middle class, who do not have influence or political ties, cannot hope to have such opportunities. Of course those in the lower class have no such opportunities whatsoever.

Where individual families are concerned one can assert that children of businessmen often become businessmen and children of doctors often become doctors, while children of policemen or padi cultivators tend to follow in their fathers' professions. Much depends on whether a father can afford to give his children the facilities for improvement. A businessman can train his son and provide capital for him to become a businessman. But can a policeman provide the same opportunities for his son? A doctor can afford to send his children to a well-established school and can often supervise the children's study at home. But a peasant must be satisfied with an inadequately equipped and poorly staffed rural school for his children. Being himself uneducated, he is unable to supervise the children at home. In a competition between the doctor's and the peasant's children, under normal circumstances, the former will easily win. Granted that there are also peasant children who have succeeded in becoming doctors while children of doctors have failed, but such occurrences are rare and the percentage involved is insignificant.

The opportunity for upward mobility among Malays, through education and business in particular, is much wider now than ever before, owing to the availability of scholarships for higher education and loans of capital for business. Since much depends on aid and sponsorship, perhaps that is why mobility among Malays now is often referred to as "sponsored mobility". This is made possible by the provision of Malay privileges as enshrined in the constitution. However, the number and amount of aid available is still limited. Scholarships and bursaries can be given to those entering colleges

and universities, but the children of peasants have problems even entering good secondary schools. Loans of capital cannot be given just to anybody requesting them. In the last analysis those who have influence or property that can be used as security are the ones who get aid. It is not easy for a peasant or a worker to get a loan, even if he is a *bumiputra*.

Sponsored mobility, made possible by various types of aid and loans, can be defended only as a short-term policy. It can increase the number of people in the upper and middle classes slightly. But it does not change the structure of Malay society; the stratification into upper, middle and lower classes continues, with the lower class still forming the majority. The lower class does not want special privileges which exist only in theory, which they are denied due to the monopoly of the upper and middle classes. What they really need is equality — equal rights and opportunities — which will place them on par with members of the upper class, especially in the realms of politics, economics, education, health and so forth. The discrimination against these people which exists simply because they *are* the lower class must end.

Thus we see clearly that in the existing system, special privilege is enjoyed only by a small minority from the upper class. Many of them enjoy these rights and opportunities not because they merit these privileges, but because of their class position in the society. There are many from the lower and middle classes who show greater ability and merit, but who are unable to manifest them owing to the inherent obstruction of the class system. It is clear that this barrier must be torn down so that all the potentialities of the lower class can be liberated and manifested in full.

VI Economy

In the preceding chapters we have touched on some facets of the economy. Some of them will be referred to again in greater detail. It has been explained that at the early stage of the development of Malay society, during the Neolithic period, its social system was simple. There were two stages of economic development then. First came the hunting and collecting stage, when much of the life in society was determined by the environment. After this came the second stage of crop cultivation and animal domestication. During this stage there were many who were already able to control or adapt the environment to serve their own purposes. In both these stages the objective of production — whether hunting, collecting, cultivating or domesticating — was to meet the requirements of life in the society itself. Production was for consumption and the unit of production was also the unit of consumption; these units were in the form of families, smaller during the first stage, but bigger during the second. There was close cooperation among members of society, and society's produce was shared and enjoyed by all of them. Usually production was just enough to meet the basic needs of society, and if there was a surplus it was kept for their own use. There was no effort to produce surplus for exchange simply because the situation did not demand exchange; society was self-sufficient and channels for such exchange just did not exist.

But gradually the situation changed. Surpluses began to be produced as agricultural production developed and social groups became bigger with chiefs or rulers as their leaders. Part of these surpluses was submitted to the leader in the form of taxes or gifts and part of it was bartered or traded. At the beginning the exchange was on a small scale, usually between neighbouring groups. It was not centralised. But later, particularly during the time of the Melaka Kingdom, trading activities were carried out on a large scale. Melaka was the trading centre for neighbouring areas as well as the focal point where the faraway countries from East and West met. Among the main commodities of trade were spices, tin and textiles. The traders recognised the sovereignty of the ruler and paid taxes of up to 10 percent to him to enable them to participate

in the trade economy. The foreign traders were provided with special areas from which they organised their business, and the sultan appointed an officer called the *syahbandar* to oversee them.

The economic position of the rulers and chiefs of Melaka became stronger with the increase in trade. But their strength had other bases as well. In Melaka and its territories, most of the common people carried out agricultural activities, and they could be mobilised to pay taxes or send tribute to the rulers and chiefs. But usually the rulers or chiefs had their own entourage consisting of slaves or indentured servants who worked on the royal lands. The wealth accumulated by the rulers and chiefs was often used to beautify their palaces and glorify their way of life, in keeping with their rank and position. Part of their riches was kept in the form of gold, silver, jewellery and other valuables; and among other things these riches could be used for "financing" war, but never as a source of capital investment for any major economic undertaking.

However, both the political and economic situation disintegrated after the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese. Various minor rulers or chiefs set up their own little kingdoms, usually at a river mouth, where they could control traffic, and collect tributes and taxes from people in agriculture or trade. These rulers and chiefs continued to maintain their entourage, some of whom worked on the land. In addition to this, the Chinese worked in tin mines in some parts of Perak and Selangor. Some rulers or chiefs owned a few mines and earned quite substantial incomes from them. But there were also other mines which were leased out and only provided revenue to the rulers and chiefs in the form of taxes. What was clear was that, after the fall of Melaka and right up to the British intervention, the Malay economy was dependent mainly on agriculture and trade, and the rulers and chiefs continued as the elite group controlling the economy as well as politics.

What happened after the British came? By the time the British decided to intervene in the Malay states, they had already reached their peak as an imperial power, controlling a huge empire overseas. With the industrial revolution, a new capitalist class had emerged in England and they had widespread influence throughout the government. The British capitalists and banks had financial surpluses, which they could invest in the colonies to develop primary industries in order to produce the raw materials required by the British factories. Companies owned and controlled by the British were launched in the Peninsula during the early decades of this

century to run tin mines, rubber estates and agency houses. British capital here increased quickly and by the 1920s it amounted to about $1,680 million, nearly half of which was invested in rubber estates (H.G. Callis, 1942). Most of the estates were big, over 2,000 acres, with some over 5,000 acres, and they were in the most fertile areas. The mines were in the richest zones, using machines and technology that had never been seen here before. It is interesting to notice that the structure of the organisations was such that many of them had interlocking directorships, i.e. the banks, the plantations, and the agency houses. The British had very tight control over the entire structure.

The development of mines, estates and commerce strengthened the capitalistic enterprises of this country. The system expanded slowly but steadily and enormous profits accrued from the investments. Until the outbreak of the Pacific War, the British were very prosperous. Tin and rubber were and still are in great demand in the world market. These industries have also attracted Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs, but their participation was limited as they could not mobilise the large amount of capital needed, as the British had. With a few exceptions most of the rubber estates they owned were of medium size, rather large smallholdings actually, while the mines were relatively small, without modern machinery or technology, such as the dredge. In commerce, especially in the rapidly growing urban centres, shops carried out the business of selling commodities required by the community. Most of these shops and small companies were owned by Chinese and Indians. Besides that other traders had also moved into the rural areas to start businesses there. These traders later became middlemen who bought rural produce to sell in towns, and bought imported goods to sell in the rural and town areas. These traders, as middlemen, constituted a vital link in the long chain connecting the village economy with that of the local town and the countries beyond.

Malay involvement in estates and commerce was virtually non-existent, even on a small scale. Most Malays lived in rural areas, and were involved with traditional agriculture. They not only lacked capital but also the skill to do business. Life in the village fulfilled most of their needs. On the other hand, the Chinese and Indians had left their homes as pioneers in search of a better life, and many of them were willing to try anything that could bring them quick wealth. In addition, some of the Chinese who wanted to start business easily obtained aid from their clan organisation

in the form of loaned capital. Such facilities did not exist for the Malays.

It is untrue to say that the Malays do not have a business tradition. Since long ago Malay traders have sailed the seas. They were prominent during the heyday of Melaka. But most of the trade they undertook was in the form of barter, and often under the patronage of the upper class. With the coming of the Europeans the economic position of the rulers and chiefs was weakened considerably, and under the British administration they had to depend mostly on their pensions. The British had introduced a money economy, and money then became the main form of capital. In the past, surplus income was used by members of the upper class to add greater opulence to their way of life, not for investment; in fact, forms of economic activity requiring financial investment hardly existed then. When the British introduced new economic activities the ruling class had already lost much of its financial strength.

If there was any change for the rural Malay as a result of the new economic system brought by the British, it was in their participation in cash crop agriculture. Rubber clearly could produce more income than *padi*. In many newly opened areas rubber was encouraged, and even in some established *padi* areas, rubber was planted as a supplement. Rubber, unlike *padi*, cannot be consumed and has to be sold; the financial proceeds from the sales in turn are used to purchase food and other commodities needed. This further extended the money economy, and the role of middlemen in the rural areas thus became more important. The only participation of rural Malays in estates and mines was as labourers, but their number was small compared to the Indians and Chinese.

The British had encouraged Indians to migrate from southern India to become workers on their estates, and Chinese from southern China to work in the mines. They did not employ the Malays, in line with the policy that the Malays should continue doing traditional agriculture — for otherwise who would produce the rice? They also believed that the Malays made neither hard-working nor stable labourers since their family links to the villages were strong, allowing them to quit or return to their homes whenever they wished, something that was difficult for the Chinese and Indians to do because their homes were far across the sea. Finally, the Malays also showed a preference for such jobs as office workers and policemen, for example. But this was no longer true after the end of World War II.

The spread of a money economy into the rural areas had some adverse effects on the people who engaged in traditional occupations like *padi* planting, fishing and rubber tapping. In the *padi* areas particularly, there was quite an acute land shortage. The opening of new land could not keep up with the increase in population because many areas traditionally under *padi* had been exhausted. Land had not been a problem previously, but after World War II the situation worsened. There were many villagers who had to sell their land owing to financial difficulties. The transfer of land through sales was quite common not only among the *padi* farmers but also among the rubber cultivators. Among those who had the means to purchase land were the middlemen, who often acted as creditors as well. They often bound the villagers with debts, and this often led to the villagers being forced to sell or mortgage their land. There were also other groups of creditors. At the same time there were also small groups of well-to-do villagers who were in the position to save money and buy land for the purpose of accumulation. Most rubber producers had to sell their rubber, and even some *padi* cultivators had to sell part of their produce. The prices offered to them were determined outside the agricultural communities themselves, and by middlemen who were deeply rooted in the villages. When the villagers were bound by heavy debts to the middlemen then the prices of their produce could easily be fixed by the latter.

As a result of the land shortage and of financial exploitation, the life of the poor villagers became more depressed. The differences between villages and towns, and between the poor and the rich became more marked. These contrasts could be seen not only in their incomes and life-styles, but also in the facilities available to them such as schools, hospitals and roads. Even within the rural areas the gap became wider, especially between the "haves" — such as middlemen and landlords — and the "have-nots", most of whom owned little or no land, and as a result had to work on other people's land as share-croppers, renters and wage earners.

After independence several political and administrative changes took place following the transfer of power from the British. But the economy changed very little. The economic system established by the British continued. Estates, mines and commerce that were owned by the British continued to be controlled by them. So too with many of the big companies and agency houses. For instance, even today Harrisons and Crossfield controls about 200,000 acres of

rubber estates, Guthrie Corporation about 180,000 acres and Sime Darby Group about 160,000 acres. The total area controlled by these three companies is equivalent to about 860 square miles, bigger than the area of Perlis, Penang and Province Wellesley, which covers only 800 square miles. Besides estates, these companies also own or control some big mines and commercial houses. They also serve as agency houses. Their profits are huge; for instance, Sime Darby made $15 million in 1970, and this increased to $60 million in 1973 and $184 million in 1978, while Guthrie made $40 million in 1970 and about $45 million in 1978.

The share capital in limited companies as estimated for the Peninsula in 1975 amounted to $9,890 million. The estimated amount owned by foreign capitalists was roughly $5,435 million (or 54.9 percent) compared to $768 million (or 7.8 percent) owned by all Malay interests and $3,687 million (or 37.3 percent) owned by other Malaysians. The 1970 figures showed that the total share capital amounted to $5,329 million, divided as follows: foreign capitalists $3,377 million (or 73.3 percent); Chinese ownership $1,450 million (or 27.2 percent) and Malay interests $125 million (or 2.4 percent). In the same year the proportion of Malay ownership in agriculture (i.e. estates), mining and commerce was less than 1 percent; in manufacturing, banking and insurance between 1 percent and 3.5 percent, and in transport a sizeable 13.3 percent. In all sectors except transport, foreign ownership ranged from 50 percent to 75 percent. According to Raja Mohar, the government economic adviser, some foreign investors earn profits as high as four times the amount they invest. In April 1976 the Deputy Finance Minister told Parliament that profits and dividends earned by foreign investors were $435 million in 1966, $555 million in 1969, $1,342 million in 1974 and $1,017 million in 1975.

The Malays, as in the past, still concentrate on small-scale agriculture in the rural areas. Most of the planting, mining and commercial activities began and developed in the Federated States, especially Perak and Selangor; however, substantial amounts of trading were undertaken throughout Penang and rubber was planted in Johore, besides the Federated States. But in the Unfederated States agriculture still predominated — mainly *padi* planting in Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis — although some was undertaken in Perak and Melaka too. These planting, mining and commercial activities did not take place in the villages, and so did not bring direct benefit to the villagers. So, the rural Malays contin-

ued to be concentrated in states and areas that were relatively undeveloped and considerably backward. They spent most of their time in traditional agricultural activities such as rice cultivation, which has low productivity.

In the four states which received little development, more than 70 percent of the population are Malays: in Trengganu 93.9 percent, in Kelantan 92.8 percent, in Perlis 79.4 percent and in Kedah 70.7 percent (Table II). In terms of distribution of population more Malays live in the rural areas than other races; i.e. 85.1 percent of Malays live in these areas, while the remaining 14.9 percent are in the urban areas, which are gazetted as those having a population of more than 10,000 (Table III). Most of the villagers engage in agriculture, and normally the size of land they work is very small. Out of 454,000 farms registered in the Agricultural Census of 1961, 48 percent were less than 3 acres, 20 percent from 3 to 5 acres, 20 percent between 5 and 10 acres, and 12 percent between 10 and 99 acres. This is the distribution according to the size of farms and not according to ownership of land. There is an estimate which indicates that about 25 percent of the cultivators do not own land and so have to work on land belonging to others. A large proportion of the rural people work on their own land of three to six acres, their main activities being rubber tapping and *padi* planting. Compared with the other ethnic groups involved in agriculture the percentage of Malays is much higher in *padi* than in rubber.

It has been admitted that poverty is a major problem facing this country. Based on the government's own studies, in 1970, 791,800 out of 1,606,000 households in the Peninsula were poor; the percentage of poor was 49.3 percent. According to the 1975 estimate it was 835,100 out of 1,901,500 or 43.9 percent (Tables VII and VIII). Based on the 1975 figures it is found that out of 835,100 poor households, 729,900 (or 87.4 percent) were in the rural areas. Most of them were involved in agriculture (including fishing), and, on the whole, this category constitutes 69 percent of all the poor households in the country. The proportion of the poor in the rural areas was about 54.1 percent, but the proportion for those in the rural areas carrying out agriculture was 63 percent. The percentage was higher among *padi* cultivators (77 percent), followed by fishermen (63 percent) and rubber small-holders (59 percent). The picture today has not changed much. The states which have poverty percentages higher than the national figure of 43.9 percent are: Kelantan 65 percent, Perlis 59 percent, Trengganu 55 percent, and

Kedah 48.9 percent (Anand, S., 1973:52).

It is clear that poverty is more rampant in the villages. When we talk about rural poverty we really mean Malay poverty, since a large majority of the rural people are Malays (about 67 percent). Roughly 74 percent of all the poor in the country are Malays, and 65 percent of all the Malays are poor. This does not deny the fact that there are also non-Malays in the rural areas and new villages and many of them are poor too. But comparatively their number is much smaller. Poverty also exists in the towns, but according to the 1975 estimates the number is only 105,200 households or 12.6 percent of the total number of poor in the country. The percentage of poverty amongst the town population that year was about 19 percent. The incidence of poverty in the towns is comparatively much smaller than in the villages, and in the towns the Malays form a minority.

The criteria used by the government to measure poverty is income. A household is considered to be poor when its monthly income is less than $25 per capita per household. So, if a household consists of six members, then it is considered poor if it earns less than $150 a month. Let us now examine the distribution of incomes in the country, bearing in mind that the poverty line is at $150 per month. In 1970 the average household income in the Peninsula was $264, but the urban average was $428, while the rural one only $200. Out of all households in the Peninsula 27 percent earned less than $100 and 31 percent earned between $100—$200; in other words 58 percent of all households earned less than $200 per month. About 90 percent of those earning less than $100 and 76.2 percent of those earning between $100—$200 came from the rural areas. In the rural areas, 82.6 percent of the households earned less than $200 while those earning less than $100 accounted for 34 percent. Since most of the rural households are Malay then it is not surprising that the average income of the Malays was low — $172 per month per household — compared to the figures for the Indians and Chinese which were $304 and $394 respectively.

It is well-known that average incomes do not reveal the reality of income differences existing in society. Whether in the rural or urban areas, among the Malays or non-Malays, there exist large income disparities due to such factors as occupation and ownership of property or capital. There is no comprehensive study which gives details on the distribution of individual or household incomes according to ethnic backgrounds or economic sectors. But the serious-

ness of the problem can be seen from the following figures. In 1957 the 20 percent of the households who earned the highest incomes, accounted for nearly 50 percent of the total income in the country, while the 60 percent who earned lower incomes, accounted for only 30 percent of all income. The situation deteriorated in 1970, when the incomes controlled by the top 20 percent had risen to 56 percent while income made by the lower 60 percent had fallen to 25 percent. Furthermore, between 1957 and 1970 the average income for the top 10 percent rose from $776 to $1,130, while that of the lowest 10 percent had fallen from $48 to $38. Who forms the group with the lowest incomes? Which group's income declined from 1957 to 1970? The answer is simple: the majority of them were Malays. The question now is, when the national *per capita* incomes rise from year to year, do the incomes of those in the lower strata — most of whom are Malays — also increase? The clear, incontrovertible fact is that the reverse happens. The poor become poorer. Those who really benefit from the rising national incomes are those in the upper strata of society. Thus, the gap between the upper and lower classes, between the rich and the poor, becomes ever wider.

Poverty and increasing economic disparity are actually the results of the present economic system based on the *laissez faire* philosophy. This philosophy was widespread in the West, particularly in Britain in the nineteenth century, when its economy was growing and its empire expanding. The main feature of this philosophy is that economic activities and those undertaking them should be free from government control or interference. The economy is supposed to be free, with competition being encouraged, for the purpose of producing high quality goods, as well as for controlling the market. The criteria for success is the amount of profits made; the bigger the profits the greater the success. In this competition the success of one group in defeating another can lead to monopoly. Monopolists can have absolute power to do anything necessary to ensure maximum profits, thus proving their success. Monopoly-capitalists can fix high prices for their produce and low incomes for their workers. As a result there will be widespread and acute exploitation.

Of course the *laissez faire* system is preferred by those already in strong economic or political positions, because in any competition they can always emerge the victor. We have seen how the British, with political power in their hands, could easily control the rich economic resources in the country: the estates, mines and commerce. They made huge profits, the bulk of which was taken back

to their own country and very little used for the development of the colonies. Economic power in the hands of the British monopoly-capitalists continued even after independence. The *laissez faire* system which became well-rooted during British rule has remained. Consistent with this economic system, the private sector plays a big role, and large investments are needed in this sector from local as well as foreign investors. Foreign investment is most welcome, and encouraged with all kinds of incentives such as pioneer status. Although British investment here exceeds any other, the Americans, Japanese, Australians and Canadians are also making headway.

Does the *laissez faire* system benefit the Malays, or for that matter any of the poor people in this country? Before answering the question we need to summarise the main concepts of the system: (a) the government guarantees full freedom in economic activities; (b) the private sector is expected to play a major part in the economic development of the country; and (c) competition is encouraged in order to achieve efficiency and maximise profits. In this country there are economic activities involving land, housing and transport which are partly organised by the government or by quasi-government bodies, but in terms of capital invested they are rather small compared to the private sector. Since the government considers the role of foreign investment to be so important, it is making an effort to attract them. A cabinet committee has been formed, the appropriate laws have been amended, and many delegations have been sent overseas, all for the purpose of convincing foreign investors that this country is stable and promises large profit for their capital. The government realises that in spite of all the money it spends and the projects it carries out, it can never achieve its development targets in isolation. Should its performance fall short of expectations, then its political position will be threatened. This is why the role of private investors becomes important.

One of the main arguments put forward by ministers and government officials in defence of foreign investment is that it creates jobs and so helps to overcome the unemployment problem. They argue that many Malays will benefit from it, because a large proportion of the new employment is reserved for them. Perhaps the other reason, which always remains unexpressed, is that foreign investment also provides opportunities for ex-politicians and ex-civil servants to become directors. There is some truth in all these arguments. But the question is, are industrial growth and

employment opportunities made possible only through foreign investment? Surely there are other alternatives, for instance, the government itself can provide more capital, or mobilise it through cooperatives. What needs to be brought in from outside is only the expertise not available locally, and this should be used to advise and train local personnel. As an example, through the Employees' Provident Fund, millions of dollars have been saved. Why is it these savings are not fully used as capital for undertaking some viable projects which can preferably be run on a cooperative basis?

As mentioned earlier, foreign investors are given a number of privileges, and they are not restricted from transferring home the profits that they make. Most of the factories that they build under pioneer status are in towns and very few in the rural areas, despite the fact that under the location-incentive programme more factories are expected to go into rural areas. The development of industries in the towns has the effect of further widening rural-urban economic disparities. Usually factories with pioneer status work three shifts in a 24 hour day, which can have adverse effects on the workers' health. Salaries paid to them are low — for instance, most of the girls who work in the electronic factories take home only about $80—$120 a month.

Many ministers and officials are known to have justified these low salaries by saying that if they are raised then fewer workers will be employed. They rationalise that it is better to have more employed, though with less pay, than have fewer employed in order to pay them well. But why think only in terms of reducing the workers' incomes? What about reducing the enormous profits made by the capitalists? The monopoly-capitalists indeed bleed this country of its wealth and exploit the workers. Is it not true that the Matsushita Electronics managed to recoup its capital after only five years in operation, and after that have reaped only profits? (Husin Ali, 1978: p. 83.) Why not lay down conditions that part of those huge profits be used to raise salaries and improve the terms of service for the workers, without reducing their number? The answers to these questions are quite simple: if too many conditions are laid down then they go against the *laissez faire* principles, and if the profits of the foreign investors are reduced then they will not wish to invest here. Minimising the wages of workers is a much simpler thing to do. After all, workers in pioneer industries face many obstacles in forming their trade unions. So, who gains and who loses in this process?

Another adverse effect of this type of economic system can be seen from the difficulties faced by Malay businesses. It is now the declared policy of the government to encourage Malays to participate in commerce and industry, which at present are dominated by non-Malays. Before independence the Malays were mostly occupied in rural agriculture, lacking in capital and ability and not encouraged by the colonial rulers to participate in the new economic activities. Even after independence the Malays were still very much in the agricultural sector. In 1957 out of about 1,023,000 Malays employed, around 749,000 (or 73.3 percent) were in agriculture, and only 58,000 (or 5.7 percent) in manufacturing and commerce, compared to the Chinese who had 40.2 percent and 29 percent of their population in these same sectors respectively. By 1970 the number of employed Malays increased to about 1,432,000; those in agriculture were about 925,000 (or 64.6 percent) while those in manufacturing and commerce were about 154,000 (or 10.8 percent). Among the Chinese the percentage was 28.5 percent in agriculture and 37.4 percent in manufacturing and commerce at this time.

Actually the percentages of people in the manufacturing and commercial sectors also include the entrepreneurs or executives. Non-Malay entrepreneurs have had much experience, have invested a lot of capital and were established earlier in these new economic activities. Their position is much stronger than that of the Malays, who are just struggling to participate in these activities. The *laissez faire* system expects them to compete. Logically, the strong can easily defeat the weak. Many Malay entrepreneurs have been forced to wind up their business as a result of stiff competition. It is just impossible for anybody without sufficient capital or experience, be they Malay or non-Malay, to compete against the monopoly-capitalists who are already well-entrenched in the business.

Let us now see what has happened at the village level. As has already been mentioned, at that level there have already emerged landlords, middlemen and moneylenders. Some of them have become so powerful that they can themselves determine the levels of rent, profits and interest that they want to extract from the villagers. In this way they adversely affect the villagers, particularly the poor peasants. They are capable of taking several exploitive measures and can make the life of the poor peasants miserable. There are laws to regulate rents and interest, but they are not effec-

tive. Besides that, middlemen are usually also landlords and moneylenders in the villages, and so it is easy for them to exploit the peasants, especially when they are powerful monopolists. Can they be controlled effectively? It is not possible as long as the *laissez faire* system prevails, because under this system they must be given the freedom to perform their roles. So, the landlords will continue to be free to fix high rents, the middlemen to buy low from — and sell high to — the peasants, and the moneylenders to fix high interests. They will be free to exploit; so they will also be free to cause poverty and misery among the poor who form the majority of the people. Most of these people are Malays.

In the long run the *laissez faire* system can only be the root of many problems and an obstacle to progress for the Malays. If this view is taken then there is a great need for a complete overhaul of the economy. Such a strongly-felt need by the Malays was manifested in the May Thirteenth Incident. Superficially, it appeared to be a communal conflict, but the basic cause was discontent over economic and political issues. The government seemed to realise this and that is why it tried to redress the situation by introducing economic changes after the incident. The New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced with the aim of (a) eradicating poverty without regard to race, and (b) restructuring society so that there would be greater participation by Malays in industry and commerce. This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter VII.

Actually the NEP, which provides the guidelines for the Second and Third Malaysia Plans is not as radical as has been claimed. It is true that the expenditure allocated for the public sector under these plans has increased greatly, when compared to those of earlier plans. This can be seen from the following:-

First Five Year Plan (1956—60)	$ 973 million
Second Five Year Plan (1961—65)	2,150 million
First Malaysia Plan (1966—70)	4,242 million
Second Malaysia Plan (1971—75)	7,250 million
Third Malaysia Plan (1976—81)	18,555 million

The expenditures have been nearly doubled with each successive Plan. Under the Second Malaysia Plan and Third Malaysia Plan about a fourth of the allocations are for agriculture, particularly for drainage and irrigation, land settlement and replanting projects. These are not new projects but the continuation of previous ones on a bigger scale. Strictly speaking, all these plans are actually no

more than summaries issued every five years of expenditures allocated by the government for development.

These development plans show no indication at all of changing the *laissez faire* system as introduced by the British colonialists. Although some reforms have been introduced in the NEP — such as encouraging government statutory bodies to participate in economic activities like commerce, industries and construction, encouraging and assisting Malays in business, and concentrating on development in the less-developed states like Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah and Perlis — basically the old colonial economic structures remain unchanged. Much money has been spent on rural areas for agricultural development, yet this same economic system, which gives a free hand to the exploiting groups, is retained. The landlords, middlemen and moneylenders are still operating on a wide scale although the threat that they pose to the poor peasants is being exposed; this is even admitted by the government. At the same time the control of the country's economy by foreign monopoly-capitalists is still firm. In fact their position will grow even stronger with the government moving so fervently now towards attracting foreign investment into the country.

In its attempt to restructure Malaysian society, the government is determined to achieve the target of 30 percent *bumiputra* control of share capital by 1990. In keeping with this objective the Malays are encouraged to participate in commerce and industry, and the government has formed various bodies to participate actively in these fields. It must be stressed that the 30 percent is not the percentage of Malays who will be involved, but the amount of capital that they, as a group, will hopefully control. To be sure, they will mostly come from a small group of already privileged Malays in the upper class. So, what will happen is not to change the structure of the economy, but merely to provide more opportunities for some Malays to participate and reap greater profits. Malay capitalists sometimes do not have sufficient capital and experience to compete with the already established local and foreign capitalists, and so, in the final analysis, they may end up merely as "sleeping partners" for the big capitalists. To what extent this will help the economy of the Malays, especially the poor in the rural area, remains a question.

It is estimated that by 1990 the amount of share capital will total about $80,000 million, and if the Malays are to control 30 percent then they need to mobilise about $24,000 million. In 1970 the

amount of Malay shares was a mere $126 million, and by 1975 it had increased to only $768 million, showing an annual increase of $128 million. As of 1975 there was still more than $23,000 million needed to reach the target, and this amount must be accumulated within 15 years, which means about $1,533 million per year. How can such an amount be obtained? How will it be possible for the percentage of Malay shares to increase if foreign investors are sought after so fervently? Again the *laissez faire* system will not help the Malays.

There are several steps by which it may be possible to achieve the projected 30 percent. One way is to mobilise all Malay savings and turn them into capital. But this amount would not be enough, (one estimate puts it in the region of $1,000 million). Alternatively, compulsory savings may be suggested. But this is easier said than done. As has been repeatedly said, most of the Malays are poor and their incomes unstable. So it is difficult for them to save, and if they are forced to save then life will be more difficult for them and their families. Furthermore, the act of compulsory saving, even for what may be considered a noble end, will be viewed by many as an infringement of their freedom, which is guaranteed under the present political system.

A second way is to have the government issue more loans, on its own, or through certain banks and statutory bodies. But since loans require securities then clearly the number of people who can take them is limited. Furthermore, political, personal and family ties will ensure that only those who are in established positions will gain access to the loans. Naturally, those who will gain are only a handful. The government can also increase the number of statutory bodies like PERNAS, UDA and SEDC, and give them bigger capital outlays in order to manage their affairs more effectively. But under the present circumstances the number of bodies that can be established and the amount of capital that can be allocated is rather limited. The national income is not that big. For instance, in 1976 it was only $5,655 million, while the national expenditure was $8,000 million: $5,600 million for recurrent and $2,400 million for capital expenditures. The expenditure for development under the TMP is estimated at $18,555 million, with about 65 percent to be allocated to the rural areas, because not only are they the ones that require development, but also because they are also the most important source of votes. At present the government is resorting to deficit financing and has been increasing the public debt every

year. Therefore it is difficult to increase substantially the allocations to statutory bodies. Any allocation made by the government to them will be viewed as direct government participation in the private sector. For how long can the government pursue this line? After all, this line goes against the *laissez faire* philosophy that the government upholds so strongly. So long as the government continues to believe in the *laissez faire* system, then its participation in the private sector will ultimately serve merely as a token of its concern.

A third way to increase the percentage of Malay capital is to curtail the rate of non-Malay and foreign investments. But such a move could kill the country's economy. At present, contributions from all groups are needed to sustain the system so that the capital to be invested for development will continuously increase, for only in this way can national income and subsequently per capita income be increased. The government's strategy is to increase Malay capital in an expanding economy. Any restriction in the accumulation and investment of capital of other groups, merely for the purpose of increasing the percentage of the Malay share, goes against the grain, because it would stunt the growth of the economy as a whole, or at least it would limit the contribution of the private sector towards development. Worse still, such a restriction would be interpreted in racial terms as an attempt to strangle the growth of the non-Malay economy. This would endanger not only the economy, but also the politics of the country.

4 Finally, we consider the policy of nationalisation. This will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter. But what needs to be mentioned here is that this policy is in opposition to the *laissez faire* system being upheld now. To carry out this policy, drastic changes are needed economically and politically. Is this possible under the present situation and leadership? If it is possible, then not only the pattern of capital ownership in industry and commerce will change in this country, but also the nature of the overall plans and strategy for fighting poverty will be transformed. If these changes are not possible, then we have to prepare ourselves for the possibility of failure, failure to achieve the two prime targets of the NEP: eradicating poverty and restructuring society.

VII Development

This chapter will try to discuss critically the government's development plans, evaluating them in the context of the various problems elaborated in the earlier chapters. These development plans were spelt out clearly in several of the five-year plans. Since 1956 five such plans have been drawn up. We are now in the Third Malaysia Plan (TMP). The ensuing discussion will focus on the policies and strategies of this plan. Only slight attention will be paid to the details of financial allocations under various headings. Since the Third Malaysia Plan gives quite a complete statement on what it intends to do and achieve during its five-year span, it is not necessary to repeat the explanation here. Those who want to know about the intentions of the Third Malaysia Plan can go directly to the source. Here the policies and strategies will only be explained solely with the purpose of evaluating and criticising them where appropriate.

Actually the Third Malaysia Plan is a continuation of the four preceding plans. Since the First Five Year Plan which was introduced in 1956, it has been stated that the intention of the government is to alleviate poverty, reduce unemployment, provide social facilities particularly in education and health, and strengthen the defence of the country. But only since the Second Malaysia Plan have the objectives of the government been clearly spelt out. The Second Malaysia Plan was formulated after the May Thirteenth Incident, which threatened the very basis of unity in this country. As stated earlier, although the incident appeared to be a racial conflict, it was recognised that the causes arose from some basic economic problems. Such admission was made by former Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, in his speech introducing the New Economic Policy (NEP) when Parliament reconvened in 1971.

Through all the mass media it was explained that, in order to strengthen national unity, the government intended to carry out a two-pronged policy aimed at: (a) eradicating poverty and providing more employment opportunities for the people irrespective of their ethnic origin; and (b) accelerating the process of restructuring society in order to correct the existing economic imbalance, so that

the identification of certain economic roles by race could be reduced and then finally abolished.

These two objectives of the NEP form the basis of the Second and Third Malaysia Plans. But before the Third Malaysia Plan was launched the security of the country came under serious threat, especially from local communist party elements who stepped up their activities following the fall of Indochina. The question of security was included as another important objective under the Third Malaysia Plan. That is why there are now three objectives in the Plan. As the Prime Minister, Dato Hussein Onn explains in the Preface to the Plan, "A major assault on poverty, a vigorous and continuing effort in the task of restructuring society as well as the strengthening of our national security, are the triple thrusts of the Third Malaysia Plan" (TMP, 1976:v). It has been emphasised that the two original objectives of the NEP cannot be achieved unless there is security. So what was previously a two-pronged strategy has now become three-pronged.

In the following we shall discuss only the two original objectives, because it is beyond our means to discuss the third. Let us begin with the first objective, the eradication of poverty. Three questions that arise here are: (a) who are the groups considered to be poor? (b) what is the root of their poverty? and (c) what are the steps to be taken to eradicate poverty? The answers to these three questions are actually in the Third Malaysia Plan and the plans before it. According to the Third Malaysia Plan the poor are found in the rural as well as the urban areas. They are "*padi* growers; rubber smallholders; coconut smallholders; fishermen; estate workers; residents of New Villages; agricultural labourers; the Orang Asli" (TMP, 1976:45). In 1970, 49.3 percent of the total number of households in the country lived in poverty. "Of all poor households, about 74 percent were Malays, 17 percent Chinese and 8 percent Indians." Furthermore, "Of all Malay households 65 percent were in poverty compared to 26 percent for Chinese households ... (and) ... Indians ... 39 percent" (TMP, 1976:5). It is clear that the problem of poverty is very much the problem of the Malays, the majority of whom live in the rural areas.

As for the roots of poverty, a paragraph in the Third Malaysia Plan reads, "The lack of productive employment opportunities is the major cause of poverty. Open unemployment and underdevelopment of human resources resulting from the lack of complementary inputs such as land, capital and entrepreneurship underlie

poverty in every sector of the economy" (TMP, 1976:27). Prior to this, the Mid-term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan (MRSMP) stated that the low incomes of the poor people in the villages were caused by the uneconomic sizes of farms, by the farms' infertility or unsuitability for cultivation, and by the use of out-of-date technology and the lack of modern methods. From both these reports it is clear that the roots of poverty as emphasised by the government are low productivity owing to lack of productive employment and the use of outdated methods.

In connection with the steps that have been taken, the Third Malaysia Plan stresses that "the rapid economic growth attained during the Second Malaysia Plan period enabled the alleviation of the poverty problem" (TMP, 1976:27). In the long run the government strategy to reduce poverty contains four elements:

(i) "The opening up of over four million acres of land for settlement by the landless and those with uneconomic holdings; the irrigation of an additional 300,000 acres for double cropping ... to about 700,000 acres in 1990; the replanting, rehabilitation and redevelopment of 1.8 million acres during the 20-year period of high-yielding rubber, coconut and pineapple production (TMP, 1976:74);

(ii) " ... relieve current population pressure in the most congested sectors of agriculture (*ibid:* 87) by encouraging poor farmers and fishermen to be active in more productive agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, widen opportunities for rural youths to get expertise that are expanded in the agricultural and modern industrial sectors;

(iii) " ... the provision of better and more efficient services in the fields of housing, transportation, water supply, electricity, education, health, nutrition and family planning;

(iv) " ... the accelerated creation of productive employment opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy ... the promotion and dispersal of industrial development will emphasise the need to channel more capital to small-scale and labour intensive industries." (*ibid:* 74-75).

Actually the fourth strategy is also for the purpose of eradicating poverty in the urban areas. Besides this, steps are also being taken to raise real incomes by providing low-cost housing and other public services.

Turning to the second objective of the NEP, the restructuring of society, it seems there are two aspects that need to be emphasised.

First, in the present circumstances ethnic imbalance exists in various sectors and at all levels of employment. For instance, as already noted earlier, most of the Malays are in the rural-agricultural sector, while the majority of the Chinese are in the manufacturing and mining sectors, and the Indians in the estates. As a result the association or identity of race with employment in certain sectors arises: Malays as peasants, Chinese and Indians mostly as labourers, but in different fields. In fact, when the same sector is examined, such as government services, there are also some types of jobs that are monopolised mainly by Malays, for instance, as administrators, policemen and soldiers; and there are those where Chinese dominate, such as in the professions, as doctors, engineers, accountants and so forth. Sometimes it is found that in certain types of occupations, the lower levels are made up mainly of one ethnic group, while the upper levels are made up largely of another group.

Second, in the ownership of productive assets there also exists an imbalance. In the Peninsula there are about seven million acres of land used for agriculture. Out of this, 4.2 million acres (or 60 percent) is under rubber cultivation. Out of all the land under rubber, about 37 percent is owned by Malays, 42 percent by non-Malays and 21 percent by foreigners. Considering the estates alone, three-quarters of those which exceed 2,000 acres are owned by foreigners. Chinese and Indians also own some big estates, but most of them are smaller than 2,000 acres. No Malays own big estates, but in Kelantan there are some small estates of more than 100 acres which are Malay-owned. The total *padi* land area is about 1.1 million acres. There are no figures regarding ownership of *padi* land, but there are not many holdings of over twenty acres. Normally *padi* cultivators work on their own uneconomic holdings or work on others' land when they have none of their own. Regarding share capital the picture is as follows:

	1970		*1975*	
	$ Million	*percent*	*$ Million*	*percent*
Malay and Malay interests	125.6	2.4	768.1	7.8
Malay individuals	84.4	1.6	227.1	2.3
Malay interests	41.2	0.8	541.0	5.5
Other Malaysians	1,826.5	34.3	3,687.3	37.3
Foreign	3,377.1	63.3	5,434.7	54.9
Total private sector	5,329.2	100.0	9,890.1	100.0

Source: TMP, 1976: Table 4-16, p. 86

In order to reduce the imbalance explained and achieve the objective of restructuring society, some of the steps to be taken are:

(i) "increase the share of the Malays and other indigenous people in employment in mining, manufacturing and construction and the share of other Malaysians in agriculture and services so that by 1990 employment in the various sectors of the economy will reflect the racial composition of the country;

(ii) "raise the share of the Malays and other indigenous people in the ownership of productive wealth including land, fixed assets and equity capital. The target is that by 1990 they will own at least 30 percent of equity capital with 40 percent being owned by other Malaysians;

(iii) "foster the development of entrepreneurship among the Malays and other indigenous people so as to effectively contribute towards the creation by 1990 of a strong and viable commercial and industrial community among them;

(iv) "encourage and support private investment both domestic and foreign" (TMP, 1976:49).

Viewed superficially both the objectives of the Third Malaysia Plan as formulated in the NEP appear to be attractive. But when examined closely, the weaknesses become more obvious. Let us take the first objective, the eradication of poverty. The Third Malaysia Plan as well as the Second Malaysia Plan recognised the existence of poverty and were able to identify the groups which are considered poor. But its analysis of the roots of poverty was not satisfactory. A clear analysis of these roots is important because they will largely determine the strategies and programmes to be undertaken for the eradication of poverty, in the same manner that a suitable cure for an illness can be given only after it is correctly diagnosed. In a manner of speaking, it would be disastrous to diagnose tuberculosis as just an ordinary cough to be treated with a common mixture.

The Second Malaysia Plan did not examine and analyse the roots of poverty. The Review of the Second Plan and the Third Malaysia Plan mention it in but a few sentences. As shown earlier, the most important factor that is emphasised is low productivity. Undoubtedly, there is a lack of productive employment and a rather widespread use of old methods. But there is no mention at all about the system that allows for a portion of the poor people's labour to be taken away either directly or indirectly. For example, among the peasantry the share-cropping system being practised

widely now results in their having to give up a large part of their produce to the landlords; and in marketing there often exists a system of monopoly which results in the peasants getting low prices for their produce and being charged high prices for the commodities that they require daily. We have already stated that the poor peasants are victims of various kinds of exploitation at various levels, by the big businessmen and capitalists at the national level, and also by monopoly-capitalists at the international level. The ones who have to bear the burden of all these levels of exploitation are the peasants. The exploitation and the system that perpetrates this exploitation is not mentioned at all in official publications or policies issued by the government dealing with poverty. Naturally the reason is that this system is directly connected with the *laissez faire* philosophy strongly upheld by those in authority.

As repeatedly mentioned before, poverty is rampant in the rural areas. So it is appropriate that a large portion of development expenditures be allocated to this sector. Out of $18,555 million estimated for total development expenditure under the Third Malaysia Plan, about $4,730 million (or 25.5 percent) is for agricultural and rural development. Out of the latter amount about $3,306 million is concentrated on three projects, namely $2,010 million for the opening of new land schemes, $675 million for replanting of rubber, $621 million for drainage and irrigation. The opening of new land is indeed necessary to overcome the problem of "land hunger". But as already examined elsewhere (Husin Ali 1976:37-46) these land schemes are still far from adequate even to meet the needs of the annual increase of the peasant population. Furthermore they are expensive, and the debt burden on the settlers is rather large. Rubber replanting is certainly beneficial, for ultimately it can increase the productivity of the holding. But it is easier for replanting to be done on estates than on the small farms which sustain poor families; and the landless peasants cannot possibly get any financial aid for replanting because they do not have any land to replant, although they contribute to the replanting funds that are collected from tax or cess on the rubber they produce.

Nobody denies the benefit that *padi* cultivators can derive from drainage and irrigation. But in the irrigation schemes like Muda in Kedah, for instance, there are many problems related to "ownership of land, land tenure and rising production cost as well as marketing and credit system which are not satisfactory" (Shamsul

Amri, 1976:74). About a third of the *padi* cultivators have insufficient or no land at all. In *padi* areas there is little land left for cultivation. But the number and size of families are still increasing. In the long run this will give rise to a serious land problem, unless other employment opportunities arise and attract the peasants from overpopulated areas.

At present, production costs of manufactured goods are increasing, and this affects the prices of commodities consumed by peasants. The structure of marketing for agricultural produce is basically unchanged. The middlemen are still powerful in the villages and in many cases they are also the owners of land and rice mills. Although the National Padi Board has taken over the role of purchasing most of the *padi*, it does not provide the peasants with the same extra services that are often given by the middlemen; and so the middlemen can undercut the Board. As a result, some serious conflicts have occurred between the two parties. Unfortunately the Board operates almost like the middlemen themselves, merely as individual purchasers and not on a cooperative basis. The middlemen continue to be important sources of credit for the peasants, binding them with high interest rates. It is true, for instance, that the Agricultural Bank does provide credit facilities to farmers, but often those who manage to get loans or credit are the ones who have security, and more often than not they come from the more well-to-do and influential groups of society.

The amount of expenditure for agriculture and rural development is indeed sizeable, and those responsible can justifiably feel proud of it. But the question is, do the poor peasants gain much from it? In the new land schemes we hear of settlers being burdened with debts incurred from the cost of developing the schemes. In RISDA serious corrupt practices have been exposed involving millions of dollars which by right should go to the smallholders for replanting rubber. In the drainage and irrigation schemes substantial profits are made by capitalists who supply expensive machinery and tools. In all these schemes those making a pile are often the big contractors.

Under the *laissez faire* system there is always serious competition for facilities, aids, loans and profits. In such stiff competition the strong are often the winners. As already noted, the estate owners can replant more easily than the smallholders, and the smallholders are more fortunate than the landless peasants who do not qualify to get replanting aid. In the same manner as the capitalists, contrac-

tors and middlemen do not face such difficulty in benefiting from the big outlays on various projects. The competitive *laissez faire* system, when practised in a society with socio-economic disparities, will only result in widening the gap further. Those who are on the losing end are mostly the weak, who form the majority, although it cannot be denied that a few of them do derive some benefit.

The objective of restructuring society has a number of weaknesses. Generally, the idea is to encourage Malays to enter the modern sector which is dominated by non-Malays. By implication it is also supposed to encourage greater non-Malay participation in economic activities and types of occupation that are primarily filled by Malays. But, the underlying motive is actually to increase the number of Malay businessmen and industrialists and to enlarge their share in the ownership of important factors of production. In other words the objective is to provide opportunities to some Malays to become capitalists and benefit from the present economic system. This objective manifests the hopes of a few Malays in the upper and middle classes, who hope to benefit even more than before from the processes of socio-economic development taking place under the successive five year plans. No doubt it is good to have more Malay businessmen and industrialists — in fact it is much better if they do not stop short, simply taking over from their non-Malay counterparts, but instead go beyond to replace the foreign monopoly-capitalists who have such a strong grip on the country's economy now. What is unfortunate is that all developments taking place under this objective are to be carried out within the framework of the *laissez faire* system. The implication of this for the poor, weak peasants, who form the majority in this country, are certainly not favourable.

It is clear that the goal of the restructuring process is horizontal and not vertical parity. The objective aims at a more balanced distribution of Malays and non-Malays in similar types of occupation within the same strata. In the lower strata of society, for example, if there are fewer Malays than Chinese as industrial workers, then the proportion of Malays should be increased; so too, if there are fewer Chinese than Malays in land schemes, then the number of Chinese in turn should be increased in the same sector. Similarly, if the number of Malays who are businessmen and executives within the middle strata is small, compared to the Chinese, they must be increased in number, while on the other hand, if the non-Malays demand that they should be given more opportunities in the

government services, then the government has to respond positively to them. The same process applies to the upper strata.

It need not be emphasised that it is difficult to achieve this horizontal parity, which, it is hoped, will reduce the identification of race with certain types of employment or economic activities. Probably this difficulty is the reason why only the question of Malay participation in business and industry is emphasised. There is a greater possibility of limited success in achieving this goal, especially with the help of government and quasi-government bodies, and also because of the strong political pressure from the Malays on this matter. Such pressure will always remind the government of the May Thirteenth Incident, which actually gave birth to the NEP.

In comparison, vertical parity is seldom emphasised. The most serious manifestation of vertical disparity in society is the wide gap between the rich and the poor. The policy of restructuring society within the framework of the *laissez faire* system can create a small group of Malay *nouveaux riches* who have much bigger incomes than the peasants. It is possible for the new Malay rich to cooperate with non-Malay capitalists, both domestic and foreign, in exploiting the low-income peasants and workers in order to maximise their profits. Of course the standard of living of a handful of Malays will rise, and there will be a few Malay millionaires among them; but the problem of poverty among the peasants will remain unsolved. It is not the intention here to say that the Malays should be discouraged from business and industries, but it must be noted that the encouragement given and the efforts carried out within the *laissez faire* system will only perpetuate greater socio-economic inequality, exploitation, and poverty among the people.

During the period of the Third Malaysia Plan, the total amount of investment needed for implementing all projects was estimated at about $44,200 million, out of which the estimated investment in the private sector was about $26,800 million (or 60.6 percent). This shows to what extent the government places its hopes on the private sector to achieve its development programmes. Investments in the private sector depend heavily on foreign investment, and that is why the government appears to be greatly worried when the amount of foreign investment in this country falls short of expectations. What will happen if the target for foreign capital is reached? The aim of foreign capitalists is inevitably to reap as much profit as possible under given conditions. In fact the investors do not accept government interference or control. There is no guarantee that

they will cooperate fully to implement the objectives of the NEP, particularly if by doing so their interests are undermined. Under the present *laissez faire* system there is very little that can be done to control or influence foreign investment. These investors will surely be more concerned about their profits than the success of the Third Malaysia Plan. A greater amount of foreign investment will result in its further entrenchment in the country's economy. This will result in the continuation of the present economic system. Consequently, poverty among the people and a widening gap between the poor and the rich will continue and intensify.

It appears that there are many shortcomings and problems that have arisen from the NEP and its implementation under the Third Malaysia Plan. What are the other steps which can serve as complements or alternatives to the existing programmes in order to achieve the main objectives of the NEP? As mentioned earlier, an effective medicine must be administered according to the diagnosis of the disease. It is acknowledged that the most serious single "illness" suffered by the majority of the people is poverty. It is a social and economic ailment, resulting not only from socio-economic, but also from political factors. Certain political ideologies stimulate certain economic systems to perpetuate themselves. Capitalism, for example, is an ideology that encourages and gives full freedom to big foreign and domestic capitalists to control the economy and allows for the socio-economic exploitation of the majority of people, while socialism is committed to limit or abolish such control and exploitation. Therefore, in order to eradicate poverty it is important not only to take economic measures to reduce poverty, but also to change the political orientation from that which favours foreign and upper class interests to one which favours the national and lower class interests, from that which perpetuates the politico-economic systems and structures of exploitation to one which seeks to dismantle them.

It has been repeatedly noted that as a result of the *laissez faire* system introduced during the days of colonialism, foreign monopoly-capitalists are free to control various sources of wealth in this country and to send home profits and dividends year after year. The biggest rubber estates and the richest tin mines in the world, which are found in this country, are owned and controlled by foreign monopoly-capitalists. On 15 April 1976, Parliament was informed that the amount of profits and dividends taken out of the country was in the region of $435 million in 1966, $555 million in

1969, $1,342 million in 1974 and $1,017 million in 1975. Assuming that, during the five-year period of the Second Malaysia Plan, the amount taken away averaged $800 million annually, it means that the total amount is $4,000 million, or 55.1 percent of the total public expenditure under the Second Malaysia Plan. This money is therefore unavailable for use in the country's development. At the same time the national debt has increased from $5,016 million to $11,178 million during the same period under the Second Malaysia Plan, an increase of $6,162 million.

Viewed logically, can a political and economic system, which allows the wealth of the country to be drained away to such an extent that it must borrow for development, be called a good system? If the answer is "no", what then should be done? One way of overcoming the problem, as done by some Third World countries, it to carry out nationalisation programmes. But such programmes are often considered to be too radical, probably because they go against the principles of the *laissez faire* system. The countries which carry out nationalisation programmes often have two objectives. The first is to eradicate all vestiges of colonialism; this is a political objective. Many countries have succeeded in gaining political independence, but their economies remain under the domination of their ex-colonial masters, and it is through this economic domination that the former colonialists are able to bring about new political pressures for their own benefit. This kind of situation is often referred to as neo-colonialism. Therefore, through nationalisation an ex-colonial country strives to secure a genuine politico-economic independence. The second objective is more economic in nature. By nationalisation it is hoped that the wealth of the country will not be drained out of it, to enrich a handful of wealthy people, most of whom are foreign capitalists living thousands of miles away, but instead will be used fully for the development of the country itself.

It is hard to deny that benefits can be derived from a nationalisation policy, whereby the state controls all the main sources of wealth. The country's wealth can be used for various types of development for the benefit and welfare of the people. Take the example of $1,017 million that was taken away as profits and dividends by the foreign monopoly-capitalists in 1975, as mentioned above. Just imagine how many schools could be built with that amount of money. If one school costs a million dollars — and a big well-equipped school can be built with that much money — then during that year alone a thousand schools could be built. That is only for

one year. What about the other years? Certainly more than just schools could be built — imagine the number of hospitals, low-cost houses and so forth that could be built for the poor people. This country is rich, but since so much of its wealth has been drained away since colonialism began, we are still short of schools, hospitals and cheap homes, especially for the needy poor. Nationalisation policies aim at using the wealth of the country for the benefit of the people and not for a handful of wealthy monopoly-capitalists. So there should be no reason for it to be opposed by the government and the leaders who claim to be really concerned about the plight of their own poor people.

But they put forward many arguments against this policy. The opponents often give examples of failures in other countries. They say that, under the Labour Government, Britain nationalised some of her industries, like coal and steel, and, as a result, many of these industries faced all sorts of difficulties leading to heavy losses, although before nationalisation they were able to make huge profits. But these people fail to explain *why* this happened. What happened was that some of the former owners and directors continued to serve, even after the industries were nationalised. Naturally, they were unhappy with the change that had taken place, and so, by using the positions they held, they tried to cause damage or failure that could discredit the nationalisation policy. However, they did not succeed to such an extent as to turn the clock back to the previous system of private ownership. Indonesia is often cited as another negative example. In Indonesia, following its nationalisation policy, those industries that were once owned or controlled by the Dutch were suddenly transferred into the hands of local politicians, generals and capitalists, to be administered by them. Most of these people were opportunists who were more concerned with their own interests than with those of the country. The failures in these countries should certainly serve as good lessons and guidance to those who intend to carry out nationalisation.

What is interesting is that the vociferous opponents of this policy give examples only from countries which have failed in their nationalisation programmes. Why not present some examples from countries that have succeeded? In the Arab states almost all of their rich oil wells were formerly controlled by western monopoly-capitalists. During that time these states were poor and often looked down upon with contempt. But what happened after Libya, Iraq and Arabia nationalised their oil? They have become wealthy and

are now looked up to with reverence both in the East and West, though sometimes reluctantly. With rising national incomes they have been able to develop much faster now than ever before. Many countries have been paying visits to these Arab states with the hope of getting loans and aid. Since the nationalisation programmes in those countries have proven successful, local opponents to the same policy try to offer new explanations. They say that the case of oil is different because it is a commodity in high demand on the world market. If that is so, why don't we emulate them and nationalise our oil too? What about rubber and tin? Are they not in high demand by some of the wealthy western countries?

When these kinds of questions are asked the arguments then begin to change. Those in authority always emphasise that there are already several businesses or industries that are managed by government or by quasi-government bodies, such as the railways and electricity. Some of them, like the railways, were at one time running at a loss. It appeared that many of the public corporations that have failed were those which have had to face stiff competition from the private sector. At one time the railways, for instance, found difficulty in competing with private transport and haulage, partly because of their own inefficiency. In the same way some of the businesses that have been taken over by such public corporations as MARA and PERNAS were already in their death throes and had no power left to compete. Even if there were new companies formed under the direct or indirect auspices of the government, they had to compete with private ones that were already firmly established and had great experience in operating under the present *laissez faire* system.

But what about those public bodies which do not have to face competition from the private sector? Electricity is a good example. The CEB is a great success. The rates imposed on the public have not increased significantly over the years. If it were run by the private sector, perhaps patrons would even have to pay for street lights. The rates would always be on the increase, just as the prices of cooking oil and other consumer commodities are now increasing. It may be argued that if the nationalisation policy is fully carried out in major industries and they are protected from competition with the private sector, then the chances of success will be greater. But still there will be some people in the government who will sigh and say, "We do not have enough expertise, we lack know-how. It is not easy to manage all the industries." The same kind of sighs

were heard from those who opposed independence before, when they said that the country lacked administrators, soldiers and so forth. If they feel so strongly about this, why don't they launch a crash programme to train and produce the needed expertise? The Third Malaysia Plan does not seem to give priority to this.

It seems to be the common practice among some people, when they run out of rational arguments, to resort to insinuations or even intimidation. Thus it is not surprising that the nationalisation policy has been branded as "communistic" and that those who are in favour of it "are willing to cooperate with the communists and become their front" (Mahathir Mohamad, 1976:106). Are all those who oppose poverty and who wish to redress it by nationalising the country's wealth cooperating with the communists? Are all the Arab states which have nationalised their oil communist fronts? These people also argue that nationalisation is a policy of "grabbing" other people's property. This they say is against Islam. Who has really been grabbing and even plundering? Is it not the imperialists who came with their boats, guns and cannons, who murdered and subjugated the local people, who colonised the country and then took over the best land and the richest mines? Are they not the real plunderers? Is it not true that by dominating the economy they can easily perpetrate exploitation and injustice? Are not these very same things opposed to Islam? So, the basic question here is not just about private ownership, but the injustices resulting from private ownership and control of the country's wealth. If it is sincerely believed that this is a communist policy and anti-Islamic, why is it then that the country's ex-Prime Minister and several ministers have agreed to sign declarations in Algiers (1971), Lahore (1974) and Dakar (1975) upholding nationalisation as a means of achieving social justice? The first was a meeting of non-aligned states, the second a meeting of Muslim states and the third, of developing nations.

Actually, the nationalisation policy will not be easily accepted by any government or leader that upholds the *laissez faire* system and depends on foreign investments in the private sector for the country's development. But it must be stressed that, as long as foreign investors and the free enterprise system remain strong the eradication of poverty and the restructuring of society will be difficult. How is it possible to control or plan development within the private sector which is guaranteed the freedom to make maximum profits? But with the nationalisation policy it is much easier to plan so that

profits from nationalised industries can be used to finance development projects and to encourage greater Malay participation in business and industries that are socially controlled. For example, is it not much easier to implement programmes for training Malays under the sponsorship of the CEB and PETRONAS than to encourage Unilevers or Exxon to do the same? That is the difference between industries controlled by the state and those controlled by foreign investors in the private sector.

Nationalisation is one important aspect within the policy of liberating the people and the country's economy from the grip of a minority of wealthy people, both local and foreign. In the developing countries, especially those which have experienced colonialism, nationalisation will first of all affect the foreign monopoly-capitalists who own and control the big estates, mines and commercial houses. But in addition to them, there are also some local landlords and capitalists who dominate the economy. A large number of them also cooperate closely with the foreign monopoly-capitalists. They control production and marketing at the national and state levels, and also on a smaller scale at the village level. The *laissez faire* system provides the fullest means and opportunities to these capitalists and landlords to carry out all kinds of manipulation and exploitation in order to maximise their profits. Many studies have been undertaken and have proved that the worst victims of exploitation by landlords and capitalists, who are also sometimes moneylenders, are the poor peasants in the rural areas.

One way of reducing the adverse effects of the middlemen and moneylenders is to encourage the development of a strong cooperative movement. But this movement must be strong at all levels. Take the fishing industry as an example. At the first stage — catching the fish — boats and nets are required. At the next stage — when the catch is to be sold — there are other requirements, such as transport, ice storage and market demands. If cooperatives are set up only for buying boats and nets, there is the possibility for sabotage or obstruction in the form of high rates imposed for transport or storage by capitalists who do not wish to see the cooperatives succeed. Only if the cooperatives control all the boats, nets, transport, storage and markets, will the movement be guaranteed success. A highly successful cooperative movement can certainly raise the standard of living of the fishermen, because profits that are normally made by owners of boats, storage or transport operators and markets under free enterprise system, can be earned by the

cooperatives instead. Thus, the fishermen will benefit through better wages and prices. In the same way the standard of living of *padi* cultivators could be improved if all the work of ploughing, supply of fertilizers, credit, milling and marketing were undertaken by cooperatives.

The cooperative system is directly opposed to the *laissez faire* system. In both fishing and *padi* cultivation, for instance, the cooperative system is concerned with the welfare of the fishermen and cultivators, while the *laissez faire* system is concerned with the profits that can be made by such groups as landlords and capitalists (including the middlemen and moneylenders). When the cooperative movement is not strong or encouraged only as a token, then it can easily be undermined by companies or individuals competing against it. Therefore, in order to guarantee the success of the cooperatives, suitable conditions must be provided which can restrict or completely remove all forms of private competition which may threaten them. But of course this would affect the delicate constitutional matter guaranteeing the legitimate rights and interests of business. This would have to be amended first. The cooperative movement must be given full powers within a particular industry, sector or area. But it is much more effective if the movement extends to all sectors in the country which affect the lives of the peasantry. In other words, the cooperative philosophy and system must replace the *laissez faire* system and philosophy. Only in this way can poverty be eradicated and the standard of living of the rural people be improved.

Another important way to achieve this objective is by introducing a comprehensive land reform programme. Efforts to open up new land settlements, provide facilities for drainage and irrigation, fertilizers, credit and so forth, as carried out under the various development plans, actually form only part of land reform. They are inadequate because they do not alter the structure of land ownership and tenure that currently exists. There is no limit to the amount of land that can be monopolised by rich landlords and capitalists. Sometimes they resort to extortionist methods whereby the poor peasants become victims, their meagre holdings confiscated due to their inability to repay loans at exorbitant rates of interest. Furthermore, in a situation where most of the land is controlled by a few landlords, then the tenancy system will benefit the owners more than the operators. In some countries land ownership is limited to only 25 acres and the rest redistributed among the

landless peasants. In some other countries all land in certain areas is controlled and worked collectively by the people in that area. What is earned is then redistributed among the people and used for carrying out local development projects. A comprehensive land reform policy which will change the systems of ownership and tenure is of vital importance for the development of this country and the progress of the people.

VIII Plural Society

In the preceding chapters we have discussed Malay society and its problems. It is well-known that the population of the country is multi-ethnic. In the 1970 census, the population of the Peninsula was 8,810,348, made up of 4,685,838 Malays (53.2 percent), 3,122,350 Chinese (35.4 percent), 932,629 Indians (10.6 percent) and 69,531 Others (0.8 percent). The Malay majority over the rest combined is very small. It is necessary for us to view and examine the position of the Malays in connection with the other ethnic groups. The Malays form only part of the bigger whole. When we focus our attention solely on them, we see only part of the picture. Actually, the Malays and their problems have to be viewed in relation to the other groups and within the context of the whole country.

The Malays in the Peninsula have long had relations with other ethnic groups, not only those from this region but also from other areas. Geographically, the Peninsula is strategically situated; the Straits of Melaka is an important waterway connecting the East and the West. For centuries traders have stopped in these parts, seeking shelter and victuals, as well as trade. Perhaps these factors attracted the early traders to settle here. By the 15th century Melaka had emerged as an important and busy centre for government and trade. Travellers and traders converged on Melaka, coming from Java and other islands in the Archipelago and all the way from Arabia, India, China and later Europe.

These foreigners did not come for trade alone. Some of them eventually settled here, married local women and raised families. There were also religious functionaries who stayed back to spread their beliefs, first Hinduism and later Islam. In Melaka, besides the traders and religious functionaries, quite a few foreigners were accepted into the upper class. The Malay Annals *(Sejarah Melayu)* mentions some officials of Indian origin serving the Court of Melaka, and the marriage of a Chinese princess to one of the early Melaka rulers. So, even then there were already socio-economic relations through trade, involvement in government and mixed marriages in both the lower and upper strata of society. But we

must remember that at that time the position of the Malays (or the government) was strong. Probably this was because the foreigners were few and some of them came only for a short time, although some stayed behind. Those who settled here were easily assimilated into Malay society.

Migration, particularly of Chinese and Indians who were searching for a livelihood or for a place to settle, took place after the introduction of British rule in the Malay states. There were two major categories of immigrants. First were those who came from the outlying islands within the Archipelago, who shared a similar history and culture with the Malays in the Peninsula. They were the Javanese, Sundanese, Acehnese, Banjarese, Bugis, Minangkabau and so forth. Most came on their own, but quite a large number were brought in as contract labourers, especially the Javanese. Some of them opened up new settlements or worked in existing villages, while others became workers on estates or in various government departments. Because of their cultural affinities with the Malays and the absence of religious obstacles, they could easily intermarry with and be assimilated into the local community. Eventually they regarded themselves, and were regarded by others, as Malays.

The second category consisted of those originating from India and China, who were brought in as contract labourers to work in the estates and mines and in government departments, e.g. railways and the postal service. Others came on their own initiative, trying their luck in trade, beginning with small sundry shops in towns and villages. A few Indians and Ceylonese filled vacancies in the professions, as lawyers, doctors and engineers. The Indians, Ceylonese and Chinese are all of different stock, and have different cultures and religions from the Malays, although owing to history there are some cultural affinities between the Malays and Indians. Furthermore, they worked and settled in areas quite far away from the Malay villages. There existed social distances between the Chinese and Indians, as well as between these two groups and the Malays. They carried on with their own lives within their own environments.

A society with multi-ethnic groups living separately but under the same political system, resulting from the history of colonialism, is often referred to as a plural society. This concept was used by a Western writer named Furnivall, who studied the situation in the East Indies, now Indonesia, and Burma when they were under the

Dutch and British rules respectively. According to him, in the plural society " ... different sections of the community (live) side by side but separately, within the same political unit". He further adds, "Each group holds its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways ... Even in the economic sphere there is division of labour along racial lines" (Furnivall, 1948:304-5). Furnivall's plural society concept is often used to analyse society in this country. Although Furnivall uses the term "race" for each of the separate groups, perhaps it is more appropriate here to use the term "ethnic group".

Shibutani and Kwan put forward the interpretation that " ... an ethnic group consists of those who conceive of themselves as being alike by virtue of their common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by others" (1965:47). They further say that each ethnic group often is " ... united by emotional bonds and concerned with the preservation of their type ... they speak in the same language ... share common cultural heritage" *(ibid:* 40). Based on these views the Malays, Chinese and Indians may be regarded as the main ethnic groups in the Peninsula. They manifest all the elements mentioned by Shibutani and Kwan. Although there are sub-groups within the Malay society, namely Javanese, Minangkabau, Bugis and others which also have their own languages and customs, very often they are categorised as Malays because they regard themselves and are regarded by others as Malays. The bases for these, as have been explained in Chapter I, are both legal as well as socio-cultural. So too, even though there are different clans among the Chinese, each with its own dialect and often involved in varying economic activities, generally they regard themselves and are regarded by others as just Chinese.

As it is, it is not so difficult to identify different ethnic groups by their outward appearance. Besides that, they each also manifest characteristics and cultural norms that are different and easily distinguishable. The Malays are Muslims, who are required by their religion to pray, fast, pay religious tithes and go on the pilgrimage to Mecca. Their attire and food are generally influenced by their religious beliefs and cultural values. As for the Chinese, although they are often associated with Buddhism and Taoism, they do not adhere strictly to these beliefs. Their religious faiths do not seem to permeate their everyday life as Islam does among the Malays, especially those in the villages. The Indians are quite devout Hindus and often perform their religious rituals. Each ethnic group has

its own language and cultural heritage, and is proud of them.

The factors which distinguish and separate different ethnic groups are not limited to hereditary characteristics. There are other factors related to the process of development and achievement among the various ethnic groups. About one-third of the people in the Peninsula live in urban areas, which are those gazetted as having more than 10,000 people. Less than one-fifth of the Malays, about one-half of the Chinese and about one-third of the Indians in the country live in the towns (see Table III). The non-Malays are concentrated in the towns, and they are mostly in the states which had the most opportunities for development from rubber estates and tin mines, namely Penang, Selangor, Perak and Negeri Sembilan.

The distribution of population is also connected with types of occupation and levels of incomes. In the rural areas Malays are involved with agriculture, especially in *padi* and rubber; Chinese are mostly involved with rubber tapping and vegetable gardening; the Indians with tapping in rubber estates. In urban areas various types of urban occupations, for instance, labour and management in manufacturing, construction and business, are mostly undertaken by the Chinese. But in the government services and the lower ranks of the uniformed services the Malays form the majority. The ethnic distribution according to occupation or economic activity can be seen clearly in Tables IV and V. Following these tables, in 1970 more than two-thirds (67.6 percent) of Malays were in agriculture, while less than a third of them were involved in mining, construction and trade. On the other hand, the non-Malays formed around two-thirds of the labour force in mining (66 percent), manufacturing (65.4 percent), construction (72.1 percent) and commerce (65.3 percent).

In terms of income, the average rural income was about $200, while the urban average was slightly more than double at $428. As already noted in the previous chapter, in 1970, out of 1.6 million households 49.3 percent were below the poverty line, which was estimated at $25 per capita per household, or about $150 per household with six members. Among those regarded as being poor 89.2 percent were in the rural areas. Most of the Malays are in the villages, and so it is not surprising that, compared to the other groups, they had the lowest average household income with $172, compared to the Chinese and Indians who had $394 and $304 respectively. Table VI shows the distribution of the ethnic groups

according to their incomes. It is seen that the percentage of Malays earning less than $200 per household exceeded all the other groups, while among the households earning more than $400 the Chinese percentage was more than the others. Among those earning less than $100 per household, about 85 percent were Malay, 10 percent Chinese and 5 percent Indian. Among those earning more than $3,000 per household, about 52 percent were Chinese, 12 percent Malay and 17 percent Indian (Table VI).

There is also some racial pattern in the distribution of educational and political affiliations. In 1970 and 1975 the distribution of the student population of all levels can be observed from Tables IX and X. Generally the percentage of Malays at different levels of education increased between 1970—1975 from 53.4 percent to 55.2 percent at primary level; from 51 percent to 54.4 percent at lower secondary; from 48.8 percent to 60.7 percent at upper secondary; from 43.4 percent to 54 percent at post-secondary; from 49.7 percent to 65.1 percent at pre-university; from 82.9 percent to 85.4 percent in diploma courses; and from 39.7 percent to 57.2 percent in degree courses. It can be said that the percentage of Malays at all levels of education is greater than the percentage of the Malay population for the country. Although the schools should be a good place for students of all ethnic groups to mix, it seems that certain ethnic groups concentrate in certain schools. According to the Household Survey of 1967—68, 87 percent of the Malay children went to Malay schools, 85 percent of the Chinese to Chinese schools and 67 percent of the Indians to Tamil schools. Only in the English schools did there appear a rather mixed combination of the various ethnic groups (Chander, 1970).

1970 was the first year that government and government-aided schools changed to Malay medium; this change will occur step by step, so that by 1980 all classes at primary and secondary level will be conducted in Malay. But this will still leave schools with only one ethnic group predominating. For instance, schools which were originally in Malay medium will continue to be predominated by Malays, while national-type schools in the urban centres will continue to be predominantly non-Malay. Private Chinese medium schools will continue almost exclusively with Chinese students. At the post-secondary level, especially in some of the well-known schools in the urban areas, most of the students will be non-Malays, while most of the science centres established by MARA will continue to admit only Malays. In the teachers' training colleges there

is some inter-ethnic congregation, but Institiut Teknologi Mara will still be exclusively for Malays while Tunku Abdul Rahman College almost exclusively for Chinese. Among the various universities, the University of Malaya seems best to reflect the population composition, although there is inevitable ethnic polarisation in some faculties. The Universiti Kebangsaan, Universiti Pertanian and Universiti Teknologi have a high percentage of Malays. On the other hand about 80 percent of the college and university students who are studying overseas are non-Malays.

In politics it can be said that most of the political parties are comprised solely or predominantly of one ethnic group as members. The policies and structural organisations of these parties are communal. Among the Malays there are two big parties: UMNO, which is based on rather liberal Malay nationalism; and PMIP, which claims to champion Islam. The PSRM, a small party which bases itself on a programme to fight for the interests of the depressed and less privileged groups, irrespective of ethnic origins, has a large Malay majority among its members. The Chinese are concentrated mainly in the MCA, DAP and Gerakan. The membership of MCA is open only to Chinese, but DAP and Gerakan, although claiming to be multiracial, do not seem to attract many Malay supporters. The MIC is strictly an Indian party. From before independence UMNO, MCA and MIC cooperated within the Alliance, but from 1974 the PMIP, Gerakan and several other opposition parties joined hands with the Alliance to form the National Front and later the Government. Their cooperation is purely organisational and confined to the leadership level. Each party continues with its own communal policies and organisational support just as before.

Although there are clearly marked differences in language, religion, culture, areas of residence, economic activities, political orientation and educational affiliation among the Malays, Chinese and Indians, nonetheless they are not compartmentalised completely from one another. There is certainly a great social distance between the majority of them, but at the same time there exist inter-ethnic relations, however limited. There are villages, townships or towns where different ethnic groups live side by side; there are many estates, factories and other places where they work together; there are political parties in which they are all active; and there are various levels of educational institutions that children of different ethnic groups can attend. Interaction occurs at various

levels. At the level of friendship there are close relationships among individuals every day, or occasional visits during festivals. In institutions such as schools, market places and cinemas for instance, men, women and children of various ethnic groups are able to strengthen their social ties. At the organisational level there are many political and non-political bodies which serve as means for promoting interaction and strengthening inter-ethnic relations.

The process of inter-ethnic integration continues to occur especially at the three levels mentioned above. This process can be seen more clearly in different strata of society. We have seen that Malay society is divided into the upper, middle and lower classes. The same division also prevails among the Chinese and Indians, and so the whole country can be analysed within the framework of the same stratification system. The one significant thing is that within each stratum the roles played by the three ethnic groups are different, thus depicting specialisation of roles among them.

As we have discussed earlier, the Malay upper class consists of the rulers, senior government politicians and administrators, and a handful of capitalists. The picture is different among the non-Malays. Of course there has never been a ruler among them, although, since independence, there have been some ministers, but most of the Chinese concentrate on economic activities, as proprietors and directors of companies, estates and also mines. Their number is bigger than that of the Malays. As already noted, in 1970, out of the total amount of $5,329 million of share capital of limited companies, only $124 million (or 2.4 percent) belonged to the Malays, while $1,450 million (or 27.2 percent) belonged to the Chinese. The Chinese ownership was only two-fifths of foreign ownership valued at $3,377 million (or 63.3 percent), but when compared to Malay ownership, Chinese ownership was more than ten times as large. A large proportion of this share capital is owned by members of the wealthy upper class.

Among members of the upper class there are some strong links. Each ethnic group tries to integrate members of another ethnic group into its own sphere of influence. For instance, the Chinese capitalists try to get ex-civil servants or ex-ministers to participate in their economic enterprises, usually as directors (although this is often in name only, because most of them are only glorified PROs). At the same time many big towkays or successful professionals are accepted into the traditional Malay system, and awarded decorations and titles such as Tun, Tan Sri, Datuk and so forth.

Many of them are leaders of the ruling parties, at the national or state level. Besides that they are also members of exclusive clubs like the Royal Golf Club and the Lake Club. So it is not only economic and political interests that link members of the upper class, but also common social activities.

Within the middle class there is also some occupational specialisation. As mentioned earlier, a large number of Malays have been absorbed into the administration; at present the 3:1 quota for admitting Malays into the civil services is still maintained. Many graduates enter these and other services, such as teaching, the military and the police, where the Malays also form the majority. On the other hand, middle class Chinese are mainly in the professions and in business. As evident in Table VII, more than 60 percent of the architects, town planners, engineers, medical doctors, dentists, managers and salesmen are Chinese. The Chinese form the majority, not only as the professionals in the private sector, but also in the public sector. The number is small in the civil and military services, just as small as the proportion of Malays in business and the professions. Quite a good number of Indians are also found in the economic fields where the Chinese predominate. The concentration of Chinese and Indians in the professions and business may be perpetuated in as much as their opportunities to enter the civil service continue to be restricted.

Among the various groups in the middle class there is a similar style of life. Their educational achievement, especially at the secondary and post-secondary levels, is mainly through the English medium; in their daily life they tend to be modern or westernised. This facilitates social relationships among them. At the state or town levels, there are sometimes understandings and relationships worked out between Malay administrators and non-Malay professionals and businessmen who have similar interests. They become members of the same clubs and spend a lot of their time playing billiards, tennis, golf or just boozing together. In fact in the big towns like Kuala Lumpur they gather in places like the Subang Golf Club and the Selangor Club. There are also members of the upper class, some of them ministers, who join these clubs, but their number is small. Although there are bases of integration among members of the middle class, there can also be acute conflicts among them which may spread to the upper class. This will be discussed later.

Within the lower class too there are elements of ethnic specialisa-

tion in particular occupations. A large majority of the Malays are peasants in the rural areas. There are some Malays who work as estate labourers or as mining workers too, but their number is few. In the towns most of them are in the lower ranks of government services, working as office boys, gardeners, policemen and soldiers, but there are also a number now who have become factory workers. Compared to the Malays, there are not many Chinese who are peasants, and compared to the Indians there are not as many Malays who are estate labourers. But in the mines, building construction and factories the proportion of Chinese workers exceeds all the other groups. The Indians form the majority of estate labourers, and there are also many of them who serve as workers in the government departments, such as public works and railways. The process of inter-ethnic integration among groups in the lower class seems to be slower than that in the upper and middle classes, although quite often strong working class solidarity is displayed in some trade union disputes. The influence of religion and culture among them is stronger. Between the Malay peasants and Chinese workers there are wide social gaps and the ties or feelings of solidarity among them are limited. But in areas or states where they form the minority, for instance in Kelantan, most of the Chinese in the lower class have assimilated into the Malay way of life, eating Kelantanese cooking and speaking in the dialect of that state.

The discussions up to this point show two important things. First, although there are strong bases for group division according to ethnic origins, that is not the only division existing in society. Within each of the ethnic groups there are also quite clear-cut class categories. If the ethnic divisions are vertical in nature, the class divisions are horizontal. Vertical divisions according to ethnic groups are determined by factors that are hereditary or ascribed, while the horizontal divisions according to class are determined by new differentiating factors, such as economics and politics, and connected with achievement of groups or individuals in society. Along with these two categories based on ethnicity and class there are also two forces at work on members of the society: the force that tends to pull them closer according to ethnic group and that which tends to pull them closer according to class. And so, in their social behaviour and actions they may be more influenced by ethnic or class interests.

Second, there does not exist an ethnic stratification system. In other words there is no system whereby each stratum or class in

society is made up of only one ethnic group and ranked higher or lower than another. In other words not all Malays are in the upper class or all Chinese in the lower class, or vice versa. This is quite different from the situation in South Africa, or to a limited extent, even in the United States. In South Africa, especially, skin colour can determine social position: the blacks are always regarded as lower than the whites economically, politically and socially, and they always remain and are regarded as belonging to the lower class. There exists a colour line there which does not exist here, although during British rule there was a situation which put the British in the upper layer high above the local people within the social stratification system existing then. As we have discussed earlier there is strong evidence to show that class categories cut across ethnic lines. Within each of the classes there are Malays, Chinese and Indians. However, the percentage of Chinese earning more than $3,000 a month and owning property is higher than the percentage of Malays, while there are more Malays than Chinese among those who earn less then $150 and live in poverty in the lower class.

Third, the common view generally held is that economic and political power is divided ethnically. The Malays are supposed to hold political power while the Chinese hold economic power. This view is prevalent across the Straits of Johore and finds enthusiastic support amongst a section of the people in Malaysia too. In fact this view is rather misleading. It is true that there are more Malay ministers and administrators than Chinese, but there are also Chinese who share political power with the Malays and have strong political positions. In the same way there are more Chinese than Malays who are businessmen or entrepreneurs, but there is an increasing number of Malays who share economic power with their Chinese partners. What is important is that not all Malays have political influence and power, and not all Chinese are economically influential or powerful. The Malays who really hold political power are only a small group from the upper class and to some extent middle class. So too the Chinese who monopolise the economy are mainly from the upper class. The Malays in the lower class and a large section of them in the middle class do not have much political power; they only have the opportunity to vote once every five years. So too, the majority of Chinese, most of whom are in the lower class, do not have any economic power. In fact, irrespective of whether they are Malays, Chinese or Indians, the majority of the

people in this country do not hold any political or economic power. Power is in the hands of the powerful, and in the political and economic spheres in this country, it is in the hands of a tiny group of people made up of the various ethnic groups who cooperate with and help one another closely.

The most important thing, which is often forgotten, is that real power is in the hands of foreigners, especially the former colonial rulers. They have much greater power and influence than the Malaysians. In the economy, for example, as was already mentioned, in 1970 foreign interests controlled about 63 percent of all the share capital of limited companies which totalled $5,329 million; or in greater detail 75.3 percent in estates, 72.4 percent in mining, 63.5 percent in commerce, 59.6 percent in manufacturing and 52.2 percent in insurance. This foreign ownership was about two and half times larger than Chinese ownership and twenty-five times larger than the Malay ownership. By 1975, the pattern of ownership had not altered very much (see Table XI). Through this economic control, which until recently was given teeth by the presence of their military might, these foreigners are able to wield considerable influence in this country. But the real test will come when there is political tension or crisis in the country.

Now we can turn to something else. Why is it that communal feelings are still strong although there have been attempts by various groups to reduce them? After the Second World War there have occurred several communal clashes in various places, such as Batu Pahat (1945/6), Batu Malim, Raub (1946), Batu Kikir (1946), Penang (January 1958), Pangkor (May 1959), Bukit Mertajam (1967) and the biggest, Kuala Lumpur (May 1969). Elsewhere I have tried to discuss the patterns and causes of such conflicts. Here the main views will be summarised.

Generally, communal clashes arise from differences and subsequent conflicts of values or interests, or both together. There are differences in the values of the Malays and the Chinese, owing to their different religious and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, there is a social distance between them, and so most Malays do not know Chinese values very well and most Chinese are quite ignorant of Malay values, despite the fact that they have been living side by side for so long. Of course sometimes they just ignore these value differences although they may know about them. This situation may give rise to unnecessary misunderstanding. First, it is possible for one ethnic group, out of ignorance and not deliberate

intention, to hurt the feelings or arouse the anger of another group. For example, if a Chinese peasant living upstream rears pigs, and the river is used by Malays far downstream for bathing and taking ablution, then a major and violent clash is bound to happen.

Second, since they are mutually ignorant of one another's religious and cultural backgrounds, they tend to have misconceptions of one another, taking the form of what social scientists call stereotypes. Certain characteristics which are often looked down upon are attributed to certain ethnic groups as a whole. For instance, there are Malays who regard the Chinese as dirty, as cheats and always obsessed with money-making. In the same way there are Chinese who picture the Malays as being lazy, spendthrift and prone to amusement. Probably, these attributes are true of some Malays and some Chinese, but not true of all of them. As a result of these stereotypes, prejudices grow. When each group is prejudiced against the other, tensions can easily develop, and explode into communal clashes.

Differences or conflicts of interests often occur in the economic and political spheres. During the colonial days opportunities were limited for the local people, but after independence the door was opened wide to them for upward mobility. From one five-year plan to another a good number of development projects were planned and there was much more money to be spent. All of these opened new opportunities for workers, businessmen and contractors. Because some Chinese had more capital, experience and know-how, they were able to gain much more from contracts than Malays or Indians. Most of them were members of MCA, a component of the National Front. The MCA indirectly became a channel for them to gain these contracts. Because of their association with the government they were also able to participate in the process of government.

In politics many Malays have succeeded in reaching top posts. The system of parliamentary democracy has enabled some common people to move upwards and become leading members of the government, as ministers and so forth. As UMNO is the backbone of the National Front, many of its leaders were appointed to various government posts after the election victory of the National Front in 1974. From these political positions, some of them have successfully shifted to economic activities.

Actually speaking, only a small number from the upper class have been the main beneficiaries of political and economic privi-

leges after the achievement of independence. They form a limited circle. At the state and national levels few can enter that circle. Some politicians, businessmen and professionals, like lawyers, accountants and so forth, try to break into that circle, but are seldom admitted into it. The majority of them are from the middle class.

The Malays feel that they ought to have a greater share in the business and industrial activities, while the Chinese feel they ought to be given more opportunities in politics and administration. The Malays feel restless with what they believe to be excessive economic power in the hands of the Chinese, while, on the other hand, the Chinese are dissatisfied because they feel left out in politics and administration which are monopolised largely by Malays. At the same time there is acute competition to get contracts, licences, jobs, promotions, places in the universities and scholarships. So, particularly among members of the middle class who compete to get better positions for themselves, success or failure is often interpreted as being caused by ethnic factors.

Feelings of dissatisfaction have been expressed in ethnic terms by some political parties. The National Front has many component parties, but almost every party is made up of one ethnic group and tries to get support from the same group. UMNO and PMIP both present themselves as champions of the Malays and of Islam. The pro-Malay issues that they constantly voice tend to give rise to uncertainty and even dissatisfaction among the MCA and Gerakan, which are the Chinese wings of the National Front. In the same manner when MCA and Gerakan take up issues to attract Chinese support, members of UMNO and PMIP become apprehensive. But although their interests sometimes seem to conflict, the leadership of the National Front has until now been able to maintain organisational unity.

From outside the National Front there are also communal pressures. Before PMIP joined the National Front, they regarded the Chinese as a threat to the future of the Malays and felt that the UMNO had sold out to the Chinese. After it joined hands with UMNO in the National Front it was difficult for the PMIP to continue with this line of propaganda. But there was a large following of the party that did not agree with PMIP entering the National Front. They did not change their views, and continued to voice their dissatisfaction loudly. On the other hand, among some chauvinists within the ranks of the MCA and DAP, for example, it has

always been asserted that the Malays, or more correctly the government, wants to abolish Chinese language and education and turn the Chinese into second class citizens. In fact, religious and cultural issues are increasingly made use of by both chauvinist Malays and Chinese to gain wider support.

The communal nature of politics in this country today is determined particularly by the middle class, and its influence has seeped downwards to the lower class. The peasantry, most of whom are Malays, and the workers, the majority of whom are Chinese, are in the most depressed socio-economic positions. Although much has been said about Malay privileges, the Malay peasants have gained almost nothing, especially when compared to the immense profits made by the upper class and foreign monopoly-capitalists. Opportunities for good jobs and facilities for education and medical services are more easily available to Malays and non-Malays from the middle and upper classes. Although several development programmes have been in existence for some time they have not made much headway towards solving the basic problems of poverty, unemployment, landlessness and inflation. Generally, as the most exploited groups, Malay peasants and non-Malay workers suffer most and in this sense share almost the same interests. But their dissatisfaction and disappointment are often expressed in ethnic terms.

Claims and accusations of a communal nature made by the top leadership of various political parties easily arouse the emotions of their members at the lower levels. The Malay peasants not only see themselves as being poor, but when comparing their sad condition with others, they see that the rich, especially those around them in the towns, are mostly Chinese. They see the Chinese middlemen in the villages not only manipulating the prices of the commodities they buy and sell, but also controlling the livelihood of the villagers. Although there are those among them who can see and feel the effects of socio-economic injustices and often feel angry about them, they are unable to understand, and more often than not are unable to interpret the basic causes of these injustices. There are some among them who attempt to interpret, but they usually end up blaming the non-Malays as a whole. To the Malays, the most common stereotype of the Chinese is that they are rich businessmen: the most common stereotype of the Indians — particularly the Chettiars and the Sikhs — is that they are moneylenders. Owing to these stereotypes, Malays tend to lose sight of the fact

that the businessmen and moneylenders consist of only a small number of Chinese and Indians in the country. There are also peasants and workers among them, and some of them do not differ very much from Malay peasants and workers.

Among the urban non-Malays there is still a widespread claim that Malays control the government, and that they use their power to suppress the non-Malays. Chinese workers or hawkers have to deal with Malay officers who, to them, represent the government. Sometimes language difficulties occur which can easily give rise to misunderstandings. Furthermore, if hawkers, for instance, hawk without a licence in restricted areas, it is usually Malay policemen who take action against them. It is difficult to convince those already burning with anti-Malay sentiments that the governing elite consists only of a handful from the upper and middle classes, from various ethnic groups, and that some non-Malays also make up a large segment of those in government services serving as doctors, engineers, high school teachers and so forth.

It is clear that each ethnic group has its own stratification system, which forms part of the stratification system of the society as a whole. Economic, social and cultural differences that have been inherited from the past are still strong, even today, and often act as factors causing separation and conflict between the ethnic groups. These differences become exacerbated and turn into dangerous clashes when there are groups and parties which make use of communal issues to gain support. It appears as if racial politics is being deliberately perpetuated so that the masses in the lower strata of society will never be united to alter the *status quo*, which, at present, greatly benefits the upper class and the foreign monopoly-capitalists who are actually in close cooperation with each other. At present political parties that raise political, economic, social and cultural issues on the basis of class differences between the rich and the poor have not proven to be successful, and have not been able to unite the peasants and workers in the lower class of all ethnic groups. Furthermore, because such parties incline towards socialism and firmly oppose many of the government's policies, which they view as giving an advantage to the foreign and upper class interests, they are often branded as pro-communist, and so their movements are restricted and their leaders often detained without trial. Weakening them only means strengthening communal parties and communal trends in the country.

IX Conclusion

It is difficult to speculate or visualise correctly the future of a country or a people. Nevertheless, it is possible to provide a general outline of the trend of changes that have taken or are taking place, and how it will probably develop in the future. As in other Third World countries, there is a strong desire in this country to build a modern society. But what type of modernisation do we want to achieve? What effects can the process of modernisation possibly have on the Malays? What form of society and what type of social values should be encouraged among them? These are interesting questions that need to be answered. They can serve as useful pointers for the future.

The process of modernisation is often regarded as synonymous with westernisation. Unfortunately, for a long time the Western elements that have spread in the society are not really those determined by the people themselves, but instead those determined by the colonial rulers. The decision to modernise was made by the same colonial masters, as was the case in many other countries that have been colonised. They have practically forced upon the people the values and systems of the West. The economic, political, administrative, legal and educational systems that have been established here during the last hundred years are based on a Western pattern, mainly the British one. The Western systems and values, or for that matter anything Western, have been revered to such an extent that the indigenous systems and values have often been ignored, if not despised. This is not to deny that there are some aspects of Western systems which are positive and have been beneficial to the Malays. Although these Western systems and values spread throughout the country, their influences are greater among the upper and middle classes, especially those in the urban areas. During the colonial days, members from these classes were the first ones used by the colonial rulers to strengthen their position. But undoubtedly these influences were more clearly perceived after independence.

Although some changes occurred during colonial rule, they were rather limited. For instance, within the economic sphere there were

many changes which were deliberately not introduced into the rural areas. As already noted, the British encouraged the Malay peasants to continue their traditional occupations of *padi* planting and fishing, and, by encouraging foreign immigrants into the Peninsula, they were at the same time stopping the Malays from being absorbed into new economic activities such as business and industry. In the field of education, schools were built and opportunities for education were extended to more Malays than before, especially those from the upper class who could be recruited into the administration; but for the common people, particularly children of the peasants, the opportunities were limited. Good schools were not built in the rural areas, and even if some were built, they were only for the primary level. It was clear that the colonial rulers wanted to limit the education made available to the villagers only up to the level of being able to read, write and do some calculations, so that they would not easily be cheated in their daily lives.

It is quite clear why the colonial masters did not want to encourage development in the economy and education among the people. It is not the intention of colonialism to develop those whom they colonise, but to harvest as much from the colonies as possible. For them opening estates and mines was more beneficial than improving the conditions of agriculture in the villages, for clearly estates and mines could be exploited for larger profits. Furthermore, the colonial rulers knew that if education were extensively encouraged then their very position could be threatened. If many schools were built and the doors opened to allow higher education to a large number of local children, then there would emerge a group of educated people who could challenge the colonial power. This had happened in many other colonies, where a small number of western-educated individuals succeeded with the help of their education to challenge colonialism. By limiting the opportunity for education, the colonialists would delay somewhat the process of social and political consciousness and the emergence of leadership that could challenge them.

Since colonial influence was limited, it was therefore not able to eradicate or replace all elements of traditional society, which have continued till this day. As an example, in the economic sphere many of the old agricultural methods are still practised in the villages; in politics the old symbols of power such as the sultan and *penghulu* still persist; and in culture many of the old beliefs are

still widespread among a large number of people. The old traditional system and values exist side by side now with the new systems and values which were encouraged by colonialism. But they do not coexist in a stable equilibrium. The process of modernisation still continues, and so while the Western elements become stronger, the traditional elements tend to get correspondingly weaker. Indeed Malay society is now in transition. To a great extent it can be said that many changes that have occurred since independence follow the patterns that had already been set during the colonial days. This can be seen most clearly in economic and legal spheres. In this country the influence and effects of colonialism are still strong and significant.

How could this happen? This is connected with the history of national struggle in this country, which, as was explained in earlier chapters, follows two different and opposite traditions. First, there is the tradition of cooperation or collaboration between local leaders and the colonialists. Second, there is the tradition of opposition or resistance. Both these traditions are found in the 19th century, following British intervention in this country, and in the 20th century, during the struggle to achieve independence. In the 19th century the local leaders who collaborated were willing to accept British rule as long as their own positions were safeguarded. Those who opposed carried on with their resistance, although many of them were imprisoned, hunted or killed. In the 20th century the group that cooperated was ready to compromise with a half-baked independence which would allow the colonialists to retain their economic control over the country. Those who opposed wanted all forms of colonialism to end, so that genuine independence could be achieved.

The difference and contradiction between these two traditions are found not only in this country, but also in several other countries that have experienced colonial rule. In many countries it is the first tradition of cooperation or collaboration that initially won. But eventually the people became politically aware, and they began to realise that the independence they fought for did not bring much benefit to the majority of people. When political consciousness is again aroused and becomes widespread among the majority of people, then they will turn to the second tradition of opposition or resistance. They will not want to be deceived anymore by leaders and policies that betray their own interests. Ultimately the demands and struggles of the people themselves, under the leader-

ship of genuine nationalists, will achieve victory. This country and the Malays will certainly witness this inevitable development.

The true leaders and champions of the people generally show two characteristics in their policies and actions. First, they give priority to the interests of their own country and people and not the interests of foreign countries and their people. Second, they often emphasise greater concern for the poor and weak who form the majority of people in the lower class, and not for the rich and strong in the upper and middle classes who monopolise political and economic power. These two characteristics can serve as useful guides or as principles for the people in this country, particularly for the Malays, if they want a better future for themselves.

In this country there still exist systems and values which are contrary to the interests of its own people. As a result of colonial control and of the lack of courage found among the present leadership, who fail to change the economic system and structure inherited from colonialism, part of the source of wealth of this country continues to be controlled by a handful of monopoly-capitalists. Year in and year out they keep draining out enormous profits. It is ironical that a rich country such as ours has to beg and borrow all over the world, especially in the West, in order to finance some of the development projects and for investments. In some newly emerging states, the disadvantages of colonial economic structures and systems have been realised. That is why many such states have taken firm action to retrieve all their sources of wealth that were controlled by the colonialists. That is the reason why many of the Arab states, for example, have nationalised their oil industries. In this way they have placed the interests of their own people and country above the interests of the foreigners.

But this alone is not sufficient. For, in the name of the people and the country, a handful from the upper classes who have the power and influence can always grab the country's wealth to satisfy their own selfish ends. Therefore, there must be some effective guarantee to ensure that the country's wealth will be redistributed fairly, and that the benefit of development projects will filter down to the bottom, so that they can be enjoyed by the poor people too, irrespective of whether they are peasants in the rural areas or workers in the towns. Economically, there are two things that can give rise to this handful of individuals monopolising the country's wealth and obstructing the majority of the poor people from achieving development. The first is the *laissez faire* system which is still

firmly entrenched here, and the second is the present nature of stratification in the society.

A *laissez faire* or free enterprise economy is an aspect of the capitalist system which was encouraged by the colonial rulers in this country for its economic and social development, so that the country and its people would be modernised in the pattern of the West. Although there are leaders who deny it, the fact is that capitalism gets the blessing and support of the government. It is true that, within the framework of this system, development efforts can also be carried out to benefit the people. As always claimed by some leaders, development in this country has raised the incomes of the peasants, especially those in the land schemes, and increased the number of villagers who can afford to own scooters and motorcycles. But surely they overlook more important things. Are not the profits gained by the contractors, middlemen, businessmen, entrepreneurs, capitalists and corrupt politicians much greater? If the poor people can get a piece of land or a small shop, is it not easier for the rich to get logging areas or factories? If the poor can buy a scooter, is it not easier for the rich to buy a Mercedes? In fact, while it is true that incomes of the lower class have increased, those of the upper class have increased much faster; therefore, the economic gap between these two classes of people is getting wider. Worse still, there is a tendency for the rich to become richer and the poor poorer.

The effects of the free enterprise economy will grow worse in a stratified society with greater inequity. Different classes in the society differ greatly from one another in the political, economic and social positions — the position of the upper class is much more strong, stable and influential than that of the lower class. Actually the differences between the classes correspond with the differences between the rich and the poor. The rich upper class normally controls positions of economic influence, and often plays roles that are looked up to in society. The reverse is quite true of the lower class.

Social classes have long existed in human society. Many modern societies today continue to reflect traditional class differences between the rulers and the ruled, and alongside these emerge differences between the capitalists and workers. Historical changes often change only the form of classes.

Dr. Mahathir, the Deputy Prime Minister, has written that " ... in Muslim societies there are no classes. There are the rich and

poor people, but class divisions do not exist." Furthermore, according to him kinship ties are so strong that they cannot be severed by economic class differences (Mahathir Mohamad, 1976). Evidently the good doctor is confused. First, it is necessary to distinguish between "Islamic teaching" and "Islamic society". It is true that, according to Islamic teaching, those who are considered to be honoured before Allah are the ones who show *taqwa*, which means fear of God. The degree of *taqwa* is not determined by one's status, whether rich or poor, ministers or peasants. But it is different with Islamic society, which may be interpreted strictly as one which practises all aspects of Islamic teachings, or loosely as a society that consists mainly of Muslims but is not necessarily based on the teachings of Islam. In any Muslim society, following these two interpretations, there exist different social categories that can be considered as classes. During the Umayyad and Abassid periods in early Muslim history there were social classes; for example, the feudal ruling class stood out clearly above the common people who formed the majority of the ruled. Such class categories exist up to this day in Muslim countries like Arabia and Egypt, although they have taken somewhat different forms.

Second, when a person admits that in a particular society there exist groups of rich and poor people, then he is in fact also admitting the presence of an important factor which determines the formation and existence of classes. Admittedly, there are many factors that can make a person rich, such as his education and occupation, and his own efforts. But usually the very rich in society control capital or land or other assets. With these they can embark on various enterprises such as opening estates or factories and controlling labour. The wealthy usually live opulently in exclusive areas and maintain social relations and a style of life that differentiate them from the poor people. With their wealth they can "buy" political influence and social prestige. So, once we admit the existence of the rich and poor in society then we must admit that classes and class differences also exist.

Third, it is contended that, in a Muslim society, kinship ties are strong and cannot be severed by class differences. This contention shows an utter ignorance even of traditional folk tales and contemporary events. It is true that kinship ties are strong in traditional societies, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. Tribes or clans are forms of extended families found all over Asia and Africa. But owing to different political, economic, social and educational

changes these kinship ties have been considerably weakened, perhaps even broken asunder, giving way to new ones based on common class or status ties. In Malay society such a folk tale as *Hikayat Si Tenggang* shows that when Tenggang succeeded in becoming a rich trader, his class position changed. With this new position he became a snob and was even unwilling to acknowledge his poor peasant parents in front of his wife. This implied that he was willing to break his kinship ties. We can find even today instances which show basic similarities with the story of Tenggang. There are many young men, who, after receiving higher education and its accompanying status, refuse to go back to their families and home villages and try to conceal their origins because they are ashamed of them. It is true that there are people, especially those in politics, who tend to favour some of their kith and kin, but certainly this tendency is in fact waning as a result of new changes taking place in Malay society. Furthermore, it is not always possible or beneficial for a successful politician to continue favouring his relatives; he must think of the consequences.

Malay society is made up entirely of Muslims. But the fear of Allah is seldom applied as an important factor in determining the prestige of individuals or groups. Even in the villages, where religion is more strongly rooted, the power of wealth and politics is given great respect. As already noted, the traditional class structure still persists, though in a modified form. The middle class is a new reality. It is possible that with the present trend of greater economic inequities, class formations will become more distinct in Malay society. One of the factors that can lead to this is the present government's economic policy. This policy encourages the emergence and growth of Malay businessmen and industrialists, who, through joint ventures with other capitalists, will encourage inter-ethnic cooperation and integration among members of the upper and middle classes. They too will be capable of exploiting the poor peasants, most of whom are Malays, as much as, if not more than their predecessors. As a result, among the Malays themselves too, the rich will become richer and the poor poorer. Thus class differences will become more crystallised among them.

Poverty is indeed a serious problem in newly emerging nations. In the Peninsula many plans and projects are being carried out to eradicate poverty. Following the NEP, expenditure allocated for them has been much bigger. Admittedly, there are sections of the peasantry which have benefited from this expenditure, but on the

whole the incomes of the majority of the poor people in the lower class have not improved very much. In fact, they have been left lagging further behind by the rich upper class, whose incomes have increased much faster. To make their plight worse, inflation over the years has caused the prices of their daily needs to soar upwards, sometimes beyond their means. Indeed the prospects of eradicating poverty in the near future is dim so long as the *laissez faire* system is perpetuated. As already explained, this system contains inherent elements that are often unjust and can only burden the poor people much more than the other groups. It is clear that poverty can be eradicated only if the present structure and system of the economy undergo a complete overhaul. This will require major political changes. Whether this will happen or not depends on the level of consciousness among the people and the type of leadership that will emerge from them. The signs are quite clear that the majority of people desire these changes, and desire them immediately.

In order to determine the direction of these major changes the Malay people now need to give the correct answers to the following questions:

(a) Do they want the people to continue being dominated by colonial systems, structures and values?
(b) Do they want the people to uphold commercial cultural values that degrade the morals and place individual self-interests before collective welfare?
(c) Do they want the people to allow the economic gaps between different classes to grow wider, and only a handful of people to enjoy the benefits of development?
(d) Do they want the people to allow exploitation, manipulation and corruption to become rampant and humanitarian relationships to disappear?
(e) Do they want people to continue being subjugated to feudal influences which create fear for truth and encourage superstition, fatalism, slavish mentality and blind following?
(f) Do they want the people to be chained to outdated values and beliefs that obstruct progress?
(g) Do they want the people to allow religion to be degraded by those groups which want to use it as a tool for advancing their self-interest and obstructing change and liberation?

There are other questions that can be asked, which need the right answers to serve as guides for action. There is also a need for a major revival movement that can develop the highest level of con-

sciousness among the majority of people so that they will strive for a progressive new life. The changes envisaged should embrace every sector: politics, economics, education, law, culture and even religion. It is to be expected that the revival movement will be opposed by groups wanting to continue cooperation or collaboration with the collapsing imperial powers and the anachronistic feudal elements. That is why the people must develop the right attitudes and carry out the struggle, imbued with a courageous spirit ever marching forward and never retreating, realising how important it is to achieve liberation and progress. The future of the Malays is in their own hands.

Tables

TABLE I

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA: DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RACE, 1970

	Total	*Percentage*
Total	8,810,348	100.0
Malay	4,685,838	53.2
Chinese	3,122,850	35.4
Indian	932,629	10.6
Others	69,531	0.8

Source: R. Chander, *Golongan Masyarakat — Banci Penduduk dan Perumahan Malaysia 1970,* Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 1972, p. 6, Table VI.

TABLE II

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA: RACIAL DISTRIBUTION BY STATES, 1970

	Malay	*Chinese*	*Indian*
Trengganu	93.9	5.4	0.6
Kelantan	92.8	5.3	0.8
Perlis	79.4	16.2	2.0
Kedah	70.7	19.3	8.4
Pahang	61.2	31.2	7.3
Johore	53.4	39.4	6.7
Melaka	51.8	39.6	7.8
Negri Sembilan	45.4	38.1	16.1
Perak	43.1	42.5	14.2
Selangor	34.6	46.3	18.3
Penang	30.7	56.1	11.5

Source: R. Chander, *Golongan Masyarakat — Banci Penduduk dan Perumahan Malaysia 1970,* Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 1972, p. 32, Table XIV.

TABLE III

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA: RACIAL DISTRIBUTION IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, 1970

	Urban		*Rural*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Total	2,530,433	28.7	6,279,915	71.3
Malay	699,372	14.9	3,986,466	85.1
Chinese	1,479,225	47.4	1,643,125	52.6
Indian	323,435	34.7	609,194	65.3
Others	28,401	40.8	41,130	59.2

Source: R. Chander, *Golongan Masyarakat — Banci Penduduk dan Perumahan Malaysia 1970*, Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 1972, p. 30, Table XI.

TABLE IV

EMPLOYMENT BY RACE AND SECTOR, PENINSULAR MALAYSIA, 1970
(000)

Sector	*Malays*	*% of sector total*	*Chinese*	*% of sector total*	*Indians*	*% of sector total*	*Others*	*% of sector total*	*Total*[1]	*% of total employment*
Agricultural, forestry and fisheries	925.4	*67.6*	293.0	*21.4*	138.3	*10.1*	12.3	*0.9*	1,369	*49.1*
Mining and quarrying ..	21.1	*24.8*	56.1	*66.0*	7.1	*8.4*	0.7	*0.8*	85	*3.1*
Manufacturing	84.4	*28.9*	191.0	*65.4*	15.5	*5.3*	1.2	*0.4*	922	*10.5*
Construction	16.9	*21.7*	56.2	*72.1*	4.7	*6.0*	0.2	*0.2*	78	*2.8*
Electricity, water and sanitary services	10.2	*48.5*	3.8	*18.0*	6.8	*32.3*	0.3	*1.4*	21	*0.8*
Transport, storage and communications	49.0	*42.6*	45.5	*39.6*	19.7	*17.1*	0.8	*0.7*	115	*4.1*
Commerce	69.3	*23.5*	192.6	*65.3*	31.6	*10.7*	1.5	*0.5*	295	*10.6*
Services	256.1	*48.5*	188.5	*35.7*	73.9	*14.0*	9.5	*1.8*	528	*100.0*
Total ..	1,432.4	*51.5*	1,026.7	*36.9*	297.6	*10.7*	26.5	*0.9*	2,783	*100.0*
LABOUR FORCE	1,557.0		1,108.9		334.4		26.0		3,026	
%	*51.5*		*36.6*		*11.1*		*0.8*		*100*	
UNEMPLOYMENT	124.6		82.2		36.8		—		243	
%	*8.0*		*7.4*		*11.0*		—		*8.0*	
POPULATION	4,841.3		3,285.6		981.5		73.0		9,181	
%	*52.7*		*35.8*		*10.7*		*0.8*		*100*	

[1] Totals do not add because of rounding.

Source: *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan*, Government Printers, Kuala Lumpur, 1973, p. 77, Table 4·4.

TABLE V

MALAYSIA: MANPOWER SURVEY RESULTS, 1973 AND ESTIMATED[1] REQUIREMENTS, 1976—80

	MANPOWER SURVEY, 1973							
		Racial distribution (%)						
	Total Employed	*Malay and other indigenous people*	*Chinese*	*Indian*	*Others*	*Total*	*Vacancies (%)*	*Estimated[2] requirements, 1976—80*
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)*	*(8)*
ESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL	145,517	48 9	39.3	10 5	1.3	100.0	10.4	65,309
emists and Physical Scien- s	354	11 6	76.8	11 3	0.3	100 0	20.6	327
boratory and Science chnicians	3,824	48 2	37.3	13.9	0.6	100 0	27.8	2,137
chitects and Town Plan- rs	353	21 0	71.4	2 5	5.1	100 0	22.4	180
gineers	2,244	13 5	69.9	12 8	3.8	100.0	22.4	2,764
gineering Assistants and chnicians	11,824	46.1	34.9	16 4	2 6	100.0	24.0	5,538
veyors	168	19.1	58.0	13 7	9.2	100.0	19 6	346
aughtsmen	2,979	39.0	53 4	6.6	1 0	100.0	9 1	2,041
gronomists	652	39 1	49.7	8 7	2.5	100 0	38 0	540
fe Science Technicians	2,070	76.9	20.6	2.0	0.5	100 0	29 1	1,396
terinarians	162	30 8	24.1	42.6	2.5	100 0	19.8	95
terinary Assistants	352	62 7	27.6	8.8	0.9	100 0	15.6	127
edical Doctors	1,915	7.6	49.5	36.7	6 2	100.0	24 0	728
edical Assistants	2,323	35.3	34.6	28 1	2 0	100.0	16 4	2,414
ofessional Nurses	5,623	33.7	55 1	9 0	2.2	100.0	19.4	5,297
ntists	379	8.4	66.8	16 1	8 7	100.0	20.1	205
ntal Assistants	1,030	24.4	72 1	3.0	0 5	100.0	10 1	578
countants	1,774	17 9	70 3	11 0	0.8	100 0	19 1	1,971
wyers	809	20.3	46 8	29 9	3.0	100 0	5 2	284
gher Education Teachers	1,844	37 5	34 8	16.2	11.5	100 0	50 9	286
imary and Secondary achers	79,527	49 5	40 4	9 4	0 7	100.0	3 1	19,872
her Professional and chnical	20,353	68 0	24.6	6 4	1.0	100 0	16.7	18,183
INISTRATIVE AND MANA- AL	22,605	35.4	55 5	7 3	1 8	100.0	8.6	12,264
anagers	12,535	13.0	81 5	3.7	1 8	100.0	3 3	10,472
RICAL	129,374	39.9	48 6	10 4	1.1	100 0	7 1	58,755
S	54,041	10 5	82 9	5 9	0.7	100 0	1 7	31,776
VICE	64,917	70 4	20.2	8.0	1.4	100 0	6 3	145,300
ICULTURAL	105,742	37 9	18.0	41 5	0 6	100.0	3.1	142,309
rm Managers and Super- SORS	7,238	30 4	29 2	38.8	1 6	100 0	3.2	13,701
DUCTION	210,331	39 2	47 7	12.4	0 7	100 0	4 4	190,123

[1] Data refer to Survey results and therefore are not adjusted for undercoverage and exclusions.

[2] Estimated from output and employment targets of the Plan and adjusted for undercoverage and exclusions.

rce: *Third Malaysia Plan*, Government Printers, Kuala Lumpur, 1976, p. 153, Table 8-11.

TABLE VI

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME, PENINSULAR MALAYSIA, 1970, IN PERCENTAGES

Income Range (per month)	*Malay*	*Chinese*	*Indian*	*Others*	*Total*
$ 10—99	84.5	9.6	4.9	1.0	100.0
$ 100—199	60.8	24.9	14.0	0.3	100.0
$ 200—399	40.3	46.0	13.5	0.2	100.0
$ 400—699	31.6	55.7	12.1	0.6	100.0
$ 700—1499	23.2	61.4	12.5	2.9	100.0
$ 1500—2999	14.0	62.1	13.6	10.3	100.0
$ 3000 and above	12.1	52.0	17.3	18.6	100.0

Source: Raymond Lee, *A Study of Interaction and Integration Among Some Malay and Chinese Students,* M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1975, p. 33, Table 2.7. (Adapted from *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan,* p. 4, Table 1.2)

TABLE VII

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA: NUMBER OF POOR HOUSEHOLDS[1] BY SECTOR, 1970—80

	1970				1975				1980			
	Total households (000)	*Total poor households (000)*	*Incidence of poverty (%)*[2]	*Percentage among poor*	*Total households (000)*	*Total poor households (000)*	*Incidence of poverty (%)*[2]	*Percentage among poor*	*Total households (000)*	*Total poor households (000)*	*Incidence of poverty (%)*[2]	*Percentage among poor*
AGRICULTURE												
Rubber smallholders	350.0	226.4	*64.7*	*28.6*	396.3	233.8	*59.0*	*28.0*	423.4	169.4	*40.0*	*22.6*
Oil palm smallholders	6.6	2.0	*30.3*	*0.3*	9.9	0.9	*9.1*	*0.1*	24.5	2.0	*8.2*	*0.3*
Coconut smallholders	32.0	16.9	*52.8*	*2.1*	34.4	17.5	*50.9*	*2.1*	34.0	16.0	*47.1*	*2.1*
Padi farmers	140.0	123.4	*88.1*	*15.6*	148.5	114.3	*77.0*	*13.7*	150.1	109.6	*73.0*	*14.2*
Other agriculture	137.5	126.2	*91.8*	*16.0*	157.4	124.1	*78.8*	*14.9*	171.5	110.3	*64.3*	*14.4*
Fishermen	38.4	28.1	*73.2*	*3.5*	41.6	26.2	*63.0*	*3.1*	42.5	22.1	*52.0*	*2.9*
Estate workers	148.4	59.4	*40.1*	*7.5*	127.0	59.7	*47.0*	*7.1*	111.5	42.4	*38.0*	*5.5*
Agricultural total	852.9	582.4	*68.3*	*73.6*	915.1	576.5	*63.0*	*69.0*	957.5	471.8	*49.3*	*61.4*
NON-AGRICULTURE												
Mining	32.4	11.1	*34.3*	*1.4*	31.8	10.1	*31.8*	*1.2*	32.4	9.6	*29.6*	*1.3*
Manufacturing	150.2	48.5	*32.3*	*6.1*	206.9	59.6	*28.8*	*7.1*	299.3	75.2	*25.1*	*9.8*
Construction	35.0	12.8	*36.6*	*1.6*	44.0	13.4	*30.5*	*1.6*	56.0	14.5	*25.9*	*1.9*
Utilities	12.8	4.7	*36.7*	*0.6*	16.4	4.8	*29.3*	*0.6*	20.5	4.8	*23.4*	*0.6*
Commerce	162.3	49.2	*30.3*	*6.2*	209.4	55.6	*26.6*	*6.7*	265.1	60.9	*23.0*	*7.9*
Transport	61.3	22.4	*36.5*	*2.8*	91.7	24.2	*26.4*	*2.9*	115.9	29.5	*25.5*	*3.8*
Services	229.1	60.7	*20.3*	*7.7*	386.1	90.9	*23.5*	*10.9*	523.8	102.0	*19.5*	*13.3*
Non-agricultural total	753.1	209.4	*27.8*	*26.4*	986.4	258.6	*26.2*	*31.0*	1,313.0	296.5	*22.6*	*38.6*
TOTAL	1,606.0	791.8	*49.3*	*100.0*	1,901.5	835.1	*43.9*	*100.0*	2,270.5	768.3	*33.8*	*100.0*

[1] Two target groups namely, residents of New Villages and agricultural labourers are included among these households, especially in other agriculture, rubber and padi

[2] (%) refers to the percentage of poor households in the total.

Source: **Third Malaysia Plan, Government Printers, Kuala Lumpur, 1976, p. 163, Table 9-3.**

TABLE VIII

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA: HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY BY RACE, 1970

	All households (000)	*Poor households (000)*	*Poverty incidence (%)*	*Percentage of total poor households*
Malay	901.5	584.2	*64.8*	*73.8*
Chinese	525.2	136.3	*26.0*	*17.2*
Indian	160.5	62.9	*39.2*	*7.9*
Others	18.8	8.4	*44.8*	*1.1*
TOTAL ..	1,606.0	791.8	*49.3*	*100.0*
All rural	1,166.7	683.7	*58.6*	*86.3*
All urban	439.3	108.1	*24.6*	*13.7*

Source: *Third Malaysia Plan,* Government Printers, Kuala Lumpur, 1976, p. 180, Table 9-6.

TABLE IX

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA: ENROLMENTS BY RACE AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION, 1970—75

	1970					*1975*				
	Malay	*Chinese*	*Indian*	*Others*	*Total*	*Malay*	*Chinese*	*Indian*	*Others*	*Total*
Primary	759,064	511,729	142,147	8,529	1,421,469	875,975	550,064	151,744	9,126	1,586,909
%	*53.4*	*36.0*	*10.0*	*0.6*	*100.0*	*55.2*	*34.7*	*9.6*	*0.5*	*100.0*
Lower secondary ..	193,054	146,872	36,339	2,270	378,535	305,700	198,493	54,290	2,988	561,471
%	*51.0*	*38.8*	*9.6*	*0.6*	*100.0*	*54.4*	*35.4*	*9.7*	*0.5*	*100.0*
Upper secondary ..	43,627	38,800	6,258	715	89,400	101,486	54,095	10,420	1,108	167,109
%	*48.8*	*43.4*	*7.0*	*0.8*	*100.0*	*60.7*	*32.4*	*6.2*	*0.7*	*100.0*
Post secondary ..	4,609	5,267	637	106	10,619	8,817	6,617	804	97	16,335
%	*43.4*	*49.6*	*6.0*	*1.0*	*100.0*	*54.0*	*40.5*	*4.9*	*0.6*	*100.0*

Source: *Third Malaysia Plan*, Government Printers, Kuala Lumpur, 1976, p. 40, Table 22-6.

MALAYSIA: ENROLMENTS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION BY RACE, 1970—75

MALAYSIA: ENROLMENTS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION BY RACE, 1970—75[1]

	1970					1975				
	Malay	*Chinese*	*Indian*	*Others*	*Total*	*Malay*	*Chinese*	*Indian*	*Others*	*Total*
Diploma and certificate courses[2]										
Universiti Malaya	—	—	—	—	—	63	61	5	3	132
Universiti Pertanian Malaysia	458	72	3	12	545	1,691	139	27	1	1,858
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	390	198	23	7	618	1,557	118	9	12	1,696
Institiut Teknologi MARA	1,801	—	—	—	1,801	7,524	—	—	—	7,524
Politeknik Ungku Omar	216	267	10	—	493	744	341	51	—	1,136
Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,151	46	4	1,201
Sub-total	2,865	537	36	19	3,457	11,579	1,810	138	20	13,547
%	*82.9*	*15.5*	*1.0*	*0.6*	*100.0*	*85.4*	*13.4*	*1.0*	*0.2*	*100.0*
Degree courses										
Universiti Malaya	3,005	3,861	559	302	7,727	3,590	3,515	504	122	7,731
Universiti Sains Malaysia	68	144	35	5	252	1,205	1,361	179	14	2,759
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	164	4	1	—	169	2,337	126	35	4	2,502
Universiti Pertanian Malaysia	—	—	—	—	—	538	135	22	—	695
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	—	—	—	—	—	483	80	3	1	567
Sub-total	3,237	4,009	595	307	8,148	8,153	5,217	743	141	14,254
%	*39.7*	*49.2*	*7.3*	*3.8*	*100.0*	*57.2*	*36.6*	*5.2*	*1.0*	*100.0*
Preliminary and pre-university courses										
Universiti Malaya	28	14	6	2	50	190	3	—	—	193
Universiti Sains Malaysia	16	3	—	—	19	92	—	—	—	92
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	—	—	—	—	—	54	5	—	1	60
Universiti Pertanian Malaysia	31	2	—	7	40	99	4	—	—	103
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	74	—	—	—	74	—	—	—	—	—
Institiut Teknologi MARA	341	—	—	—	341	348	—	—	—	348
Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman	30	1,122	41	2	1,195	32	2,739	157	4	2,932
Sub-total	520	1,141	47	11	1,719	815	2,751	157	5	3,728
%	*30.3*	*66.4*	*2.7*	*0.6*	*100.0*	*21.9*	*73.8*	*4.2*	*0.1*	*100.0*
TOTAL	6,622	5,687	678	337	13,324	20,547	9,778	1,038	166	31,529
%	*49.7*	*42.7*	*5.1*	*2.5*	*100.0*	*65.1*	*31.1*	*3.3*	*0.5*	*100.0*

[1] Figures refer only to enrolments in local universities and colleges.

[2] Does not include enrolments in domestic private institutions.

Source: ***Third Malaysia Plan***, Government Printers, Kuala Lumpur, p. 401, Table 22-7.

TABLE XI

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA: OWNERSHIP OF SHARE CAPITAL IN LIMITED COMPANIES, 1970—90

	1970[1]		*1975*[2]		*Average annual growth rate (%) 1971—75*	*1980*[3]		*1990*[4]		*Average annual growth rate (%) 1976—90*
	$ million[4,6]	*%*	*$ million*	*%*		*$ million*	*%*	*$ million*	*%*	
Malays and Malay interests ..	125.6	*2.4*	768.1	*7.8*	*43.6*	3,284.3	*16.0*	24,009.7	*30.0*	*25.8*
Malay individuals[5]	*84.4*	*1.6*	*227.1*	*2.3*	*21.9*	*695.4*	*3.4*	*5,914.2*	*7.4*	*24.3*
Malay interests[6]	*41.2*	*0.8*	*541.0*	*5.5*	*67.4*	*2,588.9*	*12.6*	*18,095.5*	*22.6*	*26.4*
Other Malaysians[7]	1,826.5	*34.3*	3,687.3	*37.3*	*15.1*	8,290.5	*40.4*	32,012.9	*40.0*	*15.5*
Foreign[8]	3,377.1	*63.3*	5,434.7	*54.9*	*10.0*	8,952.2	*43.6*	24,009.7	*30.0*	*10.4*
Total private sector[9]	5,329.2	*100.0*	9,890.1	*100.0*	*13.2*	20,527.0	*100.0*	80,032.3	*100.0*	*15.0*
Gross domestic product (in 1970 prices)	9,038.0		12,914.0		*7.4*	19,487.0		42,462.0		*8.3*

[1] *Actual*

[2] *Estimated*

[3] *Targets*

[4] *Totals for 1970 differ from those presented in the SMP and its Mid-Term Review because of the exclusion of the Government, the re-classification of the trust agencies as Malay interests and the re-allocation of most of the shares previously categorized as "held by other companies" to the shareholders of these companies*

[5] *Includes institutions channelling private Malay funds such as Amanah Saham MARA and Lembaga Urusan dan Tabung Haji*

[6] *Shares considered to be held in trust by agencies such as MARA (excluding Amanah Saham MARA), PERNAS, UDA, SEDC, Bank Bumiputra and Bank Pembangunan.*

[7] *Includes nominee companies and third-company minority holdings*

[8] *Non-residents.*

[9] *Excludes the Government and its agencies except trust agencies*

Source: *Third Malaysia Plan*, Government Printers, Kuala Lumpur, p. 86, Table 4-16.

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