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GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF MALAYSIA

EDITED BY
ZAKARIA HAJI AHMAD

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FOREWORD

THE Southeast Asian Studies Program (SEASP) was established in 1976 in response to a need to promote comparative research and writing on South-East Asia by scholars in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Of particular concern was the lack of appropriate tertiary level teaching and reference materials pertaining to the region and written from local, though not necessarily nationalistic, perspectives.

Towards this end, SEASP launched two separate but inter-related projects: one focused on the preparation of a series of country-specific volumes on Politics and Government, and the other on History.

The project on Government and Politics comprised the production of a volume each on Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. As the work involved more than fifty scholars and the project was complicated, it became increasingly evident that the task was going to take much longer than originally envisaged. Thus it was not surprising when the first manuscript to be completed was delivered only in 1982. After submission, each manuscript had to undergo a process of review by two independent referees–one from within and one from outside the region–to ensure the desired quality. We are delighted to see the third volume of the series, *Government and Politics of Malaysia*, in print and look forward to the publication of the rest in due course.

Needless to say, the project on Government and Politics could not have been completed without the cooperation of the individual contributors, editors, and coordinators involved. In the case of Malaysia, we are especially thankful to Associate Professor Zakaria Haji Ahmad, who in addition to being the editor, was the coordinator of the project as a whole. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Ford Foundation for its generous financial support to SEASP and its various projects, including that on Government and Politics.

In thanking all our benefactors and contributors, as well as others who have in one way or another helped to make this publication possible, it is clearly understood that responsibility for the facts and opinions expressed in *Government and Politics of Malaysia* rests with the individual authors and editors, and their interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of SEASP or its supporters.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

PREFACE

THIS book is the culmination of the effort initiated by the Southeast Asian Studies Program (SEASP), an enterprise established by leading South-East Asian scholars in co-operation with the Institute of South-east Asian Studies (ISEAS, Singapore) and the Ford Foundation, to produce textbooks on South-East Asia written by South-East Asians. Although the founding fathers of SEASP had originally conceived the idea of regional textbooks on politics, history and world-views, the project was subsequently seen as more manageable on a country, rather than regional, basis. Country teams were then established to cover each individual country.

The Malaysian team embarked on the Malaysian Politics and Government Project (MPG) in late 1977. Although SEASP had conceived of a standard format for each country textbook on politics and government, it was decided by the MPG team to cover as many dimensions as possible of the subject and to include participants from all 'relevant' disciplines from the three major universities of Malaysia. However, as might have been predicted, a variety of problems arose that rendered difficult the achievement of MPG's noble objective. That it has taken more than four years to do the job is simply a reflection of the difficulties faced in the project. As co-ordinator and editor of the MPG, I am pleased therefore that the project has been completed.

The net result, which is this selection of readings on Malaysian politics and government, is not the sum total of all that was done by those who have participated in this project; certain criteria of selectivity and quality have been employed. It is necessary to state as well that this book differs much from the original formulation that was conceived when the MPG began. It should be noted that it has not been possible to be up to date in the main body of the book with the many rapid developments and events taking place in Malaysia, although an attempt has been made to update, where possible, dates and events in the Postscript at the end of the book. If the volume suffers from any shortcomings, we are ever sanguine others will take up where we have left off and that it will spur them to attempt a better job. We hope, then, that this effort will serve as a forerunner for more textbooks and the publication of original research findings on politics and government by other indigenous scholars in Malaysia.

In making this enterprise possible, I wish to thank *all* those who participated in MPG, not least my co-authors for their patience, perseverance, co-operation and understanding in coping with the persistent

demands of a co-ordinator-cum-editor. To the Executive Committee of SEASP, we sincerely hope their expectations are fulfilled by the completion of this volume. Our most heartfelt thanks, appreciation and gratitude go to SEASP's co-ordinators 'Willie' Arce and 'Indai' Sodusta who helped, motivated, encouraged and facilitated the work of MPG every step of the way. We thank as well the 'secret' reviewers of MPG's early drafts, for their comments and suggestions on improving the contributions, though they are not to be held responsible for flaws in the final product. We also thank Professor Kernial Singh Sandhu, Director of ISEAS for his advice, patience and constant encouragement which were always welcome especially when the project 'stagnated' or temporarily floundered along the way.

The Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia facilitated the administration of this project by allowing the use of the resources of the Department of Political Science while I was chairman there until 1982. Mrs Teoh Paik San, librarian of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, assisted in the compilation of the final bibliography, for which we are thankful. Lastly, we wish to acknowledge the tireless efforts of Mariam Hamzah for the final typing and Siew Khai Nam for proofreading of the drafts.

Kuala Lumpur
December 1983

ZAKARIA HAJI AHMAD

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I

INTRODUCTION: HISTORY, STRUCTURE AND PROCESS IN MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

ZAKARIA HAJI AHMAD

IT has long been lamented that research on Malaysian government and politics has not been sufficiently carried out by Malaysians themselves. This assertion is still valid in spite of what John MacDougall noted recently in a provocative review of the field that 'the gross printed product on this once arcane subject has surged beyond bibliographic control to encompass a dozen disciplines and languages, scores of research centres and hundreds of solitary contributors'.[1] Save for a recent attempt by Y. Mansoor Marican and his associates at indigenous explanations of the various sub-fields of political science,[2] the fact remains that a *comprehensive* explanation of Malaysian government and politics in textbook form by Malaysians is non-existent.

The foregoing should not be construed to suggest that there are serious flaws in the existing literature on Malaysian government and politics in that most of it, as written by non-Malaysian scholars, is erroneous or ethnocentric. Inasmuch as the majority of analyses are *interpretive*, it becomes incumbent for indigenous scholars to join the fray and create a situation of competing analyses. Moreover, the value of such 'foreign' scholarship is that it can act as a bench-mark in evaluations of the state of the art and in terms of comparative analysis.

Given the considerable array of approaches, the question that needs be asked is how much our knowledge of the Malaysian political system has advanced and what other research needs to be done. In this regard, the student of Malaysian politics must surely be impressed by the multiplicity and richness of the themes that abound. On the one hand, there is Tun Suffian's *An Introduction to the Constitution of Malaysia*,[3] which must be regarded as an authoritative piece on the legal underpinnings of the Malaysian nation-state as the basis for the 'rule of law' and constitutional style of government. On the other hand, Karl von Vorys presents the country as a 'democracy without consensus', wherein a directorate comprising the leaders of the major communities arrive at decisions in camera or otherwise, about the polity.[4] Still another approach[5] purports to explain the system as more an 'administrative state', since the style of government depends more on government bureaucrats than on the political process.

Such holistic explanations, however, cannot but refer as well to what must remain an undeniable fact of Malaysian political life, that of race as *leitmotif*. Whether one talks of intercommunal bargaining in the political market-place, as best explained by K. J. Ratnam,[6] and what MacDougall labels an 'accommodationist' approach,[7] or to a more 'hegemonistic' style (again a MacDougall label)[8] as in the works of R. K. Vasil,[9] Zakaria Haji Ahmad[10] and Stanley Bedlington,[11] the issue of race must surely remain pivotal in all analyses of Malaysian politics. Such an acceptance is clearly evident in the several textbooks by Milne and Mauzy,[12] Gordon Means,[13] and to no lesser extent, Stanley Bedlington,[14] on Malaysian government and politics.

If race is a central theme, there appears to be no lack of individual community assessments which purport to explain the political behaviour of the principal actors of the Malaysian political drama, that of Malays and the non-Malays (specifically the Chinese). State loyalties amongst the Malays would appear to have disappeared soon after the end of the Second World War, a particularly significant phenomenon which may be an underlying strength for Malay nationalism in a multi-ethnic society. M. Yunus Hamidi's *Sejarah Pergerakan Politik Melayu Semenanjung*[15] (History of the Political Struggle of the Peninsular Malays) is certainly a first, indigenous attempt at explaining Malay nationalism but it is weak on theory, is normative rather than empirical, and tends to obscure the facts. Others that followed also appear to be normative in approach or too parochial in focus.[16] On the other hand, Roff's *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*[17] is a powerful treatise on Malay politics, followed closely by John Funston's *Malay Politics in Malaysia*,[18] although one should also not forget the much-maligned (by the Malay 'establishment' anyway) contribution by Chandra Muzaffar on the 'protective' nature of the Malay élite.[19] On Chinese politics, Goh Cheng Teik has initiated an analysis,[20] but one which is more of a party platform rather than an academic endeavour. However, such works are only sectoral and do not explain fully Malaysian political phenomena.

There have been those, of course, who have given class or economic interpretations but whose analyses unfortunately tend to be little more than critical diatribes against the existing social, economic and political situation.[21] Some of these begin with, or attach a great deal of importance to, the British colonial epoch of Malaysia's history as a factor in understanding contemporary economic relations.[22] Although these works are important for illumination–and certainly, the argument of an economic alliance between Malay political élites and Chinese business interests is an important theoretical paradigm–they tend to neglect other factors and as such can remain merely as ideologically-oriented and partial explanations of Malaysian political phenomena.

At a different level, it remains an important fact of Malaysian political life that the country is separated into two geographical segments, Peninsular (West) Malaysia, and Sabah and Sarawak. This distinction is reflected in political analysis as well: studies of Malaysian politics at the

national level tend to focus mainly on developments in the Peninsula, and assessments on events in Sabah and Sarawak have all appeared separately[23] as if the two regions must be viewed as distinct entities. One concern for students of Malaysian politics must then be to evaluate whether separatist tendencies might culminate in a dismemberment of the federation, a particular issue of centre-state relationships. Studies of integration between the two geographical regions have not, however, been attempted. In terms of centre-state relations, an overriding theme has been centralization in the Peninsula,[24] although there appears to be an undue emphasis on the politics of Kelantan in Malaysia.

That Kelantan has surfaced as a particular point of interest may be related to the question of Islam, the religion of the Malays, as a potential issue in the politics of multi-racial (and as such multi-religious) Malaysia.[25] Religion is not yet a serious issue of political analysis although it has increasingly become so among the Malays especially since the 1982 election.[26] The denouements in this area must now begin to be on the research agenda.

Yet another approach at understanding Malaysia has been to look at the underlying, psychological propensities. Although the works of Scott[27] and Parker[28] have been illuminating to some extent, these must also remain as less than complete explanations of Malaysian political phenomena.

The richness of the Malaysian political environment may explain the variety and diversity of explanations as reflected in the preceding brief review of the field. The question could then be asked if yet another approach is necessary or justified. There is, of course, the simple answer that indigenous attempts at analysis are still lacking, but a more important factor would be that much more needs to be known of the Malaysian polity, not only to enhance the state of the art but also as added data for theory on political development and comparative political analysis. Questions could be asked, for example, about the terminal colonial period before independence in 1957 as an important antecedent for Malaysia's political stability.

But it may well be that the landscape of Malaysian political phenomena and epiphenomena is so variegated and so complex that a comprehensive analysis by indigenous scholars is too vast an undertaking. The initial phase of this enterprise did attempt, in fact, to explore the many areas and facets of Malaysian politics: coalition politics, the role of women, interest articulation structures and patterns of aggregation, patterns of socialization and attitudes of the political system, public policy in education, housing, health, rural development and agriculture, state economic enterprises, population growth and migration, and political communications. However, leaving the complexity of the subject-matter to one side, it is probably true to say that the failure of that format was because of its over-ambitious scope and comprehensiveness as well as because of the daunting problem of the complexity of the university/social-academic, and perhaps even political, setting in which Malaysian scholars operate.[29]

If the readings that follow do not manage to fill in all the 'gaps' or to meet all the shortcomings in explanations about Malaysia, they do bring together a selection of readings on government and politics by the younger scholars of the nation's burgeoning universities. Taken as a whole, the readings do not provide a holistic interpretation of the Malaysian political situation, but are rather a bouquet of research findings and original scholarship laboured at in the course of pursuing postgraduate qualifications. Though not by design, this book also reflects the biased nature of Malaysian scholarship in that it tends to regard events in Peninsular Malaysia as representative of the country as a whole. This subconscious predisposition to neglect events in Sabah and Sarawak has resulted in a book which could more appropriately be described as one on *Peninsular* Malaysian government and politics.

But, if there is a lack of a single, unifying theme, the seven topics that are discussed here do look at areas or aspects of Malaysian politics and the governmental process mostly not treated in depth elsewhere. In addition, all the subjects under investigation contribute in some way to the myriad themes in earlier writings that are referred to above. In a sense, too, these readings deal with history, structure and process in Malaysian government and politics, each chapter combining the three elements according to the particular approach that each author has selected.

In Chapter 2, Khong Kim Hoong surveys the travails of three political movements in the early post-war period of Malay(si)a. These three movements are notable in that they were unsuccessful; more importantly, their failure is salient because they were predicated on a non-communal, or, more correctly, ideological approach to politics in a multi-racial society. Of the three, one–the Malayan Communist Party (MCP)–is still in existence but strictly proscribed; the other two–the AMCJA-PUTERA and the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP)–are defunct.

The important lesson that one may perhaps derive from Khong's analysis is that political parties have to be communally based in order to be successful in Malaysia. In a sense, the failure of these three political movements could also be a reflection of those difficult and turbulent days of political participation when the British were trying to establish their authority after the Japanese interregnum, but it seems clear that the racial factor was highly important. Khong provides rich detail in his description of the political platforms of the three parties in question, although these figured little in the political considerations of the population of the day.

Although, overwhelmed by the simplified theme of race in Malaysian politics, the three political movements described by Khong are no longer actors in the Malaysian political process, their existence nonetheless reveals 'gut' political issues of the country–some still germane–which were discussed in the early days of the polity.

From 'gut' political issues, we shift next to the rules of the game as 'played out' in the Malaysian Parliament. Since the collapse of the

colonial empires after the Second World War and the concomitant emergence of 'new states' in Asia and Africa, a major problem of these newly-independent countries has been the attempt to work political systems based on Western models. A parliamentary form of government was one such model. Michael Ong in Chapter 3 examines the history of Malaysia's attempt to follow the Westminster style of parliamentary democracy and observes that only the form has been vigorously applied. In particular, he notes that the convention of having an Opposition in Parliament is only retained as a formality to demonstrate a semblance of democracy; in effect, the government in power has dominated Parliament by virtue of continually retaining a majority, as well as by 'calling the shots' in terms of setting the 'rules of the game'. Specifically, the Government appears to have restricted the time permitted for debate through the Standing Orders, although Parliament is by definition a forum for the discussion of issues by the people's representatives.

Since Malaysia publicizes its attachment to the 'rule of law' and a constitutional form of government, the issue about parliamentary proceedings revolves around the time available for debate especially that requested by the Opposition, and the restrictions on time imposed by the Government to minimize 'politicking' by parliamentarians. Ong's essay, therefore, provides a valuable insight in the actual practice of Western parliamentary democracy in the country and the issues arising therein.

Having a parliamentary democracy implies that a system of representation exists. But, although it is generally accepted that one of the major characteristics of democratic government is the concept of popular representation, the bases of such representation are less clear and in practice differ from one country to the next. The bases of such representation are even more complex in ethnically heterogeneous societies in which communalism is a major issue.

In Chapter 4, S. Sothi Rachagan discusses some of the major issues arising out of the process of apportioning House of Representatives (the federal lower house) seats to the various states of the Malaysian federation. Although there are appropriate technical criteria for apportionment, certain political considerations seem to have been employed in the process, thereby leading to inequitable representation among the states. In addition, through the fact of majority power in Parliament, the Government exercises the prerogative of apportionment, a task entrusted to the independent Elections Commission until its mandate was withdrawn after a constitutional amendment. Sothi is quick to point out that any inferences on the bases of such malapportionment are only speculative; nevertheless, malapportionment has resulted because different population criteria seem to have been used for the different states.

No electoral system is perfect, of course, and in Malaysia the complex issues of racial alignment have been built into the system of popular representation. Sothi's essay indicates that apportionment of seats to the various states is somewhat arbitrary because there are no universally

defined principles; it could well be that the need to preserve Malay political supremacy at the polls renders difficult the application of any consistent apportionment procedure.

Looking more closely at ethnic representation, the next question may be framed thus: how are the interests of a particular ethnic group best articulated in a society beset by primordial cleavages? In terms of democratic politics, the answer to such a question may well lie in the form of an organized, intermediary political organization. The mode of activity of such organizations then becomes important in analysing its travails and success or failure, which is the subject of Lee Kam Hing's discussion in Chapter 5.

Lee Kam Hing focuses on the vehicle of the political party as used by the Chinese in articulating their interests in a Malay-dominant polity. He looks closely at three 'open' political parties, namely the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the Democratic Action Party (DAP), and the Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia or, more simply, the Gerakan. The major dilemma faced by these parties, as noted by Lee, is how to articulate the interests of the Chinese without appearing to be 'too Chinese'. Success or failure of 'Chinese' political parties, indeed, seems to hinge upon the manner in which these two countervailing demands are reconciled. Of the three parties, nevertheless, only one actually purports to present the Chinese in name; the other two are 'Chinese' insofar as their attempts to appear non-Chinese or attract Malays and other races have failed. Apart from this, it needs to be noted, too, that the DAP espouses a socialist approach.

Although the dynamics of leadership, organization and approach of the three parties is important, it is just as critical to see how they are evaluated by *the* major political party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO)–an issue that the parties themselves are acutely aware of. Lee Kam Hing's discussion does not include an analysis of the situation in Sabah and Sarawak, but it does indicate that, inasmuch as racial politics is salient, the Malay-Chinese schism in Malaysia is very important.

In Chapter 6, Mavis Puthucheary provides a discussion of the public sector, or administrative, élite. In retrospect, it might well be said that one critical factor allowing for an orderly transfer of power for Malaya at independence in 1957 as well as for post-independence political stability was and is the existence of a continuing public bureaucracy, of which the senior service, the Malay(si)an Civil Service (MCS)–now the Malaysian Administrative and Diplomatic Service (Perkhidmatan Tadbir dan Diplomatik (PTD))–was the most important part. In her treatment, Puthucheary elaborates on the theme of the political importance of the MCS and its role as an administrative élite. Stressing the importance of the MCS as not just an instrument to implement government's goals but also as an important *actor* in the policy-making process, she traces its past evolution, its present character and its future prospects. Because of historical and other factors, the senior bureau-

cracy must be regarded as a *politico*-administrative élite, although there are signs that, as a concomitant of economic modernization and other social changes, the important political role of the former MCS will diminish.

In the literature on bureaucratic role and performance in 'developing societies', the debate has centred, on the one hand, on the importance of the role of the public bureaucracy in economic development and the nation-building process, and, on the other, the dangers if this role is 'overdeveloped'. The Malaysian case illustrates that a well-developed bureaucracy is not necessarily dangerous to democracy as long as the notion of political will is ascendant over the 'heavy weight of bureaucratic power'. The issues of Malaysian bureaucratic performance are, of course, more complex, but it is against this main theoretical matrix that Mavis Puthucheary's essay must be read–in order to understand the important role of the MCS (PTD) within the Malaysian socio-political setting.

Chapter 7 is a discussion of the role of the Police in Malaysia. The issue of law and order is often glossed over in much of the literature concerning political stability and development. Yet, as pointed out by Zakaria Haji Ahmad, a critical problem in many new states is survival in the face of violent and illegal challenges from insurrectionary political forces, a problem that is usually shouldered by the Police. Zakaria's case-study of the Malaysian Police indicates that it has a formative role to perform in upholding law and order and thereby enhancing political development in that country.

Focusing specifically on the political-developmental problems of state-building, nation-building and participation, Zakaria's essay also notes that the Police in Malaysia has been used as a *national* instrument of central government rule, though this has not at the same time led to the creation of a police state. One factor allowing for this situation has been the balanced manner in which the ruling élites have utilized the police role. Indeed, it may be surmised that the survival of the regime has been possible because of the impetus given to the high degree of institutionalization of the Police, but it is equally true that the Police is recognized by the ruling élites as a legitimate, 'coercive' instrument for national independence and unity. Nonetheless, the Police is less a political than a national instrument of civilian state-rule, a factor that may be germane in understanding Malaysian politics.

In Chapter 8, the foreign policy of Malaysia is discussed. In his analysis, J. Saravanamuttu traces Malaysia's foreign policy goals and parameters over a twenty-three year period beginning from independence in 1957 up to 1980. Three issue-areas have been chosen for the analysis, namely, defence and security, development and trade, and international co-operation and diplomacy. From an earlier pro-Western stance–sometimes referred to as 'committed neutrality', since it avoided involvement in big power rivalry, Malaysia's foreign policy has shifted to emphasizing non-alignment and regional co-operation. Saravana-

muttu in fact demonstrates that Malaysia's foreign policy has been pursued in accordance with the well-defined national concerns of a small, developing country.

Saravanamuttu does not delve into the intricacies of foreign policy-making. He is probably correct in saying that the ruling élites have a definite say in the final resolution of policy, but less so than in most other Third World states where foreign policy-making is *entirely* undertaken by these élites. From another angle, it may be argued that Malaysia has been able to adapt its foreign policy posture rather successfully to a rapidly changing external environment.

Finally, in the Postscript, Zakaria Haji Ahmad summarizes the changes that have occurred in the political arena over the last few years and suggests likely political developments to the end of this century.

The readings in this book represent only an attempt to cover some of the issues not already discussed in earlier works on Malaysian government and politics. Much more needs to be done so that the notion of competing analyses regarding our understanding of Malaysia's political system can be enhanced, but it is hoped this book is yet another step in that direction and will complement the 'state of the art'.

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2. Y. Mansoor Marican (collator), *Dasar Ilmu Politik* (Guide to Political Science), Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1982.

3. Tun Mohd. Suffian, *An Introduction to the Constitution of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1972. A second edition appeared in 1976. See also Tun Mohd. Suffian, H. P. Lee and F. A. Trindade (eds.), *The Constitution of Malaysia, Its Development, 1957–1977*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1978, and Wu Min-Aun, *An Introduction to the Malaysian Legal System*, Kuala Lumpur, Heinemann Educational Books (Asia), 1975.

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2

THE EARLY POLITICAL MOVEMENTS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

KHONG KIM HOONG

Introduction

THIS is a study of three early political movements in Malay(si)a. Of the three, two were short-lived and are now defunct. They were the All-Malaya Council for Joint Action-Pusat Tenaga Rakyat (AMCJA-PUTERA) coalition and the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP). The former was a united front of disparate political economic groups that lasted hardly two years while the latter was a multi-racial party. The third movement, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) is the oldest political party in Malaysia. It is still in existence, though proscribed, and is presently waging an armed struggle 'to liberate the country'.

In view of the existing controversies on issues of nation-building, it is important to go back in history to study these three early 'political expressions' which were pioneers in modern Malaysian politics. Though they did not succeed in gaining power, we could perhaps learn from what they offered, since all three could be considered non-communal though their approaches were highly disparate. The MCP was ideological, while the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition operated on an inter-communal bargaining basis, and the IMP was a non-communal party. This chapter will trace the origins, programmes, styles, strategies and tactics used by these three political movements. Of the three, the MCP was undoubtedly the most important and it still has an important effect on Malaysia's political life. As such, it will be given greater prominence.

The Malayan Communist Party

Early History

Communist activities began in the 1920s. However, the Malayan Communist Party was founded only in 1931 with the primary objective: 'to carry on the struggle for national liberation, formulate a military programme for the overthrow of imperialism and feudal aristocracy and to establish the Soviet Republic of Malaya by the co-ordinated efforts of the proletariat and peasantry'.[1]

In its initial stages, the party concentrated on its own consolidation. There was hardly any open activity until the Depression in the 1930s

which left many people in acute poverty.[2] The communists were able to provide alternative leadership, and by 1935, they were able to lead the miners into a take-over of the Batu Arang coal-mine, establishing an elaborate defence system, courts and administration.[3] In 1936, mass demonstrations and strikes were organized, involving as many as 300,000 people.[4]

The great impetus to the communist movement came in 1937 when the Sino-Japanese conflict broke out in China. The strong appeals of Chinese nationalism brought many Chinese to the banner of the MCP's anti-Japanese front whereas previously they had stayed away from the anti-imperialist (British) front. The attraction of the Communist Party could be summed up by quoting a former adherent of the party who reported:

> In 1937, I was influenced by the surging masses of anti-Japanese patriotism. Young men all over Malaya joined in anti-Japanese work to save the country, and their enthusiasm was great. Like them, I joined in the work with great earnestness. Many of those patriotic young men used to extol the brave and courageous spirit of the members of the Communist Party in their fight against the Japanese for the salvation of the country and under the circumstances an impression was created in me regarding the Communist Party. I admired it as a gallant and heroic warrior, ready to succour the weak.[5]

By December 1941, the MCP had become the strongest political force in the country with a membership estimated at 5,000,[6] despite the early attempts of the British colonial government to suppress the party by non-recognition, arrests, banishment of communist leaders and repressive legislation.[7] When the Japanese began their invasion of Malaya, the British had no choice but to work with the communists. They agreed to release all the communists who had been jailed and to train local people in guerrilla warfare against the Japanese.[8] In return, the communists agreed to lend their prestige and organizational skills towards the mobilization of a volunteer defence corps.[9] The speed of the Japanese invasion brought an end to these projects. During the Japanese Occupation, the MCP united the resistance groups under the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) and harassed the invaders. It was the young men in the MCP who provided the inspiration to the resistance. People who did not take up arms provided food, intelligence and money to the MPAJA's war efforts. If there was any genuine local governmental authority, it was that of the MPAJA which, by 1945, had an organized armed force of 10,000.

The sudden end of the war, however, forced the MCP to re-evaluate its position *vis-à-vis* the British. Several policy options were available. First, it could declare the establishment of the Malayan Republic as it had stated in its 1943 programme[10] and seek to prevent the return of the British by the continuation of the armed struggle. This would have been opportune and logical. The party's prestige was at its height and the guerrilla movement had already gained momentum. There was no local rival for power and the British were still far away in Ceylon.

Second, it could allow the British to return, but refuse to co-operate with them at all and carry out agitation against them. Third, it could co-operate with the British with the hope of concessions later. The party leadership was reported to be divided on what its immediate post-war policy should be.[11] The policy that emerged combined options two and three above: the British were to be allowed to return but there should be co-operation with them and agitation against them simultaneously. As for the reasons why such a policy emerged, there are three possibilities.

First, it could have been for tactical reasons. Since the party was in no position to prevent the return of the British, the best thing it could do was to continue to build up its organizational strength and wait for a more opportune time to drive the British out of Malaya. Second, there was the possibility that the policy adopted was part of a revisionist trend in the thinking of the party leadership. The party had emerged as the strongest political force in the country with widespread mass support. As such, the British would have no choice but to reckon with it and grant concessions. In addition, the party had been the faithful wartime ally of the British. As such, its good work would be recognized and it would be granted a role to play in post-war Malaya. Third, the adopted policy might not have been the product of conscious planning and strategy. Communications were slow and co-ordination difficult. With the sudden termination of the war, whatever policy was adopted was bound to take the form of an immediate reaction.

Immediate Post-war Activities and Programme

The MCP, which had been illegal and underground since its formation, surfaced after the war, and branches were established in many of the big towns. The party established Peoples' Committees in all the towns and villages as institutions of local democratic government, and mass participation at the grass-roots level was encouraged. The party expected official recognition of itself and the Peoples' Committees as representative political institutions to which power could be delegated by the British Military Administration (BMA). It hoped that the MPAJA would be incorporated into a national defence force. Help was offered to the BMA for the running of relief centres for the distribution of food, and proposals forwarded for the immediate improvement of the livelihood of the people.[12] The MCP felt that the Peoples' Committees would be an effective channel through which such projects could be carried out.[13]

At that time, the party hoped to attract support from a wide spectrum of the population through a programme that included the following:

(1) The establishment of self-rule in Malaya based on the principles of national self-determination.
(2) The establishment of an All-Malayan National Assembly and the drawing up of a democratic constitution; the establishment of a democratic council in each state; and the granting of the right to

vote to people regardless of race, class, political party, sex or belief.
(3) The realization of a Malayan democratic government and the guarantee of a democratic process; freedom of publication; freedom to organize; freedom of assembly; freedom to travel and the right to strike.
(4) The implementation of an independent tariff policy; the opening up of free trade; the improvement of the workers', peasants' and commercial conditions; the expansion of the national economic structure and the improvement of social programmes.
(5) An increment in salaries; relief for unemployed, downtrodden people; the lowering of prices; the abolition of oppressive, irregular taxes and excessively high rates of interest.
(6) The abolition of the servile system of education; the institution of a democratic and free education in the language of each race; the establishment of professional colleges and the expansion of the national culture.
(7) The institution of an eight-hour day and a social security programme; the abolition of the system of contractual apprenticeship and the use of the economic surplus to help the impoverished.
(8) The recognition of equal rights for women in politics and society; the implementation of equal work and equal compensation; the guarantee of two months' rest for female workers before and after birth; the abolition of the system of female servitude and the establishment of women's suffrage.
(9) The unity of the oppressed people of the Far East and the preservation of world peace.[14]

The goal of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the establishment of a communist society, was not mentioned. Through this broad and sweeping programme, the MCP hoped to build up a united front against British rule.

However, the expectations of the MCP were not fulfilled. The British returned to reimpose their rule and were not even prepared to allow the communists to play a supplementary role. Thus, even after the Japanese surrender had been announced in Tokyo and although the MPAJA was 'an integral party of the invasion forces', the British South-East Asia Command did not allow the Japanese forces in Malaya to surrender to the MPAJA units.[15] Instead, the guerrilla forces were told to steer clear of the Japanese occupied areas, and Japanese soldiers were told to surrender only to the British officers of Force 136.[16] Within the towns, the Japanese were even asked specifically to maintain law and order.[17]

On their return, the British practised a dual policy towards the communists–to restrict and control the movement and at the same time display some signs of co-operation. The MCP was allowed to operate openly for the first time, but official recognition was held back. While the MPAJA was lavished with praise for the role it had played during

the Japanese Occupation and BMA officials spoke at MPAJA rallies throughout the country,[18] the proposal that it be incorporated into the national defence force was not accepted. Instead, the British insisted it be disbanded. The communists were given token representation in government bodies by three appointments to the Advisory Councils which had a total membership of sixty-four but the Peoples' Committees were completely ignored.

By October 1945, the MCP had been able to get a clearer picture of British intentions and became aware that the BMA had no real intention of co-operating with or recognizing the party. The British had evicted the MCP and other pro-MCP organizations from their premises, banned pro-communist newspapers and arrested their editors. Hunger marches organized by the MCP were crushed violently.[19] By November 1945, the MCP was preparing itself for a showdown with the BMA. In a major statement the MCP attacked Britain's past colonial policy and even attributed the cause of the people's suffering during the Japanese Occupation to the British because they had refused to mobilize and arm the people to defend the country, and had even suppressed the communists who had advocated mass mobilization.[20] Regarding the situation in Malaya, the declaration stated:

> The reactionary system of colonial domination is still enforced in Africa, the Near East and the Far East where half the world's population is still suffering. They (Colonial powers) have ignored the contribution of the colonies, semi-colonies in the anti-fascist struggle and they are relying on their military power to perpetuate their policy of colonial domination. We have yet to see any substantial and definite change in the British policy towards Malaya.[21]

Under such circumstances the demand for Malaya's right to self-determination was emphasized. The Perak branch of the MCP was even more militant, and issued a manifesto calling upon the people of Malaya to revolt against the British for the freedom of Malaya.[22]

The MCP's confrontational agitation was also reflected in the Soong Kwong case and the 15 February incident. Soong Kwong, the Secretary of the Selangor MPAJA was arrested and charged with the illegal imprisonment and fining of a Japanese collaborator. He was subsequently tried three times until he was found guilty by an all-British military court. To secure his release, the MCP organized a nation-wide strike which began on 29 January 1946. The strike was successful in demonstrating mass support for the communists' cause. In Singapore 150,000 and in Selangor 60,000 people took part, making it the first general strike in Malaya's history. Four days later Soong was released. However, that did not stop the MCP's campaign against the British. The showdown with the BMA came on 15 February 1946. The General Labour Union made a request for a holiday 'to remind (the people) of the dark days during the Japanese occupation and to work for a better Malaya'.[23] Mass rallies were planned for the occasion–the fourth anniversary of the British surrender in Singapore to the Japanese. To

prevent any embarrassment to itself, the BMA banned all rallies and demonstrations, raided the headquarters of the MCP and its ancillary organizations, and arrested twenty-four communist leaders.[24] However, despite the raids, demonstrations were held throughout Malaya. The BMA responded with force; at least fifteen persons were killed and forty-eight wounded.[25] The 15 February incident might have been the last confrontation between the MCP and the BMA, but it was the beginning of the headlong clash between the MCP and the British authorities.

The MCP and the Constitutional Proposals 1946–8

In October 1945, the British Government announced that a Malayan Union would replace the pre-war political structures and would comprise all the states in the Peninsula along with the island of Penang under the direct rule of a British governor. A Malayan Union citizenship would be created, while Singapore was to be a separate crown colony.

The MCP, which had expected democratization of the political structure, did not greet the initial announcement of the Malayan Union in London in October 1945 with any enthusiasm. By the time the White Paper was published in January 1946, the MCP had already had numerous minor confrontations with the British administration and was actively preparing for a nation-wide stoppage of work in its struggle for 'democratic freedoms'. The detailed information that was available merely helped to confirm its suspicions regarding British intentions in Malaya. The Malayan Union plan was viewed as a betrayal of the 'oft-repeated promises of democratic freedoms',[26] and as an attempt by the British to strengthen their control.

The MCP's rejection of the plan was for the following reasons. First, no electoral arrangements were to be instituted to enable the people to exercise their democratic rights to select their representatives. Members of the Advisory Council who were supposed to represent the people were all appointed by the governor of the Malayan Union and members of the Executive Council were all British officials. The so-called institutions of decision-making were thus not representative of the people. Second, one of the criteria for eligibility to the membership of the Advisory Council was a competent knowledge of written and spoken English. This might have been convenient from the British point of view, but by any standard of representativeness was highly undemocratic. Those who could speak and write English formed a very small minority. Third, even within the Advisory Council itself, there was not 'an odour of freedom'.[27] Despite the fact that the members of the Council were handpicked by the governor, the British Government did not feel safe enough to accept decisions that were made by the majority of its members. The Malayan Union Order-in-Council provided that: 'The Governor alone shall be entitled to submit questions to the Advisory Councils for their Advice. The Governor may act in

opposition to the Advice given to him by the members of the Advisory Council if he shall in any case consider it right to do so.'[28] Fourth, there was no security of tenure for the members of the Council, who were appointed by the governor and held office only at his pleasure. Finally, Singapore was to be a separate political unit from the Malayan Union. In the MCP's view, the island had such close historical, political, economic, social and military ties with the mainland that it was unrealistic to keep it as a separate unit. This move was seen as an attempt by the British to use Singapore's economic hold over the mainland, as Malaya's chief port for exports and imports and as its financial centre to control the politics of the Malayan Union without having to bear any responsibility.

In place of the Malayan Union scheme as planned in London, the MCP proposed an alternative constitution with the following features:

(1) Singapore would politically be an integral part of the Malay Peninsula
(2) A National Assembly would be established by universal suffrage.
(3) All the Malayan people, irrespective of race, class, political and religious beliefs, who were above eighteen would have the right to vote and be elected.
(4) No restrictions of language, educational standards, residential period, property or sex would be imposed in any form. These rights would be guaranteed in the constitution.
(5) The National Assembly would then appoint the Executive and Legislative Councils. The latter would have the power to supervise the administration of Malaya, including the right to veto any bill or enactment pertaining to Malaya that was passed by the Imperial Government in London.
(6) Singapore would be governed by a mayor and a municipal council with powers over the administration of the city.
(7) State councils whose members would be elected by universal suffrage would be established in all states in the Malay Peninsula.[29]

The proposals were more in conformity with a 'bourgeois, democratic' programme. At that time, the party was trying to build a broad coalition in the struggle against colonial rule, the rationale being that in the struggle against imperialism even the non-communists should be incorporated into the united front to give it the maximum strength. In order not to alienate the non-communists and drive them away from the united front, independence was presented as the terminal goal and there was no mention of the ultimate goal of building a socialist or communist society.

However, general opposition, particularly determined on the part of the Malays, forced the British to reconsider the Malayan Union scheme soon after its implementation. An alternative Draft Agreement was worked out with UMNO and the Malay Rulers. The Draft Agreement restored the Rulers' traditional symbolic power and gave recognition

to the 'special position of the Malays'. More stringent qualifications for citizenship were imposed on the non-Malays. But the British preference for a strong, central government and administration was accepted.

The MCP condemned the Draft Agreement as undemocratic as it took no consideration of popular aspirations. The powers of the British Crown remained as they were under the Malayan Union. No institutions of democratic control were introduced or contemplated. The British High Commissioner would appoint all members of the Executive and Legislative Councils. Singapore was to be a separate political unit. In fact, the Draft Agreement was seen to be even more retrogressive and reactionary. The easy qualification for citizenship was withdrawn and the Malay feudal rulers–the Sultans–were resurrected into the political scene, even if they were just to play a symbolic role.

However, contrary to its earlier agitational stance, the MCP did not openly go against British constitutional policy in 1946-7. It did not, as an organization, join the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition or take part in the coalition's activities, although it fully supported the coalition's proposals at every point.[30] There was also no doubt that MCP cadres were active through the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions (PMFTU), the MPAJA Ex-Services Comrades Association, the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP), and the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU). In fact, the MCP cadres must have carried out most of the backroom work in the organization of the mass rallies and demonstrations (which they were proficient at), leaving the actual task of writing up the 'Peoples' Constitutional Proposals' to the intellectuals in the Malayan Democratic Union.

There were four primary reasons why the MCP kept out of these new political groupings as an organization. First, it did not want its name to be fully committed to a bourgeois democratic programme. The MCP's ultimate objective was 'the creation of a nation on the lines of the Soviet Republic'.[31] The party feared that its total commitment to this minimum programme for a better constitution might harm the party's vanguard role in the long-term struggle for a socialist society. It was better for the party to keep its independent status and its flexibility. Second, the MCP knew that it could give direction to the struggle in the agitation against the government's policy through its cadres in the PMFTU, the MPAJA Ex-Services Comrades Association, the MNP and the MDU. Thus, there was no necessity for it to be a direct member of the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition. Third, the party's goal was to build up a broad united front in the struggle against colonial rule. This united front should include people and organizations of different inclinations where party members would be able to work with them, organize them and win them over to the party.[32] If the party was seen to be dominating the open front, many who could be won over to the party at a later date might keep away. Thus it was tactically expedient to stay clear of the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition. In this way it was hoped that no individual or organization would be inhibited from joining. Finally, the MCP was preparing itself for a greater task. It had

to spend its efforts in reorganizing the party and strengthening itself for the ultimate armed struggle against British rule when all the constitutional means had exhausted themselves. This was a more important task than assuming an open role in the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition.

The Communist Revolt 1948

The communist armed revolt, officially termed 'The Emergency', in June 1948 is certainly one of the most important events in Malayan history. Official propaganda pointed to the Soviet Union as the primary cause of the armed struggle; an order is supposed to have been sent from the Kremlin and the MCP obeyed.[33]

C. B. McLane, in his account of the Emergency argued that 'the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the MCP which was held from 17-21 March 1948 was influenced by the Calcutta conferences more than any other local party meeting in Southeast Asia'.[34] The courier that brought the message for revolution was Lawrence Sharkey, the leader of the Australian Communist Party, reputed to be 'the dominant figure at the Fourth Plenum'.[35] Sharkey, who had stopped over in Singapore on the way home from Calcutta was said 'to have delivered a scathing criticism of the MCP's past policies, especially the decision to dissolve the MPAJA after the Second World War and to have conveyed the significance of the (revolutionary) international line which had evolved since Zhdanov's Cominform speech six months earlier'.[36]

There are, however, several questions that remain unanswered. Why would the Soviet Union organize an international conference for the purpose of conveying instructions for an armed revolt, since this would alert the ruling authorities in various countries? Why would the MCP merely accept Sharkey's word that he carried instructions from the Soviet Union or the Cominform? Since the MCP representative was at the Calcutta Conference, why did *he* not return to Malaya to convey the instructions?

There are, therefore, some loopholes in the theory that the communist uprising in Malaya in 1948 was the direct result of Soviet policy conveyed through the Calcutta Conference of February-March 1948. One can ask if there were any other possible external sources from which instructions for an armed revolt could have been made. In December 1948, six months after the armed revolt broke out, the MCP issued a major document which was to serve as a guideline for the Malayan revolution. The lengthy document, entitled 'Strategic Problems of the Malayan Revolutionary War'[37] bore a striking resemblance to Mao Tse-tung's 'Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War' written in 1936.[38] Not only was Mao Tse-tung quoted extensively, but his concepts of the 'new democratic revolution', 'new democratic economy', 'coalition of workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie' and 'strategic offence and defence' in guerrilla warfare were all followed. The document openly called on the people

'to take advantage of the lessons of the revolutionary war in other lands throughout the world, especially the rich experiences of the peoples' revolutionary struggle in China for the purposes of directing the war'.[39] In addition, it declared that the success of the 'revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people . . . is an international situation which is extremely favourable to the Malayan revolutionary war'.[40]

A month after 'Strategic Problems of the Malayan Revolutionary War' had been issued, the MCP published an eight-point programme for a Malayan Democratic Republic. The programme was again in line with the Chinese model of a joint dictatorship of revolutionary classes as well as a mixed economy under the control of the state. There is no doubt that the political line of the Chinese Communist Party had a great appeal to the Malayan communists. This ideological influence which the communists in China exercised over the Malayan communists was not only a phenomenon of the period just prior to and immediately after the outbreak of the armed revolution. Even in the 1930s, the policy of the Chinese Communist Party also had a bearing on the behaviour of the Malayan communists. When the Japanese invaded China and the line of the Chinese Communist Party was that all the Chinese should unite against Japanese aggression, this line was adopted by the Malayan communists who organized demonstrations against the Japanese as well as the boycott of Japanese goods in Malaya. However, there is reason to doubt that the Chinese Communist Party was responsible for the outbreak of the armed revolt in Malaya. Though on the verge of victory, it was still fighting a civil war, and as such it could spare neither the time nor resources for such international endeavours. In fact, it was reported that Chin Peng, the new secretary-general of the MCP, received no help from the Chinese communists when he was in China in 1947 to conduct investigations on his predecessor.

The third possible external source from which 'instructions' for revolution could have originated was the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). An MCP representative was stationed in London in 1947. An MCP representative attended the British 'Empire' Communist Conference organized by the CPGB in 1947.[41] Yet, it is doubtful that the CPGB was responsible for encouraging the MCP to armed revolt. During the period in question, the CPGB was vehemently attacked for misleading the communist parties in British colonies by advocating peaceful methods.

Thus there are some doubts about the theory that the communist revolt in 1948 was essentially an externally manipulated event. While the actual armed struggle broke out in June 1948, and the decision to embark on this course was made at the Fourth Plenum of the MCP's Central Committee in March 1948, it should be noted that the germ for this course of action dates back much further in history. It is suggested that British post-war policy and the repressive measures that the colonial government took against the communists destroyed the premises on which the MCP's united front policy was based and forced the communists into armed revolt.

The MCP's Strategy and Programme in the 1950s

By 1951, the communists were forced to reassess their strategy when they found that they could not succeed in crippling the economy or British authority by force or by establishing liberated areas. Cadres were directed to penetrate legal organizations like trade unions, political parties, and government institutions and 'exploit lawful disputes and demand concessions from the government and the capitalists'.[42] The de-emphasis on the shooting war meant that the MCP had decided to move back vigorously into political activities in the urban centres.

There were two reasons for this change. First, it was in response to the government's uprooting of half a million farmers who lived on the jungle fringes and resettling them behind barbed-wired 'new villages'[43] which had disrupted the guerrilla's support base. As such, new sources of support were needed and old links had to be re-established. Therefore, more political, rather than military, activities were necessary. Second, the change was in consonance with the MCP's concept of a 'peoples' war' which was extrapolated from the experience of the communists in China.[44] The reversal in the field did not mean that the MCP had abandoned the idea that military force was needed to defeat British colonialism in Malaya, but merely that one phase of action was over. The MCP realized that military force alone would not be enough to secure a victory. In fact, in terms of military combat, the guerrillas were not able to match the British who had much better weapons and a far greater number of soldiers. The communists knew that their strength lay in the 'mobilization of the masses' through political work, and that ultimate victory, or defeat, would depend on how successful they were in this direction. If the party had the strong support of the population, it could launch assaults on the British on many fronts other than the military, and the colonial rulers would find it very expensive and difficult to survive in the hostile environment.

Following on this, the MCP issued a broad programme in early 1953, around which it hoped to build a united front against colonial rule. The new programme stated that:

(1) The first task of the liberation movement was to free Malaya from British imperialism.
(2) National sovereignty would be vested in all Malayan citizens who 'owe permanent allegiance to Malaya irrespective of race, class, occupation, religion or sex'.
(3) Complete economic, political and social equality would be enjoyed by all Malayan citizens including the right of organization, meeting, free speech, publications, person and property, residence, movement, correspondence, religious beliefs, procession and the right to strike.
(4) All foreign-owned capital and industries would be confiscated and owned by the state.
(5) Private enterprises owned by Malayans would be protected and developed in accordance with the national economy.

(6) An equitable system of taxation, according to capital, volume of business and income that would not deter investments, development and production of enterprises beneficial to the national economy would be introduced.
(7) Workers would be given security of employment and social insurance and granted improved working conditions such as sick leave, paid holidays and graduated rewards and bonuses.
(8) Land and other agricultural implements would be given to the peasants and agricultural co-operatives would be promoted.
(9) Free and compulsory education would be introduced to eliminate illiteracy.[45]

While there was nothing unusual in the programme with regard to the points about the workers and peasants which the party had not raised before, a deliberate attempt was made to woo local capitalists to join in the struggle to oust the 'foreign imperialists' through the assurances that their private enterprises would be protected and 'equitably taxed'. Through this the MCP hoped that a broad anti-imperialist movement under its leadership could be created. This policy of allying with people from all strata of Malayan society was given greater prominence a year later (in 1954) when the MCP reiterated its programme at the Conference of Communists and Workers Parties in London. It clearly stated that: 'The party will support and help any parties, groups or individuals, no matter what political views they hold whose activities help to end colonial domination of the British monopolist capitalists and do not support the war against the people.'[46]

However, the MCP was not able to build a united front with any of the major political parties against the British colonial rulers. In 1955 the party initiated talks at Baling with the newly-elected Chief Minister of Malaya for an end to the armed confrontation. The Baling Talks, however, failed when the Chief Minister demanded the unconditional surrender of the MCP.

The AMCJA-PUTERA

The AMCJA-PUTERA coalition was born out of the furore created by the British post-war constitutional proposals. As soon as it became clear that the British colonial government had begun negotiations exclusively with the Malay Rulers and UMNO to work out an alternative to the Malayan Union, all the other political organizations that were excluded showed resentment. The major political parties then in existence issued statements condemning the conspiratorial nature of the proceedings.[47] Even some non-political organizations, like the Chinese guilds and associations, were indignant over the complete by-passing of Chinese opinion.[48] But there was no concerted action by these organizations either individually or collectively to organize any activities to pressure the government to change its policy. The Chinese guilds and associations in the state of Malacca were the only ones which held a

meeting and sent a telegram to London requesting that no changes over the Malayan Union citizenship provisions should be made without consulting Chinese opinion.[49]

The First United Front

The first public attempt to co-ordinate the opposition to the British-UMNO-Malay Rulers Working Committee was made by the President of the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) in November 1946.[50] His suggestion was taken up by the Malayan Democratic Union and plans were made for co-ordinated activities. The announcement by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on 12 December 1946 that he had studied and given conditional approval to the Draft Agreement of the Working Committee gave the impetus for quick action. Two days later, eight political and non-political organizations met to form the Council of Joint Action (CJA). These were the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP), the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU), the Singapore Federation of Trade Unions, the Clerical Union, the Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA), the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC), the Indian Chambers of Commerce and the Ceylon Tamils Association.[51] The purpose of the Council of Joint Action was to 'join hands in submitting proposals on the future Malayan Constitution'.[52] Its three main principles were: (a) Singapore was an integral part of Malaya and should not be constituted as a separate political unit, (b) there should be responsible self-government through a fully elected central legislature for the whole of Malaya, (c) equal citizenship rights should be granted to those who have made Malaya their permanent home and the object of their undivided loyalty.[53]

The CJA had a short life span. Two weeks later, on 22 December 1946, it was superseded by the Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action (PMCJA), a larger coalition that included the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions (PMFTU) and the MPAJA Ex-Services Comrades Association. The PMCJA immediately sent a telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies demanding that the British Government repudiate all its previous discussions and agreements with UMNO and the Malay Rulers, and that the PMCJA be recognized as the only body representing all the Asian communities in Malaya with which the government might conduct negotiations on the constitutional issue.[54] It also decided that it would completely boycott the Consultative Committee which the colonial government had set up to allow all those who had been excluded from the Working Committee to make representations, on the basis that the Federation proposals had already been 'vested with the stamp of finality with the conditional approval of the British Government'.[55]

Presented with the *fait accompli* that it refused to accept, the PMCJA immediately carried out a campaign against the recommendations of the Working Committee. Letters were sent to the Press,[56] meetings were held[57] and mass rallies were organized throughout the country. News-

paper reports said that 'crowds of thousands'[58] were drawn to the banner of the PMCJA. A demonstration in Penang was described as 'one of the biggest gatherings ever witnessed'.[59] It looked as if the demonstrations over the Malayan Union were being repeated in the case of the Federation proposals. Only this time, the crowd was composed mainly of non-Malays.

The Second United Front

By February 1947, the Malay Nationalist Party had found it politically expedient to pull out of the PMCJA and organize its own coalition of Malay organizations. There are various explanations for this action. Simandjuntak[60] has suggested that the MNP left the PMCJA because a Chinese–Tan Cheng Lock–was elected chairman. While the election had relevance, the explanation is incomplete. For in addition to being a Chinese, Tan Cheng Lock was a businessman with widespread interests in tin mining, rubber estates, banking and commerce. The MNP, as a socialist-inclined party, probably felt very uncomfortable that an arch-capitalist was heading the coalition of which it was a member. Another reason why the party left the PMCJA was that it had found it politically inexpedient for a Malay-based party to be submerged in a coalition dominated by non-Malays. Already there were charges in the Malay newspapers[61] that the party was being manipulated by the non-Malays. Since the party's task was to win Malay support away from UMNO in its campaign for a democratic Malaya, it would be inexpedient to start off with the stigma of being the stooge for non-Malay interests. For the party to leave, form its own coalition and then work with the PMCJA on an equal basis, was politically more acceptable.

On 22 February 1947, the Pusat Tenaga Rakyat (PUTERA), or 'Central Force of the People', was formed. One hundred Malay organizations were reported to have attended the inauguration.[62] However, with the exception of the MNP and the Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (API), the others were very small associations. Like the MNP, PUTERA was also influenced by the Indonesian nationalist movement, though to a smaller extent. While the MNP drew inspiration from the ideology and goals of the Indonesian nationalist movement, PUTERA adopted the name and organizational style of the coalition of political parties formed by Sukarno in Indonesia in 1943.[63]

Soon after its formation, PUTERA formed a coalition with the PMCJA, now renamed the 'All-Malaya Council of Joint Action' (AMCJA). The partnership was a loose one, with no common and effective authority structure that could make binding decisions on both organizations. At that stage there was still no well co-ordinated programme of action. Those in opposition to the government's policy were still muddling through on their own. It was only by the end of March 1947 that definite signs of co-ordination and co-operation emerged. A joint letter was sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In addition to the original three proposals that Singapore be included, the legislature

be elected and equal citizenship rights be granted for all citizens, three more were added as follows:

(1) that the Malay Rulers should be retained as constitutional monarchs, subject to the control of the people through democratic institutions and not to the advice of the British High Commissioner or the British Residents in the states;
(2) that special provisions should be made in the constitution for the advancement and upliftment of the Malay people;
(3) that matters concerning the Muslim religion and Malay custom should be under the control of the Malay people.[64]

It was obvious that these last three proposals were added to the list at the insistence of PUTERA. As a progressive coalition, PUTERA itself felt that these demands were legitimate. After all, there should be no objection to the eradication of Malay poverty and the uplifting of the Malay masses, the right of Muslims to regulate their own affairs and the relegation of the Rulers to the position of constitutional monarchs. As a Malay coalition hoping to get the support of the Malay masses, PUTERA was obliged to articulate some of the demands of its constituency. It was tactically wise to do so, and the policy regarding the Malay Rulers in particular was adopted with this in mind. The MNP and API, the two dominant members in PUTERA, had in fact republican objectives. Therefore, the line on the Rulers was adopted either at the insistence of their other partners in the coalition or on the assumption that the Malay *rakyat* were still feudal-minded and would not accept the complete removal of the Rulers. Thus, if PUTERA hoped to win mass support, it had to be flexible in its policy.

There were two primary reasons why the AMCJA acquiesced in these three demands. First, unless they were accepted, PUTERA might not be prepared to form a coalition, and with PUTERA out of the picture, the AMCJA could not claim to be representative of all the communities as it would be predominantly non-Malay. From the AMCJA's point of view, it was vital that PUTERA, a Malay coalition, be in the campaign against the Federation proposals. Second, right from the very beginning, the leaders of the AMCJA had insisted that all the communities in Malaya should thrash out the differences among themselves first, accommodate each other's demands by 'give and take', and then present a common set of demands to the British Government. This would avoid a situation where different communities would be making different or even conflicting demands to the British and prevent the British from practising their divide and rule policy.[65]

The presentation of the six demands was the first step towards coordinated action. In April 1947, the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition set up a committee to work out a more detailed set of constitutional proposals as an alternative to that of the Working Committee. Three months later, in July 1947, the People's Constitutional Proposals were unanimously accepted by the AMCJA-PUTERA delegates conference.

The People's Constitutional Proposals, a sixty-page document,

represented a compromise between non-Malay aspirations as represented by the AMCJA, and Malay demands as represented by PUTERA. It also represented the common desire for democratic self-rule in Malaya. The main principles of the People's Constitutional Proposals were as follows:

(1) All persons born in Malaya should automatically obtain 'Melayu' citizenship. This citizenship would be indicative of the 'Melayu' nationality to which all citizens were expected to give their complete loyalty. All 'Melayu' citizens were to renounce their citizenship rights in any other country. This was in contrast to the recommendation of the government's proposal that the citizens of the new Federation of Malaya need not renounce their citizenship rights in any other country.
(2) For persons who were not born in Malaya, they could be admitted to 'Melayu' citizenship provided: that they were more than eighteen years of age; that they were of good character; that they had resided in Malaya for eight out of the previous ten years; that they pass a simple test in the Malay language, and that they swear an oath of allegiance to Malaya.
(3) All citizens should possess equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic, educational and cultural spheres regardless of race, creed, colour or sex.
(4) The Malay language should be the sole official language of the country. However, the use of other languages would be permitted.
(5) For the first nine years, not less than 55 per cent of the representatives in the central legislature should be representatives of the Malay race.
(6) Singapore should be incorporated into the Federation of Malaya.
(7) All members of the legislature should be elected by the citizens of the country.
(8) Members of the executive should be elected by the legislature from among its own members.
(9) There should be a Council of Races with power to delay any legislation for three years if it considered that the legislation had racial implications.
(10) Malay religion and custom should be under the control of institutions set up by the Malays.
(11) The Malay Rulers should be retained as constitutional monarchs.[66]

It can be seen that five of the previous six principles that the AMCJA-PUTERA had insisted upon as essential to any new constitutional arrangement, were incorporated into the People's Constitutional Proposals. The principle that was left out was that one concerning the special provisions that should be written into the constitution for the advancement and upliftment of the Malays. Instead, the principle of equal rights for all citizens regardless of race or sex was accepted. This was clearly a concession on the part of PUTERA to the AMCJA argument that if the same loyalty was to be demanded from all the nation's

citizens, then no racial group should be discriminated against or given any special privileges. Thus, if the same loyalty was to be required from the non-Malays who were expected to renounce citizenship rights in their countries of origin, there should be equal rights for all in Malaya with 'Melayu' citizenship.

On its part, the AMCJA recognized that the nationality of the new federation should be Malay-based. This was reflected by the following:

(1) The choice of the word 'Melayu' to describe the new citizenship and nationality. The English translation for the word 'Melayu' is Malay. This meant that the non-Malays were accepting Malay citizenship and nationality. To many, this might have been just a matter of semantics. But in the context of the multi-racial society of Malaya, this had political implications. The acceptance meant a willingness to be assimilated.
(2) The acceptance of the Malay language as the sole official language.
(3) The recognition of the fact that for the first nine years the Malays must have the majority in the legislature.
(4) The safeguarding of the Malay cultural heritage through the stipulation that Malay religion and custom must be under the control of the Malays themselves.

The People's Constitutional Proposals were offered as an alternative to the Draft Agreement. The former was a demand for self-government and the creation of a common nationality. The latter was more of a proposal for the continuation of British colonial rule with adjustments to the government structure in Malaya. With conflicting recommendations, there was no basis for compromise. Having abandoned the idea that making representations to the colonial government would help to bring about fundamental changes to the Draft Agreement unless some drastic developments took place, the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition began to move in the direction of hoping to create a storm. The strategy was to take the issue to the people through an intensive campaign in the hope that through a better understanding of the implications of the British-UMNO-Malay Rulers constitutional proposals, the level of popular dissatisfaction could be brought to a greater intensity and the masses would be moved into active opposition. If widespread and intensive pressure could be exerted from grass-roots level, the colonial government would have no choice but to back down.

Meetings, mass rallies and demonstrations were organized to show the government that there was mass support for the AMCJA-PUTERA proposals.[67] Despite the outpouring of dissatisfaction among large sections of the population, the government paid no heed. In April 1947, it was deemed that consultations with all sections of the population, particularly the non-Malays, had been adequately carried out,[68] and in July, the British Government published the 'Revised Constitutional Proposals' which did not differ from the Draft Agreement in any significant way.

The Third United Front

In July 1947, the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition which had been in the vanguard of the mass agitation, found a third ally in the Chinese Chambers of Commerce. Though the Chinese business community had felt excluded during the British-UMNO-Malay Rulers negotiations and had been critical of the Draft Agreement, it had still kept to itself, and the Chinese Chambers of Commerce did not join any of the Councils of Joint Action. Neither did they collaborate with any of the activities of the AMCJA-PUTERA, nor agree to the six principles, nor later subscribe to the People's Constitutional Proposals. More used to the compromising style of approach where they negotiated with, and wrung concessions from the authorities, the Chinese Chambers continued in this direction. Representations were made through the Consultative Committee. However, the finality of the British Government's rejection of their demands in response to the Federation proposals on citizenship, representation in the legislature, the inclusion of Singapore and the issue of Malay special privileges, forced them to reconsider their old methods. While they did not officially join the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition, they were prepared to collaborate in some joint activities to block the Federation proposals. The most important of these was the *hartal*–a complete stoppage of all economic activities.

It is likely that the idea of a *hartal* was first mooted by Tan Cheng Lock, who most probably had seen its effectiveness as a weapon against the government in India while he was there during the war years. The first *hartal* were conducted in Klang (in Selangor) and Melaka in early September 1947. The success of these two stoppages led to others in Perak on 25 September 1947,[69] organized mainly on the initiative of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce in the area. Pleased with the results of these demonstrations of their economic strength, the Chinese Chambers of Commerce announced a plan for a nationwide *hartal* on 20 October 1947, the day of the opening of the British Parliament.[70] The *hartal* was not to be jointly organized, but both the AMCJA-PUTERA and the Chambers called for it on the same day.[71]

Despite the scare tactics[72] and threats[73] on the part of the British colonial government, the *hartal* was duly carried out on 20 October 1947. In terms of a complete economic stoppage, it was a tremendous success. As the *Straits Times* described it in Selangor:

> Hundreds of thousands of dollars were lost by the government, industry, and business today when the *hartal* kept labour away from the ports, rubber estates, tin mines, business houses and streets. Industry in Selangor almost entirely took a forced holiday. Every rubber estate contacted said that Indian and Chinese labourers were not tapping. Tin dredges were idle and in other tin mines, only essential work was being done.[74]

In Singapore, the effects were equally devastating. It was reported that: 'Singapore presented an impressive spectacle yesterday, with its miles of shuttered shops and its streets almost empty of traffic. The organizers

of the *hartal* certainly made a proper job of it. These organizations succeeded in bringing about an almost complete shutdown."[75]

Politically too, the *hartal* must have been satisfying to the organizers, particularly to the AMCJA-PUTERA. In terms of educating the man in the street, raising his political consciousness and enabling him to participate in the agitation for a better constitution, it was a great success. However, in terms of changing British constitutional policy in Malaya, it was a failure. Instead of backing down in the face of mass opposition, the colonial administration became more convinced of the need to stand firm. In contrast to their view of the amiable UMNO leaders who had always kept their opposition within limits, government officials saw the organizers of the *hartal*, particularly those from the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition, as 'extremists' who were out to cause trouble. Thus the colonial government took a tough stand and refused to budge.

The nationwide *hartal* was perhaps the last shot that was fired by the third united front, for after that the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition and the Chinese Chambers of Commerce went their separate ways. While both parties collaborated to oppose British constitutional policy, they were also aware of their differences. The left-inclined organizations in the AMCJA-PUTERA found the political line of the capitalists in the Chinese Chambers repulsive. They were contemptuous of these businessmen who had no interest in the struggle for democracy and nationhood. The Chinese businessmen, on their part, were wary and suspicious of the leftists' intentions. Even in terms of methods there were disagreements. The AMCJA-PUTERA style was more agitational, more mass-oriented, and more militant, while the businessmen's style was élitist and compromising. In fact, the businessmen feared the mass mobilization of the AMCJA-PUTERA, for this would help to build up the strength of the workers' organizations, particularly the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions, with which they were already in conflict over wages and work conditions. Thus, the united front collapsed, an event that should perhaps have been expected because of the front's inherent contradictions.

After that the Chinese Chambers carried on as they had before–they made representations to the government and appealed for a Royal Commission to re-examine the whole constitutional issue. The opposition from the Chinese Chambers finally collapsed in February 1948 when they accepted representation in the Federal Legislative Council on the grounds that within the Legislature they could exert pressure on government policy and thus would be able to achieve their objectives.

The AMCJA-PUTERA carried on with their struggle in opposing the British Government's constitutional policy for the Federation. An information agency was set up in London for the purpose of conducting propaganda among the British public, and a monthly magazine, the *Malayan Monitor*, was published in England. But for the most part, the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition concentrated on its own internal consolidation. It was preparing itself for the long haul in the campaign, not only against the Federation proposals but against British colonial rule in

Malaya. The coalition finally broke up in June 1948 when the MCP revolt broke out, and the outlawing of many of its component organizations and the voluntary dissolution of others led to its demise.

The Independence of Malaya Party (IMP)

The IMP was formed on 16 September 1951. However, the germ of the party was sown much earlier with the formation and activities of the Communities Liaison Committee (CLC). The CLC first made its debut as the Sino-Malay Goodwill Committee in January 1949 for the purposes of enabling the leaders of the two communities to sit down and discuss the sources of inter-racial friction with a view of finding ways and means of eliminating them. It was meant to be an informal closed-door forum where selected members could freely discuss matters among themselves without any restraint. Decisions and resolutions of the Committee were not binding and the Committee did not have any executive authority. Its value lay only in the fact that the people who sat on it were leaders of the major legal political parties or communal organizations.

Dato Onn bin Ja'afar, the leader of UMNO has been credited with the initiative for the formation of the Committee[76] but there is ample evidence to show that the CLC was the brainchild of the British Government. Malcolm MacDonald, the British Governor-General of the FMS played the key role in initiating the meetings which were held in *sancta sanctorum*, such as official residences in Johor Bahru, Kuala Lumpur and Penang.[77] All statements of the Committee were issued on 'government stationery that was usually used in the Governor-General's office',[78] and through the government's Public Relations Department. The Committee was created and fostered to act as an alternative to the MCP, whose armed struggle the colonial government could not entirely defeat.[79]

The CLC met sporadically and issued its first major statement on the future of Malaya in September 1949, calling for:

(1) A thorough reconsideration of the citizenship provisions of the Federal Constitution.
(2) Legislative changes to introduce elections for the state legislatures.
(3) The introduction of elections for states and municipalities that were ready for them.
(4) The preparation of an electoral roll.
(5) The establishment of a franchise based on Federal citizenship.
(6) The compulsory teaching of the Malay and English languages in all government and government-aided schools.[80]

This was followed in April 1950 by a proposal for changes in the citizenship laws. The Committee suggested that the non-Malays should be admitted to political rights in the country through amendments to the citizenship laws. A ten-year residential requirement (instead of fifteen)

was proposed for those who had knowledge of Malay or English.[81] In addition, it was recommended that as a result of these 'political concessions on the part of the Malays',[82] the Government should make immediate and extra efforts to 'ensure the full participation of the Malays in the commercial life of the country'.[83]

By late 1950, consolidation of the organization was necessary to enable it to play a more effective role; this came in the form of the Independence of Malaya Party. The reasons why the consolidation took the form of a new non-communal political party can be traced back to Dato Onn's attempt and failure to transform UMNO from a Malay organization into one that would encompass people from all the racial groups in the country. UMNO was formed in 1946 for the purpose of forcing the British to jettison the Malayan Union plan, and was supported by the Malays because they saw in the organization an effective means of protecting their communal interests. By 1949, however, its leader Dato Onn was thinking more in terms of opening the doors to include the Chinese and the Indians. His first proposal was that UMNO should allow non-Malays to become associate members. Strong objections were raised by the more communal-minded members. In fact, five state divisions, namely Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Kelantan and Perlis, launched a campaign to defeat Onn's proposal at the UMNO General Assembly at Arau (in Perlis) on 29 May 1949.[84] However, Dato Onn's prestige as the 'Father of UMNO' and his impassioned appeals that the Malays should not be narrow-minded and suspicious but take 'a view wider than the *Kampong* (village) view'[85] and have closer relations with the other people in the country, carried the day. It is also true to say that the fact that associate members could not hold office or vote in the elections had an important bearing on the outcome of the vote.

Dato Onn's next step was to persuade UMNO members to accept the citizenship recommendations of the CLC which had been discussed and accepted by the UMNO Executive Committee, cutting down the residential requirement for citizenship for non-Malays from fifteen to ten years. This time the opposition was even stronger and more hostile. At the special General Assembly of UMNO in June 1950, which was convened for the purpose of discussing and acting on the issue, Onn was branded as 'a traitor to the Malays'[86] by his opponents. However, the issue was never voted upon, because Onn, sensing the impending defeat of his proposal, tendered his resignation as the President of UMNO. His resignation was followed by that of the entire Executive Committee. The UMNO General Assembly never voted on the issue and broke up in confusion. It was Onn's personal prestige that came to his aid again. UMNO members demonstrated at his house in Johor Bahru and pleaded with him to return to the presidency and a month later, in August 1950, Onn was re-elected to the post by a vote of 66 to 3.[87] The Assembly also passed his proposal for a change in the residential requirement for citizenship for non-Malays.

The final step that Onn took to transform UMNO from a Malay organization into a multi-racial organization was in November 1950. He

proposed that non-Malays be admitted into the organization as full members with equal rights and privileges, and the organization be renamed the United *Malayan* National Organization.[88] Despite the support of the Executive Committee, Onn's proposals came up against a brick wall. Even his threat of resignation to form another political party was not strong enough to carry him through. He himself must have realized that, and even before the UMNO members met on the proposals, had decided to launch his Independence of Malaya Party in June 1951. The UMNO members who met in August accepted his decision to resign 'in an atmosphere of profound regret and sadness'. They elected a new president–Tunku Abdul Rahman, a Kedah prince and barrister.

Several reasons have been suggested as to why Dato Onn made such haste in trying to transform UMNO. Ishak Tadin[89] argues that the phenomenal expansion of the MCA had aroused Onn's fears that it could be strong enough to rival UMNO. Therefore, Onn's purpose in opening the doors of UMNO to the Chinese and Indians was to draw the Chinese away from the MCA and make the new UMNO the national organization representative of all racial groups. Vasil,[90] however, holds the view that Onn was 'a visionary who, for the sake of a principle (of building a multi-racial nation) and the good of the country was prepared to take the risk of incurring the wrath of his followers'. His vision of a multi-racial nation led him to the conclusion that a multi-racial party was necessary and his attempt to change UMNO was a step in that direction. While there might be an element of truth in the above suggestions, it is also probably true that Onn's personal ambition led him to that action. Through his contacts with British officials and his participation in the CLC, Dato Onn knew that the British Government was prepared to grant political concessions so as to allow local leaders a greater say in the administration, although exactly what form they would take was difficult to say. He was politically experienced enough to realize that the situation in 1951 was different from that in 1946. The British Government, faced with the communist threat whose end was nowhere in sight and needing the co-operation of the Chinese community, was thinking in terms of supporting a multi-racial group to ensure political stability instead of working strictly with a communal organization (particularly UMNO) as it had done in 1946-7. Onn, therefore, took his chance of becoming a national leader of all groups, rather than remain as the head of the Malay community only.

The IMP was a logical development of the CLC and of Onn's failure to transform UMNO from an ethnocentric Malay organization into a national Malayan organization. It was inaugurated with great fanfare in Kuala Lumpur in September 1951 with the following objectives:

(1) Self-government within ten years.
(2) Democratic elections to local government by 1953 and to the central legislature, based on adult suffrage, by 1955.
(3) Malayanization of the Civil Service and the creation of a Malayan Service as opposed to a Colonial Service.

(4) Free and compulsory elementary education for all children between the ages of six and twelve by 1955.
(5) Improved social services, especially in the rural areas.
(6) Subsidies and guaranteed prices for cultivators.
(7) Full fruits of their industry to workers.
(8) Reform of the feudal system in the Malay States.[91]

For various reasons, from the very beginning the IMP could not rub off its image of being closely connected to the British officials. First, the organizers of the IMP were all members of the CLC–people who were handpicked by the Governor-General as those whom the government could work with and rely on. Second, the IMP came into being as the CLC faded from the political scene, creating the impression that it was the CLC's successor. Third, the praise that was lavished on Dato Onn by the Commissioner-General[92] certainly made Onn the blue-eyed boy of the colonial government in the eyes of the people. Despite the rhetoric of independence, the British Government did not find the IMP a threat at all. In fact, a non-communal political party campaigning for independence could prove to be more potent as an alternative to the MCP than any of the parties that existed then; so to British officials, the IMP was certainly a horse worth backing.

The IMP became an instant forerunner in Malayan political life with the help of the colonial authorities. Three of the 5 appointed Malayan ministers in the Federal Executive Council, as well as 30 out of the 75 Federal Legislative Councillors, were IMP members. In addition, many of the top MCA leaders were also IMP organizers. The party seemed poised for victory at the impending local council elections that were to be introduced for the first time. However, it suffered a crushing defeat at the Kuala Lumpur Municipal elections in 1952, winning only 2 out of the 12 seats, mainly because of the local co-operation between UMNO and the MCA. It did equally badly in other town council elections that were held that year. To regain the initiative, IMP leaders organized a 'National Conference' in April 1953 for the purpose of 'planning the way to a united, free and independent Malaya'. Three months later, the National Conference announced the following programme:

(1) Federal elections should not be held until municipal and state elections had been experimented with, because elections were 'still a novelty and to force them upon the people would make a mockery of democracy and could be prejudicial to the real interests of the people'.
(2) Federal elections should only be held towards the end of 1956.
(3) The membership of the Federal Legislative Council should be expanded from 75 to 90.
(4) Only less than half of the members of the Federal Legislative Council should be elected at this transitional stage.[93]

It might sound ironical, but the party that claimed to be leading the

national movement for self-rule was actually counselling a delay in the introduction of elections. In any case, the National Conference did not develop into the broad national front that the IMP desired. Not only did its main political rival, the UMNO-MCA Alliance condemn it as an attempt to delay the establishment of a popular government in Malaya, but even one of its sponsors, the MIC, left because of the retrogressive programme.

In many ways the IMP was a 'neither-here-nor-there' party. It called for independence, but kept on postponing the deadline for it. It did not appeal to the Malay masses who saw Dato Onn as a leader who had deserted them. The majority of the Chinese found the MCP's or the MCA's programmes to be more congruent with their interests. In any case, the close identification of IMP leaders with the colonial government made them highly suspect. With the failure of the National Conference, the IMP sank into oblivion and its leaders reorganized themselves in the form of the communal Party Negara in 1953.

Conclusion

All the three movements discussed above claimed to be non-communal, and all failed in their ultimate objective of gaining power.

The inability of the MCP to unite the various races and free Malaya from British colonial rule was in many ways due to the mistakes of the party. Firstly, it pursued a wrong strategy *vis-à-vis* the colonial authority. In August 1945, the communists were at the head of an organized force of 10,000 people. The MCP had virtual control over the country, since it was the only political movement to survive the Japanese Occupation. At that time, the MCP-led resistance movement was at its highest level of active mass support, albeit mainly from the Chinese community. There were no rivals in the field and if the party had then decided to declare the independence of Malaya, and launched armed warfare to prevent the reimposition of British rule, its chances of success would have been much better than they were three years later when it was finally decided that armed revolution was necessary to drive the British out. There are three reasons why the MCP might well have succeeded in 1945. First, its guerrillas were already in a state of full mobilization. Resistance would merely have meant the continuation of the war and the type of life they had been used to for the past few years. No psychological preparation was needed, as it would have been in times of peace. Secondly, the country was already in turmoil at the time and its continuation in a war against the restoration of British colonial rule could have been tolerated and even acceptable to the people, especially if there was a promise of better things to come. In any case, conditions could hardly have been worse than those prevailing during the Japanese Occupation. Thirdly, the British would not have had the chance to settle down and re-establish themselves, and faced with so many other problems, they would have found it difficult to cope with an armed rebellion.

Instead, the MCP faltered. Caught up with the idea that it needed more time to build its strength further before it could take on the British, and with the illusion that the colonial rulers would make political concessions to the party to enable it to consolidate its strength since it had fought the war on the British side, or would introduce reforms which the party would be able to take advantage of, the MCP accepted the return of the British and even agreed to disarm and demobilize the guerrillas under its control. For a paltry sum of money, the arms which had come into the possession of the guerrillas during the years of Japanese Occupation were surrendered to the British Military Administration.

By the time the MCP realized its mistakes, cast away its policy of compromise with the British, and decided that armed force was needed to destroy British colonialism in Malaya, it had already lost the initiative. It had to remobilize and rearm its soldiers and educate its supporters on the need to accept the disruption to their lives and livelihood after three years of relative calm. It also had to face the British who had had time to consolidate their strength and who had also found support among the Malays through the conservative UMNO leaders. Thus, while the MCP rebellion created confusion and chaos for the colonial authorities, it could not give British rule the death blow, and after a long drawn-out struggle, the British, who had nearly lost initially, were able to gain the under hand.

Furthermore, the party did not give sufficient attention to the peculiar make-up of the multi-racial society in the country and was not sensitive to conflicting racial aspirations. While most of its policies and programmes could be justified ideologically, their implementation could be interpreted in a different way altogether. For example, while the party's anti-Japanese activities in the late 1930s and early 1940s could be justifiably based on anti-fascist principles, the party mobilized support mainly through an appeal to Chinese nationalism. The response of the Malayan Chinese community, still to a large extent oriented towards politics in China, was tremendous. However, this strategy was disastrous in terms of the party's image among the Malay community who had no use for a party not oriented to the Malay Peninsula. It aroused their fears and kept them away from the MCP. Mao Tse-tung's classic axiom for successful guerrilla warfare is that the relationship of the guerrillas to the people must be like that of fish to water. Just as fish cannot survive without water, guerrillas cannot survive or be successful without the support of the people. The failure of the MCP to defeat the British or make the situation so unbearable that they would find it more expedient to withdraw, was also due to the inability of the MCP to secure the support of the Malay peasantry. Despite the class and national objectives of the party, the MCP's membership and support came primarily from the Chinese. When the Chinese squatters living in the rural areas were uprooted and resettled behind barbed-wire 'new villages', the communists found themselves not only without a base to support them in their campaign since they did not have the support of the Malays, but also in a hostile environment. The Malay peasantry, whose outlook was

still bounded by feudal tradition, owed their loyalty to their Sultans, and, since the British regime was identified with the Malay Rulers, they were more receptive to the government's propaganda than to the MCP's appeal that they should join in the struggle to rid Malaya of British colonialism.

In addition to the mistakes of the party, the MCP also failed because of the hostility of the colonial authorities. The British were sure of their purpose–they were there to rule and did not have any illusions that communism was compatible with such rule. They realized that if the communists were successful, British interests in Malaya and even in South-East Asia would be threatened. The colonial government refused to recognize the MCP, and, whenever possible, made systematic efforts to curb the growth of communist influence.

New regulations were made with regard to the trade unions in the attempt to destroy communist strength, and communist-organized activities, ranging from propaganda concert tours to demonstrations, were suppressed. And whenever they felt it necessary, the British used force; communists were arrested, jailed, and exiled from Malaya.

In contrast, the IMP was promoted and helped by the British. The colonial government gave wide publicity to its programmes and activities. In addition, IMP leaders were appointed to the Legislative and Executive Councils. Despite all this assistance, the party was not able to win the support of the population at large for a variety of reasons. First, its close identification with the colonial rulers was also a double-edged sword that cut into the party's image. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, most colonial territories were caught in an upsurge of nationalist sentiment. Thus, political leaders who worked very closely with colonial rulers were not received with popular enthusiasm. Second, while the IMP's non-communal approach was a laudable method in terms of the nation-building process, its liberal ideas were abstract and not meaningful to the masses of any racial group. The Malay masses could not appreciate why the IMP would make proposals that would make it easier for non-Malays to acquire citizenship rights in the country. On the other hand, the Chinese already had two parties that could articulate their interests. For the radical-minded, the MCP still represented their aspirations, and among the upper-class Chinese, such as the businessmen and the professionals, the MCA was able to act as a channel for their demands.

Of the three movements studied, the AMCJA-PUTERA coalition was perhaps the most sensitive to racial differences and made attempts at accommodating racial aspirations. Both the partners bargained and made concessions to each other's demands before policies were agreed on. Though the coalition claimed support from all sections of the Malayan community, it is true to say that it enjoyed much more widespread support among the Chinese and the Indians than it did among the Malays. PUTERA, the Malay component, was dominated by the MNP and API organizations supported by the more radical-minded Malays, who, however, comprised a very small section of the Malay community.

The coalition's close identification with the communists was of problematic value for two reasons. Firstly, since the communist movement was perceived as a Chinese movement by the majority of the Malays in the country, other organizations that worked closely with the communists were also similarly perceived. Thus, the coalition was not able to mobilize the support of the Malay community for its programme. Secondly, the coalition was anathema to the colonial authority which viewed it as a communist-front organization. The government had a hostile attitude towards the coalition and took steps to suppress it along with all the other communist-front organizations. Thus, the coalition was banned when the communist revolt broke out.

The failure of all three parties demonstrates the problems of forming viable political organizations in a multi-racial setting dominated by a colonial government. Any direct challenge to the government would lead to repression, but, on the other hand, too close an alignment with it would amount to a political kiss of death. Beyond this dilemma lay the other problem which persisted long after Independence: how could a single party hope to attract substantial amounts of both Malay and Chinese votes? The coalition idea was probably the only solution, but in the delicate balance of forces which existed immediately after the Second World War, AMCJA-PUTERA, with its close communist links and its weak Malay support, failed, where later the Alliance, and the *Barisan Nasional*, succeeded.

1. G. Hanrahan, *The Communist Struggle in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1971, p. 43.

2. Ibid., p. 44.

3. Ibid., p. 52. Batu Arang supplied a major portion of the fuel for electric power plants and railways in Malaya. The British government viewed this incident as the first open attempt by the communists to create chaos in the country; 300 policemen and troops later recaptured the mine.

4. Ibid., p. 53. Hanrahan doubts that the figure of 300,000 is accurate. But he agrees with the communists' claim that the strike was very successful and that thousands of longshoremen, foundry mechanics, rubber tappers and tin miners were involved.

5. Lam Swee, *My Accusation*, Kuala Lumpur, publisher unknown, 1951, p. 2.

6. Hanrahan, op. cit., p. 59.

7. Emerson says that 20,097 persons were banished from 1911 to 1931. From 1918 to 1921 the annual average was 817 and from 1928 to 1931 the annual average was 1,528. (Figures include 'undesirables'.) The increase in the later years was in relation to the increased political activities. See R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1964, p. 508. In 1937, twenty of the Party's top leaders were deported. See V. Thompson and P. Adloff, *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia*, New York, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1956, p. 128.

8. Hanrahan, op. cit., p. 64. The 101 Special Training School graduated 165 people.

9. Dalforce (as the volunteers were called) had about 5,000 members. They fought valiantly in the defence of Singapore. Those who were not killed in the battle were later massacred by the Japanese when they took over Singapore. See F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East*, London, H. M. S. O., 1956, p. 378.

10. See *The Malayan Communist Party's Declaration Regarding the Present Situation*, 7 November 1945, BMA File 54/45, Singapore National Archives.

11. Hanrahan, op. cit., p. 88.

12. See statement of Lee Kiu, representative of the Peoples' Anti-Japanese Backing Up Society, printed in *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, 26 September 1945, BMA File PR/3/2.

13. See 'Resolution of the Representatives' Assembly of all Races and Classes in Southern Johore', printed in *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, 6 October 1945, BMA File PR/3/2.

14. *New Democracy*, 26 September 1945.

15. Donnison, op. cit., p. 384.

16. *Malayan Monitor*, Vol. 3, No. 6, June 1948.

17. Donnison, op. cit., p. 382.

18. M. Stenson, *Industrial Conflict in Malaya*, London, Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 59.

19. *Min Sheng Pao*, 24 October 1945.

20. See *The Malayan Communist Party's Declaration Regarding the Present Situation*, op. cit., p. 2.

21. Ibid.

22. *25th Indian Division Weekly Intelligence Review*, Week ending 28 November 1945, p. 6.

23. *Malaya Tribune*, 17 February 1946.

24. Ibid., 16 February 1946.

25. See MU Secretariat File 20/46.

26. *The Democrat*, 9 March 1946.

27. Ibid.

28. Section 86 (2) in MU Secretariat File 325/46.

29. *The Democrat*, 12 May 1946.

30. *Malaya Tribune*, 10-11 January 1947, 5 September 1947, 19 September 1947.

31. *Straits Times*, 7 December 1947.

32. See ibid. for a short discussion of a purported MCP document on post-war strategy in the United Front.

33. *Straits Times*, 7 and 23 September 1948 and 1 October 1948.

34. C. B. MacLane, *Soviet Strategies in Southeast Asia*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 385.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., p. 386.

37. A summary of the text is reproduced in Hanrahan, op. cit., p. 170.

38. See Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Peking, Foreign Language Press, 1965.

39. Hanrahan, op. cit., p. 179.

40. Ibid., p. 175.

41. J. H. Brimmel, *Communism in Southeast Asia*, London, Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 210.

42. Hanrahan, op. cit., p. 222.

43. The resettlements were called 'new villages', but they were more in the nature of big prison camps. The resettled areas were completely surrounded by barbed-wire. Movement was controlled. Government propaganda constantly reiterated that the people voluntarily moved into the sites that were offered to 'escape from the clutches' of the guerrillas. But the reality was that the squatters were given no choice but to move. As the *Straits Times* described the relocation of the people from Segambut to Jinjang (both in the state of Selangor): 'At dawn, a cordon was thrown around the area and the government's decision to move the people was announced. The police officer stated: "We told them to pack their belongings and to break down their houses. At first many said they would not move but we made it plain that there were no two ways about it. After that, they got down to the job."' *Straits Times*, 27 June 1951.

44. Hanrahan, op. cit., pp. 170 220.

45. See *Malayan Monitor*, Vol. 6, No. 6, June 1953.

46. See 'MCP Statement to the Conference of Communist and Workers Parties, London, 1954'; *Malayan Monitor*, Vol. 7, No. 7, July 1954.

47. See *Straits Times*, 16 September 1946; *The Democrat*, 6 May 1946; *Malaya Tribune*, 2 July 1946; *Malayan Press Digest*, 16 August 1946; and *Straits Times*, 9 August 1946.

48. *Malaya Tribune*, 16 July 1946.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., 10 November 1946.
51. Ibid., 23 December 1946.
52. Ibid., 14 December 1946.
53. *Malay Mail*, 23 December 1946.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. The Chinese Press in particular gave good coverage to the views of the PMCJA. The Malay language *Utusan Melayu* and the English Language *Malaya Tribune* were also sympathetic to the PMCJA.
57. See *Malaya Tribune*, 22 January 1947.
58. Ibid., 7 February 1947.
59. Ibid., 10 February 1947.
60. B. Simandjuntak, *Malayan Federalism 1945-1963*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 49.
61. See *Warta Negara*, 11 December 1946; *Majlis*, 10 December 1946, 12 December 1946.
62. *Sunday Tribune*, 9 January 1947.
63. G. T. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1966, p. 108.
64. *Malaya Tribune*, 20 March 1947.
65. Ibid., 20 December 1947.
66. *Straits Times*, 9 July 1947.
67. These were adequately reported in the *Malaya Tribune*, 10 September 1947.
68. See *Indian Daily Mail*, 25 July 1947.
69. *Malaya Tribune*, 10 September 1947.
70. Ibid., 16 October 1947.
71. Noordin M. Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1974, p. 47.
72. *Straits Times*, 17 October 1947.
73. Ibid., 20 October 1947.
74. Ibid., 21 October 1947.
75. Ibid.
76. Ishak Tadin, 'Dato Onn', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. I, No. 1, March 1960, p. 71.
77. *Indian Daily Mail*, 20 September 1949.
78. Ibid.
79. For further elaboration, see Khong Kim Hoong, 'British Rule and the Struggle for Independence in Malaya 1945-1957', Ph.D. thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1975, pp. 327-39.
80. *Straits Times*, 18 September 1949.
81. Ibid., 10 April 1950.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid., 30 May 1950.
85. *Malay Mail*, 30 May 1950.
86. *Straits Times*, 12 June 1950.
87. *Malaya Tribune*, 29 July 1950.
88. *Straits Times*, 21 November 1950.
89. Ishak Tadin, op. cit., p. 79.
90. R. K. Vasil, *Politics in a Plural Society*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1971.
91. *Straits Times*, 23 June 1951.
92. *Malay Mail*, 17 June 1950.
93. *Straits Times*, 24 August 1953.

3

GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT: THE RULES OF THE GAME

MICHAEL ONG

The view we take is that democratic government is the best and most acceptable form of government. So long as the form is preserved, the substance can be changed to suit conditions of a particular country.[1]

Tun Haji Abdul Razak bin Dato' Hussein

In his study, *Representative Government in Southeast Asia*, Professor Emerson warned that 'no one should come to the study of Southeast Asian political institutions with fixed preconceptions that they should conform to established western models because they are societies which are in revolution and are seeking to find their own way of life between an old world and a new'.[2] One should add that the traditional ways of doing things–unless a violent revolution has occurred–have a tendency to persist in spite of all the outward appearance of a 'modern' political institution in the developing countries.[3] It is with these points in mind that this study will attempt to examine the relationship between government and opposition in the Malaysian Parliament, by focusing particularly on the Standing Orders, that is, 'the rules of the game'. Thus we are not interested in the form, which is still not dissimilar to that of Westminster, the Mother of Parliaments, but with the actual working of the institution as its practices adapt to the realities of Malaysian politics.

It is generally accepted that most legislatures play only a small role in the decision-taking function within the political system, that is to say, they do not allocate values, except in the formal sense.[4] The Lower House of the Malaysian Parliament, the Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives), is no exception. Since it was fully elected in 1959, all bills have been introduced by ministers or deputy ministers. The Government has never been defeated. The few, less than ten, Opposition bills which were introduced as private members' bills have all been rejected. The business of the House continues to be controlled by the Cabinet. This state of affairs is a reflection of the dominant position of the ruling party. Since 1959, as shown in Table 3.1 on page 41, the Government has had at least a two-thirds majority. This figure is of the utmost importance to the Government, because without a two-thirds majority no constitutional amendment can be made.[5]

TABLE 3.1
Strength of Government and Opposition in the Dewan Rakyat, 1959-1978

	Government	*Opposition*	*Total*
1959	74	30	104
1964	126	33	159
1969	97	47	144
1974	135	19	154
1978	131	23	154
1982	132	22	154

Note: In 1959, there were 104 seats; with the formation of Malaysia 45 seats were added from the three states of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore. Singapore with 15 seats withdrew from Malaysia in 1965. In 1974, 10 seats were added as the result of the redrawing of the constituencies.

When it failed to win such a majority in the 1969-70 General Elections, the Government was prepared to accept the support of the Sarawak Opposition party, Sarawak United Peoples Party (SUPP) in order to achieve this end.[6] Since 1957, the Constitution has been amended, on an average, once a year. While admitting the need for constitutional amendments, the Opposition over the years has protested 'at the manner in which our Constitution has been amended or mucked about or mutilated at the whims and fancies of the Alliance Government'.[7] As a reaction to the speed at which the Constitution was amended in 1965, in order to separate Singapore from Malaysia, a (then) Opposition member, Dr Lim Chong Eu, was permitted to introduce a private members' bill entitled *The Constitutional (Amendment) Bill 1966*. This bill sought a lapse of one month between the introduction of a motion to amend the Constitution and the date on which the amendment is read for the second time. In his introductory speech, Dr Lim expressed concern over 'the many changes to the constitution' and referred to how the constitution had been amended 'in three hours' for Singapore's separation.[8] Speaking on behalf of the Government, Tun Razak, the deputy prime minister, stated that the Government had no objection to the bill since it was concerned with the 'stability and sanctity' of the Constitution. While acknowledging that the Government, with its majority, could amend the Constitution 'at any time if the government wishes', amendments according to him, were made only 'when we consider it absolutely necessary'. In reply to Dr Tan Chee Khoon, who seconded the bill and had said that the one month was 'necessary so that MPs could consult their constituents', Tun Razak said that that was 'carrying democracy a bit too far'. He further argued that it was the House which should decide whether it needed the time to consult its constituents, since that was how Parliament operated.[9] Almost a year passed before the bill was given its second reading. Tun Razak, the only speaker on the Government side, opposed the bill on the grounds that it would provide 'an unnecessary rigidity' to the Constitution,[10] and the bill was rejected.

It should be noted that between the first and second readings of the

above bill, the Government had occasion to amend the Constitution after the proclamation of an emergency in Sarawak.[11] The *Emergency (Federal Constitution and Constitution of Sarawak) Bill 1966* proposed to empower the Governor of Sarawak 'to convene a meeting of the Council Negeri to test the confidence of the Council Negeri, in the present Government, following the accepted democratic practice'.[12] This bill was tabled at the emergency session of Parliament after the High Court of Sarawak had ruled that the Governor had acted unconstitutionally in dismissing the Chief Minister.[13] The Governor had acted after he was 'persuaded by federal authorities'[14] on the basis of a 'no-confidence' letter signed by 21 of the 42 members of the Council Negeri. On the same day as the House met, the Government published a White Paper[15] which, as stated by Tun Razak, 'indicated beyond any doubt, that the Sarawak Communist Organization has been making preparations for an armed struggle in the State'.[16] The Government's case was that the political crisis and security situation had forced it to take preventive action to ensure the stability of the state.[17] However, it has been observed that 'one cannot be too sure that Kuala Lumpur is not increasingly relying on the tactic of raising the spectre of communist subversion to keep the political pot from boiling over'.[18]

During the debate on the above bill, an Opposition MP pointed out that the Sarawak MPs 'never saw a copy of this Bill' until the morning of the debate.[19] MPs in West Malaysia, however, were given four days' notice. The bill went through all the three readings the same day and was passed unanimously. The Opposition parties, including four Sarawak MPs who had crossed the floor, were absent during the division. It was to prevent precisely such a situation that the *Constitutional (Amendment) Bill 1966* was proposed by the Opposition, but as we have seen the ruling party was not prepared to have such 'an unnecessary rigidity'.

In many ways the two bills and their passages through the House illustrate perfectly the relations between Government and Opposition in Parliament. The ruling party's overwhelming strength in the Dewan allows it to tolerate the Opposition but always on its own terms. It is to these terms that we now turn our attention.

From the very beginning, both sides of the House acknowledged that, though the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives were based on those of the House of Commons, 'it is inevitable, and indeed desirable, that our own practice will develop along purely Malayan lines... and peculiarly adapted to the needs of our nation'.[20] The evolution of procedure should give us an indication of how the House has performed over the years. It will be shown that the strength of the Government side and the non-involvement of back-benchers in the determination and interpretation of Standing Orders has resulted in the views of the Government leaders being fully reflected in all changes. In short, procedures have increasingly been used to serve the interests of the Government with rare consideration given to the views of the Opposition.

The 'rules of the game' in the House of Representatives are determined from time to time by the Standing Orders Committee. In their

reports since 1959, there is evidence that during the First Parliament (1959-64) the Committee was prepared to accommodate the views and suggestions of the Opposition. During the Second and particularly the Third Parliament, however, the Committee was increasingly reluctant to consider any suggestions from the Opposition. The Committee, like all other parliamentary committees, reflected the strength of Government and Opposition in the House of Representatives. Thus in effect the recommendations and decision of the Committee, in the final analysis, was decided by voting according to party lines.

In its first report, the Committee appears to have had an open mind regarding Standing Orders for the House. It was decided that since they were of an 'experimental nature', it was 'necessary to see how they work and to make recommendations to them as and when these are thought necessary'. It called on members to draw the attention of the Committee to 'any difficulties encountered'.[21] The experimental Standing Orders had been drawn up with the help of D. W. S. Lindderdale, who was the Fourth Clerk to the British House of Commons. However, it was recommended that the Speaker could consider not only the practice of the House of Commons, but also that of other Commonwealth parliaments.[22] One of its recommended Rules, 36 (10), which stated that 'It shall be out of order to use (a) treasonable words, (b) seditious words and (c) words which are likely to promote feeling of ill-will or hostility between different communities in the Federation', was to prove controversial. During the debate on the Report, the Opposition parties were divided, with the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) and Party Negara opposing this rule, while the Socialist Front (SF) gave qualified support to the clause. Two of these parties were represented on the Committee. Lim Kean Siew of the Socialist Front stated during the debate that he had wanted to submit a minority report but, 'it was agreed, for the sake of the order of the House, that we should all write one report, because it had to go beyond party likes and dislikes. It was meant for our own good conduct.'[23] He also revealed that part (c) of the clause 'was put in by me when the others insisted on (a) and (b)'.[24] Wan Mustaffa bin Haji Ali of the PMIP said that he was 'made to sign the Report'.[25]

During the heated debate, D. R. Seenivasagam (PPP) proposed an amendment to delete the whole of Clause 36 (10), while the Socialist Front moved that the amendment should be amended to exclude (a) and (b). He and the PPP argued that the clause was 'a unanimous suggestion of this committee, with a view to muzzle the Opposition members in this House'.[26] He had earlier pointed out that the clause was unfair to the Speaker because 'however brilliant a man may be, he cannot reasonably be expected to say what is treason, what is seditious, in a split second'.[27] He opposed the Socialist Front's amendment because, if it were passed, 'parliament will cease to reflect the views of the people'. He admitted that MPs may move motions which 'may create a certain amount of feeling of ill-will or displeasure to the other side', but 'that is what we are here for, whether it displeases the Chinese or whether it displeases the Malays, it

is immaterial. We who believe in democracy, want the right for every party, not only for our party.'[28] Wan Mustaffa (PMIP) expressed similar views and stated that though he was a member of the committee that 'does not mean that I agreed to everything'. He had requested that the motion to accept the Report be debated. He was opposed to sub-clause (c) because, if accepted, a member 'will have a certain amount of fear in speaking' and saw it as 'muzzling the mouths of Honourable Members of Parliament'.[29] Lim Kean Siew (SF) pointed out that the Report had been turned into 'a propaganda issue', though it is the Standing Orders of the House, 'for our own good conduct, for our own good and perhaps for our own bad'.[30] Sub-clause (c) according to him, could not be clearer, 'We may ... deal with issues that are communal, but we should not make use of those things to create destructive motives which may lead to the shedding of blood'.[31] He reminded the House that, 'we must not forget that we in Malaya are in a different context with other people. Malaya is perhaps the only place in the world where all the races of the country are able to sit together in Parliament and bring forth issues for the purpose of building our nation in peace. Do we want this to cease? ... The fundamental point is the basic idea of democracy, and any hostility that may lead to any racial persecution must be stopped, not outside this House, but in this House, which is the fountain of all our laws.'[32] On the other hand, the Socialist Front's opposition to (a) and (b) of the clause was, according to V. David, because 'we are afraid of the way they may be interpreted. If the Chair thinks that an issue ... is racial, treasonable or seditious, and rule out of order [*sic*], then we would be deprived from the privilege of ventilating our views for which we have been sent to this House.'[33]

The Government's view, as given by Dato Sulaiman bin Abdul Rahman, the Minister of Interior was that the Report was not a Government report, but that of the committee. He pointed out that 'the principle of having members of the Opposition parties in the Committee ... is at this moment being jeopardised'. He asked, 'what is the use of doing so if we are going to have in a Committee representatives from each party, who will come and give their personal opinion and then come back here and repudiate what they had agreed to'. In reply to the points raised, he said that there were guides in the existing sedition laws for the Speaker. He further asked whether members should use their freedom of speech 'to utter sedition and encourage it to flourish under the protection of the Constitution'. He refused to believe that D. R. Seenivasagam (PPP) meant what he actually said. For the benefit of the PMIP, he pointed out that the National Assembly of Pakistan, an Islamic state, had provisions against uttering treasonable, seditious or defamatory words in its debates. His final point was that they also appeared in the rules and procedures of the Mother of Parliaments.[34]

In its editorial on the debate the *Straits Times* said that 'the storm aroused by this demonstrated the need for the checks which the amendments will impose'. It argued that 'what the Opposition wanted was not liberty but license. Talk of parliamentary democracy being outraged is

poppycock . . . MPs may protest that they do not wish to provoke communal hostilities . . . in that case what freedom are they losing? None of their arguments make sense.'[35] The *Malay Mail* in its editorial argued that 'MPs should be unfettered as far as the performance of their duties' but pointed out that privilege must be controlled firstly by personal responsibility and secondly by the discipline of the legislature on a non-party basis. On D. R. Seenivasagam's fear that a wide interpretation of the clause might deny the legitimate grievances of some particular groups from being heard, it said 'that surely it is not in the spirit of the rules and we do not think that such a situation will arise'.[36]

The views expressed on this Clause 36 (10) have been quoted at length because of its importance not merely to the MPs themselves but to the political system. In a sense this debate was continued in the debate on the *Constitutional (Amendment) Bill 1971* and the outcome was no less uncertain. Behind the rhetoric of the Opposition MPs was the underlying fear that the Government might abuse these powers to their detriment. It was perhaps this fear that led almost every Opposition MP who spoke, to see the Report as a Government one and not as a Report of a non-partisan committee. The dominance of the Government could not be denied and assurances that the rules were for the well-being of the MPs and the nation failed to allay their fears.

The problem of adequate time to deal with the business of the House has been a continual problem since 1959. The Government has always argued that they have been fair to the Opposition, while the Opposition has denied that this has been the case. The argument for and against longer meetings of the House can be seen in the debate on the Government's motion 'That at its rising this day the House do stand adjourned *sine die*' on 14 December 1959. This was the first time that such a motion had been proposed in the House. On that occasion there were nine Opposition motions waiting to be debated and this meant that they had to be debated within five hours. Without exception all the Opposition MPs opposed the motion. Lim Kean Siew (SF) argued that to cut short the debate 'will be doing a great injustice to the Opposition'.[37] Speakers from the various Opposition parties all voiced the view that time should be given for their motions to be debated fully. Dato Onn bin Ja'afar (Party Negara) requested that motions not debated should be allowed to be carried over to the next meeting.[38] D. R. Seenivasagam (PPP) argued that the House should 'appreciate that members come here to voice their opinion and to voice it thoroughly and in as much time as may be necessary to do that. Parliament should not limit itself except in very special circumstances. Parliament should sit for as long as it is necessary to deal with the affairs of the country.' He went on to demand from the Government the withdrawal of the motion and asked for an extension of time on behalf of the people whom he represented.[39] The Government's view, stated by Tun Razak, was that since it had 'to arrange and restrict our business to suit the time available', the Opposition should do likewise. If the Opposition motions were not debated they could be debated at the next meeting of the House. The Government, according to him,

had no intention 'to restrict the Opposition in their speeches or whatever they wanted to say'. He argued that the business of the Government in any Parliament must come first and 'a limited time can only be given for private business'. He pointed out that 'we cannot accept every motion, and allow every motion by the Opposition to be debated . . . it does not follow that we go on meeting for another month'. The Government, according to him, 'have other business to do'. Further, Parliament was a place of work and 'not a place for talking and chattering'.[40] It was pointed out by Dato Onn, on a point of clarification that members were not paid $500 per month to sit in silence but to express their views to the Government and that, the word 'Parliament', meant a place of talking. When the adjournment motion was passed the four PPP MPs staged a walkout 'as a sign of protest'.[41]

The Government's argument was interesting but at the same time rather odd. It revealed that the Government did not favour lengthy meetings of the House, especially when its business was not being considered. By no means could it be said that that particular meeting had been a long one since the House had only sat for sixteen days.[42] Besides, as Chin See Yin, an Opposition member, pointed out, 'we have had a few days' rest', and the Government 'have taken their turn'.[43] Its attitude towards the Opposition's use of the House to express its views was also clear. While it was prepared to give the Opposition 'limited time' they had to sort out their affairs among themselves and could not expect an extension of that time. What was odd, however, was that the Government should feel that it had 'to arrange and restrict our business to suit the time available'. This was puzzling since the Government controlled an overwhelming majority in the House and could thus extend the 'time available'.

The Government's 'limited time' for the Opposition was to decrease over the years. Within nine months of the above debate, it was reported that the Opposition parties were to press the Government to give 'priority to their motions', many of which had been left undebated for months because of lack of time.[44] Several views of the Opposition parties were quoted. Dato Onn was quoted as saying 'I got so fed up with the repeated postponements that I withdrew my motions'. The PMIP claimed that the non-discussion of their proposals had given the people the impression that they were 'doing nothing in the House'. The Socialist Front pointed out that the Standing Orders Committee had agreed to allot one day of a five-day meeting to Opposition motions[45] but said that 'this has not been complied with at any of the meetings'. The party further accused the Government of delaying tactics at some meetings to 'deliberately kill time' so that Opposition motions had to be postponed. That report also noted that some of the Opposition motions had been carried over from four previous meetings.

The Government's unwillingness to give time for the Opposition by moving that the House adjourn *sine die* can be seen from the following examples. In 1963 Opposition MPs sought permission for one of their number, Ahmad Boestamam, leader of the Socialist Front, to appear

before the House to refute charges made against him by the Minister of Home Affairs. Boestamam had been arrested under the Internal Security Act under which a detainee can be held for two years without being charged. However, the Government moved that the House adjourned *sine die* after the sitting of that day. The Socialist Front claimed this was 'most unfair'. D. R. Seenivasagam stated that, while he did not sympathize with Boestamam's case, the adjournment 'smacks of political trickery' and urged the Government to let him appear, under armed escort, to refute the charges made against him. Tun Razak in reply said that the Government had been fair in giving the Opposition two days instead of one during the sitting.[46] In 1967, when there were two Opposition motions waiting to be debated, the government moved that the House be adjourned *sine die* 'on the completion of all government business'. This adjournment was seen as 'a gross and blatant violation of democracy' by Dr Tan Chee Khoon. He also pointed out that the Prime Minister had given a promise to Opposition MPs that they would have the opportunity to move motions for debate.[47]

In contrast, when Government business remained outstanding the Government had on occasion passed motions extending the sitting in order to complete it. In December 1971, for example, the Government was criticized for doing this on the grounds that insufficient time was given to discuss important bills.[48] V. David (Gerakan) said that it was 'most unfair and unjust to make an attempt to push through vital Bills within short hours'. Lim Kit Siang (DAP) pointed out that when the House met, 'MPs did not know what is the parliamentary business. They came to the House and then saw the papers, a pile of them, on the table and they are expected to take part in debates. And now there is a proposal to rush through all these [*sic*] business.' He asked the Minister concerned to withdraw the motion. The Government's reply was that the Speaker had given 'plenty of opportunities' for the Opposition to take part in the debate and that 'one of them, on the city status of Kuala Lumpur, had to meet a deadline'.

Apart from moving that the House not rise until it has finished its business, the Government has also used Standing Order 12(i). This states the time of each sitting, 'provided that a Minister may without notice move at any time a motion to be decided without amendment or debate to vary the time of sitting of the House'. This was used for example on 14 August 1962, 21 February 1967 and 24 August 1967.

In a letter to the Prime Minister on 28 October 1974, Lim Kit Siang, Leader of the Opposition, suggested that the Government initiate action for parliamentary reform, not only to find the time for more members of Parliament (in particular Opposition members) to speak more often on the floor of the House, but also to equip members to speak with more authority. One of these suggestions was that time should be found for Opposition motions. According to him, the Prime Minister wrote that the suggestions would be considered. Consequently, during the Fourth Parliament (1974-8) more Opposition motions were given time for debate.

Apart from the time to consider bills in the House, a constant complaint of Opposition MPs was that they were not given sufficient time to examine the bills before the House met. For example, in August 1967 this was the subject of an appeal to the Speaker by six MPs from five parties. In their letter they pointed out that during that six-day meeting of the House, the House dealt with twenty-six motions, and thirty-four bills were received by members 'either on the first day or subsequent days'. They asked the Speaker to ensure that members were given due consideration by way of fair and adequate notice of business to be transacted in the House 'during normal hours as well as beyond normal hours'. They asked the Speaker to act on the appeal 'in the interests of ensuring fair play and avoiding sharp practice in Parliament in the future'. They warned that 'if nothing is done to rectify this stormy state of affairs, we must, in all good conscience, consider whether we should allow ourselves to be party to the maintenance of a parliamentary facade to shelter a government which has shown no respect whatsoever for either the dignity of the House, or for the normal and accepted courtesies and decencies of parliamentary practice'.[49] However, the same practices continued in the Third Parliament (1969-74) and the Pekemas proposal to amend the Standing Orders so that, *inter alia*, fourteen days' notice be given for the second reading of a bill, two days' notice for Government motions, and extended time for debate and time for private motions, was rejected *in toto* by the Committee.[50]

In addition to their complaints regarding the lack of time for consideration of and debate on bills, Opposition MPs on many occasions also complained about the changes in the order of business in the House. In March 1967, Dr Tan Chee Khoon complained in the House about 'the practice of altering the order of business before the House without advance notice'. He accused the Government of 'sharp practice' since MPs who earned their livelihood other than by being merely MPs could not follow such a timetable.[51] This, as pointed out above, was also the subject of a protest in August of that year. In July 1971 Lim Kit Siang was stopped by the Speaker when he raised this matter during the committee stage of the Revised Salaries of Judges Bill. He had referred to 'the government benches' practice of juggling about with the timetable of parliamentary business', because that Bill and the one following were not expected to be debated till the next day. He said, 'I think this is to catch the Opposition with surprises, and to frustrate a full and thorough debate. I think this is most unworthy of a government which prides itself of being so reasonable and democratic.' This juggling, according to him, showed the 'utter contempt for the elected representatives'.[52] In reply, Tun Ismail argued that the Government 'have every right to decide in what order any of the business before the House should be done'. The lack of time for studying the bills was 'the fault of the Honourable Member'.[53] On another occasion, Dr Tan Chee Khoon appealed to the Government for consideration of the Income Tax Bill which had sixty pages and 'a bulky list of amendments', to be delayed. The appeal was ignored, and the Bill was taken through the House in

an extended session without any notice of its intention. The extension was moved by the Minister of Finance just before the House was due to be adjourned for that day. According to Dr Tan, 'It is difficult not to conclude that this was done deliberately, in the clear knowledge that Opposition members would be caught off-guard and would be unable to participate in the debate.'[54]

In addition to the above, Opposition MPs have also protested against the practice of not providing the text of bills to be debated in advance. For example, in May 1972, four days before the House met, Lim Kit Siang protested that MPs had not received the order paper and government bills to be considered in the forthcoming meeting. He pointed out that parliamentary draftsmen had taken several months to prepare the bills, 'yet MPs had to study and debate as many as forty bills within a few days'. According to him, 'MPs will be dumped with a mountain of government bills on their arrival in Parliament on the first day and are expected to study, debate and approve them within a short period'.[55] In the event, twenty-one bills were introduced and nineteen passed during the ten-day meeting of the House. Another example of this occurred in November 1973. MPs were given the Government's 213-paged *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan* on 26 May and had to debate it on 27 May. Again Dr Tan Chee Khoon protested that there was not enough time. While acknowledging that the 'Government can bulldoze all that they want to do in the House', he hoped that the Government 'will give us adequate time to study such important documents in future before we debate them'.[56]

These practices by the Government meant that it was able to pass, at times, an incredible number of bills in just one sitting of the House. Some examples may be given. On 25 November 1959, the House passed thirteen bills; on 10 August 1965, twenty-three bills; on 25 August 1967, twenty-four bills. During the Third Parliament there were eight occasions when more than ten bills were passed at each sitting, the highest number being eighteen on 7 December 1978.[57]

Apart from the above practices, the Government has also amended Standing Orders to the disadvantage of the Opposition. An examination of the Standing Orders Committee reports reveals that until the Third Parliament, the Committee was concerned primarily with procedural matters such as changes in the times of meetings, increasing the number of days for the major debates such as the Budget and the Speech from the Throne.[58] The reports of the Committee after 1971 differ from earlier years in one important respect. Previously, minutes gave the views of members in some detail, whereas after 1971 no details of the discussion were given. Opposition MPs' suggestions on substantive issues were completely rejected. We shall now examine some of the post-1971 amendments to the Standing Orders.

After Parliament was convened in 1971, the Committee amended more than one-third of the Standing Orders during the first session of the Third Parliament. Most of these amendments were procedural matters and resulted from amendments made to the Constitution as

well as being intended to ensure that the rules complied with existing practice.[59] Among the latter were S. O. 9(2): the Clerk shall make available to each and every member as early as possible before each meeting, a copy of the Order Paper in respect of that meeting; S. O. 22(2): no less than fourteen days' notice must be given to the Clerk for questions; S. O. 23(5) empowered the Clerk to edit questions submitted; S. O. 24(1): *any* Minister (instead of *the* Minister) may reply to questions asked. Under S. O. 12(1) morning meetings which were held in the previous Parliaments were abolished, and the official language of the House was to be Bahasa Malaysia, but the Speaker could permit the use of the English language.

Substantive issues were affected by the amendments made in 1972 and 1973. In 1972 S. O. 17(1) was amended to disallow adjournment speeches from being made 'during the first meeting of the first session or during the meeting which the Supply Bill is considered'.[60] Another report of that year disallowed any member, under S. O. 22(4) from asking 'more than twenty questions for Oral Reply and more than five questions for Written Reply in any one meeting of the House'.[61] These were strongly opposed by all the Opposition parties. On the banning of adjournment speeches, the Government's view, as given by Tun Tan Siew Sin, Minister of Finance, was that members could 'speak on a wide range of subjects' during these meetings.[62] Lim Kit Siang (DAP) saw these as 'steps to strangle the political process' and pointed out that as it was, time had already been limited.[63] Dr Tan Chee Khoon (Pekemas) made the important point that the Government was not obliged to reply to the issues raised by the Opposition during general debate, as was the case in adjournment speeches.[64] This refers to the fact that an adjournment speech is made on a specific subject requiring the minister in charge to reply. In reply to the points raised, Tun Tan said that the Opposition would be given every reasonable opportunity to speak in every debate and gave an assurance that it would consider 'sympathetically, any proposal that the House should extend its meetings even up to 9.30 p.m. If this is the view of the honourable members of this House, we will certainly not object to that.' He also stressed that 'one cannot follow Westminster one hundred per cent' but must 'suit our democracy to Malaysian conditions'.[65]

It is worthwhile noting that when the Standing Orders were published, an unnamed Alliance MP was quoted as having said, with regard to the ban on adjournment speeches, that 'apparently at the last budget session, DAP leaders made adjournment speeches every day'.[66] While it is true that the ban on adjournment speeches primarily affected the DAP, it should be pointed out that it also affected all other parties as well. Nevertheless the ban meant that specific issues, requiring a reply by the Government could not be made during these meetings, and, given that these meetings are the longest meetings of a parliamentary session, it effectively denied the Opposition parties an important and effective channel for them to raise issues. During interviews Opposition MPs also pointed out that adjournment speeches during the other

meetings of the House were subject to 'sabotage' by Government MPs. This would occur when the subject of an adjournment speech was seen as 'sensitive' by Government MPs.[67] The mechanics of this 'sabotage' appears to be as follows: when the Opposition MP starts his speech, a Government backbencher rises to inform the Speaker that the House lacks a quorum. Subsequently, the division bell is rung to no avail and the House is then adjourned on these grounds. The problem of a lack of a quorum towards the end of the day, however, is not unusual as MPs, both Government and Opposition, tend to leave the House after they have made their speeches.[68]

The limitation on the number of questions an MP can ask was according to Tun Tan, to 'ensure that as few questions as possible were left unanswered in the House'.[69] He also pointed out that the average number of questions for oral reply that could be answered daily, during the one hour allowed, was between ten and fifteen. However Dr Chen Man Hin (DAP) said that the restriction was 'undemocratic' and that MPs 'should be allowed to ask as many questions as they like'.[70] Another DAP MP, Peter Dason, suggested that question time be extended to one and a half hours. Despite calls by Veerapan (Pekemas), Yunos Wahab (PMIP), and Edmund Langgu (SNAP), for the Minister to reconsider the matter, Tun Tan pointed out that the decision of the Committee was unanimous and signed by representatives of all parties.[71]

There is no denying that before the amendment many oral questions had not been answered during sittings of the House. However, the practice of the House was that oral questions which were not answered during question time were given written replies. It is hard to understand why this could not be continued. The effect of this limitation was that during the longer meetings of the House, such as the Budget meetings, no questions appeared on the Order Paper for several sittings. For example, in the 1974 Budget meeting, six of the thirty-two days had no question time for lack of questions. In addition, seven sittings had fewer than ten questions during the question hour.[72] On the limitation of written questions, there can be no reasonable justification since at least two weeks' notice must be given. The fact of the matter is that question time had been dominated by the Opposition benches[73] and had been used effectively by them to raise issues and embarrass ministers in the administration of their portfolios.[74] There is no doubt that by and large Government MPs prefer private means of seeking information and expressing criticism rather than on the floor of the House.[75] Thus it is difficult not to conclude that the limitation on questions was aimed at the Opposition MPs.

In 1973, the combined Opposition (SNAP, DAP and Pekemas), proposed seven amendments to the Standing Orders.[76] These included notice of fourteen days to be given before bills were read for the second time; extended time for debates on the Budget and the Royal Address; the removal of the limitations on oral and written questions; that adjournment speeches be allowed in all meetings; two days' notice for

Government motions and twenty-four hours' notice for the motion to extend the time of sitting; one day a week to be set aside for private members' business. These were rejected *in toto* by the Standing Orders Committee because 'they were not necessary'.[77] The Government, while admitting to the 'steep opposition' from the parties on the limitation of questions, argued that 'if we have too many questions, then concentration on the questions of a small number of Members will be the result, whereas if you have a small number of questions... then there is a greater chance that questions from most Honourable Members, if not all Honourable Members, will come up for answer in Parliament'. The question was seen as 'purely a question of distribution'.[78] On the subject of notice for government motions, it was argued that 'any system which tries to be rigid and which does not give discretion to any Government may be ideal in the view of the Opposition... but when the Opposition becomes the Government... they will appreciate the flexibility of handling Government business... and probably the proposal such as suggested by the Opposition would be found quite cumbersome'.[79] The Government appealed to members 'to let us work with the present Standing Orders and we will find that it will not be against the interest of the Opposition at all'.[80]

Apart from rejecting the Opposition's amendments, the Committee in 1973 recommended that the Speaker may 'if he thinks fit, prescribe a time limit for speeches'.[81] In the past, the Speaker had limited the time for speeches under S. O. 100, that is, through his residuary powers. This authority has been used during Budget meetings as well as in meetings where many bills have to be considered within a short time. While it has been used against Government MPs and even a Minister,[82] Opposition MPs tend to see any limitation of time for speeches as an attempt to avoid full debate on the part of the Government. Nevertheless, there have been occasions in the past when the Speaker has appealed to the Government for more time to be made available for debate. For example, during the 1971 Constitutional Debate the Speaker announced that 'at my own personal request' the debate was extended to seven days.[83]

The 1973 Report of the Committee also announced a change in the procedure for the debates on the Supply Bill and the Annual Development Estimates. This change was to enable the debates 'to take place simultaneously'.[84] Previously the two items were debated separately. No reason was given except that the procedure was successfully used in the second session of 1978.[85] The only reason that can be suggested is that the Government wanted to save time and avoid repetition of similar issues, during the debates. In terms of time, twenty-six days had been allocated previously to the two debates, including one day for ministers to reply during the Budget debate, whereas the new procedure provided twenty-five days, including two days for ministers' replies.[86] Thus two days were 'gained' by the Government at the expense of members.

During the Fourth Parliament, amendments to Standing Orders

were minimal and, apart from a new Standing Order allowing the Parliamentary Secretary to represent and speak on behalf of the Minister of Finance during the proceedings relating to the Supply Bill and the Development Estimates, they were all procedural.[87]

Our examination of the relationship between Government and Opposition in Parliament reveals a picture of a strong Government determined at every stage of the game to control and change the rules to its advantage. Its overwhelming majority in the House has meant that its control of the Standing Orders Committee has been absolute. Thus rules to limit the number of questions MPs were allowed to ask and the banning of adjournment speeches during key meetings of the House have tended to minimize the role of the Opposition. Other sources of the strained relationship between the two were the limited time provided for Opposition motions, the shortage of time given to study important bills and the lack of quorums in the House, whether deliberate or otherwise. These have all led to the Government being accused of being less than democratic. Characteristically the Opposition has reacted with protests and boycotts not unlike the behaviour of the Opposition in other developing countries.[88]

The attitude of the Opposition to the House has been indicated to some extent in the debates on the Standing Orders Committee. They see Parliament as a national forum for the public airing of issues that affect the nation and as the place where Government is made accountable. The Government on the other hand, particularly since 1969, has attempted to minimize politicking both within and without the House, and, being in a position of power, it has thus been able to preserve the form but change the substance of democratic life in Malaysia to its own advantage.

1. *Report of Proceedings of the 17th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Kuala Lumpur*, London, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, September 1971, p. xx.

2. R. Emerson, *Representative Government in Southeast Asia*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1955, p. 192.

3. See Ann Ruth Wilner, *The Neo-Traditional Accommodation to Political Independence*, Research Monograph No. 26, Princeton, Princeton University, Center for International Studies, 1966.

4. P. A. Packenham, 'Legislatures and Political Development', in A. Kornberg and L. D. Musolf (eds.), *Legislatures in Development Perspective*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1970, p. 522.

5. *Malayan Constitution*, Article 159 (3).

6. The chairman of SUPP was made a federal minister, while its secretary-general became the deputy chief minister of the state government.

7. Dr Tan Chee Khoon, *Dewan Rakyat Debates (DRD)*, 10 September 1966, col. 2093.

8. Ibid., 10 November 1965.

9. Ibid., 10 November 1966.

10. Ibid., 25 October 1966.

11. For details see M. B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney, University of Sydney Press, 1974, pp. 94–111.

12. Tun Razak, *DRD*, 10 September 1966, col. 2066.
13. See S. M. Thio, 'The Chief Minister's Case in Sarawak', *Parliamentarian*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 1968, pp. 114–16, for legislation after the Emergency Bill was passed.
14. Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, London, University of London Press, 1970, p. 384.
15. Government White Paper, *The Communist Threat to Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1966.
16. *DRD*, 19 September 1966, col. 2058.
17. Ibid., speech by Tun Ismail, cols. 2177–84.
18. Justus M. van der Kroef, *Communism in Malaysia and Singapore*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967, p. 175.
19. *DRD*, col. 2081.
20. Ibid., speech by Tun Razak, col. 39.
21. *First Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 2 of 1959, p. 8.
22. Ibid., p. 12.
23. *DRD*, 8 December 1959, col. 1450.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., col. 1472. He had been absent during some of the Committee meetings.
26. Ibid., col. 1435.
27. Ibid., col. 1477.
28. Ibid., col. 1488.
29. Ibid., cols. 1472–3.
30. Ibid., col. 1445.
31. Ibid., col. 1446.
32. Ibid., cols. 1448–9.
33. Ibid., cols. 1465–6.
34. Ibid., cols. 1491–1505.
35. 'License for treason?', *Straits Times*, 11 December 1959.
36. 'A Control of Speech', *Malay Mail*, 11 December 1959.
37. *DRD*, 14 December 1959, col. 1522.
38. Ibid., col. 1526.
39. Ibid., col. 1524.
40. Ibid., cols. 1526–7.
41. Ibid., col. 1527.
42. The House first met on 25 November 1959.
43. *DRD*, 14 December 1959, col. 1525.
44. This and the following quotes have been taken from the *Sunday Mail*, 28 August 1960.
45. The Opposition parties had wanted to amend Standing Order (S.O.) 15 to stipulate the number of days for private members' business but the Government's view was that the amendment should not be embodied in the S.O. although it was 'sympathetic to the principle of a ratio of 1:5 days allotted to private members business'. The Committee agreed, but considered that the principle should wherever practicable be observed (*First Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 1 of 1961, p. 7).
46. *DRD*, 13 March 1963.
47. Ibid., 17 November 1967.
48. Ibid., 17 December 1971, cols. 5035–40.
49. *Sunday Times*, 27 August 1967.
50. See *Second Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 4 of 1973, Appendix B, for details of the Opposition amendments and debate on the Report on 4 December 1973 in the Dewan Rakyat, cols. 3807–14.
51. *DRD*, 1 March 1967.
52. Ibid., 20 July 1971, col. 4003.
53. Ibid., col. 4037.
54. *Sunday Times*, 27 August 1967.
55. *Straits Times*, 2 May 1972.
56. *DRD*, 27 December 1973, col. 3206.

57. Ibid.

58. In 1965, a number of amendments, details of which were not given, were suggested by Dr Toh Chin Chye (PAP), but before these were considered Singapore was separated from the Federation. See *First Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 2 of 1965, p. 3.

59. See *Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 2 of 1971, pp. 6–12, for details.

60. *Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 1 of 1972, p. 10.

61. *Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 4 of 1972.

62. *DRD*, 10 May 1977, col. 80.

63. Ibid., col. 101.

64. Ibid., col. 100.

65. Ibid., col. 106. A motion allowing the Speaker to extend the sitting of the House until 8.30 p.m. was passed after that debate.

66. *Straits Times*, 27 March 1972. The subjects of these adjournment speeches were published in *The Rocket*, March/April 1972, p. 9.

67. In July 1974 this writer was present during an adjournment speech by an Opposition MP. It was noticed that some Government MPs left the Chamber just before the speech began, while others came in to collect their brief cases and left even while the division bell was ringing.

68. There have been many occasions when there were no quorums even for Government business, e.g. 25 June 1962 and 10 December 1962. The *Straits Times* reported on 28 June 1965 that the House lacked a quorum for the third time in eight weeks. It also reported the lack of quorums in its 18 June and 22 June issues. The Third Reading of the Supply Bill in 1967 was passed after Standing Orders were suspended for lack of a quorum, *Straits Times*, 22 February 1967.

69. *DRD*, 14 December 1972.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. *DRD*, November-December 1974.

73. For example, during the 1971/72 Budget Session the Opposition members asked 1,274 questions while Government MPs asked only 469.

74. For the importance of Question Time in Parliament see D.N. Chester and N. Bowring, *Questions in Parliament*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1962.

75. This is the most common response given by Government MPs when interviewed about their participation in the House.

76. See *Second Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 4 of 1973, Appendix B, pp. 66–7.

77. Ibid., p. 55.

78. Datuk Haji Abdul Taib bin Mahmud, *DRD*, 4 December 1973, col. 3813.

79. Ibid., col. 3812.

80. Ibid., col. 3814.

81. *Second Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 4 of 1973, p. 38.

82. The Minister of Commerce, Dr Lim Swee Aun, was stopped by the Speaker on 13 December 1962 when he was not even half way through his speech, after the Speaker had announced a limitation of time during debates. On the whole these were rare occasions.

83. *Parliamentary Debates on the Constitutional Amendment Bill 1971*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, p. 29.

84. *Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 4 of 1973, p. 43.

85. Ibid.

86. See Standing Orders 66 and 67B (old) and 66 (new).

87. See *Report of the Standing Orders Committee*, DR 2 of 1977. The only other Report of the Committee was DR 2 of 1975.

88. See E. Shils, 'Opposition in the New States of Asia and Africa', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 1966.

4

THE APPORTIONMENT OF SEATS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

S. SOTHI RACHAGAN

Introduction

THE principal function of an electoral system is to translate equitably the wishes of the voters into a chamber of representatives. In electoral systems that involve territorially-based constituencies the manner in which the constituencies are delimited significantly influences the quality of representation, and this is especially so in electoral systems like that in Malaysia which involve single-member constituencies with plurality voting.

In federal states the process of delimitation of constituencies generally involves two stages. Initially, the number of seats per sub-unit (region, or component-state) will have to be determined. This process is referred to as apportionment and is distinguished from the subsequent stage which involves the actual determining of the boundaries of the constituencies apportioned to each sub-unit. This latter process is varyingly referred to as districting or delineation.

The apportionment of seats to the component units of a federal state basically involves the question of the relative electoral strength of the states concerned. It also inevitably concerns such momentous issues as the preservation of state rights, the nature and quality of the constitutional guarantees for such rights and the desire, willingness and ability to preserve them. This chapter examines the arrangements made for, the practice adopted in, and implications of the apportionment of the seats in the House of Representative to the component states of the Malaysian federation.

Constitutional Provisions for Apportionment

The first national-level election in Peninsular Malaysia was conducted for the fifty-two Federal Legislative Council seats on 27 July 1955. The committee appointed to examine the question of elections to the Council on 15 July 1953 itself recommended that a constituency delineation commission should be established.[1] The three-man commission so appointed was under the chairmanship of Lord Merthyr. No guidelines were provided to the commission as regards the apportionment of seats to the various states. However, the terms of reference of this commission

required that there should be a measure of weightage for area given to rural constituencies, and that constituencies, whilst preferably lying within whole *administrative* districts, should not in any case cross *state* boundaries. In the absence of any registration of voters the commission was obliged to work with only total population statistics. Even here the commission was severely handicapped since the latest census available at that time had been conducted as long ago as 1947. The forced migration of persons into new villages during the Emergency and the voluntary rural-urban migration made the 1947 census severely out of date. However, in view of the enthusiasm that prevailed for immediate elections, the Commission's report was accepted *in toto*.[2] The Commission apportioned the fifty-two legislative assembly seats amongst the eleven states thus:

Perlis	1	Perak	10
Kedah	6	Pahang	3
Kelantan	5	Selangor	7
Terengganu	3	Negeri Sembilan	3
Penang	4	Melaka	2
		Johor	8

The 1957 Malayan Constitution placed the responsibility for the delimitation of constituencies and the conduct of elections on an independent election commission. Article 46 of the Constitution stipulated that there should be one hundred parliamentary constituencies, and Article 116 and the Thirteenth Schedule of the Constitution included the principles by which the constituencies were to be delimited. For the purposes of the first election to the newly constituted House of Representatives, however, Article 171 of the Constitution suspended these provisions and merely required that 'the Federation shall be divided into constituencies by dividing into two constituencies each of the constituencies delimited for the purpose of the elections to the Legislative Council'. This provision was obviously in recognition of the fact that the delimitation attempted in 1954 required a thorough review which was unlikely to be completed in time for the first post-independence election. In pursuance of Article 171, therefore, the Election Commission in 1958, merely divided into half each of the fifty-two constituencies delimited in 1954.[3] The resulting 104 constituencies were those utilized for the 1959 Election.

The intention of the 1958 delimitation was clearly that the 104 parliamentary constituencies should be used for the 1959 Election and the subsequent by-election only, and that a completely fresh delimitation would be made in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution for subsequent elections. Immediately following on the Election of 1959, the Election Commission proceeded to apportion amongst the several states the one hundred seats stipulated by Article 46 and to delineate these constituencies. The Commission's report was presented in 1960[4] and the delimitation presented was to be effective for the next election scheduled for 1964.

The Constitution bound the Government to accept the report, but the Alliance Government took advantage of its more than two-thirds majority in the House of Representatives to amend the Constitution in 1962, and made the delimitation inoperative.[5] The reasons for the Government's actions were not stated, though observers generally held that it was due to the Government's probably unnecessary fear that the delimitation would be electorally disadvantageous to it.[6] The 1960 delimitation, it will be noted, came soon after the 1959 Election. The Alliance majority in terms of votes had been reduced from 79.6 per cent in 1955 to 51.5 per cent in that election and the percentage of seats won had dropped to 71.15 per cent from 98.08 per cent in 1955. The Commission's 1960 apportionment of seats amongst the states was such that, by and large, it tended to increase or retain unaltered the apportionment to the states in which the Alliance had fared badly in 1959, but to decrease the number of seats apportioned to the states in which it had fared well (Table 4.1).

The main effects of the 1962 amendments to the Constitution were:

(1) Parliament, in effect the government of the day, assumed the powers of apportionment and delineation of constituencies. The Election Commission's powers were now restricted to merely *recommending* changes. Apportionment of constituencies between the various states became in effect the prerogative of the government of the day; and
(2) the number of parliamentary constituencies was retained at 104, making the Commission's 1960 delimitation of 100 seats inoperative. Thus the 104 constituencies delimited in 1958, and intended for the 1959 Election, could now be used for subsequent elections as well.

The new provisions occasioned by the 1962 amendments to the Malayan Constitution were incorporated into the 1963 Malaysian Constitution, and the constituencies were utilized for the 1964 General Election and subsequent by-elections.

Till the formation of Malaysia in 1963, the sharing of powers between the federal government and the state governments was identical for each of the states and each state could appoint two senators to the Dewan Negara. However, no guarantees existed with respect to the number of seats in the House of Representatives for each state. The formation of Malaysia introduced such guarantees only for Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. This was a consequence of the special arrangements made for these new states.

In the case of Singapore, the most important features of the special arrangements were that Singapore would be guaranteed her free port status, have special autonomy in education and labour policies and be allowed to retain a larger proportion of her revenues. However, in exchange for this greater autonomy and lesser financial obligations *vis-à-vis* the states of the former Federation of Malaya, Singapore agreed to accept only fifteen seats in the Federal House of Representatives–

TABLE 4.1
Seats Apportioned in 1958 and 1960, and Percentage Votes Won by Alliance Party in 1959 Election, by States

State	*Seats apportioned*[1]		*Difference in 1960*	*Alliance*[2] *vote 1959* %
	1958	*1960*		
Perlis	2	2	0	59.6
Kedah	12	12	0	65.3
Kelantan	10	10	0	31.4
Terengganu	6	5	−1	37.4
Pulau Pinang	8	9	+1	44.0
Perak	20	19	−1	49.6
Pahang	6	5	−1	66.9
Selangor	14	14	0	44.3
Negeri Sembilan	6	5	−1	51.9
Melaka	4	5	+1	58.9
Johor	16	14	−2	65.7
Total	104	100	−4	

[1] Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Election Commission on the Delimitation of Constituencies*, Kuala Lumpur, 1960, p. 3.
[2] Compiled from Election Commission, *1959 Election Report*, 1960.

fewer than it would be entitled to on a purely population basis. In the case of Sabah and Sarawak, their relatively weaker position led to a number of special safeguards and guarantees which assured them a high degree of autonomy and an altogether special position in the new federation. Amongst these safeguards was a guarantee of sixteen seats for Sabah and twenty-four seats for Sarawak in the Malaysian House of Representatives–far in excess of what was warranted by their existing populations, although with accelerated development programmes, a fast rate of population growth might be expected. The special guarantees and the peculiar circumstances that apply in Sabah and Sarawak led to their constituency delineation exercises and elections being held separately from those of Peninsular Malaysia.

Though the Malaysia Agreement provided guarantees for Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore as regards the number of seats in the House of Representatives, the other eleven states had no such provision. However, the 1963 Malaysian Constitution did make a qualitative change regarding any alteration that could be made to the number of seats allotted to each of the Peninsular Malaysian states. Whereas Article 46 of the Malayan Constitution gave Parliament power to alter the number of members of the House of Representatives by ordinary Act, the Malaysian Constitution stipulates a constitutional amendment and thus requires a two-thirds majority.

In 1966 the Election Commission sought the Government's intentions

as regards any change it might wish to make to the apportionment of seats but the Government was unwilling to make any amendments. Subsequently, the Commission undertook to prepare recommendations for the delineation of constituencies, but was unable to rectify the malapportionment of seats between the states. The Commission failed to complete its review in time for the 1969 Election, and the review was postponed until after the election,[7] which was also held on the basis of the constituencies apportioned in 1958. By now the constituencies were greatly disproportionate in terms of total population and electoral size, and were grossly inadequate as a territorial basis of electoral representation.

Communal rioting and clashes followed the 1969 Election and parliamentary government was suspended. For this reason the Commission also suspended any constituency review. With the restoration of parliamentary government on 20 February 1971 the Commission resumed its review of constituencies and completed its task in May 1973. In accordance with the provisions of Section 9, Part II of the Thirteenth Schedule of the Constitution, the Commission submitted its report to the Prime Minister.[8] But even before the Election Commission's 1973 Report was tabled in the House of Representatives, Parliament approved the creation of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. This decision required constitutional amendments for the transfer of Kuala Lumpur from the Selangor State Government to the Federal Government. Along with the amendments occasioned by this transfer, the Government amended Article 46 of the Constitution and increased the number of seats in the House of Representatives from 144 to 154.[9] The additional ten seats were apportioned between the Federal Territory and the rest of Peninsular Malaysia.

The Apportionment Procedure

In apportioning seats to the several component units of a nation, factors other than just population figures may be taken into consideration. Hence, when viewed in terms of representation of people, the apportionment may appear to disadvantage certain units. This form of malapportionment, referred to as constitutional malapportionment, was occasioned by the constitution adopted in 1963 when the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak, joined together to form the larger Federation of Malaysia. As mentioned above, Sabah and Sarawak were allocated 40 seats–16 for Sabah and 24 for Sarawak. Singapore, on the other hand, conceded an even greater electoral disadvantage than the Federation of Malaya but in exchange for greater self-government (Table 4.2). When Singapore separated from the Malaysian Federation, the number of seats in the Malaysian Parliament was reduced from 159 to 144. The advantage accruing to Sabah and Sarawak was now solely at the expense of Peninsular Malaysia, thereby further accentuating the disadvantage to the Peninsular Malaysian states. This was to some extent rectified when Parliament in 1973 increased the number of Penin-

TABLE 4.2
Discrepancies between Total Population of Component Units of the Malaysian Federation and Apportionment of Seats, 1964

	Peninsular Malaysia	*Singapore*	*Sabah*	*Sarawak*	*Malaysia*
Population	7,919,055	1,844,200	506,628	819,808	11,089,691
Population as percentage of Malaysian total	71.4	16.6	4.6	7.4	100
Seats	104	15	16	24	159
Seats as percentage of Malaysian total	65.4	9.4	10.1	15.1	100
Discrepancy	−6.0	−7.2	+5.5	+7.7	–

Source: *Malaysia, Official Year Book*, 1970.

TABLE 4.3
Discrepancies between Total Population of Component Units of the Malaysian Federation and Apportionment of Seats, 1974

	Peninsular Malaysia	*Sabah*	*Sarawak*	*Malaysia*
Population[1]	8,819,928	654,943	977,438	10,452,309
Population as percentage of Malaysian total	84.4	6.2	9.4	100
Seats	114	16	24	154
Seats as percentage of Malaysian total	74.0	10.4	15.6	100
Discrepancy	−10.4	+4.2	+6.2	–

Source: Malaysia, *1970 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, Community Groups*, 1972, pp. 45–6.

[1] Population statistics are those for 1970.

sular Malaysian seats from 104 to 114, but left unchanged at a total of 40 the seats for Sabah and Sarawak (Table 4.3). For the apportionment of seats between the Peninsular Malaysian states, and since 1970 also to Sabah and Sarawak, no explicit constitutional guarantees exist and Parliament reserves the exclusive right to apportion seats, such powers having been assumed from the Election Commission by the constitutional amendment of 1962.[10]

Most crucial in apportionment is the decision as to the principles of representation. If population, the most frequently mentioned principle, is to be adopted, then several population measurements are available. Total population, permanent residents, citizens, eligible electors, or simply the registered electors can each separately, or in varying combinations, serve as the basis of apportionment. The choice of the exact population criteria utilized can have a considerable effect on the final pattern of representation.

In the absence of any accurate figures as regards the number of citizens, and in the absence of any previous registration of electors, the Merthyr Commission of 1954 had been obliged to utilize the total population measure.[11] The 1957 Malayan Constitution, however, altered the principle employed and stipulated two criteria to be jointly used–the total population and the total electorate (that is, registered electors) of the component states. The relevant clause in the Constitution read: 'Constituencies shall be allocated to the several States in such manner that the electoral quota of each State is as nearly equal to the electoral quota of the Federation as it can be without causing undue disparity between the population quota of that State and the population quota of the Federation.'[12]

It should be noted that 'electoral quota' means the number, obtained by dividing the number of electors in the Federation by the total number of seats; and 'population quota' means the number obtained by dividing the total population of the Federation by the total number of seats. The phrase 'without causing undue disparity between the population quota of that State and the population quota of the Federation' quoted above, however, is not sufficiently precise. It thus became incumbent upon the Election Commission to attempt an interpretation. The emphasis clearly had to be on electorate size, although total population was not to be entirely discounted–but what was to be the extent of the weightage given the former? For its 1960 delimitation review, the Election Commission decided to place a double emphasis on the figures based on the electoral quota, and a single emphasis on the figures based on the population quota. The formula used by the Commission was as follows: the exact number (that is, to three places of decimals) of constituencies which each state should receive was calculated firstly on a population basis, and secondly on an electorate basis. The result of the second calculation was then multiplied by two and added to the result of the first. The aggregate figure was then divided by three and the result, calculated to the nearest whole number, gave the number of seats to be apportioned to each state.[13] In 1962 the Government amended the Constitution to make the apportionment of seats become solely based on the number of electors in each state.[14]

In a state with a relatively ethnically homogeneous population such a step would leave little cause for concern, for it may be assumed that the total electorate would be a fair representation of the total population and be almost all of the total adult population. In a homogeneous state a change in the population principle utilized may not be of great signi-

ficance because nearly all the population automatically have citizenship. In the context of Malaysia's plural society, however, the omission of the total population consideration has significant ramifications on the relative electoral strength of the various communities. This problem had been envisaged by the Election Commission in its 1960 Delimitation Report: 'The allocation of Parliamentary seats in a country which has . . . somewhat complicated provisions with respect to citizenship constitutes a problem that is by no means simple.'[15] The combined effect of the enfranchisement limitations occasioned by the citizenship laws and the procedure adopted for the registration of electors has resulted in the communal composition of the electorate being different from that of the total population. Table 4.4 indicates the communal composition of the Peninsular Malaysian electorate for each of the federal-level elections held. Table 4.5 indicates the electoral advantage or disadvantage accruing from differential enfranchisement to each community at each of the elections. In 1955 the Malay community had

TABLE 4.4
Communal Composition of Peninsular Malaysian Electorate in Parliamentary Election Years

Year	*Malays*		*Chinese*		*Indians*[1]		*Total*
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	
1955	1,077,562	84.2	142,947	11.2	60,356	4.6	1,280,865
1959	1,244,827	57.1	752,846	34.5	184,665	8.4	2,182,338
1964	1,503,836	54.4	1,039,264	37.5	223,431	8.1	2,706,531
1969	1,835,908	55.7	1,055,958	36.3	264,890	8.0	3,296,256
1974	1,971,305	57.9	1,176,361	34.5	258,995	7.6	3,406,661

Source: 1955, 1959 and 1964 data obtained from Barisan Nasional Office, Jalan Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur. 1969 and 1974 figures based on electoral registers for respective years.
[1] Includes all communities except Malays and Chinese.

TABLE 4.5
Discrepancies between Communal Composition of Electorate and Communal Composition of Total Population, Peninsular Malaysia, in Parliamentary Election Years[1]

Year	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*[2]
1955	+34.4	−25.9	−8.5
1959	+ 7.1	− 2.9	−4.6
1964	+ 4.4	+ 0.6	−5.0
1969	+ 2.8	+ 0.7	−3.5
1974	+ 4.7	− 1.0	−3.7

Source: Total Population Data as estimated by Chief Statistician, Malaysia.
[1] Percentage of community in electorate minus percentage of community in total population.
[2] Includes all communities except Malays and Chinese.

a very significant advantage, but over the years this has been eroded and the Chinese and Indian communities have obtained an increasingly proportional share of the franchise, arising from increasing numbers of Chinese and Indians acquiring citizenship. In 1974, however, the trend towards parity in the share of the franchise was reversed, and the percentage of Malays in the electorate increased. This increase cannot be accounted for in terms of any change in citizenship laws, but probably reflects a higher rate of registration by Malay electors. Utilization of the total electorate criteria instead of the total population criteria thus works to the advantage of the Malay-dominated states at the expense of the predominantly non-Malay states.

Regardless of the population principle, the apportionment of seats to component units prior to the delineation of constituencies inevitably introduces a degree of deviation from absolute parity in numbers. This is occasioned by the constitutional requirement that a whole number of seats be apportioned to each state, thus precluding the possibility of constituencies straddling state boundaries.[16] Such discrepancies become marked in the case of small states, since the fractional increase or decrease in apportionment in proportion to their population is more significant than in the case of large states. Such a deviation, being an inherent feature of apportionment itself, would therefore result regardless of which population principle is utilized. Table 4.6 indicates the extent of deviation from absolute parity that apportionment would cause each Peninsular Malaysian state due to the requirement that a whole number of seats be apportioned the several states. Three different population criteria have been utilized to illustrate the point:

(1) the total population;
(2) the total electorate; and
(3) a single emphasis for total population and a double emphasis for total electorate.

Table 4.6 illustrates that, regardless of the population principle, absolute parity will be sacrificed by apportionment, but what is significant is that the amount of deviation from absolute parity varies depending on which population principle is adopted. Some states have an electoral advantage regardless of the criteria utilized, though the extent of the advantage itself varies. Perlis and Pahang are examples of this. Melaka, on the other hand, has an electoral disadvantage regardless of the criteria utilized, but again the extent of the disadvantage is dependent on the criteria used. In the case of all other states the choice of any particular criterion would determine whether the state has an advantage or disadvantage. Undoubtedly the exact population criteria employed is of immense significance to representation.

In 1973 Parliament increased the number of seats for Peninsular Malaysia from 104 to 114, and apportioned these seats to the 11 states and the Federal Territory. This apportionment formed the basis for the delineation exercise of 1974.[17] In apportioning the seats, however, Parliament made no indication of the exact population criterion utilized.

TABLE 4.6
Apportionment of House of Representative Seats from the Use of Various Population Principles

State	*Total population* (*A*)	*No. of seats* (*B*)	*Population quota* (*C*)	*Percentage deviation* (*D*)	*Total electorate* (*E*)	*No. of seats* (*F*)	*Electorate quota* (*G*)	*Percentage deviation* (*H*)	$\frac{A + 2E}{3}$ (*I*)	*No. of seats* (*J*)	*Quota* (*K*)	*Percentage deviation* (*L*)
Perlis	121,010	1.566 (2)	60,505	+21.7	58,721	1.965 (2)	29,261	+1.7	79,484	1.740 (2)	39,742	+13.0
Kedah	954,969	12.357 (12)	79,581	−3.0	400,285	13.395 (13)	30,791	−3.0	585,180	12.810 (13)	45,014	+1.5
Kelantan	684,842	8.862 (9)	76,093	+1.5	311,608	10.428 (10)	31,161	−4.3	436,019	9.545 (9)	48,447	−6.1
Terengganu	405,386	5.246 (5)	81,077	−4.9	183,769	6.150 (6)	30,628	−2.5	257,641	5.640 (6)	42,940	+6.0
Penang	776,148	10.043 (10)	77,615	−0.4	289,140	9.676 (10)	28,914	+3.2	451,476	9.883 (10)	45,148	+1.2
Perak	1,569,142	20.305 (20)	78,457	−1.5	626,565	20.967 (21)	29,836	+0.2	940,757	20.594 (21)	44,798	+1.9
Pahang	504,975	6.534 (7)	72,139	+6.9	199,478	6.675 (7)	28,497	+4.6	301,310	6.596 (7)	43,044	+5.8
Selangor	982,111	12.708 (13)	75,547	+2.2	337,353	11.289 (11)	30,668	−2.6	552,272	12.089 (12)	46,023	−0.7

(*continued*)

TABLE 4.6 (*Continued*)

State	*Total population* (*A*)	*No. of seats* (*B*)	*Population quota* (*C*)	*Percentage deviation* (*D*)	*Total electorate* (*E*)	*No. of seats* (*F*)	*Electorate quota* (*G*)	*Percentage deviation* (*H*)	$\frac{A + 2E}{3}$ (*I*)	*No. of seats* (*J*)	*Quota* (*K*)	*Percentage deviation* (*L*)
Federal Territory	648,310	8.389 (8)	81,039	−4.9	173,946	5.821 (6)	28,991	+3.0	332,067	7.269 (7)	47,438	−3.8
Negeri Sembilan	481,629	6.232 (6)	80,272	+11.0	178,717	5.981 (6)	29,786	+0.3	279,688	6.122 (6)	46,615	−2.0
Melaka	404,174	5.230 (5)	80,835	−4.6	151,609	5.073 (5)	30,322	−1.5	235,797	5.162 (5)	47,159	−3.2
Johor	1,277,269	16.528 (17)	75,133	+2.8	495,380	16.577 (17)	29,140	+2.5	756,010	16.549 (16)	47,251	−3.4
Total	8,809,965	114	77,280		3,406,661	114	29,883		5,207,762	114	45,682	

A Total population figures utilized here are as indicated in the 1974 Delineation Report and differ slightly from those in the 1970 Census. The differences are small and do not affect the validity of the discussion based on this table. These statistics have been used because the 1970 Population and Housing Census was conducted prior to the creation of the Federal Territory and therefore the Census reports do not provide data separately for Selangor and the Federal Territory.

B Total population of state divided by Population Quota for Peninsular Malaysia. Figures within brackets indicate whole number of seats apportioned. For definition of Population Quota, see p. 62.

C Population Quota of each state obtained by dividing the total population of each state by the whole number of seats apportioned in 'B'.

D Percentage deviation of Population Quota of state from Population Quota of Peninsular Malaysia. Plus signs indicate electoral advantage and minus signs indicate disadvantage.

E Total electorate figures determined by a count of the 1974 electoral registers.

F Total electorate of state divided by Electorate Quota for Peninsular Malaysia. Figures within brackets indicate whole number of seats apportioned.

G 'E' divided by whole number of seats apportioned in 'F'.

H Percentage deviation of Electorate Quota of state from Electorate Quota of Peninsular Malaysia. Plus signs indicate advantage to the state and minus signs indicate disadvantage to the state.

I Single weightage given to total population and double weightage to total electorate.

J Seats apportioned in similar fashion to that adopted in 'B' and 'F'.

K Quota obtained by dividing figure in 'I' by whole number indicated in 'J'.

L Deviation of state Quotas in 'K' from Peninsular Malaysian Quota in 'K'. Plus signs indicate advantage to the state and minus signs indicate disadvantage to the state.

TABLE 4.7
Parliament's Apportionment of Seats 1973 and Apportionment that would have Resulted from the Use of Various Population Criteria[1]

State	*Parliament*	*By total population*	*By total electorate*	*By total population and total electorate*[2]
Perlis	2	2	2	2
Kedah	13	12	13	13
Kelantan	12	9	10	9
Terengganu	7	5	6	6
Penang	9	10	10	10
Perak	21	20	21	21
Pahang	8	7	7	7
Selangor	11	13	11	12
Federal Territory	5	8	6	7
Negeri Sembilan	6	6	6	6
Melaka	4	5	5	5
Johor	16	17	17	16
Total	114	114	114	114

[1] Refer to Table 4.6 for basis of calculation.
[2] A single emphasis for total population and a double emphasis for total electorate (refer footnote 13 and pp. 62-4.

Table 4.7 indicates the apportionment made by Parliament and the apportionment that would have resulted had the criterion utilized been any of the three population criteria discussed above–that is, total population, total electorate and a combination of both total population and total electorate. Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang are seen to have been apportioned more seats than that warranted by any of the three population criteria. Conversely, the Federal Territory, Penang and Melaka are seen to have been apportioned fewer seats than they would have gained had any of the three population criteria been used. A measure of the actual advantage or disadvantage accruing to each state by Parliament's malapportionment of the seats is exemplified when adjustments are made for the deviations inherent in apportionment itself, that is, that result from the apportionment of a whole number of seats to each state. The method adopted here is to note the percentage deviation of the 1974 apportionment from the absolute parity principle, and to deduct from this the deviation that was an inevitable result of apportioning a whole number of seats to each state (Table 4.8).

Apportionment is only one stage in the delimitation of constituencies. An equally, if not more important stage, is the subsequent delineation of constituencies within the boundaries of each state. Any conclusion drawn as regards the quality of representation for the various communities merely on the basis of the apportionment among the states is thus tentative. Some indication of the implications of Parliament's 1972

TABLE 4.8
Apportionment of Seats to Peninsular Malaysian States and Percentage Deviation from the Use of Various Population Criteria,[1] 1973

State	1973 Apportionment	Percentage Distortion[2]		
		By population quota	By electorate quota	By population and electorate quota
Perlis	2	0	0	0
Kedah	13	+ 7.9	0	0
Kelantan	12	+24.7	+17.4	+26.6
Terengganu	7	+30.0	+14.6	+13.4
Penang	9	−11.2	−10.7	−11.0
Perak	21	+ 4.8	0	0
Pahang	8	+11.6	+12.0	−11.8
Selangor	11	−17.8	0	− 9.2
Federal Territory	5	−62.9	−19.4	−41.6
Negeri Sembilan	6	0	0	0
Melaka	4	−26.2	−25.3	−25.8
Johor	16	− 6.1	− 9.5	0

Source: Based on calculations shown on Table 4.6.

[1] Percentage deviation in the 1973 apportionment from apportionment according to various population criteria, after discounting distortion resulting from the need to apportion a whole number of seats to each state (refer Table 4.6). The basis of calculation here is: Distortion introduced by 1973 Apportionment minus distortion introduced by need to apportion a whole number of seats to states.

[2] Plus signs indicate advantage introduced, and minus signs indicate disadvantage introduced.

TABLE 4.9
Ethnic Composition of the Electorate of Peninsular Malaysian States, 1974, by Percentage

State	Total state population	Malay percentage	Chinese percentage	Indian percentage
Perlis	58,721	83.87	14.15	1.98
Kedah	400,285	75.95	17.40	6.65
Kelantan	311,608	94.19	5.19	0.62
Terengganu	183,769	94.12	5.30	0.58
Penang	289,140	34.17	56.11	9.72
Perak	626,565	45.04	44.75	10.21
Pahang	199,478	63.57	31.51	4.92
Selangor	337,353	46.47	38.88	14.63
Federal Territory	173,946	27.79	60.22	11.99
Negeri Sembilan	178,717	47.56	40.32	12.12
Melaka	151,699	54.78	38.75	6.47
Johor	495,390	54.58	40.46	4.96

Source: Compiled from a count of the 1974 electoral registers.

apportionment to communal representation, however, can be gauged when the communal composition of the electorate of the several states and the Federal Territory at the time of the 1974 Election is noted (Table 4.9). Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang are the states that have a larger number of seats than they would be entitled to by any of the three population criteria considered. All these three states have a larger percentage of Malays than Peninsular Malaysia as a whole. Penang, the Federal Territory and Melaka are the states that have fewer seats than they would be entitled to by any of the three population criteria. Of these only Melaka has an ethnic distribution almost identical to that of Peninsular Malaysia as a whole. Penang and the Federal Territory, however, have predominantly Chinese and non-Malay populations.

Conclusion

Since the 1962 Amendment to the Malayan Constitution, and according to the Malaysian Constitution, the apportionment of seats between the various states is no longer amongst the powers of the Election Commission. It is the sole prerogative of Parliament, in effect, the government of the day. An examination of the procedure adopted and the criteria utilized indicates that the apportionment does not follow any defined principles and is quite arbitrary. In the absence of any detailed explanation by the Government on the matter, any analysis of the motives behind the malapportionment borders on speculation. Suffice it to note that significant principles of representation have indeed been sacrificed, and clearly, this fact can easily escape a Parliament which can indulge in the luxury of a sufficient majority to alter the Constitution. Apportionment as currently applied makes for inequities in representation at state level. This in turn creates electoral inequities between the various ethnic groups in the country.*

Editor's Note: According to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, twenty-two more parliamentary seats and more than sixty more state seats are proposed in view of the increase in the number of the electors (*The Star*, 25 July 1983).

1. Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Committee Appointed to Examine the Question of Elections to the Federal Legislative Council*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Press, 1954, p. 13.

2. Criticism was, however, not wanting. F. G. Carnell referred to the report as 'a rather pedestrian and unimaginative document', 'Constitutional Reform and Elections in Malaya', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 27, September 1954, p. 230.

3. Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Election Commission on the Delimitation of Constituencies for the First Elections to the House of Representatives and the State Legislative Assemblies*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Press, 1958, p. 1.

4. Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Election Commission on the Delimitation of Parliamentary and State Constituencies under the Provisions of the Constitution of the Persekutuan Tanah Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Press, 1960.

5. Federation of Malaya, *Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1962*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Press, 1962, Section 31.

6. T. E. Smith, 'The Administration of the Election', in K. J. Ratnam and R. S. Milne (eds.), *The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964*, Singapore, University of Malaya Press, 1967, p. 65.

7. Malaysia, *Laporan Suruhanjaya Pilihanraya Malaysia atas Persempadan Bahagian-Bahagian Pilihanraya Persekutuan dan Negeri bagi Negeri-Negeri Tanah Melayu (Semenanjung Malaysia)* (Report of the Elections Commission on the Delineation of Electoral Constituencies in the Federation of Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia)), Kuala Lumpur, Jabatan Chetak Kerajaan, 1974, p. 1.

8. Ibid., p. 2.

9. Malaysia, *Act 206 of 1973*. The Act came into force on 1 February 1974.

10. Clause 2(e) of Article 161E of the Malaysian Constitution provides that 'No amendment shall be made to the Constitution without the concurrence of the Governor of the Borneo State or each of the Borneo States concerned if the amendment is such as to affect the operation of the Constitution as regards the allocation to the State in any Parliament summoned to meet before the end of August, 1970, of a quota of members of the House of Representatives not less in proportion to the total allocated to the other States which are members of the Federation on Malaysia Day, than the quota allocated to the State on that day'. By the time the 1973 apportionment was made the veto power granted the Governors of Sabah and Sarawak had become inoperative and hence Parliament merely chose to reduce the advantage.

11. Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Constituency Delineation Commission*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Press, 1954, p. 2.

12. Federation of Malaya, *Constitution*, Article 116 (3).

13. Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Election Commission*, 1960, op. cit., p. 2.

14. It is important to note that though the Constitution provided that there ought to be a measure of weightage for rural areas when constituencies are delineated, there was no provision that states with larger rural populations should be entitled to a weightage in the apportionment of seats. It would thus appear that adjustments for rural areas were to be affected only when delineation was being made.

15. Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Election Commission*, 1960, op. cit., p. 1.

16. Schedule 13 of the Malaysia Constitution sets out the principles by which the constituencies are delimited.

17. Malaysia, *Laporan Suruhanjaya Pilihanraya Malaysia*, op. cit., p. 2.

5

THREE APPROACHES IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIAN CHINESE POLITICS: THE MCA, THE DAP AND THE GERAKAN

LEE KAM HING

Introduction

THIS chapter attempts to establish a framework for understanding the development of Chinese politics in Peninsular Malaysia since the Second World War. The framework is intended to help differentiate the manner in which the Chinese have responded to changes that have taken place in the country. The pattern of response is in turn linked to the type of political attitudes held. The Chinese in Malaysia have often been described as demonstrating little political interest and involvement, especially in the pre-war years. This observation is quite inaccurate, and if the political activities of the Chinese are studied it is clear that the community has always been alert to changes and on several occasions[1] has committed itself strongly to particular positions. The differentiation in the Chinese community is not between those who are politically involved and those who are not, but rather in the orientation of Chinese political attitudes which in the end influences the pattern of political participation.

Three political orientations of the Chinese in Malaysia have been suggested by Professor Wang Gungwu in a recent study. To the first of these belong the Chinese whose outlook has remained distinctively 'Chinese' and whose political thinking has been inspired by external events and ideologies. Political activities of the Chinese in pre-war Malaya were dominated by this group. Most were concerned about the revolution in China, the Kuomintang-communist rivalry, and the Sino-Japanese War. Such concern was manifested in the establishment of local Kuomintang branches in Malaya and the setting up of organizations to mobilize assistance for the Chinese war effort against the Japanese. The second group of politically active Chinese emerged after the Second World War. This group, which included the Straits-born Chinese, began to realize that the future of the local Chinese was in Malaya and that they must establish a political role and presence. However, in seeking to accommodate to local changes, this group was nonetheless anxious to remain identifiably Chinese. A third group emerged in the post-Independence period. These were the Chinese who believed

that continued communal separateness was not only inimical to national stability but would most certainly harm the long-term political interests of the Chinese themselves. They believed that communal competition might increase Malay nationalism, and therefore called for a multi-racial approach which in the end could not be politically identifiable with any particular community. For the discussion here it would be more appropriate to place the third group with the second since both are essentially Malaya/Malaysia oriented. However, the participation of the third group can also be seen as a response distinct from that of the second.

The attitudes of the two main groups referred to above find expression in three political forms. The first of these represents those Chinese who have operated outside of the legal framework. This is the political struggle through armed revolution as espoused by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). Banned by the British in 1948, the MCP attracted young Chinese who were drawn either to its communist programme or to its association with the communists in China. Many who joined the MCP were no doubt greatly influenced by developments in China where the Chinese Communist Party gained power in 1949.[2] The second form of political expression is through the constitutional process in which political parties representing the Chinese community are established. The third form is expressed in the activities of wealthy individuals or groups who deal directly with Malay political leaders to safeguard or to enhance their business interests. These Chinese have minimal or no links with the established Chinese-based parties. The third form has emerged only in recent years following what is perceived to be the inability of Chinese-based parties to represent effectively Chinese political and economic interests.

In the following analysis, we will deal largely with the participation of the Chinese in the constitutional process by examining three principal Chinese-based parties that have emerged since the end of the Second World War. However, while the study is limited to only one of three forms of Chinese political expression, reference will be made to the others, so that Chinese political attitudes and participation can be viewed more broadly. One reason for looking at the Chinese-based parties is that it is these parties that articulate and mobilize the views of the majority of the Chinese. Furthermore, the relative strength of the parties and the shifts that occur both within a particular party or in the relationship among the parties reflect the political mood and thinking of the community as a whole.

Party politics of the Chinese in Malaysia in the post-war years can be divided into three categories. This differentiation, which has developed almost in chronological sequence, is based on varying perceptions of the future character and role of the Chinese in Malaysian society. The first of these categories is represented by the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA). The MCA is expressly a Chinese party founded to represent the interests of the community and seeks to maintain the political and cultural separateness of the Chinese. In its early years the party served as an organization for Chinese who came to see their future as

being in Malaya. It was also supported by Chinese who rejected the revolutionary course of the largely Chinese MCP. Thus, the early leadership of the MCA was drawn from the traditional Chinese guilds and associations, the Straits-born Chinese, Western-educated professionals, and anti-communist Kuomintang elements. It later worked closely with two other communal parties–the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay(si)an Indian Congress (MIC)–in seeking independence from the British. Eventually, the MCA experienced increasing difficulties in retaining the support of the Chinese community when it was seen as having failed to represent the Chinese effectively during the constitutional talks in the 1955 to 1956 period and later as a component member of the government.

Disillusionment with the MCA resulted in the coming into prominence of a number of parties espousing a non-racial approach to Malaysian politics. The party that best represented this approach was the Democratic Action Party (DAP). The DAP, through its precursor the People's Action Party (PAP) of Singapore, introduced the political slogan of a 'Malaysian Malaysia', which gained support from many Chinese. A 'Malaysian Malaysia', according to the DAP, was to be created out of the cultural elements of all the major communities in the country. No cultural group would be too prominent. Furthermore, a 'Malaysian Malaysia' was to offer equal political, educational, and economic opportunities to all races with no special advantages to any one group in particular. The DAP, along with other parties such as the Labour Party, the Peoples' Progressive Party, and the United Democratic Party which articulated similar demands, attracted considerable support from non-Malays, especially the Chinese in the urban areas. Non-racial at its outset, the direction of the DAP became influenced by the nature of its support and the issues it found itself emphasizing, so that it began to be seen increasingly as another Chinese party, the hallmark of the second category.

The third category is represented so far only by the *Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia*–known simply as the 'Gerakan'–in the post-1969 period. The early leadership of Gerakan was multi-racial and sought, as did the DAP, a non-racial approach. But given the fact that its supporters were largely Chinese, the Gerakan found itself taking a stance similar to the DAP in the first few years of its formation. Events and developments in the months after 1969 when the political initiative shifted decisively to UMNO soon persuaded party leaders that the Gerakan had to work closely with what they felt was moderate Malay leadership, thereby distinguishing it from the DAP (forming the second category). Of all the Chinese-based parties, the Gerakan has come closest to calling on the Chinese to avoid identifying themselves as a separate political community and to make efforts towards a fuller integration into Malaysian society. This is the position proposed by its veteran leader, Dr Lim Chong Eu, and his close supporters, but given the strong primordial sentiments that prevail it is one which the Gerakan has had difficulty in being consistent in maintaining. No Chinese-based party has yet en-

couraged assimilation, and the Gerakan is possibly the only one that has come close to suggesting it.

All three forms of Chinese response to political change remain important today. But of these, that represented by the parties is structured towards and works openly within the parliamentary system which makes them easier to study. The proposed framework will contribute towards explaining the complexities and dynamics of these Chinese-based parties. Beyond categorizing them simply as government or opposition parties, it is evident that confronting all of them is the question as to how they can play an effective role while accepting some of the political constraints under which they have to operate. Undoubtedly, within each party there exist serious differences as to the best strategy. The question facing many Chinese-based parties is the degree to which they should be identifiably 'Chinese' in adjusting to the existing political situation.

The Development of the Three Major Chinese-based Parties: 1949–1969

The MCA

The MCA was formed in February 1949 by a group of essentially Western-educated professionals and successful businessmen. In its formative years, the party leadership consisted largely of those who had associated themselves with the British through various consultative bodies. The first central committee of the MCA, for instance, co-opted all sixteen Chinese members of the Federal Legislative Council.[3] At the state level, many MCA leaders came from the Chinese Advisory Boards–bodies set up to advise state authorities, which were made up largely of those prominent in local business and clan organizations. The formation of the MCA was promoted by the British who saw it as an alternative to the radical Chinese politics that prevailed at that period.[4] In fact, one of the party's first tasks was to assist those Chinese in New Villages whose lives had been dislocated by the guerrilla activities of the MCP.

The MCA played an important political role during the 1949–57 period. Under Tan Cheng Lock, the party succeeded in providing the Chinese with some form of representation at a time when the communist insurrection placed the role and loyalty of the community in question.[5] On occasion the party served to moderate some harsh measures imposed upon the Chinese community by the British authorities while combating the MCP. Tan Cheng Lock himself interceded on behalf of many Chinese threatened with repatriation under the Emergency laws.[6] In the period just before Independence, the MCA leadership established links with UMNO, and a working relationship was formed to contest the elections and subsequently to negotiate with the British through the stages of self-government and independence. In constitutional discussions, it was the MCA which represented the Chinese and which

argued out some of the crucial issues such as education, language, the special position of the Malays, and citizenship. On citizenship, the MCA prevented the introduction of restrictive conditions. Despite strong criticisms made later by various Chinese organizations, MCA leaders felt that the provisions in the constitution were the best that could be obtained at the time. The party believed that it had succeeded in ensuring Chinese participation in the political process and in persuading the British and in particular the Malay leadership that a large and important segment of the Chinese population identified themselves as loyal citizens of the country. The party proceeded at the same time to encourage political consciousness in the community and initiated citizenship registration programmes.

In this period, then, the MCA was generally accepted by the British, the Malay leadership and significant sections of the Chinese community as a party representing the Chinese. Most of the major interest groups of the Chinese community were represented in the party. The support of the important guilds and associations, the Chinese Chambers of Commerce, and the Chinese school organizations was obtained. It is evident that, in the early years, all these groups saw the need for having a Chinese political organization to represent their interests. All seemed prepared to work together within the MCA which they accepted as the only viable Chinese political organization.

Yet in December 1956, the MCA suffered its first serious electoral defeat when it lost control of the Penang Municipality to the Labour Party. In retrospect, this marked the beginning of a serious erosion in the MCA's electoral support and a decline in its political influence. In November 1957 an MCA candidate was defeated by D. R. Seenivasagam in the Ipoh-Menglembu by-election to Parliament, and in the next year the MCA lost control of the Ipoh Town Council to the Peoples' Progressive Party.

Several factors led to the weakening of the MCA. Firstly, the nationwide citizenship drives by the MCA had led to a large increase in enfranchised Chinese and a greater political awareness among the Chinese. Many of the newer voters were from the non-English educated group, and to them such issues as Chinese education and language were important. The implementation of the 1952 Education Ordinance which aimed at a uniform curriculum for all schools was therefore not popularly received, as it was seen by this group as a step towards the destruction of Chinese education. This weakening of the MCA came at a most awkward time. Until then, the party was operating a national lottery from which the proceeds were used for welfare activities. Partly because of this the MCA had been able to extend its influence in the New Villages. In 1953 the Government ruled that as a political organization it was not proper that the MCA should run a lottery and with that the party lost a most lucrative source of income. This meant that funds for many of the programmes it had initiated in the New Villages were no longer available, and because of this it became all the more difficult to recover some of its lost support in the period after 1953.[7]

By this time certain factions had surfaced in the MCA. With the electoral trend against the party the faction led by Dr Lim Chong Eu gained ascendancy. This faction enjoyed the support of the guilds and associations. The Tan Siew Sin-Ong Yoke Lin group which had a close relationship with UMNO leaders was weakened by the defeat of Tan Cheng Lock as party president by Lim Chong Eu in 1958. The new leadership under Lim Chong Eu believed that a 'more Chinese' posture had to be taken if the MCA was to regain broader support of a cross-section of the Chinese community. Here they differed from the Tan Siew Sin-Ong Yoke Lin faction. The latter were convinced that the alliance with UMNO was of the utmost importance to the party and the national interest while Lim Chong Eu, abetted by another MCA leader Too Joon Hing, seemed more concerned with Chinese unity. Almost inevitably, the militantly Chinese mood within the MCA was to lead to difficulties with UMNO. In July 1959 the publication of a letter from Lim Chong Eu to the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, on the apportionment of seats for the impending elections and the possible review of the education policy, precipitated a crisis within the UMNO leadership. The demands of the MCA were rejected by the Tunku and in the end, Lim Chong Eu and his supporters were compelled in the circumstances to resign.

The 1959 crisis further weakened the MCA. Many followed Lim Chong Eu and Too Joon Hing out of the party to form the United Democratic Party (UDP). Others switched to the Labour Party which was already strong in several urban centres such as Penang, Seremban, Kuala Lumpur and Melaka. The effect was to cause the Labour Party to be even more Chinese in character than it already was. More damaging to the MCA was the withdrawal of support by the various Chinese guilds and associations, especially the educational bodies which till then had counted on the MCA to protect the position of Chinese schools.

The DAP

At a point when there was growing disenchantment with the MCA and when a new generation of young Chinese had grown up in the years following Independence, Singapore's entry into Malaysia in 1963 and with it the establishment of People's Action Party (PAP) branches in Peninsular Malaysia, offered an alternative and seemingly more attractive leadership to the Chinese. Until then, the Chinese, especially the Western-educated, had to choose between what they regarded as an enfeebled MCA and a militant Labour Party whose ideology they did not share. The PAP, in seeking to challenge directly the MCA for Chinese support, set up branches in only a few areas of the country and avoided places such as Penang and Perak where existing non-Malay opposition parties were strong. The PAP espoused a socialist line, and argued through its 'Malaysian Malaysia' concept that the problems of development ought not to be seen in racial terms but should in fact be interpreted and solved on the basis of class. Its questioning of Malay

political dominance encapsulated what the MCA dissidents of 1959, the PPP and other non-Malay parties had earlier raised (although the latter groups had done so with less cogency and determination). 'Malaysian Malaysia' became a new symbol for the non-Malays in the Malaysian political setting. But by its identification with the non-Malays, the PAP's efforts to present itself as a non-racial party failed. To the Malays, 'Malaysian Malaysia' was a PAP attempt to re-define Malaysian politics and to challenge Malay political supremacy.

In the 1964 General Election, the PAP drew large crowds to its rallies. However, it won only one seat out of the eleven it contested. Many commentators at that time interpreted this as a defeat for the PAP. Nevertheless, the win in Bangsar (which included the Petaling Jaya Chinese middle-class and the Brickfields Indian working groups) reflected the character of the support which the DAP was later to receive. Its initial lack of success ought to be seen in the context of the prevailing atmosphere created by Indonesian Confrontation, when many rallied behind the Alliance (the UMNO-MCA-MIC coalition) Government, while PAP's conflict with the Singapore Barisan Sosialis cost it the votes of many Chinese-educated in Peninsular Malaysia.

The months after the 1964 Election witnessed heightened and acrimonious debate between the PAP and the Alliance parallel to that between the Singapore state and the federal governments. As this continued, it became clear that the quarrel had created a dangerous increase in racial polarization. In the end Singapore had to leave Malaysia. The separation of Singapore, and with that the exclusion of Lee Kuan Yew from Malaysian politics, was seen as necessary to reduce the dangerous racial tension that had been allowed to build up. Non-Malay expectations had been encouraged and Malay fears aroused by Lee Kuan Yew's political initiatives. But though Singapore left Malaysia in August 1965, many of the PAP branches remained in Peninsular Malaysia. These came under the leadership of Devan Nair, the MP for Bangsar. Later the PAP in Malaysia was required to change its name and to adopt a different party symbol. When that was done the party, now renamed the Democratic Action Party (DAP) severed all links with Singapore and became a separate party. But, despite the changes, there were many aspects that remained the same, and the DAP is always held in suspicion of having secret ties with Singapore. The new party in name and in symbol chose to approximate itself to the PAP and it continued to pursue the 'Malaysian Malaysia' theme. Even without the aggressive leadership of the Singapore group the presence of the DAP continued to cause considerable concern to the Malays.[8]

It was at this juncture that the DAP gained the support of young and mostly Western-educated Chinese. Many of them had grown up in the late 1950s and the early 1960s and had become recently interested and involved in politics. Their growing political awareness was accompanied by a disenchantment with what they viewed as the MCA's political feebleness and the increasing weakness of the Chinese political position in the country. Men such as Fan Yew Teng, Lim Cho Hock and

Lee Lam Thye had been excited by the style and the political platform of Lee Kuan Yew's PAP and had decided to join the party when Singapore was still part of Malaysia. Although there existed at that time several non-Malay Opposition parties, none attracted so many young English-educated Chinese as the PAP did. The PPP and the UDP were small, regionally-based parties while the Labour Party was leaning towards a more militant line and showing little interest in the parliamentary process. It had also been weakened by the detention of several of its middle-ranking leaders. Furthermore, the Labour Party was at this time dominated by the Chinese-educated and its identification with the radical left discouraged the young English-educated professionals. More important, the PAP as the ruling party in Singapore had demonstrated that its programme could provide the basis for a viable political alternative and government.

It was this group of young English-educated Chinese, then, who were to play an important part in the growth of the DAP. Better educated and more articulate, they represented the younger generation of Chinese who increasingly questioned the political direction of the country and in particular its effect upon the non-Malays. They believed that the MCA by its relationship with UMNO had been 'domesticated'. Under a new leadership the DAP emerged as the most important Opposition party by 1968. This was despite the fact that the party, in seeking to encourage electoral co-operation among the Opposition parties, had confined its organization and activities only to those areas where the other parties were weak. Devan Nair had, by this time, relinquished the leadership of the party and Goh Hock Guan, an architect, and Lim Kit Siang had emerged to take over. But its very success re-opened the earlier PAP-Alliance conflict. The challenge to the MCA was unmistakable but many Malays were also concerned at what they interpreted as a challenge to their special position in the country by the continuing 'Malaysian Malaysia' slogan. The DAP made efforts to gain Malay support but its image as a party of the Chinese was indelible.

The Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia

Concerned at this renewed racial polarization as evidenced particularly by the angry expressions of dissatisfaction by the Malays over the 1967 Language Bill and agitation by the Chinese for a Chinese university, a number of prominent people took the initiative to form a new non-racial party known as the Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia ('Malaysian People's Solidarity Movement'), popularly known as Gerakan. Older than those in the DAP, the Gerakan leaders were made up largely of academics and trade unionists as well as politicians from a number of existing parties. Of the latter, the most important were Dr Lim Chong Eu of the UDP and Dr Tan Chee Khoon of the Labour Party. With the setting up of the Gerakan, Lim Chong Eu announced that the Penang-based UDP would dissolve itself and become part of the new party. This was significant as the move provided the new party with a strong regional base. For

Tan Chee Khoon the formation of the Gerakan was important as he had found himself gradually isolated from the Chinese-educated and the more militant members of the Labour Party, and with the elections approaching there was a need to provide himself with alternative organizational support. Several others from the moderate faction of the Labour Party, such as V. Veerapan and V. David, joined him in the Gerakan.

More than this, the Gerakan was presented by its founders as a truly multi-racial party and a much-needed alternative to the existing communally-inclined parties. Its early leadership consisted of several Malays and the pro tem chairman was Syed Hussein Alatas from the University of Singapore. It adopted a programme that was socialist inclined and it aimed at reaching out to the trade union movement which, except for the Labour Party, none of the other parties had succeeded in doing. Those in the first executive committee thus included a number of prominent trade unionists such as S. Zaidi, V. David and Yeoh Teck Chye.

For many in the Gerakan, the continued political problems in the country would continue so long as parties remained identified with particular communal groups. To the non-Malay members within the Gerakan the development of Chinese politics was disturbing. Increasingly more of the younger Chinese were drawn either to the strongly Chinese DAP or the Labour Party, and with the declining support and influence of the MCA, many in Gerakan were troubled that the dialogue that existed between Malay and Chinese political leaders might be endangered. There was on one hand a weakened MCA, a party which UMNO was prepared to work with, and on the other increasing Chinese militancy which alienated the Malays. A new party which could ensure the continuation of the Sino-Malay dialogue and co-operation had to be established.[9]

Nonetheless, in the first six years or so, the Gerakan found itself unavoidably identified as a party essentially of the non-Malays. This was largely due to the presence of Lim Chong Eu, Tan Chee Khoon, V. David and others in the Gerakan who had been linked for too long with non-Malay causes. Thus, despite having several Malay personalities in the party and espousing a non-racial programme the Gerakan failed to attract many Malays. None of its Malay leaders had strong grass-roots support and the party was therefore unable to make any inroads in constituencies where both UMNO and Parti Islam sa-Malaysia or the Islamic Party (PAS) were regarded as parties of Malay nationalism. Furthermore, the Gerakan, as an Opposition party which questioned government policies, invariably found itself in agreement on many issues with the DAP and the PPP. There was nothing, then, that significantly separated the Gerakan from the other non-Malay parties except the fact that it had more intellectuals in its leadership and was more prepared to work with moderate UMNO leaders. Thus, by the time the 1969 elections came, the Gerakan was quite prepared to join in an electoral understanding with the other Opposition parties. The

underlying motive for the arrangement was not racial–as evidenced by the presence of PAS–but rather the perceived need to combine effectively against the Alliance at the polls. The electoral co-operation worked out extremely well for the Opposition parties in the elections, and for Gerakan resulted in the capture of the state government of Penang in its very first campaign. For the first time, then, an Opposition party which received largely non-Malay support formed a state government in Peninsular Malaysia. PAS made gains against UMNO, while the DAP and PPP won seats at the expense of the MCA. The apparent electoral victory was short-lived. Racial violence broke out a few days after the elections and the political pattern altered considerably after that. The ensuing political changes forced the Gerakan more than the other two Chinese-based parties to modify its perception of and approach to Malaysian politics.

Developments in the 1969-1974 period[10]

In the aftermath of the 1969 Election and the racial violence that followed, parliamentary democracy was suspended and political parties became temporarily inactive. The enforced inactivity allowed the non-Malay parties to re-think their position and strategy in the context of a greatly altered situation where the balance of political power had swung unquestionably in favour of the Malays.

For the MCA the events that followed the 1969 Election had been traumatic. As a member of the Alliance, the party had lost control of the Penang state government and had been almost decimated in Perak. Two of its senior ministers were defeated, and its overall parliamentary strength was reduced to only thirteen. To the MCA leaders the election results confirmed in no uncertain terms that the Chinese community which the MCA claimed to represent had rejected the party. Having lost its credibility as a representative of the Chinese, the leadership informed UMNO that it was pulling out of the cabinet. In retrospect this was undoubtedly a bad decision for the MCA. For a period it held no cabinet post and so lost control of the ministries that dealt with finance and economic matters. This was to further undermine its influence over the important Chinese business community. When the party did return to the cabinet, only Tan Siew Sin regained the important finance portfolio while the others obtained positions of lesser consequence.

With the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1971, the MCA sought to recover its former strength. In seeking to refurbish the image and position of the party, the MCA promoted three developments. Firstly, it initiated a movement calling for Chinese unity under the leadership of the MCA which aimed at strengthening its grass-roots support. Secondly, it launched a 'task force' to strengthen its position in Perak. Thirdly, it opened up secret talks with the DAP for a possible merger. In each exercise, the intention was to re-establish the MCA as the party representing the Chinese and to present itself as a strong partner within the Alliance structure.

On 7 February 1971, at a meeting in Kuala Lumpur, a number of young English-educated professionals led by Alex Lee, son of Tun Henry Lee Hau Shik, founder and former leader of the party, started what has been referred to as the Chinese Unity Movement. The group included some MCA members and there was a prevailing mood within the party that renewed efforts ought to be made towards achieving unity among the Chinese in the country, and that this unity should exist within the framework of the governing coalition to safeguard non-Malay interests. There were those who argued that a re-vitalized MCA with a new and more purposeful leadership was the answer to the existing political confusion of the Chinese. It was largely felt that the events and developments since 1969 demonstrated the danger and futility of supporting Opposition parties and that a strong non-Malay opposition was in fact harmful to Chinese interests. They were persuaded of this, no doubt, by the realization that the political strength wielded by the Malays was based upon a cohesive UMNO. Supporters of the Chinese Unity Movement argued that the Chinese should have similar cohesiveness if they were to acquire some bargaining strength in the Alliance. Involved also in the Chinese Unity Movement were cultural groups led by Sim Mo Yu and Wong Wei Keong of the Chinese school teachers' organizations. It looked at this point that the MCA might be able to regain the backing of the important Chinese guilds and associations.

Besides endorsing the Chinese Unity Movement, Tun Tan Siew Sin had previously been instrumental in setting up a special task force which was entrusted with rebuilding MCA support in Perak. Led mostly by young MCA leaders, many of whom were English-educated, the task force had early successes once it was established in mid-1971. This was partly because the younger MCA leaders made an effort to look into some of the problems facing those living in the New Villages, such as problems of land and basic amenities. The early response was also related to the dynamism and dedication of the task force leaders. For the first time it appeared that the MCA was able to provide young leaders committed to the interest of grass-roots Chinese and to the broader goals of Chinese unity. It also demonstrated that popular support for the MCA could be mobilized.

Later, after the collapse of the Chinese Unity Movement and the internal crises which developed over the Perak Task Force (both described later) the MCA held talks with DAP leaders (mid-1972) towards possible co-operation or even merger. From the MCA's point of view, the moves were aimed at checking the serious erosion of the party's electoral support by neutralizing its main challenger through such a deal. Another benefit envisaged was the strengthening of the party by the inclusion of the more dynamic DAP leaders and members.

The talks failed and, although both sides maintained that the other party had presented conditions that were unacceptable, it was clear that the avowedly non-racial and socialist-inclined character of the DAP as well as the style of its leadership were incompatible with the essentially communal and conservative MCA. It underlined the fact that, at a time

when both Chinese-based parties were confronted with a new political situation and when the Chinese community which they essentially represented was demoralized, the differences were too basic to allow for any political co-operation. Nonetheless, the fact that DAP leaders were willing to participate in such discussions would suggest that within the party post-1969 political developments must have caused similar re-thinking about its political future. Consequently, none of the three initiatives with which the MCA was associated made much headway.

There had been considerable dismay within the DAP at events following the 1969 Election. After the riots Lim Kit Siang was detained under the Internal Security Act and there were reports in some foreign newspapers that Fan Yew Teng and a few others might have gone underground. The reports were incorrect; nonetheless, the fact that they gained currency suggest that many expected the party to change political strategy and to adopt, perhaps, non-constitutional means. However, party leaders quickly and openly discouraged any speculation that the DAP might consider having an underground movement parallel to the legal party. Two options seem to have been considered. One was to encourage non-Malay unity and to work within the Government for effective Chinese representation. A few in the DAP had begun to wonder if the existing strategy of the party was not in effect dividing and thereby weakening the Chinese. Even if the DAP emerged as the largest non-Malay party, strong Chinese opposition to the Government was least likely to bring about the changes which the party stood for. To them, as with the MCA reformists, an effective Chinese party within the Government offered the best prospect for the community. The second option was to maintain its existing programme and identity and to work towards winning power through the electoral process. Clearly, few of the leaders who subscribed to this approach expected that the gaining of power would be an immediate possibility. A number of DAP leaders such as Walter Loh and Richard Ho who were drawn to the first option left soon afterwards to join the MCA. The defections did not seriously affect the DAP. For the majority, the DAP as an opposition party and as a possible alternative was still necessary.

Within the Gerakan it was evident that the leadership was anxious to return to its original non-racial framework. Its posture during those critical days immediately after the 1969 Election, when it was announced that the party would not join in any coalition government with the DAP in Perak and Selangor, reflected its greater sensitivity to the mood of the Malays. Furthermore, having gained control of Penang where there is a large Malay population, it was anxious to avoid too close an association with any particular communally-identified party. By this stage, the Gerakan was already moving away from the DAP and the PPP, which it had previously been close to.

But its attempts to develop into a non-racial party encountered serious difficulties soon afterwards. Within the party a split developed between the 'Penang leadership' which formed the state government, of whom many were former UDP men, and those outside the state such

as Syed Hussein Alatas, Tan Chee Khoon, Veerapan, V. David and Yeoh Teck Chye. One issue that seriously divided the party was the question of the relationship of the party to the Penang state government. There were allegations that the Penang group was too preoccupied with running the state and tended to place less importance on party objectives. As a result of this crisis, the Syed Hussein Alatas faction left the party. The split had profound consequences for the Gerakan. Firstly, the party found its organization and influence seriously truncated and it reverted to its former character of being a local party. Many of those who disagreed with Lim Chong Eu founded the Parti Keadilan Masyarakat (Social Justice Party) or Pekemas for short. Secondly, with the departure of the Syed Hussein Alatas group, the Gerakan lost a number of leaders who had helped form the party and had given it its multiracial image. From this point on, the Gerakan found itself increasingly identified as a Chinese party.

During this time the MCA, despite the initial rallying of Chinese support and the influx of new members as it broadened its leadership, found itself similarly caught in intra-party conflict and division. The 1969 Election saw the political demise of several senior MCA leaders. The most important of these were Dr Ng Kam Poh, the Health Minister, and Dr Lim Swee Aun, the Trade and Industry Minister. Tan Siew Sin and Khaw Kai Boh were left, in effect, as the only remaining senior leaders. However, the Chinese Unity Movement and the 'Perak Task Force' helped to bring in several young leaders into party prominence. In Perak, for instance, Lim Keng Yaik and Paul Leong emerged to lead the party there. In Kuala Lumpur, Alex Lee and Tan Tiong Hong were closely involved in the Chinese Unity Movement. For a while it appeared that the MCA might be able to regain its former influence. Tan Siew Sin's position as leader of the party was strengthened during this period, and the party constitution was amended to invest more power in the president. For instance, chairmen of the state liason committees were now to be appointed by the party president. In the past the position had been an elected one and the constitutional amendment was an attempt to eliminate the dominance of the local bosses who had previously influenced state party elections.

The emergence of the Lim Keng Yaik-Alex Lee group invariably led to conflict with the more established younger party leaders. The latter, led by Lee San Choon, had been active in the party's youth wing from where they had established a powerful position within the party. With the appointment of Dr Lim Keng Yaik to the strategically important Ministry of New Villages, the difficulties between the two groups became more open. In the meanwhile, Dr Lim Keng Yaik found as he travelled around the country a continuing mood of disenchantment with the MCA leadership. The feeling was that the party had suffered because of weak and divided leadership and that the political future of the Chinese in the country depended on a strong and united Chinese party which only an ably-led MCA could provide. In April 1973 Dr Lim Keng Yaik got together several of the younger MCA leaders and sought

to reorganize the leadership as well as the party. For a while it appeared that the reformist group might succeed. Dr Lim Keng Yaik had over the months as a minister emerged as a popular and respected figure in the MCA and the call for change in the party was enthusiastically received by most of the rank-and-file. However, in the course of events, Tan Siew Sin perceived the threat as being also directed at him and increasingly swung his support to the Lee San Choon group.[11] Tan Siew Sin's intervention turned the balance against Lim Keng Yaik, and in the ensuing struggle members of the Perak Task Force and the reformists found themselves expelled from the party.

The reform movement failed because it was too expressly chauvinistic. Their objective was to have a re-organized MCA with which all Chinese could identify, but in seeking to achieve this goal the reformists allowed their direction to be influenced by groups more anxious to fight on narrow communal interests such as language and education. The reformists also made the mistake of challenging Tan Siew Sin whose backing was essential and who had seemed amenable to change.

For a while it was unclear what the outcome would be, but UMNO leaders who watched with concern must have had, in the end, a most decisive bearing on the subsequent course of events. As in the 1959 MCA crisis, MCA's need for co-operation with UMNO ensured the defeat of a faction that sought greater political unity for the Chinese and which pushed for communal causes. While most of the leaders of the Perak Task Force and the Chinese Unity Movement were expelled from the party, even earlier, in September 1972, Lim Keng Yaik had been relieved of his post.

Meanwhile, the Gerakan had by 1972 begun to be more distinguishable from the other Chinese-based parties in respect to its relations with the federal government. The departure of the Tan Chee Khoon-Syed Hussein Alatas faction had caused the party considerable concern especially over its position in the Penang state government. Furthermore, the truncated Gerakan was also anxious about improving its relations with the central government, especially as Penang depended heavily on Kuala Lumpur for its finances. So in 1972, Dr Lim Chong Eu took the Gerakan into what was soon to be the Barisan Nasional (National Front). The move was significant. It strengthened the state government of Penang and at the national level there was for the first time a second predominantly Chinese party from Peninsular Malaysia in the Government alongside the MCA. In this new situation, the Gerakan found it necessary to define itself with greater clarity so as to be distinguishable from the MCA whose constituency it largely shared. Its strategy in this respect was to present itself not as a Chinese but as a non-racial party.

The Gerakan has survived well so far despite disclaiming itself as a Chinese party and joining the Barisan Nasional, unlike the PPP which had been virtually decimated when it became a member of the ruling coalition. Gerakan's survival has been possible because of two factors. Firstly, the Penang state government under Dr Lim Chong Eu has

achieved some success. Dr Lim Chong Eu has proved not only to be an astute politician, regarded as the most senior and respected of the politically-active Chinese leaders–he is also viewed as a relatively effective chief minister. While there may be criticisms of state government policies, there is general acknowledgement that under Gerakan there has been development in the state. Compared to the Gerakan, which is a senior partner in the Penang state government, the PPP had only a minor, even ineffective, role in the Perak state government. Secondly, the Gerakan managed to broaden its influence in 1973 when many of the MCA reformists joined the party after being expelled from the MCA. With this the Gerakan gained several young leaders who have popular support in parts of Perak and Selangor. Thus, while the Gerakan is professedly a non-racial party and makes serious moves in that direction, the presence in it of Dr Lim Chong Eu, Dr Lim Keng Yaik and Paul Leong–men with backgrounds associated with Chinese causes–helps to attract Chinese support to the party.

Defining the Political Postures of the Parties

The 1978 General Election has clarified somewhat the parliamentary position of the identifiably Chinese-based parties in the Peninsula. Of these, only the MCA, the DAP and the Gerakan remain. Both the PPP and Pekemas lost whatever parliamentary representation they ever had when their candidates were completely defeated. The Labour Party is no longer legally in existence. The MCA won 17 seats while the DAP and the Gerakan took 16 and 4 respectively. For the DAP this was its largest representation in Parliament and with the subsequent decline of PAS Lim Kit Siang has emerged as the principal Opposition leader. Gerakan's small parliamentary gains are balanced by its continuing dominant role in the Penang state government. The other non-Malay parties were defeated because either their programmes or the stand of their candidates approximated too closely to those of the MCA, the DAP or the Gerakan, and being smaller and often more localized in influence they lost out to the larger and better organized parties.

To what extent do the MCA, the DAP and the Gerakan in fact represent defined positions or strategies of the Chinese in Malaysian politics, and how far are they viewed as such by the Chinese? Furthermore, do the Malay leaders see any difference in the three Chinese-based parties beyond the fact that one is in the Opposition and the others are with the Government? From the brief discussion so far, it is clear that the three Chinese-based parties represent different attempts to stake out a political role for the Chinese community. The MCA does not claim to be anything other than a party of the Chinese. It remains 'Chinese' and espouses no ideological values. The party was the first to draw the attention of the community to events and developments in the country as it attempted to commit the Chinese to greater political participation. Its leaders support the idea of a strong and exclusively Chinese party but, equally important, believe that its survival as well as

that of the community depend on close co-operation with UMNO. The MCA has resisted suggestions that it change its character–such as renaming itself the 'Malaysian Citizens Association', and in periods of electoral difficulty has controlled its instinctive response to revert temporarily to increased chauvinism. At such times the MCA has been able to evoke much sympathy and support from the community at large, as many Chinese regard sentimentally the party as essentially a party of the Chinese. This is evidenced by the Perak Task Force and the Chinese Unity Movement which attracted the support of many young Chinese. The DAP and the Gerakan, like the PPP, the Labour Party, Pekemas and the UDP, propose in varying degrees an approach to the country's problems along class rather than racial lines. In this respect both the DAP and Gerakan are less communal than the MCA. The Gerakan had gone considerably further, since some of its leaders have suggested that Chinese political separateness should end, and that there ought to be no party that is distinguishably Chinese. Clearly, on the question as to how identifiably 'Chinese' a party ought to be, the MCA stands at one end of the spectrum while the DAP and the Gerakan are at the other end.

However, the 1978 Election results indicated that the majority of the Chinese view the DAP and not the MCA as the party most committed to Chinese interests. At the parliamentary level, few MCA or Gerakan candidates were able to obtain more than 30 per cent of the Chinese vote. In all the constituencies where the Gerakan and MCA won, a very large proportion of support came from the Malay electorate. The election results might have been, however, largely a record of protest by many Chinese who, while accepting the MCA and the Gerakan as the more realistic approaches to Malaysian politics, were not happy with certain government policies. Some indication of this is seen in the fact that both the MCA and the Gerakan won a greater percentage of votes and seats at state level than at parliamentary level even though the voters were the same.

In effect the MCA and the Gerakan have not, by participating in the Barisan Nasional, been able to gain general acceptance as parties of the Chinese. They are identified with the policies of the Government. The difficulty of the MCA and the Gerakan here is that their freedom to push communal causes has been severely limited by being in the Government and by a consequent awareness of the competing demands of the various races. The DAP is not as constrained, except for the Sedition Act, as the MCA and the Gerakan. As an Opposition party the DAP is expected to criticize government policies it disagrees with and to voice issues of general concern.[12] It is in this role that the DAP has been relatively successful and it has therefore acquired an image among many Chinese as a party concerned with their interests. As an Opposition party, many leaders in the DAP have developed considerable oratorical skills which, in the days when mass rallies were allowed (that is until 1969) proved invaluable.

Clearly, the Chinese-based parties in the Government face difficulty

in competing against the DAP along communal political lines. As Chinese-based parties they can ignore communal sentiment only at great political cost. Whenever issues of a racial nature are raised, both the Gerakan and the MCA have to take a stand, as in the case of the Merdeka University question, the intake of non-Malays into the universities, and the 3 Ps controversy in the school curriculum. There is always pressure from the ground to become more 'Chinese' and here even the Gerakan has found itself increasingly drawn into such communal issues. The ability of the Gerakan and the MCA to withstand such pulls depends on the parties' leadership as well as UMNO's ability and preparedness to help contain controversial issues.

The Gerakan has therefore chosen to avoid the use of political symbols in competing for Chinese support but rather to establish itself as a party with a technocratic bias. Its leaders argue that the party is concerned primarily with ensuring that there is economic development, and believe that only through increased economic opportunities will the tension among the races be reduced. The Gerakan view is that it is important for the Chinese to support a party that could promote development and thereby ensure the community's own economic and eventually effective political participation. The control of Penang is therefore crucial to Gerakan as it offers an opportunity to the party to demonstrate its viability as a political alternative for the Chinese.[13]

The background of the Gerakan leaders helps to explain the adoption of this posture of seeking to de-emphasize communal politics. Many in the Gerakan leadership were formerly with the MCA and had been associated closely with the more communal factions. Dr Lim Chong Eu, as president of the MCA between 1958 and 1959, had led the party into a crisis with UMNO while Dr Lim Keng Yaik together with Paul Leong and Alex Lee were prominent in the reformist movement. But in seeking to push for Chinese unity and for a stronger MCA in its bargaining with UMNO, all of them had, at different times, been forced to leave the party. These episodes were instructive because they recognized that an important factor in their defeat in the party struggle had been UMNO's stand. In consequence the present Gerakan leadership is now convinced that a tough Chinese line has little chance of success, and, more importantly, is very likely to lead to racial conflict.

Aware of the altered balance of power in Malaysian politics, Gerakan leaders believe that the party ought to work closely with the Malays and, above all, support the moderate UMNO leadership. By these means the party can hope to obtain the co-operation of the Malays in power, and thereby be enabled to have some influence on policy. To gain such access, Gerakan leaders believe that the party needs to present itself as the most acceptable and trustworthy non-Malay party. To this end, the party has to avoid a blatantly communal character, and should project an image of a competent and technocratic party.

To what extent has the Gerakan succeeded in presenting itself to the Malays as a more acceptable Chinese-based party than the MCA? It must be remembered that many UMNO leaders, especially at the

lower levels, maintain a close working relationship with the MCA, while others such as the Tunku group have a sentimental attachment to the MCA as the party that was loyal to UMNO in the progress towards Independence. There are also UMNO members who have not forgotten the fact that the present Gerakan leaders were once known to have been concerned with Chinese interests. Nevertheless, the 'technocratic type' within UMNO, dominant in the Mahathir-Musa administration since July 1981, is more comfortable with Gerakan leaders such as Paul Leong and Lim Chong Eu than with those from the MCA. Paul Leong has worked closely with Dato Musa Hitam in the Ministry of Primary Industries, and as minister of that portfolio is now generally agreed to be competent and non-controversial.

However, Gerakan's approach has attracted strong criticism from the MCA and aroused a degree of suspicion in certain sections of UMNO. The MCA accusation is that the Gerakan seems prepared to take a pro-Malay position in order to replace the MCA as the dominant component member in Government. This view maintains that with the presence of another Chinese-based party in the Barisan Nasional the bargaining position of the MCA is greatly weakened since the MCA can no longer present itself as indispensable. This argument is based on the assumption that Chinese representation in the Government is held to be important by UMNO. Furthermore, to some in UMNO, Gerakan's call for the evolution of parties that are 'Malaysian in identity' and non-racial appears as an implied criticism not only of the MCA but also of UMNO. Logically the Gerakan should also be seeking Malay support in order to further its non-racial character. However, on this issue the Gerakan is aware of UMNO's concern and has on its own initiative scrupulously avoided Malay areas. In any case, Gerakan is too small a party to worry UMNO seriously.

It is thus between the Gerakan and the MCA that there exists a difficult and acrimonious relationship. The participation of the Gerakan in the Barisan Nasional now means that the MCA's influence as one of the three major components in the previous Alliance has been greatly reduced in the enlarged coalition. Positions in the cabinet have now to be shared out even more, and in Penang where the ethnic balance allows a non-Malay to head the state government it is the Gerakan which has since 1969 replaced the MCA. Not only does the MCA lose out electorally to the DAP, but in seat allocation during nomination time it is challenged by the Gerakan. To add to the frustration of the MCA, there is no mechanism within the Barisan Nasional whereby both Gerakan and the MCA could test the extent of their actual electoral support. While it remains a remote possibility, there is unease within the MCA that it could, by a combination of unexpected factors, even be eclipsed as a major Chinese-based party within the Government. Underlying the intense rivalry of the two parties is a history of unhappy relations between their leaders. The Gerakan and the MCA have been led since 1973 by men who had fought each other in MCA politics in the late 1950s and also in the early 1970s. Thus, much of the animosity

that exists between the two parties has to be understood in the context of past party and personality conflicts rather than as simply the result of the different orientations of the parties today.

In competing against the Gerakan and the DAP, the MCA finds that it has on the one hand to gain the confidence of UMNO and on the other to win the support of the Chinese. UMNO support is important if it is to retain its senior position within the Barisan Nasional, and this is particularly crucial in the period before elections when seats are allocated. For this the MCA cannot afford to appear to UMNO as an expressly chauvinistic party. Thus, the MCA has found it necessary as in the case of Gerakan (and in fact because of it) also to present itself as a party with leaders who are moderate and possess technocratic ability and outlook. Under Tan Siew Sin, who was an able and respected finance minister, the party had in the 1960s established a branch known as the 'Maju ward' to attract professionals as well as those from the universities in response to the PAP's image as a party of intellectuals. From this branch and other sources the MCA has drawn together a number of professionals (such as Dr Neo Yee Pan) who now occupy high positions in the party. This provides the party with a core from which to build up its technocratic image. As the elections of 1978 and 1982 indicate, the MCA in its competition with Gerakan is prepared to put up more candidates than before from the professional group.

Against the DAP the strategy of the MCA is to demonstrate its preparedness to fight for non-Malay causes. It has called for Chinese unity under its leadership similar to what it says has been achieved in Malay unity under UMNO. However, its effectiveness in mobilizing communal support is greatly circumscribed by its anxiety not to offend UMNO. In the last few years too, MCA has taken on a number of ambitious programmes. These include the development of the Tunku Abdul Rahman (TAR) College, the Malaysian Chinese Cultural Council, KOJADI–a co-operative for educational purposes–and the setting up of Multi-Purpose Holdings Berhad. The activities and progress of these projects are given considerable coverage in *The Star*, an English-language tabloid newspaper that was bought up by the party. More recently the party has also taken over the *Tung Pao*, a widely-read Chinese daily. These projects are aimed at gaining high visibility among the Chinese for the party and conceivably could become political symbols of its role as the principal party of the Chinese. They also create a needed sense of activity and purpose in the party, especially during the long periods between elections. These projects offer educational and economic opportunities to members, and are useful in drawing new support to the party. Given the fact that, unlike UMNO, the non-Malay parties have little to distribute in the way of patronage, the MCA projects provide rewards to those loyal to the party. However, critics of the MCA point out that these projects only underline the ineffectiveness of the party at the highest reaches of government, and that the TAR College, KOJADI and Multi-Purpose Holdings Berhad are piece-meal efforts which fail to resolve the basic educational and economic issues

which many Chinese are most concerned about. But to the MCA, small as these programmes may be, they nonetheless indicate the willingness of the party to promote the community's educational and economic interests.[14]

There is some evidence to show that, while purely communal issues remain important, there are sections of the Chinese community who are also concerned with basic questions of development. And it is in this area that the MCA and the Gerakan are able to compete with the DAP. Election results show that the Chinese-based parties in the Government tended to do better in rural and semi-rural seats. Important in explaining this pattern are the votes of the Malays which are usually high in the semi-rural non-Malay constituencies and whose support tilts the balance to MCA and Gerakan candidates. But it is also true that in these areas where questions of land and basic amenities are of more urgency than the larger issues of education and language, a significant proportion of the Chinese electorate do vote for the Barisan Nasional, whether the candidate is from the MCA or the Gerakan. There is the general belief that it is the MCA and the Gerakan assemblymen who are more likely to ensure improvements than a representative from the Opposition. Thus Barisan Nasional Chinese candidates did better in the 1978 Election for state assembly seats than for parliamentary seats in the same elections. Penang, and to an even greater extent, Johor are two states where the Barisan Nasional Chinese-based parties have done well. In Penang, the Gerakan by being in power as the major partner in the state government wields some economic influence, and in Johor which is often regarded as an MCA stronghold, the party has established close rapport with local UMNO leaders and through this has, it is said, ensured the Chinese there of greater access to land and other economic opportunities. Significantly, the Gerakan in the 1978 Election won two largely urban seats–Taiping and Kepong–partly on the reputation of the candidates as being of the technocrat type and partly on the hope that such representation, with its government connections, would help to bring development to these constituencies.[15] In the 1982 Election, Paul Leong held the Taiping seat and Dr Tan Tiong Hong successfully contested Raub (Pahang), although his replacement lost Kepong. Both the MCA and Gerakan made substantial gains in votes and seats in the 1982 Election.

Within the business community there has been a noticeable shift from close association with the MCA. The Gerakan and the DAP did not have in the past many ties with business groups, while in the 1950s and the 1960s the MCA was regarded as a party of businessmen and *towkays*, a significant proportion of its leaders at both local and national levels being businessmen. Consequently, funds for party work had never been a problem for the MCA. With the MCA being a major partner in the government and in control of several important economic portfolios in cabinet, it was not surprising that Chinese big business should seek close links with the party. The situation has changed significantly since 1969, and today the MCA controls no portfolio that

has any direct effect upon big business. Only the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, of which the MCA still has charge, wields some influence in the private sector, particularly in housing development and construction.

Given MCA's weakened position in the Government, many Chinese businessmen have increasingly established direct links with powerful Malays. The most apparent takes the form of partnerships involving Chinese businessmen with prominent Malays, and on occasion with members of Malay royalty. Such partnerships range from companies where Malays have a nominal stake to large organizations where the controlling share is held by Malays. Most large, publicly-listed companies include influential Malays on the board of directors. In part this is done to comply with the New Economic Policy. However, Chinese businesses have on their own moved well ahead in establishing links with Malay groups, as in the case of the Kuok family, Hong Leong, the Chia family of United Motor Works, Lim Goh Tong of Genting and Khoo Kay Peng of Malayan United Industries. They have had little connection with the MCA in the past, and now Chinese businessmen see such relationships with Malays as being more advantageous than links with the MCA. Companies with significant Malay participation have preference in government contracts, credit facilities and in general encounter fewer difficulties with various authorities when it comes to getting licence approval. Thus, business groups with impressive growth rates are those with close associations with Malay businessmen and politicians. Such links are not confined to large companies but have extended all the way down to middle-sized establishments.

However, while many Chinese businessmen have moved into close partnership with Malays, this has not necessarily meant a dissociation from the MCA for those who have had past links. There is basically no conflict between maintaining a relationship with the MCA and forging direct links with Malay businessmen. Men such as Dato Lee Loy Seng of Batu Kawan Plantations and Teh Hong Piau of Public Bank are still involved in the MCA in varying degrees. At the local level, businessmen are invariably elected or appointed to MCA positions by virtue of their status and financial position. Association with the MCA can still be seen as useful political backing, or as a means through which local businessmen can establish contact with powerful Malays.

Partly to counter this decline in influence in the business community a number of businessmen closely identified with the MCA helped set up Multi-Purpose Holdings Berhad, through which co-operatives have been promoted. Various state MCA branches have also formed co-operatives such as the Pik Hua Co-operative in Perak and the Aik Hua Co-operative in Selangor. Funds from MCA members are mobilized to buy up properties and companies. Foremost among such businessmen is Tan Koon Swan who himself controls Supreme Corporation. Through Multi-Purpose Holdings, businessmen with MCA links have extended control over such large public companies as Bandar Raya Developments Berhad, Magnum, Malayan Planta-

tions, Guthrie Industries and have acquired a substantial stake in Malayan United Industries.

This development means that, whereas the MCA in the past could draw upon the support of Chinese big business, the party now is building up business activities of its own. Such a trend could lead to the MCA re-establishing links with Chinese big business which is in agreement with the aim of Multi-Purpose Holdings to encourage and provide modernization techniques and to extend the scale of traditional family business. However, such a development could also lead to conflict and competition with many Chinese business groups who might feel threatened by the aggressiveness of companies belonging to Multi-Purpose Holdings. Certainly, the business ventures of Multi-Purpose Holdings have come under strong criticism from the other Chinese-based parties as well as from sections of UMNO.

Conclusion

The posture of the three parties, the MCA, Gerakan and DAP, represent different attempts to seek out a political role and position for the Chinese community. They also reflect varying political perceptions of the Chinese. But on occasion there is much that blurs their respective positions. For instance, sometimes the statements of the parties on particular issues differ little from one another. Likewise, there is much in common about the style of individual members of the three parties on the occasions when they come out more strongly on questions of a communal nature. Within the Gerakan and the MCA certain factions, which have emerged to take on a more communal stand, differ little from the DAP in their utterances. Such factions in Gerakan and the MCA are responses to the pulls from the grass-roots Chinese. These groups are viewed by the respective parties as useful in ensuring that there is no serious loss of Chinese support. But such posturings have naturally caused difficulties within the Barisan Nasional.

It is also possible to distinguish between party leaders who could be described as the technocrat type and those who are essentially the politician type in each of the parties. As examples, in Gerakan Paul Leong and Lim Chong Eu are seen by comparison with Lim Keng Yaik and Goh Cheng Teik as placing less emphasis on Chinese issues and therefore are regarded as being more of the technocrat type within the party. In the MCA Richard Ho and Lew Sip Hon have been suggested as examples of the technocrat type in contrast to Lee San Choon and Lee Kim Sai. Even within the DAP an argument could be made that there are leaders such as Lee Lam Thye who are more well-known for dealing with daily problems of hawkers and flat-dwellers than with championing communal causes. Lee Lam Thye is thus able to interact more frequently with Malay leaders because his image is less that of a communal politician compared to that of Lim Kit Siang and former party member, Fan Yew Teng.

Such differences in political postures and styles can contribute to

division and conflict within the parties. This is best exemplified in the contest between Paul Leong and Lim Keng Yaik in the 1980 Gerakan presidential elections. Lim Keng Yaik won because he was seen as better able to generate Chinese support for Gerakan than Paul Leong who was seen as being too preoccupied with being an efficient Minister of Primary Industries. Nonetheless, having the two types of leader is important as this enables the party to appeal to a broader spectrum of the Chinese constituency. Furthermore, there is a need for leaders both to articulate the sentiments of the Chinese and also to maintain close links with the Malay leadership. However, factional differences within the parties and the inconsistencies which the parties display do not detract from the argument that the leadership of the MCA, the DAP and the Gerakan have sought broadly different approaches to represent the Chinese in Malaysian politics.

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6

THE ADMINISTRATIVE ÉLITE

MAVIS PUTHUCHEARY

The Historical Background

THE politics–administration dichotomy which neatly classified politicians as makers of policy and administrators as implementors of policy has generally been thrown overboard as a myth in both developed and developing societies. The role of civil servants, especially at the higher levels of the bureaucracies, is not confined to merely implementing policies. They are involved in initiating, advising and assisting ministers in the formulation of policy and thus indirectly influencing decision-making. Thus politics and administration are intermixed and difficult to separate at the highest levels of government.

The blurring of political and administrative functions is seen most clearly in the case of colonial systems of government where the colonial government rules through its civil servants. Other political institutions such as political parties, an elected legislature or an independent free Press are weak or completely absent, allowing civil servants to perform a wide range of functions, many of which are political in nature. Thus the colonial bureaucracy by its very nature is a highly political bureaucracy.

In Peninsular Malaysia[1] many of the political functions were performed by British civil servants who belonged to the administrative service, the former Malayan Civil Service (MCS).[2] This service, although small in relation to the total bureaucracy, was the most important service, in that all the important posts such as those of Resident, Resident-General, Adviser and Colonial Secretary were held by members of the MCS. These posts were clearly political posts. Although nominally under the control of the Home Government, these colonial civil servants were given wide powers to make decisions with a minimum of interference from London.[3]

During the transition stage before the country achieved full Independence in 1957, several political parties were created and the country witnessed the emergence of political leaders such as Onn bin Jaafar, Tan Cheng Lock, Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Ismail Abdul Rahman. Until 1951 when the Member System was introduced, these leaders remained outside the Government although their views were voiced through their participation in the meetings of the nominated Federal Council which was an advisory body. But gradually they began to take a more active part in politics and by the time the first national

elections were held in 1955, the colonial system had changed to a partially elected democratic system with all the trappings of a fully elected government.

With the emergence of an indigenous political élite, one might have expected a conflict between this group and the colonial-appointed local administrative élite as experienced in some other countries. But this conflict did not take place for several reasons. Firstly, the local administrative élite up to the Second World War remained few in number. Although the British decided to open the MCS doors to Malays as early as 1902, when the first Malay officer entered the service, the number of Malay officers in the MCS remained very small, not exceeding more than thirty-one at the time of the Second World War. Thus the administrative élite did not consist of an established group of significance in terms of size. Even more important than the size of the Malay MCS, was the fact that none of them ever reached the highest echelons of the civil service. This was because Malay officers were required to enter a junior service first, the Malay Administrative Service (MAS), where they would be trained for eventual promotion to the MCS. The average number of years spent in the MAS by Malay officers promoted to the MCS was fourteen, and their average age at the time of promotion was about thirty-four. Thus, by the time they were eligible to be considered for the senior posts they had reached retirement age.[4] This meant that, unlike the situation in India and Ceylon where the indigenous officers were in senior administrative positions and firmly entrenched as the administrative élite of the country, in Malaya the indigenous officers were by and large not part of the administrative élite until after the Second World War. They were therefore not in a position of power prior to the emergence of an indigenous political élite, and did not feel that their position was threatened by that élite.

Secondly, the political élite was drawn largely from the civil service and thus both political and administrative élite were part of the same social group.[5] The participation of Malay civil servants in the protests against the Malayan Union which marked the beginning of the struggle for independence gave them a sense of identity with the nationalist movement and thus removed any stigma that might have attached to them as members of the colonial government. Malaya did not have a long and bitter struggle for independence like India, where Indian civil servants as members of the government were forced to be involved in administrative action against nationalist leaders and in this way came into direct confrontation with those leaders who eventually became the political élite of the country. On the contrary, many Malay nationalist leaders came from the civil service and, whether they left the civil service to enter politics or stayed on in it, they were very much part of the same group. Far from attacking the indigenous civil servants, the emerging political élite was responsible for hastening the process of Malayanization of the civil service so that the higher posts would be filled by local officers in the shortest possible time.

The Ethnic Background of the Administrative Élite

After Independence the composition of the administrative branch of the civil service changed from a British-dominated to a Malay-dominated one. The new political leadership which took over political power from the British was primarily Malay in composition and therefore was inclined to follow the policy adopted by the British of restricting the entry of Chinese and other races into the MCS. A large number of vacancies in the MCS arose out of the rapid 'Malayanization' of the MCS and the increase of new posts created to meet the expansion of government activities after Independence. At first these posts were filled by Malays from the MAS and other junior civil services, particularly the state civil services and the clerical services. Later, as more Malays were qualified for direct entry into the MCS by obtaining university degrees, a new group of direct-entry Malays replaced the previous MAS-promoted ones.

In the rest of the higher civil service the need for technical or professional qualifications as a prerequisite for entry into the services prevented the recruitment of Malays in large numbers, as there was a shortage of qualified Malays. In these services there was a tendency for 'Malayanization' to result in the recruitment of Chinese Malaysians and other non-Malay Malaysians into the bureaucracy. The communal representation of the MCS compared with the communal representation of the whole of the higher civil service is shown in Table 6.1.

There arose a need to keep the other races out of the MCS and some other sections of the higher civil service as a reaction to the large number of non-Malays being recruited into those sections of the higher civil service where professional and technical qualifications were an essential pre-condition for recruitment. In addition, it was felt by a large number of Malays that they should have preference over the other races in administrative and political positions, and that as the MCS was the most important branch of the civil service, it should be filled entirely by Malay officers. The quota system which was introduced in 1952 to open

TABLE 6.1
Ethnic Composition of the MCS Compared with
Ethnic Composition of the Higher Civil Service, 1962-1963

	Senior bureaucracy		*MCS*	
	Number	*%*	*Number*	*%*
British	409	14.1	9	3.1
Malay	850	29.3	250	86.2
Chinese, Indians & Others	1,643	56.6	31	10.7
Total	2,902	100.0	290	100.0

Source: Mavis Puthucheary, *The Politics of Administration*, pp. 53-4.

TABLE 6.2
Ethnic Composition of the MCS Compared with Ethnic Composition of the Higher Civil Service, 1970

	Senior bureaucracy		*MCS*	
	Number	*%*	*Number*	*%*
Malays	1,863	39.3	603	86.6
Chinese, Indians & Others	2,881	60.7	93	13.4
Total	4,744	100.0	696	100.0

Source: Mavis Puthucheary, *The Politics of Administration*, p. 56.

the MCS door a little to non-Malays but to restrict their entry by a quota of one for every four Malays recruited, was continued after Independence. Thus the ethnic composition of the MCS has changed little since Independence as can be seen in Table 6.2.

The imposition of the quota system which discriminated between Malaysian citizens on account of race has been one of the most controversial issues in political debates. According to the official report of the race riots in Kuala Lumpur in 1969,[6] allegations were made in the election campaign that Malays were given privileges in government jobs to the exclusion of non-Malays, and such discrimination tended to incite racial animosities and contributed to the breakdown of the harmony which had hitherto existed among the races. Since then the Government has introduced an amendment to the Constitution which prohibits public discussion of the quota system and other privileges and special rights given to Malays under Article 153 of the Constitution.

The Socio-economic Background of the Administrative Élite

The concept of élitism was fundamental in the creation of the administrative service as a superior service to the rest of the civil service, and several writers have written about the special role played by the new breed of British administrators who ruled in the colonies. In Peninsular Malaysia this élitism was demonstrated in the rejection by locally-based British administrators of officers who had passed the qualifying examinations but who were coloured or not of pure British descent.[7] Despite this, however, Malays were recruited into the MCS during British rule, even those who did not have the requisite qualifications and who had not sat for the highly competitive qualifying examinations.

The key to this anomaly lies again with the British belief that the Malay aristocracy had a special right to share political and administrative power with them and that this right did not extend to the other sections of society. The decision to set up a special school for the sons of Malay aristocracy along the lines of the British public school system was based

on the belief that the Malay traditional élite could be trained to become English-type gentlemen who would be best fitted to deal with the 'natives'.

Thus the élitist character of the British public school system was adopted in the recruitment of Malays into the civil service. As one writer put it:

> The concept of elitism has, indeed, been one of the most enduring in the British colonial heritage. In the Malay States they saw to it that they defended the identity of the traditional élite and preserved their power and prestige within Malay society. In protecting Malay interests they were at the same time forging an alliance with the aristocracy in return for the assistance and loyalty of the latter, a factor of no small significance in a society where the upper classes provided the leadership and dynamism for a subservient mass following.[8]

This concept of élitism was carried into the Malay College where the sons of sultans had special rooms, better food and higher scholarship allowances.[9] Even in sport the aristocratic games of horse-racing, hunting and cricket were encouraged, which sharply distinguished these boys from the rest.[10] All in all, the feudal distinction between the rulers and the ruled was preserved and strengthened. The values imparted at the Malay College were the values of the British aristocracy and did not include the concept of egalitarianism.

As the administrative élite was drawn largely from the Malay aristocracy, it was not unusual that relations between them and the traditional Malay élite would be very close. The Malay administrative élite represented the Malay sultans and were their spokesmen in the Federal Council and at other meetings when their knowledge of the English language provided a useful link between colonial officials and the traditional rulers.

The selection of Malay MCS officers to sit as representatives of the Malays and to speak as leaders of their community was a distinct departure from the doctrine of political neutrality espoused in the Northcote-Trevelyan report and practised in Britain. In their capacity as 'official spokesmen of unofficial Malay opinion'[11] Malay civil servants were vocal, especially in their demands for a greater participation by Malays in the political affairs of the country, and attacked British policy whenever they felt it was against the interests of the Malay community.[12] They advised the Sultans on what matters to bring up with the British authorities at meetings of the Rulers' Conferences. In this they were assisted by their Malay colleagues in the MCS and in the state civil services. As one writer has pointed out:

> It was not uncommon for a smaller group of the more senior of the Malay officers to get together informally before their rulers went into conference with the British and decide what subjects each Sultan or Ruler would be 'made' to raise with the authorities. Thus one Sultan might be persuaded to take up the question of increased participation in the technical services while another might be asked to obtain a definite undertaking on the part of the Government to send deserving Malays overseas for their education. In this way some of the Sultans and other

TABLE 6.3
Social Background of Civil Servants by Ethnic Group, 1970
(in Percentages)

Occupational level of father	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians & others*	*Total*
Agricultural	35.2	15.2	9.5	28.0
Blue collar	10.6	8.0	13.1	10.4
Sales/clerical	22.1	24.8	39.3	25.0
White collar	32.1	52.0	38.1	36.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Mavis Puthucheary, *Politics of Administration*, p. 70.

aristocrats often became channels for the ideas and aspirations of the Malay officers.[13]

The direct involvement of a large number of Malay civil servants in politics after the Second World War was therefore a logical outcome of their more indirect involvement during the earlier period before the Second World War. Many of them continued to champion the Malay cause and became active leaders of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) which was the first Malay political party to be organized on a country-wide basis. As before, their involvement in politics was tacitly accepted by the British on the grounds (as before) that the English-educated Malays were concentrated in the civil service and any attempt to prevent them from participating in politics would result in the rise of a more radical (and unacceptable) leadership.[14]

The close rapport between the Malay civil servants and the emerging political élite during this period benefited the civil servants greatly, for they were given rapid promotions after Independence. But there was also a rapid increase in educational opportunities at all levels. The government introduced special programmes to assist Malays to obtain the necessary educational qualifications to enter the higher civil service. This policy enabled those from the lower ranks of society to enter the civil service. Thus the expansion of educational opportunities and the large number of vacancies in the higher civil service were responsible for the recruitment of a class of people who had been previously denied entry into the civil service. This is shown in Table 6.3.

As shown in Table 6.3, the majority of the civil servants come from lower and middle level socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, there has been an upward socio-economic mobility for all ethnic groups, but especially for Malays. In particular, the government programme has assisted the sons of farmers and fishermen to become senior civil servants in one generation: 35 per cent of the Malay civil servants came from agricultural backgrounds compared with 15 per cent of the Chinese and 9.5 per cent of the Indians. This picture is also shown in the urban-rural background of civil servants in Table 6.4.

TABLE 6.4
Urban-Rural Background of Civil Servants by Ethnic Group, 1970
(in Percentages)

	Malays	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	*Total*
Urban	15.2	41.7	31.6	61.1	23.2
Small town	31.4	42.3	43.4	27.8	34.3
Rural	53.4	16.0	25.0	11.1	42.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Mavis Puthucheary, *Politics of Administration*, p. 68.

The upward mobility for the Malays has been made possible by the government's provision of special assistance for Malays in the lower socio-economic groups to obtain an educational level and income higher than that of their parents.

The Educational Background of the Administrative Élite

As pointed out earlier, British policy did not encourage Malays to obtain the same educational qualifications as their British counterparts. After receiving a public school type of education at Malay College they would receive training in the lower level Malay Administrative Service for several years before they qualified to be considered for appointment into the highly-prestigious MCS. In the mid-1930s a new scheme was introduced to provide MAS-appointed officers with a training programme leading to a diploma at the Raffles College in Singapore, but the emphasis was on administrative experience gained as an officer in the MAS. Promotion was therefore a slow process and only a few officers managed to make the grade into the MCS.

However, after the Second World War the numbers entering the MCS from the MAS increased rapidly. The MAS was the chief source of recruitment into the MCS up to the 1960s when university graduates

TABLE 6.5
Malays in the MCS by Source of Recruitment, 1950–1963

Source of recruitment	*1950*	*1957*	*1963*
Indirect recruitment			
Through the MAS[1]	29	82	136
Through state civil services and other subordinate services	–	29	42
Direct recruitment			
University graduates	2	13	72
Total	31	124	250

Source: Mavis Puthucheary, *The Politics of Administration*, p. 60.
[1]Includes a small number who obtained degrees after joining the MAS.

TABLE 6.6
Educational Levels of MCS Officers by Ethnic Origin, 1971
(in Percentages)

Highest education level	*Malays*	*Non-Malays*
Honours degree and above	63.7	92.8
General degree or equivalent	13.2	4.8
Diploma/Certificate or secondary school level	23.1	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Mavis Puthucheary, *The Politics of Administration*, p. 60.

began to enter the MCS directly in large numbers. The importance of the MAS as the main source of recruitment can be seen in Table 6.5.

Since the 1960s the emphasis has been on the need to have a good honours degree as a qualification for entry into the MCS. Thus the majority of MCS officers today possess at least an honours degree. The government has also introduced training programmes to allow MCS officers to obtain Masters and Ph.D. degrees from local universities and abroad.[15] The educational qualifications of members of the MCS have therefore improved dramatically as shown in Table 6.6.

Recently, a new regulation has been introduced requiring those wishing to enter the MCS to sit for competitive examinations and to undertake a one-year training programme which they must pass before they can be considered for entry.

The majority of MCS officers have been educated in the English language at secondary school level, although many of them received their primary education in their mother tongue. Table 6.7 shows the secondary school language medium of instruction of a sample of civil servants.

But although the majority of civil servants were English-educated, they did not come from the same school as had been the case when most of them received their education at Malay College, Kuala Kangsar. Furthermore, since 1970 more and more graduates from the Malay-medium stream have been entering the MCS. At present this group

TABLE 6.7
Secondary School Language Medium of Civil Servants
(in Percentages)

Language medium	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians & others*	*Total*
English only	68.9	73.3	94.4	72.9
Vernacular & English	24.6	19.0	5.6	21.1
Vernacular only	6.5	7.7	–	6.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Mavis Puthucheary, *Politics of Administration*, p. 74.

occupies positions in the lower rungs of the MCS but gradually, as their numbers increase, and some of them fill the more senior positions, there may be conflicts of values between this group and the more firmly established English-educated group.

The Political Influence of the Administrative Élite

Various writers on Malaysian bureaucracy have commented on the importance of the MCS in influencing and shaping government policies. Many of the posts within the MCS are political posts as much as they are administrative. Tilman commented that:

> Members of the MCS are part of Malaya's political élite in the sense that government policy decisions are often greatly influenced by the views and desires of MCS officers. Permanent secretaries and secretaries to ministries have an intimate knowledge of the overall workings of the structure of government and Principal Assistant Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries often have the technical and administrative expertise necessary to make policy suggestions that may eventually become policy decisions.[16]

While recognizing the role of the MCS in policy-making it is difficult to quantify the degree of influence exerted by the MCS or their power position among contending élite groups. There are, however, certain indicators that can be used as a measure of the influence of the MCS in decision-making. These are (a) the growth and scope of its activities, (b) the power position of the MCS in relation to the rest of the bureaucracy and (c) the power position of the MCS in relation to the other political élite groups.

The Growth and Scope of the MCS

The MCS has grown both in the size and in the scope of its activities since Independence as seen in Table 6.8. The MCS has more than quadrupled its pre-Independence size in the last twenty years. From forming about 13 per cent of the total higher civil service in 1957, it has increased its size to comprise more than 15 per cent of the total higher civil service

TABLE 6.8
Size of the MCS, 1957-1975

Year	*MCS*	*Total higher civil service*	*% of MCS to total*
1957	358	2,761	13.0
1967	454	3,971	11.4
1970	696	4,744	14.7
1975	1,477	9,545	15.5

Source: Compiled from information provided in the Staff Lists of the Federal Higher Civil Service for the various years.

TABLE 6.9
Distribution of Federal and State Posts in the MCS, 1957-1975

Year	*Federal posts*	*State posts*	*Total*	*% of federal posts to total*
1957	222	136	358	62.0
1967	322	132	454	70.9
1975	1,314	163	1,477	89.0

Source: Compiled from information provided in the Staff Lists of the Federal Higher Civil Service for the various years.

in 1975. The major increase took place after 1969. This indicates that the major responsibility for formulating and implementing government policies in recent years has fallen on the MCS which has increased in numbers in order to take on these responsibilities. The increase in the MCS is primarily an increase in posts at the federal level as shown in Table 6.9.

Thus it appears that there is a concentration of MCS posts at the centre. This reflects the growing importance of the federal government *vis-à-vis* the state governments and the centralizing tendencies of the federal government which have been observed by Tilman in these words:

> Malaysia continues to exist as a federation but purists are often tempted to regard federalism as a failure. It is certainly true that the originally powerful centre through a long series of usually intentional but sometimes accidental accretions of additional power is now in a position to overwhelm any constituent unit when necessary. In theory each level of government continues to be sovereign only in its own sphere, but in fact the state spheres have contracted significantly. At present, if adequately provoked the federal government has the legal authority and political power to encroach on the sovereignty of the states swiftly and almost at will. Moreover, it has already proved not reluctant to use such authority and power, even when the legal basis for such encroachments was less sweeping than it is at the present time.[17]

There is no doubt that some of the additional powers that have devolved onto the federal government have passed onto the bureaucracy and particularly onto MCS officers. A top-ranked MCS officer freely acknowledged this when he said:

> The Administrative and Diplomatic Service, the élite higher civil service, is omnipresent, whose members occupy key positions at the federal, state and local levels. Similarly, the professionals–doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, agricultural officers–are either fully-fledged federal employees operating in the states and districts or on 'secondment' to the state governments. In point of fact there are no state professional employees to speak of. With the exception of such matters [such as] land and the Muslim religion, 'state departments' are in fact 'operating agencies' of the federal government.
>
> One could safely go further by saying that state governments are implementors of federal socio-economic policies and programmes. Federal policy-makers exercise more *de facto* powers than formally provided for in the Federal Constitution.[18]

TABLE 6.10
Superscale Posts in the Prime Minister's Department and Treasury, 1957–1977

Superscale level		*1957*	*1967*	*1977*
Staff posts	I	1	1	1
	II	-	-	1
	III	-	-	2
Superscale	A	0	0	2
	B	0	1	4
	C	1	1	11
	D	1	6	13
	E	0	-	13
	F	0	4	63
	G	0	0	112
	H	8	20	-
Total		11	33	222
Total MCS posts[1]		358	454	1,612
Total superscale posts in MCS[1]		91	164	496

Source: Compiled from information provided in the Staff Lists of the Federal Higher Civil Service for the various years.
[1] In Home Service only.

In order to perform these major roles, the number of posts at the policy-making and controlling levels has increased remarkably over the last ten years or so. The increase in superscale posts in the Prime Minister's Department and in the Treasury between 1957 and 1977 is shown in Table 6.10. As shown by the table, the number of superscale posts in the Prime Minister's Department and the Treasury increased from 13 per cent of the total superscale posts in the MCS in 1957 to 20 per cent in 1963 and 45 per cent in 1977. Similarly, the proportion of superscale posts in the Prime Minister's Department and the Treasury to the total MCS posts (Home Service only) increased from 3 per cent in 1957 to 7 per cent in 1967 to 14 per cent in 1977.

The increase in posts in the Prime Minister's Department reflects the increasing tendency towards centralization and the creation of formal structures or clusters of bureaucratic power around the Prime Minister. Within the Prime Minister's Department alone, excluding the Public Services Department and the Treasury, there are no less than 13 units or divisions employing about 2,474 personnel and costing the government about $78.4 million annually. The expansion in the Prime Minister's Department over three years (1976–8) is shown in Table 6.11. The annual budget for the Prime Minister's Department escalated from $34.7 million in 1976 to $78.4 million in 1978. About $23 million of this

TABLE 6.11
Estimates of Expenditure, Prime Minister's Department, 1976-1978

	(*millions of dollars*)		
	Actual expenditure 1976	*Approved estimates 1977*	*Estimates 1978*
i) General Administration[1]	7.6	12.2	14.4
ii) Economic Planning Unit	3.1	3.2	3.2
iii) Implementation Co-ordination Unit	10.1	13.8	32.2
iv) National Security	0.4	0.8	0.8
v) Islamic Affairs	1.3	1.6	4.1
vi) Management of Government Buildings	1.6	1.9	4.0
vii) Federal Territory Administration	0.8	0.8	1.0
viii) Rukuntetangga Secretariat	-	-	5.1
ix) National Unity Secretariat	4.3	8.4	8.4
x) Social Development Training	4.3	0.7	0.8
xi) Royal Salaries Commission	0.6	0.8	0.8
xii) SERGPU[2]	0.6	0.8	1.2
xiii) MAMPU[3]	-	-	2.4
	34.7	45.0	78.4

Source: *Malaysia Anggaran Belanjawan 1978* (Estimates of Expenditure, 1978), pp. 106-7. (Figures do not include statutory authorities under the PM's department.)

[1] Including Cabinet Division.

[2] Socio-Economic Research and General Planning Unit.

[3] Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Manpower Planning Unit.

amount was allocated to paying the salaries of the 2,474 personnel employed.

These units in the Prime Minister's Department are staffed at the highest levels by MCS officers. These officers are members of several co-ordinating and controlling committees so that the 'various clusters are held together by over-lapping membership or by a network of criss-crossing functional linkages'.[19] In this way the central agencies exercise leadership in directing, co-ordinating and controlling the activities of the operating ministries.

The role of the MCS in political decision-making has been recognized by one of its own officers:

> The first and major characteristic of the national policy making style is the dominance of the bureaucracy in playing the political role of policy decision-making. The administrative élites share with the political leaders the responsibility for charting the course of Malaysia's history through the formulation of long term policies. This role is, however, only tacitly accepted and reluctantly acknowledged as a fact by civil servants who prefer to describe themselves as mere implementors of public policies.[20]

The Power Position of the MCS in Relation to the Total Bureaucracy

The MCS has improved its power position in the civil service not only in relation to its political decision-making role but in relation to the increase in superscale posts that have been created since 1972. In that year, out of a total of 49 posts in the total civil service which carried a basic salary of M$3,000 and above, 38 or 77.5 per cent were in the MCS; and out of a total of 1,456 posts in the civil service as a whole which carried a basic salary of M$1,500-2,999, 399 or 27 per cent were in the MCS. Thus the MCS which forms about 15 per cent of the total higher civil service makes up 29 per cent of the total number of superscale posts that are available.[21]

Not only are promotion opportunities greater in the MCS than in other services but the MCS officers are in positions where they control the operating departments. At the federal level they fill all senior positions in the central controlling agencies such as the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance, and the Public Service Department. In fact, 45 per cent of the total number of superscale posts in the Home Service are in these agencies. In addition, MCS officers fill senior positions in the several operating ministries. In some ministries, such as the Ministries of Public Enterprise, of Primary Industries and of Trade and Industry, they fill all the senior posts, while in other ministries they share the senior posts with officers from other services. The distribution of senior posts in the MCS is shown in Table 6.12.

TABLE 6.12
Distribution of Superscale Posts in the Home Service of the MCS, 1977

Superscale level	*Central controlling agencies*	*Operating ministries*	*State & district levels*	*Others*[1]	*Total*
Staff I (Chief Secretary)	1	-	-	-	1
II	1	-	-	-	1
III	2	-	-	-	2
Superscale A	2	6	-	-	8
B	4	4	-	-	8
C	11	16	4	1	32
D	13	15	2	-	30
E	13	18	10	1	42
F	63	41	14	4	122
G	112	110	25	3	250
Total	222	210	55	9	496

Source: Compiled from information obtained in the *Senarai Pegawai-Pegawai Perkhidmatan Tadbir dan Diplomatik*, Malaysia, July 1977.

[1] Includes officers posted to the Public Service Commission, the Election Commission and the Railways Service Commission.

The highly-centralized system of administration and the all-pervasive existence of a control-oriented administrative élite is complicated by the racial structure of the senior bureaucracy. That the MCS is composed primarily of Malays is seen as necessary in order to control the other branches of the civil service, especially the services in which non-Malays predominate. The ethnic composition of the MCS 'matches' the ethnic composition of the political leadership, and this has resulted in the MCS being given an important role in political decision-making.

Thus the MCS has not only maintained but improved its status and power in society, widening the disparities that had already existed between it and the other services during the colonial period. It has expanded in size and in areas of influence and control. The trust and confidence of the political leadership has given it a major role in policy-making.[22]

The Power Position of the MCS in Relation to the other Political Élites

The MCS enjoys a position of power perhaps unequalled by any other civil service in a democratic country. Its members belong to the same ethnic background as many of the political leaders and are tied by common educational and kinship links. Most importantly, because of the trust and confidence that the political leaders have in the civil service and especially in the MCS officers, they have been given a more important role in political decision-making than would otherwise have been the case. And this has contributed substantially to the special prestige and status enjoyed by the MCS in Malaysian society.

This important role played by the MCS in political decision-making has led Esman to conclude that Malaysia qualifies to be called an 'administrative state'.[23] Another writer, an MCS officer, claimed that for various reasons Malaysian political leaders are as a rule more inclined to rely on the administrative apparatus rather than political and other institutions to carry out the twin tasks of socio-economic development and nation-building.[24]

Certainly it is true that since Independence, and especially when Tun Abdul Razak was Prime Minister, the MCS achieved a position of power beyond what one would have expected of a bureaucracy in any democratic state. Furthermore, the policy of the government since 1970 has tended to strengthen the position of the MCS because it is assumed that a Malay bureaucracy would be more effective in achieving the aims of the New Economic Policy (NEP) than a multi-racial one.

But to say that this role is so important as to make Malaysia an administrative state is to forget the strength of the ruling party which has been in power for more than twenty years and is likely to stay in power for some time. Within the ruling coalition there are the usual demands from the leaders of the various component political parties, and the Prime Minister has to balance these conflicting demands and, no doubt, with the aid of the civil servants, form a policy that is acceptable to all the ethnic groups that make up the coalition, and to society as a whole.

Thus, even though the civil service may initiate policies, the final decision still lies with the political leadership which continues to exercise considerable political authority.

The Future of the Administrative Élite

Although the MCS is still an important part of the political élite, there appear to be signs that its political power may decline in the future. There are several reasons for this.

Firstly, in the past the civil service, and particularly the MCS, offered the most attractive career to English-educated Malays in terms of salary, prestige and security. Even those who received professional training in such fields as medicine, engineering and law seemed to prefer a career in government service to that in the private sector. But in more recent years this has changed. The more highly-qualified Malays seem to prefer courses of study which will give them jobs in the private sector. In particular, the opportunities given under the NEP to Malays to enter business has made it possible for many young and capable Malays to choose a business career rather than to enter the civil service. Furthermore, the opportunities for advancement within the civil service have been substantially reduced as relatively young men now occupy senior positions, thus frustrating the ambitions of the latecomers into the service. In consequence, brighter and more dynamic Malay youths are no longer attracted into the civil service, which in turn has brought about a reduction in standards. Already there are signs that the political leadership is not completely satisfied with civil servants; there has been open criticism of the civil service and several steps have been introduced to curb corruption and inefficiency.

Secondly, the power of the MCS in the past was derived to a large extent from the fact that there was no effective Malay professional middle-class outside the bureaucracy to which the political leadership could turn to for advice. Thus the administrative élite enjoyed a dominant position in relation to its role as policy adviser and initiator. Recently, however, there has been a new group of professional Malays outside the bureaucracy–lawyers, accountants and businessmen–who are able to influence the political leaders. Many of these professional men are better qualified and appear to be gaining influence at the expense of the administrative élite.

For the time being, however, the MCS remains firmly entrenched in clusters of power around the Prime Minister's Department which is highly structured in units and agencies staffed entirely by its members. The danger of such a system is that it tends to limit the freedom of the Prime Minister to consult and get views from a cross-section of society. A more flexible system of prime ministerial assistance, as in the British system, would give him the initiative to select his aides from many quarters and insert them in positions where they may be most useful to him,[25] but whether or not any prime minister is prepared to change the present highly bureaucratized structure remains to be seen. But, if such a prime

minister were to rely more on outside advice than had previously been the case, then the political influence of the administrative élite would decline, and more responsive and responsible government would be likely to develop.

1. In 1963 Malaysia was formed, consisting of what was formerly called the Federation of Malaya (Peninsular Malaysia) and Sabah and Sarawak.

2. The MCS has twice changed its name–the Malaysian Home and Foreign Service, and then, the Malaysian Administrative and Diplomatic Service (Perkhidmatan Tadbir dan Diplomatik Malaysia). For purposes of continuity, however, the original name is retained in this chapter.

3. Mavis Puthucheary, *The Politics of Administration: The Malaysian Experience*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 24-5.

4. Ibid., p. 11.

5. R. O. Tilman, 'Policy Formulation, Policy Execution, and the Political Élite Structure of Contemporary Malaya', in Wang Gungwu (ed.), *Malaysia: A Survey*, New York, Praegar, 1964, p. 350.

6. National Operations Council, *The May 13 Tragedy: A Report*, Kuala Lumpur, Jabatan Chetak Kerajaan, 9 October 1969, p. 21.

7. For a discussion on the objections raised by MCS officers to the appointment of Eurasians into the service 1874-1941, see James Allen, 'Colonial Bureaucracy/Malayan Elite', paper presented to the International Conference on Asian History, 5-10 August 1968; and A. MacCallum Scott, 'A New Colour Bar', *The Contemporary Review*, No. 560, August 1912.

8. Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Malay College, Kuala Kangsar 1905-1941: British Policy of Education for Development in the Federated Malay States', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1969, p. 42.

9. *Malay College Magazine, 1905-1955: Golden Jubilee Souvenir Brochure*, Kuala Kangsar, Malay College.

10. Noordin Selat, *Kelas Menengah Pentadbir Melayu* (The Administrative Malay Middle Class), Kuala Lumpur, Utusan Melayu, 1976, p. 117.

11. *Federal Council Proceedings*, 1933, p. 582.

12. Puthucheary, op. cit., p. 26. In 1938 as many as twenty-one out of the twenty-four Malays in the MCS were of royal or chiefly lineage.

13. Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Administrative Élite in the Federated Malay States: An Aspect of Malaysian Social History', Ph.D. thesis, University of Victoria, 1974, pp. 276-7.

14. Noordin M. Sopiee in his book *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation, Political Unification in the Malaysian Region 1945-1965*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1974, argued that the decision by the British Government to reconsider the Malayan Union proposals and to adopt the Federation policy was 'significantly related to the realization that Britain could not afford to let leadership of the Malays fall out of the hands of the traditional and very anglicized moderate leaders of UMNO (who were basically pro-British and wanted British rule to continue) and into the hands of the more 'alien' radical and extremist leaders of the Malay Nationalist Party who wanted immediate Independence for Malaya and merger with Indonesia', p. 36.

15. In 1977 there were 95 officers in the MCS with Masters degrees. A few of them had Ph.D. degrees.

16. Robert O. Tilman, *Bureaucratic Transition in Malaysia*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1964, p. 119.

17. Robert O. Tilman, *In Quest of Unity: The Centralization Theme in Malaysian Federal-State Relations 1957-1975*, Occasional Paper No. 39, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1976.

18. Elyas Omar, *Policy Analysis and Development in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, National Institute of Public Administration, 1974 (mimeograph), p. 8.

19. Ibid., p. 20.
20. Ibid., pp. 13-14.
21. Puthucheary, op. cit., p. 99.
22. Ibid., p. 110.
23. Milton Esman describes an administrative state as one in which 'the state is the dominant institution in society, guiding and controlling more than it responds to societal pressures, and administrative (bureaucratic) institutions, personnel, values, and styles are more important than political and participative organs in determining the behaviour of the state and thus the course of public affairs'. See Milton J. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia: Institution Building and Reform in a Plural Society*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1972, p. 62.
24. Elyas Omar, op. cit., p. 14. The writer claims that the civil servants were Prime Minister Tun Razak's 'major source of ideas' and that the New Economic Policy 'was developed solely by the civil service' under the leadership of the Chief Secretary.
25. G. W. Jones, 'The Prime Minister's Advisers', *Political Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, September 1973, p. 375.

7

THE POLICE AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA

ZAKARIA HAJI AHMAD

The most important lesson that can be learnt from my experience of internal disturbances is that the whole structure of Government and the activities of all departments within that structure may depend for their adequate functioning, and even for their existence, upon the efficiency and strength of the Police.

Sir Henry Gurney
High Commissioner,
Malaya, 1948–51.

Next year our country will be passing through the greatest of its constitutional changes. This advance could not have been contemplated if there had not already been in existence institutions which would maintain the rule of law and the authority of the Government. In the problems which independence will bring, the Government and the people know that the police will show the same steadfastness and devotion to duty which have distinguished their service in the past.

Chief Minister
Tunku Abdul Rahman
Message to the Police,
on the eve of Malaya's independence

It is only when one views the peace and tranquillity of Malaya within the context of the upheavals prevailing in Asia as a whole that one begins to appreciate the true value of the police contribution to the economic and political progress and stability in this country where, for example, free elections are consistently held smoothly and without serious incident.

Police document for
the Government's attention,
Malaysia, 1965.

MOST analyses of politics devote scant attention to the issues of law and order and national security. 'Law and Order' is not considered unimportant but is usually taken for granted. Similarly, 'national security' is also not unimportant, but nevertheless is conventionally understood as a matter of external defence and therefore an issue outside of the domain of domestic politics. The exceptions to the latter are not, of course, denied. Israel's external defence is an integral political issue in that country, and defence appropriations in the US Congress reflect national, state, and local political issues. More recently we have seen the concern aroused by the issue of defence in Japanese politics. In most

developing countries, however, national security is essentially internal security (the threat from within is more insidious and real) and therefore impinges on law and order and in turn concerns the role of the police.

An analytical study of the role of the police remains at the present time to be written. In the area of comparative politics and political development, much attention has been devoted to the study of political parties and party *apparatchiki*, the military élites and bureaucracies, but few studies have been concerned with the police as a political institution.[1] A substantial body of literature on police science exists, but the corpus of writings is mainly sociological or of the 'public administration' type.

This chapter attempts to analyse the role of the police in the political development of Malay(si)a.[2] In his important doctoral study of the public services of the Federation of Malaya, Robert Tilman noted that the Police formed [it still does] numerically a large proportion of the bureaucracy, but nonetheless excluded it from analysis by saying: 'it could well be argued that its particularized function in the state would normally render its inclusion unimportant in a study of the bureaucracy of a democratic government'.[3] However, the contention in this chapter is that the reverse is more true in Malaysia: the development of the Police as an effective central institution has ensured the maintenance of law and order, which in turn has facilitated the functioning of democratic government and authority in a society divided by ethnic variations, threatened by violent challenges to established order, and fragmented by the circumstances of geography. The rule of law in Malaysian political development has therefore been made possible by the existence of the Police as an institution. Malaysia's experience in terms of the relationships between politics, law and order and the Police may be a special one, but it nonetheless offers interesting insights into problems of political development in general, and in those of Malaysia in particular.

The Conceptual Framework

Some explanation of terms is in order here. 'Political development' may be taken to refer to the process of the gaining of self-determination or independence for Malaya from British colonial rule in 1957 and later the merger of the territories of Malaya, Sabah (North Borneo), Sarawak and Singapore to form the Federation of Malaysia in 1963.[4] Rather than attempt a composite definition drawn from the conceptions of various writers on the subject, the Almond and Powell notion of political development[5] is employed. According to this conceptualization, political development refers to problems of state-building, nation-building, participation and distribution.[6]

'State-building' occurs when the political élite creates new structures and organizations designed to 'penetrate' society in order to regulate behaviour in it and draw a larger volume of resources from it. It is related to the development of a centralized and penetrative bureaucracy,[7] whilst nation-building is a 'process whereby people transfer their commitment

and loyalty from smaller tribes, villages and principalities to the larger central political system'.[8] 'Participation' 'has to do with rapid increases in the volume and intensity of demands for a share in the decision-making of the political system by various groups and strata in a domestic society',[9] and 'distribution' relates to 'control over values among different elements of the population'.[10] In our discussion, however, we shall restrict our analysis to only the first three issues.

The maintenance of the law and of internal peace are principally Police tasks and it is therefore useful to clarify them. The first refers to securing observance by everyone of the country's many laws and ensuring order at places of public resort and on public roads whilst the latter refers to ensuring that every citizen or member of society may go about his normal pursuits, secure in the belief that his person will not be subject to violence or his property subject to theft or other harm. These two tasks are basic to any police agency and an adequate police apparatus cannot be said to be in operation if these minima of law and order and peace maintenance are not being ensured.

In Malaysia, the task of the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) is more elaborate, as is stipulated by statute in the Police Act 1967 (and indeed in all previous police legislation):

> The Force shall subject to the provisions of this Act be employed in and throughout the Federation (including the territorial waters thereof) for the maintenance of law and order, the preservation of the peace and security of the Federation, the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension and prosecution of offenders, and the collection of security intelligence. (Part III:3)

As might be inferred, the Police mission is very wide and has a national mandate. The RMP, or for that matter its predecessor organizations, are charged not only with conventional policing functions such as crime prevention and detection and traffic law enforcement, but also with paramilitary and security (intelligence) responsibilities.

National security is understood here primarily as internal security, that is, pertaining to challenges emanating from domestic sources to the legitimate government of the country.

The Police Role in Malaysia: General Overview

A consideration of the Police role in Malaysia's (or prior to 1963, Malaya's) political history is closely related to the challenges faced by both the colonial and post-colonial governments. Apart from the major problems of ethnic cleavage and the territorial separation of Peninsular Malaysia from Sabah and Sarawak, a significant challenge to the regime has been in the form of outright violence, specifically the Malayan Communist Party's unleashing of armed struggle and terrorism resulting in the Emergency (1948-60), and Indonesian Confrontation (1962-6). In responding to these threats to national security and legal authority (that is, basically, to law and order) the Police has performed a critical role in sustaining the government's political viability and performance.

It would be incorrect to assume that other factors such as the dynamism, talent and skill of the country's political leaders to work out conciliatory formulae for seemingly intractable political problems, the very character of the struggle for independence, an economy well-endowed with natural resources and a well-developed economic and commercial infrastructure are not also important. But it is difficult to imagine that Malaysia's history would have been the same had it not been for the existence of a well built-up governmental machinery, especially in the form of the Police to maintain and preserve law and order and thereby make efficient administration possible. The crux of our argument is that the Police was a most crucial ingredient in this combination of factors, and that the kind of police operations conducted provided a decisive instrument for the regime to deal with the stresses faced by a new country just released from colonial bondage. It was this police capability that provided the regime with the capacity to contain the threat and handle the actuality of violence.

Another possible reason for Malaysia's comparatively 'democratic' experience in nation-building has been the balance provided, so to speak, by the existence of its high police capability and the consideration that its political leaders would not use this power placed in their hands for dubious or unlawful ends. Although the Police has been endowed with vast powers, including detention without trial and seizable arrest,[11] it has consistently acted according to what is stipulated under the law. 'Detention without trial' is not, in any case, a police but a political prerogative. Although allegations of 'police brutality' were publicly voiced in 1981 and 1982, such instances are actually rare, given that the RMP is such a large force, and if any allegation is found to be true, the offenders have been reprimanded or discharged or both.

The Police role in Malaysian political development has meant an instrumental capacity to govern–through the provision of law and order and security services both to the public and the regime in power. Because this basic governmental function is performed, the regime has been able to undertake other governmental operations. More importantly, the provision of law and order has been most essential in the Malaysian situation, as the 'rules of the game' in the political arena have not yet been agreed to by all.

That the Police is an instrument of central state-rule has been a potent factor in its utilization as a national institution of authority, both in British and post-British times. The Police instrument, because of the strong central impetus in its organizational direction, has been functionally important in reducing state particularism, and at the same time has ensured federal control and 'ethnic safety'. This requires elaboration.

With regard to the reduction of state particularism, the Police has increasingly been used by the central government as a 'national' instrument. Several factors attest to this assertion. In the colonial era before 1945, although the Police was organized on a state basis, and in several instances was commanded by indigenous officers, British control was almost total because there was a common officer establishment and uni-

fied procedures for all the seven police forces; more importantly, British advice in the organization and running of these forces was sought and as a rule accepted. Indeed, in the Federated Malay States, where British hegemony was more complete, one of the early problems of the Police was that the state forces were accountable more to the British Residents of each state than to the over-all Police Commissioner; this was resolved by a true amalgamation of the constituent forces into a single united body answerable to its own Inspector-General.[12] In the second place, the indigenous rebellions in the East Coast state against the new colonial regime were resolved by police action, using men drawn from the strengths of the various state police forces–in other words, police suppression of disorder was undertaken on a supra-state basis. Moreover, in the sphere of subversion, police intelligence operations were highly co-ordinated.[13] Thirdly, with regard to the Chinese, British utilization of the Police for control and penetration of the community may be seen as an effort to counteract the immigrants' own brand of law and order, whether through the secret societies or the *kapitan China*. Although matters affecting the Chinese community afterwards came within the ambit of the Chinese Protectorate (later the Chinese Secretariat), the Police became an increasingly crucial instrument in central-state control of the law and order problems of this community.

With the collapse of the Japanese *imperium* in 1945, the British on their return to Malaya set about re-establishing the Police Force, an effort which was virtually like starting from scratch. In line with the Malayan Union scheme proclaimed in 1946, by which a unitary form of government was established for Malaya, the Police was organized on a national, and not, as hitherto, on a state basis. Although the Malayan Union was replaced in 1948 by the Federation of Malaya, in which the executive authority of the states was recognized, the Police Force was made a federal concern and thus did not revert to the control of the states. This arrangement has continued to the present despite a change in authority from colonial to indigenous hands. Indeed, at and after the formation of Malaysia, the underlying principle of command and control of the police forces of Sabah and Sarawak in their amalgamation with the Malayan force has been to structure an organization accountable to a 'strong, central government'.[14]

With regard to the ethnic problem, the 'safety' of the various ethnic groups is perceived as more assured if the Police is under federal, rather than state, control. In his seminal study on the 'communalistic' nature of Malayan politics, K. J. Ratnam observed the conflict between Malaya regionalism (state loyalty) and the necessity to have a strong federal government thus:

> Even those Malays with strong regional sentiments realize that the 'communal problem' will have to be solved at the centre: should the States be allowed to determine their own policies in certain major fields (such as education, Malay rights and so on), it is possible that Malay interests will not be safeguarded in those States which are dominated by non-Malays; furthermore, the Federation as a whole will not be able to maintain and display the trappings of a Malay State

as the Malays themselves desire. While these considerations are understood, there is nevertheless some resentment among the Malays because administration and policies in predominantly Malay States cannot be more pro-Malay than general national policies permit; and national policies are becoming more and more conditioned by the fact of communal inter-dependence. The non-Malays, generally, have no regional loyalties, and concentrate on safeguarding their interests at the national level.[15]

Inasmuch as public order is a Police and a federal responsibility, this has virtually meant that any racial conflagration will be resolved less on racial alignments and as such, the Police may be said to safeguard ethnic security.

That the Police has enabled the regime to maintain its authority in Malay(si)a against non-legal, violent threats is the result of a combination of two features: its nation-wide deployment which has enabled the government to establish its influence throughout the country and to enforce its writ, and its own role and performance in combating the communist insurrection, in both violent and subversive form. During the Malayan Emergency of 1948-60, the fact that the police in their stations performed their duty constituted a serious tactical disadvantage to communist terrorist strategy.[16] In a larger sense, the fact that the Police is organized territorially so as to correspond with the political and administration set-up, has meant that the Force has become a vital structure of the state, extending law and order to the peripheral areas of the country. That internal defence, or internal security against non-legal challenges to the government, has been entrusted to the Police has underlined the importance of the RMP as a bastion of national authority. This is so not only because internal security is regarded as a 'law and order' problem, as was the Emergency of 1948-60, but also as a result of police performance: police casualties in that 'war' numbered 2,947 (1,346 killed and 1,601 wounded), double the number of all other Security Forces' casualties, and of all Communist Terrorist (CT) 'eliminations'–10,700 in number–the police were responsible for eliminating 5,900, or over one-half of the total.[17]

In addition, the efficiency and effectiveness of the Police Special Branch (which even during the Emergency had been able virtually to pin-point every known communist terrorist or CT in the jungle) and of other formations, such as the Police Field Force, and auxiliary components like the Special Constabulary, have provided a strong basis for asserting the authority of the regime in Malaysia's political development. Although this has meant the evolution and existence of a 'police doctrine' and a well-built law and order machinery in Malaysia, it has not at the same time led to the growth of a police-state.[18]

It should be noted that in the Malaysian case, conventional measurements of police efficiency cannot be used to assess what constitutes 'success'. The Malaysian Police has a unique combination of functions in that it includes a large para-military organ, is the country's sole agency responsible for the collection and collation of security intelligence, and prosecutes in the subordinate courts. There is also the fact

that the country experienced an insurrection, which necessitated curfews and other restrictions on people's movement. As a result, crime figures were reduced, and therefore to make comparisons with police efficiency in normal peacetime situations is difficult.

Moreover, in so far as police work is largely preventive (what is called, as a vestige of British influence, 'watch and ward'), actual commission of crime is no measurement of the RMP's ability to deter crime. As stated by Onraet:[19] 'The best fruit of a policeman's work is unspectacular. It is the prevention of trouble rather than forcing a contest with trouble.' Onraet elaborates further that a modern police force's role is essentially the furnishing of security:

> The real value of police work today cannot be judged altogether on the number of arrests made; nor can the test of its success be based solely on the result of investigation. A fair judgement can only be given as the achievement or otherwise of the ideals worked for are or are not carried out into practical effect over a number of years. In two words this means internal security. Internal security grew with the growth of this new institution, and with its growth all the complex structure of modern life became possible–which is as it should be, for a force that provides this security for all classes represents the reasoned wish of a reason-conscious people. The development of all British police forces has this background, and Malaya was no exception.[20]

Thus, in both the colonial and post-colonial periods of Malaysia's history the Police has performed a vital role in ensuring peace and stability in the country. In turn, the impact of the Police role has provided, and still does, the central regime in Malaysia with the following capabilities: (a) a penetrative capacity and the ubiquitous presence of a law and order apparatus, (b) an information-gathering capacity, and (c) a public order capability.[21]

Having discussed the general parameters of the Police role in Malaysia, we need now to turn to a more specific discussion of its role in political-development terms.

The Police and State-building

Although the Police in Malaysia is organized in territorial (corresponding to the civilian government set-up) and functional formations, it is a federal department accountable only to the central government. Thus, although state governments have some say in Police operations, Police command and control is not bifurcated in that executive authority is clearly delineated in departmental hands through its topmost commander, and accountable to a single source of ministerial responsibility. Bayley has argued that, *ceteris paribus*, if the Police is organized nationally and are not locally accountable, then this will reinforce centralizing tendencies in the regime.[22] In the political systems of both Malaya and Malaysia the organization of the Police was and continues to be 'national', as stipulated in the constitutional formulae of the 1948 Federation of Malaya Agreement, the 1957 Merdeka Constitution, and the 1963 Malaysia Agreement.

To be sure, although the Police is a national institution, the strength of the federal government does not lie solely in its established authority and unified system of law and order over the constituent states of the Federation. However, the trend towards centralization of the police organization(s) in Malaysia is irreversible. More so than the civil bureaucracy which has both federal and state services, the Police has continued as a *single* service, and through the nature of its deployment, reduces, if not actually eliminates, any state loyalties or divisions.

Nonetheless, in the case of Peninsular Malaysia, the exact nature of federal-state relations with regard to Police matters, except perhaps in matters of federal government consultation with the states over the selection of senior officers in top state-level command posts, is not known. Little is known, for example, of police-politician relationships in states or areas controlled by the Opposition; in fact, not much is known either of police-politician relationships even in those areas controlled by the ruling party. The Police themselves are apt to declare these 'gaps' in such knowledge as non-issues–as they claim to be 'above politics' and their law and order mission is by nature apolitical.

As for the politicians, on the other hand, strong central control of state-level political organization within the ruling party has probably precluded the use of the Police in the regime's handling of recalcitrant political personalities (and party organizations) except, of course, in instances where violations of law and order have clearly been perpetrated. Where politicians have sought to 'complain' of inept police action, the central élites in charge of the Police have carefully avoided such political interference in matters which are clearly concerned with law and order and are the province of the Police. This would also explain why Malayanization of police posts during and after *Merdeka* did not proceed as it would have otherwise, if political and chauvinistic reasons had pre-empted other criteria.[23]

After the formation of Malaysia, the whole nature of federal-state relationships, especially those of Kuala Lumpur *vis-à-vis* Sabah and Sarawak, became more complex and will continue to be so for some time. It was agreed by the parties to the merger that internal security would be a concern of the central government, and by definition this included responsibility for the Police. In the planning stages of the amalgamation of the various police forces which accompanied the formation of Malaysia, the guiding principle for organization was the imperative of structuring the Police to fit in with the concept of 'a strong central government'. This unification process is still going on. As in former Malaya, federal rule in Sabah and Sarawak has centred more on political tactics and stratagems, and thus has precluded resort to 'police action' in the two states. But, by comparison with their counterparts in Peninsular Malaysia, politicians in Sabah and Sarawak have been more prone to 'discuss' political (meaning federal versus state) control of the Police and the 'Borneonization' of command and other senior posts.[24] In any event, unlike the Indian situation where a certain parallel exists with Malaysia in the legacy of political circumstances and administrative

structure, the federal government in Malay(si)a has not had to resort to overt police action to secure compliance from the states,[25] nor indeed, it may be argued, to resort to the strengthening or creation of police institutions in order to consolidate central rule.[26] In short, centre-periphery relations in Malaya have not been characterized by the resolving of state centrifugal tendencies through overt use of force by the Police, primarily because of the style of the regime and the nature of the police organization.

Within the Police, however, centre-periphery relations have been more 'problematic'. The continued existence of the states is obviously a cardinal point of federation–and may explain why a proposed mid-1960s plan for reorganization of the Police,[27] by which police formations would be even more centralized in regional commands thereby, *inter alia*, obviating the need for police organization to correspond to state administrative boundaries, was not accepted. State authorities are 'weak' *vis-à-vis* the federal government due to the nature of the federal system, yet at state level police formations are 'strong' in relation to federal police headquarters, and are almost autonomous in the execution of law and order matters.[28] State-level police commanders, by virtue of rank, seniority and experience, have always commanded sufficient confidence to be allowed to exercise judgement in their own areas of jurisdiction. They have done so sometimes to the 'chagrin' of their superiors at headquarters, not excluding their 'political masters; quite apart from conflict arising from personality differences, which in any event is almost unavoidable in any human organization.[29]

The detailed nature of such a problem has yet to be systematically investigated, but suffice to note that it is one that has the attention of the staff officers of the RMP at its headquarters in Bukit Aman (formerly Bluff Road), including the number one police officer, the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) himself. It is not possible to cite from documents, but various administrative memoranda and circulars are issued authoritatively from time to time. In quite a few instances, state police chiefs have differed from the perspectives of Bukit Aman, irking in turn the politicians in charge of the Police.

It is to be noted that instances of 'strong' state-level police formations are *internal*[30] to the Police structure and do not reflect strong parochial (state) loyalties opposed to the authority of the federal government. However, this does raise an interesting point about the nature of national law enforcement in Malaysia. It is tempting to ask, in the context of a burgeoning police bureaucracy, if law enforcement should be decentralized? An approach that is predicated on the enforcement of the law from a 'national perspective' surely negates ideas about the 'local nature' of violations of the law, and believes that officers of the law should be accountable only to the federal government. The social, geographical and political conditions of Malaysia may nullify a more localized control of the law enforcement function, and additionally, since the Police are also responsible for intelligence and para-military matters, it may be more fruitful to retain a national police force on the

existing lines. However, what may be required is to reform the Police[31] so as to be more 'responsive' to crime problems at the local level.

Separate from, but not unrelated to, state-building is the question of the Police as an instrument of public order. Linked to the more general problem of policing a multi-racial society, this is one of the most difficult challenges for the Police, as the organization itself is a multi-racial one, being overwhelmingly Malay in the rank-and-file, but more ethnically mixed in the officer corps. The issue is not just one of the composition of the Force, that is, who gets recruited, but also the larger one of whether it performs on the basis of racial alignments. From the viewpoint of the regime and the Police, the RMP is 'above race'[32] and its primary duty, even if prophylactic in nature, is to suppress racial conflagrations.[33]

To a large extent this has meant in practice a vigorous Police policy of suppressing *all* disorders, since it appears almost axiomatic that all disorders eventually develop into racial ones. Although the Police record of impartiality and effectiveness in the handling of racial disorders has been good, the Police themselves recognize that the problem is beyond their control or competence. Given its intelligence and information-gathering capacities, there also appears to be a regime tendency–as was discovered by a social science team which investigated national unity[34]–to rely on the Police in the attempt to contain the signs and actuality of racial violence. However, even if the Police are able to solve their own internal racial problems and/or are able to act as a cohesive force in dealing with racial disorders, the root of the ethnic problem surely lies beyond Police measures and policies.[35]

The Police and Nation-building

The role of the Police in nation-building in Malaysia may appear dubious because, as a 'coercive' instrument it probably alienates, rather than fosters, allegiance to the nation. This issue is different, although the line of separation is very thin, from that of whether the Police is used as a repressive instrument of state.[36]

In Malaysia there has been no comprehensive survey of public attitudes towards the Police, and the role of the Police in nation-building still remains to be explored.[37] The issue is, of course, complicated by the existence of several *ethnic* publics, since Malaysia is an ethnically divided society. But, if the Police performs and is perceived to perform its functions in a manner that is 'above race', then its value as a nation-building instrument is greatly enhanced. As an ubiquitous government agency and by the very nature of its vocation, the Police mingles or deals with the public more than any other state organ. The Police acts out the 'ritual drama of government'.[38] Whether regulating traffic or apprehending criminals, it is seen by the public as a symbol of authority. In short, there is great scope for utilizing the Police as a socializing agent.[39]

It is possible to see nation-building through the Police in terms of two dimensions: internal and external to the organization. In Malaysia, it

may be said the Police enjoys a great sense of cohesion as a corporate structure and in its sense of national mission. The Police is in many ways a 'melting pot' and a modernizing agent. In this regard, the RMP, in spite of its complex ethnic composition, does not exhibit the characteristic of being divided within itself in terms of dealing with any particular community or group–compared to, say, the situation with the police forces of Northern Ireland.[40] Recruitment and postings are open and 'national' in character where applicable, and the organization has always offered a place for the rural Malay to do well in modern society. That the Police shouldered the main burden of dealing with the communist insurrection of 1948-60 has made it highly conscious of its being a guardian of national sovereignty. In a sense, although police officers are less willing to admit it, their organization also serves as an obstacle to a military take-over. Externally, the RMP itself is interested, apart from playing its nation-building role, in securing a better public image through their 'weeks' and so on. 'Operation Service' ('*Bersedia Berkhidmat*')[41] represented an earnest attempt to project the image of the Police as a 'friend' rather than 'foe' of the public. Similar such attempts have periodically been made since then. Police cadet units have also been formed in schools to help instil a sense of public awareness of the Police role among the younger elements of the population.

In these efforts it is probably realistic not to expect too much. In the United States, where good police-community relations are considered an imperative of most police departments, and efforts are strenuously made to secure this goal, studies have shown that public attitudes remain rather ambivalent; those of the public who have 'contact' with the Police have different views from those who do not, but most people think of the Police only when they need them.[42] This attitude is probably not dissimilar from the general attitude of the Malaysian public, especially in the urban areas–indeed, one problem in criminal investigation is that people are reluctant to testify as witnesses in an open court of law, and, in general, it is not incorrect to state that there is public apathy towards the Police.

In rural areas, especially with regard to the Malay public, the Police image is very good and fosters the authority of government; in many remote *kampong*, for example, the policeman is often the only symbol and presence of a central, larger authority. In his study of a rural village in northern Peninsular Malaysia, Bailey found that, apart from being a law enforcer, the policeman performed the role of mediator.[43] According to Bailey, the policeman's role as a mediator in a certain dispute in Sik led one villager to comment: 'He uses the power of the middleman, not the power of the police.' ('Dia pakai kuasa orang tengah, bukan kuasa polis.')[44] But in Sarawak, in spite of a largely Iban composition, rural Iban see the Police as a 'Malay force'.[45] In many 'New Villages' in Peninsular Malaysia, police stations are usually Malay outposts in areas inhabited mainly by Chinese, but how this can be translated into nation-building terms remains unclear.

As has been stated, the nation-building potential role of the Police

remains to be exploited. Whatever the results may have been so far, there is still room for effort. Civic instruction in schools may 'enlighten' children about the Police role–to some extent this is already done through talks given to schoolchildren by police officers and through the establishment of police cadet units. But, in the writer's opinion, the Malaysian police should play a more active role in educating the general public. They could go to the people rather than 'wait' for people to come to them. A great deal of trust may be achieved through the image of a benevolent policeman; warnings, for example, without any loss of authority could be issued instead of fines. They could enforce the law more imaginatively with less resort to punitive measures. Less taking of bribes would also help. The quality of members of the Force could also be improved, even if training is already of a high standard. These suggestions, if put into effect, would gain public respect for the Force, which would not only increase its efficiency, but also serve to strengthen it as a national institution.

Police and Participation

As conceived by its top commanders and 'political masters', the RMP is strictly an arm of civilian authority–a view which is no doubt buttressed by the very nature of its mission. It is unlikely, therefore, that the Police will intervene as a major actor in the political process.

Inasmuch as the enforcement of the law and the maintenance of order depends not only on the Police but also on the legal system as the basis for 'coercion', the regime's balance between authoritarian and democratic politics is most critical. On Malayan independence in 1957, the regime inherited a vast police machine as well as extensive legal powers–in short there was a great concentration of power in the government, which potentially could have been utilized in non-democratic ways, ultimately leading to the creation of a police state. However, so far, as well described by Groves with his accompanying caveat, there does not appear to have been abuse of these powers:

> That the Federation government has never yet made the fullest use of its arbitrary strength is a credit to those in whose hands these controls have been lodged. To expect that all politicians into whose hands these great weapons could constitutionally come will always employ them with even some benignity is to take a most hopeful view of the future.[46]

So far, and on the whole, the civilians in control of the police apparatus have consciously kept separate issues of politics and security, although the distinction is a subtle one. The Police itself is very aware of the vast powers in its hands. Apart from safeguards built into the Police system, the fact that the Police does not have to employ these powers unnecessarily may very well aid its efficiency in the information-gathering (intelligence) function.

Bayley has observed that the Police 'bear primary responsibility for maintaining stable conditions of social life'.[47] However, in doing so they may also be viewed as a 'repressive' institution. In Malaysia, the police

is responsible for quelling disorders of all sorts and also has certain distasteful duties, such as the eviction of squatters. Presumably when the Force is suppressing racial rioting it is viewed in a 'positive' light, but when it is a question of dispersing student demonstrations or evicting squatters it is seen in the public eye as a repressive instrument, that is, 'negatively'. These views, however, are basically beside the point. The Police is only enforcing the law and even in the use of force has always acted with utmost restraint. Senior police officers are themselves hesitant to employ the force at their disposal and only do so as a last resort; in situations of 'sensitive law enforcement', there is a standing regulation requiring its application by rank-and-file policemen to be carried out in the presence of senior or commanding officers. Police officers have straightforward views on disorders and their perpetrators: concerning student demonstrations, for example, they do not understand why students act thus; their (police) notion is that 'students should study, not demonstrate'.

As an instrument of the regime in power, the Police may arbitrarily be used for dubious political ends, but this is a function of the ruling élites' policies. As pointed out by Huntington and Nelson, ruling or aspirant élites who wish to overcome resistance to policies may have to consider choosing a strategy of simple repression, direct or indirect, which also demands a loyal and efficient military and Police.[48] On the other hand, as stated by Bayley, it is also possible that 'a government could be capricious and arbitrary while the police conscientiously acted within the provisions of codified law'.[49] It would appear that the Police in Malaysia, although acting within the confines of codified law, is a tool of the regime. This is largely reflected in the vast scope of Police powers, although it is also apparent that these powers have not been capriciously used. In 1976, the Police Act (1967) was challenged in the courts as being *ultra vires* and in violation of the fundamental liberties enshrined in the Constitution.[50] Whatever the decision of the judiciary, the fact that the case was taken to law demonstrated that Police powers were not absolute but subject to legal review. However, the Malay(si)an experience in the communist insurrection and the existence of an atmosphere charged with subversion and potential racial violence, perforce leads to the retention of strong Police powers. Nonetheless, the presence of these powers, and rather than their utilization, has provided a means of upholding governmental authority. Thus, the Police has been, and is, by and large 'repressive' to the extent that it is acting within its mandate. As for police officers, they consider themselves apolitical and professional in their vocation, and even if the majority are probably pro-government, that is they support the ruling regime, they are only so in the same way that Americans are democrats with a small 'd'.[51]

Conclusion

In summary, it may be stated that a key factor in Malaysia's comparatively successful political development, especially in terms of over-

coming threats to its national independence and sovereignty, has been and is the existence of a well-institutionalized and professional national Police force, able to uphold the rule of law but operating under the mandate of a strong, central government. Although more comparative, cross-cultural research needs to be conducted on the relationships between law and order and the challenges to political development,[52] the Malaysian case indicates that the existence of a police force, with extensive 'coercive' powers and deployed country-wide, is not inimical to democratic political development; in this regard, however, the role of the ruling political élites is obviously critical.

To reiterate, the RMP has had a formative role to play in the political development of the country, because it is an institution highly identified with dominant ruling ethnic interests committed to the rule of law, but in other circumstances, it could easily be manipulated for more dubious ends. If political development, as seen by Pye, consists in relating 'administrative and authoritative structures of government to political forces',[53] our argument is supported simply by the lack of an 'unequal balance' between the Police and political forces. In this sense, too, state-building has not meant the use of the Police by a strong central government for encroaching on regional rights even if the trend towards centralization appears inexorable.

Nonetheless, for as long as internal defence and public order remain as important regime problems, the importance of the Police role will not diminish. The dangers are that its usefulness will be overstretched and/or that there will be an *over-reliance* upon it. An increase in political participation can be dealt with by mechanisms other than the Police; given the 'flexibility' of the Malaysian political élites, this is not an idealistic comment. It is germane to ask if the Police should retain their paramilitary and intelligence roles and not concentrate on more 'civilian' functions. There is no question that its capacity as a crime unit suffers because of its predominant attention to security matters.

Last but not least, the role of the Police in enhancing political development in Malaysia may suggest that the existence of a national and professional law-and-order apparatus is a prerequisite for development in most, if not all, Third World countries.

1. Three studies on the Police and its political roles merit attention: G. Ben-Dor, 'The Role of the Police in Political Development', *The Police Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 2, April-June 1974, pp. 101-14; C. Potholm, 'The Multiple Roles of the Police as Seen in the African Context', *The Journal of Developing Areas*, Vol. 3, No. 2, January 1969, pp. 139-58; and David H. Bayley, *The Police and Political Development in India*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969.

2. The major findings of this study are based on the writer's doctoral thesis: Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'The Police and Political Development in Malaysia: Change, Continuity and Institution-Building of a "Coercive" Apparatus in a Developing, Ethnically Divided Society', Ph.D. thesis, Massachusettes Institute of Technology, 1977.

3. R. O. Tilman, 'The Public Services of the Federation of Malaya', Ph.D. thesis, Duke

University, 1961. Tilman justifies the exclusion by the lack of adequate time separately to consider the Police Service, since it was a unique public service and differed from the other public services in matters of terms and conditions of service and disciplinary procedures. It is fair to point out also that some aspects of the Police Service were examined in the thesis. A modified version of the thesis later appeared as R. O. Tilman, *Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya*, Durham, N. C., Duke University Press, 1964.

4. This is one way of approaching the term. See R. O. Tilman, 'Education and Political Development in Malaysia', in R. O. Tilman (ed.), *Man, State and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, New York, Praeger, 1969, p. 229.

5. G. Almond and G. B. Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1966.

6. See ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 35.

8. Ibid., p. 36.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., pp. 36-7.

11. 'Seizable' offence, as defined in the Penal Code, a code of law transplanted by the British and still in use in Malaysia, refers to arrests without warrant.

12. M. Letchmanan, 'The FMS Police Force 1896-1928', BA Hons., Academic Exercise, University of Malaya in Singapore, 1961. The post of 'Inspector-General' was created in 1936 to supersede the designation of 'Commissioner' in the Straits Settlements Police Force and the Federated Malay States Police Force. After the Second World War, the rank was dropped but was used again after the formation of Malaysia in 1963.

13. R. Onraet, *Singapore: A Police Background*, London, Dorothy Crisp, 1947.

14. This was a phrase prominently used in police documents of that era.

15. K. J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1965, p. 3.

16. R. Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War*, New York, Praeger, 1966, pp. 47-9.

17. Royal Malaysia Police, *Representation on Gazetted Officers' Salaries by the Senior Police Officers' Association, Gazetted Officers' Branch, Malaya Component*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1965, pp. 9-10.

18. See Zakaria, 'The Police and Political Development in Malaysia', Chapter III.

19. Ibid., p. 70.

20. Ibid., p. 72. Although the quotation is dated, it is still a valid proposition.

21. See Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'Political Violence in Malaysia: The Malayan Emergency and Its Impact', in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Association of Historians of Asia Conference*, Bangkok, 22-26 August 1977, Bangkok, The Organizing Committee, Seventh IAHA Conference, 1979, pp. 168-91.

22. David H. Bayley, 'The Police and Political Development in Europe', in Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 328-79.

23. For an elaboration, see Zakaria, 'The Police and Political Development in Malaysia'.

24. See R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia–New States in a New Nation: The Political Development of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia*, London, Frank Cass, 1974; J. P. Ongkili, *Modernization in East Malaysia 1960-1970*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1972; and M. C. Roff, *The Politics of Belonging: Political Change in Sabah and Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1974.

25. The corollary of this is that if there is resistance–violent or otherwise–to the efforts to centralize national authority, then the Police acquires a significant political role. See Bayley, in Tilly, op. cit., pp. 361 ff.

26. M. Weiner, 'India's New Political Institutions', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 9, September 1976, pp. 898-901.

27. Royal Malaysia Police, *A Report of a Study to Reorganize the States of Malaya Component of the Royal Malaysia Police into Four Regional Police Components*, IG/SR/156/34, Kuala Lumpur, no date.

28. Bayley, in Tilly, op. cit., has hypothesized that 'the greater the scope of police operations, the more bureaucratic police accountability'.

29. For an account of such problems between Chief Police Officers (of the states) and Federal Police Headquarters and also schisms between the Director of Operations and the Police Commissioner in the early years of the Malayan Emergency, see A. Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya 1948-1960*, New York, Crane, Russak, 1975, *passim*.

30. See footnote 28.

31. This is not to say the police are neglecting their primary task of crime prevention and detection. Essentially, the police are overburdened with conflicting task demands and their attention to national security has sometimes resulted in a lowered capacity for normal (crime) law enforcement. There appears to be some public dissatisfaction with the efficiency of the police in this regard, as expressed by none other than Malaysia's elder statesman, the Tunku, in his 'As I See It' column in *The Star*. See Tunku Abdul Rahman, 'Urgent Need for Reappraisal of the Police Force', *The Star*, 2 February 1976.

32. For 'favourable' views of police impartiality in racial disorders, see J. Slimming, *Malaysia: Death of Democracy*, London, John Murray, 1969, and Karl von Vorys, *Democracy Without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1976.

33. Royal Malaysia Police, *Brief on Public Order for Talk to Senior Military Officers*, IG/121/2/2/1, dated 20 November 1965, and *Public Order*, text of a talk given by Dato Sir Claude Fenner to the Fourth Senior Officers' Seminar at the Malaysia Control Center on 5 November 1965.

34. *Social Science Research for National Unity*, an unpublished Report submitted to the Government of Malaysia, signed by N. Glazer, S. Huntington, M. Nash and M. Weiner, 1970.

35. P. Wiles is of the view that police information is an important source of public dissatisfaction, that it helps in crisis prediction but is laden with totalitarian implications. See 'Crisis Prediction', *The Annals*, Vol. 393, January 1971, pp. 32-9.

36. In pre-1917 Russia, a strong sense of nationalism may have been provoked, *inter alia*, by Tsarist repressive policies through the use of the secret police. See Adam Ulam, *The Bolsheviks*, New York, Collier Books, 1965, pp. 21-95. Other examples abound. However, it is not suggested here that the police be used as a repressive instrument so as to encourage nationalism.

37. In 1980-1 an attempt was made to analyse samples of public (schoolchildren's) attitudes toward the police. See Hasan Yusof, *Perhubungan Polis dan Orangramai di Malaysia: Satu Kajian Kes Tentang Sikap Penduduk-Penduduk Kuala Lumpur* (Police Public Relations in Malaysia: A Case of Attitudes of Residents in Kuala Lumpur), MA thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1983.

38. G. Ben-Dor, op. cit., pp. 107-8.

39. See the arguments developed by C. Potholm, op. cit., pp. 139-58, and G. Ben-Dor, op. cit.

40. G. Boehringer, *Towards a Theoretical Orientation in the Sociology of Policing: The Northern Ireland Case*, Paper presented at the British Sociological Association Conference, University of Surrey, 8 April 1973.

41. First started in 1953.

42. See the excellent synthesis of studies of this nature in the American context in J. O. Wilson, *Thinking About Crime*, New York, Vintage Books, 1975.

43. C. Bailey, *Broker, Mediator, Patron and Kinsman: A Historical Analysis of Key Leadership Roles in a Rural Malaysian District*, Ohio University Papers for International Studies, Southeast Asia Series, No. 38, Athens, Ohio University, 1976, pp. 52-7.

44. Ibid., p. 56.

45. According to an anthropologist working in Sarawak, Ms Christina Padoch.

46. H. E. Groves, 'Constitutional Problems', in Wang Gungwu (ed.), *Malaysia: A Survey*, New York, Praeger, 1964, p. 364. It is worth noting that in the parliamentary debate on the Internal Security Bill (later Act), the Government accepted Opposition amendments. See R. S. Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1967, p. 125.

47. See David H. Bayley, *The Police and Political Development in India*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969, p. 16.

48. S. Huntington and J. Nelson, *No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing Countries*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1976, p. 3.

49. Bayley, *The Police . . . in India*, p. 11.

50. *New Straits Times*, 24 June 1976. The case involved a writ of summons issued against one Hasnul Abdul Hadi (national deputy chairman of the Partai Sosialis Rakyat) for contravening one of the conditions of a licence issued to him under the Police Act for a public rally. He was alleged to have allowed one Kamaruzaman Yacob to speak at the rally at Bukit Duyong, Melaka, on 12 August 1974, when his name was not included on the list of speakers approved by the Officer in Charge of the Police District (OCPD) of Melaka Tengah. Defence argued that this restriction by the police was contrary to Article 10 of the Constitution. The case was referred to the High Court, and at the time of writing, it is not known to the writer, in spite of many enquiries, what the outcome has been.

51. This is the way Tilman describes the Malayan Civil Service (the MCS), in *Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya*, op. cit., p. 129.

52. In contrast to the Malaysian case, lack of institutionalization may explain the failure of other police forces to perform their formative roles. See Richard Krauzdorf, 'The Military and Police in the Gold Coast/Ghana through February 1966: A Study of Limited Institutionalization', Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1973.

53. L. Pye, 'The Political Context of National Development', in I. Swerdlow (ed.), *Development Administration*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1963, p. 31.

8

MALAYSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY, 1957-1980*

J. SARAVANAMUTTU

Foreign Policy and National Needs: An Approach

LIKE that of any nation-state, Malaysia's foreign policy is based on the pursuance of definite objectives and actions based on certain national priorities and needs which spring from its domestic socio-economic and political context. As a developing country of the Third World the importance of national needs becomes axiomatic for Malaysia. Its small size, low level of military capability, and its narrow-based, largely primary-producing, albeit industrializing, economy have made Malaysia focus on two major external concerns in its two decades of existence: defence or security within and beyond its territorial boundaries and the stabilization of its external revenue from primary commodities and external sources of funding for its economic development. Although Malaysia has also evinced some interest and support for global issues of peace and co-operation, the above-mentioned primary concerns have been stable external goals of the state even when actual foreign policy postures, strategies and actions have shifted or changed from time to time. Foreign policy changes are after all an indication of a state's continual efforts to seek new ways of promoting its national interests or needs in a world of flux. Thus foreign policy is something that is constantly adjusted and attuned to a changing environment while being grounded at the same time on fairly stable domestic needs. It is in this sense that foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy. The external concerns of a state are not irrelevant pursuits of grandiose, global goals but are tied closely to national concerns.

In this chapter we will examine Malaysia's national needs or interests over three broad issue-areas, namely, Defence and Security, Development and Trade, and International Co-operation and Diplomacy. These are largely intuitive categories which, however, are often used in the vocabulary of statesmen, the practitioners of foreign policy. These categories are meant to be exhaustive of the broad range of foreign policy outputs that any state may evince. The choice is purposely suited to the 'national needs orientation' in foreign policy analysis. The three issue-

*The material contained in this chapter is partly based on a larger work entitled *The Dilemma of Independence, Two Decades of Malaysia's Foreign Policy 1957-1977*, Penang, Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia for School of Social Science, 1983.

areas correspond largely to three basic types of foreign policy objectives or goals identified by foreign policy analysts, viz. (see following discussion on foreign policy objectives):

Defence and Security	Core-value goals
Development and Trade	Possession goals
International Co-operation and Diplomacy	Milieu goals

Foreign policy outputs do not, however, consist merely of objectives grounded in various national needs and interests. Along with objectives come postures or orientations, strategies and actions. It would be germane at this juncture to define these key policy outputs.

Objectives: These are the external goals sought by a state, the most permanent of which are the 'core values' of self-preservation–political independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national existence–which all states pursue *qua* nation-states.[1] We have also referred to 'possession goals' and 'milieu goals', the former being goals aimed at enhancing national values and needs, while the latter refer to the pursuit of conditions which transcend national boundaries.[2] An example of a possession goal is obtaining trade concessions for economic gain, while a common milieu goal is the promotion of international peace. Following K. J. Holsti, core goals are then short-range objectives of immediate and permanent importance, possession goals are middle-range objectives normally involving demands on other actors, and milieu goals are long-range goals of grander pretensions with no specific time limits.[3]

Postures: Foreign policy postures are the general orientation of a state toward other world actors. They are different from objectives in that they are aspirational and are not functionally specific in purpose. They may thus not necessarily, though they usually will, result in some foreign policy strategy or action. Objectives are often a function of postures. For example, a 'developing-world' posture usually leads to the pursuance of developmental goals or strategies such as the creation of a New International Economic Order. Postures, as the word implies, also suggest a degree of 'posturing', that is, playing to the gallery and taking stands largely for public consumption or for purely symbolic or political motives without any real intention of following through the pronouncements with concrete actions.

Strategies: These refer to the schemes, plans and general lines of action which a state presents or employs as a means of securing its objectives. A strategy may be single-purpose or multi-purpose, that is, it may be aimed at achieving one or more foreign policy objectives. While strategies are directly related to objectives, their particular texture or nature

will also be a function of a state's foreign policy postures since there are many ways to achieve any one given objective.

Actions: These refer to the actual steps taken at the diplomatic, political or military levels to implement policy. Actions normally flow from strategies but can also directly result from objectives or postures. It is unusual, but certainly not unknown, to have actions that are unrelated to any known foreign policy objective, posture or strategy.

However, in order to study and understand Malaysian foreign policy systematically, it is not sufficient to identify only its policy outputs or the dependent variables. We have to examine, as well, its many inputs or independent variables, or, if one prefers, the *sources* of its foreign policy. In our study of Malaysian foreign policy we will examine four broad sources of policy.[4]

The first set of sources are termed *eco-historical*. These refer to the relatively permanent features or attributes of a state such as its history, culture, geography, natural endowments and the like. Traditionally these sources are looked upon and described as 'background' factors influencing foreign policy. Geo-political factors such as a state's strategic location or its location within various spheres of interest and influence would be considered external sources rather than eco-historical sources of policy. Thus the *external* sources are the second kind of inputs of foreign policy, that is, those that emanate from a state's external environment or influences resulting from factors and actors operating outside a state's national boundaries. The *internal* sources, by contrast, refer to the domestic influences of factors within a state's national boundaries, such as those stemming from societal, political, economic and governmental-bureaucratic influences. Internal sources are different from eco-historical sources in two respects. They are of a more transient and political nature while the latter are relatively permanent and non-controversial. For example, we would consider the Islamic culture of Malaysia an eco-historical characteristic but Malaysian Muslims agitating for the non-recognition of Israel as an internal source of foreign policy. Finally, the fourth category, the *idiosyncratic* sources, refer to those influences that stem specifically from the individual or personality traits of policy-makers. Various concepts have been used to 'tap' this factor. Thus we have Brecher's 'attitudinal prison' and 'élite images' corresponding to Holsti's 'belief system' and Boulding's 'national image'.[5] Others have merely referred to it as the 'psychological' component and include psycho-dynamics, personality traits, belief systems and perceptions.[6] For our purposes, idiosyncratic variables may be defined as those aspects of élite attributes that are not a function of their role occupancy. The idea is to be comprehensive without being too inflexible. The difference between idiosyncratic and internal sources is based on a well-known distinction in international relations literature, idiosyncratic sources being those operating at the individual or élite level while internal sources refer to those operating at the national or state level. However, there is the presumption that one considers the

élite which is effectively in power and not, say, the idiosyncracies of the Opposition leaders who are unlikely in any case to materially affect foreign policy.

Finally, the writer has divided Malaysian foreign policy into four historical periods, each of which has been marked by some degree of distinctiveness in foreign policy conduct, or simply by an event or events which have had a significant impact generally on politics and in particular on foreign policy. The periods with their appropriate titles are:

1957-63: The Dilemma of Independence
1964-9 : Confrontation, Turmoil and Change
1970-5 : New Directions under a New Order
1976-80: The Consolidation of Policy

The Dilemma of Independence, 1957-63

This first period was marked by the dilemma of choosing a truly independent foreign policy and, at the same time, of being dependent on Britain and other Western powers in the security and economic issue-areas. Independent Malaya under the premiership of Tunku Abdul Rahman settled for dependence on the West with its concomitant foreign policy strategies and actions. In matters of defence and security Malaya's defence load was carried by the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA) of 1957, whereby Britain was obligated to provide Malaya with military assistance in the event of an armed attack on the latter's territories, and vice versa. Other provisions called for mutual consultation and action should the peace of either country's territories be threatened or should hostilities involving either party occur anywhere else in the world.[7]

Malaya's objectives in negotiating the treaty were fairly obvious, given that it had only one division of the Malay Royal Regiment, with no air force or navy at the time of Independence. For Britain the pact protected its national interests in the South-East Asia region, and in particular its SEATO allies. Beneath the formal treaty was a preoccupation with the communist threat to the region. Malaya's long and bitter internal war with the communists, in which Britain played the major role, left the new state, or at least its policy-makers, with a 'bad' case of communist phobia. Malaya's defence prior to Independence was provided for by the Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve formed in 1955 under the ANZAM Agreement between Britain, Australia and New Zealand with the aim of containing communist insurrection, providing defence from external attack and carrying out SEATO obligations. AMDA thus replaced this arrangement at Independence and in the protracted negotiations Malaya apparently 'won a maximum of security with a minimum of obligation and it had not compromised on two basic policies of rejecting nuclear weapons and refusing to join SEATO'.[8]

However, AMDA was not accepted at home without a brief ground swell of opposition against the pact from nationalist elements within

UMNO of the ruling Alliance Party, the Opposition parties and various trade union leaders and public figures. The UMNO backbench revolt began when a party member, Tajuddin Ali, attacked the treaty for being 'harmful to independent Malaya'.[9] This precipitated the Johor UMNO Youth claim that the pact made Malaya indirectly a member of SEATO, and led the UMNO Kedah branch to call for an emergency general session to discuss the implications of the treaty. The Tunku stood his ground amidst mounting criticism of the treaty but was forced to place his position at stake by stating that an UMNO assembly debate on AMDA would be taken by him to be a vote of 'no confidence'. The Tunku's tactic succeeded and he won a unanimous vote from the Executive Committee of UMNO stemming the demand for the emergency session. The Tunku also succeeded in obtaining a unanimous vote for AMDA in the Legislative Council, stating that the pact was a matter of necessity:

> . . . let us face the facts, and the facts are that we have at our command an army of less than one division in strength; we have no airforce, not even a single plane or a single man; we have no navy, not even a single sailor and we have not even a single sea-going craft. With the revenue at our command we can never be able to build our forces to the strength which we would require for the defence of our country.[10]

In the light of the UMNO rearguard opposition to AMDA, it is perhaps not surprising that Malaya had not joined SEATO. Its leaders dared not hazard a formal tie with the Western bloc and further compromise Malaya's independence, even though SEATO, like AMDA, was aimed at containing communism and protecting the relevant parties from external communist threat. In fact there is strong evidence to suggest that while Malaya was not directly tied to SEATO, it demonstrated a strong affinity for the grouping.[11] Indeed, the Tunku proclaimed to Parliament Malaya's partisanship on questions of the East-West conflict in 1958 in no uncertain terms:

> There is no question whatsoever of our adopting a neutral policy while Malaya is at war with the communists. Only when we are certain that people here have become truly Malayan-minded and have set their minds on making Malaya their only home can the government declare our policy of neutrality . . . let me tell you that there are no such things as local communists. Communism is an international organization which aims for world domination, not by aggression if they can avoid it, but by the use of tactics and methods among the sons of the country to overthrow democracy and to set up in its place a government after the pattern of all communist countries.[12]

With respect to Vietnam, Malaya gave its full support for containing the communist North. Indeed, the Tunku's first official visit was to South Vietnam in 1958 where he made pledges of solidarity with President Ngo Dinh Diem who returned the visit in 1960. Malaya's opposition to communism was perhaps most evident in its China policy. It followed the 'two-China' policy at the United Nations, but accorded no diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic while allowing Taiwan to set up consular relations. Malaya was also forthright in criticizing

China's actions in Tibet in 1959 and in the Sino-Indian hostilities of 1962. The Tunku even launched a 'Save Democracy Fund' which raised M$1 million 'to help India defend herself against Chinese aggression'.

To sum up, Malayan foreign policy in defence and security matters displayed a distinct pro-West and, concomitantly, anti-communist posture tempered, no doubt, by an attempt to maintain or guard its newly acquired independence. An observer of Malayan foreign policy has suggested Malaya suffered a case of political schizophrenia as a 'committed neutral'.[13] Certainly Independence presented a dilemma. Its major foreign policy objectives had to be the protection of its core-value goals of political sovereignty, territorial integrity and survival but given the worldview of its policy-makers, the pursuit of these objectives became translated into protection against or containment of communist expansion and aggression, perceived or real. AMDA was a direct response to meeting such eventualities. As far as strategies were concerned, there was perhaps no great deal of thought given to complex policies. AMDA was no more than a direct action in response to obvious defence needs. However, since Malaya had unequivocally camped on one side of the Cold War, it also naturally behaved strategically as a minor 'cold warrior', sometimes toeing the Western line even more fervently than some Western powers themselves.

Even more acute than in defence and security was the dilemma of independence in the development and trade issue-areas. Thus the British left Malaya a raw material producing, agricultural country in which rubber and tin accounted for approximately 85 per cent of all exports and in which 69 per cent of its two million strong working population was engaged in agriculture. Furthermore, continued British economic interests ensured foreign control of its major agency houses and holding companies which dominated agriculture and commerce to the extent that in 1963, according to one estimate, 'all the tin dredges, three-quarters of the large rubber estates, almost all of the new oil-palm estates, possibly two-thirds of Malayan foreign trade, and much of the new secondary industries are in overseas, mainly British, ownership and control'.[14]

Independent Malaya's policy-makers responded to this economic situation with two foreign policy postures. The first was a *laissez-faire* orientation toward foreign economic enterprise in the belief that only a large influx of foreign capital could provide the necessary ingredient and stimulus for economic development, growth and stability. This posture also implied a commitment to 'free' Western economic institutions and practices, or to international commerce in general. Thus Malaya concluded in quick succession bilateral investment pacts with West Germany, Japan and the United States soon after Independence and was a party to the ECAFE Multilateral Investment Charter (1958). Malaya also promptly granted tax relief for pioneer industries in the country in that year.

The second foreign posture which contrasted somewhat with the first, may be termed a developing-world orientation. This sprang

directly from Malaya's heavy dependence on external trade for revenue and the extreme vulnerability of its economy to external commodity price fluctuations quite beyond the country's control. It is not surprising, therefore, that Malaya ardently espoused all international efforts to stabilize the prices of primary commodities. Its participation in the various international tin agreements was a direct response to the need to protect tin prices. Malaya also strenuously protested against United States' releases of its strategic stockpiles of rubber and tin which invariably caused a downward trend in market prices, these moves becoming the early irritants in US-Malayan relations. In addition, US production of synthetic rubber and lack of support for commodity arrangements provided a further source of annoyance to Malaya.

Tin, unlike rubber, has had a long history of price-fixing arrangements, and Malaya joined the 1953 agreement under British auspices and participated after Independence in the 1960 agreement.[15] Apart from the pragmatic matter of obtaining better prices from the industrialized, tin-consuming countries, the tin conferences also provided Malaya with the opportunity of expressing solidarity with other primary producing, Third World countries.

Apart from tin agreements, independent Malaya also employed the strategy of negotiating bilateral trade agreements to overcome trade barriers and to ensure a ready market for its goods. These trade agreements typically accorded Malaya and the other country mutual most-favoured-nation treatment in various products as well as the abolition of duty in certain specified goods. Malaya concluded the first such agreement with Australia in August 1958 with the result that rubber and tin imports were allowed into Australia free of duty. The second trade agreement was with Japan in 1960, and subsequent agreements followed with New Zealand (1961), United Arab Republic (1962) and South Korea (1963).

It was in the broad issues of international co-operation and diplomacy that the new state was best able to demonstrate as well as, perhaps, enhance its own independence. Malaya committed itself firmly to the United Nations and its many ideals in accordance with the notion that it was the United Nations that embodied the aspirations of the small, developing states and that any enhancement of UN authority concomitantly increased that of Third World states. This internationalist orientation was manifested in Malaya's most significant external action for this period–its participation in the UN Congo peacekeeping effort in 1960. Malaya initially contributed 613 personnel, but increased this to a total of 1,413 men when reinforcements were sought by the Secretary-General. It strongly supported Dag Hammarskjöld when he was criticized by the Soviet Union, and Malaya also opposed the Khrushchev proposal for replacing the Secretary-General with a three-man 'troika' secretariat. Thus, throughout the duration of the crisis, the Malayan policy was to forestall any efforts at eroding UN authority.

On questions of colonialism and human rights, Malaya's position was also decidedly Third World. Its response to the Algerian situation

perhaps typifies policy on colonial issues. Except on one occasion, it supported all the Afro-Asian resolutions on the Algerian question. Only in 1958, when reference was made to the 'Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic' did Malaya cautiously abstain on a resolution, but in general it voted for the recognition of the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and independence. Malaya's attitude and voting behaviour on the West Irian question took a similar line. On the South African issue, Malaya was particularly critical of its *apartheid* policy. It was through the Tunku's initiative that the subject was raised at the 1960 Commonwealth Conference, leading eventually to the South Africa's forced withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961.

Finally, let us examine independent Malaya's efforts in regional co-operation in this first period of foreign policy. Malaya made considerable moves in this area, and was instrumental in the formation of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), the first indigenous South-East Asian league of states, in that all its members belonged to the region. ASA, formed in 1961, appears, however, to have been the unintended offspring of the Tunku's efforts at a broader grouping of non-communist South-East Asian states. As early as April 1958, the Malayan premier was reported to be contemplating a defence treaty organization consisting of Malaya, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam outside of SEATO, while rejecting a Sukarno proposal for an Islamic bloc comprising Pakistan, Malaya, Indonesia, North Borneo and Southern Philippines as 'impossible'.[16] The Tunku discussed his plans with President Garcia of the Philippines on a visit in January 1959 and the upshot was a surprisingly prompt announcement of a plan for the formation of the Southeast Asia Friendship and Economic Treaty (SEAFET). Malaya undertook to draft the treaty and the diplomatic work in inviting Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, South Vietnam and Burma to participate. However, the plan received lukewarm response except from Thailand and South Vietnam. Indeed, Indonesia expressed objection and even hostility to the project. The objections were stated plainly by its Singapore consul-general that 'the Philippines is a member of SEATO and Malaya has ties with Britain' and that 'as long as all the member countries of such a pact are not really independent, there will be splits which will spoil the ties of unity'.[17]

SEAFET was eventually abandoned and in its place an Association of Southeast Asian States (ASAS), later to be called the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), was proposed in July 1960 with Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand as founder-sponsors. At no point was the Association geared toward defence and security. Among its innocuous accomplishments and activities were the abolition of visa requirements for officials, the waiver of visa fees, an ASA express train service between Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, and several athletic and cultural exchanges. The fate of ASA, however, began to be tied to Malaya's Malaysia proposal which brought in its wake the renewed Philippine claim to Sabah and Indonesian Confrontation which effectively put an end to the Association.

In summary, Malaya evinced an internationalist orientation in its UN activities and postures of anti-colonialism and regionalism, but these postures nevertheless tended to betray its basic anti-communist or pro-West orientation in foreign relations. However, it adopted a general strategy of promoting the ideals and authority of the UN in the hope that this would in turn indirectly promote and protect the interests of the smaller countries like itself. The two facets of this strategy appeared to be (a) the promotion of and participation in general-purpose international groupings and associations such as the UN and the Commonwealth, and (b) the promotion of and participation in specific-purpose groupings and regional associations. In general, the strategies in this issue-area tended to be somewhat diffused since the goals were of a long-range type.

Confrontation, Turmoil and Change, 1964–9

This period was dominated by Indonesian Confrontation which occurred at the outset of the creation of Malaysia.[18] As early as January 1963, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr Subandrio, announced a policy of 'Confrontation' or *Konfrontasi* against the Malaysia project which he labelled 'neo-colonialist' and 'neo-imperialist'. At about the same time the Philippines made its territorial claim to Sabah, the North Borneo state that was to be included in the proposed new federation.[19] The Indonesian opposition was further fuelled by a revolt in Brunei which also affected Sarawak. Although it registered some initial success, the Azahari Revolt was quickly suppressed by British troops at the Brunei Sultan's request. Thereafter, the Malaysia issue seemed to subside to a detente with the meeting of the Tunku, President Sukarno and President Macapagal in Manila in August 1963. The summit brought about the birth of MAPHILINDO–a vague scheme of co-operation among the three countries–amidst the showering of mutual compliments by the three leaders. MAPHILINDO perished stillborn a little over a month after it was proposed, following the proclamation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963 and the severing of diplomatic ties with Indonesia and the Philippines.[20]

After the official declaration of Malaysia, Indonesian Confrontation became more serious. The Indonesian acts ranged from aggressive patrolling of the Malacca Straits in which Malaysian fishermen were harassed, to border clashes involving members of the *Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara* ('North Borneo National Army'). By 1964 Indonesian troops had landed or were air-dropped on Peninsular Malaysia itself. *Konfrontasi* continued well into 1965 but began to simmer down after the September *putsch* of 1965 in Indonesia. There were various efforts at mediation from 1964 to 1966, including initiatives by Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia and Robert Kennedy of the United States, but it was only on 12 August 1966 that an accord was signed between Indonesia and Malaysia to cease all hostilities and renew diplomatic ties. In the meantime full diplomatic relations were also resumed with the Philippines by

June. In three years of Indonesian-Malaysian hostilities, 590 Indonesians were killed, 222 wounded and 771 captured. Malaysia and its Commonwealth allies incurred the deaths of 114 servicemen and 36 civilians, while 118 servicemen and 53 civilians were wounded.

Thus Malaysian foreign policy in the issue-area of defence and security for most of this period was geared toward *Konfrontasi* and its related requirements. The immediate effect was a hardening of Malaysia's pro-Western, anti-communist posture. For one thing *Konfrontasi* triggered the Anglo-Malayan Defence Pact, resulting in a major Western power and two Commonwealth allies waging war on Malaysian soil. From the perspective of Malaysian policy-makers, *Konfrontasi* itself was viewed as a communist, PKI (Parti Kommunis Indonesia)-inspired enterprise pointing to a Jakarta-Peking-Hanoi-Pyongyong axis with Malaysia the target of communist expansionism.[21] But paradoxically, it was *Konfrontasi* that brought about a softening of Malaysia's hardline anti-communist policy in the long run. The Indonesian military and diplomatic offensive goaded the hitherto cautious Malaysia into a new foreign policy strategy of outreach in a concerted diplomatic drive to win friends and influence in Africa and Asia, and later, Eastern Europe. In particular, Malaysia's failure to gain a seat at the Cairo Non-aligned Nations Conference largely because of Indonesian propaganda, precipitated a diplomatic counter-offensive which won Malaysia the dubious recognition of a number of African and Asian countries and eventually the support of twenty-eight nations to attend the next conference at Algiers.[22]

Another spin-off from *Konfrontasi* was the first public review of Malaysian foreign policy by a Parliamentary group of Alliance MPs, which while finding that 'the present independent and non-aligned foreign policy was in conformity with the Alliance Party's principles' nonetheless suggested 'the widest diplomatic representation possible with countries irrespective of their ideologies'. The proposal seemed to have resulted indirectly from considerable domestic criticism of foreign policy. Opposition MPs, for example, had taken the Government to task for its support of the American bombing of North Vietnam at a time when it was attempting to win Afro-Asian friends. There is also some indication of the ascendancy of a counter-élite of Alliance and other politicians who were opposed to some views of the ruling group on foreign policy. An unofficial Malaysian delegation, led by UMNO MP, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, attended the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization Conference at Winneba, Ghana, in May 1965 but its application to join the organization was rejected.[23]

However, it was not until *Konfrontasi* ended that the rethinking in foreign policy took a more definitive shape. Foreign policy was at this stage still somewhat ambivalent and the policy-makers themselves appeared to be a little confused as to whether Malaysia was non-aligned or neutral. For example, Acting Foreign Minister Tun Ismail, in answering a Parliamentary query said: 'We are not committed to any power bloc and we crystallize our attitude on any issue strictly on its

merits and in the light of national interest. In that sense we are not aligned. We never claim to be neutral. We can never be neutral in the choice between right or wrong.'[24] It would perhaps be more correct to say that Malaysia tried to be neutral with respect to particular international issues, while being aligned *de facto* to the West by virtue of its military ties. Malaysia had nevertheless transformed its hardline, anti-communist posture into one of 'peaceful co-existence', taking the cue from Premier Khruschev. Indeed, it not only went out of its way to win friends in Africa and Asia but initiated diplomatic and trade ties with the Eastern European nations in this period. In so doing, the contradictions of its foreign policy became more and more apparent, necessitating eventually a change of posture.

By 1968, Tun Ismail, now retired from the Cabinet for health reasons, put forward to Parliament his seminal 'Ismail Peace Plan'. He called for the neutralization of South-East Asia, guaranteed by the major powers, the signing of non-aggression pacts and the declaration of a policy of co-existence, arguing that:

> The time is... ripe for the countries in the region to declare collectively the neutralization of South-East Asia. To be effective this must be guaranteed by the big powers, including communist China. Second, it is time that the countries in South-East Asia signed non-aggression treaties with one another. Now is also the time for the countries in South-East Asia to declare a policy of co-existence in the sense that the countries... should not interfere in the internal affairs of each other and do accept whatever form of government a country chooses to elect or adopt.... The alternative to the neutralization of South-East Asia guaranteed by the big powers... is an open invitation by the region to the current big powers to make it a pawn in big power politics. The alternative to the signing of non-aggression treaties among the countries in the region is an arms race among themselves which would be detrimental to their economy. The alternative to the declaration of the policy of co-existence is increased tension and subversion in the region.[25]

There were doubtless some differences of opinion in the Government on the Ismail proposals, with the Tunku perhaps taking a more adamant stand than the other cabinet members, but at any rate, since the suggestions emanated from a former senior cabinet minister, it was clear that a process of rethinking on foreign policy was taking place in the top echelons.

With the end of *Konfrontasi* also came, ironically, a downturn in Anglo-Malaysian relations. It began with the separation of Singapore from Malaysia, regarding which the British were given very short notice. Then came the British rejection of a Malaysian request for $630 million in defence aid. Relations reached their nadir when the Tunku accused Britain of talking with the Indonesians behind Malaysia's back. However, it was largely the British announcement of the scaling down of troop commitments and overall defence expenditure east of the Suez Canal that brought about the low rapport. For Malaysia, British withdrawal was to start in 1971 and be completed in stages by the mid-1970s.

Thus in 1968, under the Tunku's urgings, talks began for a five-year defence arrangement between Malaysia, Singapore, Britain, Australia and New Zealand to replace AMDA which would cease to function after 1971. It was not until 1971 that the final details were drafted but in the process of negotiation, it became clear to Malaysian policy-makers that they could no longer lean as heavily as before on old allies for defence. It was against this background of the impending British pull-out that Tun Ismail made his proposals.

Although Malaysia's foreign relations in this period were dominated by *Konfrontasi* and security matters, there were at least two important events which related to economic policy, namely, UNCTAD I and II of 1964 and 1968. At both these conferences Malaysia joined the Group of 77 in espousing developmental issues and the demands of the Prebisch Report calling for more equitable trade, as well as for the creation of other economic relationships between the Northern (rich) and Southern (poor) countries of the world. Neither of these conferences could boast of many concrete achievements, but through them the South dealt a few effective blows in the North-South conflict. Malaysia carried the battle into the arena of tin conferences in bargaining for a higher price range for the 1965 Tin Agreement. Malaysia, together with Bolivia, threatened withdrawal from the Agreement when the negotiations became deadlocked, but the threats were later withdrawn when consuming countries subsequently agreed to a satisfactory price range at a Tin Council meeting.[26] By the time of UNCTAD II, Malaysia had won a place on the Trade and Development Board. Thus in matters of development and trade, Malaysia's foreign policy showed a continued adherence, if not a greater commitment, to its developing-world posture and thereby its pursuit of developmental objectives.

At the same time, however, Malaysia for the most part did not discard its *laissez-faire* orientation in respect of foreign enterprise. This liberal attitude had led to a startling degree of foreign ownership and control in the Malaysian economy. Information released in 1973 showed that foreign ownership of fixed assets in the industrial sector in Peninsular Malaysia was more than half of the total (57.2 per cent) while it stood at an amazing 70.8 per cent in the modern agricultural sector, attesting to the enduring impact of colonial rule despite more than a decade of independence. Foreign ownership in the less important non-corporate sector was much less, but as the Government itself admitted:

> The overall picture indicates that foreign corporate ownership of assets in Malaysia is substantial in agriculture, manufacturing and mining, though this is already declining in agriculture and mining. Further, ownership and control is largely in the hands of a relatively small number of multi-national foreign firms with diversified economic interests.[27]

The picture for the ownership of share capital was much the same:

> The most significant feature is that foreign interests accounted for as much as 61% of the total share capital invested in the corporate sector.... Foreign

participation is especially dominant in modern agriculture and mining while it amounts to about 50% to 60% of the total in manufacturing, commerce and finance.[28]

Towards the end of the period there were signs that Malaysia was beginning to temper its *laissez-faire* attitude towards foreign enterprise with a greater degree of governmental direction. The formation of the Federal Industrial Development Authority (FIDA–now known as MIDA or Malaysian Industrial Development Authority) in 1968 was indicative of the slight shift in attitude. FIDA's function in general was to co-ordinate and systematize Malaysia's industrial development programme, and, while it remained loyal to Malaysia's open-door policy, with its formation also came a shift from the promotion of strict import-substitution industries to more export-oriented industries.

The termination of *Konfrontasi* also saw a resuscitation of regional co-operation. The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, initiated moves for a 'larger-than-ASA' regional organization which Malaysian policy-makers came around to accepting after some initial reluctance to disband ASA. Thus in August 1967, after quibbling over the name for the new organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was born with Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore as founder-members at its inaugural meeting in Bangkok. The goals of ASEAN as stated in the Bangkok Declaration were: to accelerate economic growth within the area; to promote regional peace and stability; to encourage collaboration in the social, economic, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields; to improve trade, industry and agriculture; to promote South-East Asian studies; and to maintain close co-operation with other international and regional organizations.[29] The aims did not differ significantly from those of ASA, and membership, as with ASA, was open to all states in the region. Of particular interest was a clause on foreign bases reminiscent of MAPHILINDO:

> ...affirming that all foreign bases are temporary and remain only with the expressed concurrence of the countries concerned and are not intended to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the national independence and freedom of states in the area or prejudice the orderly processes of their national development.[30]

The immediate effect of ASEAN was to seal the growing *entente* of the five South-East Asian neighbours, thus ending a period of turmoil in their relationships. However, toward the end of 1968, Malaysia-Philippines relations again became strained over the Sabah issue. A bill passed by the Philippines House of Representatives declared Sabah as part of Philippine territory. Malaysia responded by asking the Philippines to withdraw its diplomatic staff from Kuala Lumpur. However, mediation efforts by Thailand's Thanat Khoman led to a moratorium on the Sabah issue until after Malaysia's General Election of 1969. By that year's end, at the Third ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Conference, Malaysia and the Philippines agreed to resume diplomatic relations. Held

in the cool atmosphere of the Cameron Highlands, the Ministers approved all the ninety-eight recommendations put before them on projects covering commerce and industry, tourism, civil aviation, air traffic, meteorology, transportation and communication, food supply and production, fisheries, mass media, cultural activities and finance. They also signed two agreements for the establishment of an ASEAN Fund and for the promotion of co-operation in mass media and cultural activities.[31] It looked as if ASEAN was well on the road to fostering international co-operation among its five members.

New Directions under a New Order, 1970–5

With the turmoil of the 1960s behind it, Malaysia moved towards consolidation of its relationships in the region. It put the final touches to its rapprochement with Indonesia by signing with that country, in March 1970, a Friendship Treaty and a Delimitation of Territorial Seas Treaty. The first treaty was a renewal of a 1959 treaty, both being functionally equivalent to non-aggression pacts, and the only such treaty Malaysia has signed with any country. The other treaty related to Malaysia's and Indonesia's claim to a twelve-mile band of territorial waters, which meant that the Straits of Malacca, being less than twenty-four miles wide in places, could no longer be considered international waters. In December 1971 both countries in tripartite consultations with Singapore made an announcement to that effect: 'that the Straits of Malacca and Singapore are not international straits, while fully recognising their use for international shipping in accordance with the principles of innocent passage'.[32]

The general thrust of Malaysian policy in the period was one of new directions under the post-May Thirteenth Government under Tun Abdul Razak. By the year's end Malaysia attended its first non-aligned nations conference at Lusaka, symbolic of its final acceptance as a 'non-aligned' nation. Tun Razak led the Malaysian delegation and spoke in glowing terms of non-alignment, identifying fully Malaysia's foreign policy goals with non-alignment principles:

> Today with the detente between the two power blocs, it is an important responsibility of the Non-aligned Group to ensure that the interest of the big powers do not converge at the expense of the medium and small powers. The hegemonistic tendencies on the part of the major powers which appear to be under guises and with various justifications must be resisted. Furthermore, the world today is no longer bi-polar. It is at least tri-polar with the emergence of China and her legitimate role in the world cannot be washed away by those who are opposed to her. At the same time, it is a fact which also cannot be washed away that the relations between China and a number of countries remain unsatisfactory. I submit that here the non-aligned countries have an extremely important role to play and have a unique duty to discharge if we are to remain loyal to the principles of co-existence and to our basic tenets of non-alignment in our efforts to bring about a harmonization of international relations on the basis of respect for independence and integrity of states.[33]

It was also at the Lusaka Conference that Tun Razak for the first time sought endorsement, at an international forum, for Malaysia's proposal for the neutralization of South-East Asia, soon to become the centrepiece of foreign policy for the period. The scheme was subsequently aired at various other international conferences, notably, the Commemorative Session of the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations in December 1970 and the 1971 Commonwealth Conference in Singapore. As Tun Razak explained at the latter conference, neutralization involved a European-style guarantee of major powers:

> Malaysia for its part has... called for... a neutralization which necessarily requires the endorsement of the US, USSR and China. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia cannot be considered in isolation. They are very much a part of South-East Asia which has all the potentialities of becoming an arena of conflict of the superpowers intent on the extension of spheres of influence. In our view, therefore, peace and stability in this region can be a reality if the neutralization which should cover the entire area is guaranteed by the US, USSR, and China.[34]

This was clearly an ambitious scheme but Malaysia seemed earnest in carrying it through. In November 1971, it took the first important step by persuading the ASEAN countries to endorse the neutralization of South-East Asia and declare that they 'are determined to exert initially necessary efforts to secure the recognition of and respect for, South-East Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers'.[35] The Kuala Lumpur Declaration was also subsequently endorsed at the Commonwealth Conference at Ottawa in August 1973 and the Fourth Non-aligned Summit Conference in Algiers in September that year.

The slowness or lack of big power response–only China expressed verbal support for the idea–led to a change of emphasis from big power guarantee to South-East Asian initiatives in fostering some form of neutralization. Tun Razak in his speech to the Eighth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1975 stated:

> The premise of the neutralization proposal is regional and national resilience. South-East Asia must stand on its own feet. We–individual countries as well as the region as a whole–must be self-reliant if we wish to survive. If a country or a people values its way of life, it must be prepared to defend it against any form of external encroachment.... The best defence lies in the people themselves–in their commitment, their will and capacity.... This is the meaning of and thrust of the neutrality system.... The key to our future lies not in outdated and irrelevant attitudes of the cold war, but in imaginative and constructive response to the new realities of today.[36]

As further explained by Ghazali Shafie in a talk to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, a 'South-East Asian Neutrality System' entailed the pursuit of three 'essential elements', namely:(1) national cohesiveness and resilience, (2) regional cohesiveness and resilience, and (3) the observance of a policy of equidistance *vis-à-vis* the major powers.[37] The change of emphasis in the foreign

policy strategy reflects a continual adjustment toward external developments and to some extent domestic events, but while the strategy was flexible, Malaysia's basic posture during this whole period was one of nuetralism (or 'non-alignment' as its policy-makers preferred to term it).

Beside the neutralization proposal Malaysia's other–if not most significant–step toward neutralism came with the recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. While the move was strictly speaking a diplomatic matter, its implications for security were obvious. Steps toward rapprochement with China became evident when Malaysia softened its anti-China line and made pronouncements such as those at Lusaka. By 1971, Malaysia had changed its 'two-China' policy to a 'one-China, one Formosa' one and voted for the Albanian resolution which allowed for the seating of the People's Republic and consequently Taiwan's expulsion. There followed in October a nineteen-man trade mission led by PERNAS (Perbadanan Nasional or National Corporation) Chairman Tengku Razaleigh to open direct trade links, and at the United Nations secret meetings between Malaysia's representative, Zakaria Mohammed Ali, and his Chinese counterpart, Huang Hua. The two had also met in Ottawa as ambassadors to Canada. As a prelude to Chinese ties, Malaysia had recognized without fanfare the Mongolian Republic, North Vietnam, North Korea and East Germany in the course of 1972-3.

Then, on 27 May 1974, a Malaysian entourage led by Prime Minister Tun Razak left for the People's Republic of China in the first high-level official contact of the two Governments since Malaya's Independence in 1957. On 31 May Malaysia and China announced the normalization of relations to be followed by an exchange of ambassadors. At the same time Malaysia terminated diplomatic relations with Taiwan. In the joint communique announcing the normalization of relations, the two Governments agreed on the following main points:

> ... that although the social systems of the People's Republic of China and Malaysia are different, this should not constitute an obstacle to the two governments and people in establishing and developing peaceful and friendly relations between the two countries on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. The two governments consider all foreign aggression, interference, control and subversion to be impermissible. They hold that the social system of a country should be chosen and decided by its own people. They are opposed to any attempt by any country or group or countries to establish hegemony or create spheres of influence in any part of the world.[36]

Malaysia specifically stated that it recognized 'the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China and acknowledges the position of the Chinese Government that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China'. China on its part accepted Malaysia's position on the issue of overseas Chinese based on the principle of *jus soli* and apparently gave

the assurance that the MCP insurgency was an 'internal problem' of Malaysia's. Premier Chou En-Lai also spoke favourably of Malaysia's promotion of a 'Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality' (ZOPFAN) for South-East Asia.

A little under a year after the rapprochement with China came the dramatic turn of events of April 1975 in Indo-China. In unprecedented and relentless military offensives the revolutionary movements of South Vietnam and Cambodia–admittedly with generous support and participation from Hanoi–overwhelmed the non-communist regimes of Thieu and Lon Nol in a matter of months. The communist victories led to the establishment of communist governments in South Vietnam and Cambodia under the National Liberation Front and the Khmer Rouge respectively. Malaysia, in line with its neutralist policy, quickly extended recognition to these new Indo-Chinese governments, making it plain that it did not subscribe to the 'Domino Theory'. Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie explained that what he called 'The Great Domino Fallacy' was based on simplistic assumptions of the inevitability of communist victory and the uniformity of South-East Asian states. Thus he argued that 'the fall of American dominoes does not necessarily presage the fall of other states, which may not even be dominoes'.[39]

In general, Malaysia's strategy for the period shifted from one of strict defence to that of promoting general security at home and at the regional level. For the most part, the pursuance of national security dovetailed with that of regional security. Malaysia's major strategy was initially the European-style neutralization of South-East Asia to be guaranteed by specific major powers. This underwent some modification and became the promotion of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in the region. There subsequently appeared a package of strategies consisting of the promotion of national and regional resilience and a policy of equidistance *vis-à-vis* major powers, both of which were still basically functions of Malaysia's fundamental posture of neutralism throughout this period.

In economic matters, there was also some indications of a change in postures and strategies. Notably, Malaysia's developing-world posture took on a more forceful and sometimes 'radical' orientation. Malaysian spokesmen began to stress more strenuously the need to institutionalize various measures aimed at reducing price fluctuations in the primary commodities of developing countries and to effect a more equitable distribution of world wealth. North-South issues continued to be hammered out at UNCTAD III in Santiago which boasted several minor achievements including recognition of the pollution hazards in synthetics production, agreement in respect of shipping and freight that adequate notice be given and consultation precede any freight increases of importance to Less Developed Countries (LDCs), agreement on a code of conduct for Liner Conferences and a decision on monetary reform favourable to LDCs in the International Monetary Fund (IMF).[40] As for Malaysia's private achievements, it was re-elected to serve on the Trade and Development Board, the governing body

of UNCTAD, and the leader of its delegation also served as vice-president of the Conference.

However, it was in relation to the question of foreign investment that Malaysia's policies saw the greatest change. The changes took their point of departure from the government's New Economic Policy (NEP) which formed the basis of the Second Malaysia Plan (1971-5) and called for, *inter alia*, 'economic balance' between *bumiputera* and non-*bumiputera* participation in the economy. In 1973, the mid-term review of the plan recognized in clear terms that the goal of economic balance entailed the reduction of the share of foreign interests in the Malaysian economy:

> ... the attainment of the growth targets of the Perspective Plan (1970-1990) will enable non-Malay ownership of share capital to expand by nearly 12% per year and to increase its share of the total to over 40% by 1990, nine times more than the 1970 level in absolute terms.... In relation to total share capital, however, the expansion of the share of Malays and other indigenous people from under 2% in 1970 to 30% in 1990 will involve a sizable decline in the share of foreign interests from 61% to about 30% during the period.[41]

Although the 40-30-30 plan meant a drastic reduction in the *percentage* of foreign investment this did not entail an *absolute* decline. In fact Malaysia continued to welcome foreign enterprise, although it had largely discarded its earlier *laissez-faire* orientation. The prevailing attitude remained that foreign capital was still necessary for development, and that this plus the transfer of technical know-how and its job creation function outweighed the deleterious effects of foreign economic control.

It became evident toward the period's end that the rather ambitious goals of the NEP, particularly those of the Perspective Plan which targeted increases of Malay management and ownership to the 30 per cent level by 1990, would be difficult if not impossible to attain through conventional means. It seemed clear, therefore, that some drastic measures had to be taken either to actually attain these targets or at least demonstrate the government's earnestness of purpose. Thus in September 1974, the prime minister announced a policy of 'economic nationalism': 'Our objective is to bring about an effective and equitable mixture of domestic and foreign enterprise on the one hand, and private and public enterprise on the other, so that our national interest can be advanced to the context of an expanding, stable and equitable world economic order.'[42] Along with the new economic posture came the setting up of a National Petroleum Corporation (PETRONAS), which under the aggressive direction of the then chairman, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, was conferred with powers to acquire one per cent 'management shares' in foreign oil companies, which effectively allowed PETRONAS control of these companies' policies through a mechanism of weighted votes.[43] This led to the charge of 'nationalization without compensation' and the temporary pull-out of Exxon from oil prospecting off the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Government officials later

denied that the management shares amounted to nationalization, contending that they were merely a contingency to protect a very vital national resource.

In other economic moves, Tengku Razaleigh, this time as chairman of PERNAS, Malaysia's government-funded corporation for the promotion of *bumiputera* interests, succeeded by 1975 in acquiring, *inter alia*, a 19 per cent holding in Island and Peninsular Development, a 20 per cent holding in London Tin Corporation, and a 10 per cent share in Sime Darby, all large companies with major interests in Malaysia's economy.[44] In an ambitious but abortive project, PERNAS Securities announced in July 1975 its plan to acquire a controlling (40 per cent) interest in Haw Par Brothers International, a company with various interests in Malaysia and abroad.[45] At this height of the episode, Tengku Razaleigh said that the Government would continue to employ the technique of economic takeovers until the NEP target of 30 per cent *bumiputera* ownership was achieved. He had thus implemented a policy or strategy of state capitalism to attain stated political objectives.

By the end of the period, however, Malaysia had begun to soft-pedal its economic nationalism posture, without really discarding it as such. In a 'Malaysian Investment Seminar' held in Kuala Lumpur in October 1975, various cabinet ministers made speeches assuring foreign investors of the Government's continued adherence to a private enterprise-oriented economy. The prime minister, in his address admitted of 'uneasy comments' and 'misgivings' in the foreign media about Malaysia's investment climate, but he tried to dispel any idea that Malaysia did not want or need foreign investment.[46] On the PETRONAS issue, the prime minister explained that because oil was a vital resource, the special legislation was necessary, but he assured investors that 'this law will be implemented fairly and equitably and in a manner that will not affect adversely Malaysia's investment climate and our unblemished record of fair treatment to all investors'.[47]

A new area of international diplomacy which gained prominence during this period was Malaysia's relations with the Muslim world. Although Islam is the state religion and Muslims constitute over half the total population of the country, Malaysia had on the whole maintained a low profile in Islamic affairs, as reflected in the non-recognition of Israel, general support for Muslim causes, and participation in Islamic summit conferences since 1969. However, in June 1974, amidst considerable fanfare Malaysia hosted the Islamic summit in Kuala Lumpur when Tun Razak spoke in grandiose terms of Islamic solidarity and identified Malaysia with the Arab and Palestinian cause in the Middle East:

> Today, as our Arab brothers embark on the road of negotiations to seek peace and justice, we in this conference must, more than ever, remain solid and united. We must not allow ourselves to become complacent by the current mode of expectancy or to be confused by the machinations of Zionism. Our unity through this organization must be clearly demonstrated so that the world will know that

we will not weaken and we will not be divided.... Let our voices ring clear and loud in total and united support for the Arab and the Islamic cause in West Asia.[48]

One suspects, however, that Malaysia's Muslim ties suggest some degree of 'posturing'. For Malaysia, the goals of Muslim solidarity are vague and distant, a circumstance heightened by Malaysia's geographical distance from the hub of Muslim activity in the Middle East. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a pragmatic edge to these ties. Because of its good relations with the Arabs, Malaysia was among the ten most-favoured nations exempted from oil cutbacks in the 1973 energy crisis. Domestically, they are a *sine qua non* of good politics given Malaysia's Muslim majority. Thus the 1974 Islamic Conference was nicely timed, being held just before the General Elections of that year. By 1975 Malaysia had also begun to cash in on its Arab ties by concluding a number of cultural, scientific, technical and economic agreements with several oil-rich countries. On a tour of these countries in January and February, the prime minister signed six such agreements with Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

In summary, then, Malaysia's foreign policy orientation in this issue-area underwent little fundamental change, although pragmatism seemed to be the philosophy of the day as 'international goals' were sought in unison with medium-range objectives of security and real economic gains.

The Consolidation of Policy, 1976-80

The succession of Datuk Hussein Onn as prime minister following the unexpected death of Tun Razak did not fundamentally affect foreign policy. Hussein's relative inexperience in foreign policy matters meant that the newly appointed foreign minister, Tengku Ritbaudeen, would largely follow through the initiatives and maintain the positions enunciated in the Razak period. But while foreign policy had stabilized, it would be a mistake to suggest that Malaysia undertook no new foreign policy initiatives. Indeed, the external, particularly South-East Asian, environment continued to change dramatically and demanded more than just standard responses on Malaysia's part. Initially, developments prompted Malaysia and its ASEAN partners into holding the first meeting of ASEAN heads of government at Bali in February 1976 after eight years of the regional organization's existence. The historic Bali Summit produced two important documents–the Declaration of ASEAN Concord and the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation.

The treaties, however, were by no means unexpected. In Malaysia, the prime minister, Tun Razak, and Wisma Putra officials had referred repeatedly to a so-called 'blueprint' for the region's neutralization on which senior ASEAN officials had been working for some time. The Bali agreements were evidently the intermediate products of these efforts. Although the treaties fell short of any concept of neutralization,

they did represent the most significant indigenous multilateral accords to emerge out of South-East Asia.

The first document, the ASEAN Declaration of Concord, emphasized general areas of co-operation, reaffirming the declarations of Bandung, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and the UN Charter. It was the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation that spelled specifically the manner in which political co-operation was to take place. Among its major provisions are:

> the establishment of a Ministerial High Council which can provide good offices, inquire into, mediate and conciliate disputes referred to it by the signatories (Article 15)
>
> that the signatories should refrain from the use of threat or force and that disputes should at all times be settled through friendly negotiations (Article 13)
>
> that the signatories should exhaust the regional pacific settlement machinery before resorting to UN Charter procedures (Article 17)
>
> that the signatories should endeavour to co-operate in all fields for the promotion of regional resilience, based on the principles of self-confidence, self-reliance, mutual respect, co-operation and solidarity (Article 12)
>
> that the treaty be open for accession by other states in South-East Asia (Article 18)

The last-mentioned article and the ASEAN leaders' disclaimer of any military provisions in the treaty were aimed at the Indo-Chinese states, in particular Vietnam, which on the eve of the Bali meeting launched a scathing attack on ASEAN as an American-inspired military bloc 'to carry out US neo-colonialist policy to oppose the patriotic and progressive movements in South-East Asia'.[49]

The Bali overture appeared to have had some effect on the Vietnamese who sent their deputy foreign minister, Phan Hien, on a swing through the ASEAN countries (Thailand excepted). In Malaysia, Phan Hien warmly relayed Hanoi's conciliatory attitude toward ASEAN and was warmly if not enthusiastically received. He was reportedly alleged to have supported the Neutrality Zone and even hinted at Vietnam's possible entry into ASEAN.[50] The optimism about Hanoi's intentions was dispelled by the turn of events at the Colombo Non-aligned Nations Conference in August that year, when Laos, with Vietnamese support blocked reaffirmation of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration. The Laotians based their objection to the Declaration on the rather convoluted argument that:

> The KL Declaration was issued at the time when the US was intensifying their [*sic*] war of aggression in Indochina in order to cover up the participation of the ASEAN countries in the US war of aggression in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia and to fool world public opinion into thinking that ASEAN countries had good intentions.[51]

Wisma Putra was clearly annoyed at what they called an 'absurd show' at Colombo, but the Malaysian foreign minister appeared unruffled a few

days later when speaking on the appointment of Malaysia's ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam:

> We will pursue through the new closer contact our foremost foreign policy objective of promoting a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in our region.... It will take time.... We need peace, freedom and neutrality to prosper, and we are prepared to work, understand other points of view and consider other aspirations to this end, so long as our views, hopes and aspirations are equally understood and sympathised with.[52]

The continued consolidation of policy was especially evident in 1977 with the holding of the anti-climactic Second ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur. The only drama of the summit was President Marcos' announcement that the Philippines was dropping the fourteen-year-old Sabah claim, later modified to an intention of making 'definite steps' to eliminate the claim.[53] The 1977 Summit came too close on the heels of Bali to be of any real significance. The presence of the Japanese, Australian and New Zealand premiers suggested that the thrust of the summit was to be economic rather than political. As it turned out, the ASEAN leaders merely reaffirmed an 'offer of peace' to the Indo-China states, the final communiqué stressing ASEAN's desire to develop 'peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with all countries in the region, including Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam'. This emphasis on peace overtures to the Indo-China states was preceded by Malaysia's own unilateral diplomatic initiatives in forging bilateral links with Vietnam, including the proferring of technical assistance to help reconstruct Vietnam's battle-worn economy in matters ranging from rubber, palm oil, and medical aid to port-building, road construction and telecommunications. These offers were made by Tengku Rithaudeen on his two-leg tour of Hanoi and Vientiane three months before the Kuala Lumpur summit.

In the economic sphere, the Kuala Lumpur summit reaffirmed the five regional industrialization projects of urea plants in Malaysia and Indonesia, soda ash in Thailand, diesel engines in Singapore and phosphate fertilizer in the Philippines, first proposed at Bali the year before. The ASEAN leaders were able to extract from Japan a pledge of US$5 million for the projects on the condition that 'each is established as an ASEAN project'. The Australians on their part pledged an increase of aid from A$90 million to A$250 million.[54]

Towards the end of the period, the general movement towards policy stabilization was dealt a couple of severe blows. Developments emanating from Indo-China strained Malaysian foreign policy makers' capabilities to their limits, namely the scandalous exodus of 'boat people' from Vietnam, and the still (at time of writing) intractable problem of 'Kampuchea'. The initial optimism that a co-operative Indo-China would forgo a *modus vivendi* with ASEAN has fast deteriorated into outright anxiety about possibly Soviet-backed aggressive designs on ASEAN, leading to a situation of political impasse and stalemate.

Malaysia has on its part 'processed' an estimated 100,000 boat refugees

who have landed on its shores, to third countries during 1978-80, and, with ASEAN support, has eventually succeeded in defusing the refugee problem to manageable proportions after urging the convening of a Geneva Conference in July 1979. Malaysia's handling of what is probably the most tragic humanitarian problem in modern history, will go on record as a diplomatic triumph even if at points its actions and policies verged on the outer limits of callousness.

Perhaps equally tragic, but somewhat more intractable, is the Kampuchean question. The Vietnamese action in 1978 of sending ten divisions of troops (200,000) into Kampuchea to topple the Pol Pot regime, followed by a twenty-seven-day war with China in February and March of 1979, has plunged the region into considerable disequilibrium. At present, ASEAN, at odds with its Indo-China neighbours, is pressing for the continued non-recognition of the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin Government of Kampuchea and has been diplomatically successful in keeping it out of the United Nations. Indeed, the ASEAN countries by 1981 were openly backing a 'United Front' of Khmer Rouge, Free Khmer and Sihanouk forces against the Heng Samrin regime.[55]

For Malaysia, in particular, the Kampuchean question has severely crippled its initial overtures of friendship towards the Vietnamese and its early attempts to forestall a polarization of the region into communist and non-communist blocs. The continuing impasse and crisis over Kampuchea has indeed pitted, at least diplomatically, the China-US-Japanese-backed ASEAN against the Russian-backed tightly linked Indo-Chinese 'Federation'. The Vietnamese membership of COMECON coupled with a twenty-year friendship treaty with the Russians in 1978 confirmed Vietnam's definite tilt toward the Soviets. Malaysia has, however, maintained an open dialogue with the Vietnamese and (along with Indonesia) is reputedly less enthusiastic about Chinese support than are other ASEAN countries.[56] It is clear, nonetheless, that the situation and its imperatives for ASEAN diplomacy will seriously compromise Malaysia's espoused 'non-aligned' policy of equidistance *vis-à-vis* the major powers. It may also spell doom for the increasingly moribund ZOPFAN concept.

However, it is not surprising that it is in ASEAN and with ASEAN states that Malaysia has mounted, and will continue to mount, the bulk of its economic-diplomatic activity. This has grown out of a recognition that ASEAN is the most logical instrument for the pursuance of national-cum-regional objectives, be they security-oriented or developmental. This is not to say that the organization faces no problems. There has been criticism that the proliferation of diplomatic and bureaucratic activity does not necessarily produce commensurate results in real terms. Singapore's outspoken former foreign minister, S. Rajaratnam, once noted a lack of 'political will' on the part of the regional body to follow through its programmes. Referring to the five regional industrialization projects, he opined that:

It is two years since Bali but these projects have not yet been tied up. We are still in the process of feasibility studies or details of implementation. To that extent we are frittering away valuable time. What we should be doing now is looking ahead to five more projects. The vigour of ASEAN has been focused on these five projects . . . if these are the test, then this is a disappointment.[57]

The minister's words ring a note of realism amidst the often euphoric pronouncements of ASEAN summitry. The criticism is possibly a little harsh for a fledgeling regional body, which, while not often matching commitment with action, has demonstrated a level of international co-operation hitherto unachieved in the region. ASEAN intra-regional co-operation is perhaps still on the threshold between institutionalization and action-oriented programmes, but institutionalization is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for effectiveness. The present organizational structure of the Annual Foreign Ministers Meeting, the ASEAN Secretariat, the Standing Committee, and the eleven permanent and seven *ad hoc* committees provide the formal structure for the bulk of intra-regional co-operation as well as extra-regional activity. Whether they are used fruitfully depends on the members themselves.

It is in the realm of extra-regional relations that ASEAN has proved particularly advantageous to Malaysia and the other member-states. Malaysia has thus taken advantage of the multilateral ASEAN approach to press for certain national objectives. In the economic sphere, the initiation of the various dialogues with the European Economic Community (EEC), Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States are cases in point. While nothing very concrete has yet to emanate from these dialogues, there is no guarantee that bilateral arrangements would fare any better. For Malaysia, ASEAN thus provides an additional instrument for bilateral action. ASEAN provides a sense of solidarity for a conglomeration of similar and largely like-minded states who together could achieve somewhat more than they would were they to entirely rely on national instruments of foreign policy.

Sources of Stability and Change

In reviewing Malaysian foreign policy one is at once struck by its historical dynamics and progression in a see-saw of stability and change over time. Thus, one finds in the twenty-three-year span of policy an initial formative period which exhibited a high degree of stability, a transitional unstable period marked by the preponderance of external stimuli, a creative stable period of change and finally, a stable period in which policy has become well-grounded and to a great extent, consolidated. However, events in the fourth period do indicate possibilities of minor *ad hoc* adjustments of policies.

The development of Malaysian foreign policy in its particular progression and symmetry is doubtless unique, but it nevertheless underscores the interplay of certain general sources of foreign policy as well as internal and external feedback effects on this policy. The first period

underlined the importance of idiosyncratic factors stemming from a particular élite ideology and particular historical experiences such as the Emergency and the external Cold War environment. The second period, in contrast, demonstrated the dominant impact of external sources of change particularly in terms of their feedback effects on policy in an interplay of external and domestic developments. In particular, it was the long term impact of Indonesian Confrontation that propelled Malaysia into making the substantive changes that had occurred by the third period. The equilibrium of the third period attested to the development of a new élite ideology which provided the structural and psychological bases for the changes that actually occurred under the new order. The new élite also tended to be somewhat more responsive to the changed and changing international environment which no doubt facilitated the radical shift in policy. While a top-level change in leadership occurred in the fourth period, no substantive changes resulted, and élite perceptions and ideological orientations remained fundamentally unaltered. Furthermore, the post-Vietnam external environment, although initially disturbing, tended subsequently positively to reinforce existing postures and strategies rather than suggest changes.

Figures 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 represent attempts to explain the two decades of Malaysian foreign policy by employing the framework of analysis suggested earlier in this chapter. We have focused only on policy outputs in the defence and security issue-area, but these have, on the whole, been generally characteristic of Malaysian foreign policy, with qualification.

FIGURE 8.1

Explanatory Chart of Defence and Security Policy Outputs, 1957-1963

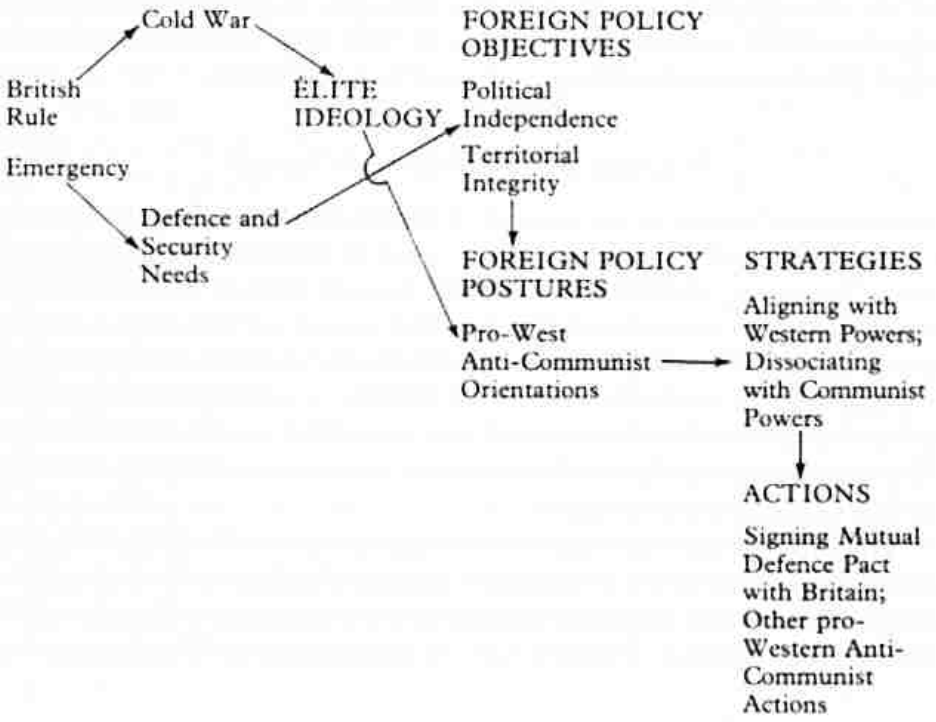
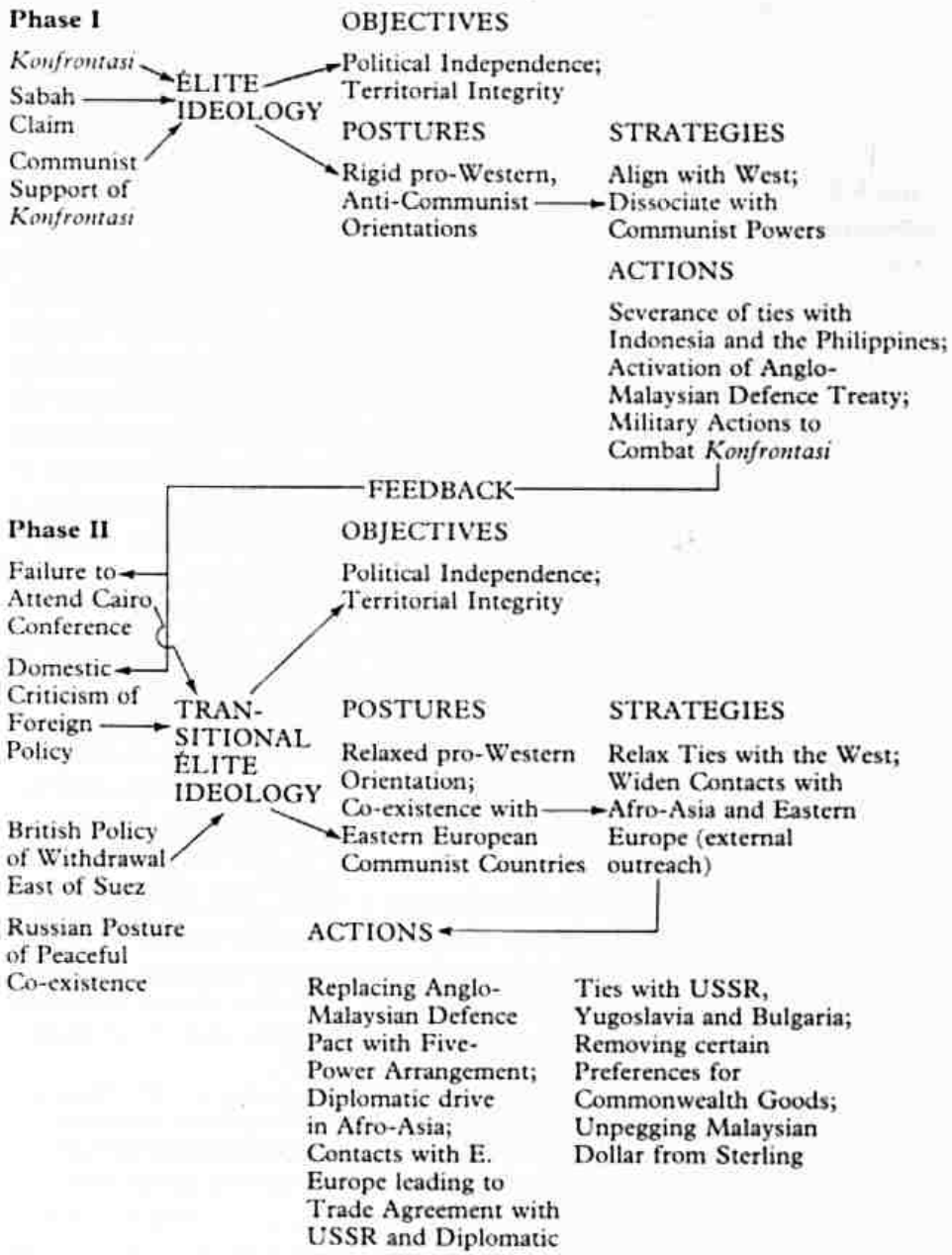


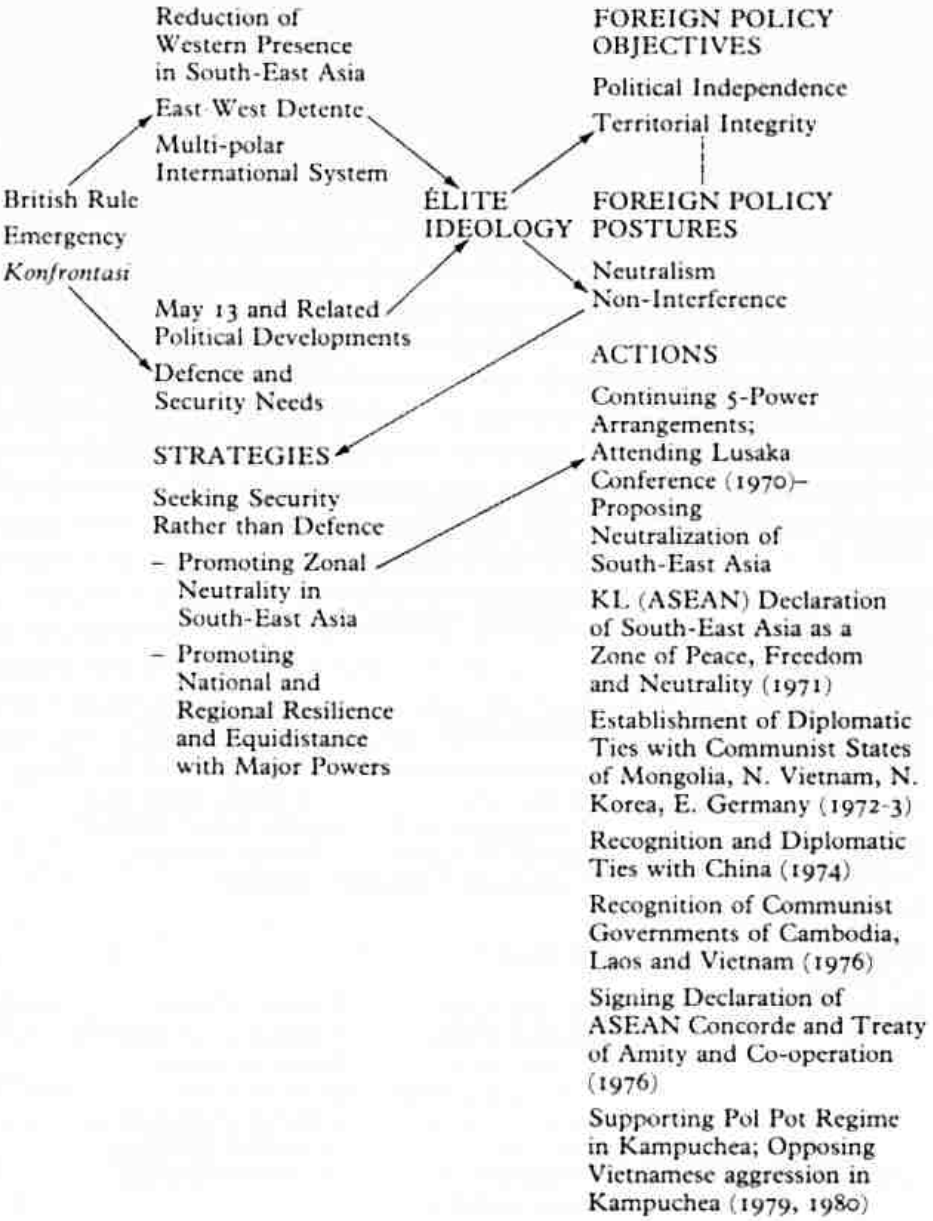
FIGURE 8.2
Explanatory Chart of Major Foreign Policy Outputs, 1964-1969



The overall picture that emerges is a mixed one, but a number of generalizations can be made.

In the first period, idiosyncratic variables tended to dominate foreign policy, particularly in the area of defence and security. In large part, this corroborates the observations of a number of previous foreign policy studies of Malaysia.[58] But even here, idiosyncratic factors–as symbolized by an elite ideology committed to certain Western values–were positively

FIGURE 8.3
Explanatory Chart of Defence and Security Policy Outputs, 1970–1980



reinforced by inputs from the external environment of the Cold War and bolstered by antecedent historical factors (British rule and the Emergency), influencing foreign policy in the same general direction. Nevertheless, the prevalence of idiosyncratic elements during the first period is difficult to dispute. In this respect the Tunku's personality comes out rather strongly.

By contrast, the second period was marked by the predominance of external factors, particularly during its first phase in the form of inputs leading to and deriving from *Konfrontasi*. Thereafter–during the second

phase–foreign policy manifested the impact of mounting negative domestic feedback upon existing policies. Idiosyncratic factors, while remaining important in the omnipresent figure of the Tunku, began to wane as his influence and sway diminished substantially by the end of the period. For the greater part of the second period the influence of eco-historical factors was negligible.

The third period saw a leadership shift which, although it arose out of domestic political developments–particularly the events of May 13–had indirect importance for foreign policy. These developments prepared the ground for the ascendancy of a new élite ideology marked by material changes in élite perceptions of the internal and external reality. Certainly the external feedback effects spilling over from the second period were a factor in influencing the new élite perceptions, but more importantly it was the changing (or changed) international environment that prompted the substantive changes in foreign policy. Thus the third period underlined the importance of the idiosyncratic, internal and external sources of foreign policy with their individual ascendancy closely linked to the development of historical events. Put differently, it was largely the external and internal feedback effects, long-term and short-term, that dictated the course, if not content, of foreign policy for the period.

The fourth period exhibited little idiosyncratic variation, even though the premiership and foreign minister's portfolio changed hands. This attests to the general stability of domestic sources of foreign policy in this period.

In the issue-area of development and trade, internal sources have been of greatest importance, attesting to a 'rational' (in the sense of ends-means calculation) pursuit of policy in this issue-area, since these internal sources stem largely from the nature of the Malaysian economy and its needs. However, there is a good case that antecedent eco-historical factors deriving from colonial rule contributed considerably to the nature of policy outputs, especially during the first period. Undoubtedly, by the second period internal domestic needs had risen to a dominant role in determining policy. Idiosyncratic variables, by contrast, had little or negligible impact. In the third period, while internal economic needs remained of paramount importance, idiosyncratic factors took on a more significant role. This was symbolized by the adoption of a new economic philosophy engendered by the ascendancy of a newer crop of UMNO leaders, and perhaps epitomized in the pragmatism of Prime Minister Tun Razak himself. The Hussein Onn team in the fourth period represented a continuation of the new élite and élite ideology rather than a break with the Razak era, thus resulting in little or no change of policy in this issue-area.

Turning finally to the issue-area of international co-operation and diplomacy, the most important generalization to be made is that for the most part status considerations were of primary importance in determining policy. By the third and fourth periods there was, however, a tendency for policy to dovetail into that in the defence and security issue-area and thus to derive from much the same sources. The second period,

as a result of *Konfrontasi*, tended to be dominated by external factors. Since many of the policies and decisions in this issue-area are usually of a more routine nature, the bureaucracy has perhaps played a greater role here in the evolution of policy than it has, for example, in defence and security. By the same token, idiosyncratic factors are not as important in influencing policy in the issue-area.

A dominant theme of our analysis is that foreign policy cannot be divorced from domestic, national concerns, and Malaysia, as a developing Third World country, has amply demonstrated the pursuance of external policies in terms of very real national interests and needs. Whether the aspiration actually matched the practice is doubtless debatable but in its more than two decades of existence Malaysia has coped surprisingly well and sometimes imaginatively with a changing external environment in the pursuance of these needs. The absence of military capability gave rise to considerable defence and security needs, particularly in the first flush of independence. Thus Malaya turned initially to its British and Commonwealth allies for military assistance in defence. Increasingly the need for defence has been reinterpreted as the need for security. Leaning less or not at all on traditional allies, Malaysia imaginatively pursued its security needs through a posture of neutralism and the promotion of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in the South-East Asia region. The dovetailing of its national security concerns with that of the region through the agency of ASEAN has already been elaborated on previously. Suffice it to say that in a state-centric and fluctuating world order, Malaysia will continue to have defence and security needs which will demand continual attention and perhaps flexibility of response.

It is in the economic realm that the significance of national needs has become most marked. By most standards, it would be foolish to contend that the Malaysian economy has 'taken off' on the path to sustained economic growth. Indeed, Malaysia is still heavily dependent on its agricultural sector in which a small number of primary commodities constitute the mainstay of the economy, although the country has benefited greatly from the discovery and exploitation of oil in the 1970s. Moreover, in spite of the increased level of agricultural and industrial diversification, this has not reduced Malaysia's chronic dependence on the rich, industrialized countries which are not only Malaysia's most important trading partners but the main source of its foreign investment as well. In short, economic needs continue to dominate foreign policy outputs in the issue-area of development and trade even more than in the area of defence and security. The endurance of economic needs notwithstanding, various internal and external inputs have caused a degree of re-definition of these needs and the pursuit of new strategies to fulfil them. Thus in Malaysia's persistent quest to gain a more advantageous position *vis-à-vis* the rich, developed countries, it has maintained a strong developing-world posture demanding various concessions from the rich countries via various institutionalized and non-institutionalized means. Malaysia, however, discarded its *laissez-faire* orientation toward foreign enter-

prise in favour of economic nationalism with strategies for maintaining control of its natural and other resources, short of outright nationalization. This shift in approach reflected the impact of the various internal and external inputs on policy, particularly the unceasing feeback effects on extant economic policies which have already been elaborated upon.

Status needs, although elusive, were a major factor in Malaysia's pursuit of global or milieu goals. This was particularly evident during the first period where a strict separation between defence and security questions on the one hand, and the more 'international' issues on the other, seemed to obtain. In the *Konfrontasi* period, this distinction became somewhat blurred, although the intense level of diplomatic activity can be seen as a means of enhancing Malaysia's status in the face of Indonesian propaganda to do the very opposite. Thus Malaysia, to combat Indonesian propaganda, began publicly to profess and later practise a posture of neutralism. This, in turn, brought about acceptance from the Non-aligned Group of nations, reducing the need to further pursue or enhance its status as an independent, sovereign and neutral state by the third period. Policy in matters of international co-operation and diplomacy–particularly in the area of regional co-operation–were thus increasingly dovetailed into the pursuit of security needs and some economic needs, as status needs receded into secondary importance in this issue-area.

We may conclude that national needs will continue to dominate Malaysian foreign policy, however they may be defined by the powers that be. A comprehensive understanding of foreign policy must also entail an appreciation of the multifarious factors that interplay upon each other as they affect policy over time and in different issue-areas. Such a holistic interpretation of foreign policy would also 'debunk' a largely prevalent view that foreign policy in Third World countries is élitist or unconcerned with domestic processes and national priorities. This essentially cynical approach makes foreign policy an activity that takes off from the whims and fancies of idiosyncratic leaders. It is this notion of leadership that has to be revised. One cannot deny the need for strong effective and enlightened leadership, but this should not be confused with the pursuance of élitist policies. Indeed, truly enlightened leaders would pursue policies grounded in the aspirations and needs of their peoples.

1. K. J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1967, pp. 132-5.

2. See Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1962, pp. 73-4.

3. Holsti, op. cit., pp. 131-2.

4. The categories used are suggested by the work of scholars of comparative foreign policy, chief of whom is James N. Rosenau. See his pioneering 'Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy' in J. N. Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, New York, Free Press, 1971, pp. 68-116. See also a more recent and comprehensive follow-up of Rosenau's

work by Stephen J. Andriole, J. Wilkenfeld and G. W. Hopple, 'A Framework for Comparative Analysis of Foreign Policy Behavior', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 2, June 1975, pp. 160 98.

5. Michael Brecher, 'Inputs and Decisions for War and Peace', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, June 1974, pp. 131–77; Ole R. Holsti, 'The Belief System and National Images: A Case Study', in J. N. Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed., New York, Free Press, 1969, pp. 543–50; Kenneth E. Boulding, 'National Images and International Systems' in Rosenau, op. cit., pp. 422–31.

6. Andriole *et al.*, op. cit.

7. Federation of Malaya, *Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Federation of Malaya on Mutual Defence and Mutual Assistance*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1957, Articles V, VI and VII.

8. J. B. Dalton, 'The Development of Malayan External Policy 1957–1963', Ph.D. thesis, Oxford University, 1967, p. 66.

9. Ibid., pp. 66–9.

10. Federation of Malaya, *Malayan Legislative Council Debates*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 2 October 1957, col. 3282.

11. See Robert O. Tilman, *Malaysian Foreign Policy*, Report RAC-R-62-2, Washington, DC, Strategic Studies Dept., 1969, p. 23, where he compiles voting tallies indicating 70–90 per cent agreement of Malaya with SEATO countries on East–West issues for years 1957, 1960 and 1963.

12. *Straits Times*, 7 December 1958.

13. See R. O. Tilman, 'Malaysian Foreign Policy: The Dilemmas of a Committed Neutral', in J. D. Montgomery and A. D. Hirschman (eds.), *Public Policy*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1969, pp. 115–59.

14. J. M. Gullick, *Malaya*, New York, Praeger, 1963, as cited in Tilman, 'Malaysian Foreign Policy: The Dilemma', p. 36. See also, J. Puthucheary, *Ownership and Control in the Malayan Economy*, Singapore, Eastern University Press, 1960.

15. See J. Saravanamuttu, 'Southern Bargaining in North South Trade: The Case of Tin', MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1972, Ch. 2.

16. *Malay Mail*, 21 April 1958; *Straits Times*, 18 and 22 April 1958.

17. N. K. Hazra, 'Malaya's Foreign Relations, 1957–1963', MA thesis, University of Singapore, 1965, p. 129.

18. The Tunku made the first public proposal for a federation consisting of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo (Sabah) and possibly, Brunei as early as May 1961. There followed various phases in the Malaysia proposal thereafter and the official sanctioning of the project after a series of Anglo-Malayan talks from 1961–2. See Noordin M. Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation, Political Unification in the Malaysian Region 1945–1965*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1974, pp. 125–82.

19. The claim was based essentially on the contention that the Sultan of Sulu had merely 'leased' and not 'ceded' that territory in 1878 to the predecessors of the British North Borneo Company from which it was passed on to the British Crown, and further that sovereignty could be transferred only to sovereigns, the Philippine Government being the heir to the Sultan of Sulu. See R. S. Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1967, pp. 187–8.

20. A series of events prior to Malaysia's proclamation led to a total breakdown of relations among the three countries. Malaya had postponed the Malaysia formation from 31 August until 16 September to give time for the UN Secretary-General's report which was due to appear on 14 September. While the Secretary-General deplored Malaya's action in fixing a date before his conclusions were made known, the report nevertheless found that the majority of the Borneo people supported Malaysia. Indonesia and the Philippines however objected to the whole procedure and chose not to accept the UN findings.

21. Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, the then Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs, indicates such a perception of *Konfrontasi*. See his 'Neutralization in Southeast Asia', *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1971, p. 49.

22. *Straits Times*, 23 June 1965. The Algiers Conference was however never held because a rebellion in Algeria ousted President Ben Bella from power.

23. Other members of the delegation included Lee San Choon; Alliance MP, Abdullah Ahmad, Political Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister; Musa Hitam, Political Secretary to the Minister of Transport; Samad Ismail, journalist; Wong Ling Ken, PAP MP; Devan Nair, PAP MP; and J. Puthucheary, lawyer. These individuals apparently comprised a 'National Committee' although it was not officially sanctioned. See *Straits Times*, 20 May 1965 and *Dewan Rakyat Parliamentary Debates*, 26 May 1965, col. 124.

24. *Straits Times*, 21 June 1966.

25. Federation of Malaysia, *Dewan Rakyat Parliamentary Debates*, 23 January 1968, cols. 1615-16.

26. See Saravanamuttu, op. cit., pp. 109-10.

27. Federation of Malaysia, *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1973, p. 11. The figures quoted are for 1970 but are probably not significantly different from data for the whole period under survey. Since no early data are available, the more recent statistics are used.

28. Ibid., p. 81.

29. *Straits Times*, 9 August 1967.

30. Ibid.

31. The ASEAN Fund was to have an initial grant of $15 million, each member-country contributing $3 million. See *Straits Times*, 18 December 1969.

32. See 'Straits of Malacca and Singapore–Joint Statement', *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 1971, p. 54.

33. Ibid., Vol. 3, No. 2, December 1970.

34. Ibid., Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1970, p. 14. Razak was distinguishing between the neutralization of the Indo-Chinese states and that of the whole region, the former plan having been endorsed at the Lusaka Conference.

35. Ibid., Vol. 4, No. 4, December 1971, p. 58.

36. Malaysia, Jabatan Penerangan (Department of Information), *Siaran Akhbar*, 1975.

37. 'ASEAN's Response to Security Issues in Southeast Asia', talk delivered to Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Conference on Regionalism in Southeast Asia, Jakarta, October 1974 (handout).

38. *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 1974, pp. 52-3.

39. From text of RTM broadcast as published in the *New Straits Times*, 7 and 8 May 1975.

40. See *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 1974, pp. 44-6.

41. *Straits Times*, 18 September 1974.

42. Ibid.

43. See *Petroleum Development (Amendment) Act, 1975*, Act A290, Laws of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1975.

44. Island and Peninsular Development is one of the largest housing developers in Malaysia and Singapore, with interests in tin, rubber and palm oil; London Tin Corporation is a British-based company with major shares in twelve tin mining companies in Malaysia, Thailand and Nigeria, and Sime Darby is a Malaysia-based company with interests in rubber, tin and various industries. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 June 1975, pp. 55-6.

45. The deal initially appeared to be a cleverly-manoeuvred reverse swop whereby PERNAS Securities was to surrender all its holdings to Haw Par for its controlling 40 per cent stake in the company which would then have controlling interests in Island and Peninsular and London Tin Corporation. The deal was however abandoned when Haw Par was suspended by the Singapore Government on the grounds of the company's alleged mismanagement. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 June 1975, pp. 55-6 and *New Straits Times*, 23 July 1975.

46. *New Straits Times*, 28 October 1975.

47. Ibid.

48. *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 1974, p. 67.

49. Chan Heng Chee, 'Southeast Asia 1976: The Handling of Contradictions', *South-*

east Asian Affairs 1977, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977, p. 18.

50. *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook 1977*, p. 230.

51. Chan, op. cit., p. 20.

52. *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook 1977*, p. 230.

53. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 August 1977.

54. *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook 1978*, p. 347.

55. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 September 1981.

56. See J. Saravanamuttu, 'Malaysia–China Relations, Pre and Post 1974: An Overview', in Loh Kok Wah, Phang Chung Nyap and J. Saravanamuttu, *The Chinese Community and China Malaysia Ties: Elite Perspectives*, Tokyo, Institute of Developing Economies, 1981, pp. 37–40.

57. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 June 1978.

58. See, for example, T. H. Silcock, 'Development of a Malayan Foreign Policy', *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1963, pp. 42–53; Marvin C. Ott, 'Foreign Policy Formulation in Malaysia', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 12, No. 3, March 1972, pp. 225–39.

POSTSCRIPT
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

ZAKARIA HAJI AHMAD

If political development is not merely the occurrence of events that chart the travails of 'nation-states' it can certainly be expected that change in structure, function and process is inevitably an indicator of the vibrant and dynamic nature of politics in any setting. In the Malaysian case, change is not only a significant feature of the political system, but often poses the danger of rendering facts and explanations obsolete and yesterday's theories history. A greater problem for the student, observer, analyst and perhaps even participant of Malaysian politics, as such, is that the whole political process has become complex and close scrutiny of events is increasingly required to make its understanding more coherent and comprehensible.

As might be expected, the preceding chapters cannot claim to be over-enduring nor so complete as to be able to explain events that supersede their propositions. Given the rapid pace of change in Malaysian society and politics, this is not only impossible but perhaps also an impractical exercise. Surely, however, the test of any proposition and the authenticity of facts is not so much its vitiation in the light of future or after-the-fact events, but rather its validity in relation to the occurrences when they happened.

Inasmuch as political development *is* change, such vibrancy in Malaysia's politics may well illustrate a healthy state of *politicization*, rather than stagnation. In 'new' societies like Malaysia's, a fundamental issue that arises is whether such changes alter the bases of the polity or if 'it looks more the same as a result'. In reviewing the themes that have been raised it is necessary, therefore, to ask if such changes require their reification or even new explanations. Nevertheless, it can be observed that continuity amidst changes and developments seems a central feature of Malaysia's politics, a factor that lends further credence to the country's political stability and the preservation of authority.

As noted elsewhere, 'it is justified to characterize Malaysia in the present as a stable society, even democratic in form or at least in part in substance, enjoying a relatively high standard of living that is enviable, and having moved into the much sought-after league of the Newly-Industrializing Countries (NICs), albeit not yet identified as comparable to the "Four Tigers" of the Asia-Pacific region. With the enunciation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) after 1971 that ultimately attempts to achieve national unity at the same time as it aims to eradicate poverty and abolish identification of vocation by race, admirers of the country

may well applaud the emphasis on a more equitable distribution of wealth in what is clearly a country well-endowed with natural resources and which at the end of the 1970s was already one of the twenty largest exporters of manufactured goods in the world.'[1] Moreover, 'that periodic and free elections have been regularly held to test the popular mandate also testifies to a society with working participatory institutions and processes, and its inveterate bureaucratic institutions and law and order apparatus an obvious contributor to its sense of being well-governed'.[2]

It could very well be argued that a contributing factor to Malaysia's stability and continuity in political institutions and processes, in spite of the society being divided on the basis of race, is the need for an inter-communal framework that can govern the country. Such a framework is of course exemplified by the *Barisan Nasional* (National Front) and its precursor, the Alliance Party,[3] a coalition of various parties that has been in power for more than three decades. The antithesis of such an argument, as shown by the chapter by Khong,[4] is the failure of political parties that attempt to be multi-racial and in effect to fail to represent specific racial interests. However, the emergence of the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) and its success in two Sabah state elections in 1985 and 1986, indicates the possibility of a multi-racial platform and the rejection of a Barisan-type formula.[5] That such a development has taken place outside of Peninsular Malaysia may indicate that multi-racialism, rather than inter-communalism may yet have a future in multi-ethnic Malaysia.

The ascendancy of the Barisan government in the country's politics is shown most poignantly in the legislative process because of the more than two-thirds majority of seats that it commands. As Michael Ong has shown in his chapter,[6] the government's domination is not merely by virtue of such overwhelming strength on its side but also by the curtailment of debate as a result of restrictions imposed within the Legislative chamber. The steady erosion of the time and grounds of debate (in adjournment speeches, oral and written questions, standing orders, etc.) has meant that the Opposition's role in the Legislative process has diminished.[7] Indeed, where amendments have been made because of opposition, it is more as a result of pressure from outside the chamber.[8] Events of the late 1970s and early 1980s do not point to an amelioration of such conditions, and it is therefore to be expected that the Malaysian parliament is a 'lame duck' in the form of democracy that is practised.

The Barisan's overwhelming majority in government is a result of the electoral system that provides an 'over-representation of seats compared to the percentage of votes won by the ruling coalition, and conversely, for the opposition'.[9] In his chapter[10] on the apportionment of seats for the federal parliament, Sothi Rachagan notes, *inter alia*, that the various changes in constituency delineation have resulted in 'racial inequities in electoral representation', a factor that figures in charges by the Opposition that the 'one man, one vote' principle has been sacrificed. Since his study was completed, other changes have been made that now mean that the number of parliamentary seats has been increased to 177

from the 154 in the 1982 elections,[11] and state constituency seats by more than 60. These changes, nevertheless, do not detract from the general observation that the delineation of electoral constituency more than tends to entrench the Barisan government,[12] almost making its victory at the polls a foregone conclusion.

To some extent, inasmuch as the Barisan 'power-sharing' formula predicates on the dominance of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) as the major representative of Malay symbolism in the political system, it can be said that the ultimate poser of non-Malay political parties is their ability to articulate the interests and yet operate within the 'rules of the game'. This was, of course, the gist of the analysis of three major 'Chinese' parties, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the Gerakan and the Democratic Action Party (DAP) made by Lee Kam Hing.[13] As later developments show, this theme continues to be valid. However, the MCA has not been spared the perennial problem of politics *within* itself as factions and leaders vie for power, influence and control of the party. In its latest power struggle in 1984-5, the leadership of the MCA was finally gained by businessman Tan Koon Swan over its Acting President, Neo Yee Pan (who had taken over from Lee San Choon), but the whole battle only meant that the MCA's credibility within the Barisan framework was seriously undermined. Tan's arrest in Singapore for alleged criminal breach of trust in 1986 has made this situation even more tenuous.

But if the MCA is emasculated, the ratings of the DAP and the Gerakan do not necessarily increase in relation to the larger question of Chinese political representation. If the DAP were to do well in the elections that must be held before June 1987, it is more likely to be a result of a loss of credibility of the Barisan government as a whole. The Gerakan, for its part, waxed loudly that it may decide to 'leave' the Barisan if it felt that it figured less in the coalition than its strength suggested, but this may in part be due to a notion that it is more 'multiracial' than that it is viewed as a Chinese party. Some talk was reported of an MCA-Gerakan merger but this is more unlikely given the fundamental differences between the two. It is important to stress, in any event, that the politics of Chinese representation has to be viewed in the context of Malay-Chinese relations.

Some Chinese industry/commerce groups in 1986 issued memoranda to the government that the bureaucracy had become less 'ethnically representative' and that equality of opportunity should be safeguarded so that more Chinese (or non-Malays) could serve in the domain of public policy and its implementation. Such a trend of 'representativeness' relates to the importance of the senior public bureaucracy which Mavis Puthucheary emphasized must be seen as part of the larger politico-administrative apparatus.[14] The strength of the bureaucracy, especially *vis-à-vis* the ruling élite and the dominant Barisan component, UMNO, could be seen as somewhat challenged with the ascendancy of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in 1981-2. Rather than rely on the bureaucracy, like his predecessors, for advice and infor-

mation, Mahathir's government seemed in fact, destined to collide with the bureaucracy both in style and substance. The 'intrusion' of politics in the administrative process in what is an 'administrative state'[15] portends a change that may curtail the burgeoning and strength of the previously powerful bureaucracy, but as one senior civil servant was said to have remarked, 'prime ministers may come and go, but the civil service goes on forever'.

Inveterate that the bureaucracy is, it is more than likely to survive the 'new' circumstances and challenge to its strength (as for example, from the move at 'privatization') that it finds itself, though the sinews it could rely on in terms of its conservative nature and well-qualified personnel have been affected somewhat by its rapid expansion and the gradual decline of quality of its more recent cohorts. More importantly, it is often forgotten that the bureaucracy, given its long-established role in Malaysian society and its ability to become a source of expertise, is in effect a 'fourth estate' in the politics of modernization, albeit it is apparent it has become a more politicized institution and less the 'neutral' instrument it may have once been.

Detractors may well argue that the 'politicization' of the bureaucracy does not necessarily mean the decline of its influence in the Malaysian public decision-making process. But, there is room to believe this theme holds less true in the arena of foreign policy, although it is a domain of public policy that holds less opportunity for domestic political interference. Since the coming of Mahathir, however, new foreign policy initiatives have been introduced so that the locus of foreign policy decision-making has effectively shifted from Wisma Putra to the Prime Minister's office. In contrast to Johan Saravanamuttu's theme of a steady evolution of foreign policy concerns from a pro-Western stance to a non-aligned position and strong belief in regional co-operation, befitting the well-defined concerns of a small, developing country,[16] Malaysia in the 1980s is evincing an apparent desire to exercise a leadership role, especially as a spokesman for the 'South' countries. Under Mahathir, the foreign policy establishment has been enjoined to go beyond its traditional diplomatic role by helping to 'sell' Malaysia, and Malaysia has been at the forefront in calls for making Antarctica a heritage of mankind and therefore not bound by the 1959 Treaty, promoting 'South-South' linkages, Islamic unity, condemning *apartheid*, and in calling for less protectionism in trade in the 'developed' countries. At the same time, however, Mahathir's government continued to solicit investment from the advanced nations even as the West was berated for its 'outdated' views of the 'developing' world.

While Malaysia continues to rely on its membership in ASEAN as a cornerstone of its foreign policy, it cannot be denied that Mahathir's thinking does not preclude an 'independent' line that may be contrary to agreed objectives–thus on ASEAN-Pacific Co-operation in Human Rights Development (HRD), it has cautioned against a quickening in such a direction.[17] Against larger issues of defence and security,

Malaysia has moved to a higher plane of self-reliance against the possibility of aggression from without and clearly does not aim to rely as much as heretofore on more diplomatic-type mechanisms in conflict-resolution.

That the primacy of politics persists as a theme in Malaysia may be surmised from the preceding comments. As argued by Zakaria, a significant feature of the country's ability to sustain authority has been the highly institutionalized nature of its forces of law and order, namely the Police, and the formative use of such an instrument by the ruling élites.[18] But a more important dimension of the primacy of politics is the notion of the need for a *strong* government in a society that Prime Minister Mahathir has described as 'on the razor's edge'.[19]

A strong government provides not only for a stable political system but in turn becomes a *sine qua non* of national development, a not unfamiliar theme in South-East Asia.[20] In the Malaysian experience, such a strong government is also understood as the capability to enforce authority, its source being the legitimized power garnered through the ballot and not out of the barrel of the gun. Although Malaysia has had a more than fair record of democratic practice because of regularly held and generally free elections, and where the same government has been returned to power, the tendency nevertheless is for authority to become too powerful. It is therefore no surprise that one observer has noted a seemingly more authoritarian political system emerging in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[21]

The use of the Police is, however, much subject to the whims of the ruling political élite. While critics are quick to assert that the Police has been used for mere political ends, it is not conclusive that impartiality in law and order tasks have been seriously impaired over time. There are, in fact, many other devices that the government in power in Malaysia has used to sustain their authority. Legislation, after all, is virtually guaranteed free passage in Parliament, the media is also very much controlled by the ruling government, and despite the fact of overwhelming legislative strength, the government has apparently imposed curbs on political debate because it is over-sensitive to criticism as to regard any and all of it as 'anti-government'.[22]

But amidst these trends and changes, it can still be seen that race or communalism is an inescapable fact of Malaysian politics and that its salience is only enhanced by the denouements on the political stage. One important development in the 1980s has been the emergence of religion as an aspect of politics and how this issue will affect both Malays and non-Malays, especially the role of Islam, in a multi-racial society. On the other hand, it is also noteworthy that moderation has been an underlying element in the country's political stability[23] and that this may serve to 'cross-cut' the issue in the years to come.

Malaysia's political challenges in the 1980s have taken on a new dimension as a result of economic problems unleashed by global economic recession, but if the analysis of institutions and processes

in the preceding chapters are valid, it can only be expected that a strong, inter-communal, governing framework will be the basis of the country's political development into the end of this century.

1. Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'Stability, Security and National Development in Malaysia: An Appraisal', in Kusuma Snitwongse and Sukhumbhand Paribatra (eds.), *Stability, Security and the Future of Southeast Asia*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, in press.

2. Ibid.

3. For details, see D. Mauzy, *Barisan Nasional: Coalition Government in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, Marican, 1983.

4. Chapter 2, this volume.

5. See Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'Malaysia in 1984: No More Free Lunches?', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 25, No. 2, February 1985, pp. 206-13, and Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'Malaysia in 1985: The Beginnings of Sagas', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 26, No. 2, February 1986, pp. 150-7.

6. Chapter 3, this volume.

7. Michael Ong, 'Malaysia: The Limiting of a Limited Democracy', paper read at the workshop on The Political System and Nation-Building in ASEAN, National University of Singapore, 23-25 January 1986.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Chapter 4, this volume.

11. In the latest constituency delineation exercise 22 new seats were added. Another new seat was created when Labuan (in Sabah) was declared part of the Federal Territory in 1984.

12. Michael Ong, 'Malaysia: Power, Elections and Responsibility', paper presented at the EROPA Regional Conference on Comparative Study of Electoral Systems in Asia and the Pacific, Diliman, 2-6 February 1986.

13. Chapter 5, this volume.

14. Chapter 6, this volume.

15. M. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1972.

16. Chapter 8, this volume.

17. Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'ASEAN-Pacific Co-operation: The Long Way Ahead', *Asia Pacific Community*, Vol. 30, 1985, pp. 13-29.

18. Chapter 7, this volume.

19. Mahathir Mohamad, 'A Prescription for a Socially Responsible Press', speech to a meeting of ASEAN journalists, reproduced in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 October 1985, pp. 26-8.

20. Jusuf Wanandi, 'Regional Order and Political Development', paper read at the East-West Center 25th Anniversary Conference on ASEAN and the Pacific Basin, Honolulu, Hawaii, 29 October-1 November 1985.

21. Harold Crouch, 'From Alliance to Barisan Nasional', in H. Crouch, Lee Kam Hing and M. Ong (eds.), *Malaysian Politics and the 1978 Election*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 5.

22. See M. Ong, 'Malaysia ... Responsibility', op. cit.

23. Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'Evolutionary Change and Political Institutionalization in Malaysia', in R. Scalapino *et al.* (eds.), *Asian Political Institutionalization*, Berkeley, University of California Press, in press.

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