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Malaysia and Ceylon: *A Study of Two Developing Centres*

Yael Levy

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem



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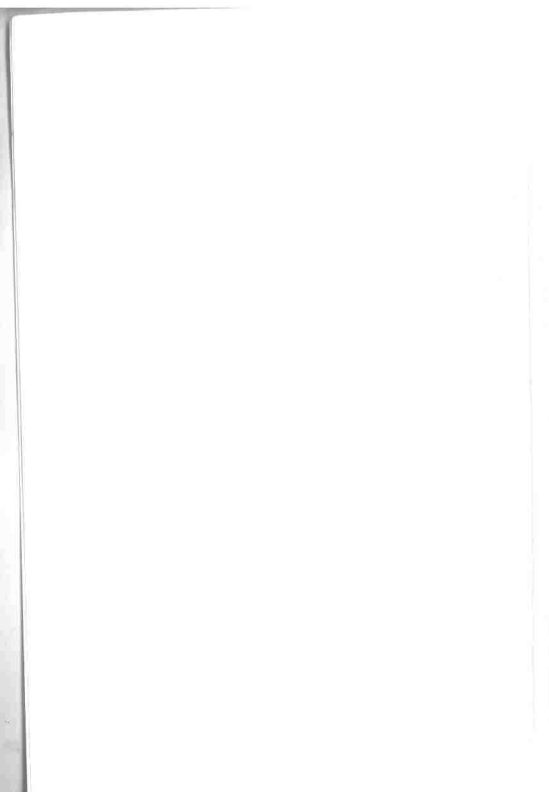
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Editor's Introduction to the Series

This series of comparative studies on modernization stems from a broad programme of research developed over the past five years in the Harry S Truman Research Institute, in cooperation with the Department of Sociology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and with other departments of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Its focus is analytical and comparative—i.e., the analysis of the *diverse* social, economical and political patterns which develop in different modernizing societies and the factors which can explain such diversity.

Even though this series of papers shows considerable differences in points of view, nevertheless they have some strong common grounds: mainly, in their revision of 'classical' theories of modernization. These theories assumed that there existed a total dichotomy between 'traditional' and 'modern' societies, and that the best way for a society to modernize was to shed most of its traditional qualities.

However, the present studies support the view that the variability of modernization is not due to one factor (the traditionality of a society, or its level of development) but to a variety of factors. Neither do their authors assume that there is necessarily any negative relationship between tradition and modernity. Rather, different aspects of 'tradition' will have varying impact on the process of development, so that each society may create its own version of modernity.

So we may say of much of this research that it:

First, recognizes what may be called the systemic viability of the so-called transitional systems;

Second, assumes these societies may develop in ways not necessarily envisioned by the initial model of modernization;

Third, they recognize the importance of both the different aspects of historical continuity and of the international situation for shaping differing contours of development for different contemporary 'post-traditional' social orders.

The crystallization of any post-traditional society is influenced by a combination of social factors, including:

- The level of resources available for mobilization and institution-building.
- The manner in which the forces of modernity impinge on the particular society.
- The structure of the situation of change in which they are caught, and.
- The different traditions of these societies or civilizations as embodied in their 'pre-modern' socio-economic structure.

Differing combinations of these forces will influence different aspects of the contours and dynamics of the post-traditional socio-political order; each individual force will tend to have more influence on some developmental aspects than on others.

The studies which will be published in this series will test these generalizations against specific case studies, or in comparative analyses.

—S. N. EISENSTADT

Editors' Note:

The editors would like to express their gratitude to the Founders and Overseers of the Harry S Truman Research Institute for their support and assistance in the development of this series.

—S.N.E. and D.W.

MALAYSIA AND CEYLON: *A Study of Two Developing Centres*

Yael Levy

The Hebrew University

The Malaysian and Ceylonese elites share the problem of preserving democracy amid ethnic rivalries and economic difficulties and crises. Despite the uniqueness of their respective social structure and history, some similar trends of development can be found in the new political centres of both societies.¹ These two centres were modelled at their initial stage along the forms of Western institutions. Now, more than twenty years have elapsed since independence, and local elites and popular forces have made their impact felt on the Western structure of the centres. It is the purpose of this paper to suggest how the changing character of the new centres exhibits a particular encounter between the continuous presence of pre-colonial social features and the new Western institutions and values.

I. THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRADITIONAL CENTRES²

Various social studies done in 'new states' reveal that a special attitude of respect and deference is expressed by the people towards the political authorities, and also, that the social prestige attributed to the incumbents of political roles is very high. For a long time there has been in South Asia no higher calling than to serve the Ruler—either the traditional ruler or the foreign Raj—or, today, to be a public servant.³ In Malaysia, up to the present, 'no occupation is worthy of prestige save the one associated with the ruler'.⁴

These attitudes are part of a wider frame of conceptions and images concerned with the nature of government and its functions in society. Essential to these conceptions is a general orientation of dependency on the ruler and of manifold popular expectations of the government. These attitudes are associated with certain features of the traditional institutional

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I would like to thank Professor S. N. Eisenstadt for the guidance and assistance he gave me in writing this paper and also Professor H. D. Evers for his critical and enlightening comments and suggestions.

forms of ruling in these societies. It is my purpose to examine these features in order to find out whether some of them are still present today and to attempt to describe the ways in which these traditional features blend with new forms of government.

THE IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF KINGSHIP

In describing the structure of the traditional centres in Ceylon and in Malaysia, I am relying heavily on the studies of the conceptions of State and Kingship in the Hindu and Buddhist states in Southeast Asia and of patrimonial political systems,⁵ and of course, on studies pertaining to Ceylon and to Malaysia.⁶

According to these studies, there was a prevalent belief in the parallelism, or homology, between the universe and the world of men, who were constantly under the influence of cosmic forces. The king, either by the principle of divine incarnation, or by the principle of merit and rebirth, held a key position between these two worlds. The ideal structure of the state was believed to embody the cosmic principles of order, and the essence of the king's function was to protect the stability of this structure. The unique significance of the king's function was demonstrated in the importance attached to the elaborate court rituals, to the etiquette of the relationships between the king and his subjects and to the architecture of the capital city and the palace. Supernatural powers were attributed also to the holy regalia. According to these conceptions, Kingship, or the political order, was a religious order as well: the king was a god-king in the Hindu tradition; a universal monarch, a Buddha-to-be, and a promoter and protector of orthodox Theravada in the Buddhist tradition.⁷ In Ceylon, the Sinhalese kings traced their lineage to the sun—in all probability to the sun in its capacity as regulator of the world⁸—and thus, they were related to the supernatural, the law of nature and the moral order.

The king stood at the centre of the social organisation and at the apex of the social hierarchy. Every social role and social group was evaluated in terms of its relation to kingship. Social prestige depended on one's proximity to the king. Society was stratified to a large degree along its political structure and hierarchy. These principles of political and social organisation were expressed in language as well, by the manner in which people addressed each other.

These conceptions of kingship were at the base of the legitimisation of the Sinhalese rulers, whose kingdoms collapsed gradually under foreign attacks and internal struggles, until finally the Kandyan kingdom was subdued by the British colonial power early in the nineteenth century. These principles were also at the core of the Malayan* Sultanates' legitimisation.

until the beginning of the present century, when the British established a system of indirect rule and of residency in the Malayan peninsula.

THE NATURE OF THE POLITICAL ROLES ✓

These ideological foundations of kingship can help us understand the nature of political roles in these states, and the actual patterns of activities of their incumbents. Thus some apparently paradoxical characteristics of the Malay aristocracy can be explained.⁹ The aristocracy consisted of a body of officials appointed by the king whose duties were related to the functioning of the centre and to the administration of the territories of the kingdom. There was no landed aristocracy; all land and people belonged to the king, or Maharaja-Sultan. The various members of the aristocracy and the territorial chiefs had no other claim to legitimate authority. The importance of their titles of nobility depended on their actual offices, and not on descent, that is, on the king solely. In practice, however, the chiefs were largely independent and their right to offices became hereditary. They often became more powerful than their ruler, and not only restricted the supply of resources to the ruler, but imposed their will in succession issues, appointments and foreign treaties as well. Nevertheless, they did not undermine the legitimation of the regime itself. As Gullick notes¹⁰ no chief ever sought to set himself up as an independent ruler. The chiefs did not attempt to define their rights as against the sultan's. Despite the actual decentralisation which took place, and despite the decline of the ruler's power, the orientations towards the centre of the kingdom remained. The ultimate aim of the bearers of political roles did not change; it was the formal, royal recognition of their position. To this end the chiefs diverted all their economic and military resources. They did not direct any resources to the development of their hard-won territories and did not engage in any activity which might have contributed to an autonomous development of the periphery. All their resources were channelled to social and political ends, within the frame of the centre. The chiefs did not develop any other collective goals or aspirations, except their aspiration to have a legitimate part in authority. A most significant aspect of the political role was in the formal occupancy of offices and in the general social status that was almost exclusively attached to it. Because of the nature of the cultural order, and its relation to the political one, these roles and aspirations had no other

*EDITOR'S NOTE: In 1963, "Malaysia" became the new name of the Federation of Malaya, which was joined then by the former British colonies in North-Borneo, Sabah and Sarawak, and Singapore (which seceded in 1965). Malaya is the name by which the Malay Peninsula was known throughout history, and also the name of the Federation which became independent in 1957. Thus, when referring to the present, Malaysia will be used and when referring to the past—Malaya.

religious or ideological overtones—the offices were considered to contain in themselves a key to the participation in the centre of society and to the most valued and rewarding activities in society.

Pieris describes a similar social and political structure in the Kandyan kingdoms of Ceylon. In Ceylon there was another, additional system of stratification; a caste system. But unlike in India, in Sinhalese Ceylon the system had no religious legitimation and did not separate social status from political power.¹¹ The not-too-rigid caste system in Ceylon involved service obligations to the king, the chief, and the temple. This status hierarchy was oriented towards the political structure too, the position of each caste being related to its service to the king. While the caste hierarchy had no legitimation in Buddhist thought, Buddhist organisation, following the political pattern, utilised the caste hierarchy and the concept of caste services for its strength.¹²

STATE AND RELIGION

The cosmic endowments of the ritualised structure of the state, and its meaning for the stratification of the society, did not leave much room for any legitimate demand to achieve some better form of government or to introduce any changes in the political and social norms. This lack of tension between the here and now and a conception of an ideal society seems very unusual when another important social fact is considered: the ruler of the Malakka Empire adopted the Muslim faith in the Sixteenth century, and Buddhism was introduced to Ceylon in the middle of the third century B.C., becoming the established religion of the Sinhalese kingdoms. The Sangha became a centre of learning and culture and a powerful organisation. But while these great world religions provided an autonomous system of values and pointed the way to the salvation of the individual's soul, they did not undermine the ideological foundations of the state and did not, for along time, induce a change in the basic attitudes towards government. The Islam adopted and practiced by the Malay rulers was not the austere faith demanding total control over secular rulers and stressing the transcendency of God versus the secularity of the world. The conversion to Islam was peaceful, and also served a political end for the rulers whose kingdoms were threatened by Portuguese expansion.¹³ Some of the rulers were converted spiritually by Sufi holy men, and their faith was more concerned with the inner state of mind than with norms regulating social and political life and institutions. Apparently, conversion to Islam did not produce any change in the structure of the political centre and in its relation to the cultural order. The seeds of change inherent in Islam were nurtured only at a later historical stage, as a reaction to modern Western

penetration. In Malakka itself, in the days of its grandeur, a theological centre started to develop, but, as this Empire was destroyed after a rather short time, this process stopped too early to leave a mark on the political structure,¹⁴ or to introduce legal changes, so that mainly 'adat', the customary law, continued to be used.¹⁵ New religious roles emerged. There were in the courts various holy persons, heads of Sufi orders, mosque officials, teachers and Hadjs; but their attachment to the courts was seemingly loose, and the influence they exercised on the rulers was more of a personal nature. There were also orders, but they did not claim total membership, they were usually not militant and they had eschatological tendencies.¹⁶ Persons of religious standing were absorbed in the ruling class, by intermarriage also.¹⁷ Conversion to Islam did not provide a new central cultural frame of reference, relevant to the political order. It did not create new aspirations, or new groups, or autonomous roles which could impinge directly on the political roles and on the self-images of their bearers. (Islam's influence from this point of view was felt upon groups which were outsiders to the traditional Malay society, and only in the latter part of the nineteenth century among the urban Malayo-Muslim community.¹⁸) The way Islam was absorbed increased the prestige of the Maharaja who became also Sultan and Imam.

In Ceylon there were several dimensions to the relationships between state and religion, both on the ideological and the social level. As described above, Buddhism accommodated itself to the ideas of divine kingship—replacing the idea of divine incarnation as justification of kingship by that of rebirth and of religious merit.¹⁹ Still, in another way, kingship was legitimised by religion, and this type of legitimation is related to the development of the Sangha as a powerful organisation within the state. As Bechert states: 'The integration of the Sangha (with the state) was worked out within the tradition of rational politics, but it had to be justified in terms of religious ideology. This could be done by emphasising the necessity to protect the Sangha from decay, i.e., from meddling in 'mundane' activities, the Sangha being an institution for purely religious or 'supra-mundane aims'.²⁰

The Sangha was incorporated into the framework of the state. Political authority also became the spiritual head of Buddhism, and the Sangha, in turn, supported the patrimonial kingship. As a social organisation, the Sangha also became a power base for influential groups, members of high caste families, who benefited from the monastic endowments. The reforms of the Sangha by strong kings were aimed at the purification of the monasteries, at the restoration of the disciplinary and educational standards of the monks, and at the same time, at the achievement of state control over the economic resources of the Sangha.²¹

These political and ideological struggles did not initiate a process of ideological separation between 'church' and state. The power of the Sangha and its religious and cultural functions did not deprive the kingship of its cosmic functions. Thus political authority still continued to contain a cosmic order; it still represented the images of the universe to which individual fate was connected. Religious values did not create an ideal which could impinge on the static value of the state, and transform it (its ideal structure) into an object which is social, man-made, and therefore capable of representing and developing new collective aims, according to social and religious ideals that are not inherent in the political ideal structure itself. In its actual manifestation (and not as a purely religious theory), Buddhism again reinforced kingship; it formed an integrated religious system, including court religion and popular beliefs.²² Until present times, the ritual in the temples of the large landowning monasteries was identical in its basic structure with the ritual in the temples of the gods and with the former royal ritual in the Kandyan palace. Up to 1815, monastic estates, temple estates and royal estates sponsored identical rituals of purification and anointment performed daily before the Buddha, the Gods and the Kings.²³ Buddhism and the cults of gods did not undermine the sacredness of the Kings.²⁴

THE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTRE ~

The political and administrative functions of these patrimonial centres were more limited than their symbolic ones.²⁵ The rulers were concerned mainly with the maintenance of external relationships and the safeguarding of internal stability and order. They were expected to provide also for the material well-being of their subjects. While extracting taxes and services from the people, the powerful kings built irrigation systems and glorified their kingdoms in building impressive and magnificent temples, palaces, cities and monuments.

The penetration of the king's administration into the periphery was limited in its scope and consisted of the service system and ritual functions. Other social groups, of different ethnic origins, were not integrated in this social system, even when they lived in the midst of the kingdom territories. They led a different social and cultural life, were socially segregated from the population, and tolerated by the rulers. Ethnic minorities, which were usually also distinguished by their occupations (like coastal traders) lived on the fringes of society, segregated from its institutions. They formed social enclaves which did not, like in Europe, create a nucleus for further differentiation. The social and cultural influence of Indian-Muslim urban communities in Malaya was limited and did not impinge on the character

of the traditional centre; their impact was felt only when other forces disrupted the Malay social structure.

In Ceylon, next to the Tamils the most numerically significant ethnic minority were the Ceylon 'Moors', who had been residents of Ceylon for centuries, as descendants of Middle Eastern and Muslim Indian traders. They kept their social and economic distinctness as 'enclaved guest people'. Insofar as they were drawn into the orbit of Sinhalese society, they remained a separate community, adjusting themselves to the Sinhalese caste system, without becoming part of it.²⁶

For many centuries people performed their social duties toward state and religion, and the all-powerful kings were expected to protect them from evil forces and from human injustice and cruelty. The kings' office-holders strove for higher offices in the traditional centre. Buddhism and later Islam, in Malaya, offered a way to salvation and a social ethic. But for a long time, the religious values and beliefs did not give rise to new conceptions about the rights and duties of individuals, social groups and government, and they did not promote the development of a status system independent of the political hierarchy.

These were some of the cosmo-magic principles which underlined the structure of the state and the functions, the rights and the duties of the rulers and the other groups in society. Is all this, as R. Heine-Geldern asks, 'a crumbling structure, giving way under the impact of modern civilisation, or may it still influence the political activities of the people concerned?'²⁷

II. THE COLONIAL IMPACT ON THE TRADITIONAL CENTRE ~

In the following pages I will attempt to suggest some of the ways through which several of these structural and symbolic traditional characteristics were transferred into the new social context of a modern state. In the process these characteristics were changed also, and in turn, they had an impact on the original Western institutions which were established by the foreign rulers and adopted by the new ruling elites.

The beginning of the sixteenth century marked the dawn of the era of Western expansion and colonial rule in many Asian countries. At this time, Ceylon was torn by internal controversies and dynastic rivalries and was split into small kingdoms and principalities. The irrigation system had gradually deteriorated and the central organisation of state and religion had declined. First came the Portuguese, and then the Dutch, and finally the British. Unlike their predecessors, the British penetrated the Kandyan highlands also, and after subjugating the rebellious chiefs, they abolished the Kandyan political structure and the system of service obligations to

the state²⁸ and unified the island under a strong administration, with Colombo as its capital.

In Malaya, the Portuguese overpowered Malakka in 1511. The Dutch followed them. For almost three centuries the peninsula was disrupted by wars between the Sultanate of Johore, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Bugis and other Malay States. At the eve of the eighteenth century, the British conquered the coastal areas and developed the Straits Settlements. During the second part of the nineteenth century they established their rule all over the peninsula.

In both countries, the British rule marked the advent of a new era and far-reaching changes in the traditional structure of society. The British established new administrative and legal systems which undermined the ideologies and structures of the old kingdoms. Colonial economic development brought about the emergence of new occupations, created new avenues for individual advancement and started the process of urbanisation. The development of the estate economy of coffee and tea plantations in Ceylon was accompanied by the immigration of Indian workers who formed in 1956 about ten per cent of the total population.²⁹ In Low Country Ceylon, the Western impact was felt earlier and deeper. Colonial rule and Christian missionary activity weakened the traditional culture and severed the association between the Sangha and the State. The Western educational system introduced people—mostly urban dwellers—to new values and new professions. In this changed social environment, national aspirations were formulated in terms of Western concepts, and the struggle for reforms in the colonial administration, and eventually for independence, was shaped according to Western constitutional patterns. The Malay society retained more of its traditional structure but there, too, a new administration was created and a new legal system replaced the traditional rules. The size of the towns increased. Under British rule, the country underwent a dramatic demographic change; almost half of its present population has its origins in the influx of immigrants, mostly Chinese, which followed the development of the port cities and the exploitation of the economic resources of the peninsula.

While the bulk of the Ceylonese and Malayan populations remained in their traditional mold, the new political elites in both countries—in spite of the differences in their development—were English educated and deeply influenced by Western culture. The independent governments which they headed were founded on conceptions entirely different from the traditional conceptions about ruling. Yet, the new patterns of government did not reflect Western influences only, and while consisting of democratic parliamentary procedures, they were in part congruent with traditional patterns of government. The traditional features preserved in the new

governments are there not only in spite of Western influence, but also as a result of it. This is true no less in Malaya than in Ceylon where traditional institutions were explicitly reinforced under British indirect rule. The British colonial administration was able to shape or to influence the character of the emerging elites and their pattern of ruling, partly because the nature of colonial rule was, in some of its aspects, compatible with traditional symbols and with the traditional emphasis on the crucial importance of government and on the social valuation of political roles. While colonial rule produced changes in the cultural outlook of the members of the new elite and in their style of life, it sometimes facilitated, or even reinforced, the persistence of certain traditional symbols and helped to transfer them to the new political institutions. These symbols were sustained mainly by the British policy of recruitment to its administration, and by some of the characteristics of this administration, through the social position it gained in the local society and through the British educational social policies.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION ON THE EMERGING ELITES

The purpose of British policy, both in Ceylon and in Malaya, was to establish political stability as a necessary condition for the development and extraction of the natural resources of these countries. A rational and efficient administration was organised. But there was more to it than the creation of a modern bureaucracy. The spread of the administration through these countries was accompanied by an emphasis on the value of government. The business of governing was considered a serious matter, which should be conducted in a proper way and with due respect to regulations and procedures. The British administrators were respected for their adherence to the rule of law. The administration of justice was conducted in an orderly way, according to formal rules. Particularly in Ceylon, the British judicial system was widely respected and Law became a coveted career.³⁰

In Malaya, the British administrators were respected for their commitment to efficiency in the management of public affairs, their regard for method, their policy of formal respect towards Malay sovereignty, and for the pomp and ceremony invested in official events.³¹ All these things, which were articles of policy, were close in their spirit to the Malay appreciation of order, hierarchy and harmony, as embodied in the political realm. The British colonial officer carried a particular ethos.³² This ethos consisted of a very strict sense of duty, obedience to law and procedures, emphasis on administrative functions, an attitude of

respect towards traditional institutions and local customs, moral superiority and the belief in the 'white man's burden' (in which traditional institutions were respected and maintained as a matter of policy).

A high degree of social prestige was attributed to the incumbents of the various roles in the colonial administration by the British themselves, and also by the people of the colonial territories. In a spirit similar to that of traditional society, political authority and social prestige were linked in the British colonial community. At the top of the British communities in Ceylon and in Malaya stood the British officials of the Civil Service. The estate managers, the planters and the businessmen were placed at a lower echelon of the social hierarchy.³³

In both countries, persons who were civil servants in the foreign bureaucracy were held in high regard by their own communities. In Malaya this high regard was also a function of the British policy of absorbing a part of the Malay aristocracy into the Malayan Administrative Service (the M.A.S.) and into the Malay Civil Service (the M.C.S.).³⁴ The M.C.S. was staffed almost entirely by British officials and only in the 1920's was it opened to Malays graduating from the M.A.S. Promotions through the grades were slow and upon strict cadet examinations. The Malay civil servants were not provided with much authority. As Roff puts it: 'The prestige of the M.A.S., as an elite corps recruited from the traditional ruling class, and sharing in addition the aura of authority which belonged to the M.C.S., was markedly higher than either the rewards or the responsibilities of office'.³⁵ Much was made of the social as well as the official responsibilities of the M.A.S. (even when they were of minor importance), and no effort was spared to impress upon members the need to keep their station in life (clubs, tennis, tea parties, patronising of expensive seats in the cinema³⁶). Apparently, Malays of noble origins increasingly wanted to become a part of this new administration. The Malay-British services served as an organisational nucleus of the independent Malaysian Federal Government. The importance of participation in the M.A.S. and M.C.S. lay not only in the learning of new concrete roles and of the specific and daily duties attached to them. It may be suggested that this participation enabled members of the traditional ruling class to develop a commitment to new roles which were politically 'neutral' and which emphasised efficiency and achievement and loyalty to professional standards and rules, albeit democratic, and therefore new. The development of such orientations was possible, in this case, because these posts apparently enjoyed the traditional prestige attached to political offices. Otherwise the relatively few M.C.S. Malay members would not have enjoyed such additional prestige as they did. Participation in the new central administration, the style of life and the approved

conduct that was involved, suited the self-image of the aristocrat as the member of an elite born to rule and administer.

In Ceylon direct rule was imposed. The Ceylonese members of the colonial administration and of the new legislative institutions that were established during the period of British rule did not enjoy a traditional legitimisation of this kind. This same process of absorbing the traditional ruling class into the new organs of government, while leaving intact its symbolic connection to traditional institutions (the British in Malaya acted formally on behalf of the Sultans), did not occur. According to the Kandyan Convention of 1815, the chiefs were to retain their offices under a British governor, but after they rebelled, the Kandyan provinces were put also under direct rule. Still one traditional feature remained as part of the colonial system: the link between political authority and social prestige. This was the result of two factors: persons with high status were recruited into the bureaucracy, while at the same time the tendency persisted to attribute high standing to the holders of political roles. The members of the new political elite—deputies to the Colonial Legislatures, leaders of parties, civil servants—were largely engaged in Western-type occupations, English educated and to a high degree 'Westernised'. This group included also a relatively high proportion of people belonging to ethnic minority groups.³⁷ The common denominator of the members of this new political elite was their Western way of life and their Western culture,³⁸ and not their common attachment to traditional institutions and symbols, as in Malaya. Their 'Westernised' background was an important factor in their entrance to the new elite. Yet, while their culture, in many ways, and their occupations were no longer traditional, the principles which shaped the formation of this new elite and its social composition were still traditional, despite the gap which developed between them and the mass of the population.

When the British arrived on the island, they relied heavily on indigenous chiefs, and incorporated them into their administration. According to Tambiah, 'in Low-country Ceylon, the feudal aristocrats, the 'Mudaliyar class', were the first to enter political power, and their 'modern attainments' (English education) made them the elite of the new era'.³⁹ When the civil service was opened to Ceylonese (with the Colebrooke reforms in 1833), the only ranks so opened—because of the high standards required—were staffed with members of the wealthy old aristocratic Mudaliyar families of the low Country or the Burghers (descendants of Dutch marriages).⁴⁰

An important factor in the continuous presence of traditionally high-status persons in the new elite, and in the persistence of the principles of recruitment to political elites, was the caste system. While

the traditional political system was abolished, the caste system did not disappear. The British did put an end to it legally, but they also contributed to its de facto preservation and to the persistence of the traditional division of labour between castes. As recently as 1926, the Colonial Secretary admitted that

no one is disqualified from entering Public service by reason of his caste, and Government is anxious in no way to encourage the recognition or perpetuation of caste distinctions. Their existence, however, cannot be ignored in localities where caste feelings run high.

Therefore a Head of a department had to take this into consideration while appointing officials.⁴¹ (Even in 1953, when Ryan published his findings, the divisional government officers in the Kandyan provinces were still recruited from within the Kandyan, and if possible Radala [the highest Goyigama subcaste], aristocracy.⁴²)

The association between high caste and political power occurred also in the formation of the new national Westernised elite. In his study of the emerging elite of Ceylon, Singer found that the Low Country Goyigama caste had remained in a position of both absolute and relative dominance in the pre-independence Legislatures and in the post-independence Parliaments too, though there has been a gradual decrease in their percentage.⁴³

The distribution of occupations among members of the Legislatures and Parliaments (between 1924 and 1956) show a dominance of persons engaged in the legal profession and of persons having 'landed interests'. By contrast, businessmen have never accounted for more than seventeen per cent of the total membership of any legislature between 1924 and 1960.⁴⁴ Both the legal profession and landowning have traditional significance. Land has traditionally been the symbol of both wealth and status. In precolonial times it meant the land a man 'held with the king's consent'.⁴⁵ The highest caste among the Sinhalese is the Goyigama, or the cultivator caste, and its highest sub-caste held the political offices in the Kandyan kingdom. (According to Singer, in recent decades the Ceylonese with money to spare and a desire for prestige have been buying plantation land. To some Ceylonese, aside from profit, such land offers psychic reward, another bond of identification with Englishmen.⁴⁶) The business community in Ceylon is composed mainly of Karawas and Hindu Tamils. The Karawas, originally the fishermen's caste, came in contact with the Europeans rather early. Many of them were converted to Christianity.

The Karawas became the dominant Sinhalese caste in commercial

activities; it is estimated that most of the richest families in Colombo belong to this caste.⁴⁷ The occupational differentiation that occurred with the development of a new economy and the introduction of colonial rule shows a traditional continuity—the higher caste going into occupations connected with Government, while the lower castes like the Karawas (and the Saligama, the cinnamon-peeling caste) entered commerce and new economic enterprises.⁴⁸ Ryan writes that the rich Karawa resented the political and social power of the Goyigama, and during the first quarter of this century tried to challenge their position, but not on democratic-ideological grounds. They tried to prove that originally, the caste order was different, that the Karawas had Brahminic origins and that the Goyigama were actually usurpers.⁴⁹ The new economic developments did not bring about more autonomous self-definitions by groups which acquired wealth.

THE INFLUENCE OF BRITISH EDUCATION ON THE EMERGING ELITES

The educational policy of the British also contributed to the preservation of traditional conceptions of hierarchy and to the strengthening of the emphasis put on political roles. Both in Ceylon and in Malaya, there were certain schools in which most of the new members of the political elite—members of the civil services, political leaders—were educated.⁵⁰

The 'Malay College' and the Royal and St. Thomas colleges in Ceylon represented an attempt to create institutions similar to the Victorian Public Schools, which produced a responsible 'core of public servants at a time when capitalism was still irresponsible and the electorate untutored'.⁵¹

The model of the Malay School was the English public school, and the Royal and St. Thomas colleges in Ceylon had the same purpose and image; these were the schools to which members of the social elite sent their children to 'distinguish them from the crowd and to prepare them for their future roles within the adult elite'.⁵² At the Malay College, the headmaster strove to inculcate in his students the values of 'loyalty to school and side, diligence, fair-play and sportsmanship'.⁵³ The educational ideal of these schools was to turn out a person close to the 'perfect English gentleman', self-reliant and cooperative, and aware of his social duty and sense of community. These schools also emphasised good social manners, compatible with high social status. In Malaya, admittance to the college was reserved to sons of royalty and aristocracy (bright children of common origin were usually not accepted and were sent to technical schools). In Ceylon also, admission appears to have been restricted.⁵⁴

Furthermore, this English education was closely connected to careers of public service. In Malaya, the Malay College was established for the

purpose of educating the sons of royalty and to transform them into a cadre of civil servants. The attributes of these schools, their elite composition, their spirit, and the concrete opportunities for administrative careers they offered, enhanced their appeal to the traditional Malay ruling class and to the influential Ceylonese. The spirit of this educational system was close to some aspects of the traditional culture: it promoted the traditional concept of hierarchy and associated high social status with cultural superiority. The privileges of high social status were blended with a sense of duty towards the community. There was an emphasis on the rules of 'fair play', on fair competitiveness, more than on specific cultural contents. This education inculcated a tolerance towards different cultural outlooks, as long as the rules of proper behavior were kept. These values did not contradict the traditional values, and this education served as a means for transferring them selectively to another, different social and cultural situation. The compatibility of these values or norms with traditional ones facilitated the adoption of the new Western values of political liberalism and commitment to the formal rules of democracy. Yet, these elites emerged in countries where large strata of people were uneducated, where wealth, power and honour were unequally distributed and where the traditional ways of life still had deep roots. The conceptions of the political roles as expressed by Malay civil servants today seem to reflect these values and it might be assumed that they are, at least partly, the result of this education and of its appeal to the traditional ruling class. Their commitment to democracy goes together with an aristocratic sense of responsibility and a paternal or 'elitist' attitude towards the people. J. C. Scott, who analysed the beliefs of a group of civil servants, stresses the fact that democratic notions are largely formalistic; the interviewed civil servants reservedly expressed a 'scorn for the mass electorate', a distaste for the delay and confusion inherent in democratic procedures and 'a preference for dictatorship in crisis'.⁵⁵ Still, according to Scott, there is a tolerance for the inconveniences of democracy. His civil servants want strong, masterful leaders, but these leaders should know that they serve the people, who can replace them if they stray away from the path of public service. He found that they lack any formal ideology, and, on the basis of his findings, it seems that they attach the greatest significance to the well-breeding and personal responsibility of the rulers. The national well-being depends on the personal, good (i.e., efficient, responsible) leadership of the top politicians.⁵⁶

In their attitudes towards the local population, the British officers—and the colonial policy—were imbued with a spirit of paternalism. They introduced new functions in the administration, some limited welfare services and education in the countryside (more in Ceylon than in Malaya). These services were extended paternalistically, without ever trying to encourage some more active patterns of participation. The admission to

the ranks of the local Civil Services, while being conducted in accordance with universalistic rules and achievements, was deliberately restricted to the privileged classes. The British rulers were conservative and valued stability, and these principles suited the Ceylonese notables and the Malay aristocracy even more.

The British policy with regard to the relationships among the various ethnic groups was based on imperial interests of stability. But here again, there was a certain similarity between their specific policies in dealing with ethnic minorities, and the ways in which the former patrimonial rulers dealt with them: on an ad-hoc basis, without absorbing them in the social system, and thus, various minority groups lived in their territories, without establishing any binding social ties with the majority of the population. The British colonial rulers reinforced the political and social segregation among them. In Malay, while permitting or even causing a tremendous demographic change, they preserved the political dominance of the Malays and did not foster any kind of integration among the various groups which may have anticipated the social and political repercussions of this demographic change. In Ceylon, the content of their policy was different: they tried to enforce political equality among the various groups and to protect the rights of the minorities, while favouring Christian groups and institutions like education over Buddhist lay social and educational institutions which were organised at the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ But in general, their policy in this sphere was an attempt to establish some kind of a working arrangement among the various ethnic elites. The success of such a policy was based on the maintenance of an hierarchical social structure and on the limited political participation and social mobilisation of the larger strata of the population.

These were some of the ways through which a certain group of people—mostly those who were concerned with ruling in their traditional societies—could adapt themselves to a changing situation, without losing their superior position in society. Another important result of this development was that it provided these people with a social role which was perfectly suited to their traditional conceptions of superiority. By holding political administrative roles, they were performing the most meaningful social function, according to their traditional culture. They became a part of the new centre of its most important component, the political structure (they did not have to resort to intellectual pursuits⁵⁸). Their new political roles linked them personally to the new state and thus provided them with a new social identity, based on a new conception of government, but traditional, or unchanged in its nature. The proximity to the centre of society is accomplished through the occupancy of political roles. In Ceylon, not all the groups which had had a central position in the traditional

structure were introduced into the new centre. The Buddhist monks and the Kandyan aristocracy were left out of this process, and after independence they became a powerful factor in the development of political divisions among the Sinhalese. In most Malay states, however, the elite's position was not challenged for a long period.

The processes through which several traditional social characteristics were preserved in a changed form were differential; the colonial situation and the colonial policies had a particular effect on the old ruling elites and on the formation of the new ones. The processes of change undergone by other groups in society had a different impact which will be examined now.

III. THE COLONIAL IMPACT ON PERIPHERAL GROUPS ~

Both in Malaya and in Ceylon, the bulk of the population remained in their traditional mold. The modern sector of economy which developed in Malaysia under British rule was concentrated in trade, rubber production and tin mining.⁵⁹ It was based upon urban markets and its control was mainly in the hands of British firms. This new economic sector drew into its orbit mostly Chinese and Indians. Most of the Malay people remained peasants and their economic life, which stayed based on rural markets and culture, was little affected by British intervention. There were differences in the economic development of the various states of the Federation. The modern economy was concentrated in the states where British rule had been more direct (the 'Federated States', the Straits Settlements and in Johore), while the traditional economy was dominant in the states which were known as the 'Unfederated States'. In these states the traditional ruler had shown more resistance to Western expansion.⁶⁰ Rubber was cultivated by Malay peasants too, but their holdings were small and the colonial policy did not encourage their development.⁶¹

In Ceylon, the Low-Country was more affected by the new economy than the Kandyan highlands. The new 'middle classes' consisted of the small-landed proprietors, members of the professions, contractors and small shopkeepers, holders of (with a few exceptions) subordinate posts in the government services, or (with hardly any exceptions) in European mercantile firms and stores. A large proportion of these new occupations were manned by Indians and members of other minority groups. Modern plantation crops were introduced to Ceylon in the second half of the nineteenth century. Their rapid expansion created problems in labour supply. In Ceylon, as well as in Malaya, the local peasantry showed little inclination to work on the plantation estates as wage labourers; cheap labour was drawn from other countries in the region, especially from South India. Hence,

the workers in these plantations were mostly Indian Tamil labourers, which constitute about a million people today. The old ruling class still held their often extensive lands. The mass of the people subsisted under a peasant economy.

Change was slow also in the political and social realms. The political changes were, above all, legal. Service obligations were abolished and both rulers and ruled became equal before the law. But these legal changes had little significance in the social organisation of life. In Malaya, a vernacular system of education was developed. Its aim was the creation of a 'vigorous and self-respecting peasantry'.⁶² This type of education cultivated traditional attitudes towards political authority. For a long period, most peasants and even urban dwellers were suspicious of any unfamiliar ideas or political movements. Attempts to meddle in affairs defined as 'government business' were considered disapprovingly. It was none of one's business. Roff quotes the following passage from an article which appeared in the press in 1939: 'Four or five years ago the term "politics" was understood by the Malays to mean "treason". It was in the nature of our people to be wholly loyal and submissive to the Government, to the authorities, to the Rulers; any unfamiliar movement was feared by them'.⁶³

Social and cultural fermentation was limited within small urban groups, mostly 'Arab' Malays and Jawi Peranakan (of mixed Indian-Malay descent), and later, among educated people from common origins, who graduated mostly from teachers' schools and technical colleges. Their activities and small organisations had no popular appeal. Social and religious questions discussed in the growing press in the twenties and thirties of this century, and in various non-political associations, arose public interest in the towns and even in villages. But as it became apparent that the intellectual activity of the members of these groups implied—in different degrees, and in some cases also explicitly—resentment and criticism of the traditional forms of government and of the religious syncretism tolerated by the courts, most Malays turned away from them.⁶⁴

The first political organisation that gained a substantial following—and almost the only one until after independence—was of aristocratic conservative leadership and under the auspices of Sultans. Thus the first modern and popular forms of political activity were concentrated around the various political associations which were formed by Malay members of the aristocracy, and popular support was granted not to new social and economic goals, but to the preservation of Malay institutions and to the safeguarding of Malay privileges, as against the inferior position of the Chinese and Indian minorities. The position of the Malays had been threatened by a sudden change in British policy in 1945, which involved the abolition of some of the privileges enjoyed by the Malays and proposed the granting

of equal citizenship rights to all the population.⁶⁵ So it happened that the largest part of the Malay people, peasants as well as people who had immigrated to the towns, were introduced to new, unknown patterns of political participation by their traditional rulers and the Westernised members of the aristocracy, which were to provide the nucleus for the new independent government. In the new political organisations the traditional position of the members of the old ruling class as leaders and protectors of the people was preserved. The rank and file members of these associations followed their old leaders and gave their support to the safe-keeping of the traditional institutions and symbols.

In Ceylon, there was no such direct continuity between the old ruling class and the new Westernised political elite. However, the relationships between the new elite, which formed the developing national centre, and the peripheral social groups exhibited similar structural characteristics. As early as 1931 universal suffrage through a territorial electoral system was established in Ceylon by the Donoughmore reforms. But for various reasons, the Donoughmore system deliberately discouraged the formation of a parliamentary system. According to Woodward it was the fear that a *racialist* party system would emerge that had rationalised the denial of such a system.⁶⁶ No large-scale parties developed, and until independence Ceylon politics were played out between the high-status, wealthy and Westernised Ceylonese politicians and the British administrators; as far as the electorate was involved in the political process, they were still expressing their electoral loyalties on a largely ascriptive, 'semi-feudal' basis.⁶⁷ Only the Marxist Left had an organised, small, party structure. The Left emerged out of a group of unemployed university graduates in the 1930's which had failed to get proper jobs.⁶⁸ However, these revolutionary leaders did not provide on the whole another kind of popular political participation. Many of the Trotskyist oppositionists were related to leading Goyigama families (as the Senanayakes and the Bandaranaiques), and they shared with the more conservative members of the Legislative and State Councils common social and educational backgrounds.⁶⁹ Nor did the trade unions (which were formed after 1931) introduce new patterns of political participation. Their first leaders came from the Ceylonese upper middle class,⁷⁰ organised labour from the top down, and kept the power in their own hands. As Singer says:

Needless to say, the rank and file of the workers themselves were more than willing to go along with this arrangement . . . (the worker) was delighted to have the far better equipped politician defend his interest for him. In return, he would of course support his union president at the polls.⁷¹

Within the new political organisations, traditional patterns of political relationships between leaders and followers persisted: passivity on the part of the rank and file while the political leaders, who formed a part of the social elite, were expected to lead and to protect the people.

These traditional attitudes were preserved also around traditional institutions. In Malaya, the old symbols were carried on through the political institutions, and Islam, in its syncretic form, reinforced the traditional character of the sultanates. In Ceylon, traditional symbols were preserved through religious institutions and rituals. The new political offices were secular and alienated from the traditional culture. But still, the traditional attitude towards government was perpetuated by religion, which had been in the past closely related to political institutions. As Evers notes, in the Kandyan highlands the palace rituals were no longer taking place, but religious rituals were still going on 'without cessation, stressing the unity of Buddha, Gods and Government'.⁷²

However, the perpetuation of traditional-like relationships within new frameworks, and the continued existence of traditional institutions, political or religious, had a particular significance for social groups located in the periphery, quite different from the significance that the elements of continuity had had on central groups. For the periphery this partial continuity had created a void; the nature of the relationships between the members of the old ruling families and the peasants had altered. Sons of the aristocracy had entered a new world and took part now in the life of a society which had detached itself from the old ways; peasants were left behind. In Ceylon, wealthy sons preferred to live in town and were no longer available to perform traditional ceremonial functions or carry out their old responsibilities in the villages.⁷³

The bikkhus had lost their national importance as educators and as social leaders. The temples which had been centres of learning had to compete now with institutions which were entirely foreign to the old Sinhalese culture. The abolition of the royal dynasties and of the traditional links between government and religion 'left a kind of rump Buddhist society deprived of the vitally important support of the faith which the temporal authority is canonically in charge of'.⁷⁴

It might be suggested that the social, economic and political changes that had occurred created for people who stayed in traditional roles, or who had no access to Western education and to new and rewarding occupational roles, two general problems. One problem touched their particular, individual position: how to promote their social and economic interests and their personal advancement in the newly created social conditions. Many analyses show how these interests and status problems influence present day politics and inter-communal relationships.⁷⁵

Wriggins notes that in Ceylon 'The language reforms demanded had profound status and opportunity implications and were seen as both the symbol and the guarantee of future wealth and standing'.⁷⁶ While the new elite had retained much of the prestige traditionally accorded to bearers of political authority, its Western culture had alienated social groups which resented the losses in their positions inflicted on them during the colonial rule. Bikkhus, vernacular teachers, people with no knowledge of English and educated in 'swabhasha' (the Ceylonese people's own languages) found few careers open to them. As long as government business was conducted in English, many coveted offices were out of the reach of about sixty to seventy per cent of the population which were literate in Sinhalese.

The second problem is of a more general nature. It concerns the individual's 'political need', his need for membership in a political order and for contact with central symbols.⁷⁷ It is a problem of how to relate one's individual social status to the political symbols and institutions of the developing national centre. Such a link, or at least a weak one, might be established between an individual whose social position is remote from the centre, and the centre, by the definition of his social identity. This identity might contain a quality which is recognised as socially significant or represented in the central symbols of the society. Yet the new national centre had increasingly assumed symbols and forms which were alien to the traditional and popular culture. People were no longer 'subjects', yet how could they define their new role of 'citizen' in a meaningful way? The new national elites had retained much of their traditional legitimacy, particularly so in Malaysia, but their present political roles derived from an entirely different conception of the polity. In the past the polity had consisted of the population which was attached to the ruling class by a system of service obligations and which depended, in various degrees, on the symbolic functions of the centre. The symbolic ties with the centre were intertwined with a hierarchical system of social relationships. Today, the new polity is conceived and structured in a different way. It is based on the conception of a sovereign state, delineated by territorial boundaries. These boundaries relate all the inhabitants of the enclosed territory to the centre; the political status of the inhabitants is defined primarily by virtue of residency. The citizens are expected to be loyal to the state, but the status of citizenship does not necessarily involve any symbolic dependency upon the political centre, nor does it imply a particularistic type of relationship with central groups. This conception of the state might perhaps be taken for granted in the West, though not by everybody, but at least it forms one important component of the definition of the state and of the bases for the acquisition of civil rights. This con-

ception is apparently espoused by the members of the new elites in Ceylon and Malaysia but it is not so obvious for people whose images of society have not been shaped by the Western culture.

These problems found their expressions in the character of the developing popular participation in politics. One of the most drastic changes that occurred in both societies after independence was the rapid democratisation of the new regimes.⁷⁸ The political power of the large strata of the populations became real. The political elites seem to be firmly dedicated not only to the keeping of public order, but also to the preservation of democratic procedures. Both in Ceylon and in Malaysia, in spite of the communal and political upheavals and the quite frequent use of emergency powers, elections continue to function as a mechanism devised for the formation of governments and not only as a means to secure popular support for the elite in power. In Ceylon 'elections have been freely conducted, judicial decisions unpalatable to government have regularly been enforced, compromise with both Tamil communities is the basis of the present government (1968), and all parties, from revolutionary Trotskyists and Maoists to Sinhalese obscurantists, still operate freely'.⁷⁹ Many observers have remarked that in Malaysia, up to the last elections in 1969—which were interrupted by the eruption of communal violence—national elections had been free; no force or fraud had been exercised, except for the arrests of some party leaders on the ground of communist infiltration and Indonesian influence.⁸⁰

The political leadership in both countries seems to be committed to the principle of free elections; hence the power of the electorate. It is therefore of much interest to explore the impact of the democratisation of the electorate on the character of the new centre. To what aims do the Malay and the Sinhalese electorate use their newly acquired influence, what are the kinds of ideologies which appeal to them and which enjoy popular support, and what are the contents of the demands articulated in the name of the voter?

I would like to draw the attention of the reader to one kind of demands articulated by various parties and other social groups: the 'communal' demands. It is not being argued that such demands are voiced by every party, or, that there are no other popular demands of a different nature altogether. I selected these demands because it seems that they reflect the problems mentioned, and also because they point to some of the forces which shape the character of the new centres.

Both in Ceylon and in Malaysia, many economic and social grievances (though, of course, not all of them) are formulated in communal terms. Feelings of resentment against backwardness, lack of educational opportunities, unemployment (or unsuitable employment), poverty and

impatience with the slow pace of material improvement are articulated in the name of certain ethnic groups. The demands for governmental aid and privileges are justified ideologically by communal arguments. The Malays consider themselves the true people of the land and as such they stress the superiority of their own culture and language over those of the other ethnic communities.

In Ceylon, Sinhalese nationalism is also expressed by the demand to accord the 'rightful place' to Buddhism, to Sinhalese education and to the Sinhalese language as the only national language. Communal symbols and rationalisations are voiced even by parties which promote modern ideologies like socialism, and which strive to reconstruct society in accordance with new conceptions of human rights and to wipe out the remnants of the old social order. The justifying principles of the demands for the allocation of various resources or the conceptions of distributive justice, as articulated by some leaders and parties, do not, as a rule, include new conceptions of social organisations. There is, for instance, no emphasis on the social contribution of an occupational role or on the equality of men when demands for higher wages are made. Such demands are not always integrated in the socialist and democratic—or even communist—ideologies promoted by the leaders of some parties. Rather the legitimising principles of various economic and social interests derive often from ascriptive conceptions of social statuses. The specific ascriptive content, that is the communal one, is chosen from the traditional setting but it is not exactly traditional; it is used in a new way. Though ethnic, linguistic or religious attributes had had considerable importance in the past in delineating the relevant social collectivity, they did not serve as the only basis for defining social rights and duties. These communal attributes served more as a general delineator, taken for granted, while other social statuses determined the individual's position in society and the structure of his social relationships with his fellowmen and with authority. The larger community in pre-colonial times consisted of the kingdom or the sultanate while the 'primordial' ties were within kinship units, localities, sub-castes, and around temples and orders.

One of the major differences between the significance attributed to ethnic status now and in the past is that now ethnic affiliation serves as the principal social characteristic by virtue of which persons claim the right to define their status in society and their relations with the government. The question that arises is what are the factors which have brought ethnic identity to the foreground and have made inter-ethnic relationships dangerously prone to outbursts of violence. This question has already received the attention of many scholars, and my inquiry is limited to only one aspect of the ethnic problem: its connection with the develop-

ment of the new centres. It might be suggested that ethnic identity offers an alternative way of adapting oneself to a changing type of political organisation and a means of linking oneself to the new centre. Sinhalese, Buddhist, Malay and Muslim traditional symbols and institutions provide structural and cultural foci for definitions of collective identity. These communal contents might form a meaningful basis for the definition of the new status of citizen and an institutionalised link to the new centre as it acquires a more communal character. The communal symbols are, on the one hand, rooted in tradition, while, on the other hand, they can be reinterpreted and adapted to the new political structures of a 'nation-state' comprised of socially equal members. That ethnic identities are expected to provide such a link with the new centre might be seen in the vehemence of the demand for governmental action and patronage in this direction. The communal goals are not confined only to the propagation or cultivation of a national language, or to the revitalisation of traditional culture, or to the improvement of the quality of non-English education. There is in these demands an insistence on the value of political sponsorship and authoritative confirmation of the special rights and political superiority of an ascriptively defined community within the state, and of its language, religion or culture. The attribution of communal symbols to the centre seems to be an essential goal of the political struggle, party contest, and, sometimes, of the bloody rioting connected with ethnic issues.

In Ceylon, the movement for the establishment of 'Sinhalese only' as the national language was closely intertwined with a growth of Buddhist political militancy. (This Buddhist militancy is to be distinguished from religious reform movements and trends which definitely do not belong to this category of social phenomena, communalism.⁸¹) In Malaysia, one of the most extreme forms of Malay communalism is articulated by a Malay-Muslim party. This religious party advocates the establishment of a theocratic state and the restoration of Malaysia to its initial people, the Malays. Ecological analyses of voting patterns show that the strongholds of this extreme communal party are located in more backward and isolated regions, where the legitimation of the government has weakened and where the penetration of the development agencies has lacked efficiency.⁸² Islam is used politically against the national centre and against the traditional legitimacy of this centre which did not depend on autonomous religious values and institutions. The attempt to confer Islamic contents on the centre might also be regarded as another alternative to crystallise central symbols which would fill the void created by the establishment of modern, Western-like governmental institutions. But, here again, this development reflects the traditional dependency on the symbolic functions of the centre, as this party aims to convey the religious symbols on the political institutions.

The inclination to expect protection and care from the government is reflected also in the particular brand of socialism which is popular in Ceylon and in the manner in which it is merged with nationalism. The government is expected to perform the functions of the traditional centre: to symbolise the social and cultural identity of the individual, and then to protect him and to enhance his general well-being by allocating to him various symbolic and material resources. The stress in socialism is on the allocation of resources, like jobs, and on the major role assigned to the government in shaping the process of development.⁸³ The responsibility and the role of the individual as a worker, for instance, and of his own organisations, are less elaborated. The building of a new 'socialist' society, with a developed economy, is considered the task of a 'national' government, that is, a government which carries communal symbols and to which various social groups would be committed without necessarily developing by themselves new, autonomous, cultural or economic resources (which could, in turn, serve as the bases for the crystallisation of new roles and symbols).

The modern, democratic government is not conceived as a part of a new centre in which new social goals are introduced by various groups, debated, accepted in different degrees and implemented by the representatives of various groups. That this was the way the political elites and the goals of the governments were broadened in some Western countries does not mean that this should be expected to happen elsewhere too. This process in the West was connected with the autonomous developments of certain social groups, secondary elites, class organisations and institutions. The lack of autonomy from the government, not only from the material point of view, is noted by many scholars who have studied developing countries. Ness stresses this absence of autonomous social and economic development, and attributes the Malaysian achievements in development to the Government's initiative, strength and control over the development plans and their application.⁸⁴ This lack of autonomy—or perhaps it is rather the value attached to working in close contact with the government—is shown by studies done both in Malaysia and in Ceylon. Alatas finds that 'almost one hundred per cent of Malay university graduates (professions) prefer to be in government service'.⁸⁵ Evers discovers expectations for more governmental interference and guidance among industrial managers.⁸⁶ It remains to be seen whether in Ceylon the new governing elites, which are not strengthened by the traditional legitimacy enjoyed by the Malay elites, would be able to promote and implement development plans among the population and control effectively the mounting demands for the distribution of all kinds of rewards.

The increase in communal rivalry is connected with the formation of the new centres in still another way. In most of the developing countries a conscious effort is made to mobilise the loyalties of the whole population and to encourage mass participation in politics. The more politically mobilised people become, the more difficult it is for the new governments to conduct a differential policy towards various social groups, according to their particular social and economic situation, and to maintain the pre-colonial and colonial tradition of ethnic segregation. Every social group now is asked to commit itself to the collective goals of the national centre. The changing character of the centre in this respect deepens social cleavages and antagonisms; they are no longer limited to conflicts and wars among the groups at the head of the political hierarchy in each community but involve all the social strata.

In Ceylon there is a long history of rivalry between the Sinhalese and the Tamils; nevertheless, the current hostilities are of a different nature altogether, though it suits the arguments of communal partisans to invoke history in their struggles for political superiority at the expense of the civil rights of other communities. The commitment of the leading politicians to the party system, their dependency upon popular legitimacy, and their resourcefulness in organising mass support has given full way to the expression of communal interests. Almost all the Ceylonese parties, from left to right, have adopted, in different degrees, some communal symbols and have supported such legislation. The ideologies of the parties seem to be a mirror of popular interests in an unrestrained way. Left and liberal parties as well have adjusted themselves to the communal demands.⁸⁷

In Malaysia, the number of Chinese who are 'community oriented'⁸⁸ decreases, that is, greater numbers of Chinese no longer limit their efforts in the safeguarding of their own social institutions and their economic interests without wanting to play an active role in national politics. More of them develop a commitment towards the Malaysian centre, and thus demonstrate the loyalty demanded from them by suspecting Malays. The policy of segregation between the communities and the maintenance of the top-coalition between ethnic groups in the Alliance party becomes a most difficult task. The leading organisation in this party, the Malay U.M.N.O., has tried to absorb the communal demands evinced by new active members and local leaders⁸⁹ at the middle and lower levels of the party organisation, and to restrict the expression of communal grievances altogether, without changing its national policy of cooperation with the established Chinese and Indian party elites.

CONCLUSIONS ✓

It is still difficult to identify the principal characteristics of the new emerging centres in the two countries discussed in this paper. However, certain developmental trends may be discerned. The changing character of the new centres exhibits a particular encounter between persisting pre-colonial social features and new Western institutions and values. In both countries the establishment of the colonial regime started the formation of a new centre; centralised government and administration, and, at a later stage, other Western political institutions such as parliament and parties were formed. One of the most important ways by which new values were introduced was through the influence exercised on the political elites which developed a commitment to democracy. The impact on the large strata of society and on traditional elites which did not enter the frameworks of the new centres was different. The readiness shown by the political elites of these two countries to adhere to democratic electoral procedures is now confronted by the pressures from groups which were remote from the new centres in the first stages of their development, prior to independence. Democracy has transformed the former inarticulated masses into powerful voters and participants in the political process. The new ideologies of nationalism and socialism have reinforced the populist demands to convey to the initially liberal and moderate independent governments communal symbols, and to lay the stress on distributive policies. These contradictory trends—democracy versus communalism, development versus distribution—are in a way the results of the uneven developments which occurred in the formation of new centres around alien culture and institutions. While members of the old elites could adapt themselves to the new political regime through their access to Western education and Western-type political roles which contained a traditional satisfactory meaning, other groups were alienated from the cultural content which was at the core of the new political institutions. Independence and democracy have now given them the means to try to impose their demands on the governing elites and to introduce into the centres new-traditional symbols and policies.

See author's "Postscript" (p. 39)

Notes

1. I am using the term 'centre' as designated by E. Shils, as an analytical concept and not as a geographical one:

The centre, or the central zone, is a phenomenon of the realm of values and beliefs. It is the centre of the order of symbols, of values and beliefs,

which govern the society. . . . The central zone partakes of the nature of the sacred. In this sense, every society has an 'official' religion, even when that society or its exponents and interpreters, conceive of it, more or less correctly, as a secular, pluralistic, and tolerant society. The principle of the Counter-Reformation: 'Cuius regio, ejus religio', although its rigor has been loosened and its harshness mollified, retains a core of permanent truth.

The centre is also a phenomenon of the realm of action. It is a structure of activities, of roles and of persons, within the network of institutions. It is in these roles that the values and beliefs which are central are embodied and propounded. [E. A. Shils, 'Centre and periphery' in *The Logic of Personal Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 117.]

For the elaboration of this concept, the structure of centres, the relations between their religious or ideological functions and their political functions and the formation of centres, see S. N. Eisenstadt, *Political Sociology* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), pp. 15-22.

2. In this paper I refer only to a part of the population in the countries under study: to the Sinhalese in Ceylon and to the Malays in Malaysia, which are concentrated in the Western part of Malaysia, the former Malaya.

3. W. H. Wriggins, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 30.

4. Syed H. Alatas 'The grading of occupational prestige amongst the Malays in Malaysia', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XL1 (1968), p. 151.

5. In particular:

R. Heine-Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: East-West Centre Press, 1968); C. Geertz, *Islam Observed—Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968);

S. N. Eisenstadt, op. cit., 'Patrimonial Systems, Introduction', pp. 138-146.

6. For Malaya:

J. M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya* (London: Athlone Press, 1968). For the earlier history of Malay kingdoms and sultanates from the establishment of the kingdom of Malacca and through the smaller, less enduring and less centralised kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula, see, for instance: J. Kennedy, *A History of Malaya 1400-1959* (London: Macmillan, 1962). On the Indianised kingdoms prior to Malacca, see: G. Coedes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: East-West Centre Press, 1968).

For Ceylon:

R. Pieris, *Sinhalese Social Organisation—the Kandyan Period* (Colombo: The Ceylon University Press Board, 1956). For the similar conceptions of kingship and its relation to religion and the social organisation of kingship in the different kingdoms of mediaeval Ceylon, prior to the Kandyan period, see: M. B. Ariyapala, *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon* (Colombo and Kandy: K. V. G. de Silva, 1956), and W. Geiger in *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times* ed. by H. Bechert (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1960).

7. H. Bechert, 'Theravada Buddhist Sangha: some general observations on historical and political factors in its development', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXIX (1970), p. 766.

8. Pieris, op. cit. p. 11. On the practice of tracing the descent of kings to the sun or to the moon, see: Ariyapala, op. cit., pp. 51-53.

9. For the social structure of the Malay sultanates, see: Gullick, op. cit.

10. Gullick, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
11. On the existence of Brahmanism side by side with Buddhism—apart from the fusion of essential Brahmanical ideas of kingship with Buddhism—and on the roles of the Brahmins in the royal courts, see: Geiger, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-26 and pp. 176-179.
12. B. Ryan, *Caste in Modern Ceylon: The Sinhalese System in Transition* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), pp. 44-45.
13. For the conversion to Islam by the rulers of the Malay and Javanese kingdoms and principalities, see: J. C. Van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society* (The Hague: W. Van Hoeve, 1967), pp. 111-116.
14. As it happened in Minangkabau, which had a similar political structure. Religious groups developed and tried to impose Islamic laws and change the structure of government. See: G. W. J. Drewes, 'Indonesia—mysticism and activism' in *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilisation*, ed. by G. E. Von Grunebaum (Chicago: 1955).
15. See B. J. Brown, 'Justice and the Adat Perpatih: law or lore?' in *Papers on Malayan History*, ed. by K. G. Trengonning (Singapore: Journal of Southeast Asian History, 1962).
16. Syed N. Al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised among the Malays* (Singapore: Malaysian Research Institute, 1963).
17. Gullick, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
18. See W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), ch. 2: 'The Malayo-Muslim world of Singapore', and ch. 3: 'Kaum Muda—Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction'.
19. Heine-Geldern, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
20. Bechert, *op. cit.*, pp. 766-767.
21. See H. D. Evers, 'Monastic landlordism in Ceylon', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXVIII (1969).
22. See M. Ames, 'Magical-animism and Buddhism: a structural analysis of the Sinhalese religious system' in *Religion in Southeast Asia*, ed. by E. B. Harper (Seattle: 1964).
23. Evers, *op. cit.*, p. 691.
24. On the social organisation of the three socio-religious systems—Buddhist temples, temples for the gods and the palace system—see: H. D. Evers, *Monks, Priests and Peasants—Buddhism and Social Structure in Central Ceylon* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971 [in press]).
25. For the analysis of these functions in patrimonial centres, see Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
26. Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-147.
27. Heine-Geldern, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
28. While the service obligations to the state were being abolished in 1833, the service obligations to the Radala aristocratic families were abolished only in 1965, and the services attached to temple lands have still to be performed, H. D. Evers, 'Buddha and the Seven Gods, and dual structure of a temple in Central Ceylon', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXVII, 3 (1968), p. 545.
29. Wriggins, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
31. See E. Sadka, 'The State Councils in Perak and Selangor, 1877-1895' in *Papers on Malayan History*, *op. cit.*
32. See, for instance, R. Wilkinson, *Gentlemanly Power: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), ch. 9.

33. A description of the British colonial community is given in Zeylanicus, *Ceylon between Orient and Occident* (London: Elek Books, 1970), ch. 13.
34. Roff, op. cit., pp. 100-113.
35. Ibid., p. 106.
36. Ibid., p. 227.
37. S. J. Tambiah (1955) 'Ethnic representation in Ceylon higher administrative services, 1870-1946', *University of Ceylon Review* (April 13, July), p. 113-114.
38. M. R. Singer, *The Emerging Elite* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1964).
39. Tambiah, op. cit., footnote.
40. G. C. Mendis, *Ceylon Under the British* (Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries, 1952), pp. 37, 83.
41. Ryan, op. cit., p. 325.
42. Ibid., p. 330.
43. Singer, op. cit., pp. 63-65.
44. Ibid., p. 91.
45. Ibid., p. 83.
46. Ibid., p. 85.
47. Ibid., pp. 34-35.
48. In his study on the emergence of a class of industrial entrepreneurs, Evers found that 30% of a group of industrial managers belong to the Goyigama caste, while 48% belong to the Karava caste. H. D. Evers, *Kulturwandel in Ceylon* (Baden-Baden: Verlag August Lutzeyer, 1964b), p. 167, table 7.
49. Ryan, op. cit., pp. 331-332.
50. Singer, op. cit., p. 74-75; Roff, op. cit., p. 103; R. O. Tilman, 'Policy formulation, policy execution and the political elite structure of contemporary Malaysia' in Gung-Wu Wang (ed.), *Malaysia, a Survey* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1964), p. 357.
51. Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 115.
52. Singer, op. cit., pp. 74-75.
53. Roff, op. cit., p. 104.
54. Wriggins, op. cit., p. 30.
55. J. C. Scott, *Political Ideology in Malaysia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 172-177.
56. Ibid., p. 175.
57. See, for instance: D. E. Smith, 'The Sinhalese Buddhist revolution' in *South Asian Politics and Religion*, ed. by D. E. Smith (Princeton: 1966), especially pp. 478-482.
58. The percentage of 'intellectuals' (teachers, writers, journalists) in the Ceylonese emerging elite was low. See Singer, op. cit., p. 91.
59. See, for instance: G. D. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 28-29.
60. See R. Emerson, *Malaysia, a study in Direct and Indirect Rule* (N.Y.: Mac-Millan, 1937).
61. See M. Rudner, 'The state and peasant innovation in rural development: the case of Malaysian rubber', *Asian and African Studies*, Vol. VI (1970).
62. Roff, op. cit., p. 252.
63. Ibid., pp. 217-218.
64. Ibid., ch. 3 and pp. 221-235; R. Soenarna, 'Malay nationalism, 1900-1945', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. I (1960).
65. In 1945 the British government issued a 'White Paper' announcing a plan for the amalgamation of the Malay States into a Malayan Union. It aroused, for different reasons, the antagonism of all ethnic communities and was consequently abandoned.

66. C. A. Woodward, *The Growth of a Party System in Ceylon* (Providence: Brown, 1969), p. 51.
67. J. Jupp, 'Constitutional developments in Ceylon since Independence', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XL1 (1968), and rejoinder, Vol. XL111 (1970).
68. Woodward, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
69. Jupp, 1968, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170.
70. Singer, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.
72. Evers, 1969, *op. cit.*, p. 691.
73. See, for instance: Wriggins, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
74. P. Mus, 'Buddhism and world order', *Daedalus*, Vol. XCV (1966), p. 821. For the severance of the links between government and religion, see: H. D. Evers, 'Buddhism and British colonial policy in Ceylon, 1815-1875', *Asian Studies*, Vol. II (1964a).
75. See: R. N. Kearny, *Communalism and Language in the Politics of Ceylon* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1967); K. Y. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965).
76. Wriggins, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
77. E. Shils, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
78. This process formally started in Ceylon in 1931, but its full realisation occurred only in the post-independence period.
79. Jupp, 1968, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
80. R. S. Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia* (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1967), p. 106; for a more recent evaluation see: Goh Chen Teik, *The May Thirteenth Incident and Democracy in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1971).
81. See M. M. Ames, 'Ideological and social change in Ceylon', *Human Organisation*, Vol. XXII (1963).
82. K. Y. Ratnam and R. S. Milne, 'The 1969 parliamentary elections in West Malaysia', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XLIII (1970).
83. See, for instance: Singer, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-109; G. Myrdal: *Asian Drama* (Pantheon, 1968), pp. 829-833.
84. Ness, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
85. Alatas, 1968, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
86. H. D. Evers, *Kulturwandel in Ceylon* (Baden-Baden: Verlag August Lutzeyer, 1964b), p. 146.
87. See, particularly, Woodward's (*op. cit.*) description of the changing official ideologies of the parties.
88. Gung-Wu Wang, 'Chinese politics in Malaya', *The China Quarterly*, No. 43 (1970).
89. M. L. Rogers, 'Politicisation and political development in a rural Malay community', *Asian Survey*, December 1969.

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Postscript:

This paper has presented an analysis of the developments of the new centres up to 1970, and thus, has not dealt with another form yet of pressure on the centre. In 1971 a severe political crisis shook Ceylon. It was a violent and widespread rebellion or armed insurrection in which government offices and property were attacked and which cost many lives. This rebellion was launched in April 1971 by the JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna—People's Liberation Front). The JVP challenged Ceylon's established Left parties, charging them with abandoning the true socialist goals and supporting the national bourgeois class which was in fact helping to consolidate neo-colonialism in Ceylon.

The social base of this movement consisted of new groups created by the long-standing free-education system; the members of this movement were apparently mainly the educated unemployed, university and secondary school students and drop-outs looking for work, teachers and rural schoolteachers. Exposed to radical mass-media, to the established communist elite propaganda and to the socialist goals and promises of the government, the followers of this movement pressed for an immediate solution to Ceylon's growing economic and social problems.

The attack staged by these new social groups was directed against the centre itself, demanding the implementation of the socialist programme promised in the election campaign of 1970. This movement represents a new phase in the changing relationships between the centre and the periphery. Traditional or communal symbols had hardly any place in its aims. But it seems that the all-pervading power attributed to government in society is still reflected in the aims of the JVP too: the key to economic and social progress lays in the hands of a revolutionary government, served by educated people, which will lead the country, redress the colonial structural distortions, initiate and implement the desired changes.

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