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ALIRAN

for U • N • I • T • Y MONTHLY

GHOST OF MAY 13

Shameless politicians exploiting voters fears



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TACTICS IN KIJAL
BY-ELECTION**

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GHOST OF MAY 13

Shameless politicians exploiting voters fears

May 13 – the mere mention of that date is enough to strike terror into the hearts of most decent Malaysians. It is a taboo subject very rarely brought up in public conversation but instead discussed in hushed tones in the privacy of homes. The only exception to this being certain unscrupulous politicians who love harping on this topic each time an election comes along.

THE MAY 13 SYNDROME

Yes, this is the “May 13 syndrome”. A nation continues to suffer the psychological after-shock of a tragedy which occurred over twenty-one years ago – that black day in our history when riots erupted following the closely contested 1969 general election which saw the Opposition making sweeping gains at the expense of the ruling Alliance. Many were killed and injured in the senseless orgy of violence that ensued.

Under normal circumstances, the passage of time would have erased the bitter memories of that fateful day. But not in this case. In subsequent general election campaigns, certain politicians have shamelessly continued to make references to the date we would all like to forget. The fear is instilled in voters that they had better vote wisely (i.e. vote for the ruling coalition) or face the consequences (i.e. a blood-bath).

GRAVE EXHUMED

It is obvious that the ghost of May 13 has not been laid to rest. Every five years, the ‘grave’ is exhumed at the behest of certain politicians and the ‘ghost’ is set free to wreak havoc in the subconscious minds of voters – much like how Freddie of “Nightmare on Elm Street” fame torments his

It is time to lay the ghost of May 13 to rest. Let's give the ghost of May 13 a decent burial. Hammer the final nail into the coffin and lower it into the grave once and for all.

sleeping victims in their dreams.

But the reality is that we have nothing to fear. Absolutely nothing. Having said that, we have to cast a wary eye at certain politicians who could turn out to be sour losers in the coming general election. Even in 1969, the riots were not instigated by ordinary voters who had gone berserk. No way. The real culprits were the ones behind the scenes, skilfully tugging away at puppet strings to orchestrate the tragic scenes of chaos. All this in order to achieve their own selfish ends and satisfy their

unquenchable thirst for power.

EXPOSE THE CULPRITS

Voting for greater Opposition representation in Parliament, in itself, will not lead to violence and mayhem. If you look at it logically, if the Opposition is successful in the elections, what possible reason could it have for creating trouble? The ones who would be more likely to give vent to their frustrations would be the ones who stand to lose more. Think about it.

Let's give the ghost of May 13 a decent burial. Hammer the final nail into the coffin and lower it into the grave once and for all. Those who insist on exhuming it every now and again should be exposed for what they are – unscrupulous and perverted politicians who will stoop at nothing to be in power. □



Every five years unscrupulous politicians set free the 'ghost of May 13' to haunt the minds of voters.

If the Opposition does well...

WILL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BE AFFECTED?

It has often been said by our leaders that if the Opposition does well in the coming general election, national economic development will be seriously jeopardized.

This is very misleading. Economic development will not cease to be a priority irrespective of who is in power. The only thing that may be different would be the actual economic policies adopted. Even then, there is not much we need to fear.

FREE MARKET POLICY

Semangat 46 and DAP would surely avoid rocking the boat — if they were to come to power — as far as the economy is concerned. In all probability, they would continue promoting a free market economy with minimum State interference. If our labour cost remains competitive and the infrastructure is sound, foreign investment will continue to pour into the country, no matter who holds the reins of power. Foreign investors are more concerned about the types of incentives available, the supporting industrial network, transport and communications facilities and a ready labour pool — in short, the overall investment climate has to be attractive.

PAS' STAND

There is much doubt and concern over what kind of economic policy PAS will favour. They have partly themselves to blame for not making their economic orientation entirely clear. But recently, PAS deputy chief, Abdul Hadi

Economic development will not cease to be a priority irrespective of who is in power. If our labour cost remains competitive and the infrastructure is sound, foreign investment will continue to pour into the country, no matter who holds the reins of power.

Awang was reported to have said that PAS would not reject a free market economy. It wants a free economic system which would benefit humanity, as required by

Islam, he added.

It is not true that only a Barisan government will be able to attract foreign investments and ensure economic growth. Although there is wide publicity given to each foreign investment in the country, it is not widely realized that Malaysia lags behind several other ASEAN countries in terms of the amount of direct foreign investment. As for economic growth, Malaysia's 8.5% growth rate in 1989 was ahead of Indonesia's 6.2% and the Philippines 6.0% but well behind Thailand's 10.5% and Singapore's 9.2%.



Loading tin ingots: Foreign investors are attracted by a conducive investment climate, not who holds the reins of power.

INCREASED BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

Even if Opposition representation in Parliament is increased, the flow of foreign investments and development in the country is not going to be disrupted. A strong and effective Opposition will keep the ruling party in check and reduce any abuse of power. It will serve as a strong deterrent against corruption and wastage of funds. It will encourage a more independent Judiciary. Investors and busi-

nessmen will have somewhere they can go to for redress in the face of any high-handed or unreasonable Executive and bureaucratic decisions.

A stronger Opposition will also result in more freedom for the mass media. The free flow of information will be encouraged and this will inspire confidence in decision-making within the business community. Economic issues will be more thoroughly debated before policies can be adopted.

CONCLUSION

It must be realized that the money for development does not come from the ruling coalition's pockets. It comes from the fruit of the land and the sweat of its people — from the taxes, assessments, duties, levies and tolls which ordinary Malaysians have to pay to the Government — whether it is a Barisan or a Semangat-led government. Remember, the money for development comes from us, the ordinary citizens of Malaysia. □

NO PICNIC IN LANGKAWI

Commonwealth Observers Shoulder Heavy Responsibility

Now that Dr. Mahathir has decided to go ahead with his plan to invite Commonwealth (CW) observers for the forthcoming general election, making it quite clear that it is going to be on his terms, it would be appropriate to pause for reflection.

As we recall, it was Mahathir, not Election Watch (EW), who decided to invite the observers in the first place. Not because he relishes the idea of an independent, credible foreign group scrutinizing our electoral process — far from it. It was purely a tactical move on his part to neutralize the effectiveness and undermine the credibility of EW in the eyes of the public. Perhaps, he was also under the impression that, having feted the CW heads of government at Langkawi recently, and in view of his close relationship with CW secretary-general, representatives from the CW would be more inclined to see things his way.

For Dr. Mahathir, election observing begins and ends on polling day. No way would he want the Commonwealth observers to evaluate the short campaign period, the media blackout imposed on public rallies and the unequal weightage in constituency sizes.

But then, on 18 July, Mahathir discovered what he was in for. That was when officials, Sir Anthony Siaguru and Dr. Neville Linton met him at his office the day after their arrival in Kuala Lumpur. The duo were here on a "technical mission" to prepare the groundwork for the actual observer team — a common procedure in election monitoring. It must have dawned on Mahathir then that this was going to be no picnic in Langkawi. They were taking their task far too seriously for his liking

and were extremely thorough in their approach. This isn't surprising when one considers that the CW Secretariat has its reputation and integrity to protect.

Mahathir was in a dilemma. He had to find a way out.

On 20 July, the Group of Concerned Citizens (GOCC) was formed, headed by Tun Omar Y. L. Ong and comprising individuals known for their pro-government affiliation. It immediately issued a predictable press statement stating that foreign observers were unnecessary. Many believe that this group was sponsored, directly or indirectly, by the government to create the impression that the public was against the idea of inviting foreign observers.

The next day, in Muar, Mahathir openly declared that he was having second thoughts about inviting foreign observers. EW, he claimed, had invited the two CW representatives before the government could issue an official invita-



CW representatives Sir Anthony Siaguru and Dr. Neville Linton: Taking their task far too seriously for Dr M's liking.

tion to the CW Secretariat (a baseless allegation). It had also influenced ('menghasut' was the word he used) the CW Secretariat, he alleged. Moreover, he added, the representatives' conduct proved that they were 'biased' (just because they had met some individuals from EW).

It must be stressed here that the Prime Minister and Senior Election Commission (EC) officials were among the first to meet the CW representatives. The two representatives also held discussions with leaders of political parties, both from the Government and the Opposition. The question that must be asked here is — Why did Mahathir agree to meet them if they had really been invited by EW? An impartial analysis will clearly show that the CW delegates activities in Malaysia were consistent with their objective of obtaining the views of a wide cross-section of those involved in the electoral process.

But the more Mahathir thought about it, the more he realized that he could not possibly withdraw the invitation without causing considerable embarrassment to himself, the Cabinet and the CW Secretariat. If the invitation was withdrawn, it would certainly appear to the outside world that he had something to hide. Besides, more significantly, it would surely show him up as an indecisive leader.

The only way out it seemed was to keep the invitation open but insist on the right to dictate terms. Who knows, if the terms were rigid and unreasonable enough, the CW Secretariat would find it extremely difficult to accept the invitation without compromising its integrity.

For Mahathir, election observing begins and ends on polling day. Perhaps, he would take the observers to a polling station or two to watch the voters dropping their ballots into the boxes. No way

would he want them to evaluate the short campaign period, the media blackout imposed on the various parties, the ban on public rallies and the unequal weightage in constituency sizes.

Indeed, the most serious area for concern in our electoral process would not even be conspicuous on polling day. It arises well before that — the whole business of voter registration. Many grievances have been aired on this subject ranging from missing names on electoral rolls and names with the same IC numbers, to allegations of wholesale transfers of blocks of voters from one constituency to another.

At present, voter registration is carried out for a few weeks every year, often without much fanfare. Thus, many eligible citizens are deprived of the chance to register and vote.

Often electoral rolls are displayed at obscure and unpublicised locations. The vast majority of voters do not bother to check if their names are correctly included in the rolls. This results in much confusion and unpleasant scenes on polling day.

Some urgent reform in this area is essential. The EC should seriously consider making registration compulsory for all eligible citizens. Whether he or she actually votes or not is the individuals' prerogative. In this age of computer technology, such a registration system should not be too difficult to implement. For example, the national Identity Card's computerised data bank could be linked to the EC's office to provide the Commission with up to date information on all eligible voters, including changes of addresses. Our Identity Cards could also have an additional feature to show which voting constituency we belong to.

These are just some suggestions. What is required is a comprehensive study of our existing electoral system to further improve on it. Whether the necessary funds, expertise and resources will be made available to the EC is another question altogether. □

GET YOUR FACTS RIGHT V. K. CHIN!

In the Star on 23 July 1990, page two, it was reported that: "Apart from Semangat, the (Commonwealth) visitors also met Election Commission officials twice since they arrived on Tuesday.

They had met the Prime Minister on Wednesday."

In the same edition of the Star, on page 17, V.K. Chin had the audacity to comment:

"We feel that the Secretariat owes Malaysia at least an explana-

tion on the snafu.

Even this lapse in courtesy could be overlooked except for the fact (sic) that its two representatives had so far confined their meetings to the opposition and outside groups."

Perhaps V.K. Chin could tell us exactly when Mahathir officially joined the Opposition? Alternatively, he could explain to the Malaysian public what it is he is trying to prove.

CHONG EU'S LESSON ON PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY



Dr Lim Chong Eu: Welcome! — only if you've come to learn.

They (the Commonwealth observers) must also be willing to learn. Malaysia's record of parliamentary democracy may even provide a lesson, which the observers can take back to their home country. If they come with such an attitude, then we will certainly welcome them." *DR. LIM CHONG EU, NST 28 July 1990.*

So, it appears that the Commonwealth observers have to come all the way to Malaysia to learn about parliamentary democracy. You cannot be serious, Dr. Lim?!

FAKE ICs RACKET?

May affect results in marginal constituencies

We have heard of yuppies proudly flashing their strings of credit and charge cards. But having a string of identity cards in your wallet is 'another kettle of fish altogether'. Some disturbing allegations have created a stir on the East Coast. These allegations — if proven correct — could have far-reaching implications for the credibility of the results in certain crucial seats in the coming general election.

POLICE REPORT LODGED

According to a report in the PAS newspaper (Harakah) of 3 August, a syndicate is alleged to have issued false identity cards in order to ensure the defeat of Opposition candidates in the coming polls. The main focus of the syndicate is on marginal constituencies where the winning majorities in previous elections were slim. It is alleged that the syndicate has synchronized the issue of the fake ICs to coincide with the latest electoral rolls. It is understood that certain quarters have already lodged a police report over the matter.

According to a Harakah columnist, the Barisan Nasional has recently begun to feel very confident of doing very well in Kelantan. He states that it has no basis for such confidence and goes on to ask whether this has anything to do with the alleged fake ICs syndicate. Those in possession of more than one IC would apparently be able to vote more than once in different constituencies. Such rigging of the polls would surely be difficult to detect by foreign observers on polling day.

RUMBLING FROM SABAH

It appears that a similar syndicate was in operation in Sabah during the electoral registration

It is alleged that a syndicate has issued thousands of false identity cards in order to ensure the defeat of opposition candidates. Those in possession of these fake ICs would apparently be able to vote more than once in different constituencies.

exercise in March this year. It is suspected that around 250,000 illegal immigrants may have received blue ICs which enabled them to register as voters. Apparently, sources say Pairin got wind of this and ordered snap-state elections before the new 1990 electoral rolls could be ready for use. Thus, the eligibility to vote in the recently concluded state elections was based on the old 1989 rolls and, consequently the syndicate there was outwitted as far as the state elections were concerned.



Had Pairin got wind of the fake ICs syndicate when he called snap state elections?

This ties in with an allegation made by the Ranau (Sabah) State Assemblyman, Siringan Gubat, reported in an obscure column of the NST dated 6 August 1990. He claimed to have discovered 750 phantom voters in the 1990 electoral rolls for his constituency which were displayed recently. Gubat said that villagers did not even know the names of certain voters whose names appeared on the list. In one village, for instance, there were only seven registered voters previously, but the latest rolls showed 12 new voters who did not reside there. There were also complaints of "suspicious" names from the Kiulu (Sabah) constituency where villagers did not recognize the 37 new voters listed for Kampung Lokos and another 26 for Kampong Tiong.

CONCERN OVER VOTER REGISTRATION

It appears that there is cause for serious concern about the whole area of voter registration. If the Commonwealth observers were to look carefully at our electoral rolls and the process of voter registration, there is no doubt that there will be quite a few raised eye-brows, to say the least. Perhaps, that is why Mahathir is so anxious to restrict their activities to polling day only, for he knows the process of balloting and counting is quite straightforward and above board.

There are several measures which can be taken to strengthen the public's confidence in the area of registration — both short and long-term measures.

SHORT-TERM MEASURES

First, the Election Commission should conduct a detailed check on selective constituencies where com-

plaints have arisen. No doubt, opposition parties would be quite happy to provide the Commission with a list of the most affected constituencies for a thorough screening. Special attention should be paid to constituencies where the previous winning margins were wafer-thin.

Second, the Police will have to be extra-vigilant on polling day to detect any organized or mass movements of voters from one area to another. In the past, there have been allegations that foreign nationals were brought in from over the borders of a neighbouring country in order to vote.

Third, the Election Commission should seriously consider marking the thumbs of voters with indelible ink on polling day. Once the voter's thumb-print is taken, the ballot paper will be issued to him. As the ink will not wear off for at least two weeks, there is no chance of the voter casting his ballot again in another constituency as he will be immediately spotted. This is a normal practice in India, the world's largest democracy, and it has been proven to be quite effective. It may appear to be rather primitive to some; but in an era of "primitive" politicians, such drastic measures will surely not go amiss.

LONG-TERM SOLUTION

Ultimately, the only real long-term solution to this problem is the introduction of compulsory registration for citizens. A sophisticated registration system should be implemented — one that will be able to detect and highlight any fraudulent manipulation of electoral rolls. We should not be too proud to accept any foreign know-how and expertise in developing such a system. Until we are certain that our electoral rolls are 100% clean, it will be an uphill task trying to convince anyone that our elections are really free and fair. □

ALIRAN NOT COLLECTING FUNDS FOR ELECTION WATCH

It has come to our notice that certain individuals are going around collecting money for Election Watch using an Aliran letterhead which purportedly carries the signature of Aliran Secretary, Dr. Ariffin Omar. The letterhead, the contents and signature are false.

Election Watch has not authorised any member of the public

to collect funds on its behalf. Aliran, nor any of its officials or members have been asked to collect funds for Election Watch.

If members of the public come across anyone collecting funds on behalf of Election Watch, they should report the person or persons to the police.

ELECTION WATCH

AWARENESS

A man got into a bus and found himself sitting next to a youngster who was obviously a hippy. He was wearing only one shoe.

"You've evidently lost a shoe, son."

"No man," came the reply. "I found one."

It is evident to me; that does not mean it is true.

ANTHONY DE MELLO •
The Prayer of the Frog

* * *

"What comes from the lips, reaches the ear. What comes from the heart, reaches the heart."

- ARAB PROVERB

STRIPPING THE ETHNIC HEROES

YOU may be one of those who have noticed of late that politicians of all sorts have been going out of their way to "help" the rakyat.

Smartly bush-jacketed chaps in equally smart cars have been stirring the dust in narrow kampung roads to call on their constituents bearing gifts of development promises and projects. For some of these constituents, it was probably the first time that they had seen their wakil rakyat since the last general election.

Others went further to actually implement long-overdue development projects. A recent news report showed an Umno politician grinning and hammering away at a wooden wall. He was helping to build a new kampung house for a needy Bumiputera member of his constituency, an elderly lady who appeared quite bewildered by this expensively-dressed "workman".

This wakil rakyat's colleagues have been even more industrious and imaginative in helping the rakyat in their own areas. Some of them have been featured working shoulder-to-shoulder with sunburnt farmers, distributing poverty kits (whatever they are) to the poor, clearing rubbish and undergrowth in new villages and handing out ang-pows to the old and needy.

All these are well and good, even if they occur only once in several years, except for the ethnic bias of the episodes. Umno leaders are seen handing out aid and grant only to the Bumiputera, MCA politicians lend a hand solely to the Chinese and likewise, MIC leaders

seem willing to reach out only to the Indians.

The effect of their ethnic type of politics clearly does little toward uniting the different ethnic groups here. Worse still, it is being practised by the very people who continually blame others for the country's ethnic anxieties and problems.

There are times when these ethnic heroes are blatantly communal as in the case of a local politician who has given his Ministerial protection to a group of hawkers in a Penang suburb. These hawkers have repeatedly defied the authorities order to relocate to a permanent site and the politician is championing them not because he thinks it is proper that they remain where they are, but because they are of a certain ethnic group.

Those of us who have attended ceramah and talks by political parties would also have been horrified to hear their leaders talk along the lines of: "Kita, bangsa Melayu", or "Wua men hua ren" (meaning we of the

Chinese race), and so on. Their means of soliciting political support is clearly contrary to the spirit of Malaysian unity. What is more disturbing is that some of them actually relish their reputation of being a Malay hero or champion of the Indians or hero of the Chinese.

Their constant rhetoric of Malaysian unity is sadly unmatched by their action, which must be regarded as one of the major causes of the deterioration in ethnic relations. Their methods may appeal to certain segments of the various communities, but a growing number of Malaysians are increasingly critical of such contradictions. They view with distaste such manipulation of ethnic sentiments which only serve to create resentment, envy, distrust and suspicion among the different communities at all levels.

With the nearing general election, Malaysians must think carefully about whether they should continue to condone ethnic opportunists such as these. □

AYW

No amount of technological progress will cure the hatred that eats away the vitals of materialistic society like a spiritual cancer. The only cure is, and must always be, spiritual.

Thomas Merton • Thoughts in Solitude

A Jewish prayer of repentance



peoples of the Universe!
Hear the broken sounds of Shevarim.
We can mend our wounded souls
and our tattered lives.

Thus we can serve God and God's creation
with all the fullness our being.
Then the wail of Shofar will awaken in us
the desire to sacrifice and to work,
leading us toward a world
where we can live in justice and holiness.

Oh humanity!
Listen to the call of Shofar.
Oh Lord,
help us awaken from our lethargy and egoism.

Make us understand that You created our talents
in your image and granted us
the power of creation and love.
Grant us the possibility of casting off all fear,
suspicion, aggression and violence.

Let the sound of Shofar strengthen our decisions
and fill our lives with meaning,
as we dedicate ourselves
to Your eternal truth.

*Rabbi Daniel Kripper,
Representative of the Jewish community
Ecumenical liturgy, Montevideo, December 1989*

A Christian prayer of repentance

We

are creatures like the trees and the fields,
like the earth and the sea;
We are children of God,
brothers and sisters of Jesus,
but always,
we remain less than God.

Yet we puff ourselves up
as if we were great lords and ladies.
And in the rest of creation,
there is a huge, anguished sigh.

You have created us to live in union,
yet we have built barriers that divide us,
unfaithful to the message we have received.

Jesus Christ, you were born poor
and remained poor until the Cross.
We enrich ourselves by destroying nature,
by destroying ourselves.
Forgive our arrogance, our pride,
our self-sufficiency.

Grant us your Light with which to look
with humility toward the future,
and your Strength to journey
toward the New Creation.

*Pastor Hilda Vence
Representative of the Christian community
Ecumenical liturgy, Montevideo, December 1989*



LETTERS

We welcome letters from readers. Letters can be either in English or Bahasa Malaysia. These letters may be edited for purposes of space and clarity. The views may not be those of the Aliran Monthly. Pseudonyms are accepted but all letters should include the writer's name and address. Letters should preferably be typewritten with double-spacing; if hand-written they should be legible.

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, Aliran Monthly, P.O. Box 1049, 10930 Penang, Malaysia.



Sad wait for pilgrims' return:
The Christian community mourns
with its Muslim brothers.

THE MINA TRAGEDY

The CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA on behalf of the Christian community conveys its deepest condolences to families of those who have died in the tragedy in Mina.

We are greatly shocked at the magnitude of the tragedy and deeply saddened by the death of so many pilgrims who were in the process of fulfilling their religious duties.

May God console all who have been so suddenly bereft of their loved ones and grant them peace.

Our sympathies are also with those families who are undergoing great anxiety awaiting news of the safety of

their loved ones. May God be their companion in this time of anxiety.

MR DANIEL HO
Hon. Secretary
Christian Federation of Malaysia

DETENTION OF 24 PAS MEMBERS

We refer to the article in the Harakah, dated 4 May 1990, regarding the detention of 24 PAS members under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

The Society for Christian Reflection is disturbed to learn about the continued detention of these 24 PAS members and particularly the effect that their detention has had on their families. This is especially distressing because many of

those detained are the primary breadwinners of their families. As a result of their detention, many of their families are facing abject poverty, to the extent that their children have been forced to drop out of school.

We are also perturbed to learn that apart from these 24 persons, there are also at least another 36 persons detained at the Kamunting Detention Centre. What is even more worrying is the seemingly indiscriminate use of the ISA to randomly detain people without trial and that these detentions are taking place without any mention of it by the government as to the occasion and reasons for their detention.

We strongly urge the government to immediately and unconditionally release all those presently detained under the ISA or to charge them in court. We also call for the repeal of this unjust Act.

RAJENDRAN DEVARAJ
O/B Executive Committee
Society for Christian Reflection

HORRIFIC LAWS REVOKED BY IRAQ'S COUNCIL

I refer to S.P. Choong's "Horrible new laws in Iraq" (Letters, A.M. Vol. 10 No. 5) and wish to inform you that the law in question was decreed on February 28, 1990. Less than two weeks later, on March 12, 1990, that Law was revoked by Iraq's Revolution Command Council's Decree No. 133. And that was the end of it.

HISHAM TABAQCHALI
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
Kuala Lumpur

THE NEXT GOVERNMENT

Bearing in mind the forthcoming election and the lopsided bombardment of pro-government propaganda in the local newspapers, television and radio, publications such as yours play an important role in presenting a fairer perspective of current Malaysian politics.

Your publication has done an excellent job in exposing the Barisan Nasional's weaknesses and this should continue. Your articles have also given Malaysians a good idea of what a good Malaysian government should be but little is written about the plans of the

alternative government.

If it is not too late, perhaps you could give us your view on how such a government could come about amidst the present scenario. Interviews with the opposition leaders about fundamental issues will also give us a clear view of the alternative government. Malaysian voters like me need to know in more details before we decide who we want to cast our votes for. This election is in some ways crucial. As a foreigner once told me "Your country is rich and has great potential. What you need is good leaders who can lead the way to prosperity."

We need to know what the next Malaysian government has in store for us. We need to know early before the election.

HIGH HOPES
Penang

ELECTIONS MONITORING

In proposing to send to Malaysia observers from democratic countries to monitor our elections, the Commonwealth Secretariat shows its regard for fairplay. If, as is claimed, elections in our country have always been fair and clean then we should welcome having our electoral procedures observed without the need to lay our terms.

As long as international standards of election-monitoring are followed and those sent to us are men and women of integrity and judgment, there should be no reason for unease, should there? As the saying goes: "If the material is pure gold, its intrinsic nature will be proven in the fire." Authenticity will always be its own vindication. Can the role of our mass media (space given both to incumbents and the opposition) and other practices stand up to scrutiny?

DR WONG SOAK KOON
Kuala Lumpur

THE POT CALLING THE KETTLE BLACK

Our paranoid Prime Minister has again come up with a silly statement. This time, he claims that an Opposition party has been harassing and victimizing civil servants who support the Government.

One thing immediately comes to mind. Does this Opposition party

really have the clout or authority to victimize these civil servants at state (even in Kelantan) or federal level?

Do the leaders of this Opposition party really have the power to transfer civil servants out of any district? Aren't the federal and all state governments firmly in the hands of the ruling coalition?

Is the PM merely making such a statement in order to go on the offensive against the Opposition? Remember the ridiculous accusation he made in Parliament regarding Karpal Singh's role in masterminding the burglary involving the Vijandran videotapes? Has the PM run out of political ideas? Perhaps, he is fighting like a drowning man clutching on to straws!

Another ridiculous statement which he made recently was that the Opposition might close down certain newspapers if it came to power. Isn't this very hypothetical? No one can deny that the Opposition may resort to such a high-handed action, but can anyone really say for sure that it will really happen?

Wasn't it his government which closed down three newspapers in 1987? Wasn't he who was responsible for the extreme amendments to the Printing and Printing Presses Act? Didn't he introduce the Official Secrets Act? Aren't these Acts responsible for the diminution in press freedom in the country? Isn't the Star now a pale shadow of its former self?

How can the PM ever come up with such a ridiculous statement that certain newspapers might be closed down if the Opposition was to take over the government? Wasn't he the one who committed this sin against the rakyat and the thousands of employees of the Star, the Sin Chiew Jit Poh and Watan? Why is he then trying to accuse others of trying to resort to this? If he feels that this form of action is wrong, why did he commit this sin in 1987?

There are many questions to be asked, but can the PM really answer them with a clear conscience. Perhaps, the writing is on the wall. Our beloved Dr. M must indeed be paranoid now. For his own sake, we feel that he should step down before he loses his sanity!

FED-UP
Penang

WE NEED AN EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION

The situation in Malaysian politics is now entirely different. For more than three decades the Barisan Nasional has ruled the country and contributed towards its develop-

ment.

But now, Semangat 46 is claiming that it is the original UMNO and that the Malays should come forward to support it. It has established itself not only among the Malays but also among the non-Malays. It is growing day by day with the support of other opposition parties in the country. Bapa Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, adviser for Semangat 46 and its allies, had proposed Tengku Razaleigh as the next Prime Minister of Malaysia, if opposition parties are successful in the coming general election.

In a democratic country like Malaysia, a strong and effective Opposition is essential and should be welcomed by the ruling Coalition. In the past opposition parties were never united but now Semangat 46 has overcome this problem.

We are not out to find fault with the ruling coalition. Instead, we want it to govern honestly and to keep its promises to the rakyat. If it cannot do that, then we need a dedicated and an effective alternative government under the leadership of Semangat 46. In the meantime I would like to appeal to PAS not to argue about Islamic issues with the other parties, as the election is nearing. It should move away from religious issues in order to be an effective opposition party.

The time is ripe for change now. We would like to urge both sides to work for the betterment of the people and the nation. We are familiar with the manifesto of the Barisan Nasional but not that of Semangat 46. Can they provide us with more details?

T. KRISHNAN
Kuala Selangor

THE REAL REASON FOR MTSU'S WITHDRAWAL

The lead story of the NST and The Star of 14 June was the announcement of the Malayan Technical Services Union's (MTSU) decision to disaffiliate from the MTUC. It is quite odd for the local mass media to give front page coverage to the disaffiliation from the MTUC by one of its 146 affiliates. But they had a purpose - to discredit the leaders of the MTUC and in the process to please their unseen boss.

The story included a statement from MTSU General Secretary, En. Mohd. Khairuddin Haji Mydin, to the effect that his union's decision to pull out was made primarily for two reasons: One, as a protest against the MTUC's stand on the GSP issue, and two, because MTUC president Zainal Rampak had joined Semangat 46.

On that very day, TV3 carried an interview with the ex-General Secretary of the MTSU, A. Ragunathan. He was reported to have concurred with Khairuddin's statement on the MTSU's withdrawal from the MTUC.

Ragunathan had left the MTSU in July last year and is currently a director of Times Engineering. It was, therefore, rather odd for TV3 to have interviewed Ragunathan and not the President or General Secretary of the Union.

What is the real reason for the MTSU's disaffiliation from the MTUC? The union made the decision to disaffiliate at its executive council meeting held on 11 February 1990. It is claimed that a working paper tabled at the meeting by the MTSU General Secretary clearly stated that by pulling out of the MTUC, the union would be able to save \$7,000 by way of the yearly affiliation fee which could be used for its other activities. There was no mention of the GSP or Zainal Rampak's membership in Semangat 46, for these issues surfaced ONLY in May.

The meeting, it is reliably understood, also decided NOT to announce the decision to the press, mainly to safeguard the good name of the MTSU, which was one of the oldest affiliates of the MTUC. It pulled out in 1980, then returned to the fold of the MTUC in 1985, only to disaffiliate again in order to save \$7,000 a year. Its actions in undermining trade union solidarity would have tarnished the image of the MTSU. Hence, no press statement was issued after the 11 February meeting.

According to MTSU sources, the leaders also decided not to write officially to the MTUC about its withdrawal, but to

default payment of affiliation fees; thus ceasing to be an affiliate in the course of time. It can be verified with the MTUC that the union has not paid its fees since 11 February. In fact, it stopped payment in September 1989.

Why then did Mohd. Khairuddin and Ragunathan who were both fully aware of the reasons for the MTSU's decision to pull out of the MTUC from the start distort the truth? Obviously, they were in a hurry to please their political masters.

Ragunathan, who now criticises Zainal Rampak for joining Semangat 46, was once a member of the Malaysian Ceylonese Congress, a supporter of the Barisan Nasional for some years. At that time he was a leader in the MTSU, CUEPACS and the MTUC.

During the 1986 general election, he addressed ceramahs organized by Datuk Lee Kim Sai and went all the way to Penang to campaign for En. Anwar Ibrahim, in spite of the fact that, under his (Ragunathan's) chairmanship, CUEPACS had decided to remain neutral in the elections. Hypocrisy has, perhaps, no limit.

K. GEORGE
Klang

A SRI LANKAN WELL-WISHER

The World Solidarity Forum on Sri Lanka for Justice and Peace" held a conference in Thailand. Among the publications distributed there were Aliran's.

After coming back to Sri Lanka, I read it and found it very interesting. Article 21 of your basic principles ("The active promotion of Bahasa Malaysia") is what I personally admire most.

I hope Aliran will "flow" towards its aims and set a new "trend".

S.G. PUNCHIHEWA PANNIPITIYA
Sri Lanka

FISHING FOR VOTES USING THE GSP

It is regrettable to note that Dr. Mahathir and his Barisan colleagues are going all out to discredit the MTUC and its leaders over the GSP issue. Is the MTUC really involved, directly or indirectly in asking the US Government to withdraw the GSP privileges being enjoyed by Malaysia

at present? Nobody really knows the answer. The MTUC should be considered innocent until proven guilty. But Dr. Mahathir and his colleagues are banging them everyday, not because they care for the welfare of workers, but in order to gain political mileage out of the GSP issue - just to fish for a few extra votes in the coming general election. Unfortunately, this is because some of the top MTUC leaders are also in opposition parties. Naturally, opposition parties have also been dragged in and labelled as traitors to the nation.

In Dr. Mahathir's language, Nelson Mandela would also be labelled as a traitor to his own country because everybody knows that Mandela is visiting many countries in the West pleading for economic sanctions to be imposed on his motherland, South Africa.

Personally, I hope that the MTUC and opposition parties will come out openly in support of the GSP. After all setting up a national union for workers in the electronics industry is a secondary objective, which could be achieved, by Allah's grace, if there is a change in Government after the next general election.

A MALAYSIAN
Penang

TUN HUSSEIN'S QUALITIES WORTHY OF EMULATION

The passing away of Tun Hussein Onn, the beloved third PM of Malaysia, is a great loss to the nation. He was a man of many virtues. His extreme humility was second to none. His vision was sharp; when he saw greatness in a man, he would recognize it.

Above all, he was a wise leader. Many men grab power through planning and manipulation. But Tun Hussein rose to the highest office of the land through a twist of fate.

His excellent qualities should be emulated by one and all.

WEN AI
Kuala Lumpur

WHY IS ANWAR KEEPING QUIET?

The Prime Minister is touring the whole country on a pre-election campaign. At every state, he is holding public rallies (which are banned

YOUR
DAILY LIFE

is your temple
&
your religion.

Kahlil Gibran •

QUOTED FROM 'THE PROPHET'

in Malaysia), using school-fields and other public facilities. The mass media is giving great coverage to his speeches in which he condemns opposition parties.

As the tour is a political one, I would like to know who is paying for the fares and other expenses incurred by the PM and his entourage. If government funds are being used, why is saudara Anwar Ibrahim, the Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Corrupt Practices, keeping quiet?

I would also like to question the PM if he is going on these tours on government time or is he on leave? If it is on government time, the PM must be charged with wasting his official time on political activities.

Perhaps saudara Anwar Ibrahim will respond (if he dares to).

ABDULLAH HAJI AHMAD
Kuala Lumpur

ELECTION WATCH MUST HAVE PEOPLE'S SUPPORT

I feel very uneasy about our Prime Minister inviting Commonwealth observers to oversee the general election which is due anytime now. What particularly worries me is that Dr. Mahathir has stated that no conditions must be set by the Opposition. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Sir Sridath Ramphal, may be above reproach in dealing with Dr. M's request, but what I fear most is the potential manipulation by the keen minds that surround Dr. M.

We even have a precedent. The two foreign judges from Sri Lanka and Singapore who sat on the tribunal to remove Lord President Tun Salleh Abas did not really try hard to do justice. Despite the glaring shortcomings in the constitution of the tribunal itself, the one-sided terms of reference and the quality of "truth" from the main witnesses, they just sat through the proceedings and finally concurred with our lesser judges to commit a travesty of justice.

If you ask me the outcome of any event in the high circles of Government today, it can be predetermined! Including the conduct of the general election. We have seen too many instances of abuse of power by the Barisan Nasional to have any faith in their credibility.

Ironically, our own Election Watch has the best chance of ensuring a fair general election. But Election Watch must have the support of the people. The people have to wake up from their slumber. They must realize and be aware of what is happening. Everything is in our hands - yours and mine.

DARSHAN SINGH
Kuala Lumpur

THE ISA IS INHUMAN

I am utterly disgusted by the way the arrest of the three Sabahans under the ISA has been used to further the selfish ends of various parties. The central issue is the unjust and inhuman ISA legislation NOT the alleged "crime" of the detainees.

The so-called "plot" is a mere unsubstantiated allegation by the police to "justify" using the ISA. It is precisely because the police have insufficient evidence to stand up in a court of law that they are resorting to the ISA. This has been proven true in all previous ISA cases.

The injustice of the ISA to the ordinary thinking person is clear. Denial of a person's right to a proper defence is the greatest possible injustice. One would even dare say that God would never deny any human being this right. This is clearly recorded in many of the great spiritual traditions. How then could mere men support the existence of the ISA?

Firstly, the inhumanity of the ISA is clear from the point of view of the detainees themselves. Because the ISA lends itself to arbitrary arrest, no one is ever sure why he or she is actually being arrested and no proper reason need ever be given. Such uncertainty, which easily results in doubt and guilt, is designed to elicit incriminating information from the detainee. This kind of psychological torture is most inhuman. Thus, punishment is meted out on the basis of suspicion. This goes against all known human values.

Secondly, on the part of the families of the detainees, the shock and disruption in their lives cause great suffering. Besides that, there is always the gnawing question - WHY?

But, by far the most deadly aspect of the ISA, is the one that touches all of us - FEAR. A vicious cycle of fear, reduces the population to mere spectators as the noose of unjust and inhuman legislation is tightened.

We fear the unknown which is precisely the reason for the existence of the ISA that allows arbitrary detentions. Its purpose is basically punitive and coercive.

And where fear thrives - a fear that immobilizes - there is little to hope for in our humanity, unless we can overcome that fear. Face it by acknowledging the feeling. Yet, we fight it by going against the very thing that thrives on - inaction. We must act! We must act together NOW!

Oppose the ISA by calling for its repeal. Oppose the ISA by calling for the release of all ISA detainees and by giving your support to the families of the detainees.

ACTION NOW
Kota Kinabalu

IT TAKES TWO TO DIALOGUE

With reference to the article written by 33 Malaysian Christians (AM, Vol. 10 No. 3), I wish to make the following observations:

- * They seem to be aware of what the MCCBCHS has done, but do they know the methods adopted by it so far, especially in the case of the Selangor State Legislative Assembly which adopted some aspects of the Shariah laws?
- * They suggest dialogue in place of the signature campaign. Are they aware of the numerous fruitless attempts at dialogue initiated by the MCCBCHS? Further, do they know what dialogue is and what conditions must be present for dialogue to be successful? Also, can they enlighten us as to how to dialogue with people who obviously do not wish to dialogue?
- * Whether the Shariah laws are good or not is not the heart of the matter. Each and every non-Muslim Malaysian citizen has the RIGHT to be consulted for his views on the Shariah laws and these views should be taken into account before the 'powers that be' can even begin to think of passing such laws.
- * While it is a virtue to be simple, we must not be naive. We must use our God-given intelligence.

PPY
Penang

TUN SALLEH SHOULD BE REINSTATED

When Tun Salleh Abas was unjustly removed from his post, Malaysians of all communities came out and are still coming out to defend him. This is something we Malaysians ought to be proud of.

Well, we can look at Tun Salleh's removal this way. His is just a case of a worker being dismissed unlawfully by his employer. Sometimes a worker is reinstated and compensated. We hope this can be done for Tun Salleh.

But it can only be done if Malaysians elect a new government, which is not impossible.

As for Mahathir, all his ridiculous actions remind me of a drowning man clasp for straws.

My last advice to you, Mahathir, is that the faster you step down the better. Your time was up long ago. A huge tidal wave is moving to sweep you

aside. This wave is growing bigger by the day.

When that moment arrives, Malaysians might consider submitting your name to the Guinness Book of Records for breaking the record for 'arrogance and wickedness'.

SARONG PIMPERNEL
Kuala Lumpur

ORGANIZE MORE INTER-FAITH FORUMS

On 18 May, an inter-religious forum was successfully organized at the Dewan Sri Pinang with participants from over 20 institutions. This is the first time that such a forum was held, which showed and proved that the participating institutions are not sectarian. They were willing to come forward to share with one another their common interests in glorifying the Oneness of God, serving and inspiring one another in community service, displaying loyalty to their country, to loving one another irrespective of colour or creed, preserving the environment and being good citizens in the world we live in.

We hope that such inter-faith forums can be held more often at state and national levels. The heads of the respective religious institutions must come forward to meet more often and not feel proud or arrogant. They must 'train' themselves to become the purest of the pure and the humblest of the humble. Let the world see that Malaysia can produce a wonderful multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society - a genuine Unity in Diversity.

POH SIM LIM
Penang

"THESE PEOPLE" ARE MALAYSIANS, TOO

As I was going through some old papers and magazines the other day, I came across an old Newsweek magazine dated 2 May 1988. What made me read its contents was its front page which had the PM's face and headline - "IS DEMOCRACY THREATENED IN MAHATHIR'S MALAYSIA?" Since I had been following all the happenings in our country, as highlighted by Aliran and other independent media, I decided to find out what it was all about; i.e. what foreign magazines had to say about our country.



The PM calls some Malaysians 'these people': Discriminatory.

I was shocked and stunned for a moment, and I couldn't believe my eyes when I read what was said by our PM.

I wouldn't have been bothered if it had been said by foreigners. What concerns me most was the PM's answer to a question by Newsweek's Carroll Bogert.

The extract is as follows:

Newsweek:

What role does the legacy of British rule play in Malaysia today?

Mahathir:

We have a multi-racial population that was imposed on us by the British. They brought in THESE PEOPLE (my emphasis) and never consulted us. When we were under the British colonial rule there was no such thing as democracy. It was an autocratic government, an authoritarian government.

How could the PM say such a thing when he has been entrusted to safeguard all Malaysians, irrespective of their ethnic origins. He should instead speak highly of all Malaysians and, as such, he should not criticize or talk lowly about "THESE PEOPLE". They have the same rights as this country belongs to them, too.

Anyway, at the time when the British brought in "THESE PEOPLE" he was nowhere around to be consulted. I suppose he might also have forgotten, that he was born to an Indian school teacher who was probably among "THESE PEOPLE" brought in by the British then. It would have been impossible for him to be a Malaysian less still a PM and enjoy the status of a Bumiputra. How could he forget this and where his ancestors came from? Or is he merely trying to make people forget the actual fact that he is not a pure Malay (of Malay parentage)?

It is not proper for the PM to speak like this - he makes it as though "THESE PEOPLE" are not part of

Malaysia. It is unfair. As a PM, he should be fair and just. This discriminating remark should not have been made at all, especially by the Head of the Executive in our country. I wonder whether he is championing only one community, even though he is Chairman of the Barisan Nasional, a party that claims the support and co-operation of Malaysians from all communities.

JINJANG JOE
Penang

ALIRAN RACUNI FIKIRAN ORANG MELAYU DAN ISLAM

Saya seorang pembaca setia majalah Aliran. Pada pandangan saya, majalah ini bertujuan menyedarkan rakyat mengenai haknya, mengenai penyelewengan dan lebih penting, perpaduan. Tujuan ini saya sokong penuh, tetapi malangnya pada keseluruhan majalah ini memuatkan berita-berita yang sentiasa mengkritik serta menghentam kerajaan sahaja. Seolah-olah kerajaan sekarang ini tidak tahu mentadbir negara.

Yang menyedihkan, rencana-rencana mengenai Islam adalah menyeleweng, serta memberi gambaran bahawa Islam agama kejam. Orang yang tidak tahu apa itu Islam cuba jangan menulis, sebab sebenarnya mereka mengelirukan masyarakat bukan Islam dan juga orang Islam. Adakala Dr. Chandra Muzaffar menulis seolah-olah beliau ulamak. Saya ingin mempersoalkan pengetahuan agama Islam beliau. Di manakah beliau mendapat pendidikan Islam?

Keinginan Aliran untuk mengeluarkan majalah dalam Bahasa Kebangsaan sungguh murni dan sejajar dengan hasrat kerajaan untuk memperkembangkan penggunaan Bahasa tetapi apakah Aliran mempunyai muslihat di sebalik usahanya untuk mendapat permit percetakan untuk edisi Bahasa? Mungkinkah kerajaan meragui cita-cita Aliran ini? Pada pandangan saya, mungkin Aliran mempunyai niat jahat untuk meracuni fikiran rakyat, terutamanya orang-orang Melayu. Mungkin juga Aliran dibantu oleh kumpulan-kumpulan tertentu dengan niat untuk meracuni fikiran orang-orang Islam.

ABDUL QAYYUM
Pulau Pinang

Sudah tujuh tahun Aliran Monthly diterbitkan. Cuba saudara sebutkan satu pun rencana dalam mana-mana keluaran yang menggambarkan Islam sebagai agama kejam.

- Editor

THE RAZALEIGH STRATEGY

Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, who now leads the combined opposition, may do exactly the opposite of what the incumbent government is doing to solve Malaysia's ethnic woes. The Razaleigh strategy is openness.

The prince from Peninsular Malaysia's east coast State of Kelantan has not said so in so many words, but his remarks at numerous meetings with supporters in the past year strongly point to this.

Since Independence 33 years ago, the Alliance and its expanded version called the Barisan Nasional have been trying to tackle the ethnic problem piecemeal without openly discussing and finding long term solutions.

It seems to have adopted a policy of pretending that problems do not exist hoping that they will go away. This policy is enforced by stringent laws that ensures problems are not publicly aired.

Thus ethnic tension is bottled up in spite of the apparent superficial sense of unity expounded by leaders of the BN, who publicly call on each community to stand united to protect their interest.

The general election is expected to be in mid-September although Parliament's life of five years expires only late next year because the government wants a fresh mandate.

Whether it will get it or not is a question for two reasons. Firstly, the government has been in office for too long, and people may want to opt for a change, and secondly, a strong opposition has emerged.

For the first time, the opposition is multi-ethnic embracing a cross section of viewpoints and led

The ruling National Front and the combined Opposition are both confident of winning the imminent general election. Whichever group wins, its priority will have to be Malaysia's ethnic woes, says a CORRESPONDENT contributing to AM.



Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah: Cabinet experience and a multi-ethnic Opposition may tip the election scales in his favour.

by a credible Malay politician with government experience. Tengku Razaleigh had been in the Cabinet for many years before going into Opposition.

Now voters are able to exercise their rights without being accused of communal bias. Formerly, supporting the opposition had communal tones. Bickering within the component parties of the BN is also giving weight to the opposition.

These factors suggest the need for a serious look at what a government led by Tengku Razaleigh would be like. But it will certainly have to be one that accommodates opposing viewpoints of many Malaysians.

This is because Tengku Razaleigh's Semangat 46, formed from the core of the deregistered UMNO, is teaming up with parties representing various ideologies as well as communities.

They include DAP, which is Chinese based, PAS, branded as Islamic fundamentalist, Malaysian Democratic Indian Party, Parti Rakyat, Hamim and Berjasa.

The rationale behind the move to get such a diverse group under one umbrella is explained by one Semangat official as the need for accommodation.

He says: "Because we do not agree with these views, can we afford to ignore them? Can we pretend that they do not exist, or even prevent them from holding views that do not agree with our own?"

Close aides say that Tengku Razaleigh has expressed many times that Malaysia's ethnic problems can only be solved by joint efforts of all Malaysians and not by a select few.

By this, he means open minded discussions of the many problems of a multi ethnic society with a view of finding acceptable solutions as against the current system of sweeping problems under the carpet.

Tengku Razaleigh is not prepared to discuss his plans with the media for two reasons: one that he does not want to pre-empt his party manifesto, and secondly, for

fear that what he says will be twisted by the official media.

However, those who attend opposition meetings are able to piece together what the plans are.

It appears that the shadow government will repeal many current unpopular laws that restrict freedoms like the Official Secrets Act (OSA), the Internal Security Act (ISA) and laws on printing and publishing.

Tengku Razaleigh believes that a popular government should not have secrets from citizens. The government must trust the people and those few who digress should be dealt with under normal laws.

The ISA, under which detention without trial at the government's pleasure, is a relic of the Indonesian confrontation and the war against insurgents. The ISA has outlived its usefulness because of normalisation of relations with Jakarta and the laying down of arms by the Malayan Communist Party.

The control on the media stifles free discussion of opinion and views and the Semangat led opposition wants the media to be de-controlled, and ownership taken out of political control and placed with independent public corporations.

The opposition also feels that citizens must be taken into the process of decision-making. Towards this end, all bills to be tabled in Parliament would be published and sufficient time given for public discussion and comment.

An aide to the Tengku says: "What we are trying to do is to form a practical democratic government where the citizen can participate in the running of the country. Where he has a rightful say. .

"Citizens will not have to live under fear of reprisals like arrest and detention without trial for holding views contrary to the government's."

The opposition will maintain a free enterprise economy, but ensure that management and labour compliment, and not contradict each other. But trade unions will be de-controlled to ensure that workers enjoy rights within the

norms of United Nations guidelines.

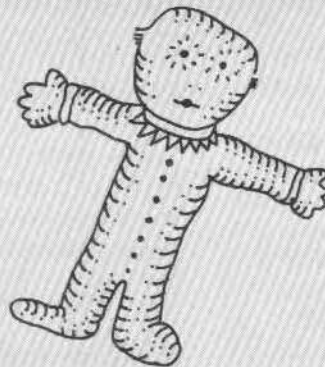
Another aide says the process of national integration will be a major effort, and this will start with the future generation. "We will start with young children in schools, who will be groomed to be honest, upright, God fearing citizens. This will eliminate the current ills -

bigotry, nepotism, greed, crime and pollution," he adds.

The intensity of the campaign by both sides for votes, although the date of the general election has yet to be announced, indicates the seriousness of the challenge to the government.

Will Tengku Razaleigh have his way? Time will tell. □

THE SELF



There was once a scientist who discovered the art of reproducing himself so perfectly that it was impossible to tell the reproduction from the original. One day he learnt that the Angel of Death was searching for him so he produced a dozen copies of himself. The Angel was at a loss to know which of the thirteen specimens before him was the scientist, so he left them all alone and returned to heaven.

But not for long, for, being an expert in human nature, the angel came up with a clever device. He said, "Sir, you must be a genius to have succeeded in making such perfect reproductions of yourself. However, I have discovered a flaw in your work, just one tiny little flaw."

The scientist immediately jumped out and shouted, "Impossible. Where is the flaw?"

"Right here," said the angel, as he picked up the scientist from among the reproductions and carried him off.

* * *

ANTHONY DE MELLO • The Prayer of the Frog

KIJAL BY-ELECTION

BN makes a mockery of the electoral process

The results of the Kijal by-election came as a surprise to many around the country, not because Semangat 46 lost but because of the margin of victory scored by the Barisan Nasional. It was conceded by both parties right up to the eve of the by-election that the margin of victory was likely to be narrow, between 350 to 500 votes only. But when the results were announced at 9.25 p.m., the Barisan had scored a stunning victory of 1,689 vote-majority – an increase of 180 votes as compared to its margin of victory of 1,509 votes in the 1986 election.

How does one explain this majority which must have come as a complete surprise even to the Barisan itself? What are the factors which had contributed to this unexpected margin of victory?

It was generally acknowledged that the Barisan, given its huge machinery, media blitz and inexhaustible resources, would have won the by-election. But the majority of its victory was something else. And this must be explained.

Though the state-controlled press had given its own distorted version for this victory, the entire truth was never told for obvious reasons. We were never told how the poor, innocent voters in Kijal were barricaded from the opposition, how they were barred from listening to other views, how they were bribed into voting for the Barisan. We were never told how they were threatened by samsengs, how they were taken away and indoctrinated, how they were held incommunicado, prisoners in their own homes. We were never told any

The press had come up with its own analysis – which is not entirely true – why the opposition had lost the Kijal by-election. There are other reasons to explain this loss. Aliran member, OMAR BIN OTHMAN who was in Kijal for the entire period of campaigning has filed this analysis for the Aliran Monthly.

of this.

Let us now examine what really happened preceding the by-election.

The anak angkat programme was certainly a factor in this poverty-stricken constituency. To give effect to this programme, KEMAS, the Economic Planning Unit of Kerajaan Negeri, the Unit Perpaduan Ummah and other state

agencies were fully mobilised to marshal votes for Barisan.

Under this programme a number of households – as many as 1,000 according to certain estimates – were identified and two anak angkat or foster children were placed with each household. Those who assumed the role of foster children were either members of UMNO Baru or were linked to agencies which were part of the government machinery.

These anak angkat were each paid \$100–\$200 each – the WATAN of August 4 cited the sum as being between \$200 and \$500, which is not unbelievable – and they moved into these households for the entire duration of the campaign period, attending to the needs of these families.

During this period, the impoverished families became totally dependent on these foster children economically. For this brief period



Kijal by-election: Promise of dirtier tactics to come.



of economic dependence, these unfortunate voters paid a heavy price in their personal liberty. They were not allowed to attend opposition ceramah and were effectively barred from communicating with the opposition. It was also reported that doors were closed shut whenever the members of the opposition approached these households.

All this sudden sharing and caring did not come about out of love or charity, not even because these people needed protection or assistance, but to make sure that the man and woman of the household and others living with them voted solidly for the Barisan.

This was a shameful case of economic assistance in return for support for the Barisan. It was a case of selective assistance with strings attached. It was a blatant exploitation of poverty to gain maximum mileage for the Barisan.

However one looks at it, it was nothing but bribing and buying votes. It was a total travesty of the democratic process and clearly constituted an election offence. What free elections are we talking about when voters are prevented access to the views of the opposition?

Another contributing factor was the pupuk semangat programme which was run by the Biro Tata Negara (BTN). From reports received it is confirmed that a few hundred voters identified as fence-sitters and slightly inclined to the opposition were gathered and taken away from their homes for brainwashing and indoctrination sessions for days on end. It was said that these sessions were very communal in nature. It was alleged that these



Kijal residents met with a caring and sharing Barisan — but why always only before an election?

voters were told that if there was a split among the Malays then the Chinese would take over the country.

It was also mentioned that the government in trying to portray itself as benevolent and caring dished out land titles, scholarships for children, fertilizers and kain pelekak at these sessions. Isn't it a wonder how these poor folks managed to survive all this while before the campaign period?

It was made abundantly clear they must vote in the Barisan candidate or else there will be consequences. And these consequences could be ugly and difficult. Imagine what it would do to their poverty should their boats be confiscated or their TOLs withdrawn.

The mighty Barisan shamelessly used the full state machinery to allure and induce the poor voters to support it.

And whenever there was any sign of opposition sympathy, it acted as a ruthless bully, threatening at times, and smacking down hard at other times. A case in point was at Ladang Kubu, a state-owned estate with 800 workers. These workers, under threat of sufferance, were told to vote for the Barisan candidate. They were compelled to attend the Barisan ceramah and ordered to stay away from the opposition ceramah. Nine workers

of the estate who showed some sympathy were summarily dismissed on the spot. One of those dismissed had nine children to support. That did not prick the conscience of those who claimed to have a tradition of "membela rakyat"! It did not matter who got hurt as long as it protected the interest of Barisan.

Besides this intimidation and high-handedness, the management also prevented the opposition from going into these estates to hold their ceramah and put across their views as should be the case in a democracy. But the Barisan, on the other hand, had unlimited access into these estates and they travelled all over unhindered in their cars and conducted their ceramah to their hearts' delight. This understandably angered the opposition who protested to the management vehemently after which they were allowed access into these estates but were forced to leave their cars outside the estates. This meant walking miles into the estates to speak to the estate workers.

It should therefore come as no surprise when out of sheer frustration some 150 supporters of Semangat peacefully gathered outside Ladang Kubu TDM Estate Hall, half a kilometre away from the estate entrance, on the eve of

continued on page 22

①

WELCOME!
WELCOME!
NOW TELL ME, WHAT
WILL THE OBSERVER
TEAM DO WHEN IT
ARRIVES?



②

WE'D WANT TO
EXAMINE THE
ELECTORAL
ROLLS ...

SURE!
SURE!
ANYTHING!!



⑤

WE'D ALSO LIKE TO
MEET ALL GROUPS ...
GOVERNMENT AND
OPPOSITION ... SOCIAL
GROUPS, AND SO ON ...

OOOHH!



⑥

WE'D ALSO WANT
TO MONITOR THE ACCESS
TO THE MEDIA FOR
POLITICAL PARTIES
CONTESTING THE
ELECTION ...

OOOHH!
OOH!



③

... AND OBSERVE THE ACTUAL VOTING AND COUNTING OF VOTES ON ELECTION DAY...

OKAY!



④

... AND BEFORE THAT, TO LOOK AT REPORTS BY THE ELECTION COMMISSION ON PAST ELECTIONS ... AS WELL AS ELECTORAL COMPLAINTS ...

OH!



⑦

... AND WHETHER POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR CANDIDATES ARE FOLLOWING THE RULES LAID DOWN IN THE ELECTION LAWS, SUCH AS MONEY POLITICS

OOOH NO!



⑧

NO OBSERVER TEAM! BIASED! ONE-SIDED! INFLUENCED BY ELECTION WATCH PRO-OPPOSITION! ANTI-GOVERNMENT!



the Kijal by-election to show their displeasure against the outright bias shown by the estate management.

However, this peaceful gathering was twisted out of all proportion by the Barisan, without any respect for truth and justice, and termed as a mob of 500 out to disrupt its *ceramah*. It was alleged, as reported in the STAR of August 2, that "the 500-strong group blocked the entrance to the hall with a van and shouted abuses at Barisan Nasional leaders at about 10 p.m., a few minutes after Tan Sri Rahim (the Chief Minister of Malacca) started his speech.

"The situation became very tense. Tan Sri Rahim cut short his speech and we called the police from our mobile phone."

The State Executive Councillor Datuk Mohamed Ali Rustam, as reported by STAR, said, "Barisan supporters at the *ceramah* told us that the group was breaking car windscreens and throwing acid on cars outside the hall."

Compare this concocted story to what the internal security and public order director Datuk Ang Phaik Chin had to say in the STAR of August 4, it becomes crystal clear how blatantly the State Executive Councillor had lied. According to Datuk Ang the "Malacca Chief Minister Tan Sri Haji Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik was also not 'trapped' by opposition campaigners", as earlier claimed by the Barisan.

"Datuk Ang said Tan Sri Rahim and his entourage were transported in a police vehicle to the Kemaman police headquarters at midnight because there were about 150 people, believed to be opposition supporters, blocking the way about half a kilometre away from the estate entrance.

"There were not more than 150 people and they were not armed. They had a peaceful gathering.

"He said Semangat 46 candidate Ahmad Shabery Cheek was also with the group outside.

"Datuk Ang also said police did not receive any report that acid was thrown and windscreens were broken during the incident.

"However, there was one

isolated case where a man reported that his car windscreen was broken in Air Putih".

This was one incident when fortunately the Barisan was caught lying and conclusively proven that it had lied by none other than the internal security and public order director. But there had been other lies and abuses which had gone unexposed but had done irreparable damage to the election process.

Then there was the case of about 250 Burmese Muslims who had settled here some years ago and who had been given citizenship in recent years. They were rounded up and threatened that their citizenship would be revoked if they did not vote for the Barisan.

It was also reported that the identity cards of 200 voters were taken away for cash inducements by the Barisan from voters who were inclined towards the opposition – thus effectively preventing 200 pro-opposition voters from voting on polling day. Yet two days later the Secretary General of UMNO and Information Minister, Datuk Mohamed Rahmat appeared on TV accusing the opposition of collecting identity cards for cash inducements and warning them that it was a criminal offence to do so. Certain members in the Barisan have certainly become adept at *sin transfers*!

It did not stop with this dirty trick. The dirty tricks department was on full time duty during the campaign period. It took these simple kampung folks by surprise when a group of hired youngsters appeared at opposition *ceramah*, bent on making a nuisance of themselves. These volatile and vociferous *samsengs* were seen as potential trouble-makers as they went around threatening the voters.

What is even more despicable is the way the Barisan exploited the ethnic issue. When the ethnic state of affairs in this country called for greater effort to promote and improve inter-ethnic harmony, the way the Barisan went out of its way to cause suspicion, fear and hatred was indeed shocking. Circulars sent out by the Barisan drummed up the possibility of Lim Kit Siang

becoming the Prime Minister of Malaysia because of the cooperation between Semangat 46 and DAP. It was suggested that if the Malays did not reject Semangat 46, the Chinese will take over the country as a result of Malay disunity.

It is difficult to follow the logic that the cooperation between Semangat 46 and DAP would produce a Chinese Prime Minister but on the other hand the cooperation between UMNO and MCA, an exclusive Chinese party, will prevent this possibility!

As for the opposition, they were equally guilty of adopting the same gangster tactics at Barisan *ceramah*. It may be a question of tit for tat but it did not absolve them. This kind of tactic puts off voters.

A couple of Semangat 46 leaders had used rough language in referring to their Barisan counterparts. This kind of language did not endear them to the kampung folks who are used to gentle and mild descriptions! It produced negative effects.

There was also some over zealous canvassing at the last minute on polling day. This robust canvassing did not go down well with the voters and it cost Semangat 46 some votes.

Apart from this, the Semangat 46 machinery was very weak in that area and could not match the Barisan Nasional machinery. It lacked resources and did not have the Barisan-type of state agencies to allure and induce voters.

Every thing said and done, what conclusions could one draw from the Kijal by-election?

It is obvious that the electoral process had suffered a heavy blow. The Barisan victory had extracted a heavy price.

Elections will not be a fair competition in future. If anything it will be dirtier than ever. Voters will be deprived of their right to information and the opportunity to make fair decisions based on all facts. The Barisan will go on abusing its powers and misusing its government machinery to its full advantage.

Only the voters can change this trend! □

THE SABAH STATE GENERAL ELECTIONS

In the recent Sabah State General Elections held on July 16-17, 1990 Sabahans once again gave the PBS another five-year mandate to administer the State. This election also saw the largest number of candidates and political parties ever to have contested in any State General Elections. A total of 253 candidates contested, of which 228 represented seven political parties. Another 24 stood as independents. In this article, we will examine some of the main issues highlighted. We will then take a closer look at the results. Finally, we will look at some of the implications from the standpoint of Federal-State relations.

MAIN ISSUES

The major issue that arose in the course of the campaigns appears to be, ironically, a common concern for Sabah's rights within the Federation. These pertained to the federal civil services in Sabah, Sabah's share of oil revenue, the return of Labuan and the control of illegal immigration. These were highlighted in the manifestoes of PBS, BERJAYA, PRS and AKAR. The Federal Government was clearly not happy with this. USNO was the only party that did not express any of these concerns. Just before the dissolution of the Assembly, Dr. Mahathir was reported to have stated that in the case of an election, BN will still win since both the PBS and USNO are its members. However, several days after the various manifestoes were published, the local dailies carried Dr. Mahathir's statement warning all contesting parties in Sabah not to "play with fire",



The PBS election manifesto addressed the Labuan issue.

namely, "anti-federal" sentiments.

Apart from the above common concern, the Opposition highlighted the creation of Innoprise Corporation Sdn. Bhd. which they alleged was an attempt by Dr. Jeffrey Kitingan to "rob" Sabahans of their share of profit from timber concessions given to the Sabah Foundation by the State Government. Other issues pertained to the failure of PBS to tackle the illegal immigrant problem, corruption and nepotism in the PBS government, and racial discrimination against non-Kadazans. Some USNO leaders also claimed that Muslims were being discriminated and called for the Muslims to unite behind USNO to ensure a government headed

by Muslims. Aside from refuting these allegations, PBS also reminded the voters of the involvement of key leaders of USNO and BERJAYA in the 1986 demonstrations and riots. The ISA detention, the raids on houses of PBS leaders, and corruption charges against Dr. Jeffrey were also raised by the PBS in their ceramahs, presumably to indicate how the PBS government and its supporters were being unfairly treated by the Federal authorities.

A summons requiring Dr. Jeffrey Kitingan, the brother of the Chief Minister, to appear before a Sessions Court a few days before election day also became an issue: as evidence for the Opposition of

irresponsible PBS government, and alternatively, as further evidence for the PBS of unfair Federal treatment.

Similarly the announcement by the Deputy Inspector of Police that those arrested under the ISA were allegedly involved in a plot to take Sabah out of Malaysia also became an issue, and cut both ways. Not surprisingly, public tension and fears reached new heights as election day approached. It was also clear that a lot of funds had been expended and much money had changed hands.

ELECTION RESULTS

The turnout was above average but ranged from 57% in Sukau to 86% in Kedamaian. All the 48 State Legislative Assembly seats were won by only two parties: PBS obtained 36 seats while USNO garnered the remaining 12. A total of 149 candidates, including many Opposition leaders lost their deposits. The election results reveal certain important trends:

- 1) Although PBS is a multi-ethnic and non-religious based party, nonetheless its victory does not negate the fact that ethnic and religious identities have become consolidated.
- 2) The PBS essentially succeeded in Kadazan/Dusun-majority, Chinese-majority and the "mixed" constituencies. Although it also won in some Muslim-majority areas, the bulk of Muslim constituencies were won by USNO. This was so not only where USNO stalwarts contested. It was also true even when USNO fielded newcomers. The case of Balung where Datuk Ahmad Baharom Titingan, the most senior PBS Muslim leader was defeated by an USNO newcomer supports this observation. Whether such support for USNO is because of the alleged discrimination of Muslims in Sabah and/or the call to vote USNO in order to ensure a Muslim-led government, is not clear. But obviously, Muslims are becoming consolidated and rallying behind USNO again.

- 3) For all kinds of reasons, but in particular Mustapha's and Harris Salleh's past records, the Chinese prefer to work with the PBS rather than with USNO or Berjaya.
- 4) Whether the failure of other multi-ethnic, multi-religious parties such as AKAR, PRS and BERJAYA indicates the end of multi-ethnic politics in Sabah is not yet clear. This is because the PBS, while Kadazan-Dusun dominated, can still be considered multi-ethnic. But the results probably indicate the end of PRS, BERJAYA and probably AKAR as well.
- 5) The continued failure of the DAP, a Peninsula-based party which currently holds four Sabah parliamentary seats, does not necessarily indicate preference for the Barisan Nasional over the DAP, the parliamentary opposition. Considered in the context of the common concerns among all the parties for Sabah's rights within the Federation, it more pertinently indicates a preference for home-grown parties.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONS

1. Throughout the four years of PBS rule between 1986-1990, relations between the Federal and the State Government had not been altogether cordial. Issues which caused tensions included:
 - a) the Federal Government's lenient treatment of USNO and BERJAYA leaders who had been implicated and/or involved in the illegal 1986 demonstrations and riots;
 - b) corruption cases initiated by the Internal Revenue Department and the Anti-Corruption Agency against senior PBS leaders;
 - c) the handling of illegal immigration which become increasingly acute; discrepancies in the electoral rolls; questions on the erosion of Sabah's rights within the

Federation; Sabah's share of oil revenue; the domination of the upper echelons of the Federal Civil Service by non-Sabahans and their allegedly unsympathetic attitudes to the PBS government; etc.

2. Many of these issues, including the question of re-acquiring Labuan, have now been included in the PBS manifesto for the 1990 election. If the PBS' recent victory may be interpreted as popular support for the issues raised in the PBS manifesto, and insofar as the PBS government feels pressured to fulfil its promises, Federal-State relations will continue to be strained, if not deteriorate.
3. Two immediate problems are pending: the corruption charges made against Dr. Jeffrey Kitingan and the ISA detentions. Both matters involve people closely associated with PBS and its top leadership. How these problems are resolved will affect Federal-State relations too.

CONCLUSION

The outcome of the recent elections reveals that the PBS has the support of a majority of Sabahans. In particular, it received solid support among Kadazans-Dusuns, Muruts and the Chinese. It is also probable that the PBS promise to fight for Sabah's rights vis-a-vis the Federal government swing the voters behind the party. But there are difficulties ahead. It has to win more Muslim support. At the same time its relations with Kuala Lumpur remain rather strained. Despite its electoral victory there still remain charges of corruption, nepotism and discrimination. In fighting for the rights of the Sabahans, therefore, the PBS must ensure that its own government is clean, fair and just, responsible and democratic. Now that it has won the elections, the PBS must now strive for a higher, moral victory. Without this, its electoral victory will be a hollow one. □

ALIRAN SABAH

SABAH — ONE OF THIRTEEN OR ONE OF THREE?

It is significant that almost all the political parties involved in the recent Sabah state elections included in their manifestoes some general statement on how, upon coming to power, each of them would do its utmost to secure and maintain the rights of Sabah within the Federation of Malaysia. These parties included the opposition Parti Rakyat Sabah, Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat Sabah, Berjaya, and the Liberal Democratic Party, and the incumbent, the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), itself a member of the Barisan Nasional. Only the United Sabah National Organisation (USNO) was reticent about including such a statement in its manifesto.

The range of demands included a fairer share of oil revenue which currently amounts to only five per cent of the total for Sabah; effective control of the illegal Filipino and Indonesian immigrants, conservatively estimated at 500,000 and who come under the charge of the federal authorities; Borneo-nisation, in contrast to Malaya-nisation of the federal civil service, the federal statutory authorities and their various subsidiaries; a larger allocation of development funds for Sabah especially in view of its relative lag behind peninsular achievements; and a greater devolution of powers from the federal government to Sabah.

In the case of the PBS, other specific demands included the establishment of a separate television station; the return of Labuan

Sabahans resent the whittling away of the State's autonomy, but they must realise that their own state leaders were partly responsible, says FRANCIS LOH KOK WAH who also discusses the Twenty Points which forms the basis of Sabah's rights within the Federation.

island; and a review of the Internal Security Act under which auspices some Sabahans close to the PBS had been arrested for, allegedly, plotting to take Sabah out of Malaysia.

Whatever the merits of each or all of these demands, Sabahan politicians and leaders obviously felt that they were pressing issues which had to be addressed. While it might be true, as Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad argued, that raising such "anti-federal issues" was "playing with fire", nonetheless, it should also be recognised that such sentiments were already rather widespread among ordinary Sabahans even before the electoral campaigns began.

This is obvious to anyone who has spent some time in Sabah recently. Indeed, the roots of such sentiments run deep into the history of Sabah's involvement in Malaysia — a history which, from the Sabah standpoint, is one of increasing domination, even "colonisation" of their state by the

federal government. Hence, not to have addressed these issues would have been quite irresponsible of politicians seeking to represent the Sabah people.

Neither should the raising of such issues by any political leader, whatever his party, or indeed by any Sabahan, be construed as attempting to break away from the Federation. There is a big distinction between seceding and demanding for more rights and greater autonomy within the existing political framework. And it is obvious that it is the latter that the Sabahans are demanding. And when viewed within the context of history, such demands in fact seem very legitimate.

It is therefore pertinent to return to history to understand the present Sabah standpoint.

THE TWENTY POINTS

The first person to express concern for Sabah's rights within the Federation in a systematic manner was no less than the late Tun Fuad Stephens, the first Chief Minister of Sabah. Before leading his state into Malaysia on 16 September 1963, his own party UNKO (the United National Kadazan Organisation) and the Sabah Alliance (comprising UNKO, USNO, and the Sabah Chinese Association) had insisted upon and acquired certain guarantees from Kuala Lumpur with regards to Sabah's rights generally and the Kadazan peoples rights specifically. What were these rights?



Tun Fuad Stephens: Rights for Sabah under *Twenty Points* agreement.

Firstly, while Islam would be the official religion of the country, they insisted that this should not apply to Sabah. This was important since the majority of Sabahans especially the Kadazans, who considered themselves to be the "true natives of Sabah", and the Chinese were not Muslims. Second, the leaders argued that while Malay was to be the national language, "English should continue to be used for a period of ten years after Malaysia Day". Other demands included the "Borneonisation" of the public services as soon as possible; state control over immigration, local government and land matters; consultation with regards to changes in Sabah's educational system; special rights for the "natives" (including Sino-Kadazans); the channelling of development funds from Kuala Lumpur to Sabah; and representation in Parliament in accordance with "its size and potentialities" and not merely on the basis of its population size.

These and other demands were finally formulated as the "Twenty Points". They were incorporated in amended form as part of the Inter-Governmental Committee Report, 1962, discussing the Independence arrangements and approved by the Sabah Legislative Assembly in March 1963. Subsequently, the Report formed part of the basis of the London Agreement paving the way for the formation of Malaysia in September 1963.

After these demands were incorporated into the new Sabah State Constitution, they, too, found their way through amendments, into the Federal Constitution of Malaysia.

In this way, the *Twenty Points* were given official recognition in an indirect manner by the federal authorities. While this did not amount to according the *Twenty Points* legal status, an amicable settlement was nonetheless reached, principally because the federal government gave assurances to the Kadazan (and other Borneo) leaders that the spirit of the *Twenty Points* would be honoured.

Hence, Sabah (and Sarawak) were given special rights to which none of the other peninsular states were entitled. For this reason, many Kadazan and Sabahan leaders considered the status of Sabah to be different from that of the other states. Some harboured the opinion, still very much alive today, that Sabah had entered into the arrangement as an equal partner with the Federation of Malaya. Sabah was "one of three" (four if one includes Singapore) signatories to the London Agreement and as such, should not be treated as "one of the thirteen" states, still less be dominated by Kuala Lumpur.

It was in this manner that Stephens and the other Sabah Alliance leaders hoped to preserve their autonomy. In this regard the *Twenty Points* is an important symbol of the terms under which Sabah became a part of Malaysia. It signifies a fair deal and being treated as an equal partner.

It is not surprising therefore that on various occasions over the past 27 years since 1963, various Sabah leaders have referred to the *Twenty Points* when they felt themselves under siege by the Federal government. For instance, when Singapore was expelled without Sabah's consultation in 1965, and when Stephens was forced to step down as leader of Sabah Alliance in 1967, Stephens remarked that the *Twenty Points* were not being honoured. Even Tun Mustapha talked in these terms when he was removed in 1975 as a result of Federal pressures.

More recently, we have heard, too, reference to the *Twenty Points* by the PBS leaders. On

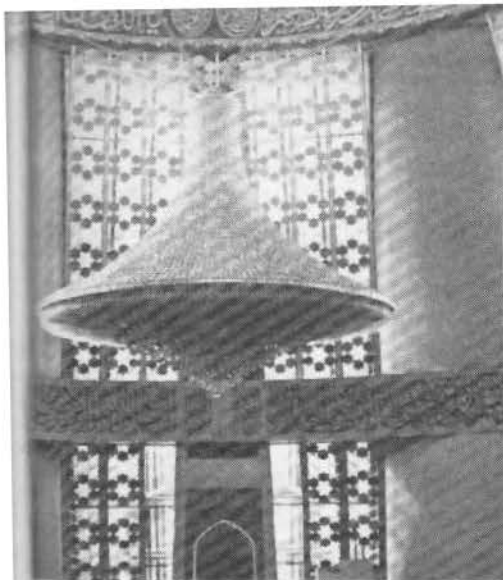
these occasions, the context is usually of how Sabah has become increasingly dominated by the federal authorities or how "cooperative federalism" has become "coercive federalism". Put another way, the complaint is that the *Twenty Points* have not been honoured. What is the basis for such comments? Below we briefly discuss how the erosion of the *Twenty Points* has occurred over the past 27 years.

EROSION OF THE TWENTY POINTS

Under Mustapha's rule (1967 - 75) for instance, a bill was introduced before 10 years of Independence had passed, to make Bahasa Malaysia the sole official language. Although in retrospect this move has helped to bind Sabah to Malaysia, it did cause much anxiety for many Sabahans when Mustapha so acted ahead of time. Moreover, in 1974 he ordered all broadcasts in Chinese, Kadazan, Murut and other indigenous languages terminated.

More controversial were his efforts to Islamise the state. The Sabah Constitution was amended to make Islam the official religion. Funds were then made available for the building of mosques, the promotion and the administration of the Islamic religion. The propagation of Christianity, in particular, was curtailed causing much anxiety among non-Muslims. Under him too, Sabah's educational system was also brought in line with the national one. What was particularly annoying for the Kadazans, however, was that arrangements were not made to teach Kadazan as a Pupil's Own Language as provided for under the Education Act. Finally, it was of course during Mustapha's time that Syed Kechik from Kedah ran the Sabah Foundation and wielded much power.

Next, under Harris Salleh's Berjaya government (1976 - 84), Labuan was ceded away without consultation of the people whatsoever. In contrast to the \$3 billion paid to Selangor for the acquisition of Kuala Lumpur,



Sabah State mosque: Islam became the official religion and caused much anxiety among Sabah's ethnic communities.

Sabah received no compensation whatsoever for the transfer of Labuan.

In promotion of what he interpreted to constitute the "national culture policy" Harris also attempted to streamline the cultures of the various groups. Furthermore, he introduced the category of "Pribumi" to include not only the Kadazans, Muruts, Bajau, Sulu and other indigenous peoples of Sabah but Indonesians, Filipinos, natives of Sarawak, and Cocos Islanders as well. The Kadazans, in particular, considered these moves as trying to deny them their identity as the "true natives" of Sabah and as the largest of all the indigenous groups. They further feared that Harris, like Mustapha before him, was trying to Malayise and Islamise them.

In addition to the above, Harris Salleh further presided over the "federalisation" of Sabah's state bureaucracy. By the early 1980s, only 19 departments continued to be under the control of the Sabah government, while the number of departments under the control of the federal government had increased from 13 in 1963 to 51 in 1981, many new ones being created in the process.

Moreover, following the Cabinet Committee Report of salary revisions, terms and conditions of

service, all state officers seconded to federal departments also became federal officers. By 1978 more than 20,000 such public servants had been so affected. As a result, the State government lost almost all say in the appointment and promotion of employees in these federalised departments, including these 20,000 plus former state employees. Much anxiety resulted. As one Sabahan intellectual lamented: "Theoretically, it is possible for a federal department to be staffed entirely by recruits from Peninsular Malaysia."

In 1989, the Public Services Department, Sabah branch, noted in a statement that there were some 23,000 peninsular Malaysians serving in Sabah. They constituted about 50 per cent of the total 46,780 employed in the Federal public service. A review of the Federal agencies in Sabah conducted by the Institute of Development Studies (Sabah) further noted that some 85 per cent of the 64 agencies were headed by people from peninsular Malaysia that same year. It is clear therefore, that Borneo-nisation of the public services has not occurred. Instead, Sabah's bureaucracy has become increasingly federalised and most of the top positions have been filled by officers from the peninsula.

From the foregoing, we may conclude that many of the provisions of the *Twenty Points* have not been upheld. Consequently Sabah has increasingly lost its autonomy and come under the domination of the federal government.

However, it must be stressed that these developments occurred with the cooperation of the Sabah state governments, first under Mustapha and subsequently Harris Salleh. Indeed all of the changes that we have mentioned were duly passed in the Legislative Assembly. In other words, previous Sabahan leaders themselves cooperated with the Federal government to remove the *Twenty Points* safeguards and to allow for domination by Kuala Lumpur. Perhaps this is why the young Sabahans, and in particular the young Kadazans in the PBS, are

so annoyed with the older politicians. Indeed, Mustapha's and Harris' governments also included several prominent Kadazan leaders as Ministers who must share responsibility for what has come to pass. But in a sense the Sabahan electorate itself must also be held responsible for allowing their rights to be whittled. For these leaders were elected by them! In this regard, we also need to reflect on the money politics and undemocratic rule that the people allowed to become widespread during, at least Mustapha's and Harris Salleh's time.

Quite apart from the question of the *Twenty Points* and the loss of autonomy, the nature of the economic relationship between Sabah and the peninsula is also a cause of concern and growing dissatisfaction among the Sabahans.

DIVISION OF LABOUR AND UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFITS

From the outset it is necessary to clarify that the statistics referred to in this section have been obtained from official publications of the federal and Sabah governments. They include the various Five Year Plans, the Sabah Regional Planning Study, Ministry of Finance reports and the Annual Bulletin of Statistics.

In 1971, the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP for Malaysia as a whole was 14.7 per cent while that for Sabah was only 2.5 per cent. By 1983, the percentage for Malaysia as a whole had increased to 18.3 per cent while that for Sabah was registering only 2.9 per cent. Simultaneously, whereas the primary sector's (agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining and quarrying) contribution to Malaysia's GDP dropped from 37.1 per cent to 27.2 per cent over the same period, that for Sabah only dropped from 54.5 per cent to 51.6 per cent. The corresponding figures for the tertiary sector were 47.1 per cent rising to 54.3 per cent for Malaysia as a whole, and 43 per cent rising to 45.4 per cent for Sabah during the same period.

Accordingly, production workers as a proportion of the total labour force in the Peninsula rose from 27.3 per cent to 33.3 per cent between 1970 and 1980. In the case of Sabah, however, they only rose from 3.3 per cent to 4 per cent between 1970 and 1978. Taken together, these statistics suggest that Malaysia's reputation as an emerging Newly Industrialised Country is principally a result of rapid industrialization in the Peninsula, not in Sabah. There appears, therefore, that a division of labour exists between the two regions.

This division between a more industrialized Peninsula and a Sabah specializing in the production of commodities is further reflected in the terms of trade between the two regions. While the total value of Sabah's trade had been increasing rapidly during the 1970s, nonetheless, certain unhealthy trends vis-a-vis that proportion of its trade with the Peninsula have developed.

Whereas in 1970 the value of exports to the Peninsula amounted to only \$4.6 million, it increased to \$360.2 million by 1984, some 6.6 per cent of the total value of Sabah's exports. Over the same period, the value of imports from the Peninsula increased from \$101.7 million to \$1,340.7 million, some 36.6 per cent of the total value of Sabah's imports. Consequently, Sabah's balance of trade with the Peninsula worsened some ten-fold over the same period: from -\$97.1 million to -\$980.5 million. Not surprisingly, its major imports from the Peninsula comprised manufactured goods and articles, machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, beverage and tobacco, food and mineral fuels. As a result of the division of labour between the two regions, therefore, there has occurred a net outflow of funds from Sabah to the Peninsula.

Furthermore, according to Ministry of Finance statistics, federal expenditures in Sabah have totalled some \$8,213 million between 1971 to 1985. Over that same period of time, however, federal revenue collected from

Sabah amounted to \$15,489 million. In other words there was a further net outflow of some \$7,275 million from Sabah to the federal government.

In lieu of comparable data on income distribution between the two regions, we have to resort to statistics on the incidence of poverty to gauge how such a division of labour and net outflow of public funds might have affected the corresponding wealth of the two regions. Although steadily declining since 1970, nonetheless, Sabah still registered some 33.1 per cent of its population as poor in 1984. By contrast, the incidence of poverty in the Peninsula was down to 18.4 per cent that year. There was, it would appear, some material cause for the Kadazans and Sabahans more generally to feel that they were being "colonised" by the federal government.

INCREASING CENTRALISATION

These then are some of the issues that shape the nature of federal-state relations between Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu today. It is on the basis of these issues that the Sabahans claim that the *Twenty Points* safeguards have been eroded and a loss of autonomy resulted.

From the review of developments above it is undeniable that Sabah has become increasingly "one of the thirteen" rather than "one of the three". From the Sabah standpoint, it is perfectly in keeping with the original terms of their participation in Malaysia to demand for, say, a separate television station, a higher percentage of oil revenue and Borneonisation of the public services. These are substantive issues that had to be addressed, perhaps especially in times of elections when one of the major aspects of any democracy comes full circle.

The problem with resolving such issues, however, is that the federal government today does not seem prepared to accept (if it ever did) Sabah's demand that it be treated as "one of the three" and be

accorded greater autonomy. In fact, it appears that it is merely seen as "one of the thirteen". This is apparent, for instance, in the recent response by the Federal Minister of Information to Sabah's request for its own television statement. In his mind Sabah should not be treated in any special way whatsoever. Thus if Sabah's request should be acceded to what was to prevent other states from making the same request?

That federal leaders and the federal government should be thinking along these lines should also not be surprising. For not only is our federal system an extremely centralised one and the centralisation process occurred for some time now in Sabah. Centralisation in Sabah was also achieved constitutionally with the cooperation of the past Sabah leaders elected by the Sabah people. This fact should also be recognised.

Thus, unless the present younger generation of Sabahans acknowledge that the whittling away of the state's autonomy was also brought about by their own elected state leaders — thus demanding much retrospection about, say, the prevalence of money politics in Sabah — the same could continue in future.

Thus far no clear resolution of the tension between Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu seems in sight. In fact the substantive issues highlighted by Sabahans are not being given serious consideration. Instead, the federal authorities seem to think about integration in superficial terms and that it can be achieved by having more and cheaper flights between the two regions, more patriotic songs and slogans, more sporting links, etc. In other words, more of the same.

However, the substantive issues outlined above must be addressed, and in the right spirit of building a truly united community, before the strains can be ironed away. On their part, Sabahans, indeed all Malaysians should take their politics seriously and usher in responsible and just governments. □

THE GULF CRISIS

THE IRAQI INVASION OF KUWAIT

The whole world condemns the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. To make it worse, the Iraqi regime has chosen to annex the tiny oil-rich Kingdom.

The annexation has been camouflaged as a 'merger'. This is a vivid illustration of the sinister deception that the Iraqi regime is capable of.

The gulf crisis, following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, has been the major news story all over the world in the last few weeks. In a series of short articles, some of which were released as press statements, **CHANDRA MUZAFFAR** examines various aspects of the crisis.

Iraq should withdraw from Kuwait immediately and without any conditions. The puppet regime that it installed following the

invasion should also be dismantled.

However, this does not mean that the Emir of Kuwait should be re-instated. The invasion has shown that the Emir and the ruling family have very little support among the populace. In fact, disaffection with the ruling elite had developed even before the recent invasion. Many Kuwaitis were unhappy with the Emir for the dissolution of a fragile, feeble parliament which had existed in one form or another since 1962.

Kuwait invaded and annexed.



There was, besides, a financial scandal a few months ago involving the Emir's family. The Emir is also perceived by a significant cross-section of Kuwaiti society as a mere lackey of the United States.

As soon as Iraq withdraws, the United Nations should establish a peace-keeping force in Kuwait. The peace-keeping force should pave the way for democratic elections and the establishment of a genuine, legitimate government which has the support of the people. It will be up to the government to decide — without interference from any quarter — on the type of relationship it wants to

establish with Iraq, other Arab nations, the United States and the rest of the world.

Of course, the solution we have propounded here is only possible after Iraq withdraws from Kuwait. Iraq should be forced to withdraw from Kuwait through diplomatic pressure and economic sanctions.

In this connection, all nations and peoples should give their full support to UN efforts to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. It is significant that a number of countries have begun to impose economic sanctions upon Iraq in accordance with the UN Security

Council resolution. These sanctions will have the desired effects, even though it will take a bit of time. Some Arab and non-Arab countries are also actively involved in diplomatic moves to persuade Iraq to leave Kuwait.

It is best to allow the Arab states and nations in the Gulf region to resolve the crisis arising from Iraq's illegal occupation of Kuwait, with the assistance of the UN. The military involvement of the United States in the crisis will only aggravate an already tense situation. ●

THE ESCALATION OF THE GULF CRISIS

The United States is largely responsible for the dangerous escalation of the gulf crisis.

The United States has escalated the crisis in two ways — **one**, through its massive military build-up along the Saudi-Kuwaiti border and **two**, through its naval blockade of Iraq and occupied Kuwait.

The United States has sought to justify its military build-up on Saudi soil in the name of protecting Saudi Arabia from an imminent Iraqi attack. If the United States government had incontrovertible evidence of Iraqi designs on Saudi Arabia, it should have placed the evidence before the United Nations Security Council. The United Nations could then have been persuaded to establish a multinational force under its own banner to protect the integrity of Saudi Arabia. The UN Charter allows the world body to come to the assistance of member states threatened by armed aggression. It allows the UN to act collectively against a member-state which has violated the Charter. After all, the United Nations Security Council was almost unanimous in its

condemnation of Iraqi occupation and annexation of Kuwait.

Why didn't the United States, or more appropriately Saudi Arabia, seek UN help in defending its (Saudi's) territorial integrity? There are two possible explanations. **One**, the United States does not have the sort of evidence which can stand up to international scrutiny to show that Iraq was about to invade Saudi Arabia. **Two**, the real purpose behind the United States military build-up in Saudi Arabia is not the defence of the latter's territorial integrity. Its primary mission in Saudi Arabia is not the protection of the Saudi people.

Why then has the United States deployed so much military power at the Saudi-Kuwait border? Because it intends to re-take Kuwait for the Emir and, of course, for its own economic and political interests. The United States will not allow Kuwait to get out of its grip. For that matter, it will not allow any of the other oil-rich gulf kingdoms to chart out their own petroleum and financial policies, independent of the United States. In pursuing this vital nation-

al objective, the United States has the solid backing of almost all the Western industrial economies and Japan.

For Kuwait and the other gulf kingdoms help to maintain petroleum prices at a level which is consonant with the larger economic interests of the United States and the other industrial nations. They ensure that these nations have easy access to their oil. Even their investments, which are considerable, are geared towards reinforcing the fiscal instruments and institutions of the Western economies.

Iraqi annexation of Kuwait is a major challenge to this entire system of control and dominance over gulf oil, of which the United States is the principal beneficiary. With the annexation of Kuwait, Iraq and occupied Kuwait would now control almost one-fourth of the oil exported from the whole of West Asia. According to some sources, this would put them ahead of Saudi Arabia, currently the world's largest exporter of crude oil.

Losing control over Kuwaiti oil to Iraq is going to jeopardize

American interests in West Asia. For Iraq, together with Iran, Algeria and Libya, use petroleum as a strategic weapon — and not merely as a trading commodity — to buttress their economic and political independence. While Iraq's bargaining power not only at the OPEC table but also in the volatile politics of West Asia will be enhanced, the United States' ability to manipulate the important political and economic actors in the region will diminish considerably.

It is because of the economics and politics of oil that the United States has put together such a huge military expedition in Saudi Arabia. To reiterate, it has calculated that it is in its economic, political and strategic interests to regain control of Kuwait. This is why it has bypassed the United Nations and set

up its own multi-national force, with the assistance of some of its European allies like Britain and Australia, and some of its Arab friends like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco. Iraq's inveterate foe, Syria, has also joined in. But no one is under any illusion: it is basically an American military operation.

It is for the same reason — its self-interest — that the United States has decided on its own naval blockade without the consent of the UN itself. It would be a gross violation of the UN Charter for any country to implement UN sanctions through military means. It is significant that United States President, George Bush, has ignored the advice of the UN Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, on this matter.

The blockade, like the mass deployment of troops, planes and warships in the gulf region has raised tensions in West Asia. There is widespread fear that a war may break out any time.

The Iraqi regime has begun to react to the US blockade and military mobilization. It is quite obvious now that Americans in Kuwait and Iraq are going to be held as hostages in strategic military and civilian locations. Holding people who may not be directly or indirectly linked to a conflict as hostages is a despicable act. It should be condemned by all those who cherish civilized norms of behaviour.

This is what happens when belligerency confronts belligerency in an escalating conflict. ●

IS THERE A SOLUTION?

Is it possible to work out a peaceful solution to the gulf crisis? Theoretically, it is possible — provided the United Nations is allowed to play a much bigger and more effective role. Below we outline a five-point solution.

- 1) The simultaneous withdrawal of both Iraq from Kuwait and the United States-led multi-national force from Saudi Arabia.
- 2) The immediate establishment of a United Nations peace-keeping force in Kuwait and along the

Kuwait-Saudi border.

- 3) The freeing of all hostages held by the Iraqi regime in Iraq and Kuwait.
- 4) The holding of democratic elections in Kuwait to determine who would constitute the government. The elections should be conducted by the UN.
- 5) The holding of a comprehensive West Asia Conference under the auspices of the UN to find solutions to some of the fundamental problems confronting the

region, including the denial of a homeland to the Palestinians, disputes over state boundaries created by colonial rule, the presence of foreign bases and military facilities in the region and the role of superpowers in West Asian politics. Apart from all the states in West Asia, the five permanent members of the UN should also be invited to participate in the conference ●

THE UNITED STATES AND SADDAM HUSSEIN

From most accounts, Saddam Hussein, President of Iraq, is a harsh dictator. He rules his country with an iron hand. The ruling Baath party is Saddam's vehicle for one-man rule.

It was this dictator, with a

total monopoly over power in his country, who received massive military support from the United States from 1980 to 1988, during the eight-year Iraq-Iran war. Before the war, Saddam's main source of military aid was the Soviet Union.

But Soviet arms were not enough to make Iraq a regional military power. It was United States military assistance which transformed that country into a regional military power.

The United States backed Iraq

to the hilt in its war against Iran even though Iraq was clearly the aggressor. It was Iraq that unilaterally violated the 1975 Shatt al-Arab waterway agreement which Saddam himself had signed with the then Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi. But the United States, fearing the rise of revolutionary Islam, in the wake of the overthrow of their fond ally, the Shah, decided to give all the help it could to Saddam. The United States reckoned that a dictatorial Arab nationalist regime was less of a threat to its interests than Islamic resurgence.

This explains why the United States was prepared to tolerate a lot of Saddam's misdeeds. Saddam's use of chemical weapons against Iranian soldiers — a well-documented fact placed before the councils of the world — was never given much attention by United States officialdom. All that mat-

tered to the United States was that Imam Khomeini and the Iranian leadership had to be defeated.

Today, George Bush proclaims to the world that Saddam Hussein may use chemical weapons against American soldiers. He wants the whole world to condemn Saddam for even contemplating the use of chemical weapons in a war which may erupt at any time.

Today, US State Department and Pentagon officials call Saddam Hussein a 'Hitler'. If he is a Hitler, let it not be forgotten that the United States was quite happy to use him when it suited its interests.

Today, friend has become foe in West Asia. The only thing that has not changed is the role of the United States in West Asia. It remains that one alien power which has no scruples about manipulating every situation to serve its narrow interests. ●

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Newspaper, radio and television reports from the United States and Britain on the gulf crisis have generally been biased in favour of American intervention. Nonetheless, once in a while there are media accounts which give some indication of how ordinary Arabs in different West Asian states have been reacting to the United States military build-up and its naval blockade against Iraq.

It appears that there is a lot of resentment against, a lot of anger over, American military moves in the gulf region. Arabs in Jerusalem, Cairo, Tunis, Algiers, Amman, and of course Baghdad, have been holding massive demonstrations against American intervention in the gulf region. They see United States involvement as an ugly manifestation of stark self-interest.

But more than the aggressive, arrogant manner in which it pursues its self-interest, it is the double standards, the hypocrisy embodied in the United States' West Asia policy, which has incensed a

sizeable segment of the Arab population. For the Arabs, these double standards become so obvious the moment they reflect upon the present gulf crisis, against a backdrop of other invasions, occupations and annexations in West Asia, in the last 40 odd years.

Of those episodes which reveal the double standards and hypocrisy of the United States government, nothing is more indelibly etched in the Arab memory than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the United States mobilises military power to thwart the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait, the Arab wonders why the United States aided and abetted the Israeli annexation of the West Bank, the Gaza strip and the Golan Heights. Israel has managed to hold on to these territories annexed from the Palestinian people and from other Arabs 23 years ago, partly because of the active collaboration of the United States.

Indeed for the ordinary Arab, the very creation of Israel in 1948

was the result of the annexation and occupation of Palestinian land by Jews from outside the region, who had the wholehearted support of the United States and British governments. So he begins to ask himself: what right has the United States to marshal its forces to defeat Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait when the United States assisted, directly and indirectly, in the annexation and occupation of Palestine?

As a result of that annexation and the continued expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland, about three million Palestinians live as refugees in other people's countries. The United States — so concerned about the invasion and annexation of Kuwait — has shown hardly any compassion for the agony and ordeal of the Palestinians.

What is worse, the United States continues to condone Israeli aggression against the Palestinians and other Arabs, even when the whole world, including some of its Western allies, condemn the Tel Aviv regime. This was what happened when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. The United States did not ask the civilized nations of the world to impose sanctions upon, or to blockade, Israel when its troops massacred innocent women and children at Shabra and Shatila.

In fact, it is the United States, aided and abetted by Thatcher's Britain, which has consistently thwarted any UN Security Council attempt to impose economic sanctions upon Israel for its systematic suppression of the Palestinian people. It is primarily because of the United States, its veto power in the UN Security Council and its financial control over the UN and its agencies, that the United Nations has failed miserably to do justice to the Palestinian cause.

This then, is at the root of the Arab anger with the United States over its military intervention in the gulf region. Many Arabs see the United States as a belligerent superpower, totally bereft of a sense of justice and fairness. They see the United States government as a wizard in the diabolical art of double standards! ●

ETIKA KEWARTAWANAN

Utusan Malaysia, akhbar yang mengaku dirinya sebagai "Penyebarnya Fikiran Rakyat", memang diketahui umum sebagai akhbar yang tidak mengenal erti prinsip kewartawanan. Apabila Utusan bertanya pendapat Ketua Jabatan Sains Politik Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Prof. Madya Dr. Haris Amir Abdullah, mengenai pemerhati luar untuk mengawasi pilihanraya umum, beliau berkata, "Putih, putih, putih dan putih," tetapi Utusan Malaysia memutarbelit dan mengubahnya menjadi "Hitam, hitam, hitam dan hitam." Berikut disiarkan kandungan surat beliau kepada Ketua Pengarang Utusan Malaysia.

Jabatan Sains Politik

30 Julai 1990

Ketua Pengarang
Utusan Malaysia
Jalan Chan Sow Lin
55200 Kuala Lumpur.

Tuan,

Saya merujuk kepada berita di Utusan Malaysia pada 28 Julai 1990, muka surat 4, bertajuk "Pendapat tokoh-tokoh akademik: Pemerhati luar tak diperhu awasi pilihanraya umum". Di dalam berita itu hasil temuduga dengan dua orang akademik, termasuk saya sendiri, dilaporkan.

2. Berita tersebut sama sekali tidak mencerminkan pendapat yang saya kemukakan kepada pemberita tuan. Petikan-petikan dalam berita itu bukanlah kata-kata saya tetapi direka sahaja oleh pemberita itu. Saya tidak mengatakan bahawa "tidak pernah timbul sebelum ini sebarang keraguan". Saya tidak mengatakan bahawa "kerajaan tidak harus takut dengan ugutan pembangkang". Saya tidak mengatakan bahawa "ini memperlihatkan pihak pembangkang seolah-olah tidak mempunyai isu" dan saya tidak berkata "kalau pihak pembangkang ingin benar-benar adil mengapa ia ditimbulkan sekarang".

3. Pendapat yang saya kemukakan dalam temuduga singkat melalui telefon itu adalah seperti berikut:—

- 1) Masyarakat Malaysia boleh menerima kedatangan pemerhati luar untuk menin-

jau pilihanraya itu.

- ii) Pada umumnya pilihanraya di Malaysia berjalan dengan adil pada hari pilihanraya itu (maksud saya, dari segi pembuangan dan pengiraan undi dan sebagainya).

- iii) Para pemerhati luar mungkin akan menimbulkan masalah berita-berita di suratkhbar, termasuk Utusan Malaysia, dan media massa lain yang terlalu berat sebelah dan tidak memberi peluang kepada pihak pembangkang. Misalnya, saya kata bahawa saya belum pernah melihat temuduga dengan Lim Kit Siang di televisyen.

- iv) Para pemerhati luar mungkin akan merasa bimbang melihat peranan sesetengah jentera kerajaan yang tidak bersikap berkecuali tetapi membantukan kempen BN secara aktif.

4. Berita tuan bukan sekadar memutarbelitkan pendapat saya tetapi merupakan rekaan belaka yang tidak kena-mengena dengan apa yang dikemukakan dalam temuduga itu. Pengalaman ini telah menguatkan kesan bahawa berita-berita Utusan Malaysia berkaitan dengan pilihanraya memang berat sebelah dan kurang dapat dipercayai oleh para pembaca.

Yang benar,

PROF MADYA DR HARIS AMIR
ABDULLAH

Ketua

Jabatan Sains Politik,

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

CURRENT CONCERNS

TV STATIONS FOR SABAH AND SARAWAK

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat announced recently that the Federal Government will not allow Sabah to operate its own radio and television stations. He expressed satisfaction that TV2 was now available in Sabah and Sarawak.

It should be pointed out that the real issue is the content of TV programmes with regards to Sabah and Sarawak which have their own historical and cultural traditions. The present three TV networks do not cater to the cultural interests of the peoples in Sabah and Sarawak. The local programmes cater more to the interests of Malays, Chinese and Indians of Peninsular Malaysia who have their communal parties to ensure that certain ethnic and religious interests are taken care of.

There is very little which caters to the cultural interests of the Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau, Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit, Lun Bawang and others of Sarawak; and Kadazan, Bajau, Tagal, Kedayan and others of Sabah, to mention only the major ethnic groups. Even the present national news do not have sufficient reports on the socio-cultural and economic development in Sabah and Sarawak, except at times when there are crises, major crimes, or major political events. Even then, like in the case of the election in Sabah, the news is mainly from the perspective of certain politicians and do not take into account of the perspective of either the politicians or the people of Sabah, as in the case of the Labuan issue or the call for a Sabah TV station. In fact, there is more news about U.S.A. (including traffic accidents there) than about Sabah and Sarawak.

There is therefore an urgent need to have at least a channel which can rectify the neglect of the viewers in Sabah and Sarawak. This will help to bring about greater territorial integration. There is no point talking about integration when even the contents of

the national TV networks have so little coverage on Sabah and Sarawak.

It is not a bad idea for Sabah and Sarawak to operate their own stations. This will ensure that the media interests of the people there are well taken care of. It will also help to reduce the insensitivity, even though unintentional, on the part of the Semenanjung producers, towards the culture and people of Sabah and Sarawak. Given the historical and cultural uniqueness of the two states, as well as the diversities there, it is more efficient to decentralize the TV networks.

This brings us to an important point, that is, it is misleading to merely treat Sabah and Sarawak as any other states in Malaysia. A major problem in the relations between the Semenanjung and East Malaysia is due to this attitude of Semenanjung politicians who treat Sabah and Sarawak as merely a state in Malaysia, and it has become common for our national leaders (who are politicians of political parties in the Peninsula) to say that Sabah or Sarawak cannot have this or that because otherwise every other state will demand to have it too, as indeed expressed by the Information Minister recently with regards to the TV station for Sabah.

One must realize that Sabah and Sarawak agreed to form Malaysia together with the Peninsula not just like any other states in the Peninsula. In a sense, they were equal partners to the Peninsula. There were conditions agreed upon when Sabah and Sarawak agreed to form Malaysia with the Semenanjung. I have already mentioned the distinct historical and cultural traditions of East Malaysia. In terms of size, one must not forget that Sabah and Sarawak are bigger than the whole Peninsula comprising the eleven states. All these have implications on the allocation of fund and the distribution of resources. It is important that the politicians and the people in the Semenanjung are sensitive to this reality.

31 July 1990 Dr. Tan Chee Beng
Exco Member



Registering voters: Compulsory registration will prevent a lot of hanky-panky in the electoral process.

COMPULSORY REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

ALIRAN supports wholeheartedly the recent call by Election Watch member, Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin to introduce compulsory registration of voters in the country.

Compulsory registration of voters would mean that persons who attain a certain age would be required by law to register as voters. It would be very similar to registering birth or death or marriage. Compulsory registration of voters is done in a number of parliamentary democracies.

It is particularly important that compulsory registration of voters is introduced in our country as soon as possible, since a lot of the hanky-panky in the electoral process is linked to voter registration. Many of the complaints by voters in the last few months about names disappearing from electoral rolls, about names being transferred to other constituencies, about the same identity card numbers for different names are all connected, in one way or another, with the registration of voters.

Compulsory registration of

voters is one of the most effective ways of ensuring a clean electoral roll. Once registration as a voter is required by law, political parties will have no role in the registration of voters. Both government and opposition parties will not be able to manipulate voter registration.

ALIRAN would also like to suggest that the voting age be lowered from 21 to 18 years. In a number of parliamentary democracies, eighteen is the voting age. India, for instance, lowered the voting age a few years ago, to 18 years. In a young country like ours, there is every reason to lower the voting age.

But more than lowering the voting age, it is the compulsory registration of voters that merits immediate attention from the powers-that-be.

31 July 1990

P Ramakrishnan
Exco Member

ARRESTS IN BELAGA, SARAWAK

ALIRAN is deeply concerned about the arrests of eight natives from Long Geng in the Belaga District of Sarawak who had put up a human barricade to stop logging activities on their ancestral lands.

The eight who are being detained in the Kapit police station are Gara Jalong, Batang Lenchau, Ahang Ejam, Likit Balan, Luyu Lawai, Ismail Ding, Bit Bilong and Baya Asang. The relatives of the detained have been given very little information by the police on why the eight were arrested. They are concerned about the physical and mental well-being of their loved ones. What is disturbing are allegations that some of them have been tortured.

Arresting or using force on those protesting against logging operations in Belaga will only aggravate the situation. Instead of resorting to such tactics, the authorities should make a sincere effort to understand the real grievances of the natives.

ALIRAN has been informed that since mid-June, the Kenyah community of Long Geng has been negotiating with timber companies operating in their area to stop indiscriminate logging. The human barricade was erected only after the community realized that the timber companies were not pre-

pared to respond positively to their plea.

The plea of the Kenyah community of Long Geng in Belaga deserves the full support of all Malaysians. As a community, its collective right to its ancestral lands must be recognised and respected by both the political elites and the timber barons. Besides, indiscriminate logging leads to severe environmental destruction. Though there may be short-term economic gains from the type of logging that is taking place in Belaga, its long-term consequences for the Kenyah community and the people of Sarawak are bound to be disastrous. The rapid depletion of a natural resource which has been a major revenue earner for the state, is not in the economic interest of the ordinary Sarawakian.

ALIRAN calls upon the timber companies and the state authorities to heed the just, legitimate plea of the Long Geng community. Logging operations should cease. The eight members of the Long Geng community who have been arrested should be released immediately.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar

3 August 1990

President

OBSERVING ELECTIONS

Certain quarters feel that the proposed Commonwealth observer mission to the coming general elections should function like foreign individuals and groups invited to witness the American presidential election. There is a serious misconception here that should be corrected.

The foreign invitees to American presidential elections, whether they are middle-level politicians or budding journalists, are on 'look-see' visits. These are trips to enable them to see the American electoral and political system at work.

This is not what the Commonwealth Heads of Government envisaged in their communique issued in Kuala Lumpur on 24 October 1989, at the end of their six day meeting. The whole idea behind "mounting observer missions" is to strengthen democratic institutions in member countries. As the opening lines in the relevant paragraph in the communique put it, "Heads of Government also agreed that one area where the Commonwealth might usefully make dis-

tributive contribution is in the strengthening of democratic institutions in member countries. Heads of Government have long recognised a commitment to democratic processes as being among the values they most cherish." It is not possible for a Commonwealth observer mission to the elections to help strengthen democratic institutions if it is regarded as a simple look-see trip.

Indeed, later in the paragraph, it becomes very clear how the Commonwealth hopes to strengthen democratic institutions through elections. It says, "Heads of Government agreed with the Secretary-General's proposal that one of the Commonwealth's contributions to strengthening democracy might be the provision of Commonwealth assistance in helping member countries to reinforce their election and other constitutional processes through a facility for mounting observer missions at the request of member governments, and in responding to such requests in other relevant ways. They requested that the modalities of such a facility and related assistance should be examined in greater detail by the high-level group on future Commonwealth roles."

Working out the modalities of a facility for mounting observer missions cannot possibly mean detailing arrangements for look-see visits! Obviously, what the communique envisages is a proper mission which would assess various aspects of an election.

If the numerous observer missions of the last few years initiated by different groups including the United Nations are anything to go by, a Commonwealth observer mission will also have to examine voter registration, campaign facilities, the way polling is carried out, the counting of votes and of course electoral grievances. It will also have to meet candidates and political parties and prepare a report on its evaluation of the election. It would be wrong of an observer mission to confine its observations to voting and counting of votes on polling day.

Members of the Commonwealth who are known to hold fair and honest elections, in every sense of the word, would be quite happy to welcome observer missions that seek to examine every aspect of an election. They would be prepared for international scrutiny because they have nothing to hide.

The Executive Committee

4 August 1990

SYARIAH & POLYGAMY

ALIRAN commends the Syariah Court of Selangor for its just decision yesterday in a civil suit involving the question of polygamy.

It was a balanced, rational judgment guided by the letter and the spirit of the Quran. It established in unambiguous language that polygamy, while sanctioned by the Quran, has its limits. The Quran does not encourage polygamy. On the contrary, it is only in exceptional circumstances that polygamy is permitted.

The Selangor Syariah Court decision is a tremendous moral booster to Muslim women in particular and Malaysian women in general. It is an explicit acknowledgement of their right to fair and just treatment in marriage. At the same time, the judgment emphasises the importance of men observing their responsibilities in life. Self-control and self-discipline would be among the more important of these responsibilities. Most of all, the Syariah Court decision has shown our multi-religious society what Islam really stands for in the controversial question of polygamy.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar
President

11 August 1990

'WINTER IN MALAYSIA' PROJECT - A WASTE OF PUBLIC FUNDS

The creation of a nine million ringgit 'temperate park' at the Cahaya Sri Alam Agricultural park is a colossal waste of public funds.

The two reasons given by the authorities for the creation of the temperate park are both ludicrous. The Malaysian public has been told that the park will facilitate research into the suitability of certain temperate crops. It is totally illogical for us to research temperate crops when local research on tropical crops remains under-developed. Though the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Authority (MARDI) has done some good work on tropical fruits in recent years, research-wise, we lag far behind Thailand, which is now

renowned throughout Asia for its agricultural research. There is so much original research to be done in the cultivation of a greater variety of better quality local fruits and vegetables. We have yet to develop a wide range of food industries based upon local fruits.

Government leaders have also argued that Malaysians who spend millions of ringgit visiting temperate countries every year do not have to do so now, since we have our own temperate park! In other words, they can experience 'winter' without going to countries which have winter. In this way, we will save a lot of foreign exchange. This is a foolish argument. Well-to-do Malaysians and Malaysians who like visiting Western countries will continue to do so. They are not going to be satisfied with the cheap thrill of a make-believe winter in Shah Alam. In any case, it is not because of winter that Malaysians visit temperate countries. North America and West European countries attract a lot of Malaysians because of their

shopping facilities, their educational opportunities, their tourist spots, and most of all, because of the seductive images of affluence that these societies convey through the mass-media.

It is simply absurd that the government should spend so much on a silly, stupid project such as the temperate park when a lot of people have yet to be provided with the basic amenities of life. More than one-third of the population of Sabah and Sarawak, for instance, do not have access to piped water and electricity. Even in Peninsular Malaysia, educational and health facilities are far from adequate. There are so many double-session schools in the country because the government says it does not have the money to put up more school buildings. And yet, it spends nine million ringgit giving Malaysians a sensation of winter!

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar
President

20 August 1990



Cahaya Sri Alam Agricultural Park: Nine million ringgit for a sensation of winter!

Watch, and the Group of Concerned Citizens (GOCC). It should be noted that the members of technical mission met the Prime Minister on Wednesday, 18 July 1990, even before they met with opposition political parties and other individuals and groups. The sole purpose of the entire exercise, it appears was to acquire a proper understanding of Malaysian elections and the electoral system, in preparation for the monitoring of the coming general elections.

Since it was the Prime Minister who had mooted the idea of a team from the Commonwealth to observe the elections, it is obvious that the technical mission that was in the country from 17 to 22 July 1990, was in response to his original invitation. It is therefore discourteous of the Prime Minister to accuse the technical mission of "bias", of "not being neutral". The accusations are totally untrue, unjust and unfair. It smears the good name of the technical mission and the Commonwealth Secretariat, when the mission was only doing what was expected of it.

It is now clear to Election Watch and to sections of the Malaysian public why the Prime Minister has suddenly turned against the technical mission, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretary-General. There are perhaps two main reasons for this "about-turn".

One, it has now dawned upon the Prime Minister that the observer team from the Commonwealth will be adhering closely to accepted international norms of election-watching. The observer team will be looking at questions like equitable access for all political parties to the daily newspapers and radio and television, the use of state facilities for political party campaigns, the role of money in the elections, the nature of electoral grievances and the remedies available within the electoral and legal system, and so on.

It appears from the Prime Minister's public utterances that election monitoring is confined to the balloting and counting of votes on polling day. But the

Commonwealth Secretariat knows that a fair and honest election must encompass the entire process of competing and campaigning for power. The Prime Minister seems to be afraid that the broader, more logical and more rational view of a fair and honest election would be inimical to his interests.

Two, as a result of the visit of the technical mission, the Prime Minister has realised that he cannot control the Commonwealth observer team. He did not want the mission to meet members of Election Watch, but he failed to get his way. It would be recalled

that earlier he had stated that he did not want the observer team to meet the opposition parties.

For the above reasons it is not surprising that the Prime Minister is having second thoughts about the Commonwealth observer team. It is not inconceivable therefore that the invitation to the Commonwealth team may be withdrawn.

But the Prime Minister needs a pretext to withdraw the invitation. And the pretext he has concocted is that the observer team may be "biased". The Prime Minister needs a scapegoat for this action. And that scapegoat is Election Watch.

We reproduce below contents of the letter sent by Election Watch to the Commonwealth Secretary General.

Sir Shridath Ramphal,
Secretary-General of the
Commonwealth,
Commonwealth Secretariat,
Malborough House, Pall Mall,
LONDON SW1Y 5HX.

Your excellency

On behalf of Election Watch (a citizens' group established to help ensure a fair general election) I welcome the decision to send observers from Commonwealth countries to our coming general election.

I am confident that the Commonwealth observers will do their very best to ensure a free and fair election in keeping with the democratic traditions of the Commonwealth.

I enclose a statement by Election Watch welcoming the decision to invite observers from the Commonwealth to look at our coming election. The statement enumerates some of the standard procedures associated with election watching.

Two earlier statements by Election Watch which help to clarify the aims and objectives of the body are also included. There are also thumb-nail sketches of Election Watch members apart from an assortment of newspaper cuttings on the government's and public's response to the formation of Election Watch.

I appreciate your willingness to receive these documents from Election Watch.

With warm regards.

Sincerely,
Tun Mohd. Suffian
Chairman
Election Watch
Date: 26th June, 1990.



FREE, FAIR, CLEAN & HONEST

Is that too much to ask?

Below is a joint statement dated July 24, 1990, signed by:

1. *Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah*
President, *Semangat 46*;
2. *Dr Sanusi Daing Marioh*
Vice President, *PAS*;
3. *Lim Kit Siang*
Secretary-General, *DAP*;
4. *M.G. Pandithan*
President, *AMIPF*;
5. *Dato Sudin Wahab*
President, *HAMIM*;
6. *Dr Syed Husin Ali*
President, *PRM*;
7. *Dato Wan Hashim*
President, *BERJASA*;
8. *Yeoh Poh San*
Secretary-General, *MSP*.

WE, the following Opposition Political Parties in Malaysia, having met in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday, 24th July 1990, to discuss the proposal for a Commonwealth Observer Mission for the coming general elections in Malaysia:

● **RESOLVE** to endorse and accept in principle the invitation of a Commonwealth Observer Mission for the coming general elections;

● **DECLARE** that for the Commonwealth Observer Mission to play a meaningful role with credibility and legitimacy, it should comply with the following principles and guidelines:

1. that the Mission members should come from countries with internationally-recognised parliamentary democracy with multi-party systems in their respective Parliaments;
2. that the Mission members

should comprise personalities of impeccable standing and background with regard to their experience in election-watching as well as their commitment to the promotion of parliamentary democracy;

3. that the terms of reference of the Commonwealth Observer Mission are broad and wide enough to ensure that the general elections is free, fair, clean and honest;
4. that the Mission should not just confine itself to the tasks and duties of the Election Commission and the voting process on polling day, but the entire election campaign, such as freedom of speech and assembly available to competing political parties and candidates, including matters like public rallies; free and fair treatment by the media, whether radio, television or newspapers; and campaign funding and expenditures;
5. that the Mission should also monitor any abuses of government funds and facilities by any political party or candidates during the general elections;
6. that the Mission should have fullest freedom of movement and access, including contacts with political parties, organisations or individuals concerned about the general elections meeting the four criteria of being free, fair, clean and honest;
7. that the Mission be allowed to decide on its modus operandi to fulfil its terms of reference;
8. that the government would not

put any restriction, limitation or constraint in the way of the Mission, but pledges full co-operation and support for its activities;

9. that the Mission should be in the country two or three weeks before the election campaign;
10. that the Mission should prepare and make public a report on the conduct of the general elections in Malaysia.

● **NOTE WITH CONCERN** that the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed, seems to be backtracking from his commitment announced in Parliament on June 21, 1990 to invite the Commonwealth Observer Mission;

● **CALL** on Dr. Mahathir not to renege on his commitment to invite the Commonwealth Observer Mission to prove that he has nothing to hide from international or local scrutiny of the general elections campaign and process, especially as this is in line with the Kuala Lumpur CHOGM Communique of October 1989;

● **EMPHASISE** that the Observer Mission should not be confined only to the Commonwealth, but extended to countries and organisations internationally and locally recognised for their commitment to and concern for democracy and human rights; **AND**

● **RESOLVE** to form an All-Party Action Committee to ensure a free, fair, clean and honest general elections. □

MAHATHIR'S BACKSTEP*

I WAS SORT OF TRAPPED. THE ELECTION WATCH WAS FORMED AND I HAD TO DO SOMETHING TO COUNTER ITS IMPACT AND INFLUENCE ON VOTERS DURING THE GENERAL ELECTION...

MOREOVER, ITS MEMBERS ARE PROMINENT AND CREDIBLE PEOPLE - AN EX-LP, A FORMER AUDITOR GENERAL, A SOCIAL REFORMIST AND THREE TOP LAWYERS!



SO I SUGGESTED GETTING MY PALS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT TO SEND AN OBSERVER TEAM. EVERYBODY LIKED THE IDEA... EVEN THAT KIT SIANG... AND ALL OF THEM PRAISED ME

THEY SENT TWO CHAPS TO LOOK-SEE... HOW WAS I TO KNOW THAT THOSE COMMONWEALTH CHAPS HAVE MINDS OF THEIR OWN. I COULDN'T CONTROL THEM!



THAT'S WHY I'M WALKING BACKWARDS THESE DAYS... QUICK SWEEP UP, OMAR! SO SLOW, THAT FELLOW...



* TO BE DANCED TO MAHATHIR'S TUNE

DR M'S SCAPEGOAT

Below is a Press Statement release dated July 24, 1990, signed by Election Watch Chairman Tun Mohd. Suffian Hashim and members Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin Zakaria, Raja Aziz Addruse, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Dato Param Cumaraswamy and Chooi Mun Sou.



It is with much regret that Election Watch is forced to respond to some of the allegations made against it by the Prime Minister, other government leaders and sections of the media, in connection with the recent visit to Kuala Lumpur of two representatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

It is not true that the Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Sir Anthony Siaguru, and the Assistant Director of the Commonwealth's International Affairs Division, Dr Neville Linton, came here at the invitation of Election Watch. Election Watch was in no way responsible for their visit. Election Watch has no ties whatsoever with the Commonwealth Secretariat or with the Commonwealth Secretary-General. No one in Election Watch knows or has met the Commonwealth Secretary-General. It is totally absurd, therefore, to suggest that Election Watch has influenced the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

After the Prime Minister announced, in the Dewan Rakyat on 21 June 1990, that a team from

the Commonwealth would be invited to observe the general elections, Election Watch made a press release welcoming the move. A copy of that press release, together with other press releases issued by Election Watch and newspaper clippings pertaining to Election Watch, were sent to the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. These documents and materials were sent to the Secretary-General since the Prime Minister himself had stated that the reason for inviting Commonwealth observers was because Election Watch had been formed with allegedly "ulterior motives". Election Watch informed the Prime Minister that it had sent its press releases and newspaper clippings to the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

Election Watch is making public the short letter that accompanied the press releases and newspaper clippings sent to the Secretary-General. It will be apparent to everyone that Election Watch did not at any point invite the Secretary-General to send his representatives to Malaysia.

As we understand it, the two representatives who came here were part of a technical mission to assess the general situation, to gather information in relation to the conduct of elections in Malaysia and to determine the size of the observer team which should be sent to monitor the coming general elections. Technical missions of this sort are often despatched, before the actual observer team arrives, so that the team would be fully conversant with the overall electoral and political situation. Election-monitoring by foreign groups in the Sri Lankan, South Korean, Zimbabwean and the Hungarian cases all followed this same pattern.

As part of its work, the mission rightly held extensive discussions with the Election Commission and all the major political parties, both from the government and the opposition. It met private individuals and groups concerned with the conduct of elections, including a few members from Election

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