

ALIRAN

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ECONOMIC DECLINE

PENDIDIKAN MENGENAI HAK ASASI MANUSIA

Testimony of Nobel Laureates

Human Rights and YOU

*The General Elections 1982:
An Analysis*

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

We are happy to welcome you to our second issue of the year. Having gained some momentum over the last few months, the journal is beginning to assume a definite shape. We would like readers to write in and let us know what they think of the contents.

Starting with this issue, we intend to run various regular features on important subjects written by our members e.g. 'Demolishing Myths' and 'Human Rights and You'. 'Demolishing Myths' will seek to expose misleading beliefs and ideas prevalent in our society; the latter is self-explanatory.

The main article in this issue is an analysis of the recent elections which, inter alia, discusses the implications of the election results for the future of the country. Much excitement was generated in the general elections by the entry of some prominent dissidents into the ruling Barisan coalition. We have therefore included an article, 'Reform from Inside and Outside', which examines the proposition that the reform of Malaysian society can best be achieved from within the government.

In 'Hard Work — the Cure-all?', Sdr. Chandra Muzaffar exposes the myth that a Japanese-type work ethic is the answer to our social problems. It is pointed out that the Japanese succeeded precisely because they did not seek to imitate anyone.

Human Rights remains one of Aliran's chief concerns and, in this issue, we present the first of a series on Human Rights in the contemporary setting. Another regular series is the section on Public Institutions which will be based on the proceedings of various Aliran study club discussions. In the present issue we take a look at the educational system in Malaysia.

The main item in the Bahasa Malaysia section is an important article on labour and its role in Malaysia. We have also reproduced an article which appeared in a local Bahasa daily questioning Aliran's role and our reply to it. As before, our complete press statements during the last quarter are reproduced in Bahasa to act as a link between the two language groups.

We have said that we are very interested to hear from our readers and in this we have not been disappointed. The column 'From our Readers' contains a wide variety of views and comments that will give much food for thought. It justifies our faith in the Malaysian public that, if given the opportunity, they will prove themselves an outspoken but level-headed constituency. Please keep your letters coming in; substantive papers and articles are also welcome. Only you can judge whether we are fulfilling the role we set for ourselves.

It only remains for me to say 'happy reading'. If you sympathise with our views, please get your friends to subscribe on the form provided within.

Gan Teik Chee.

Celebrate Merdeka with Aliran — Join in our dinner on 28th August 1982 at Fortuna Restaurant, Penang. Phone Subramaniam at 04-889396 after 5 pm.

All subscribers have been sent their Journals. Those who still have not received theirs, please contact the distribution bureau.

CONTENTS

- 1 Editor's Message
 - 2 From Our Readers
 - 6 Reform from Inside and Outside
 - 9 1982 Elections: An Analysis
 - 13 Human Rights
Human Rights and You
 - 15 Demolishing Myths
Hard Work — the Cure-all?
 - 17 Question and Answer on Aliran
 - 19 Aliran Diary
 - 20 Study of Public Institutions
The Education System
 - 23 Aliran on Cultural Minorities
 - 26 One language — the dubious basis of National Unity
 - 28 Current Comment
 - 30 Pilihanraya Umum 1982: Satu Analisa
 - 33 Hak Asasi Manusia
Hak Asasi: Apa Maknanya
 - 35 Pemimpin-pemimpin Kesatuan Sekerja
 - 37 Perbalahan Pendapat
 - 40 Ulasan Semasa
 - 42 On the Societies Scene
Working Together
 - 47 Economic Notes
Economic Decline: Causes and Consequences
 - 52 Media Imperialism
 - 54 International Affairs
El Salvador: The Next "Vietnam"?
 - 57 Learning from History
The Propaganda Movement of the Philippines
 - 59 The Real Malaysian
 - 66 Guest Column
Holistic Medicine
 - 68 Books
- Pull-out Centrefold: Manifesto of Nobel Laureates

FROM OUR READERS

Letters from readers are welcome, and should be addressed to:-

*Editor, Aliran Quarterly,
P.O. Box 1049, Penang, Malaysia.*

Pseudonyms are accepted but all letters should include the writer's name and address.

— ed.

STEAK AND BULL

Dear Editor,

After reading Aliran's pamphlet on the elections, and now that post-electoral calm has been restored, I felt encouraged to express my own flow of thoughts.

There is an adage much used in marketing circles: 'sell the sizzle, not the steak.' Its import is clear enough — get the buyer to glamourize and romanticize over the article. Dazzle the silly man and he will not stop to worry about weight or quality.

We are regularly informed that Malaysians are getting more sophisticated. I suppose that is true. That other clean, efficient and trustworthy personage, Mrs. Thatcher, leader of a nation amply endowed with cerebration, has found that modern marketing methods do work in elections. In America, which, like Penang, leads, it has worked for a long time. And if what works for the Americans and the British works for us, then clearly we are sophisticated. Soon it seems we shall reach another pinnacle — what works for the Japanese will also work for us.

It was, as these things go, a cleverly run Barisan campaign. Clean, efficient and trustworthy — and with spiritual aspirations. That manifesto! Truly a campaign for all seasons.

Equal opportunities. Education for all (including Chinese education). An Islamic University. A chicken in every pot. Development and Money.

It worked like a charm. Now that we have bought the steak, and the salesman has stopped his efforts to keep it sizzling, let's have a quick look at what we got.

1. Shortly after the elections, the message was 'Tighten your belts; axe prestige projects.' No people-oriented projects will be cut, though. (Try explaining that to rubber smallholders and padi planters who are still waiting for piped water and electricity.)
2. There will apparently continue to be stern action against corruption. But corruption does not merely mean putting ill-gotten money in one's pocket. It includes the abuse of public property and services for private/partisan purposes. It includes the use of RTM, military transport, the splashing of public money for various "projects" during an election campaign and political patronage.
3. As for the erstwhile Barisan manifesto, I suggest the reader get a copy and frame it - to ensure that it is not forgotten by the publishers.
4. Development rolls on apace. We are only hoping they will spare Tembeling for the sake of some old-fashioned human beings who are actually living among the greenery.

All in all, the sizzling steak turns out to be standard old bull. I am turning vegetarian and moving to a tree-house, and not in Taman Negara.

Penduduk Jati
Penang.

REFRESHING CHANGE

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my appreciation of Aliran's publications and of your Journal in particular.

It was extremely educational as well as a joy to read. The contents of your Quarterly are something never

before available in this country. What a refreshing change from the depressing sameness of sloppy sycophancy in our national dailies! Please don't think I'm exaggerating when I say that Aliran, its ideas, its honesty and courage, represent a beacon of hope to all concerned citizens who love Malaysia.

The politicians won't like to hear such praise of others but I personally have no faith in politicians. Whatever the party, they are mostly the same type i.e. professional self-seekers. (Most of the problems of this country, communalism, poverty, corruption, are caused by politicians.) What can individuals like myself do except give you our whole-hearted support and our prayers for your eventual success. Keep up the good work - you are never alone in the struggle for truth, justice and solidarity!

Of course there are technical defects in your journal but one feels sure your readers will be understanding. The pressures of meeting deadlines and bureaucratic restrictions etc. . . . may be some of the reasons. One trusts you are striving to improve the technical quality of the publication in future.

In ending let me express the hope that when the history of our confused period is written, Aliran will be remembered with gratitude.

Avid Reader
Perak

MISINFORMATION

Dear Editor,

I was deeply touched by Dr. Chandra's letter dated 11 Mei 1982, I had given up hope of receiving any reply as I had been given the false information that Aliran is made-up of only "high-intellectuals" and they have no time for lay men. How wrong I was.

Please find enclosed my requests for your publications and your quarterly together with my money order.

K.B. Appan
Selangor

3 MARBLES IN A TIN

Dear Editor,

At the back of his mind, Mr. Chong thinks in terms of Chinese values. Similarly Encik Ahmad and Mr. Muthu cannot help but be a part of their ethnic-cultural world. That is the typical picture of Malaysian society.

In the book "Aliran Speaks", (Oct. 1981 p.25) an MCA politician says: "all problems should be tackled on a communal basis with a communal approach for the well being of the community and the nation itself." (I am told that this outstanding politician is now a prominent M.P.) This approach holds that national unity can be achieved through representation of ethnic interests by the leading communal parties. Advocates of this approach from all communities assume that ethnic politics is a realistic way to bargain and negotiate for the best interests of each community. Whilst this way of thinking seems practical at first glance, it could equally reflect a closed mind, closed to positive and alternative ways of promoting multiculturalism. It could be described as a petty, self-defensive attitude, akin to the bluffology of the poker-table. As Aliran pointed out in the same book (pg. 26), there are "examples of concrete situations to show that the aspirations of the poor and underprivileged cannot be fulfilled through a communal approach." Poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon.

For example, the MCA enjoys the close support of business groups. It therefore suffers from an image of being a rich party. A further connotation is that it is for the rich and indifferent to the poor. This creates a complex of sorts. On the other hand, communal-based parties with a populist image, e.g. UMNO, have not been all that effective in arresting poverty despite their loud championing of this cause.

Can Man rise above community ethos? Can Malaysians rise above communal thinking? I do not claim

that I know the answer. Let us review our performance. The achievements are barely creditable. The Malay sector has improved significantly. There is a rising middle class with numerous successful businessmen. The Chinese sector has maintained its role in private business but, in education, there is concern over places in universities. The Indian sector has stagnated as a result of estate fragmentation though the NUPW is successful in maintaining wage rates. However, the nation as a whole lacks substance and cohesiveness, like 3 marbles rattling in a tin.

What next? There are many complicated issues in a tri-community country. One of the issues which attracts consensus amongst all communities is the issue of poverty and under-privilegedness. The poor people seem to go on with life without much hassles about ethnic issues. Through sheer physical interdependence, they have maintained a degree of spontaneous multiculturalism. Perhaps this could be a first step towards integration. Tackle the problems of poverty without regard to community grouping. Encourage people with a real conscience to act in a non-communal approach towards the poor. Let not poverty be a barrier to the enjoyment of life. Let not the pursuit of wealth be the purpose of existence.

While politicians argue, the gap between the poor and the super rich widens. The National Income and the proverbial cake is divided between the rich, the super rich and the poor. The issue of poverty v. privilege is very much a part of social life in any country. It is recognized that privilege for the sake of privilegeworshippers goes against the grain of man's moral and religious nature. Now that Aliran has arrived on the scene, will Malaysians respond with resolution and support their cause?

Expatriate Malaysian
Australia

ECONOMIC LESSONS

Dear Editor,

In times of recession, many Third World countries go on an austerity drive, cutting down projects and reducing government investment. Frankly, the current recession may be a blessing in disguise. It may push the poor nations to unite and fight for better trade arrangements.

It is said that Malaysians are paying more for tyres even though rubber prices have fallen. Likewise a Ghanaian has to pay more for chocolates which uses Ghanaian cocoa even though the price of cocoa has dropped.

This is the reality today — prices of manufactured goods are increasing both in real and actual terms while prices of raw materials are dropping.

Perhaps the developing countries have as much to blame as the exploiting countries. Had our planners given greater priority to research and development of products that utilise our own raw materials, we would not be so hard hit now.

We learn in retrospect; only, some learn slower than others.

An Optimist
Penang

CLEAN ELECTIONS

Dear Editor,

With gladness I welcome Dr. Mahathir's call for a clean, efficient and trustworthy government. I hope these slogans will be backed up by action once the government is re-elected. Trust has to be earned if it is to remain in the hearts of the people.

During the time of campaigning, the temptation for vote-conscious politicians to get elected by breaking election laws is great. The caretaker government ought to be extra careful in this respect.

For example, the limits on election expenditure of \$20,000 for Parliamentary candidates and \$15,000 for State candidates should be strictly observed. Candidates who spend in

excess of the legal limit should be disqualified without any qualms.

Next, the political parties contesting in the elections should publish a list of donors who contribute towards the party coffers. This applies both to the National Front as well as the opposition. Most of all, the parties involved in the election should publish an account of the way in which funds are used in the campaigning period.

If the few suggestions above are seriously implemented during the next one week or so before voting day, I believe Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir will justify the hopes created by the Barisan slogan proclaimed so loudly. We are sure he will abide by the standards he sets for his team.

Hopeful Observer
Penang

JOURNALISTIC SINS

Dear Editor,

Now that we already know the result of the recent elections perhaps it's time to ask a journalistic question: How did the Malaysian newspapers fare in the election coverage? Well, it does look like the media have surpassed previous records as far as breaking the fundamental rules of journalism goes.

For instance, the objectivity in the coverage of the election campaigns of various political parties is questionable. One found the newspapers consistently reporting what the ruling party was doing while only giving tongue-in-cheek treatment to the opposition.

Indeed, it would be instructive to glance through some of the newspaper headlines of April 1982.

Let's begin with a certain daily of April 21st, "Opposition seats up for grabs;" "More DAP men quit;" "Kit Siang on San Choon's sincerity;" "MCA confident of winning all in Perak;" "Charged with burning BN banner." Page 5 of same issue has: "Give Dr. M a resounding victory, Chinese told;" "Opposition exploiting temple issue;" "A desperate

opposition bid;" "PSRM chief's call to voters."

And here's page 4, of another daily (April 6th): "Star-studded Barisan team for Negri;" "Plastic posters for Barisan;" "Entry of group would confuse Chinese: Yeap;" "2Ms for nation-wide campaign;" "No SDP list;" "DAP to field cabbie and two farmers;" "DAP dilemma - lack of candidates;" "New faces for Kangar and Arau;" "Council: Keep off our property." And page 5 of the same issue: "Eight new faces in Kedah BN line-up;" "Lay off sensitive issues, Mohamed warns parties;" "Sanusi: Secret PAS-DAP pact won't work;" "Barisan list is final - Mahathir;" "Join UMNO if you love Islam, Muslims urged;" "Opposition pact in Penang;" "Straight fight likely for the Premier;" "Polls test of BN discipline: Sanusi."

Just reading the above headlines made one feel as if the Opposition were amateurish and virtually defunct in terms of political strategies, policies and views on social issues. The ruling party, on the other hand, seemed to be well prepared and had a lot to say on important matters.

As for accuracy and truth, one has to wonder, for instance, whether the reported number of defections from PAS to UMNO possibly outnumbered the total membership of PAS.

Another journalistic sin is failing to separate fact from opinion (most of the time, of the writer's) in news reporting. At times, what initially looked like a straight news item turned out to be the reporter's analysis which is a different thing altogether.

Attribution is another questionable aspect of local reporting. For example, the New Straits Times on April 20, 1982 carried a story, headlined "PAS supporters abandon candidate," that went like this:

Bruas, Mon. - Several PAS supporters are believed to have abandoned their candidate for the Bruas Parliamentary constituency over his "secret alliance" with DAP.

As a result, the candidate, Encik Yusoff Kassim was said to have been left with only his relatives to support him.

Surely, a reporter or editor worth his or her salt would have probed further the "reliability" of "are believed" and "was said to have". For a start, Encik Yusoff Kassim should have been given the chance to confirm, deny, or explain.

Judging from the apparent lack of professional ethics among many local journalists, one wonders whether theirs is a profession to be highly regarded. Or, whether their behaviour and attitude vindicates what Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir had said of them: "..... journalists are journalists not because of a special selection based on their ability to judge correctly and dispassionately. They are journalists because of their need for jobs and their ability to write and interest readers. Their righteousness is usually a gimmick they employ for the sake of their jobs - not for democracy. (New Straits Times, July 9, 1981)".

Media Watcher
Penang

ALIRAN JADI PARTI POLITIK?

Pengarang,

Berbicara Sdr. Lokman Hakim: Kenapa persatuan Aliran tidak menjadi sebuah parti politik - barulah tahu realitinya.

Soalnya: Kalaulah seseorang menegur timbangan yang tidak betul oleh penjual ikan, apakah penegur mesti menjual ikan; kalaulah seorang pelanggan menegur penggantung rambut; kalaulah seorang pembaca mengkritik sebuah pojok oleh pengarang sebuah akhbar, apakah pengkritik harus pula memikul tugas si pengarang; kalaulah pengundi melahirkan rasa tidak puas hati terhadap pemimpin - walaupun secara lisan, apakah ia mesti disuruh menjadi pemimpin pula . . . dll, dll? Wah, kalau macam ini lecehlah!

Maka, hal Aliran harus menjadi sebuah parti politik bilamana ia

membuat pandangan, teguran atau kritikan (yang kita percaya untuk kebaikan bersama) adalah tidak timbul!

Tentang perlunya kita mempunyai pembangkang (yang kita harapkan memikulkan tanggungjawab dengan waras pula) untuk berperanan sebagai badan atau barisan lain dari BARI-SAN - dalam hal-hal yang tidak 'terlampau' olehnya, saya teringat-kata orang tua-tua: 'Kalau mata sendiri masuk sampah, orang lain jua yang seeloknya menolong membuangnya.'

Pendukung Kewarasan
Pulau Pinang

Catitan: Surat ini saya kirim kepada sebuah akhbar kebangsaan tetapi tidak disiarkan; maka saya ambil keputusan menghantarkannya kepada jernal Aliran.

COURAGE AND FAIRNESS

Dear Editor,

I've received the Aliran Quarterly (Vol. 2. No. 1) your organisation sent me. It is doubtlessly a courageous and unbiased publication. I wish to convey my warmest regards to you.

The titles of other Aliran publications are also printed in your quarterly. I have interest in a few of your publications advertised in the quarterly and would like to place an order for the following books (one copy each):

1. Basic Beliefs	\$0.70
2. Whither Democracy	\$3.00
3. Protector?	\$4.20
4. One God, Many Paths	\$4.20
5. All other pamphlets in English	\$0.70 each

Please mail the books directly to me and send the bill to the address below as you have done previously:-

(Name and address supplied)

Thank you.

L.H.E.
Perak

REFORM FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

Gan Teik Chee

Recent events in the political arena have raised the question whether the reform of Malaysian society can best be achieved from within the Government rather than through the traditional role of independent interest groups. Shortly before nomination day on 7th April 1982, Anwar Ibrahim, the well-known Islamic dissident youth leader, resigned as President of ABIM to join UMNO and was nominated to stand for election to Parliament. He explained that he held firm to his principles but wished to influence national policies from inside the Government. About the same time two leaders of the Chinese Tung Chiao Chung movement, a strong proponent of Chinese education and culture, joined the Gerakan and were put up for election to Parliament. The justification they gave was similar to that of Anwar Ibrahim's. For almost 50 years, it was said, the society had fought for the cause of Chinese education and culture outside the Government and to little avail. They now believed that campaigning for Chinese cultural interests within the Government would be more effective. Both Encik Anwar and Encik Koh, one of the 2 Chinese leaders, were elected in their respective constituencies. Since then voices have been raised in various quarters vindicating their stand and calling upon other social reform groups to follow suit. 'Be realistic and join the Government; nothing can be done from the outside' is a typical exhortation. This sentiment is currently held by large numbers of the public especially in the urban areas. The time has come for the matter to be examined calmly and carefully.

RATIONAL PERSUASION

First and foremost, it is said that there is a greater likelihood of change being achieved by rational persuasion within the circles of the Barisan coalition. This view presupposes that the ruling group is receptive to social reform if it can be persuaded, in the national interest, of the merits of reform. One is at once prompted to question, if this is so, why have the proposals of interest groups like ABIM and UCCA not been well received hitherto. As a matter of fact nothing had prevented the proposals from being adopted — except either their intrinsic unacceptability or the interests of powerful lobbies within the Establishment. What is it, then, about joining the Government that will make their proposals any more meritorious or any more acceptable to the lobbies. Obviously policies that cannot be accommodated within the national consensus will continue to be excluded, whether the proposer speaks from inside or outside the government. On the other hand proposals originating from

within, sound and feasible though they may be, will still have to be vetted by the dominant vested interests. There is no reason to believe that the mere emergence of one or two dissident Government MPs will significantly alter the permutations of trade-offs in the highest political councils of the land. Any proposed change that fundamentally affects the position of established interests will not be tolerated. On the other hand, whatever the difference in policy making, once a decision is reached all parties are bound by the majority view. Our would-be inside reformer, faced with the adoption of reactionary policies, finds himself silenced before he has stated — before even the implementation of the policy.

What is worse, during the decision-making process itself he may not have been consulted for his views. For it is well known that in the democracies of the 3rd World, Cabinet Government is actually Government by clique, usually the clique surrounding the chief executive. Important legislation and policies are worked out by the governing clique and then presented to the Cabinet for ratification only. Unless the inside reformer can gain admission into this clique, his reformist views will not be heard at all.

It is clear that, given the dominance of vested interests within the Government, the prospects of meaningful policy changes being instituted through inside persuasion is practically nil. It would be far more fruitful to try and influence public opinion and to mobilise popular support for reform measures. For in a system of competing lobbies and interests, the weight of public opinion can be no small factor to be considered by the powers that be in the process of policy-making.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION

'Riches and honours are what every man desires, but if they can be obtained only by transgressing the right way, they must not be grasped. Poverty and obscurity are what every man detests, but if they can be avoided only by transgressing the right way they must not be evaded.'
— Confucius

It cannot, however, be assumed that reformers who join the Government do so in order to pursue their ideals by a different approach, though this is the common justification that they plead. In the present state of political corruption in the country, it is prudent to test such protestations against all the available evidence. First, one notes that the electoral process has become a distortion

of the democratic way of life. In principle, Parliamentary elections are held in order to determine the people's choice in the most reliable manner possible. For over a decade after Merdeka this principle was largely adhered to. But what we have today bears no resemblance to the free and fair elections of the past. In the last elections, rallies were banned, newspapers were obviously one-sided, the caretaker government fully exploited State facilities for electioneering, and large fortunes were spent in support of certain candidates. After the elections, more buying and selling take place as rival parties try to outbid each other in procuring the elected representatives from the opposition to defect to their respective parties. In the circumstances one doubts whether voters were allowed a sufficiently clear range of options from which to choose their political leaders, and whether their choice will be respected by the contesting parties.

Against this background of widespread corruption, how is one to view the entry of prominent dissidents into the ruling coalition just before the general elections? Is it not a fair deduction that tired reformers may have decided to join the Government because they found the going hard and unrewarding on the outside? Of course, a dissident who defects is of far greater worth to the Government than a loyal follower of the ruling party. And the almost immediate preferment of the would-be reformer within the party and Government bears out the abovementioned deduction. The justification given, of attempting to achieve reforms from inside the Government, must therefore appear as a mere excuse for less lofty motivations.

The sad thing is that the Malaysian public is prepared to accept transparently unprincipled conduct as part of the political game in contrast to their emotional, and sometimes violent, reaction to foul play in football matches. Perhaps the reason is that they feel they are helpless against the realities of Government power whereas histrionics on the football ground is never taken too seriously by the authorities. If this is so, the latter may well be serving as a safety-valve for public frustration against the massive political corruption of today!

ETHNIC POLARIZATION

There is another compelling reason why social reformers in this country should not join the Government, namely, Malaysia is a society with sharp ethnic polarization, as epitomized by our communal party set-up.

In such a polarized society, independent reformers are well placed to analyse and criticize the communal attitudes of different social groups in the nation, thereby helping to reduce inter-communal antagonism and to foster national unity. The entry of prominent reformers into the communal parties within the Government will therefore weaken non-communal opinion and harden the existing ethnic divisions. It will almost certainly be interpreted by the man in the street as an indication that non-communalism has no future in this country. Since 1970

the component parties in the ruling coalition have tended to emphasize more their separate identities than their common interests. Only during the election season do they strive towards greater cohesiveness and, even then, rabid calls for Malay unity and Chinese unity resound across the land. The Cabinet, for example, is no longer seen by the ordinary citizen as a national Government but as the result of juggling competing ethnic groups together. Over the years, the rakyat have been led into adopting the mentality of the numbers game and the quota system in more and more important areas of national life.

Independent social interest groups, like Aliran, CAP and EPSM, by the nature of their occupational focus, present and foster non-communal values and attitudes while addressing themselves to particular social problems. The public dialogue which follows such presentation contributes to the spread of non-communal consciousness and a common sense of nationhood. Of course social reform groups have no capacity to carry out a programme of national education in the values and norms of non-communalism but, given conditions of minimum freedom and communication, discussion and debate are in themselves an educational process. Thus the continued autonomy of interest groups free from party politics is one substantial way of preserving the framework of our multi-ethnic society.

FEEDBACK

At the basis of government is the duty, if not the desire, to serve the needs of the rakyat. No Government denies this axiom; even totalitarian regimes claim to rule on the people's behalf and for their benefit. Thus good Government depends, firstly, on determining the people's wishes and, secondly, on striving to meet these wishes within acceptable limits.

The first is known in ordinary language as 'getting good feedback' and it entails 'keeping the channels of communication open between the people and the Government. In Islamic political thought, the process of free consultation (Shura) is seen as the basis of the relationship between the people and the government. Feedback, to be reliable, must be gathered from independent sources. The fervent assent of sycophants and minions are a hindrance to obtaining genuine grass-roots responses. Asian history is replete with examples of corrupt governors and generals sending in fabricated reports of the people's well-being and support to the central Government, thus bring about a false sense of security, and often contributing to the fall of the regime.

This is where social interest groups come in. The existence of groups of articulate, thinking citizens concerned with the state of society in every sphere of social life helps the Government to feel the pulse of the community. For autonomous interest groups are peculiarly suited for the role of gathering and presenting a wide range of feedback for the consideration of the authorities. It is important that such groups operate

outside the electoral arena i.e. abstain from party politics in order to ensure their unbiased position in public affairs. Whenever the leaders of a reform group join any competing political party, the effectiveness of their role declines and the loss falls upon the nation itself.

Providing feedback naturally entails making comparisons and valuations as well as offering criticisms and suggestions. On their part the authorities may accept, reject or even ignore such criticisms and suggestions. But the important thing is that the voicing of dissent should not be treated as a threat to political authority or, worse, as disloyalty to the nation. A regime which disapproves of legitimate dissent willy-nilly fouls the channels of communication with the people and eventually falls prey to one-sided praise and self-glorification.

ADVERSARY SYSTEM AND QUALITY OF NATION

In a democratic society, institutions such as political parties, elections and Parliament presuppose that a free flow of opinions and ideas is available to the people, so as to assist the electorate in judging the programmes and policies of respective political parties. Thus freedom of thought, freedom of expression and of access to the media are basic prerequisites for the efficacy of the democratic process with its adversary system. Social interest groups strengthen the democratic process for they provide a range of options, values, views and policies, on social issues for the consideration of the general public. Should the range of options be reduced drastically, the democratic process will break down.

There must therefore be the freedom for social critics to present their honest views, unqualified by sentiments for or against any party, including the Government of the day. This process is of course anathema to the many pseudo-democracies of the 3rd World. Their Governments would like to use the label of 'democracy' without practising its substance.

The recruitment of social reformers into ruling groups is in practice a subversion of the democratic system and may be compared to the jury joining the prosecution, leaving the defendant helpless and bewildered.

Moreover, to have reformers working out and articulating various view points on social issues contributes to improving the quality of thinking in public life. Stimulation of thought and free exchange of ideas are crucial to the intellectual enterprise. Obviously such free exchange will be curtailed if significant numbers of social critics are induced to join the Government and to take on the role of official apologists for the regime. Even if they do not actually voice the official line, personal attachment to Government leaders and emotional ties with elements in the Establishment invariably lead to the corruption of perception and analysis.

Serious independent thinking is important not only in the political field but also in social, cultural and religious matters. The participation of non-partisan

thinkers in dialogue with each other and with the general public raises the level of discussion and broadens the options that emerge therefrom. This can only benefit and enrich the community. Malaysia is conspicuously lacking in a self-sustaining intellectual life. The educated elite, though relatively well-off, have failed to provide the necessary intellectual leadership — hence the predominance of pinball culture in fashionable social circles. Formal institutions of learning, universities, cultural centres, museums, mosques and churches are lifeless without a rich intellectual milieu. For out of variety emerges depth of thinking and, perhaps, truth. For a Muslim, the individual pursuit of knowledge and search after truth are regarded as a religious duty. Indeed the cultural and religious traditions of all the communities in Malaysia uphold the importance of pursuing truth and of learning from one another.

The quality of a nation ultimately depends on the quality of its intelligentsia i.e. its independent social observers, and their commitment to truth. What makes nations great is not GNP or military might or huge populations but the character of the intelligentsia for they determine the tune of the whole society. Thus any attempt to reduce the role of the intelligentsia e.g. by winning over effective intellectual leaders into one or other political party will adversely affect the community. As it is, we have become over the post-Merdeka years a nation of psychological drifters, groping about for a centre of gravity.

HUMAN DIGNITY

Apart from the place of ideas and opinions in intellectual life or the political system, dissent is a basic human right arising from the integrity of man as a spiritual being. Closed door horse-trading within the caucuses of Government is not the free dissent that is thus envisaged. The thoughts and views of human individuals in any society are valuable in their own right and not merely with a view to adoption or implementation. Thus unpopular and minority views, even if unacceptable in practice, have a right to be freely expressed and expounded no less than attractive and popular opinions. This is basic to the concept of the human individual as a unique being with a spiritual destiny, a concept common to all the major religions.

Moreover, psychologists have shown that identity and self-respect depend on the individual expressing his own perceptions and view points. Self-expression is not an antisocial principle by any means. It is based on the fact that men need to be themselves and to stand on their own feet before they can be any good to society. The man who stands on his own feet is the man whose spirituality has drawn into harmony his emotional and physical elements, with the complete freedom to direct them for the realization of his personality and the welfare of the community. The individual is the starting-point and basic unit of society — the viability of the collectivity depends on the

continue on page 46

1982 ELECTIONS: AN ANALYSIS

Chandra Muzaffar

The Barisan Nasional's victory in the 1982 General Election was one of its most outstanding ever. It obtained 132 out of 154 Parliamentary seats and retained control of all the 11 states which went to the polls.

In the 1978 General Election, the Barisan won 130 seats in Parliament while remaining in charge of all the state governments. The 1974 election was that one occasion — since the holding of Parliamentary elections on a nation-wide basis — when the ruling coalition did better than this year. It captured 135 constituencies. But at that time the Barisan's main rival for Malay votes, the Parti Islam Se Malaysia (PAS), was part of the coalition.

This interpretative analysis of the election will be concerned with 3 main areas. First, an attempt will be made to explain electoral performances in certain parts of the country which do not fit easily into past or present patterns. The victories of Chinese-based parties in the Barisan in urban constituencies which were hitherto opposition strongholds would come within this category. So would the revival that PAS experienced in Kelantan and, to some extent, Trengganu, in contrast to its decline in Kedah. The setbacks that the Barisan suffered in Sabah and Sarawak which somewhat slowed down its whirlwind victories in Peninsular Malaysia will also be studied.

Our second area of concern will be the performance of the Barisan and the opposition in the country as a whole. An overall perspective on the factors responsible for the ruling coalition's continued strength and the opposition's inability to improve its electoral position will — it is hoped — emerge from this discussion.

Finally, the implications of the 1982 election for the future will be examined. How will the Barisan use its overwhelming power? What does greater Chinese representation in the coalition mean for ethnic relations? How will the Barisan's principal partner, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), react to PAS's limited success in Kelantan and Trengganu? And perhaps most important of all, how will the obvious decline in the national economy affect all these?

SPECIAL CASES: Urban Constituencies

Before we analyse the good showing of Chinese-based parties in the Barisan, in particular the Malaysian

Chinese Association (MCA), it is necessary to refute a view which a biased press has popularized: that the Chinese dominant opposition party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), had been routed in its urban fortresses. This is not really true. What has taken place is a shift in support away from the DAP towards the Barisan in areas like the Kinta Valley and parts of Penang, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Negri Sembilan and Malacca. The shift, though perceptible, is not all that significant especially if one examines the votes polled by the DAP. In Peninsular Malaysia, its tally dropped slightly to 20.3% compared to 21.5% in 1978. Even in the Kinta Valley, where the DAP lost all 4 Parliamentary seats — including 3 which it won in 1978 — it obtained 81,154 votes compared to the Barisan's 105,594 votes.

To understand this shift in support, one has to examine the more important trends that have influenced Chinese thinking in the last decade. Of these trends, the consolidation and expansion of what are perceived as Malay interests in education and culture, business and industry, politics and administration, has had the greatest impact. The national education policy and the New Economic Policy (NEP) can be interpreted as manifestations of this trend.

Since 1969, the dominant Chinese reactions to these policies have taken two forms. There is overt opposition from without and there is covert opposition from within. Overt opposition is conveyed through the DAP. Fighting for Chinese and non-Malay rights has been an integral aspect of the party's political programme. Its stand on the Merdeka University issue, the 3R controversy, educational quotas, employment quotas, the Industrialization Coordination Act (ICA) and so on are sufficient proofs. The 'fighting outside the government' approach is based on the premise that, given UMNO's dominance and the strength of Malay vested interests, it is impossible to obtain redress for fundamental Chinese grievances related to language, education, economics and politics from within.

As I have hinted, this approach has always enjoyed considerable support. It reached its peak in 1978 when the DAP obtained 15 Parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia; its lowest point was this year when the party

managed to win only 6 Parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia.

Covert opposition is much more complex. Outwardly, parties like the MCA and the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan) support the national education policy and the NEP. At the same time, however, these parties, especially the MCA, try to influence specific programmes linked to these policies from the Chinese point of view. Thus, the effect of the national education policy upon the Chinese language and culture becomes a matter of great concern for the MCA. Similarly, it attempts to modify those aspects of the ICA that are seen as intruding into Chinese business interests. The purpose is to secure concessions, to seek compromises, on behalf of the community. This is what the MCA did at the end of 1978 on the question of increasing places for non-Malay students in Universities. A formula was worked out through consultations with the UMNO leadership.

This 'inside' approach arises from the belief that fighting from outside is futile. One has to try to influence policy formulation, the decision-making process, from within. In that way, the rights of the Chinese Community would be better protected. It may even be possible to advance its position.

This approach gathered a lot of momentum in the years immediately after the 'May 13th incident' in 1969. This was understandable. For 'May 13th' signaled the ascendancy of the Malay middle-class with a clear commitment to the furtherance of its interests in various spheres. Non-Malay elites knew that the sort of non-Malay goals that they advocated in language and education could not be accomplished through electoral confrontation. This is one of the reasons why parties like the Gerakan and the People's Progressive Party (PPP) decided to join the ruling coalition. They were going to try to achieve their objectives from within. Though this approach did not have widespread support, it did persuade a segment of the urban voters to throw in their weight with the Barisan. Consequently, in the 1974 General Elections the Barisan improved its performance in the urban constituencies.

However, after 1974, the advocates of the 'within approach' could not sustain their support. The MCA, which had a new leadership, was burdened with serious internal problems brought about by contending cliques. It did not obtain any significant concessions on Chinese ethnic interests from the UMNO elite between 1974 and elections in July 1978. On the contrary, it was a period when the advance of the Malay position in the higher echelons of commerce, industry and the professions became even more apparent. Predictably, then, the 1978 General Election resulted in a decline of support for the 'within approach' and an upsurge of support for the 'without approach'.

In the last few years however things have begun to change for the MCA. By the end of 1979, Dato Lee San Choon, the President, had consolidated his hold over the party. Various MCA projects -- some of which had been started more than a decade ago -- were beginning to make

an impact. The frustrations of the Chinese community over higher educational opportunities were dealt with to some extent through an expanded Tunku Abdul Rahman (TAR) College and by providing scholarships, particularly by launching a special scholarship fund -- the Kojadi project. Unhappiness over the alleged lack of Chinese elements in the evolution of a national culture was somewhat assuaged through the establishment of a Chinese cultural society. This society has organised Chinese cultural activities in different cities with some vigour. The MCA has also got around some of the perceived obstacles in the growth of the Chinese economy by setting up a national cooperative society and a multi-purpose holding (MPH). Both -- especially the latter -- have sought to mobilise Chinese capital on a massive scale. Tangible benefits in the form of shares and dividends are being made available to a substantial segment of the community.

Through these activities -- sometimes known as the MCA's five projects -- the party has made an impression upon the Chinese. The psychological thrust comes from the underlying message: that the Chinese must organise, must unite, if they want to protect their interests. They must mobilise their economic and educational resources in the pursuit of their rights. Invariably, the message includes a rider; that if they do not achieve solidarity their future and their children's future would be in jeopardy.

It is useful to recollect at this point that it was through direct organisation of the Chinese in the new villages in the early fifties that the MCA first established its popularity. Besides, the welfare activities of the traditional Chinese clan associations provide a precedent. It is something that is easily understood within Chinese political culture. This work within the community was one of the main factors responsible for its success in the 1982 elections.

At the same time, however, the MCA was also helped by the fact that it is part of the government. This may sound paradoxical. On the one hand, by providing services to the Chinese it is reacting to the government's attempt to help the Malays in education and the economy. The MCA is, in a sense, telling the Chinese that they cannot depend upon the government. Yet, by remaining with the government it is not only able to obtain patronage for some of its projects like the TAR College but also benefit from the sort of assistance that government departments and agencies invariably give to Barisan members of Parliament and state assemblies. By getting the Public Works Department to build roads in their constituencies, by obtaining grants from the Ministry of Education for Chinese primary schools in their constituencies, by securing government-built low-cost flats for their constituents, by expediting the issue of passports for their constituents, MCA legislators have enhanced their image considerably. Their ability to get things done for their constituencies with State assistance helped MCA candidates to win in adjacent opposition areas too.

Once again, if one observes the MCA's mode of operation one cannot help draw a parallel to the relationship between the Kapitan Cina and the Sultan in colonial Malaya. The Kapitan Cina, while organising and providing for his community, maintained a relationship with the Sultan from whom he and his people derived various advantages. In a way, the MCA — UMNO relationship has all along comprised elements of this traditional tie.

Apart from effective mobilisation of the Chinese along ethnic lines and MCA's position within government, one cannot deny that many of the party's candidates have done creditable constituency work in the last few years. Even candidates defeated in the 1978 election, like Yeoh Poh San in Petaling, maintained service centres. A couple of other MCA winners in the Federal Territory also ran effective service centres for the people. These service centres, by no means confined to Kuala Lumpur or Selangor, helped to change the very image of the MCA from that of a party concerned only with the rich to that of a party that could also serve the poor.

Perhaps, the involvement of influential elements from the Chinese education movement (Tung Chiao Chung) on the side of two Parliamentary candidates from the Gerakan was also a plus factor for Chinese candidates in the Barisan as a whole. By campaigning hard for their candidates, by espousing their candidacies in the Chinese press, they managed to provide some credibility to the Gerakan and, to some extent, the MCA, as far as the cause of Chinese education was concerned. And Chinese education has been the single most emotional issue among the Chinese electorate since 1959. It is an issue that has made and unmade candidates right through our Parliamentary history.

It is certainly true that the DAP suffered as a result of the association of the Tung Chiao Chung with the Barisan. For the DAP has always perceived itself, and has been perceived by a significant number of Chinese, as the champion of Chinese education. Indeed, it reckoned that its public stand on the 3R controversy was going to be a major 'vote-getter' at the polls. It was even hoping that the Tung Chiao Chung would support it in the elections.

There were other factors too that weakened the DAP's position and therefore strengthened the Barisan's urban appeal. Internal party squabbles and the defections that followed at the end of 1980 and early 1981 had left its ugly scars behind. This was one of the reasons why it did not seem to have captured the imagination of the young urban voter. It conveyed the impression of being a party too obsessed with itself.

Also, some tactical blunders were committed. Though DAP leaders deny that it had any effect, it is quite conceivable that by switching candidates — Pato from Menglembu to Petaling, Chian Heng Kai from Batu Gajah to Tanjung and so on — the feeling was created that DAP legislators were not really interested in continuing to serve their electorates. It could be interpreted (as the

Barisan opponents did) as taking the people's support for granted or, worse, running away for fear of losing.

The other mistake of the DAP was for its Secretary-General Lim Kit Siang to challenge Datuk Lee San Choon to stand in any one of the urban, Chinese-majority constituencies. When the latter took up the challenge and stood in Seremban, Lim — perhaps for good reasons — decided not to contest him. Expectedly, this was exploited by the MCA with some gain.

In a nutshell then, DAP's failings and, to a much greater degree, changes in the MCA and Chinese perceptions of it were responsible for the shift in support from the former to the latter. However, there are other factors which are part of our general analysis that had also influenced the outcome. These we will deal with at length towards the end of this essay.

SPECIAL CASES: The Malay Belt

For the time being we shall turn to our second special area — the Malay belt of Kelantan, Trengganu and Kedah.

In Kelantan, PAS won 10 out of the 36 state seats and 4 out of the 12 Parliamentary seats. This represents a 8 seat increase in the state assembly and a 2 seat increase in Parliament compared to 1978. It polled 46.5% of the votes as against 52.8% for the Barisan.

PAS's performance has been rightly described as a 'resurgence' considering that it was routed in 1978, especially in the state elections, after having been in power in Kelantan for 18 years.

How does one account for PAS's new-found strength? The tendency is to explain it in terms of its manipulation of religious ideas and symbols. This is to the point but it does not constitute a total explanation since PAS has always — even in 1978 — distorted Islamic teachings for electoral purposes. It has invariably presented itself as the only genuinely Islamic group and labelled its opponents, especially UMNO, as un-Islamic because of its association with non-Muslim organisations. More than that, in 1982, as in the past, its vague, nebulous commitment to an 'Islamic state' and to 'Islamic sovereignty' was the forte of its campaign.

However, this time there was an additional factor which lent some credence to its exploitation of ethnic fears and hopes. It is linked to the type of economic development that Kelantan has experienced since Barisan took full command of the state government in 1978.

As expected, the Barisan government has encouraged the establishment of hotels, supermarkets, wholesale businesses and the like, most of them with capital from outside Kelantan. Given the ethnic structure of domestic capital a significant chunk of it is Chinese.

Development of this sort, as scholars have argued, does not really benefit the mass of the population. It serves the interest of an urban elite that is already part of

the 'consumer culture'. It draws others from lower down the economic ladder into that culture.

What is worse, a consuming elite generates other changes. Land prices go up, the prices of houses and of rentals go up. A few big hotels in a small city like Kota Bharu will alter, to some extent, the prices of meat and poultry and vegetables since they purchase these items in bulk for their rich customers. As a result, the poorer groups can only afford lower quality meat or fish. The poorest are eased out of the market.

In Kelantan, consumer-oriented capital penetration of this kind has yet another effect which most other states may not experience. Because colonial economic enterprise was limited and because there was no large-scale flow of capital from the West coast during PAS rule, Kelantan has managed to sustain a fairly viable, largely Malay trading community.

With the new type of businesses entering Kelantan, backed by greater capitalisation and supported by a more extensive distribution system, small and medium-sized Kelantanese traders are feeling threatened. Since there is an ethnic angle to the intrusion of capital, their resentment is also beginning to assume an ethnic dimension.

It is this resentment that PAS has been able to exploit. Though the direct consequences of Barisan-type development are not widespread, the ensuing resentment has been fed into two 'networks' over which PAS has some control. First, there is the Kelantan-cum-Malay identity 'network'. The arrival of the outsider with his capital and skills is seen as a threat to Kelantanese identity. And since Kelantanese identity has tremendous sentiment behind it, it generates a certain degree of apprehension even in areas far removed from the new hotels and businesses.

Second, resentment is transmitted through the network of religious schools, the 'pondoks' and 'madrasahs'. The existence of these autonomous and semi-autonomous religious institutions at the kampong-level has been a vital factor in the growth of PAS. It is not a coincidence that states where autonomous pondoks and madrasahs have deeper historical roots are also the states where PAS has been able to mobilise rural support more effectively. Though these institutions are now subject to greater governmental control, they can still be expected to respond to the PAS call to protect Muslim identity and Muslim values in the face of changes wrought by Barisan-style development.

This is, however, not the only aspect of development which PAS was able to manipulate to its advantage. Government projects which require the acquisition of land or which result in the forced resettlement of villagers without adequate compensation were election issues for PAS. Here, too, the fear of losing one's land, one's inheritance, was adroitly exploited.

Apart from ethnicity and development, certain serious shortcomings on the part of the Barisan helped PAS. Berjasa, a small Kelantan-based coalition partner established in 1978, failed to make any progress. It has 11 seats from the previous election but some of its Assemblymen had neglected their constituencies. There was a great deal of internal bickering and its leadership was not capable of developing the party. More important perhaps, UMNO itself was not keen to allow the party to grow since it was obvious that it wanted to maintain its monopoly of the Barisan's Malay supporters. Indeed, between Berjasa and UMNO at the level of Kelantan politics there were constant quarrels. The end result of it all was Berjasa's disastrous performance. It lost 6 out of

continue on page 60



HUMAN RIGHTS

We begin in this issue a series of articles on human rights in the contemporary setting. The writer has made a special study of the subject. The approach throughout is analytical and practical yet firmly committed to the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND YOU

Azmi Khalid

WHAT ACTUALLY ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

At the Sixth Malaysian Law Conference held in August 1981, Dato Musa Hitam, Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister had this to say about human rights and the Rule of Law:

"When times are not normal and the very existence of this country is threatened by external forces, it may be necessary to make certain sacrifices of our liberties and privileges, of the individual as well as of the mass, and at the expense of the administration of justice and social justice. When such a situation arises, no Government worthy of the mandate given by the electorate, and, if it is to be conscious of its oath to uphold and preserve the Constitution, can fail or hesitate to take such measures as it deems necessary for the preservation of the country as an independent sovereign state, free from the dominance of any other country."

Thus was recorded an explicit declaration of the country's human rights 'policy', though not as any significant departure from official attitudes towards the liberty of the individual that had consistently been voiced and practised ever since Independence.

This firm statement immediately raises to mind numerous doubts and arguments. Indeed, the subject of human rights anywhere in the world today evokes questions, discussion and debate as well as emotion and agitation of varying kinds. In the end, one would be faced with a few basic questions:

What actually *are* human rights? Are they the same everywhere? Why and how are they violated? Can there be various types and levels of rights? How do we attain them? Can people in any society ever hope to achieve all those grandiose aims enshrined in pious declarations? How can I as an individual benefit from all this talk and action?

The task of considering and determining whether human rights can be 'sacrificed' for the time being with the aim of ultimately striving for it at some later, more opportune time is one that plagues many developing societies. Yet before we can undertake this heavy task we must first understand what is meant by terms like 'human rights', 'fundamental liberties', 'civil rights', 'basic freedoms' and other cognate words or phrases. Only then can we expect to be able to commit ourselves and future generations to binding decisions on human rights.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations Organisation in 1948 proclaims that the peoples of the U.N. have reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights. It also declares that "*(the) recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world*".

Such ideals may appear to be profound but they can easily be translated into simpler terms of direct application to the individual person. In its publication entitled "Questions and Answers on Human Rights" the U.N. Office of Public Information answers the question 'What are human rights?' in this way:

"Human rights are based on mankind's increasing demand for a decent, civilised life in which the inherent dignity of each human being will receive respect and protection. That idea reaches beyond the comforts and conveniences which science and technology can provide. We do not speak merely of biological needs when we talk about human rights. We mean those conditions of life which allow us fully to develop and use our human qualities of intelligence and conscience and to satisfy our spiritual needs. Human rights are fundamental; without them, we cannot live as human beings."

So we can learn from this that human rights are inherent, natural and fundamental to all of us as human beings. It does not therefore matter whether reference is made to civil liberties or fundamental rights or basic rights, so long as they really mean what human beings everywhere know and feel are their human rights. That is also why human rights are said to be universal. In different places, there may be many different ideas on how and when such rights should be made available — but that is another question, one of application.

We can also gather that human rights do not merely encompass what have now popularly been called "basic needs of life," i.e. food, shelter and clothing. (Those are the comforts and conveniences required for all of us in the very first instance.) No doubt the poor countries of the world find extreme difficulty in making provision for even basic needs for its teeming multitudes but, in principle, those are comforts and conveniences required for all mankind in the very first instance.

WHY IS THERE SO MUCH CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS?

This may seem an unnecessary question if we agree that human rights are inherent, natural and fundamental. Yet the concern, at times rather extreme, surely exists because of blatant abuses and gross violations in many parts of the world. This negative trend has not abated but tends to be on the increase. The "disregard and contempt for human rights (that) have resulted in barbarous acts (during the Second World War) which have outraged the conscience of mankind", as stated in the preamble to the Universal Declaration, served to prompt the world into proclaiming that historic document "as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations". More than 33 years later today, we do not seem to be any nearer to securing the "universal and effective recognition and observance" of those rights. There is indeed much cause for concern.

WHAT ARE THOSE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS TO BE ATTAINED?

Recognizing human rights themselves may be a problem. People tend to confuse fundamental rights with mere parts or portions of such rights. Some may strive for the right to vote in free and periodic elections but stop short of asserting the fundamental right to participate in the government of the country. That fundamental right means more than merely voting a Government in or out of office every few years — it means that the basis of the authority of government ought to constantly rest with the will of the people, for example through regular two-way decision-making processes in between elections.

So it is important that movements striving for the attainment of human rights do not simply pick and choose a few 'rights' of direct or immediate need as their primary aims, without relating their struggle to the broader, long-term objectives of fundamental concern.

ARE HUMAN RIGHTS ABSOLUTE?

The U.N. would answer: "Not when their exercise would interfere with the rights of others." This is surely obvious, logical and acceptable to everyone since human rights are not just for us alone to enjoy: we need to ensure that others can do so as well. In fact, when we call for respect for human rights we have to mean that not only our rights must be observed, but also that we have the common duty to respect the rights of *one another*. That makes it clear, then, that the concept of human rights is not merely a selfish demand for personal needs since a duty on everyone is implicit in that demand.

As for other restrictions on human rights, all major international documents provide that rights shall not be subject to any restrictions except those provided by law, and which are necessary to protect national security, public order, public health or morals, or the rights and freedoms of others. This may seem like a blank cheque for the severe curtailment of individual liberties by tyrannical governments and serve as a strict reminder to the indi-

vidual that he has the *duty* to accept any legal restrictions. However, he may take comfort in the words of the Universal Declaration:

"Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible."

So it seems that he may assert he is not duty-bound to observe restrictions that are unwarranted and which unduly impede the individual's "free and full development of his personality" within his society. But is that not rebelling against the system? Even if he is morally justified, how does he respond to repressive *laws* and actions in his country? These are indeed thorny issues worthy of deeper perusal in due course.

WHY ARE THERE SUPPOSED TO BE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RIGHTS?

The Universal Declaration recognises two broad categories of rights. One is the traditional kind — civil and political rights — which have gradually evolved over centuries during the long development of democratic society. The other — economic, social and cultural rights — started to be recognised more recently when people realised that possession of certain political and civil rights would be valueless without the simultaneous enjoyment of certain rights of an economic, social and cultural character.

Examples of civil and political rights would include the right to equality before the law; right to life, liberty and personal security; as well as the right to fundamental freedoms such as freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of opinion and expression; and the freedom to join with others in peaceful assembly and association. The other kind includes the right to work, to free choice of jobs, to an adequate standard of living, to education and to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Difficulties have also arisen as a consequence of this categorisation. In developing countries, and communist states in particular, the second type of rights have been over-emphasised to the virtual exclusion of the civil and political rights. The popular justification for this approach is that civil and political rights would be luxuries in conditions where poverty and illiteracy abound, in other words, "that the man in the street is more concerned about his bread-and-butter rights rather than the right to espouse ideas and thoughts".

This too is a significant issue which we need to explore further, bearing in mind the stark reality behind the words of a human rights advocate:

"A well-fed slave is nothing else but a well-fed slave."

When we later go on to discuss how human rights are to be implemented and when we compare conditions in different parts of the world, this question of the necessary inter-relationship of all universal human rights will be given full focus.

DEMOLISHING MYTHS

Beginning with this issue, an attempt will be made to examine critically some of the major myths in politics, economics and culture which have prevented people from realising the truth about various social problems in the country. De-mythologising is an important aspect of social education.

HARD WORK — THE CURE - ALL?

Chandra Muzaffar

There is so much talk these days about the importance of hard work. We are told by our leaders that hard work alone is the key to success. If we worked hard, if we were disciplined and efficient, our nation would become a great nation — according to the Prime Minister and a number of others in government.

There is no doubt that hard work is important. A hard-working individual, who is at the same time disciplined and efficient, is an asset to himself as he is an asset to the community and the nation. It is true that hard work, discipline and efficiency can help increase economic productivity. These are human attributes that have sometimes contributed towards the economic success of a nation.

But hard work is not everything. Neither is discipline, nor is efficiency. It is wrong to suggest that hard work is a cure-all, a panacea, for all our ills. No nation will be able to resolve all its economic problems through hard work and discipline alone. This is why it is fallacious to argue that Japan's economic prosperity is due entirely to the hard work and discipline of its people. It follows that by emulating Japanese work ethics, we will not be able to guarantee the success of our nation.

To establish this point, it would be useful to find out why Japan managed to industrialize in the latter part of the 19th century. Japan was one of the very few Asian and African countries that remained free of colonial bondage. Even those countries that were not colonized in the political and administrative sense, like Thailand, were brought under the economic domination of the colonial powers. The destructive effects of colonial rule upon the indigenous economy and its devastating impact upon the domestic culture are undoubtedly among the major causes of the underdevelopment of many newly-independent states. Japan, in contrast, could utilise traditional economic skills and activities, expressed through a whole network of small and medium-sized industries, to launch its industrialization programme. Similarly, because its cultural base was almost intact, traditional values of co-operation and group solidarity could provide the framework for its modernization. Japan's inherent cultural strength, from that point of view, served as a dynamo for its industrialization.

Indeed, its ability to escape colonial subjugation also influenced the nature of Japanese nationalism. Japanese nationalism in the nineteenth century exuded a sense of self-confidence which was missing in the nationalisms of those countries that came under colonial rule. Its insularity, the homogenous population, Shintoism and devotion to the Emperor, all helped to strengthen Japanese nationalism to a point where few other peoples could match the intensity of its citizens' patriotism. It was this fervent patriotism that was partly responsible for the commitment of both the elites and the people to achieving greatness for Japan, through a programme of rapid modernization.

Perhaps even more important than nationalism was the role of the ruling class under the stewardship of the Emperor Meiji. History tells us that the Japanese ruling class in the latter part of the nineteenth century was extremely conscious of the need for modernization. The Emperor and his officials led the quest for new knowledge. They sought ideas on industry, commerce, administration and education from different parts of Europe. They absorbed and adapted technology from outside. They gave a lot of attention to the creation of a sound scientific base. As they trained their scientists and technologists, as they translated foreign books and manuals into Japanese, they succeeded in encouraging the growth of an atmosphere that valued knowledge and learning. Libraries and laboratories mushroomed everywhere under the stimulus of a dynamic leadership.

There is no doubt that leadership rather than hard work was a crucial factor in Japan's success. In most societies, leadership is a vital ingredient in development. This is especially true of societies that are trying to achieve a massive change. It is a pity, therefore, that our own leaders who give so much emphasis to hard work, who regard Japan as a model worthy of emulation, have failed to stress the importance of leadership. It is the qualities of good leadership that they should be talking about. They should be advising themselves, exhorting themselves to be sincere, honest, dedicated and committed rather than admonishing ordinary people for allegedly not working hard. It is of course true that the present leadership is concerned about the sort of values it

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embodies. It is also true that it tries to set a good example especially on hard work and discipline. Be that as it may, it is apparent to all that our leaders perceive the absence of hard work on the part of the people as the real obstacle to progress.

If the Japanese have proven how significant leadership is as a general principle of development, they have also shown us the importance of working towards change without being dependent upon external assistance. One of the reasons why the Japanese succeeded in the nineteenth century was because they chose consciously to develop through their own human resources, with appropriate knowledge and technology from outside but without foreign investments, foreign aid and foreign consultants. It is quite clear today that no country can grow on the basis of foreign investments and foreign aid, for external dependence retards our capacity to develop our own potential. This is why it does not make sense to ask our people to imitate the Japanese in order to succeed when the Japanese themselves succeeded by not seeking to imitate anyone. Instead, they jealously preserved what they regarded as the "Japanese Spirit" in the course of learning from outside. In this connection, it must be admitted that our society has never really tried to develop its own resources and its own strength seeing that we are so dependent upon foreign investments for our economic progress.

Yet another reason which explains Japan's ability to modernize so successfully is related to the juncture at which the country began to industrialize. As a late nineteenth century entrant, it had the advantage of adopting technology developed by the West without the related disadvantage of having to export its manufactured goods to a world market beset with trade obstacles. For at that time, the individual and collective control of the then industrializing nations was not as crippling or as pervasive as it is today. Japan could, therefore, establish a niche for itself in the industrializing world.

It should be apparent by now that all these factors — the absence of colonial domination, nationalism, a conscious elite, autonomous development and industrialization at a certain historical point — had a much greater impact upon Japan's success than mere hard work as such. Hard work became an asset only because all the other factors had combined together to pave the way for Japan's successful modernization. In other words, hard work in the context of nineteenth century Japan was a secondary, not a primary, cause of its success.

Even today, Japan's ability to stay ahead of other industrial giants is not due entirely to the work ethics of its people. Its system of production has much to do with its size. The Japanese production system is much more decentralized than, say, its American equivalent. In producing a car, for instance, various component parts are made by small and medium-sized industrial units operating independently of the central unit which may be responsible for manufacturing certain essential elements of the vehicle. Apart from greater efficiency, this

approach to production minimises labour problems while maximizing the ancillary effects of industrialization.

Besides, the Japanese have developed highly effective marketing techniques and are very concerned about quality control which have given them an edge over their competitors. More important, Japan as a nation spends a substantial amount of money on research and development (R & D). This is one of the main reasons why it is technologically so innovative. By developing newer and newer techniques of production and newer and newer designs in manufacturing, it has been able to outstrip its rivals in the West.

In the actual administration of industries and in the relationship between management and workers, the Japanese also tend to be rather more imaginative than others. We have all heard of their consensus approach to decision-making in factories. This approach, which seeks the workers' views on production matters, helps to enhance their commitment to their job and the overall objectives of the factory. It also reduces, to some extent, alienation from work.

Quite apart from this, Japanese factories and even the bureaucracy provide security of tenure to their workers. Workers are seldom dismissed or retrenched. This increases their sense of attachment to their jobs. Also, Japanese workers are generally well-trained and given a lot of exposure to different aspects of a particular vocation. Experience and ability, rather than paper qualifications, are highly valued. Recruitment and promotion are based largely upon merit. Most occupations carry with them a variety of material incentives including paid holidays for productive workers and the like. Needless to say, Japanese workers are relatively well paid.

All this shows that there is some connection between working conditions and Japanese work ethics. No one — not even a Japanese — would be prepared to work hard for a long period of time unless he is given material and non-material rewards which can satisfy him to some extent. Our leaders should link their exhortations of hard work to the people with a re-examination of wages and working conditions, especially for those in the lower echelons. As numerous studies have shown, wide disparities in salaries and lifestyles between the apex and the base often dissuade ordinary workers from giving of their best. Japanese entrepreneurs and managers, however committed they may be to profit-maximization, have always been conscious of the need to ensure that the income-cum-status gap does not get too wide.

Our discussion of Japan's breakthrough in the nineteenth century, and its ability to sustain a dynamic industrialization programme in the last few decades, has clearly established that a whole variety of factors are responsible for that country's success. To be sure, hard work is one of those factors but it is not as significant as it is made out to be. No one denies the importance of hard work. What we are against — if we may repeat — is the way in which this praiseworthy quality has been presented

QUESTION AND ANSWER ON ALIRAN

1. IS ALIRAN AN EXCLUSIVE GROUP OF INTELLECTUALS?

Certainly not, if by intellectuals you mean University academics or graduates. That is a common misunderstanding which must be corrected. Aliran accepts as members men and women from all social and occupational backgrounds. While the main focus of our activities is on spreading ideas and improving social consciousness, we do not look for a purely intellectual membership. That would be contrary to our aims and objectives as a reform movement based on common spiritual values upheld by all the communities in this country. Our present membership comprises men and women from all ethnic groups, all religious persuasions and all walks of life. We certainly do not operate any kind of quota system.

Any adult Malaysian citizen can join Aliran if he subscribes to our Basic Beliefs and accepts the duties and responsibilities entailed in membership of a reform movement. Of course, we allow some time to prospective members to consider our beliefs and ideals before deciding whether they really want to come in. What our members have in common is notably the willingness to learn to think as individuals and to act accordingly. By thinking individuals we certainly do not mean degree-holders or academics. A motor-mechanic, for example, who reflects on and analyses social problems is probably more of a thinker than an academic who reads only the daily newspapers. Moreover 'thinking' includes feeling and doing — the cerebral armchair radical has no place in a movement like ours.

2. IS ALIRAN A RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION?

No, we are not. We are interested in religion as a code of values, the background to the spiritual worldview upon which we base our movement. Belief in God necessarily involves adherence to human values like justice, freedom and harmony, of which God is the transcendental source. At the same time we are interested in integrating religious principles into modern science and society. But we do not promote any particular religion nor do we inquire into each member's religious convictions. That belongs to the private realm between the

individual and God. Of course it would be impossible for a convinced atheist to join Aliran because our very first Basic belief is belief in God.

Having individuals who subscribe to spiritual values and its application to the practicalities of modern society strengthens the bond among our members. Eventually such individuals will assume the role of cultural and ethnic mediators in the larger community in which Aliran exists and functions. In this connection some of the ideals we have sought to explain and uphold are the maintaining of ends before means; the transcendental unity of mankind; and harmony with the total environment, both human and natural.

3. IS ALIRAN ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT IN APPROACH?

Being anti-establishment implies holding a cluster of pre-conceived opinions opposed to existing institutions and that is something which we simply do not believe in. In pursuing our objectives, we mainly seek to educate the Malaysian public while striving to educate ourselves as well. Of course we also respond to immediate situations in society by articulating public grievances and voicing our opinions on social issues. But we treat each issue on its merits. If the Government, or any other established institution, initiates policies which are in the public interest, we support them. But if the adoption of a certain measure is detrimental to the nation's welfare, we say so. We are sure the public would not wish it any other way. If one looks through our Press statements since our inauguration, one will find that, *viz a viz* the authorities, our views are for, against and neutral in about equal proportions. Is that being anti-Establishment? The real problem is that constructive criticism is viewed from some quarters as antisocial and a threat to authority, a viewpoint that no democratic government would profess.

4. WHAT SCHOOL OF THOUGHT DO YOU REPRESENT, IF ANY.

We do belong to an existing school of thought called, for want of a better term, the spiritual worldview. It is the present alternative to both capitalism

and communism. A perceptive reviewer of our 'Basic Beliefs' has this to say: '... the Western States were led by the Invisible Hand of the market and the totalitarian states by the Leviathan of bureaucratic planning. Neither the economics of the capitalist societies nor the politics of the communists was subject to a higher, moral authority. Aliran believes this to be the affliction of modern society ...'

What we uphold and pursue has come to be the guiding light of numerous movements in the West as well as the 3rd World. Progressive religion or spiritual development are upheld alike by Islamic, Christian and Buddhist reform groups throughout the world. Contemporary man has come to realize the awful crisis of our times, the alienation of man from God, Nature and his neighbour. The major characteristics of the modern spiritual worldview can be stated as supremacy of a moral order, integration of religion and science, and harmony with the natural and human environment.

But the particular rules and systems in practical situations will have to be worked out, as since time immemorial, with reason, courage and good sense. Two of the tasks may be mentioned here: to achieve an ethical economics e.g. partnerships and cooperatives, and a humane politics e.g. decentralization of administration with full community participation.

5. WHY DO YOU EXCLUDE POLITICIANS FROM ALIRAN?

Strictly speaking we do not exclude them but it is true we discourage active politicians from joining Aliran. Our Constitution as amended in 1979 actually provides that no member of a political party may hold a position of responsibility in Aliran, for example in the Executive Committee. (It is also provided that no student may join Aliran without the express permission of his principal.) The rationale behind this provision is that we are a non-partisan reform movement. It must be apprecia-

ted that the nature of our function obliges us to abstain from party politics. Furthermore we believe that as an interest group our ideas and opinions should be formulated and articulated from the viewpoint of the whole society, free from predilections towards any fixed body of thought, whether that of political parties, trade unions or community organizations.

Nevertheless we have with us a few inactive members of various political parties. If they start becoming active in their respective parties then their membership will be reviewed. At the same time it must be said that when members of opposing political parties can find common ground in our midst, there is hope for a more open society.

6. HOW DOES ALIRAN FINANCE ITS ACTIVITIES?

From the beginning we have operated on a shoe-string budget and have ensured that our major activities are wholly self-supporting. The publication and sale of books and pamphlets, for example, earns a considerable income which is re-invested in producing more publications. Other minor sources of income are fees and subscriptions paid by members and the odd donation. We do not receive funds from any outside body or foundation whatsoever because it is our policy to be financially independent of all parties. Aliran believes 'in practising what it preaches in respect of self-reliance, moderate consumption and living within one's means. Because many voluntary organizations have been used to external funding it is assumed that we too have some undisclosed source of funds. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is surprising how little one really needs to carry out the type of work that Aliran has been doing.

Our financial austerity is a blessing in disguise in that our members know that they can derive no tangible reward or benefit through membership in Aliran. As a result those who join us are genuine idealists, firmly committed to our aims and objectives.

I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something I can do.

Edward Hale

ALIRAN DIARY

As a reform movement, Aliran organizes educational activities such as study clubs, talks, and film shows aimed at promoting consciousness and improving the knowledge of its members. Since we are an open society, friends and guests of Aliran are welcome to these functions. The society has organized discussions and talks about Poland and its economic crisis, on the general elections and on the non-Muslim divorce laws. A series of discussions on the merits and weaknesses of the education system was also held. An article in the present Journal has emerged from the discussions. These discussions were very lively as the subject is one that concerns all of us directly or indirectly. The talk on the new divorce laws was given by a guest speaker – we hope to have more invited speakers in the course of the year. The films screened normally deal with culture or history. In 1981 we screened the first part of the 'World of Islam' – a film on the cultural and scientific attainments of Islam, which drew a large crowd. The second part was screened in May 1982 but was unfortunately not well-attended.

Our members in Kuala Lumpur and Kelantan have maintained their own internal education programme despite the disadvantage of small numbers. As a group, the KL members have made substantial contributions to Aliran's work e.g. by organizing seminars in Kuala Lumpur and by writing for the Journal.

The Kelantan study club was only recently set up with six members and they meet now and then. But being a tightly-knit group, the members are more involved in mutual encouragement and improvement in informal ways too.

Our functions also take into account the need for recreation. This year the fraternity bureau had a satay party and a hike up Strawberry Hill in Penang. Both these functions were attended by members and friends.

A forthcoming function of Aliran will be the Merdeka Dinner which will be held tentatively on the 28th August 1982 at 7.00 in the evening. This is an annual Aliran function to commemorate Malaysia's independence. As is the case with all our functions, friends and guests of Aliran are welcome. So do keep the date in mind and celebrate with us.

Shortly before the polling day in the recent elections, Aliran members were very busy preparing 20,000 copies of a pamphlet on elections and voting responsibility for distribution to the public. From the subsequent feedback, it appears that the pamphlets were quite well received and served a useful role by explaining things like the basic premises of democratic elections, the role of the mass media, electoral offences and corruption. We shall keep in mind this method of communication and public education.

*I sit
on a
man's back
chocking him
and making
him carry
me yet assure myself and
others that I am sorry for him
and wish to lighten his load by
all possible means – except by
getting off his back.*

Leo Tolstoy

STUDY OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

This paper on educational institutions was compiled from recent discussions and proceedings of Aliran's Study-Club in Penang.

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Ang Boon Chong and Hum Kim Choy

The whole world has come to regard education as perhaps the most important investment for the future and have rightly given it priority in economic and social planning. It is an investment in human resources, the returns from which could affect not only the foreseeable future but also the well-being of generations yet unborn.

No country can be great or attain to excellence if its people are educationally disadvantaged. Progress and development are invariably tied to the degree of literacy and the type and quality of education a country enjoys. Furthermore men's faith in knowledge and learning engenders the love for and abiding interest in the arts and sciences, philosophy and one's cultural heritage.

PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

The main purpose of education must be to prepare one for life. To do this our learning institutions have first to develop the ability to think and adapt to changing situations and second, to provide the necessary training in basic skills.

The goals of formal education needs redefinition not so much in terms of subject matter but more in the areas of developing thinking abilities and teaching techniques such as problem solving, analysing and synthesising. Clearly, the role of the teacher as a giver of knowledge and students as the passive recipients of information can no longer be regarded as the backbone of education. With the current knowledge explosion, where new frontiers are continually being explored, the old style method of imparting any body of factual knowledge can no longer be feasible nor desirable because facts are soon made obsolete by new discoveries. The test of an institution, therefore, must now be whether it is adequate to the needs of the present and of the foreseeable future.

Education is only relevant today if it encourages the development of an inquiring mind and confidence in one's own values and standing in society. It has also to recognise that there are basic abilities which need cultivation, namely, the abilities to work with data, with people and with things respectively. There is a need to develop the student's greatest talent in at least one of those areas to the point of excellence and cultivate minimum levels of competence in the other areas. Furthermore the current

emphasis on mental and physical development needs to be expanded to include emotional and spiritual growth. Hitler's Germany has shown that the development of mind alone does not make a human being. Education is worthwhile if it leads to the better human being and meaningful only when it can provide some answers to the perplexing questions of life, on the reason and purpose of man's existence.

The idea of life-long education should become a part of the guiding principles of education policies in this country. We should strive for the establishment of a learning society where people are sophisticated enough and discerning enough to prize character, commitment and competence beyond the ability to do well in examinations and even above academic excellence.

To increase the opportunities for continuous learning, many forms of social, cultural and economic services could be used for educational purposes. In a country like ours where a sizable portion of our adult population are still illiterate, the case for the setting-up of adult education classes cannot be denied. It may begin as a modest attempt at providing functional literacy but the final goal might be to advance to a point where the adult student can eventually feel a sense of achievement, a realisation that his newly-acquired skill will enable him to live a more useful and fulfilling life. To this end, the mass communication media and all the devices of modern technology may be harnessed to serve the cause of community education.

SCHOOLING

Informal schooling for Malaysians usually begins at the kindergarten level. The kindergartens are largely outside government control and are mostly private-owned enterprises. It is doubtful that many of the teachers who run these kindergartens are trained for the job. It is mostly a business concern whose operations are regulated by the profit motive. Some kindergartens have been known to charge fees higher than what it would normally cost to put a student through college. Perhaps it is time for the authorities to pay attention to these schools if only to ensure that minimum professional standards are maintained.

Formal schooling for children begins when they are admitted into the primary schools at the age of seven. The

children will spend the better part of six years of their lives here before moving up to the secondary level where after another five years, most of them will leave school for the job-market, to attend to the serious business of earning a living. Out of an estimated student population of around three million, only eighteen thousand students will be given places in form six (the announced 1982 intake) and roughly 75% of this number may eventually be lucky enough to gain admittance into our institutions of higher learning.

It is apparent from the above that for the overwhelming majority of Malaysians, schooling does not go beyond form five, and yet the main thrust of our nation's educational planning continues to be centered on providing elitist education that has little usefulness or relevance to over 98% of the student population. Our schools seem to be geared to the development of a narrow range of talent when there are other areas of human abilities still unexploited and crying out to be tapped.

EXCELLENCE

There is a need to expand the concept of academic excellence and to speak in broader terms of educational excellence. Students who are less inclined academically, for instance, might find their niche in vocational and technical training and perhaps some other courses that are less intellectual in nature. Students who have not done

well in school should not think of themselves as below-average people. If their chief talents should lie among the unexploited areas they should be encouraged to believe that their contributions to society can still be as valuable and as necessary as the next person's. There is no doubt that the nation will always need to nurture and develop competence of the highest order. But must we also try to cast everyone in the same mould and in this way sell short the individuals and society? The time is due for some new models of education to emerge that are true to the integrity of individuals as well as to the needs of society. The concept of equal opportunity in education is meaningless, if one has to develop mediocre competence in an area which is another person's forte. Equal opportunity should mean providing the tools to develop one's own special talents to the point of excellence.

The world is now moving and changing at a breathtaking speed and man finds that he has to run in order to stand still. Knowledge grows and is continuing to grow at such a tremendous rate that we are literally swamped by it. Therefore it is incumbent upon those in charge of educational planning to carefully work out strategies towards the question of what and how much to learn so that our students and teachers do not lose sight of the trees for the forest.

The most important skill a student must now acquire is learning to learn. The development of this skill



will enable him to become less dependent on the teacher and more apt to do things by and for himself. As a self-learner, he shall be freed from much of the external constraints of time, rules and restrictions to pursue his own special interests, or conduct experiments and research into his particular passion. It is from such highly specialised individual contributions that mankind has always received the greatest benefits.

DEMORALIZING

Perhaps the saddest indictment of our school system is that students find school grim, boring, passive, ineffective and generally hostile to their own spontaneous nature. Our classrooms do not permit children's minds to develop beyond conventional thinking and attitudes. This has the effect of stifling initiative and inventiveness. The loss to the nation is incalculable, in terms of creativity and originality, in a system that frowns on the child who dares to be different.

Our school system is too examination and result-oriented. Measuring attainments in this way is unsatisfactory, not because examinations are necessarily in and by themselves bad but because of the way testing is done and the frequency with which they occur. Examinations have the tendency to demoralise and show up the slow pupils while showing off the bright ones. Each examination is invariably accompanied by much fear and anxiety in the less-gifted ones. Questions are often set to test memory rather than to explore thinking and reasoning abilities. The bane of the system is that it encourages pupils to commit information to memory and regurgitate them periodically in examination halls.

Over-crowding too has had the effect of adding to the woes of schooling in our country. Over-sized classes invariably bring about disciplinary problems and this in turn pollutes the atmosphere for learning. Pupils who need the personal attention of the teacher do not get

it. As a result, school becomes a cold and impersonal place for the pupil and the teacher becomes to them a stern and remote figure to be heeded and obeyed at all times.

Then again you have head-teachers who in their zealotry insist that school syllabuses must be adhered to strictly. Work schemes are painstakingly planned for each week of the year and has to be completed weekly within the time prescribed. Needless to say the harm done is tremendous, especially when teachers who should know their pupils best are not allowed to exercise discretion in letting the children dictate the pace of progress.

In cases where control is not so rigid there is at times a total absence of co-ordination. Succeeding teachers do not begin work from where work was left off the previous year, but from the point work was meant to begin for the new class. The result is pupils are experiencing huge gaps in their education and nobody seems to care. In national-type schools where the medium of instruction is now in Bahasa Malaysia, the more senior teacher is facing a communication difficulty in class. His lack of facility with the language makes him inadequate to his tasks and pupils are naturally bored by his fumbblings and unsatisfactory explanations. The only way such a teacher can maintain some form of order in class is to resort to tyrannical measures and reduce pupils to a state of artificial docility.

These are only a few examples of the problems plaguing our schools. However it must not be taken that because no mention is made of the more satisfactory aspects of our education system that there is no good side to it. We freely acknowledge that our schools are no better or no worse than schools the world over. Perhaps schooling is not the best system man has devised for the education of his young. But until a better system is found, we have to go on improving the system we have inherited and hope that despite schools our children will not suffer the lack of a good education.

*The world of books is the most remarkable creation of Man.
Nothing else that he builds ever lasts.
Monuments fall, nations perish, civilisations grow old and die out,
And after an era of darkness new races build others, but in the world
of books are volumes that have seen this happen again and again
and yet live on still young.
Still as fresh as the day they were written.
Still telling men's hearts of the hearts of men centuries dead.*

Clarence Day

ALIRAN ON CULTURAL MINORITIES

Chandra Muzaffar

This is a reply to Mr. Man Chai Te's article published in "Fajar" No. 19 Mar-April 1982 which is reprinted after this reply.

Man Chai Te's convoluted diatribe against Aliran (One language — the dubious basis of National Unity *Fajar* No. 19 Mar. — Apr. 1982) combines superficiality with sophistry and ignorance with arrogance.

His long-winded arguments can be reduced with some difficulty to 4 main points. According to him our opposition to the establishment of a Chinese-language University suggests that we a) advocate a one-language policy b) support mono-ethnic institutions c) deny the cultural aspirations of national minorities and d) do not provide for the realization of the human potential.

ONE-LANGUAGE POLICY?

Apparently Man does not understand what a 'one-language policy' means.

When a group like Aliran suggests that Chinese should be taught as a subject from the lowest to the highest level in the education system; that Chinese literature, history and civilisation should be part of the curriculum; that the Chinese language should be sustained through the media including the government-run Radio and Television; that every attempt should be made to protect the position of that language and culture in the Malaysian social environment, it is grossly unfair to accuse us of espousing a one-language policy. (*The Real issues: the Merdeka University* Aliran 1979, p 27, p 83).

'One-language' advocates are those who deny any social position or role whatsoever to languages other than their own. They would be opposed to the teaching of Chinese in state schools which our Constitution provides for, or the allocation of air-time over Radio and Television to Chinese language programmes which our broadcasting policy allows for.

In this connection, it is Man who is ignorant of elementary social science. Doesn't he know that schools, universities, the radio, television, newspapers are all *social institutions*? By arguing that Chinese should be made available through these institutions, isn't Aliran in fact saying that there should be social support for the use of the language? How then can we be upbraided for not appreciating "that it is always Social Institutions and rights that are at issue rather than the legalistic reference to the individual"? Or, is it possible that in Man's social

science the term institution is reserved for a Chinese-medium University? In other words, as long as there is no such institution he is not prepared to recognise the existence of other types of institutional support.

MONO-ETHNIC INSTITUTIONS?

Equally absurd is his use of the term 'mono-ethnic institutions'. By arguing that Malay should be the main medium of instruction in schools and universities, we are far from espousing mono-ethnic institutions. For the term mono-ethnic means 'of one ethnic group'. Aliran is against mono-ethnic institutions. Indeed in our *Merdeka University* book we had stated clearly, "Mono-ethnic educational institutions, whether it is MARA or the proposed university, are not in the interest of a multi-ethnic society since they socialize the young in a manner that does not harmonize with the realities of the situation." (P.26)

Perhaps, Man — given his unconventional terminology — means something else by 'mono-ethnic institutions'. There is a hint of this as one tries to penetrate the confusion that surrounds his ideas. One gets the feeling that he associates our acknowledgement of the historical position of the Malay language with supporting 'mono-ethnic institutions'. Apparently he does not recognise this historical reality which he regards as 'this ideological view of national unity' that merely 'fuels Malay chauvinism.'

And yet he admits that "all the national groups have always recognised Malay as the lingua franca". This is where he contradicts himself. Since Malay is the lingua franca, the language of *inter-ethnic communication*, it cannot possibly be a *mono-ethnic institution*.

The inter-ethnic role of Malay is what bestows legitimacy upon its status as the national language of both Malaysia and Indonesia. Let it not be forgotten that for centuries the Malay language served in this region as the channel through which diverse linguistic and ethnic groups from within and without communicated with one another.

What changed all this was Western imperialism — a point which our staunch anti-imperialist comrade Man should be able to empathize with. It was because of British trade and administrative policies, reinforced later by its educational and cultural programmes, that Malay began to decline in importance. It is a pity that comrade Man does not condemn British colonialism for emasculating a language and a culture in its homeland, a far more serious crime than retarding the growth of languages and

cultures that were historically and geographically alien to this region.

Does comrade Man realise that it was colonialism which inhibited non-Malay identification with the Malay language in contrast to the situation in pre-colonial Melaka, where Chinese and Indian minorities adjusted harmoniously to Malay culture? For a great champion of the masses, comrade Man seems to ignore the stark fact that in spite of all the damage done by colonialism the language of social intercourse between a Malay peasant and a non-Malay worker, indeed between a Chinese tin-mining labourer and an Indian rubber tapper was, and is, *Malay*. Let us try to understand the language realities that obtain in multi-ethnic Malaysia before we pose as heroes of the people striving to unite the diverse communities.

CULTURAL ASPIRATIONS OF MINORITIES

It is within this national context that Aliran views the legitimate cultural aspirations of the minorities. On more than one occasion, we have criticised the suppression of minority cultures during the colonial era. We continue to speak out boldly against government policies today that reinforce existing ethnic dichotomies. The evidence is available in numerous Aliran publications.

However, we are convinced that if the cultural aspirations of minorities are to be fulfilled, they should be integrated into the mainstream of national life. This is why we want Chinese language and culture to be available as subjects of study in a national education system just as Chinese language programmes should remain part of a national broadcasting system.

In this way two important objectives can be accomplished. First, distinctive identity elements can be preserved within a national ethos. The national ethos will provide the strength which minorities operating on their own cannot hope to sustain over a long period of time. Two, these distinctive elements can help enrich the national culture itself since there will be perpetual interaction between minority and majority groups.

The general principles of our conception of the role of minority cultures in Malaysia can be applied to other multi-ethnic situations especially those with historical experiences that are not very different from ours. Thus, the Chinese minority in Indonesia should not be denied the opportunity to integrate into the economic and political life of the nation; neither should the community isolate itself from the mainstream of Indonesian society. Even in situations that are not comparable, one would argue that minority cultural consciousness should emerge as part of the national consciousness. The black consciousness movement in the United States would, from that point of view, establish its legitimacy only if it entered into the consciousness of the nation as a whole.

It is wrong to equate this integrative concept of minority-majority community relations with the 'utilitarian culture of the West'. The assimilationist character of

American culture, for instance, is of a different order. At no point, in the evolution of American culture was there a deliberate attempt to integrate Spanish or African elements into the national way of life. The 'melting-pot' sought, sometimes unconsciously, to melt all other cultures into the dominant 'Anglo-Saxon' mould. We are not advocating this.

Neither do we want the perpetuation of separate cultures without any symbiotic relationship developing between them. This is the inherent danger of Man's idea of a self-contained Chinese education system existing within a distinct Chinese cultural milieu. A Chinese-language University will lead to this since it will be possible for a Chinese youth to complete his entire education with hardly any exposure to the other communities.

This must give rise to certain grave consequences. First, the Chinese community will be perceived by others — and will eventually perceive itself — as a community on the outside. In fact, in all societies that became multi-ethnic under the external pressure of colonialism there is a tendency for the indigenous community to see itself as the "inside community" in relation to the immigrants brought by colonial rule who are invariably perceived as "the outside people". Creating a Chinese cultural world distinguished by its own education system is going to reinforce this image. Surely, it is not in the interest of the Chinese community or of ethnic relations to allow this to happen. For when the educational and economic resources of two communities living cheek by jowl are organised along communal lines, serious ethnic antagonisms are bound to develop sooner than later.

Second, communal mobilisation whether it is on behalf of education or politics must in the end distort social realities within the community itself. This has already begun to happen among the Chinese. What began as a demand for more Chinese education has now grown into a massive communal movement which seeks to define economic and social issues too along ethnic lines. Consequently, class, group and occupational ties which cut across ethnic boundaries have become weaker and weaker. The support for the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) in the recent election is, in a sense, a manifestation of this trend within the Chinese community. With the blurring of socio-economic distinctions among the Chinese the scope for the emergence of progressive multi-ethnic movements has become even more limited.

There is no doubt that the Merdeka University controversy, like the 3R issue, has contributed directly to this state of affairs. For each time the Chinese community mobilises communal sentiments in pursuit of cultural goals that cannot be accommodated within an integrative concept of the nation, the Malay community also closes ranks behind its leaders. As a result of this, differences within the Malay community are often set aside.

Of course, a great deal of communal sentiment within the Chinese community is also a reaction to the ethnic policies of the ruling UMNO elite. Aliran has always argued against an ethnic approach to development since it

is not in the interest of the vast majority of the Malays and the Malaysian nation as a whole. This is why we see the bumiputra/non-bumiputra dichotomy as one of the most formidable barriers against national integration.

It is this barrier that we should be focussing upon in trying to locate the obstacles to the full realization of the human potential of all communities, instead of exaggerating upon how the absence of a Chinese language university has 'crippled' the development of the Chinese potential.

REALIZATION OF HUMAN POTENTIAL

Furthermore, it is fallacious to argue that without such a University the potential of the Chinese community cannot be developed fully. Though we have refuted this argument in our book (pp 83 - 85), Man continues to repeat the same points in an infantile manner. What is worse, he tries to mislead through the use of selective quotes!

He does not tell his readers for instance that we began by emphasising that "the whole question of what factors help or hinder the development of the potential of a community or an individual is itself a complex one" (p. 83).

Then, we went on to distinguish the political and economic potential of an individual or community. It is in relation to the former that the example of Andrew Young was given.

It is of course a truism that a person can realise his political or economic potential without knowing his mother tongue. But realising one's cultural potential is a different thing. Again Man fails to acknowledge that we had recognised, as regards cultural potential, that "knowledge of one's mother-tongue would certainly be useful" (p. 83).

However, we are not so naive as to believe that if one does not know one's mother-tongue one cannot at all realise one's cultural potential. For one thing, there are other media of cultural articulation - apart from literary expression. Besides, even with literary expression, it is quite possible for a native who is not fluent in his own language to achieve excellence in a foreign tongue. (p. 84)

By crossing swords with us on such obvious matters, Man merely exposes his ignorance. Perhaps it is more than just ignorance. For, on another point, anyone with rudimentary logic would know that even if the economy were organised along, say, socialist lines it would still be difficult to provide jobs for graduates from a Chinese-medium University since administration and eventually the economy would require fluency in the national language and perhaps English to some extent. The problem may then have to be resolved by making Chinese an official language too.

It is interesting that Man does not suggest this. It may indicate his awareness that in all situations there are

certain other factors too that condition the rights of an individual and his community. This is a pertinent observation to make for Man insists that the Merdeka University involves "a question of basic democracy". Indeed, the question of basic democratic rights is raised over and over again throughout his diatribe.

By way of analogy, then, is the non-official status of the Chinese language an infringement of the rights of the Chinese as individuals and as a community? Of course not. For if it is, then all the other minorities like the Tamils, the Sikhs, the Ibans, the Kadazans and so on can argue that their rights have also been infringed since none of their languages enjoy official status. From a purely theoretical point of view, a numerically or even financially stronger minority cannot argue that there is greater justification for the exercise of its rights compared to the rights of other groups.

We would all agree that it would be absurdly chaotic if all these languages were granted official status. Administration would come to a grinding halt and social intercourse transformed into a bazaar of Babel. What is true of Malaysia is also true of hundreds of other countries of all sorts of ideological persuasion in the first, second and third worlds. Some language or other will have to be made the official language. Other languages will have to assume secondary roles. Indeed, even when there is no one official language, the main social language tends to dominate.

This indicates that cultural rights like most other rights do not exist in vacuum. They cannot help but be influenced by a variety of considerations. History, the cultural background of a society, the nature of a language, apart from politics, economics, ideology and practical realities, tend to determine the pattern of relationship between and among languages and cultures. Consequently, some languages and cultures will have a bigger impact than others.

Be that as it may, there is a sacred kernel, an inviolable core, in the cultural rights of all communities. It is the right to study and use one's mother tongue. It is the right to practise one's religion, to observe one's culture. It is these rights that are embodied in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights of 1976.

Each nation, however, will have to give form and substance to these rights in accordance with its own history and circumstances. We in Aliran have tried to preserve the essence of these universal ideals by formulating cultural rights that are fair and just to all our communities.

In this endeavour we have not dismissed the past - as some would want us to do - for the present grew out of the past; neither we have not denied the present - as others have chosen to - for the future must evolve from the present.

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One language — the dubious basis of National Unity

The need to rectify what is often presented as a 'commonsensical' view of national unity — 'one language', and conversely, suppress institutions in the languages of the national minorities — is well overdue. Resurrecting the Merdeka University issue at this point in time is not incidental. The current controversy over the new '3Rs' primary education system only confirms the urgency of clarifying the crucial issues involved in the country's language policy. We have used the Aliran publication, "The Merdeka University: The Real Issues" (1979), as the focus for criticism since it is perhaps the most coherent statement regarding the 'One Language' stand. Indeed it is all the more unfortunate that not only reformist intellectuals like Aliran subscribe to this view, but also quite a few 'progressives' (who tend to be the English-educated intelligentsia). It is thus the fervent hope of the writer that all the democratic forces in Malaysia will come round to the crucial issues involved in Malaysia's language policy.

The fundamental point ignored by Aliran and all those who claim that national unity is better forged with one language is that it is a question of basic democracy which has been infringed. That is why the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights provides for the right of a human being to learn and use his or her mother-tongue. Aliran recognises this principle, but proceeds to quibble about the fact that this only refers to individual rights, and thus rules out such provisions as Universities. 'But the right to learn one's mother-tongue does not mean that University education must also be available in one's mother-tongue . . . The UN in its various declarations has never regarded this as a fundamental human right . . . no UN's document has ever suggested that, that education must be in one's mother-tongue!' (Aliran, pp. 81-82)

But this is mere sophistry since there must be enough social scientists within Aliran to appreciate that it is always social institutions and rights that are at issue rather than the legalistic reference to the individual.

The one-dimensional view of language and culture presented in the Aliran publication is only a secondary aspect compared to their failure to appreciate what are basic democratic rights of peoples. And one would have to be at least a democrat to claim to fight for justice and equality. Organisations which have the least association with progressive ideas should really be urging all governments to provide the facilities for "promoting the languages and cultures of all national minorities." Instead, Aliran is arguing against what is in fact the efforts of the Chinese community itself, and not a cent would come out the national coffers. The Malay community would not be deprived of anything, in any way.

Aliran fails to appreciate the sentiments that characterise the struggles of the peoples of the Third World. The commitment to basic democratic rights is part and parcel of the renewed cultural aspirations of the oppressed peoples, of national minorities everywhere. Consequently, the only motive that Aliran can conjure up regarding such fundamental demands is that they are based on narrow communalism and sectional interests. "Perhaps Dr. Tan's inability to understand the case against Merdeka University stems from an unwillingness to acknowledge that there may well be traces of communal thinking, of ethnic manipulation, on the side of the proponents of the University itself." (Aliran, p. 76) We do not deny that these demands are frequently usurped by communalistic parties in Malaysia, but the fundamental issue at hand must be clear to all demo-

crats. The just, valid, and democratic aspirations of the great majority of the masses must not be compromised for the argument regarding the communalistic interests of opportunists.

Aliran's argument for 'mono-ethnic institutions' is the complete inversion of rationality, and in accepting the same premises as the Government's, only contributes toward fueling Malay chauvinism ('bumiputraisim') — the opposite effect from achieving national unity. Thus Aliran maintains that ' . . . allowing Chinese as a medium of higher education would be perceived by Malay opinion as a transgression of the Malay language's historical position' (Aliran, p. 27). By endorsing this ideological view of national unity, Aliran and indeed quite a few 'abstract socialists' usually qualify it with an eclectic reference to also the socio-economic factors, etc. But the real basis of national unity should be spelled out rather than quibbling about 'necessary' and 'sufficient' conditions for national unity. The assumption that the necessary condition is for 'monoethnic institutions' is completely fallacious and 'commonsensical' only to abstract egalitarians who have no notion of the aspirations of the masses.

As it happens, Aliran departs from the government line only so far as they see 'the fundamental challenge of formulating a just, humanitarian recruitment policy for university places'. (Aliran, p. 25). Even on this measure, a just policy must surely envelope the education system as a whole rather than merely touch on a different equation for university admission.

For supposed libertarians and egalitarians, Aliran's ready acceptance of the status quo in various countries is also surprising. This is shown by their justification of the dominance of 'One Language' in several countries in the world simply

because that situation exists! 'English is the common language of the US. It is spoken by a whole variety of ethnic groups . . . Bahasa Indonesia had long served as a language of inter-ethnic communication . . . it became the national language . . .' (Aliran, p. 78) So, the logic goes, there is no need to meet the aspirations of the American Indians in the US, or the Kurdish people in Iran, or the Muslims in the Philippines, or indeed the Malays in Singapore . . . simply because in those countries only one language dominates. We fail to follow that logic. We fail to understand why indeed there cannot be a Malay University in Singapore, a French University in Canada, ad nauseum.

For intellectuals, Aliran display an unfortunate superficiality in their one-dimensional characterisation of language and culture. This is similarly witnessed in many who have inadvertently imbibed the utilitarian culture of Western imperialism and argue against the promotion and development of other languages and cultures. 'Neither linguistics nor cultural anthropology tells us that in order to maintain a meaningful relationship with one's language and culture one should also study mathematics, physics, geography, sociology and economics in that language!' (Aliran, p. 27) When Dr. Tan Seng Giaw defended the latter in terms of realising the 'human potential', one can guess that he was trying to go beyond the superficial utilitarian function of language. 'Why is it not possible for Merdeka University with Chinese as the main medium of instruction to reach the physical and psychological apex of the education hierarchy? Why can't a complete system of Chinese education exist? Would it not be a good system to discover and nurture human potential, which is the world's greatest wealth?' (Dr. Tan Seng Giaw, Star, 7 Dec. 1978) But Aliran's caricature of what he meant is depressing for its dishonesty if not obscurantism. 'It is clear that the political or economic potential of a community need not be related in any way to the opportunities afforded to the language of that community. Hundreds upon thousands of distinguished Americans of German, Dutch, Jewish and African descent have contributed immensely to the political and

economic life of the American nation - in spite of their total ignorance of their original mother-tongues. The present American Ambassador to the UN is a black American (sic) who has no knowledge at all of the language spoken by his forefathers in the African continent . . . Since Dr. Tan must be aware of all this, the only conclusion I can come to is that he has misused the concept of human potential.' (Aliran, pp. 83-84) By referring to 'accomplished' personalities (by whose standards?) who have little or no knowledge of their own language, Aliran believes that they are walking advertisements for their advocacy of 'monoethnic institutions'. By picking on unfortunate examples like Andrew Young, the former US Ambassador to the UN, we get a clue to the yardstick they use in measuring 'accomplishment'. The Black People in the West and in Africa certainly do not regard Andrew Young with the same reverence as does Aliran. On the other hand, the Black Consciousness revival (as well as the cultural revival of all oppressed peoples throughout the Third World) in recent years has precisely been a response to just that 'monoethnic dominance' Aliran advocates. So what if there are accomplished poets and writers who cannot write in their mother tongue? It only goes to show what greater poets and writers they could be if only they did!

The utilitarian justification for 'monoethnic institutions' (i.e. with relation to the technical subjects) is understandable for right-wing ideologues, but certainly unseemly for supposed progressives like Aliran. This argument for not accepting Merdeka University is seen when Dr. Tan Seng Giaw is rhetorically asked whether the proposed University could enhance employment opportunities for our graduates. Surely Aliran should be questioning instead the whole orientation of the national economy and asking why it cannot provide adequate employment for our graduates! Does not Aliran already point to the hundreds of thousands of graduates from the main stream who cannot find employment? By referring to the case of Nanyang University graduates who find themselves in a 'weaker bargaining position', Aliran once again show that they have not

considered the aspirations of the students who nevertheless decide to apply to study there. Otherwise, Aliran must think that these students who want to enter Nanyang (or Merdeka) University are either 'irrational', raving lunatics, or else 'communist-minded chauvinists'!

Now, we are not claiming that defending Chinese (and Tamil) education would automatically lead to national unity. All we are saying is that it is a better and firmer basis for mutual understanding between the various nationals in Malaysia. It is a legitimate and democratic demand. On the other hand, the argument for the dominance of one language, we maintain, is an ideological basis of national unity - it merely fuels Malay chauvinism.

National unity must be based on equality of status of the various nationalities that make up the country. Greater efforts must be made to promote mutual understanding and dispel national prejudices, to encourage inter-community cooperation and fraternal relations. In this respect, all the national groups have always recognised Malay as the lingua franca and its use and development must be encouraged. At the same time, the development of the languages of the minorities must also be guaranteed. The lessons of communal relations since Independence should go some way toward proving the hollow 'unity' that is supposed to come about with the imposition of one language on all the other nationalities.

But even these 'recommendations' that we have outlined are themselves abstract if the basic foundations for national unity are not laid. These have to embody essentially: a commitment to democracy and policies that will improve the living standards of the workers and peasants and at the same time unite them. These components are inextricably linked and involve the lifting of restrictions on legitimate political organisations and activity as well as the encouragement of social and political institutions that ensure genuine popular control. New institutions have to be brought about that will enable the masses of all the nationalities to jointly decide policies that affect their lives. These involve issues that affect not only the

continue on page 29

CURRENT COMMENT

In each issue of the journal, we shall be reproducing in this column all Aliran's complete statements to the Press made during the preceding quarter.

CLOSING DOWN OF MAJUTERNAK

Aliran welcomes the government's bold decision to close down Majuternak. Such boldness is essential if we want to eradicate waste, inefficiency and incompetence.

Aliran hopes that this will be the beginning of a comprehensive review of the performance of all government agencies involved directly in socio-economic development.

A comprehensive review must examine the rationale for the establishment of various state agencies and statutory bodies. For it is obvious from the Majuternak case that the purpose and function of the agency itself was never clearly defined.

Indeed, from the proliferation of state agencies and corporations in the last decade, it appears that socio-economic need was not always the rationale for the setting up of a statutory body. Consequently, duplication of roles is a common disease among government agencies. Besides, agencies have served largely as avenues for providing lucrative jobs to the ever-increasing pool of graduates. They have also emerged as 'little empires' for ambitious empire-builders in the bureaucracy.

A review must address itself to these questions. It must also ascertain whether the large number of personnel employed in certain agencies can be reduced, and whether these agencies can be maintained at lower operating costs.

Executive Committee

REVIEW OF HOUSING POLICY

It is commendable that the Government is taking measures to remove some of the loopholes in house-buying procedures. The Deputy Prime Minister recently announced that housing application forms for low- and medium-cost houses will be standardised and made easily available to the public.

This will certainly protect the lower-income house buyers from being fleeced by middlemen who sell these forms at high prices.

Earlier the Government also announced its intention to standardise house-purchasing agreements. Again, this will prevent house buyers from being over-charged by unscrupulous lawyers. However, the central issue of the housing industry remains, that there are insufficient low- and medium-cost houses.

Aliran calls for a comprehensive housing policy to study such issues as the housing needs/demands situation, squatter problem, price control on housing materials, quality in housing and state participation in house construction.

Second, Aliran calls for a review of the ownership pattern of houses and land to ensure that the lower income group has a chance to own a house.

Third, there should be greater public control of the production and distribution of building materials.

Fourth, there must be more checks on land and house speculation.

Fifth, there must be more stringent measures against corruption both in the private and public sectors, including municipal councils, land offices and Government departments.

Khor Yoke Lim
Executive Committee
Member

11th May, 1982

TEMBELING DAM

Aliran expresses its full support to the growing public protest led by the Tembeling Coordinating Committee against the proposed Tembeling Hydro-electric dam.

It is clear that, notwithstanding the purported economic benefits of this project, the costs involved in terms of affecting the viability of Taman Negara and the adverse environmental impact on both people and wildlife in the vicinity are unacceptable. Public concern on this issue indicates an awareness that it is important to preserve areas of our natural forests, so as to enrich our lives and that of future generations with their great diversity and beauty.

It should also be clear that development projects should be weighed not only in economic terms but also in terms of their contribution to our non-material needs. Development should be seen as wholistic i.e. economic, spiritual and cultural development of man and society, a concept that conforms to the major philosophies of the East. In Islam, for example, natural resources are the common legacy of all mankind, to be used responsibly to satisfy basic needs in accordance with defined principles. In Buddhism, too, there is the middle path to follow.

In short, economic development should nurture and harmonize with the eco-system.

The Tembeling issue exposes yet again the flaws of the nation's current development strategies.

Harun Rasip
Executive Committee
Exco Member

12th May, 1982

PUNISHING THE VOTER

It is a pity that after all these years of independence certain political leaders continue to misunderstand the responsibility of government and its relationship to opposition constituencies and supporters.

Finance Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah is reported to have said recently that all 27 land schemes of the Kelantan Land Development and Rehabilitation Authority (Takdir) would be dissolved because a large number of settlers in these schemes were PAS supporters who had opposed the Barisan Nasional in the recent general election. He made it clear that the state government would give priority to development projects in constituencies represented by the Barisan and would "exclude areas whose elected representatives are from PAS, including projects for water, electricity and roads." (STAR, May 21 1982)

It is time that government leaders realize and accept that once a party assumes power its responsibility is to the entire nation. And the entire nation includes opposition constituencies and opposition supporters. This is a simple principle of democratic governance.

This is why an MP is designated as "the member for such and such constituency" for he is the representative of all his constituents even if he had secured his seat with a two-vote majority. Similarly, the government is recognised, domestically and internationally, as the representative of all the people even if only 60 percent of the electorate voted for it.

Just as all of us, whatever our political views, recognise the authority of the government, so should the government, for its part, observe its moral obligation to the people, irrespective of their ideological affiliation or inclination. Indeed, it is more than just a moral obligation. For the money that the government uses to finance development projects comes from the people. Whether we voted Barisan or the opposition all of us continue to contribute to the national revenue through slog and sweat. How will the government react if some PAS or DAP supporters decide not to pay taxes because it is the Barisan that is in power? And yet it is such irrationality that is manifested in statements like 'PAS aress will be denied development'.

On this matter, the Prime Minister has a different view. He has emphasised recently that opposition constituencies too will receive developmental assistance. This is as it should be. For depriving people with a different electoral orientation, of basic human needs such as water and electricity, is not only a gross betrayal of responsibility but also a cruel and inhuman policy. No government — least of all a clean and trustworthy one — can defend such action.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar
President,

25 May 1982.

ISA DEATHS: AN APPEAL TO THE KING

While Aliran appreciates the efforts of FUEMSSO and Karpal Singh, the member of Parliament for Jelutong, to save the lives of those sentenced to death under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for possession of firearms, it cannot, however, support any move to persuade the government to allow the convicted to be adopted by foreign organisations. Besides, the government has made it clear that the adoption offer does not extend to those prosecuted and convicted in court.

It is true that adoption in such cases can be interpreted as the government exercising authority over the juridical system. This, it should not be encouraged to do, since the independence of the judiciary is sacred enough as a principle of democratic rule to be defended under all circumstances.

For those detained without trial, it is even more illogical to seek adoption by foreign organisations. As Aliran has argued previously, it amounts to an admission that he who challenges authority has committed a crime that deserves to be punished by banishment.

As far as the immediate situation goes, Aliran feels that the only course of action available now is to appeal to the Yang di Pertuan Agong to grant a reprieve to Tan Chay Wa and others sentenced to death under the ISA for possession of firearms.

His Majesty's official birthday on the 2nd June will be an appropriate

occasion to grant a reprieve. Granting a reprieve or even commuting the death sentence would be a humanitarian act in harmony with the Rukunegara and our spiritual tradition of justice with compassion.

In the long run, however, Aliran would like the government to review the whole concept of the death penalty under the ISA for the mere possession of firearms. There isn't an iota of justification for the imposition of capital punishment in such cases. Besides, there is hardly any evidence to show that because of this sentence violent crimes in the country have declined.

Indeed, it is partly because the death sentence has a limited function as a deterrent that many countries have abolished it.

Here, in Malaysia, we should at least conduct a comprehensive sociological study of the relationship between the death penalty and crime. Only then will we know whether it has any deterrent value or not.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar
President

31st May, 1982

One language — the dubious basis of National Unity

continued from page 27

economic conditions of their working lives, but also meet their social and political needs. As we are aware, the present system barely gives nominal recognition to these needs. The sham democracy ensures that when there is a conflict of interests, it is almost always that of the rich and powerful (especially foreign capital) that decides rather than those of the majority of the masses.

Real national unity can only be built upon this greater democracy forged between the masses to attain genuine popular control over their lives. It is thus clear that those who want the Merdeka University but not greater democracy are just as opportunistic as those who claim to be champions of the masses but insist on the dominance of 'One Language'. We defend the democratic right of national minorities to develop their own languages primarily because there is no reason why language could possibly come in the way of the common interest of the Malay, Chinese, Indian workers and peasants of Malaysia.

PILIHANRAYA UMUM 1982: SATU ANALISA

Chandra Muzaffar

Kemenangan Barisan Nasional dalam pilihanraya umum 1982 merupakan salah satu kejayaan yang menonjol baginya. Barisan telah memenangi 132 daripada 154 kerusi Parlimen dan juga berjaya mengekalkan kuasanya di kesemua 11 negeri yang turut bertanding baru-baru ini.

Analisa tafsiran ini mempunyai tiga bahagian besar:

Pertama, kita akan cuba melihat dan menjelaskan perkara-perkara yang telah berlaku dalam pilihanraya 1982 yang tidak mempunyai bandingan dengan pola-pola yang lalu dan semasa. Kemenangan parti-parti kaum Cina di dalam Barisan di kawasan-kawasan bandar yang dulunya merupakan kubu pihak pembangkang adalah diletakkan di bawah kategori ini. Termasuk dalam kumpulan ini ialah "kebangkitan semula" parti PAS di Kelantan dan Trengganu berbanding dengan kemerosotannya di Kedah. Juga, di bawah kategori ini ialah rintangan yang dialami oleh Barisan di Sabah dan Sarawak.

Kedua, prestasi Barisan dan pihak pembangkang secara am dalam pilihanraya tempoh hari.

Ketiga, implikasi pilihanraya 1982 terhadap masa depan negara. Bagaimana Barisan akan menggunakan kuasa yang diberikan kepadanya? Apakah implikasinya dengan adanya peningkatan perwakilan kaum Cina di dalam Barisan terhadap hubungan etnik? Apakah reaksi Umno terhadap kejayaan kecil yang dicapai oleh PAS di Kelantan dan Trengganu? Dan, mungkin mustahak lagi, bagaimana kemerosotan ekonomi negara akan menjejaskan ini semua?

Kes Khusus: Kawasan bandar. Kemenangan MCA di dalam pilihanraya baru-baru ini bukanlah kerana DAP telah teruk dikalahkan. Ini lebih merupakan peralihan sokongan kaum Cina — dari DAP ke MCA. Ada beberapa faktor yang menyebabkan perubahan sikap di kalangan orang-orang Cina. Di antara lain, penglibatan besar dan pembesaran apa yang dipandang sebagai kepentingan orang-orang Melayu di dalam bidang pelajaran dan budaya, perdagangan dan perindustrian, politik dan pentadbiran telah mendatangkan kesan terhadap kaum Cina. Dasar pelajaran kebangsaan dan Dasar Ekonomi Baru bolehlah disifatkan sebagai mencerminkan perkembangan tersebut.

Sejak 1969, telah lahir dua jenis reaksi utama di kalangan kaum Cina terhadap 'trend' di atas. **Pertama**, penentangan terbuka dari luar yang datangnya dari DAP, **kedua**, penentangan secara diam-diam dari dalam, iaitu melalui MCA dan Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan).

Selepas 1974, penentang dari dalam ini (iaitu MCA) telah mengalami krisis dalam parti yang menyebabkan parti itu tidak dapat menjaga kepentingan kaum Cina, dan lantas itu ia kehilangan pengaruh.

Bagaimanapun, satu perubahan telah berlaku dalam parti MCA dalam beberapa tahun yang lalu. Presidennya, Dato' Lee San Choon, telah berjaya memperkukuhkan kedudukannya di dalam parti dan, bertolak dari sini, kita dapati MCA lebih cergas dalam menjaga kepentingan kaum Cina. Hasilnya ialah MCA telah melancarkan lima projek besar iaitu: pembesaran Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman; tabung biasiswa bernama Kojadi; penubuhan satu pertubuhan budaya Cina; penubuhan sebuah syarikat pelaburan (Multi-Purpose Holdings); dan penubuhan persatuan koperatif nasional.

MCA juga telah banyak menjalankan kerja-kerja kebajikan untuk kawasan-kawasan pilihannya, seperti mempercepatkan proses pembinaan rumah-rumah murah untuk orang-orang yang berpendapatan kecil; mempercepatkan pengeluaran pasport; dan menubuhkan pusat-pusat perkhidmatan (service centres) di Kuala Lumpur dan Selangor.

Kepopularan MCA juga disebabkan hakikat bahawa MCA adalah di dalam kerajaan yang memerintah dan parti ini telah menggunakan kedudukannya untuk melayani permintaan-permintaan dari kaum Cina.

Selain dari penglibatan beberapa elemen dari pergerakan pelajaran Cina (Tung Chiao Chung) dalam Gerakan, perbalahan dalam parti DAP juga mengakibatkan kekalahan DAP dalam pilihanraya tahun ini.

Kes Khusus: Kawasan Melayu. Kawasan Melayu ini meliputi Kelantan, Trengganu dan Kedah. Prestasi PAS di Kelantan merupakan satu "kebangkitan semula" yang disebabkan oleh beberapa faktor. Di antara lain, pembangunan yang berlaku di Kelantan, lebih-lebih lagi di Kota Bharu, telah menyebabkan modal dari luar datang mencurah untuk dilaburkan dalam industri hotel, supermarket, dan sebagainya, yang menyebabkan tersinggung hati "anak-anak" Kelantan yang selama ini telah menjalankan perniagaan pribumi secara "sederhana". Lagipun, penanaman modal ini lebih dipandang dari perspektif perkauman kerana kebanyakan modal tersebut datang dari kaum Cina di sebelah pantai barat.

Penanaman modal luar ini juga menaikkan harga tanah, rumah dan sewa rumah. Lain-lain barang keperluan harian juga turut naik harga di Kelantan. Rasa ketidak-

puasan ini diluahkan dan disebarluaskan melalui pondok-pondok agama dan madrasah yang bersifat bebas.

PAS juga telah memperalatkan agama hingga ia dilihat oleh setengah golongan masyarakat Melayu sebagai parti yang mempertahankan kedaulatan Islam di negara ini.

Faktor lain yang menyebabkan kemenangan terhadap PAS di Kelantan ialah krisis dalam parti Berjasa, dan juga hubungan yang tidak begitu terjalin di antara Berjasa dan Umno Kelantan. Keretakan dalam Umno Kelantan juga memberi sebab kepada kebangkitan PAS di Kelantan. Akhir sekali, pentadbiran Barisan selama empat tahun di Kelantan tidak begitu memuaskan segolongan orang Melayu disebabkan ketidakadilan, misalnya, dalam pemberian kemudahan-kemudahan di kampung-kampung.

Di Trengganu, ketidakseimbangan pembangunan juga telah menyebabkan ramai orang Trengganu tidak puas hati. Disebabkan penemuan minyak di negeri itu, harga barang pun naik menyebabkan kesusahan kepada orang-orang kampung yang miskin. Isu ini telah dieksploitasikan oleh PAS.

Satu faktor lagi ialah kepimpinan PAS Trengganu yang diketuai oleh Abdul Hadi Awang telah menjalankan kerja yang baik dalam menyebarkan fahaman mereka di merata-rata tempat di negeri itu.

PAS Kedah pula menerima nasib yang agak berlainan dari apa yang berlaku di Kelantan dan Trengganu. PAS jatuh di negeri Kedah disebabkan pertelingkahan di antara order lama dengan order baru dalam parti itu. Konflik ini tidak mungkin dapat diselesaikan secepat mungkin. Faktor yang lain ialah hakikat bahawa Dr. Mahathir ialah Perdana Menteri yang datang dari Kedah dan seharusnya beliau menerima "kesetiaan dari rakyat Kedah".

Kes Khusus: Sabah dan Sarawak. Majoriti Barisan Nasional di Sabah merosot kerana di antara lain, tindakan parti Berjaya meletakkan calon-calon bebasnya untuk menentang calon-calon Usno (United Sabah National Organisation). Perbuatan ini adalah seolah-olah retak menanti pecah kerana sebelum ini hubungan di antara Kuala Lumpur dan Kota Kinabalu bukanlah boleh dikatakan harmonis.

Di Sarawak, kekurangan kerusi yang dimenangi oleh Barisan bukanlah disebabkan krisis dalam parti Barisan negeri itu, tetapi ialah kerana adanya elemen perkauman di dalam parti SNAP (Sarawak National Party). Ini merupakan satu ekor trend dari Semenanjung di mana kebanyakan dasar ekonomi dan politiknya berbau perkauman.

Jadi, Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu (PBB), parti komponen Barisan yang utama di Sarawak, lebih mirip menjaga kepentingan orang-orang Islam. Ini menyebabkan tekanan terhadap SNAP untuk ia menjadi parti yang menjaga kepentingan bumiputra bukan-Islam atau parti Iban.

Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), rakan Barisan yang lain di Sarawak, juga tersepit di dalam dilema ini. Disebabkan tekanan ini, parti tersebut terpaksa merubah orientasinya menjadi parti kaum Cina. Ketidak-upayaan SUPP untuk menjadi parti kaum Cina menyebabkan kemenangan parti yang berorientasikan Cina — DAP.

PRESTASI SECARA MENYELURUH

Sudah menjadi satu realiti bahawa kebanyakan kerusi terletak di kawasan luar bandar Semenanjung. Dan bertolak dari sini, kita harus menerima hakikat bahawa ada beberapa nilai yang terkandung di dalam budaya politik Melayu yang menyebabkan keutuhan Barisan Nasional yang dipimpin oleh Umno. Di antara nilai-nilai itu ialah pergantungan orang-orang Melayu terhadap pemerintah, kesetiaan kepada pemimpin.

Selagi ada perasaan bahawa yang memerintah itu adalah betul dan baik, selagi itulah parti memerintah — Barisan — akan mempunyai kelebihan (advantage) dibandingkan dengan pihak pembangkang. Hanya satu jenis perasaan saja yang dapat menyaingi perasaan orang-orang Melayu terhadap pemerintah itu iaitu perhubungan masyarakat Melayu dengan Islam. Inilah salah satu faktor yang dapat mengekalkan PAS dalam arena politik negara.

Faktor satu lagi ialah kewujudan pemimpin baru setiap kali negara menghadapi pilihanraya. Ini membuahkan suatu perasaan positif di kalangan pengundi — harapan dan jangkaan baru dari pemimpin baru seperti Dr. Mahathir. Di sinilah letaknya satu-satu kekuatan Barisan dalam pilihanraya yang baru berlalu.

Pentadbiran Mahathir-Musa telah mendapat imej yang baik dari kacamata orang ramai, lebih-lebih lagi di kalangan kelas menengah. Kemasukan Anwar Ibrahim juga merubahkan pola pengundian kali ini disebabkan beliau mempunyai pengaruh yang agak kuat di kalangan anak-anak muda Islam di kawasan-kawasan bandar seperti Kuala Lumpur.

Apa yang lebih menonjol dari sifat "kesetiaan" ini ialah penggunaan keistimewaan kuasa oleh pihak parti yang memerintah, yang turut membantu kejayaan Barisan dalam pilihanraya itu. Pemimpin-pemimpin Barisan, sebagai pemimpin pemerintahan, telah misalnya melancarkan banyak projek dalam masa kempen dua minggu berbanding dengan dua bulan sebelum itu. Sebagai sebuah pemerintahan sementara (caretaker government), Barisan telah berperangai terlalu aktif.

Media massa juga merupakan satu faktor yang telah membantu Barisan menang dalam pilihanraya tahun ini. Radio, television dan akhbar-akhbar telah berkelakuan seolah-olah ia adalah wakil bagi parti Barisan dalam kempen pilihanraya — dengan menyiarkan begitu banyak berita dan penulisan mengenai parti itu.

Dan seperti media, wang juga adalah salah satu aspek utama dalam pilihanraya ini. Wang, misalnya, telah ditaburkan ke hospital, sekolah persendirian dan lain-lain badan amal sebagai derma dari Barisan. Kalau dipandang dari kelengkapan kempen pilihanraya Barisan, parti

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Elemen "takut-menakutkan" juga turut timbul dalam pilihanraya ini. Parti Barisan, di dalam satu iklan akhbar, telah mengingatkan pengundi tentang tragedi 13 Mei. Perasaan takut ini akan hanya menyebabkan umum mempunyai pandangan buruk terhadap parti-parti pembangkang kerana pemerintah sering membuat hujah bahawa tragedi 13 Mei itu adalah disebabkan, di antara lain, tindak-tanduk pihak pembangkang.

Selain dari penggunaan media, pengharaman terhadap rapat umum juga menyebabkan pihak pembangkang "lemah" bersuara dalam kempen pilihanraya. Ini telah membantutkan usaha pihak pembangkang untuk mendekati pengundi. Ceramah bukanlah satu alternatif yang memadai dan sesuai.

Kejayaan Barisan dalam pilihanraya itu juga kerana kejayaan terhadnya dalam mentadbirkan negara ini sejak Merdeka. Kemakmuran negara ini telah membawa kebaikan kepada ramai rakyat Malaysia. Lagipun, pemerintah telah menunjukkan sifatnya yang mahu menjaga kepentingan rakyat jika dibandingkan dengan banyak rejim yang lain di Dunia Ketiga. Dengan lain perkataan, bila pemerintah telah menyediakan kemudahan-kemudahan asas kepada negara, rakyat tidak akan keberatan untuk menyokong pemerintahan itu. Manakala pihak pembangkang tidak meyakinkan ramai pengundi kerana ia tidak dapat memberi satu alternatif yang baik dan positif.

MASA DEPAN NEGARA.

Apakah makna keputusan 22hb. April itu terhadap masa depan negara kita?

Hakikat yang berhadapan dengan kita kini ialah kewujudan pemerintahan yang dominan dan pihak pembangkang yang lemah, dan tindak-tanduk pemerintahan yang amat berkuasa ini.

Kemelesetan ekonomi negara sudah tentu membawa kesan terhadap hubungan pemerintah dengan kuasa. Hasilnya, pemerintah akan menerima empat cabaran utama di masa depan:

- i. Dari segi ekonomi, pemerintah yang mempunyai kuasa yang besar harus menggunakannya untuk menghasilkan perubahan struktur negara. Pemerintah perlu memikirkan semula konsep "pembangunan" yang dipraktikannya selama ini. Pembangunan yang mengutamakan modal dan keuntungan yang maksima sebagai matlamatnya sudah pasti akan merugikan majoriti sepertimana terbukti di Kelantan. Sebagai alternatif, kita harus memperkuatkan kedudukan masyarakat tempatan agar golongan majoriti dapat mengawal sumber-sumber yang penting untuk produksi.
- ii. Pemikiran baru mengenai ekonomi juga akan membawa ciri-ciri positif terhadap perhubungan etnik di Malaysia. Persaingan dalam meraut keuntungan di antara kumpulan-kumpulan etnik dapat dikurangkan, kalau tidakpun dihindarkan. Disamping itu, bukan Melayu harus dididik memahami dan menghargai latarbelakang sejarah dan kebudayaan negara itu. Kaum Melayu pula mesti digalakkan menerima hakikat masyarakat berbilang kaum.
- iii. Kemelesetan ekonomi boleh menjejaskan kebebasan politik. Berhadapan dengan keadaan ekonomi yang tidak baik, pemerintah mungkin menggunakan kuasa yang ada padanya untuk mengawal keadaan sosial yang kurang tenteram. Adalah elok jika diwujudkan penyertaan orang ramai dalam membuat keputusan politik dan ekonomi dalam masyarakat.
- iv. Pemerintah memerlukan orientasi baru dalam membanteras rasuah. Pemimpin perlulah bersikap amat tegas dalam hal "pemerintahan bersih" dan dalam menentukan bukan saja sektor awam yang bersih dari rasuah, malah sektor swasta juga perlu dibersihkan. Penting dan perlunya perubahan-perubahan yang mendalam ini hanya menunjukkan bahawa kepimpinan harus bertindak dengan berani untuk menghadapi cabaran zaman.

(Ringkasan ini disediakan oleh Mustafa K. Anuar berdasarkan kepada penulisan asal Dr. Chandra Muzaffar yang berjudul "1982 Elections: An Analysis.")

Kebebasan adalah suatu ideal manusia bukan ideal barat. Seluruh bumi ini adalah satu kuil kebebasan. Semangat kebebasan ini mengalir di mana sahaja manusia mencuba mengamalkan keadilan sesama sendiri. (Terjemahan)

*Petikan dari "Capita Selecta"
oleh Muhammad Natsir.*

HAK ASASI MANUSIA

Mulai dari isu ini kita akan mulakan beberapa siri rencana mengenai hak asasi manusia. Penulis telah membuat kajian yang khusus mengenai perkara tersebut. Adalah diharapkan supaya melalui ruangan ini pembaca-pembaca dapat memahami beberapa konsep dan aspek-aspek tertentu mengenai hak asasi manusia yang disifatkan sebagai suatu keperluan yang asas bagi setiap insan.

HAK ASASI: MAKNANYA

Azmi Khalid

APAKAH SEBENARNYA HAK ASASI MANUSIA?

Di Persidangan Undang-Undang Malaysia Yang Keenam yang telah diadakan pada bulan Ogos 1981, Dato' Musa Hitam, Timbalan Perdana Menteri Malaysia telah memperkatakan tentang hak asasi manusia dan Kedaulatan Undang-Undang seperti berikut:—

"Pada masa luarbiasa apabila kewujudan negara diancam oleh kuasa-kuasa luar, mungkin perlu dibuat pengorbanan-pengorbanan tertentu terhadap kebebasan dan keistimewaan kita, samada oleh individu mahupun oleh umum, dan dengan menjejaskan pentadbiran keadilan serta keadilan sosial. Apabila timbul keadaan begini, tiada mana-mana Kerajaan yang mementingkan mandat yang telah diberikan oleh para pengundi, dan, jika Kerajaan itu sedarkan ikrarnya untuk menegakkan dan memelihara Perlembagaan, dapat mengabaikan atau teragak-agak mengambil langkah-langkah yang difikirkannya perlu bagi memelihara negara sebagai sebuah negara yang merdeka dan berdaulat, bebas daripada penguasaan sebarang negara lain."

Dengan itu tercatatlah suatu peristiharan yang jelas tentang 'dasar' hak asasi manusia bagi negara ini, walaupun ianya tidak berbeza sangat daripada sikap-sikap rasmi terhadap kebebasan individu yang pernah disuara dan diamalkan semenjak Kemerdekaan.

Kenyataan tegas itu terus membangkitkan berbagai keraguan dan persoalan. Sesungguhnya, subjek mengenai hak asasi manusia di mana-mana sekalipun dalam dunia masakini terus menimbulkan persoalan, perbincangan dan perbahasan serta emosi dan perasaan yang berbagai rupa. Akhirnya, kita akan dihadapkan dengan beberapa soal pokok:

Apakah sebenarnya hak asasi manusia? Adakah ianya serupa di mana-mana tempat pun? Kenapa dan bagaimanakah ianya dicabuli? Bolehkah ujud berbagai jenis dan peringkat hak? Bagaimanakah kita dapat mencapainya? Bolehkah orang dalam mana-mana masyarakat mencapai segala tujuan yang termaktub dalam peristiharan-peristiharan murni? Bagaimanakah saya sebagai individu boleh mendapatkan munafaat daripada segala perbincangan dan tindakan ini?

Tugas bagi mempertimbang dan menentukan samada hak asasi manusia boleh 'dikorbankan' buat

sementara waktu dengan tujuan akan mencapainya pada suatu masa yang lebih sesuai nanti, adalah sesuatu yang dihadapi oleh kebanyakan masyarakat membangun. Tetapi, sebelum kita dapat memikul tugas seberat itu, perlulah difahami dahulu apa yang dimaksudkan dengan 'hak asasi manusia', 'kebebasan asasi', 'hak-hak sivil' dan lain-lain istilah atau ungkapan yang lain. Hanya selepas itu kita berharap akan dapat melibatkan diri kita sendiri serta generasi-generasi akan datang keputusan-keputusan mengenai hak asasi manusia.

ISTILAH DAN DEFINASI HAK ASASI MANUSIA

Peristiharan Sejagat Hak Asasi Manusia yang telah diluluskan oleh Pertubuhan Bangsa-bangsa Bersatu telah menegaskan semula keyakinan mereka terhadap hak asasi manusia. Piagam itu juga mengistiharkan bahawa "pengiktirafan keutuhan tarafdiri dan hak-hak samarata dan yang tak dapat dipisahkan bagi seluruh umat manusia adalah asas kebebasan, keadilan dan keamanan dalam dunia."

Ideal-ideal sebegitu mungkin kelihatan terlalu megah tetapi ianya boleh juga dengan senangnya diterjemahkan kepada kata-kata yang dapat digunakan secara langsung bagi orang-orang persendirian. Dalam penerbitannya bertajuk "Soalan dan Jawapan Mengenai Hak Asasi Manusia", Pejabat Penerangan Awam Bangsa-bangsa Bersatu menjawab soalan 'Apakah hak asasi manusia?' seperti berikut:—

"Hak asasi manusia adalah berasaskan desakan oleh umat manusia untuk kehidupan bertamaddun yang sempurna, dalam mana keutuhan tarafdiri setiap insan akan menerima sanjungan dan perlindungan. Idea itu menjangkau lebih jauh dari kesenangan dan kemudahan yang sains serta teknologi dapat bekalkan. Kita tidak maksudkan hanya keperluan-keperluan biologikal apabila kita memperkatakan tentang hak asasi manusia. Kita maksudkan keadaan-keadaan hidup yang membolehkan kita memperkembang dan menggunakan sepenuhnya sifat-sifat kemanusiaan kita seperti akal fikiran dan rasahati serta menunaikan keperluan-keperluan rohaniah. Hak asasi manusia adalah asas bagi keadaan semulajadi kita; tanpanya, kita tidak dapat hidup sebagai manusia."

Oleh itu kita boleh pelajari dari sini bahawa hak asasi manusia adalah berkeutuhan, perkara semulajadi dan asas bagi kita semua sebagai insan. Tidaklah begitu penting samada ia disebut sebagai kebebasan sivil atau hak asasi atau hak utama, asalkan istilah-istilah itu benar-benar mengertikan sesuatu yang manusia di merata-rata tempat ketahui dan rasai sebagai haknya. Itulah juga sebabnya yang hak asasi manusia adalah dikatakan sebagai sejagat. Tetapi tidak pula dapat dinafikan bahawa terdapat berbagai pendapat tentang bagaimana dan bila hak-hak itu harus diberikan. Namun demikian itu merupakan soal lain — iaitu soal perlaksanaan.

Kita dapat juga fahami bahawa hak asasi manusia tidak meliputi semata-mata apa yang sekarang ini secara popular dikenali sebagai "keperluan-keperluan asasi" dalam kehidupan, iaitu makanan, tempat perlindungan dan pakaian. (Itu merupakan kesenangan dan kemudahan yang diperlukan oleh semua manusia sebagai permulaan.) Meskipun begitu, negara-negara miskin di dunia pun mendapati sukar membuat peruntukan bagi keperluan-keperluan seumpama itu bagi rakyatnya — tetapi, secara prinsipnya, itulah kesenangan dan keselesaan yang diperlukan untuk semua manusia sebagai permulaannya.

KENAPAKAH TERDAPAT KEBIMBANGAN TENTANG HAK ASASI MANUSIA?

Soalan ini mungkin rasa tidak perlu ditanyakan jika kita setuju bahawa hak asasi manusia adalah berkeutuhan, bersifat semulajadi dan asasi. Dibalikannya, kebimbangan itu yang kadang-kala keterlaluan, tentunya ujud oleh kerana penyalahgunaan dan pelanggaran perjanjian dimerata tempat diseluruh dunia. Tren negatif ini belum berkurangan tetapi kelihatan meningkat. "*Pengabaian serta penghinaan terhadap hak asasi manusia (yang) telah-pun mengakibatkan tindakan terkutuk (semasa Perang Dunia Kedua) yang telah melanggar rasahati umat manusia*" sepertimana dinyatakan dalam mukaddimah kepada Peristiharan Sejagat, tentu sekali mendorong umat manusia mengumumkan dokumen bersejarah itu sebagai "suatu ukuran pencapaian bersama untuk seluruh umat manusia dan kesemua negara". Sekarang, lebih daripada 33 tahun kemudian, kita masih belum mendekati matlamat "**pengiktirafan dan pematuhan sejagat yang berkesan**" bagi hak asasi manusia. Sesungguhnya kita harus merasa bimbang.

APAKAH HAK-HAK ASASI YANG PERLU DICAPAI?

Mengakui bahawa hak-hak asasi mungkin juga suatu masalah. Kita biasanya mengelirukan hak asasi dengan bahagian-bahagiannya sahaja. Setengah golongan mungkin menekankan hak untuk mengundi dalam pilihanraya yang bebas yang diadakan dari masa kesemasa tetapi tidak pula menuntut hak asasi untuk mengambil bahagian dalam pemerintahan negara. Hak asasi itu bermaksud lebih daripada hanya mengundi untuk menubuh atau memilih sesuatu Kerajaan beberapa tahun sekali — ianya bermakna bahawa asas bagi kewibawaan Kerajaan senantiasa terletak

dengan kemahuan rakyat, misalnya melalui proses-proses membuat keputusan secara dua-hala dalam tempoh-masa antara pilihanraya.

Oleh itu, adalah penting bagi pergerakan-pergerakan yang memperjuangkan hak asasi supaya tidak hanya mengambil dan memilih beberapa 'hak' tertentu yang diperlukan secara langsung atau dengan segera sebagai matlamat-matlamat utama mereka, tanpa mengaitkan perjuangan itu kepada objektif-objektif jangka-panjang yang lebih luas dan bersifat asasi.

APAKAH HAK ASASI MUTLAK?

Bangsa-bangsa Bersatu menjawab: "*Tidak, jika penggunaannya mengganggu hak-hak orang lain*". Ini memang jelas, logik dan boleh diterima oleh setiap orang oleh kerana hak asasi bukan hanya untuk kita sendiri menikmati: kita harus menentukan yang orang lain boleh menikmati juga. Sebenarnya, apabila kita mendesakkan penghormatan bagi hak asasi manusia kita seharusnya maksudkan bukan hanya yang hak-hak kita dipatuhi, tetapi juga bahawa kita mempunyai kewajipan untuk menghormati hak-hak orang lain. Oleh itu jelaslah yang konsep hak asasi manusia tidak merupakan suatu desakan untuk keperluan-keperluan persendirian sahaja oleh kerana desakan itu dibuat bersampingan dengan kewajipan yang tersirat.

Mengenai sekatan-sekatan lain ke atas hak asasi manusia, semua dokumen antarabangsa yang utama memperuntukkan bahawa hak-hak tidak harus tertakluk kepada sebarang sekatan selain dari sekatan-sekatan yang dibenarkan oleh undang-undang dan yang mana perlu untuk menjaga keselamatan negara, ketenteraman awam, kesihatan awam atau akhlak, atau hak-hak dan kebebasan orang lain. Ini mungkin kelihatan seolah-olah sebagai membenarkan pembatasan kebebasan-kebebasan individu secara keterlaluan oleh kerajaan-kerajaan kukubesi dan sebagai peringatan tegas kepada individu yang dia tertakluk pada kewajipan menerima sebarang sekatan disisi undang-undang. Namun demikian, kita tidak perlu khuatir oleh kerana, dalam Peristiharan Sejagat kata-kata berikut ada termaktub:—

"Setiap orang mempunyai kewajipan terhadap masyarakat, hanya jika sekiranya perkembangan keperibadiannya secara bebas dan sempurna dapat dicapai"

Oleh yang demikian, individu nampaknya boleh menegaskan yang dia tidak berkewajipan mematuhi sekatan-sekatan yang tidak sewajarnya dan yang menghalang "**perkembangan keperibadiannya secara bebas dan sempurna**" dalam masyarakatnya. Tetapi bukankah itu suatu pemberontakan terhadap sistem yang ujud? Walaupun dari segi moral ianya boleh diterima, tetapi bagaimanakah harus individu bertindak terhadap undang-undang dan tindakan yang kejam dalam negaranya? Soal-soal ini memangnya isu rumit yang akan dikaji dengan mendalam nanti.

KENAPAKAH TERDAPAT BERBAGAI JENIS HAK ASASI?

Peristiharan Sejagat mengiktirafkan dua jenis hak secara umumnya. Yang satu adalah jenis tradisional — hak-hak sivil dan politik — yang telah lama kelamaan muncul melalui beberapa abad semasa perkembangan masyarakat demokratik. Yang satu lagi — hak-hak ekonomi, sosial dan kebudayaan — mula diiktiraf tidak beberapa lama dahulu apabila manusia sedari yang pemilikan hak-hak sivil dan politik tertentu adalah tidak bernilai tanpa menikmati juga hak-hak tertentu yang bersifat ekonomi, sosial dan kebudayaan.

Contoh hak-hak sivil dan politik termasuklah hak kepada taraf samarata disisi undang-undang; hak terhadap nyawa, kebebasan dan keselamatan diri; serta hak terhadap kebebasan-kebebasan asasi seperti kebebasan berfikir, rasahati dan beragama; kebebasan berpendapat dan mengeluarkan fikiran; dan kebebasan untuk bergiat bersama orang lain dalam perhimpunan aman dan persatuan. Jenis yang kedua pula meliputi hak terhadap pekerjaan, terhadap pilihan pekerjaan secara bebas, terhadap taraf hidup yang memadai, terhadap pelajaran dan hak menyertai kehidupan kebudayaan masyarakatnya.

Kesukaran telah juga timbul akibat daripada pembahagian hak-hak kepada dua jenis itu. Di negara membangun dan negara komunis utamanya, jenis kedua telah diberikan keutamaan yang berlebihan, hampir-hampir dengan menghapuskan jenis pertama. Alasan popular bagi pendekatan ini adalah bahawa hak-hak sivil dan politik merupakan kemewahan dalam keadaan-keadaan di mana kemiskinan dan butahuruf berleluasa, iaitu "*bahawa orang biasa adalah lebih mementingkan hak mengenai kebendaan daripada hak untuk menyuarakan idea dan pandangan*".

Ini juga merupakan suatu isu penting yang perlu diselidiki selanjutnya, terutamanya jika kita fikirkan kebenaran dibalik kata-kata dari seorang pejuang hak asasi manusia:

"Seorang hamba yang diberi cukup makan tetap juga seorang hamba"

Apabila kita bincangkan kelak bagaimana hak asasi harus dilaksanakan dan apabila kita bandingkan keadaan-keadaan di beberapa tempat di seluruh dunia, soal hubungan yang perlu antara kesemua hak-hak asasi sejagat akan diberikan tumpuan sepenuhnya.

PEMIMPIN-PEMIMPIN KESATUAN SEKERJA

Pemimpin-pemimpin kesatuan sekerja diingatkan bahawa kekurangan pengetahuan dan kewibawaan merupakan satu kelemahan besar yang terdapat di kalangan mereka di negara ini.

Berucap di simposium anjuran Cuepacs di Kuala Lumpur pada 30 April 1982 yang lalu, Presiden Aliran, Mr. Chandra Muzaffar menekankan bahawa pemimpin-pemimpin kesatuan sekerja perlulah berfikiran luas dan tajam, lagi kritis bila berhadapan dengan isu-isu asas yang menular di sekitar masyarakat.

"Mereka mesti memperoleh pengetahuan yang lebih tentang masyarakat bagi membolehkan mereka memahami secara mendalam tentang proses-proses sosial."

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar menegaskan bahawa pemimpin-pemimpin kesatuan sekerja sendiri mesti cuba mempengaruhi pemerintah supaya menganalisa isu-isu tertentu. "Misalnya," katanya, "jika kecekapan dan daya pengeluaran adalah masalah-masalah dalam birokrasi,

mungkin adalah lebih baik untuk mengkaji kualiti dan kalibar kesemua yang terlibat di dalam proses pengurusan dan pengawasan." Adakah mereka itu cukup cekap? Adakah wajar untuk meletakkan siswazah-siswazah universiti, dengan pengalaman yang terhad memegang teraju yang begitu penting? Tidakkah lebih baik jika mereka diberi pendedahan yang lebih luas sebelum jangka mereka menjalankan tanggungjawab-tanggungjawab yang lebih berat? Bolehkah lebih peluang untuk kenaikan pangkat diberi kepada pekerja bukan-siswazah yang berkebolehan, dan berkalibar tinggi?

Itu adalah satu-satu isu yang memerlukan kebijaksanaan pemimpin-pemimpin kesatuan sekerja selain mengekalkan integriti mereka sekiranya mereka mahu memainkan peranan yang berkesan dan bermakna terhadap perjuangan kaum pekerja. Ini bermakna "pemimpin-pemimpin yang bermaruah tinggi tidak boleh dibeli dengan harta atau dirasuahkan dengan kuasa" ujar beliau lagi.

SEJARAH

Menyorot kembali terhadap perkembangan pergerakan kesatuan sekerja di negara ini, Dr. Muzaffar berkata bahawa adalah ternyata keberkesanan kesatuan sekerja telah diganggu oleh British yang lebih suka perkembangan penjajahan kapitalisma mereka dan tidak suka akan kepentingan pihak pekerja.

Beliau berkata, "sejak merdeka dalam tahun 1957 pergerakan kesatuan sekerja telah dipengaruhi oleh tiga trend utama yang kurang sihat. *Pertama:* apabila perpecahan kaum di dalam masyarakat semakin menjadi-jadi, ianya semakin susah untuk menyakinkan pekerja-pekerja bahawa mereka semua mempunyai aspirasi-aspirasi yang sama, yang menjangkau segala batasan kaum. Lebih komunal pandangan mereka terhadap isu-isu ekonomi dan politik maka kesatuan sekerja itu akan menjadi bertambah lemah. *Kedua:* kepentingan pekerja akan tidak menerima perhatian yang sewajarnya, selagi pemerintah mengamalkan dasar ekonomi yang lebih mementingkan modal dan keuntungan. Pergantungan ekonomi negara terhadap sektor perindustrian (yang berkait rapat dengan penanaman modal asing dan pasaran luar negeri) telah menyebabkan kedudukan dan kepentingan pekerja lebih tergugat. *Ketiga:* pemerintah selama beberapa tahun yang lalu telah menguatkan lagi genggamannya terhadap proses politik. Akibatnya, kebebasan beberapa kumpulan, termasuk kesatuan sekerja, untuk mengatur rancangan dan bertindak telah menjadi bertambah terhad."

"Ini adalah nyata jika dilihat dari berbagai undang-undang yang menghadkan aktiviti-aktiviti kesatuan-kesatuan sekerja dan pemimpin-pemimpin mereka."

"Walau bagaimanapun, ada terdapat perkembangan sihat di tengah-tengah trend negatif ini," kata Dr. Muzaffar.

Pertama: kesatuan-kesatuan sekerja mempunyai lebih banyak ahli dari berbagai kaum melalui proses urbanisasi dan dasar ekonomi baru. Sayugia diingatkan, ini tidak bermakna perasaan muhibbah telah menebal kerana pada waktu yang sama permissahan antara kaum semakin menjadi-jadi. *Kedua:* terdapat perhubungan yang lebih

rancak di dalam Bahasa Malaysia di kalangan pemimpin-pemimpin kesatuan disebabkan dasar pelajaran kebangsaan dan lalalui proses masa. *Ketiga:* kemakmuran negara pada keseluruhannya selama ini telah membuahkan kesenangan kepada kebanyakan kelas pekerja.

MASA DEPAN KESATUAN SEKERJA

Menyentuh tentang masa depan kesatuan sekerja di Malaysia, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar berkata bahawa perasaan perkauman akan mendadak selagi kepentingan rakyat berlandaskan keperluan-keperluan satu-satu kaum di negara ini. Ini akan memecah-belahkan perpaduan kaum di dalam satu-satu kesatuan sekerja dan akhirnya menghasilkan satu suasana di mana tidak mungkin wujud satu kesatuan sekerja yang benar-benar bersifat pelbagai kaum.

Selanjutnya beliau meramalkan, "Keadaan ekonomi juga tidak begitu menyebelahi pihak pekerja. Selain dari kejatuhan ekonomi negara yang akan menjejaskan kehidupan golongan pekerja, tekanan baru terhadap penghasilan dan pengeluaran lebih akan juga membawa kesan kepada pergerakan kesatuan sekerja".

"Sama ada dalam ekonomi kapitalis mahupun sosialis, permintaan golongan pekerja untuk mendapatkan gaji dan keadaan kerja yang lebih baik lazimnya diketepikan bila produktiviti dan pengeluaran menjadi objektif utama yang difikirkan perlu dicapai."

"Apa yang menakutkan," katanya lagi, "permintaan kaum pekerja seperti ini di dalam keadaan ekonomi yang teruk akan hanya membuat pemerintah mengambil tindakan kuat terhadap orang-orang yang membuat tuntutan itu. Tindakan pemerintah yang keras akan hanya menjejaskan hak-hak kesatuan sekerja dan ini akhirnya akan melemahkan pergerakan itu pada keseluruhannya."

Liputan di atas ditulis oleh Saudara Mustafa K. Anuar berdasarkan ucapan yang disampaikan oleh Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Presiden ALIRAN di satu simposium yang dianjurkan oleh CUEPACS pada 30 April dan 1 Mei 1982 di Hotel Merlin, Kuala Lumpur.

"Saya bukanlah yang terbaik dari kalangan anda; saya memerlukan segala nasihat dan pertolongan dari anda. Jika saya melakukan kebaikan, berilah sokongan; jika saya melakukan kesalahan, tegurlah saya. Menyatakan kebenaran kepada seseorang yang diamanahkan untuk memerintah adalah suatu kesetiaan yang tulen; menyembunyikan kebenaran itu adalah satu penghianatan".

— Saidina Abu Bakar r.a.

PERBALAHAN PENDAPAT

BAGAIMANA DENGAN IDEA PARTI ALIRAN?

Rencana di bawah ini, yang ditulis oleh Saudara Lukman Hakim, telah tersiar di dalam akhbar Utusan Malaysia pada 1 Mei 1982, yang mempertikaikan pendapat Dr. Chandra Muzaffar di dalam rencananya berjudul "Wanted: A Loyal Opposition" yang disiarkan oleh Majallah Far Eastern Economic Review, keluaran bulan April (23 - 29) 1982.

Sekali-sekala sebelum ini disebut tentang pandangan dari "menara gading" berbeza dari pandangan pihak-pihak lain yang berpijak kepada realiti. Pandangan dari "ivory tower" itu kerap manis atau idealistik; barangkali ini sebabnya tidak ramai para sarjana universiti menceburkan diri dalam politik.

Bagi mereka memadailah memberi kuliah atau syarahan kepada para siswa, dan sekali-sekala memberi nasihat kepada pihak-pihak di luar universiti, termasuklah pak menteri.

Demikianlah halnya bila membaca rencana Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Presiden Aliran berjudul "Wanted: A Loyal Opposition" di dalam majallah *Far Eastern Economic Review* keluaran minggu 23-29 April. Ertinya rencana itu ditulis sebelum hari mengundi.

Maka berkatalah Dr. Muzaffar: "Fungsi pembangkang di Malaysia ialah untuk memujuk kerajaan berfikir pada tahap lebih asas mengenai cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi negara. Malah, ini salah satu peranan utama puak pembangkang keseluruhannya."

Makalah tersebut tidak pula menyebut adakah DAP dan PAS memainkan peranan seperti yang disebut itu.

Dapatkah DAP, umpamanya, memandang segala sesuatu dari mata kepentingan nasional dan bukan dari kacamata chauvinisme satu kaum dan demikian juga dapatkah PAS memandang begitu?

Dr. Muzaffar menolak tesis perlunya sebuah kerajaan yang kuat untuk menegakkan keadilan sosial.

"Kuat untuk apa? Kuat untuk siapa?" beliau bertanya.

Katanya lagi, ada kerajaan-kerajaan yang kuat yang berjaya dan demikian juga ada kerajaan-kerajaan seumpama itu yang gagal.

Maka kita bertanya pula: Apakah kerajaan-kerajaan Perikatan dan Barisan Nasional selama ini gagal belaka? Sedangkan mereka memenangi satu demi satu pilihanraya dari sebelum merdeka hinggalah kepada pilihanraya 1982 ini.

Adakah pandangan dari "menara gading" saja yang betul dan suara rakyat tak betul?

Dr. Muzaffar menyebut, antara lainnya, tentang Akta Profesion Undang-Undang 1976 yang menyekat peguam-peguam yang aktif dalam politik daripada memegang jawatan-jawatan dalam Majlis Peguam dan jawatankuasa-jawatankuasa peguam.

Apa yang menjadi masalah dan istimewa bagi para peguam hingga mahu layanan lebih dari yang lain?

Jika mereka cergas dalam parti-parti politik tentu mereka boleh mengemukakan pendapat melalui parti politik itu. Tidaklah perlu mereka kesekian kali mengemukakan hujah dalam Majlis Peguam pula.

Dr. Muzaffar juga menyebut tentang Akta Universiti yang membatasi kegiatan-kegiatan politik para siswa.

Setahu kita sejak berlakunya akta itu tidak yang menjadi kecoh dalam universiti-universiti di negara kita. Tiada lagi berlaku demonstrasi demi

demonstrasi yang hanya menghalang pelajaran masing-masing.

Malah bilangan siswa yang keluar dari universiti-universiti itu telah meningkat dan masing-masing kemudian memberi sumbangan setelah lulus dalam pelbagai bidang dan jurusan.

Malah agak ramai juga lulusan-lulusan universiti itu masuk parti-parti politik, sama ada dalam Barisan Nasional atau puak pembangkang, termasuk PAS.

BERGELIGA

Bukan bererti pendapat seseorang yang masih siswa begitu bergeliga dari pandangan orang luar.

Banyak sebab-sebab untuk mengadakan pembangkang yang hidup dalam Parlimen baru Malaysia, kata Dr. Muzaffar lagi. Memang betul begitu, tetapi betapa pula prestasi puak pembangkang selama ini?

Kalau benar-benar menjadi pembangkang seperti yang disebut-sebut oleh Dr. Muzaffar tentu menang lagi dalam pilihanraya kali ini. Tetapi sebagaimana kita maklum mereka tewas: DAP kehilangan kubu-kubunya di bandar-bandar dan PAS gagal merampas negeri-negeri yang menjadi idamannya, termasuk yang pernah diperintah olehnya selama 18 tahun.

Sayang Dr. Muzaffar tidak menukarkan Aliran menjadi parti politik dan bertanding dalam pilihanraya baru lalu. Ini ialah kerana beliau tidak mahu menyertai PAS, DAP atau pun Parti Rakyat. Dengan demikian eloklah ditubuhkan saja Parti Aliran dan mencuba dulu di Pulau Pinang.

Akan ternyata kelak bahawa berkempen di kalangan rakyat di luar bandar dan di bandar berbeza dari berkempen dari awan atau menara gading.

Rencana atau makalah seperti oleh Dr. Muzaffar memang mudah

tersiar dalam majalah terbitan luar negeri seperti di Hongkong yang malangnya masih tanah jajahan yang tidak boleh merdeka kerana telah dijanjikan akan kembali kepangkuan China pada tahun 1997. Dengan itu tiada pilihan oleh rakyat.

Majalah atau terbitan dari tempat-tempat seperti itu lumrah memberi nasihat atau tunjuk ajar kepada lain-lain negara yang telah merdeka dan bebas.

JAWABAN KEPADA LUKMAN HAKIM

Memandangkan bahawa tulisan Saudara Lukman Hakim seperti di atas tidak tepat dan tidak berasas dan difikirkan boleh mengelirukan para pembaca, maka Dr. Chandra Muzaffar telah menjawabnya melalui akhbar yang sama, yang disiarkan pada 14 Mei 1982. Berikut ini disiarkan jawapan sepenuhnya, (iaitu, isi kandungan sebenar yang dihantar kepada akhbar tersebut) oleh Dr. Chandra Muzaffar bagi menjawab tanggapan-tanggapan yang dibuat oleh Saudara Lukman Hakim.

Mencabar pengulas-pengulas sosial yang menkritik aspek-aspek tertentu tentang masyarakat agar menceburkan diri dalam politik kepartian adalah satu perkara biasa di negara kita. Demikianlah halnya dengan pendapat saudara Lukman Hakim (Utusan Malaysia 1 Mei 1982).

Sikap ini membuktikan kadangkalan pemikiran beliau tentang apa yang dimaksudkan dengan demokrasi. Sistem demokrasi yang tulen — jika dibandingkan dengan sistem totaliter — pasti memberi 'ruang bergerak' kepada pertubuhan-pertubuhan sosial yang bebas, yang ingin menilai masalah-masalah masyarakat dari sudut yang lebih luas daripada kepentingan kepartian. Tiada sebab badan-badan sedemikian mesti mengisytiharkan diri sebagai parti politik. Keengganan pihak-pihak tertentu menerima hakikat demokrasi ini adalah salah satu daripada cabaran utama yang dihadapi oleh Aliran.

Sesungguhnya di demokrasi-demokrasi yang lain, pertubuhan-pertubuhan seperti Aliran bukan sahaja mengkritik dan mengulas, bahkan menyokong dan berkempen untuk calon-calon dan parti-parti yang mempunyai cita-cita yang sehati dengan perjuangan mereka. Masyarakat-masyarakat yang lain menerima peranan ini kerana mereka memahami bahawa pertubuhan-pertubuhan sosial berhak mem-

pengaruhi proses pilihanraya dengan cara-cara demokratik.

PEMBANGKANG BOLEH MENGEKALKAN SISTEM DEMOKRASI BERPARLIMEN

Tujuan utama rencana saya di majalah *Far Eastern Economics Review* (23 — 29 April 82) ialah untuk memupuk kesedaran tentang prinsip-prinsip demokratik dan nilai-nilai etika. Bagi Aliran, wujudnya pembangkang adalah salah satu daripada faktor-faktor yang dapat mengekalkan sistem demokrasi berparlimen.

Ini tidak bererti bahawa pembangkang di Malaysia adalah bijak bistari. Saya bukan peminat pembangkang sepertimana diterangkan dalam rencana *Review*. Malah, dalam tulisan-tulisan Aliran kelemahan-kelemahan dasar-dasar pembangkang dibahaskan dengan jelas dan jitu.

Namun, dapatkah kita menafikan bahawa pembangkang telah membongkarkan beberapa kes-kes rasuah yang penting dan mendedahkan kecurangan-kecurangan pentadbiran yang mungkin tidak diketahui umum sekiranya pembangkang tidak wujud di negara kita? Sebagai contoh, ambillah kes Rahman Talib dalam tahun-tahun enam puluhan, kes pembelian frigate, kes Northrop, kes-kes tanah di Johor dan lain-lain lagi.

Mungkin saudara Lukman, berdasarkan logik beliau yang aneh itu, akan mempertikaikan hujah saya dengan mengatakan bahawa walau-

pun pembangkang yang membangkitkan persoalan-persoalan rasuah, hanya kerajaan yang dapat bertindak mengatasinya. Ini menunjukkan bahawa pembangkang tidak berkesan. Ini adalah satu hujah yang tidak berasas yang sering diperdengarkan. Memang, dimanapun kerajaan semata-mata yang mempunyai kuasa dan kekuasaan untuk melakukan sesuatu yang bersabit dengan kepentingan awam. Tugas dan tanggungjawab biasa kerajaan ini tidak boleh digunakan sebagai dalih untuk meniadakan peranan pembangkang. Orang yang waras tidak menyangka pembangkang dapat mengambil tindakan terhadap mereka yang terlibat dalam rasuah. Itu bukan fungsi pembangkang.

PEMBANGKANG BERUSAHA MEMPERTAHANKAN HAK-HAK ASASI DARIPADA DIHAKIS

Selain daripada mendedahkan rasuah, saudara Lukman harus diingatkan bahawa pembangkanglah yang cuba mempertahankan hak-hak asasi daripada dihakiskan lagi melalui akta demi akta dan pindaan demi pindaan. Dalam hubungan ini, ingin saya menegaskan bahawa batasan-batasan tertentu penting bagi setiap masyarakat. Tetapi batasan-batasan sedemikian mesti dibezakan daripada sekatan-sekatan yang membawa akibat-akibat yang negatif pada masyarakat. Akta Universiti, um-

pamanya, telah membantut pertumbuhan kesedaran sosial di kalangan pelajar-pelajar. Inilah kelemahannya dan bukan larangan terhadap demonstrasi. Lagi pun, bukan kerana adanya akta bilangan siswazah dari universiti-universiti meningkat, tetapi kerana pengambilan lebih ramai pelajar-pelajar dan perkembangan universiti-universiti sendiri.

Begitu juga, saudara Lukman tidak memahami bahawa dengan menyekat peguam-peguam yang aktif dalam politik daripada memegang jawatan-jawatan dalam Majlis Peguam dan jawatankuasa-jawatankuasa peguam, mereka dinafikan hak yang ada pada kebanyakan golongan-golongan yang lain termasuk doktor, arkitek dan jurutera. Seorang arkitek yang aktif dalam politik tidak dilarang menduduki jawatankuasa persatuannya. Kenapa peguam diberi layanan yang kurang dari yang lain?

FAKTOR-FAKTOR KEMENANGAN BARISAN NASIONAL DALAM PILIHANRAYA

Kekeliruan saudara Lukman memuncak dalam hujahnya tentang kemenangan dalam pilihanraya dan nilai baik yang ada pada parti yang menang itu. Di negara-negara Dunia Ketiga terutamanya, kejayaan dalam pilihanraya tidak boleh digunakan sebagai bukti bahawa segala dasar-dasar parti berkenaan itu adalah bagus. Ini adalah kerana dasar-dasar peserta-peserta pilihanraya samada dalam bidang ekonomi, politik, atau sosial jarang dibahaskan depan khalayak ramai. Apakah kemenangan Barisan Nasional di kawasan-kawasan bandar tertentu bermakna bahawa rakyat menerima dasar perumahan-nya atau kegagalannya di kawasan-

kawasan desa tertentu bererti bahawa rakyat menolak dasar tanahnya? Kita tidak pasti tentang perkara-perkara ini kerana pilihanraya kita sejak dulu lagi tidak berteraskan persoalan-persoalan sosio-ekonomi khususnya. Soal-soal kebudayaan dan ugama sekalipun tidak dikaji dengan cara mendalam oleh pengundi-pengundi.

Yang mempengaruhi proses pilihanraya di negara kita — seperti mana juga dengan beberapa negara-negara yang lain — ialah media, duit, peluang lebih yang ada pada parti yang memerintah untuk mempersembahkan imejnya kepada pengundi, kawalan ketat terhadap pembangkang, kekuatan dan kelemahan jentera pilihanraya sesuatu parti, personaliti calon-calon, kegelisahan kaum pada satu pihak dan cita-cita kaum pada pihak yang lain.

Saya tidak menafikan bahawa prestasi parti yang memerintah juga mungkin mempengaruhi pengundi-pengundi. Mungkin pengundi-pengundi berpuas hati dengan pembangunan negara. Yang saya membantah ialah anggapan bahawa kegagalan dalam pilihanraya bererti parti itu tak betul.

REVIEW — BUKAN KEPUNYAAN KERAJAAN HONGKONG

Akhir kata, apakah kena-mengena-nya tempat terbitan majalah *Review* — iaitu Hongkong — dengan soal kebebasan dan kemerdekaan? Inilah bukti yang paling ketara tentang logik yang kusut dan pemikiran yang keroah dalam tulisan saudara Lukman. *Review* bukan kepunyaan kerajaan Hongkong. Majalah itu dimiliki oleh swasta. Besar kemungkinannya bahawa sidang pengarang *Review* lebih cenderung kepada sistem demo-

krasi. Lagi pun, majalah itu adalah majalah serantau dengan kakitangan antarabangsa. Oleh itu, sidang pengarang bebas mengendalikan majalahnya mengikut kehendak-kehendaknya dan pemilik-pemilik-nya. Apakah suasana politik Malaysia telah mempengaruhi saudara Lukman sehingga beliau tidak dapat menerima bahawa dalam setiap masyarakat ada individu-individu dan kumpulan-kumpulan yang berpegang teguh kepada idea-idea yang mungkin berbeza daripada fahaman regim yang memerintah? Itulah sebabnya kedudukan Hongkong sebagai tanah jajahan tidak ada relevan langsung terhadap rencana tentang demokrasi.

Begitu juga, minat *Review* terhadap pilihanraya di Malaysia tidak harus ditafsirkan sebagai campurtangan dalam hal ehwal negara kita. Sekiranya ini yang dimaksudkan dengan 'campurtangan' kebanyakan akhbar dan majalah boleh dituduh bercampur tangan dalam politik negara lain.

SOAL MENARA GADING TIDAK TIMBUL

Fahaman yang cetek dalam beberapa hal menunjukkan bahawa usaha-usaha untuk meningkatkan kesedaran sosial mesti diteruskan. Dalam usaha ini, soal 'menara gading' atau pandangan 'dari awan' tidak timbul. Yang penting ialah samada pandangan itu bersifat logik dan matang dan berdasarkan pada pengetahuan. Ada kemungkinan sarjana-sarjana yang mengkaji masyarakat lebih memahami kenyataan sosial daripada penyokong-penyokong sesuatu golongan yang bersikap 'taat buta' yang tidak mahu mengakui kelemahan yang ada pada golongan mereka.

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ULASAN SEMASA

Berikut ini adalah beberapa pendapat dan ulasan lengkap yang telah dihantar oleh Aliran kepada akhbar-akhbar tertentu tempatan berkenaan isu-isu semasa yang telah dan sedang dipersoalkan oleh masyarakat umum di negara ini.

PEMBUBARAN MAJUTERNAK

Aliran mengalu-alukan keputusan Kerajaan membubarkan Majuternak. Ketegasan sedemikian rupalah yang diperlukan sekiranya kita berhasrat menghapuskan pembaziran dan ketidakcekapan.

Adalah diharapkan bahawa tindakan ini menandakan permulaan penyemakan yang menyeluruh akan prestasi semua agensi Kerajaan yang terlibat secara langsung dalam pembangunan sosio-ekonomi.

Penyemakan yang menyeluruh harus mengkaji faktor-faktor yang mendorong penubuhan agensi-agensi Kerajaan tersebut. Ternyata dari kes Majuternak bahawa tujuan dan matlamatnya tidak begitu jelas.

Sesungguhnya, berdasarkan penubuhan agensi-agensi dan syarikat-syarikat perniagaan Kerajaan yang begitu banyak dalam desawarsa yang lalu kita dapat menyimpulkan bahawa faktor sosio-ekonomi bukan selalunya pendorong utama yang menyebabkan tertubuhnya sesuatu badan berkanun. Ini adalah salah satu daripada faktor-faktor yang bertanggungjawab atas 'penduaan kegiatan' yang berlaku antara agensi-agensi kerajaan. Lagi pun, kebanyakan agensi-agensi hanya menjadi saluran-saluran yang memberi pekerjaan-pekerjaan yang mewah kepada siswazah-siswazah yang semakin ramai bilangannya. Adakalanya, agensi-agensi tertentu wujud sebagai 'empayar-empayar' kecil untuk memenuhi cita-cita 'pembentuk-pembentuk empayar' tertentu dalam birokrasi.

Penyemakan yang lengkap mesti ditujukan pada perkara-perkara tersebut. Harus dipastikan juga samada bilangan pekerja dalam agensi-agensi tertentu dapat dikurangkan dan samada agensi-agensi ini dapat dikendalikan dengan kos yang berkurangan.

Jawatankuasa Aliran

22hb Mac, 1982

KAJIAN TENTANG DASAR PERUMAHAN

Adalah dipuji bahawa Kerajaan sedang mengambil langkah-langkah untuk memperbaiki semula beberapa kelonggaran di dalam peraturan-peraturan pembelian rumah. Timbalan Perdana Menteri baru-baru ini telah mengumumkan bahawa borang-borang permohonan perumahan untuk rumah-rumah kos rendah dan menengah rendah akan diseragamkan dan senang diperolehi oleh orang ramai.

Ini sudah tentu akan melindungi pembeli-pembeli rumah yang berpendapatan rendah daripada diperdayakan oleh orang tengah yang menjual borang-borang tersebut pada harga yang tinggi.

Terdahulu, Kerajaan telah mengumumkan hasratnya untuk menyeragamkan perjanjian jualbeli rumah. Sekali lagi, ini akan mengelakkan pembeli-pembeli rumah dari dikenakan bayaran yang berlebihan oleh peguam-peguam yang tidak bertata-susila. Walau bagaimanapun, soal pokok tentang industri perumahan masih kekal, bahawa rumah-rumah kos rendah dan menengah-rendah adalah tidak mencukupi.

Aliran menyeru supaya satu dasar perumahan yang menyeluruh dikaji semula seperti isu-isu mengenai keperluan-keperluan/permintaan-permintaan rumah, masalah setinggan, kawalan harga keatas bahan-bahan bangunan, mutu rumah dan penyertaan kerajaan negeri di dalam pembinaan rumah.

Kedua, Aliran menyeru bagi satu kajian tentang bentuk pemilikan rumah dan hak milik tanah bagi memastikan bahawa kumpulan yang berpendapatan rendah mendapat peluang memiliki sebuah rumah.

Ketiga, seharusnya hendaklah diadakan kawalan awam yang lebih ketat tentang pengeluaran dan pengedaran bahan-bahan binaan.

Keempat, seharusnya hendaklah diadakan lebih siasatan tentang spekulasi tanah dan rumah.

Kelima, mestilah hendaknya diadakan langkah-langkah yang lebih ketat terhadap rasuah samada di sektor persendirian dan awam, termasuk majlis-majlis bandaran, pejabat-pejabat tanah dan jabatan-jabatan Kerajaan.

Khor Yoke Lim
Jawatankuasa Aliran

11hb Mei, 1982

TEMBELING DAN PEMBANGUNAN

Aliran menyatakan sokongan penuh pada pergerakan awam yang sedang meningkat, serta pada Jawatankuasa Penyelarasan Tembeling, dalam bantahan terhadap cadangan bagi ampungan hidroelektrik Tembeling.

Adalah nyata bahawa, walaupun diper-timbangkan faedah-faedah ekonomi yang dikatakan akan muncul dari projek ini, kos-kos yang terlibat dari segi kesan ke atas Taman Negara dan imek buruk ke atas alam sekitarnya - bagi manusia dan haiwan tidak dapat diterima. Kebimbangan awam mengenai isu ini menandakan suatu kesedaran akan perimustahakannya dipelihara kawasan-kawasan hutan semulajadi kita untuk memperkayakan hidup bagi kita dan generasi-generasi akan datang dengan pelbagai kebaikan dan keindahannya.

Adalah seharusnya juga nyata bahawa projek-projek pembangunan hendaklah dinilai bukan sahaja di sisi ekonomi tetapi juga dari segi sumbangannya pada keperluan-keperluan kita secara bukan-kebendaan. Pembangunan hendaklah disifatkan sebagai pembangunan ekonomi, rohani dan kebudayaan insan dan masyarakat secara keseluruhannya, dan konsep ini adalah sejajar dengan falsafah-falsafah

Pengetahuan sedikit adalah lebih baik dari kejahilan langsung. (terjemahan)

Abu al-Fida'

utama di dunia Timur. Misalannya dalam Islam, sumber-sumber alam semulajadi merupakan warisan bersama bagi semua manusia untuk digunakan dengan cara bertanggungjawab bagi menunaikan keperluan menurut prinsip-prinsip yang telah ditetapkan; menurut agama Buddha, terdapat pula jalan tengah yang harus diikuti.

Pada keseluruhannya, terdapat idea bahawa pembangunan ekonomi harus memupuk dan ujud sejajar, bukan bertentangan, dengan sistem tabii.

Isu Tembeling mendedahkan sekali lagi kecacatan-kecacatan dalam strategi pembangunan negara kita masakini.

Harun Rasip
Jawatankuasa Aliran

12hb Mei, 1982

TANGGUNGJAWAB KERAJAAN YANG BERAMANAH

Salah faham yang masih wujud dikalangan pemimpin-pemimpin tertentu tentang tanggungjawab pemerintah dan hubungannya dengan kawasan-kawasan pilihanraya pembangkang dan penyokong-penyokong pembangkang adalah sesuatu yang sungguh mengecewakan.

Baru-baru ini, Menteri Kewangan, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, dilaporkan menyatakan bahawa kesemua 27 rancangan tanah di bawah TAKDIR (iaitu Badan Pembangunan Tanah, Kelantan) akan dibubarkan. Ini adalah kerana ramai peneroka di rancangan-rancangan tersebut terdiri daripada penyokong PAS yang menentang Barisan Nasional dalam pilihanraya umum yang baru tamat. Beliau menegaskan bahawa kerajaan negeri akan memberi keutamaan kepada projek-projek pembangunan di kawasan-kawasan pilihanraya yang memilih wakil rakyat dari PAS akan diketepikan dalam pelaksanaan projek-projek air, elektrik dan jalanraya. (STAR, 21 Mei 1982)

Masanya sudah tiba untuk pemimpin-pemimpin Kerajaan memahami bahawa tanggungjawab parti yang telah mencapai kuasa adalah kepada negara keseluruhannya. Dan negara merangkumi kawasan-kawasan pilihanraya pembangkang dan penyokong-penyokong pembangkang jua. Ini adalah prinsip pemerintahan demokratik yang mudah difahami.

Itulah sebabnya ahli Parlimen biasanya digelar sebagai "ahli kawasan pilihanraya sekian, sekian" kerana dia adalah wakil semua penghuni-penghuni kawasan tersebut walaupun kemenangannya mungkin dengan kelebihan 2 undi. Begitu juga, Kerajaan diiktirafkan di dalam dan di luar negeri sebagai wakil rakyat

jelata walaupun bilangan yang mengundinya mungkin tidak melebihi 60 peratus daripada jumlah pengundi.

Tanggungjawab Moral

Oleh kerana kita semua sanggup mengakui kekuasaan Kerajaan — walau apa pun pandangan-pandangan politik kita — Kerajaan pula mesti menegakkan tanggungjawab moralnya kepada orang ramai tanpa menghiraukan kecenderungan ideologi mereka. Justeru, kewajipan Kerajaan itu adalah lebih daripada tanggungjawab moral. Ini adalah kerana wang yang digunakan oleh Kerajaan untuk membiayai projek-projek pembangunan sebenarnya adalah wang rakyat. Samada kita mengundi Barisan atau pembangkang, kita terus menyumbang pada pendapatan nasional melalui usaha dan tenaga kita. Dalam hubungan ini, apakah reaksi Kerajaan sekiranya penyokong-penyokong PAS atau DAP mengambil keputusan tidak mahu membayar cukai kerana Barisan yang berkuasa? Tidakkah kenyataan-kenyataan seperti "kawasan-kawasan PAS akan dinafikan pembangunan" mencerminkan sikap yang sama — iaitu satu sikap yang tidak waras?

Namun, dalam soal ini, sikap Perdana Menteri berbeza. Baru-baru ini beliau menegaskan bahawa kawasan-kawasan pilihanraya pembangkang juga akan menerima bantuan pembangunan. Ini adalah sikap yang patut dibuktikan. Menafikan keperluan asasi seperti air dan elektrik bukan sahaja pengkhianatan terhadap tanggungjawab; malah ia merupakan satu tindakan yang kejam dan tidak berperkemanusiaan. Kerajaan apa bentuk pun — lebih-lebih lagi kerajaan yang bersih dan beramanah — tidak harus memperlihatkan tindakan sedemikian.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar
Presiden
ALIRAN

25hb Mei, 1982

KES-KES HUKUMAN MATI ISA: RAYUAN KEPADA DYMM YANG DIPERTUAN AGONG

Sungguhpun Aliran menghargai percubaan-percubaan FUEMSSO dan Encik Karpal Singh, ahli Parlimen Kawasan Jelutong, untuk menyelamatkan mereka yang menerima hukuman mati di bawah Akta Keselamatan Dalam Negeri (ISA) kerana memiliki senjata api, namun kami tidak dapat menyokong sebarang usaha yang bertujuan memujuk Kerajaan membenarkan "pesalah-pesalah" dijadikan "anak angkat" oleh pertubuhan-

pertubuhan asing. Lagi pun, Kerajaan telah menyatakan bahawa tawaran "anak angkat" tidak merangkumi mereka yang telah dibicarakan dan didapati salah di mahkamah.

Memang benar, jika Kerajaan menyetujui dengan cadangan "anak angkat" itu, tindakannya mungkin ditafsirkan sebagai suatu percubaan untuk menguasai sistem kehakiman. Tidak harus kita menggalakkan Kerajaan bertindak demikian kerana keluhuran prinsip kebebasan kehakiman. Prinsip ini penting bagi pemerintahan demokratik dan harus dipertahankan dalam apa keadaan jua pun.

Bagi mereka yang ditahan tanpa pembicaraan mahkamah, idea "anak angkat" lebih tidak masuk akal. Sepertimana ALIRAN pernah berhujjah pada satu masa dulu, jika diterima idea "anak angkat" bermakna bahawa kita mengaku bahawa seseorang yang mencabar kekuasaan adalah salah dan patut dibuang negeri.

Kembali kepada kes-kes hukum mati ISA, Aliran berpendapat bahawa tindakan yang paling sesuai dalam keadaan yang wujud kini ialah merayu kepada DYMM Seri Paduka Baginda Yang di-Pertuan Agong agar baginda menggantungkan hukuman mati yang dikenakan terhadap Tan Chay Wa dan lain-lain di bawah ISA kerana memiliki senjata api.

Hari Keputeraan DYMM Yang di-Pertuan Agong pada 2 Jun adalah tarikh yang sesuai untuk mengambil tindakan ini. Menggantungkan hukuman ataupun meringankannya dapat diterima sebagai satu tindakan perikemanusiaan yang sebatu dengan Rukunegara dan tradisi rohaniyah kita yang mencantumkan keadilan dengan balas kasihan.

Dari segi jangka panjang Aliran berharap bahawa Kerajaan akan menyemak konsep hukuman mati di bawah ISA untuk mereka yang memiliki senjata api. Tiada sebab mengapa hukuman mati mesti dikenakan dalam kes-kes sedemikian. Lagi pun, tidak ada sebarang bukti yang menunjukkan bahawa jenayah-jenayah yang ganas telah berkurangan kerana hukuman tadi.

Ini adalah satu daripada sebabnya ramai berpendapat bahawa fungsi hukuman mati adalah terhad. Akibatnya, beberapa negara-negara telah menghapuskannya.

Di Malaysia, kita sekurang-kurangnya mesti membuat kajian sosiologi yang lengkap untuk menentukan hubungan antara hukuman mati dan jenayah. Selepas itu, barulah kita boleh pasti samada hukuman mati benar-benar mencegah jenayah atau tidak.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar
Presiden
Aliran Kesedaran Negara.

31hb Mei, 1982

ON THE SOCIETIES SCENE

Aliran hopes to run a regular column in this Journal reporting on the work and activities of the non-governmental voluntary organisations which are linked to the Sekretariat Persidangan Pertubuhan.

WORKING TOGETHER

Harun Rasip

SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) ACT 1981

Surely the most significant event to date affecting societies directly was the introduction of this Act in April 1981. The sweeping powers granted to the Registrar of Societies; the restrictions placed upon those who have served criminal sentences or have been detained; the denial of access to the courts; the creation of political societies; the severe curtailment upon international affiliations, connections and foreign funding; all these affect our political freedom and the quest for social justice. Citizens should remind themselves that even while the Minister for Home Affairs has made soothing, pre-election remarks, nothing has changed and the Act is still here. Smooth, glib assurances and earnest young "professionals" working inside the government is good advertising copy but little else.

SOCIETIES ACT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

One unforeseen result from the Societies (Amendment) Act controversy was the formation of a Committee to coordinate the protest against the Societies (Amendment) Act by approximately 100 registered societies, the Bar Council and other organizations including professional, academic and business bodies and trade unions. Chaired by ABIM, the committee organized a country-wide signature campaign collecting over 70,000 signatures, a hand-bill campaign, a Perjumpaan Nasional, a Simposium Nasional and repeated representations to political parties, political figures and government leaders. The speeches at the Perjumpaan Nasional by several speakers indicated that the Societies (Amendment) Act controversy was only one part of the general decline of political freedoms. Consequently one felt there was a need to understand and explain the larger conception of democracy which in turn involved an analysis of political and civil liberties, a debunking of the myth that freedom requires trade-offs with development and security and finally, a mental leap into envisaging the ideal society from various religious, social and economic perspectives.

It is surprising that this has not been done before because if one thing is clear, even by looking east, it is that this nation has no clear vision of its national destiny. The Simposium Kebangsaan held on 29 - 31 August 1981

ambitiously attempted to do the above but did not succeed. Its significance lies in the fact that the attempt was made. However, from the foregoing, certain points emerge.

CERTAIN POINTS EMERGE

FIRST, the coming together of so many societies and organizations, comprising varied interests, religious persuasions and different communities, to register their common opposition to an attack on their freedom. This is something quite unique and encouraging in a society like ours, beset by communalism and chauvinistic politicians. All citizens should welcome this development. It points the way towards unity and a just society - an adherence and commitment to a set of principles and ethics common to all, enshrining fundamental human rights. Within this framework all sectional interests can be accommodated and the full development of the human being given priority.

SECOND, all societies and organizations should see that the struggle for their aims and objectives is tied up in the larger issue of freedom and society. Whether it is squatters' or residents' committees fighting housing developers, student organizations protesting Education Department rulings, or professional and business bodies resisting restrictions by legislation, their right to do so is common to all and must be defended in concert.

THIRD, there is a need for a body to co-ordinate social action programmes, promote exchanges of ideas and to encourage and strengthen solidarity among social interest groups. An important function would also be to assist in and to co-ordinate further study, research and analysis into freedom and society. Basic to the reform of society or its laws is the prior appreciation of the broad social economic and political forces and their interaction within society. A clear idea of where one is going is also necessary. Thus an intellectual endeavour is required, one which must be noted in a set of fundamental spiritual values and ethical principles. Thinking, discussion, debate, research, analysis are vital if progressive societies and organizations wish to contribute something of lasting value to society.

The promotion of solidarity is crucial if the present diverse grouping is to stay united in their commitment. Personal ambitions, doctrinal differences and differences in perspective must be reconciled under a steadfast commitment to basic principles.

As information exchange is important, societies should encourage exchanges of their published materials. Informal meetings between societies and perhaps an annual get-together to exchange ideas, educate each other or debate issues of common interest should be organised.

SEKRETARIAT PERSIDANGAN PERTUBUHAN (SPP)

The SPP was formed following the Symposium Nasional to continue the protest against the Societies (Amendment) Act and to maintain and strengthen relations among societies through the exchange of ideas and information on matters of common interest. ABIM nominated the first Chairman of the Sekretariat and also agreed to assist in the sekretariat administration. Following the national elections, the SPP is pursuing representations made earlier to government leaders and is formulating a detailed programme for this purpose. Recently it has encouraged signatory societies and other societies to give support to the Tembeling Co-ordinating Committee

formed on 10 April 1982 to oppose the proposed Tembeling hydro-electric dam.

Societies desiring to participate in SPP activity and programmes can direct enquiries to SPP c/o ABIM, A-1, Bangunan UDA Jln. Pantai Baru, K.L. Tel: 566370 Sdra. Abas Hassan.

It is understood that SPP needs funds in order to continue its activities. So donations will be appreciated.

TEMBELING COORDINATING COMMITTEE (TCC)

Following the announcement by the government that it was proceeding with the Tembeling dam, a protest movement was launched and organized by the TCC comprising Malayan Nature Society, Sahabat Alam Malaysia, ABIM, Young Christian Workers and joined later by Aliran, CAP, and Selangor Graduates Society. A signature campaign was launched in late May 1982 with car-stickers, T-shirts and post-cards. A legal and economic analysis is forthcoming and a one-day seminar on the controversy will be held on 19th June 1982 with speakers from the government, universities and voluntary bodies. All organizations are urged to join in the protest. Information and enquiries should be directed to TCC, c/o 8-B, Jalan SS 2/66, Petaling Jaya. Tel: 757767.

PAGAN

No, we shall not know them,
the craftsmen, masons, priests
and scribes carried off
from old Thaton,
whose friezes and fables
tease these reddened
remnants of former glory,
crowding the green intensity.

A horse's neigh floats
on the wind, over the timeless
river, and is lost to the ghostly
mounds undulating
over the harried plain.
The heaps of crumbling sand
ignore the wispy conifers
and mutely multiply.

My thoughts return to demand
of these relics adamantine,
'Who shall rouse your dozing
servants, sutras flooding
the lap?'
We await that solitary soldier,
crossing no man's land,
to raise the clarion call.

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by some of our leaders as a total explanation of the economic success of the Japanese nation.

Such exaggerated emphasis is particularly disturbing in view of their unwillingness to recognise one of the most crucial reasons behind Japan's prosperity, a reason which we have yet to mention. Unlike all the factors suggested so far, this is an extremely negative factor. It is undeniable that Japanese dominance of the under-developed Third World, or to put it differently, Japanese imperialism, is also one of the reasons responsible for its economic growth. It is legitimate to consider this as an important factor in the same way as historians and politicians regard colonialism as one of the causes for the rise of Britain in the nineteenth century. Japanese imperialism manifests itself through the vast gains it has made as a result of exploitative trade, investment, aid and technological relationships with numerous third world countries. The ASEAN region is one of the victims of Japanese imperialism. Admiration for Japanese work ethics should not blind us to this aspect of Japanese economic expansion.

If our leaders had a more balanced view of Japan, they would be able to understand the limitations of the 'hard work as a cure-all' theory in our country. Indeed, if that theory is inapplicable to Japan, it is even more inappropriate for Malaysia. In countries like ours, there are huge numbers of people who are poor and disadvantaged through no fault of theirs. A padi farmer with 3 relongs of land can work as hard as he wants but he will continue to remain poor. At the most, he may hope for some negligible improvement in his income. The reason is simple. His problems are related to his uneconomic holdings, and a marketing and credit system that exploits him. Hard work alone will not be able to solve his problems for they are the products of an inequitable social structure which is beyond his command or control. Similarly, a trishaw-pedlar in the city, struggling to live on his meagre daily earnings, will not be able to alleviate his misery by working twice as hard or thrice as long. His poor income is linked to the technological level of our society, educational opportunities, the employment pattern, the rate of social mobility and labour-capital relationships. The trishaw-pedlar on his own can do very little about any of these issues. The resolution of each of them requires a thorough examination of the entire social system. Likewise, an industrious office-boy with a small salary cannot hope to buy a decent house, even if he takes on an additional part-time job or works on week-ends. This is mainly because the housing crisis is related to the pattern of ownership of land, the production and distribution of building materials, red-tape in the housing industry, corruption and so on.

What this means is that there are serious obstacles to progress that have nothing to do with whether our people are prepared to work harder or not. The political leadership — and indeed all of us in the elite-stratum of society — have a moral responsibility to remove these obstacles before urging the masses to slog and sweat. For

many of the causes of backwardness and under-development in Third World countries are embedded in the social structure. In order to eliminate them, there must be the determination to conquer those vested interests that benefit from the perpetuation of an unjust social order. This will be possible only if the political leadership is itself free of vested interests that are inimical to the well-being of the majority. It is political will of this sort among the leaders, rather than hard work on the part of the masses, that is urgently needed in societies like ours.

It is because of this absence of understanding of the larger social system that some of our leaders believe that through hard work alone, we will be able to build an autonomous, self-reliant nation. The desire to create a self-reliant society is, of course, laudable. Our present leadership seems to be more conscious of this than past leaders. But how can we create such a society unless our guiding social philosophy also emphasises autonomy? As it is, our economic ideology seeks to integrate our society into an international system that dominates us and denies us our independence. Even our present thrust into heavy industries is, in a sense, a response to a new stage in the international division of labour. To put it simply, it is in the interests of the industrialized countries to locate their heavy industries in the Third World — industries which they will continue to control through their technological and market dominance. This does not mean however that a heavy industries programme is not important. It is, but it must grow out of an autonomous industrialization programme. A machine tools factory, for instance, should be an integral part of the domestic technological and economic setting rather than an off-shoot of an industrial enclave, perhaps an extension of German or Japanese industrial expansion.

In the sort of industrialization that we envisage, small and medium-sized industries will play a significant role. These industries, using local material and human resources on an extensive scale, will also help upgrade existing indigenous technology. In the process, dependence on the outside would be reduced and self-reliance would be enhanced.

Indeed, self-reliance would increase considerably if industries are linked to the agricultural sector of society. In this connection, it must be stressed that the agrarian aspect of the economy, especially food production, should be accorded special attention if our aim is autonomy. For freeing a people from dependence on external sources for food should be one of the first considerations of any leadership.

And yet neither food production nor the state of agriculture has figured prominently in the thinking of our government. More than hard work and discipline, we should be concerned about the decline of agriculture and the paucity of certain types of food caused partly by the export orientation of the local food industry.

Just as our leaders and planners should do more analysis on agricultural output and the sort of industrialization that will really benefit our people, so should they reflect seriously on the position of science in society. One of the major causes of our underdevelopment and, therefore, our dependence is the absence of a strong scientific base. We spend so little on scientific research. It should be one of the important items in our development expenditure. Scientific institutes doing research on fundamental sciences should be established in an organised, systematic manner. There should be a national science policy. The scientific spirit should be assiduously cultivated through the school system, the media and through various other channels.

Why should we create this scientific foundation? A strong scientific base will not only enable us to absorb and adapt technology but also expedite innovation and invention. Once we are able to innovate technologically, our chances of achieving self-reliance will be all the better. Indeed, the secret of the economic strength of even the small countries of Western Europe like Sweden and Denmark is their scientific base.

Given the importance of science to national autonomy, it is surprising that our leaders have placed so little emphasis on it. Surely, allocating resources for the development of science is far more crucial for the future than merely urging the masses to work hard or to be disciplined and efficient. Discipline and efficiency in themselves are qualities associated with scientific societies.

Of the essential measures for self-reliance, our government has acted with a certain degree of positiveness in only two spheres. One, through the market mechanism, it has succeeded in gaining control of our foreign-owned assets in the plantation and tin sectors. Two, the present leadership seems to be seriously interested in greater South-South co-operation instead of merely perpetuating existing North-South ties which are detrimental to us. As far as ownership of resources goes, one hopes that the government will now ensure, through socialization if possible, that the benefits of economic nationalism are passed on in tangible terms to the disadvantaged majority. It is matters like this that should engage the energies of our politicians and bureaucrats.

If it is true — as we have attempted to establish — that there are a whole lot of problems and challenges confronting our nation each of which is more compelling than the question of hard work, why is it that our government regards hard work as the most crucial issue? It is quite conceivable that this obsession, however noble the intention of the government, may have emerged from a wrong diagnosis of the challenge of development. There are many third world leaders who have made genuine mistakes about the right priorities in achieving social change. Sometimes, however, a wrong approach can produce certain dangerous consequences for society as a whole. It may serve to camouflage the realities in the economy by diverting attention to an issue whose significance is limited. The vital problems relating to the

nature of the economy, the position of science, the role of the political leadership may never surface as dominant social concerns. As a result, the real challenges will never be addressed. The country will continue to remain backward.

What is equally bad, a wrong diagnosis could create a situation which would enable the government to condemn the people for ills that they are not responsible for. For if the real 'problem' is people's capacity to work hard then when things do not turn out well, all that one has to do is to blame the people.

Besides, in an economic system like ours where capital is all important, it is simply not fair to expect the poor majority to work hard when it is obvious that they will not be justly rewarded for their labour. In such a situation, the poor may be justified in thinking that the harder they work the greater would be the profits of the rich — especially if there are no effective mechanisms for meaningful redistribution of wealth. Hard work then would make it more lucrative for some to exploit others. This is one of the most unjust consequences of an unthinking doctrine of 'hard work'.

A fourth and final consequence is related to ethnicity. In a society where ethnic stereotyping is quite pervasive, the call to work hard may be perceived in certain communally-inclined quarters as a reprimand of the Malay community or sections of it. Ethnic stereotypes, as we know, are, generally indefensible. There are industrious and lazy people in all communities. It is not true that certain communities are 'born' with certain positive or negative qualities.

Does this mean that hard work is not a problem as such? While it may be useful for certain occupational categories to work harder than they are inclined to presently, there is no doubt at all that Malaysians are generally a hardworking people. Some indirect evidence of this is available from a public bureaucracy and a private sector which, all said and done, are more efficient, disciplined and productive than what one finds in many other third world countries.

Having said that, I would readily admit that nevertheless there may be differences in work ethics among different groups within the same occupation. This may even assume an ethnic colouring at times. However, what is important is how we explain such phenomena. Among non-Malays, their status as second and third generation descendants of immigrants may account for their industriousness. This is universally true of immigrants and their immediate descendants everywhere. The Malays who settled down in Sri Lanka have the same reputation. Besides, in Malaysia, ethnic differentiation in the educational and employment fields may have spurred non-Malays in the last decade to push themselves harder than they would otherwise have done.

The Malay situation, in contrast, has been quite different. It can be argued that the Malay ruling class from the traditional to the colonial period failed to set the right

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example on work and discipline. And since its impact upon the rest of Malay society was great, this has had some adverse effects. Of course, in the post-independence era, there has been a healthier atmosphere as far as work ethics are concerned. However, certain aspects of current economic and education policies have tended to lull some young Malays into complacency. Among this type, there does not seem to be sufficient commitment to excellence and performance.

In order to overcome this shortcoming, there is certainly a need to stress the importance of hard work, discipline and efficiency to specific social groups. It must not be presented, unjustifiably, as a criticism of the entire community. More than that, the effective way of inspiring these groups to be more industrious or disciplined would be to appeal to such values in Islam. For the bond between the Malay community and Islam is deep. It is easier to obtain enthusiastic acceptance of a certain value like hard work if it is presented as an Islamic virtue. After all, there is a reservoir of support for hard work and discipline in the Quran, the hadiths (sayings of the holy Prophet Muhammad), and numerous treatises of repute. This is why from a sociological point of view it does not make sense at all to exhort Malay-Muslims to emulate Japanese or South Korean work ethics. One's own cultural background is invariably a more powerful medium for the transmission and inculcation of personal values.

This in fact illustrates the importance of basing one's programme of social reconstruction upon a philosophy that is culturally-rooted. Islam and the other great religious traditions have the capacity to perform this role. What is needed is a broader and deeper understanding of the spiritual essence of religion fertilized by knowledge garnered from the contemporary sciences. As an example of what this will lead to, let us look at the concept of work from a progressive spiritual perspective.

Work would be perceived as embodying four dimensions. First, it must be ethically proper. Work that is unethical is not work. Among the major religions, there is some commonality on this score. Second, work must enable an individual to provide for his basic needs and those of his family. Third, whatever surplus over needs is generated from an individual's work must be used for the community's well-being. Thus, a human being also works for his fellow-beings. Finally, work must be creative and intellectually and spiritually satisfying. It must enable a human being to discover his spiritual essence. This means work is, in fact, only a means towards a larger end.

This concept of work shows that it is possible to develop enlightened notions of man and society from our spiritual traditions provided we adopt a modern approach. That is why, in the ultimate analysis, the answer does not lie in the East or the West. The truth has always been within ourselves.

REFORM FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

continued from page 8

health of the individuals therein. Conversely, since human beings exist in groups and communities, each person's freedom of expression is necessarily limited by the freedom of others. A man's wholeness is to be measured by his capacity for consideration for others.

In this context, it is instructive to look at a spiritual figure that is common in Asian traditions viz the religious mystic or guru. Autonomy is visibly incarnate in the person of the contemplative guru existing apart from the 'business' of society — hence the modern accusation that he is 'useless' or 'unproductive'. Yet nothing is more useful than to demonstrate in concrete form the value of a spiritual vocation. The guru or mystic practises the highest charity in that he points the way towards that which has supreme value i.e. Godliness.

To advocate the movement of independent thinkers, who are in fact teachers by example as well as thought, into any particular political party is to jeopardize the spiritual health of the community. Whenever a range of visions, insights and ideas has become petrified into fixed, competing groups, then self-expression is rendered a mere alignment of rival polemics. The identity of individual

human beings which depends on their sense of wholeness would be sacrificed for the sacred cow of political conformity and convenience.

No committed social reformer whether religious or secular can countenance such a corruption of his vocation as a thinker and as a human being.

We must therefore weigh and scrutinise the appeals for solidarity of reformers from whichever quarter they may issue forth. Society can absorb the defection and loss of one or two secret self-seekers but not a mass conversion of visionaries and thinkers into apologists and functionaries.

CONCLUSION

From the preceding analysis we hope it will become clear, despite the confused political climate of our time, that improvement, reform and excellence can best be achieved by social interest groups retaining their autonomy and continuing actively with their role as keepers of the nation's conscience.

ECONOMIC NOTES

This section will be devoted to the important economic questions of our time in both the local and the international scene. We hope to provide with each issue an unbiased, thorough analysis of economics in relation to daily living.

ECONOMIC DECLINE: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Subramaniam Sithambaram

Malaysia is in the early stages of a severe economic recession. According to some economists this recession might turn out to be the worst since Independence in 1957. Yet it was hardly an issue in the 1982 general elections held in April. This is surprising because just a few days before the election campaign started, Bank Negara Malaysia in its annual report had given warning of the severity of the recession we are entering into. Both the opposition and the government avoided this issue for reasons best known to them. This is a sad reflection on the immaturity of the political process in our country.

However as soon as the elections were over, the 'clean, efficient and trustworthy' government stopped talking about the great economic success story of Malaysia; instead, there were announcements of an earlier-than-anticipated review of the Fourth Malaysia Plan to scale it down in light of the bad news on the economic front.

In this article, we will first look at the causes of the recession in Malaysia; next we will review its effects and finally examine some alternatives that are available to reduce the impact of the recession.

Most readers will be aware that the leading industrial nations (i.e. the OECD countries, a grouping of West European countries, Canada, U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand and Japan) have been experiencing very low economic growth rates coupled with high inflation and severe unemployment since 1979. Although the oil price hike is often blamed for the recession in the West, it is not that simple. Deficit spending by many governments especially the U.S.A. (the largest economic force in the world) is one of the important factors for the inflation and subsequently the recession.

But in any case it was earlier believed that the OECD economies would recover in late 1981 or early 1982. But as it turns out now, most economists are not even certain that there will be a recovery in early 1983. It is now predicted that the average growth rate for OECD economies in 1982 will be zero per cent.

How is this going to affect Malaysia? Since our economy is very much linked to the world economy, an economic slump in the leading industrial nations reduces the demand for our products, both primary commodities and manufactured goods. Reduced demand for primary commodities leads to lower prices for these raw materials. This is because raw materials are very price elastic i.e. a small change in demand will cause a large change in the price. Manufactured goods in general are less price elastic.

Lower prices for our raw materials have two serious consequences which directly affect a substantial segment of the population. Firstly, it will result in lower income to smallholders and estate workers whose wages are linked to the price of rubber, oil palm, cocoa, etc. and also lower profits to the owners of estates and tin-mines. Secondly, unemployment and underemployment in the primary commodity industries will increase substantially. For example, the low tin price has forced many marginal tin mines to close, resulting in considerable unemployment in the tin-mining areas. According to the president of the All-Malaya Chinese Mining Association, Datuk Hew See Tong, layoffs among gravel-pump mine workers could soar to 7,000 by October with the closure of more mines. Similarly, many rubber smallholdings have become un-economic to tap giving rise to underemployment in the smallholder sector of the economy. All this means lower income to a lot of people which means less spending on manufactured goods like television sets, refrigerators, motor-cycles, rice-cookers, etc.

Thus the manufacturing industry is suffering from a double blow. On the one hand exports of manufactured goods declined by 17.3 per cent in 1981 because of the recession in the West. On the other hand local demand for manufactured goods is also experiencing a slowdown due to lower incomes. This situation cannot improve in 1982 because the recession in the OECD economies is still going on and the commodity prices on the average are lower than last year. (See Table 1).

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TABLE 1 – PRICES OF LEADING EXPORTS OF MALAYSIA†

Year	Rubber* (14.4%) RSS f.o.b. Kuala Lumpur sen/kg	Palm Oil* (11.0%) f.o.b. Kuala Lumpur \$/tonne	Tin (8.3%) f.o.b. Penang \$/kg	Petroleum (26.8%) US\$/barrel f.o.b.
1978	230	1178	28.82	\$4.23
1979	279	1310	32.39	21.09
1980	313	1172	35.71	36.50
1981 – Treasury estimates	275	1200	33.07	39.00
– Actual	258	1143	32.30	39.00
1982 – Treasury estimates	295	1250	34.72	37.00
Price on 5/5/82	199	1038	29.40	35.00

* The figure after each item is its percentage of total exports in 1981. The above four commodities together make up 60.5% of Malaysia's total exports in 1981.

† The figures in this and other tables were obtained from official sources like 1981/82 Treasury report and the 1981 Bank Negara Annual Report.

This has serious implications for the unemployment situation. Due to the extraordinary growth experienced by Malaysia in 1976 – 1980, largely fueled by the unexpected increase in prices of our primary commodities (See 1975 prices in Table 1), our unemployment situation improved somewhat in this period as can be seen from Table 2. In fact in certain sectors, there is even a shortage of workers.

LAYOFFS AND RETRENCHMENT

Now with this downturn in the economy there is going to be reduced growth leading to unemployment in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. Eventually the effect will be felt also in the tertiary services sectors. Of course, the impact is not immediate in most cases. There

is always a time lag between a reduction of demand for goods, and cut-down in factory production. Often manufacturers will try to produce for stock, postpone layoffs by cancelling overtime, asking employees to take their leave or even work on shorter work weeks with a corresponding reduction in pay. But this cannot be prolonged; since there is no sign of recovery either in the West or the East, layoffs and retrenchment are going to take place, particularly in the sectors of economy which are very export-oriented such as electronics and textiles.

But even before that, school leavers and graduates from higher institutions are going to feel the pinch. Furthermore, the rapid upward mobility experienced by many young middle-class Malaysians is going to slow

TABLE 2 – SELECTED INDICATORS OF THE MALAYSIAN ECONOMY

Year	Real GDP growth (%)	Inflation rate (% increase in CPI) for Pen. Malaysia*	Unemployment rate %	Current Account Balance of Payments (M\$ million)
1976	11.6	2.6	6.4	+ 1,642
1977	7.6	4.7	6.3	+ 1,278
1978	7.5	3.9	6.2	+ 319
1979	8.5	3.6	6.4	+ 2,655
1980	8.0	6.7	5.3	– 542
1981	6.5	9.6	5.2	– 5,758

* The inflation rates for Sabah and Sarawak are much higher.

down. Surely all these will have considerable social consequences.

When the cake keeps on expanding ethnic frictions can be kept in abeyance. But when the cake does not expand as fast as before, or worse, stops expanding, then the ethnic conflict involved in sharing out the cake is going to be intense. We shall require rational and sensible leaders to avoid any unpleasant consequences.

In the past when there have been slowdowns in our economic growth, the government has intervened by creating demand for goods and services to compensate for the reduction of demand from the private sector. They can do this by increasing government spending on building roads, ports, opening up new land schemes, and so on. All these activities will then take care of the unemployment which might have resulted from the slowdown in the private sector.

In order to increase spending, the government will have to borrow money heavily to finance the deficit in the budget. Usually the government attempts to finance all of its operating expenditure from the operating revenue ending up with a small current surplus (See Table 3). Then, the development expenditure is financed largely by loans both foreign and local and a drawdown in assets. So when the Government wants to stimulate demand, it increases its spending which involves more borrowing.

Unfortunately, deficit spending on a large scale is not going to be painless. It can sow the seeds for a long-term persistent inflation as has been pointed out by Bank Negara in its 1981 Annual report. It is not a coincidence, then, that in the 70's increasing Federal Government

budget deficits have been accompanied by higher rates of inflation. The 1981 deficit is five times more than the 1975 deficit of \$1,896 million (See Table 3).

OVER OPTIMISTIC ASSUMPTIONS

The situation is going to be more serious in 1982. The government's budget figure for the operating revenue of \$17,497 million is based on what now turns out to be very optimistic assumptions. For example, the Treasury's estimate of the 1982 average rubber and tin prices are \$2.95 and \$34.70 per kilo respectively. Since the beginning of the year, the actual prices are nowhere near to these very hopeful estimates. Lower commodity prices affect government revenue in two ways. First, revenue from export duties on primary exports will decrease sharply since the export duty structure is a progressive one. In other words a 30% drop in the rubber price means a sharper drop in the export duty rates levied on rubber. Furthermore, with an actual decline in the volume of exports it will result in a very much lower collection of export duties. Second, lower prices for commodities means less income for companies and individuals involved in the production and export of rubber, tin, palm oil, petroleum, timber, cocoa and so on. Lower income results in lower income tax collections for the Inland Revenue Department.

While the government may have lower than expected revenues, operating expenditures are not going to be lower. Much of this expenditure is on salaries and related items. Without even additional spending over the budgeted figures, the deficit is clearly going to be much higher than the projected \$10,256 million. (See Table 3).

TABLE 3 - FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE (All figures are in M\$ million)

Year	Operating Revenue	Operating Expenditure	Development Expenditure	Overall Budget Deficit	Sources of finance		
					Loans		Change in assets and special receipts ^d
					Domestic	External	
1975	5,117	4,900	2,113	- 1,896	1,209	912	- 225
1976	6,157	5,828	2,334	- 2,005	1,636	369	- 0-
1977	7,760	7,398	3,138	- 2,776	1,887	535	+ 354
1978	8,841	8,041	3,699	- 2,899	1,165	541	+ 1,193
1979	10,505	10,040	4,151	- 3,686	2,507	679	+ 500
1980	13,835	13,617	7,331	- 7,113	2,311	310	+ 4,492
1981 ^a	15,252	14,790	8,611	- 8,149	3,300	2,891	+ 1,958
1981 ^b	15,678	14,761	10,673	- 9,756	4,106	2,903	+ 2,747
1982 ^c	17,683	17,319	10,434	- 10,070	-	-	-

Notes: a Treasury's latest estimate in Sept/Oct 1981

b Actual as reported in 1981 Bank Negara Annual Report

c 1982 Budget estimates

d A - indicates a build up of reserves while a + indicates a drawdown of assets.

As the readers can see from Table 3, we have resorted to heavy borrowings in the last few years. Debt servicing in the form of repayments and interest has increased from \$619 million in 1975 to \$2020 million in 1981. And with last year's mammoth borrowing the debt servicing figure this year is going to rise sharply. It will interest readers to know that 12.9 per cent of government revenue in 1981 went to debt-servicing.

As if this is not bad enough, the structure of the national debt is undergoing a disturbing change. Up to now foreign borrowing formed only a small portion of total borrowing. For example it formed only 21.3% and 11.8% of total borrowings in 1979 and 1980 respectively. However in 1981, it made up a very high 41.5% of the total borrowing. In absolute terms it is even more startling: net foreign borrowing was \$310 million in 1980 whereas in 1981 it jumped to a massive \$2,903 million, a nine-fold increase.

Thus servicing this foreign loan is going to worsen the already serious balance of payments situation. As shown in Table 1, the current account balance of payments i.e. the difference between exports and imports of goods and services has deteriorated seriously. The cumulative surplus of \$5352 million achieved during the Third Malaysia Plan period (1976 to 1980) was wiped out by the massive deficit of \$5,758 million in 1981 alone. In fact in 1981 we achieved history in our external trade when as the Bank Negara report states, "The merchandise account, the traditional source of strength in Malaysia's balance of payments, recorded a deficit of \$735 million for the first time". The services account which is the other component of the current account has always been in deficit. The payments which come under this are incomes repatriated by foreign companies, freight and insurance, payments for education abroad, travel and interest payments on foreign loans both by government and the private sector.

The balance of payments situation is going to be worse in 1982. The prices of most of our export items are lower while the quantity of some exports like tin and rubber is also going to be lower. The prices of imports which are mostly processed and manufactured items are expected to be higher. Thus the merchandise balance will suffer another deficit. At the same time, as the Bank Negara report says, "the deficit on services, which is characteristic of Malaysia's balance of payments, will continue to grow but moderately, mainly on account of higher payments for freight and insurance, and interest payments on foreign loans. As a result, the current account in 1982, as in 1981, is expected to show a large deficit".

Thus if the government wants to pursue stimulative demand policies to fight the recession, it will have to borrow locally and externally. Local borrowing means competing with the private sector for the limited funds available for lending which will then result in high interest rates; this may be counter productive as high interest rates will further deter any investment or spending by the private sector which in turn will affect the general

economic recovery. On the other hand foreign borrowing will worsen the already bad balance of payments situation, which in turn will weaken the Malaysian Ringgit. Furthermore, an expansionary policy can fuel inflation which will badly affect the lower income groups.

SHORT AND LONG TERM ALTERNATIVES

So what can be done to face this recession? We have to examine the long term and short term alternatives. In the long run we have to develop a more self-reliant economy so that we will not be affected by the periodic boom and bust economic cycle of the West. To become more self-reliant, a greater proportion of the Gross National Product (GNP) should be based on domestic demand and supply rather than imports and exports. For example, we should concentrate more on food production so that we can reduce food import bills which make up 11% of our imports in 1980. We have to upgrade the scientific base in our country so that we will be able to develop our own technology for the production of manufactured goods that are being imported now at great cost. But to do all this, Malaysia requires a thinking leadership which is at the same time far-sighted and creative. It also takes time and perseverance to achieve these goals.

However in the short-term, the government should re-examine its development plans. There has been some talk of pruning prestige projects. In the first instance, any efficient government will not squander its revenue on prestige projects like marble arches whether in good times or bad.

The following criteria should be used in reviewing the projects. Firstly, projects with a high foreign exchange component should be scrutinised carefully. If we axe such projects it will improve our balance of payments situation and lessen our need to borrow from foreign sources.

Secondly, projects which are very capital-intensive should be reconsidered. Such projects do not create a lot of jobs yet it absorbs much scarce funds. On top of it, to implement such projects we will have to depend very much on costly foreign expertise since we lack a scientific base.

Thirdly, projects which have an impact on income generation for the poor should not be shelved. For example, projects which provide tap water and electricity for rural areas and low cost houses for the urban poor should not be axed. Such projects benefit a proportionately large number of people. Moreover clean water can improve the health of the citizens thus reducing the demand for hospital services.

Fourthly, we should use this recessionary period to upgrade the skills and knowledge of workers and school-leavers by continuing industrial training schemes. This will enable us to have a pool of skilled workers for whom there is currently a great shortage.

Finally, all projects which end up creating a permanent bureaucracy should be avoided. On the

contrary projects should be such that once they are accomplished, the beneficiaries should be able to take over the management. For example land development schemes should not end up with a huge bureaucracy administering it after its completion like what is happening in FELDA and FELCRA. This kills the initiative and creativity of the settlers, breeds empire builders, creates duplication of tasks by different agencies, diverts scarce resources like building-materials into putting up fancy offices for the bureaucrats and increases inefficiency and corruption in general.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

These five criteria are not an exhaustive list. However they will suffice. Let us now look at some projects which may be axed. We have been told that the Kubang Kerian teaching hospital for the Universiti Sains Malaysia Medical School in Kelantan is going to be one of the largest if not the largest teaching hospital in the world. This is a project which will require a lot of foreign exchange but will create very few jobs for the cost

involved and have little impact on the ordinary people's health or wellbeing. It also requires a large bureaucracy to run the largest hospital in the world. If anything, it will cause severe inflation in the locality. If the government wants to improve the health of the Kelantanese, it should set up a wider system of health centres and cottage hospitals which do not require foreign expertise or foreign funds, and it should also ensure that every Kelantanese home has clean potable water supply. Very often small is indeed beautiful.

Another area where there can be massive cuts in spending is in defence. We are planning to buy a lot of hardware like planes and tanks which is a big drain on foreign exchange. Military spending may create a lot of jobs for Americans, Belgians and the French who sell this equipment to us but does not help at all in our employment situation. It does not have any benefit for the poor of the country and it causes inflation (just ask anyone living near a military base). These are just a few examples. Perhaps readers can write in to Aliran quarterly, giving their ideas on what other projects ought to be slashed.

"Justice for all"

GLOSSARY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CRUSADE

Compiled by Sammy C. Occena

1. *THEMOCRACY* – Regime of them, by them, and for them.
2. *THEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT* – Government off the people, buy the people, and fool the people.
3. *PARALIAMENTARY SYSTEM* – Fusion of executive and legislative powers in a themocratic government.
4. *YESSEMBLY* – Legislature of a themocratic government.
5. *PRIMED MINISTER* – The highest Yesficial in a paraliamentary government with a head of State/Government.
6. *YESFICIALS* – Officers of a themocratic government below the head of State/Government.
7. *YESSEMBLYMEN* – Lawmakers in a themocratic government.
8. *YADGES OR YESTICES* – Judges in a themocratic government.
9. *CHE!-LECTION* – The political exercise where Yesficials – equivalent to elected officials in a democratic government – are selected by means of multiplying ballots.
10. *SHOWCIALISM* – Philosophy of a themocratic government, characterized by excessive image building and by the "edifice complex."

MEDIA IMPERIALISM

Khor Yoke Lim

The current international debate on communication issues has highlighted the imbalances in information flow between developed and developing countries. Communication has become an exchange between unequal parties, where developing countries remain largely passive and captive importers of information.

The call for a new order arises from the awareness that communication is potentially a powerful political and economic tool as well as a means of shaping the intellectual creativity of mankind.

Politically, communicators are concerned that those in charge of the dissemination of information, control the means to influence public opinion. It is well-known that people form opinions and make decisions based on facts, knowledge and information.

To be fair, such problems exist not only on the international scale between rich and poor countries, but very much so at the national level too. A cursory glance at many Third World countries shows an increasing trend towards repression of freedoms (freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom to demonstrate, freedom to assemble) and the tendency by governments to harness the media to perpetuate their own interests.

The International Press Institute's annual world press freedom review for 1979 notes that 17 journalists lost their lives by violence and 69 newspapers were banned or suspended in that year.

In the field of economics, communication is vital in marketing products. Buying and selling of goods in competitive international markets requires instant transmission of information.

But Juan Somavia, Director of Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET), describes such information as "the vehicle for transmitting values and life styles to Third World countries which stimulate the type of consumption and the type of society necessary to the transnational system as a whole."

One of the inequalities in communication can be seen in the distribution of mass media facilities. It is tilted towards a minority segment of world population, that is the developed countries.

In North America, there is one copy of newspaper for every three persons on the average, but only one copy for 90 people in Africa and one for 15 people in Asia. Even within a particular region, the disparity between rich and poor countries is very wide. In Asia, Japan with 15% of Asia's population has 66% of press circulation, 46% of radio receivers, 63% of television sets and 89% of telephones in the region.

Similar inequalities exist in the distribution of radio and television. 78% of all radio receivers can be found in North America and Europe. It is said that in the United States, there are more radio receivers than inhabitants. In Africa the average is one receiver to 18 persons. As mentioned by Peter Enahoro in his article "Africa's Besieged Press", Africa has fewer newspapers, magazines, radios and televisions than any other region in the world.

There is one television receiver for every two persons in North America, one for every fewer persons in Europe and one for forty persons in Asia and the Middle East.

From the chart below, one can see that the difference between Group A and B is not very large. It is the difference between Group A and C that is most glaring.

While it is clear that there are more television sets in developed countries, almost every developing country has invested a lot of money in building broadcasting stations.

Yet, an inventory of television contents in various developing countries show that they have not been able to produce sufficient programmes domestically for their own broadcasts. Hence the need to import material to fill air-time.

Having invested in television technology, these

Countries*	Daily Press	Radio Receivers	TV Receivers	Cinema Attendance per inhabitant
	per 1000 inhabitants			
A. Countries with very low GNP	19.2	56.0	5.4	2.7
B. Countries with low GNP	19.0	57.2	27.5	1.1
B. Countries with high GNP	328.0	741.0	338.0	7.4

* Group A consists of countries with a gross national product per capita income of less than \$400, Group B, between \$400 and \$2,500 and Group C, consists of developed countries.

Source: International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, 1980.

countries are caught in the dilemma of having to rely on imported programmes from the developed countries while realising that such programmes transmit foreign cultural values which are not necessarily desirable.

A research on importation of television programmes (by Nordenstreng and Varis) showed that the percentage of imports in most developing countries varies from a third to one half of total broadcasting time.

The four major exporters of programmes are the United States, Great Britain, France and the Federal Republic of Germany. Following that are lesser giants including Japan, Hong Kong and Australia.

There are several reasons for this one-way traffic. One of these is financial – the producing countries are able to offer materials that cost less than the expense of producing similar materials in the developing countries. But since the majority of television sets are in developed countries, the producing companies' main concern is to cater to these majority tastes which are of course alien to developing countries.

Second, having invested in the new equipment ahead of the technological capability and skills, developing countries are faced with demands from both producers, advertisers and viewers who have invested in the technology, for materials to fill viewing-time.

More research has to be carried out to study the political impact of new communication technologies on the relationship between developed and developing countries. Today television programmes can be transmitted via satellite, microwave and laser beam. If linked with a central computer bank, it is possible to switch on the television for print outs on weather conditions, stock market results, and prices of meat in the supermarkets. Housewives might even be able to purchase by push button without having to go to the market.

But these opportunities are not without dangers. One can foresee that less developed nations, having limited resources and technological knowledge, will be perpetually dependent on developed countries for the software and hardware of these technology. As new technology advances, dependent countries will constantly be attempting to catch up but cannot succeed to be on par because technology changes so rapidly.

NEWS INFORMATION

Perhaps the most widely discussed issue on imbalances of communication flow is the way news information is dominated by five agencies namely, United Press International (UPI), Associated Press (AP), Reuters, Agence-France-Presse (AFP) and to a lesser extent, Tass.

All the board of directors of UPI and AP as well as most of their bureau chiefs in Latin American and Asian offices are nationals of the United States. Agence-France-Presse is partly supported by the French government. These five agencies produce 80% of all international news of which only 25% are coverage concerning the developing countries. Also, the agencies or their subsidiaries provide the bulk of economic and financial news. The Reuters

Economic Service for example is one of the most important economic news services in the world.

Subscribers to these news giants trustingly believe that the information they get are generally "liberal". However, as regards information that impinges on national interests of the home countries, pro-government slants are evident.

An example mentioned by Juan Somavia is that the foreign press frequently attached the label "marxist" President Salvador Allende but never "capitalist" President Nixon. Groups that react against governments friendly to the United States are labelled "extremists" or "guerillas". On the other hand, groups that rebel but are backed by the United States are described as patriotic.

After all, most news material are sent to a few news centers such as New York, London or Tokyo before it is transmitted to other countries. Therefore Malaysia may get its news about Nigeria via London or New York. Studies on the flow of foreign news in Malaysia and Bangladesh showed that whilst news about Asian countries form the bulk of foreign news reported in their local newspapers, about 50% of such news was received from one or the other giant news agencies, with Reuters occupying the top position. Thus, Malaysia gets more news about India through Reuters than India's own news agencies.

Another instance of news imbalance is in the distribution of coverage geographically. For instance, it is said that Vietnam ceased to be news after the Vietnam War. Events happening in smaller countries or developments in rural areas of developing countries are usually given less attention and coverage. In part this is the result of excessive consideration being given to the "marketability" of news by the majority of purchasers. Thus, treating news as a commercial product has contributed to the distortion in news coverage that we see these days.

Attempts are now being made by developing countries to increase exchange and circulation of news amongst themselves. But unfortunately, the lack of proper transmission facilities prevents some countries from transmitting their news directly to even neighbouring countries. This is true of Bangladesh which has no transmission facilities to many neighbouring news agencies except to the Press Trust of India (PTI).

In 1975 the non-aligned countries organised a pool of national news agencies. Tanjug, the Yugoslavia national news agency was appointed to administer the pool. Other regional arrangements have been set up to increase exchanges of news among member countries. Example of such arrangements include ASEAN, African News Agency (PANA) and Caribbean News Agency (CANA).

But it is salutary to bear in mind the warning in the MacBride Report that "the decolonization of information must not serve as a pretext for bringing information under the exclusive control of government authorities."

Let us hope that ensuing efforts to rectify the imbalances described above will bring about a fair and equal exchange of information within and between all nations.

EL SALVADOR: THE NEXT "VIETNAM"?

Subramaniam Sithambaram

"I don't see why we need to stand by and permit a country to go Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people" – Henry Kissinger, 1970.

"It is not intervention in another country's affairs for the U.S. to support friendly governments facing revolution" – George Bush (former CIA chief and present U.S. Vice President), 1978.

The current Falkland Islands crisis has diverted public attention from the political crisis in El Salvador, a Central American republic right at the backyard of the United States. The seven Central American nations, which make up the narrow limb connecting Mexico in North America to Colombia in South America, all have a history of foreign military intervention (mostly by U.S. Marines) and, with the exception of democratic Costa Rica, of military coups, revolutions and right wing dictatorships. It is a region of vital strategic interest to the United States because of the Panama Canal and the proximity of the largest oil exporting nations outside West Asia i.e. Mexico and Venezuela, the fifth and sixth largest producers of oil in the world.

Economically, all the Central American countries are in the doldrums. The chief exports are coffee, cotton, sugar and bananas (hence the term "banana republics"). El Salvador is the most densely populated country in Latin America with a population of about 4½ million. Its Gross National Product has declined by 25 per cent in the last three years. Since coffee was introduced about a hundred years ago, more and more of the arable land has come under the control of an oligarchy of related families. Today, this oligarchy known as '14 Families' controls most of the industry, finance and agriculture in El Salvador. Of course, they are the kingmakers in El Salvadorean politics.

The last free election was in 1930. Since a 1932 peasant rebellion, the army has been in control of El Salvador together with the cooperation of the '14 Families'. The army has ruled longer than in any other Latin American country. As *South: The Third World Magazine* (March 1981 issue) says: "For years the occasional election was easily won by a candidate of the families and the armed forces. In the last decade, though, victories by the opposition Social Democrat, Christian Democrat and Communist parties were only fended off by blatant electoral fraud. Dissidence became increasingly extra-parliamentary. Guerrilla groups and church-sponsored

peasant organisations were followed by the broad based 'organizaciones populares'. The regime's answer was blanket repression".

In October, 1979, a coup by reformist-minded junior army officers resulted in the installation of Jose Napoleon Duarte, the leader of the Christian Democrats, as the president of a new civilian-military junta which has tried to institute certain land reforms. Although there has been conflicting reports, the reforms have fallen short of its aim. As expected, the '14 Families' oligarchy has become a real obstacle to these limited reforms, since they threaten their power base. The violence has escalated since then, reaching its peak early this year. Since 1980, about 30,000 people, mostly civilians have been killed.

FOUR FACTIONS

The various factions involved in the conflict can be divided into four distinct groups. On the extreme right is a coalition of anti-communist, anti-socialist right wing parties like ARENA and the National Reconciliation Party, usually associated with the violence against people in El Salvador. Their leader, Roberto D'Aubission, 38, from ARENA, is a former army major linked to rightist terrorist groups and has been described by Robert White, a former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, as 'a pathological killer'. He is now the new Speaker for the National Assembly and is in effective control of the new government. The far right has the backing of the majority of the '14 Families' oligarchy, senior officers of the local army and, more important, the Pentagon and other right wing factions in the Reagan administration.

The second group is the right-of-centre Christian Democrats, headed by Duarte. This group commands some support in the army as well as the bureaucracy and among some of the more liberal members of '14 Families' oligarchy. They are also backed by the Christian Democratic parties of Latin America and segments of the Reagan administration.

The third group, the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), is a coalition of centrist groups like the Social Democrats, Roman Catholic lay leaders and priests, students, labour and the small businessmen. They command widespread support in the urban centres as well as parts of the rural area. The FDR is backed by the Social Democratic parties of Western Europe and Latin America. In fact Mexico and France have insisted that the FDR must play a meaningful role in any negotiations for a peaceful settlement.

Finally on the left is the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), a coalition of guerrilla groups who have the sympathy of Cuba and to some extent Nicaragua. Though they number only about six thousand, they have many peasant supporters in the countryside, especially among the Indians, which enables them to move "freely through more than a third of the countryside, strike the junta's strongholds at will and outmanoeuvre government troops advised and outfitted by the United States" (*Newsweek*/March 1, 1982). But it must be noted that the FMLN and FDR are now working together with a common program to rid El Salvador of U.S. influence, to set up a "national democratic and revolutionary government" and to initiate radical socio-economic reforms for the masses.

The conflict between the right and the left has made violence a fact of life everywhere in El Salvador. There is a distinct difference in the nature of violence meted out by the extreme right and left. To quote a *New York Times* report: "The left, for the most part, conducts its violence against property. Pipes and wires are ruptured and cut This makes the people angry. The extreme right, for the most part, conducts its violence against people. . . . far-rightists still conduct fatal forays against those who are suspected guerrillas or guerrilla sympathisers, or who may become either. This makes people terrified." Church leaders who are sympathetic to the FDR or FMLN often get killed. For example, on March 24, 1980, Archbishop Oscar Romero while celebrating mass was assassinated by suspected rightist terrorists. His 'crime' was denouncing violations of human rights by the armed forces and championing the poor and oppressed in his country. In March, this year, 4 Dutch journalists were killed by El Salvadorean troops for writing stories unfavourable to the right. About that time the UPI reported that the right wing Anti-Communist Alliance of El Salvador has vowed to kill 35 other foreign and local journalists attached to the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, AP, UPI, ABC, NBC, CBS etc., whom they accused of being accomplices of the left, for their coverage unfavourable to the right.

The carnage, in proportion to El Salvador's small population, surpasses any other in the world. Reagan and his cronies in Washington have been blaming the Soviet Union and Cuba for all this violence. They claim that the Soviet Union, through its proxy Cuba which in turn through its proxy Nicaragua, El Salvador's neighbour, has been channelling arms to the El Salvadorean rebels. These charges have been vigorously denied by Miguel D'Escoto, Nicaragua's foreign minister, a Maryknoll missionary priest turned revolutionary minister. The Reagan administration refuses to see the underlying causes of the instability. As *Newsweek* (March 1, 1980) the respected establishment magazine says, "Despite their ample support and sympathy for the rebels, Castro and the Sandinistas (from Nicaragua) are hardly the cause of Central American

turmoil. Decades of poverty and repression by various dictators have planted most of the seeds of revolution Even if Reagan could stamp out the subversion of Castro and the Sandinistas, enough homegrown problems would remain to keep Central America ablaze." Right now, Reagan is threatening to invade Nicaragua; Secretary of State Alexander Haig, the General of Vietnam fame, has refused to rule out armed intervention in El Salvador or Nicaragua.

But the proposed U.S. armed intervention in El Salvador has attracted strong opposition domestically. Americans have not forgotten the trauma of their experience in Vietnam. There have been massive public protests and demonstrations across the country. (Incidentally, Ed Asner of Lou Grant fame has led actors and others in the movie industry in some of these protests against U.S. involvement in El Salvador).

GENERAL ELECTION

Meanwhile to placate the public at home and their allies in Europe, the Reagan administration and the junta went through the motions of a general election in El Salvador. The elections were held on March 28, 1982. The elections excluded the opposition FDR and FMLN, took place in a country torn by war, with 300,000 people out of the country. Both FDR and FMLN asked the public to boycott the elections. But there was a very large turnout and the rightists emerged victors with 36 seats in the assembly. The Christian Democrats won the remaining 24 seats in the 60 member assembly.

Predictably, Reagan, and the junta's other equally vicious allies in Latin America, hailed the large turnout as a victory for democracy and rejection of the centrists and leftists. But a recent *International Herald Tribune* story highlighting the report on this election by Lord Pratab Chitnis for the British Parliament's human rights group to be presented soon to the House of Lords has been more illuminating. It says that "Lord Chitnis is an experienced observer of difficult Third World elections, including the 'internal election' in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The Chitnis report makes the following observations:

- All who voted had to have their hands and identity cards marked with indelible ink, which imposed considerable psychological pressure on people to vote as it provided a permanent record that could be checked later.
- When electors came to vote, their names were recorded in a list; knowing the fearsome role 'lists' have played in the repression in El Salvador, this was clearly one which any intelligent El Salvadorean would want to be on.
- The guerrillas recognising the intolerable pressure on the population to vote did not disrupt the elections.

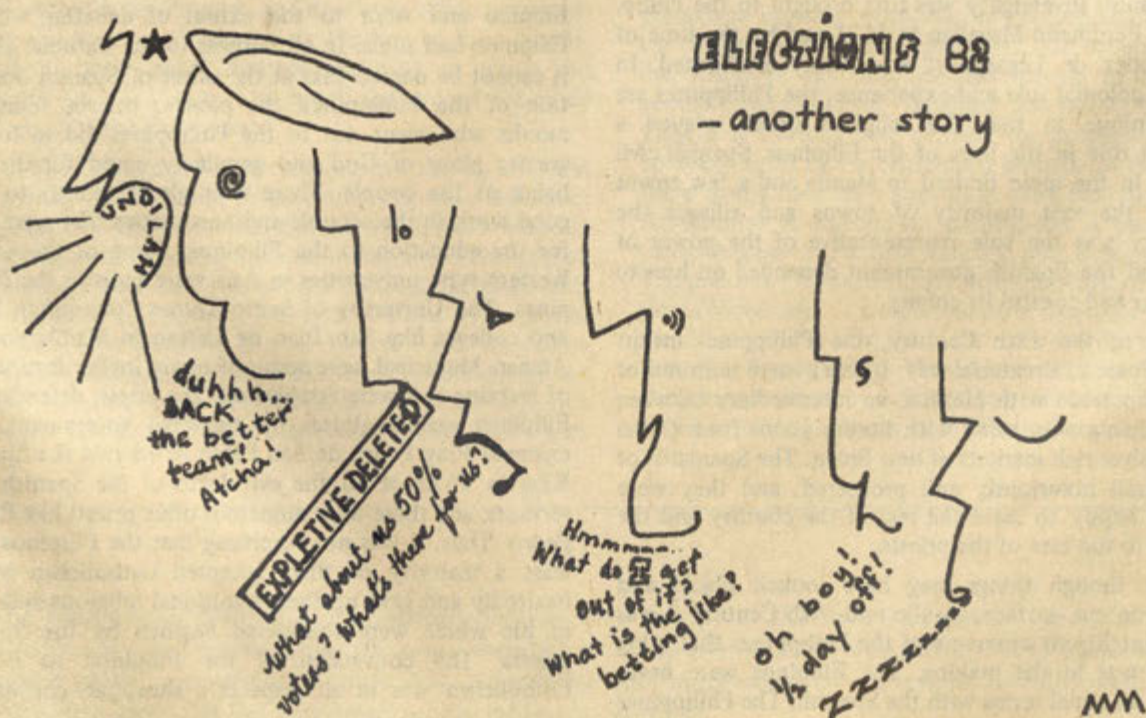
In his opinion, the right, and in particular ARENA, the party headed by D'Aubission does not reflect the will of the people. The pressure was to vote for the people who control the killing. If records were to be kept, the electors wanted to be on the side of those with access to the lists. He believes that had the elections been really free, the real preference would have been for a Christian Democratic-FDR coalition."

Meanwhile, the new assembly has elected that 'pathological killer' Roberto D'Aubission as speaker. The right wing controls 11 out of 14 Cabinet posts including the key ministries of Interior and Finance. The other three posts went to the outgoing Christian Democrats. The new provisional President is a compromise candidate. He is Alvaro Alfredo Magana, a former banker who enjoys the confidence of the army (El Salvador's permanent government), the Christian Democrats, and the U.S. embassy. Indeed he has been imposed on the rightists by the pressure of the U.S. Administration.

Thus it appears that El Salvador's unhappy problems are not going to end. The Americans are hoping to solve the problem by increasing military (US\$81 million last year) and economic (US\$104.5 million last year) aid.

This will only give ammunition to the right to escalate their carnage on the unfortunate Salvadoreans.

Another alternative outcome could be a military action by younger army officers against the government in the spirit of the 1979 coup that led to some attempts at land reforms. But there can be no end to the tragedy as long as fundamental problems of economic and political concentration of wealth and power, respectively, exploitation and lack of basic civil liberties, are not solved. And in attempting to find solutions, all the various parties including FDR and FMLN guerrillas must be involved while the ever-interfering Americans and Soviet Union are kept out.



THE PROPAGANDA MOVEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Ariffin Omar

The following is a short account of the propaganda movement of the Philippines and of its role in the spreading of Filipino national consciousness.

To understand the importance of the role of the Propaganda Movement in the Philippines, we have to look into the context of the times in which it operated.

Spanish sovereignty was first brought to the Philippines by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521 and by the time of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, it was firmly established. In terms of colonial rule and experience, the Philippines are rather unique in that the religious orders played a dominant role in the lives of the Filipinos. Spanish civil rule was in the main limited to Manila and a few towns while in the vast majority of towns and villages the missionary was the sole representative of the power of Spain, and the Spanish government depended on him to administer and control its colony.

Up to the 18th Century, the Philippines meant little to Spain in a material way. It was a mere terminus of the galleon trade with Mexico, an intermediary between the merchants who came with luxury goods from China and the silver rich markets of new Spain. The Spaniards of Manila lived luxuriously and prospered, and they were generally happy to leave the rest of the country and the Filipinos to the care of the priests.

But though things may have looked placid and peaceful on the surface, by the mid-19th Century it was clear to intelligent observers of the Philippines that a big upheaval was in the making. The Filipinos were never accepted on equal terms with the Spanish. The Philippines had no representation in the Cortes (national assembly) of Spain even though she was considered to be a Spanish province and not a colony. The Cortes was a congress which had representatives from overseas provinces like Mexico and Cuba. Filipinos could only hope to reach the rank of a *gobernadorcillo* which was very low in the administrative hierarchy. All Filipinos had to pay tribute

(tributos), 40 days of compulsory labour per year. The Filipino was regarded as a native (*Inctro*) who "is no more than a big child, whose facial and bodily characteristics continually bring to mind . . . the Darwinian theory and the anthropoid ancestry of these people".

This scurrilous view of the Filipino was not the sole monopoly of Spanish civil officers. Even the Spanish priests, friars, monks etc. entertained such a view of the Filipino and went to the extent of debating whether Filipinos had souls. In all fairness to the Catholic church it cannot be denied that at the onset of Spanish domination of the Philippines, the pioneer priests, friars and monks who went out to the Philippines did so for the greater glory of God and genuinely cared for the well being of the people. There is ample testimony to their good work in the schools and universities that were built for the education to the Filipinos. Some of the earliest Western-type universities in Asia were built in the Philippines. The University of Santo Tomas, founded in 1611, and colleges like San Juan de Letran in Manila and the Ateneo Municipal were some of many higher institutions of learning that were established. The priests defended the Filipinos against abuses by the civil government. For example Fray Pedro de San Pablo petitioned the Spanish King in 1620 of all the evil deeds of the Spanish civil servants, and there were numerous other priests like Father Pedro. Thus, it was not surprising that the Filipinos or at least a majority of them accepted Catholicism wholeheartedly and gave up their traditional religions and ways of life which were considered heathen by the Spanish priests. The conversion of the Filipinos to Roman Catholicism was in all respects a thorough conversion.

But with the passage of time, sincere and dedicated priests were replaced by evil and heartless men who used and abused religion to suit their desires. By the time the educated Filipinos were in a position to request that they be treated as equals, things had turned from bad to worse. Those young dedicated Filipinos who loved their country and people found that they could not even discuss the

plight of the Filipinos in their own country. The Spanish authorities had unleashed a reign of terror and fear. Deportations, banishments, detention without trial, conviction and execution as a result of false charges were commonplace. Hope was lost completely when the Spanish executed three Filipino priests, Burgos, Gomez and Zamora, on the false charge of starting a rebellion. These martyrs were executed in 1872 and their execution hastened the growth of Filipino nationalism.

When the Propaganda Movement started in Spain (it was very unsafe to operate in the Philippines), the atmosphere was right for it. The movement was founded by men like Dr. Jose Rizal, a gifted physician and novelist; Marcelo K. del Pilar, a lawyer-newspaperman; and Graciano Lopez Jaena who was an orator-satirist. There were also a number of other Filipinos who were involved in it and who became famous during the Philippine revolution.

The aims of the Propaganda Movement were equality before the law for Filipinos and Spaniards, assimilation of the Philippines as a regular province of Spain, representation in the Cortes for the Philippines, secularization of the Philippine parishes and basic human rights. Thus, it was obvious to many that the Propaganda Movement was not a radical or a revolutionary movement; instead, it functioned as a reform movement. These men who supported the Propaganda with their pens, tongues and even with their money and lives were called propagandists and they were 'steeped in the lore of their people, loyal to their racial heritage, brilliant in mind and patriotic in spirit, sincere in heart and indeed the pride and glory of the Philippines.'

The Propaganda Movement carried out its activities by writing articles to the press, countering racist lies about the Filipinos and even founded La Solidaridad with the avowed aim of exposing Spanish abuses in the Philippines, promoting liberal and democratic values and championing the rights of the oppressed Filipinos. Rizal wrote novels like *Noli Me Tangere* (Social Cancer) and *El Filibusterismo* (The Reign of Greed). These novels depict the tragic romance between Ibarra, an educated and rich Filipino youth and Maria Clara, the symbol of Filipino

womanhood; the heroic sacrifice of Elias, who gave up his life so that Ibarra could escape from the minions of Spanish law, and the unsuccessful vengeance of the same Ibarra who returned disguised as the rich jeweler, Simoun. Rizal also wrote poetry in praise of his people and homeland. Del Pilar wrote articles and pamphlets denouncing Spanish abuses. Likewise Lopez Jaena used his oratorical skills to expose Spanish injustices.

However, despite their gallant efforts and laudable aims, the Spanish authorities both in Spain and Manila turned a deaf ear to their pleas for reform. From a pragmatic point of view the Propaganda Movement failed to achieve its aim i.e. to bring about reforms. The fate of many of the propagandists who fought for the Philippines are a cause of intense sorrow to those who love freedom. Men like Marcelo del Pilar, Lopez Jaena and Jose Ma. Panganiban died in abject poverty ridiculed by their vicious enemies. Dr. Jose Rizal faced death at the hands of a firing squad on the trumped-up charges of fomenting and leading the Philippine Revolution of 1896.

These men gave their wealth, their youth, energy and finally even their lives for their beloved nation. But did they die in vain? Historically, their deaths were the catalyst that sparked off the revolution that expelled the repressive Spanish regime from the Philippines. Dr. Jose Rizal and his fellow reformers were well aware that a premature uprising would be an unmitigated disaster for the Philippines. Without the ideas, the programmes and the vision of the propagandists serving to awaken the people's consciousness, rebellion was doomed to failure. Thus it is obvious that without the propagandists giving coherent form to the nationalist struggle of the Filipinos, there would have been a revolt in 1896 but certainly not a Revolution. A Revolution presupposes a people with a consciousness of its own identity and unity as a nation. The creation of that identity was the work of the Propaganda Movement. It would therefore be unwise to say that the Movement was a failure. It failed only in the sense that the Propagandists themselves did not bring about change; instead, it was their vision and ideas that brought about permanent change in the Philippines.

The pleasure in complete domination over another person is the very essence of the sadistic drive. Another way of formulating the same thought is to say that the aim of sadism is to transform a man into a thing, something animate into something inanimate since by complete and absolute control the living loses the one essential quality of life - freedom.

Eric Fromm,

THE REAL MALAYSIAN

J.C. Forou

There was a prelude to that opening chapter, the fifties, when a new society was being born. It began with the trauma caused by the Japanese when they temporarily "borrowed" the country from another long term borrower. The latter returned in the mid-forties and was surprised that: "the natives are restless, Tuan."

Swift changes followed. The Malayan Union proposal. The birth of political parties. The Emergency (the first one). Booming economy. The first colonial elections – now seems so quaint, those open-air movies at rallies – ("what is a rally, mummy? "Must be some kind of motor sport, dear" – circa 1980s)

Raju was born in 1945 to local-born parents, themselves young and unsettled, uprooted because of the war.

During the next decade, Raju was subjected to the fluctuating fortunes of his family which settled in a large town on the west coast. His grandfather, a goldsmith, established his reputation and became a community leader. Raju absorbed a lot on his grandpa's lap – the images of India, classical songs, dreams for the future and what was expected of the first born Indian male.

Meanwhile, outside the self-serving dimension of the Indian enclave, the Emergency was proclaimed shortly after the furore over the Malayan Union. The ravages and inconvenience of war returned after the brief respite following the Japanese surrender.

The political process was gathering momentum towards self-rule, the first national elections and eventual independence in 1957.

Raju's father did not follow his father's trade but by virtue of being English-educated he became a teacher. A small but vital change in family outlook. Young Raju developed new awareness: school-centredness, cross-cultural communication, pursuit of academic excellence, and what the macro-world (called Malaya) was all about.

Little did he know that he was part of that generation which bridged the colonial and post-colonial Malaya; the first of several generations to undergo rapid changes in their relations with the real society. He was the first to live through what the elders could only contemplate – the emergence of the new Malaysian persona.

On the personal side, Raju was as Indian as the next. At home, his parents force-fed him with all the Indianness at their disposal.

Yet it was the English language which became his window on the world. He did well in school, achieving his share of honours and expecting recognition.

The country in the meantime was roller-coasting, through the official ending of Emergency, the "Merger" with Singapore, the dispute of the "Sabah Claim" with the Philippines, "Konfrontasi" with Indonesia, the Cobbold Commission in Borneo and then the fateful events of 1969 and 1970.

Raju, swept by natural momentum, dutifully went through a local university and then found himself a cultural hybrid of sorts. There was now the full realisation of the importance and pre-eminence of the Malay ethos.

The Malay language was replacing English. The Malay community's aspirations were finally reaching his understanding. As a teacher, his first of several jobs after graduation, he was now part of the young professionals who were carving out their niche in a sea of social and political turbulence.

Raju's bewilderment: He is Malaysian by legal definition. His Indian past often conflicted with his Western exposure. Augmented by overseas experience in East and West. And this in turn conflicted with what he thought being Malaysian involved.

Friends and peers only compounded this dilemma. In his consciousness the question keeps ringing "Will the real Malaysian please stand up?"

Now he looks around him and notices the physical manifestations of a young and fast developing country. An economic boom unprecedented in its short modern history has swept in vast changes. The urban skyline rapidly changes. The cost of living spirals upwards. A stable government keeps pushing towards its goals, pausing little for breath or for other opinions.

Yet it appears very difficult for Raju and his generation to feel the pulse of the nation. If there is a soul, then it has always eluded him. His motivations are not bolstered by any spiritual base which could offer sound guidance as he journeys pell-mell into a future, shock waves leaving him washed up on the shores of apathy and discontent.

It has been slowly dawning on him that he is part of the vanguard of that soul-searching army casting about for the random elements upon which is bred a cultural context, an identity, a definitive set of values and aspirations. He realises that all that which exists around him are but fission matter, material in the cultural breeder reactor which even now is at work.

That work will never cease. It will go on willy nilly, notwithstanding and largely indifferent to manipulations, claims and predictions.

Some call it destiny.

continued from page 12

the 10 seats it was allocated and the only Parliamentary constituency it contested in Kelantan.

Gaining at Berjasa's expense was one thing; PAS also benefitted from clique conflicts within Kelantan UMNO. It has been suggested that following the Musa Hitam-Tunku Razaleigh contest for the Deputy Presidency of UMNO in July 1981, a pro-Musa group had grown around the state's Deputy Menteri Besar, Datuk Hussein Ahmad. A divisional election, it is alleged, reflected this clash between Razaleigh's and Hussein's supporters. Even in 1959 when PAS first gained control in Kelantan, internal feuds in UMNO was one of the many reasons for its victory.

Finally, the 4 years of Barisan rule had tarnished somewhat its administrative image. Penghulus, known to be sympathetic to PAS or even Berjasa, were transferred or dismissed according to certain sources. This created a lot of indignation. PAS kampongs were openly discriminated against when it came to providing public amenities like piped water and electricity. To make it worse, it was even whispered that certain important figures in the state government were involved in corrupt practices. Their wealth and ostentatious life-styles were allegedly the evidence.

From our analysis, then, it appears that the situation and circumstance rather than the individual or the organisation contributed to PAS's resurgence in Kelantan.

In Trengganu its performance was not as good though it obtained 5 state seats when it had none in 1978. It failed to win any Parliamentary seat in 1982 as in 1978.

Lopsided development also had something to do with PAS's ability to make inroads in Trengganu. Oil wealth has given rise to a new elite with a standard of living that is conspicuously higher than that of the average person in the state. As in Kelantan, though on a smaller scale, the emergence of this elite has distorted the value of properties, rentals, market prices. It has created a demand for new types of goods and services which in turn has had some effect upon the purchasing habits of the population. The ordinary people have become more conscious of income disparities, of contradictory life-styles. Support for PAS is, in a sense, their way of protesting against the kind of economic and social change that is taking place in parts of Trengganu.

However, the developmental question here does not seem to bear any ethnic connotation. This may be because Trengganu does not have a strong indigenous trading community capable of reacting to non-indigenous capital from outside. Moreover, PAS leaders in Trengganu, like Abdul Hadi Awang, are less prone to confusing ethnicity with Islam.

If ethnicity has been less of a factor, the impact of leaders has been much more of an important element in Trengganu than in Kelantan. The appeal of its local leader, Hadi, in particular, helped to draw a lot of people to PAS. PAS leaders had also done impressive grass-roots work spreading the party's message to remote rural communities.

In contrast to Trengganu where it made some progress, PAS in Kedah lost considerable support. It won only 2 state seats and 1 Parliamentary seat compared to 7 and 2 respectively in 1978.

PAS's decline can be attributed to two main factors. Since the last election, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad has become Prime Minister. It is not unusual when a ruling party is performing well at the polls for the state or province from where the leader hails to put up an extraordinarily good showing. The party somehow enjoys enhanced credibility in that particular area. In Malaysia, this is reinforced by the Malay trait of 'loyalty to the leader'.

Quite apart from this, PAS in Kedah evinces the clearest signs of an on-going tussle for power in the party between the 'old guards' and the 'young turks'. Unlike Kelantan where the old guards under party President, Datuk Asri Muda are in control, and unlike Trengganu where the young turks are in charge, Kedah PAS has both camps in it, each wielding considerable influence. On the one hand, there are old guard leaders like Datuk Abu Bakar Umar and Datuk Sudin Wahab; on the other hand, there are young turks like Fadhil Noor and Ahmad Nakhaie.

The conflict between these two camps affected PAS's performance in a number of crucial areas. It is a conflict that is not likely to be resolved in the near future.

SPECIAL CASES: Sabah and Sarawak

When we turn from the 'Malay belt' to Sabah a different picture emerges. Before the elections, political pundits had predicted that by fielding its own independents against United Sabah National Organisation (USNO) candidates, Berjaya would reduce the Barisan's overall majority. And this is precisely what happened. Berjaya retained 10 out of the 11 Parliamentary constituencies allocated to it losing 1 to the DAP while Berjaya 'independents' defeated all 5 USNO candidates. This means that officially the Barisan had secured only 10 out of the 16 seats in Sabah.

Berjaya, the ruling party in Kota Kinabalu, has always felt that it should be the only representative of the Barisan in Sabah. In every election and by-election it has tried to prove to Kuala Lumpur that USNO has no support and should be discarded as a Barisan member.

However, USNO has friends within the Federal Cabinet. Besides, Berjaya Chief Minister, Datuk Harris Salleh, is said to be linked to individuals in the Cabinet and in the Barisan who are not particularly close to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. Datuk Harris's political style has also alienated the top leadership in Kuala Lumpur.

By pitting independents against a coalition partner, Datuk Harris had defied party discipline and further antagonised Dr. Mahathir. More important, he continues

to regard the 5 independents as Berjaya members though Dr. Mahathir has made it very clear that they are not Barisan members of Parliament.

How this simmering feud between Kota Kinabalu and Kuala Lumpur will be resolved — rather than the outcome of the elections — is the crucial question for the future of Sabah.

In Sarawak, it is not inter-party disagreement within the Barisan coalition but the communalization of politics and intra-clique conflict within the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), one of the Barisan partners, that explain its electoral losses. Out of 24 seats, the Barisan conceded 3 Parliamentary constituencies to independents and 2 to the DAP.

It is important to observe that in the first few years after the formation of Malaysia, Sarawak politics was less communal than it is today. The introduction of economic and political policies with obvious communal overtones inspired by the experience in Peninsular Malaysia is one of the major reasons behind this change.

Consequently, Pesaka-Bumiputra Bersatu (PBB), the main Barisan party in Sarawak, performs and is perceived as a Bumiputra party, more inclined to the interests of the Muslims in its midst. There is therefore pressure upon SNAP to operate as a non-Muslim Bumiputra party or as a pure Iban party. This is the essence of the conflict between Datuk James Wong, SNAP President, and Datuk Leo Moggie, Federal Minister from SNAP. Datuk Wong wants SNAP to remain a multi-ethnic party catering for all including the Chinese, while Moggie, it is suggested, would like the party to be identified with the Ibans. Arising from this conflict, the Moggie faction fielded independents against SNAP candidates and won in 3 constituencies.

The Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), the other coalition partner, is also caught in this dilemma. It has long been a multi-ethnic party of sorts with both Chinese and Iban support. But because of the ethnic impact, it is being forced more and more to project itself as a Chinese party. Its inability to do so explains to some extent the success of the Chinese-oriented DAP in 2 urban constituencies.

It may be observed, in this connection, that Sabah politics was also developing along ethnic lines under the influence of Peninsula Malaysia. With multi-ethnic Berjaya in power since 1976, this trend has been arrested for the time being mainly because the government has shrewdly avoided being identified with any particular ethnic group.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Having examined the performance of various electoral contenders in former opposition urban strongholds, in Kelantan, Trengganu and Kedah and in Sabah and Sarawak, it is now necessary to look at the 1982 election and the Barisan's success in particular from a general perspective. The reasons that explain the Barisan's overall performance should not be regarded as in-

applicable to those special cases we have studied. Indeed, many of the reasons we will be putting forth were perhaps decisive in ensuring certain Barisan victories. But the difference is this: they are valid not just for particular areas but the country as a whole. Hence their inclusion under this heading.

Given the fact that the majority of seats in Peninsular Malaysia are rural, one has to recognise the influence of certain values in Malay political culture which may account for the continued dominance of the UMNO — led Barisan Nasional. Of these values, a strong sense of attachment to state authority may well be the most crucial.

As long as there is the feeling that authority is right and good by virtue of the fact that it is authority, the ruling Barisan will have an advantage over most competitors. This attachment to authority which we have also referred to previously as the 'loyalty to leader' trait is a product of the feudal background of Malay society. The only other form of attachment that has been able to rival this in Malay politics is the community's relationship to Islam. This is one of the factors responsible for the continuous presence of PAS as a political force. However, there are other sociological changes which are eroding the strength of this attachment to authority.

Be that as it may, the emergence of a new leader rekindles the potency of this relationship. New hopes and new expectations are aroused. Faith and allegiance in the leader are expressed in unquestioning terms. This has been the impact of Dr. Mahathir's assumption of the mantle of authority. It was undoubtedly an asset to the Barisan as a whole in the elections.

However, the Mahathir administration has made an impact in a much more modern manner. Dr. Mahathir and the Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam, are perceived by a substantial segment of the English-educated middle-class and perhaps the urban population at large as a different breed of leaders. The 2-M image is one of dedicated men determined to fight corruption, create a more efficient bureaucracy and make government serve the people. Some of their actions have of course lent credence to this public image. But in the ultimate analysis, it is an image born of future hope rather than present reality.

Since the middle-class is convinced of the worth of the 2M leadership, a significant portion of ordinary people too would have been persuaded for the simple reason that the power-brokers in politics and the opinion-makers in the media are from that class. In this connection, it is quite conceivable that among minorities like the Indians or Eurasians, the positive orientation of their middle-class towards the 2M leadership would have had a great impact upon the electoral choice of the rest of the community.

The other person whose presence in UMNO and the Barisan may have made some difference to the voting pattern is Anwar Ibrahim, the former Muslim youth leader.

Among Malay youths in the cities where there has been a resurgent interest in Islam in the last decade, he commanded a great deal of influence. It is not unlikely that his popularity extended to urban Malay populations as a whole in some areas. His joining UMNO on the eve of the elections may have persuaded his followers to vote that party or stay away from the polls. Either way, it may explain to some extent the decline in support for PAS candidates in certain constituencies in Kuala Lumpur and other cities.

More than attachment to authority or the 2M image and Anwar, the Barisan's cynical use of the privileges of incumbency also helped it to score a landslide victory. Of course, in every election, the ruling coalition has used government ministries like information, education and public utilities, and government servants like District officers and Penghulus for electoral purposes. This time, however, it was conspicuously more blatant than at any point in the past.

On nomination day itself, a senior minister arrived in a Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) helicopter to file his nomination papers. Top Barisan leaders in their capacities as government leaders must have launched more projects and officiated at more ceremonies in the two weeks of the campaign than in the two preceding months. For a caretaker government, the Barisan was unusually active!

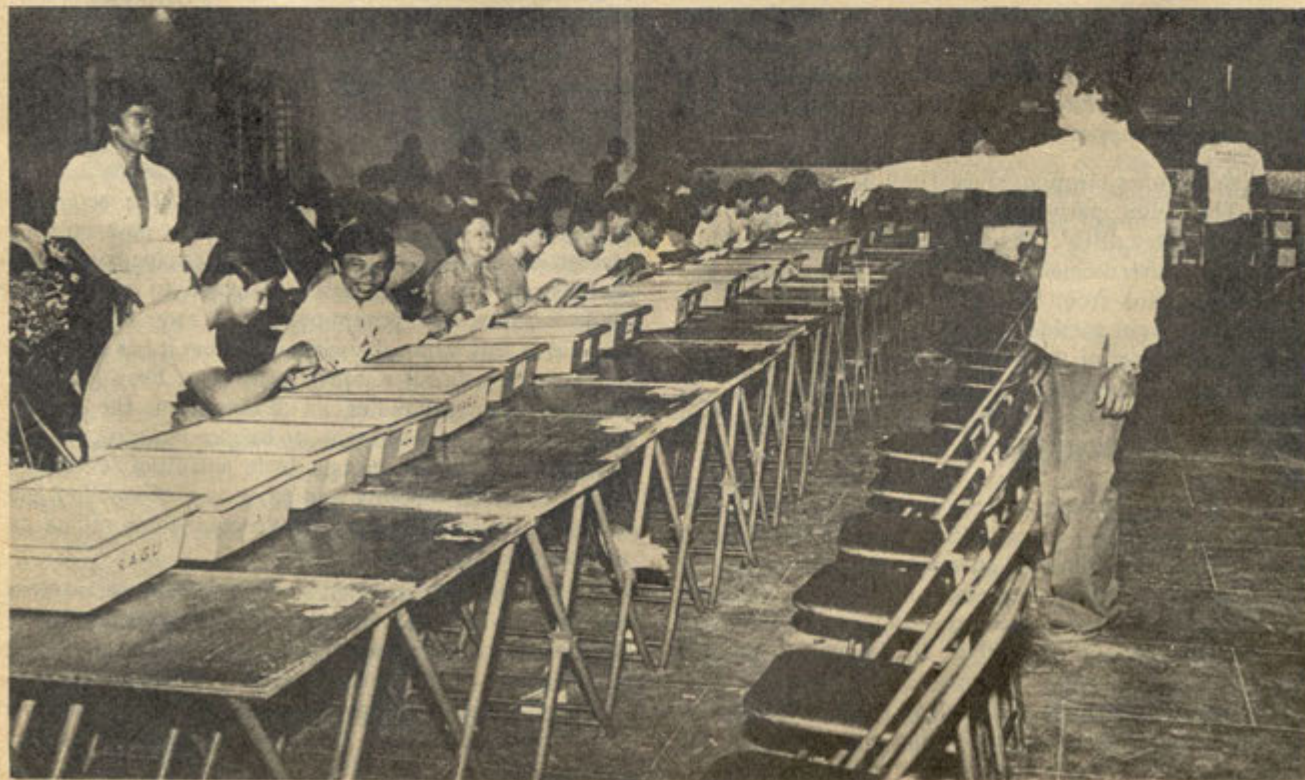
The unwillingness to observe some of the restraints of a caretaker government was obvious in other ways too. Administrative policy decisions like allowing tenants to purchase flats were made on the spot. Money was

disbursed for all sorts of government programmes in crucial constituencies. Even the Acting Datuk Bandar of Kuala Lumpur — a civil servant — appeared together with the Chairman of the Barisan, Dr. Mahathir, at a political function for the party's candidate in one of the city's constituencies.

Wielding the instruments of power during an election campaign serves a number of purposes. First, it helps to remind the voters that the party has been the government, is the government, and therefore should be the government. Second, by giving aid to the people, by launching projects for the people, the party creates hopes in the people for the future. It is a crafty way of influencing them to vote for the party. Third, providing assistance during such a vital period also ensures that the recipients will be grateful. Out of gratitude, it is hoped, that they would support the party. Finally the display of power and authority tends to impress people; it overawes them. It is conceivable that this in turn would persuade quite a few to back the ruling party.

If the use of state facilities was crucial for the Barisan, the role of the media was even more decisive. In no other election were radio, television and newspapers mobilised on behalf of the ruling coalition in such a vulgar and comprehensive manner. Apart from special feature programmes over Radio and Television highlighting the government's achievements, special interviews with leading government personalities were also conducted which, in effect, enabled them to make campaign points.

The newspapers of all language media — most of which are owned or controlled by some group or other



associated with government parties — were incredibly lopsided and biased in their coverage. From nomination day to polling day, almost all newspapers carried full-page advertisements on behalf of the Barisan. Both news stories and features painted the Barisan in the rosier hue. Often, in eulogising the ruling party, there was no attempt to distinguish fact from opinion. The opposition, on the other hand, was not only given very little space but, what is worse, it was derided and defamed by the press — even before the voters passed judgment.

Like the media, money too was a prominent aspect of the election. It has been alleged that on a constituency by constituency basis, the Barisan must have spent more money in this election than in any previous election. Judging by its election machinery alone — workers, posters, pamphlets, banners, cars — Barisan spending would have easily exceeded the limits imposed by law: \$15,000 for a state constituency and \$20,000 for a Parliamentary constituency. Indeed in some of the larger urban constituencies, Barisan workers and cars on polling day outnumbered what the opposition had by 50 to 1! Since it is well known that the Barisan usually has to pay for its workers and cars, one begins to get an idea of how much its candidates would have spent.

In fact, in the urban areas, a lot of money was pumped in by candidates and their supporters for various other purposes. They would make available attractive donations to private schools, hospitals and other charities. Dinners and excursions would be organised. It has been suggested that in some extreme cases voters had been bought. In other instances, bets would be placed on the outcome of the contest in a manner that would make it financially attractive for those involved to mobilise votes for the Barisan candidate in question. Without any doubt at all, this election witnessed the moral subversion of the electoral process through the unprecedented use and influence of money.

As in other elections since 1969, fear also played a part. The ruling party did not hesitate to invoke the spectre of 'May 13th'. The electorate was reminded in a prominent advertisement of how the ruling party had saved the nation from May 13th and why therefore the voters should not gamble with their children's future. By reviving memories of the May 13th riot which the government has always argued was caused partially by opposition excesses, voters would think twice about supporting opposition parties.

More than instilling fear in the minds of the voters, it was the denial of opportunities to communicate with the electorate that affected adversely the performance of the opposition. In between elections, opposition parties are hardly mentioned over the state-run Radio and Television — except when they are faced with internal problems. Even with newspapers, it has become customary to downplay the positive side of the opposition. Towards elections and during the campaign, the newspaper situation gets much worse for them.

In the 1982 Elections, as we have observed, the Press played an extraordinarily biased role. Without sufficient access to the press, opposition parties could not counter the arguments and accusations hurled at them. Of course, they were offered some Radio time. But the allocation was so heavily weighted against them that they had to turn down the offer — as they did in 1974 and 1978.

Media access aside, the opposition's greatest obstacle was the continued ban on public rallies. For the opposition right from 1959, the only effective avenue of communication with the public during elections was the rally. When it was first banned just before the 1978 election the government argued that the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) which was then observing its 30th anniversary, may exploit public rallies to create trouble. This time, there was not even an attempt to explain the ban, apart from blandly saying that it was in the interest of national security.

Ceramahs (small-group talks) are no substitute for public rallies. Opposition parties can reach out to only limited audiences of anything between 50 and 2000 persons. A party has to hold about 20 ceramahs to get the effect of one big rally. Besides, even ceramahs have to observe certain restrictions including one on the use of loudspeakers. And some of the ceramahs of certain opposition parties were stopped by the police during the recent campaign on the ground that sensitive issues had been raised. A more serious disadvantage however was the inability of the opposition in certain cities to get enough places to hold their ceramahs. It has been alleged that many community halls had been booked sometime in advance by the ruling party.

Though denial of access to the opposition, the fear element, the use of money, the lop-sided media coverage and the manipulation of the instruments of power were all vital factors in ensuring the Barisan's triumph, one has to concede that its limited success in governing the country since independence also played a part. The economic prosperity of the country — even the government's severest critics will admit — has brought some benefits to the majority of the people. Compared to many third world regimes, the government does care. It is partly because of this sense of social justice that it has been able to maintain political stability for so long. Even in ethnic relations, notwithstanding its deterioration, the government has tried, now and then, to balance interests. When a government provides certain basic amenities, ensures a degree of social mobility and takes care of stability and security, the people can be expected to continue to support it.

This is particularly true when the opposition does not offer an alternative to the existing coalition. Parties like the DAP and PAS are essentially community-oriented organisations incapable of developing a genuinely multi-ethnic, all-rounded national character. Even the small Parti Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia (PSRM) does not seem to have realized that neither the ethnic cleavages within the

population, nor the religious sentiments of the Muslim community, nor the nature of economic change in the country, nor the class structure of society, nor the repressive power of the elites, will allow for the easy growth of socialism as an alternative philosophy. Most of all, however, as long as the opposition parties cannot co-operate on the basis of a minimum programme acceptable to their respective constituents, there is no reason why the people should choose them rather the Barisan as the government of the day. For after all, with the Barisan there is at least the certainty of some government; with a divided opposition in power one cannot be assured of stable rule.

THE FUTURE

Finally, let us ask: what does the electoral verdict of 22 April mean for the future of the country?

The reality that confronts all Malaysians today is the presence of an overwhelmingly dominant government and a numerically weak opposition. How will this powerful government take to its power?

A lot will depend upon the values and attitudes of the leadership, the success of its policies and programmes, the response of various vested interests and indeed the general political and economic climate. The decline of the national economy will undoubtedly have a profound impact upon the government's relationship to, and use of, power. As the effects of this decline become more and more pronounced, the government could use its power to deal with the emerging situation in one of two ways. It could either follow new routes or make modifications to existing approaches. I shall examine some of these new routes in relation to four challenges.

As far as the economy is concerned, the government could use its vast powers to initiate fundamental structural changes. It should ask why development has produced a 'backlash effect' in Kelantan and Trengganu? For once it begins to explore the issue in depth, it will realise that it is because the local community is economically-weak that a new consumption-oriented elite with access to resources has established itself at the expense of the ordinary people. The government should therefore create the conditions that will enable the local community to strengthen itself: to own basic resources such as urban land or oil as the case may be, to control financial outlets and the distribution network if need be. Equally important, it should provide opportunities for existing small and medium-sized industries to grow and develop. Local-level commercial activities should be encouraged through various incentives ranging from loans to tax reliefs. Only through a reorientation in the concept of development — development that makes the local community the basis of change — can progress really benefit the ordinary human being.

If we are reluctant to work for structural changes of this sort, we will be forced to pursue the present developmental emphasis on capital for the maximization of

profits. As long as there was tremendous economic growth, such policies did not reveal their inherent weaknesses for willy-nilly the victims of development could also be accommodated and provided for. But now that there is less wealth, the hidden flaws will show up more clearly. This is why we need to do more than cut down on prestige projects and wasteful expenditure in response to the economic decline. This is the chance to adopt a new approach to development itself. Of course, the strong and powerful in various spheres of the economy will be unhappy. But then the advantage of a huge legislative majority is that, theoretically at least, power derived from the ordinary masses can be used on their behalf, for their benefit.

Indeed new thinking on the economy will have a positive effect upon ethnic relations too. Among the Malays, grass-root development will give them a greater sense of strength and security. The sort of ethnic insecurity which is now expressing itself in Kelantan and which had been quite pervasive in the rest of the Peninsula over the last 100 years will probably diminish.

Among the non-Malays, this new type of development will not only provide greater opportunities to the majority, who have no access to capital, but also curb the growth of an already affluent elite whose greed and crookedness have aggravated ethnic relations. Once again, the 1982 election was a witness to the wealth and power of this elite. Perhaps with a new approach to development, elections themselves will be cleaner!

Leaving aside these indirect blessings for ethnic relations, our government should also use its strength to deal with fundamental communal questions confronting the various groups. The significant Chinese and Indian rerepresentation in the Barisan is an opportunity to socialize them into a vision of the nation and its identity which embodies an appreciation of the historical and cultural background of the country. Similarly, the overwhelming Malay support should be harnessed to foster an understanding of the aspirations of the non-Malays for acceptance and equality.

Failure to do this will mean a deepening of existing ethnic cleavages. If present policies are continued with cosmetic changes here and there, the sort of communal sentiments which propelled the MCA to great heights in the last elections will get stronger and stronger. As a reaction to this and as a reaction to PAS's resurgence, UMNO, it is conceivable, will become more and more 'Islamic' by expousing Islamic causes and promoting Islamic institutions. This could further alienate the non-Muslims. In the end, even the originally non-communal situations could become communalized — as we have observed in Sarawak. This would be dangerous for the country in the future — more than it has been in the past — because the economic prosperity which has enabled us to placate competing ethnic demands can no longer be taken for granted.

Indeed, a waning economy can affect political freedom itself. If fundamental issues in development and ethnic relations have not been attended to, the social tensions resulting from a waning economy may persuade the ruling elites to resort to stern measures to control the situation. This has nothing to do with how well disposed individual leaders may be to human rights and civil liberties. It is the situation that will determine the direction of repression.

This is why, together with fundamental transformations in the economy and ethnic relations, the scope for popular participation in democratic governance should be expanded through a gradual process. Democratic mobilisation is far more effective than authoritarian coercion especially in hard times. There is an urgent need therefore to initiate moves for greater public participation in government by removing the wide variety of laws that impede the growth of democratic values.

This must be done soon, for the election has taught us how a new curb which may have aroused some anger in the beginning is eventually accepted as a reality that one has to live with. It is not just in the case of public rallies or radio time. Even the use of state facilities or lop-sided coverage in the media are now accepted as the norm in elections. Soon the massive injection of money into politics will also be accepted as 'normal' or 'inevitable'. This is how freedom — the freedom to disagree, the freedom to dissent — is destroyed by 'free' men themselves.

Finally, like all the other approaches suggested here, a new orientation is imperative in the fight against corruption. Just as a huge legislative majority should enhance the confidence of the ruling elite and therefore lead to greater liberalization, so should it strengthen the hand of clean and trustworthy leaders in their desire to control graft. In other words, there should be no excuse at all for tolerating corruption since losing a few members of Parliament or Assemblymen would not affect the Barisan's capacity to govern.

Getting rid of corrupt politicians, however loyal they may be to the leader or however intimate they may be to the party bosses, is an important element in the new approach. A leadership would have passed the acid test if

it has the courage to put on trial influential power-brokers who have indulged in corrupt practices.

Similarly, it must have the ability to instil in the party and the bureaucracy a clear conception of the distinction between private and public spheres of authority. It is when a public facility is used as if it were one's private property that corruption breeds and expands. The unwillingness to separate the state from the party is a product of the same psychology. Exploiting the privileges of government for the party's interest — a practice which was pervasive in the election as we observed — is something that an incorrupt leadership would not do, whatever the consequences.

More than that, an incorrupt leadership would also try to reduce corruption in the private sector. Indeed one cannot possibly curb graft in the public sector in a mixed economy like ours without attempting to control it in the private sector. This is why, business in Malaysia should be infused with a sense of ethics. Various accepted practices in business which smack of corruption from a moral point of view should be discouraged through exhortation, education and even legislation.

Of course, to do all this, the integrity of those at the apex of society should be beyond any suspicion. This is why we have time and again asked that the Anti-corruption Agency be made an independent body answerable directly to Parliament and that legislators declare their financial assets in a Register accessible to the public.

If the new leadership is not prepared to tackle corruption at a more fundamental level, the disease will eventually reach critical proportions. Arresting a few legislators and some bureaucrats from time to time will lose its public appeal after a while. The people will become cynical of the government's professed determination to fight corruption if they begin to realise that power-brokers, administrators, business tycoons and industrialists, who are corrupt but well connected are still wandering around the corridors of power.

It should be patently clear, then, that new routes are required in almost every sphere of our national life. This is the hour to begin a great transformation. Do we have the courage and the commitment to commence that crusade?

The Seven Sins

Politics without principle. Wealth without work. Pleasure without conscience. Knowledge without character. Commerce without morality. Science without humanity. Worship without sacrifice.

Mahathma Gandhi

HOLISTIC MEDICINE

Latif Kamaluddin

Recent times have witnessed an upsurge in the critique of conventional or western medicine, popularly known as allopathy. Though taking place in the west, this rising critique must be seen and understood as possessing universal importance and relevance. The attack on allopathy, or rather its underlying philosophy of man, health and illness, has arisen out of a need to reappraise the fundamental understanding of man's state of "wellness" or lack of it.

Holistic medicine in its many forms attempts to "humanize" medicine and to return Nature to its rightful place in the context of the healing arts. See the Schedule for a table of the various forms of holistic healing practices.

The biomedical model of modern western medicine is characterized chiefly by the following:—

- a) Diseases are understood as a biological problem of a physicalistic nature. The language of allopathy is basically that of chemistry and physics.
- b) Western medicine is, based on its "philosophical assumptions", not in a position to heal or cure states of "non-wellness". This is due largely to the fact that the medical model involved here is that of symptom recognition and treatment. The neutralization of symptoms then becomes the basic preoccupation of biomedical practice. What western medicine fails to recognise is that symptoms are not causes. Holistic methods attempt to trace, locate and alleviate causes.
- c) The biomedical model requires that illness be dealt with as an entity independent of social behaviour.

In this article the author will attempt to present the holistic paradigm of medical care. The summary below is in no way comprehensive but rather represents a layman's introduction to some fundamentals of holistic medical philosophy.

THE PARADIGM OF HOLISTIC MEDICINE:

- a) Holistic medicine addresses itself to the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of those who come for help. Practitioners of holistic medicine are primarily concerned with helping their patients overcome the split that has stripped the mind of its power to

experience and control the body. They also endeavour through various therapeutic approaches to bring the body back into line with the mind. In short, holistic therapy aims at making the patient "whole" again.

- b) Holistic medicine views health as a positive state, not as the absence of diseases. Holistic practitioners tend to measure "well-being". This perspective allows practitioners to work constructively to improve the health of those who feel unwell but have no obvious organic disease, and to help those who are functioning well to make still greater use of their faculties, as well as to treat those suffering from clinical illness.
- c) Holistic medicine emphasizes the promotion of health and the prevention of disease. In taking medical histories, holistic practitioners make inquiries about their patients' background. Much of their therapeutic work consists of helping people to see how their habits, attitudes, expectations and the way they live affect their physical and emotional health, and then assisting them to take steps not only to prevent illhealth but also to feel better.
- d) A holistic approach to medicine and health care includes understanding and treating people in the context of their culture, their family, and their community. A holistic perspective respects the ways in which culture shapes pathophysiology and distinguishes between the anatomical lesions that constitute a "disease" state or diagnostic category and the individual's experience of "illness".
- e) Holistic medicine emphasizes the responsibility of each individual for his or her health. Practitioners of holistic medicine feel that they have the capacity to understand the psychobiological origins of our illness, to stimulate our innate healing processes, and to make changes in our live-patterns that will promote health and prevent illness. (Many of the therapeutic techniques depends on the patient's response rather than the practitioner's efforts.) In other words holistic medicine uses therapeutic approaches that mobilize the individual's innate capacity for self-healing.

- f) Holism involves an appreciation of the quality of life in each of its stages and an interest in improving it, as well as knowledge of the illness that are common at each stage.
- g) An understanding of, and a commitment to, change in those social and economic conditions that perpetuate ill health are as much a part of holistic medicine as its emphasis on individual responsibility. A holistic practitioner cannot consider individuals in isolation from the social, economic and ecological context.

FINAL NOTES:

The future of our medicine and our health as a community will in part be determined by the ways in

which the holistic approach is allowed to shape the existing larger health care system, the training of practitioners working in that system, and the education of the layman, who must ultimately learn to take care of himself.

Sat Nam!

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SCHEDULE

1) VITALISTIC MEDICINE

- a) Homeopathic medicine
- b) Chinese medicine
- c) Hindu medicine (Ayurvedic, Unani)
- d) Malay medicine
- e) Herbalistic Folk medicine

2) PSYCHOTHERAPY

- a) Hypnotherapy
- b) Occult medicine (magic, spiritism)
- c) Hermetic medicine
- d) Psychic healing
- e) Mediumistic healing
- f) Mind/Body therapies (dance, music)
- g) Mind control exercises
- h) Bioaergetics
- i) Dream analysis

3) PHYSICAL THERAPY

- a) Electrotherapy
- b) Physical cultures
- c) Physiotherapies

4) MERIDIAN THERAPY

- a) Accupuncture
- b) Accupressure
- c) Reflexiology

5) MANIPULATIVE THERAPY

- a) Chiropractice
- b) Osteopathy
- c) Physiatry
- d) Massage (remedial, body intuitional)

6) NUTRITIONAL THERAPY

- a) Diet
- b) Fasting



7) BREATH THERAPY

- a) Western breath therapy
- b) Yogic therapies (Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, Sufi)

8) CHROMOTHERAPY

- a) Colour healing
- b) Gem therapy

9) RADIESTHESIA

- a) Dowsing methods
- b) Pendulum methods
- c) Aura reading

10) ASTROLOGICAL MEDICINE

- a) Astrology
- b) Palmistry

11) HYDROTHERAPY

- a) Spas
- b) Thermal baths
- c) Herbal baths

12) AROMATHERAPY

- a) Oil
- b) Perfumes
- c) Incense

BOOKS

Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (Picador, 1982)

This book is a mixture of history and allegory describing the vicissitudes of Saleem Sinai's family in the context of modern India since the pre-Independence years. It won the Booker Prize for 1981 in England, perhaps confirming the continuing English fascination for India and things Indian. Fact and fiction are closely intertwined in the story as recounted by Saleem but that is in the nature of hyperbole.

To a large extent, Saleem's experiences and responses are Salman's made into art. Like Saleem, the author was born into a wealthy Muslim family in Bombay in 1947 and grew up in post-Independence India. 1947 is a pivotal year for the storyteller as well as the subjects of the story. On the stroke of midnight 15th August 1947, 'clock-hands joined palms in respectful greeting as I came.' Saleem was one of 1001 midnight's children; only his arrival was noted by Nehru, the Prime Minister, himself, in a historic letter framed and hanging on Saleem's bedroom wall which ends: . . . 'We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own.' These children, symbolic heroes of the new India, were each born with exotic miraculous powers, reminiscent of the legendary India. Saleem himself could enter into the hearts and minds of others by telepathy and for some years provided a forum for a Midnight's Children Conference in his head.

The story of the failure and final emasculation of these children is a metaphor for the author's view of modern India's fate. But then he tells us that India achieved independence in the Age of Darkness, Kali-Yuga, in

which the cow of mortality teeters on one leg . . . 'Midnight's children can be made to represent many things, according to your point of view: they can be seen as the last throw of everything antiquated and retrogressive in our myth-ridden nation, whose defeat was entirely desirable in the context of a modernising, twentieth century economy; or as the true hope of freedom, which is now forever extinguished . . . ' Hope and the ending of hope, optimism, purpose and the destruction thereof, are the constant themes that run through the huge convolutions of the novel.

Verbose, lyrical, expansive and intense, the work contains a range of characters, scenes and smells that the reader will find positively dizzying. At the same time the emotion is well drawn; the ridiculous and the grotesque are made bearable by humour and irony. The profusion of incidents and events are knitted together by clever cross-references and correspondences, redolent with meaning. Mian Abdullah who originated from the magicians' ghetto in Dehli points forward to Saleem's sojourn in that ghetto while the Rani's wedding gift to Nadir Khan links together successive custodians of that silver spittoon. And always in all the trains in this story there are the voices and fists of fare dodgers clinging, banging, and pleading to be let in.

The prime virtue of the work lies in its portrayal of India in its multiple facets - 3rd World society with its deprived millions; multi-cultural hotchpotch and language marches; the elaborately rich religious traditions. Above all, the search for identity and a psychological centre which is established from the beginning and remains a nagging, anxious quest through the thick and thin of the narrative.

. . . 'I must work fast, faster than Scheherazade, if I am to end up

meaning - yes, meaning - something. I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity.' . . . The dilemma of a whole society is epitomized in the intense gropings of an individual anomie. But India is not a deculturalized banana republic; it has an immense store of traditional meanings to draw upon. Despite the obvious decay and corruption of contemporary India, it is not true to say that there is no hope. Among the Indians, there will always be little groups of men, here and there, humming away at their work on the anvils of destiny. If not another Gandhi, perhaps the present day spawns of Mian Abdullah, with his generosity, his earthiness and his vision.

What do we make of all this; we, with a similar mythology, political history and pervading decay? The moral we Malaysians can extricate from the confusingly crowded tapestry is that each generation creates its own hopes out of the preceding nightmare.

Even for now, India's dented democracy remains all of a piece. Willy nilly, Ahmad Sinai obtains justice against the Indian Government in the Bombay High Court. Commander Sabarmati, the modern day Rama and hero of the masses, is justly convicted. We see the Supreme Court and the President reaffirm the rule of law. And almost 20 years later another judge in Allahabad passes judgment on the electoral misdemeanours of Indira Gandhi. (For us, the parallels run too close for comfort.) One notices too the acceptance of ethnic minorities within the hotchpotch. Sam Manecksha, the Parsi General, leads Indian troops to victory against Pakistan while a couple of Muslim Presidents uphold the image of a secular State.

This is an honest piece of allegory; the author casts an unsentimental eye over the march of events and the

shifting scenes. The New York Times reviewer claims that the novel 'sounds like a continent finding its voice', as if the complete India had found its way into print. Admirable though his achievement is, Rushdie's India is but a compendious view of the whole — in places abstractions are made to serve for the inside complexities.

One noticeable philosophical position, if one can call it that, is Rushdie's distrust of religion as political inspiration. Dr. Aziz is seen, unable to believe or disbelieve in God, as a victim of his own optimism in the volatile confusion of his time. Mian Abdullah, for all his generosity and idealism, falls to thuggery and the Muslim Leaguers. Dreamy amateurs do not increase one's respect for religious movements. And Gandhi, the great soul, is only referred to fleetingly perhaps because of the difficulty in doing him justice. The ugly side of religious politics is, however, highlighted, culminating in Indira Gandhi and her astrologers. The destruction of the midnight's children by sterilization is justified in the name of a certain Widow, the Goddess Devi, a manifestation of the OM. And finally, Saleem concludes self-deprecatingly, "*We should have avoided it, I should never have dreamed of purpose, I am coming to the conclusion that privacy, the small individual lives of men, are preferable to this inflated macrocosmic activity.*" So shall the world end with a domestic whimper.

Apparently, the author holds to a brand of pessimistic liberal humanism that is espoused by a large section of writers in the West. Readers in the 3rd World can only regret the passing over of an opportunity, against this sweeping backdrop, to sketch the configurations for the future of India as a possible model for similar developing societies.

The signs are already there that the world is arriving at the threshold of another era. Five hundred years of secular humanism are coming to an end, albeit within the span of Kali-Yuga. In this momen-

tous setting, will spiritual India yet arrive at the climatic phase in its long evolution, liberated from the spell of Western modernism?

Ghaniman.

Peter L. Berger *Pyramids of Sacrifice* Political Ethics and Social Change (Basic Books Inc. Publishers, New York, 1974)

This is an important book about development by a distinguished sociologist. Its essential purpose is to reveal the myth and the reality about third world development to our leaders.

As in the building of the pyramids, in the great quest for development today, it is the ordinary masses who slog and sweat for the schemes of the leaders and intellectuals. Invariably, it is they who decide what is good for the people — and sacrifice or serve the people as the case may be.

The concepts of development prevalent in the third world usually fall into two categories — one supportive of growth and the other committed to revolution. The first has its roots in capitalism; the second in marxism or socialism. The first sees the third world developing in stages on the western pattern while the second sees the need for revolution to overthrow capitalist dominance.

In this connection, Berger notes "both paradigms have emerged from specifically western intellectual traditions and are transmitted by intellectual elites whose formation has been profoundly westernized. Neither paradigm has grown out of indigenous non-western traditions, and those whose basic orientations are still rooted in these traditions look upon both as alien importations. Whatever may go on in the circles of intellectuals, this is still true of the great mass of people in Third World countries." (p. 16)

Both the dominant theories of development — the theory of growth

and the theory of revolution — are essentially myths. It is in exposing the myths that Berger is at his best.

Through lucid, logical reasoning, he shows that capitalist growth in the third world must lead to elitistic development. It excludes people from decision-making and destroys traditional solidarities. It reinforces dependence upon the West from almost every point of view and propagates the proliferation of a consumer culture.

Berger sees dependence upon the West as a major cause of the underdevelopment of the Third World. Indeed, capitalism as a whole is unsuitable for us in the Third World. For the West, however, capitalism has produced "a better life materially for larger numbers of people than any previous or contemporary socio-economic system in human history." (p. 58)

While the author feels that the socialist option is better for the Third World, he rejects Revolution as a solution. He points out correctly that economic progress in countries that had been through revolutions has been unsatisfactory, relative to the high human costs. The Soviet Union for instance is behind every European country (except, perhaps Italy) in various social indicators like health, education, etc.

Besides, in most socialist states the emphasis upon heavy industry has led to the neglect of agriculture. A highly-centralized bureaucracy is a common feature too. Totalitarian tendencies are obvious, sometimes resulting in terror and political repression.

As for totalitarian tendencies, Berger admits that "Socialism need not imply totalitarianism. But socialism contains a built-in tendency towards totalitarianism for a very simple reason: socialism, by its very nature, will seek to absorb the economy within the state, thus vastly increasing the totalitarian potential of the latter. This totalitarian tendency, with all the attendant risks of unchecked and tyrannical power must be counted as one of the

possible political costs of socialism. It is a high cost indeed." (p. 86-7)

The ultimate solution, Berger believes, is to bring ethical considerations into policy-making. To begin with, one can establish a basic programme of ethics by saying "no" to a number of circumstances. "No to children living in garbage, no to exploitation and hunger, no to terror and totalitarianism, no to anomie and the mindless destruction of human meanings. I think it is such concrete cases in which individuals with very different ideological presuppositions will together say no, that hold most hope for new approaches of political action. From these concrete instances of saying no, one may then move ahead to the painstaking task of finding alternatives which will not only be normally acceptable but which will work." (p. 227-8)

And indeed, for those sceptics who are not convinced that alternatives to capitalist and socialist models are urgently needed, *Pyramids of Sacrifice* may well be the tonic.

Introducing other titles

Susan George *How the other half dies* (Allanheld, Osmun & Co. Publishers, Montclair 1977)

The book is about hunger and malnutrition. The author shows that famine and hunger are caused by the distribution of power and resources between the industrialized and non-industrialized countries, and within the latter between the elites who own most of the arable land and the mass of the population who own little or none.

Susan George shows that the usual reasons given for world hunger like over-population, unwillingness to adopt modern technology, inability to work hard and so on are not the real reasons. Therefore, solutions such as population control,

transfer of technology and the Green Revolution are off the mark.

These wrong solutions are promoted by both huge agribusiness corporations and domestic elites for their own interest.

She sees the real solution in having third world countries establish their economic independence, and becoming self-reliant. In that way, they would be in a better position to reorganise agriculture, introduce land reform and create cooperatives for credit and marketing purposes.

There are two interesting features about this book. One, towards the end, there are practical suggestions on what the reader can do to promote the right ideas on agriculture. Two, the book is written in such simple, direct language that anyone who can read English can follow the arguments easily.

How the other half Dies is a brilliant, thought-provoking book. All those involved in development planning – politicians, administrators, academics – should pay close attention to its contents.

Barrington Moore Jr. *Reflections on the causes of human misery and upon certain proposals to eliminate them* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1970)

This book should be compulsory reading for all those who want to try to solve the many ills of society. As in most of his other writings, Moore adopts a rational, level-headed approach. He exposes the flaws in the theories of dogmatic, doctrinaire types.

Noting that hunger, poverty, disease, war, oppression and intellectual persecution are among the main causes of human misery, he argues that

"no institutional order can be perfect and least of all can it stay or seem perfect to those who must live under it" (p. 114). That being the case "there is always a need for protection against arbitrary authority, an arbitrariness whose specific content and definition change with changing historical circumstances. Essential to this protection is the possibility of effective criticism and complaint. Indeed, this possibility may be the best criterion with which to judge human societies" (p. 114).

Though it is not the purpose of the book, *Reflections* emerges as a reaffirmation of the value of freedom and differences of opinion in society.

Margaret Mead *Male and Female* A study of the sexes in a changing world (Dell Publishing Co. 1971).

A study of the commonalities and differences between the sexes. It is critical of attempts to obliterate differences; yet, the author argues that it is wrong to deny certain occupations and activities to one sex. Most human pursuits require the peculiar and unique contributions of both sexes. A true civilisation is one that harnesses the full potential of both sexes. Margaret Mead is therefore against sexual discrimination.

However – as if in response to certain feminist groups – she maintains that if masculinity and femininity cease in society, if men and women cease to be husbands and wives, fathers and mothers respectively, then society will collapse.

The book is written with that intellectual maturity and emotional balance which has made Margaret Mead one of the greatest anthropologists of all time. It is a book that all those who are interested in developing a deeper understanding of the position of women in society should read.

AIMS AND PURPOSES OF ALIRAN

ALIRAN is the first non-partisan, multi-ethnic reform movement to have emerged in our country. There have been reform movements in the past confined to particular communities or to particular issues. Our movement on the other hand not only draws its strength from various religious and linguistic groups but is also concerned with the total reform of Malaysian society as an endeavour which will span a few decades.

ALIRAN's reforms will be directed towards the creation of a society where the spiritual and material development of Man and his community would be based upon certain fundamental moral values acceptable to the Malaysian nation as a whole. These values, highly cherished in Islam are in fact universal ideals which would be in complete harmony with the interests and aspirations of the non-Muslim communities. Freedom and equality, unity and solidarity within diversity, love for honesty and integrity, respect for industry and excellence and most of all a commitment to truth and justice – these would be among the supreme values of ALIRAN's ideal society. In such a society, the political system, the economic order, social institutions, cultural patterns and ethnic relations will reflect those moral values which are at the core of the nation. Our commitment to them will be all the more precious because it emerges from an abiding belief in God as the Source of these values.

To achieve this goal the first and perhaps most important task of our movement will be to get our rakyat to think and to reflect on the major challenges confronting our nation. Sound analysis and proper understanding of Malaysian problems is only possible if there has been serious thinking and reflection. Out of this reflection, it is conceivable that a new consciousness of the type of reforms we need in various spheres of national life will emerge. ALIRAN will seek to nurture and nourish this consciousness so that our people will realize what social justice means in reality, why civil rights and liberties are so vitally important, what the sane, sensible approaches to national unity are, and how honest, able leadership can inspire the masses to harness their energies in the quest for excellence.

More than cultivating social consciousness, ALIRAN will also attempt to disseminate values and principles common to all our communities in its desire to build a strong, solid foundation for national unity and solidarity. This emphasis upon common social and cultural values will be buttressed by a comprehensive examination of both historical realities and the contemporary situation especially those policies which have a profound impact upon inter-ethnic relations. It is a fact that an understanding of the relationship between communities based upon these premises has yet to manifest itself in our country.

Finally, as a reform movement, ALIRAN must be concerned not only with the long-term task of educating society but also with its immediate position in an environment fraught with urgent issues. It must therefore articulate public grievances – from wages and incomes and housing problems to efficiency in our public services and corruption – on behalf of the common man. Our reform movement will thus become yet another channel for the representation of our peoples' woes and worries.

In espousing the interests of the rakyat, ALIRAN it must be emphasised, will utilise all the constitutional avenues of action available. It will be guided in this by the aspirations of the Rukunegara. We believe that such an approach will help strengthen the democratic process itself since it will result in a more active, alert and participatory public. Apart from publishing books and pamphlets which will be its main activity and organising talks, forums and seminars, ALIRAN will also conduct research into various social problems and plan public campaigns from time to time on particular issues. In the years to come new modes of democratic action will be developed as the reform movement itself discovers new challenges in what is after all a constantly changing situation.

It is our hope that our people will help ALIRAN achieve its ideals – ideals which are fundamental in Man's eternal quest for justice and freedom.

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