FROM BRITISH TO BUMIPUTERA RULE

Local Politics and Rural Development in Peninsular Malaysia

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Local Politics and Rural Development in Peninsular Malaysia

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To my wife, Wendy

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This book is an examination of the complex interplay, at the local level, of politics and developmental processes in Malaysia. It is based on the study of a rural Malay community and combines the methodologies of anthropology and history. However, it is not simply a study of one community in Malaysia; rather it is a study of Malaysian political reality through the presentation of the social life of one rural community. More specifically, it is a study of how the implementation of development measures at the local level, before and after independence, were both shaped by, and in turn influenced the political context in which they were applied. It has been observed that both the policies themselves, and the sometimes paradoxical local forms that they take, are the consequences of inherent tensions and unresolved contradictions, at the national level. This study – one oriented to the social history of local politics – aims to provide a milieu for a more meaningful analysis not only of the issues of Malaysian economic development and planning, but also of the operation of the Malay party politics.

Inevitably, I am indebted to many individuals and institutions in the course of the study. Fieldwork was made possible by an award from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and a travel grant from Monash University. A fellowship from the Institute of Southeast

Asian Studies, Singapore enabled me to revise my doctoral thesis into the present study.

Professor S. Husin Ali of Universiti Malaya gave me guidance in my early days as a graduate student and helped to shape my future interests and direction. The late Professor Michael Swift of Monash University gave me guidance at every stage of the research in the true tradition of British social anthropology. His untimely death was a great loss to Malay studies. Rashmi Desai and Michael Stevenson of Monash University, and John Butcher of Griffith University helped me in many instances throughout the study. So, too, did my colleagues at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, particularly, Halim Ali, Hood Salleh, Mohd. Dahlan Hj. Aman, Rustam A. Sani, Salleh Lamry and Samad Hadi. Shaharil Talib of Universiti Malaya taught me the trade secrets of the historian. Dato' Dr Mohd. Nor Ghani, of the Prime Minister's Department, assisted me at the initial stage of the research. At the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, Sharon Siddique gave great encouragement in the preparation of the book, and Pauline Khng was responsible for improving my manuscript.

My father, Hj. Baharuddin Hj. Yaakub, and my parents-in-law, Stella and Howard Smith, unselfishly provided their love, support and precious time. Joan and Peter Green in Melbourne, Cikgu Suratman Markasan and family, Mohamed Ahmad and family, Ibrahim Othman and other friends in Singapore were generous with their time and help.

Of course, my deepest gratitude goes to the villagers and others in the research area in Selangor, into whose lives I intruded for about two years. For ethical reasons, I am not able to list their names.

Last but not least, my thanks go to my wife, Wendy, both for her help with the book itself, and above all, for her continued patient encouragement. To her I dedicate this book.

Needless to say, none of the individuals and institutions mentioned above are responsible for any of the failings in this book.

Shamsul A. B
(Shamsul Amri Baharuddin)

Seremban, 1986

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Listed below are the psuedonyms of individuals and places which appear frequently in the text. They are crucial social actors and important places of the ethnographic account presented in the study. Given the highly personal nature of much of the illustrative case material examined, it is necessary, on ethical grounds to protect the identity of the people and the places.

This list is to assist readers in following the description, analysis and arguments in the study. It should also help the reader to separate the pseudonyms from the real names as the former are listed below. See Map 3 for the location of the places mentioned.

It is important to note that there is no surname system in Malay society. A full Malay name consists of two given names separated by a gender indicator *bin* (son of) or *binte* (daughter of) for example, Anis bin Ali. The names listed below are first names only.

(a) People

Abu
Headmaster of Kg. Mawar's primary school, a loyal supporter of

Timah, the state councillor for Mawar; on the board of directors of the latter's private company or *syarikat*.

Abdullah/Ustaz Abdullah
A rubber smallholder and part-time religious teacher and was responsible for establishing a branch of PAS in Kg. Asal in 1958.

Ah Chong
A rich and established Chinese contractor from Sungai Ikan; a trusted ally and business partner of Timah and on the latter's private company board of directors; the main figure responsible for running the company.

Ahmad
The first unofficial village head or leader of Kg. Asal, of Sumatran origin, and known to be very religious; considered a "rebel" by the *penghulu* for initiating rubber growing in his village against the colonial government's land regulation.

Ali
The first village head of Kg. Kasturi and a close ally of the *penghulu*.

Anis
The son of Ali and later the village head of Kg. Kasturi on his father's death; a confidante of Timah.

Bakar
An independent candidate formerly a shop attendant who contested Timah for the Mawar state councillor seat, sponsored by the latter's political opponents.

Cikgu Din
A teacher at Kg. Chempaka primary school; an active member of the Kg. Chempaka UMNO branch and the Village Development and Security Committee; an enterprising oil palm and rubber smallholder.

Cikgu Hassan
One of the first two teachers (the other was Cikgu Omar) of Kg. Chempaka primary school; often consulted by the villagers for advice and help on bureaucratic matters but mostly remembered for his role as a mediator in a feud between two well-off local families.

Cikgu Omar
A teacher at Kg. Chempaka primary school, but more well-known for his business and economic activities; a relative of the *penghulu*.

Hamzah
A smallholder from Kg. Asal who was a strong supporter of the local PAS branch but switched camp and joined UMNO after a conflict with the PAS leaders.

Haji Abdul
The first village head of Kg. Chempaka, a close ally of the *penghulu* and was at the centre of the "1934 scandal" after which he left and went back to Java; before he left he was also a successful petty contractor.

Haji Salam
From an assistant to Haji Abdul he succeeded him as the village head of Kg. Chempaka; a successful petty contractor who accumulated a lot of wealth and land; had two wives and a large family.

Haji Zam Zam
A religious teacher and an active committee member of the Kg. Asal PAS branch; contested as PAS candidate in various elections at the state and federal levels but did not win any.

Johar
A smallholder and an active PAS committee member of Kg. Asal branch; contested in various elections at the state level on PAS's ticket but never successful.

Karim
The son of Umar, the first village head of Kg. Teratai; a reliable assistant of his father when the latter was ageing and often ill.

Kasman
A smallholder from Kg. Chempaka proper who donated a piece of land for the site of the village mosque in an effort to resolve the "1936 mosque controversy" in Kg. Chempaka.

Malik
The first son of Haji Salam, a successful building contractor and businessman, an active UMNO official of the Sungai Ikan branch which opposed Timah in the 1974 pre-selection and during the election itself; has two wives.

Manap
The second son of Haji Salam, a successful petty building contractor, replaces his father as the village head of Kg. Chempaka, presently the chairperson of the Village Development and Security Committee and leader of Kg. Chempaka UMNO branch; has four wives.

Raja Rustam
The first MP for Malawati and formerly an Assistant District Officer of the Malawati district during the late colonial period, the founding chairperson of UMNO Malawati.

Ramlee
A teacher who was the leader of the UMNO Sungai Ikan branch which opposed the selection of Timah as the ruling party candidate in the 1974 state election.

Sudin
The third son of Haji Salam, a shopkeeper and a middleman by occupation; has two wives.

Suhin
The Mawar state councillor from 1959 until 1974, responsible for securing Timah, his daughter-in-law, as his successor; a successful businessman himself.

Timah
The Mawar state councillor from 1974 to 1982; daughter-in-law of Suhin; the central figure in the "1974 pre-selection dispute" in Mawar.

Umar
The first village head of Kg. Teratai, but his duties were mainly performed by his son, Karim, because of age and poor health.

Zainal/Haji Zainal
The successor to Ahmad as the leader of Kg. Asal after the former left the village; was involved in many of Kg. Chempaka's conflicts.

Zubir
A rich landowner and businessman of Kg. Chempaka; owns a few shops and lorries; the only person in Kg. Chempaka who holds a licence to buy or sell oil palm fruit.

(b) Places

Kg. Abok
A village in Mukim Asap whose inhabitants were mainly rubber smallholders, some of whom became the pioneers of the Kg. Chempaka village complex (consisting of Kg. Asal, Kg. Teratai, Kg. Kasturi, Kg. Baru and Kg. Chempaka proper).

Kg. Asal
The first settled area within the Kg. Chempaka village complex; one of the PAS strongholds in Mawar and Malawati.

Kg. Baru
The last of the settled area within the Kg. Chempaka village complex, only opened in the mid-1960s, located in Mukim Enau, east of Mukim Mawar.

Kg. Chempaka
A village consisting of two smaller villages – Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal. The field research was conducted in these villages.

Kg. Mawar
A village on the coast of the Malacca Straits where the Mawar township, the administrative centre for Mukim Mawar is located.

Kg. Silang
A village in Mukim Mawar surrounded by large plantations; the villagers were mainly rubber smallholders and were partly responsible for opening up the Kg. Chempaka village complex in 1916.

Kg. Kasturi
A village within Kg. Chempaka village complex, shares a boundary with Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Teratai.

Kg. Teratai
A village within Kg. Chempaka village complex, shares a boundary with Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Kasturi.

Malawati District
Formerly the capital district of Selangor until 1857; divided by a river, the northern part of which is the rice area and the southern part, the cash crop (rubber, coconut, oil palm) area.

Mukim Asap
The mukim north of Kg. Chempaka village complex, from where part of the latter's pioneers came from.

Mukim Mawar
The southernmost mukim in Malawati district, and its physical area coincided with the Mawar state electoral constituency; in 1981, there were 11 villages and 14 plantations in the mukim.

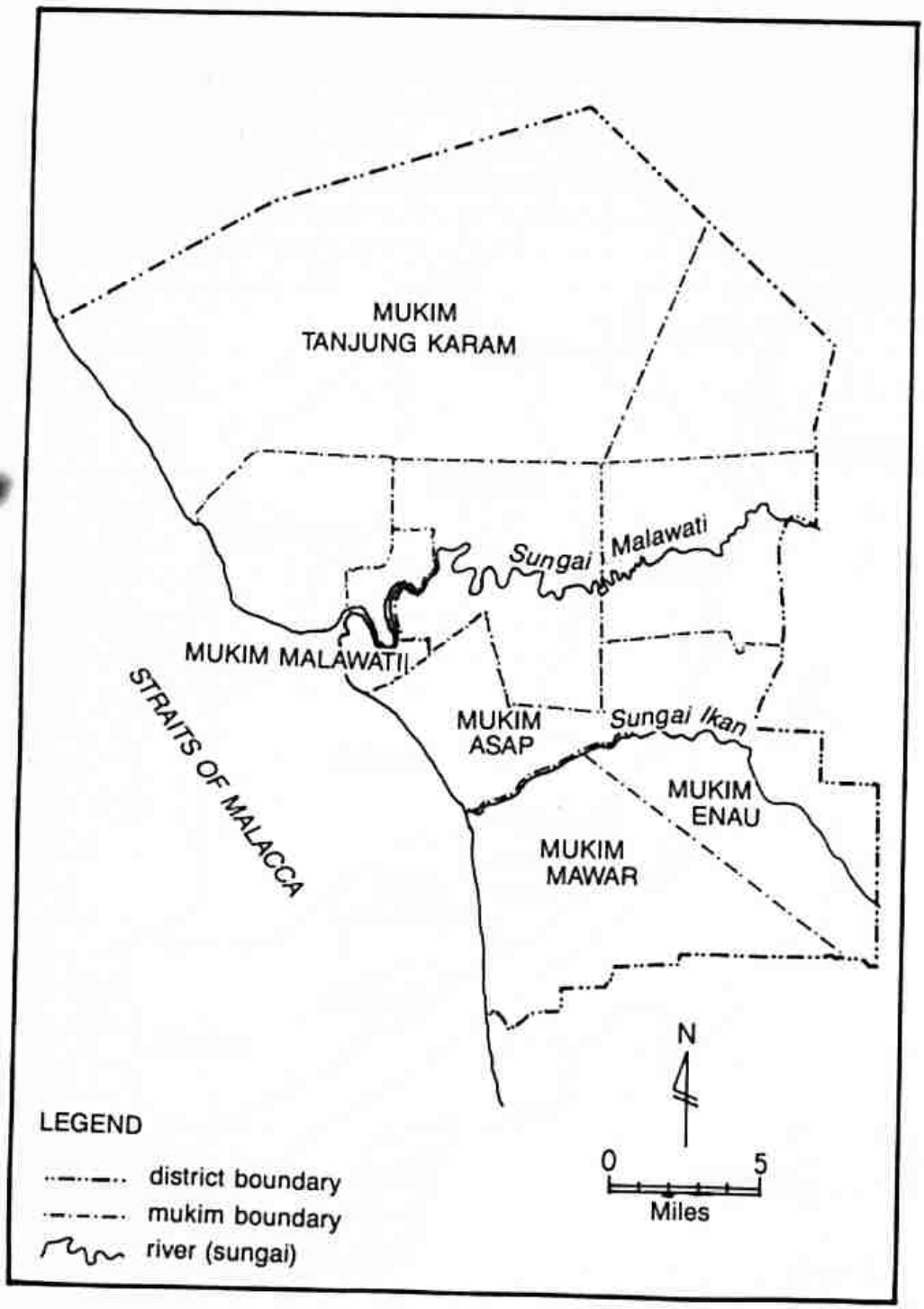
Sungai Bilis
The southernmost township in Mukim Mawar, populated mainly by Chinese fishermen.

Sungai Ikan
A village at the northernmost end of Mukim Mawar, where Sungai Ikan town, the fishing and business centre of the *mukim* is located;

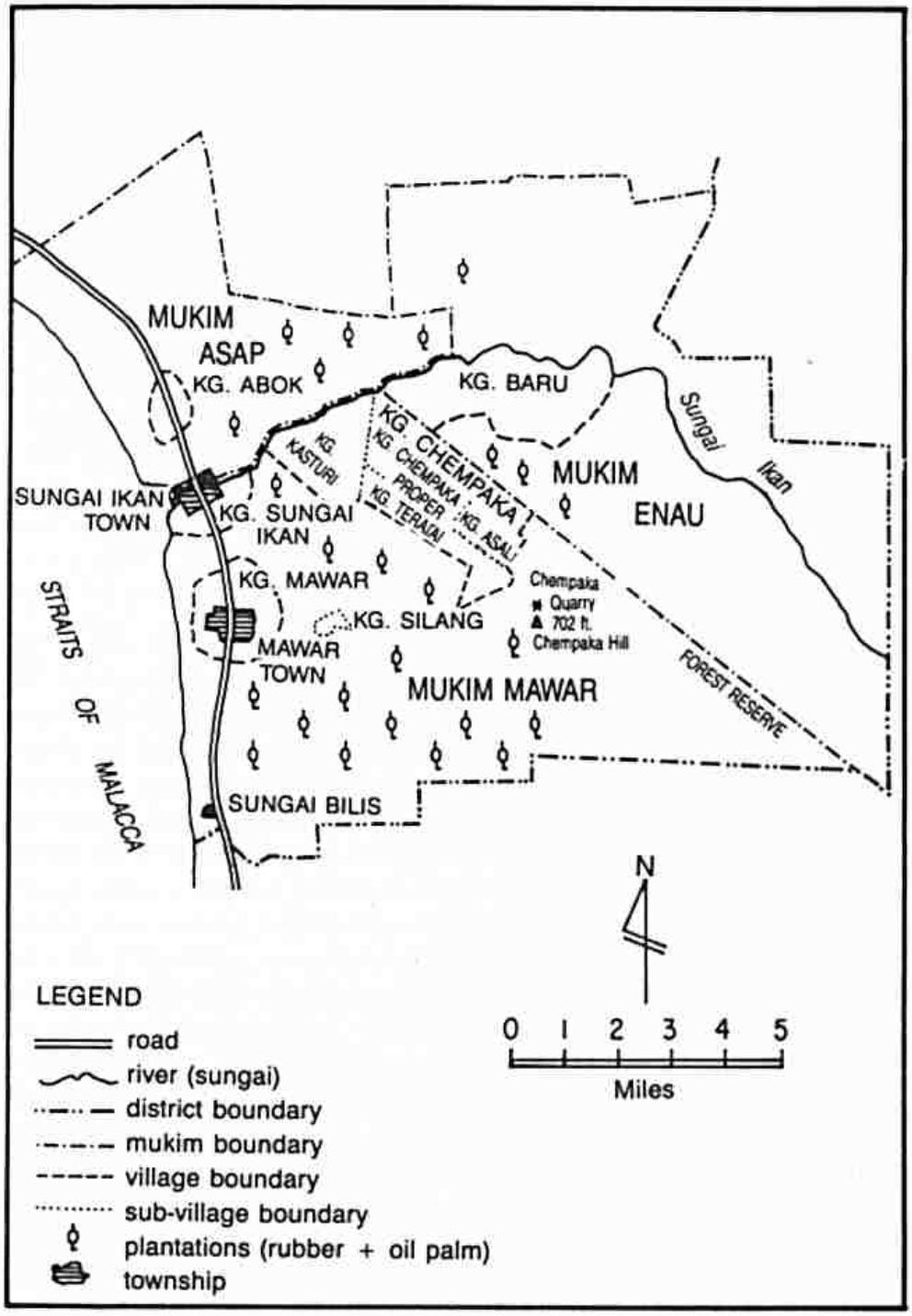
the town is Chinese-dominated and the surrounding area populated by Malays.

Tanjung Karam
A rice-growing area north of Mukim Mawar; has been considered one of the PAS strongholds in Malawati district; many people from Kg. Chempaka came from this area and migrated back during the colonial period.

Map 1: Peninsular Malaysia.



Map 2: Mukim Mawar and the neighbouring *mukim* in Malawati District.



Map 3: Detailed map of Mukim Mawar.

1

INTRODUCTION

For the last two decades, in the field of Malaysian social studies, two particular areas of interest seemed to have received more attention than others from local and foreign scholars. They are the study of Malaysian politics, and development and development planning in Malaysia. The popularity of both themes has been generated by, at least, two important and interrelated perceptions about the country. Firstly, Malaysia has been perceived by many as a plural society whose political survival depends upon its ability to create and sustain a political compromise amongst its major ethnic groups. Secondly, it is also believed that the political compromise can only work in the long run if the social and economic well being of its populace is improved, through careful and systematic development planning. Thus there has always been a keen interest amongst most Malaysianists either to observe and discuss the political process at the national level or to evaluate and summarize the results of Malaysia's development efforts at different stages of their implementation.[1] Hence various aspects of Malaysian politics and development and development planning in Malaysia have been examined by a broad spectrum of social scientists, who subscribe to a variety of theoretical orientations. However, a detailed survey of the literature on both themes in Malay and English reveals that nearly all

of them are macro studies.

Studies on Malaysian politics, for example, have been dominated largely by psephological analysis of every state and federal elections including by-elections held in Malaysia.[2] There is also a substantial collection of literature on topics such as ethnic politics,[3] political history and government,[4] history of major political parties,[5] and biographies of selected political leaders.[6] Since the mid-1970s, there has also been a proliferation of popular political literature, written in Malay which present journalistic-type but often critical analyses of "hot" national political issues such as the "Datuk Harun corruption scandal" and the leadership struggle within the ruling parties.[7] But very rarely does the considerable literature on Malaysian politics analyse in any detail the national political dynamics at the local village level, that is, in the context of local politics. To date, from about a dozen of published monographs on local communities and about four times of that in the form of books on various aspects of Malaysian politics, only four provide us with detailed analysis on the nature and dynamics of local politics: three on Malay local politics by Syed Husin Ali, Marvin L. Rogers, and Clive S. Kessler,[8] and one on Chinese local politics by Judith V. Strauch.[9] It is also important to note in the context of this study, that the three monographs on Malay local politics were based on field research conducted before 1970. We do not really know what changes have taken place since in terms of Malay local politics, especially the impact of the New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced in association with the Second Malaysia Plan from 1971 onwards.

Similarly, the discussions in most of the literature on development and development planning in Malaysia have been dominated by macro issues and the analysis confined mostly to performance evaluation exercise. Such a trend is not unexpected as the main contributors have been economists, who are keen to evaluate the development plans using criteria derived from the "positivistic and scientific modern economics".[10] Others such as sociologists, political scientists and geographers have adopted a macro approach too, in their discussions and analysis of the so-called social implications of the development initiatives.[11] There are few published works by either economists or other social scientists, which offer detailed analysis on particular development programmes, such as the government-sponsored land scheme based on closely focused

research.[12] More rarely still does the now burgeoning literature on development and development planning in Malaysia trace the local level implications and vicissitudes. The few that exist, all of which are community studies, discuss the development issue only in a manner subsidiary and complementary to their particular area of interest, such as "village social values", "communication and social structure in rural Malaysia", and "the sociology of production amongst the rural Malays".[13] For that matter, one could also argue that most published community studies on the rural Malays have paid some attention to the issue but lack the detail and depth.

From the above, one gets the impression that both themes have been discussed separately by almost two different set of scholars. What is more glaring perhaps is the apparent neglect on the crucial interconnection of politics and planning and of the national and the local as a serious research topic. The few works available on this topic take the form of brief, review and survey-type articles,[14] except the contributions of Martin Rudner, A. F. Robertson and Bruce Gale.[15] However, all of them adopt a macro approach and provide only a general analysis. There is not a single study in English or Malay which has examined in detail the complex interplay at the local community level of political dynamics and development initiatives originating from and generated by circumstances within as well as beyond the said context. This is despite the fact that there exists now a considerable body of scholarly publications on Malaysian social studies.

This study is a modest attempt to fill this vacuum in Malaysian social studies. The two themes discussed in this study are that of "local politics" and "rural development". More specifically, it deals with local, village politics amongst the rural Malays based on a detailed community study, hence the emphasis on the rural development aspect of the overall development planning in Malaysia. It is perhaps relevant to mention here that as a village study it discusses a Malay village, or more accurately a complex of villages, that depend on rubber and oil palm for their livelihood. There has not been a single detailed study to date on peasant oil palm growers. Most village studies conducted in Malaysia so far have been on the wet rice cultivators, especially those in Kedah and Kelantan; thus giving one the impression that almost all Malay peasants are rice growers.[16] This study aims to redress this empirical gap. If not theoretically, at

least empirically, we are then able to understand some of the specific issues and problems confronted by the rubber and oil palm cultivators, which are quite different from those faced, for example, by the rice growers in the contemporary development process in Malaysia.

As a study of local politics,[17] the study has four main intentions. Firstly, it intends to show that contemporary political divisions in local society are not recent in origin or the consequences of cleavages that began with the introduction of modern electoral politics after the Second World War. Rather, they express, amplify and also transmute antagonisms that have been endemic to and defined by the context of the local community from the time of its establishment. Secondly, it endeavours to demonstrate that at the time of the community's establishment and ever since the evolution of local community, its main antagonisms have not been a response to local events; rather, they are the result. They indicate the processes of political decisions and economic influences of wider structural context, both national and international. Thirdly, in its focus on contemporary Malay politics, this study intends to present not only an examination of inter-party rivalry between the two principal Malay based parties, namely, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS),[18] but more importantly, the intra-party politics of both political parties. In both circumstances, the local basis and the national context from which the rivalries occurred will be discussed. Finally, this study intends to trace and demonstrate the dominating influence of the rural development policy during the colonial and post-colonial era, in shaping directly and indirectly the nature and dynamics of politics within the local community. Hence the theme "rural development" becomes the second major concern for this study.

As a study of rural development, however, it is not simply a policy and performance evaluation. But rather it is an examination of how the implementation of the rural development policy during and after the colonial period, is shaped by the political context in which they are applied – how they are harnessed to and even quite fundamentally distorted by the political interests and struggles with which they become locally implicated. At the same time, however, it is not just a story of the local denaturing or co-option of positive national policies, a diversion of proper purposes by illicit local

interests. This study also intends to show how both the policies themselves and the sometimes quite paradoxical, even unrecognizable local forms that they take are the consequence of inherent tensions, unresolved dilemmas and contradictions, in the politico-economic structure of Malaysian society nationally. Thus this would enable us to understand amongst others, about the origins and the implications of national development efforts and the major transformation that has occurred as a result of the policies in the last decades, for instance, in the political and economic position of the local *wakil rakyat* (people's representative to the state and federal parliament).

The decision to study the rural development theme together with that of local politics is based on historical, theoretical and empirical reasons which reveal the mutually influencing relationships and crucial interconnections between the two themes, particularly at the local community level from colonial times till now. Historically, rural development is not a new phenomenon in Malaysian history as some scholars would have us believe. Scholars who have studied this topic tend to highlight it as a post-war phenomenon,[19] and some saw it as a post-colonial institution.[20] This study argues that what was called rural development policy in the 1950s by the colonial government was essentially the continuation of its pre-war agricultural policy. The extant colonial documents[21] and studies by Lim Teck Ghee and Rudner,[22] among others, have established the important link, or rather, the transformation of the colonial agricultural policy to rural development policy. Admittedly, the rationale of the policy as well as its specific programmes have seen some changes through the years. However, its basic commitment to capitalist interests as a whole, during the colonial and post-colonial period, remained unaltered.[23] The changes in its rationale and specific programmes ought to be viewed theoretically, in the context of the changing nature of the Malaysian capitalist state, in which various capitalist factions within the dominant class, often identified in terms of ethnic bloc, continuously compete for dominance. The faction struggle is usually articulated in the political sphere, in terms of ethnic politics. Hence the political strength of each capitalist faction often decides who controls the bureaucracy. Therefore, it is inevitable that the continuing conflict and compromise amongst the factions are expressed not only in the national and local politics but also, in part in the

changing nature of the rationale and specific programmes of the national rural development policy as well as in the overall Malaysian development planning, during and after the colonial era. It is in this historical and theoretical context that this study simultaneously re-examines the two themes and their local implications. At the empirical level, we learn little from previous historical and anthropological studies as to the specific impact of the colonial agricultural policy and its later version, the rural development policy, on rural Malay communities. Most published historical studies have a macro approach both in terms of the unit of analysis and the perspective on society they have adopted, even amongst arguably the more progressive historians.[24] As such, they could only venture to make general remarks as to the consequences of, for example, the Malay Reservation Enactment or the Stevenson Restriction Scheme on the villagers of rural Malaysia and record the villagers' reactions, based mostly on surviving colonial files. We remained uninformed about the impact of the colonial agricultural policy on the process of class formation and its political expressions, articulated through dominant local personalities and issues at the community level. Similarly, the anthropological studies in the main have only made token efforts to examine and incorporate the history of the communities studied.[25] We learn little about the colonial rule and its consequences on the communities they have examined, much less on the impact of the colonial agricultural policy. This is not unrelated to the ahistorical nature of the theoretical orientations that most of the anthropologists who studied Malaysia have adopted. Discussions, by anthropologists on post-war and post-*Merdeka* (independence) rural development policy, especially after the introduction of the NEP in 1971, and its impact of local Malay communities remain, as mentioned earlier, a secondary concern.

From the above, it is quite obvious that this study does not treat the two themes – local politics and rural development – as separate issues, as they have been in the past by most Malaysianists. Instead, the themes will be dealt with holistically, to show their mutual influences in one exemplary case. In other words, this is not simply another study on a Malay village. Rather it is a study on Malaysia in a Malay village. By implication, this study rejects the positivistic, reductionist and synchronic systems approach that has dominated the Malaysian social studies which has as a consequence of and in

the last three decades neglected the importance of history and the historical uniqueness of particular cases. Instead, it will demonstrate in the case at hand the importance of history. Although this study takes into account the on-going methodological debates – idiographic vs. nomothetic and case study vs. comparative method – it still insists, based on its concern to integrate history and anthropology that "community studies are not, or should not be parochial, but are a strategic method [for all social scientists, not only anthropologists] of studying broader issues".[26] Inevitably, this study will also deal with a number of familiar topics in development studies, political anthropology and local politics in a demonstrative and empirical sense. They are topics such as uneven development, indigenization of underdevelopment, development administration, rural response to economic change, patron-client relations, patronage politics, factionalism, machine "politics" and "parapolitical systems", which we rarely find being applied and their interconnections examined simultaneously in detail in the context of rural life in Malaysia in general, and of Malay village communities in particular. This study hopes to provide a more rounded, and detailed account of what contemporary Malaysian politics and economic development are about, not only for the social scientists but also for those in politics and development planning.

This study examines the implications of rural development on local politics or local politics as manifested in the implementation of rural development policy in a Malay community located in Selangor from late pre-colonial Malaya to the early 1980s. Chapter 2 presents a detailed ethnographic history of the community studied – its origins, the evolution of its social structure and the development of its internal politics – highlighting the specific consequences of the various colonial agricultural policies not only within the context of the community being studied but also within its immediate local environs. The discussion covers a period which stretches from late pre-colonial to late colonial Malaya. In Chapter 3, the focus is on the post-Merdeka period, from the late 1950s to the early 1980s, examining the consequences of the national rural development policy, introduced prior to independence on the social structure of the community. More specifically, it is concerned with analysing the community's agriculture, occupational and class structure mainly in the context of the implementation of the so-called rural development

projects. In Chapter 4, a detailed examination of the community's political history is presented. It traces the various forms of conflicts in the community from the colonial period until the recent NEP era. Chapter 5 discusses the implementation of the NEP, particularly its rural development policy at the grass-root, that is, from the district level downwards. The emphasis is on the political dimension of the distribution of the so-called development projects under the NEP, and its political and economic implications at the different levels of social organization within the district and especially, in the community studied. The concluding Chapter 6 provides a brief review of what has been discussed in the ethnographic chapters drawing together the complex interplay of the various disparate issues already examined in detail. It also deals briefly with the implications of the findings from this community study for a clearer understanding of similar context at other local levels or beyond.

NOTES

1 It is naive to assume that most scholars who were interested in Malaysia were motivated solely by academic interests. Studies have shown that after the Second World War western powers, particularly the United States, have been following closely the development of the new nations of the so-called "free world", such as Malaysia, for fear of the latter being taken over by "communists" (the eternal bogeyman) and other "radical forces" (next common scapegoat). To assist them in understanding and monitoring the progress of these nations the western powers sought the help of their academics, mostly political scientists and economists. Generous research funds were made available to them by the interested governments and concerned business-based foundations to study various aspects of the new nations/societies. One such study funded by the Ford Foundation with the blessings of the United States Government was conducted on Malaysia. See *Social Science Research for National Unity: A Confidential Report to the Government of Malaysia*, 29 April 1970. It was signed by four internationally known American social scientists – Nathan Glazer, Samuel P. Huntington, Manning Nash and Myron Weiner. The rise of the "new scholarly hegemony" has been discussed, for example, by Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York, 1969), and Clive Kessler, *Islam and Politics in a Malay State: Kelantan 1838-1969* (Ithaca, 1978), pp. 17-19. Its influences within Malaysian social studies have been analysed, for example, by Abdul Rahman Embong "A Comment on the State of Race Relations in Malaysia", *Jurnal Antropologi dan Sosiologi* 3(1973): 63-68; Anon. "Hunting with Huntington: In Search of New Pastures?", *Dissent* [Melbourne], 27(1972): 18-22; B.A. Ngun and Lenny Siegel,

"The U.S. in Malaysia", *Pacific Research and World Empire Telegram* 7(1976): 8-12; Shamsul A.B., "Pembangunan Pertanian dan Luar Bandar di Malaysia: Satu Penilaian dan Kritik", *Jurnal Antropologi dan Sosiologi* 8(1980): 22-46; Johan Saravanamuttu, "The Underdevelopment of Malaysian Political Science", *Ilmu Masyarakat* 5(1984): 13-20. See also the editorials of the now banned Malaysian magazine, *TRUTH* from Vol. 1, No. 1-7, April-October 1973.

2 For the detailed psephological analyses of the various elections held so far in Malaysia see the followings:

a. *1955 General Elections*

F.G. Carnell, "Constitutional Reforms and Elections in Malaya", *Pacific Affairs* 26(1954): 216-235; idem, "The Malayan Elections", *Pacific Affairs* 28(1955): 315-330; I. Tinker, "Malayan Elections: Electoral Pattern for Plural Societies?" *Western Political Quarterly* 9(1956): 258-282; T.E. Smith, *Report on the First Election of Members to the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1955).

b. *1959 General Elections*

T.E. Smith, "The Malayan Elections of 1959", *Pacific Affairs* 33(1960): 38-47; Daniel Moore, "The United Malays National Organization and the 1959 Elections: A Study of a Political Party in Action in a Newly Independent Plural Society" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1960); Terence McGee, "The Malayan Elections of 1959: A Study of Electoral Geography", *Malayan Journal of Tropical Geography* 16(1962): 70-99; K.G. Tregonning, "Malaya, 1959", *Australian Quarterly* 32(1960): 38-47; Zahoor Ahmad, "The Federal Elections in Malaya, 1959" (Academic Exercise, Department of History, University of Malaya, 1961).

c. *1964 General Elections*

Terence McGee, "The Malayan Parliamentary Elections, 1964", *Pacific Viewpoint* 6(1965): 20-65; R.K. Vasil, "The 1964 General Elections in Malaya", *International Studies* 7(1965): 20-65; T.E. Smith, "Malaysia after the Election" *World Today* 20(1964): 351-357; K.J. Ratnam and R.S. Milne, *The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964* (Singapore, 1967); K. Turner, "Some Comments on the Malaysian Elections", *Australian Outlook* 19(1965): 62-72.

d. *1969 General Elections*

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9 Judith V. Strauch, *Chinese Village Politics in the Malaysian State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981).

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11 See for example, Ooi Jin Bee, "Rural Development in Tropical Areas, with Special Reference to Malaya", *Malayan Journal of Tropical Geography* 12(1959): 1-222; G.D. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia* (Berkeley, 1967); D.S. Gibbons, R. de Konick and Ibrahim Hassan, *Agricultural Modernization, Poverty and Inequality* (London, 1980). Admittedly, there exists a small collection of published "village studies" or "micro research" such as by Stephen Chee, *Rural Local Government and Rural Development in Malaysia* (Ithaca, 1974); Manning Nash, *Peasant Citizens: Politics, Religion and Modernization in Kelantan, Malaysia* (Athens, 1974); G.S. Cheema et al., *Rural Organisations and Rural Development in Selected Malaysian Villages* (Kuala Lumpur, 1978), discussing the impact of government-sponsored development initiatives at the local, village level. However, these are essentially village or micro surveys with none of the principal researcher

spending more than a few weeks, if at all, in the research areas, whilst the rest of data gathering was done by hired research assistants, mainly university undergraduates. Hence, most of these studies can only offer sketchy and performance-evaluation type of impact analyses rather than substantive ones.

12 Probably the book by Colin MacAndrews, *Mobility and Modernization: The Federal Land Development Authority and its Role in Modernizing the Rural Malays* (Yogyakarta, 1977) is one of the few available to date.

13 See Peter Wilson, *A Malay Village and Malaysia* (New Haven, 1967); William Wilder, *Communication, Social Structure and Development in Rural Malaysia* (London, 1982); Conner Bailey, *The Sociology of Production in Rural Malay Society* (Kuala Lumpur, 1983).

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15 The three scholars have published relatively more detailed studies of politics and planning in Malaysia, especially Bruce Gale. See Martin Rudner, *Nationalism, Planning, and Economic Modernization in Malaysia* (London, 1975); B. Gale, *Politics and Public Enterprise in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, 1981); A.F. Robertson, *People and the State: An Anthropology of Planned Development* (Cambridge, 1984).

16 See for example, Akimi Fujimoto, *Income Sharing Among Malay Peasants: A Study of Land Tenure and Rice Production* (Singapore, 1983); Masuo Kuchiba, Yoshihiro Tsubouchi and Narifumi Maeda, *Three Malay Villages: A Sociology of Paddy Growers in West Malaysia* (Honolulu, 1979); Kenzo Horii, *Land Tenure and Rice Economy in West Malaysia* (Tokyo, 1981); T. Ouchi et al. *Farmer and Village in West Malaysia* (Tokyo, 1977); Afifuddin Haji Omar, *Peasants, Institutions and Development in Malaysia: The Political Economy of Development in the Muda Region* (Alor Star, 1978); Rosemary Barnard, "Organization of Production in a Kedah Rice Farming Village" (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1970); Diana Wong, "The Social Organization of Peasant Reproduction: A Village in Kedah" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bielefeld, 1983); and the most recent by James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London, 1985).

17 The terms "local politics" and "local-level politics" have been defined by the more conservative political anthropologists as two separate concepts. See M.J. Swartz, "Introduction" in *Local-level Politics*, ed. M.J. Swartz (London, 1968), pp. 1-46. However, on epistempological grounds the differences between the two terms are unnecessary. Hence in this book both terms are used interchangeably.

18 *Persatuan Islam SeMalaya* is generally known in Malaysia as PAS – a romanized

version of an acronym which was originally written in Jawi or Arabic script. Later, PAS was known as *Parti Islam*.

19 See for example, Charles Gamba, "Rural Development in Malaya", *Eastern World* 4(1952): 97 and 126; Ooi Jin Bee, "Rural Development"; G.D. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development*.

20 See for example, Frank Peacock, "The Failures of Rural Development in Malaysia", in *Issues in Malaysian Development*, ed. J. Jackson and M. Rudner (Singapore, 1979), pp. 375-396; idem, "Rural Poverty and Development in West Malaysia 1957-70", *Journal of Developing Areas* 15(1981): 639-654; Alex Kwan, "Rural Development in Malaysia – Issues and Problems Confronting MADA, FELDA and RISDA", *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 8(1980): 64-86.

21 The documents referred to here are, mainly, published government reports or publications, such as *Draft Development Plan for the Federation of Malaya* (1950); *Interim Report of the Smallholders Enquiry Committee* (1951), *Report of the Rice Production Committee* (1953) and the like, which are all included under the Special Series of the Official Publications of the Malayan Government. Those categorized under the Regular Series include the *Legislative Council Proceedings* (1948-1959), Federation of Malaya, *Annual Reports* (1948-1957). Unpublished documents are located in the various series of the colonial files now deposited at Arkib Negara, such as the Selangor State Secretariat Files.

22 See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy in Colonial Malaya, 1874-1941* (Kuala Lumpur, 1977) and the following articles of Martin Rudner: "The State and Peasant Innovations in Rural Development: The Case of Malaysian Rubber", *Asian and African Studies* 6(1970): 75-96; "Rubber Strategy for Post-War Malaya 1950-55", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 3(1972): 63-96; "The Malayan Post-War Rice Crisis: An Episode in Colonial Agricultural Policy", *Kajian Ekonomi Malaysia* 12(1975): 1-13; "Financial Policies in Post-War Malaya: The Fiscal and Monetary Measures of Liberation and Reconstruction", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 3(1975): 323-348; "Malayan Rubber Policy: Development and Anti-Development during the 1950s", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 7(1976): 235-239; "Agricultural Policy and Peasant Social Transformation in Late Colonial Malaya", in *Issues in Malaysian Development*, ed. J. Jackson and M. Rudner, pp. 7-67, and Rudner's book, *Nationalism, Planning and Economic Modernization*. See also Kenelm Burridge, "Rural Administration in Johore", *Journal of African Administration* 9(1957): 29-36.

23 For further discussions on various aspects of the nature and workings of the Malaysian capitalist state, see Mohamed Amin (psued.) and M. Caldwell, eds., *Malaya – The Making of a Neo-Colony* (Nottingham, 1977); M.R. Stenson, *Class, Race and Colonialism in West Malaysia* (Queensland, 1980); P.L. Burns, "Capitalism and the Malay States", in *Capitalism and Colonial Production*, ed. H. Alavi et al. (London, 1982), pp. 159-178; R. Bach, "Historical Patterns of Capitalist Penetration in Malaysia", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 6(1977): 458-476; Fatimah Halim (pseud.) "The State in West Malaysia", *Race & Class* 24(1982): 34-45; idem, "Capital, Labour and the State: The West Malaysian Case", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 12(1982): 259-280; Zawawi Ibrahim, "Perspectives on Capitalist Penetra-

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24. See for example, Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy, Land and Agriculture in Perak, 1874-1897* (Penang, 1976); idem, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*; Shaharil Talib, "Voices from the Kelantan Desa", *Modern Asian Studies* 17(1983): 177-195; idem, *After Its Own Image: The Trengganu Experience 1881-1941* (Singapore, 1984); Burns, "Capitalism and the Malay States"; P. Sullivan, *Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State: Nineteenth Century Perak* (Kuala Lumpur, 1982).

25. The work of Kessler, *Islam and Politics* is an exception. The important monographs of Raymond Firth, *Malay Fisherman: Their Peasant Economy* (London, 1966); and his wife, Rosemary Firth, *Housekeeping among Malay Peasants* (London, 1966) were based on field research conducted during the colonial period, hence they are important historical sources on a Malay community in colonial days.

26. See Kessler, *Islam and Politics*, p. 247.

2

SWAMP TO SETTLEMENT

The Formation and Consolidation of Kampung Chempaka

Every Malay village has its own specific history which fashions the contours of social reality within that village. To that extent, then, it is imperative for every village to be understood in terms of this local perspective. However, it is of equal importance to locate and understand what took place in a particular village in the wider historical and structural context, because the village social reality is also constantly being restructured by social relations external to it. In other words, the structure of the internal aspects of the village is contingent on its relationship with the larger entity. This chapter provides an ethnographic history of the village and its surrounding areas during British colonial rule. The village has been given a pseudonym Kampung (Kg.) Chempaka. This chapter will concentrate mainly on describing and analysing local events. It will also attempt simultaneously to locate these events in the wider colonial context which constantly impinged upon the local situation in various ways.[1]

The discussion is divided into chronological parts. The first one deals with the general as well as the specific local circumstances leading to the opening of Kg. Chempaka and its neighbours (also given psuedonyms), namely, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai, initially as the site for shifting cultivation (*ladang*) and later, as fully-fledged

Malay settlements. Next, the focus will be on Kg. Chempaka and its immediate neighbours during their formative years, that is, from the early 1920s until the eve of the Second World War, which has been the most unstable and controversy-ridden era of the villages' social history. The last section deals with the period during which Kg. Chempaka as a social entity and a settlement became consolidated and stable. This section covers the period from the Japanese Occupation until independence in 1957.

The Birth of Kampung Chempaka

The area in which Kg. Chempaka and its three immediate neighbours (Kg. Teratai, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Baru) are now located was once a large tract of wasteland, part swamp and part secondary jungle of poor soil situated in the remote northeastern corner of Mukim Mawar of Malawati district. During the coffee boom of 1891-1896 it was left uncultivated by the European coffee plantation owners who were offered large acreages of superior and more desirable land within the *mukim* (sub-district) and elsewhere in the district by the colonial administration.[2] This explains why this cluster of villages is now almost surrounded by large estates.

Before the British intervention of 1874, as far back as the 1740s and until the 1850s, Malawati was an important district. It was an important port and the state capital of Selangor.[3] Throughout this period, it was an important economic centre through which part of the Selangor tin exports was handled. In fact, the control of the town became a source of struggle between the Bugis and the European merchants (the Dutch, then the British), because whoever controlled Malawati port also controlled quite a substantial proportion of the export of Selangor tin. Politically, then, Malawati was the seat of the Selangor sultanate, irrespective of whether the reigning sultan was under European control or not.[4]

When the capital of Selangor was moved to the Langat-Jugra area in 1857, Malawati ceased to play a signficant economic or political role in the history of Selangor until the civil wars. The district then was known more for its peasant agriculture, namely, rice growing, coconut planting and other types of food crops. Fishing and the exploitation and sale of jungle produce were also common but were

carried out on a much smaller scale.

This economic pattern was clearly reflected in Mukim Mawar.[5] According to existing historical sources,[6] coconuts dominated the *mukim* economy long before colonial intervention, and certainly this was the case from the early nineteenth century. Coconuts were grown mainly for exchange and only a small proportion was consumed by the producers. Two main groups of coconut growers can be identified from the 1850s onwards.[7]

Firstly, the *penghulu* group, which consisted of the local chief or the *penghulu* of Mawar, his extended family members, and his close aides such as village elders who could also be the informal village heads of the villages in his *mukim*. Apparently this group, although small, controlled large plots of land planted with coconut, and rarely engaged in other economic activities.

Secondly, the peasant group consisted of local Malays who also grew coconut but on smaller plots of land. Although the majority of this group were involved in coconut planting, there were also those who grew rice, sold jungle produce or fished. Despite their being the larger group, they did not own the land on which they grew their crops or the land from which they obtained jungle produce.

In pre-colonial Malaya, land was nominally held in the sultan's name. At the local level, such as in Mukim Mawar, the *penghulu* – by tradition a sultan's nominee – was the single most important person, and had total nominal control of access to land in his area. Generally, access to land was dictated by customary laws and backed by religious sanctions. Therefore, a peasant had only usufructary rights to the land he chose to settle on and cultivate, with a few years margin, to be decided by the *penghulu*. In addition, the peasant was also obliged to provide the *penghulu* with a share of his labour and produce.

With control over land and the labour of the *mukim*, it is clear that the *penghulu* group had a large measure of control of the production process. Moreover, the group had access to a portion of the produce in the *mukim*. The implications of such a situation in Mawar were that the group could concentrate on cash cropping (coconut) without having to plant food crops such as rice, as these could be obtained from the peasants.[8] Surplus was not only extracted through the production process, but also accrued through other means, such as taxes levied on trade conducted in the *mukim*, royalties on other

assorted produce, possibly usury (if the institution of debt-bondmen existed),[9] and various fines imposed on the people of the *mukim* who committed crimes. This revenue was for the *penghulu* in the maintenance of a life-style befitting his position, in the upkeep of a small security force of mercenaries to uphold peace and order[10] and as tribute paid to the district chief or sultan.

From the above, it can be argued that the majority of Mawar peasants at least after the 1850s were no longer totally involved in production simply for subsistence.[11] They were increasingly involved in commodity production, but not necessarily in the full capitalist sense such as with those solely occupied in tin mining in Lukut. Nonetheless, it was quite clear that their production facilitated the maintenance of the local élite and, in the broader sense, the growing capitalist sector of other areas of Selangor, such as the tin mining industry in Lukut.[12]

However, social and economic conditions in Selangor experienced a tremendous and traumatic change during the Selangor civil war of 1867-1873. Malawati district, which since 1857 was almost reduced to insignificance after losing its role as Selangor's capital town and district, once again became alive during the war. In fact, it played a significant political role in the history of Selangor in those turbulent years. The whole district became a battle theatre. It brought hardship to many people from various areas in the district, especially from Mukim Mawar. The war was essentially an intra-ruling class rivalry for territorial control in order to extract a tribute from the tin miners who were mainly Chinese. A similar situation gave rise to the wars in Perak.

The rebel in the war, Raja Mahdi, received the support of several members of the Selangor royal family, amongst whom was the *penghulu* of Mawar.[13] The *penghulu* group of Mawar were known to have helped Raja Mahdi to re-equip his army of mercenaries after he lost the battle at Kelang and fled to Sungai Ikan. About 200 people from the peasant group were recruited by force or otherwise to join Raja Mahdi's group as mercenaries, but most of them were unpaid. With this support and other aid, Raja Mahdi launched an attack on Malawati fort from Mawar and won.

The war devastated not only Mawar but most of Malawati district. The men, mainly peasants, if not pressed into service fled with their families to avoid the depredations of the unpaid soldiery on either

side. The once flourishing rice areas to the north of Malawati river were almost deserted. The coconut areas to the south of the river around Mawar were overgrown with weeds and scrub. Most of the *penghulu* group members and a small group of peasants remained but the rest left.[14] Although some colonial accounts of the after effects of the civil war on Malawati were somewhat exaggerated,[15] it is still quite clear that the social and economic consequences for the ordinary peasants were much more severe than those suffered by the élite class, such as the *penghulu* group of Mawar.[16]

Heavy British involvement in the civil war was crucial in the victory of Tunku Kudin over Raja Mahdi.[17] Soon after, in 1874, the British intervened in Selangor and three other Malay states.[18] They took control of the administration but retained the Malay sultans and chiefs as figureheads. Constitutional changes made by the British in the early years of their rule in Malaya resulted in further reinforcement of their position.[19]

In Malawati, the new colonial administration made numerous attempts to rehabilitate the district after the devastation of the war. Two main strategies were adopted: firstly, the promotion of rice cultivation;[20] and secondly, the importation of new settlers and labourers, from as far north as Kelantan and from Java in the south.[21] New rice lands were opened up and old ones reconstituted. This took place in the area north of the Malawati river, where about 150-170 families from Langat, another part of Selangor, came in search of better rice lands. Rice production of the area increased. In fact, in 1888, Malawati saw more new rice lands developed than any other district of Selangor.[22] But this success was shortlived when frequent floods and diseases caused a drastic decline in rice production.

The area to the south of the river, stretching from Malawati town to Mawar had a more diversified cultivation.[23] Wet rice fields were scattered in between cash crops and dry rice areas. Shifting cultivation was quite popular with the local inhabitants, but not with the colonial administration which introduced rules to penalize the practice. Among the cash crops, coconut was the most popular, as it had been grown in the area prior to the civil war. Many new Javanese settlers and indentured labourers were involved in coconut production. There were also villagers who produced poultry, sago, sugar cane, areca nut, maize, tapioca, arrowroot and millet. Fishing, coastal and inland, was another economic activity pursued by certain

sections of the community. Despite all these developments, the peasantry faced many problems, particularly relating to land and cultivation conditions, which were directly related to changing British policies.[24]

With the advent of British rule, land which was the primary means of production of the peasantry, was transformed into a commodity as a result of the introduction of a new system of land tenure.[25] Although the implementation of this new land tenure was disorganized at the formal administrative level from 1874 to 1890, it certainly had the effect of giving monetary value to land as it could now be bought, sold and taxed, but only within the conditions set out by the colonial administration.[26]

Since land was state-controlled, the colonial government was able to grant large tracts of land to European interests for mining. At the same time, it embarked on a multi-pronged, ambitious agricultural policy. Firstly, the forests of the Malay states were converted into vast plantations.[27] To this end large acreages of the best land were alienated to the ever-increasing number of European planters who received generous government loans, subsidies to import Indian labourers and improved infra-structure (roads and railways). Secondly, to generate an interest among the peasantry to grow more food crops, a liberal land policy was adopted which enabled potential cultivators to obtain land easily and cheaply. Finally, a liberal immigration policy led to an influx of immigrants from the Nusantara islands, such as Java and Sumatra. The latter policy was designed to increase the number of potential food crop cultivators.[28]

The smooth running of these policies was ensured by the newly introduced administration system in which British officials took over the government but kept the traditional Malay ruling class for symbolic value to appease the Malay masses. In short, the Malay ruling class was retained essentially to legitimize colonial rule and policies. At the district level, the District Officer (DO) replaced the Malay chief and functioned as the collector of land and other revenues, and as a magistrate. However, in order to link the colonial government with the general Malay populace the position of *penghulu* was retained and incorporated into the new administration with a fixed monthly allowance. The changes which were brought about by the implementation of the various colonial policies, and indeed the fact of overall colonial domination, transformed the

production process and social relations within colonial Malaya as a whole, the Malay peasantry included.[29]

British efforts to encourage the peasants to grow food crops, especially rice, were not very successful. The British aimed to use these food crops to support the increasing immigrant population mainly working in plantations and mines. But as peasants were given the right to own permanent land plots, they grew crops which they thought were profitable. Many of them who were growing rice decided to change to cash crops. Others, who were already growing food crops for sale, such as coconuts and tapioca, decided to grow cash crops which brought them more lucrative returns. Some of them, especially the voluntary immigrants from Java, decided to become wage earners in the plantations which were mushrooming during the coffee boom of the 1890s; and a considerable number of them sold their land. There were other circumstances which led to peasant land being sold or dispossessed.[30] In an attempt to stop peasants from selling or being dispossessed of their land, the colonial government introduced legislation whereby peasants could obtain land more easily and cheaply but with a set of conditions attached to the title. The land could not be owned, bought or transferred to anyone who was not a Muslim (which all the Malays were). This land was categorized as "customary land" and each lot was listed in the Entry for Mukim Registrar (EMR). For the first time "the nature of cultivation clause" was introduced and entered in the land titles issued to the applicant. Peasants were, therefore, allowed to grow crops which were regarded as "desirable by the administration".[31] All these conditions were outlined in the 1891 Selangor Land Code.

A group of peasants from Malawati protested vehemently when the EMR was enforced. The reasons for the protest were summed up succinctly by the then DO, George Bellamy:

> I enquired into their grievances and must admit they were right to a certain extent. They were asked to pay for the new documents and reasonably argued that as they paid for their original documents they ought not to be charged for the new ones. Again they asked why they should be treated differently from the Chinese who were allowed permanent documents while their own were liable to revision every seven years. . . .[32]

When the leader of the group refused to allow his *anak buah* (fellow

villagers) to obey the new regulations, the DO resorted to a tactic which he himself admitted as "illegal". He said,

> I ordered them to obtain the new documents and on their refusing I placed them in charge of the police. This might have been *illegal* but it was necessary to show that I was in earnest. The headman got a great fright and the opposition caved in at once. The result of this small contest had excellent effect throughout the District. . . .[33] (emphasis added)

This event took place when the coffee boom of 1891-1896 had already begun.

Many scholars have argued that the strict enforcement of the new land code was adopted to tighten up the implementation of the colonial food production policy, which was necessary to reduce the importation of rice from abroad and hence minimize the loss of foreign exchange.[34] At the same time, it was meant to stop the peasant drift into cash crop cultivation and competition with European-owned agricultural enterprises, namely, coffee plantations.[35] In Malawati, the alienation of vast tracts of land for large-scale coffee growing occurred later than in other districts of Selangor. The first coffee estates started in Malawati in 1895 when 20 blocks of land of 320 acres each were sold to European planters. At least five of these were located in Mukim Mawar.[36]

The developments described had specific consequences on the Mawar community, especially in relation to the role of the *penghulu*. Although the *penghulu* was incorporated into the colonial district administration and his official powers outlined, his appointment, theoretically, was endorsed by the sultan and this served to tie him by tradition to the local community.[37] Besides receiving his monthly allowance, he and his family, and his close aides, were granted official ownership of land they already cultivated. In addition, he was also given new land of his choice and he could cultivate the crops he wanted. He was exempted from paying any quit-rent or charges on the land he owned such as survey costs and the like.[38] Other benefits he received from the colonial government included interest-free house loans, cash advance, travelling allowance, and land commission.[39]

Under the new land tenure system and, more importantly, the new administration, a *penghulu* no longer had total control of the labour

resources within his *mukim* nor did he retain his right to appropriate part of the produce from his *mukim*. Therefore, the Mawar peasants who meanwhile had become owners of their own land too, were released from performing corvée labour and from the obligation to contribute part of their produce to the *penghulu* group. However, they now had to pay taxes to the government. This meant that they had to contribute a portion of their produce, which now must be transformed into a commodity, in order to pay the tax in cash. For those who had been growing coconuts or selling jungle produce this was not a real problem, but it was a significant change for those growing rice for subsistence.

Thus both the *penghulu* and the peasant group experienced a significant change in the relations of production owing to the changes in land tenure and hence access to it. They now had to serve the interests of the colonialists promoted by the new agricultural policies, and/or respond "rationally" to other developments occurring simultaneously within the agricultural sector of the colonial economy, namely, the expansion of large-scale planting of cash crops such as coffee.[40]

Despite these changes however, the *penghulu* still wielded considerable power at the *mukim* and village level *vis-à-vis* the implementation of colonial policies. Although land applications were made to the district office, all applications had to be channelled through him. He was also given the power to oversee within his *mukim* the implementation of the food crop policy. He was requested to report to the authorities those who were in tax arrears or had paid their taxes to recruit local labour for clearing new areas for plantation, and to enforce a variety of other regulations. His role was especially significant after the introduction of the EMR in 1891, and during the subsequent coffee boom.[41]

In this context, the peasants of Mawar still needed his patronage to cope with the newly-introduced colonial bureaucratic procedures which many of them found too complicated. Anyone who wanted to open new areas or become a leader of a new settlement within his *mukim* had to get informal permission from the *penghulu*. Thus he still commanded almost the same political and economic power that he had in pre-colonial Mawar, but now on a totally different social basis. It was not uncommon for the *penghulu* to obtain help from villagers to work on his land, or to receive gifts such as rice and

other food crop produce in return for the favours and services he rendered to the villagers.

When coffee price was at its height after 1890, many peasants in Mawar decided to convert their old lands (that is, those grown with coconut, rice, tapioca, quick-bearing fruit trees, etc.) into coffee fields. Some even acquired new land for coffee cultivation. The *penghulu* group did not participate to any large extent[42] as most of their coconut land was not suitable for other crops. On plots which were suitable for coffee they had the crop planted utilizing indentured labourers. As such they managed to grow coffee and coconut simultaneously. For the next few years the Mawar community was overwhelmed by "coffee fever". Rice, which had been the traditional staple food, became less popular as a crop but nevertheless, was easily available and inexpensive. In Mawar, the supply came from Burma and Siam (Thailand) which were organized by the colonial government, and from the northern areas of Malawati which grew rice.[43]

It was around this period that a new group emerged and became socially more noticeable in Mawar. These were immigrant Malays, mainly Javanese males, who were workers in the coffee estates of Mawar or in the large coconut holdings of the *penghulu* group. Their status upon arrival was that of an indentured labourer, each having to work for a period of two years for their employer. After that they were released to return to their country of origin or they could continue to serve their employers as fully-waged workers, or find work locally. Many decided to remain and soon became members of the Mawar community, especially through marriage. A smaller group returned to Java to bring their families to reside in Mawar and other parts of Selangor. Initially, the process of their assimilation into the local Malay-dominated community was problematic, owing to the stigma they had as *buruh kontrak* (indentured labourers). But over the years they were accepted like the other voluntary Javanese migrants who came much earlier.[44] The group continued to pursue work either in the estates or in the coconut areas of Mawar. Unlike the Indian labourers who lived on the estates, they settled in homes in the villages of Mawar, that is, as a group of immigrant Malay workers who settled among the *penghulu* and peasant groups and yet were set apart by their occupation.

After 1895, world coffee prices began to fall and continued falling

at a dramatic rate over the next few years. In Mawar, the impact of this sudden downturn of coffee prices on the *penghulu*, and the peasant and worker groups was quite devastating. Initially, they were surprised but still optimistic that the price would rise again. But when no prospect of a coffee price recovery appeared, many of them, especially from the peasant group, either neglected their land or abandoned their holdings and migrated. There were also some who stayed and reverted to growing coconut, rice, vegetables and other short-term food crops. The labourer group, especially those working in the coffee estates suffered badly too. Most of them were made redundant by the European coffee plantation owners who were badly affected economically when the world coffee price slumped. The workers had to survive by cultivating their own small plots of land becoming tenant or wage labourers hired by the *penghulu* group, or they migrated elsewhere in Selangor.

The *penghulu* group, despite the coffee disaster was still able to sustain itself, mainly because it had coconut production to fall back on. Furthermore, with the availability of cheap labour, made up predominantly of desperate peasants and out-of-work estate labourers, the *penghulu* group was able to reconvert rather quickly, their coffee-grown plots into either coconut or food crop holdings. Besides these resources, the *penghulu* could obtain loans from the district office to supplement his depleted profit from coffee.[45]

The European coffee plantations suffered too, from the dramatic downturn in the economy. By 1907, Malawati plantations growing coffee had shrunk in area from about 10,000 acres to about 200 acres.[46] However, the sudden increase in demand for rubber owing to the expanding automobile industry in the United States in the 1890s revived flagging European interests in large-scale commercial agriculture.[47] Rubber had been grown in Malaya from 1890 onwards, but only on an experimental basis and interplanted with coffee. When rubber took the world by storm at the turn of this century, these planters quickly responded and thereafter rubber estates sprouted everywhere, especially on the west coast of Malaya. Between 1900 and 1913, the land acreage planted with rubber in Malaya increased by leaps and bounds – from a mere 6,000 acres in 1900 to about 1,000,000 acres in 1913, two-thirds of which belonged to the Europeans. This was the time when the large amounts of accumulated profit, mainly obtained by the agency houses of British

merçhant capital were invested in the new miracle crop.[48] In Malawati, many of the old coffee estates have now become rubber estates. In fact, new areas were opened for rubber. In Mawar itself, the number of plantations grew from about five coffee estates in 1897 to 58, mostly rubber estates at the eve of the First World War.[49]

The peasants in Mawar like their counterparts in colonial Malaya, did not respond immediately to the new developments. Instead they were cautious and preferred to wait and see owing to various circumstances. Some of them were still recovering from the after effects of the coffee disaster, while others who engaged in coconut, rice and other food crop cultivation did not possess the resources to plant rubber. Those who had sold their land as a result of the coffee disaster needed time to acquire new land. In fact, there were a small number of them who sold their lands to plantation owners when the latter were rushing to acquire as much land as possible to expand their plantation holdings.[50] On top of all this, the colonial administration's hostile attitude towards peasants, mainly through discriminatory regulations, became an immense obstacle to the peasants' participation in rubber growing. Lim Teck Ghee's statement that "the early history of peasant rubber cultivation is thus a story of struggle against great odds" is a valid point.[51]

It is very clear that from the initial period of rubber cultivation in Malaya, British rule favoured the plantation owners in the same way that it had favoured large-scale coffee growing in the mid-1980s. The government-sponsored special research, at its agricultural research stations, firstly to discover the potential of rubber, and later to experiment and improve methods of rubber planting and tapping, disease control, and seed varieties. Once the plant was confirmed as a profitable cash crop,[52] large and generous loans were granted to European planters to help them during the growing period (about five years) before the rubber trees could be tapped for latex. The government's liberal immigration policy was helpful in solving the plantation owners' labour problem too.[53] But the peasants' interest in rubber cultivation was treated with utter disregard by the British rulers. To discourage peasants from growing rubber instead of food crops, the colonial government imposed a "no rubber condition" on new land acquired by peasants after 1910. Those who wanted to grow rubber on their lands had to pay higher land taxes than those who grew food crops.

Against these great odds, the peasant group in Mawar began to grow rubber around about 1910.[54] Their abandoned coffee holdings were converted to rubber plots. Land left uncultivated by the European planters, even though of poorer soil quality, were acquired by peasants and planted with rubber. It was not uncommon to find peasants who grew rubber illegally on lands which were supposed to be orchards or kampung plots, and even on unalienated land. The peasants almost abandoned rice growing. They depended on rice from Mukim Asap, north of Mawar, or on cheap imported rice. Food crops which were still grown included yam, maize, bananas, perennial fruit trees and vegetables. Coconut holdings, which were mostly on land unsuitable for other crops were retained. However, there were peasants who did try to convert their coconut plots to rubber but met with little success as expected.[55]

Mawar labourers who were unemployed following the coffee disaster and had become peasants or tenant-peasants were suddenly in demand again. They were joined by many new migrants from other parts of the Malawati district. However, they still lived in the villages and not on the estates. A small group of them, nonetheless, chose to remain peasants.

The *penghulu* group, too, was caught up in the rubber fever. They converted all their coffee plots to rubber lands and wherever possible their coconut plots too. This group received preferential treatment from the district office when applying for new land and hence expanded its land holdings. The *penghulu* was the greatest beneficiary of this lenient district office attitude. Contrary to the general trend, his application to convert orchard or kampung land to rubber land was granted without much fuss. In fact, small government loans were also made available to him, not necessarily for his rubber land, but these were sufficient to enable him to buy the abandoned coffee plots of peasants, and engage labourers to convert these plots to rubber land.[56] The *penghulu* group was also given government contracts to construct minor irrigation projects around Mawar, which were primarily meant to help the plantation owners. Furthermore, at the recommendation of the district office, European plantation owners often awarded this group contracts to recruit local labour in the initial preparation and maintenance of their estates.[57]

Therefore, in the Mawar context, there existed differential treatment given by the district administration to various groups within

the Malay peasantry. The *penghulu* group was obviously favoured because of its importance to the functioning of district administration and ordinary peasants were neglected by the colonial government.

Special legislation – the Malay Reservation Enactment – providing for land to be reserved for exclusive Malay ownership was passed in late 1913. It was intended mainly for the Malay peasants who, according to the British, were slowly being dispossessed of their land by creditors. To avert peasant landlessness, and hence poverty, the British saw fit to introduce the enactment. However, this solved only part of the problem. The colonial administration's rapid alienation of the best land to capitalist interests was never considered an equally important factor contributing to the rise of peasant landlessness and land hunger. The implications of the enforcement of this enactment on the Malay peasantry as a whole had been dealt with extensively by many scholars.[58] Suffice it to say that the enactment ensured that non-Malay capitalists' interests, mainly European, were safeguarded. Although it began as an attempt to preserve Malay land by restricting disposal rights, the enactment later ended up as an exercise in restricting cultivation rights. It was through the same legislation that subsequent strict enforcement of the "no rubber" condition on Malay land was carried out by the colonial government, in its attempts to discourage peasants from growing rubber instead of food crops.

During the first decade of this century and until the eve of the First World War the price of rubber fluctuated quite considerably for various reasons. Despite this, the plantation owners were not badly affected and production increased without much interruption. However, peasant smallholders did not enjoy such stability.

In Mawar, the peasants started to tap their rubber in 1914, the first year of the First World War. At that time, due to circumstances closely related to the war, rubber prices dropped substantially, from an average of 8s. 9d. per pound (London prices) in 1910 to 3s. ¼d. in 1913. Throughout the war period, the price fell but hovered around an average of 2s. 5d. per pound.[59] The impact of the general decline in rubber prices on the Mawar peasants was especially dramatic, mainly because during the same period, the price of rice began to increase, for both local and imported varieties. Those who were solely dependent on rubber for their livelihood suffered the most.

Some abandoned their rubber lands and migrated to other areas within Malawati or elsewhere in Selangor state to seek a better future, while others engaged themselves in a great variety of occupations such as fishing, collecting jungle produce, attap-making, logging, or a combination of the above to earn a living. There were also those who turned to cash cropping of minor food crops such as tapioca, yam, vegetables and the like.[60]

The labourer group,[61] on the other hand, did not suffer serious effects from the war-engendered conditions as the estates were still expanding despite the war. Their labour was still needed though they had to contend with lower wages. They were still able to buy rice at a heavily subsidized price from employers and/or became dependent on the food crops grown in a section of each estate.[62]

The *penghulu* group were able yet again to weather the storm with their resources – large holdings of rubber and coconut – and, more importantly, support from the district office through monthly allowances, rent-free land and various other allowances. Thus their wealth and political position seemed to have made them relatively the most economically stable group in Mawar.

In view of these circumstances, it is not at all surprising that those peasants who were desperate and without other alternative source of livelihood, had to open up small patches of land wherever available. Suddenly, the swampy *tanah kosong* (uncultivated land) beyond the estates at the remote northeastern corner of Mawar became important to the peasants.[63] Separate groups of peasants went there to clear and irrigate the land to grow food crops.

At first, the swamp was converted into *ladang*. Later, around the end of the war, a few families decided to build their homes there. A settlement began to grow amidst the surrounding estates. As the economic conditions worsened after the war, more peasants came to settle in different parts of the once swampy bush area, leading to the formation of four Malay villages, one of which came to be known as Kg. Chempaka.

Kampung Chempaka during the Inter-War Years

Exactly when the Kg. Chempaka area was first settled is not known.[64]

However, most of the pioneer settlers interviewed agreed that it was first cleared for food crop cultivation around 1916 and had its first permanent settlers at the end of the First World War (1918).

The majority of the pioneers were from the peasant group of Mawar. However, they were joined by a small group of peasants from Mukim Asap, Mawar's immediate northern neighbour. The former group were rubber smallholders and a few who had worked in the coconut plots of the *penghulu* group. The latter were rubber smallholders only.

The Mawar peasants were formerly villagers from Kg. Mawar and Kg. Silang of the *mukim*. The Mukim Asap peasants were from Kg. Abok. Those from Kg. Mawar and Kg. Silang were mainly responsible for the establishment of Kg. Asal, Kg. Teratai, Kg. Chempaka and part of Kg. Kasturi. The other part of Kg. Kasturi was opened up by those from Kg. Abok. However, there were peasants from Kg. Abok who settled in the other three villages besides Kg. Kasturi. But their roles in charting the course of development of these villages were insignificant compared to what they did in Kg. Kasturi.

When the peasants first cleared as *ladang* and later established settlements in the wasteland area, they were not only occupying illegally a tract of government land but were also involved in an outlawed agricultural activity. Therefore, each of them had to submit an official application to the colonial administration to obtain legal ownership of the occupied plot for which each applicant had to pay a premium, survey fees and a fixed quit-rent. There were cases where the applicants or pioneer peasants had to borrow money to pay for the costs incurred in getting the land. All alienated lots had "cultivation conditions" attached to them. This was in accordance with the colonial government policy of encouraging Malay peasants to grow crops regarded as officially desirable, namely, food crops.[65] Hence, there existed different categories of land such as *tanah kampung* (kampung land), *dusun* (orchard), *sawah* (rice), *kelapa* (coconut) or *getah* (rubber) land. The taxes for land grown with rubber, a non-food crop, were higher than the rest. Above all, most of these lands were declared as Malay reservation lands which meant they could not be sold or transferred to non-Malays. However, there was also non-reservation land which was alienated to the peasants. In the case of the villages mentioned, all the land was declared

reservation land in 1921, and divided into small lots of 2.5 to 3.5 acres each.[66] Land applications had to be made to the government through the *penghulu* who then forwarded them to the district office. After the land titles were awarded to the applicants, it was the job of the *penghulu* to check periodically that the cultivation conditions were observed by the owners. He usually depended on his close aides, namely, the village heads, whose nominations and selection were entirely in his hands to monitor individuals who violated the cultivation conditions within each village of his *mukim*. In short, at the *mukim* and village level, the *penghulu* group possessed tremendous influence and power in deciding who should or should not be given land and in reporting to the authorities those who infringed the cultivation conditions.[67]

From the time it was first settled in 1918 until it was turned into a Malay reservation area in 1921, all land in the cluster of villages mentioned was classified as ancestral land. This was in accordance with the 1891 Selangor Land Code and hence it could only be owned by Malays. However, a transfer to a non-Malay could still be made with the written consent of the District Collector of Land Revenues.

During the pre-reservation period, all the villagers of Kg. Asal, Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Teratai and Kg. Kasturi grew food crops. In the swamp areas of Kg. Asal, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai wet rice was grown. In the rest of these three villages and in the whole of Kg. Chempaka, which was originally secondary jungle, dry rice, tapioca, coconut, fruit trees and a variety of vegetables were planted. The peasants' close adherence to the cultivation conditions was not solely due to their respect for the rules. It was mainly due to the unfavourable world economic conditions which resulted from rubber prices falling to their lowest since 1900 and the Malayan rice crisis and the consequent very high rice price which was beyond the reach of many peasants especially those in Mawar. Therefore, the pioneer peasants, who were rubber growers before, were without a subsistence base to fall back on when the economic downturn occurred. Thus, they had no choice but to open up the wasteland as *ladang* to grow food crops which, in fact, was an illegal activity according to the colonial government rules, and was opposed by the *penghulu* of Mawar then. (See Chapter 4 for details.)

It was a common practice before 1921 for the unofficial village heads to collect a small portion of the village produce, namely rice, as

gifts to the *penghulu*. This was supposedly for the help the *penghulu* had given in facilitating the villagers' land applications and, at the same time, a demonstration of loyalty and support to the *penghulu* from the villagers. Through the gift-giving practice, the unofficial village heads could demonstrate to the *penghulu* their abilities as leaders, and hence as prospective village heads who were loyal and capable.

Although the *penghulu* did not have the power to make decisions regarding land applications, he could, however, delay any application under a variety of pretexts, or help to expedite the processing of one almost immediately. He also had the power to nominate and select anyone as village heads. It is not surprising that his patronage was much sought after by both the prospective village heads and the villagers themselves. Since he grew mainly coconut and rubber, the rice gifts from the villagers then became the major source of his staple food supply. Furthermore, the gifts symbolically enhanced his authority and legitimacy with the populace and his status in the eyes of the colonial authorities as well.

In short, the patron-client bonds between the *penghulu* and the prospective village heads, and between him and the Mawar villagers in general, had a strong economic and political base. But these relations were soon put to test after the four villages were declared as Malay reservation zones in 1921, which resulted in a much stricter imposition of the restrictive cultivation conditions. The situation was further compounded and complicated with the colonial government's introduction of the Stevenson Restriction Scheme in 1922 in an effort to control rubber production, especially among Malay smallholders, and hence to protect, in part, large plantation interest.[68] Although initially, peasants throughout the country were adversely affected by the Stevenson Scheme, resulting in peasants lodging mass official protests and, in some cases, outbreaks of peasant violence,[69] those in Kg. Asal, Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Teratai and Kg. Kasturi were not yet directly affected. However, after about a year of the scheme's operation, the average price of rubber in Malaya was almost double that of the 12 months' preceding the restriction.[70] It was around this time that the apparent harmonious patron-client relations between the *penghulu* and the villagers of the new settlements were disrupted.

It all began when the settlers of Kg. Asal, sensitive to the sudden

rubber price increase, decided to grow rubber, even though this was violating the reservation conditions and in a period when production would have been much restricted by the Stevenson Scheme. The unoffficial village head of Kg. Asal, Ahmad, initiated planting on his own land and soon many of his villagers followed. By early 1924, a substantial area of food crop land was converted to rubber land in Kg. Asal. However, coconut was still grown owing to the high price copra enjoyed in the 1920s. Nonetheless, there were instances when the villagers cut down coconut trees and planted rubber trees in their place. The swampy part of the village was still planted with rice. But, on the whole, the food crop area within Kg. Asal was very much reduced as a result of the cultivation of rubber.

The increase in rubber prices received a mixed response from the members of the other three villages. This was due to a number of related reasons. In Kg. Chempaka, the unofficial village head, Haji Abdul, was not in favour of growing rubber and discouraged strongly those who attempted to do so or did. He reminded the villagers to be cautious of their decision to plant rubber because they had failed once and were forced to leave their holdings in search of an alternative livelihood. The villagers were also warned about the cultivation conditions, and he advised them to seek official permission to change their land status before growing rubber.[71] To demonstrate his strictness and hence loyalty to the colonial administration, he reported to the *penghulu* and the district office those villagers who grew rubber without changing their land status. These were peasants who lived close to Kg. Asal. Haji Abdul was displeased with the conduct of Ahmad of Kg. Asal and considered him to be irresponsible for encouraging his fellow villagers to grow rubber illegally. He, in fact, raised this issue with the *penghulu* and officials at the Malawati district office. Haji Abdul's close relationship with the *penghulu* and the district officials could partly explain his pro-establishment attitudes. For quite some time he had been a close ally of the *penghulu* who was distantly related to him through marriage. Through recommendations by the *penghulu*, the district office awarded Haji Abdul a few minor government contracts, mainly for the construction of irrigation canals around Mawar and in the estates. It was also known that he received initial financial support from the *penghulu*. He employed many of his villagers and also those from Kg. Asal and Kg. Kasturi for his construction

contracts. He, thus, saw no urgency to plant rubber himself because he was not short of cash. He also continued to grow food crops which fulfilled his more immediate family needs. In this overall context, it was not surprising that he had been obedient and loyal to the authorities and adopted an officious attitude towards his villagers. His integrity and interests would be at stake should his fellow villagers violate government regulations. Furthermore, he sought nomination and selection as the official village head of Kg. Chempaka. He allegedly had a number of land applications filed, on behalf of his family members, awaiting approval from the district office.

As a result, most of the villagers in Kg. Chempaka remained coconut growers and continued to plant other types of food crops. Through business activities such as those of Haji Abdul and the *penghulu* there was a growing number of villagers not only in Kg. Chempaka but also in the other three villages which had taken to contract labouring. These labourers were paid according to the amount of work they could complete per day. For instance, for every yard of canal they dug they received ten cents, and each canal was usually eight feet wide and four feet deep. There were also other forms of contract work available in the estates nearby. However, most of the estate owners preferred not to employ workers directly but to award contracts to the *penghulu* group of Mawar who would then recruit their own villagers as workers. Through this method, the efficiency of the workers became the responsibility of the contractors, namely the *penghulu* group.

The situation in Kg. Kasturi was quite similar to the one in Kg. Chempaka. Its official village head, Ali, who was a close associate of the *penghulu*, adopted an officious approach towards his fellow villagers *vis-à-vis* the issue of rubber planting and land matters. Ali was also opposed to Ahmad of Kg. Asal's actions. However, it was reported that he did help a number of villagers interested in growing rubber to change the official status of their lands. This was because large areas of his village were more suited for coconut and rice then rubber. So, despite the increase in rubber prices which could have tempted many villagers to plant the crop, suitable land was lacking. This is evident even today.

Unfortunately, not much was known about Umar, the unofficial village head of Kg. Teratai and his reactions to rubber planting. Apparently, he was the eldest amongst the unofficial village heads of

the area and was not in good health. His son Karim helped him most of the time to organize the settlers in the village. This probably explains the fact that many of Kg. Teratai villagers did grow rubber, following the trend set by Kg. Asal villagers especially on those lands suitable for the crop. However, Umar was apparently not criticized by Ali of Kg. Kasturi and Haji Abdul of Kg. Chempaka. Many believed this was because of his age and bad health, although he was not really in the *penghulu's* immediate circle of allies. Coconut and areca-nut were important crops still cultivated in the area along with tapioca and fruit trees. There were also Kg. Teratai villagers who worked for Ali, Haji Abdul or the *penghulu* in their contracting businesses. It was also said that there were fewer settlers in Kg. Teratai than in the other three villages. Presumably, this could have partly contributed to it being relatively less significant and less remembered by the pioneers of its neighbouring villages.

The *penghulu's* reaction to these developments in the newly-established settlements was predictable. He was reported to be appalled and strongly opposed to the irresponsible act, especially that of Ahmad of Kg. Asal in participating and encouraging his villagers to grow rubber instead of food crops. Apparently, he met Ahmad and told him to stop the planting of rubber in his village unless he received official permission from the authorities; if not, he and his people could face serious consequences, such as having to pay heavy fines.[72] The *penghulu* was joined by his allies, Ali of Kg. Kasturi and Haji Abdul of Kg. Chempaka, in condemning Ahmad.

Despite these threats, Ahmad remained unchanged in his attitude and actions. He did not stop his villagers from planting rubber. At the same time, he organized a mass application from his villagers to the district administration to change their land status and cultivation conditions from non-rubber to rubber land. He bypassed the *penghulu* and lodged the applications directly to the district office. This action was not taken kindly by the *penghulu* who, as a consequence, was reported to have been very angry and called Ahmad *biadab* (ill-mannered). After that Ahmad and his fellow villagers stopped sending gifts to the *penghulu*. One wonders what were the reasons that enabled Ahmad to make the "brave" decision to grow rubber illegally in his village, to stick to the decision despite threats and condemnation from his counterparts and more impor-

tantly from the *pengkulu* himself, and finally to rebuke the *penghulu* by bypassing him in his land applications. Most important of all, his actions jeopardized his chances of being nominated and selected as the official village head of Kg. Asal.

Various explanations have been offered. Firstly, Ahmad was said to be a famous *bomoh* (a traditional healer) who possessed strong supernatural powers. It was claimed that since his ancestors came from Sumatra, he probably could have been a *sufi* (mystic), because he was known to be very religious. In fact, he built the first and only mosque in the whole area in 1921 and this was moved to a new place in 1936. There were, of course, *surau* (small prayer houses), to be found in the other villages but there was only one mosque in the area until about 15 years later when another was built in Kg. Kasturi. Ahmad was also alleged to be an expert in Malay martial arts (*silat*), and many of the pioneers of Kg. Asal were his students. Owing to all these alleged superior attributes, it was said that he was afraid of no one, showed great concern for his fellow villagers' interests, was sincere in his dealings and was a principled man. He had little in common with either the *penghulu*, a native Malay, or Ali of Kg. Kasturi, a Banjarese from Borneo, or Haji Abdul of Kg. Chempaka, a Javanese by origin. All of them were described by Ahmad as too worldly in their approach to life.

Besides these religious and ethnic stereotypes used to describe Ahmad, there are more immediate economic and ecological circumstances for his stance. First, he was not in the *penghulu's* circle of allies, although he paid respect to the *penghulu* by giving gifts. This was evident from the fact that he did not participate in the contracting business. Originally, he grew rubber at Kg. Silang but he was one of the earliest to clear the wasteland and turn it into *ladang*. He built his home there when rubber prices fell dramatically. He seemed to live a life not very different from his fellow villagers despite the fact that he was their leader. When rubber prices picked up again, he decided to plant the crop again because of his prior experience. It was a rational economic decision which his villagers agreed with and followed. Furthermore, it was said that the land in Kg. Asal was more suitable for rubber because it was nearer to the forest reserve and hence only a small part of it was swampy, unlike Kg. Kasturi which was next to a river, Sungai Ikan, and had big patches of fresh water swamp. These were the circumstances which encouraged Ahmad and his villagers

to ignore the cultivation conditions and grow rubber. They were unpopular with the *penghulu*, because the situation challenged his authority, gave him a "bad name" and "disturbed" the harmony which had existed in the area since its establishment. It also meant that the *penghulu's* free supply of food produce was reduced.

As a result, in 1925, when the village heads were officially proclaimed and given *surat tauliah* (letters of appointment) by the *penghulu*, Ahmad was not appointed as a village head of Kg. Asal. To rub salt into the wound, the *penghulu* declared Kg. Asal to be a part of Kg. Chempaka and henceforth it was put under the jurisdiction of Haji Abdul, whom he appointed as the official village head. After its official incorporation within Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Asal ceased to exist as far as the *penghulu* and the district administration were concerned. After dealing with Ahmad, the *penghulu* decided to deal with the villagers of Kg. Asal. He took steps against those who grew rubber illegally. Although many had already applied for permission to their land titles, he, being an influential man in the area especially with the district office administrators, recommended that the applications be dismissed and fines imposed.

Ahmad and his men did not keep quiet about this matter. They made a representation to the DO and appealed against the decision disallowing them to change their land titles from food crop to rubber. However, as expected, the DO was on the *penghulu's* side. He dismissed the appeal, ordering them to pay fines and cut down their new rubber trees which were still in the pre-production stage, and to grow food crops again. The implication of these decisions was that the villagers were not classified as bona-fide rubber smallholders. Therefore, under the Stevenson Scheme, they were not entitled to receive transferable export coupons, without which they could not sell their rubber produce to the local rubber dealers. The villagers' reaction to this official rebuff was mixed. A small group refused to pay the fine and ignored the order to cut down the trees. Another group did cut down the trees but did not pay the fine, which suggested that they were doing it for economic reasons *vis-à-vis* the Stevenson Scheme and not because they were observing the official orders. A few families including Ahmad's decided to leave the village and migrate to another part of Malawati, namely, Tanjung Karam, owing to the economic situation and as a protest against the *penghulu* and the local British administration.

It must be noted here that the "1925 affair" was to have significant consequences on the subsequent political history of the four villages, especially Kg. Chempaka. It signalled the beginning of what was to be protracted antagonism between peasants and office-holding élites within and around the cluster of villages. This has been manifested in various forms from 1925 until the present.

From the start, the conflict resulted in the souring of relationships between the peasants of Kg. Asal and the establishment, represented by the *penghulu* and his allies. Although there were groups, such as relatives and fellow peasants from the neighbouring villages who were sympathetic to the plight of their counterparts in Kg. Asal, they could only watch as bystanders in the whole conflict. However, the seeds of anti-establishment feelings had been sown in the minds of the Kg. Asal peasants. They were conscious of their subjugated and deprived position and knew who were responsible for their loss of opportunity. But they could not translate their antagonism into anything but verbal protest. They maintained that they belonged to Kg. Asal and it was not a part of Kg. Chempaka. Immediately after Ahmad left they chose a new leader, Zainal, a former student of Ahmad, who was reputed to be a religious man. Haji Abdul, the official village head, was neither warmly welcomed nor reported to be comfortable during his visits to Kg. Asal. His relationship with Zainal was known to be one of mutual hatred. Nonetheless, Haji Abdul had the upper hand by virtue of his official position. For example, he made attempts to evict from Kg. Asal those who grew rubber illegally and refused to cut down the trees. Ironically, it was the *penghulu* who discouraged him from taking further action on this matter because he was reported to be quite concerned about the possibility of violent reactions from Kg. Asal villagers, similar to those that occurred in Johor and Perak when the Stevenson Scheme was first introduced.[73]

During the first two years as village head, Haji Abdul's time was mainly occupied by the various official duties. This was inevitable because additional legislation concerning lands and crops, revenue, health among other things increased the tasks of the *penghulu*, and hence the village heads. The *penghulu* depended heavily on his village heads for information concerning the *mukim* which he had to submit monthly to the district office.[74] Haji Abdul, for example, had to give the *penghulu* the exact size of each household in the village,

the exact acreage of land under cultivation with a detailed breakdown of its crops, the number of people suffering from malaria, the number of criminal cases in the village and so forth. It was, therefore, not surprising that Haji Abdul depended on his assistant, Haji Salam, to run his contracting business which was very profitable and expanding despite the economic recession in the latter half of the 1920s. During the recession, the rubber estates in Mawar were not badly affected, judging from the expansion of the estates which had large areas of plantation reserves. This consequently guaranteed more business opportunities for someone like Haji Abdul. To find extra workers to cope with his expanding business was not really a problem in view of the bad effects of the recession on villagers in Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Asal. Furthermore, in 1927, the area was badly affected by floods which destroyed mainly food crops.[75] As a result of these circumstances, many villagers from Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Asal and their immediate neighbours had to sell their lands cheaply or abandon them. Most of those badly affected by floods migrated elsewhere and others ended up working with Haji Abdul or other local businessmen. The rubber trees were able to withstand the floods and hence continued to provide profits for the plantations and employment for the affected villagers.

It was during this difficult period that businessmen like Haji Abdul and others of the *penghulu* group managed to acquire more land. Although cases of peasant indebtedness had generally increased in Malawati, especially in the rice and coconut growing areas which were devastated by the floods,[76] in Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Asal such cases were few. This was because those villagers who really suffered from both the recession and the natural disaster had migrated and probably became tenants elsewhere but not in Kg. Chempaka.

Haji Salam, the assistant to Haji Abdul, too, bought a number of the land plots which were sold or formally abandoned by the desperate villagers. In 1928, the floods had subsided and the Stevenson Scheme restrictions were lifted.[77] By 1930, when the rubber industry improved as the economy improved, Haji Salam set up his own contracting business. He was assisted by his close relatives and received much from Haji Abdul who was close to the *penghulu* and the European estate managers. Apparently, they helped each other despite the fact that they were operating similar

businesses. Haji Abdul was reported to have employed one of Haji Salam's cousins as his assistant. The apparent lack of competition between the two could be explained by the fact that Haji Abdul was by then so successful that his business activities had expanded beyond the Kg. Chempaka and Mawar areas, thus leaving Haji Salam to handle the small contracts within Mawar.

The implication of this development was that more employment opportunities, mainly as contract labourers, were available to local villagers who wished either to supplement their earnings from growing rubber and food crops or to seek work in non-peasant activities. By 1930, there was a substantial number of villagers within Kg. Chempaka who were contract labourers. However, they were a smaller group than that of the peasants.

In 1929, Haji Abdul and Haji Salam initiated the setting up of a Malay primary school in Kg. Chempaka.[78] Prior to this, boys from the village were either enrolled in the Mawar Malay school or did not go to school at all. The latter was reportedly more common. Through the *penghulu*, Haji Abdul requested the district administration to set up a school in his village. As a demonstration of his eagerness to support this project, he donated one of his store houses and turned it into a classroom. The first two teachers came from Mawar. By early 1930, a fully-assisted government school was built not far from the storehouse-turned-classroom. Apparently, the establishment of the school was well-received by the villagers. Soon it was over-crowded and an extra building was constructed with the co-operation of the villagers themselves.[79] The school records and diaries, which are still intact, show that the pupils came not only from Kg. Chempaka but also from the other three neighbouring villages.[80] Haji Abdul's and Haji Salam's children were among the earliest to be enrolled in the new school. Within two years of its existence the number of school teachers increased from two to four. All of them were from the Mawar area and formerly educated in the Mawar Malay school. Later, two of them married locally and settled in Kg. Chempaka.[81] They became the first two government officials in the village. Later, they were reported to have played important roles in the overall development of the village.

When the world-wide economic depression occurred in the first half of the 1930s, the economy of Malaya was quite badly affected. Prices of cash crops such as rubber and copra declined drastically.

The villagers in Kg. Chempaka were badly affected too, except those who were growing rice, fruit trees, tapioca and vegetables. The rubber plantations in Mawar, and hence the businesses of Haji Abdul and colleagues, also experienced a difficult time. As a result, Haji Abdul and his friends had to depend mainly on government contracts to survive. But they still had their food crop lands to fall back on, unlike the rest of the villagers who grew rubber or coconut. On the whole, during the depression period, the villagers of Kg. Chempaka had very few economic options opened to them. A small group of them left the village to seek livelihood elsewhere, mainly in other parts of Selangor, but a few went as far as Johor and Perak. This group consisted mainly of rubber growers, including the newcomers, who abandoned their young, untapped or newly-tapped rubber trees. Also included for the first time were a few coconut growers. Apparently, this group did not even attempt to sell their lands. In desperation, they abandoned their homes quite hastily.

Those who remained resorted to various alternatives in order to survive. Most of them were known to have sold their rubber and coconut lands very cheaply to the more well-to-do fellow villagers, such as Haji Salam, Haji Abdul and the two school teachers, or to rich outsiders from Kg. Teratai, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Mawar. The villagers were thus left with their homestead plots on which they grew food crops for their own consumption, and a small portion for sale. Some even grew coffee to get cash. To supplement their earnings, they either became sharecroppers with the increasing number of landlords and absentee landlords, or became contract labourers for anyone willing to employ them even though the wage was low. Those villagers who had small plots of land and formerly survived by working as contract labourers had to contend with very low wages, or unemployment. However, there was a small group of rubber growers in the village who, despite the low rubber prices, continued to tap their rubber trees heavily and survived on whatever little income they obtained from the sale of their rubber produce. Since rubber was first grown in this village, the villagers had sold whatever they produced to Chinese rubber dealers from Sungai Ikan. It was reported that this group of villagers practised what has been called the severe tapping method, that is, the trees were excessively tapped to obtain the maximum amount of latex in the shortest possible time. It is not known if this form of tapping does shorten the life span of

the village trees, although official government reports on the area stress that overtapping destroyed most of the peasant holdings. The adverse economic conditions resulted in many of these villagers not being able to pay their land taxes, despite the fact that taxes were reduced by the colonial government. This led to many land plots and *tanah kampung*, being auctioned and their owners being forced to leave Kg. Chempaka. Despite the difficult economic conditions which led to many of the villagers migrating, Kg. Chempaka still received a few families of newcomers, mainly relatives of the existing villagers. They were reported to have illegally occupied abandoned areas in the village and cultivated food crops, such as coffee, tapioca and vegetables. Neither the village head nor the *penghulu* took any action against them.

During the depression, the colonial government pursued a new rice policy in an all-out effort to boost peasant rice production.[82] It had two objectives: firstly, to improve established rice areas by providing assistance in maintaining old drainage and irrigation systems and to restore abandoned fields by constructing new canals; and, secondly, to open up new large-scale irrigated rice schemes. The former had a direct consequence on Kg. Chempaka and its closest neighbours. In 1933, this cluster of four villagers was declared a rice growing area.[83] The existing rice fields in Kg. Asal and Kg. Kasturi were to be provided with new irrigation and drainage canals. Those areas which were considered suitable for rice but cultivated with rubber or coconut, especially those abandoned, were to be flooded to grow rice. Within a two-year period three big canals were built in the area stretching from Kg. Asal, through Kg. Chempaka proper, to Kg. Kasturi, and into Sungai Ikan (river) which constituted the northern boundary of Kg. Kasturi and a neighbouring rubber estate. Small wooden dams were built at the points where the canals met the river to regulate the water flow.

The contracts for constructing these canals were given to Haji Abdul, Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar (the local teacher-cum-contractor). To Haji Abdul and Haji Salam, the new projects were important in reviving business which flagged during the early part of the depression. Cikgu Omar, though new in the business and to the village, obtained the contract through his close family ties with the Mawar *penghulu*. Hence, Haji Salam and Haji Abdul had no choice but to acccept Cikgu Omar's participation, because they too

had been awarded the government contracts by the district office as a result of strong recommendations from the *penghulu*.

The new projects brought employment to the villagers from Kg. Chempaka, its immediate neighbours and other villages within Mawar. It offered Kg. Chempaka villagers the opportunity to participate in a fully government-assisted rice production scheme. The whole scheme promised benefits not only to the well-to-do but also to the majority of the villagers who were economically desperate. To the latter, especially those who had income as contract labourers, it meant a guarantee of jobs throughout the construction of the canals and during the indefinite period of maintenance afterwards. For those who had been rice-growers, especially those from Kg. Asal, the project promised to improve their yield and hence, their economic position. For others, who had been badly affected by the lower rubber and coconut prices, the activity of rice growing became an immediate and viable alternative.[84] Although the project contributed to a substantial increase in the production of rice in Mawar, and hence received praise from the district officials[85] during its implementation, it generated a series of bitter internal quarrels amongst the villagers of Kg. Chempaka, between the well-to-do and the villagers of Kg. Asal.

The first dispute involved Haji Abdul and a small group of his workers from Kg. Asal. Haji Abdul was said to have employed about ten workers to dig the canal, six of whom were Kg. Asal villagers, with the rest from Kg. Chempaka proper. He paid them on a piece rate basis that is, ten cents for every yard completed daily of the eight feet wide by four feet deep canal. He also promised a bonus if the work was satisfactorily completed within the specified period. Apparently, a few days after the work started, he was happy with the performance of his workers and paid them fully. In fact, he gave three of his workers an advance because they needed money urgently. When the job was completed in early 1934, all his workers received full wages and bonuses, except the three, to whom he had given an advance. They did not receive the bonus. The three workers, two from Kg. Asal and one from Kg. Chempaka proper were dissatisfied and complained to Haji Abdul. They were told that the bonus was not given because they received the advance which Haji Abdul considered to be a loan and had therefore charged interest. After failing to get the bonus from Haji Abdul, the two workers from

Kg. Asal decided to report the matter to the district office. The one from Kg. Chempaka proper did not participate because he wanted to continue working under Haji Abdul in the future. Apparently, his two colleagues from Kg. Asal continued to pursue the matter after receiving encouragement from their unofficial village head, Zainal. Since the 1925 Kg. Asal affair, Zainal had been waiting for such an opportunity to take revenge on Haji Abdul and the *penghulu* for what they did to Ahmad. As a result of the official report lodged by the two workers, the district office investigated the case.[86]

The *penghulu* tried to intervene but was unsuccessful because the investigation revealed that Haji Abdul had underpaid his workers not only in this particular instance but numerous times before. He was also found guilty by the district officials of illegally lending money and charging interest on the loans. He was fined and relieved of his office as the Kg. Chempaka village head. Immediately after that he migrated elsewhere, in shame, with his whole family. Some said he went back to Java. He was soon replaced by Haji Salam, now a wealthy landowner and contractor.

To this day, the few surviving Kg. Asal villagers who worked with Haji Abdul feel proud whenever they recount the "1934 scandal" and they claim responsibility for his downfall. They might not have been directly responsible for Haji Abdul's demise as village head, but it is sufficient to demonstrate the silent antagonistic feelings that most Kg. Asal villagers still have against him as a representative of the establishment. Some consider it to be a "curse" which befell Haji Abdul for his treachery towards Ahmad, the former unofficial village head of Kg. Asal.

Another open conflict which occurred as a result of the implementation of the rice production scheme in Kg. Chempaka involved Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar, on one side, and Zainal and a group of Kg. Asal villagers, on the other. It concerned the right to cultivate the abandoned lands in Kg. Asal which were to be rehabilitated for rice growing. The land involved was about ten lots or 25 acres. Zainal and a group of Kg. Asal villagers living adjacent to the land claimed that they had the right to cultivate rice on the plots before any others from Kg. Asal or other villages. They met Haji Salam, the new village head, on this issue. However, the latter argued that as the village head he had the final say on the matter. Zainal and the Kg. Asal villagers involved then went to see the *penghulu*. To their surprise, the

penghulu informed them that Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar had with his approval applied to the district office for the acquisition of the abandoned plots. The villagers raised this matter with the district officials who decided instead to ask them to forward official applications and pay all the taxes in arrears, which the original owners had not paid, if they wished to acquire the abandoned plots. The Kg. Asal villagers were in no position to raise the cash to pay the tax arrears, although they were eligible to apply for the land. In the end, Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar succeeded in obtaining the ten abandoned lots in Kg. Asal to cultivate rice. Existing land records reveal that the *penghulu* acquired two of the ten lots under his son's name. The Kg. Asal villagers were furious when they learned this, and accused the *penghulu* of having *bersubahat* (conspired) with Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar to cheat them. To pacify the angry villagers, the new landowners offered to let them cultivate rice on the now controversial lands on a sharecropping basis. Zainal and a few others refused, but several villagers accepted the offer because they needed whatever they could get in order to survive during the difficult times. The incident increased antagonisms between the Kg. Asal leadership and the rich and official clique within Kg. Chempaka in particular, and Mawar in general.

In this light, the rice production scheme was in fact one which benefitted the already well-to-do in Kg. Chempaka, besides fulfilling the colonial administration policy.[87] Whatever little benefit it brought to the needy villagers was clearly a token only. It did not improve the lot of the rubber and coconut smallholders or of those who cultivated food crops other than rice. From the beginning the implementation of the scheme was very much to the advantage of the village official-cum-business élite. The colonial policies and existing regulations legitimized and strengthened their political dominance at the village level. Their strong economic position further facilitated their efforts to accumulate more wealth, and hence guaranteed their continued political dominance.

During the second half of the 1930s, the general economic conditions in colonial Malaya improved slightly. This improvement was sufficient to create a positive mood amongst the district officials of Malawati.[88] They were happy with their successes in implementing the various government policies, such as the 1932 Rice Policy, the enforcement of the amended Malay Reservations Enact-

ment of 1933, the establishment of co-operatives for Malays and others. As a result of the improved general economic conditions, the district administration was able to provide a much improved welfare service, including the establishment of an infant welfare centre, the building of more schools, the awarding of scholarships to local Malay students to study in the Serdang School of Agriculture and the like. To sustain this mood of success, and hence the colonial policies, the district office organized various forms of competition, exhibitions and fairs.[89] For example, a kampung sanitation competition was organized to fight malaria. This was won by Mukim Mawar for three successive years. Two big shows were also organized. First, the annual agricultural show during which rice growers competed to represent the district at the All-Malayan Padi Competition. In the same show, there were also competitions for the best, healthiest and most productive coconut, tapioca, vegetable and fruit holdings. All these competitions were in line with the colonial policy of encouraging Malays to grow more food crops. It also provided the opportunity for the district officials and the various *penghulu* and village heads to inspect every village and *mukim* and hence examine the success of the colonial policies. The second, the district show, consisted of a horticultural competition, a healthy baby contest, a handicraft competition, a football tournament and an athletics meet among others. The winners represented the district at the annual national contest, organized by the Malayan Agricultural and Horticultural Association (MAHA) exhibition. Through these shows the district officials were able to promote and publicize government administrative policies and ensure the active participation of the villagers in realizing these policies.

In order to promote the marketing of village produce, both agricultural and non-agricultural, the district administration took the initiative to establish weekly fairs in all the main market centres of the various *mukim*. These were and still are called *pasar lambak* (open air markets). The administration provided stalls, or at least space, for those who wished to sell their goods and produce, at the rate of 30 cents for each stall and ten cents for each space. The principal things sold at the fairs were locally grown vegetables, fruits, Malay cakes, sweetmeats, coconuts, poultry, fish, crockery and cloth. The *pasar lambak* system not only helped the locals but also outside businessmen who were mainly non-Malay crockery and

cloth merchants. A villager who was once very active and successful in *pasar lambak* business by selling tapioca said, "It gave me the opportunity to get some cash and buy the expensive cloth and sarongs." From his account of the early days of *pasar lambak*, it was quite clear that it became an institution through which, for example, home-grown foodstuffs were made available cheaply to the local Indian estate labourers, the salariat and outsiders. At the same time, it generated a profitable business for the Sikh cloth merchants or the Chinese fishmongers. This was especially true in the Mawar case, for half of the *mukim* was made up of estates and it had a small but active Chinese-controlled fishing industry.

These campaigns promoted by the colonial district administration were quite successful in that they managed to generate some sort of awareness amongst the general public of the importance of government policies and the need to give their implementation full support. Naturally, the negative aspects of the policies, in the general context were obscured.[90]

At the *mukim* and village level, it was reported that the main participants of the various shows came from the official élite group, that is, the *penghulu*, village heads and their families. In Mawar, the *penghulu* mobilized all the village heads in his *mukim* to enrol as participants in the various competitions and shows. Each village head in turn mobilized the support of his family members and close associates. One such example is the rice competition. It was reported that Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar who owned rice lands in Kg. Chempaka (which were actually located in Kg. Asal) injected extra finance and labour to upgrade a few plots of their rice fields for competition purposes. They apparently sought the help of a few villagers for this. They were unsuccessful in the competition, but the fact that they alone tried to do this is sufficient to demonstrate the limitation of the success of the propaganda campaigns. At the district level the success of the campaign gave the impression that it was well received by the public. However, at the *mukim* and village level, only a selected group of people responded positively. The majority of the villagers of Kg. Chempaka, for example, were mere spectators to a show.

Similar trends were evident with regard to participation in the *pasar lambak* institution. In Mawar, according to a villager who actively participated in the institution in the late 1930s, a small group

of petty traders were the ones who benefitted most from participating in *pasar lambak*, not to mention the non-food crop growers who also benefitted from the sale of cheap foodstuffs. The rest of the participants were ordinary villagers who wanted to find extra cash for their immediate family needs or to buy a few luxury items for themselves. To the general public, it was entertainment time (*berpesta*), and to those with extra cash, a time to spend money.

It is important to note that it was around this time that the Kg. Chempaka Malay School produced its first batch of graduates. They later became teacher trainees and were all posted to other schools in Mawar while continuing to live in Kg. Chempaka. The school soon became an important centre for various official activities in the village. It was frequently visited by travelling government health officers (for example, dentists, nurses, anti-malaria officers, etc.) who either gave medical treatment to the school children and parents or launched anti-malaria campaigns and the like.[91] District agricultural personnel often organized meetings at the school to give information on pest control or how to improve food crop holdings and so forth. The school compound was turned into a show ground several times. It was also not uncommon for the school teachers to become actively involved in activities beyond their duties. Cikgu Omar was a case in point. Cikgu Hassan, the other teacher who resided in Kg. Chempaka, was often consulted by villagers on bureaucratic matters, such as how to fill out an assortment of government forms mainly relating to land applications and changes in cultivation conditions.

In one particular case, Cikgu Hassan was called on as a mediator in a serious feud between two well-off families, one from Kg. Chempaka and the other from Kelang. The feud was a result of a stabbing and a suicide involving a married couple. The man was the son of a Kelang family and the woman was from Kg. Chempaka. On the wedding night, the bridegroom stabbed to death his bride with the *keris* (Malay dagger) which he wore at the *bersanding* (a marriage ceremony) and later stabbed himself in the abdomen dying the next day.[92] Although the magistrate, police chief and the dresser-in-charge (health officer) came to the scene to investigate the reasons behind the incident, the case remains a mystery to this day. Cikgu Hassan failed to resolve the feud.

This event, together with the "1925 affair" and the "1934 scandal"

in Kg. Chempaka, revealed a significant change in the social basis of village leadership. Prior to the British intervention, the *penghulu* group had total control of the production process and were unquestionably "leaders of peasants"[3] in the political and economic spheres. With the advent of colonial rule, the *penghulu* group lost most of its economic power and their political position was reconstituted. At one level, they were the link between the new colonial administration and the villagers, and at another they became the officials or new élite in the villages. There were also genuine "peasant leaders", such as Ahmad of Kg. Asal, whose basis of leadership was religion and who were seen as the dissenting traditional or old élite. When Western-based education was introduced and subsequently perceived as an important vehicle for social mobility, the school teachers emerged as the new élite. The Kg. Chempaka case demonstrates how Cikgu Omar and Hassan, because of their higher (western-based) education slowly but surely took over some of the important roles traditionally performed by the *penghulu* and the village heads, now seen as the old élite. It is significant that, in this new context, the leaders of Kg. Asal were seen neither as the new nor as the old élite but were simply perceived as peasant leaders, who were responsible for instigating protests against the establishments officials, a role they had played since 1925. At the same time, they continued to play the role of religious leaders to Kg. Asal villagers and conducted religious classes both for children and adults without official sanction or support.

At the end of 1934, for the first time since Kg. Chempaka was established, three Chinese families came to open retail shops selling sundry goods. They also acted as middlemen who bought coconut, rubber and food crop produce of the Kg. Chempaka villagers. Prior to this, the villagers sold their produce and bought whatever they needed at Mawar and Sungai Ikan town or, sold their coconut or rubber produce to Chinese dealers who came from these towns to the village almost daily. According to a few village elders, the Chinese shopkeepers were welcomed by most villagers because they were then able to sell their produce and buy basic households needs at the same place. However, the relationship between the shopkeepers and the villagers was not necessarily always harmonious. It was reported that there were a couple of cases in which villagers accumulated debts at the shops and were not able to pay them. There were also

cases when villagers borrowed money from the shopkeepers, mainly in the form of IOU chits, with the promise to pay back with their agricultural produce, but failed to do so. These cases were dealt by the Mawar *penghulu* court. Unfortunately, records relating to these cases are not available, and hence it is difficult to ascertain the magnitude of the problem in Kg. Chempaka. What has been described above is based on oral sources.[94]

From various district records, however, there was no mention of villagers from Kg. Chempaka being forced to mortgage their lands to non-Malay petty moneylenders or shopkeepers as a result of not being able to pay their debts. But there were cases where Malays who were indebted to other Malays were dispossessed by the creditor. This was especially true of other villages in Mawar but not of Kg. Chempaka.

However, the apparent peace and prosperity enjoyed by the Kg. Chempaka villagers since the end of 1934 onwards was severely disrupted by a series of natural disasters between 1937 and 1939.[95] These also affected Kg. Teratai and Kg. Kasturi. In 1937, Kg. Asal was hit by a series of floods which devastated food crops, especially rice, and to a certain extent some plots of rubber holdings. Nearly half of the village was under water for a few days. The catastrophe forced many families to migrate to nearby villages in Mawar or to other parts of Malawati and Selangor. Those who stayed in Kg. Asal managed to survive because their lands were only partly damaged or they found other seasonal jobs. Hence large tracts of ruined residential and cultivated land were left abandoned yet again. Kg. Chempaka proper which was on slightly higher ground and had a better drainage system was not so badly affected. Similarly situated were Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai which were devastated only in a few very low areas of the villages.

In early 1939, there was a long period of drought affecting many villages within Mawar. This time, Kg. Chempaka proper was the worst affected area. During the drought, outbreaks of fire destroyed coconut, coffee, tapioca crops and houses. Kg. Kasturi had similar drought problems but without the fires. On the whole, food crop production was affected in these villages. As a result, the village heads of Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Kasturi made an application through the *penghulu*, to the district office to change the cultivation conditions of the affected land from *dusun* or kampung land to coco-

nut, rubber or coffee. This move was not unrelated to the price increase enjoyed by coconut, coffee and rubber in mid-1939. They also made a surprise application to open up the abandoned area of Kg. Asal and to allow the drought-affected villagers of Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Kasturi to apply for the land and to change its cultivation conditions to rubber. This was possible because those Kg. Asal villagers who migrated had lost their ownership of the land as they had not paid the necessary land taxes for three years or more.

The village heads' applications were partially successful. As a policy, the district office did not allow change in the cultivation conditions. Instead, the disaster-affected peasants were given some assistance by the agricultural department to replant their land with coconut.[96] The applications for the abandoned land in Kg. Asal were approved but not the change in cultivation conditions. This time it was the village head of Kg. Kasturi, Ali, who took full advantage of the opportunity to acquire more land for himself and his family members. A few other families from Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Kasturi also obtained land in Kg. Asal.

The reaction of Kg. Asal villagers to what had happened was one of disgust. Some felt that they had been victims of discrimination, yet again, by the official élite. A few saw it as a further punishment resulting from the "1925 affair". On the whole, they viewed the encroachments of Haji Salam and Ali as *pencerobohan* of Kg. Asal (the outrage of Kg. Asal) by newcomers. The incident created further hostility between the villagers of Kg. Asal and the two village heads, which to a certain extent included the ordinary villagers of Kg. Kasturi. Expressions of opposition during that time were verbal, in the form of weak protests or simply *berseteru* (to become enemies, not on speaking terms). Although the people of Kg. Asal could not express their discontent towards the establishment, they harboured feelings of intense *dendam* (grudge) which influenced subsequent political and social relationships within Kg. Chempaka especially after post-independent Malaysia. In 1939, the newcomers to Kg. Asal began to grow rubber, although this was against the cultivation condition of the lands. On the old rice lands they built canals and grew tapioca, dry rice and yam. The disaster-affected lands of Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Kasturi, too, were planted with rubber, tapioca and dry rice. Only a small group of the owners grew coconut and a few interplanted it with coffee.

The widespread tapioca cultivation in the cluster of villages – Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Kasturi, Kg. Teratai – led to the setting up of a small cottage industry in 1940 by a Chinese businessman from Kelang, which produced *tepung ubi* (tapioca flour).[97] The area then became well-known in Malawati and Kelang districts as a tapioca producing area and for its tapioca flour. The factory employed about 20 workers, eight of whom were Chinese, the rest were local Malay villagers. It was reported that as a result of the establishment of the factory, many villagers converted their coconut or yam plots into tapioca plots. The few who had problematic rubber holdings grew tapioca after cutting down the rubber trees. The tapioca was sold direct to the factory. By mid-1941 the factory expanded and the number of workers doubled.

On the political scene, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, there existed an active Malay political association in Selangor called *Persatuan Melayu Selangor*.[98] The association was established in mid-1938 to fight for the "general advancement of the Malays". The formal structure of the association was similar to the territorial administrative structure of Selangor state. The association had representatives from each district and attempts were made to establish branches at the *mukim* level too. In Malawati, the first and probably the only *mukim* branch was established in October 1938 at Pasangan. The then *penghulu* of Mawar was invited to attend the inaugural meeting but he did not set up a branch in Mawar. The association which from the beginning was élite-based and seemed to serve Malay élite interests did not have any participation from or any impact on villagers in Mukim Mawar. According to the present village heads of Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Chempaka, their predecessors knew about the association, but they also knew that it was for *orang besar* (the élite) only and not for the ordinary people. They said they were too far removed from the political activities at the district and state level and did not really understand how it operated, particularly in its aims and its relevance to their everyday life; except that it was supposed to fight for Malay rights.

From the above account of Kg. Chempaka during the inter-war period, we witness how a Malay village and its community evolved during the colonial era. It was certainly a period full of uncertainties, wrought with economic difficulties, natural calamities and, hence, social instability. Structurally, it manifested the consequences of the

economic and political dominance of British rule and policies as they were carried out at the local level. Empirically, it demonstrated how the implementation of the colonial policies and the specific local conditions combined to produce social configurations peculiar to the village.[99] For example, the emergence and the slow consolidation of a number of social patterns, such as the occupational and class structure within the village, the constant movement of the population owing to economic and ecological factors, the political power structure and oppositions within them, and the influence of modern facilities, such as education, health, and so forth.

The Second World War, which resulted in the Japanese Occupation Malaya brought a few significant changes to Kg. Chempaka For example, its population stabilized. After the war and until independence in 1957, Kg. Chempaka went through a less turbulent experience but was not without problems generated by post-war British rule and by specific local events or both.

The Japanese Occupation

Japanese rule in Malaya lasted for about four years (1941-1945). This period of Japan's brief colonization of Malaya began when it forces invaded Malaya and fought the British. After the Japanese conquest of Malaya the war was still being fought in the rest of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The country and its people were still reeling from the shocks of war when the Japanese Military Administration (JMA) established itself as the government of the day, not without resistance from local elements. As the task of reconstructing and building a new colony in Malaya was taking shape, the Japanese were forced to surrender, thus ending Japanese colonialism in Malaya.

Despite its brief presence, the JMA did make attempts to reorganize the local economy but with little success. In the political sphere, through its various policies and schemes, the Japanese managed indirectly during its brief occupation of the country to foster political developments especially within the Malay community.[100] However, we learn little from the extant historical comments and analysis of the period about the specific effects of the Japanese rule at the lower local level, such as in a district, *mukim* or village.[101] We are told of the general suffering of the rural

population but only superficially. The statements on the Malay peasantry during the era, for example, were general, merely illustrating what one would have expected in any community trapped in the ravages of a war. Hence, the experience of Kg. Chempaka during the Japanese Occupation is an attempt to provide a brief description of some aspects of life and social conditions in a Malay village at that period. The description by no means pretends to represent the general experience of other Malay communities then, and it is almost impossible to compare owing to the dearth of unpublished and published accounts of village life during that period.

In the initial stage of Japanese presence, that is, during the battle phase, Kg. Chempaka and its three immediate neighbours were not witness to any battle between advancing Japanese forces and the withdrawing British army. This was probably because this cluster of villages was situated in a remote corner of Malawati and not in any direct path of the many-pronged Japanese forces' advance unlike the villages in and around Mawar township or Kelang. The only encounter with the Japanese soldiers that the villagers from the said cluster of villages had was when the soldiers crossed Sungai Ikan, the river, from an estate located to the immediate north of the villages and headed in a southwest direction towards Mawar town. The soldiers some on bicycles but most on foot passed through the northernmost tip of Kg. Kasturi into another estate and, later, into Mawar; thus bypassing Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Teratai altogether. In short, according to the present Kg. Kasturi village head, the villages were "quiet and peaceful . . . when the rest of Malaya was involved in the war".

Inevitably the consequences of war soon caught up with Kg. Chempaka. According to its present village head, by mid-1942 the villagers began to experience severe economic difficulties. Those growing cash crops were not able to sell their products. The ones working as contract labourers were out of work with no alternative source of livelihood. The more well-to-do, such as Haji Salam, Ali and Cikgu Omar were badly affected too. These difficulties were further aggravated by the acute shortage of basic food especially rice. Although food was available on the blackmarket at exorbitant prices, they were beyond the reach of most villagers except the well-to-do. As a result, the majority had to depend solely on tapioca as its staple food for daily consumption or *kenduri* (feasts).[102]

Despite these dramatic changes none seemed to have left the village, a practice quite frequent in the pre-war period. As the village elders said, "Everywhere else was hopeless and destroyed by war, we were lucky to have our village intact." This same reason contributed to the sudden arrival of many families from various parts of Malawati and Selangor state, mainly ex-villagers of Kg. Chempaka and relatives of the local inhabitants. They came in search of food and shelter because their own holdings elsewhere had been devastated by the war.

As a result of the adverse economic conditions many rubber smallholders whose rubber trees were young decided to cut them down and instead planted tapioca, sweet potato and maize. Those with mature trees stopped tapping and concentrated on food crop cultivation around their houses. The unemployed contract labourers and the newcomers also grew food crops. A few worked on whatever vacant or abandoned land plots were available in the village. But many of them cleared the forest reserve adjacent to the Kg. Asal and turned it into *ladang*. About 200 acres of jungle was cleared for this purpose.[103] The well-to-do who possessed many idle land plots had to allow the needy ones to cultivate their land but on a sharecropping basis. The well-to-do seemed to have preferred cultivating their lands with dry rice rather than tapioca. Many villagers tried to grow dry rice, too, but only on a small section of their already crowded plots. According to many from the latter group, their attempts to grow dry rice were not particularly successful owing to the ravages of disease, birds and the floods in the third quarter of 1942.[104] They found dry rice was too time-consuming and gave little economic return. The more well-to-do, though facing similar problems, were able to sustain their efforts because of their bigger plots and labour was also not such a problem.

When the Japanese launched its "grow more food" campaign, as part of its economic policy in Malaya in mid-1943, food crop cultivation in Kg. Chempaka was already in full swing. Obviously it was a response to the need to cope with the difficult economic circumstances and nothing to do with the Japanese policy. However, sections of Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Kasturi, which were traditionally wet rice areas but had been abandoned by the villagers owing to water problems and/or the ever-lucrative attraction of rubber, were re-irrigated and planted with rice. The whole process of production

was controlled and supervised by Japanese soldier-farmers, who were sent to various areas in Selangor and other Malay states to promote and increase food production through land schemes.[105] Villagers from Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai were enlisted as forced labour for the scheme. Many of them were also recruited to work in other schemes elsewhere in Selangor, such as in Tanjung Karam.[106] Often school children were also called for tasks such as keeping the birds away from the rice fields. Those working in these rice fields or land schemes did not receive anything in return. However, the JMA did provide monthly rice rations to non-rice grower households. The distribution was done by each village head, who often inflated the number of households in his village and kept the rations meant for the "ghost" families.[107]

Despite all these efforts rice production did not increase overall in Malaya for a variety of reasons.[108] Poor seedlings and the existence of easier ways of obtaining a living have been suggested as the main reasons. However, according to Kg. Chempaka villagers, especially the well-to-do who were planting dry rice on most of their plots before mid-1943, the main reason which discouraged them from continuing production was the negative Japanese policy and attitude towards rice growers. Most of what they produced was expropriated by the Japanese and pooled into a district rice stock. A large amount from this stock was consumed by the Japanese soldiers and what remained was later distributed irregularly as monthly rations for the non-rice growers. Thus, rice growing became a totally unattractive economic proposition in Kg. Chempaka and was only grown in the Japanese-controlled land schemes. Those who had been growing rice opted for other food crops such as tapioca.

Rubber production was also revived by the Japanese[109] and many villagers turned to rubber tapping again. However, the rubber price was controlled by the government and whatever was produced had to be sold to the *kaishas* (Japanese companies) or to their agents. It was not long before the villagers realized that the price was too low for them to be able to depend on rubber as a livelihood. Many turned again to food crops. Poultry rearing and fresh-water fishing were other minor economic activities carried out by many villagers, mainly to supplement whatever food they already had available. As mentioned earlier, many basic necessities were available on the

blackmarket peddled by the Chinese retailers in Sungai Ikan and Sungai Bilis towns. Villagers exchanged chickens, tapioca, sweet potatoes, maize and yam for salt, sugar, wheat, flour and salted fish. A few villagers became local agents for the Chinese.

Besides the economic policy, education was another Japanese policy which had a direct impact on the villagers.[110] The local school had to teach the Japanese language and every morning had to carry out the ritual of flag-raising, while teachers and pupils together sang songs praising the Japanese emperor. Teachers, old and new, had to learn basic Japanese and some aspects of elementary Japanese studies. As had formerly been the British practice, the Japanese, too, used the school as an official gathering and information centre, where village meetings were held and official announcements and posters were displayed. However, it was never turned into a Japanese army headquarters hence the pre-war school records were left intact to this day. Schools in Mawar and Malawati, for example, had their records burned by the occupying Japanese soldiers.

On the whole the JMA did not provoke much opposition in Kg. Chempaka. Politically, there were attempts made by the Sungai Ikan branch of the Chinese-dominated Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) to recruit villagers as guerrillas but it did not receive much response from them. This was especially so after three Kg. Chempaka youths were arrested for illegally possessing radios and listening to BBC broadcasts. They were sent to serve in the infamous death railway project in Burma as punishment. Two other villagers were severely tortured for hoarding rice stolen from the rice fields. These events together with the ever-present *kempetai* (Japanese Military Police), and their *hantu* (the Malay word for ghost used to describe the informers) in the village made the villagers most reluctant to be involved in any active anti-Japanese political activities. Apparently, the villagers did not discover the identity of the informer who told the Japanese about the illegal radio. This strongly discouraged villagers from participating in any form of anti-Japanese activity, even though they harboured intense feelings of hatred towards the Japanese. Economically, Kg. Chempaka during the Japanese Occupation was in a better position to cope with the adverse economic conditions than the other Mawar villages which had been devastated since the beginning of the war. Its population

increased with the new arrivals. All the village inhabitants seemed to have concentrated on economic activities which helped them to survive the occupation period, though at times they were threatened by floods.[111] Thus, it became more stable and consolidated as a community, unlike the 1920s and 1930s when natural disasters and difficult economic conditions, resulting in constant in- and out-migration put the community in a continuous state of flux. Needless to say, at the time the Japanese surrendered the economic conditions in Kg. Chempaka had considerably worsened, when basic necessities such as food and clothing became almost impossible to obtain except on the blackmarket at prices well beyond the reach of the majority of the villagers.

Although during this period Malay politics went through a transformation, and to a certain extent, reconstitution, this was only evident at the national and/or state level[112] and not at the *mukim* or village level. In Mukim Mawar and the cluster of villages studied, the villagers were occupied with basic issues and problems of economic survival. The local official élite were rendered politically insignificant during the JMA because of their near-total exclusion from the administrative machine. Instead, school teachers became more important politically to the villagers because of their ability to speak Japanese, and hence played a crucial role in helping the villagers to understand what the Japanese wanted from them as citizens of the new government.

For about a decade after the war until independence (1957), colonial Malaya experienced significant changes both in the economic and political spheres. These changes have been well-documented and analysed by Malaysianists.[113] However, it has been argued that British economic policies in post-war Malaya, in essence, did not differ very much from those during the pre-war period despite the introduction of development plans.[114] For example, the focus of interest was still on primary production with industrialization receiving only token attention. In the political sphere, the British faced more serious problems which were not unrelated to the economic realities then. For example, the British Malayan Union scheme met a premature death when challenged by the élite-oriented Malays who argued that the scheme was against the economic interests of the Malays and would lead to the demise of the Malays as a race.[115]

After the War, Before Independence

Without ignoring the political tussles and economic bargaining taking place at the national level, which ultimately fashioned the lives of the rural inhabitants, it is equally important to examine the structural and empirical consequences of these developments at the village level. The latter is often ignored by Malaysianists in preference for the former.[116] An overview of what happened in Kg. Chempaka immediately after the war until independence will give us some insight into the changes experienced by ordinary villagers as a result of the transformation in the wider society at that time.

After the Japanese surrender, for the first few weeks, the Chinese-controlled MPAJA established *de facto* administrative control in the main urban areas and rural towns throughout Malaya. Then the group launched reprisals against Japanese collaborators, including Malays. It resulted in the merciless torture and killing of numerous Malays, especially in the rural areas. The Malays were stunned momentarily, but soon retaliated, led by religious-cum-cult leaders. Although the outbreaks of Sino-Malay clashes were reported to have occurred in many parts of the peninsula, the ones often mentioned were those that took place in Batu Pahat (Johor), Batu Kikir (Negeri Sembilan), Sungai Manik (Perak) and Batu Malim (Pahang).[117] Sporadic communal clashes continued throughout the British Military Administration (BMA) period but of a lesser magnitude. However, cult movements, often village-based persisted well into the Emergency (1948-1960).

To the Kg. Chempaka villagers the brief but traumatic period of the Chinese guerrilla rule was simply remembered as *empatbelas hari Cina balas dendam* (fourteen days of Chinese revenge). According to various Malay and Chinese sources in Mawar, at least ten from the Sungai Ikan Chinese community were known to have been actively involved as guerillas of the MPAJA and many more were sympathizers. Immediately after the war, the "gang of ten" was said to have tortured and killed at least seven Malays, from various villages in Mawar, who were believed to have given the Japanese the list of names of Chinese shopkeepers in Sungai Ikan and Sungai Bilis who were supplying the guerrillas with food and other items. This had led

to the mass execution of these Chinese by the Japanese. One of the seven Malays killed was said to be guilty of deceiving the guerrillas regarding the movements of the Japanese secret police, leading to a group of the former, which included a high-ranking officer, being ambushed and killed by the latter. It was reported that three of the seven Malays were brutally tortured and, subsequently, killed by the guerrillas in front of their families. The rest were executed elsewhere and their dismembered bodies were found floating in Sungai Ikan.

After a momentary shock the Mawar Malays retaliated without any help or direct influence from outside the *mukim*. The Malays were in three separate groups. The first one was from Kg. Asal, led by Zainal, the unofficial village head who was an exponent of Malay *silat* (martial art) and a former student of the disaffected and exiled Ahmad. A few from Kg. Chempaka proper joined in too. The other two groups were from around Mawar township, led by ordinary villagers, who were reputed to be a *guru* (teacher) of some form of Malay *silat*. These groups attacked almost simultaneously the towns of Sungai Ikan and Sungai Bilis, first by burning the shophouses and then killing the Chinese, who were mostly innocent. The Chinese shopkeepers in Kg. Chempaka were saved from certain death, by a few of the villagers who hid them in chicken sheds and in the roofs of houses when the Kg. Asal Malay group was hunting for them and burned shophouses. The Chinese of Sungai Ikan and Sungai Bilis were said to have suffered heavy casualties and lost many lives as a result of the Mawar Malays' spontaneous but organized retaliations. Nonetheless, the bloody incident was one of many which occurred throughout Malaya, especially in the last quarter of 1945 and persisted in lesser magnitude well into the BMA period. Hence, the communal clashes must be viewed in the wider political and economic context surrounding Sino-Malay relations before and during the war. In Mukim Mawar the communal tensions remained until the Emergency when the Chinese-dominated insurgent group was reported to have harassed the Malays and the Chinese.

Although communal issues seemed to have dominated the political scene in immediate post-war Malaya, it was the food crisis or *masalah perut* (literally, stomach problem) which was uppermost in the Kg. Chempaka villagers' minds. The main problem was the

acute shortage of rice confronting the villagers in Kg. Chempaka, and elsewhere in Malaya, since the Japanese Occupation. When the British returned to Malaya they were faced with an imminent rice famine.[118] Domestic shortage and the inavailability of relief supplies from abroad contributed to the rice crisis. The BMA caught in this unpleasant and almost threatening situation, adopted various policies and poured in millions of dollars to alleviate the problem but with limited or no success due to a number of reasons.

In Kg. Chempaka, many villagers remembered that there was no rice available for at least six months after the war. They were forced to continue to eat tapioca as their staple food in order to survive. Even though rice was made available by the government through licensed retail outlets, in Kg. Chempaka and neighbouring villagers the village heads were given the licences. But the villagers simply could not afford to buy sufficient rice to feed their families. Some were only able to eat rice once a week or a month. It was alleged that the Kg. Chempaka village head connived in the illegal sale and distribution of controlled foodstuffs, especially rice, because it fetched about five to six times the official price on the blackmarket. This was also the case with sugar, condensed milk, cloth, kerosene and other controlled items. Attempts made by many villagers to grow wet and dry rice had a mixed result and brought success only to a few, especially to those who had since the Japanese Occupation grown rice, namely, the well-to-do ones.

Those who had been contract labourers before the war returned to similar jobs either directly with the estates nearby or with Haji Salam and a few others who resumed their small contracting businesses. The labourers were reported to have survived entirely on tapioca which was available cheaply in the village or which they grew near their houses on kampung land. The estates nearby never complied with the March 1946 "Foodcrop Production" directive which required rubber plantations to cultivate rice on at least two percent of their total acreage. The directive was dropped at the end of 1947.

Early attempts by the villagers to participate actively again in rubber production were heavily constrained by the acute shortage of acid, tapping knives and other necessary equipment for tapping. Although the government through its Rubber Buying Unit was supposed to make these items available to the smallholders, they never reached the intended recipients, owing to mismanagement

and racketeering.[119] Only after 1947 were these items easily available. During the shortage Kg. Chempaka smallholders were not short on initiatives. Many of them approached the rubber tappers of nearby estates for help, but not without having to pay in cash or in kind. The more enterprising ones raided the estate stores at night and got what they needed but not without casualties. A few were caught, convicted and jailed for failing to pay the fines imposed. Haji Salam and a few of the more well-to-do initially suffered similar problems in their effort to obtain the items needed to tap their rubber trees. They made attempts through the *penghulu* for help from the district office but without success. However, through the initiatives of their poorer relatives or tenants who worked in their holdings and who had contacts with the estate rubber tappers, the problem was finally resolved. Although the initial problem of getting essential supplies and equipment was resolved, through their own initiative, the village smallholders still had to face the colonial government prohibition on new planting and the ban on land alienation for rubber which was introduced just before the war. In mid-1947 the prohibition on new planting was lifted but not on land alienation. The removal of the ban was more advantageous to the estates nearby which planted their reservation lands with high-yielding clones.[120] The contract labourers and the local contractors from Kg. Chempaka benefitted from the estates' expansion which gave employment to the former and business to the latter. But the new government move affected the smallholders since the ban on land alienation for rubber was not lifted and they could not expand their holdings, and hence their production.

Again, they proved to be an enterprising and resilient lot. They ignored the government rule and began to plant new rubber trees on their plots, which were kampung or orchard land, or on any land available in the village. According to the present Kg. Chempaka village head, his father, Haji Salam, who was village head then, did not take any action against people for violating the cultivation conditions or for occupying the vacated plots. He also planted new trees on kampung land and encouraged his family members to do the same, knowing that the government officials were in no position to oversee the enforcement of the regulations. Apparently, the *penghulu* himself was guilty of similar offences. With the *mukim* and the village officials flouting the regulations, the villagers were safe from being

fined or punished in any other manner by the authorities. The licensed buyers of rubber were Chinese from Sungai Ikan and Kelang. The smallholders had to sell latex instead of rubber sheets because the coagulant was in short supply. By 1948, the local Chinese shopkeepers had set up their retail businesses again. At first, they were mainly retailers of sundry goods and then were slowly involved in the business of buying local fruit and vegetable produce to be sold elsewhere in Malawati. The whole pattern repeated the situation in Chempaka before the war. By the time the Emergency was declared in 1948, rubber growing had again become the main economic activity of Chempaka villagers. Rice growing was totally abandoned, but not coconut and other food crops. The 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. curfew imposed during the Emergency did not have any great impact on the lives of the villagers because Mukim Mawar and Malawati district for that matter, was not at the centre of the fighting between government forces and the insurgents. Admittedly, there were arrests of "communist sympathisers" at Sungai Ikan, Sungai Bilis and in other small towns within the district; but, according to available records, and other sources, this was a common pattern throughout the less affected areas of Selangor.[121] In fact, not a single "new village"[122] was set up in Mukim Mawar throughout the Emergency despite the fact that about 75 percent of the area was made up of rubber plantations and three towns were heavily populated by Chinese.

From a detailed survey of Kg. Chempaka villagers who joined the military forces during the Emergency, namely the Special Constabulary Unit, known to the villagers as SC,[123] and the Royal Malay Regiment, about 62 percent were either former contract labourers or their sons. The rest were unsuccessful rubber smallholders or their sons. The main reason for signing up was primarily economic except for a few who joined because of personal reasons such as "being broken-hearted in love affairs", "frustrated in being unable to join the English medium school or to continue their education", or "looking for new experience in life". It must also be mentioned that those joining the SC were promised small plots of land on retirement, in return for their service. This, later, became the main attraction to many Kg. Chempaka villagers who joined the forces.

The Korean War and the resultant rubber boom of 1950-1951 alleviated temporarily the economic hardships faced by the majority of Kg. Chempaka residents. To the residents their decision to stick to

rubber, legally and illegally, was vindicated. For two years they lavished their new wealth on luxury items such as refrigerators which were used as cupboards for foodstuff as there was no electricity. According to the present village heads of Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Kasturi many villagers took the opportunity to clear their debts, such as overdue land taxes, and what they owed to family members and the local Chinese shopkeepers. Not a small number decided to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Social activities such as weddings became lavish affairs again. Many households built new homes or repaired their existing ones. There was a small number of villagers particularly from Kg. Asal who made attempts to buy land from other villagers or applied for new land from the district office. A few succeeded in the former, but all failed in the latter for policy reasons. One of the successful ones was at that time a tenant of Haji Salam, who had large plots of Kg. Asal. Haji Salam and his three sons invested a lot of money in their contracting business. In addition, his eldest son set up a separate business of his own and operated from Sungai Ikan. He dealt mainly with minor construction projects of the district office rather than the estates which were his father's domain.

On the whole, the boom period brought some immediate and short-term economic and social gains to Kg. Chempaka villagers. In the long-term their structural position remained the same, if not worse. As rubber smallholders, the villagers continued to suffer further problems particularly in rubber production as the result of the general pro-foreign capital policies of the British. This was epitomized in the new rubber replanting scheme and its implementation.

Replanting was seen as the key to rubber modernization, especially in the plantation sector.[124] A special fund, called the Stabilization Fund, was set up for the replanting scheme, involving estates and smallholdings. Taking advantage of the Korean War rubber boom, a replanting levy (cess) graded according to rubber export prices, was collected separately from both the estate owners and smallholders from early 1951. The money from the estate owners went into Fund A and the smallholders into Fund B. The overall distribution of the fund and implementation of the replanting scheme was controlled by the Rubber Industry (Replanting) Board, which had 18 members, five of whom were smallholders, and guided by the Rubber Industry (Replanting) Ordinance, No. 8, 1952. From its

full implementation in March 1952, it was clear that the estate owners were better treated by the authority. For example, estate owners received automatic reimbursement from Fund A once they began replanting without much administrative intervention and direction in replanting operations. But smallholders were expected to initiate their own replanting by applying for approval and a conditional grant to the amount of M$400 per acre.

It was in this context that smallholders in Kg. Chempaka found it too difficult to replant their holdings with new trees. According to the few who replanted their holdings then, the bureaucratic process in the application for approval was cumbersome involving the village head or *penghulu* whose signatures were needed on the application form. This included a show of deference and loyalty to the officials through gifts or helping out at *kenduri* (feasts), and so forth. Otherwise the applicant had to ask close family members or friends of the officials to be "referees of good character" in order to get the all-important signature of the official. In short, each applicant directly or indirectly had to be in the good books of the officials. Then the applicant had to contend with the replanting inspectors, who were officials from the district office. His duty was to inspect the technical viability of the plot to be replanted, such as soil suitability, types of seedling and fertilizer used, the cleanliness of plot and the fencing. He was also responsible for checking that the officially-required standards of maintenance were observed throughout the growing period of the trees, failing which the grants could be revoked immediately. Therefore, he also controlled the regular payments of the grant. It followed, in view of all this scrutiny, that each applicant had to "entertain" the inspector in various ways. For example, every time he came to inspect a plot, the owner never failed to prepare a nice *makan* (food for lunch mainly) and to ensure that the inspector had fruits or vegetables to bring home after the inspection. The inspector was on the invitation list whenever an applicant had feasts, and so forth. It is not surprising then that the majority of the smallholders of Kg. Chempaka were not attracted to the replanting scheme. Athough the grant increased from M$400 to M$500 in mid-November 1954, it was insufficient to cover their income loss in the years before the trees were ready to be tapped. To them, the most logical step was to grow rubber illegally elsewhere. It was also impossible for those already growing rubber illegally to

participate in the replanting scheme.

The few wealthier villagers and those who had alternative regular income accepted the replanting scheme quite willingly. Although they admitted that the bureaucratic procedures were intimidating, this was compensated by the "friendliness" of the replanting inspector who helped them to get through the paper work. A closer investigation revealed that the inspector was a close friend of a local villager who was a school teacher in Malawati town. In fact, according to the current village head of Kg. Chempaka, the school teacher had two three-acre lots in Kg. Chempaka which were being replanted under the supervision of his father. One lot was under his name and the other under his father's. Since, legally, the two lots were owned by different owners and were under the five-acre limit, they received full replanting grants at M$1,200 per lot or M$400 per acre. If the two lots were under one owner, he would have received only two-thirds of the grant which would be M$1,600 instead of M$2,400. This was a common strategy adopted by village heads, the salariat and others who owned more than one lot of land in Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Teratai and Kg. Kasturi. To change the title of ownership was an easy administrative exercise and cost little. A study of the land title records of four wealthy families in Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Kasturi showed that there were transfers of ownership of rubber lands from owners to immediate family members between 1953 and 1956.[125] The reason was to take full advantage of the replanting grants. This was confirmed by those involved and the officials. According to a few of the well-to-do, they were also encouraged by district officials and the replanting inspector to replant their rubber land with alternative crops, such as coconut, coffee and dry rice.[126] The same grants were available if they decided to do so. But, they said, none of the alternatives promised similar returns to high-yielding rubber trees, so they decided to continue to grow rubber. Other smallholders in Kg. Chempaka knew vaguely about this but again ignored the scheme.

The replanting in the estates near Kg. Chempaka involved only rubber. New planting and, now replanting in the estates provided greater employment opportunities for the villagers who had traditionally been contract labourers, and even to those smallholders whose plots were not productive enough. The contracting business also enjoyed a tremendous increase and hence Haji Salam, his son

and a few others from Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai had more contracts than they could handle. This time they shared the contracting business with a number of Chinese contractors. The Chinese contractors, with more capital, were involved in the early stage of the replanting, for example, in felling and clearing the old trees which were then transported elsewhere and sold as firewood. The Malay contractors then took over the work from the Chinese and were involved mainly in digging seedling holes, planting cover crops and repairing irrigation canals or even digging new ones. The general maintenance for the next few years until the trees were ready for tapping was carried out by the estate management and its workers. Most of the villagers from Kg. Chempaka were employed by Haji Salam, his son and other Malay contractors. According to them it was easier to negotiate with Malay contractors when they could not work or needed wages in advance for various reasons. Hence their preference for the Malay contractors. But, according to a small group of Kg. Chempaka villagers, mainly from Kg. Asal, working with Chinese contractors had similar advantages, if not more. There was no favouritism, wages were paid on time, bonuses were paid promptly once the extra work was done, advance in wages were available for all sorts of circumstances. But the differences expressed had a more deep-seated reason, related directly to the "1925 affair" and the events that occurred subsequently.

On the whole, the Mawar and Kg. Chempaka cases demonstrated that the new replanting scheme in late colonial Malaya benefitted largely the estate sector, not only in terms of direct grants but also indirectly, in easy access to cheap rural labour. This was not unrelated to the discriminatory treatment received by the smallholders who, in the main, found the scheme economically and socially unattractive and preferred to work as contract workers in the estates. Only the wealthy smallholders could take advantage of the scheme frequently resorting to unofficial means. Even the revised replanting scheme, introduced in mid-1955, did not improve the situation.[127] Although smallholders were given a higher planting grant set initially at M$500 an acre, this was not automatic upon evidence of replanting, as with estates, but still required prior application and follow-up inspections. Furthermore, they were still being "encouraged" to replant wherever feasible with crops other than rubber. For the average smallholders, such as those in Kg. Chempaka who owned

rubber plots of about three acres each, inadequate finance and onerous regulatory procedures remained as imposing obstacles to replanting. The better-off smallholders who participated in the scheme, further benefitted when the government accelerated payment of grants under Fund B as an electoral gesture before the 1959 elections.

The economic impact of these developments in Kg. Chempaka was articulated in the increased social differentiation it had engendered within the three broad social groups in the village. The well-to-do group, already politically dominant, managed to consolidate further its economic dominance and hence enhanced its political position. Individuals such as Haji Salam, his first son and a few others benefitted at least twice from the new replanting scheme, first as smallholders, and second as businessmen. For Haji Salam, being the village head and a long-standing businessman the success helped him to set up new and separate businesses for his second son as a small building contractor, for his third son as a rubber dealer, and for his son-in-law (the husband of his youngest daughter) as a house-builder and carpenter. Through his official connections he also managed to borrow loans from the Rural Industrial Development Authority (RIDA), a body established in 1950 to help foster rural development in Malaya.[128]

To the average rubber smallholders of Kg. Chempaka, which constituted the largest social group in the village, their inability to participate in the replanting meant they had to survive on declining income from the ageing rubber land, only off-set by their initiative to grow rubber illegally. Acquisition of new land for food crop or for rubber was not possible because of regulations. The only economic alternatives open to them after the Korean War boom were either to become part-time or full-time labourers with the contractors to work in the estates or to become tenants to the same contractors who were also rich landowners. There were also a few who survived as part-time petty pedlars of all sorts of things at the weekly open air market at Sungai Ikan,[129] or as part-time inland fishermen, but this group was too small and temporary in nature to change the picture. However, these odd jobs, unimportant and amorphous as they may seem, had become a crucial last resort and survival mechanism for the majority of the Kg. Chempaka rubber smallholders, to which they turned during difficult times. To them odd jobs were a

continuous source of "floating" economic opportunities to be grabbed when there was nothing else to turn to.[130]

The traditional contract labourers, with little or no land, and who formed the new largest social group in Kg. Chempaka, found the economic situation relatively less difficult. Jobs were abundant before, during and after the Korean War boom. One of them remarked, "If one was willing to work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week, one could live 'comfortably' although the wage was low." They, in fact, needed to work for 12 hours a day to make a living, or else they had to get their children and wives to work at the same time, which was not an uncommon practice.

In the political sphere, the well-to-do group along with the official élite at the *mukim* level were responsible for the introduction of UMNO in Mawar and its various villages. They had too many vested interests at stake to do otherwise. But generally UMNO failed to attract real grass-root support, that is, the average smallholders and the contract labourers.[131] In the case of Kg. Chempaka, the opposition parties such as PAS, received greater support from the grass-roots and this is still the situation today. The 1955 elections marked the beginning of the spread of PAS influence in Mawar, and in Kg. Chempaka particularly. But there are specific reasons and circumstances relating to Kg. Chempaka, particularly in Kg. Asal, which will be discussed in later chapters. Between 1946 and 1955 there were also other political parties and groups which attempted to gain local support in Mawar. For example, Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (API) had a few members, mainly petty traders of Sumatran origin, who were arrested soon after the organization was banned when the Emergency was declared in 1948. Parti Negara, led by Dato Onn Jaafar who was the founder of UMNO, received more support than API but this was insufficient to establish a branch in Mawar. Most of its branches were in Malawati and the Tanjung Karam area, where PAS support was also very strong. But there was not a single branch of any party in Kg. Chempaka until 1958 when PAS managed to set up one at Kg. Asal. Not until 1968 did Kg. Chempaka have its own UMNO branch. Again it was based in Kg. Asal not in Kg. Chempaka proper. Since PAS had a ten-year headstart it created tactical and strategic problems for the Kg. Chempaka UMNO leadership.[132]

The school went through a tremendous expansion in late colonial Malaya. On the eve of independence, its enrolment had reached 1,000

students from 300 in 1950. New school buildings were built, mostly through self-help organizations rather than being financed by the government. In 1956, for the first time, about a dozen pupils from the school signed up to join the Malay-medium secondary school in Malawati. A massive anti-illiteracy campaign was launched by the colonial government in mid-1959 called *Gerakan Lampu Suluh* (Torchlight Campaign) to register children between five and seven years old as pupils of the school.[133] Since the end of the war, few school teachers have resided in Kg. Chempaka. They were either from Mukim Mawar or Malawati. Most of the school teachers staying outside Kg. Chempaka commuted to school by bicycle or motorcycle. There were three access roads to Kg. Chempaka. The best was a laterite road that cut through Kg. Teratai, then the estates before joining the Klang-Malawati main road. The new one was to the extreme south of Kg. Chempaka, again a laterite estate road, not well-kept and ending at Mawar town. The last one was to the extreme north, a bike track along Sungai Ikan (river) which ended at Sungai Ikan town. The road remained untarred until about a decade after independence. Other facilities categorized as social services, such as mosque, clinic, postal and telecommunication services and public transport were introduced in the village much later, some as late as the early 1980s.

It could be said as a conclusion that Kg. Chempaka from the Japanese Occupation until independence went through a long period of difficulties except during the Korean War boom. Despite this, the whole 1945-1957 era was clearly a period of consolidation for Kg. Chempaka. This is especially true if compared to the pre-war era. From the Japanese Occupation onwards, the population of Kg. Chempaka was stabilized as there was less out-migration. There was a time, especially soon after the Japanese invasion, when a lot of newcomers came to settle in Kg. Chempaka because it was considered as a safe and more prosperous place than other parts of Selangor which were devastated by the war. There were floods too, during the Japanese Occupation but they were not bad enough to cause people to migrate. Like other villages throughout Malaya, the Japanese Occupation had a tremendous impact on the economic and social life of the villagers of Kg. Chempaka which later worsened and remained bad until the Korean War boom arrived.

With a large majority of its population dependent on rubber,

directly or indirectly, colonial policies relating to the crop affected social relations within Kg. Chempaka significantly. The villagers were directly exposed to the vagaries of world market forces which in turn shaped British rubber policies in colonial Malaya. For example, the British replanting scheme, which favoured large foreign-owned estates, did little to alleviate the economic problems of the smallholders of Kg. Chempaka. Its implementation within the smallholder and estate sectors only resulted in the exacerbation of economic and social differentiation amongst social classes within Kg. Chempaka. The official cum élite class in the village consolidated its position economically and politically. The contract labourer class expanded when the estate sector enjoyed continued success in its replanting. The smallholder class, the biggest of them all, suffered yet again as a result of regulations prohibiting the use of land for rubber and the rigid cultivation conditions attached to their lands. Caught in these severe conditions they had no choice but to resort to growing rubber illegally, or to survive by resorting to jobs, or by becoming tenants, or seeking employment as contract labourers.

The introduction of political parties, then elections, further consolidated the position of the official cum élite class as it was the first to seize the opportunity when it came. It built a strong alliance with the national élite through UMNO, because the latter was supposed to protect the interests of its local counterparts, which were expressed in ethnic terms. It took about a decade for the smallholder and contract labourer class to organize themselves politically and to express their class antagonisms through PAS. From the end of the Second World War onwards pre-war local antagonism, both political and economic, was revived and expressed, mainly, in the new political party rivalries, within and between UMNO and PAS.[134] In due course, new issues emerged and the extant tensions accentuated, involving not only old leaders but also new ones. This issues were simultaneously, influenced and shaped by the ever-changing local and national contexts. This is particularly obvious from 1970 onwards, that is, after the introduction of the NEP and its *bumiputera* (autochthonous ethnic group) policy.

Therefore, the consolidation phase experienced by Kg. Chempaka as a settlement, and as a community, was not without its contradictions, as discussion of its formative years has shown and as discussion of its future will reveal.

NOTES

1 The reconstruction of the history Kg. Chempaka, Mukim Mawar and Malawati is based on oral and written sources. They are as follows:

A. Oral Sources

a. The surviving pioneer settlers of Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai living within and outside these villages;

b. The village elders and village heads of Kg. Chempaka, Kg. Kasturi, Kg. Teratai and Kg. Mawar;

c. Individuals of Mawar and Malawati other than the above, who are considered by the locals as their "local historians".

B. Written Sources

Unpublished

a. Land titles at Malawati's land office;

b. Kg. Chempaka school records, 1929-1981 (16 volumes);

c. Selangor Secretariat Files (SSF), 1878-1950 deposited at the National Archive;

d. UMNO papers, 1946-1955, National Archive;

e. Private papers/files of the UMNO local officials within Mawar, 1950-1980.

Published

a. *Annual Reports (AR)* of Selangor, *Selangor State Gazette (SSG)*, *Selangor Journal (SJ)*, *Straits Settlement Government Gazette (SSGG)* and others deposited at the National Archive, 1878-1950.

b. Articles and reports published in journals such as *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JSBRAS)*, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*, and a few others which were published during the colonial days and are considered historical documents.

I hold the view that oral history is crucial not only as a source for reconstructing the past but also because what is remembered affects the present. In an attempt to present as accurate a picture of the history of Kg. Chempaka and its immediate environs, I consistently cross-checked oral with the written sources. I am solely responsible for any errors in facts and for opinions held.

2 *SJ* Vol. 1, No. 10, 27 January 1893, p. 157; *SJ* Vol. 2, No. 15, 6 April 1894, p. 230; *AR Selangor 1894*, pp. 9-10; *AR Selangor 1896*, p. 3.

3 Khoo Kay Kim "Descriptive Accounts of Nineteenth Century Selangor", *Malaysia in History* 15(1972): 7-13; Yusof Hasan, *Sejarah dan Kesan-Kesan Sejarah Kuala Selangor* (Subang Jaya, 1981), pp. 5-14.

4 J.M. Gullick, *A History of Selangor 1742-1957* (Singapore, 1960), pp. 23-24.

5 Mukim Mawar has changed little since pre-colonial days. This is confirmed by two sets of documents and maps; see SSF 6247/92(1892) and SSF 4908/13(1913), and the current map produced by Malawati district office in 1980.

6 Various sources have indicated that Mawar in the 1850s was well known as an important coconut growing area. See J. Anderson *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula, and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca* (Kuala Lumpur, 1965), p. 197; Khoo Kay Kim, *The Western Malay States 1850-1873* (Kuala Lumpur, 1972), p. 40.

7 See SSF 8/78; SSF 94/78; SSF 148/83.

8 Ibid.

9 Slavery existed in much of pre-colonial Malaya. There existed different categories of slaves. For further discussion on this see, for example, Aminuddin Baki, "The Institution of Debt-Slavery in Perak", *Peninjau Sejarah* 1(1966): 1-65; Sharom Ahmat, "Debt-Bondage in Kedah", *Kedah Dari Segi Sejarah* 4(1970): 45-49; W.E. Maxwell, "The Law Relating to Slavery among the Malays", *JSBRAS* 19(1890): 247-296; and Sullivan, *Social Relations*.

10 During the Selangor Civil War of 1867-1873, many villagers were recruited as mercenaries on both sides and some belonged to local chiefs such as the *penghulu*, see Gullick, *History of Selangor*, pp. 67-69.

11 Raja Bot (b. 1848 – d. 1916), a leading member of the Selangor royal family, confirmed this trend in Selangor; see his open letter to the British Resident entitled "Rice Cultivation in the States: Interesting Letter from Raja Bot", which appeared in the *Malay Mail*, 14 November 1902, p. 3, reprinted in *Peninjau Sejarah* 1(1966): 71-75, preceded by a comment from Khoo Kay Kim, pp. 69-70.

12 For interesting analyses on these trends, see Khoo Kay Kim, *Western Malay States*, pp. 35-41, 67-79; Gullick, *History of Selangor*, pp. 41-55; idem, *The Story of Kuala Lumpur 1857-1939* (Kuala Lumpur, 1983), pp. 11-23.

13 See R.O. Winstedt, "The History of Selangor", *JMBRAS* 12(1934): 22-23; and Mohd. Amin Hassan, "Raja Mahadi bin Raja Sulaiman", *Peninjau Sejarah* 1(1966): 56.

14 J.S. Sidhu, "The Beginnings of British Intervention in Selangor", *Peninjau Sejarah* 3(1968): 20-30.

15 See for example, J.W.W. Birch (posth.) "Retrospective Notes, a Glance at Selangor '74", *SJ* 1(1892): 9-12, 24-27.

16 J.M. Gullick (commentary), "Selangor 1876-1882: The Bloomfield Douglas Diary", *JMBRAS* 48(1975): 30.

17 There was also Chinese involvement in the war mainly tin mine owners in Selangor and the Straits Chinese merchants. See Khoo Kay Kim, "Biographical Sketches of Certain Straits Chinese Involved in the Kelang War 1867-1874", *Peninjau Sejarah* 2(1967): 69-70; idem, *Western Malay States*, pp. 201-227.

18 For further accounts and analyses on the circumstances leading to British intervention in the Malay States, see for example, J. de V. Allen, "The Colonial Office and the Malay States, 1867-73", *JMBRAS* 36(1963): 1-36; C.D. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control* (London, 1961); C.N. Parkinson, *British Intervention in Malaya 1867-1877* (Kuala Lumpur, 1964); Khoo Kay Kim, "The Origin of British Administration in Malaya", *JMBRAS* 39(1966): 52-91.

19 Detailed accounts and analyses of the administrative and political change in early British colonial Malaya, see for example, R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study of Direct and Indirect Rule* (Kuala Lumpur, 1964); E. Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895* (Kuala Lumpur, 1968); E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula 1880-1910* (Kuala Lumpur, 1969); P. Loh, *The Malay States 1877-1895, Political Change and Social Policy* (Kuala Lumpur, 1969); J.S. Sidhu, *Administration in the Federated Malaya States 1896-1920* (Kuala Lumpur, 1980).

20 SSF 8/78; SSF 94/78; SSF 188/78; SSF 235/78; SSF 148/83; SSF 633/84; SSF 1434/84; and SSF 1937/85.

21 See SSF 2406/04; and also Tunku Shamsul Bahrin, "The Indonesians in Malaya: A Study of the Pattern of Migration into Malaya" (MA dissertation, University of Sheffield, 1964); and Khazin Mohd. Tamrin, "Sejarah dan Penempatan Orang Jawa di Selangor 1880-1940" (MA dissertation, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1976).

22 SSF 442/89 and *SSG 1901* – supplement section.

23 SSF 8/78; SSF 188/78; SSF 148/83.

24 SSF 334/84; SSF 204/84; *SSG 1900* – supplement section, pp. 997-1017; *SSGG 1887*, pp. 565-590; *SSG 1889*, pp. 1045-1083; *SSGG 1891*, pp. 1313-1373.

25 On the new system of land tenure, called the Torrens System, introduced in early British Malaya see W.E. Maxwell, *The Torrens Systems of Conveyancing by Registration Title* (Singapore, 1883); S.K. Das, *The Torrens System in Malaya* (Singapore, 1963); David S.Y. Wong, *Tenure and Land Dealings in the Malay States* (Singapore, 1975).

26 Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, pp. 12-23.

27 Ibid., pp. 12-16.

28 Ibid., pp 16-17.

29 For further discussions on this see Bach, "Historical Patterns", pp. 458-464; G. Lee, "Commodity Production and Reproduction amongst the Malayan Peasantry", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 3(1973): 441-456, P.L. Burns, *Peasantry and National Integration in Peninsula Malaysia* (Adelaide, 1983), pp. 1-3; Shamsul A.B., "The Development of the Underdevelopment of the Malaysian Peasantry", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 9(1979): 434-454; Zawawi Ibrahim, "Perspectives on Capitalist Penetration", pp. 66-105; H.M. Dahlan, "Micro-Analyses of Village Communities. A Study of Underdevelopment", in *The Nascent Malaysian Society* (Kuala Lumpur, 1976), pp. 99-132.

30 In the 1880s, in Selangor, it was reported that many Malay peasants used their land as collateral for borrowing money from Chinese businessmen or Indian chettiers (moneylenders). The loans were used to finance their cash cropping activities or for social reasons. In many cases they failed to repay the creditors and their lands were dispossessed by the latter. This development, which emerged after the introduction of the new land tenure system alarmed the British officials and led to the introduction of the Selangor Land Code of 1891 and the Mukim Register. See SSF 874/92, and Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, pp. 17-18.

31 Ibid., p. 77.

32 SSF 187/93, p. 31; for detailed discussions on the protest and personalities involved. See SSF 2807/92; SSF 2808/92; SSF 2859/92.

33 SSF 187/93, p. 32.

34 Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, pp. 20-23; for discussions on the implementation of the rice policy and its problem in Malawati district, see SSF 514/92; SSF 1573/92; SSF 2630/92.

35 For further discussions on early European involvement in agricultural enterprises, see James Jackson, *Planters and Speculators: Chinese and European Agricultural Enterprise in Malaya, 1786-1921* (Kuala Lumpur, 1968) and Wan Kin Cheong, "Coffee Planting in Selangor, 1880-1900" (Academic Exercise, Department of History, University of Malaya at Singapore, 1954).

36 SSF 989/95; SSF 1564/95; SSF 2046/95; SSF 2725/95; SSF 4828/95; SSF 5349/95.

37 SSF 4107/92; SSF 911/92; SSF 3764/05; SSF 4240/17; SSF 2920/24.

38 SSF 3989/97; SSF 3177/99.

39 SSF 1824/92; SSF 3010/92; SSF 1709/93; SSF 3567/97; SSF 6374/05; SSF 2603/13.

40 Jackson, *Planters and Speculators*, pp. 176-181, 191-205.

41 SSF 4107/92; SSF 187/93; SSF 3764/05.

42 I wish to emphasize that the *penghulu* group in Mawar was a cohesive one comprising the *penghulu*, his immediate and extended family members, the unofficial village heads of the various villages in Mawar, and a few low-ranking Selangor royal family members residing in Mawar. Records show that members of this group received special treatment from the colonial district officials such as, special allowances and priority in selecting choice lands. See SSF 2816/92; SSF 7455/92; SSF 370/93; SSF 1281/93; SSF 2046/95. For further descriptions on the *penghulu* system in Selangor and Perak, see Paul Kratoska, "Penghulus in Perak and Selangor: The Rationalization and Decline of a Traditional Malay Office", *JMBRAS* 52(1984): 31-59.

43 SSF 874/92; SSF 187/93; SSF 389/94; SSF 894/98; *SSG 1899* – supplement section; SSF 1417/01; *SSG 1902* – supplement section; SSF 950/03. These files contain the unpublished annual reports of Malawati district which covered almost the last decade of the 19th century. They contained detailed information relating to the decline of rice cultivation in the district, the rise of cash cropping, particularly coffee and coconut; the problems encountered by colonial administrators in implementing land cultivation conditions and the rice policy; importation of rice; cases of peasants flouting the land conditions, etc. In other words, one can obtain quite a good description of the relationship between the district colonial administration and the local population *vis-à-vis* the implementation of various colonial agricultural policies from the contents of the files cited above.

44 This issue has been discussed in great detail in an historical study on Javanese migration and settlements in pre-Second World War Selangor by Khazin Mohd. Tamrin, "Sejarah dan Penempatan Orang Jawa di Selangor" (MA dissertation, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1976).

45 SSF 1801/97; SSF 5039/97; SSF 3567/97; SSF 6067/96; SSF 3567/97.

46 SSF 1943/07; SSF 2419/07; SSF 3320/07.

47 See Jackson, *Planters and Speculators*, pp. 211-245.

48 John Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya 1876-1922: The Genesis of the Industry* (Kuala Lumpur, 1973), pp. 93-122; idem, "Land Alienation and the First Rubber-Boom in Malaya c. 1903-10", *Jernal Sejarah*, 6(1972/73): 23-28; and Li Dun Jen, *British Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1982), pp. 83-108.

49 SSF 894/98; SSF 1661/13.

50 SSF 2398/08; SSF 6481/08; SSF 3001/11.

51 Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, p. 75; and Rex Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators* (Kuala Lumpur, 1975), pp. 1-22.

52 Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya*, pp. 42-47, 86-92.

53 For a description and analysis on colonial immigration policy relating to labour see R.N. Jackson, *Immigrant Labour and the Development in Malaya, 1786-1920* (Kuala Lumpur, 1961).

54 Accounts of the difficulties faced by Mawar rubber smallholders prior to the First World War were obtained from the few surviving pioneers of Kg. Chempaka and the children of those deceased. Although some were exaggerated, most of what was said seemed fairly reliable after cross-checking all the details with available archival records. See SSF 833/09; SSF 913/10; SSF 1661/13; SSF 909/15.

55 Brief statements regarding the general difficult conditions faced by peasant cash croppers, especially those who grew rubber during the First World War, were made in the following reports: SSF 909/15; SSF 844/16; SSF 773/17; SSF 706/18; SSF 828/19; SSF 867/20.

56 One has also to remember that the *penghulu* was in the position to know first who wanted to sell their lands in Mawar as any application for a transfer of ownership had go through him. He, too, had the power to find or try anyone violating any land regulations. See SSF 996/13.

57 This information was obtained from a retired surveyor who was in the Public Works Department, Malawati just after the First World War, and confirmed by the children of the individuals in the *penghulu* group who were involved in the projects as petty contractors. Three of them were the sons of Haji Salam, two of whom are now successful contractors and one a rubber dealer. Attempts made to locate official documents or records in the archive regarding this matter were unsuccessful, except one, SSF 2861/11.

58 See for example, Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*; Paul Kratoska, "'Ends that we cannot foresee': Malay Reservations in British Malaya", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 14(1983): 149-168; Ahmad Nazri Abdullah, "Sejarah Tanah Simpanan Melayu di Negeri-Negeri Melayu Bersekutu 1890an hingga 1930an" (MA dissertation, University of Malaya, 1981).

59 Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya*, p. 213, Appendix I.

60 The rice crisis reached its peak in 1917 when crop failure in India reduced supply to Malaya. Siam and Vietnam, the other two main suppliers, became more competitive in price. To import rice became more expensive and to secure normal supplies was difficult. A few enactments were introduced by the British in the hope of alleviating the problem. Two important enactments were: (i) the Rice Land Enactment 1917, meant to boost local rice production; and (ii) the Food Production Enactment 1917; amended and strengthened in 1918 and later repealed in 1921; this enactment forced the estates to grow food crops on a certain proportion of their land. See SSF 828/19.

61 The labourers' group was divided into two categories: (i) the wage labourers employed directly by the estates who resided on the estate compound with their Chinese and Indian counterparts; (ii) wage labourers or contract labourers, who were employed by contractors to work in estates or on other projects.

62 Those labourers in the first category benefitted most from the food crop cultivation projects of the estates and its subsidized rice supply. The second category, without recommendations from the contractors, were unable to buy the rice and had to grow their own food crops.

63 Earlier in the chapter, it was mentioned that the wasteland was part swamp and part secondary jungle of poor soil quality. It was one of the two wasteland areas located along Sungai Ikan (the river), which the European commercial plantation owners did not cultivate during the coffee boom of 1891-1896 and the rubber boom of the early twentieth century, because the planters were offered superior land elsewhere within the *mukim* and district. The other wasteland was to become what is known today as Kg. Bukit Badong. See M. Logan and G. Missen, *New Viewpoints in Urban and Industrial Geography* (Melbourne, 1971), pp. 233-251; and for a detailed analysis of the quality of the soil of these areas see I.F.T. Wong, *The Present Land Use of Selangor* (Kuala Lumpur, 1969).

64 It was not possible to establish the exact date when this took place. Some suggested it was in 1916, while others said it was in 1918. Both dates seem to be correct in that the first effort to clear the area were made in 1916 by a few individuals. Full-scale clearing took place in 1918 when the rice crisis was at its worst and larger groups of individuals were involved then. Hence the two dates relate to the two different stages of activities reflecting the change in tempo of the rice crises – from bad to worse.

65 See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, pp. 103-138.

66 SSF 4058/21; SSF 764/21; SSF 761/22.

67 An outline of the *penghulu's* powers and duties are found in SSF 3764/05; see also William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur, 1967) pp. 6-7, 19-21; Sadka, *The Protected Malay States*, pp. 199-203 and Kratoska, "Penghulus in Perak and Selangor", on the role of *penghulu* in colonial administration.

68 See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, pp. 140-145; Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya*, pp. 192-199; Colin Barlow, *The National Rubber Industry: Its Development, Technology, and Economy in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, 1978), pp. 58-60; P.T. Bauer, *The Rubber Industry: A Study of Competition and Monopoly* (London, 1948), pp. 56-73.

69 See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, p. 146.

70 Ibid., p. 151.

71 For details on the official view of the Malawati DO on changing land status from non-rubber to rubber see SSF 407/21; SSF 761/22. He was then campaigning for the cultivation of *nipah* palm. See SSF 5054/21 and SSF 3383/21.

72 Incidents of peasants violating the Stevenson Scheme elsewhere in Malawati increased from 1923 onwards. See SSF 885/24, SSF 849/24; SSF 960/26; SSF 962/27; SSF 224/28.

73 Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, p. 146.

74 Since the introduction of the Malay Reservation Enactment 1913, the Rice Lands Enactment 1917, the Stevenson Scheme 1922 and various other regulations related to health and schools, the tasks of the *penghulu* had increased enormously. It was not uncommon for him to delegate some of his duties to official village heads. For further details on this matter see SSF G 118/31, SSF 61223/31, SSF 4732/21.

75 See SSF 224/28.

76 See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, pp. 159, 176, note 74, 75, 76 and SSF 224/28.

77 Although the Stevenson Scheme was lifted in 1928, "a new phase of restriction" persisted afterwards, see Barlow, *Natural Rubber Industry*, p. 64, which culminated in the International Rubber Regulation Scheme of 1934. The new scheme brought benefits mostly to estate owners. Bauer, in his studies, showed that various aspects of the operation of the "new" regulations worked against the general interest of the smallholder in a similar way to the 1922 Stevenson Scheme. See P.T. Bauer, *Report on a Visit to the Rubber Growing Smallholdings of Malaya, July-September 1946* (London, 1948); idem, "The Workings of Rubber Regulations", in *Readings in Malayan Economics*, ed. T.H. Silcock (Singapore, 1961), pp. 242-267. It is interesting to note that, according to Mohamed Amin and Caldwell, *Malaya: Neo-Colony*, p. 61, Bauer's views and role in the research on rubber industry in Malaya represented the economic and political interest of the British manufacturing industry and Whitehall respectively.

78 Detailed information on the history of Kg. Chempaka primary school is found in the school's *Buku Harian* (School Diary), *Buku Perjawatan* (Establishment Record), and *Buku Dikenal* (Enrolment Register). The 16 volumes record the various aspects of the school's administration from when it was opened on 1 December 1929 until the present. The subsequent discussion on the school and to some extent Kg. Chempaka's history is based on these records.

79 *Buku Harian* recorded, amongst other things, the relationship between school teachers and villagers; comments on teachers' performances; the day-to-day activities in the school; visits and comments by various district level officials. In short this book contained a corpus of information not only pertaining to the school but also served as the "who's who" of official visitors to the village.

80 *Buku Dikenal* had detailed information on each registered student, namely, date of birth, age upon entry, village of origin, level of Qur'anic education, reasons for leaving school and at what grade and so forth.

81 Detailed bio-data of every teacher who had served in the school is found in the school's *Buku Perjawatan*, including place of origin, marital status and educational and professional qualifications.

82 Amendments to the 1913 Malay Reservations Enactment were introduced in October 1933. It was meant "to make it as unhealthy as possible for non-Malays in reservation lands". See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, p. 213. According to the colonial government estimate there was almost M$5 million in debts incurred on the reservation rice land. At the same time, the amendments and the new rice policy in the 1930s were supposed to reduce peasant indebtedness on the reservation and, simultaneously, to regenerate rice cultivation. However, these new regulations articulated with other trends in the peasant economy led to the rise of a Malay landowning class within the Malay community. Hence, the effort of the colonial government to minimize land concentration amongst non-Malays met with limited success; instead, it engendered a process of land concentration by the few well-to-do Malays.

83 See SSF G 92/35, Enclosure (Encl.) no. 1.

84 Since 1929 coconut prices had declined dramatically and reached its lowest in 1934 which led to the appointment of a committee by the colonial government to investigate and report on the matter in 1934. One of the worst affected groups of coconut growers in Malaya was that in Malawati, particularly in Mukim Mawar. For details see SSF G 634/31; SSF G 1166/32; SSF 243/30; SSF G 263/31; SSF G 354/32; SSF G 203/33; SSF G 92/35.

85 SSF G 92/35 – Encl. 1.

86 Attempts made to locate both the report and the outcome of the investigation failed. However, various oral sources have confirmed that the events did take place, including a statement made by the present Kg. Chempaka village head.

87 The policy's original objective was to create an independent subsistence-based peasantry. In this case it has benefitted the village rich.

88 See SSF G 92/35, Encls. 1, 2 and 4.

89 For details about the organization and financing of these events in Malawati, see SSF G 92/35.

90 Descriptions of similar campaigns elsewhere in Malaya and their ideological importance are not available. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, no historian of colonial Malaya, in their published works, has ever mentioned these campaigns. Therefore, it is not possible to ascertain how widespread such campaigns in other parts of Malaya were, and hence the lack of comparison as to its success elsewhere. However, from the records examined, there was every indication that events such as MAHA and the All-Malayan Padi Competition were annual national events.

91 See SSF G 341/33 and Kg. Chempaka school's *Buku Harian* which recorded the weekly visits of anti-malaria officers during this period.

92 Many versions as to why the incident happened were told to me: (i) the bridegroom discovered that the bride was not a virgin, felt cheated and stabbed the latter in rage; (ii) the bridegroom was mentally unbalanced (*tiga suku*); (iii) the

bridegroom was "charmed" and became temporarily insane at midnight when he stabbed the bride. Although none of the people talked to on this matter could say confidently that their version was the correct one, all of them, however, said that the marriage was arranged between two rich families – the bridegroom's family was a Kelang copra trader and the bride's was a rich rubber and coconut cultivator of Kg. Chempaka. The bride's family left Kg. Chempaka a year after the incident. The whole event was also reported in SSF G 92/35, p. 11 (Encl. 4).

93 I wish to distinguish between "leaders of peasants" who through their élite position coerced a following from the peasantry as opposed to genuine "peasant leaders" who are peasants and represent the grass-root needs and aspirations of their own people.

94 See also SSF G 263/31; SSF G 92/35; Encl. 1; and SSF G 92/35 Encl. 4.

95 See SSF G 276/38 which contained the following enclosures: (i) Encl. 1A – "Climate of Selangor"; (ii) Encl. 1B – "Metereological Conditions During 1937"; (iii) Encl. 1C – "Abstracts of Observations for 12 stations in the State of Selangor"; (iv) Encl. 1D – "Abstracts of Observations of Kuala Lumpur for 10 years 1928-1937".

96 See SSF G 339/38 Encls. 1 and 2 which mentioned areas in Malawati affected by the natural disasters and outlined the steps taken by various government departments of Malawati to assist the rehabilitation of the victims.

97 Since the 1850s the tapioca industry has been the domain of Chinese entrepreneurs. The crop was an important plantation crop which preceded coffee and rubber in Malaya, see Jackson, *Planters and Speculators*, pp. 52-83, and idem, "Tapioca, A Plantation Crop which Preceded Rubber in Malaya", *Malaysia in History* 10(1967): 13-24. Since the introduction of rubber, the popularity of tapioca declined but it remained one of the staple food crops grown by peasants for household consumption.

98 A detailed study on *Persatuan Melayu Selangor* has been carried out by William Roff, "The Persatuan Melayu Selangor: An Early Malay Political Association", *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 9(1968): 117-146.

99 So far, there has been no detailed study of a particular Malay village during colonial Malaya by social scientists. There are, however, numerous such studies at the honours thesis level by undergraduates of Universiti Malaya and Universiti Kebangsaan. However, I could only draw limited comparisons with such studies. Major published historical studies on colonial Malaya have a macro perspective.

100 See for example, T.H. Silcock and Ungku Aziz, "Nationalism in Malaya" in *Asian Nationalism and the West*, ed. W.L. Holland (New York, 1973), pp. 291-292.

101 Available historical accounts of the Japanese Occupation in Malaya have only focused on the impact of Japanese rule at the national level. Only recently have attempts been made to study the consequences of the Japanese rule at the district and state level, but not at the village level, except academic exercises by undergraduates of the History Department of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Malaya. The main source on life in the village during this period has been in the form of Malay novels, such as by Ahmad Murad Haji Nasruddin,

Nyawa Dihujung Pedang (Kuala Lumpur, 1959); Malay short stories, such as by Arenawati, *Cherpen-Cherpen Zaman Jepun* (Kuala Lumpur, 1966); a Malay film such as "Sarjan Hassan", scripted and directed in 1959 by the late P. Ramlee.

102 See Raymond Firth, *Report on Social Science Research in Malaya* (Singapore, 1948), p. 9.

103 The decision to clear the jungle was neither encouraged nor sanctioned by the local Japanese administration. It was a desperate move by the villagers who were in need of food. They were also aware that there was no proper official body within the Japanese colonial government to deal with land matters.

104 These problems were recorded in Kg. Chempaka school's *Buku Harian*, 12/10/02 to 24/12/02 (Japanese calendar).

105 Some discussions on these schemes in Selangor are found in *Perubahan Baru*, a Jawi Malay newspaper published in Kuala Lumpur during the Japanese Occupation. Before and after the war it was known as *Majlis*.

106 See *Buku Harian*, 17/1/03, 18/1/03 (Japanese calendar).

107 This was admitted by the present village head of Kg. Kasturi.

108 This was mentioned in the *Malayan Union Reports* of 1946, and 1947, see also Firth, *Report on Social Science*, pp. 9-10; Commonwealth Economic Committee, *Grain Crops* (London, 1950), and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), *Second Report on Rice Situation* (Washington, 1950).

109 See H.I.S. Kanwar "Economic Section – The Malayan Rubber Industry", *Eastern World* (June 1951), pp. 32-34.

110 The subsequent accounts are based on oral sources and the *Buku Harian* of the Kg. Chempaka school.

111 According to the *Buku Harian*, floods occurred quite regularly during the Japanese Occupation, but none was as heavy as those of 1937-1938 period.

112 For accounts on Malay politics during the Japanese Occupation see Silcock and Ungku Aziz, "Nationalism in Malaya", pp. 290-292; Halinah Bamadhaj, "The Impact of Japanese Occupation of Malaya on Malay Society and Politics, 1941-1945" (MA dissertation, University of Auckland, 1975); and A.J. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics during the Malayan Union Experiment, 1942-1948* (Kuala Lumpur, 1979).

113 The bibliographical essays by Maurice Freedman and Michael Swift "Rural Sociology in Malaya", *Current Sociology* 8(1959): 1-15; and A.J. Stockwell, "The Historiography of Malaysia: Recent Writings in English on the History of the Area since 1874", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 5(1976): 82-110, provide useful general surveys and bibliographies of published materials on late colonial Malaya. R.A. Bilas, "The Economic Development of the Federation of Malaya, 1950-1960" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1963) and Rudner, *Nationalism, Planning and Economic Modernization*, give interesting overviews of the economy of the period; A. Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-60* (London, 1975) on the communist movement and the Emergency of 1948-1960; Khong Kim Hoong, "British Rule and the Struggle for Independ-

ence in Malaya, 1945-1957" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1975) on the struggle for independence; W.K. Braun "The Introduction of Representative Institutions into Malaya" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1956); Means, *Malaysian Politics* and Milne and Mauzy, *Politics and Government* on the political developments; E.L. Wheelright, *Industrialization in Malaysia* (Melbourne, 1975); M. Stenson, *Industrial Conflict in Malaya: Prelude to the Communist Revolt of 1948* (London, 1970); idem, *Class, Race and Colonialism* on industrialization and its problems; Robert Tilman, *Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya* (Durham, 1964); Means, *Malaysian Politics* and Milne and Mauzy, *Politics and Government*, on the bureaucratic changes for that period. The collection of essays edited by Wang Gungwu, *Malaysia: A Survey* (London, 1964) is also most useful. A critical review of post-war Malaya is found in Mohamed Amin and Caldwell, *Malaya: Neo-colony*.

114 See Rudner, *Nationalism, Planning and Economic Modernization;* idem, "Draft Development Plan"; idem, "Malayan Post-war Rice Crisis"; idem, "Malayan Rubber Policy"; idem, "Agricultural Policy and Peasant Social Transformation".

115 See Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics;* J. Allen, *The Malayan Union* (New Haven, 1967); Mohammad Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation: Political Unification in the Malaysia Region 1945-65* (Kuala Lumpur, 1974).

116 Village studies carried out in late colonial Malaya are few. Only K.O.L. Burridge, *A Report on Fieldwork in Batu Pahat, Johore* (Singapore, 1956) made an attempt to study the political aspect of village life of late colonial Malaya. See also his article, "The Malay Composition of a Village in Johor", *JMBRAS* 29(1956): 60-77.

117 Detailed studies on the Sino-Malay clashes have never been undertaken except by Burridge, *A Report on Fieldwork*, and idem, "Racial Relations in Johore", *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 2(1957): 151-168. Lately, the undergraduates of the History Department of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia have carried out detailed research on Sino-Malay clashes that took place in various parts of Malaya soon after the war.

118 See Rudner, "Malayan Post-war Rice Crisis".

119 See Rudner, "Malayan Rubber Policy", pp. 238-239.

120 The current village heads of Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Kasturi, whose fathers were contractors then, estimated that the reserved lands of the estates in Mawar at 300-400 acres. No exact figure could be obtained.

121 See SSF 433/50, pp. 16-17.

122 The term "new village" referred to specially created resettlement areas mainly for the Chinese whose homes were formerly scattered in the rural areas. The introduction of such a programme by the colonial government was based on the assumption that the Chinese were assisting the insurgents during the Emergency (1948-1960). If they were isolated and regrouped in the "new villages", the insurgents would lose their main suppliers of food and other basic items. For further discussion on this see Ray Nyce, *Chinese New Villages in Malaya: A Community Study* (Singapore, 1973).

123 In the late 1950s and 1960s, a large number of retired SCs who were engaged in fighting insurgents during the Emergency (1948-1960) had to be reintegrated into civilian life. They were given land and money "to start a new life" in various parts of Malaya. However, there were no proper land settlement schemes for the ex-SCs. Information on this was obtained from retired SCs in and outside Malawati and a few retired senior police officers who were responsible for running the "rehabilitation programmes" for the SCs.

124 See Bauer, *Rubber Industry;* Rudner, "Rubber Strategy"; idem, "Malayan Rubber Policy".

125 The four families are Haji Salam's, village head of Kg. Chempaka; Cikgu Omar, a school teacher cum rich landowner of Kg. Chempaka; Haji Dolah another rich landowner from Kg. Kasturi who owns land in Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Chempaka; and Ali, village head of Kg. Kasturi.

126 The policy of re-directing smallholders away from rubber was outlined in, Federation of Malaya, *Legislative Council Proceedings,* 20 March 1952, under Agriculture and Forestry Section.

127 See Rudner, "Malayan Rubber Policy", pp. 249-253.

128 On RIDA's brief history and performance see Charles Gamba and Ungku Aziz, "RIDA and Malayan Economic Development", *Far Eastern Survey* 20(1951): 173-176; and J.H. Beaglehole, "Malay Participation in Commerce and Industry: The Role of RIDA and MARA", *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 7(1969): 3-20.

129 The *pasar lambak* was re-introduced in 1949, see SSF 433/50, pp. 18-19.

130 The odd jobs take many forms, ranging from replacing a sick contract labourer for a day or two to carrying pails of water at 20 cents per pail for a *kenduri* (feast). As such, a villager could do a number of different odd jobs a day and obtain some cash for the day. The villagers called such work *ambil upah* or to work for a small fee.

131 This is contrary to the claims made by Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics,* pp. 159-160.

132 See Chapter 4 for a detailed political history of Kg. Chempaka.

133 These events were well-documented in Kg. Chempaka school's *Buku Harian* and *Buku Perjawatan.*

134 The rivalries and antagonisms within and between PAS and UMNO range from petty personal clashes to serious inter-village confrontations. Some of these differences were economic but manifested in the political sphere, and vice versa. These are examined in detail in Chapters 3 and 4. However, readers may encounter some difficulties in following parts of Chapter 3 (which presents a detailed analysis of the village economy) as some of the explanations of the political events found in this chapter are based on descriptions and assumptions in Chapter 4 (which is a detailed political history of the village). There is a chronological line which is blurred at some places by the need to juggle political and economic issues in some parts of Chapter 3. I have tried to overcome this problem for the readers by indicating in parentheses, when and where one has to refer to in Chapter 4 for further details.

3

LIVELIHOOD AND SOCIAL DIVISIONS

Agriculture, Occupation and Class in Post-Independence Kampung Chempaka

The process of rural social differentiation in Malaysia had its origins in the capitalist production which, contrary to many opinions, occurred decades before direct colonial rule.[1] Historical records, accounts and analyses have provided us the empirical evidence of this, not only in Selangor but also for the rest of Malaysia.

This chapter intends to discuss the changes in the Kg. Chempaka economy after independence in 1957 until the present, which have had ramifications on the village social structure and politics. The discussion is divided into two chronological parts covering 1957 to 1969, and from 1970 until the present.

Most scholars of Malaysian studies, irrespective of theoretical orientations, generally agree that the events of 1969 (that is, the racial riots) have affected and to a certain extent, changed the economic, political and ideological situations in Malaysia from then onwards. By implication, *pre-1969* and *post-1969 independent* Malaysia has been viewed broadly as two somewhat distinct periods in the history of post-colonial Malaysia.[2]

The difference between *pre-1969* and *post-1969* Malaysia is best demonstrated if we examine the shifts in the rural development policy which has been crucial in shaping the conditions in rural Malaysia. It has also a direct relevance to this book in general and

this chapter, in particular. The obvious shift was in the general rationale of the policy. Prior to 1969, rural development policy in Malaysia had been primarily concerned with improving rural life through a variety of productive and welfare programmes.[3] After 1969, it became a strategy of reducing the overall priority of rural development relative to industrialization or urbanization policies and education. The new emphasis was not only meant to improve rural life and economic activity but also to prepare some rural Malays for inter-sectoral mobility while the rest wait for further opportunities to do similarly, when and if the *bumiputera* policy takes its full effect by 1990. In other words, the government hopes that the backwash effects of the *bumiputera* policy will convey development to the rural economy.[4]

This chapter outlines the differences in the specific policies relating to rural development before and after 1969, which resulted from the shift of overall rationale, and, secondly, to examine the consequences of their implementation on the livelihood of Chempaka villagers and the village social divisions.

Kampung Chempaka Economy: 1957-1969

It has been said that the early history of peasant rubber cultivation is a story of struggle against great odds. The remark was made in reference to the general predicament confronted by rubber smallholders, mainly Malays, in colonial Malaya during the first two decades of this century. However, it is still applicable to Kg. Chempaka's economy in late and post-colonial Malaya. In order to understand the predicament of Kg. Chempaka villagers, a large number of whom were rubber smallholders during this period, one has to locate it in the wider context, namely, the overall and the specific rural development policies of Malaysia's post-independence government, particularly towards rubber cultivation by Malay smallholders.

Many scholars have argued that Malaysia's rural development policy throughout the late 1950s and 1960s was in favour of non-rubber growers.[5] Thus, in general, there was a neglect of the rubber smallholders' interests. In fact, many Malay leaders, particularly those in the ruling party, were of the opinion that rubber

planting was an alien and capitalistic venture, but rice cultivation represented the "true" Malay traditional village life. According to them, the problem of rural development was essentially one of relieving peasants of their dependency on rubber through agricultural diversification, such as growing rice and other food crops.[6] As a result, between 1957 and 1965, the government of the day was committed to a policy of achieving self-sufficiency in rice, and when this policy failed the emphasis was shifted to a crop diversification strategy, such as the cultivation of coconut, oil palm, pineapple, cocoa and others.[7] In essence, such a policy was a continuation of the pre-war and post-war colonial agricultural policy, but under a new name. Despite the claims that it contained new strategies, the new rural development policy comprised programmes which were either a revival of pre-war colonial schemes, or a continuation of the post-war colonial strategies.[8] Therefore, by implication, the inherent class bias of the colonial agricultural policy remained. This was strongly reflected not only in the new rural development policy but also in the overall orientation of development planning in Malaysia prior to 1969.[9]

In 1955, a revised replanting scheme, both for the estates and smallholdings, was introduced as a result of the recommendations made by the Mudie Report (1954) and the 1955 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) Report. The revised scheme was meant to revive the fortunes of the rubber industry in Malaya which were low in the early 1950s. It involved a commitment by the government to a long-term seven-year programme and a massive investment of M$280 million.[10] New planting, which had been prohibited since the late 1930s was now permitted, but remained tied to the revised replanting scheme.[11] The implementation of the revised scheme and those subsequent to it, that is, until 1970, met with limited success. Many studies have shown that the estates were the main beneficiaries of the replanting funds, because fund allocations for the two sectors – estates and smallholdings – were made according to their relative production, which resulted in almost 60 percent going to the estates.[12] Within the smallholding sector, although the Rubber Industry (Replanting) Board introduced various schemes for smallholders and increased the replanting grants a few times between 1955 to 1970,[13] the overall success was limited. There was a substantial increase in replanting amongst the smallholders

during the said period.[14] However, official reports admitted the fact that the majority of the new participants were either better-off Malay smallholders or the non-Malay smallholders, both of whom have relatively larger holdings and were in a better economic position to take advantage of the revised scheme. The poorer Malay smallholders, who made up about 75 percent of the total population of Malaysia's smallholders and had an average holding of about five acres each, did not participate for economic and bureaucratic reasons.[15]

This general trend was reflected in post-independence Kg. Chempaka.[16] The rubber smallholders, who could also be owner-sharecroppers, did not participate in the revised scheme, except for a few families who had close associations with the village well-to-do. The latter, who had bigger holdings and an alternative source of income, were able to participate but not without resorting to unofficial methods to maximize gains offered by the scheme, and with some help from the replanting inspectors (*pegawai tanaman semula*). The businessmen among the well-to-do also benefitted from the participation of estates in Mukim Mawar in the revised scheme, through increased employment opportunities for the labourer class of Kg. Chempaka.

In 1964, the Rubber Research Institute (RRI), with the help of the village head and the replanting inspectors, selected ten lots, or about 25 acres, in Kg. Chempaka to be specially replanted with high-yielding clonal seedlings. The main aim was to test if the seedlings were suitable for soil similar to that of Kg. Chempaka's. The whole project was financed and managed by RRI and its officials. It was no coincidence that the site chosen was in Kg. Chempaka proper and all participants came from the same village, none was from Kg. Asal. The official explanation was that the site was chosen by the RRI officers after conducting soil tests in various parts of the village. It was also said that the officers preferred the experimental site to be on one location and not scattered within the villages and hence the site and the participants were to be from Kg. Chempaka proper. The PAS leaders from Kg. Asal alleged that the whole project was an election incentive for the UMNO officials and stalwarts in Kg. Chempaka prior to the 1964 general election. It was true that the participants were either UMNO officials or *orang kuat* UMNO (UMNO party stalwarts). The PAS leaders also believed it was an indirect hint from

UMNO that they should switch camps because if they did they would receive similar "rewards".

Besides this controversial RRI-sponsored replanting, there was no other replanting activity undertaken by Kg. Chempaka smallholders until 1974 when the Rubber Industry Smallholders' Development Authority (RISDA) established a Group Processing Centre (GPC) for smallholders at Kg. Asal. However, new planting was actively pursued by two small groups within Kg. Chempaka. Firstly, by those who converted their food crop plots into rubber holdings; and secondly, by those, who were mainly sharecroppers and planted rubber on government lands in the village, that is, plots meant for public use. Both groups, in effect, were involved in illegal new planting. They made attempts to participate in the various large-scale new planting schemes of the state and federal governments but failed.[17] The applications were made through the village head, and although he said he supported the applications the chances of his villagers being selected were slim indeed. He gave two reasons. Firstly, Malawati since the colonial days had been known as a rice growing area. As a result most rural development projects for the district were mainly for rice growers, and few were for the rubber smallholders.[18] Secondly, all the new planting schemes of the state and federal governments were located elsewhere in Selangor and priority was given to applicants living in those areas.[19] On both accounts, the rubber smallholders of Malawati, such as his villagers, were disadvantaged. In view of this, the village head felt that his decision to close an eye and not take action against the recalcitrant villagers was justified.

Most of the villagers, who belonged to the small group of Kg. Chempaka rubber sharecroppers mentioned above, were also coffee and coconut growers. These crops were grown on their kampung plots because they often did not own any other land. But to depend solely on the seasonal or irregular coffee and coconut produce for livelihood was insufficient, and hence they often tapped rubber trees belonging to either absentee landlords or the village well-to-do, mainly, on a *bagi dua* (equal share) system: 50 percent latex goes to the owner, and 50 percent latex plus all scrap to the cropper.[20] It was reported that few were tapping on a daily or monthly wage basis. (Wages create problems of capital for the employer which can be avoided with sharecropping.) Some became

sharecroppers because what they earned from their own plot was insufficient subsistence for the household. Yet others were involved in sharecropping to earn extra cash and not just to supplement their subsistence. The number of villagers in the former category exceeded the latter. Exact figures as to the size of the groups in relation to the total number of peasant households in Kg. Chempaka could not be obtained. However, if the recent data on the class breakdown of peasants in Kg. Chempaka are any guide and if the estimates given by the RISDA officer of Mukim Mawar and Kg. Chempaka village heads are correct, the smallholders-cum-sharecroppers constitute about 20 percent of the peasant households and the purely sharecroppers not more than five percent.

The labourer class in pre-1969 Kg. Chempaka consisted mainly of estate labourers and contract labourers (who were employees of the village businessmen surviving on contracts from estates in Mawar). There were small groups of construction labourers (involved in building construction and employed by either the village businessmen or outsiders), quarry labourers (employed directly by a small Chinese-owned quarry located about three miles from the village), and rubber factory workers (employed directly by a rubber factory in Batang Berjuntai about ten miles from the village). A few of the village youths sought employment in factories, located mainly in Petaling Jaya the nearest industrial centre about 30 miles away. None of them lived in the village. Many of the labourers were either single or young married couples who resided in the village with their parents or in-laws who were landless. It was common for many parents of these labourers to be former labourers or active labourers themselves. It was also common for the children of the peasant smallholders to become labourers, and the number grew substantially after 1969.

The middle group of villagers could be put into two major categories: the petty traders and the self-employed. The former was the larger group. There were ten shopkeepers, six of whom were Chinese. All of them were involved in the marketing of agricultural produce from the village. At least three of the Chinese and two of the Malay shopkeepers were rubber dealers and middlemen for other cash crop produce of the village. Other than retail trading, there were also those who were unlicensed taxi drivers (*teksi sapu*). This was said to be a thriving business because there was no public transport

available at that time, except for one licensed taxi which operated from Malawati town. The licence belonged to the then state assemblyman of Mawar. There were three carpenter/house-builders, two barbers, one tailor, four Malay pastry makers and four folk-healers. One of the carpenter/house-builders was the son-in-law of Haji Salam, the village head, and another, Haji Zainal, the unofficial village head of Kg. Asal. In the late 1950s, Zainal spent about four years in Saudi Arabia as a worker for a Kelantanese Malay building contractor.[21] When he came back to Kg. Asal in the early 1960s he became a carpenter and builder. He, apparently, brought back substantial savings and was able not only to set up a small building business but also to buy a few acres of land and an old car which he used as an unlicensed taxi. The village middle income category were not rich landowners. Generally, they possessed two to three lots of agricultural land (2.5 to 3 acres per lot) besides their kampung land. Because they were involved in petty business activities of all sorts, the tendency was for them to have their plots worked on by family members or by sharecroppers. All of them grew rubber on their plots. The Chinese shopkeepers, however, did not own any land in the village. All of them owned land elsewhere in the district, and one rented six acres of Haji Salam's land to grow rubber and vegetables.

The village well-to-do consisted of two main groups, namely, the entrepreneurs and the salariat. However, there were cases where individuals from the salariat were actively involved in contracting businesses too. But, the ability of these individuals to sustain successful businesses depended upon their regular wages, accumulated wealth and political position. Kg. Chempaka's dominant contractors/entrepreneurs of the 1960s came from Haji Salam's family. His successful business began in the 1930s, first, as an assistant to Haji Abdul and later, on his own. A combination of economic and political factors contributed to his success, not only as a businessman but also as a rich landowner and village head. His three sons, Malik, Manap and Sudin, became his able assistants over the years. They gained invaluable experience in running the contracting business. Not surprisingly, they later became businessmen, each operating separately: Malik and Manap as building contractors and Sudin as a rubber dealer.

Malik, according to various sources,[22] was the most successful of the three. He was already running a thriving construction business

in the mid-1960s, before the *bumiputera* policy was started. His initial success was due to the financial help of his father, Haji Salam. Using his father's longstanding official contacts with officers from the various departments at the district office he managed to win several tenders worth M$5,000 to M$10,000.[23] He operated mainly in Malawati district and only rarely in Mukim Mawar, which became the "territory" of his younger brother, Manap. When his business expanded in the mid-1960s he obtained loans from RIDA and later from MARA (Majlis Amanah Rakyat). Malik was also involved in joint-ventures with local Chinese contractors from Sungai Ikan town. This was when he moved to Sungai Ikan. As a businessman, he was well respected by the district office for his prompt work and by fellow contractors especially the Chinese, for his hard work.[24] His success is often mentioned by Mawar Malays, especially after his business expanded many times over in the 1970s. He has also been actively involved in the UMNO Sungai Ikan branch since the late 1960s.

Manap, on the other hand, enjoyed a modest success compared to his older brother. Since early 1960 he had been assisting his father in the village administration because of the latter's ill-health. His business involved construction projects below M$5,000 mainly in Mukim Mawar. If Malik was involved in big projects such as constructing community halls, mosques and *surau*, Manap was usually involved in projects such as the construction of minor wooden bridges, village wells, badminton courts, and so forth. According to him, he had to divide his time equally between attending to Kg. Chempaka's welfare and his business, especially after his father's death in 1970. In August 1970, he was officially appointed as Kg. Chempaka's village head. His business depended mainly on project tenders from the district office which he had obtained first through his father and, later, on his own as the unofficial assistant village head.

Sudin, Haji Salam's third son, began as a rubber dealer in the mid-1950s; first, on behalf of his father who obtained the official licence, and later, on his own. He was in charge of organizing the family's rubber plots and marketing its produce. It has been suggested that originally Haji Salam obtained the licence mainly to facilitate the marketing of his family's rubber produce. Compared to his older brothers, Sudin's business was much smaller, but,

nevertheless profitable, particularly as he also had a small sundry shop. This attracted many of the village smallholders to sell their rubber produce to him and at the same time buy basic necessities from the shop either with cash or on credit.

It is interesting to note that Kg. Chempaka villagers often mentioned that the economic success of Haji Salam's family was attributed to its size, not only in the number of children he and his sons had but also the number of wives they had. Haji Salam had two wives, but all his six children were from his first marriage. Malik has one wife and nine children (the ninth was adopted). Manap originally had four wives but later divorced the childless second wife in late 1960s. From his marriage he had 12 children; seven by the first, three by the third and two by the fourth. Sudin has two wives and nine children; seven from the first and two from the second. Haji Salam had three daughters, two of whom had six children each and one had seven. It is not surprising that the Haji Salam "dynasty" had a total of about 200 acres of rubber and non-rubber land in 1970.[25]

Besides Haji Salam's family, only Cikgu Omar was involved in the contracting business. But he left Kg. Chempaka in the mid-1960s and settled elsewhere in Malawati district. While he was in Kg. Chempaka his business depended solely on contracts provided by the estates in Mukim Mawar. Apparently, he did not make any attempt to undertake other forms of contract work, as Malik and Manap did after 1957. However, records revealed that he once owned about 60 acres of land in Kg. Chempaka part of which was subsequently sold while the rest had its ownership transferred to his children, none of whom reside in Kg. Chempaka today.

The village salariat were school teachers, government office clerks, and the staff of the *kelas dewasa* (adult education classes). One of the six school teachers was teaching in Tanjung Karam and commuted daily to work. Sometimes he stayed two or three nights a week in a friend's house at Tanjung Karam. He is Haji Zam Zam, an active PAS official of Kg. Asal and a close friend of Haji Zainal. Except for Cikgu Din, who came to Kg. Chempaka in 1958, the rest of the school teachers did not own much land unlike the situation described elsewhere in Malaysia.[26] Cikgu Din, who came from a well-to-do family in Meru, first bought a small plot of land from Manap, the son of Haji Salam, to build his home, adjacent to Manap's house (where his first wife and children lived). Through the years he

managed to save and buy over 20 acres of land, some in Kg. Chempaka proper and the rest in Kg. Asal, all of which were planted with rubber. He and his wife tapped the rubber trees. This was possible because he often opted to teach in the afternoon session, thus allowing him to tap rubber in the morning. When he had to teach in the morning session, his wife and two hired tappers took over the tapping. The economic strategy adopted by Cikgu Din was quite uncommon for someone of his class and Swift had observed similar instances in his own study. He called them "mildly deviant" peasants.[27]

The two government clerks were working at the district office and commuted daily to work. They were bachelors, stayed with their parents and owned no land. In late 1960s they were promoted and transferred elsewhere in Selangor. The adult education classes had two women teachers and a supervisor, all of whom were in their twenties and resided with their parents. The two teachers were also part-time tailors, mainly sewing ladies' clothes. The supervisor did not teach and spent most of his time visiting adult education classes in Mukim Mawar or in his office in Mawar town. He also assisted the state assemblyman in various clerical jobs and received some cash allowance. It was not until he got married in the early 1970s that he bought a plot of land to build his house.

The well-to-do group of Kg. Chempaka of the 1960s was dominated by one single family, that of Haji Salam. They were clearly in a better economic position than the rest of the group. They had a conglomerate of successful business ventures, and owned a lot of land. Their economic successes were not unrelated to the benefits brought about by the official position of village head which Haji Salam held for over 30 years, and later was taken over by his son, Manap. Although the salariat were economically better-off than the rest of the villagers they were probably not much more than the petty traders of the village, their regular wages and political position enabled them to accumulate wealth, or the potential to accumulate, as the case of Cikgu Din had shown. This is particularly evident in the 1970s.

To obtain the detailed information necessary to ascertain the pattern of land distribution in Kg. Chempaka during the 1960s is a near impossible task. There was no village development committee in Kg. Chempaka until after 1970, which meant that no detailed

information on land matters was recorded. Neither did the district office nor the *penghulu* of Mukim Mawar files have any information on this matter. The latter contained information mostly on the various types of government projects which were implemented in Kg. Chempaka and the detailed expenditure on all projects. However, based upon information gathered from the village head, the Mawar assistant agricultural officer, RISDA officer and Farmers' Organization Authority officers, and various sources at the district office, some general estimates of the land distribution pattern within Kg. Chempaka can be made.

Kg. Chempaka has a total of 815 land lots of 2,442 acres of land, and each lot ranges between 2.5 to 3 acres. (See Table 1.) Based on the village head's own survey made after the 1970 Census, Kg. Chempaka had about 350 households in mid-1970. He estimated in early 1960, the number of households was between 250 to 300. Out of the 815 lots, 15 lots or about 45 acres have been reserved for public use by the government. In fact, a few lots were already occupied by the school, mosque, *surau*, clinic, cemetery, roads and irrigation canals. The remaining 800 lots were distributed as follows: about 60 percent or 486 lots belonged to the peasantry, which constituted about 65 percent of Kg. Chempaka total households then. These lots are made up of kampung land and agricultural plots. The labourer class, which constitutes about 30 percent of the total households, owned around 15 percent or 120 lots, mainly in the form of kampung land and very few agricultural plots. The village middle category and the rich, constituting about 5 percent of total households, owned about 25 percent or 200 lots, which are mainly agricultural plots. It must also be noted that about 50 lots owned by the last group were owned by absentee landlords.

Although these figures do not indicate the magnitude of land hunger and problems of landlessness in the village, they do reveal the general pattern of land concentration. For instance, immediately discernible from the figures is the contrast of land owned by the labourer class, on the one hand, and the village rich and the village middle category on the other. As mentioned earlier Haji Salam's family alone owned about 200 acres or 67 lots.

The 1960s was also known as an era of *Gerakan Maju* (Operations Development), during which both the federal and state governments poured millions of dollars into development projects meant to

TABLE 1

Landuse Pattern in Kampung Chempaka
By Crops, Lots, Acreages and Percentages
(as of March 1981)

Crops	Lots*	Acreages**	% (Acreage)***
Rubber	527	1580	64.7
Oil Palm	195	584	23.9
Coconut	14	41	1.7
Coffee	12	37	1.5
Government Reserve	15	45	1.8
Kampung land	52	155	6.4
Total	815	2442	100.0

NOTES:

* According to the Selangor Land Rules, 1966 (SL.P.U.26/1966), a "lot" refers to a piece of land demarcated by cadastral survey, allotted a number, and registered either as an entry in the *mukim* register or as a grant in the Registration of Titles Office. A rubber holding, may consist of one or more lots held under a single legal ownership. The size of each lot varies from district to district. However, land lots under the Malay Reservation in Malawati range from 2.5 to 3.5 acre per lot.

** In Kg. Chempaka, each lot is between 2.5 to 3 acres. The figures, have been rounded up.

*** Since the lot varies in size, and the acreage does not, therefore the percentages are calculated from the latter.

improve the economic position of the rural poor.[28] Various records suggest that, in Malawati, the main beneficiaries were the rice growers.[29] Therefore, important economic projects, such as marketing and credit, technological assistance and the like were mostly allocated and implemented in rice areas such as Tanjung Karam. Projects that reached rubber areas, such as Kg. Chempaka, were those categorized as basic amenities and social services. It has been frequently stated that the distribution of the economic and non-economic projects has been, at most times, based on political and not economic criteria, which means particular villages could sometimes be allocated either few, token projects of no real benefit to the villages or none at all, if the villages concerned were labelled as *sarang parti pembangkang* or a "nest of the opposition party".[30] Kg. Chempaka was, and still is, one of the villages in Malawati that has been so labelled. (See Chapter 4.)

The consequences of having been politically blacklisted, denied Kg. Chempaka, especially the Kg. Asal area, many of the basic amenities and social services projects. During the 1960s, the main basic amenities project implemented in Kg. Chempaka was the surfacing and the re-surfacing of one particular road with tar. The road was, and still is today, the only road in the village surfaced with tar. It is no coincidence that besides linking the village with the Selangor coastal highway, the road also links Merbau Estate with the highway. The need to resurface it about once in two years in the 1960s was due to its heavy daily use by large tankers to carry rubber latex or lorries to transport rubber bales from the estate to Kelang or elsewhere. Since the road is unsuited for heavy transportation, the surface was badly scarred by large and deep pot-holes. Admittedly, the road also facilitated the transportation of local agricultural produce to the towns. However, this activity did not entail the frequent use of heavy transport. The village head remarked that the money allocated for road surfacing and resurfacing could have been utilized to improve eight more feeder roads in the village, if Merbau Estate was allowed to use the road once a week, so lessening the damage. Whatever remained was too little to improve the much needed water supply system and to replace the old and small horse-powered electricity generator with a bigger one. The major social services projects implemented in Kg. Chempaka in the 1960s involved the building of a *klinik bidan* (maternity clinic) and a

balai raya (community hall) in 1962, and the repairing of a few classrooms and the teachers' quarters of Kg. Chempaka school.

Ad hoc special projects implemented in Kg. Chempaka after the visits of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, who came to campaign for the ruling party before the 1964 and 1969 general elections, were one *surau* and three extra public standpipes. On the whole, the development projects which Kg. Chempaka received were token assistance not meant to assist its villagers economically in the way that the rice growers of Tanjung Karam had benefitted. (See Chapters 4 and 5.) Moreover, whatever received was much less than, say, Kg. Kasturi which enjoyed numerous economic and non-economic projects under Gerakan Maju as a result of its village head being a loyal supporter of the local state assemblyman.

In conclusion, it can be said that the patterns of Kg. Chempaka's economy in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s indicate a strong resemblance to the late colonial period. This was, in part, the consequence of the post-independence government pursuing policies, particularly relating to rubber which were almost similar to those prior to independence with only minor modifications. Whatever policy modifications were made pertaining to rubber seemed of no advantage to the rubber smallholders, who made up the biggest social group in Kg. Chempaka. The apparent advantage the policy modifications brought to the labourer class was only secondary to the lucrative economic returns enjoyed by the businessmen amongst the village well-to-do. Despite these, the rubber smallholders, by flouting the land regulations, sought participation in the new planting, some, after failing to participate in the various schemes for new planting organized by the federal and state government.

The advent of Gerakan Maju, a campaign that was meant to alleviate the poor peasant economic problems, was pursued vigorously by the government in the 1960s through the implementation of various programmes. But this again only benefitted the well-to-do of Kg. Chempaka more than the supposed beneficiaries, the ordinary villagers. The success of Haji Salam's family business is an example. The majority of Kg. Chempaka villagers were disadvantaged in two ways. Firstly, since Malawati district was categorized as a rice area most development projects were for rice growers and little was done for the rubber smallholders. Secondly, due to the political ostracization of Kg. Chempaka as a nest of the opposition party, the

campaign consequently brought only token non-economic benefits to Kg. Chempaka.

The land distribution patterns can be traced to their pre-war origins discussed in the previous chapter. Against all these odds, the majority of Kg. Chempaka villagers, or at least some of them, were adept at converting whatever resources they possessed into some degree of control over the conditions of reproduction of the system. This found expression particularly at the political level (which will be expanded on in the next chapter).

Post-1969 Kampung Chempaka: The NEP Era

The NEP was launched in association with the government's Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975. Since its implementation, not long after the tragic race riots of 13 May 1969, there has been a proliferation of unpublished and published materials on its origins, theoretical orientations, policy effectiveness and various aspects of its implementation.[31] However, a brief outline of its objectives and strategies is necessary here in order to pinpoint its rural development policy. The latter is its most relevant aspect for this book and particularly this chapter.

The NEP has two main objectives. Firstly, the eradication of poverty amongst all Malaysians irrespective of race, through increasing the access of the poor to land, public amenities, training, and various forms of technological and agricultural assistance. This objective aims to reduce and then eradicate the incidence of absolute poverty. Secondly, the restructuring of Malaysian society to reduce and eliminate the identification of race with economic function and geographical location. The aim of this objective is to increase *bumiputera* participation in the modern rural and urban sectors, hence reducing their dependence on subsistence agriculture. This is to be achieved, (a) through an increase of *bumiputera* employment in sectors traditionally dominated by other races. Hence the employment sector should ultimately reflect the racial composition of the population in Peninsula Malaysia (54 percent Malays, 35 percent Chinese, 10 percent Indians and 1 percent others); and (b) increase of *bumiputera* share capital in the corporate sector to at least 30

percent of the total by 1990. Both objectives contain short- and-long term strategies.

The objectives of the NEP have been implemented in stages in successive five-year plans subsequent to the Second Malaysia Plan. Hence, the Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-1980 and the Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1981-1986 have incorporated the original objectives of the Second Malaysia Plan embodied in the NEP. Inevitably, there have been changes and adjustments made in the last two plans.

The rural development policy of the Second Malaysia Plan embodies all the strategies outlined as part of the first objective of the NEP, namely, the eradication of poverty, and part of the strategies included under the second objective of the NEP, that is, restructuring society. The rationale of post-1969 rural development policy is not simply to improve rural life through a variety of productive and welfare programmes, such as those prior to 1969, pursued independently of the other sectors of the Malaysian economy. The strategy was to reduce the overall priority of rural development relative to industrialization or urbanization policies and education. This meant not only that rural life and economic activity should be improved but also that some rural *bumiputera* should be given the opportunity and assistance for inter-sectoral mobility, for instance, to move from the subsistence agricultural sector to the commercial agriculture sector. While this process takes place, the rest of the rural *bumiputera* will wait for further opportunities to do the same, when and if the NEP takes its full effect in 1990. In short, the government hopes that the backwash effects of the specific policies under the restructuring will convey development to the rural economy. This is on the assumption that the eradication of poverty goal is achieved.

Malaysianists of both conservative and progressive persuasions have advanced numerous criticisms of the policy ineffectiveness of the NEP which, when implemented, tends to exclude a majority of its supposed beneficiaries.[32] Unfortunately, most of these criticisms are based on studies of macro-level units, such as the whole country or a particular state, a particular sector of the economy (for example, the public enterprise sector), a particular quasi-government body (for example, Federal Land Development Authority or FELDA) and so on. Undeniably, these studies and their findings are very important. However, it is of equal importance to know the impact of the NEP and its implementation at the local level.

The main objective of this section is not only to discuss and analyse the livelihood and social divisions within Kg. Chempaka but also show how they are shaped by the implementation of the various practical strategies of the NEP. The political dimension of the whole process and its impact on the various forms and different levels of social organization within the village and beyond will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

Agriculture

Rubber dominated the livelihood of the majority of Kg. Chempaka villagers prior to 1969; be it the smallholders who survived on rubber tapping, the labourers who worked in the rubber estates or the middle category and the village rich who earned part of their living from their rubber plots. Legal new planting and the replanting activities were actively pursued by the well-to-do group. Coconut, coffee and a variety of food crops were also grown but only a small number of Kg. Chempaka households depended on the crops for their living. This pattern of agriculture remained until the RISDA-sponsored replanting scheme reached the village in late 1973.[33] Before we examine the implementation of the scheme and the villagers response in detail, a discussion of the Village Development and Security Committee (VDSC) or Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung is crucial.

The VDSC of Kg. Chempaka was first established on 30 April 1971.[34] The village head, Manap, automatically became a member and the chairperson of the committee. This is stipulated by law. The rest of the members of the first committee and the subsequent ones, were elected during annual general meetings. In the first committee, out of eleven members, only three were UMNO members; and Manap was one of them. The three were also from Kg. Chempaka proper. The remaining eight were all PAS officials and came from Kg. Asal. The dominance of PAS in the first VDSC was due to the fact that nearly 80 percent of those attending the first annual general meeting came from Kg. Asal. This was not a coincidence. The PAS leaders interviewed admitted that they conducted a door-to-door campaign prior to the meeting urging their supporters, mainly from

Kg. Asal, to attend the gathering. One of those who attended the meeting said that he was told to be present if he wanted Kg. Asal to progress and participate in the government's development projects, and to help elect as many representatives as possible from Kg. Asal to the VDSC. Some were even told that if they wanted Kg. Asal to become a legitimate official village in its own right, it was through control of the VDSC. For political reasons, Kg. Asal had missed some of the basic amenities projects which Kg. Chempaka proper had, such as a piped water supply and electricity. (See Chapter 4 for details.)

RISDA began its campaign to encourage Kg. Chempaka smallholders to replant their holdings in late 1973. It was introduced and conducted through the VDSC in its initial stages. The new replanting scheme offered by RISDA contained some very attractive economic and bureaucratic inducements, although not an increase in the replanting grant which had been M$750 per acre since January 1962. The economic inducements were in the form of credit and marketing facilities. Credits were promised to prospective participants of the scheme to assist them in the initial replanting costs, like buying seedlings, fertilizers and herbicides and to seek an alternative source of income while waiting for rubber trees to mature through intercropping bananas, pineapples, vegetables, groundnuts and livestock farming (small-scale goat and poultry farming with organizational assistance from RISDA). RISDA, with the cooperation of the local branch of the Farmers' Organization Authority (FOA) and the Agricultural Department, promised to market the garden produce and livestock.

Bureaucratic inducements involved handling land transfer and extension services. In the former, RISDA promised to handle all paperwork relating to land status transfers (mainly from non-rubber to rubber land) directly with the district office on behalf of the participants and even to pay the transfer charges for poor participants. The extension services affect education. RISDA promised that its officers would conduct frequent demonstrations, group discussions and short courses on the technical aspects of replanting, on the management of intercrop cultivation and livestock farming, and on the "psychology" of replanting.[35] In this way, through its extension services RISDA hoped to establish closer contact with the participants and to erase the officious image of their predecessors, the

district office replanting inspectors.

Later, RISDA introduced other incentives and facilities when the replanting scheme was under way which expanded to include the cultivation of other crops such as oil palm and fruit trees. RISDA also widened the scope of its extension services to include educational facilities such as pre-schooling for the participants' children, home science and tailoring classes for the participants' wives and family members and so on.

The new RISDA replanting deal received a mixed reception within Kg. Chempaka. The village rich and the middle category (small businessmen) felt that it was the best deal that they had so far. The smallholders' group was divided. Some regarded the RISDA offers as sensible. Some were still doubtful as to the possibility of fair implementation of the promises and preferred to adopt a wait-and-see strategy, and a few felt that they were duped yet again by the government with attractive inducements to replant which they believed would ultimately benefit only the village rich and middle category. Many were still bitter about their pre-independence and pre-1969 experiences, when they failed to become FELDA settlers or to join the Fringe Alienation Scheme of the state government. A section of the labourer class, which had their kampung plots planted with rubber and other crops, were hopeful that they would be allowed to participate even though they had only less than two acres of cultivable plots. They were mainly seeking an additional source of income and employment for their children and family members.

At another level, there was an apparent difference in enthusiasm and receptivity to the RISDA offers between those from Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal. This difference was made obvious by the fact that there were more potential participants who had registered with RISDA to participate in the replanting scheme from Kg. Asal than from Kg. Chempaka proper. This was due to the intensive door-to-door campaign conducted by the VDSC members from Kg. Asal to explain in detail the RISDA offers and to enlist as many potential participants as they could. The initiative of the VDSC members was said to have overwhelmed the Mukim Mawar RISDA officer, who had to conduct a similar campaign on his own in Kg. Chempaka proper. In short, the more organized and politically conscious PAS leadership of Kg. Asal saw the economic benefits they could obtain for their fellow villagers (or party members and supporters) and took

advantage of their positions as VDSC members to officially help the RISDA officer in his campaign and thus help their villagers too. The UMNO leadership of Kg. Chempaka as a whole, mainly based in Kg. Chempaka proper, seemed to lack the initiative and capacity to organize help for their fellow villagers. This was not surprising as many of them were either the village rich, like Manap the village head or the village middle category who, according to the RISDA officer, were more pre-occupied with what they could gain from the replanting scheme and put less to help organize the smallholders in Kg. Chempaka proper. The PAS leaders of Kg. Asal continued to mediate between the villagers and RISDA on most matters related to the replanting scheme throughout the 1970s. This persisted irrespective of whether they were sitting on the VDSC or not, and even after PAS had left the National Front (Barisan Nasional) coalition ruling party in November 1977. PAS joined the National Front in December 1972.

The implementation of the replanting scheme started in mid-1974 when the first batch of 20 smallholders cut their old rubber trees for replanting: 15 from Kg. Asal and five from Kg. Chempaka proper. The rest who had registered with RISDA were not able to participate immediately because of problems related to land status, ownership and the like. There were about 50 such cases, mostly those whose holdings were non-rubber land. The district land office usually takes six months to over a year to process each land status transfer. There were also cases where the applicants were co-owners of the plots which they registered for replanting and had yet to get written agreements from the other owners. A few cases involved applicants whose lands were still under the names of the previous owners such as their deceased parents. In such cases an applicant had to get a *surat kuasa* (authorization letter) from other family members to allow him to participate in the replanting scheme.

Despite the enthusiasm shown by the participants and the officials towards the scheme, bureaucratic problems remained the main obstacle to the full implementation of the scheme. This obstacle had delayed the participation of many Kg. Chempaka villagers in the scheme and often became a source of political discontent. When they voiced their discontent publicly they were often depicted as the "villains", a view frequently found in the official reports of RISDA or other government departments. "Traditional values and attitudes"

was the most popular cliché used to label discontented smallholders. In the case of Kg. Chempaka, the state assembly member of Mawar often called the protesting smallholders "ungrateful".

Admittedly, there were problems faced by RISDA officers when they made attempts to collect credit repayments from those smallholders who began tapping their replanted trees in late 1980. According to the Mawar RISDA officer, only three out of the 20 who replanted in 1974 made an effort to repay the various credits given to help them subsist when the trees were maturing. He alleged that many of those who failed to repay the loans had spent the income from the new tapping on buying consumer goods and the like, rather than repaying RISDA. Intensive interviews conducted with the 20 smallholders from the first batch of the scheme participants revealed a few aspects of the implementation which were rarely mentioned in any RISDA report examined in the course of this study. All of them complained about the low level of latex produced from their replanted trees. None of them obtained the RISDA-projected high yield of latex that the trees should produce. Of course, this could be the participants own fault for not maintaining their plots as specified by RISDA. However, all the participants argued that they received poor quality agricultural materials, namely, seedlings, herbicides and fertilizers. RISDA, using the credit allotted to each participant bought the materials from sub-contractors on their behalf. In the case of seedlings they were mostly taken from the RISDA local nurseries. The villagers alleged that the materials supplied were cheap and of low quality. Some even accused the local RISDA officers of buying the replanting materials from businessmen who were their friends, suggesting that they were improper practices involved. The local nurseries were said to have produced poor seedlings because they were sited in areas known to have poor soil.

Similar problems arose with intercrop cultivation and livestock farming. Credits were not given in cash but managed on behalf of participants by RISDA which selected and supplied the seedlings for the intercropping and the animals for the livestock farming. Again, the participants said, they were not consulted in the decision as to which type of seedlings and animals they preferred. All decisions were made by local RISDA officers and supplies were obtained from sub-contractors. They were told to trust RISDA in making the best decisions for them. What the participants essentially

implied was that they were not getting the projected incomes they were supposed to get from the replanting and other economic activities. This put them in a difficult economic position to repay the credits they had received from RISDA.

It could be argued that the participants were simply giving excuses for their own inadequacies and that most of their allegations were unfounded. But from observations made during the study, we found that there was a general trend amongst the more recent participants of the scheme to buy their own seedlings, herbicides and fertilizers, although they received those items from RISDA under the credit programme. Those who could not afford to supplement their materials had to be content with what RISDA gave them. Many of the recent participants of the scheme argued that they had to prevent similar problems recurring (low latex-producing trees). One of them cynically commented that

> I might be poor but not stupid. My livelihood depends on the quantity of latex my rubber stands produce, not on monthly salaries like they receive (local RISDA officers). They come and go, but I live and die here.

Similar predicaments were faced by smallholders who replanted their rubber plots with other cash crops. This will be discussed in detail below.

For those villagers who were not participating in the replanting scheme, RISDA had other programmes. The most important one involved simultaneously the processing and marketing aspects of village rubber production, namely the establishment of the Group Processing Centre (GPC).[36] One such centre was set up in Kg. Asal in 1974 and another in Kg. Chempaka proper in 1975.

A GPC is essentially a small wooden building with corrugated zinc roofing in which are found the equipment to process latex into unsmoked sheets. Some GPCs have their own smokehouses located adjacent to the main building. Neither the GPC at Kg. Chempaka proper nor that at Kg. Asal had a smokehouse. The local RISDA officers managed both GPCs. Local rubber smallholders bring their latex to the centre and process them into sheet rubber using proper equipment and methods under the watchful eyes of the RISDA officer on duty. However, it is not a centre where every smallholder

in the village could bring their latex to be processed. One has to become a member and pay a participation fee. This fee is pooled into a revolving fund and used as capital for cash loans to members during difficult periods, for instance, when they are sick and cannot tap. On top of that each member must also contribute a further ten cents per month and one cent per *kati* (local weight measurement equivalent to 1⅓ pounds) of rubber processed at the centre. Both levies are used for the replacement of equipment and the general upkeep of the centre. These funds are meant to sustain the GPC's operation in the long run.

According to RISDA, the centre represents "a community development project for rubber smallholders... aimed at making them a progressive and developed society... by changing their attitudes towards their own life, society and nation... to work harder, be self-reliant, be business-minded and be competitive with each other...".[37] This philosophy is in line with the theoretical orientation and philosophy of the NEP which emphasized that only through modernization could development in the rural sector be achieved.[38]

From the start, the GPC operations attracted only a small group of rubber growers, namely, the village rich, the village middle category and the well-to-do amongst the peasantry (see note 54). A detailed examination of the membership list for the Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal centres revealed this pattern. The latter had 25 members, 15 of whom belonged to the village middle category and the well-to-do group. It was no coincidence that the 15 were all PAS leaders and/or their family members. The Kg. Chempaka proper centre had 21 members, 17 of whom belonged to the groups mentioned above and to the village rich. From the list it could be established that 8 of the 17 were from Haji Salam's family.

Many smallholders and sharecroppers decided that there was no special advantage in becoming a member of the GPC. They believed they would lose more by paying the levies and participation fees, and thus preferred to sell their latex direct to rubber agents, or process the latex into unsmoked sheets for immediate sale to the same agents. They said they needed as much cash as possible and quickly and found even the one cent per *kati* levy too much to pay for so small a return. But, they admitted that the prospect of being able to borrow in times of difficulty was an attraction. However, they believed there would be problems in loan distribution, because of

favouritism and the like.

Based on information provided by the local RISDA officers, Kg. Chempaka UMNO officials and my own observations and examination of available records, the GPC at Kg. Asal was clearly the better organized and hence the more successful of the two in Kg. Chempaka. Further evidence suggests that the Kg. Asal centre had become an integral part of PAS party organization, in that problems of the centre were often discussed at the party officials' monthly meetings and attempts to resolve them were approached as if they were party problems. The Kg. Chempaka proper GPC, on the other hand, was described as *hidup segan mati tak mahu* (unwilling to exert itself but loathe to die). It was clearly dominated by Haji Salam's family members and friends, and distrust amongst other members towards the family was sometimes openly expressed. Nonetheless, it continued to operate at a much slower pace than the Kg. Asal centre.

The achievements of Kg. Asal GPC impressed the local RISDA officers. It was not surprising that when the organizers of the centre requested further extension services facilities to improve the centre and to attract more participants, the RISDA officers were more than glad to arrange them. As a result, a pre-school class was set up primarily for the GPC members' children. However, the registration list showed that non-members dominated the class. There were fortnightly classes on home science and tailoring for the wives and young children of the members. Again, those who attended these classes were relatives of members and non-members. RISDA also awarded small scholarships (M$40 monthly pocket money) to a few of the deserving children of the members.

It was rumoured that the state assembly member (*wakil rakyat*) for Mawar was not very pleased with what the local RISDA officers had done in Kg. Asal.[39] The *wakil rakyat* was known to have blocked for political reasons many development projects, particularly of the basic amenities category meant for Kg. Asal.[40] For example, until 1984, Kg. Asal had neither piped-water supply nor electricity, which Kg. Chempaka proper, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai have had since the mid-1970s. Therefore, the RISDA extension services which Kg. Asal received were seen by the *wakil rakyat* as "spoiling his plans" to punish Kg. Asal villagers for supporting the opposition party party, PAS. In fact, some even suggested that the *wakil rakyat*

was enraged because she felt she was outwitted by the PAS leaders of Kg. Asal. The setting up of the GPC and its subsequent success gave the PAS leaders respect and credibility with local RISDA officers. In line with RISDA national policy, it was the officers' duty to give support and encouragement to a successful project such as the one in Kg. Asal. Furthermore, its success also reflected on their organizational ability which, in turn, could earn them promotion or at least commendations from RISDA's top national officials, which it did.

In short, the PAS leaders of Kg. Asal managed to turn an economic project into a political one and reaped economic as well as the political gains which their village had been denied (on political grounds) for a long time. The RISDA officers, guided by RISDA national policy, and motivated by their own interests in seeking promotion in the hierarchy of RISDA's national bureaucracy, played the game according to the logic of the situation, only to incur the displeasure of the local *wakil rakyat*. The leader perceived the whole episode as a challenge to her political power and her role as "the provider" in Mawar. The eventual "winners", for want of a better term, were the Kg. Asal villagers and its leaders who happened to be in the opposition party. However, the latter had gained even more benefits than one would have expected.

Managing the GPC gave the PAS leaders of Kg. Asal the invaluable business experience which enabled them to set up a private company (*syarikat*) in April 1977 but it was unregistered. The various documents pertaining to the *syarikat* reveal that the 19 members were PAS and UMNO leaders of Kg. Chempaka. Each contributed M$30 as shares which were utilized as revolving capital. Its main business activity was to buy rubber and, later, oil palm produce of Kg. Chempaka smallholders to be sold directly to factories in Malawati district or Kelang. For this it had two old three-ton army trucks to collect and transport rubber bales or latex and oil palm fruits from various collection points in the village to a central place or to take them directly to the factories. Both were affectionately called *Kombat* (referring to the villagers then most popular Malaysian TV programme called *Combat*).

According to its constitution the aims of the *syarikat* were:

(i) to respond to the government's call to get 30 percent *bumiputera* participation in the Third Malaysia Plan;

(ii) to demonstrate that the *bumiputera* can be self-reliant (*berdikari*);
(iii) to buy local agricultural produce according to the market price.

Although the company has a licence to buy and sell rubber, which was obtained by Manap, the village head, it did not have a licence to buy and sell palm oil. The *syarikat* sought the help of another local dealer and used his licence for a commission.[41]

The main office bearers of the *syarikat* were PAS leaders and the UMNO leaders were ordinary members. However, the latter were often given the task of dealing with matters involving government institutions. The *syarikat* accounts showed that it had been making annual net profits, at the average of M$1,500 since 1977. This is after expenditure on lorries, stationery and office equipment. Only in 1981 were the profits distributed to members in the form of cash dividends.

It is interesting to note that the existence of the *syarikat* is not known to many Kg. Chempaka villagers. According to Cikgu Din, a member of the *syarikat*, all members had agreed to a policy of *lebih kerja kurang cakap* (more work less talk), because they believe this to be the key to success in business. However, this seemed to be a convenient policy to adopt in the light of the PAS-UMNO political rivalry in Kg. Chempaka, especially prior to every general election. All the evidence indicates that economic interests, namely those generated by the NEP, underlie this convenient coalition at the top, though on the political platform the protagonists seemed to be "enemies" as shown in the 1978 and the recent 1982 election campaigns. Its strategy was to keep a low profile. Not surprisingly, its meetings have been conducted at night, usually after 10 p.m.

Rubber still remains a major cash crop in Kg. Chempaka, as figures on the village landuse pattern indicate (see Table 1). However, since the 1974-1975 rubber rice slump, which created massive peasant protest especially in the north of Peninsula Malaysia,[42] oil palm has emerged, in a very short period, as a popular alternative crop for smallholders in Kg. Chempaka and elsewhere in Malaysia.[43] RISDA had been involved since 1975 in a nation-wide campaign to encourage smallholders to replant old rubber trees with oil palm. Kg. Chempaka villagers were attracted to this plan for four main reasons. Firstly, the replanting grant was increased to M$900 per acre, and, later in June 1978, to M$1,300 per acre (out of which M$100 was an incentive bonus). Secondly, oil palm in the mid-1970s fetched

a higher price than rubber. Thirdly, oil palm has a relatively shorter maturing period compared to rubber – three instead of six to seven years for rubber. Finally, the smallholders were more confident that many of the technical problems associated with oil palm cultivation and marketing, which earlier discouraged them from growing the crop on their own, had largely been resolved.[44]

As a result, many of those who, in 1973, registered to replant their plots with rubber, and were waiting for their applications to be processed, decided to re-register for oil palm in 1975. From 1976 onwards, most of the new applicants for the replanting scheme registered to grow oil palm. Despite the enthusiasm, the actual rate of replanting was slow due to problems in land matters, similar to the ones discussed earlier. If these problems had been resolved then, by 1981 the acreages planted with oil palm would have equalled, if not exceeded, that of rubber in Kg. Chempaka. In other words, the figures in Table 1 under-represented the villagers' popular response to oil palm. The local RISDA officers predicted that it was only a matter of time before rubber would replace oil palm as the major crop in Kg. Chempaka.

In 1976, only five smallholders managed to participate immediately in the cultivation of oil palm under the RISDA replanting scheme. However, the number increases every year, and by 1981 there were 36 smallholders involved in various stages of the scheme, 11 of whom were already harvesting. According to the latter, they found planting oil palm and its maintenance until harvesting were substantially more demanding than that of rubber.[45] Some even claimed that it was twice as hard. But on the whole, they considered the burden was bearable because it only involved three years of hard work compared to six or seven years in rubber cultivation. Throughout the maturation period of the crop, RISDA offered credit and extension service facilities similar to those received by the rubber replanters. In fact, the local RISDA officers did not differentiate between the oil palm and rubber replanters except in the technical sense (that is, planting, maintenance, etc). As a result, many of the problems relating to credit and extension service matters confronted by the oil palm cultivators were similar to those experienced by the rubber replanters. However, there was one important exception. With the absence of a GPC scheme for the oil palm growers, the RISDA officers said they were saved from having to deal with an extra-

organizational problem and, more importantly, another potential source of political controversy.

The oil palm cultivators, however, continued to face different problems relating to harvesting and marketing. Harvesting the ripe fruit bunches from each tree had to be done at the correct time, because both the yield and quality of palm oil are affected by the ripeness of the fruit at the time of harvesting. The fruits are best harvested near maturity or at maturity. Harvesting too late when the fruits are over-ripe means they also rot easily. But the Kg. Chempaka cultivators seems to have harvested too early from lack of experience, and hence they were paid lower prices. Dealers who were the assessors of the fruit quality, were therefore, able to manipulate prices. In some cases cultivators changed dealers to get better prices for their fruits.

Most of the smallholders also mentioned that harvesting was not only difficult but also sometimes costly. Harvesting may be divided into three stages: (i) cutting the bunches from the palm, (ii) collecting the loose fruits which fall from the harvested bunch; and (iii) transporting the bunches to the roadside where they can be loaded into the dealers' vehicles for transport to the factory. The height of the palm dictates the method used to cut the bunches from the palm. Since all the trees in Kg. Chempaka were very young, the height ranged from six to eight feet, and most smallholders used long-handled chisel-like blade (*penggali*) to cut the fruit bunches. The task demanded not so much skill but brute force, hence all harvesting work was done by men. When the palms grow taller it is necessary to use a curved blade lashed to a bamboo pole or a ladder. This will pose extra problems, such as the need to hire labourers, when the cultivators and the trees grow older. A comparison with rubber trees has been made by the villagers. Oil palms grow taller as they mature and thus, harvesting gets more difficult. But rubber trees as they get older have cuts on the bark for latex made lower and lower and are thus easier to tap. Such problems have been reported in FELDA schemes where oil palms were planted in 1961.[46]

Carrying the cut fruits from the tree to the collection point at the roadside is a major task. Two methods have been adopted by the smallholders: (i) manual labour, and (ii) vehicular collection. In the former, the cultivator uses family labour (wife and children) who help to collect the loose fruits and carry them in gunny sacks to the

collecting point. In the latter, the cultivator either uses a bicycle or motorcycle with the fruits usually in a rattan basket. Although most of the smallholders did their own harvesting, a few employed labourers. The village rich and the middle category who grew oil palm depended on their family labour and labourers for harvesting. The sharecroppers carried out their own harvesting and still adopted the *bagi dua* system, that is, equal sharing of the earnings. However, it is interesting to note that at least three of the sharecroppers interviewed were negotiating with the landowners (who are absentee landlords) for better terms that is, on a 60:40 basis, of which they want the larger share. They argued that the cost and task of maintaining a plot of oil palms until they mature required twice as much effort as rubber. They also argued that they had lost that part of their earnings from the sale of scrap rubber and this had to be compensated. The outcome of the negotiation is not known as it was still in the process of being considered by the landowners when this study ended.

Another problem involved the theft of fruits. Since all the fruits were heaped at the collection point on the roadside and often collected by the dealers a day or two later, they could be easily stolen at night. At one stage, the problem became quite serious and a neighbourhood vigilante group was formed to patrol the roads where the fruits were heaped. Some even conducted *sembahyang hajat* (special prayers) to protect the fruits or to ask the Almighty to punish the thieves. This problem existed in lesser magnitude after it was reported to the local police officers who made a few arrests, mainly as a scare tactic and not to stamp out the problem, because they said they had other important criminal problems to attend to.

On the whole, there seemed to be a general consensus amongst Kg. Chempaka oil palm cultivators that, despite the hard work and problems involved, planting this crop is more economically rewarding than growing rubber. Figures obtained from the local RISDA office and from our own household and property survey seemed to indicate that the oil palm cultivators earned about 25 percent more than the rubber growers in gross annual income. RISDA reports confirmed that similar patterns were observed elsewhere in Malaysia.[47] To what extent the income difference contributed to eradicating poverty and improving the quality of life amongst Kg. Chempaka oil palm growers is difficult to determine except by

using arbitrary and subjective social indicators, such as the level of consumer goods consumption and the like. Certainly the gross incomes of the oil palm cultivators have improved since they switched from growing rubber, but their general social conditions in structural terms, especially in landownership, remained unchanged.

The oil palm produce in Kg. Chempaka are marketed by three licensed dealers (two Malays and one Chinese) and one unlicensed dealer (the unregistered *syarikat* of PAS and UMNO leaders mentioned earlier). All the fruits are processed at two Chinese-owned palm oil mills, one at Meru and the other at Batang Berjuntai. One of the Malay licensed dealers comes from Kg. Asal and the other from Mawar. The former, Zubir, comes from a rich copra trader family of Kelang, married a local girl and settled in Kg. Asal since the early 1970s. He owns about 30 acres of land in Kg. Chempaka, a retail shop and a lorry to transport the oil palm fruits to the factory. All of this property was accumulated during the last decade after he settled in Kg. Chempaka. The *syarikat* used his licence to buy and sell oil palm at 10 percent commission per ton sent to the factory. Therefore, Zubir has at least four major sources of income; from his retail shop, his personal oil palm business, his oil palm plots (cultivated by share-croppers) and, his commission from the *syarikat*. He is the only one in Kg. Chempaka who could rival Haji Salam's family in economic terms but not in the socio-political sphere.

Since the oil palm marketing business started, the laterite roads within Kg. Chempaka has deteriorated. Lorries carrying the fruits are often over-loaded destroying road surfaces and creating large pot-holes. After heavy tropical downpours, accessibility by small motor vehicles, especially cars, is almost impossible. This situation, according to the affected villagers, has created difficulties for them and their children because the unlicensed taxis often refuse to take them directly to their homes and school buses are reluctant to pick up their children. This issue is often raised during the VDSC bi-monthly meetings.

The minutes of the VDSC meetings also revealed that Kg. Chempaka had received little in other forms of government agricultural schemes. The two schemes which have reached Kg. Chempaka were minor projects, namely, the subsidized fertilizer scheme and the poultry farming scheme. In the former, the villagers were entitled to buy a limited amount of subsidized fertilizer at a very cheap rate

(M$1 per bag) from the Agricultural Department. The fertilizer was the type which suited fruit trees and not oil palm or rubber. According to the local Agricultural Officer the fertilizer was bought at a special price from ICI (Imperial Chemical Industries), which has a subsidiary in Malaysia.[48] The poultry farming project involved the Department of Veterinary Services. Interested villagers were supplied with "boilers" (the technical term for chicks) at 41 cents each, but they have to bear the costs of chicken hatcheries and so forth. This project was similar to the one provided by RISDA but meant for those who were ineligible for the RISDA scheme. Both projects were reported to have involved only a few villagers. Most of the participants in the subsidized fertilizer scheme were smallholders. But the poultry farming project had four participants all of whom belonged to the village middle category. They participated to supplement their incomes from other sources and one of them said he was doing it as a hobby.

Compared to the types of agricultural projects which reached Kg. Kasturi, as revealed by the minutes of its VDSC meeting, the ones which Kg. Chempaka received were minor ones. The major ones include cattle rearing/grazing land, cocoa cultivation, orchard development, fresh water fish farming and vegetable gardening. Each of these schemes was fully sponsored by various government departments and quasi-government bodies. Follow-up extension services were also provided. The schemes cost between M$500 to M$2,000 each. The ones received by Kg. Chempaka villagers were both under M$500 each. As has been mentioned, there are important political reasons which have deprived Kg. Chempaka not only of the major agricultural schemes but also of other development projects. This will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

This lack of government assistance has put the coconut and coffee cultivators in the village in a disadvantageous position.[50] Neither the replanting nor the rehabilitation programme for coconut, which began in 1963 reached the Kg. Chempaka coconut growers. Most of the trees are old and produce little fruit. Harvesting has become a major problem because of the height of the trees. Out of the 12 households which grew coconut, only 4 households depended on the fruit as their main source of income. They carried out their own replanting section by section on their plots with high-yield seedlings bought from friends in Kg. Mawar or from others who lived 30 miles

away in Sabak Bernam. These two areas have enjoyed the benefits of the Agricultural Department's replanting and rehabilitation scheme since the mid-1960s. The new high-yield Malayan Tall Palms were supposed to bear early and more fruit than the old Malayan Tall Palm variety. Nevertheless, it still takes about four years before the crop matures and is ready to be picked. So intercropping was actively pursued with coffee and, now, cocoa as the two most popular intercrops. The four households have to bear all the replanting and maintenance costs without any support from the government. At least one member of each of the household had to look for temporary work in order to supplement the household incomes during the replanting. All of them worked as contract labourers in nearby estates. The other eight families were coconut smallholders and sharecroppers at the same time. Most of them were sharecroppers in the rubber and oil palm holdings of the village rich and the middle category, or of the absentee landlords. The coconuts were usually sold as fruits, instead of copra, to the village Chinese shopkeepers. Some were sold direct to fellow villagers for use in their daily cooking. From time to time, large quantities of the coconuts were also sold to villagers who were holding feasts, especially weddings. In short, the marketing of the produce was not systematic and the prices varied considerably depending on who was the buyer. Usually the coconut smallholders obtained better prices if they sold to the Chinese shopkeepers. If they sold to fellow villagers they had to contend with lower prices because the transactions were economic and social at the same time. The economic loss or the reduced profits in such transactions were often seen in religious terms as *amalan sedekah* (freewill offerings).

Only ten households in Kg. Chempaka were involved in coffee cultivation, and only one depended solely on coffee for a living. This household comprises an elderly couple who had been growing coffee since the war. Periodically, one of them had to find alternative employment for subsistence. Since the late 1970s, they have been depending on monthly remittances from their two children working in Kuala Lumpur, and have concentrated on their coffee plot. The other nine households also grew fruit trees in the same plot where they grew coffee. At least six of the households have one or two of their members working as labourers, either in the estates nearby or with the Haji Salam family businesses. Since coffee is a minor crop,

there has been little government attention towards its cultivators. This is reflected in the absence of research to improve the cultivation in terms of technique and the experimental development of high-yielding species.[51] The cultivators continue their traditional methods of coffee cultivation using unselected planting materials mainly of the *Liberica* variety. Chemical fertilizers are used only when prices are favourable and cultivation practices are of a low standard resulting in low economic returns. The only government institution which has been catering for the interests of the coffee cultivators is the FOA. The Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) also provides some help to market some of the produce locally, but Kg. Chempaka coffee cultivators sell their beans to the local Chinese shopkeepers and not to FAMA. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that most of Kg. Chempaka coffee cultivators were also dependent on other sources of income. It must be noted that they cannot grow rubber or oil palm because their plots are unsuited for these crops. This is the same problem faced by the coconut growers. The area where coffee and coconut are grown in Kg. Chempaka is swampy and poorly drained. The only government project in which they participated was the subsidized fertilizer scheme.

Agriculture in Kg. Chempaka is dominated by two crops, namely rubber and oil palm. Among those who depended mainly on agriculture for their livelihood, namely, the peasant group, rubber remains the main income provider. Due to land problems many of them are unable to grow oil palm, a crop which has gained tremendous popularity in Kg. Chempaka since 1975. The number of peasants who participated in rubber and oil palm replanting schemes is, therefore, very small. This does not reflect RISDA's inaction as problems of landownership and status have hindered the full participation of the peasants, and these problems are beyond RISDA's capacity to resolve. It lies in the hands of the district office land division officials as well as the peasants themselves.

Only two of the three non-peasant groups are involved in the replanting schemes, namely the village rich and the village middle category, part of whose income is derived from agricultural production. Members of these groups often have sharecroppers cultivating their lands based on an equal share system. The sharecroppers come from the peasant group. The labourer class are either landless or have

very small plots on which they could cultivate crops and obtain income from it. Most of those who own land possess only kampung land not more than three acres each. Often these lands are shared with two or three other households who are their relatives. They could, however, grow fruit trees and vegetables around their homes but only for household consumption, seldom for cash.

Government agricultural projects which reached the village, other than those provided by RISDA, are minor and have made no significant contribution towards providing alternative sources of income for improving the livelihood of the peasants in Kg. Chempaka. This was not the case for Kg. Chempaka's nearest neighbour, Kg. Kasturi, which was provided with many major agricultural projects, even if these did not necessarily reach the supposed beneficiaries.

Little from the impressive inventory of rural development projects available under the NEP have reached Kg. Chempaka villagers, particularly those related to agriculture – the source of livelihood for a large section of Kg. Chempaka's community. There were other rural non-agricultural, development projects which have been implemented in the village. However, to what extent these projects are provided to improve the quality of life of the villagers or as political "carrots" will be examined in subsequent chapters.

Occupation and Class

This section examines the occupational and class structure of Kg. Chempaka so as to understand not only the dynamics of social relation in the community but also the roles of the people in this study.

The Kg. Chempaka community (as of March 1981) comprised 436 households, 11 of which were Chinese and the rest Malays.[52] The total village population, that is, Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal was 1,581, of whom 1,535 were Malays and 46 Chinese.[53] The adult population of Chempaka accounted for about half of the total population, that is, 875 individuals (481 males and 394 females). Amongst the adults, 672 persons, or 76.8 percent were were economically active (460 males and 212 females), and 203, or 23.2 percent were inactive and dependents (21 males and 187 females).

TABLE 2
Kampung Chempaka Economically Active Adult Population*
By Class, Occupation and Gender
(as of March 1981)

Class and Occupation#		Male	Female	Total
A. *Village Bourgeoisie*				
I	Contractors and entrepreneurs	3	–	3
II	Salariat			
	Teacher	4	2	6
	Clerical	1	2	3
	KEMAS staff[a]	1	2	3
	Local council supervisor	1	–	1
	Security guard (estates and banks)	5	–	5
	Junior technician	1	–	1
	Total	13	6	19
B. *Village Petty Bourgeoisie*				
III	Small businessmen			
	Rubber dealer	5	–	5[b]
	Oil palm dealer	3	–	3
	Foodstuff dealer	13	–	13[c]
	Motor mechanic	1	–	1
	Barber	2	–	2
	Tailor	1	5	6
	Total	25	5	30
IV	Cottage industry			
	Carpenter/house builder	4	–	4
	Concrete-block maker	5	–	5
	Malay pastry maker	–	6	6
	Tempe maker	–	1	1
	Total	9	7	16
V	Drivers			
	Truck driver	4	–	4
	Unlicensed taxi driver	9	–	9
	Total	13	–	13
VI	Pensioners	2	–	2

VII Folk healers			
Traditional spirit-healer (*dukun*)	2	–	2
Traditional midwife (*bidan kampung*)	–	2	2
Circumcisor (*mudim*)	1	–	1
Total	3	2	5
C. *Village Proletariat*			
VIII Hustlers[d]	8	–	8
IX Labourers			
Estate	41	45	86
Construction contract	53	–	53
Non-construction contract	48	12	60
Quarry	15	–	15
Factory	12	10	22
Local council	6	–	6
Transport	4	1	5
Agriculture (*buruh kampung*)	23	5	28
Total	202	73	275
D. *The Peasantry*			
X Self-employed cultivators (owners and tenants)	182	119	301
Total number of economically active	460	212	672
Total number of those inactive and dependent[e]	21	182	203
Total adult population	481	394	875

NOTES:

* "Economically Active Adults" refer to persons over 18 years old, whose livelihood depend on investments of their labour or capital, or both.

\# The occupational classification is based on data obtained for occupation providing the main source of income. Cases of those having subsidiary occupations to supplement their main incomes will be discussed in the text.

[a] KEMAS or Kemajuan Masyarakat (Community Development) classes, for adults.

[b] Includes one Chinese.

[c] Includes six Chinese.

[d] Includes smugglers, pedlars of illegal goods, etc.

[e] Includes school leavers, invalids, homebound housewives, etc.

Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of the different categories of occupation pursued by the economically active in Kg. Chempaka, namely, the principal occupations or the main source of incomes. Information on the subsidiary occupations involving most of the villagers on a seasonal, part-time or regular basis, is excluded. This, however, will be discussed below.

The available data on occupation allow us to divide the village population into four main social categories: (i) the village bourgeoisie, previously referred to as the village well-to-do or rich in my discussion (see Table 2, Groups I and II, involving 22 persons or 3.3 percent, of the economically active villagers); (ii) the village petty bourgeoisie, previously referred to as the village middle category (see Table 2, Groups III to VII, 66 persons or 9.8 percent); (iii) the village proletariat, the majority of whom were wage labourers working mostly outside the village economy (see Table 2, Groups VIII and IX, 283 individuals or 42.1 percent); and (iv) the peasantry, with its own internal sub-divisions, which formed the largest category within the village adult population, but only slightly larger than the proletariat class (see Table 2, Group X, 301 individuals, or 44.8 percent).[34]

The village bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and proletariat subsist primarily on non-agricultural economic activities. However, except for the proletariat, the village bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie depended quite heavily on agriculture, mostly from ownership of agricultural plots. Some from the middle category also obtained incomes from working part-time on their agricultural land. Renting their land to sharecroppers who were mostly peasants, was a common practice for the village bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. The proletariat were largely landless single youths or young married couples. Those from this class who owned land did not obtain any income from agricultural activities because the land they held were kampung lots. Whatever they grew on this plot was for household consumption. It must also be noted that it was common to find three or more houses on a lot, mostly belonging to close relatives.

The peasants were the only group which depended primarily on ownership of and work on agricultural land for livelihood. In the latter case they either owned their lands or were sharecroppers. Few were solely dependent on sharecropping for a living. It was quite common for most peasants to engage in various forms of mar-

agricultural activities to supplement their earnings, such as handicraft (weaving attap roofs, mats and baskets); running foodstalls during village festivities (such as, at the biennial athletic meet of the local school, at the local Qur'an reading competition night, and so on); selling home grown fruits and vegetables at Mawar's weekly *pasar lambak* or open air market; and so on. For those involved in replanting, it was not uncommon for them to seek alternative employment as contract labourers, besides depending on the sale of their intercrop produce. All these activities conducted by the peasants were irregular and temporary. However, those from the village middle category and proletariat were also involved in temporary and irregular work.

Although in terms of principal occupations the economically active adults in Kg. Chempaka can be categorized as agriculturalists and non-agriculturalists, the division does not imply that there exists two discrete sectors in the village economy. An examination of the distribution of land and the investments of capital and labour on the land amongst the different classes in Kg. Chempaka will provide a clearer picture of the situations described earlier.

The data presented in Table 3 only provides us with information on the pattern of landownership amongst the economically active adults in Kg. Chempaka, by class, occupation and gender. It is equally important to know how each class utilizes the land they owned, and also to know about institutional resources, particularly amongst the non-agriculturalists (the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat). It is important, too, to learn how the different classes within the Kg. Chempaka peasantry made use of their agricultural plots. In short, we are interested in examining the magnitude of economic dependence on agricultural land through ownership and/or work by the different classes in Kg. Chempaka.

Amongst the village bourgeoisie, 19 individuals of the 22, or 86.3 percent owned land. The three non-landed were all females of the salariat, who lived with their parents. Between the contractor and the entrepreneur, on the one side, and the salariat, on the other, there was a larger difference in the size of the average land owned. The former owned an average of 35 acres each, and in the latter (that is, amongst those landed) 11 acres each. Manap, Sudin (Haji Salam's sons) and Zubir were in the contractor and entrepreneur category, with Manap the village head as the only contractor. None of them

TABLE 3
Landownership in Kampung Chempaka*
By Class, Occupation and Gender

Class and Occupation	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	Landed	No.	Landed	No.	Landed
A. *Village Bourgeoisie*						
I Contractor and entrepreneur	3	3	–	–	3	3
II Salariat	13	13	6	3	19	16
Total	16	16	6	3	22	19
B. *Village Petty Bourgeoisie*						
III Small businessmen	25	18**	5	1	30	19
IV Cottage industry	9	9	7	5	16	14
V Drivers	13	10	–	–	13	10
VI Pensioners	2	2	–	–	2	2
VII Folk-healers	3	3	2	2	5	5
Total	52	42	14	8	66	50
C. *Proletariat*						
VIII Hustlers	8	2	–	–	8	2
IX Labourers	202	41	73	4	275	45
Total	210	43	73	4	283	47
D. *The Peasantry*						
X Self-employed	182	151	119	12	301	163
Total	460	252	212	27	672	279

NOTES: * Amongst the economically active adults only.
** The non-landed (seven) were all Chinese who cannot own land in areas declared as Malay Reservations which includes Kg. Chempaka.

worked on their lands. However, besides receiving most of their incomes from their business activities, they also received subsidiary incomes from rents or their share through sharecropping mostly. Manap, for instance, received a fixed rent from the six acres he rented to one of the village Chinese shopkeepers, and his share from the rest of the land which was cultivated by others, amongst whom were his distant relatives. Zubir, who was always busy with his various business activities had his brother-in-law manage his retail shop and agricultural plots. Sudin spent most of his time as a rubber dealer and looking after his shop, whilst his two wives managed his agricultural plots. Although all of them have thriving businesses which brought in much profit, the incomes received from their large agricultural plots were by no means small.

Among the salariat of the village bourgeoisie the situation was quite different. Only Cikgu Din, who teaches at the village school, worked on his own land amounting to 25 acres. As mentioned earlier, he preferred to teach in the afternoon session so that he could tap his rubber plots in the morning together with his wife. When he had to teach in the morning he had his wife and two hired labourers do the tapping. He also planted a few acres with oil palm, and spent much time on this plot. It must be emphasized that what he practised is quite uncommon for someone of his class. The rest of the salariat had their lands cultivated either by relatives or sharecroppers. In one particular case, a bank security guard used part of his salary to repay a loan with which he bought a plot of rubber land in the village, and used the rest of his salary and his income from his land (worked on by his wife and son) for his household expenditure. It is also common amongst the salariat to use part of their salary to buy consumer items, such as television, stereo equipment or a car, on hire purchase, and to survive on the remainder of the salary and income from their rented lands.

The introduction of oil palm resulted in at least two persons, both school teachers engaging in the cultivation of the crop. They were obviously the more advantaged amongst the salariat by virtue of having more flexible and shorter working hours. They finished teaching at about 1.00 p.m., if they taught in the morning session, and started at about the same time if they taught in the afternoon session. In both situations they had ample time to work on their plots. But the deciding factor which encouraged them to cultivate oil

palm was that the crop could be harvested at any time of the day, unlike rubber which must be tapped in the morning. Since the replanting grants were given to cultivators on the basis of plot sizes for cultivation, irrespective of whether they have alternative and regular incomes, the school teachers (including Cikgu Din), Manap, Sudin and Zubir benefited from the grant as did the village poor.

The bourgeoisie in Kg. Chempaka of the NEP era have now become more active in investing their labour on their agricultural plots, by taking advantage of the benefits provided by the government under the rural development schemes of the NEP. This means that the income derived from their agricultural land has increased significantly when they were contented before with just receiving rents or their shares from sharecropping. Hence, their potential to accumulate more wealth has also increased. Subsequent chapters will reveal how their active participation in local politics opened other forms of economic oportunities which would strengthen their economic and political position. Of course, this depends on which faction within the ruling party (UMNO) they belong to.

The village petty bourgeoisie or the middle category consisted of 66 individuals, of whom 50, or 75.8 percent were landed (including Haji Zainal of Kg. Asal), and each owned an average of 6.7 acres of agricultural land. Among the landed, there were three main ways in which they dealt with their agricultural plots. Firstly, those who spent all their time on their principal occupation had their land cultivated entirely by others and were therefore landlords. Included in this category were the truck drivers, the *tempe*-maker (who is the third wife of Manap, the village head), a few of the foodstuff retailers and the rubber and oil palm dealers. Secondly, there were those whose main occupation allowed them to work on their own plots enabling them to have incomes from both their primary occupation and their agricultural plots. But they claimed that the latter income was often irregular and much less than the former. In this category were a few of the shopkeepers, the folk-healers, the concrete-block makers and the pensioners. Thirdly, there were those who worked their own land either on a part-time or irregular basis which meant they sometimes let others cultivate their agricultural plots. For example, the tailors or the carpenter-cum-house builders had to complete their clients' work in a specified time-period or they would lose that job. In the case of the carpenter-cum-house builders this

could take a few months, or in the tailors' case a few weeks, which meant that during this period they had no choice but to let others work on their agricultural plots.

However, irrespective of whether they performed agricultural labour or not, they were entitled, according to RISDA's directives, to replanting grants and other development benefits provided by the government. Hence, they were in a position to actively involve themselves in replanting without affecting their economic position because they have their principal occupation as a source of livelihood. In fact, the replanting would only improve their already sound economic situation and their potential to accumulate wealth. It is necessary to point out here that many of those who have been active in organizing the rubber GPC in Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal, and in the private unregistered *syarikat*, mentioned earlier, were individuals from the middle category. The rest were from the well-to-do peasants.

A small percentage of the proletariat class had land (47 individuals of 283, or 16.6 percent). The rest, mostly single youths and young married couples were either residing with their parents or parents-in-law, who came from the different classes within the village. There were some married couples who had built homes on the same kampung lots as their parents or relatives. The landed individuals from the proletariat class owned only their kampung land no larger than three acres each. Often they had two or more houses of their kin on the same lot. Few worked on their land and earned incomes from them. Those who did were the agricultural labourers (*buruh kampung*), who recently specialized in oil palm harvesting. This particular group grew mostly vegetables and fruit trees. The rest of this class did minimal agricultural activities, even though most of them had old rubber trees on their land, which were grown illegally during the Korean War boom. In such cases, some found it more advantageous economically to let others tap the rubber trees and earn income as landlords in the form of rents or their share from sharecropping, while the rest had their wives and children to tap the trees. It is also important to note that, all the proletariats who owned kampung land were ineligible for the RISDA's replanting scheme unless they change the title to rubber or oil palm. The bureaucratic process involved could take from six months to over a year. According to the local RISDA officers many of the proletariats had

joint ownership problems, too. Until 1981, none of them were able to participate in the RISDA scheme.

Among the non-agricultural classes there seemed to be no consistent or fixed pattern in the investment of labour on their agricultural plot. Although amongst the bourgeoisie, especially within the salariat, the interest in working on their own agricultural plots was on the increase since the advent of RISDA-sponsored replanting (particularly oil palm). On the whole, they still derived incomes mainly through landownership. The petty bourgeoisie involvement in cultivating their own agricultural land were dictated by their primary occupation. Despite these situations both classes still enjoy substantial earnings from their agricultural lands, more so if they participated in the government-sponsored replanting scheme. The landed proletariat seemed to have spent little or no time at all on the agricultural plots they owned. Thus, very few of them actually had incomes from working on their land. In fact, some of them rented out their land to others to work on and were satisfied to receive whatever rent they could get.

The peasantry which consisted of 301 economically active adults was by no means a homogenous group. First, there were only four landlords (two males and two females). All of them were over 60 years old and the two females were widows. Besides collecting rents from their land which were worked by others, at least three of them received regular remittances from their children working elsewhere. The second group was the smallholders, 73 of them (68 males and five females).[55] They owned an average of 4.2 acres each and all of them were household heads. Rubber and oil palm were their two main crops. Their income was derived mainly from working on their own land. As mentioned earlier, they were often involved in other non-agricultural activities too.[56] Many from this group had registered to replant their plots but only a few so far had actually carried out the replanting. Most of them were waiting for their titles to be transferred from kampung to rubber land, or still trying to resolve ownership problems. The third group was the smallholder-tenant/sharecropper, of which there were 86 (81 males and five females). Again, all of them were household heads, but owned an average of 3.5 acres each. Their income was from working their own land as well as sharecropping. In the latter case they were sharecroppers/tenants to the village bourgeoisie and petty

bourgeoisie. A few worked on land belonging to absentee landlords in government service in urban areas. Most of the peasants in this category had also registered with RISDA to participate in the replanting but few were actually replanting for the same reasons given earlier. Out of 301 peasants in Kg. Chempaka, only 163, or 54. 2 percent were landed (151 males and 12 females), all of whom were household heads. The other 138 individuals (31 males and 107 females) were landless.

The landless can be divided into two categories. The first, 11 male household heads, could be classified as full-fledged sharecroppers/ tenants. Their incomes were derived mainly from working on other people's land: four from the land of absentee landlords in urban areas and seven of the village bourgeoisie. The second category of 127 individuals (20 males and 107 females) were wives and children of the peasants from the different categories discussed earlier. It is important to note that, although they were landless, as economically active adults, their contributions (agricultural labour) towards the households they belonged to were indispensable. This is due to the fact that amongst peasants, the household is the principal unit of production and consumption.

From the above, we observe that within the occupational and class structure of Kg. Chempaka the distinction between the so-called non-agriculturalists (the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat) and the agriculturalist (the peasantry) is arbitrary and ambiguous, though it is a useful analytic device. For instance, some peasants did receive incomes from non-agricultural activities and some non-peasants from agricultural sources. However, the main links between these two social groups were established through the positions of the landed bourgeoisie and the landless agricultural proletariat. In the former, in addition to their non-agricultural incomes the landed bourgeoisie also received substantial incomes as landlords, a position similar to that of the peasant landlords. In the latter, the landless agricultural proletariat (*buruh kampung*), survived mainly as wage labourers in the peasant sector, a position similar to their counterparts who worked in the plantation sector. Of the two, the first one is not only dominant and influential economically but also politically, especially in post-1970 Kg. Chempaka. Prior to the NEP era, the second link did reveal its political potential but only briefly.

NOTES

1 In his recent contributions, Burns, "Capitalism and the Malay States", pp. 159-178, has brought to our attention the tendency amongst Malaysianists to take 1874 – the year the British established control over the Malay States, as the "beginning" of the era of capitalist production in Malaya. He correctly points out that capitalist production has occurred "before direct colonial rule is established . . . set the conditions under which agricultural production is eventually incorporated into the new mode of production". (Ibid., p. 159).

2 In almost every recent account of Malaysia's post-colonial history, political economy, etc., 1969 – the year the major racial riots occurred, is taken as a point of departure from which a "new" era in Malaysian political development began. This position is taken by both the conservative as well as the more progressive analysts within the Malaysianist circle.

3 Rudner has discussed this in detail in the following contributions, "The State and Peasant Innovations"; "Draft Development Plan"; and "Malayan Quandary: Rural Development Policy under the First and Second Five Year Plans", in *Readings on Malaysian Economic Development*, ed. David Lim (Kuala Lumpur, 1975), pp. 80-88. See also Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development*; M.J. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia: Institution Building and Reform in a Plural Society* (Ithaca, 1972), and D.R. Snodgrass, *Inequality and Economic Development in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, 1980), who have discussed in some detail various aspects of Malaysia's rural development policies prior to 1969 and their implementation.

4 A more detailed policy statement and long-term programmes of the *bumiputera* policy are found in the following official documents: Government of Malaysia, *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975* (Kuala Lumpur, 1971) pp. 131-144; idem, *Third Malaysia Plan 1976-1980* (Kuala Lumpur, 1976), pp. 296-309; idem, *Fourth Malaysia Plan 1981-1985* (Kuala Lumpur, 1981), pp. 279-289. Elsewhere, I have discussed and evaluated the implementation of Malaysia's rural development programmes in the first-half of the 1970s and in general, see Shamsul A.B. *RMK. Tujuan dan Pelaksanaannya: Satu Penilaian Teoritis* (Kuala Lumpur, 1977), pp. 35-58, 59-86, and idem, "Pembangunan Pertanian dan Luar Bandar di Malaysia".

5 See for example, Rudner, "The State and Peasant Innovations"; idem, "Rubber Strategy for Post-War Malaya"; idem "Malayan Rubber Policy"; P.T. Bauer, "Post-War Malayan Rubber Policy: A Comment", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 4(1973): 133-138.

6 These opinions were expressed strongly in the various meetings of the Legislative Council and later of parliament. See Member for Economic Affairs, *Federation of Malaya Legislative Council Proceedings* (hereafter L.C. Proc.) May and December 1955; Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives, L.C. Proc. December 1957; *Dewan Rakyat Proceedings* (D.R. Proc.), May 1963. See also Federation of Malaya, *Policies and Measures Leading Towards Greater Diversification of Agricultural Economy in the Federation of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1963).

7 For an elaboration on the rural development policies during the post-

independence period see the various five-year plans, such as the *First Five-Year Plan, 1955-60; Second Five Year Plan, 1961-65; First Malaysia Plan, 1966-1970* and so on. For analyses of the various plans and their implementation see for example, Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development;* Rudner, *Nationalism, Planning and Economic Modernization;* Snodgrass, *Inequality and Economic Development;* David Lim, "Malaysian Development Planning", *Pacific Affairs* 55(1982-83): 613-639; and Toh Kim Woon and Jomo "The Nature of the Malaysian State"; E.K. Fisk, "Rural Development Policy", in *Political Economy of Independent Malaya,* ed. T.H. Silcock and E.K. Fisk (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 174-194.

8 Besides the rice self-sufficiency strategy which was introduced by the British soon after the rice crisis (see Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy,* pp. 120-122), the new strategies were:

a. the rubber replanting scheme: first introduced in 1934, it benefitted mainly the estates and *not* the smallholders – see Bauer, *Rubber Industry,* pp. 173-178; it was reintroduced after Second World War with similar consequences – see, Rudner, "Rubber Strategy for Post-War Malaya"; idem, "Malayan Rubber Policy"; from 1965 onwards a New Replanting Scheme was launched but its implementation continued to favour estate owners – see Rudner, "Malayan Rubber Policy";

b. the co-operative marketing and rural credit: first introduced in 1923 to alleviate peasant poverty and indebtedness – see Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy,* pp. 155-158, then it was re-introduced in 1950, mainly through RIDA – see Beaglehole, "Malay Participation", and again revived in 1961 which resulted in a political controversy within UMNO and the Alliance, affecting badly its policy effectiveness – see Rudner, *Nationalism, Planning and Economic Modernization;* Aziz Ishak, *Special Guest: The Detention of an ex-Cabinet Minister in Malaysia* (Singapore, 1977), pp.27-34;

c. the land development programme: a revival of the land rush which characterized Malaya up to the early 1930s – Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy,* pp. 180-216. In 1956, a Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) was introduced to carry out the programme which so far has been considered very expensive but only of benefit to a small percentage of the rural poor – see Snodgrass, *Inequality and Economic Development,* pp. 176-182; Syed Husin Ali, *Apa Erti Pembangunan?* (Kuala Lumpur, 1976), pp. 48-54.

Although there were other specific programmes which were implemented such as the expansion of the infrastructure (roads, electricity, etc.) and social services (health, schools, etc.) these were not considered new strategies. Furthermore, the budget allocation was small and the implementation was slow prior to 1969. See Snodgrass, *Inequality and Economic Development,* pp. 193-195.

The only new strategy involved the implementation of minor rural development projects such as the building of mosques, *surau,* bicycle paths and so on. It was introduced in 1957 but later considered to be wasteful and expenditure on the projects was gradually curtailed from the mid-1960s onwards. See Snodgrass, *Inequality and Economic Development,* p. 195.

For a detailed description on the administration of pre-1969 rural development in Malaysia, see Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development*, and C.G. Ferguson, "The Story of Development in Malaya (now Malaysia) – Some Aspects", *Journal of Local Administration Overseas* 4(1965): 149-164.

9 Subsequent discussions in this chapter will reveal that, for structural reasons, this tendency persisted after 1969. Elsewhere, I have discussed in detail the general history of development planning in post-independence Malaysia, Shamsul A.B. "Perancangan Pembangunan Negera Selepas Merdeka 1957-1975", in *Malaysia: Sejarah dan Proses Pembangunan* (Kuala Lumpur, 1979), pp. 335-247; the general theoretical orientation of the pre-1969 and post-1969 five-year plans, especially the all-important Second Malaysia Plan; idem, "Rancangan Malaysia Kedua – Satu Penilaian dan Kritikan Teoritis", *Akademika* 10(1977): 1-17; and idem, "The Theoretical Orientations of the Second Malaysia Plan", in *Malaysia: Some Contemporary Issues in Socio-Economic Development*, ed. Cheong Kee Cheok et al. (Kuala Lumpur, 1979), pp. 3-9; and assessed critically the implementation of the rural development policy in post-colonial Malaysia, idem, "Pembangunan Pertanian". See also Syed Husin Ali, "Alternative Strategies for Rural Development", in *Fourth Malaysia*, ed. Jomo and Wells, pp. 45-50.

10 For details of the revised schemes, see Federation of Malaya, *Taxation and Replanting in the Rubber Industry* (Kuala Lumpur, 1955). An elaboration on the operation of the Replanting Fund A (estates) and B (smallholders) see Lim Chong Yah, "The Malayan Rubber Replanting Taxes", *Malayan Economic Review* 6(1961): 43-52.

11 The Mudie Mission recommended that new planting be permitted in order to attract investment to the rubber industry (1954, para 115). The colonial government accepted it but on the condition that it would not be detrimental to the replanting scheme as a whole and only in special circumstances, see L.C. Proc., 4 May, 1955 (Member for Economic Affairs), and *Taxation and Replanting in the Rubber Industry*. In short, the rubber policy was still seen, in official terms, as primarily geared towards replanting and re-development rather than development anew. It is in this sense that new planting was tied in many aspects to the revised replanting scheme.

12 See for example, Lim Chong Yah, "Malayan Rubber Replanting"; Bauer, "Post-War Malayan Rubber" and Rudner, "Malayan Rubber Policy".

13 Between 1952 and 1970, the Rubber Industry (Replanting) Board, first established by the colonial government 1952 and abolished in 1972, implemented four separate replanting schemes for smallholders utilizing Fund B. During the period the grants were increased four times. The details are as follows:

Scheme	*Duration*	*Grant*
No. 1	1/9/1952 to 31/12/1952	M$400
No. 2	1/1/1953 to 31/12/1959	M$500 (from Nov. 1954)
No. 3	1/1/1960 to 31/12/1966	M$600 (from Jan. 1960) (M$750 + $50 bonus (from Jan. 1962)
No. 4	1/1/1967 to 31/1/1970	M$750 + $50 bonus

Source: Rubber Industry Smallholders' Development Authority (RISDA) Reports.

14 See Rudner, "Malayan Rubber Policy", p. 251; S. Selvadurai, *Agriculture in Peninsular Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, 1979), pp. 20-38.

15 For detailed statistics and accounts on the success and failure of the smallholders revised scheme, see Minister of Commerce and Industry, L.C. Proc. December 1957 and April 1959, and the *Interim Review of Development in Malaya under the Second Five-Year Plan, 1963*. For ethnographic accounts on the impact of the schemes at the village level see, Michael Swift, "The Accumulation of Capital in a Peasant Economy", *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 5(1957): 330-332; idem, "Capital, Saving and Credit in a Malay Peasant Economy" in *Capital, Saving and Credit in Peasant Societes*, ed. R. Firth and B.S. Yamey (London, 1964), pp. 142-144; idem, *Malay Peasant Society in Jelebu* (London, 1965), pp. 53-63; Wilson, *A Malay Village and Malaysia*, pp. 71-98.

16 However, Wilder, *Communication, Social Structure*, p. 157 seems to be of the impression that the overall replanting programme, especially for rural smallholders was successful. His impression was derived from two sources which he cited, namely, F.H. Golay, "Malaya", in *Underdevelopment and Economic Nationalism in Southeast Asia*, ed., F.H. Golay et al. (Ithaca, 1971), pp. 330-348 and Robert Ho, *Farmers of Central Malaya* (Canberra, 1967), and not from his own field data or from a further reading of the existing literature on rubber replanting. Ironically, neither Golay nor Ho claimed that the replanting scheme was successful. On the contrary, Ho (ibid., pp. 90-93) was of the opinion that the implementation of the replanting scheme for smallholders was wrought with unresolved problems. Although Ho (ibid., pp. 14-18) was studying an area in central Pahang, it did not include the village or *mukim* where Wilder did his research. Golay (ibid., pp. 353, 370, 372), on the other hand, made general remarks on replanting and discussed the issue in the context of "racial discrimination", that is, pro-Malay, and land distribution in Malaya. He did not evaluate the impact of replanting on smallholders – successful or otherwise. One wonders how Wilder could have arrived at an impression contrary to the opinions expressed in the sources quoted. Admittedly, his study is not on "replanting and its impact of Malay peasants". But his criticism of Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development*, which I do not dispute, for the latter's lack of discussion on the role of replanting in Malaysia's rural development (Wilder, p. 210, footnote 7), is not only shallow but superfluous or to use Wilder's own expression, "curious and frustrating", and "superficial" for he himself fails to provide one. His two-paragraph discussion on replanting is grossly inadequate and the sources he cited were obscure and unimportant in the study of rubber replanting in Malaysia. In fact, his monograph has ignored many anthropological studies on Malay society available since 1966, which have dealt with all the aspects he claims being analysed for the first time by him (Wilder, pp. 4-5). Ness's "mistake" is inconsequential compared to Wilder's more serious anthropological deficiencies.

17 In 1956, following the *Report of the Working Party set up to Consider the Development of New Areas for Land Settlement in the Federation of Malaya*, L.C. Paper No. 11 of 1956, the federal government set up FELDA schemes. Though designed to promote land settlement first and foremost, FELDA was also committed to ensuring settlers' economic viability through planting with cash crops, particularly rubber. It was through FELDA, that the large-scale new

planting programme for smallholders was undertaken. For a comprehensive description of FELDA's origins, history and progress for the first two decades see, Tunku Shamsul and P.D.A. Perera, *FELDA – 21 Years of Land Development* (Kuala Lumpur, 1977).

In 1960, a Fringe Alienation Programme sponsored by the Ministry of Rural Development, meant for smallholders under 50 years old who owned uneconomic land holdings to plant new rubber trees was launched. The participants must come from within a three-mile radius of the scheme's location. Between 1961 to 1970 the federal government spent about M$50 million to finance 423 such schemes. The schemes did meet the success projected because most of the participants were not poor peasants but quite well-off UMNO local supporters. See Tunku Shamsul, "A Preliminary Study of the Fringe Alienation Schemes in West Malaysia", *Malayan Journal of Tropical Geography* 28(1969): 75-83.

In 1957, the Selangor and federal governments co-sponsored another new planting scheme called the Group Settlement Scheme for poor Malays and non-Malays to carry out the new planting of rubber. Each participant was given six acres of rubber land and two acres for kampung and orchard. Initial technical assistance was given by the Department of Agriculture, Selangor, see W. Senftleben, *Backgrounds to Agricultural Land Policy in Malaysia* (Wiesbaden, 1978), pp. 221-223.

18 Various records and accounts confirm that Malawati has been categorized primarily as a rice area. See for example, U. Narkswasdi and S. Selvadurai, *Economic Survey of Padi Production in West Malaysia Report No. 1 – Selangor* (Kuala Lumpur, 1967). In fact, one of the earliest large-scale irrigated rice schemes in colonial Malaya was that of Pancang Bedina in Malawati. See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, pp. 183-184, 217.

19 Between 1956 and 1973 there were only four FELDA schemes in Selangor all of which were located in the Ulu Selangor district. This was the only district in Selangor which had large areas of virgin jungle. Most of the FELDA settlers were from states other than Selangor. The Fringe Alienation Schemes began in 1961 and by 1970 Selangor had only three schemes, one in Ulu Selangor and two in Kuala Langat district. The participants came from within the mentioned districts. The Group Settlement Schemes of Selangor started in 1960 and by 1969 there were 10 schemes operating none of which was in Malawati. Therefore, rubber smallholders from Malawati district, in general, and from Kg. Chempaka, in particular, were not only disadvantaged by the overall pro-rice policy of the government but also by the fact that their district had been categorized as a rice area.

20 For further discussions on sharecropping systems in Malaysia see, A.F. Robertson "On Sharecropping", *Man* (N.S.) 15(1980): 411-429; F.A. Bray and A.F. Robertson, "Sharecropping in Kelantan, Malaysia", *Research in Economic Anthropology* 3(1980): 209-244, Fatimah Halim (psued.), "The Major Mode of Surplus Labour Appropriation in the West Malaysia Countryside: The Sharecropping System", *Journal of Peasant Studies* 10(1983): 256-278.

21 From my interviews with Haji Zainal I learnt that there was a large Malay

business community in Mecca and Medina, mainly Kelantanese. Some were retail traders, jewellers and goldsmiths, cloth traders, *Haji* agents or *Sheikh Haji*, construction contractors, etc. Other sources confirmed Haji Zainal's information. However, to the best of my knowledge, there has been no systematic study on this Malay community in Saudi Arabia. Other studies done by Malaysianists on the *Haji* tend to concentrate on what happened in Malaysia.

22 Most of the information on Malik's business background was obtained from either retired district office officials or from my interviews with Malik.

23 The war against "militant communism" was declared over on 31 July 1960, and hence the Emergency ended. Soon after, the Federal Government of Malaysia declared war against rural poverty, called *Gerakan Maju* or "Operations Development". The Ministry of National and Rural Development was given the sole responsibility of organizing plans and strategies to combat poverty, all of which were found in the official book with a red cover on Rural Development Strategies commonly called The Red Book. Operation Rooms were set up at the federal, state, district, *mukim* and village levels to monitor the implementation of programmes under Gerakan Maju. Part of the programmes involved the implementation of minor rural development projects – village mosques, *surau*, markets, bicycle paths, bus sheds, etc. Malik's business survived on these minor projects.

24 The stereotype that the Malays were economically backward because of their negative attitudes, indolence and rigid belief system was widely accepted by the general public as well as by "respected scholars" of Malay society in the 1960s. It is in this context that we must understand why Malik received such respect from his Chinese peers.

25 This figure came from a detailed examination of each of the 815 land titles listed under Kg. Chempaka Malay Reservation. Each title, called *geran tanah* contains, among other things, records of previous owners and dates of transfers. I also learnt that Haji Salam had land outside Kg. Chempaka, namely in other villages of Mawar. But the task of tracing the exact location and size of the property (which would entail sifting through about 2,500 other land titles for the whole Mukim Mawar) was forbidding. However, the figure is estimated at 30 to 40 acres.

26 See for example, Syed Husin Ali, *Malay Peasant Society*, pp. 89-91, 99.

27 Swift, "Economic Concentration and Malay Peasant Society", in *Social Organization: Essays Presented to Raymond Firth*, ed. M. Freedman (London, 1967), pp. 253-254.

28 See Ferguson, "The Story of Development", Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development*.

29 The records consulted were unpublished annual reports of various government departments and quasi-government institutions, namely, Agricultural, Public Works, Adult Education, Drainage and Irrigation and Co-operative departments; and the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) and the Farmers' Organization Authority (FOA). These reports in various files were irregular and often very brief.

30 See Shamsul A.B. "The Politics of Poverty Eradication: The Implementation of Development Projects in a Malaysian District", *Pacific Affairs* 56(1983): 455-476; and Mahathir Mohamed, *Malay Dilemma* (Singapore, 1970), p. 9.

31 I began conducting research on development planning in Malaysia in 1973, with a special focus on the controversial Second Malaysia Plan and its NEP. Since then I have come across no fewer than a thousand titles of unpublished and published materials (excluding government materials), both in English (35 percent) and Malay (65 percent), which analyse various features of the NEP. Those referred to directly in this book are listed in the bibliography.

32 See David Lim, "Malaysian Development Planning"; K.S. Jomo "Prospects for the New Economic Policy in Light of the Fourth Malaysia Plan", in *Fourth Malaysia*, ed. Jomo and Wells (Kuala Lumpur, 1983), pp. 51-61.

33 RISDA, or Rural Industry Smallholders' Development Authority, was established in February 1973 to take over from the Rubber Industry (Replanting) Board the developing of the rubber smallholders sector which was established by the post-war colonial government in 1952. RISDA's main role is "to be the modernizing agent and catalyst for smallholder development... adopting... an integrated and a systematic approach... This approach encompasses such programmes as individual or group replanting/new planting, credit facilities for agricultural inputs, the setting of development centres to purchase smallholder rubber, marketing of intercrops/livestock and smallholder training and extension services", in S. Reksopoetranto and G.S. Tan, eds., *The Progress and Development of Rubber Smallholders* (Kuala Lumpur, 1979), p. 157. Within Mukim Mawar RISDA's main programme is the replanting of rubber and other crops.

34 Details about Kg. Chempaka VDSC are based on a complete set of the committee's minutes obtained from the district office and the village head of Kg. Chempaka. Specific details of files will be cited if necessary. Based on these documents, interviews with the past and present members of the VDSC and the officials at the district office, I managed to acquire a detailed overview of the functioning of the VDSC since it was first established.

35 This term was used by the local RISDA officers to refer to their efforts to inculcate self-reliant, competitive, business-minded and hard-working attitudes in the smallholders. This is in fact an aspect of RISDA's national policy in line with the "high-need for achievement" criterion, made famous by David McClelland in *The Achieving Society* (Glencoe, 1961).

36 For detailed evaluation on the implementation of the GPC, see S. Wahid, "Amalan Hasil Penyelidikan Kebun-Kebun Tanam Semula dan Projek Modernisasi", RISDA, *Laporan Seminar Konsep* (Kuala Lumpur, 1974), pp. 63-82, C.H. Yeoh and P.D. Abraham, "Processing of Smallholders' Rubber in Group Processing Centres" (mimeograph RISDA, 1975); critical analysis of the whole concept and its implementation, see P.P. Courtenay, "Preliminary Review of the Location of Smallholder Rubber Modernization Efforts in Peninsula Malaysia", *Kabar Seberang* 1(1977): 19-28; and George Cho, "The Location of Development Centres for Rubber Smallholders in Peninsula Malaysia", in *Issues in Malaysian Development*, ed. Jackson and Rudner, pp. 101-129.

37 Reksopoetranto and Tan, *Progress and Development*, p. 194.

38 *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975*, pp. 43-44, paragraphs 140-146.

39 The source of this rumour was not known, according to the private secretary of the *wakil rakyat*. I have also checked on this information with the local RISDA officers who said that they were told by close supporters of the *wakil rakyat* but never heard it directly themselves. In my interview with the *wakil rakyat*, she avoided this issue, hence the "rumour" status.

40 I was approached by one of the *syarikat*'s members, to assist the *syarikat* in obtaining a licence for buying and selling oil palm, from PORLA (Palm Oil Registration and Licensing Authority).

41 For a more detailed discussion on the origins of political discrimination against Kg. Asal by the Mawar *wakil rakyat*, see Chapter 4, pp. 177-183. Specific forms of the discrimination and their occurrence are described in Chapter 5, pp. 221-225.

42 For a description and analysis on the "Baling Peasant Protest" see *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 December 1974, 20 December 1974 and 10 January 1975; see also Wan Hashim, *A Malay Peasant Community in Upper Perak* (Bangi, 1978), pp. 185-188.

43 Oil palm was a crop grown by European-owned estates since the 1890s, but not on a large scale. In the 1960s the crop gained tremendous popularity and has since become a major plantation crop besides rubber. Smallholders' participation began in a large-scale through FELDA and later by individual smallholders throughout the country. For detailed accounts of the history, development and success story on oil palm in Malaysia, see Khoo Swee Joo, "The Malayan Oil Palm Industry", *Kajian Ekonomi Malaysia*, 1(1964): 1-13; Tan Koon Lin, "The Oil Palm Industry in Malaya", (MA dissertation, University of Malaya, 1965); C.N. Williams and Y.C. Hsu, *Oil Palm Cultivation in Malaysia: Technical and Economic Aspect* (Kuala Lumpur, 1970); Harcharan S. Khera, *Oil Palm Industry of Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, 1976); Selvadurai, *Agriculture in Peninsular Malaysia*, pp. 84-100.

44 Since the oil palm industry began on a large scale in late colonial Malaya and progressed by leaps and bounds in the 1960s, it was grown mostly in estates. There were no oil palm smallholdings then. The technical problem of extracting oil from the fruit was beyond the capacity of the smallholders because the ripe fruit bunches had to be processed within 24 hours of harvesting. Without a processing factory close by growing oil palm was out of question for the smallholders. Marketing the fruit is another major problem for the majority of peasant smallholders. For Kg. Chempaka villagers, they were fortunate to have three oil palm processing factories within 15-mile radius.

45 The local RISDA officers confirmed that cultivating oil palm and the work of tending the crop until it is harvested though for only three years demand much greater attention than rubber during its first crucial two years. Selecting the appropriate type of seedlings to suit the soil is particularly important, so is the choice of fertilizers and herbicides. Moreover, the crop is prone to insect and disease attacks and needs constant daily attention. A proper drainage system is also crucial particularly in Kg. Chempaka which is essentially a natural swamp

area. On top of these technical problems, one has also to pay special attention to the number of trees planted and distances between them. If the trees are planted too closely the full grown branches will overlap and thus inhibit proper growth of the trees and fruits. It will obstruct pollination and make harvesting difficult. Transporting the heavy ripe fruit bunches, each weighing about 35 pounds, from each tree to a chosen central collection point from where the dealer loads the fruit into a truck is also a problem. Usually, the smallholders use a bicycle or motorbike to transport the fruit bunches from each tree to the collection point. Then there is the problem of collecting loose fruits on the ground. Rats are known to destroy the young fruits, and snakes are commonly found in any oil palm plots creating risks for the smallholders. There were a few minor cases of smallholders being bitten by snakes when I was in the field. For details on the technical aspects of oil palm planting and problems, see Ng Siew Kee, "Soil Suitability for Oil Palms in West Malaysia", in *Oil Palm Developments in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, 1968), pp 11-17; J.J. Olie and T.D. Tjeng, *The Extraction of Palm Oil* (Kuala Lumpur, 1974); William and Hsu, *Oil Palm Cultivation*, pp. 9-18; Khera, *Oil Palm Industry*, pp. 1-16.

46 Personal communications with my relatives who are FELDA settlers and confirmed by officers at FELDA headquarters (Settlers' Development Section), Kuala Lumpur. It is also important to note that rubber smallholders do not have such problems. In fact, these problems were very much in the minds of the few in Kg. Chempaka who decided to grow rubber instead of oil palm amidst the latter's popularity with Kg. Chempaka smallholders.

47 See *RISDA Annual Reports* for 1971, 1979, 1980. In FELDA schemes the average monthly income per settler of those growing oil palm exceeded those growing rubber by 50 percent to 80 percent. See *FELDA Annual Reports* for 1970 to 1980 and Khera, *Oil Palm Industry*, p. 153. Both sources also indicate that oil palm prices suffer fewer fluctuations than rubber at least in the 1970s.

48 It was alleged that the fertilizer supplied was from an unsold stock which ICI wanted to dispose quickly and cheaply. I was not able to ascertain the accuracy of the allegation. However, historically, ICI had been the major, if not the sole, supplier of chemical fertilizer to the various government and quasi-government bodies. Its interests had been represented quite strongly even in the Malaysian cabinet especially in 1950s and early 1960s. An effort to break its monopoly in the production of urea fertilizer led to the political demise of a Malaysian cabinet minister, see Aziz Ishak, *Special Guest*, pp. 27-34.

49 Minutes of the VDSC meetings of Kg. Kasturi were obtained from the district office and covered the period between 1971 and 1981. I also obtained minutes of Mukim Mawar Development and Security Committee meetings for the 1975 to 1981 period. This *mukim* level committee is headed by the *penghulu*, as chairperson, and all village heads of the *mukim* were automatically committee members. It also includes local government officials. The whole *mukim* committee meets every two months.

50 Information on coconut and coffee growing in Malawati district were obtained from three main sources. (i) the Agricultural Department; (ii) the Farmers'

Organization Authority, (iii) sets of briefings on the two crops given by officers from the two bodies mentioned above during the annual visits to Malawati by the *Menteri Besar* (chief minister), and the Sultan of Selangor. The visits of the two dignitaries entailed elaborate preparations and participation of all government and non-government officials of the district as well as politicians and villagers. The whole exercise began with an official briefing on the current development performance of the district by the DO, then by the various heads of departments and quasi-government bodies. The first day of the visits was normally declared a public holiday for the district. The occasion usually generated much competition amongst officers, politicians and local businessmen to get the attention of the dignitaries, in the hope that their names would be included in the future list of medal recipients (*bintang*), from the state.

51 Selvadurai, *Agriculture in Peninsular Malaysia*, pp. 147-154.

52 It is interesting to note that out of the 425 Malay households, 287 are of Javanese descent, 65 Banjarese (from Bandjarmasin, Kalimantan), 30 Peninsular Malays, 14 Sumatrans (mostly from Kubu of East Sumatra) and 29 mixed. This sub-ethnic breakdown is significant insofar as it required that I learn the Javanese dialect in order to carry out the field research as it is the *lingua franca* within the village. It is also significant for understanding some aspects of the cultural practices which are identified by the social actors themselves as Javanese, Banjarese, etc. Between these sub-ethnic groups I observed some differences in their daily diet indicated by the use or non-use of certain food items. For instance, *tempe* or fermented soya bean, is one of the staple foods amongst the Javanese, after rice and tapioca. For more details on some of my fieldwork problems, see Shamsul A.B., "The Superiority of Indigenous Scholars? Some Facts and Fallacies with Special Reference Malay Anthropologists and Sociologists in Fieldwork", *Manusia dan Masyarakat* (Siri Baru), 3 (1982): 24-33.

53 My data were collected in a household and property survey in early 1981. Comparisons were made with the data collected by the village head during the nationwide 1980 Census done in June 1980. There were very slight differences.

54 The villagers have their own concepts and terminologies which they commonly use to describe the various social classes within and outside the village. The village rich and well-to-do are called *orang kaya, berada, senang, mewah*; the village middle category are called *orang sederhana kayanya* or *sedang kayanya*; and the village poor are called *orang susah, miskin, sempit*, which include the wage labourers (*kuli, buruh*), the agricultural labourers (*buruh kampung, buruh upahan*), and poor peasant smallholders (*pekebun kecil miskin*). Using these terms, together with variables such as occupation, land ownership, income, size of enterprise, I have constructed a "micro social class structure" of the village, hence the terms *village* bourgeoisie, *village* petty bourgeoisie and *village* proletariat.

It must be noted here that attempts to construct class categories at the village level are more for descriptive purposes than an abstract, conceptual one. For an enlightening discussion on this issue in the Malaysian context see Diana Wong, "The Social Organization of Peasant Reproduction: A Village In Kedah", pp. 327-332.

55 *If we apply the concept of landlordism rigidly, there* should be another category *within Kg. Chempaka peasantry, that is, the* smallholder-landlord category. This *included four ageing individuals who had part of* their plots cultivated by their *in-laws and cousins who happened to have* built their homes on the same land as *the owners. There existed a loose agreement* as to the method and frequency of *rent payment. When interviewed, an owner* said that "I don't really worry *whether he (the son-in-law) pays rent or not;* or he shares whatever he had earned *from tapping the rubber trees or not.* After all, all his incomes are spent on looking *after my daughter and my grandson.* But I do *borrow* money from him when *necessary*". *In a separate interview,* the son-in-law said that "he (the father-in-*law) asked me to pay part of* the annual land taxes if I could, and lend him money *from time to time.* But usually he *borrowed,* he never paid back" (my emphasis). It *is common for* the "borrow-lend" agreement to exist between relatives and in-laws amongst the Malays, irrespective of whether one is a landowner and or a tenant/sharecropper. In short, in the four cases mentioned the agreement between the two parties was a "primordial social contract" (for want of a better term) and not strictly an economic one, unlike the other cases discussed in this section of the chapter. Hence I categorize the owners as smallholders and the in-laws as landless persons but members of the extended households.

56 According to Swift, "Economic Concentration", p. 263, "In (Malay) village society there is no clear distinction between the man who works only his own land, and the man who owns some land and rents some, and the man who rents all the land he works". To a great extent, this remark is still applicable to the situation in Kg. Chempaka, especially amongst the landed and economically active adults. See also Kessler, *Islam and Politics*, p. 95.

4

OLD ANTAGONISMS, NEW RIVALRIES

Sectional Interest and Political Rivalries in Kampung Chempaka

Since the introduction of modern electoral politics after the Second World War in Malaya, any study of village politics is incomplete without examining party politics and their role in shaping social reality within the village context. This is particularly crucial in Malaysia's case because the political system rather than the administrative system has become the major conduit of goods and services from the government to the village, especially in the last decade. (See Chapter 5 for details on this phenomenon.) Inevitably the village political structure, or for that matter its overall social structure, is the end product of a complex interaction between intra- and extra-village developments. In other words, as Kessler has rightly pointed out:

> Local issues are but national issues in a particular guise, concrete and immediately apprehendable, and the articulation of responses to them, in the distinctive dialects of particular contexts, is far from unreal.[3]

However, Kessler in his penetrating study of a Kelantan rural community, has also demonstrated that it is not sufficient to understand contemporary rural politics in the role of political parties

without delving into a detailed examination of its social history. Through his meticulous analysis he revealed that the new political rivalries expressed through party platforms were in fact old antagonisms reincarnated. At a more general level, he was arguing that the ahistorical bias of most studies on Malaysian politics had several common side effects: an over-emphasis on harmony and integration and a highly conservative interpretation of society, as well as a selective over-stress on certain aspects of culture and society, namely, religion and ethnicity.[2]

This chapter examines the historical and sociological context of Kg. Chempaka politics. It gives a brief account of Kg. Chempaka's political and social history during the inter-war years which was characterized by divisive conflicts generated largely by competing sectional interests (intra- and extra-village) and, was further complicated by a series of unfavourable ecological conditions.[3] Then, follows a detailed discussion of the origins and developments of political parties in Kg. Chempaka and Mukim Mawar. Of particular importance in this context is the examination of the specific issues which became the basis of political contention within the village. The whole discussion covers the period between 1948 and 1969, that is, the late colonial Malayan era, and the post-independence years until 1969. Finally, the focus will be on the political consequences within Mukim Mawar and Kg. Chempaka politics as a result of the political realignments at the national level after 1969.

Consensus and Discord during the Inter-War Years in Kampung Chempaka

Kg. Chempaka's beginning and the whole of its social history seemed to have been in direct opposition to the idyllic and stereotyped view of the Malay village, often portrayed by colonial administrators-scholars, as a place of harmony, equality, abundance and tranquility.[4] As a village, it was born out of crisis (nation-wide as well as world-wide) and it was first established in a manner which contravened colonial rules and created disquiet amongst district colonial administrative functionaries.[5] Throughout the inter-war years its growth and development were by no means trouble-free,

socially and ecologically. Thus it was neither a harmonious entity and a place of abundance nor an egalitarian whole. Social reality within the village was constantly being restructured by social relations external to it, that is, the colonial context within which it existed.

Falling rubber prices and soaring rice prices immediately after the First World War created enormous economic and social pressures amongst the Mawar peasantry. Most Mawar peasants then were already dependent on rubber for their livelihood and hence on imported rice for their basic food supply. The only way out, as some of them saw it, was to turn to the wasteland, left uncultivated by the foreign plantation owners, beyond the rubber estates that surrounded them, and grow food crops there. Hence the wasteland was cleared soon after the war as *ladang* or shifting cultivation area.

The decision by the early pioneers to open up the wasteland was a controversial one. Since January 1887, the Selangor colonial government had disallowed *ladang* cultivation, in favour of rice and coconut cultivation – a policy actively resumed after the rice crisis of 1917-18.[6] Therefore, officially, Kg. Chempaka as a *ladang* was an illegal area. The *penghulu* of Mawar who was empowered by the colonial government to deal with land and agricultural matters in his *mukim* was offended by the pioneers' *ladang* cultivation.[7] It was understandable why he was very displeased over this issue. He had been frequently praised by the DO of Malawati for his success in encouraging his *anak buah* or fellow villagers, to grow rice, coconuts and such, instead of involving themselves in *ladang* cultivation. Thus, the activities of the Kg. Chempaka early pioneers were seen by him as ignoring his authority, and, at the same time, as affecting his good image, *vis-à-vis* the DO. The *penghulu* instructed the leader of the pioneer group, Ahmad, to tell his men not to grow short-term crops, such as tapioca, vegetables and the like, but to grow rice and coconut instead. The instruction was not followed by Ahmad and his men, who later settled in the area where the *ladang* was sited and called it Kg. Asal. But, the subsequent settlers who opened up other parts of the wasteland, which, later became Kg. Kasturi, Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Teratai followed the *penghulu's* instruction. This ultimately defused the *ladang* issue before it became a major local conflict.

Therefore, from the outset, the *penghulu*-peasant relationship in

Kg. Chempaka encountered problems. This set the tone of the subsequent history of the relationship between the local colonial government functionaries, and the Kg. Chempaka peasantry.

About two years after Kg. Chempaka was declared a Malay Reservation area in 1921 and a year after the 1922 Stevenson Restriction Scheme was introduced, the *penghulu*-peasant relationship in Kg. Chempaka was put to the test once more. Again, it was over another agricultural issue. This time it developed into a major conflict, involving Ahmad, the leader of Kg. Asal, and his fellow villagers, on the one side, and the *penghulu* and, for the first time, his loyal supporters, on the other. The outcome of the conflict not only soured the *penghulu*-peasant relationship, but was also significant in shaping future socio-political relationships within colonial and post-colonial Kg. Chempaka.

It began when Ahmad and his villagers decided to grow rubber which meant violating not only the Malay Reservation Enactment but also the Stevenson Restriction Scheme.[8] Prior to this they were growing food crops, a portion of which was given to the *penghulu* as a gift – a common practice since pre-colonial days in Mawar. The *penghulu* strongly resented on official as well as personal grounds Ahmad and his villagers' decision to grow rubber. Ali of Kg. Kasturi and Haji Abdul of Kg. Chempaka proper, both unofficial village heads, were also unhappy with Ahmad's decision and were on the *penghulu*'s side. Despite the *penghulu*'s warning and condemnation from his peers, Ahmad, and his villagers continued to cultivate rubber. In fact, Ahmad organized a mass application from his villagers to the district administration to change their land status and cultivation conditions from non-rubber to rubber land. What was significant in this event was that he bypassed the *penghulu*, whose approval was necessary, if not mandatory, before the officials at the district office could act on any land application from the *penghulu*'s *mukim*.[9]

The *penghulu* was reportedly enraged over Ahmad's action. The issue dragged on for two years during which time many angry words were exchanged between the parties involved. As a result, in 1925, when the *penghulu* officially proclaimed and gave a *surat tauliah*, (letter of appointment) to Ali, Haji Abdul and Umar, as the official village heads of Kg. Kasturi, Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Teratai, respectively, Ahmad was left out. Not only did the *penghulu* not

appoint Ahmad as the official village head of Kg. Asal, he also denied Kg. Asal full official village status. Instead he declared Kg. Asal to be part of Kg. Chempaka and henceforth under the jurisdiction of Haji Abdul, who then became the official headman for the new Kg. Chempaka (consisting of Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal). The *penghulu* also made sure that the land applications of Kg. Asal villagers were not approved by the district office. Attempts made by Ahmad and his villagers to appeal to the district office on both matters (the village status and land applications) were turned down. Instead, the district office ordered the villagers of Kg. Asal to cut down the rubber trees and pay fines for their offences. Some ignored this ruling while others obeyed. But most of those who cut down their rubber trees did so for economic reasons not because of government orders.

For economic reasons and as a protest against the *penghulu* and the district administration, Ahmad and a few of his close friends and families left Kg. Asal and moved to Tanjung Karam, an area to the north of Malawati district. He was replaced by one of his students, Zainal, who was the villagers' popular choice. He was reputed to be a religious man too. The "*peristiwa 1925*", or the "1925 affair", as it was called, signalled the beginning of what was to be protracted antagonism between the peasants and office-holding élite within Kg. Chempaka and Mawar. The conflict, which was economic in origin and resolved (at least from the *penghulu* and his supporters' view) politically, was significant for a number of reasons. It was not simply a manifestation of "everyday forms of peasant resistance", as some would have labelled it.[10] It was essentially an articulation of two opposing sectional interests which must be understood in economic and political terms defined by the colonial context.

The *penghulu* group comprised the official élite, whose origins could be traced to pre-colonial Mawar. Over the years and through various means of coercion (see Chapter 2), they had become "leaders of peasants" within the *mukim;* mainly on a self-chosen basis and, later, incorporated into and sanctioned by the colonial government.[11] They were not only rich landowners, but also the regular recipients of various forms of financial aid and bureaucratic privileges from the local district office.[12] In short, they may have lost economic control of the local economy but were not necessarily rendered poor. The social basis of their leadership was more political than economic. The "1925

affair" was an example of how they used their political power (in line with the colonial government policy) to deny peasants a free choice of what to cultivate on their lands. At the same time, it gave the opportunity to the *penghulu* to demonstrate his personal influence, not without strong support from the district office.

The peasant group consisted of individuals who had been given individual rights to own land by the same colonial regime through its land tenure system. However, the right to own did not automatically give them the right to cultivate what they chose. Nonetheless, the peasants seemed to ignore this and continued to react with economic rationality in cultivating crops which they thought most profitable to them. They were following what the leader of their choice did, that is, Ahmad, who in this context could be categorized as a "peasant leader", for he was a peasant himself and demonstrated that he was representing the interests, needs and aspiration of his own class. His willingness to fight, on behalf of and with the peasants, for the right to cultivate rubber at the expense of losing the headmanship was seen by his fellow villagers as a big self-sacrifice and hence he is always remembered as a genuine leader. Ahmad commanded respect and loyalty from Kg. Asal villagers because of his religiosity (*kealimannya*), and this particular quality was said to be his guiding principle. But, he and his supporters failed to achieve what they fought for and the interests of the *penghulu* group prevailed.

However, the "1925 affair" at another level represented a conflict of interests between the local peasantry and the colonial state. The latter was represented locally by its agent, namely, the *penghulu* and those at the district office. The conflict in Kg. Chempaka did not develop into an open confrontation, such as those which took place in other Malay states during the colonial period.[13] Nonetheless, it had its consequences which subsequently affected not only peasant-official relationship in Kg. Chempaka, but also many local issues long after it was over.

One of the most profound consequences of the conflict which remained until recent times involved the official status of Kg. Asal. The villagers did not take kindly to the official denial of Kg. Asal's right to exist as a village on its own and to have an official village head of their choice. To be incorporated into and thus become a part of the new Kg. Chempaka was never acceptable to Zainal and

Kg. Asal villagers. In short, Kg. Asal continued to claim its "independence" and, in many instances, its villagers refused to adhere to instructions given by Haji Abdul, or to co-operate with him on official matters. It was said that Haji Abdul was neither warmly welcomed nor was he comfortable during his visits to Kg. Asal to carry out his official duties. He often sent his assistant Haji Salam to Kg. Asal if the need arose. Haji Abdul's relationship with Zainal remained one of mutual hatred. Nonetheless, Haji Abdul had the upper hand by virtue of his official position. For example, he continued making attempts to evict from Kg. Asal those who grew rubber illegally and refused to cut down the trees. A few families whose lands were without official titles had to submit to his instructions. As a businessman, who employed a substantial number of labourers, he was in a position to provide jobs. After the floods of 1927, which badly affected some families from Kg. Asal, Haji Abdul became an important employer to many of the flood victims, not only from Kg. Chempaka proper, Kg. Teratai and Kg. Kasturi, but also from Kg. Asal. In this context, his official position was reinforced by his economic one, especially in the eyes of a section of Kg. Asal villagers. Ironically, it was the labourers, whom he recruited from Kg. Asal, who were responsible for his political demise in 1934.

During the economic depression of the early 1930s Haji Abdul's business survived mainly on minor government contracts awarded to him, such as constructing new irrigation canals, repairing and maintaining old ones, constructing wooden dams, and so forth. These projects were implemented as part of a strategy of the administration to boost peasant rice production, not only within Malawati but also throughout the Malay states.[14] In one such project, Haji Abdul employed a few Kg. Asal villagers as his labourers. A dispute between Haji Abdul and three of his labourers (two of whom were from Kg. Asal) developed over the payment of some bonus. (Some aspects of this dispute has been dealt with in Chapter 2, pp. 43-44.) When Haji Abdul failed to pay the bonus the labourers concerned lodged a report with the police as well as with the district office, but not without the help and instigation of Zainal, the present leader of Kg. Asal.

The *penghulu* intervened by appealing to the DO on behalf of Haji Abdul and reportedly requested to let him settle the matter informally. He was said to have met the labourers involved and

Zainal to ask them to withdraw the report and promised to do something about the official status of Kg. Asal and to expedite some of the land applications of the villagers. According to Zainal (now Haji Zainal), he refused to negotiate on "religious grounds" (see page 44). But a further detailed investigation of the whole issue revealed that the "religious" reason was only a secondary one. Although, since the "1925 affair", Zainal was said to have mentioned quite often that some day the Almighty will show who was right and wrong or *siapa benar, siapa salah;* he was also heard saying that he was waiting for the opportunity to take revenge on Haji Abdul and the *penghulu* for what they did to Ahmad and Kg. Asal as a whole. As a result of Zainal's refusal, the dispute was finally resolved by the DO who found it difficult to act in any other way but officially since it had become a police matter.

An official investigation was conducted and it was found that Haji Abdul had been underpaying his labourers not only in this particular case but also in a few others. He was fined by the DO, who could also act as a magistrate with a limited jurisdiction and relieved of his office as the official village head of Kg. Chempaka. Haji Abdul and his family left the village soon after, reportedly returning to Java, and was replaced by Haji Salam. Although Zainal and the labourers involved were pleased with the result, Zainal was said to have been disappointed that he was not appointed by the DO to replace Haji Abdul. He believed he had done something positive or *berjasa*, for the district administration by encouraging his fellow villagers to report Haji Abdul's misconduct. This could be considered a politically naive reaction on the part of Zainal, who should have realized that the *penghulu* was still responsible for choosing the potential village head candidate although the final official approval came from the DO.

Therefore, this time, the "1934 scandal" (as it is still known today) brought a "happy" ending to the peasants but not to the *penghulu* group who, in the "1925 affair" were the "victors" (for want of a better word). At one level, it could be seen as a case of peasants successfully redeeming the balance or restoring equality and social justice through the very structure which had inhibited their social and economic well-being in the past. But in real and empirical terms the two labourers, who reported the case were later, refused employment by the businessmen in Mawar who labelled them as

trouble-makers or *kaki kacau*. One of them left the village and the other became a tenant/sharecropper to an absentee landlord until he obtained a few acres of land in Kg. Baru, a village adjacent to Kg. Chempaka which was established in the late 1960s. Within Kg. Chempaka, the "1934 scandal" manifested the continuing tension between Kg. Asal peasants and the official élite which began when Kg. Chempaka was established in 1916. Underlying this discord were issues which were indirectly or directly related to the colonial adminstration policies on land and agriculture. The articulation of the discord took other forms, too, which seemed unrelated to the wider structural issues. The controversy over the re-siting of the mosque in 1936 (hereafter referred to as the "1936 mosque controversy") was a case in point.

In 1921, Ahmad and his villagers built a wooden and attap-roofed mosque – the first and only mosque in the newly-settled wasteland area for about 15 years. It was on a site located at the east end of the present Kg. Chempaka, close to a government forest reserve. The mosque was quite small but was more than sufficient to accommodate 40 individuals, the minimum size of the weekly Friday prayers assembly or *jumaah* as stipulated by Islamic law. Although the mosque was mainly used by Kg. Asal villagers for their daily prayers (Kg. Teratai, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Chempaka proper had their own *surau*), it was the only religious centre in the new area where villagers attended their weekly Friday prayers, for *Maulud Nabi* (every twelfth *Rabiulawal* of the Muslim month to celebrate the Prophet's birthday) and for *Hari Raya* prayers (on every first *Syawal* to celebrate the end of the *Ramadan* fasting, and on every tenth *Zulhijah*, the day of sacrifice and the Mecca pilgrimage). The mosque was a religious as well as a social centre for the inhabitants of the new settlements. Ahmad was the *imam* (prayer leader), and the *khatib* (sermon reader) on most occasions. Thus, he was playing the religious leader role of the area and the unofficial village head for Kg. Asal at the same time. He continued performing both roles until he left Kg. Asal after the "1925 affair". By popular demand, Zainal took over both positions soon after Ahmad left.

In 1936, the new Kg. Chempaka village head, Haji Salam, suggested to Zainal the need to move the mosque to a more central location in the village. The proposed site was to be in Kg. Chempaka proper but close to the boundary which separated it from Kg. Asal.

The half acre site was donated by Haji Salam. Zainal refused to accept the suggestion on the grounds that the mosque was one of the fewsymbols of village "independence" which Kg. Asal still possessed after the "1925 affair". This he was not willing to give up and his decision was supported by most of his fellow villagers. To avoid the issue turning into a conflict, Haji Salam quickly proposed that the new mosque should be sited on the Kg. Asal side of the boundary. Zainal agreed to this and persuaded one of his villagers, Kasman, to donate part of his land for the new site hence it was called *wakaf* Kasman. The *wakaf* (land left to a mosque) was in the centre of Kg. Asal. Nonetheless, Haji Salam accepted the proposed site. Zainal was said to be pleased with his achievement in retaining the mosque within Kg. Asal, and thus the symbol of "independence" for his village. The new mosque was completed in 1936. Haji Salam and Zainal jointly organized the construction with the full participation of villagers from Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal who provided not only the labour but also donations towards buying the building materials. The new mosque was much bigger and was able to accommodate about 100 to 150 people at prayer each time. Its compound was larger too, sufficient for three large tents (20 x 30 feet) to be erected if and when necessary during *Maulud Nabi* or other religious festivities.

Soon after the new mosque was completed another dispute between Haji Salam and Zainal emerged over the selection of mosque officials. Haji Salam suggested that the officials should comprise individuals from both Kg. Asal and Kg. Chempaka proper. But Zainal, on the other hand, insisted that the officials of the previous mosque be retained. Firstly, they were experienced in the running of a mosque. Secondly, although the *qariah* (area served by a mosque) had expanded to include Kg. Chempaka proper, the mosque was still in Kg. Asal, thus the duty to look after it remained in the hands of Kg. Asal inhabitants. Haji Salam was reported to be unhappy over Zainal's obstinacy in refusing to compromise. Villagers from Kg. Chempaka proper, especially those involved in constructing the mosque as well as those who had donated money towards it, were unhappy, too.

Haji Salam apparently discussed this problem with other leaders of Kg. Asal and some elders from the village. He found all, save for a small group, were supporting Zainal on this issue. It was not a

coincidence that the small group consisted mainly of Haji Salam's own labourers and a few ordinary villagers. This particular group was said to have felt that Zainal's stand on this issue was inflexible. With the full support of Kg. Chempaka proper's villagers and a section of Kg. Asal's, Haji Salam told Zainal that he was going to consult the members of the mosque assembly on this matter, and let them decide on a resolution. Zainal at first agreed to Haji Salam's proposal believing that he had the full support of his fellow villagers, which since the "1925 affair" he had never failed to receive. When he found out that he would not have the total support of Kg. Asal villagers on this matter, Zainal softened and agreed to Haji Salam's original proposal, but not without setting a condition. He wanted to retain the position of *imam* (prayer leader) and Haji Salam accepted this. So, the selection of the mosque officials was resolved before it was brought up at a public meeting. Both villages were equally represented and Zainal retained his *imam* position. Haji Salam announced the appointment of the new mosque officials at a Friday prayer congregation and Zainal managed to avoid a public embarrassment. He could have lost the *imam* post to Haji Salam, though it was unlikely, but, more importantly, it would have been bad for his image if he had been publicly opposed by a section of his own villagers. Although Zainal was said to have approached the opposing group amongst his villagers and tried to regain their support before the public meeting, the latter did not change their stand. He was told by some members of the group (namely, Haji Salam's labourers) that Haji Salam expected their support on the controversial issue and they did not intend to offend him as their livelihood depended on him. Zainal was disappointed that Kg. Asal villagers were not united but he did not take any retaliatory action towards this group. Perhaps there was too much at stake for him personally to raise this matter publicly.

Nonetheless, the events of the "1936 mosque controversy" revealed at least two major patterns. Firstly, the problematic official-peasant relationship within Kg. Chempaka continued to exist and was brought into the open yet again, only this time over a local issue. It also brought into a sharper focus the political polarization between the villagers of Kg. Asal and Kg. Chempaka proper which prior to this was between the government functionaries (such as the *penghulu*, Haji Abdul and Haji Salam) and Kg. Asal

villagers led by Ahmad and, later Zainal. Secondly, for the first time since the "1925 affair", the political unity of Kg. Asal villagers showed signs of breaking down. The issue may seem petty but judging from Zainal's reaction it was quite a serious one. He was forced into a face-saving compromise with Haji Salam over the selection of the new mosque officials. The evidence seemed to suggest that economic factors were partly responsible in generating the rift within Kg. Asal. However, it is important to note that although the "1936 mosque controversy" ended in a peaceful manner, its sequel which began in mid-1970 turned into a major local political conflict within Kg. Chempaka, almost resulting in an outbreak of physical violence. To what extent these incipient class contradictions influenced future political configurations within Kg. Asal will be discussed later in this chapter.

Since Kg. Chempaka was essentially a swampy area converted into a settlement it was prone to flooding. It also experienced other forms of natural disaster such as drought and fire. The two major ones were the 1927 flood and the 1937-1939 floods, drought and fire. On each occasion the worst affected area within Kg. Chempaka was Kg. Asal, and after each disaster dozens of families abandoned their lands and migrated. Each time it took a few years before the devastated areas were re-cultivated, either by former settlers or newcomers. According to the colonial government's legislation any landowner who failed to pay his land taxes for three consecutive years would lose his ownership rights. In other words, after every major disaster many peasant families, especially those in Kg. Asal lost their lands. These lands were then available to the public. The enforcement of this regulation had generated at least two major land disputes in the second half of the 1930s in Kg. Chempaka. The first one occurred in 1935 (hereafter referred to as the "1935 land dispute") and the second in 1939 (hereafter referred to as the "1939 land dispute").

The "1935 land dispute" involved 25 acres of land in Kg. Asal abandoned by their owners after the 1927 floods. There were two groups of applicants, namely, Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar (both from the official-elite group in Kg. Chempaka) and a small group of peasants from Kg. Asal including Zainal. The former applied without the knowledge of the latter but with the support of the *penghulu*. In their application they promised to cultivate rice on the abandoned

land in line with the colonial government's 1932 rice policy. The latter applied with the same aim of growing rice but without the expressed intention of adhering to any policy except to fulfil their own needs. They were furious when the *penghulu* told them that Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar had applied for the same land because Haji Salam had not mentioned it when he was consulted earlier. Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar succeeded in obtaining the land as they had strong support from the *penghulu* and they were able to pay the substantial tax arrears which Zainal and colleagues could not afford. Apparently, the tax had not been paid for about ten years.[15] It is interesting to note that the *penghulu* also acquired about six acres of the abandoned land under his son's name.

This resulted in the Kg. Asal villagers accusing the *penghulu* of having conspired with Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar to cheat them. To pacify the angry villagers, the new owners offered to allow them to cultivate rice on the abandoned land on a sharecropping basis. A few accepted while the rest, including Zainal, refused the offer. In fact, Haji Salam and Cikgu Omar entered their newly-acquired rice plots for the rice competition organized by the district office, but they were unsuccessful. (See Chapter 2, pp. 46-48 for details on the various agricultural and other forms of competition organized by the district office to promote rice and agricultural production in the district.) The "1935 land dispute " further deepened the antagonisms between the peasant leaders of Kg. Asal and the rich, official clique within Kg. Chempaka in particular and Mawar in general. The "1936 mosque controversy" was another expression of this continuing tension.

The "1939 land dispute" involved not only the Kg. Chempaka official élite and the villagers of Kg. Chempaka proper but also the Kg. Kasturi village head and his villagers, on the one side, and Kg. Asal villagers, on the other. It began when the village heads of Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Teratai applied to the district office to change the cultivation conditions of the 1939 drought and fire affected land from *tanah kampung* to rubber land. They also applied, on behalf of their villagers, for the lands in Kg. Teratai and Kg. Asal which were abandoned by their owners after the 1937 floods. The applications were partially successful. As a policy, the district office did not allow change in the cultivation conditions. Instead, the disaster-affected villagers were given some government assistance to replant their

land with coconut. The application for the land in Kg. Asal was approved but not the change in the cultivation conditions.

This time, it was Ali, the Kg. Kasturi village head, who took full advantage of the opportunity to acquire more land for himself and his family. A few other families from Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Kasturi also obtained land in Kg. Asal and Kg. Teratai, too. Kg. Asal villagers were the more vocal in opposing what they called the takeover scheme of Haji Salam and Ali. In fact they viewed it as *penkerindahan* (the outrage of Kg. Asal) by the newcomers. The hostilities stemmed from the Kg. Asal villagers' belief that they should have had first refusal and had been discriminated once again.

Zainal once more organized an official protest to the district office and met with no success. Apparently Zainal and other peasant leaders of Kg. Asal, together with a small group from Kg. Teratai, confronted Haji Salam, Ali and the *penghulu* demanding the land be returned to the natives of each village. Again, the protest ended in failure. The "1939 land dispute" was considered by many villagers of Kg. Asal as the worst in the series of conflicts they had with the establishment and its functionaries since 1916, equalled only by the "1945 affair". In the latter they were denied the right to cultivation of their choice and the village lost its official status too. In the former they were denied the ownership of land within their own village, but the very same land they wanted was given to "newcomers" (that is, people from outside the village) by the establishment. This was done, as one of them said, literally in front of their eyes.

So far we have examined a series of cases involving conflicts which impinged on the relationship between the official élite group and the villagers and their leaders within Kg. Chempaka and beyond. In all the cases except the "1936 mosque controversy", the conflicts emerged as the result of issues either related to land or colonial agricultural policies, or both. In political terms, the conflicts were articulated in the form of conflict between prominent personalities within Kg. Chempaka but belonging to different social classes, namely, the official elite class and the peasant class. The former including the *penghulu* of Mawar were furthering not only their personal and sectional interests but also expressing the underlying interests of the colonial administration. Those in the peasant class were not only expressing their class interest but also their personal interests too. Zainal is a case in point. The expression of the class

contradictions was further complicated by the fact that it was generally perceived as an issue of localism, that is, "independence" from Kg. Chempaka proper. The origins of this polarization could be traced to the "1925 affair" when Kg. Asal was denied the official status as a village. Henceforth, the conflicts in Kg. Chempaka were quite often perceived phenomenologically by the social actors as territorially-based, that is, Kg. Asal versus Kg. Chempaka proper or part personality and part territory, that is, Kg. Asal and Zainal versus the official-élite group of Kg. Chempaka and Mawar. The complicated dynamics of political rivalries within Kg. Chempaka, cannot be understood in terms of class factors alone, personality clashes, or "territorial oppositions". The evidence clearly reveals that all the elements were closely interconnected and represented the different facets of the one complex social reality within Kg. Chempaka which continuously influenced one another. However, such a complex social reality and the contradictions within it often found its most overt expression in the political sphere. In the case of Kg. Chempaka its full political potential was unleashed with the advent of modern electoral politics soon after the Second World War.

Therefore, in the next section we will turn to the development of political parties within Mawar and Kg. Chempaka, and examine how old antagonisms are reincarnated and expressed in the new political party rivalries, how new issues emerge and accentuate existing tensions, and the emergence of new personalities. The analysis will also constantly examine how these political conflicts are directly or indirectly shaped by the ever-changing social structure of the wider society.

Political Parties in Kampung Chempaka: Origins and Development

When the details of the proposed Malayan Union policy were released in January 1946, in the form of a White Paper, the colonial government was engulfed by a storm of protest from the Malay élites.[10] The latter, included serving and retired Malay bureaucrats of high and low ranks, Malay academics, Malay aristocrats and other active Malay leaders throughout the Malay Peninsular. By exploiting both their social status and their official rank, they were able to exert

influence over local-level leaders of the rural Malays and subsequently organized a mass demonstration in Kuala Lumpur to voice their anti-Malayan Union feelings in March 1946. By May 1946, the élite-oriented UMNO was established promising to fight for the rights of the Malays, to restore the status quo of the Malay monarchy and to improve the economic and social conditions of the Malay community as a whole.[17] The élite nature of UMNO as a political party was reflected not only at the national level of its organization but also in its local branches. When the demonstration against the Malayan Union was organized the Malay national élite received the general support of *penghulu* and village heads at the local-level. However, as mentioned earlier, the co-operation of the local leaders was obtained through various ways of "soft coercion". The situation in Mawar was a case in point.

According to the various oral and written sources,[18] the recruitment of the anti-Malayan Union demonstration in Malawati was carried out by a Malay Assistant District Officer (ADO) serving at the district office. He was Raja Rustam, a member of the Selangor royal family and an active member of *Persatuan Melayu Selangor*. The *penghulu* and all the village heads in Mukim Mawar were said to have been told by the ADO that the formation of Malayan Union would result in the sultan losing all powers and hence all the *mukim* and village leaders, who were appointed by him would lose theirs too, and ultimately the Malay race would be alien in its own country. It was true that the sultans would lose all their powers if Malayan Union was in operation. Whether the *penghulu* and village heads, whose role as intermediaries between the colonial government and the villagers was so crucial, would also lose their positions was debatable. Probably less improbable was the suggestion that the Malays would be alien in their own country.

However, it was clear that the threat of losing their positions and hence all the advantages which came with them, and, to a lesser extent, the relegation of the Malays to aliens, were uppermost in the minds of the *penghulu* group of Mawar. In the words of Ali, the then village head of Kg. Kasturi, "we must defend our position and interest, and therefore, we must go to Kuala Lumpur for the demonstrations". This was proudly recounted by the current village head of Kg. Kasturi, Anis. It was the same group of individuals who went to Kuala Lumpur from Mawar who came back to organize the

establishment of an UMNO branch in Mawar in 1948.[19] An UMNO division was established in 1949 in Malawati with Raja Rustam as its first chairperson.

In Mukim Mawar, therefore, UMNO was the first political party to have its branch established there. It was not surprising that it was based at and called Kg. Mawar UMNO branch. The *penghulu* was the founding chairperson and the deputy was Suhin, a wealthy Mawar landowner. All the village heads in Mawar, their family members and their close associates became the first batch of 23 members of UMNO Kg. Mawar. Ali of Kg. Kasturi was one of the nine founding committee members of the branch. The rest were either village heads or local élites. Significantly, there was not a single school teacher in the first group of members. Other studies have revealed that Malay school teachers played a dominant role in the activities which led to the setting up of many UMNO branches throughout the Malay Peninsula then. Equally significant, but in the Mawar and Kg. Chempaka context, was that Haji Salam of Kg. Chempaka was not elected as a committee member and remained as an ordinary UMNO member until he died. This is significant in understanding the future development of UMNO within Kg. Chempaka which will be dealt with shortly.

Until 1953, the Kg. Mawar branch remained the only UMNO branch in the *mukim*. It was in fact the branch for the whole *mukim* and was organized on a *mukim*-basis. A detailed examination of the branch membership registers between 1948 and 1953 revealed that none of the members was from the peasant group. Although the Kg. Mawar branch membership increased from 23 in 1948 to 35 in 1953, the new members were either school teachers, petty entrepreneurs or their immediate family members. The second UMNO branch in Mawar, the Sungai Ikan branch established in 1953, had a similar membership composition. Ali of Kg. Kasturi was the chairperson with officials and members recruited from the élites of Kg. Chempaka, Sungai Ikan, Kg. Teratai and Kg. Kasturi.

As mentioned earlier, it was not a coincidence that the membership of both the UMNO branches in Mawar was élite-oriented. Apart from the reasons and circumstances already described, since 1950 UMNO was perceived not only as a protector but also as a provider by local élites. UMNO's effort to improve the Malay economy, amongst others, led to the establishment of RIDA and the

implementation of the revised replanting scheme. According to Anis, the current village head of Kg. Kasturi and an UMNO member of Sungai Ikan branch then, at least six of the entrepreneur members from both the Sungai Ikan and Kg. Mawar UMNO branches received some form of financial assistance from RIDA in the first half of the 1950s, including Haji Salam – a petty entrepreneur and a village head. The non-entrepreneur members may not have benefitted from such facilities from RIDA, but they had direct access to district office officials such as the ADO who could help to facilitate their replanting applications or to resolve bureaucratic problems related to the implementation of the replanting scheme or those concerning land. Since most of local bureaucrats were also UMNO members they were seen as approachable in both capacities, but mostly in the latter context, by local UMNO leaders. The bureaucrats were not unwilling political partners or patrons whichever the case may be, because as active UMNO members they wanted to be seen as nationalists who were committed to fighting for "Malay rights" or as the ones who help their own race (*tolong bangsa*). They were seen in that light by local UMNO leaders in Mawar. There were, thus, economic and ideological reasons which encouraged and attracted local élites to become or to remain UMNO members. There were also those who joined UMNO mainly on ideological grounds such as one of the local school teachers. He proudly regarded himself as the fighter (*pejuang*), for Malay education and claimed that he organized the collection of about M$200 within Malawati towards the UMNO special education fund. On the whole, it was not difficult to understand why UMNO branches in Mawar attracted the whole-hearted support of the local élite class.

The initial absence of support from the peasant and proletariat classes must not be seen as a form of political apathy. On the contrary, many of them were aware of the advantages of joining UMNO and the need to support the fight for "Malay rights" carried out by the party. The reasons why they did not initially participate actively ranged from personal to economic ones. For instance, Zainal and his colleagues in Kg. Asal refused under any circumstances to associate themselves with the local élite, especially the *penghulu* and the village heads of Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Chempaka. This was directly related to the continuing tension which had existed from the pre-war period. Some found that coping with the immediate post-war

economic crisis was difficult enough. And during the Korean War boom, most of them were in a better economic position and realized that without any political affiliation they could still enjoy economic prosperity though temporarily. Others were of the belief that UMNO was a party for the well-to-do or for those with "position" (*orang berkedudukan*), because they identified UMNO as a party for the officials, as UMNO in Mawar was originally organized on a *mukim*-basis led by the *penghulu*.[20] The first few peasant members of UMNO in Mawar were close friends or clients of the local officials who sponsored their membership. This was not unrelated to the massive membership campaign carried out in Malawati, as elsewhere in Malaya, prior to the July 1955 elections. For the Malawati constituency the Alliance Party, which was a coalition of UMNO, MCA (Malayan Chinese Association) and MIC (Malayan Indian Congress), was represented by an UMNO candidate, no other than Raja Rustam, the ex-ADO and the first chairperson of UMNO Malawati division. He defeated his nearest opponent, a PAS candidate by 7,049 votes. The other candidate, from Parti Negara obtained only 756 votes and thus forfeited his election deposit.[21]

Except for Parti Negara, there was no other political party which attempted to establish a branch in Mawar before 1955. However, the party failed to gain enough local support to establish its own local branch. PAS had a few sympathisers but its fortress was in Tanjung Karam. However, there was a political group called *Angkatan Pemuda Insaf* (API), which tried with little success to recruit its members in Mawar. This group was later banned by the colonial government. In short, the early history of political parties in Mawar, and hence Kg. Chempaka, is the history of the local UMNO branches.

PAS made its first inroad into Mawar in Kg. Asal. The man responsible for slowly nurturing PAS influence and interest in Kg. Asal was Ustaz Abdullah – a rubber smallholder and part-time religious teacher. He came from Tanjung Karam, the PAS fortress in Malawati, and had been an active PAS official in one of the local PAS branches there. His family originally came from Kg. Asal but fled to Tanjung Karam when the 1937-1939 natural disasters devastated the village. So his return to Kg. Asal in late 1954 was not seen as something unusual by the villagers. He was readily accepted by the local residents and not tagged as a stranger. Abdullah's relationship with Zainal became closer after the former initiated special afternoon

religious classes for the village children. Prior to this, the children only received religious instruction as part of their Qur'an reading lessons. Abdullah separated the Qur'an lessons from the religious instruction and conducted the latter himself. He left the Qur'an lessons to various *lebai* (religious specialist) and *haji* (religious specialists who had made the pilgrimage) of Kg. Asal. The classes were held at the mosque. Soon he became well-known in the village for the success of the classes, measured by the number of its graduates accepted by the Mawar religious school sponsored by the Department of Religious Affairs, Selangor.

Perhaps his more significant contribution was when he organized special religious classes for the adults of the village in the evenings, especially after the *Isyak* prayer. It was essentially religious instruction or revision for the ordinary villager, as opposed to special advanced religious classes for the few who studied aspects of Sufism. The classes for the latter were started by Ahmad in the early 1920s and was later taken over by Zainal. Abdullah's effort was appreciated by most of the villagers. It was through these classes that Abdullah was able to establish a closer relationship with the people of Kg. Asal. He soon received and commanded tremendous respect from the locals. Zainal often offered him the leadership of the Friday prayers at the mosque as *imam*, and to deliver the sermons, too. Such was Zainal's respect for Abdullah. All this happened within three years after Abdullah came to Kg. Asal.

His most important and lasting contribution to Kg. Asal was in the establishment of a primary religious school in the village. Abdullah received financial support to build the school from the Department of Religious Affairs and from the donations of the villagers. The building was constructed next to the mosque and completed in early 1958. Students came not only from Kg. Asal but also from Kg. Chempaka proper, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Teratai. By this time Abdullah was enjoying fame and popularity in the village which sometimes outshone Zainal's. But this situation did not have any negative effect on their relationship. Zainal also suggested to the villagers that Abdullah was the most appropriate person to take over his unofficial position when he left for Saudi Arabia in 1959. This was accepted unanimously by the villagers.

From the time he first arrived until he set up the school, Abdullah did not make any move to organize a PAS branch in the village. He

was keener to win the confidence of the village first, a strategy not uncommon amongst village-level PAS pioneers in Tanjung Karam and other parts of Selangor.[22] However, Abdullah did not neglect to expose the villagers to PAS propaganda as much as possible. This he did by inviting, from time to time, outside personalities to deliver religious talks to his adult classes at the mosque, which included PAS as well as non-PAS officials. Among the PAS officials, he invited most of the party national leaders, such as Dr Burhanuddin, Zulkiflee Mohamed, Raja Hanifah and Othman Abdullah.[23] The villagers were aware that most of the invited speakers were PAS officials because a few came to Kg. Chempaka prior to the 1955 elections to campaign for the party. However, the villagers also realized that they were well-educated in Islamic studies and hence they came to listen to their religious opinions. This was the perception of the majority who attended the classes and talks, even though Abdullah had more than religious reasons for having these speakers.

Abdullah made the first move to set up a PAS branch in Kg. Chempaka after the official opening of the religious school in mid-1958. Zulkiflee Mohamed, who was then the national vice-president of PAS and a lecturer at the Islamic College, Kelang, was invited to officiate at the opening ceremony, during which he delivered a fiery speech on the future of Islamic education in Malaya. Many of the villagers who listened to the speech still recall the immediate emotional impact it had on them. After the ceremony and festivities ended, Zulkiflee met and addressed a small group of Kg. Asal peasant leaders. It was a pre-arranged meeting organized by Abdullah, although some felt it was held at the insistence of Zulkiflee. At the meeting Zulkiflee was said to have discussed, amongst other things the possibility of accepting the best student in the school in each year as a candidate for the Islamic College. This suggestion though tentative was enough to impress the group as to Abdullah's influence. Zulkiflee also suggested that the group should consider the setting up of a PAS branch. Zainal was said to be enthusiastic about the idea and so was the rest of the group. Abdullah, according to those who attended the meeting, did not say much about the possibility of having a PAS branch in the village but was more concerned about the Islamic College issue. Whether this was done deliberately or otherwise was not known. His disinterest on the PAS branch issue, however, did not discourage Zainal from

suggesting that Abdullah should take the initiative to establish a PAS branch in Kg. Asal, in view of his close association with the PAS national leaders.

About a month after the historic meeting a smaller group of Kg. Asal leaders, led by Zainal and Abdullah met with Zulkiflee and other PAS national and Selangor leaders, to discuss the setting up of a PAS branch at Kg. Asal. Not long after that a meeting was organized to launch a membership drive for the party. It was held at the Kg. Asal religious school and was well attended. During the inaugural meeting Abdullah made an important speech, the content of which was claimed by present PAS leaders as crucial to the long-term survival of PAS in the area.[24] He was talking mainly about *berjihad* (holy struggle), which he believed was the only way which the villagers could succeed in whatever they do in their daily activities, in the religious practices or in the political sphere. He also stressed the importance of sacrificing one's energy (*tenaga*), property (*harta*) and life (*nyawa*) for the community's sake. PAS, according to him, was a political party which upholds *berjihad* as its supreme principle guiding all its activites. He did not forget to mention all his achievements which the villagers were aware.

It was not difficult to understand the enthusiastic response PAS received from Kg. Asal villagers. When it was finally registered as a branch with the national organization at the end of 1958, it had 78 registered and paid-up members. This was double that of UMNO members in Mawar when its branch was established in 1948 and slightly higher than the Sungai Ikan and Kg. Mawar UMNO membership of 1953 put together. Zainal, at the request of Abdullah, became the first chairperson of the branch and Abdullah as the vice-chairperson. Eight others were elected to make up the rest of the committee officials. It is important to note that most of the officials were from the peasant class except Zainal who belonged to the village middle category. For about 12 years PAS enjoyed a tremendous political influence within Kg. Chempaka, especially in Kg. Asal, but this was not without its problems. It must be mentioned here that UMNO had not established its branch in Kg. Chempaka until 1968. The branch, interestingly, was set up by ex-PAS members of Kg. Asal who defected and joined UMNO after a split within the PAS leadership which occurred then.

The origin and early development of UMNO and PAS within

Kg. Chempaka were different in at least three major aspects. Firstly, there were distinct and different circumstances which led to the establishment of both parties' first branches. UMNO was organized from the top while PAS was established from the bottom. The need to establish an UMNO branch within Mawar and the way it was carried out represented a local expression of the national pattern dominated by Malay élitist, sectional interests. PAS was introduced in Mawar, that is, in Kg. Asal, about a decade after UMNO, under different circumstances. It was basically a one-man effort but not without the support of the local peasant leaders and villagers who already had long standing disagreements with the official élite of Mawar – the founder of UMNO. Thus there existed underlying locally-based factors, both class and personal, which seemed to have facilitated PAS's entry into Mawar through Kg. Asal.

Secondly, and as a result of the above, the membership composition of each party also differed. UMNO was essentially the party of the *mukim* élite whilst PAS was that of the peasants. Prevailing nation-wide circumstances and events, and local historical factors influenced and fashioned the membership recruitment of both parties in Mawar. Thirdly, and as the consequence of the two aspects described above, the PAS and UMNO branches were organized from different bases, administratively and geographically. UMNO was organized at first on a *mukim* basis and operated very much on the same grid as the *mukim* formal bureaucratic arrangements, involving the hierarchy of *mukim* government functionaries. The establishment of a second branch at Sungai Ikan did not alter this pattern significantly which continued until after the 1955 general elections. Only after that were new branches set up in one or two other villages within Mawar, but not in Kg. Chempaka which had its own UMNO branch in 1968, about 20 years after UMNO first established its foothold in Mawar. In other words, the focus of political power within UMNO in Mawar was located outside Kg. Chempaka, which only had its élite as representatives (if they could be categorized as such). PAS, on the contrary, was village-based in its organization and drew its membership mostly from Kg. Asal. In Kg. Chempaka PAS was the first political party to have its branch in the village. This partly explained the continued dominance of PAS in Kg. Chempaka politics particularly in the 1960 and to some extent, until today.

Since the introduction of political parties in Mawar and

Kg. Chempaka, most of the past and current local issues and problems have found expression in party politics activities and conflicts, either intra-party or inter-party. The increase in bureaucratic intervention in the social processes of village life in Malaysia, especially after 1969 further complicates the dynamics of social relations within Kg. Chempaka and in its relations with the wider society, immediate and beyond.

Kampung Chempaka Politics 1958-1972: The Contest for Domination

Before PAS joined the National Front coalition party in 1972, [25] and became UMNO's partner, the two parties were always involved in keen political contest for rural Malay votes at every election, particularly in the Malay-dominated states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu.[26] In the other states, UMNO-PAS tussles were usually limited to rural areas where the Malay population was predominant. Malawati was one such area. However, the rivalry between PAS and UMNO in Mawar prior to 1972 was a one-sided affair in which UMNO consistently emerged as the victor. The results of all the elections held for that period were conclusive proof. However, there remained pockets of areas within Malawati where PAS influence surpassed that of UMNO. Despite UMNO's popular support within Malawati at the *mukim* and district level, PAS reigned supreme in a number of villages. Kg. Asal, was one of PAS's strongholds in Malawati between 1958 and 1972.[27]

PAS dominance in Kg. Chempaka had its historical roots and was due to a set of local circumstances already described in detail in the preceding sections of this chapter and also in Chapter 2. Suffice to say that when PAS made its impact in Kg. Asal, the village as a community was a relatively stable and united political unit with strong leadership. The continuous confrontation the village community had with the establishment and its agents since pre-war times was partly responsible for bringing about the solidarity which it enjoyed. However, the solidarity was put to test particularly during the "1936 mosque controversy" in which a small group of its proletariat chose to differ with majority opinion regarding the selection of the mosque officials. But since then, Zainal, the village's

most influential leader managed to overcome the problem. Hence the solidarity seemed to have remained intact despite the difficult socio-economic conditions immediately after the war. It must be noted that the two main classes within the community were the peasants and the proletariats with the former forming the majority. It was remarkable that Zainal through his charisma and forthrightness was able to maintain unity between the classes, whose interests could be at tangent at the best of times. (In fact, the differences in interest between these two classes emerged in the late 1960s resulting in a serious crisis within the community and the local PAS branch. This will be dealt with later.)

When PAS was introduced and accepted by the Kg. Asal community through the effort of the one man, Ustaz Abdullah, who in turn had the full support of Zainal, the party organization became the political arm of the village overall social organization. Subsequently, important local issues, past and present, became the party's too, only this time couched in party slogans. For instance, the village's prolonged struggle to regain its official status was now perceived as achievable through *berjihad* (the holy struggle) in which the villagers were expected to make personal sacrifices. (This was the theme of Ustaz Abdullah's speech at the inaugural meeting of the PAS branch in Kg. Asal). Similarly, the village traditional "enemies" – the establishment and its functionaries – were often labelled as *kafir* (non-believers) and *munafik* (hypocrites). It may seem unsophisticated the way PAS principles and slogans, or for that matter Islamic concepts, had been used by the villagers to express what were essentially long-standing problems.[28] Nonetheless, the religious idioms became a crucial ideological basis which reinforced village unity and Kg. Asal PAS success and dominance in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, not only within Kg. Chempaka but also within the PAS organization of Malawati.

Since there was no UMNO branch as such within Kg. Chempaka, and whoever became members of the party were registered either in the Kg. Mawar or Sungai Ikan branch, there was no real political opposition to PAS within Kg. Chempaka. In other words, the political contest in Kg. Chempaka was essentially between a well-organized peasant-based PAS branch located in Kg. Asal, and UMNO members of Kg. Mawar and Sungai Ikan residing in Kg. Chempaka proper who were the village élites.

However, there were also peasants from Kg. Chempaka proper, Kg. Teratai and Kg. Kasturi who were registered members of PAS Kg. Asal branch. They formed only a small minority within their village. But due to the efforts of Kg. Asal officials, the PAS membership at Kg. Teratai was doubled in three years and by 1962 Kg. Teratai had its own branch, the second in Mawar. The leadership of the Kg. Asal branch after Zainal left for Saudi Arabia in 1959 was taken over by Abdullah and Haji Zam Zam. The latter was a religious school teacher at Tanjung Karam but came back to teach at Kg. Asal after the village religious school was opened. Both of them organized a door-to-door membership campaign in all villages within Mawar prior to the 1959 general elections. But the most intensive campaign was carried out in Kg. Chempaka proper, Kg. Teratai and Kg. Kasturi. Although the campaign did not lead to a substantial increase in the party branch membership, it certainly enlarged the pool of its sympathisers within Mawar. This was evident in the election results of the Mawar state constituency, where Ustaz Abdullah stood against Suhin, the UMNO candidate, who was the vice chairperson of Kg. Mawar UMNO branch.

Suhin won the seat with 3,943 votes and Abdullah polled 1,680 votes. But it must be noted that UMNO had a ten-year headstart in Mawar compared to PAS. The latter had its first branch in Mawar hardly a year prior to the May 1959 state elections. Despite this, PAS managed to obtain a substantial number of votes because of their aggressive campaign and big rallies organized prior to the election. PAS achievement could be considered more significant when compared with the ethnic composition of Mawar voters then. A study of its electoral roll revealed that about 62 percent of the registered voters were Malays and the rest non-Malays. (There are 14 rubber estates and three towns in Mukim Mawar, most of which are populated by non-Malays). If we assume that most of the non-Malay voters voted for the multi-racial Alliance Party, represented by Suhin, and not the Malay-dominated PAS candidate, Abdullah, then the latter must have received at least 50 percent of the Malay vote in Mawar.[29] By implication, UMNO and PAS in Mawar received almost equal support from the Malay voters, with the former winning the election on non-Malay votes. This was readily admitted even by Suhin and other Mawar UMNO officials during that time. In many ways, the election results of the 1959 state elections for Mawar

constituency generated more confidence amongst Kg. Asal PAS officials as to the possibility of gaining future support for the party within the *mukim*. After that at least three more PAS branches were established in the *mukim*, one at Kg. Teratai and at two other villages. All were due to the efforts of Kg. Asal officials. This resulted in the officials (namely Abdullah and Haji Zam Zam) being voted for the Malawati PAS central committee. The latter stood for the Malawati town seat in the May 1959 state elections but lost. The Kg. Asal PAS officials' achievement received commendations from the national PAS leaders, who then frequented the village to give talks at various village official functions as well as at special party forums. A small group from the branch was said to have toured Kelantan and Trengganu, at the invitation of the state governments which were then under PAS control. All these "high-powered" activities and experience gave tremendous confidence to Kg. Asal leadership. The villagers' confidence in their ability also continued to increase.

Haji Salam, the Kg. Chempaka village head, found that his village was visited more often by PAS parliamentarians and the party's top-level officials than by his own party, UMNO. He often consulted Suhin, the Mawar *wakil rakyat*, to discuss the problem posed by PAS dominance in his village. He was known to have insisted that Suhin channel more rural development projects to Kg. Chempaka in order to show that the UMNO-controlled government did not forget the villagers. But Suhin was more concerned about consolidating his political position elsewhere in Mawar because he believed his future depended on the rest of Mawar rather than Kg. Chempaka. In other words, not only were the UMNO members in Kg. Chempaka not able to arrest the increasing PAS influence but they also failed to get the needed outside support especially from the *wakil rakyat*. However, what Suhin could promise was to bring to Kg. Chempaka UMNO's top national leaders. This he did prior to the April 1964 general elections when state and federal elections were conducted on the same day – 25 April 1964.

Although at the national level the main election issue was national solidarity in the face of Indonesian confrontation, within Mawar the campaign was dominated by local issues. Within Kg. Chempaka, for the first time, PAS raised the issue of Kg. Asal's official status during its election campaign. It received a lot of attention from Kg. Asal and Kg. Chempaka proper villagers for separate reasons. The former felt

that the time had come for Kg. Asal to be reinstated to its original status. To the latter, the sooner this issue was resolved the better for Kg. Chempaka proper's welfare. For years now the political stigma of being under PAS domination had worked against their interests. The political exclusion of Kg. Chempaka by the *wakil rakyat* was also a major issue raised by PAS campaigners. They accused the *wakil rakyat* and the government of practising *pilih kasih* (favouritism), denying Kg. Chempaka important rural development projects, such as electricity and water supply. Amongst the PAS big names who came to Kg. Chempaka were Asri, Raja Hanifah, Zulkiflee and Ustaz Tanawi from PAS headquarters.

UMNO brought the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, to talk in a rally held at the school playing field. The Chief Minister of Selangor, Datuk Harun Idris, attended a separate rally in Kg. Chempaka. He promised a new village in Mukim Enau adjacent to Kg. Chempaka, thus enabling those with little or no land to acquire the agricultural land they needed. He also promised to ensure that the district office would expedite the villagers' application for land titles. As token political gestures the Prime Minister and Chief Minister donated hundreds of dollars to the school and the mosque. Prior to the visits of the two dignitaries, the roads in Kg. Chempaka were resurfaced and all the main canals were cleared of rubbish and grass, carried out by the Public Works Department (PWD) and the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) respectively.

For a few days, prior to the elections of 1964, Kg. Chempaka was host to many dignitaries and national political figures from both UMNO and PAS. Festivities were held to celebrate the dignitaries' visits. Some villagers remarked cynically that the visits profited only the ice sellers but not the village. They emphasized that "election promises were made to be broken" and were not expecting any of the promises to be fulfilled after the election. But they were, nevertheless, happy to receive such attention from the dignitaries, and the opportunity to see in person or if they were lucky enough to shake hands with the VIPs.

Suhin retained his Mawar seat after defeating Johar, the PAS candidate from Kg. Asal and another candidate from the Socialist Front Party. PAS received almost the same number of votes as in the 1959 elections, indicating it was still the major challenger to UMNO in Mawar. Abdullah did not contest this time due to ill-health.

However, three other Kg. Asal PAS officials were fielded by PAS as its candidates in two other state seats in Malawati district and in one of the two parliamentary seats. Haji Zam Zam contested for the federal seat of Kapar. Although all of them failed to win, in the context of PAS Malawati, Kg. Asal branches provided the most candidates for the party. This was significant is so far as it indicated the relative strength and influence of the Kg. Asal PAS branch and its officials within the party district-level organization. Zainal came back from the Middle East after the election as Haji Zainal and took over the village leadership again. His presence was an asset to PAS as he had been an influential and respected personality within Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal.

UMNO Mawar faced a minor crisis shortly after the election over the issue of the M$4 allowance which UMNO was supposed to pay to each of its members who worked during polling day. The work involved the distribution of party pamphlets to voters at the various polling stations, transporting voters by car from various points of the villages to polling stations, putting up party posters and banners at strategic spots within the constituency, picking up the aged and disabled voters from and to their homes. The tasks involved about 60 to 100 members and sympathizers of UMNO. Many of them were not paid and went to see Suhin, the *wakil rakyat* to claim the allowance. Apparently, one of Suhin's assistants was alleged to have gambled the funds in a mahjong game before polling day. Suhin promised to replace the money and to pay the workers as soon as he could. After three months nothing happened and the members concerned were agitated and walked out *en masse* from a victory celebration. About 50 of them immediately joined PAS, either at Kg. Asal or Kg. Teratai. So, in late 1964, PAS had a sudden increase of membership, the new entrants being the UMNO dissidents. Suhin, the *wakil rakyat*, was said to have been upset and accused the dissidents of being too materialistic and was surprised that PAS accepted them. PAS leaders of Kg. Asal responded by saying that the dissidents left UMNO because it was a corrupt party and led by *munafik* (hypocrites). Many more exchanges of accusations ensued between PAS and UMNO leaders within Mawar over this issue in subsequent months.

PAS Kg. Asal had its own crisis in 1968 which led to a split in the leadership and among the party members. The dissidents crossed over to UMNO and established the first UMNO branch in Kg. Chem-

paka. The conflict was over land matters and party policies. It was originally a minor disagreement but became a major issue leading to the expulsion of a small group of PAS members and the resignation of one of the committee members. It began in late 1967 when the Selangor state government decided to open up the swampy areas adjacent to Kg. Chempaka as a new Malay settlement. This was promised by the Chief Minister in his election campaign speech prior to the 1964 election – one of the rare occasions when an election promise was fulfilled in Mawar, and the first one in Kg. Chempaka, according to its present village head. However, the project was not meant solely for Kg. Chempaka villagers but to help the rural poor. It was introduced in the wake of a massive rural protest by landless peasants throughout Selangor and led by Hamid Tuah.[30] In short, the project was partly a public relations exercise by the government as well as fulfilling an election promise.

There were hundred of applicants for land in the newly proposed settlement later named Kg. Baru (see Map 3). They came from the landless as well as the landed. The district office processed all the applications, but the DO had little say in deciding who the land should be given to. All policies and decisions regarding land in the state were made by the state Executive Council (Exco) which was a small state cabinet whose members were all elected politicians from the ruling party.[31] The DO had to consult the Exco as well as the Mawar *wakil rakyat* before any decision on the matter could be made. It was in this context that the selection of the applicants became a political exercise and not a bureaucratic one as every applicant was made to believe.

Among the applicants were Kg. Asal villagers who were mostly peasants and proletariats. They were also PAS members or supporters. Many of them realized they probably had little chance in getting the land in view of the political nature of its distribution. But Suhin, the Mawar *wakil rakyat* had decided to use the opportunity to bait the PAS members of Kg. Asal. Through the Kg. Chempaka village head and other channels, Suhin put the word across to the applicants from Kg. Asal that they would get the land if they became UMNO members first. This brought a strong reaction from the village PAS officials who at a special meeting urged the villagers to withdraw their applications. They argued on religious grounds that the project had become "a material bait meant to tempt the weak

Muslims". Not all the applicants accepted the argument. A small group of the applicants, mainly proletariats, argued that they were landless and this was the only opportunity for them to get land. PAS officials threatened expulsion if they failed to abide by the party decision. The hard line taken by the officials resulted in the deepening of the conflict. Those who agreed refused to withdraw their applications and instead reassured their leaders that they would remain as PAS members even if their land applications were successful. The assurance did not prevent them from being expelled.

The explusion was at the insistence of Zainal. Some of the committee members thought it was too harsh but did not oppose the decision. One of them, however, felt that the expulsion orders were unfair and accused Zainal of over-reaction. He was asked to resign from the committee. This he did not take to kindly and felt that he had been publicly disgraced. He left PAS and immediately lashed out at its leadership. He accused the leadership of being dictatorial, unIslamic and failing to take into consideration the interests of the poor because they were already leading a comfortable life. He then raised the issue of PAS failure to bring development to the village and that the villagers suffered from supporting the wrong party.

One of Suhin's messengers was said to have approach Hamzah, the dissident leader, to invite him to become an UMNO member and set up a branch at Kg. Asal. At first he refused on the grounds that he was still "PAS at heart" and he was only against the leadership at Kg. Asal. But at the insistence of the members of the expelled group who, by then, had been approached by Suhin's men too, Hamzah reluctantly became an UMNO member of Sungai Ikan branch. In mid-1968, together with Manap, he set up a separate UMNO branch at Kg. Asal. But the branch was known as UMNO Kg. Chempaka because the members came from Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal. As most of the officials were from Kg. Asal, the branch was therefore, based at the village. (It was not until 1979, about a decade later, that a separate branch for Kg. Chempaka proper was set up.)

Ironically, the district records revealed that only three from the dissenting group were given land at Kg. Baru excluding Hamzah as he did not make any application. Other successful applicants included the Kg. Kasturi village head and his two sons, Sudin (Haji Salam's son), one of Manap's wives, and four well-known supporters of Suhin (two school teachers, a clerk and a petty entrepreneur).

There were also other ordinary villagers from Kg. Teratai, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Chempaka proper who got the land. A small group of peasants from outside Mawar were selected too. In other words, most of Suhin's loyal supporters received their rewards.

The PAS dispute was a self-inflicted wound due to the uncompromising attitude of its leadership as it affected party and village unity. It was partly the result of personal differences within the leadership and partly the leader's neglect of the economic interests of the minority in preference to party principles and policies. The evidence revealed that the political bait offered by Suhin played a secondary role, though it was responsible for initiating the PAS internal conflict. Interestingly, the Kg. Chempaka UMNO branch members who came from Kg. Asal did make attempts to raise the "reinstatement of Kg. Asal" issue with both Manap and Suhin. This had been a major issue taken up by PAS Kg. Asal since it was first established. In short, the Kg. Asal *esprit de corps* still existed irrespective of whether one was a PAS or UMNO member. There was even a suggestion that an UMNO branch at Kg. Asal separate from Kg. Chempaka proper should be established. This did not materialize until 1979.

The 1968 internal dispute within PAS Kg. Asal, the stronghold of the party in Mukim Mawar, had little impact on PAS leadership or party support in the *mukim*. Although the party and its leadership suffered internal opposition the leadership was too experienced and the party's influence was too entrenched to be disturbed by the dispute according to the then PAS leaders who were interviewed. These opinions were not baseless. Evidence revealed that prior to the 1969 general elections, PAS Kg. Asal and Mawar had strong support seen by the number of PAS branches and membership in Mukim Mawar. This enabled PAS to organize, arguably, the party's most aggressive election campaign ever in Mawar: door-to-door canvassing and big public rallies. The results of the elections, particularly, for the Mawar state seat, also revealed a substantial increase in PAS votes compared to the 1959 and 1964 elections, although the party's candidate, Johar, lost yet again to the incumbent, Suhin, from the Alliance.[32] So strong and aggressive was the PAS campaign that UMNO Mawar found it necessary to invite the Prime Minister, Tun Razak, the Selangor Chief Minister and a few UMNO national leaders to its rallies, particularly in Kg. Chempaka. There was a

pre-election poster war which was at times so tense that local police were called to patrol the village because supporters from both parties were involved in tearing and pulling down each other's posters. However, this subsided a few weeks after the election.

The event which nearly led to an outbreak of physical violence in Kg. Chempaka occurred in June 1970 at a meeting to discuss the mosque's future. A complex interplay of narrow local, sectional interests, personal rivalries and old grudges underlined the new mosque controversy, the first of which took place in 1936. The second incident was a meeting held at the mosque, attended by about 250 villagers, organized by Manap, the Kg. Chempaka village head. He was encouraged to hold the meeting by the Malawati member of parliament (MP) and, Suhin, the *wakil rakyat* for Mawar, after they visited the village in early 1970 as part of their victory tour. They found the mosque was too old and either needed a lot of repair or to be replaced by a new one. At the meeting, chaired by Manap, Suhin, the *penghulu*, a representative of Selangor's Religious Affairs Department and an official from Malawati district office were also present.

The meeting began peacefully with Manap explaining the need to have a new mosque for Kg. Chempaka. He also suggested that the new building should be constructed on the existing site, and hence remain close to the religious school. Then Suhin, the *wakil rakyat* promised that he would get the necessary funds from the Selangor state government to build the whole mosque. The *penghulu*, the Religious Affairs Department officer and the district office representative gave speeches in support of the new mosque project, promised their full co-operation and appealed to those attending to respond similarly. Then the discussion was opened to the floor.

The leaders of Kg. Asal who were also PAS branch leaders for the village agreed that there was a need for repairs to be done to improve the old mosque but a new mosque was not necessary. The cost of repair could be collected from the villagers and the repair done by the experienced builders of the village. When asked by Suhin why they did not want a new mosque, Haji Zainal replied that they did not want *duit haram* (religiously forbidden money) to finance the building of the mosque. Another PAS leader argued that the government funds consisted of lottery money, taxes from pigs, liquor and gambling, all of which are prohibited by Islamic laws.

Hence it was not proper to use the funds to build a holy place such as the mosque. The argument became heated when Hamzah, the leader of the dissident and expelled PAS members who had since become an UMNO Kg. Chempaka official called them hypocrites for accepting other government-funded projects but not the mosque. Hamzah was supported by the leaders of Kg. Chempaka who were also UMNO officials. Before the debate became more acrimonious, Suhin and Manap suggested that a vote be taken on the issue. The motion to replace the old mosque using government funds was carried with more than a 100-vote majority.

When the result of the voting was announced a PAS supporter from Kg. Asal stood up and shouted that the meeting was improper and the voting was illegal as only a section of the village community was present. He was supported by others from Kg. Asal. Someone from Kg. Chempaka proper replied that the meeting and the result were both legal because the notice for the meeting was announced weeks before and those who did not attend showed that they were not interested. Suddenly one of Kg. Asal's supporters jumped up angrily and tried to slap the speaker from Kg. Chempaka proper. A scuffle broke out and there was panic and shouting in the mosque. Manap, Suhin, Haji Zainal, Haji Zam Zam and the officials of both sides intervened to prevent any violence. Manap suspended the meeting and the mosque issue was unresolved when the meeting ended.

For the next three months, there was no formal discussion on the issue. But the mosque controversy and the incidents at the meeting became the talk of the village. In late September 1970, Manap called another meeting on the mosque issue. This time it was held at the village school and attended by villagers from Kg. Chempaka proper and a small group of UMNO supporters from Kg. Asal. The PAS leaders and supporters of Kg. Asal boycotted the meeting. The motion that a new mosque be built and that it be financed fully by the government was passed unanimously. Another site of 1½ acres for the new mosque was suggested. It belonged to one of Manap's in-laws.

By March 1971, the government had paid about M$2,000 to the landowner and work to clear and drain the site was done. Manap was given the contract by the district PWD to do the M$3,000-job. He commissioned an architect to draw the building plan. All the relevant

authorities were involved in a series of discussions for the next few months finalizing the building as well as the financial aspects of the mosque. By June 1972, a tender worth M$80,000 was advertised for the mosque. But the project was shelved in September 1972 by the Religious Affairs Department. This was announced after a group from Kg. Asal went to meet the director of the department. Led by Haji Zainal, the group requested permission from the Religious Affairs Department to rebuild the old mosque. They claimed they had collected about M$30,000 from donations to finance the rebuilding project. They also presented a complete plan as to how the mosque would be rebuilt, approved by an architect and engineers. It was reported that each landowner in Kg. Asal was asked to "donate" at least M$20 for each acre of land they owned towards the mosque rebuilding fund. The PAS leaders of Kg. Asal also received financial support from outside. It was alleged that the PAS government of Kelantan and the PAS headquarters also donated. Since the regulation said that officially there should be only one mosque in a gazetted village, the Religious Affairs Department was put in a difficult position over the issue. Although the officials of the department was said to be sympathetic with the Kg. Asal proposal, they were, however, unwilling to allow the mosque to be rebuilt. It would not only contravene the regulation but would also displease the UMNO-dominated state government. Hence the new mosque project and the Kg. Asal proposal were not given the go-ahead.

The Kg. Chempaka UMNO leaders and Suhin, the *wakil rakyat*, went to meet the Chief Minister in December 1972 on this matter. But the latter said he did not wish to interfere with Religious Affairs Department which is directly under the sultan's control. When the UMNO group was busy meeting different top-level persons in their effort to get the project restarted, Kg. Asal PAS leaders and villagers had begun to rebuild the mosque. By 1974, after PAS was already in the National Front coalition party, the mosque was completed. Haji Zainal, a builder of some experience, was in charge of directing the rebuilding using mainly volunteers as his workers. Meanwhile there was no sign indicating that the new mosque project in Kg. Chempaka proper would continue, at least until 1977 when the issue was raised again (see p. 181).

The "1970 mosque controversy" which dragged on for about a decade, was described by most villagers in Kg. Chempaka as "a sad

moment" in the village history. Most of Kg. Chempaka proper's villagers decided not to go to the mosque for their Friday prayers. They preferred to go to the Kg. Kasturi mosque. They also called the mosque *masjid PAS* or PAS's mosque. The tension and conflict between the leaders of Kg. Chempaka and Kg. Asal had now crystallized into a conflict between two villages. Kg. Asal was then called *kampung PAS* (PAS village) by those in Kg. Chempaka proper. In a way the split between the two villages was complete politically and to an extent socially. This was the view held by some of Kg. Chempaka villagers who still went to pray at the Kg. Kasturi mosque in early 1980 when the field research for this study began. (By the time the field work was suspended in 1981 Kg. Chempaka proper had its new mosque.)

The loss in the 1969 elections and the "1970 mosque controversy" did not deter the PAS leaders of Kg. Asal from their political struggle for dominance within Kg. Chempaka. As described in the preceding chapter (pp. 100-101), they managed to dominate the VDSC of Kg. Chempaka when it was established in 1971. Through the committee they channelled all their grievances to the *wakil rakyat* as well as to the district office. Thus the committee became a new medium through which PAS Kg. Asal made their demands, including the "reinstatement of Kg. Asal" issue. But this was to the political disadvantage of Kg. Chempaka as a whole. The demands at the village committee were never considered seriously by the *wakil rakyat* or the district office officials, who after 1971, when the NEP was launched, had increased power to decide on the distribution and implementation of minor development projects (under M$25,000). This was mainly due to Kg. Chempaka being labelled a "black area", that is, controlled by the opposition party. (The term "black area" was once used during the Emergency to refer to villages or zones supposedly infested with communist insurgents.) The "1970 mosque controversy" was often used by UMNO politicians and local bureaucrats as a "proof" of PAS dominance in Kg. Chempaka and justification for calling it a "black area".

The relationship between Kg. Chempaka, the "black area" and the UMNO politicians and the district bureaucrats did not change after 1972 when PAS joined as a partner of UMNO and other parties in the National Front. This was partly because PAS leaders in Kg. Asal and the Selangor PAS leadership did not agree to PAS joining the

National Front coalition. This disagreement within PAS continued until 1975, and some scholars argued that this unresolved internal problem led to the deterioration of PAS-UMNO relationship which ended with the expulsion of PAS from the National Front in 1977.[33] Within Kg. Chempaka and Mawar, the PAS-UMNO relationship was an uneasy one although at the national level the leadership of the two parties appeared friendly. There were other long standing causes which underlined the PAS-UMNO conflict within Mawar and Kg. Chempaka, which no outside influence could mend or put right in a short period because of their historical and structural nature.

However, the events which took place in Mawar prior to the 1974 elections were partly responsible for bringing together PAS and UMNO leaders of Kg. Chempaka who were supposedly bitter enemies. The events were related to the internal conflict within UMNO branches of Mawar over the selection of a new candidate to replace Suhin as the next Mawar *wakil rakyat* for the state legislative assembly, which will be later examined in detail. PAS and UMNO leaders of Kg. Chempaka, since the 1974 incident, had become very close and ultimately they buried their long-standing political differences for economic reasons.

The 1974 Pre-Selection Dispute: A New Phase in Kampung Chempaka Politics

When PAS joined the National Front coalition, the federal and the state electoral constituencies were generally allocated to the various component parties according to past performances of the parties in the constituencies they contested in elections prior to the 1974 elections. The Mawar state seat was UMNO's, because it had been won by UMNO since 1959. For three four-year terms Suhin was the *wakil rakyat* for Mawar. Although PAS provided a strong opposition, especially during the 1969 elections, and had one of its strongholds within Malawati at Kg. Asal, within Mawar it was unable to provide the necessary challenge to UMNO's dominance. Hence PAS ended second best in all the elections of the constituency.

Since the introduction of the NEP, the national government has made many changes to the general administrative structure, in order to facilitate the implementation of its various development

programmes.[34] The most significant change has been the increased dominance of the *wakil rakyat* over the decision-making process within the district bureaucracy – particularly in the operations of the district development machinery which were traditionally the domain of local bureaucrats. The process through which this trend has influenced the economic and political configurations within Malawati in general and particularly in Kg. Chempaka will be discussed in the next chapter. Suffice to say here that changes in the position of the *wakil rakyat* since the advent of the NEP have generated tremendous internal political competition within UMNO Malawati, giving rise to widespread factional politics at all levels within the district. The struggle was over the coveted position of the *wakil rakyat*, particularly during the pre-selection period before a general election. As one informant put it contending leaders regard the position as providing "the passport to riches and power" (*paspot jadi kaya dan berkuasa*). Given the stakes, the contest over pre-selection can develop into intense internal factional fighting, often leading to a protracted conflict within or between UMNO branches. The Mawar pre-selection for the 1974 election was one such example.

The Mawar state seat, since 1959, was held by Suhin, one of UMNO Mawar's founding officials, and a wealthy landowner. He was asked by the UMNO headquarter to step down because of his age and to give the new and younger local UMNO leaders a chance to become *wakil rakyat*. This raised the hopes of several contending local UMNO leaders in Mawar for the position as they saw it as a means to accumulating more wealth and political power. By 1974, the UMNO constitution had been changed to allow the final say on a candidate for an electoral seat to rest entirely with the UMNO Supreme Council and not the local UMNO division as in previous elections.[35] Despite this change, the Sungai Ikan UMNO branch led by a school teacher, Ramlee, and a rich building contractor, Malik (brother of Manap, the Kg. Chempaka village head), believed that this time it would be their turn to provide a candidate, since the incumbent came from the Kg. Mawar UMNO branch. In fact, Ramlee was expected by many to be the candidate, and his name was proposed by UMNO Sungai Ikan to Suhin, the incumbent, as replacement. However, Suhin disagreed as he felt that the candidate should be chosen on the basis of his or her ability and proven record, irrespective of which branch he or she belonged to. An argument

ensued between the incumbent and UMNO Sungai Ikan officials. Meanwhile, Suhin negotiated secretly with Selangor and national UMNO leaders for a woman candidate to contest in Mawar.

Apparently he convinced the top UMNO leaders that there should be an increased participation of women as *wakil rakyat*, particularly in Selangor which, at that time, had only one woman representative in the state legislative assembly. His success in influencing the UMNO national leaders was no surprise. As an influential and long-serving *wakil rakyat* in the Selangor legislative assembly and as a senior UMNO official in the state as well as in Peninsular Malaysia, the incumbent commanded the respect not only of the state Chief Minister but also of the top UMNO leaders, particularly members of the all-powerful UMNO Supreme Council. His candidate was his own daughter-in-law, Timah. His son was unavailable due to a serious diabetic attack which resulted in the amputation of his legs. Suhin also had the full support of the *Wanita* UMNO (UMNO Womens' Section) in his fight to have a woman candidate for the Mawar state seat.

Suhin had his own reasons for wanting the *wakil rakyat* position to remain in his family. Firstly, the introduction of the NEP had increased his political power within the district bureaucracy. Secondly, and as a result of having the new power it enabled him not only to decide on the distribution of development benefits within the district, but also to participate in the "business of development". This he did by establishing a private family business, together with rich local Chinese *towkays* (businessmen) to build various public buildings, the tenders of which were awarded to his company by the then district development committee in which he was an active and influential member. It appeared he was determined not to lose the opportunity of accumulating more wealth under the NEP.

The success of Suhin in exploiting his powerful political network and securing his daughter-in-law as the National Front candidate for the Mawar seat in the 1974 election was unpopular. The leaders of UMNO Sungai Ikan accused Suhin of nepotism and corruption resulting in an open conflict between UMNO Kg. Mawar and Sungai Ikan. The latter fielded an independent candidate, Bakar, an unknown who was a shop attendant of Malik's. It was clear that the UMNO Sungai Ikan leaders chose a weak candidate whom they thought they could exercise control. If Bakar had won he would have

been made the puppet whilst the leaders of UMNO Sungai Ikan became the *dalang* or the hidden showmen.

In this conflict the UMNO Kg. Chempaka leaders for their own reasons aligned with the Sungai Ikan branch leaders to the dislike of Suhin and Timah. Firstly, Suhin had over the years neglected Kg. Chempaka's progress and since 1968, after Kg. Chempaka had its own UMNO branch, Suhin's attitude towards the village changed very little. Secondly, Suhin often remarked that the Kg. Chempaka UMNO leaders were weak, incompetent and lacking in initiatives, as they were unable to neutralize the PAS challenge within Kg. Chempaka. Without support from Suhin, and other top UMNO officials of the district, UMNO Kg. Chempaka found it difficult to recruit new members and was not able to defuse the PAS challenge. The conflict within UMNO Mawar over the pre-selection issue provided the Kg. Chempaka UMNO leaders with an opportunity to show their discontent with Suhin. They were also particularly hopeful that if Bakar should win, Kg. Chempaka's progress would not be neglected.

UMNO Kg. Chempaka leaders were joined by PAS leaders in Mawar particularly from Kg. Asal who disagreed with the PAS national leadership decision to join the National Front and took this opportunity to demonstrate their resentment. Like the UMNO leaders of Kg. Chempaka, they also had their personal and political grievances against Suhin. For the first time since 1925, the leaders of Kg. Chempaka proper and Kg. Asal, who were supposedly bitter enemies, formed a coalition. Together with UMNO Sungai Ikan and Kg. Chempaka, the PAS leaders launched a joint campaign for Bakar as an independent candidate.

Although Timah finally won with a majority of more than 3,000 votes, she was predictably angry before the election with the endless personal attacks during the election campaign – a not uncommon feature of local politics. Her "uneducated" background was frequently mentioned by the opposing side as one of the reasons why she was unfit to become a *wakil rakyat*. She had a Malay lower-secondary school education and was a KEMAS (*Kemajuan Masyarakat*/ Community Development) teacher, conducting adult classes for women.[36] Although she was the chairperson of Wanita UMNO Mawar for some years, this was considered insufficient by her opposition to qualify her as an experienced politician. There were also very personal allegations made regarding her private life.

At one stage, Timah and her supporters felt threatened by the aggressive personal attacks carried out by the independent candidate camp. She was alleged to have made attempts to buy off Bakar, in secret meetings held at the district Rest House but failed. After she won the 1974 election, she was still angry with the opposition camp, calling them *pembelot* (traitors).[37] Henceforth, the relationship between Timah and Kg. Chempaka leadership (both UMNO and PAS) were at best unfriendly. This consequently affected various aspects of Kg. Chempaka's progress because it was denied many forms of development projects which it was entitled to and were under the control of Timah as a *wakil rakyat*. Some said she did this as revenge not on the villagers but more towards the leaders of Kg. Chempaka. Some argued that it was due to her weakness as a junior *wakil rakyat* within the district that she was not able to assert her influence. A few suggested that she was too involved in accumulating personal wealth together with her loyal supporters and business associates. The validity of these suggestions will be examined in the next chapter. Her relationship with Kg. Chempaka in the context of the implementation of the NEP within the district, will be also be discussed.

The relationship betwen PAS and UMNO leaders within Kg. Chempaka which has been partly examined in the previous chapter must also be considered. What began as a political coalition in 1974 had bloomed in a short period into a viable economic partnership of an élitist nature. This relationship matured, amidst the political conflict in Mawar. There was a certain amount of secrecy surrounding the relationship. In one respect it manifested a classic case of economic interests over-riding political differences which ironically had its economic roots that could be traced to the colonial era. The implementation of the NEP and the material benefits it offered seemed too good to waste. The underlying consensus was reached by both the UMNO and PAS leaders of Kg. Chempaka who had for years been bitter enemies even before the introduction of electoral politics in the village. But according to the PAS leaders *air dan minyak tak campur* (water and oil do not mix), which implied that economic and political interests could still be separated. This was evident during the 1978 elections by which time PAS had left the National Front coalition.

Haji Zainal representing PAS contested against Timah for the Mawar state seat and lost by about 3,700 votes, the biggest majority

obtained by UMNO/National Front since the 1959 elections. During the campaign leading to the election Kg. Chempaka UMNO and the PAS leaders were in different camps. Although the scars from the 1974 dispute were not healed, UMNO Sungai Ikan and Kg. Chempaka were "friends" again with the *wakil rakyat*. Together they supported Datuk Harun, the Chief Minister of Selangor, who was convicted on corruption charges in 1976. However, they were forced to back down on this support for the controversial Datuk Harun, particularly Timah the *wakil rakyat*, after receiving warnings from UMNO top leaders that they would be expelled from the party. Despite being partners in a successful economic venture, both the PAS and UMNO leaders continued to express their ideological differences, at least to their own supporters. One could argue that there was a possibility of both sides "staging" the fight for the public in Kg. Chempaka for political purposes. This is plausible in view of the fact they were still keeping their business meetings secret. Observations revealed that not many of the PAS and UMNO supporters knew about their leaders' economic venture. Those who knew, knew little and were unsure of the details of the venture. Probably they were distracted by two important achievements of UMNO Kg. Chempaka during the late 1970s.

Firstly, an UMNO branch was established in Kg. Chempaka proper in 1979, more accurately named UMNO Kg. Chempaka. This resulted in the original Kg. Asal-based UMNO Kg. Chempaka being dissolved and renamed UMNO Kg. Asal. Only in this way could the new UMNO Kg. Chempaka branch be established in Kg. Chempaka proper and so named. Secondly, the new mosque project was revived after being shelved for about five years. Building was finally began in 1979 and was completed in 1981, on a piece of land donated by Malik, the brother of the Kg. Chempaka village head. It was not a coincidence that Malik won the M$150,000 tender to build the mosque. These achievements were perceived by Kg. Chempaka villagers as a demonstration of UMNO's growing dominance in the village. The PAS leaders of Kg. Asal were still unable to bring any progress to the village which even in 1981 was still without electricity and piped water supply, although Kg. Chempaka proper had theirs since the mid-1970s. Both the UMNO and PAS leaders continued to publicly express their "mutual hatred" in the village Parents-Teacher Association meetings and in the VDSC. As late as the 1982 general

elections, they were still opposing each other in the campaign prior to the election. However, the latest information from the village revealed that their business activities are still continuing with profits increasing from year to year.

Some possible explanations can be offered for this contradiction. Undoubtedly in Kg. Chempaka the PAS leaders are seasoned campaigners and more experienced in the political game. Evidence shows that they were capable of seizing any opportunity provided by the government and exploiting it to their maximum advantage. With the declining influence of PAS at the national and local level they were left with little choice but to co-operate with the local UMNO, which began as a political coalition and later an economic partnership. As described earlier, UMNO Kg. Chempaka leaders were in a weak position within the *mukim* and district UMNO organization. For a long time they were systematically excluded and were without support from the top to face the PAS onslaught in Kg. Chempaka. Starved of the needed political support and perceived as weak in the village, they found it was more viable to become allies with local PAS leaders. The PAS-UMNO coalition in the National Front and the 1974 conflict in Mawar provided the first opportunity and the implementation of the NEP further increased the possibility. The PAS leaders proposed and their UMNO counterparts accepted when the former suggested the setting up of a joint economic venture to take advantage of the various benefits that the NEP provided, with the latter providing the political front and the former taking charge of the business activities. The dominance of UMNO within the district bureaucracy made it imperative for any business ventures to have connections with top district UMNO politicians. Kg. Chempaka UMNO leaders, since the late 1970s, seemed to have shown that they had direct access to important UMNO district leaders, though not so much with Timah, the Mawar *wakil rakyat*, and their recent achievements proved this.

Although there was a convergence of strong personal and class interests between the two groups of leaders, expressed in the continued success in their profitable business venture, there were outstanding issues in the village which put them at variance politically. For example, Kg. Asal, the PAS stronghold was still an under-developed village, denied of many basic facilities. Although they made attempts, through various means including controlling

the VDSC they were not able to improve the conditions in the village. There was also the long-standing issue of Kg. Asal's official status which remained unresolved. The political stigma of being labelled a "black area" was in part responsible for this. Kg. Chempaka proper, controlled by the UMNO leaders suffered too. The leaders felt that to continue to associate politically with PAS would only disadvantage them further. It was in their best interest then to continue to exist and fight for the needs of Kg. Chempaka proper on their own using the UMNO platform. Despite being discriminated Kg. Chempaka proper still received some development benefits by virtue of being perceived as an UMNO area.

In this context, UMNO Kg. Chempaka leaders had no alternative but to continue its political existence and at least show to their district leaders that they were down but not out. In fact, under a new and much younger leadership Kg. Chempaka UMNO since 1979 slowly improved its relationship with the district UMNO organization and leaders. PAS leaders in the village recognized this fact and for personal and class interests wanted the Kg. Chempaka branch and Malawati UMNO relationship to improve. But they also realized that the UMNO leaders would not fight for the interests of Kg. Asal villagers for obvious reasons. Hence the PAS leaders had no choice but to continue the political responsibility to represent the Kg. Asal villagers' demands on party platform. The dilemma faced by the PAS leaders was not exactly a case of being "torn between two lovers" and they insisted that economic and political interests, like oil and water, do not mix. Each could be pursued independently and this they did.

The above is a constant reminder of the crucial role and the impact of the NEP in changing the political and economic configurations within Kg. Chempaka and Mawar. It is, therefore, important to examine closely the local-level implementation of the various NEP programmes, particularly its rural development programmes and their distribution. Relevant to this study is the impact they have in affecting changes within local-level political process as a result of the large amount of material benefits they provided. And better understanding of the political in-fighting within UMNO Mawar, the PAS-UMNO coalition within Kg. Chempaka, the relationship between Timah, the *wakil rakyat*, and Kg. Chempaka leaders and so on, could only be achieved by such an examination. This is not to say

that the NEP has not generated significant economic changes at the local level. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

NOTES

1 Kessler, *Islam and Politics*, p. 244.

2 Ibid., pp. 19-20, 244-247.

3 This section summarizes most of what has been described in detail in Chapter 2 but highlights the political dimension of the events. This does not imply that the economic dimension is unimportant. On the contrary, most of the political controversies in pre-war Kg. Chempaka were generated by issues which were essentially economic in nature, such as land, agriculture and so on.

4 See Sullivan, *Social Relations*, pp. xiv-xix; idem, "A Critical Appraisal of Malayan Historians: The Theory of Society Implicit in their work" (Paper presented at the Third Colloquium, Malaysian Society of Asian Studies Association of Australia, University of Adelaide, 22-24 August 1981); for a critical examination not only of the works of the colonial scholars but also the post-colonial historians of Malay society.

5 I wish to emphasize that what Kg. Chempaka experienced is not atypical as archival materials on Malawati revealed. This is supported by other historical studies on the Malay peasantry, such as those by Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, and Shaharil Talib, "Voices from the Kelantan Desa 1900-1940", pp. 177-195, and idem, *After Its Own Image*.

6 SSF 1780/86, SSF 894/98.

7 SSF 894/98, p. 12.

8 The violations of the various sections of the Malay Reservation Enactment of 1913 by Malay peasant owners were very frequent. Most historical accounts on colonial Malaya which dealt with the Malay peasantry mentioned this fact; see for example, Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy;* Kratoska, "'Ends that We Cannot Foresee'"; Ahmad Nazri, "Sejarah Tanah Simpanan Melayu". But none gave detailed account on the enforcement of the enactment and its political consequences within local level politics then. Similarly, no historical studies which had examined the operations of the Stevenson Scheme paid attention to its impact on the social and political aspects of village life in colonial Malaya except in a broad sense, for example, Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya;* idem, "Malayan Rubber Smallholdings in the Inter-war Period: Some Preliminary Findings", *Malayan Economic Review* 23(1978): 61-72; idem, "Peasant Smallholders in the Malayan Economy: An Historical Study with Special Reference to the Rubber Industry", in *Issues in Malaysian Development*, ed. Jackson and Rudner, pp. 69-99. It is difficult, if not impossible to make any comparisons with situations in other areas of colonial Malaya. I also wish to point out that my focus, in this study, has been mainly on the violation of the cultivation conditions attached to

the Malay Reservation Land. The evidence gathered (oral and written) indicated *that it was the recurrent, major* issue in Kg. Chempaka.

9 *Further details on the powers,* duties and the tasks of a *penghulu,* see SSF 4107/92, *SSF 3764/05* and SSF 4240/17.

10 *See for example,* J. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak.*

11 *Many scholars of* pre-colonial Malay society argued that the ruling class did not *necessarily have a complete* and centralized control of their domain. On the *contrary, they said, many* local chiefs enjoyed tremendous political and economic *autonomy.* In other words, the Malay states were relatively decentralized and *not concentrated* in the hands of the sultan. It is within this context that one *must locate* the origins of the "leaders of peasants" being referred to here, *whose* political positions were incorporated into the British colonial administration system.

12 The economic benefits include rent-free lands, house loans, land rents, etc., and bureaucratic privileges such as monthly allowance, *sampan* (small boat) and bicycle allowance, funeral expenses, etc. See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion, and note 42 in that chapter for details of the sources.

13 See Jang Aishah Mutalib, *Pemberontakan Pahang 1891-1895* (Kota Bharu, 1972); Sanyal Usha, "The Trengganu Uprising 1928" (MA dissertation, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1977); Abdullah Zakaria, "Kekacauan dan Kebangkitan Trengganu 1921-1928" (MA dissertation, University of Malaya, 1976); Shaharil Talib, *After Its Own Image.*

14 See Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy,* pp. 91-92, 155-158, 197-198.

15 It is common for Mawar peasants not to pay their land taxes over a period of time, sometimes exceeding the three-year regulation limit. They would only pay when they were threatened by the *penghulu* with eviction or auction orders. Even so, the peasants concerned would only pay a part of the taxes, such as for three of the five years' tax arrears. This is also common even in recent times, according to officials from Malawati land office.

16 For further discussions on various aspects of the Malayan Union policy and the subsequent political reactions, see Allen, *Malayan Union;* Mohammad Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union;* Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics;* Yunus Hamidi, *Sejarah Pergerakan Politik Melayu Semenanjung* (Kuala Lumpur, 1961).

17 UMNO's origins, its ideological and political history, have generally been studied in the context of Malay politics and nationalism at the marco level. See for example, Ramlah Adam, *UMNO: Organisasi dan Kegiatan Politik;* Funston, *Malay Politics in Malaysia;* Moore, "The United Malays National Organization", Aziz Ahmad, *UMNO: Falsafah dan Perjuangannya* (Kuala Lumpur: 1980). Recently, the undergraduate students of the Department of History, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia have also produced interesting accounts on the history of UMNO in almost every state of Peninsular Malaysia, mostly in the form of honours theses.

18 The reconstruction of the UMNO history in Mawar is based on oral and written sources. I interviewed about twenty of the founding members of UMNO Kg. Mawar and Sungai Ikan, three of the surviving founding committee members of Malawati UMNO division, a few retired government servants who were serving at Malawati district office in the early 1950s, and scores of individuals in Mukim Mawar. I consulted three different types of written material: archival, extant UMNO files kept by individuals in Mawar and UMNO Selangor reports. The specific source referred to will only be cited if and when necessary.

19 The present village heads of Kg. Mawar and Kg. Kasturi provided most of the detailed information on those from Mawar who attended the anti-Malayan Union demonstration at Kuala Lumpur in 1946.

20 Information on peasants' reactions towards UMNO Mawar in its early years was gathered from groups of village elders in Kg. Teratai, Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Chempaka. Kg. Mawar's and Kg. Kasturi's village heads also gave some useful insights into, what they considered "the villagers' lack of support towards UMNO" in the 1950s.

21 The details of the election results were obtained from the various election reports published by the Election Commission after each general election.

22 Such cases were frequently mentioned in explaining the success of PAS in establishing its branches with Tanjung Karam, Kelang and Sabak Bernam. To what extent this is common elsewhere in Peninsular Malaysia is unknown. However, it is not uncommon for traditional religious instruction centres, such as *pondok*, to become PAS fortresses in the 1960s.

23 See Funston, *Malay Politics in Malaysia*, pp. 118-126, for brief accounts on the various important PAS national leaders of the 1960s. For a detailed biographical history of Zulkiflee Muhammad see Mohsin Haji Ahmad, "Allahyarham Zulkiflee Muhammad (Honours thesis, Department of History, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1975); and on Dr Burhanuddin, see Saliha Hassan, "Dr Burhanuddin Alhelmi: A Political Biography" (Academic Exercise, Department of History, University of Malaya, 1972) and Ahmad Boestamam (psued.), *Dr Burhanuddin: Putera Setia Melayu Raya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1972).

24 This was the opinion of PAS leaders in Kg. Chempaka given in separate interviews.

25 The National Front (*Barisan Nasional*) was officially registered as a political party on 1 June 1974 with nine component parties namely, UMNO, MCA, MIC, PAS, PPP (People's Progressive Party), PBB (Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu), Gerakan (Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia), SUPP (Sarawak United People's Party) and Sabah Alliance Party. However, since then, a few of the political parties have left the National Front and new ones joined in.

The Alliance Party, precursor of the National Front, was officially established on 23 August 1953 with only UMNO and MCA as its components. On 17 October 1954 the MIC joined the Alliance Party. The party existed for some 20 years (1953-1974) before expanding into the National Front.

26 For detailed psephological analysis of the various general elections from 1955 to 1982, see references cited in Chapter 1, note 2.

27 The dates 1958 and 1972 were significant in the context of Kg. Chempaka politics. 1958 was when the first branch of a political party was established in Kg. Chempaka, that is, the PAS branch in Kg. Asal. The latter was the year when PAS joined the National Front, but was opposed by Kg. Asal PAS branch. However, the branch was forced to have "a truce" with Kg. Chempaka's UMNO branch. Subsequently, the leadership of both parties within Kg. Chempaka got together secretly and set up a *syarikat* (private company) that was unregistered to take advantage of the benefits provided by the NEP. See Chapter 3.

28 It is relevant here to cite Kessler who said, "What finds voice and is therefore affirmed through religion is often the human reality of the believers themselves. They are at once the producers and products of their society's history, struggling to find adequate forms to explain their own experience and to assert their right to define their identity and their future for themselves." See Clive Kessler, "Malaysia Islamic Revivalism and Political Disaffection in a Divided Society", *Southeast Asia Chronicle* 75(1980): 11.

29 Voting on ethnic lines is the pattern within Malaysia. This has been the opinion of most scholars who have analysed the results of all the general elections held so far in Malaysia. However, it is not uncommon to find that non-Malay votes go to a Malay candidate of the ruling Alliance or National Front coalition party if the opponent is also a Malay candidate but from PAS.

30 See a detailed study on the protest led by Hamid Tuah, known as *Peristiwa Telok Gong* by Siti Nor Hamid, "Gerakan Kaum Tani di Selangor: Satu Kajian Kes di Telok Gong" (Honours thesis, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1982). Siti Nor is a daughter of Hamid Tuah and has been active politically at the national level.

31 Since land administration is a state matter, state Executive Councils (Excos) in Malaysia are the main political bodies which make decisions on land policy. But in Selangor there is a smaller body called the Steering Committee which is made up of a selected few from the Exco with the state secretary, a civil servant, as the secretary, chaired by the chief minister. This committee, or the inner cabinet, makes all the final decisions on land and other matters, endorsed by the Exco and rubber-stamped by the state legislative assembly.

32 It must be mentioned here that at the federal constituency level, the contest was between the Alliance candidate and the Democratic Action Party (DAP). Haji Zam Zam, the third candidate, represented PAS, but he was not considered by either Alliance or DAP as their main threat.

33 See for example, Funston, *Malay Politics in Malaysia*, pp. 244-247; Crouch et al. *Malaysia Politics*, pp. 8-9.

34 See for example, Isman, *Administration and Development*, M. Puthucheary, *The Politics of Administration: The Malaysian Experience* (Kuala Lumpur, 1978); Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad, "The District Office as an Institution of Development" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1977); idem,

"Development Administration: Major Efforts at Administrative Reforms – Malaysia's Case" (Unpublished paper, Fourth Asian Foreign Service Course, 1-22 July, 1972); idem, "Administrative Reforms for Development in Malaysia: Focus on the Grassroot Organization", in *Administrative Reforms for Decentralized Development*, ed. A.P. Saxena (Kuala Lumpur, 1980), pp. 103-140.

35 A closer examination and comparison of the content of UMNO constitution pre-1974 and post-1974 revealed this crucial shift in the power to decide which candidate will contest for UMNO. See particularly the sections on the "Supreme Council" and "UMNO Division".

36 From my observation, KEMAS has two main political functions. It is an institution which provides jobs or rewards for local level UMNO leaders or supporters; those who have consistently worked hard during election campaigns. Secondly, it is a channel through which the ruling party continuously monitors and assesses grassroot support through the adult classes it organized in almost every village. KEMAS also organized civic courses for villagers to explain what the government is doing for the ordinary people. It is not uncommon for KEMAS to organize tours for villagers to visit Kuala Lumpur to see the "progress and development" at the capital of the nation. The transport used is state government buses. Each villager is charged a small fee, part of which goes to pay for the trip, and part for joining UMNO or payment of the party's annual subscription. Indirectly, KEMAS recruits new party members. Some officials from the district office described KEMAS as an official UMNO organ within the government bureaucracy. Others alleged that KEMAS gathers intelligence information for the party. For a more detailed analysis on the origins and political role of KEMAS, see Shamsul A.B. "KEMAS: The Under-rated Political Machine" (Unpublished paper, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1982).

37 These comments and related information are based on my interviews with the *wakil rakyat* and her personal secretary.

5

POLITICS OF BUMIPUTERA POLICY

Distribution of Development Benefits Under the New Economic Policy in Kampung Chempaka

Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the present UMNO President and Prime Minister of Malaysia, stated in his controversial book, *The Malay Dilemma*

> The party (UMNO) was held together not because the members had generally identical ideas on politics, but through a system of patronage and disguised coercion based on Government rather than party authority . . . . As patronage became more and more indirect, as when a village was denied or given development projects, it became more and more difficult to elicit favourable responses . . . . The advent of patronage as a factor in intra-party politics was significant, for it meant that the leaders were no longer answerable to the ordinary members and the faceless supporters, but were only answerable to themselves. A feeling of power normally grips those who wield patronage, a feeling that they can mould and shape people and opinion any way they please.[1]

Few would doubt the importance of patronage in party politics, in Malaysia or elsewhere. But to assume that in Malaysian politics, especially UMNO's, patronage alone, however dominant its role, decides the rules of the political game – as emphasized by Mahathir

above, is misleading and grossly inaccurate. Many scholars have argued that patronage is a powerful ideological device which obscures the underlying class structure. The function of patron-client relationship is to serve, facilitate, lubricate and sanctify the structural relationships of exploitation and dominance within a class-divided society such as Malaysia.[2] In short, patronage is a form of class rule and class struggle and at the same time its concealment. In the Malaysian context, this is best illustrated by the way in which development projects under the NEP poverty eradication programme are distributed at the local village level.

This chapter intends not only to demonstrate the dominance of patronage politics in the distribution process but also the economic basis which underlies it and is often expressed quite explicitly. To achieve this purpose it is necessary to examine empirically in some detail not only what takes place in Kg. Chempaka and Mukim Mawar but also the situation in Malawati district as a whole. It is too common for Malaysianists to discuss in a few sentences the role of the district bureaucracy in the distribution of development projects under the NEP. Among social anthropologists the emphasis has been mainly on village-state relations, treating district bureaucracy as a mere agent or instrument of the state, forgetting it could be an obstacle too. Therefore, the role of the district bureaucracy has been reduced to an organizational conduit through which development projects are channelled. In the course of the administrative changes made by the national government, since 1971, to facilitate the implementation of the NEP, the importance of district bureaucracy has reached new heights. Of course, this was not unrelated to the changes which took place at the national level resulting in greater intervention and control of the state over development planning in general and resource allocation in particular.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion on the origins of the NEP and its objectives. This will provide the general background against which the analysis of the implementation of the NEP objectives at the local level must be set. The next section examines the composition and function of a group of district-level committees which are mainly responsible for deciding the course of development within the district, which is hereafter referred to as the district development machinery. It will be demonstrated how the bureaucratic operations of the machinery are ultimately controlled by politi-

cians so that it becomes an integral part of the local ruling party apparatus. A detailed description of the distribution process of development benefits meant to eradicate poverty, particularly those popularly known as rural development projects, will also be discussed. The emphasis in this section will be on the political dimension of the distribution and its political and economic implications at the different levels of social organization within the district. The main groups which benefitted most from the implementation of the projects will be identified. The amount of funds involved will be discussed too. The last section of this chapter will deal with Kg. Chempaka and Mawar. Bearing in mind that Kg. Chempaka politics is closely related to the overall political situation in the Mawar state seat or electoral constituency (see previous chapter), this chapter will examine how the conflict of political and economic interests amongst the different groups within the Mawar constituency and Kg. Chempaka expresses itself in the process of the distribution of development projects under the NEP.

The NEP: Its Origins and Objectives

The NEP was implemented in 1971, not long after the 13 May 1969 racial riots in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital city. It is not uncommon for scholars to assume that the NEP was formulated solely as a government response to the bloody incident.[3] Of course, we cannot deny that the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975 as a document was finalized in mid-1970 when the NEP was explained. However, most of the philosophical ideas and practical policies incorporated in this document, and hence into the NEP, were drawn mainly from the proposals and resolutions of the Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputra (Indigenous Economic Congress) of 1965 and 1968. The initiation and organization of the congress, the interest groups it represented, and how their interests came to be embodied in the NEP are outlined briefly here.

The need to hold the congress was voiced strongly by the Malay capitalist group within UMNO at its 1965 annual general assembly. They demanded government intervention in the private sector, especially in the Pioneer Industries Scheme, whereby Malay participation would be increased, not only in terms of employment

quotas but also in share capital. The magical figure of 30 percent Malay participation was in vogue long before the NEP was formulated.[4] The dissatisfaction articulated by the Malay capitalist group at the general assembly arose from two main sources: firstly, their discontentment with a government body called RIDA, which was supposed to be responsible for the development of Malay participation in commerce and industry, and secondly, because of the failure of the Malay National Investment Company, sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.[5] In response to mounting pressure, the government then called a Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputra in June 1965, intending to achieve economically what the first All-Malaya Malay Congress of 1946 had achieved politically, in effecting the formation of UMNO. A second congress was held in September 1968.[6] In these conferences, no less than 300 resolutions were put together and submitted to the UMNO-controlled government.[7] The resolutions expressed the frustrations of the participants with regard to the status quo and government policy but, more significantly, the conferences generally reflected the emerging coherence and consolidation of the Malay capitalist class. Therefore, it could be suggested that the 13 May 1969 incident was ironically, a blessing in disguise for the Malay capitalists. They were presented with the golden opportunity to promote their interests on the economic front through the UMNO-controlled government, which then incorporated their demands amongst the objectives and policies of the NEP.

The NEP has two major objectives. Firstly, "to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty... irrespective of race", and secondly, "to restructure Malaysian society to correct economic imbalance, so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function".[8] The first objective of the NEP was to be achieved without challenging the interests of the propertied class and without incorporating efforts to improve the lot of wage-earners as a whole.[9] In short, all measures to eradicate poverty could only be carried out within a framework which did not disturb the interests of the propertied class.[10] Policies which the government has implemented to eradicate poverty include the provision and improvement of basic amenities to rural areas (piped water, electricity, roads, health facilities, and so forth); increased government assistance to peasants to help them improve their productivity and hence,

income; job creation for the unemployed, guaranteed minimum price increases for selected commodities such as rice but not including rubber and oil palm which are subjected to international market forces; and land for the landless. As these policies have been implemented within the context of the governments's definition of poverty, it is not surprising to observe that although the state of income distribution has worsened overall, officially "the incidence of poverty has been reduced dramatically".[11]

The second objective of the NEP was translated into policies such as racial quotas for employment at all levels (that is, the increase of Malay labour participation, especially at the supervisory and executive levels); and the expansion of tertiary education opportunities for Malays (that is, the cultivation of a stratum that would be obligated to, and allied with, the governing class). But the most important element of this particular objective was to "rectify" the imbalance of ownership and wealth between the races. This was to be done by allocating at least 30 percent of the total commercial capital and industrial activities in all categories and scales of operation to the Malays and other indigenous people in terms of ownership and management. In short, the creation of a Malay entrepreneurial class, who were to own 30 percent of the nation's wealth by 1990 through a fully government-assisted programme was seen as the best strategy to rectify the imbalance mentioned. For this sole purpose, the government implemented programmes to support the activities of private Malay capitalists, an approach which had been adopted in the pre-NEP era, but which met with little success. Public enterprises or quasi-government bodies, such as the Urban Development Authority (UDA) and the State Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) were established by the dozen to promote the interests of Malay capitalists, purportedly on behalf of, and in trusteeship for, the Malay community as a whole.[12]

These objectives of the NEP have been introduced in phases since 1971, according to the five-year plans subsequent to the Second Malaysia Plan. Hence, the Third Malaysia Plan 1976-1980 and the Fourth Malaysia Plan 1981-1985 have incorporated the original objectives and policies of the Second Malaysia Plan. Inevitably there have been changes made in the Third and Fourth Malaysia Plans but none of these affect the interests of the Malay capitalist class.[13] On the contrary, they consolidate and strengthen their interests.

It has been consistently argued in the previous chapters that the overall orientation of development planning in Malaysia reflects the commitment of the dominant classes to capitalist development and to the promotion of capitalist interests as a whole; be it during the colonial era or in the post-colonial period. However, the continuing process of competition and compromise amongst the dominant class factions, since independence in 1957 resulted in the ascendancy of the emerging Malay bourgeoisie, particularly its bureaucratic class.[14] Thus, we witness the advent and promotion of the *bumiputera* policy by the state through the NEP, purported to be in the interest of the Malay community. This is articulated in the state promotion of Malay capital accumulation through the NEP "restructuring society" objective, and the state promise of greater commitment in its rural development policy (which has had a different rationale since 1971) eradicate poverty. The latter also represents an attempt by the powers that be, to respond and fulfil the demands of the Malay rural electorate, which still forms the bulk of UMNO electoral support and hence of the ruling party.

The introduction of the *bumiputera* policy also resulted in some major changes in the administration of development such as planning, implementation and evaluation at all levels. Consequently, politicians or "technocrats" as some called them,[15] more than bureaucrats, have a greater control not only of the planning process but also the implementation and distribution process. This phenomenon is most evident at the state and district levels. For example, within Selangor state (and in the Malaysian states) the Exco is a powerful political organ in deciding matters relating to the implementation of development projects and on many other crucial matters such as land. Of its 12 members, only three are bureaucrats (the state secretary, the state legal adviser and the state financial officer) and the rest are politicians selected from the 33 members of the state legislative assembly. The Exco thus functions as a state cabinet. However, there is a smaller, inner cabinet which actually formulates major policies of the state and decides on important state matters. It is called the Steering Committee which has five members, four politicians and one civil servant. One of the politicians is the chief minister who is also the chairperson of the committee. He is responsible for selecting the other three politicians. The lone bureaucrat is the state secretary who as secretary to the Steering

Committee prepares the agenda, minutes, and so forth.

The Exco is not really the most powerful political organ as many scholars seem to believe, but the Steering Committee.[16] The decisions of this committee are endorsed by the Exco and finally passed by the legislative assembly. Sometimes the Steering Committee makes and hands down decisions directly to district bureaucracy. What is significant about all this is the fact that politicians, particularly from the ruling party, wield tremendous power in running state affairs, traditionally the domain of the bureaucrats. The latter run the day-to-day administration at the state and district levels. However, this does not imply that they are passive participants in the political distribution of development benefits under the NEP. They, too, participate quite actively in various capacities, and have benefitted quite handsomely in the "business of development".

In sum, the administrative changes made since the advent of the *bumiputera* policy have created highly significant political and economic configurations at all levels within Malaysia. Examination of the Mawar and Kg. Chempaka cases will show the extent of political control over the district development machinery and the distribution process of development projects. This will show more clearly the local expression of the "class contention" as some termed it,[17] which underlies the social relations within Malaysian society. The funds involved in financing development projects, how they are utilized, and how much really "trickles down", to borrow a term commonly used by the theorists of the "modernization" school, will also be discussed.

The District Development Machinery: The Management of Sectional Interests in Malawati

In Malaysia, at the district level, all projects implemented under the *bumiputera* policy of the NEP are called *projek pembangunan*, or development projects, irrespective of whether they are for "poverty eradication" or to "restructure Malaysian society". In short, the two objectives of the NEP and the development projects included under them are often difficult to separate, or perceived as one and the same by local politicians and bureaucrats. So, too, by village leaders,

peasants, proletariats and the like. Or else, they are generally referred to as *bumiputera* policy. The significance of such perceptions *vis-à-vis* the implementation of the *projek pembangunan*, will emerge as we later empirically examine the distribution of such projects and their ultimate beneficiaries.

In a district, such as Malawati, there exists so many different committees dealing with matters ranging from the Qur'an reading competition to the issuing of liquor licences.[18] In 1981, there were at least 40 different district-level committees in Malawati – small, big, permanent and *ad hoc*. Most of these committees are chaired by the DO or the ADO. At least 12 of these committees were formed to handle the development administration or development matters.[19] Of these only four could be considered to be of major importance in handling and fashioning development within Malawati. They are the District Action Committee (DAC), the District Development Committee (DDC), the District Technical/Planning Committee (DTPC) and the District Land Committee (DLC).

The DAC is the largest and most important with about 60 members – most of whom are permanent and a few co-opted at every meeting. The members can be categorized into three groups: politicians (MPs and state legislative assembly members), civil servants (federal and state governments) and officials of statutory government bodies (such as, RISDA, FELDA, etc). The chairperson of this committee is the DO. The committee functions as the highest decision-making body in the district not only on matters pertaining to development projects but also handles matters such as the sultan's visits to Malawati. It is also empowered by legislation to create small or special *ad hoc* committees to deal with urgent problems such as natural disasters. It meets at least once in two months at the district operations room. Not all the stipulated members are always present at the meetings as some send their representatives. More importantly, it handles a very large amount of public funds. According to district and state official sources, it deals with funds in the order of M$3.5 million to M$4.5 million annually, out of which about 75 percent is spent on development projects. This was for the period between 1976 and 1981.[20] Excluded from these figures were special development expenditure from the Chief Minister's fund for each state legislative assembly member and from the federal government for each of the MPs. The four state councillors receive M$120,000 each

for special development expenditure and the two MPs receive M$100,000 each annually for similar expenditure. There is an extra M$920,000 available for development in the district over the millions allocated by both state and federal authorities. It is important to note that these special funds are only made available to state councillors and MPs from the ruling coalition, that is, the National Front and not to those who belong to the opposition party.

The DDC is responsible for monitoring the progress of all development projects throughout Malawati and to act as a co-ordinating body for the various departments and statutory institutions in the implementation of these projects. Unlike the DDCs in other Selangor districts, the one in Malawati is divided into two.[21] One is the Development Committee (Infrastructure) which deals with projects such as roads, buildings, and so forth, the other is the Development Committee (Agro-Base) which handles schemes related to agriculture, particularly rice. Malawati has been known mainly for its rice production at Tanjung Karam since colonial days. Currently there is a large-scale agricultural project, called the Northwest Selangor Integrated Agricultural Development Project, being implemented, financed by the federal government with a M$150 million loan from the World Bank.[22] It is an irrigation as well as an agricultural project through which the government hopes "to raise the productivity and incomes of about 32,000 smallholding families dependent on the cultivation of padi and a wide variety of tree crops".[23] The first stage began in 1979 and was completed in early 1984. It is the existence of such projects which necessitated the establishment of a separate committee called the Development Committee (Agro-Base) because the implementation of these projects would suffer greatly if co-ordination amongst the various government departments and statutory bodies as well as private entrepreneurs involved such as contractors, is lacking. The membership of both committees is much smaller than that of the DAC. Each has a core group of about ten committee members, mainly district-level heads of government departments and statutory bodies, and all the six politicians (who are normally represented by their secretaries). Meetings of the two committees are held separately and take place at least once every two months. Often individuals from the private sector are called to attend and are co-opted as members during the meetings. In this way, the committees are able to get direct feedback

or progress reports when needed from all sectors involved in implementing the projects. Should there be any problem arising from the implementation process, the committees are quickly mobilized to solve it. The officials of these committees are often dubbed trouble shooters.

The DO is the chairperson of both committees, but more often than not, he has the ADOs to preside in his absence. The committees do not handle funds or make decisions about them, but they are supposed to submit monthly progress reports, outlining any problems in detail and make recommendations to the all-powerful DAC. In any case, most of the committee members of both committees sit on the DAC, too.

The DTPC is much smaller than the two previous committees. It deals primarily with the technical aspects of development projects, such as the planning of an industrial site, pollution aspects, architectural matters and soil surveys. The main task of this committee is to draw up an annual master plan of Malawati's physical development. Officials of this committee regularly check the physical aspects of each proposed project and submit relevant reports and recommendations to the DDC and the DAC before any decision is made. It does not handle any public funds. It consists of officials from the district office who are categorized as professionals within the government service, such as engineers, surveyors and health inspectors. The DO or his representative chairs the committee and its meetings. Politicians, or their representatives, are also members of this committee. Again, most of the committee members are also officials of the DAC and/or the DDC. Often, professional consultants particular projects are invited and co-opted as members at its meetings.

The smallest of the four major committees involved in development administration within Malawati is the DLC. Some may argue that this committee does not deal directly with development matters but with matters pertaining to land such as land alienation, collection of land taxes and issuing of titles. In short, it serves more as a clearing house for land applications. The chairperson is the Collector of Land Revenue, also called the ADO in-charge of land, and three state councillors. The latter are chosen from the six in Malawati. Usually the three most senior become the members of the committee. The present committee in Malawati was set up in August

1978. The meetings are held regularly, sometimes twice a month. This is due to the backlog of thousands of land cases which have to be cleared. It is not uncommon for a land title application to take between six months to over two years before it is passed.

Although the officials of the district land office are not clear on how to relate land policy to the implementation of the NEP,[24] evidence reveals that the DLC makes crucial decisions regarding land development in the district (such as land alienation, acquisition, conversion, sub-division, amalgamation and mining lands) which are, directly or indirectly, related to particular development projects. For example, to build a two-mile road, which is classified as a development project, it would probably involve 30 to 50 landowners whose lands (usually a very small acreage) have to be acquired. This, in turn, becomes not only a DLC matter, but also concerns the DAC. In most cases, compensation becomes a hot political issue, or the acquisition of the land itself could turn into a political nightmare for some state councillors. In this way, although small and seemingly not responsible for development projects, this committee is in fact crucial especially in a rural district like Malawati, where land is the primary means of production for the majority of its population.

However, this committee does not make any final decisions regarding land matters. It only makes recommendations to the Exco or directly to the Steering Committee of Selangor state, for example, whether or not, a particular piece of land is suitable for a particular development project or should be alienated to a private individual applicant. The recommendations are based on technical and administrative criteria. (The latter is often referred to as political by the district land office officials themselves.) Any piece of land to be alienated, either to individuals or to any government or statutory bodies, must have been inspected by the district technical departments, such as the PWD, DID, the Health Department, and so on. This is to ensure, for instance, that the soil is safe enough for buildings to be built on, especially public buildings (for example, mosques and community halls); or that it is not too close to mosquito-infested swamps, and the like; or whether it is earmarked for some other projects. Based on the technical report, the committee then deliberates the administrative aspect of the proposal, such as the economic advantages particularly of private projects (for example, petrol stations and motor workshops) to the local population. At

this stage, it is not uncommon to ask questions such as whether the applicant is a member of the ruling party, or how much financial contributions the applicant could make to the ruling party election coffers.[25] After all these have been deliberated, the full recommendation is then submitted to the Exco or Steering Committee. Members of the DLC are also officials of the DAC.

From the above, it is not difficult to appreciate that a small but important section of the DAC also sits on the other three important district committees which are involved in development matters, mainly politicians, the DO and his assistants and the heads of the various government and statutory bodies. Whatever has been agreed in the three committees is endorsed without much debate at the DAC. It is also common for proposals put forward by this small section of officials, particularly those made by the politicians, to receive special attention by the other three committees, that is, by its members who are not politicians. But the dominance of the politicians in all the committees and particularly in the DAC is not only due to the fact that they could be Exco members or that they sit in the state legislative assembly but also to one important local political factor.

From a detailed study of the political backgrounds of the committee who are not politicians, it was found that nearly 80 percent of them are members of the ruling party and a small group are party officials. Most of them are members of UMNO branches within Mawar and Tanjung Karam UMNO divisions, only a few belong to branches outside these divisions.[26] (For example, two of the ADOs are members of UMNO branches at their village of origin in the northern states of Peninsular Malaysia.) According to the government rules, its officials (including those in the statutory bodies) cannot participate, without prior permission, in any political activities. The rules divide the officials into two categories: (i) Group A – officers holding appointments requiring a university degree or professional qualifications as the entry qualification; (ii) Group B – those officers not in Group A.[27] In the former, the officers are prohibited fom taking part or carrying on political activities and even from wearing any emblem of a political party. They are not allowed to adopt a partisan view orally or in writing. This group includes the DO and his assistant, district engineers, doctors, architects, veterinary surgeons, and so forth. In the Malawati context it includes

virtually all the heads of government departments and statutory bodies and the DO and his ADOs, all of whom are members of the DAC. Group B include officers such as the *penghulu*, and other district level bureaucrats who sit on the various committees. They are allowed to become committee members of *any* political party if given prior permission by the government.

However, the rules seemed to have been ignored. There are officers of the Group A category in Malawati who are members of the ruling party and have even become party officials, but no disciplinary action has been taken against them. This seems to be the case if they remain loyal and are not critical of the government or not in conflict with local politicians. It is not surprising that no disciplinary action has been taken against the offenders. In Selangor one of the assistant state secretaries was a card-carrying member of UMNO for about a decade. He resigned in 1982 and contested a federal seat in his home state and eventually was appointed as a deputy minister in the federal government. Such officers are responsible for finding the offenders. It is not surprising if Group A officers in other districts within Selangor are active party officials of the ruling party. The Group B officials in Malawati are often strong UMNO party men at the branch or divisional level. Many seem to have not even bothered to ask official permission to participate. They assume that it would be accepted as long as they remain in the ruling party and are loyal to the local and state level political masters. One could violate the rules, it appears as long as one is a member or an official of UMNO or the National Front but not of the opposition party.[28]

The clear implication of this situation is that all development committees of the district are virtually National Front or UMNO district development committees in government "clothing". Those members of the committees who belong to the National Front are subject to the politicians (MPs and state councillors), who are their party leaders. This has tended to boost the dominance of politicians at the district level. As a result, although formally these committees are the crucial bodies that decide on the implementation of all development projects under the NEP within the district, the ultimate power of decision-making lies within the UMNO-dominated National Front party organization of Malawati. This situation holds in all *mukim* and villages within the district. One may argue that neither the police department within the district could be included

in this politico-bureaucratic complex, nor could the judiciary (represented by one magistrate in Malawati). While theoretically this may be the case, upon closer scrutiny it is apparent they are also subject to political pressures which have led to legal compromises. There have been allegations of several such cases one of which certainly took place.[29]

From the above it is clear that the entire district development machinery has become an integral part of the total ruling party organization, and now operates within the context of the political factions, cleavages and coalitions of UMNO Malawati. The machinery has also become the most effective instrument within the district, not only for the suppression of opposition from other political parties, such as PAS, but also for dealing with opposition from within the ruling party ranks. The large pool of material rewards that this machinery can offer through the implementation of the NEP programmes, and the potential power that one can gain by association with the organizations or its officials, have created highly significant political and economic configurations in the district and in its various *mukim* and villages.

Hence the economic basis of patronage and network politics within the district, which in the past was often obscured, has now become more prominent. Quite often it is openly expressed in terms of financial and material gains in an exchange of political support nexus. Contending leaders within the local ruling party organization often talk in terms of the economic value of the political positions, namely, the state councillor and parliamentarian posts. This resulted in intense intra-party struggles for the coveted political positions.[30] In the economic sphere, there has been a proliferation of private companies, known as *syarikat*, formed to take advantage of the material benefits provided by the implementation of the various, often expensive, development projects. It is in this context that the local Malay bourgeoisie together with their national counterparts co-operate for mutual benefit. In other circumstances the two factions could be competing with each other, often expressed in political and factional terms. It is also common for factions within the local Malay bourgeoisie to compete against one another for obvious materials gains, the articulation of which is mostly expressed in terms of intra-party conflicts.

Politics and the Distribution of Development Projects in Malawati

There are many types of development projects under the NEP which are implemented in Malawati: a few are large-scale ones involving millions of dollars, some are of medium size but still costly, and many are minor ones but the total cost is quite substantial. All these projects are meant to fulfil the two objectives of the NEP – "poverty eradication" and "restructuring society". In this section the focus will be on those categorized as rural development projects which, in the main, are supposed to eradicate poverty. However, they are also meant to modernize the rural sector and improve this sector's productivity and quality of life, thus fulfilling the "restructuring society" objective of the NEP. We will emphasize the political dimension of the distribution of these projects because the main political issues and conflicts which took place within the district often found clear expressions in the distribution process itself.

The rural development projects are categorized broadly by the district development bureaucracy, into agricultural and basic amenities projects. These categories frequently appear in the minutes of the various development committee meetings, in a number of important official reports and briefings, and in countless numbers of public speeches made by politicians, bureaucrats, local leaders and even in Friday prayer sermons.[31] Each category of the projects will be examined to discuss the different government bodies involved, how these projects are distributed, the ultimate beneficiaries and to what extent the whole distribution process is politicized within the district.

Agricultural Projects

In Malawati agricultural projects can be broadly classified under national and state organizations. There are those which belong to national-based institutions, such as RISDA, FELDA and FOA and the Ministry of Agriculture and, on the other, those belonging to state-based organizations such as the Selangor Agricultural Development Corporation, Department of Agriculture and so on. Policies and projects of the national-based institutions are formulated and their

implementation monitored mostly from the top. The state-based bodies have their projects proposed by the district bureaucracy after being recommended by *mukim* and village communities and planned by Selangor government planners. As such, national-based institutions seldom have their policy formulation affected by the local political situation, except at the implementation level. But local politics often shape the policy formulation and influence the implementation process of most of the projects belonging to state-based institutions. This is due to the fact that the very politicians who dominate the district development machinery also sit on the state legislative assembly and a few are also members of the powerful state Exco. One or two could even be on the influential Steering Committee. It is not uncommon for them to impose their demands, or have their demands met at either the district, the state constituency or state level. This situation also applies to the planning and implementation of the basic amenities projects which will be discussed later. Some of the agricultural projects of both the national and state based organizations and their implementation will now be examined.

RISDA is one of the main national-based institutions which have many projects in Malawati, especially in the rubber region of the district located south of the Malawati river. This is where Mawar and Kg. Chempaka are located. The area to the north of the river is often referred to as the rice bowl region and there RISDA had very few projects. (Some details of RISDA's role, projects and their implementation at the village level in Kg. Chempaka have been discussed in Chapter 3.) RISDA's main effort is geared towards "modernizing the smallholder sector [rubber and, lately, oil palm] with the ultimate aim of improving the economic well-being of the smallholders".[32] This is to be achieved through various activities which include replanting, the opening of new lands to be developed as plantations for the benefit of the smallholders, preparing and supplying planting materials, credit facilities, providing extension services and advising the smallholders on matters pertaining to marketing, improving production technique, processing, amongst others.

Observations of RISDA's performance at Kg. Chempaka revealed that most of its projects implemented in the village were successful, if we use RISDA and its local officials' own measurements. However, in real terms, the main beneficiaries were the village bourgeoisie and

petty bourgeoisie who had relatively sizeable, if not large, landholdings and alternative incomes to support themselves during the maturation period of the crops (rubber or oil palm) they chose to grow. Hence the credit facilities as well as other assistance RISDA provided along with its replanting programmes went to the same group of recipients.

It is not entirely true that the lack of peasant participation, such as in the case of Kg. Chempaka, was due to their ignorance of the various facilities offered by RISDA, their hesitation and reluctance to adopt new techniques or technology, or simply the uneconomic size of their holdings, as some Malaysianists have argued.[33] On the contrary, they were fully aware of all the projects offered by RISDA and were willing to accept the new techniques. Despite their small uneconomic plots, the large replanting grants and the intercropping programmes were considered sufficient for them to survive during the maturing period of the crop. The availability of other part-time employment opportunities was an additional factor. What delayed their participation was unresolved land matters, such as the changing of the land status from non-rubber to rubber, the absence of proper land titles, joint ownership problems, and so forth. Unless these issues were resolved they were not eligible to participate in RISDA's programme. These problems had historical roots and were not unrelated to the fact that the colonial and post-colonial state in Malaysia had been always committed to capitalist development and hence, in the past, rural development programmes benefitted the plantation sector most. In other words, there were unresolved long-standing structural problems which existed before RISDA was established to help the poor or for that matter, before other similar bodies existed. Therefore, when RISDA implemented its projects it inevitably faced the same problems which its predecessor, the Rubber Industry (Replanting) Board confronted in the 1950s and 1960s.[34] The recipients had the perennial problem of economic balance between having to survive by taking part in the programme and suffering because of insufficient assistance if and when they participate in the institutional programmes. The so-called negative attitudes, which were supposedly responsible for their lack of participation, were the manifestations of the economic balancing act that they had to do constantly, which in turn, were the observable expressions of the underlying, wider structural problems.

At the district level, RISDA is represented by its district chief on the DAC. His main role is to report at every meeting the progress of all RISDA projects in the district, the problems faced and steps taken to redress them, and to discuss proposed future RISDA projects. He also hears complaints about RISDA's performance from other committee members, and reports them to his headquarters. Should he decide to resolve any of the problems relating to the implementations of projects, he usually has to refer to his superiors either at the state level or at the headquarters. In many ways, it is difficult for local politicians to really exert pressure on him on policy matters because he could always say he is under instruction from his "top bosses". He also does not hesitate to use that as an excuse if he is harassed politically. However, he and his junior officers at every *mukim* in the district are not totally free from political pressures when it comes to the distribution and implementation of the projects. There have been cases when they were forced to favour an UMNO village but not a PAS one, or a particular UMNO politician's area and not another.[35] In such cases the RISDA officials' own involvement in the local ruling party politics seems to have been the main reason for the bias.

However, in Kg. Chempaka's case such bias did not occur. In fact, the PAS officials and supporters of Kg. Asal were benefitting greatly from the replanting programmes. This became the source of a mild dispute between the Mawar *wakil rakyat* and the local RISDA official discussed in Chapter 3. The dispute in Kg. Chempaka revealed that there was a conflict of interest between the two parties. The Mawar *wakil rakyat*'s main reason for being dissatisfied with the RISDA officials was political. This was the direct consequence of the "1974 conflict" discussed in Chapter 4. She had been blocking many development projects from reaching Kg. Asal since 1974, and hence the RISDA projects which Kg. Asal received were seen by her as "spoiling" her plan to punish a group of opposition party supporters. She felt she had been outwitted by the PAS leaders of Kg. Asal and the RISDA officers were seen as their collaborators. However, the RISDA officers believed it was their duty to give support and encouragement to diligent and innovative smallholders, such as those in Kg. Asal. This was in line with RISDA national policy. The success of the GPC project in Kg. Asal gave them a good name *vis-à-vis* the top RISDA bureaucrats and was good for their promotion prospects too. In short, there was a conflict between

political and personal interests. However, the *wakil rakyat*'s motive was not strictly political, as it was apparently also influenced by personal grudge.

Another important and active national based institution is the FOA which has its own set of agricultural projects meant for the poor in Malawati Selangor. Unlike RISDA, FOA projects are more diversified and tend to be small-scale. Compared to RISDA, FOA bureaucracy is smaller and less centralized. Some scholars claim that the FOA overall organization is less efficient due to a smaller and less competent staff when compared to RISDA.[36] FOA projects in Malawati are for tree-crop growers as well as rice cultivators. Its projects can be divided into: (i) assisting villagers in establishing farmers' associations, co-operatives, etc., (ii) providing agricultural inputs, for example, seedlings and fertilizers and (iii) developing sizeable areas for certain crops. These projects when implemented are usually integrated. For example, FOA officers with the co-operation of village heads will set up a farmers' association in a village with members recruited from the villagers. There is no membership fee. Once the association has been established, the village head, the FOA officers and the members get together at a meeting and decide the type of agricultural projects the village needs and the relevant assistance needed from FOA. The FOA then organizes the projects to be implemented and provides not only the technical know-how but also the agricultural inputs or facilities. Some of the projects could also involve the opening up of a large area in the village or somewhere nearby for a certain crop, such as an oil palm nursery. Again all the assistance is provided by FOA channelled through the village farmers' association. Often if the crop grown needs to be marketed a farmers' co-operative is set up in the village with the help of the FOA officers. It is important to emphasize here that the projects do not involve the planting of major crops such as rubber or rice. The crops cultivated are mainly secondary crops or crops in interplanting, such as cocoa, coffee, Indian millet, sugar cane, fruit trees, ginger, pineapple and chilly.

It is clear that the FOA has to depend heavily on the close co-operation of the village head to ensure the projects are implemented successfully and reach the village poor whom the FOA is supposed to assist. In most cases the village head will eventually take over the organizing role and together with his VDSC members will

have a total control not only on deciding the types of project the village needs but also of the distribution process. This is partly due to the fact that the only condition for participation in FOA projects is to be a member of the village farmers' association. The village head and his colleagues in the VDSC often set their own criteria on who are or are not eligible to become members. The choice of projects, the implementation and distribution are thus loosely structured, highly political and "subjective" (for want of a better term). In relative terms, participation in RISDA projects seemed to have stricter and more objective prerequisites, namely, ownership of land below a certain acreage, previously a bona fide rubber grower and with low income (at least theoretically). Every application is processed and approved by RISDA officers without the help of the applicants' village head or any other persons. Therefore, it is not suprising that many FOA projects in Malawati have not reached the needy ones but rather the more powerful and often rich villagers. The Kg. Kasturi case is an example.

From observations and interviews conducted with Kg. Kasturi's village head and its VDSC members, and based upon records available, the main participants of every FOA project in the last five years have been the same small group of people.[37] They were the village head and his sons, the VDSC members and relatives and a handful of the village head's loyal supporters. Anis, the village head, clearly stated that his policy was not to allow any "anti-government" individuals to participate in FOA projects. He said such projects are only for those who have worked hard for the government. In other words, he only favours those who support UMNO but not the opposition party, and within UMNO those who supported the *wakil rakyat* in the "1974 conflict" and not her "enemies". An examination of the list of participants in the coffee and cocoa nursery projects sponsored by FOA at Kg. Kasturi revealed that Anis was a man of his word. He has been an ardent UMNO supporter since the early 1950s, and since the mid-1960s was elected the chairperson of UMNO Kg. Kasturi branch. He is also considered by many as one of the few confidantes of Timah, the Mawar *wakil rakyat*. It was not surprising therefore that Kg. Kasturi had been showered with development projects after the "1974 conflict". He was then reported to be seen with Timah in all her election campaigns in Mawar.

The above case did not involve the Mawar *wakil rakyat* directly. It

was a case of an UMNO strongman-cum-village leader, who on his own initiative acted on behalf of the *wakil rakyat* to punish the rebels of the "1974 conflict", a few of whom came from Kg. Kasturi. He did not receive any political instructions from the *wakil rakyat* on how to distribute the FOA projects. He set his own. In other words, the FOA approach in implementing its projects at the village level allowed political interference to take place, and subsequently its distribution process to be fashioned by village politics. The FOA officers were not able to redress their problem because they believed bureaucratically that everything was legal and above board as far as they were concerned. One of them said it was beyond his control if politics enter the distribution process. He only wanted to earn a living (*cari makan*), and thus it was best for him to keep his mouth shut. But the villagers of Kg. Kasturi could not keep quiet. At the instigation of PAS officials from Kg. Asal a few wrote petition letters to FOA headquarters on the favouritism which occurred in Kg. Kasturi *vis-à-vis* the implementing and distribution of its projects. Nothing came of the complaints and the dissatisfaction remains.

The state-based organizations differ in operation from the national ones. The politicians and village élites are involved in formulating, implementing and distributing the projects. The idea of a particular project originates usually from proposals discussed at the VDSC. Then the proposal for the project is submitted to the district office and also to the *wakil rakyat*. It is discussed at the various district development committees, and steps are taken by the relevant officers representing the state organizations at the district level to examine various aspects of the prospects, for example, its economic viability and projected cost. A report is then submitted to the DAC and a decision is made at its meeting. At this stage, the *wakil rakyat* and *penghulu* will have to argue for the project to be passed and funds allocated for it. Other *penghulu* and *wakil rakyat* have their own agricultural projects for their own areas. So the competition for funds at this level is intense. Usually the more powerful the *wakil rakyat* the more he will get for his constituency. Thus, from the beginning to the end, the projects of state institutions are decided on political criteria which differ from stage to stage.

At the constituency or *mukim* level, a *wakil rakyat* usually entertains proposals from his or her "favourite" villages, that is, where the supporters are found. In Mawar, Kg. Kasturi is the *anak*

emas (the golden child) and Kg. Chempaka is the *anak tiri* (stepchild), as the village head of the latter claims and this is not unfounded. Therefore, a proposal of a particular agricultural project from a particular village will only reach the district level. Otherwise, it will meet its death at the *mukim* development and security committee which was the fate of many of Kg. Chempaka's proposals. At the district level, as mentioned before, the influence of the *wakil rakyat* in district politics will determine the fate of the proposals at the DAC.

Once passed and given the funds, the implementation and the distribution of the project is again politically decided. It is not uncommon for a *wakil rakyat* to give instructions to a village head as to how and to whom the benefits from the project should go. In Mawar, for example, the *wakil rakyat* moved a cattle-rearing project from Kg. Chempaka to Kg. Kasturi, although the latter did not have a grazing area and the former had. The cattle were then distributed by Anis, Kasturi's village head, according to his own criteria. In short, projects of state institutions though small-scale have a high political value within a *mukim* and a village, especially for buying the continued political support of the selected villages. The projects could also be seen as a political reward for being loyal.

It must be mentioned here that there are also projects of the state institutions, such as the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Veterinary Services, which are of their own creation. For example, the district Department of Agriculture had a project called *subsidi baja*, or fertilizer subsidy. The department was able to offer the fertilizer because a certain multinational chemical company was getting rid of its old stock. Therefore, with the co-operation of and through the department the company concerned was able to sell its old fertilizer cheaply to villagers. Such a project was implemented in Kg. Chempaka. However, Kg. Chempaka received the project not because the *wakil rakyat* was generous but because she thought Kg. Chempaka only deserved minor projects. This implies that even projects, non-political in origin, are ultimately politicized when they are distributed, because the *wakil rakyat* has the power at the district and the constituency levels to decide where the project should go. The officers of the department, who are UMNO members too, but of branches outside Mawar, succumb to the political pressure.

On the whole, the state institutions have projects which seldom cost more than M$1,000. Hence they are called *projek ikan bilis* (small

fish projects) because there is little financial gain in taking tenders to supply the agricultural inputs or livestock or whatever such projects need. Nevertheless, they have high political value for the village heads or local UMNO leaders, especially those who are close associates of the *wakil rakyat*. And the closer they are the bigger the benefits their village receives. In other words, although not all village heads can enjoy "big slices" of the development pie unless they are very close to the *wakil rakyat*, they can get the "crumbs" and enjoy a lot of political influence from the little given to them.

It is also interesting to note that lower-ranking local bureaucrats who are directly involved in official matters relating to the distribution of the *ikan bilis* projects gain personal benefit from the whole exercise, especially if their villages of origin are within the district. From the evidence gathered, there have been cases where these bureaucrats have managed to "help" their relatives and close friends to obtain benefits, such as fertilizers, seedlings and the like. But what is more interesting is the case where these low-ranking bureaucrats are also UMNO branch officials or ordinary UMNO members whose ambition is to become local party officials. Under such circumstances, it has been observed that these bureaucrats often work closely with their respective village heads in distributing the development benefits. In cases where there are personality clashes or conflicts of interest occurring between the bureaucrats and the village heads, the "closeness" of either to the *wakil rakyat* usually decides the winner. In short, the political patronage of the *wakil rakyat* is crucial for political success at the village level.

Basic Amenities Projects

The second category of rural development projects implemented in [illegible] is referred to by the district bureaucrats as basic amenities or infrastructure projects. These projects are grouped into seven major categories:

1. minor projects such as the building of village mosques or small prayer houses, bus and bicycle sheds, bicycle and motorcycle paths, playing grounds, small markets, community halls, etc.;
2. road construction, for example, constructing new primary or secondary roads, resurfacing of roads with tar or laterite, building bridges — wooden, concrete or metal;

3. providing electricity supply, including the installation of generators;
4. providing piped drinking water, involving not only the main pipe lines but also subsidies to bring water supply to each home;
5. building low-cost housing in areas where housing is a problem, as in rural townships;
6. health services, mainly the building of health centres in every *mukim* and clinics in every village;
7. postal and telecommunication services, mainly providing letter boxes, telephone lines and public telephone booths.

There are other basic amenities projects which are carried out by federal government departments or bodies, such as the construction of new schools. This is the task of the Ministry of Education and its Department of Education at the state level. Thus, the projects listed above are only those over which the DAC has the final say in matters of planning, implementation, distribution and, most importantly, finance.

Unlike the agriculture projects, the basic amenities projects are generally expensive and the cost ranges from M$10,000 to M$250,000 with a few below M$10,000. For example, in the period from 1978 to 1980, the total budget allocation for these projects was a sum of approximately M$2.5 million. This amount was more than double the sum allocated for agricultural projects in Malawati district for the same period, that is, about M$1 million. The stated aims of these basic amenities projects is to improve "the poor quality of life" of the village poor, to reduce unemployment, and to motivate peasants to work harder through the provision of basic amenities. Some local bureaucrats consider these projects as part of the effort to "modernize" rural life, which is in line with the NEP's objective of restructuring society.

Our detailed findings reveal that, although the villagers have benefited from the implementation of these projects, in terms of having better roads, new mosques and the like, the individuals who reap the biggest material harvest could be grouped into two. First, the district politicians and their allies – penghulu, village heads, village elites, Chinese towkays (businessmen) and high-ranking district bureaucrats. Politically the members of this group also occupy the most powerful and strategic positions in the distribution process and hence are able to decide which areas and which groups

the benefits are for. The potent combination of these two advantages – economic and political – has given the politicians and their close associates an awesome power which they can wield almost at will, and which is not without support, of course, from top-level politicians and bureaucrats, especially at the state level. Second is a group of low-ranking bureaucrats and petty businessmen (mostly those without party affiliations or rebel UMNO members). Although they are politically not influential compared to the first group because they do not sit on the various district development committees, they have a lot of say in the practical, administrative aspect of the implementation process. Here, we are referring particularly to the low-ranking bureaucrats who do all the paper work for the projects, such as preparing payment cheques, evaluating the technical aspects of implemented projects and the like. For various reasons and excuses, they could delay or expedite the preparation of cheque payments for a particular project which has been completed. Thus, they become an almost indispensable group within the local bureaucracy responsible for the successful implementation of the district's basic amenities projects.

What follows is a detailed discussion on how these groups have made huge gains, especially in material terms, from the implementation and distribution of the basic amenities projects in Malawati. The political value of the projects which seems to correspond with its material value and how they are politically distributed will also be examined.

All the projects in the seven categories mentioned above are government-funded and according to government regulations, tenders have to be called.[38] A tender for a particular project has to be advertised publicly through public notices or advertisements in selected newspapers. A detailed outline of the project is given in the advertisement or notice, the estimated cost and the duration within which the project is expected to be completed. Suitable contractors are invited to submit their detailed proposals for the project. Each contractor's proposal is examined by the PWD first. The main aim is to see what type of material the contractor proposes to use for the project such as type of wood or brick, and whether or not they correspond with the cost. The PWD will then submit a report on each contractor's proposal to the DAC to make a final selection and award a particular tender to a particular contractor or construction

company.[39] Essentially, the whole exercise is supposedly to select a contractor who could offer the cheapest proposal but offering the best material for the project. However, under the NEP, this rule is usually not observed. Hence a *bumiputera* contractor could be awarded a tender for a particular project, even though his proposal costs 10 percent more than the advertised estimated cost, and another non-*bumiputera* contractor proposal costs 10 percent less.[40]

This means competition for government tenders is mainly between the *bumiputera* contractors. It is not uncommon to find a *bumiputera*, who has little or no capital, with no knowledge and experience of the construction business, teaming up with a rich and experienced Chinese contractor, to form a private construction company to bid for government tenders under the *bumiputera*'s name. Such joint ventures, in which the *bumiputera* is a sleeping partner and receives regular payment from the company is popularly known as an Ali-Baba company (Ali, the Malay or *bumiputera* and Baba, the Chinese). The *bumiputera* thus, becomes a front to give the company a *bumiputera* look which is politically necessary if the company is to be considered at all in any bid for government tenders. Often the "poor" *bumiputera* can be powerful politically, or a member of the ruling aristocratic families within Selangor. It is in this context that the politicians within the Malawati DAC are in the strategic position not only to decide to whom contracts should be given to but also to participate as bidders for the tenders. An examination of the records at the Registrar of Companies office reveals that each politician in the district has his or her own private company, mostly with Chinese businessmen as partners. Few have established *bumiputera* contractors as partners. There are, however, solely Malay or Chinese construction companies, too, operating in Malawati but they form a small group.

It is important to note that the government has allowed tenders for contracts of projects worth less than M$25,000 to be awarded at the discretion of the DO. The aim is to avoid bureaucratic delays in implementing the more minor projects. In Malawati, the DAC has instituted a protection policy by formally designating projects below M$25,000 for the district's entrepreneurs only. Included in the minor and under M$25,000 category are projects such as building a bicycle shed, a wooden bridge, a *surau*, the elaborate dais for the annually-held Qu'ran reading competition and the like. There seems to be an

endless supply of such projects since the NEP was implemented. The major projects also involve the construction work of some sort, mainly building and road construction. Contracts for supplying building and other construction materials involve large amounts of money sometimes up to M$250,000. Such costly projects are less numerous. But on the whole, the amount of money involved in implementing both types of projects in Malawati runs into millions of dollars. It seems inevitable that the district politicians should take advantage of the situation. They dominate the DAC and make most decisions without much debate and opposition from other committee members, even though the decisions are sometimes controversial and biased. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that they have set up their own companies to participate as bidders for government contracts (usually for the basic amenities projects). Since they decide who to award the contracts to, it is not an uncommon practice for them to award themselves the various contracts or to companies belonging to their patrons at the state and national levels.

What a *wakil rakyat* usually does is to set up a *syarikat* to compete for the more lucrative contracts – those above M$25,000. As shareholders, they have Chinese *towkays* and/or established Malay contractors. Also invited or involved are the loyal supporters – the rich village heads, landlords, petty entrepreneurs and influential school teachers. Predictably, it is not uncommon for the *wakil rakyat* concerned, and the political supporters to become sleeping partners, or "passengers in the business" (the term used by a PAS official from Kg. Asal) of the Chinese or Malay contractors who actually run the day-to-day business activities. As mentioned earlier, the former are satisfied receiving a fixed monthly allowance as "directors" of the company or a certain percentage of the profits, in return for doing little more than ensuring that their *syarikat* wins the contract each time a project comes up for tender in the district. To win the minor contracts is relatively easy because of the "protectionist" policy described earlier. However, the big and costly projects often attract competitors from outside the district as stated earlier. Therefore, district politicians often have to curb their economic lust when competing with their patrons for major contracts.

There are also situations where lower-ranking, district level bureaucrats have involved themselves, directly or indirectly, in this

"business of poverty eradication". They often operate independently of the politician-controlled groups, and have their own network of petty Malay and Chinese contractors. Some of these bureaucrats are shareholders in the *syarikat* of the petty contractors, while others are satisfied with the material gains (in kind or cash) accrued from their close association with the contractors.[41] Since there are so many small tenders for the taking, the politician-controlled groups seldom interfere with these bureaucrats as long as they themselves feel *kenyang* (full). Moreover the politician-controlled groups are dependent on these bureaucrats for the processing of much of the paper work of projects for which they have won tenders. They need the bureaucrats to give "favourable" reports on the quality of the work done, and, most importantly, to prepare the cheque payments quickly. So, it is "morally" fair, as one of the low-ranking bureaucrats said, for him and his colleagues to have their "shares" without interference from the politicians, whom they said, have "more than enough to feed their whole family for a century". Thus, it is not often that the politician-controlled groups and the low-ranking bureaucrats are in conflict over development "benefits".

There are three groups of petty contractors whom the bureaucrats serve: (i) those Malays not considered by the politicians to be "close associates" or "loyal supporters"; (ii) small-time independent Chinese or Indian contractors, who could be either ruling party members or non-members; (iii) members of the bureaucrats' families or circle of close friends (within or outside the district).

Having discussed how the tenders are distributed, it is also necessary to explain how the projects themselves are allocated to the different areas within Malawati district. The decisions regarding this process is in the hands of the politicians and, to a lesser extent, the bureaucrats.

Generally, demands for these benefits come from the villages themselves and are communicated through various channels, the commonest being their own VDSCs.[42] However, these demands do not necessarily represent the needs of the village majority. Instead, they may express the collective interests of the committee members or of a dominant faction within the committee. The evidence collected shows that, if there is a strong opposition party branch in a particular village, say a PAS branch, the VDSC of that village is

always kept on its toes by any PAS members within or outside the committee, so that the interests of the majority are not brushed aside in preference to any UMNO committee members' individual interests or the interests of UMNO in general. But at another level, the village could suffer because of this situation if the district UMNO politicians see this as a weakness on the part of the UMNO village branch leadership in terms of their inability to defuse the PAS influence. Hence, the village could be denied most of the basic amenities projects.

On the whole, opposition parties are not strong in Malawati district except in a few areas and have no effect on the ruling party's dominance. Although there might be bitter opposition, for example, between UMNO and PAS in some villages, the more widespread and significant conflicts occur within UMNO party ranks. It is these cleavages within UMNO itself that usually influence the pattern of distribution of development benefits in Malawati district. The loyalty factor has an important ideological role in the distribution process. For example, a *wakil rakyat* who seeks to hold an important post within the central committee of the Malawati UMNO division, needs votes from all the village branches within his electoral constituency during the division annual general meeting. Or, if he is already a committee member, he might want his "right hand man" to be elected. In these circumstances, if any of the village branches do not co-operate, it will be considered to be an act of disloyalty, with the likely outcome that the village will be denied further projects for basic amenities. On the other hand, those villages whom the *wakil rakyat* considers to be his loyal supporters will be showered with benefits. He may also reward those villages whose leadership worked hard for him during a general election campaign.

Among the *wakil rakyat*, members of the state Exco are especially powerful. They will always have their projects and other demands given top priority by the district bureaucrats with little protest from other *wakil rakyat*.[43] This is because their colleagues know that the Exco members are the ones who can fight for their interests at the state level. In the case of Malawati district, there is one *wakil rakyat* who is also the state Exco member. According to an ADO his constituency gets the most benefits for basic amenities. For example, all the secondary roads within his constituency are fully bitumenized, but such roads in other constituencies are of laterite

only. Records from the district office (community development section) also revealed that most of the projects for his constituency get first priority over other constituencies. He received such attention without protest from his colleagues because he is also a member of the all-powerful Steering Committee of Selangor state, and in the Exco he holds the portfolio for land and agriculture. So whoever among his colleagues does not deliver the votes necessary for him to be re-elected as the deputy chairperson of the UMNO division, will not receive "personal" favours. Possibly he could mount a campaign among the DAC members to move a particular project, for instance, a lucrative low-cost housing project, from the constituency of his disfavoured colleague to the constituency of another friend. This has happened a number of times, according to district office sources. Such a situation tends to exaggerate not only uneven development among villages but also among constituencies and *mukim* in the district. This is the opinion of district officials from the various departments and amongst the district politicians too.

Another basic amenities project which has always generated a lot of political controversy within the district in general, and within the ruling party ranks in particular, is the low-cost housing scheme meant for the local lower income group. The houses are built by the Selangor Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), a state based statutory body, which sub-contracts the construction to companies of its choice. Hence, the construction stage of the housing schemes is not an issue within district politics. However, the distribution of the schemes to the various constituencies and *mukim* within the district, and the selection of potential owners, have become very contentious issues and often develop into bitter internal political conflict within the different levels of the UMNO organization in the district.

The competition amongst the *wakil rakyat* to have as many low-cost housing projects as possible in his or her constituency has been quite intense over the years. Since the district development bureaucracy can only make proposals and the final decision lies in the hands of the Selangor Exco and Steering Committee members, the only Exco member in Malawati has become an important political figure whose patronage is much sought after not only by his fellow *wakil rakyat* but also other local UMNO leaders. It is evident that his constituency has benefited most from such schemes. So far he has completed two such projects and two more were under construction

in his area in 1981. In Mawar, one has been completed and another one was under construction in 1981. The former is located at Sungai Ikan town and the latter at the Mawar township itself. The high demand for low-cost houses is due to two closely related reasons: political and economic. To a *wakil rakyat*, who selects the final occupants or owners of a low-cost housing scheme in his or her constituency, each house has high political value, because he or she realizes it has high economic value too. A loyal supporter is usually "awarded" one of the houses as a political reward, for his past political contribution and as a means of buying his continued support in the future. Of course, this is all done within the legal, official procedures. To the supporter, who is usually a village bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie, it means accumulating more wealth for himself at a "cheap price" in the political and financial sense. Financially, he has to pay a monthly installment of not more than M$100 for the house, with a nominal interest rate charged. He has to pay over a 15-year or 20-year period, at the end of which he either obtains a freehold title or a 99-year lease of the land on which the house is sited. In return he has to continue his active political role within the local UMNO branch and support the *wakil rakyat* in various ways.

A survey of the owners' socio-economic background of three completed low-cost housing schemes in the district (one of which is in Sungai Ikan) revealed that 53 percent of them are Malay school teachers who are all active local UMNO officials from various branches; 17 percent low-ranking local bureaucrats who are not necessarily active UMNO officials but are the "indispensable" officials at the district office; 4 percent village élites who are either village heads or rich landowners, 15 percent government manual labourers (mostly Indians and a few Malays) and 11 percent local petty entrepreneurs (mostly Chinese and a few Malays and Indians). The ethnic breakdown of the owners is as follows: 80 percent Malays, 15 percent Chinese and 5 percent Indians. About 68 percent of the owners have rented out their houses to bachelor school teachers, low-ranking officers of state or national institutions and others; 15 percent to relatives and the rest occupy their own houses. The information seems to indicate that only about 15 percent of the houses were allocated to the supposed beneficiaries, that is, the low income group in the district, namely, the manual labourers. The rest

are shared amongst the local bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie who are also active local officials of the local ruling party organization. It is not surprising, therefore, that the distribution process of these houses (usually a two-bedroom unit) has generated a lot of complaints and grievances amongst those who failed to acquire one, especially, members of the ruling party. They often express their dissatisfaction either in local gossip or in the "letters to the editor" column of local newspapers. Such complaints are quite widespread not only in Malawati but also throughout Malaysia for low-cost housing schemes are implemented in every state. This suggests that a similar pattern of distribution, such as the one described above, may be common in Malaysia.

From the evidence presented thus far on the implementation and the distribution of the agricultural and basic amenities projects in Malawati district, we can safely say that the latter has definitely generated more economic and political configurations within the district by the very fact that they offer more material benefits. This phenomenon has served to strength the political dominance of individual politicians who are then in a commanding position to accrue even more wealth and power, a pattern which is justified and perpetuated by the dependent capitalist structures of post-colonial Malaysia explicitly expressed in its development planning orientation. Consequently, the same phenomenon also contributes towards perpetuating and at times exaggerating the process of uneven development at the local level, especially intra-class and inter-class and inter-regions and intra-regions (villages, *mukim* and constituencies). The impact of this phenomenon within Mawar and Kg. Chempaka politics will be examined in the following section.

Mawar and Kampung Chempaka: Politics and Development after 1974

Prior to this we have examined how the various facets of Mawar and Kg. Chempaka politics, especially after 1971, found expression in the implementation and distribution of development projects under the NEP. We will now focus special attention on what has happened since the "1974 conflict" which led to the deterioration of the relationship between Kg. Chempaka and Timah, the Mawar *wakil*

rakyat – arguably the single most important political figure in Mawar. We will examine her economic activities, her relationships with leading Mawar UMNO leaders and with her political counterparts at the district level. Then, against this background, her relationship with the various factions within Kg. Chempaka will be analysed. Recent political developments in Kg. Chempaka will also be dealt with, amongst others, the official proposal of reinstating Kg. Asal which has been accepted in principle by the district bureaucracy and the reasons behind it.

Timah did not establish a new *syarikat* to participate in the "business of development" in Malawati. She continued where Suhin, her father-in-law and the ex-Mawar state councillor, and her husband had left off. She expanded the *syarikat* and had her younger brother, a former estate supervisor in Mawar, manage its ever increasing business activities. She invited a few of her loyal supporters to join as directors. They are Anis, the Kg. Kasturi village head, Abu, a headmaster of a local primary school, and two other village heads in Mawar. She also has Ah Chong, a rich and established Chinese contractor from Sungai Ikan. The *syarikat* extended its activities beyond its involvement in building construction to include the more lucrative road construction and resurfacing projects and contracts to supply building and construction material, ranging from M$25,000 to M$150,000 per contract. Within eight years, she was able to expand her business activities sufficiently to maintain a plush mansion in Shah Alam, the Selangor state capital as an office to administer her business dealings in other parts of the state. She has now built a two-storey M$200,000 mansion in Mawar, changed cars four times, the latest one is a Volvo 244GL, owned a few units of low-cost housing in her relatives' names and quite a large acreage of uncultivated land in Kg. Baru (as revealed by the land office records). The directors of her *syarikat* have prospered too. For instance, Abu has bought a piece of land in Sungai Ikan town with assistance from Timah, and is leasing it to a petroleum company to build a petrol station which he has a share. Anis, the Kg. Kasturi village head, is probably the "poorest" of the lot because he has only increased his land acreage. But he had been sent for study tour trips all over Malaysia and twice overseas – an unparalleled achievement in the *mukim*. Her Chinese partner now owns five units of shophouses in Sungai Ikan which are rented out to local Chinese and

he is enjoying a tremendous business success. These are minor successes compared to what the only Exco member in Malawati and his associates had achieved.[44]

However, the success of Timah's *syarikat* is only surpassed by Malik, Haji Salam's son, who has a successful construction company. He is a "big-timer" and deals with contracts above M$500,000. With his son, a qualified accountant, running his business he has been able to win very large contracts not only in Selangor but also in Kuala Lumpur, and in other states too. His success was partly due to his long experience as a construction contractor and partly to his association with state and federal level politicians. Although he was once blacklisted after the "1974 conflict" by UMNO, he remains one of the few well-established and respected *bumiputera* contractor in Selangor whose success records are envied even by his non-Malay counterparts. It came as no surprise when he was approached by Selangor top politicians to become their partner, hence his entry into the "big league". His company has an office with a staff of 15 in Kuala Lumpur – not a small achievement by any standard. In this context, it is difficult to imagine that Timah's *syarikat* will ever surpass Malik's in every aspect, especially since April 1982 when Timah was forced to retire prematurely from politics and lost her political advantage but not the contacts. It was reported that Timah often met Malik for advice on business matters. If this is true, which is not unlikely, then the "1974 conflict" which made them bitter enemies seems to have been forgotten for a more important economic reason.

Timah's relationship with her counterparts was not close initially but she soon developed a good rapport with the Exco member. The latter was said to have helped her not only politically but in many other ways, amongst which, was to assist Timah in her business. The Exco member was reputed to be aggressive (he once slapped a clerk at the district office) and impatient with any form of opposition. (He has had about five *penghulu* in his *mukim*, two of whom were transferred elsewhere within 24 hours for "incompetence" and "insubordination".) He was supportive of Timah's "revenge" towards her opponents in the "1974 conflict". So, he became Timah's patron and was responsible for enhancing Timah's position *vis-à-vis* other *wakil rakyat* and the district officials in the DAC. Through his lobbying and campaign Timah was elected as the deputy chairperson

of the Women's Section of UMNO division in the district for two consecutive two-year terms.

Although Timah's relationship with Kg. Chempaka was, to put it mildly, unfriendly, she treated the different factions in Kg. Chempaka differently. She was close to the leaders of UMNO Kg. Asal who supported her during the "1974 conflict". Her relationship with Manap, the Kg. Chempaka village head, and the UMNO Kg. Chempaka leadership was always uneasy. With the PAS leaders of Kg. Asal, it was one of total opposition. But even so she has frequently indirectly acknowledged the experience and capability of the PAS leaders. This was demonstrated in the RISDA project controversy when she felt she was outwitted by the PAS leaders. The different treatment she gave to the three factions became more obvious after UMNO Kg. Asal was established in 1979. Since UMNO Kg. Asal was now on its own it was easier for her to deal with them directly. She made every attempt to help the UMNO supporters of that village to participate in development projects in Kg. Baru, Kg. Kasturi and even outside Mawar. She could prevent the PAS leaders and supporters in the village participating or taking advantage of any development project. Hence the village is still without electricity and water supply to this date and most of the village roads remain unattended. As for her supporters in Kg. Chempaka proper, she has given them minor development projects. The only major project so far is the building of the new mosque and the contract went to Malik. This strengthened the suggestion that Timah and Malik have become friends again because without Timah's approval Malik would have not got the contract. But others suggest that Malik also receives support from the MP of Malawati, who then, was also a federal cabinet deputy minister but since July 1984, a full minister. Timah also adopted the same strategy as the one she used in Kg. Asal. With the help of Anis, the Kg. Kasturi's village head, she arranged for a few of the ordinary villagers of Kg. Chempaka proper to participate in agricultural projects in Kg. Kasturi. This demonstrated that her antagonism was directed more towards the UMNO leaders of Kg. Chempaka than the ordinary villagers.

One of the recent minor projects implemented in Kg. Chempaka proper is the *tandas curah*, or water-sealed toilet scheme. Since 1980, only 68 of the 436 households in Kg. Chempaka had toilets (34 from Kg. Chempaka proper), the Health Department supplied the

basic equipment for the water-sealed toilets at a minimal cost and taught the villagers how to build their own. The demonstration of toilet building was officially launched by the then Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Malaysia. The *wakil rakyat* declined the invitation to officiate at the opening ceremony. The implication was that the project had no material gain that the UMNO Kg. Chempaka leadership could benefit unlike a *lembu pawah* or cattle-rearing scheme from which the leaders could directly benefit. This was the case in Kg. Kasturi. The cattle-rearing scheme of Kg. Kasturi was originally meant for Kg. Chempaka because it has a large suitable grazing area while Kg. Kasturi has little grazing land. However, many Kg. Chempaka villagers are participating in the project run by Anis.

As mentioned earlier, Timah received M$120,000 annually for distribution as development expenditure from the state chief minister as a *wakil rakyat* of the ruling party. This was over and above the normal allocation given by the state and federal governments. Officially, the money should have been distributed through the district office to villages in her constituency for development purposes. But on close scrutiny one finds that the fund was basically used for buying continued support from the UMNO leaders and members of each branch in her constituency. She also used the money to reward her loyal supporters during the 1974 and 1978 elections. This buying of support took various forms, ranging from the purchasing of sports goods for local teams to outright monetary grants to the UMNO branch (M$1,000 annually). During her two terms as *wakil rakyat* Kg. Chempaka received only about M$10,000 in outright grants out of the M$960,000 available during her eight years. For UMNO Kg. Asal, but not UMNO Kg. Chempaka, she gave other forms of grants. For example, she gave about M$500 towards the *kutu pinggan* (crockery tontine) fund of Kg. Asal. This was to enable the UMNO supporters to set up their own *kutu pinggan* as PAS supporters had organized one in the late 1970s.[45] She also bought jerseys and other equipment worth about M$500 for Kg. Asal's soccer and *sepak takraw* (Malay ball game) teams.

Despite all this, the village head of Kg. Chempaka did not miss opportunities to participate in and to enjoy various benefits of the poverty eradication projects, even though he was excluded from the *wakil rakyat* clique. As he was a successful small contractor even

before the NEP was introduced and had survived by winning PWD *small tenders*, he therefore had long-established contacts with low *ranking bureaucrats* at the district level. Hence, he continued to *prosper in his* business and was able to take advantage of the NEP *projects*, but not without having to pay dearly, because the *bureaucrats* knew he had been labelled an UMNO "rebel".

Timah's biggest contribution in Kg. Asal is not in material form but in a proposal to reinstate Kg. Asal as an official village, a status denied for more than 50 years since the "1925 affair".[46] The proposal had been accepted by the DAC and was in the hands of the state Steering Committee in 1981. In his recommendation the *penghulu* argued, amongst other things, that "it is necessary now to separate Kg. Asal from Kg. Chempaka proper for political reasons. Kg. Asal has its own UMNO branch and its own mosque." But the *wakil rakyat* had different reasons. By reinstating Kg. Asal as an official village she gained two major political advantages. Firstly, she took away from PAS what had been its major *modal politik* (political capital) on which its credibility and part of its strength had been based. This would give UMNO Kg. Asal a strong political advantage in challenging PAS dominance in the village. Secondly, this would give the *wakil rakyat* the opportunity to direct all development projects to Kg. Asal which formerly she had to do through the Kg. Chempaka leadership, as Kg. Asal is a part of Kg. Chempaka. According to Anis, Timah's confidante and the Kg. Kasturi village head, she then hoped to defuse PAS dominance and woo its supporters by providing all the basic amenities projects that they had been denied for so long. In other words, she wanted to show Kg. Asal PAS supporters that their party would bring them no benefit. Simultaneously, she could also show the "traitors" in Kg. Chempaka proper what they had missed.

Timah was confident of winning this political gamble for many reasons. After nearly eight years in power she had strengthened and consolidated her political position both at the district and constituency level. The political support from the Exco member partly contributed to this new-found confidence. She also realized that she had tremendous political power and, more importantly, a large pool of development projects, available under the NEP, at her disposal and that she had been able to buy political support without too much trouble. For example, she succeeded in demolishing PAS

Kg. Teratai by buying its supporters through various agricultural projects. This gave her the confidence that she would succeed in Kg. Asal too, but not without a strong challenge from PAS. She also knew that PAS Kg. Asal was not as strong as it had been and planned to expose the party leadership's "unholy economic marriage" with leaders of UMNO Kg. Chempaka. Both groups had been her adversaries since 1974. But her premature retirement from active politics in 1982 (because she was not pre-selected for the Mawar state constituency) which was not unrelated to her over zealousness in accumulating wealth by "unacceptable means", denied her the opportunity of carrying out her political plans to the end. Alternatively, the very circumstances which contributed to her political and economic success, that is, the NEP were the cause of her political demise.

NOTES

1 Mahathir Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma*, pp. 9-10.

2 See for example, Jan Breman, *Patronage and Exploitation, Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujerat, India* (Berkeley, 1974); Hamza Alavi, "Peasant Classes and Primordial Loyalties", *Journal of Peasant Studies* 1(1973): 23-62; Joel Kahn, "Ideology and Social Structure in Indonesia", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20(1978): 103-122; and D. Gilmore, "Patronage and Class Conflict in Southern Spain", *Man* (N.S.), 12(1977): 446-458. For analysis on patronage politics in Malaysia see Syed Husin Ali, "Political Functionaries in Rural Malaysia", in *Changing Identities in Modern Southeast Asia*, ed. David Banks (London, 1976), pp. 5-20; Shamsul A.B., "Patron-Client Relations as an Aspect of Peasant Ideology: A Note with Reference to Malay Peasant Society", *Akademika* 20 & 21(1982): 219-233 [Special Issue on "Peasantry and Modernization", ed. Hairi Abdullah and H.M. Dahlan]; Jailani Md. Dom, "Sistem Patronage di Kampong Bagan" (Honours thesis, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1979); Mohamed Khatib Ismail, "Pola Hubungan Patron-Client: Satu Kajian Kes di Kampung Serengkam, Maran, Pahang", (Honours thesis, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1979); Diana Wong, "The Social Organization of Peasant Reproduction", pp. 309-326.

3 This assumption is commonly held by the more conservative Malaysianists. See for example, Ozey Mehmet, "Race Riots in Malaysia", *Queen's Quarterly* 58(1971): 210-218; idem, "Colonialism, Dualistic Growth and the Distribution of Economic Benefits in Malaysia", *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 5(1971): 1-21; Means, *Malaysian Politics*, pp. 407-408; Snodgrass, *Inequality and Economic*

Development, pp. ix-x; E.K. Fisk and Osman Rani, eds. *The Political Economy of Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, 1982), pp. 8-9.

4 Reports of discussions on the issue are found in UMNO, *Penyata Tahunan 1964* (Kuala Lumpur, 1965) and UMNO, *Penyata Tahunan 1965* (Kuala Lumpur, 1966).

5 The Malay capitalists' disaffection over the unsatisfactory performance of government-funded bodies, especially of RIDA and the Investment Company, has been voiced in local newspapers since 1961. See for example, *Berita Harian*, 25 February 1961 and 27 March 1961; *Utusan Melayu*, 19 September 1962; *Straits Times*, 12 December 1965. This issue has also been discussed by Beaglehole, "Malay Participation in Commerce", pp. 316-345; Milne and Mauzy, *Politics and Government*, pp. 322-324; Karl von Vorays, *Democracy Without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 233-234.

6 The third congress was held in 1973. See *Lapuran Seminar Ekonomi Bumiputera Ketiga* (Kuala Lumpur, 1973). One of the important resolutions of the congress which was later tabled in parliament concerned the need for more quasi-government bodies to be established to handle *bumiputera* business interests. Henceforth, there was a proliferation of public enterprises to cater for the Malay business community. Further discussion on this development has been analysed by the Malaysian Centre for Development Studies "Public Enterprises in Malaysia – A General Survey – Part I": *Development Forum* 4(1973): 1-20; R.S. Milne, "The Politics of Malaysia's New Economic Policy", *Pacific Affairs*, 49(1976): 235-261; Lim Mah Hui and W. Canak, "The Political Economy of State Policies in Malaysia", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 11(1981): 208-244; Gale, *Politics and Public Enterprise*.

7 For details of the numerous proposals, see *Lapuran Seminar Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputra Pertama* (Kuala Lumpur, 1966) and *Lapuran Seminar Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputra Kedua* (Kuala Lumpur, 1969). See also comments made by Tham Seong Chee, "Ideology, Politics and Economic Modernization: The Case of the Malays in Malaysia", *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 1(1973): 41-58.

8 For an elaboration of these objectives, see *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975*, pp. 1-10.

9 I have discussed these points in detail elsewhere, see Shamsul, *RMK: Tujuan dan Perlaksanaanya*; idem, "The Theoretical Orientations", pp. 3-9.

10 Detailed pronouncement to this effect is found in *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975*, p. 43, para. 140.

11 See for example, K.S. Jomo and Ishak Shari, "Income Inequalities in Post-Colonial Peninsular Malaysia", *Pacific Viewpoint* 23(1982): 67-76; David Lim, "Malaysian Development Planning"; idem "The Political Economy of the New Economic Policy in Malaysia" (Papers presented at Third Colloquium, Malaysia Society of Asian Studies Association of Australia, University of Adelaide 22-24 August 1981).

12 See for example, S.H. Alatas, *The Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975: A Critique* (Singapore, 1972); Shamsul A.B. "RMK dan Penyusunan Semula Masyarakat: Satu Usaha untuk Meningkatkan Kedudukan Orang Melayu?", *Jurnal Antropologi dan*

Sosiologi, 6(1978): 81-97.

13 See also *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975* (Kuala Lumpur, 1973) and *Mid-Term Review of the Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-1980* (Kuala Lumpur, 1979), which give details of the policy and strategy changes.

14 See K.S. Jomo, "The Ascendance of Bureaucrat Capitalists in Malaysia", *Alternatives* 3(1982): 467-490; idem, "Malaysia's New Economic Policy: A Class Perspective", *Pacific Viewpoint* 25(1984): 153-172.

15 See for example, R.S. Milne, "Technocrats and Politics in ASEAN Countries", *Pacific Affairs* 55(1982): 403-429.

16 See for example, Means, *Malaysian Politics*, pp. 196-197; Senftleben, *Backgrounds to Agricultural Land*, pp. 104-105.

17 See Jomo, "Class Formation in Malaya", Chapter 1.

18 It is well-known that within one Malaysian administrative district the number of committees could be as high as 80 but is rarely less than 40. Various government reports testify to this fact. See for example, Prime Minister's Department, *An In-Depth Study of District and Local Government in the State of Selangor* (Kuala Lumpur, 1979).

19 District level development committees have been established before the NEP era around the early 1960s when the government launched its "Operations Development" to combat poverty in the rural areas. For detailed information on the history and functions of these development committees in the pre-1969 era, see Ferguson, "The Story of Development"; Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development* M. Puthucheary, "The Operations Room in Malaysia – A Technique in Administrative Reform", in *Administrative Reform in Asia*, ed. Hahn-Been Lee and A.G. Samonte (Manila, 1970), pp. 165-199; Harun Karim, "Village Development Committee – A Study of Its Origins, Organization and Performance" (Academic Exercise, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, 1971). There were significant changes in the organization and power distribution within "development administration" in Malaysia after 1969. See for example, Esman, *Administration and Development*, J.H. Beaglehole, *The District: A Study in Decentralization in West Malaysia* (London, 1976); idem, "The District – Some Aspects of Administration and Politics in West Malaysia", *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 7(1973): 184-198; Puthucheary, *Politics of Administration*, pp. 107-116; Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad, "Development Administration: Major Efforts at Administrative Reforms for Development in Malaysia", pp. 103-140.

20 These figures were compiled from various official sources, namely, the annual budget reports of Selangor state and Malawati district, minutes of the DAC meetings and from other files at the district office made available to me.

21 See Prime Minister's Department, *An In-depth Study – Selangor* p. 233.

22 See World Bank, *Malaysia: An Appraisal of the Northwest Selangor Integrated Agricultural Development* (New York, 1978).

23 Ibid., p. 1.

24 This has been clearly admitted in a report published by the Prime Minister's Department, *In-depth Study – Selangor*, p. 249.

25 In Selangor, this practice is not uncommon. The expulsion of its chief minister, Datuk Harun Idris, from UMNO and his dismissal as the chief minister on corruption charges over a land deal is a case in point. A bribe of M$250,000 was paid to the UMNO political fund by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation in connection with an application for a piece of land in the centre of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital city. For a detailed discussion on this case, its trial and political implications in Malaysian politics, see Marwilis Yusof, *Datuk Harun di Mahkamah*; Ainnon Jamaal, *Harun Dedah Rasuah Politik*; Crouch et al., *Malaysian Politics*, pp. 16-20.

26 For political effectiveness, UMNO decided in the mid-1970s, to have one division (*bahagian*), in every federal constituency. Malawati district has a one full federal constituency and part of a different federal constituency. The former is the Malawati federal constituency and the latter is part of the Tanjung Karam constituency. Part of Tanjung Karam constituency is in Sabak Bernam district. In Malawati federal constituency/UMNO division there are three state electoral constituencies, namely, Mawar, Assam Jawa and Permatang. In Tanjung Karam federal constituency/UMNO division only one of its three state electoral seats is in Malawati district, of the Sungai Burong state constituency. There are two MPs and four state councillors in the Malawati DAC. However, one of the MPs, the one who holds the Tanjung Karam federal constituency, is also a member of a similar committee in Sabak Bernam district, because part of his constituency is physically located in that district.

27 The detailed regulation on government officers and political activities is found in a gazetted document called *Public Officers (Conduct and Discipline) (Chapter "D") General Orders 1980* P.U. (A)203 (Amendment No. 45), Vol. 24, No. 15, 17 July 1980, Article 19, pp. 1080-1981. The rules for Group A officers are given in Article 19(2) and (4), and for Group B in Article 19 (3).

28 Based on my observations and discussions with various UMNO officials at the headquarters as well as at UMNO divisions throughout Peninsular Malaysia in the past five years and talks with many civil servants during that period, I learned that many newly-recruited Malay civil servants have become UMNO members or officials in their village branches, in the hope that they would be chosen to run for higher office. The main attraction is not only political but economic. I would argue that this trend began during the Razak regime, especially after 1971, when many high-ranking Malay bureaucrats and company executives – all university graduates with little or no experience in politics and many of whom were not even UMNO members – were recruited directly into the government as ministers, deputy ministers or parliamentary secretaries of the federal and state governments. As a result, partisan bureaucracy is a widespread phenomenon in Malaysia today, hence the political "neutrality" of the Malaysian bureaucracy is a myth.

29 In May 1981, a school teacher, who was also a committee member of a village UMNO branch in Malawati and a loyal supporter of a local state councillor, was arrested for illegal gambling. I attended his trial. All charges against him were dropped by the prosecuting officer from the local police, because the state

councillor met with the district police chief and promised to deal with the teacher personally. The teacher resigned as an UMNO branch committee member. The police personnel were my key informants. I also learned that some of the lower-ranking members of the force are ardent supporters of UMNO. This was demonstrated, for example, when one of them was used by a village UMNO branch to collect donations for a party from Chinese shopkeepers in Sungai Ikan.

30 On 14 April 1982, eight days before the 1982 Malaysian general elections, the speaker of the state legislative assembly of Negeri Sembilan was murdered (see *New Straits Times*, 15 April 1982). A few months later, a federal cabinet minister and four of his loyal supporters were arrested and charged with the murder. The trial began in November 1982. Evidence presented at the trial showed the existence of an intense power struggle within the UMNO division over two closely related issues – the pre-selection of candidates and the distribution of development benefits under the NEP (see *New Straits Times*, 5, 9, 10 and 11 November 1982 and 21, 22, 23 and 24 December 1982). The minister was finally convicted and sentenced to death but not his four supporters. It is interesting to note some of the statements made by the presiding judge who said, "the prosecution [has] proven beyond reasonable doubt that the murder weapon belonged to Datuk Mokhtar [the minister] and was in his possession at the time of killing . . . He plotted to shoot Datuk Taha Talib [the deceased] because of political antagonism . . . [This has] been a grim and gruesome tale of political intrigue, sorcery, conspiracy and murder involving a minister of the crown." To date, that is the extent to which intra-party conflict in Malaysia could develop; it is not unrelated to circumstances engendered by the implementation of the NEP. In the latest development of the case, the ex-minister was given a royal pardon and his death sentence commuted to life imprisonment. See *New Straits Times*, 3 March 1984. For a detailed description of the trial see Alias Mohamed, *The Trial of Mokhtar Hashim* (Kuala Lumpur, 1983).

31 A content analysis of the minutes of the various development committees at the district, *mukim* and village level reveals this phenomenon. These categories are also mentioned endlessly in public speeches and even Friday prayer sermons written by the Religious Affairs Department.

32 See Mohd. Nor Abdullah, "The Role of Rubber Industry Smallholders' Development Authority in Malaysia", in *Proceedings of the Second Seminar on the Progress and Development of Rubber Smallholders*, ed. Ani Arope et al. (Kuala Lumpur, 1978), pp. 89-97.

33 "Negative attitude", "ignorance", "reluctant to change" are some of the more common clichés used by many Malaysianists to describe peasant failure to take advantage of the various rural development projects offered by the government. See Alex Kwan, "Rural Development in Malaysia".

34 See Rudner, "Malayan Rubber Policy"; idem, "Agricultural Policy and Peasant Social Transformation".

35 This information was given by a RISDA official of Mukim Mawar.

36 See L.J. Fredericks, "Ideology and Organization in Agricultural Development", *Sociologia Ruralis* 17(1977): 191-201; idem, "Policy Formulation and Agricultural Development Administration: The Farmers' Organization Authority in Malaysia", *Journal of Administration Overseas* 14(1975): 76-90; idem, "Inter-Institutional Conflict and the Creation of the Farmers' Organization Authority" *Development Forum* 4(1973): 23-28.

37 Some information was obtained from the minutes of Kg. Kasturi VDSC and also from local FOA officials through interviews.

38 The details on this regulation are found in Kerajaan Malaysia, *Arahan Perbendaharaan* (Kuala Lumpur, 1981), pp. 50-63. It also provides a detailed categorization of the different classes of contractors. For example, Contractors Class A are eligible to bid for tenders valued at M$50,001 and above; Class B from M$50,001 to M$1,000,000; Class BX from M$50,001 to M$500,000; Class C from M$25,001 to M$250,000 and so on.

39 There were a number of tenders, even though not vetted by the PWD which were passed by the DAC for various reasons, such as, those of a *syarikat* of a *wakil rakyat* who is sitting on the committee, or a *syarikat* of the royal family etc. It is also a common practice in Malawati for the *wakil rakyat* to ignore government procedure on matters relating to tenders and contracts. The following excerpt from a report published by the Prime Minister's Department, *In-depth Study – Selangor*, pp. 235-236, says it all:

Relationships with Politicians

The district of Malawati has two Parliamentary Members (Ahli Dewan Rakyat) and four State Assemblymen (Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri – ADUN). The district office faces some problems with the politicians who tend to bypass financial procedures in the implementation of development projects. The particular problems faced are those where a politician:

1. Chooses a contractor and awards him a contract instead of going through the normal procedure of choosing a contractor through the calling of quotations.
2. Purchase some goods and hands the bill to the ADO (Community Development).
3. Decides on a project site without first investigating if the site is available.
4. Agrees on a project without first consulting the district office if it is feasible or necessary.
5. Changing projects even though the fund approved is for a particular project.
6. Contacts the DO and insists that his/her projects should be implemented immediately without considering that the DO has other projects to implement besides those of politicians.

All this has tended to contribute to the difficulties in implementation by the district office. The DO has frequently to do as the politicians direct as the latter feel that they are in a stronger position and have more power. The DO also tends to do as the politicans direct as the former may sit on the Exco or

Tindakan Negeri meeting which has the final authority for approval.

40 There was an official directive from the federal Treasury Department, Kuala Lumpur, on this matter. However, I was *not allowed to see* the one sent to the district office because the officials claimed that it was a restricted document. Nonetheless, I managed *to hear* it being read. Interviews with the politicians confirmed the content of the directive.

41 There was a case where a junior technician received an expensive car as a "gift" but did not dare to bring the car to work. Instead, he left the car at his relative's house, about two miles from his office, and travelled to work by motor cycle.

42 The VDSC usually submits the minutes of its monthly meeting to the *penghulu*, *wakil rakyat* and the Community Development section of the district office. These consist of reports on (i) what the village had received as development benefits from various government, semi-government and individual sources; (ii) the progress and problems of the projects' implementation, and (iii) new requests. Besides this formal channel, there is always an informal one, direct personal appeals to the *wakil rakyat* through UMNO.

43 The member of parliament within the district receives such treatment too, especially if he is holding a post at the federal level, for example, as a parliamentary secretary, deputy minister or a minister.

44 For about three weeks in May 1981, a small research team, from the Institute of Cultural Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, and the Socio-Economic Research Unit (SERU) of the Prime Minister's Department, conducted an intensive survey of 21 villages in all *mukim* of Malawati district. The main aim of the survey was to assess the overall progress of the rural development projects implemented under the Third Malaysia Plan of 1976-1981. I was invited to join the research team and managed to obtain first-hand information on "development progress" in other areas of Malawati which allowed for comparisons with my own findings from the study of Mukim Mawar. See also, Mohd, Shahari Jabar, "Rural Poverty and the Malay Peasant Politics of Survival" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1978), and Salleh Lamry, "Modernisasi Pertanian di Kalangan Pesawah dan Pekebun Kelapa Tani Melayu: Satu Kajian Kes di Kampung Sungai Limau, Sabak Bernam", (MA dissertation, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1978) for comparisons as both studies were conducted in Malawati and its neighbouring district. It is also interesting to compare the Malawati case with another district in Selangor, Kuala Langat, see Ong Ai-Hwa, "Women and Industry: Malay Peasants in Coastal Selangor, 1975-80" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Columbia, 1982).

45 Similar institutions also exists elsewhere in Malaysia, see for example, Johan Jaafar, "Kisah Sebuah Kampung: Pakatan Pinggan Mangkuk, Kumpulan Yassin dan Kesetiaan Pada UMNO", *Dewan Masyarakat* 20(May 1982): 50-51; M.L. Rogers, "Patterns of Change in a Rural Malay Society: Sungai Raya Revisited", *Asian Survey* 22(1982): 757-778.

46 A memorandum of this issue was made available to me by district officials. Attached to it were recommendations by various authorities, such as the PWD, DID, Religious Affairs Department, Health Department and the *penghulu*.

6

CONCLUSION

In most anthropological studies the conclusion as well as the theoretical paradigms adopted are embedded in the analysis. However, there is a need to draw together "the complex configuration of interconnections between disparate matters"[1] on the community studied – in this case Kg. Chempaka. This is especially important as this study is not only concerned with community level issues but also with broader national issues and their crucial interrelationships. This task has been carried out through an examination of two central themes – local politics and rural development – which are also strongly interconnected but little studied within Malaysian social studies. The Kg. Chempaka case will first be summarized and, later, considered for some of the more crucial implications and lessons in contemporary Malaysia particularly in the last decade – the NEP decade.

Kampung Chempaka: From British to Bumiputera Rule

Kg. Chempaka is a "child of colonialism". It was born out of a nation-wide and world-wide economic crisis which forced a section

of the Mawar peasants – Kg. Chempaka pioneers – to seek alternative sources of livelihood by opening up an uncultivated area within the *mukim*. They were mostly rubber smallholders who had little or no land, drawn into growing the crop during the rubber boom early this century and thus abandoning food crop cultivation. A fall in rubber prices and a rise in rice prices left them in a "no-win" situation. Their decision to grow rubber was against the wishes of the British colonial administration expressed in its agricultural policy which was partly implemented through the imposition of "food crop only" cultivation conditions on most lands alienated to local peasants.

When the pioneers of Kg. Chempaka, in 1916, cleared the wasteland area for a *ladang* or shifting cultivation they were in fact violating the then existing agricultural policy which outlawed *ladang* cultivation in favour of rice and other food crops. "Peasants grow food crop only" policy was promoted simultaneously with "cash crops for plantations only" policy. Through the former the British hoped to reduce rice imports for feeding imported labourers on the foreign-owned plantations and miners and, at the same time, save some foreign exchange.

At the local level, the *penghulu*, as a government functionary, also played the role of "the guardian" of the agricultural policy and was responsible for ensuring that the policy was adhered to. For this reason as well as on personal grounds he warned the pioneers to revert to proper food crop cultivation. The pioneers did not obey him but the subsequent settlers did. Thus, a possible *penghulu*-peasant conflict was averted.

Four villages finally emerged from the swampy wasteland – Kg. Asal, Kg. Kasturi, Kg. Teratai and Kg. Chempaka proper. In the initial years, the inhabitants of the villages grew food crops not necessarily because they were in favour of the agricultural policy but mainly because it was unprofitable to cultivate cash crops, especially rubber which was suffering from a slump in the price. This led to the introduction of the Stevenson Restriction Scheme to limit rubber growing among smallholders. By that time the Malay Reservation Enactment was already in operation as a result of which a stricter enforcement of the cultivation conditions attached to peasant land was imposed. Not long after that world rubber prices increased again. The more economically sensitive peasants of Kg. Asal led by

Ahmad grew rubber again, thus violating not only the land rules but also the Stevenson Scheme. More importantly, this decision meant abandoning food crop cultivation and hence denying the *penghulu* who was growing coconut and rubber with special permission from the district colonial administration, the traditional gift of food items which he regularly received from Kg. Asal. Other villages were also making similar contributions. A combination of official and personal reasons prompted the *penghulu* to take action against Ahmad the head of Kg. Asal and his followers. The *penghulu* was supported by the village heads of Kg. Kasturi and Kg. Chempaka proper. But Ahmad and his men continued to disobey him.

In the "1925 affair" Ahmad was not appointed as Kg. Asal village head and the village was denied official status and incorporated in the new Kg. Chempaka under Haji Abdul, who was appointed as the new Kg. Chempaka village head. The officials versus peasant conflict brought antagonisms between them to the fore. The stage was set for what proved to be a protracted contest of sectional interests. Further implementation of the various schemes under the colonial agricultural policy in Kg. Chempaka gave rise to at least four other major official versus peasant conflicts, one of which was only indirectly related. They were the "1934 scandal" which cost Haji Abdul of Kg. Chempaka his headmanship; the "1935 land dispute" in which some land in Kg. Asal was taken over by Haji Salam, the new Kg. Chempaka village head, and Cikgu Omar, a teacher-cum-entrepreneur, further fuelling the antagonisms between the officials and peasants in Kg. Chempaka; the "1936 mosque controversy" which resulted in a political compromise between the factions; and the "1939 land dispute" which involved the take-over of a substantial area of Kg. Asal by Ali, the Kg. Kasturi village head, Haji Salam and the *penghulu* himself, which was considered as *pencerobohan* or the outrage of Kg. Asal by its villagers.

The series of conflicts was generated by a mesh of reasons – economic, political, religious, personal hostilities, localism, ecological disasters, and so forth. In other words, the conflicts were multi-faceted and thus could be seen as official versus villagers; or a petty entrepreneur class versus peasant and proletariat classes; or "leaders of peasants" versus "peasant leaders"; or Kg. Asal versus its neighbours; or officials versus the natural disaster victims; or peasants versus the colonial state; or the religious versus non-

religious; and so forth. However, close scrutiny shows that most of these conflicts were related to the implementation of the various programmes under the colonial agricultural policy, ranging from important matters such as land to as petty as the participation in the district rice competition.

The very same policy also contributed greatly to the formation of the different social classes in Kg. Chempaka. Initially, Kg. Chempaka was settled by a group of pioneers who were displaced peasants from the *mukim* of Mawar and Asap. Within two decades during the inter-war years, we saw the emergence of a small official-cum-entrepreneur class from the once displaced peasants. They were originally peasant leaders, that is, selected by peasants themselves to represent their economic and political interests. Later, through their appointments as village heads they became closely associated with the *penghulu*. The association proved beneficial to both sides. The *penghulu* through its close contacts with the district office was able to help the village headmen set up their small businesses, mainly as construction contractors, taking advantage of the various government contracts to build irrigation canals and other facilities associated with specific programmes under the agricultural policy, or private contracts in the local plantations. They mainly employed villagers who were victims of natural disasters or the Depression as their labourers. As a result, the village heads and a few local élites were drawn closer to the *penghulu* and became his loyal supporters, and thus socially distanced themselves from the peasants and the emerging proletariat class. From "peasant leaders" they became "leaders of peasants" who now derived economic and political strength by aligning with the *penghulu* and supporting the colonial cause, which frequently put them at odds with the interests of the peasants to which they had once belonged. Hence from what was essentially a peasant class now emerged two others, that of the official-entrepreneur class and the proletariat class drawn from the workers who worked on the estates. Nevertheless, the peasant class remained the largest in the community.

Based on the evidence presented in this study, many of the conflicts within the village manifested the underlying class contradictions within the community, but not necessarily overtly expressed in class terms at all times. Some emerged as religious conflicts, a few in the form of personal hostilities, some as narrow localism (Kg. Asal

versus the outsiders), once or twice as family feuds, and there were even fiery verbal exchanges. This revealed that there was not necessarily a one-to-one or direct causal relationship between the colonial agricultural policy and local, community politics as the evidence amply demonstrated. What is suggested here is that in colonial Kg. Chempaka the community, from the beginning, was subjected to various forms of rules and policies, mainly related to the implementation of the colonial agricultural policy. Through the local official functionaries the policy, which changed from time to time, was implemented. There was widespread peasant opposition in colonial Malaya to many aspects of this policy, and this happened in Kg. Chempaka too. The opposition, direct or indirect, found expressions in local issues and took various forms thus obscuring their class origins. In essence, what we have observed were the local expressions of an important national issue dominating rural life in colonial Malaya.

The Second World War did not really generate as much change in the economic sphere as in the political sphere in Malaya. The pre-war colonial agricultural policy changed in name but not in content. It then became the rural development policy. Since most Kg. Chempaka villagers were involved in rubber cultivation or in rubber-related activities (such as working as labourers in nearby rubber estates) the specific programmes of the rural development policy which related to rubber affected the villagers most. The official-cum-entrepreneur class continued to receive the benefits of the rubber replanting programme as smallholders and businessmen. The proletariat class expanded as the nearby estates increased their replanting and new planting activities. The peasant smallholding class suffered as a result of not being able to participate in the replanting scheme, for economic and bureaucratic reasons, but also as a consequence of the colonial government policy against new planting by peasant smallholders. The latter did not stop them from carrying out illegal new planting. The infrastructure and social services under the rural development policy did not reach the community as they were not meant for them. This situation persisted even after independence and to the late 1960s. Whatever changes in the policy, which were translated in various forms, reached only the official-entrepreneur class who continued successfully to accumulate more wealth, but not the other classes.

In the political sphere, the introduction of modern political parties in Malaya, in the late 1940s, was largely an immediate response to British post-war Malayan Union proposals but has its roots in pre-war Malay politics. The protaganists in the anti-Malayan Union campaign, which was countrywide, were the Malays from the governing class – administrators, aristocrats and royalty – and they were the same people who established UMNO in 1946. At the local level, the governing class, mainly through "soft" coercion, were able to recruit the support of local Malay élite in their anti-Malayan Union campaign. The latter were responsible, after 1946, for organizing UMNO local branches throughout Malaya. Therefore, from top to bottom, UMNO's organization was élite-controlled. Evidence from Malawati revealed that within the district, UMNO was initially organized along the pre-existing local colonial administrative hierarchy – district and *mukim* – without village branches. In Mukim Mawar, for the first six years there was only one UMNO branch in the whole *mukim*, called UMNO Mawar, and the members were mainly village heads, successful local petty entrepreneurs and rich landlords, none from the local peasantry and the proletariat class. The second branch, at Sungai Ikan also had a similar membership composition. Only in 1955 did peasants begin to participate in Mawar UMNO politics, but mostly as sponsored members, and hence they could be categorized as "passive political passengers" – a term used by the members themselves. In Kg. Chempaka, UMNO was represented by the village head, his sons and a few close friends of theirs.

From the beginning, UMNO was perceived as the political party which belonged to the official-entrepreneur class, both in Kg. Chempaka and in Mawar as a whole. Thus in the local context, UMNO inherited all the problems associated with the official-entrepreneur class, and at the same time became the new vehicle through which the interests of the class were expressed. The latter was evident when many of its members' participation in the post-1950 rural development programmes – replanting, RIDA activities – was facilitated by the fact that they belonged to UMNO and hence were given priority by local Malay civil servants who were the district's party officials. Until 1954, after which government regulations forbade high-ranking civil servants to participate in politics unless they resigned, the role of local Malay administrators was crucial in consolidating the

support of local elites for UMNO in Malawati as a whole and in Mawar in particular. In Kg. Chempaka, peasant leaders, like Zainal from Kg. Asal, observed these developments with contempt but were not able to do anything save express their discontentment verbally, in gossip and in coffee-shop or *surau* talks. Their dissatisfaction stemmed from their not being able to participate in the rubber replanting scheme. Although the main reason that denied the peasants participation was essentially an economic one, it was the bureaucratic reason which became the contentious political issue locally, because the official-entrepreneur class of Kg. Chempaka received various forms of "bureaucratic favours" when they applied for the replanting grants. This was more obvious and more directly felt by the peasants than the economic reasons which from the outset hindered their participation. Although the peasant dissatisfaction did not lead to any open conflict, nonetheless, it signalled the introduction of a new element to the already complex local political relations that is, party politics. Thereafter, the post-war conflicts within Kg. Chempaka were often seen in the intra-party and inter-party rivalries especially after PAS made inroads into the villages, obscuring further the underlying class tensions which generated most of the pre-war conflicts.

In 1955 PAS established its first branch in Mukim Mawar at Kg. Asal and in 1962, the second branch in Kg. Teratai. It was the former which eventually became one of PAS strongholds in Malawati. It was no coincidence that the majority of Kg. Asal managed to dominate party politics within Kg. Chempaka for about a decade and to a lesser extent after that. This was due to several related reasons. Firstly, there was no UMNO branch in Kg. Chempaka until 1965 which, ironically, was established by expelled PAS dissidents of Kg. Asal. Secondly, after failing to recruit new members for the then existing UMNO branches at Kg. Mawar and Sungai Ikan, the UMNO "representatives" in Kg. Chempaka focused their attention on improving their economic position through the party. Thus they were perceived by most villagers as self-seeking. Thirdly, the PAS leaders, by virtue of being peasant leaders, were able to identify themselves particularly with the peasants and through their unitarian and religious ideas were able to organize and establish religious classes and later a religious school. These concrete contributions were sufficient proof as far as the peasants were concerned of their

ability and leadership. The successes of the PAS leaders were exaggerated by the failures of the village official-entrepreneur class, who were all UMNO members, to bring rural development projects to the village. Fourthly, the ability of PAS leaders to take up the long-standing local issues and represent them as party issues, such as the official status of Kg. Asal, must not be under-rated. From the above factors it is not difficult to understand why PAS enjoyed such tremendous success in Kg. Chempaka for so long. The ability of PAS to provide the challenge to UMNO Mawar was demonstrated during the various state elections. Although PAS candidates suffered several defeats in the elections, they were, nevertheless, able to attract a substantial number of votes, particularly from the Mawar Malay community. This was no small success as UMNO's dominance in Malawati was not challenged for decades, and, more importantly, the Mawar PAS organization was essentially village-based receiving little financial support from the national level unlike UMNO Mawar.

PAS's continued success and dominance in Kg. Chempaka, especially in the 1960s, had its long-term negative consequences on the village as a whole. The village head and associates, who were UMNO members were seen as politically impotent in their inability to defuse PAS dominance. Instead of being assisted they were blamed for their ineffectiveness by the district as well as Mukim Mawar UMNO officials. Consequently, Kg. Chempaka was declared a "black area" (or an opposition party area) and denied rural development projects. This, in turn, strengthened PAS accusations of the village being neglected and led to more support for PAS. The Mawar state councillor was more preoccupied with consolidating his political position and support and thus channelled most of the projects to those villages from which his main support came. He, however, made some attempts to break PAS dominance in Kg. Chempaka by inviting the Prime Minister and other top-level UMNO officials during the pre-election campaigns, but they all failed. It was a conflict within PAS Kg. Asal in 1968 which finally gave UMNO, for the first time since 1959, the opportunity to establish a branch with direct support from peasants. However, PAS's political position was too entrenched in Kg. Asal and its leadership too experienced to be shaken by the internal conflict. They came back with a vengeance in the 1969 state elections for the Mawar seat where they received their

biggest ever vote and lost by a small margin. So strong was PAS Kg. Asal that a few of its leaders were fielded as the party's candidates in other state seats in and outside Malawati as well as for the federal seat in which the Mawar constituency was part of.

When PAS joined the National Front coalition party in 1972, PAS Kg. Asal was opposed to this move. Many other PAS branches in Malawati supported the Kg. Asal's branch stand, and in fact, throughout the country there was big group within PAS adopting a similar position. The PAS-UMNO coalition lasted until 1977 when PAS was expelled. What was significant in the Mawar context was that PAS Kg. Asal did not make any attempt to communicate with UMNO Mawar throughout the coalition years. It did, however, join forces with UMNO Kg. Chempaka to support UMNO Sungai Ikan in opposing the then Mawar *wakil rakyat* in 1974, for selecting his daughter-in-law as the ruling party candidate for the state elections. The latter had strong personal reasons and a lot of economic interest at stake in having his candidate contest the Mawar constituency. They were directly related to his business interests which were beginning to enjoy much success since the implementation of the NEP which, in turn, increased local *wakil rakyat* dominance in the distribution process of development projects and thus government contracts. The 1974 dispute thus brought the leaders of UMNO and PAS in Kg. Chempaka together which culminated in a profitable economic joint-venture from 1977 onwards. But they remained opposed on the political platform as the 1978 and the 1982 elections revealed. The contradiction was due to a complex combination of personal, economic and political factors, all of which were related to the implementation of the NEP, some directly and some indirectly.

Kg. Chempaka further suffered political discrimination since 1974 as a result of its leaders being on the "wrong side" in the "1974 dispute". The new *wakil rakyat* blocked or denied various forms of rural development projects (both the agricultural and the basic amenities projects) from reaching Kg. Chempaka. As the most powerful and influential political figure in her constituency she had the final say over the distribution of the development benefits within her area. She was thus able to deprive her opponents of, and showered her friends with, development projects. At another level, she and her trusted aides, were enjoying tremendous success in their business mainly through winning government contracts for the small

as well as the lucrative rural development projects. Hence the potent combination of economic and political advantages had given her an awesome power which she could wield almost at will – which was not without support and co-operation from district, state and national level politicians and much assistance from the increasingly ineffective bureaucrats. This position served to strengthen her political dominance and economic position, and helped her to accrue even more wealth and power. The very same advantages she enjoyed in the end, proved to be the forces which ended her political career.

Hence from the Kg. Chempaka case we witnessed the local consequences of the *bumiputera* rule through the implementation of a part of its *bumiputera* policy, namely the rural development programmes. Not only has it transformed the social basis of local politics but it has also generated new economic opportunities which, in turn, led to class realignments and further increased class tensions at the community level. As such, it requires us to examine the specific political and economic consequences of the NEP in more general terms beyond the community studied. In short, we want to know what are the implications of and the lessons we have learned from this case study particularly in relation to the implementation of the NEP.

The NEP Decade: Some Lessons from a Community Study

Since the advent of the NEP, the national government has introduced many new policies to achieve its objectives, both at the local and national levels. Concomitant changes have been made to the general administrative structure in order to facilitate implementation of the various government development programmes. The impact of such changes at the district level, as observed in Malawati, has been great. Most significant has been the increased dominance of local politicians, namely, the *wakil rakyat* of the ruling party, over the decision-making process within the district bureaucracy – especially in the operation of the district development machinery, which was traditionally the domain of local bureaucrats. This dominance is further enhanced by the fact that many local bureaucrats of both high and low rank have become partisans who openly belong to the ruling UMNO party organization. Hence they are under the control of the

top local politicians, that is, the *wakil rakyat*, not only within their local party organization but also in the development committee itself. As a result, the district development machinery, which controls and monitors every aspect of the implementation of all district development projects under the NEP, has now become an integral part of the local ruling party apparatus. The political and economic implications of this pattern for the process of distribution of development benefits at different levels within the district are far-reaching.

Firstly, as funds allocated for rural development projects have generally been biased towards basic amenities, mainly involving construction jobs, the biggest beneficiaries in Malawati have been the politicians, namely, the *wakil rakyat*, and their Malay and Chinese associates. They have managed to turn rural development projects, initially aimed at eradicating poverty, into rich financial resources for themselves, by establishing their own companies and then awarding them lucrative government contracts. These efforts are interpreted by them as fulfilling the 30 percent quota of *bumiputera* ownership in business and management, as outlined in the NEP. In other words, they believe that they have fulfilled to some degree the societal "restructuring" objective of the NEP, but ironically and on their own admission, it was by exploiting the poverty eradication objective. This is a very different strategy from that pursued by the Malay national bourgeoisie, who generally involve themselves in the stockmarket or in large-scale business ventures in the national industrial sector. Nonetheless, the emerging local *nouveaux riches* comprising top district UMNO politicians, cannot be described simply as petty Malay entrepreneurs because their operating capital ranges from M$50,000 to M$250,000.

Secondly, the *wakil rakyat* through their successful business activities, such as those described in Kg. Chempaka, Mawar and in Malawati, have managed to foster a new locally-based Malay business class, not of petty commodity traders, but full-fledged capital-based entrepreneurs. The existence of such a class, which is far from small at the village and *mukim* level was unknown prior to the NEP. In this sense, the NEP has been successful, especially, in creating new Malay entrepreneurs but at the expense of the impoverished peasants in each locality.

Thirdly, although there exist numerous other development pro-

jects at the *mukim* and district level which are relatively small in material value, the distribution of these projects is based on personal links of patronage within the political arena, as the Kg. Chempaka and Mawar cases have shown. As a result, at the village and *mukim* level, the beneficiaries have been small, select groups of peasants, not necessarily the poorest, although the projects are supposedly for them. It is also important to note that low-ranking bureaucrats (Malays and non-Malays) and disfavoured local UMNO leaders also benefit materially from the distribution of this pool of *ikan bilis* projects. The situation is such that those closely-associated with the centre of power at the local level stand to benefit most from the implementation of the development programmes under the NEP.

Fourthly, there have been significant changes in the operation of local politics, especially within UMNO. Since the introduction of the NEP, the general position of the ruling party *wakil rakyat* in Malawati has undergone substantial change. Prior to the NEP, a *wakil rakyat* was seen more as a political patron than as an economic one. The NEP has transformed not only the image but also the objective position of the *wakil rakyat* within the district. Their political power has been greatly increased by their control of the district development machinery which, in turn, places them in an unassailable position in distributing development benefits. This situation has not only brought them very substantial personal gain but also, by virtue of their new-found wealth, has given them the ability to buy continued political support with hard cash. Consequently, the nature of internal politics within local UMNO organizations has been reshaped. Bitter factional struggles have increased within local UMNO over the coveted position of *wakil rakyat*, especially during the pre-selection period before a general election, since the contending leaders regard the position as providing the passport to riches and power. This has resulted, as in the Mawar case, in the directing of development benefits away from disfavoured groups of people within the ruling party ranks. Sometimes whole villages have been denied such benefits on the basis of belonging to the "wrong camp" within the local UMNO organizations or of supporting an opposition party, such as PAS. The intense internal political strife within local UMNO organizations has reached new heights as recent events in Selangor and elsewhere in Malaysia show. Outbreaks of violence at

UMNO branch and divisional meetings both in Selangor and in other parts of Malaysia have been on the rise.[2] In fact, in one particular UMNO division, in Negeri Sembilan, a protracted vehement factional conflict ended in what has been widely referred to as a "political" murder.[3]

It is also significant that the leadership struggle within local UMNO organizations is not only for the *wakil rakyat* position but also for other offices at the branch and divisional levels.[4] The latter is usually a stepping stone to the former. Failing that, such an office gives one the opportunity to be involved in the financially lucrative "business of development" at the local level. Yet another route to being a *wakil rakyat* or a potentially successful Malay entrepreneur is to be elected as one of the divisional representatives to the all-important UMNO annual general assembly and to participate in the election of the UMNO national Supreme Council members. Before or during this meeting a divisional representative has the chance to get to know or to be known to the various candidates of the UMNO national leadership, or at least, to the latter's lieutenants. This opens up another opportunity for one to be considered as a potential *wakil rakyat* candidate or to receive patronage in the form of material benefits. Given these benefits, it is not uncommon, in the contest for official positions within local UMNO organizations, for the contending leaders to use money to achieve their goal. Such a practice is by no means a local level phenomenon. The Prime Minister and the present President of UMNO Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has stated that "with more Malays becoming rich, the contests for the posts (in the UMNO Supreme Council) are carried out by using large amounts of money".[5] Thus the rise of "money politics", at all levels within UMNO is closely related, if not the direct result, of the NEP itself.

At the local level, it is now clear that since the advent of the NEP, local politicians, especially the *wakil rakyat*, have become influential not only in deciding the allocation of rural development benefits, but more importantly, in determining the future course of district level development. Such a situation has, in turn, transformed the basis of local politics within the ruling party organization into fierce internal competition for the *wakil rakyat* position because it promises the opportunity for more wealth and power. This vicious circle of political behaviour has gathered considerable momentum, and the

social consequences must be weighed if they are not to go beyond the level of party politics itself.

NOTES

1 Kessler, *Islam and Politics*, p. 21.
In this book, less attention was given to discussing the ideological basis of the formulation of the development policies as well as to the ideological underpinnings of the national politics. This was done deliberately for two main reasons. Firstly, it is a major and crucial topic in itself which needs special and detailed attention. Thus it would be too presumptuous for this book to take up such an issue in what is essentially a community study. Secondly, to date the issue has been the subject of much debate and discussions amongst the more progressive Malaysianists whose contributions I readily acknowledged throughout this book.

2 On the various incidents in Selangor see for example, the *Star* 4 January 1984, *Berita Harian*, 2, 3 and 4 January 1984 for news on the "Port Klang Shooting and Free-for-all Incident"; the *Star*, 4 and 5 January 1984 and *Berita Harian*, 3, 4 and 5 January 1984 for the "Tanjung Karang demonstrations"; and the *Star*, 6, 12, 19, 22 and 23 March 1984, and 17, 18 and 19 April 1984 for reports on the "Petaling UMNO controversy". For reports on other states, see the *Star*, 23 January, 12 March, 3 April and 23 May 1984 on the "Penang UMNO power struggle". In fact all Malaysian newspapers for the months of December 1983, January, February, March, April and May 1984 covered in detail the UMNO meetings at the branch, divisional and national levels. For comments by Musa Hitam, the Deputy Premier and Deputy President UMNO Malaysia on "the violent trends in UMNO local level meetings" see the *Star*, 9 March 1984. See, also Chandra Muzaffar's comments on the above issues in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 July 1984, pp. 24-25. It is also important to note that for the first time in UMNO's history, an unresolved divisional conflict was brought to the court of law for a decision (the *Star*, 22, 23 and 25 May 1984.) In an effort to control this so-called negative tendency UMNO is to amend its constitution to prevent members from bringing their political problems and differences to court (*New Sunday Times*, 7 July 1985). However, resorting to the court of law to resolve internal party disagreements is common amongst other National Front component parties, such as the MCA and, particularly, the MIC.

3 For detailed references on the incident and the subsequent developments see Chapter 5, note 30.

4 The struggle for executive positions at all levels of UMNO reached a new height recently when UMNO Youth and Wanita proposed an amendment to the UMNO constitution to open all executive positions (except at the UMNO Supreme Council) for contest. At present, an UMNO branch leader is empowered to appoint two persons to the branch executive committee in addition to the five elected during its general meeting. At the division level, the divisional head is empowered to appoint three in addition to the seven elected ones. At the national level, an UMNO Youth leader is empowered to appoint five to its executive council in addition to

the ten elected during its general assembly. Similarly, UMNO Wanita leader is empowered to appoint five to its executive council in addition to the ten elected ones (*New Straits Times*, 27 July 1985).

5 See Dr Mahathir Mohamad's presidential address to the 35th UMNO general assembly (*New Straits Times*, 26 May 1984) and to the 36th UMNO general assembly (*New Straits Times*, 28 September 1985). See also comments by Musa Hitam on the issue of "money politics" within UMNO (the *Star*, 14 April 1984) and by Rais Yatim, another cabinet minister (the *Star*, 21 April 1984). Also a recent analysis of the issue by Zainal Epi "Changes to Check Money Politics" (the *Star*, 23 September 1985).

ABBREVIATIONS

ADO	Assistant District Officer
API	Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (a nationalist political organization)
AR	Annual Report
ADUN	Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri (state legislative assembly member)
BMA	British Military Administration
DAC	District Action Committee
DAP	Democratic Action Party
DDC	District Development Committee
DID	District Land Committee
DO	District Officer
D.R. Proc.	Dewan Rakyat Proceedings (parliamentary proceedings)
DTPC	District Technical and Planning Committee

EMR	Entry for Mukim Register
Exco	Executive Committee (state legislative assembly)
FAMA	Farmers' Agricultural and Marketing Authority
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FELDA	Federal Land Development Authority
FELCRA	Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority
FOA	Farmers' Organization Authority
GPC	Group Processing Centre
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICI	Imperial Chemical Industries
JMA	Japanese Military Administration
JMBRAS	Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSBRAS	Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
JKKK	Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (Village Development and Security Committee or VDSC)
KEMAS	Kemajuan Masyarakat (Community Development)
L.C.Proc.	Legislative Council Proceedings
MADA	Muda Agricultural Development Authority
MAHA	Malayan Agricultural and Horticultural Association

MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat
MPAJA	Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
MP	Member of Parliament
NEP	New Economic Policy
NF	National Front (coalition party)
PAS	Parti Islam SeMalaysia
PORLA	Palm Oil Research and Licensing Authority
PWD	Public Works Department
RIDA	Rural Industrial Development Authority
RISDA	Rubber Industry Smallholders' Development Authority
RRI (M)	Rubber Research Institute (Malaysia)
SEDC	Selangor Economic Development Corporation
SC	Special Constabulary (Unit)
SSF	Selangor Secretariat File
SSGG	Straits Settlement Government Gazette
SGG	Selangor Government Gazette
Tg.	Tanjung (cape)
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
VDC	Village Development Committee
VDSC	Village Development and Security Committee (Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung or JKKK)

GLOSSARY

A guide to the vernacular terms used in the text.

air dan minyak tak campur	water and oil do not mix
amalan sedekah	alms giving; freewill offerings
anak buah	subject of a village head, or of *penghulu*; also used as a kinship term to refer to kindred relations
anak emas	the golden son; the most favoured one
anak tiri	stepson; the neglected one
bagi dua	sharecropping; equal share
balai raya	community hall
berada	well-to-do
berdikari	abbreviation of a Malay phrase *berdiri di atas kaki sendiri* or to stand on one's own feet, be independent; to be self-reliant

berjasa	to do one's duty loyally; beneficient; actively kind
berjihad	to struggle; to wage a crusade; to wage a holy struggle
bersanding	a public ceremony during which the bride and bridegroom sit side by side on a dais.
berseteru	to become enemies and not on speaking terms
bersubahat	to collaborate; to be an accomplice of; to conspire
biadab	disrespectful; discourteous
bintang	stars; also refer to honorary titles awarded by the royal family to selected persons for their special contribution to society
bomoh	a traditional healer or medicine-person
bumiputera	prince or son of the soil; autochthonous ethnic group, native or indigenous group
buruh	labour, labourer
buruh kampung	village labourer; agricultural labourer, landless agricultural proletariat
buruh kontrak	contract labourer; refers specifically to indentured labourers in colonial Malaya who were mainly of Javanese origin
buruh upahan	wage labour
cari makan	to earn a living

cikgu	school teacher (title, and form of address)
dalang	puppeteer; the person behind the scene
dendam	grudge
duit haram	money prohibited by religion
dusun	an orchard
empat belas hari Cina balas dendam	fourteen days of Chinese revenge
hantu	ghost, informer
haji	pilgrimage; or a title given to a person who has done the pilgrimage; or a religious specialist who made the pilgrimage
harta	property
hidup segan mati tak mahu	not willing to exert oneself but loathe to die
imam	a prayer leader; a custodian of the mosque
jumaah	followers of a prayer or prayers; members of the mosque assembly
kafir	non-believer
kaki kacau	trouble-makers
kampung	village or a complex of villages
kati	local weight measurement equivalent to 1⅓ pounds
kaya	rich, wealthy
kealimannya	religiousness
kelas dewasa	adult education classes
kenduri	feast

kenyang	satisfied
keris	a Malay dagger
khatib	a person who reads the sermon during Friday prayers
klinik bidan	maternity clinic
kuli	coolie
kutu pinggan	crockery tontine
ladang	a shifting cultivation area; an agricultural plot away from home
lebai	religious specialist
lebih kerja kurang cakap	more work less talk
lembu pawah	a cattle rearing scheme financed by loans
makan	to eat; an occasion to eat together
masalah perut	stomach problem, food crisis
miskin	poor
modal politik	political capital
mukim	a sub-district
munafik	hypocrites
nyawa	life
orang berkedudukan	man of position or standing
orang besar	chiefs, the élites
orang kuat UMNO	UMNO party stalwarts
paspot jadi kaya dan berkuasa	passport to wealth and power
pasar lambak	open-air market
pegawai tanam semula	replanting inspectors or officers
pejuang	fighter
pekebunkecil miskin	poor smallholder

pembelot	traitor
pencerobohan	outrage; aggression
penggali	a small spade-like implement for digging also used to cut oil palm fruit
penghulu	the official head of a mukim
pilih kasih	favouritism; nepotism
projek pembangunan	development project
projek ikan bilis	"small fish" projects; projects of little value financially or politically
qariah	the zone served by a mosque
sarang parti pembangkang	a nest of the opposition party
sedang	medium; intermediate
sederhana	moderate, average, mediocre
sembahyang hajat	special prayers conducted for a specific aim
sempit	narrow, confined (space); narrowness
senang mewah	living in comfort and luxury
sepak takraw	a traditional Malay ball game where the ball is made of woven cane
siapa benar siapa salah	who's right who's wrong
silat	Malay martial arts
sufi	a mystic
sungai	river
surat kuasa	letter of appointment; authorization letter
surau	a small prayer house

susah	difficult; economically very poor
syarikat	a company – registered or unregistered
tanah kosong	vacant land; uncultivated land
tanah kampung	a piece of land containing the house and its compound
tandas curah	water-sealed toilets
tanjung	cape
teksi sapu	unlicensed taxi drivers
tempe	fermented soya bean-cake
tenaga	energy
tepung ubi	tapioca flour
tiga suku	mentally unbalanced
tolong bangsa	to help one's own race
wakaf	land left to a mosque
wakil rakyat	people's representative; refers specifically to a member of parliament or the state legislative assembly

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