

# ALIRAN

For Justice, Freedom, Solidarity ● MONTHLY



The Sabah Election

## Public Servants' Salary Claim IT IS JUST

Over the last 2 months or so, there have been a number of reports in the press about the demand made by CUEPACS on behalf of public sector employees. It has been the position that the demand of these public servants is a result of economic problems. A substantial section of state propaganda has been submitted on 30 November. It was prepared by our editorial board. The memorandum by our editorial board is on page 2.

# Why Berjaya Lost

Immediately after the Sabah State election and the former Chief Minister, Datuk Harris Salleh's attempted coup, the editorial board of the Aliran monthly requested Aliran members in Sabah and their friends to jot down on paper the main causes of Berjaya's almost total defeat.

They came up with some interesting points which have been outlined here. Indirectly they also serve to expose the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) of Joseph Pairin Kittingan managed to get on top and form the new state government — editor

migrants who... For the... that their... longer... since it... their s... special

3) The de

### Political Causes

1) Datuk Harris Salleh's autocratic political style. He seldom consulted his cabinet or even government officials. He was unwilling to accept criticism even from his own party colleagues. His treatment of Pairin after the latter questioned him at the Berjaya congress was proof of this.



# Do We Need A Stronger Opposition?

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# Public Servants' Salary Claim IT IS JUST

In the last 2 months or so, there have been a number of reports in the newspapers of the demand made by CUEPACS on behalf of public sector employees for salary adjustments.

Almost all our dailies have taken the position that the demand of these public servants cannot be met, given our serious economic problems. A substantial section of the public also subscribes to this view partly because of state propaganda.

ALIRAN decided to examine the demand of our public servants for better wages. We studied their memorandum to the government submitted on 30 November 1984 and came to the conclusion that they had a strong case.

Our stand on the CUEPACS claim is published below. It was prepared by Aliran executive committee member, P. Ramakrishnan. The memorandum by our public sector employees is also reproduced in the following pages.

— Editor

**J**anuary 1985 should have been the year for salary adjustment for all public employees. The last adjustment was made in 1980 with the clear understanding that adjustments would be made every five years. Even at that time in 1980, the adjustment was below the level of the cost of living. The government agreed in 1980 to rectify this situation.

The government has a moral obligation to honour this undertaking. In the last 5 years almost everything has gone up — except salaries of civil servants. Prices of food, vegetables, accommodation, transportation, fuel, services have all soared skywards. And the hardest hit by this inflationary trend is the poorer segment

of our society, who form the backbone of the nation. For they are the ones who have more mouths to feed, more bodies to clothe, more heads to shelter and more children to educate, all within a very tight and shrinking budget.

Inflation and the accompanying hardships have hit every member of the poorer segment of our society, irrespective of religion and ethnicity. Their cry for justice is unanimous and cuts across ethnic boundaries.

Before politicians polarise this issue, it is the bounden duty of the government to settle it in a fair and just manner. It is no good saying that all must wait until times are better, until the economy improves. Hardship doesn't stop visiting the poor

until times are better; hunger doesn't stop gnawing at the vitals of the exploited until the economy improves.

Isn't it a crying shame to be told that there is no money to meet this just demand and yet continue to pay Entertainment Allowances of between \$500/- and \$1,600/- a month to those in the superscale category? Isn't it a crying shame to be told that there is no money for the poor and the deserving and yet pay Housing Allowances of between \$350/- and \$1,500/- a month to those in the superscale category? Isn't it a crying shame that a hard-earned monthly salary of many in Division 4 should be less than the minimum paid as Entertainment Allowance to those at the top?

Wages and Allowances of the Lowest Category & the Highest Category in the Public Services

Kategori	Tanggungaji	Elaun Khidmat Awam	Elaun Keralan	Elaun Rumah	Elaun Makan	Bayaran Maksima Sewa Hotel	Elaun Lojing (Tanpa Rest)
Kumpulan D: Buruh Kasar	\$250 X 10-360	\$35.00	—	—	\$14.00	\$26.00	\$16.00
Kumpulan A: Tingkatan Tertinggi A	\$4510 X 150-4660	—	\$1600.00	\$1500.00	\$80.00	Sebenar (Standard Suite)	\$80.00
Tingkatan Tertinggi B	\$4060 X 150-4210	—	\$1200.00	\$1250.00	\$60.00	Sebenar (Bilik Bujang)	\$70.00
Tingkatan Tertinggi C	\$3760 X 150-3910	—	\$1000.00	\$1000.00	\$60.00	Sebenar (Bilik Bujang)	\$70.00
Tingkatan Tertinggi D	\$3460 X 150-3610	—	\$ 800.00	\$ 750.00	\$60.00	Sebenar (Bilik Bujang)	\$70.00
Tingkatan Tertinggi E	\$3190 X 120-3310	—	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$40.00	\$100.00	\$60.00
Tingkatan Tertinggi F	\$2920 X 120-3040	—	\$ 550.00	\$ 450.00	\$40.00	\$100.00	\$60.00
Tingkatan Tertinggi G	\$2650 X 120-2770	—	\$ 500.00	\$ 350.00	\$40.00	\$100.00	\$60.00

Aliran proposes that claims of the civil servants be met immediately. It is our view that money can be found if we

- Curb and control corruption at the higher levels of society
- Eliminate wastage in the public services and do away with prestige projects
- Reduce duplication of agencies and activities in the public sector
- Control unnecessary expansion of personnel at the upper echelons of the public services
- Stop paying Entertainment & Housing

Allowances

- Stop the several pensions we pay to so many of our former State Assemblymen and Parliamentarians
- Stop the many overseas trips of our leaders
- Encourage moderate living styles among the elites rather than continue to allow them to indulge in lavish living.

Apart from all these measures, the government should also control the colossal repatriation of profits by foreign

companies operating in the country. There should be a concerted effort to curb the massive profits of big companies, both foreign and local. It is immoral to restrain the meagre wages of the poor while not imposing any checks upon the unlimited profits of the rich.

Aliran is convinced that if the government is prepared to look at our economy from a total perspective, it will realise that there is a strong case for salary increases for civil servants at the lower and middle levels ●

# MEMORANDUM: Public Servants' Salary Claim Demand by the Staff Sides of the National Joint Councils in the Public Services For Pay Adjustment

## 1. Introduction

The five Staff Sides of the National Joint Councils submit this claim for a pay adjustment for all public employees based on the policy that the public employees are due for a pay adjustment in 1985. The Government has accepted as a rule the adjustment of salaries of public employees on a quinquennial basis, the review year being 1984 and the increase to be made in January, 1985, since the last adjustment was made in 1980.

It is relevant to mention here that generally in the private sector, the practice is to make pay adjustments triennially. Pay adjustments are aimed to meet the rise in cost of living and also to reflect productivity inputs.

The claim for pay increase is based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) using 1979 as the base year and on the Gross National Product. We have used the 1979 as the base year in view of the fact that the Department of Statistics, changed the weightage for the Household Expenditure Survey in November, 1980. As a result the Consumer Price Index (1980=100) will denote for 1980 as zero (0).

At the outset, we wish to point out that the claim for rectification of anomalies and pay adjustment based on changes in duties and responsibilities will be carried out by the unions as a separate and continuous exercise. And also in regard to reducing the key scales of the original Cabinet Committee Report, review of schemes of service, review of vehicle loans, housing loans, etc. will be dealt with by the Staff Sides as a separate exercise.

The original Cabinet Committee Report was a co-ordination exercise of the recommendations of the Suffian, Aziz, and Harun Reports and the Sheikh Abdullah and Tun Aziz Salary Reports. In reviewing this, the Cabinet Committee adopted an "across the board" basis in the 1980 pay adjustment. The "across the board" basis claim has caused unhappiness among the senior staff, as the quantum of adjustment would be the same irrespective of the length of service. However, in view of the present economic situation of the country, the Staff Sides have, for this exercise, decided reluctantly to adopt the basis for the 1985 pay adjustment.

## 2. Basis for Pay Adjustment

### (a) Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is shown in the following table:—

Year	CPI(1980=100)	Rate of Increase
1979	93.7	$\frac{126.4 - 93.7}{93.7} \times 100$
1980	100.00	
1981	109.7	9.7
1982	116.1	= 34.9%
1983	120.4	
1984	126.4 (estimated)*	

\* An estimated rate of increase of 5% has been envisaged for 1984 compared to 1983 ( $120.4 \times 1.05 = 126.4$ ) /

From the above figures it can be seen that the rate of inflation for the period 1979 – 1984 is 34.9%.

It must be pointed out that in the CPI measurement there is obviously an under

estimation of inflation rate, as the Household Expenditure Survey weight is based on the expenditure pattern that existed in 1980. In the current calculation, 1980 has been taken as the base year. However, there has been no updating of the CPI since 1980. After the Household Expenditure Survey was carried out in 1980, the CPI was revised for a second time using weights derived from the survey.

The weights derived from that survey would therefore, not reflect the current expenditure pattern. It is obvious that by 1984 the weights for rent, as well as for transport have risen quite steeply since 1980. As such, more importance, in terms of weightage, should be given to these two expenditure items.

### (b) Catch-up

Taking into consideration that the CPI for the period 1970 to 1974 was 36.0%, whereas the revision of salary offered vide Cabinet Committee Report I effective from 1.1.1976 amounted to an average of 15.4%, there was a balance of 20.6% to catch-up in the 1980 salary review.

Between 1975 and 1978, the CPI scored an increase of 12.8%. However, in the 1980 pay adjustment, the public employees had a salary increase ranging between 6% to 19% only and not 14% to 28% as reported in the press. The percentage was worked on the minimum of the scale and not on the average of mean increases over the scale of particular grades. Therefore, between 1970 to 1978, the employees have been lagging behind 14.4%. However, the Staff Sides have decided not to use the "catch-up" as a

**Mass Rally: Cuepacs/MTUC in Dewan Seri Pulau Pinang on 8th May 1985**



The public sector employees form a large portion of the nation's manpower.

Photo: Hum



Encik Ahmad Nor: Pay adjustments are aimed to meet the rise in cost of living.

Photo: Hum



Union Leaders: . . . the success of the nation's development plans has been through the productive efforts of the public service

Photo: Hum

factor in support of this claim but hopes the 1985 pay adjustment should not result in decline in real wages.

**(c) National Economic Growth**

The Public Service has been constantly called upon to increase efficiency and productivity and it has to a very large measure responded to the call. Unlike in the private enterprises, the public employees have been placed in a different position in regard to incentive payment for productivity. This has been a very long grievance of the public service for not being adequately rewarded.

In Malaysia, the public sector employees form a large portion of the nation's manpower. The various Government authorities own a good portion of the nation's capital assets and are responsible for a large portion of the nation's annual fixed investments.

The nation's scientific and technological research and development is financed by Government agencies. The size and structure of importance of private industries are in effect determined by decisions of Government. Public sector purchases provide a large and in some cases dominant part of the demand for the products of other industries, notably construction, pharmaceutical, electrical engineering, communication equipments and so on. The public sector in Malaysia besides being responsible for a substantial part of the nation's production of goods and services, either as supplier or as purchaser, predominates at crucial points in the modern economy: construction, research, advanced scientific and technological development.

It is an acknowledged fact that the success of the nation's development plans has been through the productive efforts of the public service. During the period 1980-1984 the country achieved quite an impressive rate of economic growth. The nominal Gross National Product (GNP) increased at an average rate of 10.3% from \$43,092 million in 1979 to \$70,596 million in 1984 while in 1970 the real GNP increased at an average rate of 5.7% from \$23,308 million to \$31,100 million. It is to be remembered that this appreciable rate of growth was achieved when the prices of some of the major commodities like rubber and tin were low during certain years of the period assessed.

The GNP per capita rose at an average rate of 7.1% per annum from \$3,650 in 1980 to \$4,685 in 1984.

The public sector still plays a major role and will be largely responsible for directing Government fiscal monetary and industrial policies in a manner that would effectively and efficiently mobilise national savings as well as provide the necessary climate for the promotion of both domestic and foreign investment.

The Public Service must therefore have a fair share of the Gross National Product

reflected in the wage increase during any period of the growth.

### 3. Our Claim

The Staff Sides are of the view that the 1985 pay adjustment should be based on the initial salaries of the respective Divisions, unlike the 1980 pay adjustment which was based on Groups. The rationale behind this proposal is intended to narrowing the gap between the highest and the lowest groups as well as to minimising the frustration of those who are appointed or promoted to higher grades by ensuring that upon promotion they are given enhanced salaries thus reconciling with the principle of the rate for the job.

In the 1980 pay adjustment the percentage increases were granted on the lowest segment of the salary scale of each group as follows:—

- (i) Group D – Industrial & Manual Group – 28% (\$55/-)
- (ii) Group D – Scheme of Service with SRP qualifications – 27% (\$55/-)
- (iii) Group C – 25% (\$75/-)
- (iv) Group B – 20% (\$100/-)
- (v) Group A, Timescale – 18% (\$135/-)
- (vi) Group A, Senior Grade – 16% (\$290/-)
- (vii) Superscale Grade and above – 15% (\$345/- sliding to 14% – \$860/-)

Though the real wage of public sector employees has eroded by 14.4% over a period from 1970 to 1978, as mentioned earlier, we feel that subsequent pay adjustments should not lead to a decline in real wages thus further lowering the standard of living of public sector employees.

Our claim therefore reflects the CPI increase for the said period and share in the GNP per capita which is as follows:—

	CPI (1979 to 1984)	34.9%
Average	GNP (1979 to 1984)	7.1%
		<u>42.0%</u>

We, therefore, propose the following pay adjustments for 1985 based on the initial salary of the lower salary scale in each division:—

Division	Amount
I	\$210.00
II	\$175.00
III	\$140.00
IV	\$105.00 + \$15/- being saving element

#### (a) Saving Element for Lower Income

It is an acknowledged fact that the employees in the lower income group (Div IV) are unable to overcome the effect of increase in the cost of living. Because their families are large, they find it difficult to make ends meet. Therefore, saving for a "rainy day" is out of the question for them. The Staff Sides con-

tend that the employees in the lower income group should be compensated with an additional sum of \$15/- as an element for savings to meet contingencies in times of need. Such savings are necessary in view of the fact that they would have to meet similar recurrent expenditure at the end of the year as the higher income bracket do, on education.

### 4. Annual Increment

We claim that the minimum annual increment should be \$20/- or 5% of the salary whichever is higher. The present annual increment of \$10/- does not reflect a fair increase and tends to 'lengthen' the salary scale and thus reduces the value of the rate for the job. The Government tendency is always to start at a lower point and to move up the ladder at a slower rate.

The Government should also consider reviewing the incremental rates in the salary scales.

### 5. Civil Service Allowance

The Staff Sides have been pursuing the question of Housing Allowance even prior to the 1980 wage adjustment. The Housing Allowance is an element involved in the determination of the Civil Service Allowance. The Cabinet Report I, Vide para 1.2., page 7 states inter alia: "since living in the civilized sense includes being fed, clothed and housed, then "working for a living" can only be meaningful if the wage paid takes into consideration food,

clothing and housing."

The Government has recognized that the House Ownership Scheme introduced in 1970 as an alternative to Housing Allowance has been inadequate and unsatisfactory. The Cabinet Committee Report I has in fact described the scheme as 'idealistic' but "frankly unrealistic".

In view of this, the Government in the 1980 wage adjustment granted Housing Allowance only to public officers in Superscale G and above but to the rest of the employees, Civil Service Allowance was granted.

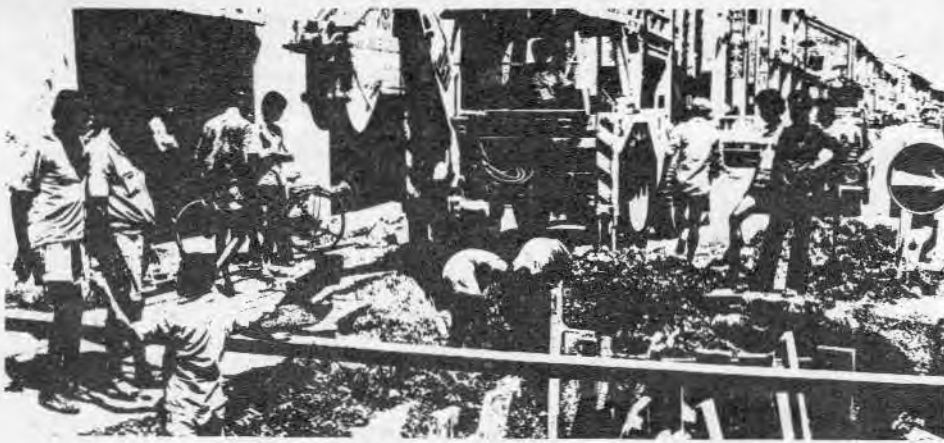
The Civil Service Allowances are as follows:—

Salary Groups	Civil Service Allowance
Group A Senior Grade	\$250.00 p.m.
Group A Time-scale	\$125.00 p.m.
Group B	\$ 75.00 p.m.
Group C	\$ 45.00 p.m.
Group D	\$ 35.00 p.m.

Immediately after the 1980 wage adjustment, the Staff Sides requested the Government to extend the Housing Allowance to the rest of the public employees. However, the claim together with the rest of the counter proposals were rejected on the ground that the Government was not in a position to incur the additional expenditure involved vide JPA(S) 81/16/15(29) dated 14th May, 1981.



"Please, Sir! Please don't give me a rise—my wife will kill me"



Division Four workers sweating to serve.

The Star



In view of the magnitude of the claim, CUEPACS met the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad for the second time on 16th August, 1982 to hear the decision of the Government on the matter.

At this meeting, the Prime Minister disclosed that the Civil Service Allowance granted to the rest of the public employees contains an element of Housing Allowance. He acknowledged the fact

that the element of Housing Allowance incorporated in the Civil Service Allowance was inadequate and was prepared to revise the Civil Service Allowance, but because the world wide recession had also affected Malaysia, the Treasury was not in a position to meet the claim at that stage. However, the Prime Minister gave a categorical assurance to the CUEPACS delegation that when the financial situation improved the

Government would consider increasing the Civil Service Allowance which consists an element of shelter as well. Accordingly, we are making a claim for an upward revision of the Civil Service Allowance.

Since rentals as well as cost of houses have gone up, a good majority of the lower income group are unable to own houses. A substantial amount of their salaries goes towards rental. There is sufficient justification therefore for our claim for an increase in Civil Service Allowance.

We, therefore, propose the following rates:—

Divisions	Civil Service Allowance
Div. IV	\$110.00
Div. III	\$170.00
Div. II	\$250.00
Div. I	\$350.00

#### 6. Tax Exemption

Any adjustment of salary based on increase in the cost of living is incomplete unless the element of income tax is also taken into consideration. During the past 20 years the income tax factor was not given due consideration where salary revisions were made. Consequently, real income has been gradually reduced as far as the salaried employees are concerned. This situation has been further aggravated by the escalation of percentage of tax rates at certain levels. It is therefore, necessary that a measure of relief must be provided in order that the real income may not be further reduced.

In this connection, it is suggested that payment of any regular allowances, such as Civil Service Allowance, Housing Allowance, etc. should be exempted from taxation in the same way as Entertainment Allowance which is being paid to Superscale Officers.

#### 7. Spread out of Quinquennial Pay Adjustment

The Harun Commission on the relationship between cost of living and public sector salaries held the view "that public sector salaries should be related to cost of living but not in the manner as it does in the Private Sector where salaries are subject to frequent reviews dependent on the rate of profit, the cost of living and other factors". (Para 6.53 page 131 of the report). The Harun Commission went on to state that "as a matter of principle, public sector salaries should be related to cost of living only when existing salary levels cannot be maintained". (Para 6.54 page 132). The Commission concluded by stressing that a realistic period for review based on cost of living should be once every five years and recommended 1975 as the base year, for the First Revision.

Here it must be stressed that the Harun Commission also held that by adopting this rule, it did not necessarily follow

that public sector salaries should be generally increased only every five years, although that system is intended to bring the salaries to realistic levels in relation to cost of living.

Whilst a quinquennial review is regarded as a basis, however in the event of an unexpected inflation, the recommendation of the Commission is that Relief Allowance should be granted which should be subject to review during the next quinquennial General Pay Adjustment.

*Our claim for a pay adjustment is very reasonable*

The method of quinquennial adjustment, though, is intended to maintain a realistic level of pay in the public sector every five years. The nature of the rise in the cost of living has been very sharp as Malaysia is very dependent upon imports of consumer goods and the standards of living has also been fast changing. This has proved to be so over the last three quinquennial periods.

This trend makes it essential to formulate an annual method of adjusting public sector pay, based on the quinquennial review. The quantum for adjustment based on the quinquennial review should be applied annually on a spread-out basis. This would not only reduce the impact on revenues at the end of the five year period but also help in the annual budgetting of estimates. It will also ensure that sufficient relief is granted to public employees each year in view of the sharp rise in cost of living in the year in question.

#### 8. Conclusion

From the facts enumerated in this memorandum, the public employees have not been sufficiently compensated by the revisions of their salaries since 1970 so as to enable them to sustain their real income. With the 49.3% of the CPI still to catch up, it would appear that they have been denied a fair share of the economic cake that has been growing steadily in this country for which the public employees have contributed substantially.

The Staff Sides, therefore, are of the firm view that our claim for a pay adjustment in 1985 is very reasonable and sincerely hope that it will receive favourable consideration from the Government.

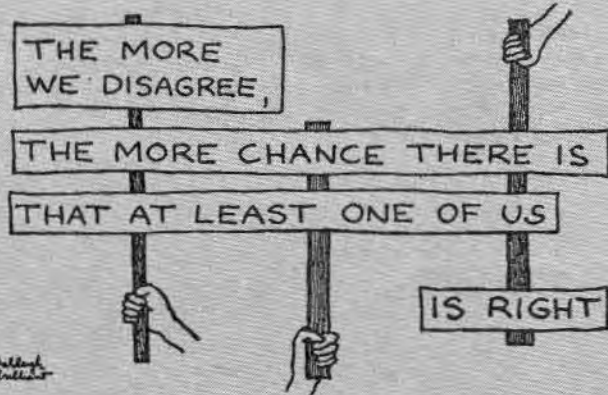
# Ashleigh Brilliant ON COMMUNICATION

## COMMUNICATE!



IT CAN'T  
MAKE THINGS  
ANY WORSE.

Ashleigh Brilliant



Ashleigh Brilliant

When all other  
means of  
communication  
fail,  
try words.



Ashleigh Brilliant

# Letters

We welcome letters from readers. These letters may be edited for purposes of space and clarity. The views expressed may not be those of the Aliran Monthly. Pseudonyms are accepted but all letters should include the writer's name and address.

Letters should be addressed to Editor, Aliran Monthly, P.O. Box 1049, Penang, Malaysia.

## BMF Scandal

The Finance Minister mentioned some time ago that the BMF scandal had come to pass. Recently in his address to Malaysian students in the US (NST 16 April) he repeated the empty platitudes uttered by top members in the Barisan. I would only like to remind him that Malaysians are fed up with this kind of talk. Malaysians want action and not promises and explanations from politicians who beat about the bush.

Among other things he said that in western countries the BMF scandal could have been settled easily but in our country it was quite different and thus had to take time. This is another bit of rubbish. He also mentioned that 'nobody is perfect.'

From what I know the BMF was not a mistake. It was a crime planned by a tremendously greedy group of people who broke regulations. It was treason of the most despicable kind against the country.

The public outcry was the result of government failure to take stringent and decisive actions against the culprits. Members from the public are beginning to wonder whether the government has failed to do more because those involved are close or connected to someone holding a very high office in the country.

I would like to remind top members from the government that the fury vented through the mass media was only the tip of the iceberg. I am afraid someday Malaysians will no longer contain their frustration. There is a strong possibility that they might take action against the government.

Nobody is immune from the country's laws. Not even those close or connected to someone who holds a very high office in this country. Even that someone is not immune from the laws of the land. This is what 'Amanah' is all about.

Sarong Pimpernel  
Kuala Lumpur

## Political Integrity

People in high places should uphold the law, and not break it. Why is it that a Penang State Executive Councillor who consciously damages public property, pleads guilty and is set free by the Court? I wonder what would have happened to an ordinary man convicted of the same offence!

LHS  
Penang

## Why KBSR?

Allow me to write in support of 'A Parent', Kulim, on 'Let teachers study KBSR course at home.' (The Star, March 28).

The KBSR is yet another project that does not benefit the public. It is not well planned. This is in fact the situation with many government projects.

Those who oppose such development projects are called either 'pro-communist', 'subversives' or 'extremists'.

The KBSR scheme is also a political ploy to make teachers resign. Three thousand of them have resigned in the last three years — the KBSR period. What a government for the people!

The KBSR is in fact nothing new. The 'lembab' or slow-learners have always been there.

B.A. Kedah  
Alor Setar

## End Of Liberal Policy Towards The Press?

The recent announcement by the Prime Minister that he intends to review his government's liberal policy towards the Press did not come as a shock to me. When the present Prime Minister took over 4 years ago, he did relax the policy and people like me are very grateful to him. But within a short span of 4 years he found that he too cannot stand public comment on the wrong-doings of the government.

It takes two people to start a quarrel and also two hands to clap. Why did the Government allow, in the first place, Bukit Cina, Papan, Mandarin oranges and other such issues to crop up? When the public was concerned about these issues the government should have taken positive steps to satisfy the people instead of keeping silent or dragging its feet.

Malaysia will be putting the clock back if the already controlled press is further restricted and I am afraid that Aliran will be one of the first to be denied the KDN permit.

Citizen  
Kuala Lumpur

## Government To Blame For Disunity

Permit me to voice my humble opinion in your monthly on the Prime Minister's undemocratic warning to the press for 'undermining' the Government's efforts to strengthen national unity. I consider his warning as 'blackmail'.

If the Prime Minister doesn't want 'communal songs' to be sung, he himself shouldn't sing them. The Government places too much emphasis on the cursed terms 'Bumis & Non Bumis'. That is the 'root of all evils'. Most Government policies are based on this. So the press and the people automatically become 'communally brainwashed'. The implementation of the NEP has been abused and even the

Prime Minister has said that we have practised more than what the NEP requires. Disunity in the country is not only confined to the Malays and Non-Malays, UMNO Malays and Non-UMNO Malays are also disunited in mind, body and soul. The Chinese and the Indians too are in the same boat.

The Prime Minister, besides blaming some newspapers for 'undermining' his efforts to unite the people, has also accused them of 'oppressing him' by not printing all that he says. I feel this is not true. The amount of publicity given him is more than enough so much so that I feel he owns the newspapers. Besides the Information Ministry is his tool. So what more does he want? For example during the Constitution Amendment crisis in 1983 didn't the newspapers print all the speeches he made at his public rallies? Not a word from others was printed except from Bapa Malaysia in the Star because he is the Chairman of that newspaper. Most newspapers today are more 'Government Gazettes' than anything else. Some newspapers in order to promote sales, apart from exercising their democratic rights, print the truth. The rest simply toe the Government's line.

On his directive to Barisan Nasional component party members to form and get involved in multiracial clubs, I am not convinced of his sincerity in wanting to promote national unity because overseas he encourages the setting up of UMNO clubs. Thousands of our young Malaysians are studying abroad and the way to unite them is to have multiracial clubs so that when they return and as future leaders they will be more Malaysian than Bumi or Non Bumi. I am sure the people will not mind if their money is spent to form such clubs.

I conclude by appealing to the Prime Minister not to abuse Parliamentary Democracy to suit his own ends. As for the press there are already more than enough laws and regulations to ensure that no one exceeds the bounds. The Prime Minister should not therefore ask the press to shut up and only listen to him because he feels that the brute majority of the Barisan in Parliament has given him the right to dominate everyone else.

Ismail Hashim  
Bukit Gelugor  
Pulau Pinang

## The Increase In Fees For Malaysian Students In Australia

The DAP calls on the Malaysian government to send a high-level delegation, led by Education Minister, Abdullah Badawi, to Canberra to protest against the Australian government increase of fees for Malaysian students.

Despite appeals, memoranda and even protests, the Australian Government had disregarded the long-standing relationship between the two countries and gone ahead to increase sharply the fees of Malaysian students in Australia.

There seems to be a misconception among Australian government circles that the overwhelming majority of Malaysian students come from rich and well-off families. In fact, this was the distinct impression that DAP leaders gathered when we met with members of the Goldring Committee during their visit to Kuala Lumpur. The Goldring Committee subsequently came out against increase of fees.

The latest round of increases of fees by the Australian Government will mean a new financial burden of some \$15 million to Malaysian parents. For the poor and low-income families who are already finding it hard to finance their

children's higher studies in Australia, this would be a particularly hard and cruel blow.

In a way, the Malaysian government must bear responsibility for the latest round of increases, for it was none other than the Education Minister Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi who announced that the Malaysian Government understood and accepted the Australian proposal to increase fees during the visit of the Australian Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden.

Why should the Malaysian Government criticise the British Government's increase of fees for foreign students leading to the 'Buy British Goods Last' campaign, while giving its blessings to the Australian Government's fee increase?

The DAP calls upon the Malaysian Government to step forward to find a solution to the fees problem to ensure that no Malaysian student suffers as a result.

Lim Kit Siang  
Secretary-General  
DAP  
Kuala Lumpur

### Imminent Fees Increase For Overseas Students In Australia

Some well-meaning people — including some Malaysians — have argued that Australia's decision to increase tuition fees for overseas students at Australian universities and colleges has nothing whatsoever to do with the question of trade or diplomacy. These people may be forgiven for their naivete or ignorance.

The Australian policy on overseas students, as history shows us, has everything to do with trade and diplomacy. In 1904 special provision was first made for entry of overseas students into Australia. The stated aims of this provision were the promotion of "interaction with the students' home countries and to improve trade relations between these countries and Australia."

In April 1950, the then Australian Minister for Immigration, H. Holt reiterated this policy by saying that "the grant of facilities which enabled Asians to secure educational advantages not available to them in their own countries could prove a pertinent factor in cementing ties of friendship between Australia and her northern neighbours and assist in the promotion of trade between the countries concerned." This policy continued until the mid 1960's.

In March 1966 a revised policy insisted that overseas students should pursue courses of "recognised value to the students' homeland;" hence, stricter academic entry requirements were applied.

In 1973 the policy returned to an emphasis broader than foreign aid. It also stressed the "fostering of good relations and cultural exchange".

This policy was brought to an end in 1979 by the imposition of tuition fees for private overseas students. This prompted Australian Labour Party Senator John Button to say, correctly on 13 September 1979 in the Australian Senate that through the new policy "Australia will provide unlimited places for wealthy students at the expense of the less well-to-do."

The Australian Union of Students had condemned this new policy as "exploitative and racist".

The proposed new round of fees increase for overseas students in Australia will adversely affect more than 9,000 Malaysian students, the great majority of whom are private students. The rumoured 20-40% increase will mean that the majority of Malaysian students already in



Australia and those intending to go to Australia will have their courses cut short and their aspirations dashed. This majority do not come from wealthy homes. The fees increase will mean that in future only those Malaysians who are really from wealthy homes can afford to study in Australia. Thus, the Australian government's decision will have worked along the lines of a self-fulfilling prophecy, namely, that Malaysians studying in Australia are from wealthy backgrounds and can therefore afford expensive fees.

This is clearly discriminatory and against less well-to-do Malaysians. Coming from a Labour government which claims to be democratic socialist, it is particularly regrettable and outrageous.

If the Australian authorities go ahead with the further imposition of sharp increases in tuition fees for overseas students, in utter disregard for the feelings and pleas of people in developing countries and in betrayal of previous policy, diplomacy and history, then Malaysians have every right to retaliate and should retaliate in quick and appropriate fashion.

For a start, we could boycott all Australian goods. Secondly, we could review the 5-power defence agreement of which Australia is a signatory and of which the Australian airbase in Butterworth is part and parcel.

The Malaysian government must not be soft on this issue which affects the interests of thousands of Malaysians.

Fan Yew Teng  
Secretary-General  
SDP  
Kuala Lumpur

### The Need For Religious Tolerance

I read with great interest Dr. Chandra Muzaffar's article entitled 'Loyalty to God and Spiritual Values' which appeared in (The Star April 8).

In the pretext of expressing some sane opinion a few people have been trying to promote limited views of God and universal values. Religious tolerance and true mutual respect for

each other's faiths is a sign of our own religious maturity.

There is no quarrel between a Hindu Yogi, a Buddhist Saint, a Muslim or Christian mystic. They can all live in perfect harmony. But little brains dabbling in limited dialectics and entangled in emotion feel that they hold the key to the Kingdom of God.

All good intentions to love and adore the various religions in our midst is being hampered by the actions of fanatics and narrow minded zealots.

Love of one's own religion need not be expressed in the hatred of the other religions in our midst. But this may well be the trend in the future if people seclude themselves behind the dogmas of their own faith.

There are indeed very few Muslims of Chandra Muzaffar's tolerance and insight in this country. I hope and pray that Aliran's attempt to promote universal and humanistic values in our national life will continue to receive wide support from all sections of our society.

P. Rasahugan  
Ipoh

### SGS Resolution

The SGS 12th Annual General Meeting held on 17 March 1985 has adopted, among others, the following resolution:

#### The 12 SGS AGM

- NOTES that the British government has announced its intention to raise university fees for medical, dentistry and veterinary courses for 1985-1986 academic year. That the increase which is applicable to only non-British and non-EEC students will result in a further decline in the number of Malaysian students studying in Britain;
- FURTHER NOTES that the Australian government is intending to emulate the discriminatory British policy of implementing "full cost" fees for overseas students;
- RECOGNISES that:
  - a) Malaysia contributed \$450 million to Britain and \$110 million to Australia in 1982 to support her students;

- b) the total outflow of about \$1 billion annually to tuition and living expenses amount to about 45% of the total education budget in the Fourth Malaysian Plan.
- URGES therefore that
  - a) Malaysian student bodies in Britain and Australia continue to organise and intensify opposition to the unjust fee increases;
  - b) concerned Malaysian non-governmental organisations and individuals should urge the government to review its education system in order to eliminate the need for such a large number of students going overseas.
  - DIRECTS the Executive Committee to publish and distribute at home and abroad a list of all Australian goods and services available in Malaysia with the view of reviewing trade ties. We urge you to support the spirit of the above resolution in any way possible and engage in any action that is necessary.

E.T. Chock  
Secretary  
Selangor Graduates Society  
Petaling Jaya  
Selangor

### Banning of US Nuclear Warships

We would like to congratulate New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange and his Labour government on their firm stand in banning nuclear capable warships from New Zealand. This principled and courageous act should receive the highest respect and admiration from peace-loving peoples all over the world.

President Reagan of the United States should stop harrasing the government and people of New Zealand over their decision to ban all nuclear warships. The people of New Zealand decided democratically in their general election a few months ago, on such a move, and no other government or country, including the US and Australia, has the right to tell them what to do.

President Reagan should remember that the Pacific Ocean is no American lake. We condemn his childish reprisals against New Zealand. The trouble with American imperialism is that it never learns from its blunders and also from the fact that the great majority of the peoples of the world — if the facts are put objectively to them — are strongly against all things nuclear.

The ASEAN governments should emulate the New Zealand government by declaring that they would similarly ban all nuclear capable warships from their shores and ports.

Fan Yew Teng  
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Kuala Lumpur

### Lazy Workers?

Once again, our Prime Minister has publicly described our workers as lazy in order to legitimise the Government's policy of encouraging immigrant labour to work in Malaysia.

While laziness and malignancy exist in all societies, is it fair for him to make such a general accusation? Perhaps, an analysis of the situation might prove otherwise.

Let me start with our fishermen. They spend most of the night and day either fishing or selling their catch or mending their nets. In the process, they have to drag their wives and teenage children to help them out. They don't enjoy public holidays and rest days. And yet, the highest rate of poverty is traceable to our fishermen.

Then come our landless farmers, the small-holders and the plantation workers. They too start their work very early in the morning. Here again their wives and teenage children are not spared. In spite of a hard day's work, most of them eke out a hand-to-mouth living. In this group too the rate of poverty has gone up over the years.

Coming to our urban workers, are they really lazy? Who are those people who sell satay, kuih-kuih, cut grass and perform other odd jobs in the evenings, rest days and public holidays? Most of them are from the lower ranks of urban workers. They would have very much liked to spend their leisure hours after a day's work watching TV, playing with their children or chatting with their wives. But their income is so low that they are forced to put in extra

an achievement would have been impossible to sustain, if Malaysian workers were lazy.

The reason why workers from neighbouring countries migrate to Malaysia can be traced to the economic and employment conditions in their respective countries. Compared with the Malaysian ringgit, their currency fetches very low value; their labour markets are flooded with unemployed persons; hence wages are low. For them, Malaysia is a haven.

But we should not forget the fact that an immigrant labour force without trade union protection will lead to lower wages and exploitation of labour, although the employers would be able for a while to increase their profit margin. Only a Government totally committed to capitalism will ever allow such a thing to happen.



"Have it your own way, dear—we're all sunbathing on the roof sipping ice-cold Martinis with our dizzy blonde secretaries while you're slaving over a hot stove getting my dinner."

efforts to make ends meet. It is disgraceful to describe them as lazy!

In this context, it is relevant to ask why so many foreign countries invest their capital in this country? If your workers are so lazy, how is it possible for foreign investors to siphon away from Malaysia an average of \$1.5 billion as profits every year? Perhaps the Prime Minister wants our workers to work even harder so that employers can make more profits. Perhaps this is why he wants everyone to increase productivity.

But to achieve higher productivity, there must be conditions conducive to it. Apart from satisfactory working conditions and suitable tools and equipment, workers must be consulted and they should be assured that they would have a fair share of the profit. Besides, their living conditions must also be satisfactory. A worker who does not have enough to eat; who lacks necessary facilities to educate his children; who has no proper shelter; who has no choice but to do odd jobs to supplement his income, cannot be expected to contribute towards higher productivity.

In spite of the above obstacles encountered by the workers, Malaysia remains the number one producer of rubber, tin and oil palm. Such

Coming back to lazy workers, in my view the higher your income the lazier you are. While this is a general rule, there are exceptions like our Prime Minister who works, perhaps, 14 hours a day on the average. We do not find our fishermen, farmers, and other low paid workers at golf courses, in casinos, pent-houses, night clubs and posh hotels, where money and time are wasted without any consideration. Only VVIPs, VIPs and highly paid executives are generally found in these places. When they return to their desk, they are too tired to do much work. Then they plan to spend a holiday with their family overseas. In other words, most of them do little work, whereas they enjoy the best in life.

Recently, I read an article by our Bapa Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, in the Star, where he said that when he was the Prime Minister, there were only 13 Ministers and 3 Deputy Ministers, but that the number has now increased to 24 and 26 respectively. Recently 4 more Deputy Ministers were appointed. Perhaps, laziness has crept into the highest levels of government!

K George  
Kelang

# The Population of Sabah



Kadazan womenfolk

The Star

Sabah has been very much in the news recently, especially since Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) trounced Berjaya. However most people in other parts of Malaysia still do not know much about the people and culture in the state. Let's have a look at the population of Sabah.

According to the 1980 census, the total population of Malaysia was 13.7 million of which 11.4 million were in Peninsular Malaysia, 1.0 million in Sabah and 1.3 million in Sarawak. Unlike the statistics on other states, the population breakdown by ethnic groups in Sabah is reduced to mainly the indigenous people versus the Chinese, since Indians are in most cases included under "Others". Furthermore the term **pribumi** rather than **bumiputera** is used for the "indigenous people". Thus in 1980, Pribumi made up 82.9% of Sabah's population, Chinese made up 16.2%, and others made up 0.9%.

The 1980 census as indicated in the table does not tell us the numerical strength of the major ethnic groups. According to the 1970 census, Kadazans represented the largest single ethnic group (28.2%) in Sabah, followed by the Chinese (21.3%), Bajau (11.8%), Murut (4.8%), Malays (2.8%), and the other ethnic groups.

The ethnic composition in Sabah is very complicated and there is still no satisfactory classification of ethnic groups. The Pribumi category of the 1980 census comprises the following. Kadazan, Kwijau, Murut, Bajau, Illanun, Lotud, Rungus, Tambanuo, Dumpas, Maragang, Paitan, Idahan, Minokok, Rumanau, Mangka'ak, Sulu, Orang Sungei, Brunei, Kedayan, Bisaya, Tidong, Other Indigenous, Malay, Indonesian, Sino-native, Native of Sarawak, Native of Philippines, and Cocos Islanders.

It should be noted that the large

## Ethnic Composition of Sabah, 1980

Ethnic Groups	Number (thousands)	Percentage
Pribumi	838.1	82.9
Chinese	164.0	16.2
Indians	5.6	0.6
Others	3.3	0.3
Total	1,011.0	100.0

## Ethnic Composition of Sabah, 1970

Ethnic Groups	Number	Percentage
Kadazan	184,512	28.2
Chinese	139,509	21.3
Bajau	77,271	11.8
Murut	31,299	4.8
Malays	18,365	2.8
Other Indigenous	125,631	19.2
Indonesians	39,526	6.0
Others	37,151	5.7
Total	654,943	99.8

number of migrants from the Philippines and Indonesia were classified under Pribumi in the 1980 census. This contributes to the rather high Pribumi annual growth rate of about 4½% between 1970 and 1980. Foreign-born persons made up 13% of Sabah's population in 1980 compared with 8% in 1970.

The net inflows of migrants from Indonesia and Philippines during the intercensal period were 45,000 and 36,000 respectively. No wonder the question of illegal immigrants was a major issue in the recent state election.

For a state where the majority of the population are still rather poor, the influx of a large number of migrants has serious political and socio-economic implications as well as negative effects on ethnic relations. Proper studies on the refugees and illegal immigrants should be carried out, and effective measures should be taken to deal with this problem. However the policies must be humane and based on reason with due consideration given to the question of refugees.

The use of the label "Pribumi" instead of "Bumiputera" is unjustifiable and is to a great extent, not accepted by the people so classified. Thus on his first day of duty as the Chief Minister this April, Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan announced that all ethnic groups classified by the last government as Pribumi would now on be known as Bumiputera. We hope that the new Chief Minister will go further and eradicate the bumiputera/non-bumiputera

distinction. This unfortunate classification has increased ethnic tension and disunity in Malaysia. Ethnic relations in Sabah have been fairly good and there is no reason to cultivate the indigenous/non-indigenous ideology which will only serve to divide the people

The emphasis on Pribumi versus Chinese classification is most misleading since the contrast inevitably focuses on this dichotomy. For example, the computation on the incidence of poverty by the ethnic origin of the head of household in 1982 in Sabah shows that Pribumi made up 93.1% of the poor, Chinese 5.9%, and Others 1.0% (Cf. **Mid-Term Review of the Fourth Malaysian Plan**, p. 87). A casual reader may forget that 82.9% of the population has been classified under Pribumi, while irresponsible politicians may use this form of statistics for their narrow communal politics. Furthermore, the classification does not tell us the incidence of poverty between the various "Pribumi" ethnic groups, say, between the Kadazan and the Malays. The Pribumi/Chinese dichotomy, as used in the computation of poverty by ethnicity, tends to direct the attention away from the underlying economic causes of poverty. Since the majority of the people classified as Pribumi live in rural areas, the above statistics really show the importance of emphasizing rural development.

Tan Chee Beng

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# Organising the Exploited Part II

*BMS continues his narrative on the setbacks and sufferings he has experienced in unionizing poor, exploited workers – editor.*

I left MOVE as a full-time worker and joined an electronic firm. The electronic firm was paying me \$5 a day. I got myself employed not just to earn a living. It was also to gain the experience of working in an electronic firm environment. In MOVE we were exposed to reports of the oppressive working conditions in electronic firms in other countries. I wanted to experience for myself.

In the place I worked, incentives were given for uninterrupted work. So if one wants the incentive of \$40 one cannot go to toilet except during the time provided. One is also expected to be healthy and not go on medical leave. For many the extra \$40 meant a lot. They neglected their health. In the ultimate analysis, for the management the worker is just another unit in the factory governed by certain laws that can be manipulated to the management's advantage. Workers in a factory are hardly treated as humans.

Another area I looked at were retrenchment procedures. You see the company I worked in, would not ask the workers to leave. Blatant retrenchment brings a bad name to the company. So what they do is to put on their notice board a bait for encouraging workers to leave. They will say that if workers want to leave they can and that they will be paid certain benefits. Workers not knowing about labour laws fall into the trap. There is a duration you must have worked before you are eligible for benefits other than the pay you are entitled to. So when a new worker quits he or she is simply given his or her pay. When they ask for the benefits mentioned in the notice board they are simply shown the Labour Ordinance. And asked to leave. The workers can't fight back. I came to understand that this was how new workers were brought in every six months or so. In this way the management not

only got fresh workers but also saved on the benefits they would have to pay if the worker reached a certain period in employment.

As I studied these situations, I also took a lot of photographs of actual working conditions in the factory. All these were later used in an in-depth study of the working conditions in the Electronic industry.

Another thing is the psychological stress the workers go through. Imagine sitting down looking at a chip through a microscope. The chip is your world. For that moment you see nothing else in the whole world. You are tied up with it. Your existence is a mere extension of its being. You are totally immersed in it. In this situation if anyone pokes you jokingly you are shocked into reality. The immediate reaction is to scream. I have myself experienced this. In many electronic firms, production operators start screaming. When it catches on the thing turns into a mass hysteria. The funny part is the official explanation. They say that evil spirits cause the hysteria. If people only knew which evil spirit .... In one factory, I remember a bomoh was called to solve the problem. A goat was killed to appease the evil spirit.

'What did you do with your findings?' I asked.

I shared it. I shared it with other workers. And I shared it with MOVE organizers. After a while, I left the job at the electronic firm. And I found a job with a photography lab. I joined as a despatch boy. But during my free time I spent time in the darkroom. Developing films and printing them was no mystery to me. I used this skill in my work with MOVE.

'But you left the photography lab, didn't you,' I queried.

'Yes, at the end of 1978, I joined

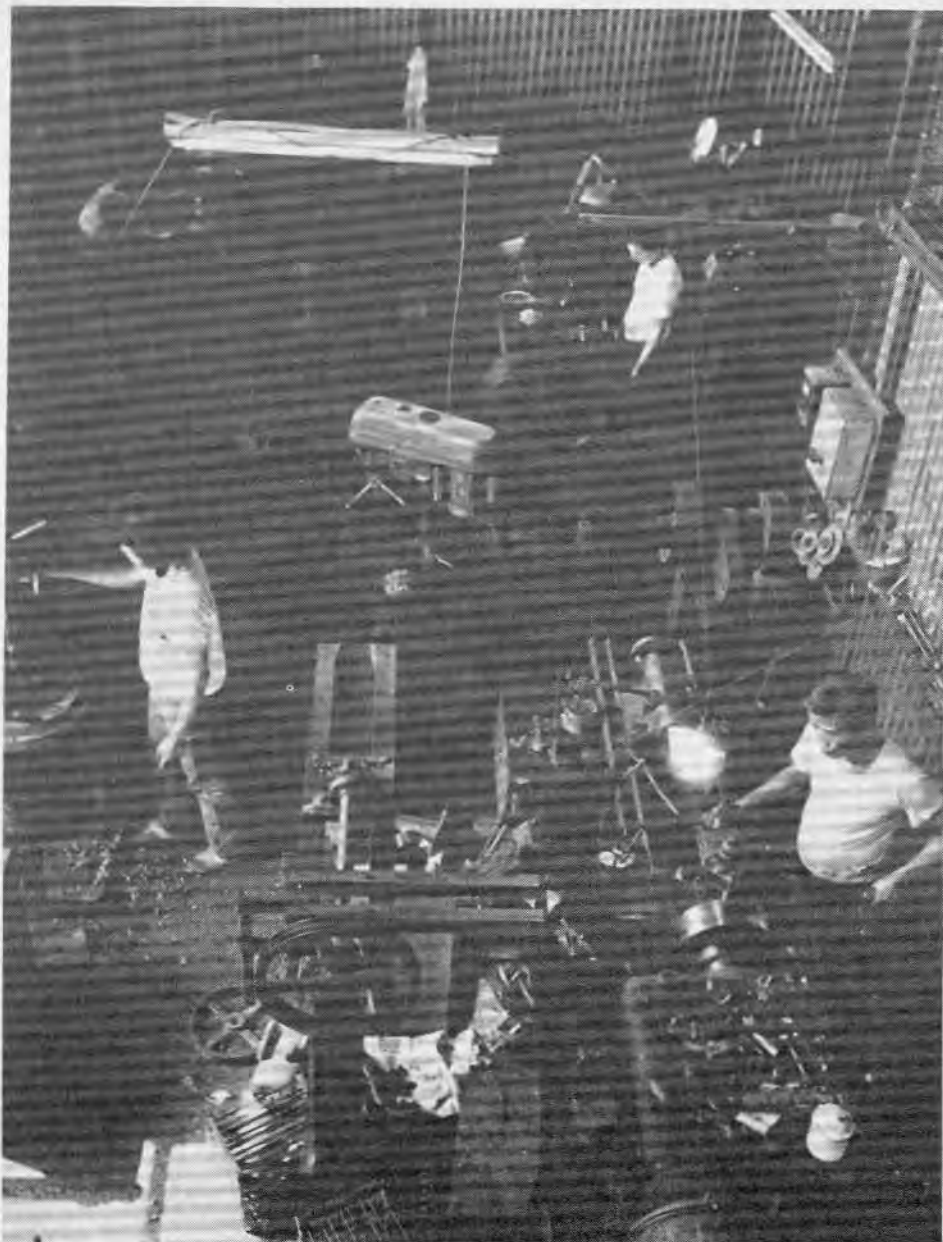
CTQ. It dealt with motor parts. My friend helped me get the job at CTQ as a guard. As time passed and as I got used to the place I felt the need to organize a group. However there was already a well structured union in the factory.'

'Well if there was a strong union why did you want to form another group? Why didn't you think of working within the Union?'

He responded almost immediately. 'Unions hardly educate their workers. They tell them nothing about realities in the country. They do not educate the workers about the exploitative nature of labour laws. They do not even discuss the ways by which the management cheats workers. Unions merely talk of bread and butter issues. True, they provide some basic leadership training but not so much to develop leaders as to keep the union bureaucracy going. Just as the Colonial Masters developed a class of civil servants to maintain British bureaucracy. The union in CTQ was also not doing much because many in the management team were once strong union leaders. They had been coopted.

So your aim was to form ....

... yes to form a group so that the workers would become aware of the reality they lived in. To begin the process I penetrated the work site through friends. Remember I was a guard and I had no business at the work site. However with the help of friends I formed a group of six. They were union members. The union accepted us as a sub-committee though we did not go through the union. Till 1980, I was a uniformed person. This curtailed my participation in the work site sub-committee that I helped form. So I asked for a transfer. In 1980 I was given a transfer to the work site, to the production line. One month later we formed the Safety Committee (CTQSC). The union



We were able to generate a lot of interest among workers on safety problems.



in CTQ supported us. The CTQSC educated the workers on safety. We produced pamphlets. We held dialogues with the Factory and Machinery Department. We discussed safety problems like eye injury because of welding, noisy environment, dust menace, chemical pollutants, inhalation that caused coughs, chest pains and loss of appetite. We soon brought out a monthly bulletin. It gave information on safety. It was circulated to all members. We were able to generate a lot of interest among workers on safety problems. Workers were coming out to tell us of safety problems they encountered. Case studies on safety conditions were analysed. The Factory and Machinery Department gave us a lot of support in solving the safety problems at the work site.

When all this started happening, the management got worried. Even our national union got worried. The national union's safety committee was not as active as ours. The national union tried to interfere in our work. We had to stop them. Our national union was also worried about my connection with MOVE. The national union was closer to ENV, a group that took a special interest in environmental safety. Both the national union and ENV saw MOVE as a threat. MOVE was doing the work a union ought to be doing.

It was because of all this that the national union didn't want to help me when I was jobless. Anyway the management saw me as a danger and began to victimize me. They picked on me for everything. Finally they demoted me from welder to sweeper. The demotion was unjustified and meant to humiliate me. Meanwhile many of the leaders who worked along with me left because of victimization against them. I was isolated and left alone. Then one day the personnel manager, an ex-union leader, called me up and told me that it would be better if I left on my own accord instead of being sacked. If the latter happened I wouldn't get any benefits. I knew I was fighting a losing battle. My friends had left. The workers who were around were all apathetic to what was happening. Finally I resigned.

It was almost midnight now. BMS and I were at the end of a long conversation. But I had one last question. What do you hope to achieve by doing all this?

He was silent. Not because he did not know. No, I did not get that feeling. He knew too well what he wanted. He spoke, 'Well, it is a fight for the cause of justice — so that one day there will be no more class dichotomies. No class will exploit another. One day there will be justice for everyone' ●

M. Nadarajah

# Why Berjaya Lost

Immediately after the Sabah State election and the former Chief Minister, Datuk Harris Salleh's attempted coup, the editorial board of the *Aliran* monthly requested *Aliran* members in Sabah and their friends to jot down on paper the main causes of Berjaya's almost total defeat.

They came up with some interesting points which have been outlined below. Indirectly they also serve to explain why the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) of Datuk Joseph Pairin Kittingan managed to come on top and form the new state government — editor.



The Star

Datuk Joseph Pairin Kittingan has emerged as a folk-hero of his people

## Ethnic Causes

1) Datuk Harris Salleh's wholesale accommodation of Indonesian and Filipino immigrants to a point where their presence threatened to overwhelm the local population. The Kadazans and other non-Muslim Bumiputras in particular felt very uncertain about their future since the Indonesian and Filipino element had pushed up the Muslim population to such an extent that Bumiputra Muslims had become the majority community. In the past the Kadazans were the single largest group in the state (see *Vital Statistics* in this issue). What increased Kadazan insecurity was the allegation that 90,000 Indonesian and Filipino immigrants had been given citizenship. It was seen as one of Harris Salleh's crafty manoeuvres to consolidate and perpetuate his power through the demographic strength of the Muslim community.

2) The use of a new term 'Pribumi' to cover all indigenous groups including Filipinos, Indonesians and even Pakistanis. Many of these were recent

migrants who had just been domiciled. For the Kadazans the new term meant that their identity as a group was no longer distinct. They resented this since it amounted to a derogation of their status as a people with a long and special tie to the land.

- 3) The decision by Harris Salleh to change the Kadazan Harvest Festival into a Pesta Rakyat for the entire population. Again, the Kadazans regarded the move as an insult of sorts. It was seen as an attempt to undermine the distinct cultural identity of the Kadazans.
- 4) The popularity of Datuk Joseph Pairin Kittingan was also a factor. As someone who had defended Kadazan rights on issues such as 'Pribumi' and the 'Harvest Festival' Pairin had emerged in the last 2 years in particular as a folk-hero of his people. He was given the title of *Huguon Siou* which is the highest honour that the Kadazan community can confer upon anyone. Pairin's political ascendancy led to the rapid decline of Berjaya's standing among the Kadazans.

## Political Causes

1) Datuk Harris Salleh's autocratic political style. He seldom consulted his cabinet or even government officials. He was unwilling to accept criticism even from his own party colleagues. His treatment of Pairin after the latter questioned him at the Berjaya congress was proof of this.

Datuk Harris also forced his Assemblymen to be completely submissive to his will by making each and everyone of them sign an undated letter of resignation. The letter was what "persuaded" almost every Assemblyman to remain silent in the face of Harris's arrogance because of the fear of losing his or her seat. Again, Datuk Pairin chose to be different. He was prepared to give up his seat partly because he knew he would be returned by an even bigger majority in a by-election. This is exactly what happened in the Tambunan by-election in January this year.

2) Datuk Harris's punishment of the voters of Tambunan for re-electing Pairin was also a major cause of Berjaya's downfall. He threatened to



The Star

Berjaya Rally: It is clear that Berjaya was 'killed' mainly by its own misdeeds

Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves.

— William Pitt



The Star

**Tambunan the place where the people showed they disapproved of corruption and arrogance**

withdraw all government facilities from that constituency. Though the threat was not fully implemented, it created a strong sense of moral revulsion among the people. Tambunan generated a feeling of outrage which was almost unprecedented even in Sabah's tumultuous politics.

- 3) Before Tambunan the former Chief Minister had already made another unpopular decision. He handed over Labuan to the Federal government. There were no proper consultations with the people. Solid arguments against making Labuan a federal territory were dismissed contemptuously by the then Chief Minister. Sabahans as a whole were quite incensed over the decision but Datuk Harris rode roughshod over their feelings.
- 4) It was not just Tambunan and Labuan; disdain for the feelings of ordinary people was very much a trait of the Harris Salleh administration. The people did not like the way the various Jawatankuasa Kemajuan Kampung (JKKK) were used by Berjaya and yet the government persisted with its open discrimination against non-party individuals. It was widely known among kampung dwellers that only Berjaya members or supporters would receive development assistance from the government.

#### The Federal Factor

In Sabah, as in Sarawak, there has always been a certain degree of suspicion of the Federal government. On numerous

occasions in the past, the state had shown its resentment of what it perceived as central government dominance.

Given this backdrop, it was unwise of the Sabah government to have surrendered Labuan to the Centre. This not only increased antagonistic feelings towards Kuala Lumpur but also made Harris Salleh look like an agent of the central government in the eyes of fellow Sabahans. Indeed, Harris Salleh was seen as someone going out of his way to cultivate Federal leaders at the expense of Sabahan interests.

If anything, the large scale involvement of Peninsular Malaysian politicians in the election campaign on behalf of Berjaya aggravated things for the party. Many of these politicians had very little feel for Sabah politics. Some of them made the stupid mistake of referring constantly to the 'May 13th' riot in Kuala Lumpur with the aim of discouraging voters from supporting PBS in particular. This angered them further. Others talked about Islamization without understanding the local milieu. Such talk drew the Kadazans and the Chinese even closer to the PBS.

#### Socio-Economic Causes

- 1) Of these causes none is perhaps as significant as widespread allegations of pervasive corruption and nepotism at all levels but especially at the apex. Rumour has it that a number of very important state leaders of all communities — Bumiputra Muslim, Bumiputra

non-Muslim and Chinese — had amassed huge fortunes through their public offices. It gave rise to anger and indignation among the ordinary populace. This may be one of the reasons why the entire cabinet of Harris Salleh was wiped out at the polls.

- 2) There was also substantial evidence to show that a lot of the new government agencies set up by Harris like SAFO-DA & SAMA were not functioning well at all. The colossal funds allocated to them were badly managed — according to some sources. Apart from the problem of wasteful expenditure, there was also the question of whether top bureaucrats were using public funds to enrich themselves. All this only served to erode the credibility of the government.
- 3) The utter inability of the government to tackle the serious housing problem in the state made matters worse. In fact, contrary to all its promises since 1976, the Berjaya government has only been able to build a very small number of low-cost houses. Even its low-cost houses are quite expensive! Besides, like almost everything else in Sabah, housing was also highly politicised. The bias shown to Berjaya people in the allocation of new houses resulted in the sort of frustration that brought down the party.
- 4) While housing was a major grievance among the poor and dispossessed, the various restrictions imposed upon businesses created a lot of unhappiness among business groups — especially within the Chinese community. Various Municipal rates had gone up and bureaucratic red-tape had become more impenetrable. This, in turn, dampened the business spirit. It is perhaps one of the reasons why the largely commercial Chinese community joined hands with the Kadazans to get rid of Harris Salleh and his clique.

**From the various factors described above, it is clear that Berjaya was 'killed' mainly by its own misdeeds. It was its own arrogance, authoritarianism and abuse of power which led to its demise. It is a classic case of how injustice, exploitation and oppression on the part of a group in power leads eventually to its own doom ●**

# The People's Triumph

**A**liran President, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar described the election as "the people's triumph". He went to say "They (the people) have shown tremendous maturity in the use of their vote. They have sent a warning to leaders who think that they can fool the people all the time.

Aliran is convinced that Berjaya was swept out of office by a huge tidal wave of popular resentment. Yesterday's electoral verdict is a massive protest against Berjaya's autocratic rule, its abuse of power, its administrative arbitrariness. The people have shown, through the ballot box, that they are not prepared to put up with rampant corruption and political arrogance.

Though communal sentiments may have also influenced the voting pattern, it is quite clear from the election results that substantial segments of all communities were fed up with Berjaya's misrule. This is why Berjaya's defeat should not be misinterpreted as a defeat for multi-ethnic politics. A multi-ethnic political party in power can withstand any communal challenge as long as it is just and fair to all and strives to overcome poverty and exploitation.

It is in this connection that Aliran hopes that the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) will break out of the mould into which Sabah politics has been cast. It must not disappoint the rakyat. When the rakyat threw out USNO and put Berjaya in 1976, they were hoping for a just, honest and democratic government. Berjaya however, failed them. The PBS must do better."

The 'power grab bid' immediately after the election also drew a response from Aliran. Dr. Chandra made it clear that, "Aliran condemns the desperate bid by Berjaya President, Datuk Harris Salleh and USNO President, Tun Mustapha Harun, to grab power after the Sabah State election. It shows their utter contempt for the feelings of the people. They were prepared to subvert the democratic process in order to gratify their lust for power.

It is a shame that in their unsuccessful

You cannot ride roughshod over the people's right.



Tun Adnan Robert



Tun Mustapha Harun



Datuk Harris Salleh

bid for power they managed to manipulate Yang diPertua Negeri Tun Adnan Robert for a while. As the Head of State he should have adhered to constitutional procedures and resisted their blatant violation of democratic conventions. It is partly because of his indecisiveness that a simple event like the swearing in of a new Chief Minister was suddenly transformed into a farcical circus. The Yang diPertua Negeri's conduct raises serious doubts in the public mind about his competence to occupy such an exalted office.

At the same time, Aliran feels that the confusion would not have dragged on for almost a whole day if the Acting Prime Minister had intervened directly at the outset to ensure that constitutional procedures were adhered to.

Nonetheless, Aliran recognises that his statements emphasising the Barisan's and the Federal Government's commitment to democratic principles helped, in a sense, to pave the way for Datuk Pairin Kittingan's eventual swearing in as the new Chief Minister. Malaysians, as a whole, would appreciate the position he took.

Pursuing its concern for the proper practice of democracy in Sabah, Aliran endorsed the call to do away

with appointed Assembly members. The statement by its executive committee member, Gan Kong Hwee unfortunately was not carried in any newspaper. It read "Aliran agrees with Bapa Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, that the Sabah State government should take necessary steps to abrogate the clause in the Sabah State Constitution that provides for six members to be appointed to the Sabah State Assembly. This could be done at one of the future sittings of the State Assembly.

It is incongruous to have six appointed members in a legislature elected by the people. As the recent abortive attempt to seize power in Sabah showed such a provision in the Constitution can be manipulated to thwart the will of the people. Besides, it is very much against the spirit of democracy.

Aliran endorses the Tunku's view that our leaders should be much more sensitive to the people's feelings. This lack of sensitivity is evident not only in Sabah politics but also in Peninsular Malaysia. The important lesson that the Barisan Nasional leadership should learn from its defeat in Sabah is that you cannot ride roughshod over the people's rights" ●

Below we publish comments from our readers on the June/July opinion poll theme:

# Do We Need A Stronger Opposition?

**Y**es, I do think we need a stronger opposition. A strong opposition can act as an effective watchdog in upholding democracy and preventing any abuse of power.

Take the BMF issue for example. A lot of learned and loyal Malaysians had called for a Royal Commission of Inquiry to investigate the corruption but the call was never heeded. I feel that if we had a stronger opposition in Parliament, the Government would really have to heed the rakyat's call for the setting up of the Royal Commission.

The events that happened in Sabah should teach us the importance of a strong opposition. Before the State elections last week, Sabah was without a strong opposition. The Berjaya government was so powerful that it became thick-headed and it even went to the extent of abrogating the district status of Tambunan just because the people of Tambunan had elected an opposition representative. This was totally against the spirit of democracy. If Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan had not set up a strong opposition, I wonder how much more injustice the people of Sabah would have had to put up with.

Lawrence Chang  
Serdang



**Y**es, Malaysia needs a stronger opposition. But why? And how?

By the very fact that we exist in this country we ought to have our rightful place under the Malaysian sun. As citizens, we — everyone of us — should maintain a certain amount of political interest in order to protect our own individual interests. We can do this by making sure that all interests are fairly represented in Parliament. A system of checks and balances is necessary if our parliamentary democracy is to survive.

We cannot allow only certain influential groups to retain and promote their own vested interests. If we allow this to happen, we are not only defeating the very basic principles of Parliamentary Democracy but we also lose our dignity as human beings.

For the reasons above, I declare that there is a great need for a stronger opposition in Malaysia. And, of course, the only way for us to have a stronger opposition is to be able to provide a good and strong alternative government. This means that all Malaysians should not just lie down and accept the fact that the Barisan Nasional is destined to rule us for all eternity. That they will rule us forever is not a fact at all. They have been merely elected to serve us and we have the power to change the situation by exercising our votes wisely. If we feel they are no longer serving us fairly, we are not obliged to keep them in power. We can vote in another government.

Ooi Hock Tiam  
Kuala Lumpur



**M**y opinion is this: we have passed the stage of needing a stronger opposition. Either we change the government or we forget it. We have to replace this 30 year-old government of a few haves with a government of have-nots. If we cannot do this, then let us all ask for more 4-digit draws and social welfare lotteries so that we can all gamble our way into the future!

If we choose to change the government then how do we go about it? The 4 main opposition parties, PAS, DAP, PSRM and SDP must cooperate. Past efforts at cooperation have failed because some of their leaders are greedy and big-headed.

Aliran has been making some inroads through its dialogues of concern. Unfor-

tunately, there is no follow up. If these four parties cannot unite or fight poverty with one manifesto then Aliran must persuade them to come together.

B.A. Kedah  
Alor Setar



**I**n the present history-making era of Malaysian politics — with headlines on BMF "bad-debt" scandal, Petronas "heroic" rescue, PAS "fearful" inroads, UMNO "dirty" politics, MCA "ghost" members, Berjaya and USNO "unholy" alliance among a host of other issues, what seems to be the medication for today is a stronger (and perhaps, wiser) opposition.

When the word 'opposition' comes to my mind, I cannot help but think of people like Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Khoo and Mr. Lim Kit Siang (apart from others not mentioned here) who have contributed, and are still contributing in no small ways, whether directly or indirectly, towards the cause of the opposition. While I may not speak or write as eloquently as they or may not even be knowledgeable in Malaysian politics (which is, in my honest opinion, basically dirty), it is evident that more people of such calibre are urgently needed to make a stronger opposition.

The purpose of a stronger opposition is not to topple the ruling party, but rather to help develop a more equal Parliamentary system. Opposition MPs are often denied the opportunity to make speeches for whenever they try to, Government backbenchers walk out as if in want of a puff or in need of some exercise. This endows neither prestige nor dignity to Parliament. It is obvious that the small and weak opposition is not respected and in many ways treated as an enemy of the ruling party. A stronger

opposition, I believe is not only conducive for the growth of a healthy parliamentary democracy, but will also serve to check effectively any deceitful move by the party in power. In fact, if parliamentary sittings are shown live on T.V., I can bet the performance of our MPs will improve — especially when proud Sonny at home will be recording naughty Daddy on video-tape for his friends to see!

Above all, while a stronger opposition is necessary, I completely support Tan Sri Dr. Tan when he says that the people should also be involved in the parliamentary process. For parliamentary democracy to survive and flourish the efforts of all sectors of our society — the government, (a stronger) opposition and the people — are required.

Newcomer  
Penang

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**A**n opposition is needed as a watchdog of the Government, to question and to hold up to public examination the government's policies.

Our Malaysian Parliament has just turned 25 but sad to say, opposition MPs have often been denied the opportunity to be heard in Parliament (except for a few courageous ones). Instead, Parliament is often thought of as comprising the Government alone.

There is not only a need for the opposition to break the monopoly by the Government; the presence of a stronger and more courageous voice in Parliament will also help the people to get their aspirations across.

At least with the presence of a stronger opposition, parliamentary democracy will be kept alive. Take the case of Sabah for example. The Malaysian public needs people like Datuk Pairin to show that the government cannot do what it likes; that the Government cannot rule in the interests of the ruling class.

Carol Yong  
Bangi

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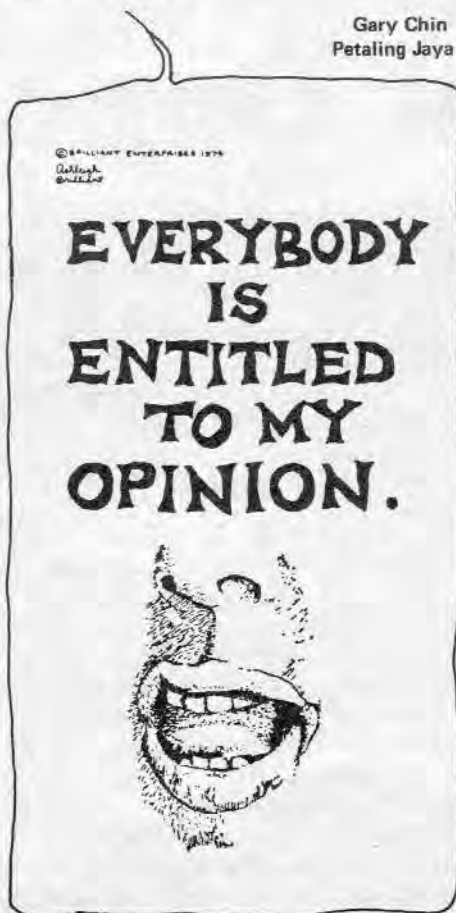
**W**hen the amendment to the Petroleum Development Act was debated and eventually passed in Parliament last month, there were only 24 Barisan and 5 opposition MPs present. If there were just 20 more MPs in the opposition, the government would not have been able to save its skin as far as the controversy over the take-over of Bank Bumiputra by Petronas was concerned.

If we had 25 opposition MPs, there may be a greater sense of responsibility and accountability on the part of our MPs. However, it is doubtful if full

attendance in Parliament for every sitting will make any difference as most MPs of the ruling coalition are there only to serve their own political (and economic) interests and those of their leaders.

What we need, therefore, is not just a stronger opposition but a more involved public which makes demands on their MPs so that it is their views and wishes that are put forward and not those of a few individuals.

Gary Chin  
Petaling Jaya



**T**he elections are just around the corner and Barisan Nasional politicians will be traversing the length and breadth of the country to remind the people that a vote for the opposition is a vote wasted because opposition parties cannot bring development to the people. I hope that they are not telling us that all this physical development around us has happened through the grace of our government politicians!

The electorate today is more mature. The people are aware that apart from the physical development of the nation there are many other issues which need greater attention. Communalism, religious extremism, corruption, poverty and political arrogance are on the rise. Another landslide victory for the ruling Barisan means that the negative traits outlined above will be given another shot in the arm.

All this talk of the importance of a strong government to deal with the various problems faced by the nation is

sheer hypocrisy. In fact, the government's political power is the cause of most of our major problems. Some government politicians have become arrogant, bankrupt and even indecent in Parliament. They behave like feudal lords. They cannot take criticism and worse still they do not have the guts to face even the small opposition in Parliament.

Opposition political parties like the DAP despite their multi racial policies are made to appear as communal parties because of their large Chinese membership. But let us ask, who laid the foundation for this ethnic and political polarisation in the country? The UMNO in its eagerness to champion Malay rights — in effect the rights of elite Malays — has divided the people into bumiputras and non-bumiputras. In its eagerness to counter religious extremism, it has moved further into religious isolation. And what has happened? Racial and religious identification have begun to mean more to us than our national identity.

A strong opposition is needed to check the misguided adventures of our politicians pursuing policies that are increasing social tensions and creating new economic imbalances. A strong opposition is needed to make the people aware of the true social and political problems facing the nation.

In the name of eradicating poverty and bringing about greater social justice, communalism, capitalism and personal political ambitions are endangering the nation's sanity. We have had too many boozing MPs, absentee MPs and Yes Men MPs over the years. And again there are many happy-go-lucky MPs who are there primarily to serve themselves in the pretext of serving the nation. Only a strong opposition can put an end to all this parliamentary mockery.

A strong opposition is needed to prevent Barisan Nasional politicians from meddling with the Constitution as and when it suits the whims and fancies of our political elites.

Our politicians talk of parliamentary democracy but just and genuine political dissent is viewed with suspicion by the coalition in power. It is quick to label anyone who disagrees as an 'anti-national' element. The Barisan makes it appear that a loyal citizen must necessarily support the coalition in power whether it is right or wrong.

To put an end to all these absurdities, to make the people more conscious of their social rights, to enable them to have a greater sense of belonging to this nation, to fight poverty, corruption and political incompetence and finally to preserve the very essence of democracy, a stronger opposition is needed.

P Rasahugan  
Ipoh

**T**he nature or type of opposition is significant. Opposition parties that struggle or fight for non-issues (or the interests of certain small, influential but rich groupings) may not serve the interests of the poor, or even the people in general.

History has shown that a strong opposition group that fights for such non-issues or issues beneficial to small, rich parties will only worsen the lot of those really in need of governmental aid.

But what is a strong opposition? Is it strong in terms of members in relation to the ruling party? Is it strong not in terms of numbers but being vocal and having support from a representative faction of the population? I think the second criterion should be used for determining the strength and effectiveness of opposition parties.

Using the above as the "accepted" definition of a strong opposition party, a strong opposition is necessary for the following reasons:

- a. So that the ruling party does not become too "powerful" due to the absence of checks and balances (checks on its activities, new policies, etc.).
- b. So that the interests of the minority groups (such as Bahais in Iran, homosexuals, lesbians, or those whose religious beliefs are different from the majority) may not be infringed upon. A strong, effective and worthy opposition should function to protect the interests of such groups.

**Cornelius L**

**T**here is certainly a need for a strong opposition in Parliament, especially when we consider the "misbehaviour" of certain members of the ruling coalition in the House and also the manner in which certain Bills had been pushed through Parliament without proper and sufficient discussions on the part of the ruling party.

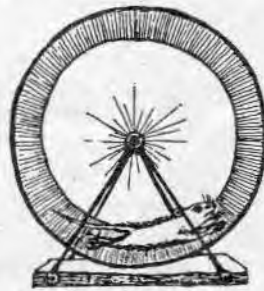
A strong and responsible opposition should be able to keep the Government on its toes, and this ought to remind the latter, that it has to be accountable to the rakyat — and not run the country according to its whims and fancies.

In other words, the presence of a strong opposition should be able to check certain authoritarian streaks that have been acquired by a Government which has been enjoying more than a comfortable majority in Parliament all along.

Also, the least a strong, and vocal, opposition can do is to literally awaken, some members of the ruling party who have a tendency to fall into slumberland!

**"A Dear Parliamentarian"**

**I'M TOO BUSY  
TO HAVE TIME FOR  
ANYTHING  
IMPORTANT.**



**Adeline Lee**

**T**here is absolutely no doubt about it — Malaysia is in desperate need of a stronger opposition!

We need a stronger opposition to ensure that the interests of all Malaysians are being cared for properly; we need it to balance democratic processes in this country — to ensure that all Malaysians have a say in matters concerning national policies. And last but certainly not least, we need a stronger opposition to prevent laws from being bulldozed through in Parliament by the ruling party.

A stronger opposition would herald the return of Parliamentary democracy. Then, covered 'yes men' would cease to exist in Parliament. The rights of the people, regardless of race, colour or creed would be attended to: no longer will we be subjected to the whims and fancies of the ruling party.

Allow me to quote from Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg address: 'A government of the people, by the people, for the people'. Isn't this what we want here in Malaysia? But for a democratic government to exist, we need a strong opposition. A hale and hearty opposition which would make its voice heard; an opposition which would fearlessly question government policies if the need arises.

Parliamentary democracy in Malaysia is suffering badly. It is at the point of suffocating to death. In order to survive, it needs a breath of fresh air from the opposition. Unfortunately, the opposition itself is in dire straits, gasping for air. It has become a highly endangered creature, soon to be extinct.

Help! First aid is obviously needed urgently. Come on, opposition, hang on there! Here's a first aid kit. Or would you prefer open heart surgery? Buck up, Malaysian democracy needs you!

**Adeline Lee**

**Y**es, we do. Why? — so that the government will be more controlled in their actions. A stronger opposition will make them more afraid of doing things as they like. They are getting to be too big-headed now. ('angkuh').

**Housewife (63 years old)**

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**Y**es, we do. Why? The government is taking too much for granted. They take any action they like without thinking of the people's feelings and opinions. If there is a stronger opposition, then they'll be more careful. They will have to think more carefully before introducing any bill in Parliament. They've taken everything for granted. They need to be awakened.

**Pensioner (79 years old-male)**

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**Y**es, we do. Why? The government is doing whatever they like now. They do not bother to think of other people's opinion. If there is a strong opposition, they cannot do as they like. It will be a real check on them. They will not be as big-headed as they are now.

**Teacher (37 years old-female)**

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**I** don't think much about such things. What's the use, the government always does as it likes. I guess it might do some good to have a stronger opposition but I've not much faith in the opposition either. Well, at least, it'll act as a check on government excesses.

**Lecturer (35 years old-female)**

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**Y**es, we do. Why? Dr. Mahathir and his men are getting too bossy. A stronger opposition will check them. At least they cannot do as they like.

**School-girl (18 years old)**

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**W**e certainly do. I can't stand the way the Barisan Nasional is behaving right now — they ride roughshod over everything. They forget that it's we the people who put them there. If there's a strong opposition in Parliament, it'll give them a good think. They'll have to consider the people's opinions. Right now they think they're invincible and can do what they like without any sense of justice and fair-play. They're insensitive to the needs of a multi-racial society. They've caused a great deal of racial polarisation because of their policies and

statements. The irony is they talk of racial unity. A strong opposition will force them to think of other people.

Teacher (40 years old-female)

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**W**hat difference does it make? All that talk about parliament — in the end we're the same. Let those who like politics talk about it. It makes no difference to me.

Housewife (45 years old)

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**W**hy do we need a stronger opposition? So that there can be more 'lawyer-buruks'? They talk a lot and make a lot of noise and our government can't get things done. Things are okay as they are. I think our government is doing a good job.

LLN Workshop worker (43 years old-male)

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**A** strong opposition is necessary but what we don't need is opposition for opposition sake. We should oppose issues that involve public well-being. But right now, many oppose because they think they have to oppose everything the government does.

What we need is a strong and **responsible** opposition. Otherwise, we might as well not have one.

Housewife (32 years old)

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**I**s there a need for a stronger opposition? Surely this is a rhetorical question and the answer is very obvious!

I would have preferred if Aliran's theme for the Opinion Poll had been "Is a Stronger Opposition Possible?". This is a crucial question.

While there is always a need for a stronger opposition, is it possible to achieve this under the so-called Parliamentary Democracy we seem to be practising? The electoral system that exists in the country is so devised that it deliberately denies opportunities for making a choice after listening to the views of **all** political parties. What opportunities are there to make a sensible choice based on information and facts?

You can hardly call the so-called electoral process we go through periodically as a democratic choice made freely, without being threatened or cajoled by the ruling party. We don't observe the electoral process according to the covenants of democracy but rather go through a democratic mockery that openly denies the opposition a fair basis for electoral competition.

The election campaign period is limited; rallies are not permitted, truthful reporting in the press is prevented; equal time and opportunity for all political parties on TV and radio are prohibited; open and fair competition is not tolerated. Under these circumstances, is it possible for the opposition to operate? The fact that they continue to exist and struggle on is a remarkable tribute to their resilience.

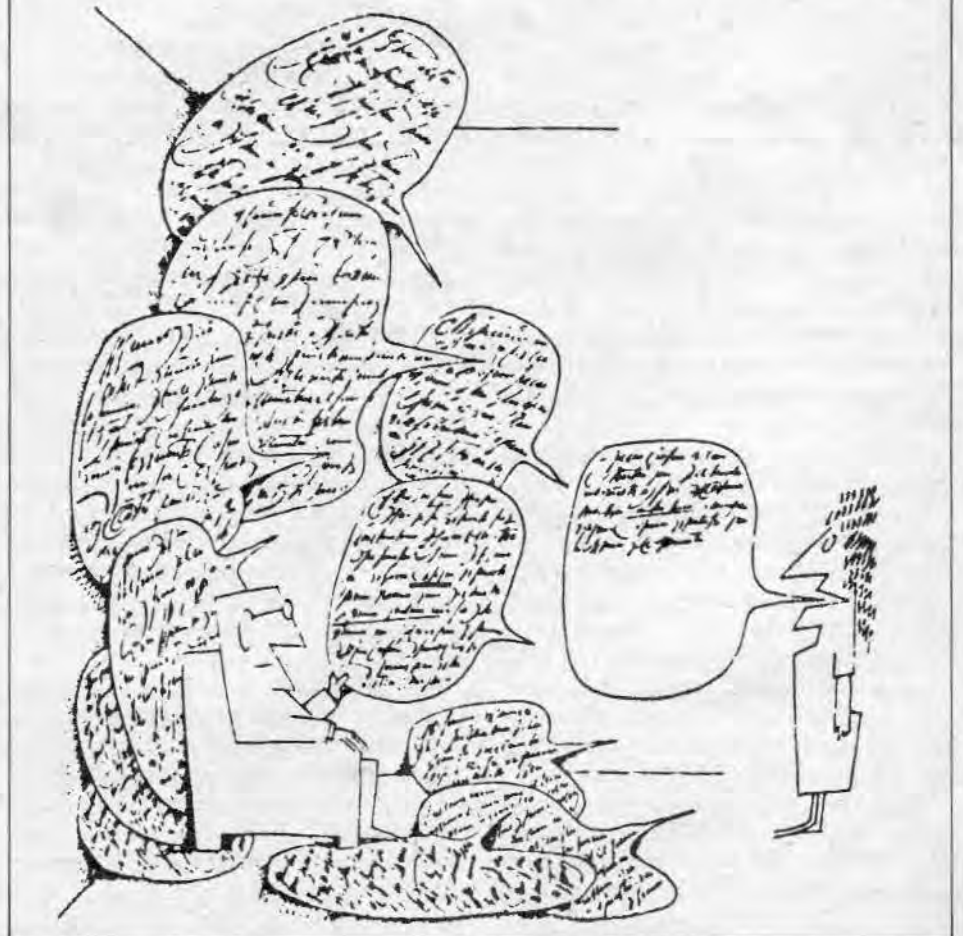
Why can't we permit rallies? We are told that the security situation of the country will be affected by public rallies. Or is it a ploy to keep the people ignorant? If mammoth crowds could be mustered by the government to marshal support for its Constitutional Amendments in 1983, in spite of a volatile situation then, why not allow rallies now? I have heard of incidents and rowdiness at football matches rather than at political rallies. Padang Terap was one exception — but we don't know the whole truth surrounding this. But should we use this one isolated incident as an excuse to ban rallies for the next elections? Just because a person is killed in a motor-car accident, do we ban motor-cars? Just because a person commits suicide from a high-rise building, do we stop putting up such structures? Just because a person in a position of influence commits corruption, do we abolish such positions?

Why shouldn't TV and radio time be made available to the opposition? The government monopolises this media so absolutely that it has become a propaganda machinery for the government day in and day out that you literally feel sick of listening to a lot of hogwash. What a relief it would be to listen to something different! If the government uses public media to retain its support and win over those who voted against it, shouldn't the same right be available to the opposition?

The Election Commission must know its role and duty during the election period. The only role they seem to be playing is to disqualify candidates on technical grounds and count the votes at the end of the polling day. They don't seem to be concerned by the unfair tactics of the ruling party during the campaign period. Voters are threatened; voters are bribed; government facilities are abused; numerous projects are launched; civil servants are made use of to campaign for the government; information vans are turned into propaganda vans for the ruling party; etc., etc..... The Election Commission seems to be oblivious to all this! It should supervise the entire conduct of the elections impartially and ensure that the opposition is given a fair opportunity to compete.

Only then will it be possible to have a stronger opposition. Aliran should strive

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Parliament so that it will enjoy prestige and credibility and reign supreme. Parliamentary Democracy must be safeguarded so that the views and voices of almost 40 per cent of the electorate of this country who have voted for the opposition will be heard as a matter of right and not as a matter of sufferance. The only way to ensure this is to have a stronger opposition which will take the Government to task for every abuse; which will demand accountability from the Government for every deed; which will question the Government for every sen spent; which will effectively provide the Government the necessary checks and balances.

**Shattered Democrat**



**T**he opposition, has for better or for worse played a significant role in Malaysian politics since Merdeka. Even though constantly ridiculed and denigrated by the ruling party, they have consistently distinguished themselves as a credible force to be reckoned with. That this is so is no accident because the ruling party has been incoherent on many critical issues where pragmatism and 'emotionalism' supplant principle.

The opposition as it is now, is the last vestige in what is otherwise the tyranny by the majority in our 'democratic' process. To contribute to genuine democratic processes an opposition is needed and it goes without saying, the stronger the opposition the more effective it would be in checking the Government and offering constructive criticisms when deviations occur.

A stronger opposition must be seen not only in the context of numbers, although numbers count in politics. More important, to be credible, the opposition must be mature, responsible and sensitive to the aspirations of the rakyat. Childish behaviour like issuing challenges to leaders of other parties for a two mile race is just not on! Policies and criticisms must be rational instead of appealing only to emotions. A strong opposition must also imply an ability to keep the Government in check and making it accountable to the rakyat, for every form of government

**The enemies of freedom do not argue; they shout and they shoot.**

— W.R. Inge

tends to perish by excesses of its basic principle. Stronger opposition also means increased room for critical and exhaustive analysis and therefore able to initiate and respond to debates intelligently, in form and matter. The ill-seasoned, complacent and passive government backbenchers need active and committed sparing partners! This is only possible with a strong opposition.

A strong opposition can only function when conditions congenial to its effectiveness exist. Central to this is the recognition that all individuals have rights which are superior to the social institu-

wields a blanket mandate to endorse all their actions and policies during their term. Nobody is infallible and the victorious party is no exception. The maxim, 'power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely' has an eternal truth as can be seen in innumerable instances in history.

The case of Malaysia is no exception. The Barisan Nasional (and prior to its formation, the Alliance) has ruled Malaysia since independence but their policies and actions have not been free from criticisms and condemnations by citizens who uphold justice, fairness and equality. The manner in which the Societies Amendment Act and the Internal Security Act were passed are but some manifestations of increasing arbitrariness and autocracy of the ruling party. Effective opposition has brought to light the BMF scandal, and had caused the replacement of the repugnant Societies Amendment Act as well as preventing the levelling of Bukit China in Malacca.

The last decade or so has seen the gradual but steady ascendancy of the Executive over Parliament which has increasingly been reduced to a mere rubber-stamping body as the ruling-party controls more than 2/3 of the seats. The arrogance and vindictiveness of the Barisan could be seen in the unconstitutional abrogation of the district status of Tambunan in Sabah after its defeat in the by-election which had the effect of signalling the death knell of Berjaya in the State Election that ensued. It saw the emergence and victory of Party Bersatu Sabah in the polls led by Datuk Joseph Pairin Kittingan. Under such circumstances there is an urgent need for a strong opposition to act as a watchdog over the actions of the ruling party.

It is however lamentable to note that the various opposition parties are sadly divided and thus not able to present a stronger front to check the actions of the Executive. It is therefore urged that all opposition parties lay aside their petty differences and strive to form a coalition and thus a more formidable opposition platform to counter the overwhelming majority of the ruling party in Parliament. It is also imperative that opposition parties be responsible and politically mature and only take up issues of genuine national concern and not merely opposing for opposition sake by dwelling on petty and insignificant issues. They should also avoid mustering support by raising narrow racial and religious issues which may fan the flames of ethnic and religious discord.

**John Heah Wee Theng**  
Penang

tions through which they pursue their goals. This insistence on the dignity of an individual means that all are equally entitled to contribute their opinions to the process of public decision-making, in accordance with the principles of participatory democracy. Laws which are contrary to the spirit of democracy and freedom of which Malaysia has many, must be dispensed with. Our Parliament is now in an anaemic state, consequent upon the erosion of its powers by the Executive. Bills are ramped through with lightning speed. These are all a consequence of an impregnable tyrannical majority the ruling party has in Parliament, a malaise only correctable by a strong opposition.

The alternative to a strong opposition is no opposition, which only means surrendering our rights, dignity and freedom as individuals. Ancient Greek history which shows that "free man fights better" is as relevant today as it was 2000 years ago.

"Khor"



**T**here is no denying the necessity of a strong and viable opposition in any democratic system. The ruling party may have won a mandate to rule from the people through the electoral process but it does not mean that it

# Pembangunan Dan Islam

## Bahagian Pertama

Ini adalah kertas kerja yang dibentangkan di simposium PAS mengenai 'Perpaduan Negara' pada 10hb Februari. Bahagian kedua dan ketiga akan disiarkan kelak — pengarang.

**P**embangunan, kita diberitahu, bukan proses menambah keuntungan semata-mata. Pembangunan bukan mempertingkatkan daya pengeluaran semata-mata. Pembangunan adalah untuk kesejahteraan manusia.

Kesejahteraan manusia, ya, kesejahteraan manusia — satu matlamat yang murni. Tetapi apakah kesejahteraan manusia yang kita maksudkan? Dapatkah kita mencapai kesejahteraan manusia sekiranya dasar-dasar pembangunan kita tidak mengandungi satu konsepsi yang menyeluruh tentang manusia? Macam mana kita dapat mencapai kebahagiaan manusia jika fahaman akan manusia itu sendiri mengelirukan? Pembangunan macam mana yang enggan, gagal, menjawab persoalan-persoalan seperti tentang manusia — Siapa dia manusia? Apakah asal usulnya? Apakah tujuannya atas bumi ini? Apakah peranannya semasa di sini?

Salah satu faktor yang menyebabkan ketidakpastian arah pembangunan dewasa ini ialah kegagalan teori-teori pembangunan menghadapi persoalan-persoalan asasi ini. Oleh kerana asas falsafah teori-teori ini kurang jelas dari segi fahaman mereka tentang manusia, maka makna dan maksud pembangunan sentiasa berubah. Adakalanya pembangunan disamakan dengan modenisasi; adakalanya ia dikaitkan dengan keperluan-keperluan asas atau sifat berdikari; adakalanya ia dianggap sebagai proses pembebasan terutamanya daripada pergantungan terhadap negara-negara maju.<sup>1</sup>

Selaginya pembangunan tidak berdasarkan pada satu konsepsi yang menyeluruh tentang manusia, maknanya, asal-usulnya dan tujuannya, kita tidak dapat mengatasi kekeliruan dan ketidakpastian yang kini timbul. Itulah sebabnya beberapa dasawarsa dulu, ahli-ahli falsafah Barat yang terkenal seperti Pitirim Sorokin, Lewis Mumford dan Arnold Toynbee telah memberi amaran tentang bahayanya pembangunan dan kemajuan yang tidak

mengendahkan persoalan-persoalan asasi yang disebutkan tadi. Fritz Schumacher dan Jeremy Rifkin<sup>2</sup> juga berpegang pada pendapat yang sama. Sepertimana dikatakan oleh Schumacher, "Keperluan yang paling mendesak ketika ini .. ialah penyusunan semula metafizik, satu usaha yang teragung untuk menjernihkan keyakinan-keyakinan kita mengenai persoalan-persoalan seperti, siapa dia manusia? dari mana datang dia manusia? dan apakah matlamat kehidupannya?"<sup>3</sup>

Nyatalah bahawa persoalan-persoalan asasi ini tidak boleh dijawab dengan sempurna sekiranya penggubal-penggubal teori-teori pembangunan tidak mahu merujuk kepada sumber yang lazimnya dianggap mereka sebagai 'lapuk', 'usang' dan 'mundur'. Yang dimaksudkan saya ialah ugama. Pentingnya ugama, khususnya falsafah dan pandangan semesta ugama, dalam pembentukan masyarakat jarang diakui oleh kebanyakan ahli-ahli teori pembangunan Barat. Tetapi, bagi seorang ahli falsafah sosial seperti Sorokin hanya, "melalui sistem nilai-nilai yang berakar dalam perasaan kewajipan moral dan Ketuhanan, kita dapat mengatur cara-cara rasional yang boleh membantu kita menyelesaikan banyak masalah-masalah praktikal tentang penyusunan semula sosial dan budaya".<sup>4</sup> Itulah sebabnya, kata beliau kita mesti menaruh kepercayaan pada Tuhan terlebih dahulu.

Atas kesedaran inilah Islam memberi jawapan-jawapan yang jelas dan jitu terhadap persoalan-persoalan asasi mengenai manusia. Malah, jawapan-jawapan inilah yang menjadi asas dan inti Islam. Pembangunan yang tidak memberi perhatian yang cukup kepada jawapan-jawapan yang maha penting ini bukan pembangunan namanya.

Bagi Islam, manusia adalah khalifah Allah. Ini bermakna bahawa setiap insan atas bumi Allah, samada ia Muslim atau tidak, ialah Khalifah Allah. Sebagai Khalifah Allah ia ada dalam bentuk material dalam dunia fana ini buat sementara waktu tetapi asalnya ialah spiritual dan takdirnya ialah spiritual. Tujuan manusia sebagai Khalifah Allah adalah untuk memberi erti yang konkrit kepada Tauhid

melalui amalan dan usahanya. Untuk menolong manusia dalam tugas yang suci ini, ia diberi bimbingan dalam bentuk nilai-nilai sejagat yang abadi. Begitu juga, Allah s.w.t. menentukan seberapa prinsip-prinsip asasi yang perlu bagi kesejahteraan hidup manusia.

Konsep **Khalifah Allah, Tauhid, nilai-nilai sejagat** dan **prinsip-prinsip asasi** mempunyai hubungan erat dengan soal pembangunan. Pembangunan berlandaskan Islam tidak dapat kita memahami tanpa konsep-konsep yang utama ini. Sebenarnya, konsep-konsep inilah yang mencirikan pembangunan dari kacamata Islam. Oleh itu, harus kita mengkaji implikasi konsep-konsep ini untuk pembangunan,

### Khalifah Allah

Pembangunan harus memberi makna kepada kedudukan dan peranan insan sebagai Khalifah Allah.

Sebagai Khalifah Allah, ia mesti melindungi asas spiritualnya kerana asas inilah yang menentukan kedudukannya sebagai Khalifah Allah. Sebenarnya, keupayaan, kuasa yang ada pada kita untuk memilih jalan spiritual inilah yang menjadikan kita manusia.<sup>5</sup>

Untuk memahami apa yang dimaksudkan dengan asas spirituality harus kita merenungkan makna amalan-amalan ibadat seperti sembahyang, puasa, memberi zakat, mengerjakan haj dan sebagainya. Setiap ibadat ini bertujuan mendidik kita mengatasi kehendak dan keperluan material semata-mata agar kita dapat memperkuat tumpuan pada nilai-nilai spiritual yang termaktub dalam jiwa kita. Sebagai contoh fardu sembahyang memerlukan kita tinggalkan tugas-tugas harian dan memberi perhatian kepada asas dan akar segala penciptaan dan penghidupan — iaitu Allah s.w.t. Kita diingatkan akan sifat-sifat Illahi, Rahman dan Rahim supaya kita menjadikannya sebagai asas dan inti kehidupan kita sendiri. Begitu juga, melalui puasa, kita mengawal keperluan-keperluan material dan disamping itu, memahami pentingnya disiplin, belas kasihan dan pengorbanan dalam kehidupan kita. Pemberian zakat adalah penyerahan sebahagian daripada benda material yang sangat disayangi manusia untuk kesejahteraan khalayak ramai. Ia melambangkan pentingnya keadilan dalam masyarakat. Fardu haj pula memaksa kita memutuskan hubungan (buat sementara waktu) dengan kehendak-kehendak material supaya kita dapat mengamalkan nilai-nilai persaudaraan dan kesamaan.

Kesamaan, persaudaraan, keadilan, kesejahteraan, pengorbanan, belas kasihan, kebebasan dan nilai-nilai yang lain, seperti kecintaan, penghormatan, mengenal batas, kesederhanaan, disiplin dan kerajinan — nilai-nilai inilah yang mentarifik manusia sebagai Khalifah Allah. Pembangunan tidak harus menjejaskan nilai-nilai



Dayabumi: Adakah ini pembangunan?

spiritual ini. Jejasnya nilai-nilai ini bermakna tercabullah maruah Khalifah Allah.

Ini bererti bahawa sekiranya sebahagian daripada masyarakat miskin dan menderita, daif dan sengsara, sudah nyata bahawa kesamaan dan persaudaraan tidak wujud dalam masyarakat itu. Pembangunan yang mengekalkan keadaan sedemikian bertentangan dengan cita-cita Islam. Begitu juga, pembangunan yang mengizinkan penindasan dan penceroohan tidak bisa diterima Islam kerana ia menghancurkan segala nilai-nilai murni dalam masyarakat termasuk kecintaan, penghormatan, belas kasihan dan maruah individu.

Maruah individu dan masyarakat akan terus terkorban jika proses pembangunan menggalakkan rasuah dan sifat tamak haloba. Harus kita tanya juga: bagaimana pula dengan pembangunan yang memperkuatkan arus materialisma, yang memperkukuhkan sifat perolehan (acquisitiveness) dan sifat gila mengumpul harta (accumulation) dikalangan yang kaya? Bagaimana pula dengan pembangunan yang menganggap kemewahan dan kekayaan sebagai matlamat utama hidup? Bagaimana pula dengan pembangunan yang menjadikan 'penternakan' golongan mewah sebagai dasarnya? Sudah pasti pembangunan sedemikian akan mengakibatkan hilangnya kesedaran bahawa manusia adalah penciptaan spiritual. Inilah kesan yang paling dahsyat daripada pembangunan yang mengutamakan materialisma tanpa batas: manusia — Khalifah Allah — lupa asalnya dan matlamat hidupnya.

Jelaslah bahawa Islam tidak mahu masyarakat dimana sebahagian daripada anggotanya dalam keadaan kepincangan dan sebahagian yang lain dalam keadaan kemewahan. Itulah sebabnya masyarakat yang diilhamkan dalam Islam ialah 'masyarakat tengah'. Ini terbukti dalam firman Allah sura al-Baqara 143 yang berbunyi, "Kami telah melantik Kamu sebagai masyarakat tengah, agar kamu menjadi contoh untuk seluruh manusia, sepertimana Rasulullah menjadi contoh untuk-mu."<sup>6</sup>

Masyarakat tengah dalam konteks penolakan Islam terhadap keadaan-keadaan ekstrim seperti kemiskinan, pada satu pihak, dan kemewahan, pada pihak yang lain, menunjukkan bahawa jalan yang dipilihnya ialah jalan sederhana. Kesederhanaan bukan sahaja diperingkat masyarakat bahkan juga dalam kehidupan insan. Itulah sebabnya Islam menganjurkan sifat mengenal batas dalam setiap bidang hidup. Pembangunan tidak harus memaksa kita melampaui batas-batas samada dalam pakaian, atau makanan atau pergaulan. Contoh yang paling baik dalam hal ini ialah Nabi Muhammad s.a.w. Mengikut Sayyidina Ali dalam **Nahjul Balagha.**, "Nabi makan atas lantai, seperti abdi-abdi. Nabi menampung kasutnya dan bajunya sendiri ...."<sup>7</sup> Sifat-sifat peribadi ini ada kena-mengena dengan pembangunan kerana ia menunjukkan bahawa walau apa pun pangkat seseorang individu atau darjat kemajuan sesuatu negara, nilai-nilai spiritual seperti kesederhanaan, mengenal batas dan sebagainya harus kita mematuhi.

Mengenal batas, sebagai panduan hidup juga ada hubungan dengan peranan manusia sebagai Khalifah Allah dalam ertikata yang lebih luas. Sebagai Khalifah Allah, manusia bertanggungjawab menegakkan segala yang makruf dan mencegah segala yang munkar — sepertimana termaktub dalam sura Al-Imran: 104.<sup>8</sup> Ini bererti bahawa kebebasan itu penting untuk membolehkan manusia bertindak sebagai Khalifah Allah. Oleh itu, proses pembangunan yang mengakibatkan kemerosotan hak-hak kebebasan anggota-anggota masyarakat adalah pembangunan yang bertentangan dengan Islam. Adalah salah dari segi Islam jika kita berujah bahawa kebebasan boleh diketepikan dalam usaha mencapai pembangunan. Pembangunan sedemikian mustahil membawa manfaat kepada manusia kerana ia mencacatkan pembangunan jiwa insan. Lagi pun, dalam proses pembangunan pemerintah dimana mana pun pasti melalukan beberapa kesilapan-kesilapan dari segi dasar dan pelaksanaan. Apakah kesan-kesannya terhadap orangramai sekitarnya kritikan dan teguran dilarang sama

sekali? Bukankah tindakan begini satu penafian yang besar terhadap kebenaran?

Sebagai insan yang mendukung kebenaran, Khalifah Allah mesti diberi segala peluang dan kemudahan untuk memperjuangkan nilai-nilai makruf. Selain daripada keperluan-keperluan asas, proses pembangunan juga mesti menentukan bahawa manusia dapat mengumpul pengetahuan yang berguna. Memperluaskan dan memperbanyakkan ilmu mesti dijadikan satu sasaran pembangunan. Penguasaan ilmulah yang membolehkan Khalifah Allah melaksanakan tanggungjawabnya terhadap segala jenis penciptaan yang ada atas bumi Allah.

Walaupun manusia begitu berkuasa, begitu mulia kedudukannya, Islam sering mengingatkan kita bahawa Khalifah Allah adalah hamba Allah. Segala-segala yang ada di bumi dan langit adalah hakmilik Allah,<sup>9</sup> Allah yang memiliki kuasa mutlak, Allah yang memiliki ilmu yang sempurna. Dengan memperkiatkan kekayaan mutlak, kuasa mutlak dan ilmu mutlak dengan Allah, Al-Quran, secara automatik menghadkan kedudukan manusia dalam bidang-bidang ini dan bidang-bidang yang lain. Idea ini tentang kedudukan manusia terkandung juga dalam beberapa ayat-ayat yang lain dalam Kitab Suci yang menyeru manusia bersikap rendah hati, jangan sombong, jangan angkuh, jangan rampas kuasa atau menyalahgunakan kuasa.

Pendekatan ini kepada manusia dalam hubungannya dengan Tuhan mempunyai implikasi yang mendalam untuk proses pembangunan. Pembangunan yang membolehkan manusia berlagak sebagai 'Tuhan', pembangunan yang membolehkan segelintir individu memusatkan kuasa, pembangunan yang membolehkan segolongan kecil mempergunakan kuasa mutlak — pembangunan sedemikian rupa adalah pembangunan yang kontra pada cita-cita unggul Al-Quran al-Karim.

Konsep kedudukan relatif manusia dalam hubungannya dengan Allah, dan konsep bahawa kehidupan adalah sementara (transient) yang juga sering ditegaskan dalam Quran adalah cara-cara untuk mengawal dan menahan 'ego' manusia. Betapa bahayanya ego yang tidak terkawal jelas terbukti dalam kegilaan kuasa yang berkaitan dengan wang dalam sistem kapitalis dan kegilaan kuasa yang berkaitan dengan politik dalam sistem komunis. Bagi Islam, selagi tidak ada penyerahan pada satu Kuasa yang lebih tinggi dan satu Hakikat (Reality) yang lebih mutlak — iaitu pengakuan **Transcendence** — pembangunan mungkin membawa pada pemusatan kuasa dalam bentuk ternyata atau tersembunyi.<sup>10</sup> Itulah sebabnya transcendence sebagai idea saikologikal, begitu penting dalam kehidupan individu dan masyarakat <sup>11</sup> ●

Chandra Muzaffar

# NEWS

## Announcement 1

### Dialogue of Concern III

Aliran is happy to announce that the third dialogue in our series of dialogues on major social concerns will be held at 9.00 am, Sunday, 14 July 1985, at Hotel Merlin, Kuala Lumpur.

The dialogue this time will be on

## Parliamentary Democracy

Various public interest societies and all important political parties from the government and the opposition have been invited to the dialogue. Two resolutions will be discussed — one, on the state of parliamentary democracy and two, on

certain administrative arrangements which Aliran feels are necessary for strengthening freedom in our society.

Because of the significance of the theme in relation to the overall situation in the country, there will be a special official opening ceremony for this dialogue.

It is a great honour to all those who uphold the principles of parliamentary democracy that **His Royal Highness the Sultan of Perak**, the **Timbalan Yang Di Pertuan Agung** has graciously consented to open the dialogue. There could be no better person in a position of authority who commands respect and affection from the people, to state the case for parliamentary democracy.

## Announcement 2

### Opinion Poll

The theme for the September opinion poll will be:

#### Has Development benefitted the Ordinary Rakyat?

It is generally agreed that there has been quite a bit of development in the country. The government has always argued that its development programmes have benefitted the rakyat. There are others, however, who feel that development has brought very little tangible benefits to the ordinary people. In their opinion, it is mainly the upper classes that have reaped most of the benefits. Yet others maintain that the very concept and nature of development in Malaysia is wrong.

What do you think of our development? Has Development benefitted the ordinary rakyat?

Let's have your views in less than 500 words before the **15 July 1985**.

Write to:

Opinion Poll  
Aliran Monthly  
Aliran  
P. O. Box 1049  
Penang  
Malaysia

We are looking forward to your contribution.

**Your View Counts With Aliran.**

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# CURRENT COMMENT

A record of Aliran's complete press statements made in the preceding months

**M**ay First marks Labour Day and like many other days of occasion it should also be a time for reflection apart from one of celebration and holiday.

While everyone is engaged in some form of labour or other it is to those who struggle for an existence that one's thoughts should have priority for. This includes not just industrial workers such as lowly paid operatives of electronic firms but also the rural poor such as the poor plantation worker and the landless peasant.

It is symbolic of the injustice created by the present form of development that those who have to work the hardest are also those who are the poorest and who suffer the most in times of economic depression. The nation has, since independence pursued the type of development that has sought to fulfil the wants of the middle and upper classes rather than meet the needs of the poorer segment of the working class. Hence there are huge disparities of income, attempts to restrain wages but not profits and unfair access to services and housing. It is a society whose direction and existence is very much determined by the wealthy and influential. In such a society low income workers have little chance of affecting changes which could uplift their condition. It is also a society whose economy is over-dependent upon the international economic system. For all these reasons, there is a pressing need for fundamental structural changes.

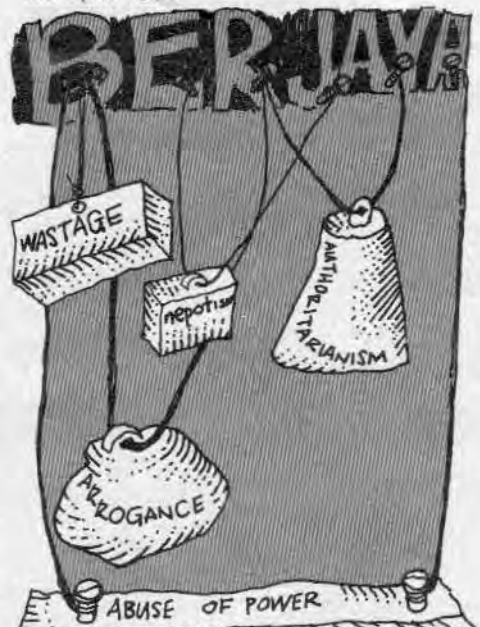
Thus, short term demands for better wages and conditions of work will gradually have to evolve into efforts to effect changes in the structure of ownership of industry. As an alternative to both state and private ownership of capital and production processes, one could consider steps which would lead to forms of direct common ownership by workers such as cooperatives. At the same time one would also need to seek ways of cutting down on our foreign dependency. For this a local technological base will have to be developed which can provide forms of technology which are much less capital and energy intensive than those of today.

In the short term, industries should immediately take steps towards developing the ability to utilise excess manpower and production capabilities in times of recession such as the present in

related albeit non-traditional areas of industry. This will help to avoid the inhumanity of worker retrenchment. At the same time there must also be a readiness to accept reductions in profit. The government on its part should allow greater freedom for peaceful unionization of workers and at the same time relax stringent labour laws. There is also the need for greater democratisation of the labour movement so that ordinary members can be encouraged to participate and to be involved in the decision making process. Such democratization would be linked to much needed social education programmes that will inspire workers to critically reflect upon their social situation. No less important is the need for labour unions to uphold justice and integrity within themselves and at the same time forge ties with other public interest groups in a common quest of freedom and justice.

Tong Veng Wye  
Exco Member

30 April 1985



**I**t is a pity that some quarters have interpreted Berjaya's defeat as the failure of multi-ethnic politics.

The defeat of Berjaya has been caused by a variety of factors which have nothing to do with multi-ethnic principles.

Multi-ethnic principles should not be made a scapegoat for corruption, wastage,

nepotism, arrogance, authoritarianism and abuse of power.

Aliran remains convinced that multi-ethnic politics can work provided the party in power that claims to be multi-ethnic pays attention to the genuine needs of the rakyat. Its priority should be the elimination of poverty and exploitation irrespective of ethnicity. It should also show a firm determination to practise values such as honesty, integrity and fairness in administration. Most of all, multi-ethnic parties should not deviate from democratic principles.

If it is sometimes difficult for multi-ethnic parties in government or the opposition to succeed it is only because the entire political atmosphere is largely communal. This communal atmosphere in politics is sustained by various ethnic interests. Even after the recent Sabah State election, we have witnessed how these vested interests tried to manipulate ethnic sentiments so that their brand of politics will survive forever.

Mustafa K. Anuar  
Exco Member

10 May 1985

(The above statement did not appear in any newspaper)

**I**t is shocking that \$100 million ringgit in the Employees Provident Fund's (EPF) statement of accounts for 1983 cannot be accounted for.

If the EPF management does not know who the contributors are, it is only because it failed to obtain correct and complete information from the employers when they submitted particulars of the depositors.

This dereliction of duty on the part of the EPF management should be thoroughly investigated. Appropriate action should be taken if necessary. At the same time, since many of the employers concerned are apparently government departments and statutory bodies the political leadership should take effective measures immediately to ensure that there is more efficient, competent performance on their part.

In the last 4 years, there have been a lot of exhortations about the importance of efficiency and good management. Public servants are all the while urged to improve their performance. And yet when there is clear evidence of shoddiness, ineptness and incompetence, the political leadership is unwilling to act firmly and decisively.

Let us hope it will not disappoint the people this time.

Hum Kim Choy  
Exco Member

17 May 1985

