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"ETHNICITY, POLITICS AND EDUCATION: A STUDY
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MALAYAN EDUCATION AND
ITS POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS 1955-1970"

By

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A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Education
University of Keele for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

November 1983

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Abstract

Basically, the problems of Malayan education centred around the 'language of instruction in schools' and its position in the national system of education. What invoked the controversy was over the claim of legitimacy each ethnic group had over their cultural and political status in the new polity. The philosophical differences that existed over these issues were further exacerbated when they became politicised and polarised along ethnic lines.

The Report of the Education Committee, 1956 (the Razak Report) which attempted to reconcile these differences, especially over the question of 'language in schools' somehow had failed to reduce the controversy. The same fate was also inflicted upon the Education Review Committee, 1960. Under these circumstances, the linguistic controversy remained and this created a serious problem towards the full implementation of the national education policy as recommended by the Razak Report. Out of this controversy emerged the condition of 'stalemate' that stalled the progress and development of the national language but nonetheless paved the way for the continued retention of English in the educational system of the country. It was only in 1970, following the ethnic crisis of 1969 that the national education policy of which the national language clause was an essential part was fully implemented.

As the study shows, the reasons for not implementing the national language policy in schools were many. Among them were the policy itself which was ambiguous and vague, the government who vacillated due to the

pre-independent political arrangement which easily succumbed to communal pressures, and the ruling elites who resisted the change and preferred the retention of the colonial language.

This study thus attempts to provide an analysis on the development of Malayan education between 1955-1970. The emphasis is on the development that led to the implementation of the national language policy in schools following the ethnic crisis of May 13, 1969.

The first two chapters of the study provide the setting, both geographical and historical, the ensuing demographic change, the emergence of ethnic nationalism and the growth of a plural school system. Chapter three explores the various alternatives that Malaya could choose in its effort of nation-building. In chapter four, the Report of the Education Committee, 1956 is critically analysed. The contradictory political implications of the Report is specially elucidated in chapter five. In the final three chapters, attempts are made to provide the background that led to the 1969 ethnic crisis and the impact it had upon the direction of the national education policy.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost I would like to express my deep gratitude to Mr. P.E.D. Robinson for his guidance and advice throughout the course of this study. As a colleague and counsellor, his sudden resignation from the Department of Education, University of Keele was a personal loss to me. To him, I express my heartfelt thanks and wish all the success in his new career.

My thanks also go to the various individuals and institutions who had helped me in one way or another towards the preparation of this thesis.

I am also grateful to the Universiti Sains Malaysia for the leave and grant without which I would not be able to carry out this study.

Finally, my appreciation to my wife, Ida, for her patience and encouragement.

Abbreviation

- A.N.M. - Arkib Negara Malaysia (National Archive of Malaysia)
- D.A.P. - Democratic Action Party
- J.P.M. - Jabatan Perdana Menteri (Prime Minister's Department)
- K.P.G.M.S. - Kesatuan Perguruan Guru-guru Melayu Semenanjung
(Federation of Malay School Teachers' Association)
- L.C.D. - Legislative Council Debate
- M.C.A. - Malayan Chinese Association
- M.G.N. - Majlis Gerakan Negara (National Operation Council)
- M.I.C. - Malayan Indian Congress
- P.B.M.U.M. - Persekutuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya
(University of Malaya Malay Language Society)
- P.D. - Parliamentary Debate
- P.M.I.P. - Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
- P.P.P. - People Progressive Party
- P.T.M. - Persekutuan Tanah Melayu (Federation of Malay Land)
- S.F. - Socialist Front
- U.C.S.T.A. - United Chinese School Teachers' Association
- U.D.P. - United Democratic Party
- U.M.N.O. - United Malay National Organization

Introduction

When Malaya achieved its independence on August 31, 1957, it inherited a polity which was ethnically, linguistically and culturally divided. This divisive structure was reinforced by a colonial system of education which was divided along ethnic lines (Loh: 1975). With these existing social conditions, the elements that could contribute towards national integration were few and education was assumed to be one. This was the perception of the government on the eve of the country's independence and the philosophy was henceforth enshrined in the "Report of the Education Committee, 1956" also commonly known as the "Razak Report". The Report (1956: para 12) recommended that:

"the ultimate objective of educational policy in the country must be to bring together the children of all races under a national educational system in which the national language is the main medium of instruction, though we recognise that progress towards this goal cannot be rushed and must be gradual."

In 1960, four years after the publication of the Report, this same philosophy was expressed by Dato' Abdul Razak, the Chairman of the Education Committee, 1956 itself. In his speech to the Asian Regional Conference of the World Confederation of the Teaching Profession held on April 25, 1960, he stressed that the system of education "must be keyed to national unity, and this unity in turn is integrated with the development of national language" (ANM & JPM, 1975:72).

The Razak Report which became the Education Ordinance, 1957 is normally considered as a watershed in the development of education in independent Malaya. However, as a blue-print for the national system of education, the Report, although essentially accommodative in its philosophy, failed to satisfy the expectations of the various ethnic groups of the country. From the time of its official release until the trauma of the

1969 ethnic crisis, the Report did not receive sufficient support to overcome the ethnic divisions in Malayan society. Paradoxically, the crux of the controversy was not on the philosophy of the Report per se, and neither was it on the structure nor the content of the curriculum but rather on the means of achieving the objective. Primarily, the discord focussed on the role and position of the national language and other languages in the educational system of the country. In the contradictions that developed over this issue lies the heart of Malaya's educational problems. This controversy was further aggravated by the dynamics of ethnicity and politics which in turn impeded its implementation process.

As will be argued later, language, which is tied up to the concept of ethnicity and culture is one single divisive element in any plural society. In Malaya, the choice of Malay as the national language was in principle agreed by the various ethnic groups but nonetheless it became controversial when it was translated into the educational frameworks where it was to be made the main medium of instruction in schools. The language issue was again in the midst of controversy when the Malayan constitution did not accord any official status to any languages other than Malay and English. Article 152 of the Federal Constitution for instance states that, "the national language shall be the Malay language" but English will remain the official language "for a period of ten years after Merdeka Day, and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides." The position of the national language as defined by the constitution was crucial in this study for it was closely related to the linguistic objective as recommended by the Razak Report (op. cit. : para 12).

Under these circumstances, it was unfortunate to note that from the time when the Report was made public until the national crisis of 1969, education and language was a political issue that permeated through every

stratum of Malayan life. The issue did not only result in ethnic squabbles, but more than that, created an ethnic disalignment within a community of similar ethnic base. By and large, these inter and intra-ethnic controversies resulted in a state of stalemate over the implementation of the language policy in the school system and it took a national calamity on a large scale for this important breakthrough to take place. It is therefore the purpose of this study to analyse the problems and issues related to the national education policy as enshrined in the Razak Report and as re-emphasised by the Report of the Education Committee, 1960. The thrust of the argument centres on the implementation of the policy for it was in this vital area that a weak link in the whole system of national education was created. Other than that, the study also tries to reveal that the Razak Report itself, as a document of policy, was fraught with dubiousness and ambiguity which would have made it "unimplementable" even under normal circumstances.

The study also explores the country's basic institutions in order to ascertain their responses towards the needs of the new nation and its nation-building process. It was therefore in this light that the May 13, 1969 incident was a significant demarcator between the politics of uncertainty and appeasement of old and the new realism of the future. The May 13 tragedy, as we may call it, exposed the loose foundation upon which independent Malaya was built. It was after a thorough re-examination of the country's post-independent institutions that their re-orientation was made to suit the needs of the newly found realism. Among the first measures taken were in the realm of education. Hardly two weeks had passed when the Minister of Education announced the full implementation of the national language policy in the country's educational system, as had been recommended by the Razak Report.

At the same time, the analysis is not confined within the premise of policy making and implementation but rather presented within the broad framework of the country's historical background, colonialism and the emergence of the plural society, the salient of ethnic politics during the post world-war two period and the problems of de-colonization. All these factors contributed to the development of the national education policy and the subsequent failure of its implementation.

Finally, the choice of the topic and the period of study is considered as important in two ways. In the first place, ethnicity is a recognised force that permeates into all spheres of life in which politics and education are among the most salient. The formation of the Alliance Party which was based on the principles of consociationalism was essentially in response to this ethnic influence. Secondly, the period of this study saw the implication of these political arrangements towards the development of institutions and the influence they had in relation to policy making and implementation. It was in this context that the process of policy implementation became an issue as manifested in the area of education during the period 1955 to 1970. The significance of 1955 was that it was towards the end of that year that the Committee of Education was set up under Dato' Abdul Razak by the Federal Legislative Council, and 1970 was chosen as the end of the period of study for it was in this year that the national education policy was fully implemented following the ethnic riots of May 13, 1969.

Approach to the Problem

Much has been written on the development of Malayan education during the colonial time and the policy and practice that accrued with it. Among them are the works by Chelliah (1940), Stevenson (1975) and Loh (1975).

Loh (ibid.) for example, analysed how the British policy of "divide and rule" was strongly reinforced by the existence of the separate school systems in the colony. Stevenson (ibid.) on the other hand mentioned the inter and intra-ethnic separation within and among the various communal groups created by the colonial administration.

Other writers like Fennel (1967), Enloe (1970), and Osman Mohammed (1973) attempted an analysis on the development of Malayan education during both the colonial and the independent periods. Fennel (op.cit.) especially, elucidated the educational programmes as initiated by the colonial administrations and compared them with a more committed policy by the newly independent government of Malaya. Enloe (op.cit.) on the other hand, approached the subject within the parameter of ethnic politics while Osman Mohammed (op.cit.) attempted a philosophical interpretation over the concept of social integration and the function of education based on the pluralistic models developed by Leo Kuper and M. G. Smith (ed. 1967).

My interest in Malayan education is primarily focussed upon its development in relation to the policy implementation. As has been mentioned earlier, the first decade of independence saw a controversy developing over the proposed new educational policy which was characterised by intense political manipulation and communal bargaining. This in turn resulted in the adoption of the "ice-box policy" (Lijphart, 1966: 177) by the government when treating the sensitive parts of the Razak Report. This "policy of inaction" (ibid.) was designed to bridge the differences among the members of the Alliance Coalition government. Here, the agreement to disagree allowed any controversial issue to be temporarily frozen (ibid. 164-177).

The year 1967 saw the passage of the National Language Act by Parliament. The Act was significant in that it can be identified as marking

the climax of communal bargaining over the national language issue. Related in importance was the fact that the Act was closely linked to the national education policy of the country. The May 13, 1969 crisis thus ended the era of hesitancy, vacillation and compromise. Taking advantage of the "non-political" atmosphere following the outbreak of the crisis, a more pragmatic approach of governing was pursued. It was in this light that the national education policy which was delayed in its implementation finally took its proper course.

The approach used in this study is mainly historical and philosophical. In the first two chapters of the thesis the educational development that transpired during the period of colonial rule is analysed in relation to the historical, political and social background of the country. The rest of the thesis explores the evolution of the national education policy in relation to the nation-building process, the divisiveness of the language issue and the problems of implementation. It should be emphasised that there is no rigid demarcation as to the approaches used but rather each is integrated with the historical and philosophical arguments.

Procedure and Resources

The method used in this research was mostly interpretive and descriptive. The materials used were primary and secondary sources. These were in the form of official documents, statements of policies, published and unpublished dissertations, symposium papers on education, parliamentary reports, newspapers and various other literary documents that were relevant to the study and available to the author. At the same time, interviews were conducted with relevant personalities to elucidate some of the issues under discussion.

Besides the various facilities provided by the University of Keele's Library, research was also carried out at the National Archive of Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Library, University of Science Library, Penang's Public Library, The New Straits Times Library, the Utusan Melayu Library, the Institute of Education Library (London), the School of African and Oriental Studies Library and the Insititue of Commonwealth Studies Library.

Limitation of the Study

The problems that arose out of the study were mainly in two areas. Firstly, the period of study is too recent so that many of the official documents are still considered as classified and under these circumstances are not allowed for public scrutiny. Neverthelss, it was possible to overcome these difficulties by scrutinizing the "press releases" issued by leaders from both inside and outside the government. Secondly, the controversial nature of the subject was such that many of the interviewees preferred to remain anonymous and this to some extent affected the credibility of the issues that were being discussed. Nonetheless, it provided the opportunity to seek for alternative hypotheses to the ones being explored.

Finally, in terms of the geographical area, the name "Malaya" is used throughout the thesis. The name "Malaysia" was coined after the establishment of the Federation of four states in 1963. These were the states of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore (which left the Federation in 1965). Henceforth, Malaya was called "Peninsular Malaysia" and the states of Sabah and Sarawak were often referred to as "East Malaysia". So as to avoid historical and geographical ambiguity, the term Malaya is used in this text. Furthermore, it is this specific geographical area of peninsular Malaya that this research is confined to.

Chapter I

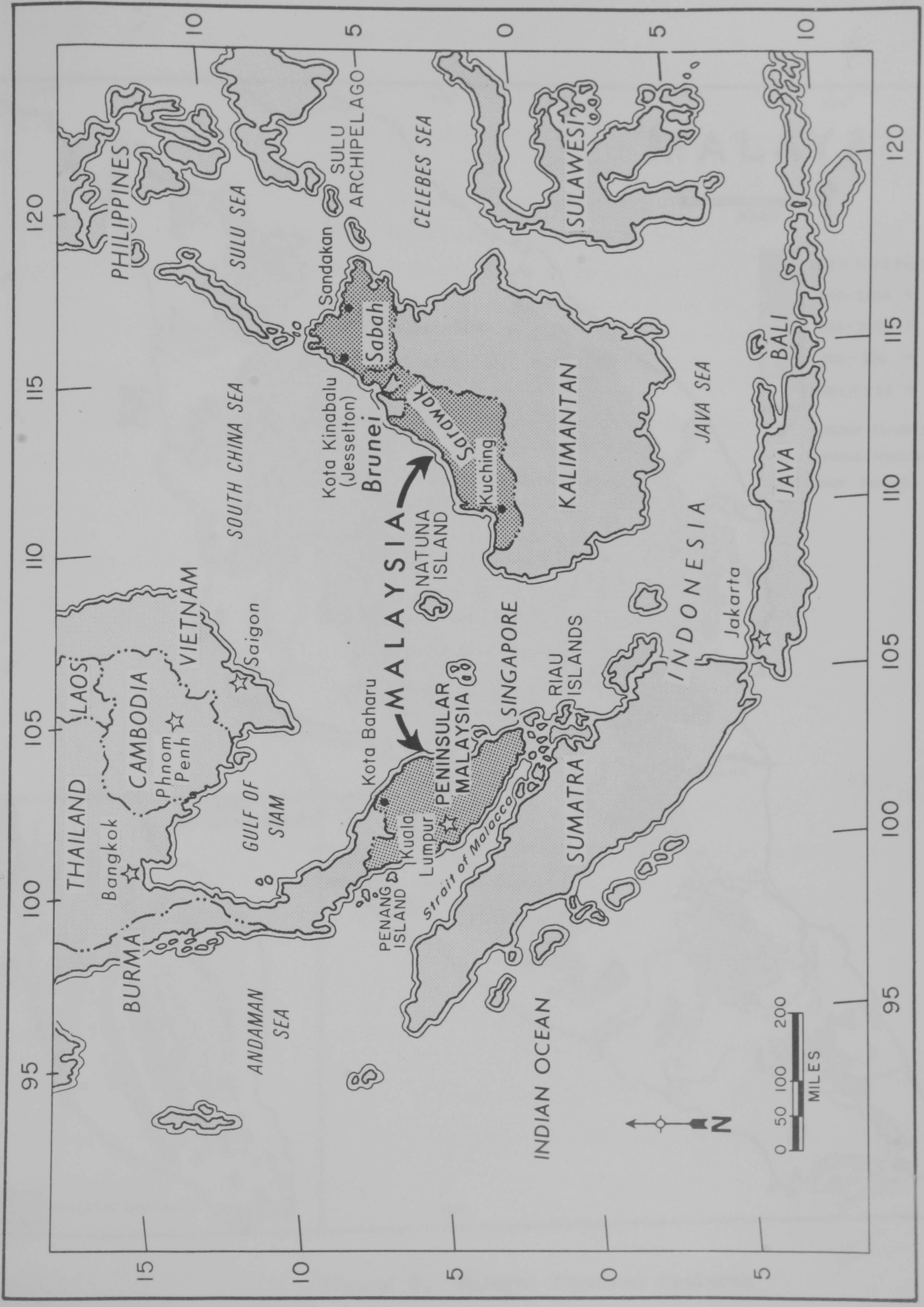
Malayan Education in Historical Perspective

The Setting

Malaya is a former British protectorate situated between latitude one degree and seven degrees north. It is linked to the Asian mainland by the Isthmus of Kra which also forms its northern boundary with Thailand. To the south is the island of Singapore which is joined to the peninsula by a man-made causeway. The country is separated from Indonesia by the Straits of Malacca which forms its western boundary (see Figure 1). The country's location just above the equator determines much of its climate by the presence of high temperatures and the absence of any cold spells. As Ooi (1963: 27) explained, "Seasonality in the peninsula, as in other parts of the tropics, is a function of rainfall rather than of temperature."

With the abundant amount of rainfall (average 110 inches a year) and the amount of tropical sun it receives all the year round, the result is the lush green vegetation which characterises most equatorial countries. However, it is the relief of the country that to some extent has a major influence upon the distribution of population, the patterns of settlement and the nature of occupations. Physically, Malaya's land area of about 50,700 square miles is punctuated by mountain ranges which divide the country between its western and eastern coast. These areas of highland of which the most prominent are the Main Range, the Kledang Range and the Trengganu Highland, occupy most of the central and northern parts of the country and are sparsely populated. The concentration of population is mainly in the lowland areas of the western coast and in the eastern part, and its distribution is mostly along the flat alluvial plain of the north-eastern region and the central eastern belt (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Malaya's Position in South-East Asia



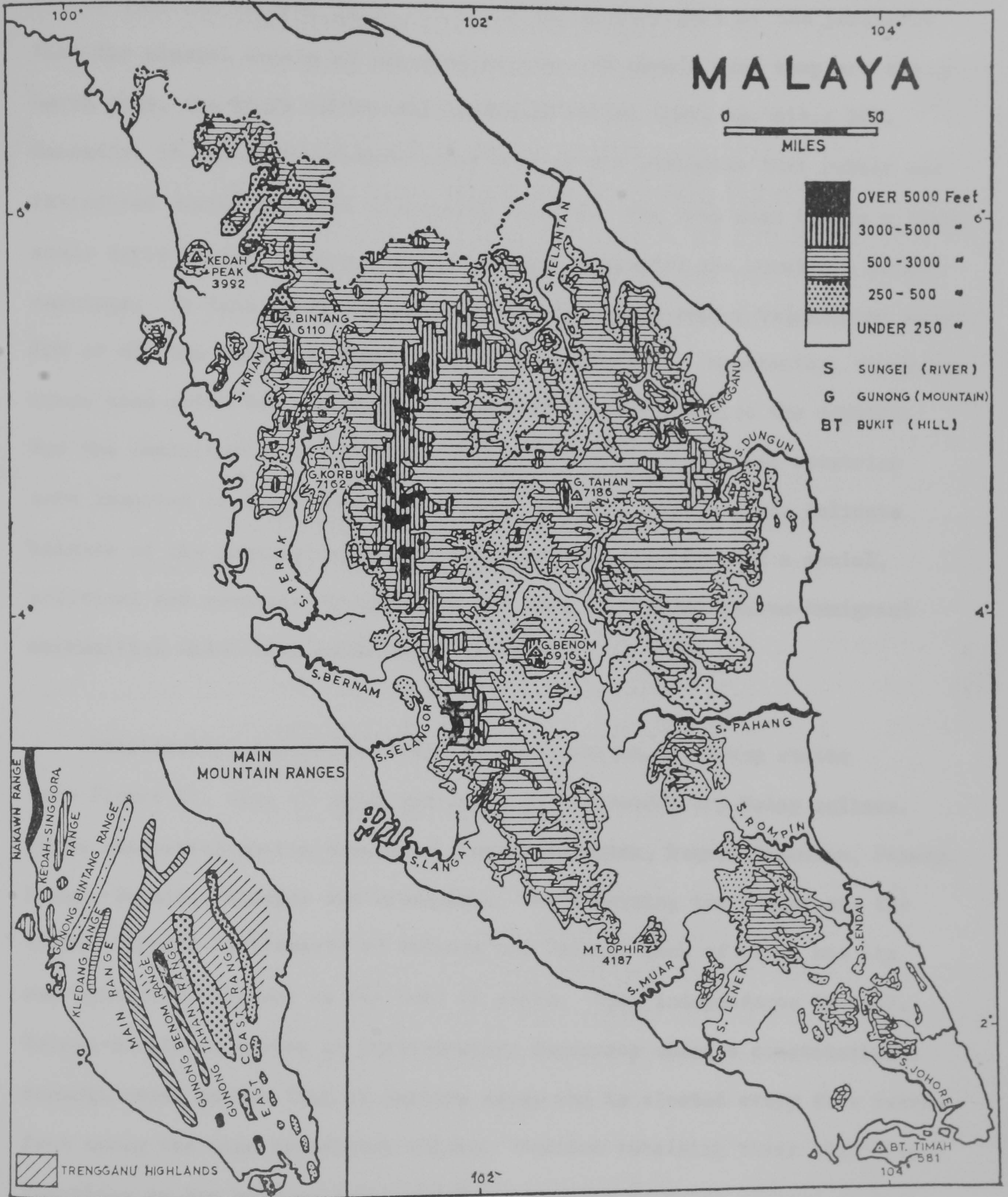


Figure 2. Malaya: Physical Features

In studying the population distribution of Malaya, it is more than the accident of geography that the concentration is on the western-coast rather than its eastern part. It is in the western part of the peninsula that the mineral assets of the country lie. To name a few, they are the Larut area, the Kinta valley and the Klang valley (Ooi, op. cit.: 10). Secondly, it was at the eastern coast area of the peninsula that rubber was introduced during the late nineteenth century. The crop soon became a large scale agricultural venture which henceforth dominated the country's export earnings. In fact until the sixties, both tin and rubber represented about 80% of all the domestic exports (Ooi, op. cit.: 183). Apparently, these two items also paved the way for the advent of colonialism into the country. For the exploitation of these resources, labourers from alien countries were imported in large numbers and this, besides upsetting the delicate balance of the country's demographic structure, also created a social, political and economic dichotomy in the form of the indigenous-immigrant animosities which last until this very day.

Politically, peninsular Malaya is a Federation of eleven states (see Figure 3), nine of which are ruled by the hereditary Malay sultans. These monarchial states are Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Selangor and Trengganu. The remaining two states are the former Straits Settlements of Malacca and Penang, each of which has its own appointed Governor as its head of state. Upon independence in 1957, Malaya adopted a system of Parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarch known as the Yang Di Pertuan Agong who is elected every five years from among the nine hereditary rulers. Besides retaining their traditional functions as the head of Islam and the protector of Malay customs in their respective states (Ryan, 1967: 147), their roles remain symbolical and constitutional.

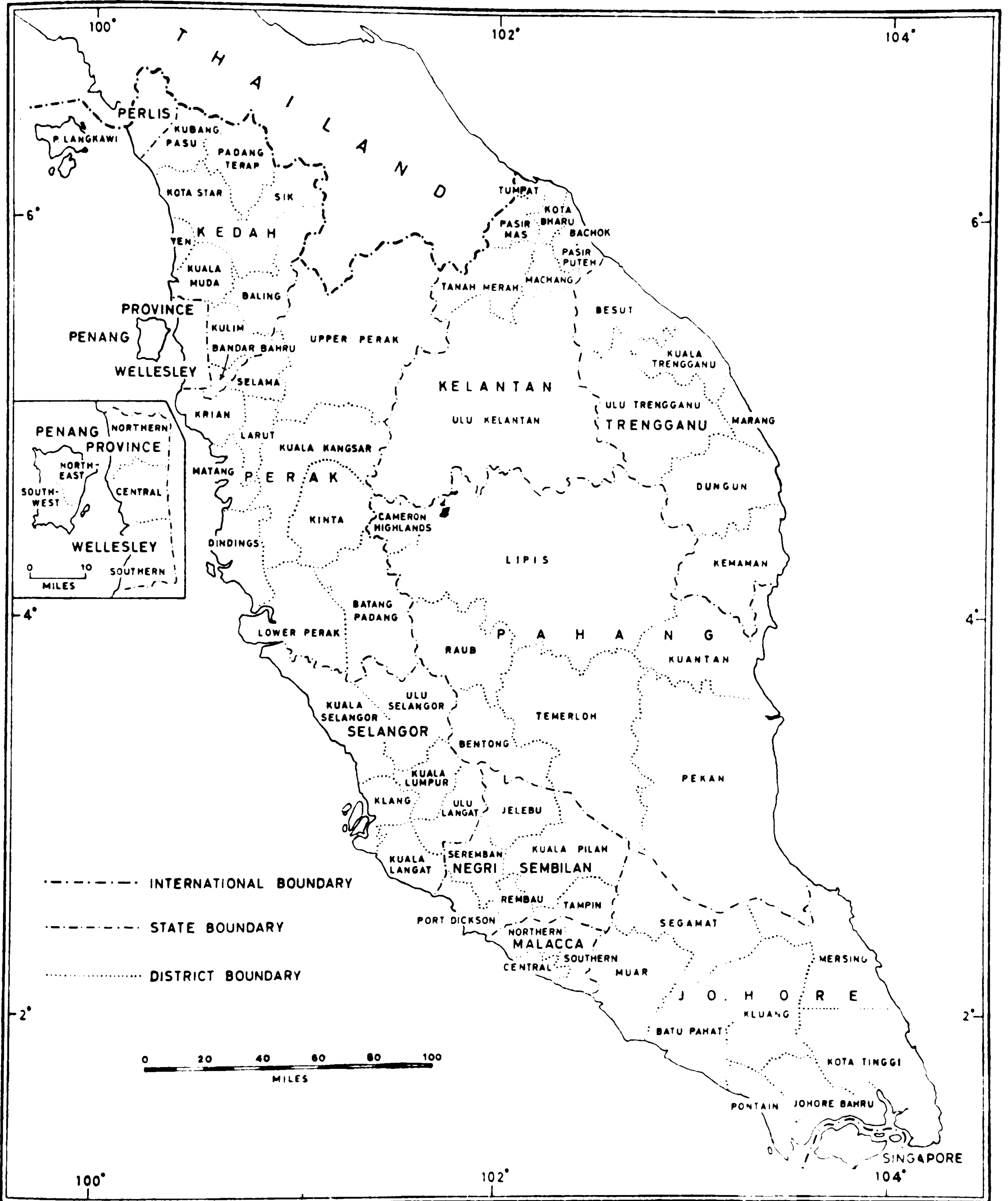


Figure 3. Malaya: Political Division

An important feature of Malaya is its population which is multi-ethnic in character. The major ethnic groups that predominate are the Malays, Chinese and the Indians. The census of 1957 showed that the Malays made up 49.8% of the population, while the Chinese and Indians had 37.2% and 11.7% respectively (see Table I). This ethnic division is further marked by differences in language, religion, culture, historical experiences, economic activities and patterns of settlement. It is these arrays of differences that make one's existence in Malaya interesting, challenging and not the least, scary.

Table I

Population by Ethnic Group, West Malaysia, 1970, 1957 and 1947

Ethnic Group	1970		1957		1947	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Total	8,810,348	100.0	6,278,718	100.0	4,908,086	100.0
Malays	4,685,838	53.2	3,125,474	49.8	2,427,834	49.5
Chinese	3,122,350	35.4	2,333,756	37.2	1,884,534	38.4
Indians	932,629	10.6	735,038	11.7	530,638	10.8
Others	69,531	0.8	84,450	1.3	65,080	1.3

Source: Malaysia, 1970 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia: Community Groups, Kuala Lumpur: Department of Statistics, 1972, pp. 30-31, cited in Hon-Chan, 1977:81.

Historical Background of the Country

Malaya has a long historical past. Archeological records show that the country was already inhabited as far back as the Pliestocene Period (Wheatley, 1973: xxx). However, these early groups of settlers and their

way of life was not so significant as to leave any mark on the environment. It was the arrival of the forest cultivators from the north between 2,500 and 1,500 B.C. that the first geographical impact upon the country was made. According to Wheatley (ibid.: xxxi) these were the forbearers of the present Malays and Indonesians and by the time of the "Dong-son"¹ period, civilisation had already taken shape in the form of a settled community, organised agriculture and a certain form of organised village life. Alastair Lamb (1964: 101-102) notes that by the second century A.D. South-East Asia was already geographically known to the Mediterranean world as indicated by Ptolemy's description of the region.

The written historical records of the country are comparatively recent in origin, and are mostly obtained through Chinese sources. The earliest of these were found in the Chinese dynastic annals which registered the presence of embassies from the countries of the South Seas. These annals gave an account of the development in the middle of the third century A.D. when trades delegations from China "mentioned about more than a hundred kingdoms in Southern Seas" (Wheatley, op. cit.: 14-15). By the middle of the fourth century A.D. it was already certain that a settled and organized community had existed for some time and for the next hundred years these kingdoms became sanctuaries for Indians who migrated to escape the political turbulence that was occurring in India. Among these migrants were "the priests, Brahmans and the scholars" who according to Coedes (1968:56) played a vital role in the spread of Indian cultural influence in the region.

A notable account of these Indianised states was made by I Ching, a seventh century Chinese monk who spent much of his time in India and in this region. In his account, I Ching listed the ports of call if one was to travel from China to India. Two of these ports mentioned were Langkasuka

1. Dong-son: to denote a period of "metal-culture" that originated in Tonking in about 300 B.C. See Hall, D. G. E., 1964:8.

and Kedah (Wheatley, op. cit.: 41-45), situated in the north-western part of Malaya. However, these two ports were forgotten and less frequently mentioned by travellers and traders after the rise of the Sri Vijaya empire in the eighth century A.D. From then onwards, the historical activities of the archipelago became concentrated within the matrix of the present Indonesian boundary. However, Malaya became prominent again with the founding of the kingdom of Malacca by Parameswara, a Sumatran prince in 1400. The opening of Malacca in fact marked the beginning of the country's modern history. By 1403, from a small fishing village, Malacca had reached such importance as a commercial centre that it warranted the Chinese Emperor to send his envoy. Being a newly established state, Parameswara took advantage of this relationship with China to protect himself from any foreign threat, especially from the kingdom of Siam. In 1405, China under the Ming Dynasty recognised Malacca and promised protection from enemies. With this recognition and protection, Malacca continued to grow in importance as an entreport port (Hall, 1964: 194). Wheatley (op. cit.: 312-13) for instance described the importance of Malacca in the following terms:

"The life blood of Malacca was commerce. During the 14th century, the Straits was the crucial sector of the world's major trade-route which had one terminus in Venice - or even further westwards - and the other in the Moluccan Islands. Spices were carried through the Archipelago over many routes and in the ships of diverse people; in the Indian Ocean they also followed various directions before finally entering the Middle East through either the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea; but to the Straits of Malacca there was no practicable alternative."

With the coming of Islam in 1414, a new dimension was added to its greatness as an unrivalled trading centre in the region. Malacca's conversion began with the Sultan himself. With his power and influence the new faith soon spread throughout the kingdom and its dependencies.

The conversion of the Malays to Islam was significant for it changed their "weltanschauung" from that of paganism and polytheistic Hinduism to the uncompromising monotheism of Islam. In the field of literary development, the writing system of the Malay language which was based on the Indian Pali script was abandoned in favour of the Arabic system of writing (Asmah, 1982: 3). As to this development, Asmah (ibid.: 12) made the following observation:

"Islam which came to the archipelao long before Christianity brought with it not only religious works but also Arabic tales and poetry. The most notable of the Arabic literary genres brought into the Malay world was a type of verse, known as the 'shair'. This form became very much favoured by the Malays. Later shair verses were created by local people with local themes and these were taken from island to island."

The importance of Malacca as a trading centre came to the attention of a maritime power from Europe. Portugal which had already a trading post in Goa, at the southern coast of India, wanted a share in the monopoly of the eastern trades. In 1509, under the command of Admiral Diego Lopez de Sequiera, Portugese ships arrived in Malacca but had to withdraw due to the hostile reception they received from the ruling groups. Two years later, in 1511, under the leadership of Alfonso de Albuquerque and after heavy fighting, Malacca was captured by the Portugese. This marked the end of the golden period of the Malacca Sultanate and the beginning of the western colonial intervention.

Malacca's downfall could therefore be attributed to its own strategic location and commercial prosperity. Quatritch Wales (1976: 195) when commenting on the position of Malaya noted as such:

"I feel that I must draw attention to the obvious cultural limitation of the Malay peninsula, with its relatively restricted areas of fertility and its much divided terrain, and one must add, the strategic attractions that made inevitable its occupation by outsiders of relatively advanced civilizations."

The Portugese ruled Malacca for more than a hundred years. However, its power and authority were confined only within the city. Schriekke (1967: 15-17) for example argued that the persistent policy of pursuing "glory, gospel and gold" did not augur well for the Portugese and their unfair treatment of the Muslim traders and the favouring of non-Muslims made the former turn to Acheh, a port situated at the northern coast of Sumatra. This apparently led to the decline of Malacca as the region's most important port.

European rivalries for the eastern trade especially between the Portugese and the Dutch was at its height during the first half of the seventeenth century. The Dutch, who were already in Indonesia, felt that their monopoly over the spice trade would be incomplete without the control of Malacca. In 1641, after a long and protracted war, the Portugese were defeated. Malacca remained under the jurisdiction of the Dutch until 1824 when it was transferred to the British as the result of the Anglo-Dutch treaty signed in that year. By this treaty, the Dutch agreed to recognise British rights over Singapore and also to exchange the Dutch possession of Malacca for the British colonial possessions in West Sumatra (Bastin, ed., 1967: 55-58). The treaty therefore demarcated the two country's respective spheres of influence in the region.

The British penetration into Malaya was more subtle than either the Dutch or the Portugese. It began with the acquisition of the island of Penang by Francis Light from the Sultan of Kedah through the treaty of 1786. They were primarily motivated by economic considerations, for strategically the island was ideally located as a port of call for the eastern trades. Hence the choice was important, for at this juncture in European history the tempo of industrialization had already gathered momentum and there was the need not only for the raw materials but also markets in which to sell these

finished products (Courtenay, 1972: 12). As a port, Penang had the advantage of both.

The large-scale discovery of tin in the state of Perak in the middle of the nineteenth century opened a new era in both the political and economic history of the country. The new found resources seemed profitable enough to attract entrepreneurs from the Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore, an island which came under the British through a financial agreement made between the Sultan of Johor and Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819. However, a major problem developed over the means of exploiting these resources. The country had an acute shortage of labourers. Initially this was met by Chinese immigrants who had already settled in the Straits Settlements. But supply could not meet demand and since local labour was scarce and showed little interest in working in the new industry, an initiative was taken by the colonial authority to facilitate the emigration of Chinese labourers into the country (Hall, 1954:142). This strategy was successfully executed and during the last quarter of the twentieth century, Malaya saw an influx of alien labourers working in the tin mines or doing other related activities. The effect on the country was tremendous. The large-scale importation of foreign workers destabilised the country's demographic structure. As Sadka (1968: 22) pointed out, "In the 19th century, this leisurely, stable type of settlement was succeeded by a new immigration pattern - the wholesale importation of adult male labourers."

The choice of China as the source of supply for the mining workforce was not accidental. In fact the encouragement given to the Chinese to emigrate was concurrent with the establishment of the British Settlements in Malaya. For instance, the foundation of Penang was described as "a new era in the history of Chinese emigration" when they were welcomed by the

colonial administration (Hall, op. cit.: 142).

Until 1874, the British policy towards the affairs of the Malay states was strictly one of non-intervention. But in that year there was a shift of policy. Prolonged civil wars, disruption of the mines due to the gang fights among the various Chinese secret societies, pressures from the business communities and being motivated by the era of imperialism were often cited as the reasons that led to the full British intervention and the beginning of its forward movement in the Malay states (Gullick, 1964: 33-36 and Amin and Caldwell, 1977: 13-22). Various treaties were signed between the British and the Malay rulers and these treaties, besides providing the British with political and economic legitimacy over the tin laden states of Perak, Selangor, Pahang and Negeri Sembilan, also place them in virtual control of these four states except on matters relating to Malay customs and religion. This was in fact the beginning of the Residential System, a policy of indirect rule which lasted until 1948 when it was replaced by a centralised form of federal administration.

The other states of Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Trengganu came under British influence at the turn of the century. The southern state of Johor was the last to receive any form of British advisor. Although it was only in 1914 that Johor formalised its relationship with the British, the western influence was felt earlier than in other states due to its close proximity to Singapore.

In 1941, during the period of the Second World War, Malaya was already distinctly divided into three political and territorial groupings. These were the Federated Malay States, which consisted of Perak, Pahang, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan; the Unfederated Malay States of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Johor; and the Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca.

Emergence of a Plural Society

Frank Swettenham, a Resident who became Malaya's first Resident-General, attributed much of the development of British Malaya to the Chinese immigrant communities. He described them as such:

"... it was the Chinese who began the work, who have continued it ever since, and whose efforts have succeeded in producing more than half of the world's tin supply. Their energy and enterprise have made the Malay States what they are today and it would be impossible to overstate the obligation which the Malay Government and people are under to these hard working, capable and law-abiding aliens."
(Swettenham, 1907: 231-232)

Their incredible drive in pursuit of economic survival prompted Francis Light to describe them as "the most valuable part of our inhabitants" (cited in Purcell, 1967: 40). It was these qualities that impressed both the colonial administrators and entrepreneurs alike. Their arrival en masse to seek means of livelihood was an asset to the European and Chinese miners for these immigrants served as economic machines par excellence. The fact that the British were in control of the ports of entry into the country further facilitated the process. By 1871, for instance, there were already 100,000 overseas Chinese in the Straits Settlements alone (Hunter, 1966: 37).

The presence of the Chinese in Malaya was not a recent phenomenon. Trade relationships between China and this country had existed as early as the seventh century A.D. To the Chinese, the peninsular states were sources of jungle products such as the aromatic woods, spices, ivory, and rhinoceros horn. Along with them they brought commodities like salt, iron, rice and earthenware. For members of the ruling hierarchy, they brought gold, silver, silks, porcelain and lacquer-ware (Wheatley, op. cit.: 73). Their presence was therefore not unfamiliar to the region. Fei-Hsin, during his visit to Malacca in 1436 noted the presence of "white-complexioned folk among them who are a Chinese descent" (Wheatley, op. cit.: 325).

The existence of the Chinese during the pre-colonial period was sufficiently small in number so their presence warranted no concern. Furthermore, they came specifically for trading purposes after which they would return to their homeland and those who preferred to settle were easily assimilated into the indigenous community.

However, the nineteenth century migration of the Chinese was different in both motivation and goal. It was the result of colonialism and its subsequent economic policies. Most of them came from the south-eastern provinces of Kwantung, Fukien, Hainan and Kwangsi; areas which "had very limited resources and suffered from severe population pressure" (Chang, 1973: 4). They came with a single purpose of earning their livelihood (Courtenay, *op. cit.*: 93).

Until the outbreak of the Second World War, these Chinese labourers were transient in nature and hoping to make as much money as possible before returning home. For those who had the intention of permanent settlement, they developed their own social organization that was reminiscent of that in their homeland in China. Communication with the local population was rare due to cultural and linguistic differences. The colonial administration on the other hand was nonchalant towards the emergence of this new community and they were left very much to themselves. Initially, their presence was tolerable to the indigenous community but as their numbers grew and their position began to change from that of transient workers to permanent settlers, resentment towards their presence began to emerge.

The modern Indians appeared on the Malayan scene at a much later date. Their large scale arrival was synonymous with the growth of the plantation industries which became a major venture at the turn of the century. Jain (1970: 439) for instance, described them as "a child of British imperialism"

associated especially with the growth of the rubber industry. In addition, they were also imported and employed in the building of roads and railway lines, a vital part of the colonial economic infra-structure.

Like the Chinese, the history of the Indians in Malaya could be dated as far back as the early centuries of the Christian era. The waves of migration that took place from the middle of the fourth century to the middle of the fifth century created such an enormous cultural impact that it virtually Indianised the indigenous states of South-east Asia (Coedes, *op. cit.*: 55-56). The Indian's political and cultural influence remained for many centuries and it only ended with the arrival of Islam. The conversion of Malacca into this new religion was an ideological coup d'etat which overthrew not only the Hindu influence upon the courts but also their dominant position as traders in the region.

On the contrary, the modern Indian immigrants were far from the rank of traders or financiers. They were "chiefly unlettered labourers coming into the country to work for a pittance on some plantation or government project" (Sandhu, 1969: 31-32). However, their arrival "en masse" could not be understood without associating them with the growth of rubber as a plantation crop. The introduction of rubber at the end of the nineteenth century and its "phenomenal success ... led to the decline and abandonment" (Ooi, *op. cit.*: 186) of other plantation crops like coffee and pepper. To the European coffee planters who had suffered heavy losses due to the surplus production of coffee from Brazil in the 1890s, the success of rubber was a relief and a blessing (Courtenay, *op. cit.*: 50). In fact there was a rush towards investing in this crop. As Sandhu (*op. cit.*: 50) put it, investors and planters took the opportunity to invest "million pounds worth of money into the Malayan countryside and thousands of acres of new and reclaimed land were snapped by a horde of companies and individual planters."

As an agricultural enterprise, the rubber industry was labour intensive in its operation. Local residents were either not keen or were fully engaged in other forms of occupation. Attempts to import labourers from Indonesia and Japan were unsuccessful due to the strict immigration controls imposed by these two countries. It was then that attention was turned towards the Indian sub-continent. Poor living conditions, especially in the southern parts of the country and the efficient recruiting machinery further facilitated the out-flow of these Indians. It was only after 1938 when a ban was imposed by the Government of India on all assisted emigration that the process of labour recruitment was stopped (Arasaratnam, 1970:10-20).

Amidst all the economic activities that occurred especially during the first half-century of British rule, life among the Malays remained undisturbed. The colonial administration felt no necessity to incorporate the Malays into both the mining and agricultural activities. At the same time, not many Malays were prepared or willing to work as labourers in the new economic system. As Steinberg (1971: 322) observed:

"The relative sparseness of the Malay population and its involvement in a traditional social order based on the village and cultivation of the land meant that few Malays were available or willing to engage in the wage labour needed for rapid development of export industries and their ancillary facilities."

Furthermore, with labour easily available either from India or China, there was no necessity at all to disturb the prevalent status-quo, and, looking at it from the capitalist point of view, what mattered most was the efficient functioning of the economic machinery. According to Roff (1967: 13), "between 1875 to 1900 the total revenue of the states under British protection rose from well under half a million Straits dollars to fifteen and a half million, and the value of exports rose from three quarters of a million dollars to more than sixty million."

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Malaya was already at a convergent point of two new cultural traditions, each claiming a stake in the future of the country. As has been observed earlier, the indigenous Malays were left as spectators amidst the economic activities and the dynamics of demographic change that were taking place. It was also during this period that occupations and patterns of settlement took their ethnic identification. The Malays were identified as farmers and fishermen and to be found in the "kampung"¹; the Chinese living in the urban centres participating in mining or commercial activities; the Indians were to be found in the rubber estates working as rubber tappers. Thus on the eve of independence Malaya was already a fully-fledged plural society which Furnivall (1948: 304) succinctly characterised as follows:

"In Burma, as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples - European, Chinese, Indian and native. It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines."

At this stage, a lengthy discussion given to the demographic history of the country which subsequently led to the emergence of a plural society is important in two ways. In the first place, this development influenced the course of Malayan politics that were to emerge, and secondly, out of this plural society evolved a plural school system which posed such an obstacle in the country's efforts of nation-building upon the achievement of independence in 1957.

1. "kampung" - villages

Emergence of the Plural School System

Education of the Malays

The development of education in colonial Malaya followed the demographic patterns as reflected by the racial composition and separation that existed in its society. Prior to the introduction of secular education, indigenous education was religious in orientation and traditional Malay education focussed mainly on the teaching of the Koran. It was customary in a Malay village for the children to learn how to read the Islamic sacred text from persons who were knowledgeable in the subject. The venue of learning varied from place to place. Most often it would be held in a "surau" (small mosque) or at the teacher's house itself. In the north and north-eastern parts of the country, besides the "surau", learning was held in the "pondok" (hut) where a form of residence was available for students. Children who were sent to these "pondok" schools would be equipped with all the basic essentials such as sleeping mats and pillows, cooking utensils and food. Learning in the "pondok" did not confine itself to only reading or reciting the Koran for the curriculum included the learning of the Arab language and the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic (Khoo, 1980: 1-8). The products of this "pondok" system of education after completing their studies would return to their respective villages to become religious teachers in their own communities. At the same time, it was not uncommon to see some of the ambitious students from these "pondoks" seek to continue their religious education in the Middle Eastern countries.

In a traditional Malay society where Islamic values were held supreme and became its central value system, the focus of village life was centred around the "surau". It was here that meetings were held and decisions that affected the village were made. And in matters of religious importance, the advice of these religious leaders was always being sought.

In marriages, the religious leaders played the role of solemnizing the ceremony and in the "kenduri" (religious feast) they would be called to lead in the prayers. In a Malay traditional society, religious leaders or people with religious knowledge always held positions above the rest of the population. It is therefore unfair to suggest that "upward social mobility through education was then a virtually non-existent phenomenon" (Loh, op.cit.:12).

Initial attempts by the British to secularize these indigenous education systems among the Malays were met with hostility. For example, in Penang and Province Wellesly they were opposed to the secularizing attempt which they considered to be religiously undesirable. It was only after a compromise with the local religious leaders that the Koran would be taught in the school's precinct that parents began to allow their children to attend these schools (Loh, op. cit.: 13).

The British educational policy towards the Malays was one of dualism. This was in line with the social policy adopted towards Malay society in general. The premise taken was to categorise the Malay traditional society into the rulers and the ruled. The ruling groups were the sultans and together with various district chiefs made up the ruling aristocracy who stood at the apex of the indigenous political structure. At the bottom of this ladder were the ruled, the peasants, commonly known as the "rakyat". Educationally, this pattern of dualism was earnestly carried out by the British (Loh, op. cit.: 31). For example, at the bottom of the educational hierarchy, the British built Malay schools for the masses as a mark of "paternalism and concern". The education provided was both terminal in terms of its duration, for post-primary education was not available in the Malay language, and minimal in its curriculum content, with only a limited scope for upward social mobility. The subjects taught were vocational in orientation and this policy was in line with the objective of making the

"rakyat" more versatile in their own environment, be they farmers or fishermen. In short, the Malay vernacular schools were pathetic in their conditions. As Sadka (op. cit.: 293) noted, "pedagogically the schools were bad; teachers were untrained and miserably paid, and had to deal with up to four standards at a time in one-room schools." Nonetheless, this system found its apex in 1922 with the establishment of the Sultan Idris Training College (S.I.T.C.) in Tanjung Malim, Perak where Malay vernacular school teachers were trained.

To that extent Malay vernacular education provided only a limited form of social mobility even in their own environment. With the exception of the few who managed to get selected into the S.I.T.C., the rest of the Malay school products would return to their respective traditional family occupations. In this context, education which was meant to be an agent of change was irrelevant as far as the British policy towards the Malays was concerned. In fact the curriculum provided was an indirect way of stagnating the Malay masses by confining them in their own rural milieu, far from the challenge of modern activities. Also, it was a form of social control at its best. Even the S.I.T.C. was directed towards this end. As Awang Had Salleh (1980:139) explained, "S.I.T.C. was not a secondary school. It was a training college for teachers - a college to mould the people who will return to the village to make the village folks more satisfied with the village ways of life."

The British policy of educational dualism towards the Malays had its precedent in British India during the first half of the nineteenth century. Lord Macaulay (in Young, ed. 1952: 729) in his famous minute delivered on 2nd February, 1835, stated that:

"... it is impossible for us with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."

Macaulay's minute on education was a statement of indirect rule at its best. Henceforth, it became the guiding principle not only for British officers serving in India but also in other British dependencies (Furnivall, op. cit.: 374-5). In the feudalistic Malay society, it was not difficult to identify the social stratification that existed (A. Kahar Bador, 1975: 134-142). Divisions which were based on group status were deeply rooted in the Malay culture and it was a matter of reinforcing these stratified values for the policy to be realised.

In its practicality, the policy of indirect rule required a close relationship between the colonizer and the ruling traditional elites of the colonized territories. This was in contrast to the system of direct rule, where, by and large, the colonizer had to deal directly with the natives. In the politics of indirect rule, these traditional elites functioned as intermediaries between the colonial administrators and the masses. Thus any policy that was formulated appeared to have the sanction of these indigenous rulers. It was these groups that Macaulay was referring to and to whom the English education was directed. In Malaya, this vision was realised in 1905 with the establishment of the Malay College in the royal town of Kuala Kangsar in the state of Perak. Its establishment was significant in understanding the colonial policy of educational dualism towards the Malays. Loh (op. cit.: 24) described the Malay College Kuala Kangsar (M.C.K.K.) as such:

"... as an educational institution it was geared closely to a political objective, to give to the future Sultans, Malay Chiefs and the traditional elites an approximate English public school education which could prepare them for participatory roles within the British Administration."

The M.C.K.K. followed the best tradition that was provided in an English public school thus befitting its position as the educational custodian of the Malay aristocracies. The College's curriculum prepared the student for

the public examination conducted by the University of Cambridge Examination Syndicate. True to its objective, the products of this college were readily absorbed into the colonial bureaucracies. This was in contrast to the opportunity accorded to the majority of the Malay population who had been attending the Malay vernacular schools, even those few who managed to get selected for the Sultan Idris Training College.

The M.C.K.K. and the S.I.T.C. were educational institutions which had both educational and political objectives for their establishment. Essentially, these institutions were instruments for preserving the status-quo of the Malay feudal society. They represented a form of social engineering and the outcome was obvious in that the Malay masses remained in their traditional rural environment and the few traditional elites provided the colonial government with the lower level of workforce and "interpreters" needed for the administration of the country. As Steinberg (op. cit.: 323) pointed out:

"The maintenance of the traditional elite throughout the peninsula, either in its customary form or as the new bureaucracy, was paralleled by a striking absence of Malay peasant involvement in the mushrooming export economy, either as part of the work force or as entrepreneurs. The British sought actively to shield Malay peasant society from the disruptive effect of the new economic order, partly in the interests of the protectorate relationship and for a sentimental view of the idylls of village life, partly as the means of ensuring continued food production, and partly in order to avoid the political consequences thought likely to follow any substantial disorganization of the peasant economy. The traditional Malay ruling class actively concurred in the measure that resulted."

Education of the Immigrant Communities

The establishment of Chinese schools in Malaya, in whatever form, marked the beginning of a settled community which hitherto had been transient. In contrast to the Malay community where paternalism was accorded to their

education by the British, the policy towards Chinese education was one of neglect. It was only after 1920 when the Chinese schools became hotbeds for subversion and highly politicized that the government enacted a law that made these schools compulsory for inspection (Purcell, op. cit.:228-9). Prior to this they were autonomous in every respect.

The independent nature in the growth of Chinese schools in Malaya had its antecedent in imperial China. It was in A.D. 706 that a serious revolution in Chinese education began, when an imperial edict caused the salaries of the teachers to be paid by the students instead of the state (Bashford, 1916: 103). The edict was significant for it placed the responsibility of education upon the individual rather than on the state. With this tradition, it was not surprising to see that Chinese education in Malaya developed autonomously into a social concern devoid of any interference from the government. This enterprising value towards education in fact fitted in well with the colonial policy of laissez-faire that was accorded to the immigrant communities. Out of this policy emerged large numbers of Chinese schools initiated either by individuals or as the result of their collective efforts. However, most of these schools were "old style schools where the children learned the classics by rote" (Chang, op. cit.: 29). According to Purcell (op. cit.: 228):

"The teacher, as likely as not, combined his profession with that of fortune teller, or geomantic divines, letter writer, and general learned odd man of the village, and any man who could read and write fluently was considered as fully qualified to teach."

As to the conditions of the schools, Purcell (op. cit.: 228) observed that they were "dirty, ill-ventillated, and ill-lighted basements, out-houses, or attics: the sanitation was non-existent; skin diseases were common among the pupils." Despite these pathetic conditions, no efforts were made by the

colonial government to intervene and provide them with the necessary assistance. It was only during the turn of the century that some interest was given to the Chinese schools in general. But the concern of the colonial authority was more on the political activities that developed within these schools rather than their educational aspects. This began during the first decade of this century when the revolutionary fervour that developed in China spilled into the Chinese community in Malaya and the schools became centres for the contending political groups (Purcell, op. cit.: 232). The Manchu Government which was then hostile towards the overseas Chinese, even embarked on a large scale educational aid programme (Loh, op. cit.: 40). Together with the Revolutionaries and the Reformists, they created intense politicization among the students and teachers that, if it remained unchecked, might threaten the stability of the country. In 1920, a regulation was made for the inspection of these schools but it was rather administrative in form and understandably the policy of laissez-faire was still being pursued.

Until after the Second World War, Chinese schools in Malaya retained their independence and autonomy with all the characteristics that were reminiscent of their homeland. It was in fact a miniature China, where, except for the location of the school, the teacher, text-books, curriculum content and language of instruction were all Chinese and imported wholesale from China (Purcell, op. cit.: 232-3).

The modern Indians on the other hand were of a different tradition from the earlier groups that emigrated. They were mostly illiterates and they migrated with the sole intention of seeking a better form of life. The environment from which they came was economically poor and socially repressive especially for the majority who belonged to the lowest hierarchy of the rigidly stratified Indian social structure. It was in the hope of escaping from the grip of such an oppressive environment that they emigrated to this country.

To the planters, they were a source of cheap labour, while to these destitutes emigrating was the only way to escape from the strangulation of poverty.

The colonial policy of not supporting the education of the immigrant communities also extended to the Indians. Their education was left to the initiative of the various voluntary organizations, especially the Christian missionary groups. With the opening of Penang Free School by Rev. Hutchings in 1816, a provision was made to establish a Tamil school as its "vernacular branch school" (Chang, op. cit.: 19). This undertaking was also extended to the other parts of the Straits Settlement (ibid.). However, in 1900, there was a slight shift in the government's policy when it undertook the building of Tamil schools in the states of Perak and Negeri Sembilan (Arasaratnam, op. cit.: 179).

A definite policy on the education of the Indians appeared in 1923 when a Labour Code was enacted at the request of the Government of India. The Code stipulated that a school should be erected on each estate which had ten or more children of school-going age. By this Code, the government was being relieved of the educational responsibility it had towards the children of these Indian immigrants. Instead, the onus of providing education fell on the planters themselves. Arasaratnam (op. cit.: 179) was correct in suggesting that with the law, "planters became the reluctant custodian of education of the labourer's children." As a result of this development, many of these "estate schools" left much to be desired. The planters' reluctance to invest large sums of money were reflected in the conditions of these schools which more often than not had no proper venues. Teachers were poorly paid and in many instances, "estate's clerks, conductors, dispensers, kanganys and even labourers" would be assigned to teach in these schools (Arasaratnam, op. cit.: 180).

Tamil schools, like their Malay counterparts, were only terminal in their set up. Secondary education in the Tamil language was non-existent. After completing their primary education, they would have no other alternative than to seek employment on the estates. The only avenue to further their education was to go to the English schools which in most cases they could not afford. Thus, they remained in the estates ready to follow in the footsteps of their parents.

The Growth of English Education

Except for the establishment of the Malay College, which was fully supported by the government, English education in Malaya saw growth through the initiative and efforts of various voluntary organisations. The government's policy of not promoting English education was often expressed by successive colonial administrators in the country. Sir George Maxwell (in Sidney, 1927: 202) for instance emphasised that:

"... the first thing I should like to make perfectly clear is that education in this country so far as the government is concerned, does not mean English education."

This statement of policy however, did not retard the growth of English schools. Their development was attributed to the untiring efforts of the Christian missionaries who viewed education as a main vehicle for religious conversion (Holmes, ed. 1967: 25). Until 1920, when there was an obvious shift in policy, English schools supported themselves through the collection of fees from the students and annual grants provided by the government, based upon the number of students taking public examinations.

Since the establishment of the Penang Free School in 1816, demands for places in the English schools were always high. The reason was that the Malays who initially had been suspicious towards these institutions,

especially with their evangelical activities, soon felt their importance and hence there was a clamour for them to be built in rural areas so that they could benefit from them (Loh,op.cit.:53-54). These demands were however rejected on the grounds of policy which required the Malays to attend Malay vernacular schools "to learn Malay and the Koran" (Loh,op.cit.:53). Swettenham's (cited in Sadka, op.cit.:292) statement on English education could be a pointer to the policy that was to be adopted. He emphasised that:

"The one danger to be guarded against is an attempt to teach English indiscriminately. It could not be well taught except in a very few schools, and I do not think it is at all advisable to give the children of an agricultural population an indifferent knowledge of a language that to all but the very few would only unfit them for the duties of life and make them discontented with anything like manual labour."

Nonetheless, the government's attitude towards the development of English schools was one of 'love-hate'. With the growth of the urban economy and the expansion of western bureaucracy, more personnel educated in English were needed by the government to fill in the intermediary levels of the workforce. At the same time, the growth of these English schools was restricted "to prevent rural Malays from becoming 'contaminated' with Western ideas and culture" (Watson, 1982:26). This attitude adopted by the government further inflated the value of English education in the colonial labour market.

Situated in urban centres, English schools were fee-paying institutions. Thus they were not easily accessible to the Malays who were mainly in the rural areas nor to the people in the urban centres who were poor. In all aspects, the English schools were elitist in their set-up and high in their esteem. The curriculum provided was geared towards the prestigious Senior Cambridge School Certificate Examination which had strong occupational values not only for employment with the government but also in the private sectors. At the outbreak of the Second World war, English schools had already

developed into a system with all the prestige and privilege that superceded the vernacular schools both in stature and importance. The psychology that emerged out of this development was of considerable importance when analysing the "National Education Policy" in relation to its development, especially during the first decade of Malaya's independence.

Colonial Policy and Practice in Retrospect

Education per se was never a part of the colonial package. It was rather an off-shoot of the colonial process. The policy that developed was therefore "mainly self-serving" (Coleman, ed. 1965: 36), in line with the economic policy but rationalised by such an abstract description like the "civilizing effort" (Hobson, 1968: 286-294) without which the colony would have remained undeveloped.

In Malaya, colonialism had left trails of discontent and this entailed the various policies that were adopted. Conspicuous among all these was its aggressive economic policy which consequently called for the recruitment of immigrant workers for maximum exploitation. The net result was the emergence of a plural society which under the prevailing circumstances required a new direction in policy and practice in general. Education was a particular case in point. The policy that was implemented was not only discriminatory but also inter and intra-ethnically divisive. The dualistic system that was developed for the natives and which was patterned along the traditional Malay social structure, created a wedge between the Malay educated masses and the few English educated elites. This policy had a subsequent effect upon the divergent nationalistic tendencies and the mode of response that the Malays developed towards British colonialism. The far reaching consequence of this educational dualism was reflected in the debates over the nature and content of education following the launching of the national education policy in 1956 and its process of implementation

during the first turbulent decade of the country's independence.

Another aspect that emerged out of the colonial rule was the uncontrolled growth of the Chinese and Tamil schools which served the educational and cultural needs of the immigrant communities. Far from their original home environment, these schools played a vital role in the preservation of their respective culture and identity. This was particularly true amongst the Chinese community (Pye, 1972:31). The criticism that was often voiced against these schools was their lack of realistic approach towards the new environment. The systems that were adopted were alien in lock, stock and barrel and this further deepened the institutional cleavages among the various ethnic components of the country.

Simultaneously, English schools developed their importance as elitist institutions, and being sanctified by the colonial authority, their products were easily "socialized into the political culture of the imperial country" (Coleman, ed. op. cit.: 36). To be educated was taken to mean an education in an English school and to be able to write and converse in the language of the colonial master. The "intellectual arrogance" (Nyerere, 1968: 52) that emerged out of this system developed into a psychological force that was strong enough to challenge any progressive attempt to restructure the educational system that was inherited from colonial days, even though it no longer served the purposes and needs of the country.

At the turn of the century, racial segmentation was already a reality in Malaya and the government had a very limited option to pursue. The first was to intervene and develop a strategy that could forge a sense of oneness among the segregated communities; secondly, to be oblivious to the changes that were taking place. Unfortunately, it was the latter course that was taken and the country remained racially segregated as manifested by the

patterns of settlement, occupational structure and the school system established along ethnic lines.

The laissez-faire policy of the government during the pre-1941 period could be interpreted as one of "non-committal" towards the people of the country and their future. Secondly, it was politically intentional on the part of the colonial government to embark on the "divide and rule" policy (Bell and Freeman, 1974: 64). Both the arguments were inter-related but the latter had repercussions. By ignoring the integrative potentials that were prevalent among the various ethnic groups, it was felt that colonialism itself would function at its best.

Chapter 2

In Search of a Consensus

World War II and the Impact on Colonialism

The global conflict of 1939-1945, despite the massive destruction it caused, was to some extent a historical landmark in the history of international colonialism. If the "Berlin Conference of 1885" (Worsley, 1964: 14) marked the colonial process at its peak, the second World War and its aftermath saw the beginning of its disintegration. The psychological impact of the war was tremendous in that it left trails of a new-found confidence among the people of the colonized territories. To the local nationalists, this development was a source of strength and pride, the quality that was much needed to enhance their movement. Nonetheless, in some cases, this nationalistic fervour was also accompanied by political radicalism, a phenomenon that was absent in the past. Thus, within a period of less than a decade, the chain of imperialism which had been holding the people for centuries began to crack and in some cases to break. Out of these political developments, new nations were born, national boundaries redrawn and new leaderships emerged. This scenario was particularly true in Southeast Asia where the impact of war on all spheres of life was deeply felt. Of importance was the fact that singularly at this juncture of history, colonialism and its advocates were made defenceless. The argument that colonialism was part of the "white man's civilizing mission" had finally lost its legitimacy.

In the Far East, the efficiency of the Japanese war machine was decisive and this incurred a devastating blow on the military might of the colonial power in the region (Means, 1970: 44). Although the period of the Japanese occupation was short, it provided enough time for the people to take stock of the political changes that occurred around them. To the indigenous population, it was a period of national awakening, the political development that was serious enough to challenge the colonial power on their return when the war ended. The cry "Asia for the Asiatic" initiated by the Japanese was contagious and in Malaya, even the lack-lustre political attitudes of the Malays were affected by the slogan.

In a plural society like Malaya, the response towards the Japanese invasion was inter and intra-ethnically varied. It was in the main a dynamic reflection of the society itself. The conspirators against British imperialism were also strongly anti-Japanese throughout the period of occupation, as were the Chinese who had a long historical enmity towards them. On the other hand, the Indians collaborated and this was in line with the general philosophy of most of the overseas Indians, that was to secure the support of the Japanese in their drive against the British in India (Means, *ibid.*: 48). However, the response of the indigenous community in general was to take advantage of the new political development by consciously supporting the new power with the ultimate aim of securing independence for their respective countries.

Indonesia was an example of a country where the approach towards the Japanese was more to its advantage. The war years saw Indonesian nationalism, which had been suppressed by the Dutch, emerge into a force marked

by extreme militancy. Their hatred towards the Dutch rule was manifested by the overt support they gave to the Japanese invaders. But at the same time, a strong anti-Japanese feeling developed when Japan vacillated in granting them independence during the closing stage of the war (Kahin, 1970: 134-5).

The political significance of the war towards colonized territories was direct and clear. The colonial power was no longer seen to be invincible, as it had been assumed to be, and this changed the whole perspective of the masses towards their colonial rulers. This breakdown of confidence had a snowballing effect on the growth of nationalism which was mostly anti-colonial in character. In countries where the forces of nationalism had already left their mark, they became well defined and increased in intensity. Here again, Indonesia is taken as a case in point. The interregnum period, from the time of the Japanese surrender until the arrival of the allied forces, witnessed Indonesia making its own unilateral declaration of independence from the Dutch, and the return of the allied forces was bloodily opposed by the natives (Kahin, *ibid*:144-6).

The events that shaped the political movements in neighbouring Indonesia took a different course in Malaya. The after effect of the war made the multi-ethnic character of the country even more defined and felt. Characteristic of their strategies in the occupied countries, the Japanese administration in Malaya further reinforced the ethnic divisions by favouring one ethnic community and suppressing the other. As Morrison (1949: 241) observed:

"The Japanese, as in every country of Southeast Asia which they occupied, exploited racial differences in order to

strengthen their own position. An even more potent factor was the prevailing sense of insecurity, which in a plural society causes people to believe that they can be safe only with their fellow-racials. Thus the war years witnessed a steady deterioration in Malay-Chinese relations."

This very act adopted by the Japanese in turn aggravated the delicate ethnic balance and created much animosity among the various ethnic groups as manifested by "some serious communal outbreaks" that followed after the Japanese surrender and just before the arrival of the British in 1946 (Morrison, op. cit.: 240).

In Malaya, the ethnic distinctions were evident. They were differences which could be easily identified by the "various institutions that existed, specialised economic functions, share in government administration, degree of education, religion, temperament, rate of education, and attitude towards Malaya" (Morrison, op. cit.: 240). However, one significant fact had to be understood when analysing the Malay and non-Malay attitudes towards the country. As Ratnam (1946: 6) points out, "the former has a cultural and institutional continuity in the local context while the latter lacks a Malayan traditional past". This was in essence the source of the different responses accorded to the Japanese invasion. While the Malays were concerned about the future well-being of the country, the non-Malays were still being dictated by the developments that occurred in their countries of origin. With the absence of any common historical tradition, the country thus failed to respond collectively when the Japanese made their invasion. In fact, the ethnic value systems took varying forms of response, and to some extent this provided an easy victory for the Japanese at the initial stage of the war and the swift return of

the British when the war ended.

Psychologically, the impact of the war upon the country was immense. It shook the very fibre of trust the people had towards the British rule when as a protector the British failed to fulfil its obligation in time of national catastrophe. The humiliating defeat suffered at the hands of an Asian power, whose forces were lesser in numerical strength (Foong, 1977: 99) left a wound which failed to heal even after the war had ended. Finally, it would be interesting to note that the war also marked the eclipse of colonialism, and in Malaya particularly, it was an initial stage towards self-realization.

Emergence of Ethnic Nationalism

Witnessing the return of the British to Malaya after their World War II debacle, Seabridge (1945: 202) commented that they arrived "as a man who has failed in a mission on which the very lives of his charge depended". This was the general view accorded to them when they returned to re-establish their pre-war eminence. Although their authority was promptly restored, the semblance of the pre-war atmosphere was absent. On the country's economic front, for example, the disruption was enormous (The Times, July 9, 1946) and politically the climate within the country was one of radicalism (The Times, March 4, 1946). Between these two, the latter was the most complex. At one end of the pole there was a clear exertion of Malay nationalism while at the other end of the continuum there was a nationalistic tendency manifested by the immigrant communities which was reminiscent of their countries of origin.

Ethnicity, if it is to be defined as "characteristics, distinctive cultural or sub-cultural traits that set one group off from others"

(Bell and Freeman, 1974: 10) together with nationalism "as an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, cohesion and individuality for a social group deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation" (Smith, ed. 1976: 1) are forces that could be harnessed to anyone's advantage. In Malaya, where there was an absence of any common value system among the various ethnic groups, ethnicity and ethnic nationalism were two divergent elements that could pose a threat to the viability of the polity. On the other hand, what other alternatives did the immigrant communities have when the concept of a Malayan nation was still vague and ambiguous in terms of its geographical delineation or political cohesion? The Malays themselves being indigenous did not at this period of Malayan history provide any form of a centralised or cohesive model. Their loyalty was too parochial, mainly being diverted towards their respective states and rulers. Even the word "Malay" which was supposed to transcend beyond any political boundary had failed to become a unifying force (Roff, 1967: 242-5). Although the period before the Second World War saw the growth of Malay Associations in the various states of the country, attempts to form "a single national movement failed utterly at the hands of timorousness, state rivalries, and an inability to see beyond the traditional Malay political structure" (Roff, *ibid*: 246-7). Steinberg (*op. cit.*:327) for instance, described the Associations as "conservative in bias, loyal to the rulers ... and displaying an almost equal enthusiasm for British colonial rule".

It was in the 1920's that the first wind of change swept into "the Malay literate world" and this was brought about by the Pan-Islamic movement which had its roots in the Middle Eastern countries (Roff, *op. cit.*:88-90). However, the movement was reformative rather than political

in its orientation. In the main, it attempted to bring the Malays out of their narrow conceptual view of Islam and thus brought them in line with the current world view of its development. As such, the movement was far from being radical in that it could threaten the existing traditional power structure of the Malays (Means, op. cit.:23). Furthermore, since the movement was intellectual in character, the impact on the masses was rather minimal.

Generally, the majority of the Malays in pre-war Malaya were politically dormant and contented. Their fatalistic psychology together with the force of feudalism were two powerful elements that made them a defeated race and accepted the manipulation of the colonial ruler and its accomplices as a matter of course. Few therefore, could deny that to some extent it was the Japanese who stirred them into the realization that they were masters of their own destiny and their 'protectors' were unreliable in times of crisis.

Until the outbreak of the Second World War, the Chinese were still regarded as transient by the colonial administration. The fluctuating nature of their migratory patterns made it quite difficult to ascertain their future attitudes and commitment towards the country. It was in this respect that the vocal and financial support given by the local Chinese towards the revolution of 1911 was tolerated by the government. The confrontation only started in the 1920's when the Chinese school teachers who had strong Kuomintang background "introduced anti-western propaganda into their schools" (Gullick, 1964:74). Sir Cecil Clementi who became the Governor of the Federated Malay States in 1929 even went to the extent of ordering the removal of text-books that were considered

to be subversive in their content and placed these schools under stricter government supervision (Loh, op. cit.:97). This unprecedented measure taken by the colonial authority created considerable disquiet among the Chinese community at large (Loh, ibid.:95). However, things began to change in 1937 when the Japanese occupied Manchuria. This development increased the prevalent nationalistic feelings among the local Chinese, and when the Japanese invaded Malaya in 1941 they were in Alliance with the British in facing their common enemy (Gullick, op. cit.:77). To most of them the war was a "continuation of China's war" with Japan (The Economist, January 8, 1949:46) and being Chinese nationals they felt obliged to fight the Japanese. Under such circumstances, it was inevitable that feelings of resentment should develop among the Malays towards them. They were unhappy and suspicious about the fact that ancestral enmity became a major determinant when responding towards foreign domination. The Economist (ibid.:46) made an appropriate observation when it noted that:

"The Malays unable to understand the rights and wrongs of the war between China and Japan, merely resented the Chinese action and this resentment tended to align their sympathies with Japan rather than with China".

Indian nationalism in Malaya was similar to that taken by their Chinese counterparts. Essentially, it followed the political patterns that developed in the Indian sub-continent. During the war, the Japanese capitalised "on the appeal of nationalism" of the Indians by helping them to set up the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army to fight the British. Although these attempts by the Japanese proved futile, the impact of this development was far reaching.

Even after the war, the loyalty of the Indians remained towards India rather than to their new found home. As Simandjuntak (1969:14) observed:

"... the emotional and political interests of the Indian community had not yet been transplanted to Malaya, in spite of the three and a half years' disruption of normal communication with India and the stabilization of the Indian population in Malaya."

It could thus be concluded that ethnicity and ethnic nationalism in pre-war Malaya was a de facto asset that could be advantageously utilised. The colonial policy of "divide and rule" which took subtler forms was overtly practised by the Japanese administration. Malay nationalism which was previously dormant and subdued was nurtured during the period of occupation and this in turn rekindled into a fully-fledged nationalistic movement which was anti-colonial in character. For instance, Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Malay Youth Association) was one of these movements that had widespread followings and openly collaborated with the Japanese administration (Silcock and Aziz, 1967:154). Personalities like Ishak Haji Mohammed, Ibrahim Yaakub and Ahmad Boestamam who were imprisoned for their anti-British activities were released by the Japanese and were given important appointments in the Japanese administration (Means, op. cit.:23).

The Second World War was the first ever crisis confronted by the colonial government in Malaya. It was therefore unprepared either to protect the colony or to mobilize the population in its defence (Amin and Caldwell, op. cit.:85). The immediate effect on the population was one of confusion. In the absence of any acceptable common ideology among the divided population, it was inevitable that they should revert

to their respective primordial loyalties and needs. Part of the blame could also be apportioned to the colonial policy itself. Since its full intervention into the country which began in 1874, the preoccupation of the colonial government had been one of economic exploitation and the future welfare of the state seemed to be only a token item on its agenda. Its social concern was the preservation of the ethnic status-quo either based on their geographical locations, economic activities or class structure. The failure to develop any common institution that could bridge these ethnic polyglots into one common bond further exacerbated the problems of ethnic separation. As a policy, it was excellently executed and was able to neutralise any form of ethnic conflict during the pre-war period. In this respect, the colonial policy of "divide and rule" was par excellence and the country's failure to respond collectively towards the Japanese occupation, to mention the least, was the outcome of this conscious effort.

The Malayan Union

Following the capitulation of the Japanese, the British returned to resume their old position and the country was immediately placed under a Military Administration. Together with their arrival, they also brought along a post-war political package in the form of the "Malayan Union". Essentially, the Malayan Union Plan proposed a centralised administrative structure and a common citizenship to all who professed loyalty to the country. The Plan attempted to place the various separate political entities which existed in the form of the Federated Malay States, Unfederated Malay States and the Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca, with the exclusion of Singapore, under a centralised

administrative structure. Since the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1895, Malaya had eleven separate political units, each having its own system of bureaucratic framework. Administratively, this was too cumbersome for the colonial government and it was the objective of the proposed Union to streamline the bureaucracy. At the same time, the Malayan Union Plan also attempted to settle the intricate problems of citizenship. The Plan thus proposed the abolition of privileges accorded to any ethnic group. Anyone born in the Malayan Union would be treated equally and be eligible for citizenship (Ryan, op. cit.: 212-213).

Opposition to the scheme was strong and spontaneous. When the idea first appeared as an article in *The Times* (June 25, 1945), the immediate reaction was disagreement. One such response, from Ismail bin Md Ali (*The Times*, July 5, 1945) who, writing in a lengthy article which in general reflected the concern of the Malays over the proposed scheme, wrote:

"It is only right to state, as a preliminary discussion on the future of Malaya that legally and morally Great Britain as a defaulter in her treaties with the Malay states, is hardly in a position to forego those treaties without the free will and the consent of the Malay rulers. Personally I doubt whether our Sultans would be willing to replace those previous engagements by one all embracing treaty which would convert the Malay people into British subjects. There is much that is sound in the fundamental principle of protection underlying the treaties between each of the Malay Sultans and Great Britain. The latter unquestionably acknowledged the sovereignty of the rulers, who unconditionally surrendered into British hands the economic and political management of the lands in return for British protection, which means not only that Great Britain undertook the defence of the Malay states from foreign aggression, but also she was legally and morally bound to preserve the existence of the Malay states and to maintain the identity of the Malay population."

In the same tone, Sir Richard Winstedt, a retired Malayan Civil Servant wrote that, "to abrogate the existing treaties with Malay rulers, unless they desire, would clearly be a breach of faith and seriously damage our prestige" (The Times, July 7, 1945). Again, on October 2, 1945 he wrote in The Times that, "if now the alien Asiatic is to have a preponderant voice in government as well as commerce, the Malay race is doomed to be a race of 'hammers of wood and drawers of water'."

Details of the Malayan Union scheme were published in a White Paper in London on January 22, 1946 (The Times, January 23, 1946). In Malaya a Pan-Malayan Congress was held in Kuala Lumpur on March 3, 1946 to discuss the Malayan Union proposal. The Congress which attracted about two hundred delegates from all over the country, was presided over by Dato' Onn bin Jaafar. In his speech he emphasised that the "Malays must play their part while the time yet remains in warding off the devastating and ignominy of race extinction" (The Times, March 4, 1946).

Despite the fact that the scheme was unpopular and aroused strong opposition from the Malay community, the colonial Government was not prepared to reverse the decision. This prompted The Times (March 2, 1946) to comment that:

"... official announcements gave the impression that the peoples and problems of Malaya were regarded as so much raw material for official re-arrangement."

Thus, the Malay's opposition to the Union scheme increased in intensity when the Colonial Government failed to rescind the plan. On April 1, 1946, a few hours after it was inaugurated, a big demonstration

was organised by the Pan-Malayan Congress to show their disapproval of the whole scheme. The Sultans, aware of this mass feeling, boycotted the event after being warned by the Congress "not to attend the ceremony otherwise they would be disowned by the people" (The Times, April 3, 1946).

In response to this political development, a two-man parliamentary mission was appointed by the Colonial Government to visit Malaya and study the constitutional crisis that arose. The mission was sympathetic to the plight of the Malays and following the visit, discussions were held between the representatives of the Colonial Government, the Sultans and the leaders of the Pan-Malayan Congress. A Working Committee was formed to work out the details of the new constitution. The result materialised into the "Federation of Malaya Agreement" which officially replaced the Malayan Union on February 1, 1948.

The new constitution was not without opposition. The non-Malays claimed that they had been ignored in the constitutional making process. Their anger was to some extent justified but by then the political mood of the Government had changed. By reverting to its pre-war policy of favouring the Malays, it also implied that the Colonial Government was in no position to accommodate fully the demands of the immigrant communities.

At this point, some pertinent issues could be raised when analysing the spontaneous reaction of the Malays against the Union scheme. Of importance was the issue connected with the "legal annexation of the Malay states" (Mohammed Noordin Sopiee, 1974:16). The scheme was interpreted as a ploy to change the legal status of the colonial authority

and thus placed the country under British dominion. Secondly, it was related to the position of the Malays in relation to other communities. By providing a common form of citizenship for all, the scheme abrogated all the previous practices of preferential treatment accorded to them. Allen (1967:1) for example, correctly described the plan as breaking from the principle that "Malaya was primarily the land of the Malays".

The political volte-face of the Colonial Government over a major post-war policy could be analysed by understanding the nature of developments that took place in Malaya during and immediately after the war. It began when the British were defeated and the Japanese assumed the role of administrator which had been left vacant. In the absence of the "protectors" either in the image of the British or the feudal rulers, ethnic rivalries began and each claimed legitimacy over the political vacuum that had been created. This had a lasting effect for, following the Japanese capitulation, Malaya witnessed for the first time in its history, a serious ethnic conflict between the Malays and the Chinese which was only contained with the timely arrival of the British forces. The impact of these events was tremendous for after the war, ethnic relations in Malaya were never the same again. But, paradoxically, the Colonial Government had failed to perceive this development, especially within the Malay community who began to feel threatened by the presence of the immigrant communities.

The Malayan Union Plan, in essence, was a political miscalculation. Planned during the war years, it lacked the knowledge and insight of the developments in the colonial territory. Malay nationalism and the

anti-colonial sentiments which germinated during the period, blossomed into a force when the scheme was proclaimed. The Malays, being the natives, fully realised the implications of the scheme upon their status and hence reacted vehemently against it. Secondly, the tide of nationalism was sweeping the region and it was quite impossible to stop the momentum of the mass movement that developed without resorting to the use of force. Lastly, and of significance, was the fact that colonialism itself was at its weakest during this period of history. The success of the Malays in aborting the Malayan Union was also important in understanding the subsequent political development of the country. It was a political land-mark for them who henceforth dominated the Malayan political scene.

It could therefore be observed that by the end of the Second World War, ethnicity and its related problems began to be felt in Malaya. The most pertinent was the claim of legitimacy by the various ethnic groups over their cultural, political and linguistic status in the country. It was in this relation that the knowledge of ethnic nationalism and the ethnic rivalries that accrued with it are important in understanding the Government's failure to formulate any effective educational policy during the colonial period and the subsequent educational problems that arose during the first decade of the country's independence.

Post-War Educational Development

The post-war educational policy for Malaya was in line with the Malayan Union Plan of bureaucratic centralization. Accordingly, its long-term objective was "to reconstruct the educational system so as to ensure the fullest educational development for every section of the community" (Council Paper No. 53, 1946:29). The policy was to strengthen the existing structure of the separate school systems by extending them up to post-primary level with the Government taking responsibility for their development. The Plan also called for the reorganization of the syllabus and curriculum "in the light of modern educational practice and research" (Council Paper, *ibid*:29-30).

Following the withdrawal of the Malayan Union Scheme, the educational policy that was formulated to fit into the new administrative pattern was made inappropriate and irrelevant. To accommodate the new political developments, a new group, the Central Advisory Committee on Education was appointed in 1949 and its first report appeared in May 1950. The Report was significant for it was the first time that a statement of policy acknowledged that education should play a part in "nullifying of communal divisions and the integration of all into one Malayan entity" (Central Advisory Committee, May 1950: para 1). The Committee (*ibid*:para 4)) felt that English schools could meet this objective for in "Each class is a miniature Malaya, racial or religious difficulties seldom appearing". It was also "convinced that the ultimate desirable objective should be free (and finally compulsory) primary education in the medium of English" (*ibid*: para 5).

To some extent, the bias towards English as proposed by the Central Advisory Committee (ibid.) was an indication that the colonial authority attempted to neutralise the educational controversies that had already emerged. The choice of English as the medium of instruction in schools could thus appease a section of the Malayan community who outrightly rejected the adoption of Malay language into the proposed educational system. At the same time, being a colonial language English was thought of as an instrument that could serve as a bond among the diverse population of the country. As Tan Cheng Lock (1947:97), a respectable Chinese leader, pointed out:

"Speaking as a British subject and a citizen of the British colony, I think English should be the best common basic language to serve as a bond between the different sections of our permanent population because Malay, the language of the people of this country, is totally inadequate and unsuitable for the purpose especially in so far as the locally born non-Malays are concerned, and locally born non-Malays slightly outnumber the Malays in the colony!"

In a similar tone, Prof. Silcock (1949:464) wrote that, "as things are a Malay language could not per se unify the people; English education is the only instrument that could".

However, the recommendations of the Central Advisory Committee were rejected by the Federal Legislative Council and alternatively, the Government appointed another committee to look specifically into the education of the Malays (Annual Report on Education, 1955:21). The appointment of this committee to look into the problem of Malay education rather than Malayan education as a whole left a big question mark over the whole issue. Nonetheless, the reason for this act could be attributed

to the following justifications on the part of the Government. Firstly, the tide of Malay nationalism was at its height following their success in aborting the Malayan Union scheme. Their political exertion was thus felt when the Federal Legislative Council had to shelve the recommendations of the Central Advisory Committee on Education after a heated debate which took place in July 1950 (Annual Report on Education, *ibid.*:21). Secondly, there was a considerable increase in the enrollment into Malay vernacular education. For instance, in 1950 there were 276,000 pupils enrolled compared with 122,000 in 1941 (Central Advisory Committee, *op. cit.*: para.3b). Thirdly, conditions in the Malay vernacular schools were in a pathetic state; without proper furniture, shortage of textbooks and general reading materials and, most important, Malay parents began to lose hope in Malay schools (Barnes report, 1951:12-13).

The Committee on Malay Education that was proposed was chaired by Mr. L.J. Barnes, Director of Social Training, University of Oxford. The "Barnes Report" as it came to be known, did not discuss the problems of Malay education in isolation but rather took the whole issue as a basis for a national framework for education. It was a radical proposition which suggested "a single-type primary school open to pupils of all races and staffed by teachers of any race, provided only that those teachers possess the proper qualifications and are federal citizens" (Barnes Report, 1951: ch.IV, para.3). The Report (*ibid.*) further stressed the importance of the primary school "as an instrument for building up a common Malayan nationality on the basis of those elements in the population who regard Malaya as their permanent home and as the object of their loyalty".

Further than that, the Report proposed that the new school should provide six years of free primary education in the medium of English or Malay. For the post-primary school, the medium of instruction would only be English. Provisions for the learning of vernacular languages were also given in each of these schools. The ultimate philosophy of the Report was to produce pupils with "effective bi-lingualism by the age of twelve plus" (Barnes Report, *ibid.*:ch.IV,para. 12).

Generally, the Barnes Report was sympathetic to the Malays and fully understood the dilemma facing them. In describing the position of the Malays, the Report poignantly expressed its concern over their future. It noted that:

"... the immigrant races, taking full advantage of the improvidence of the simple Malay, tempted him with a system of forward selling crop and catch for ready cash. Thus began the economic slavery of the Malay in full view of the protecting power"
(Barnes Report, *ibid.*:ch.2, para. 4).

With this understanding, the Report strongly felt that "education appears as a last chance" for them (Barnes Report, *ibid.*:ch.2, para. 14). It was therefore with this philosophical belief that the Report gave recognition to the status of the Malay language by placing it in order of importance on a par with English, at least for the first six years of schooling. To stress this vital issue, it clearly emphasised that "at all times it will be a main function of every school to safeguard the position and the status of the Malay language" (Barnes Report, *ibid.*: ch. IV, para. 9).

However, H. R. Cheeseman, the former Director of Education had certain reservations with regard to the Report. When it was first published he commented as such:

"Again and again the most promising Malay boys have not been able to go on to English school because their parents have been unable to keep them. Again and again the most promising Malays in the English schools have had to leave before completing the secondary school course because of the compelling requirements of the family exchequers, because of the overwhelming necessity to earn money. It is sad that the Barnes Committee has failed to discover or at least to state that the chief problem to face is economic and not educational. There is only one way to deal with it. Until education has given the Malays their weapons for fighting their economic difficulties, then they must be helped" (The Straits Times, Sept. 5, 1951).

Cheeseman's comment was appropriate for it touched on the basic problem of the Malays themselves. As to this the Barnes Report had failed to suggest any solution. It did not even propose how the new system could help the Malays in their future educational endeavour.

A positive aspect of the Report was its attempt to narrow down the existing educational pluralism which had been the feature of the existing school system. As the Report (ibid.:ch.IV, para. 17) noted:

"the fact remains that Chinese and Indians are being asked to give up gradually their own vernacular schools, and to send their children, not indeed to Malay schools in the present meaning of that term but to schools where Malay is the only oriental language taught".

The Barnes Report therefore did not accord any status to the vernacular schools or languages other than Malay. The national school system

that it proposed in fact relegated the position of these languages to foreign status which would only be taught as a separate subject. This invoked unfavourable responses especially from the Chinese who viewed the Report as a conscious attempt to destroy their culture. The Straits Times (July 11, 1951) in its editorial described the Report as "prostitution of education to politics". At the same time, strong opposition also came from the Indian community. In Kuala Lumpur, for instance, thirty-five Indian educators met "under the auspices of the Malayan Indian Congress to condemn the Report and request delay in its execution" (Finkelstein, 1952:15).

As a compromising measure, the Government appointed a Committee in January 1951 which was headed by Dr. William P. Fenn, a Chinese educator and Dr. Wu Teh-Yao, an official of the United Nations. The terms of reference given to this mission were to make a "preliminary survey of the whole field of Chinese education ... with particular reference to (1) bridging the gap between the present communal system of school and the time when education will be on a non-communal basis with English or Malay as the medium of instruction and other languages as an optional subject, and advising on (II) preparation of text books for present use with a Malayan as distinct from a Chinese background and content" (Fenn-Wu Report, 1951: ch.1, para. 6).

However, after their meetings with Chinese leaders and teachers, the mission outlined its statement of purpose as:

"to survey sympathetically but objectively the entire field of the education of Chinese in Malaya and to recommend such constructive changes and improvements as would lead to the Chinese schools making the greatest contribution to the welfare and happiness of the people of Malaya and in particular of the Chinese who have chosen that prosperous land as their home" (Fenn-Wu Report, *ibid.*:ch. 1, para. 11).

There were several philosophical differences that existed between the Barnes and the Fenn-Wu Reports. Of significance was the means rather than the goal of achieving the "ultimate Malayan nation". The Fenn-Wu Report for instance, made an observation that, "if a Malayan nation is the political goal of all peoples in Malaya, it appears logical that all schools should evaluate critically their contributions to that goal" (Fenn-Wu Report, *ibid.*: ch. 3, para. 4). But contrary to the Barnes Report (*op. cit.*: 20) which called for the establishment of a national school of "inter-racial character", the Fenn-Wu Report, besides advocating the retention of the existing pluralism in the school system, also emphasized the need to given due recognition to the importance of the Chinese language other than Malay or English.¹ As to this effect, the Fenn-Wu Report (*op. cit.*: ch. 2, para. 15) suggested as such:

"We would reiterate our belief in the importance of a broad view. Such a view demands mutual respect for each other's cultures. It also demands recognition of the fact that any restrictive imposition of one language or two languages upon the peoples of Malaya will not provide a healthful atmosphere for community understanding and national unity. The unity of a nation depends not upon the singleness of tongue or simplicity of culture; it lies in the hearts of its citizens".

The Fenn-Wu Report represented the mass opinion of the Chinese and their concept of education in relation to the general development of Chinese culture. Thus it was strongly felt that any attempt to relegate the status of the Chinese language was also to mean that it would finally lead to the extinction of their culture. The Fenn-Wu Report (*ibid.*: ch. 2, para. 6) in its defence of the Chinese language and culture,

1. Paradoxically, no committee was formed to look into the problems of the Indian schools. This could be attributed to the assumption that the demands of the Chinese community would also be of relevance to the Indian community in general.

stressed that:

"a new culture can come only from the natural mingling of diverse cultural elements for generations. In this process, elements which do not command appreciation disappear, while those which do, need no political or external support".

The Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports provided the first open debate over the nature of education that would be suitable for Malaya. Central to the issues were the nature of school that was to be established and the language of instruction that was to be adopted. Disagreements over these were hard to resolve and henceforth continued to remain as a source of ethnic contradiction and conflict.

The period following the Barnes and the Fenn-Wu Reports, saw two more committees being formed. The first was another Central Advisory Committee whose function was to study the recommendations as outlined in the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports. The Report of this Committee was again referred to a Special Committee for its consideration and to "make recommendations to the Government for suitable legislation" (Special Committee, 1951: para. 1). Both the Committees strongly endorsed most of the recommendations as outlined in the Barnes Report, and of particular importance was the support they gave for the establishment of a national school over the existing separate school system (Special Committee, *ibid.*: para. 15). Explicit in the Report (para. 7) was its commitment to the development of Malay education as initially expressed in the forwards to the Barnes Report (*ibid.*: para. 2). This paragraph stated that Malay education ought:

- (a) "to foster the growth of individuals towards the best in knowledge, skill and character which they have in them to attain;

- (b) to encourage and enable the Malay community to occupy its rightful place in relation to other communal groups in the mixed society of Malaya;
- (c) to assist the formation of a unified citizen body or nation, composed of all such groups".

The Special Committee (ibid.) except for a few minor alterations, reinforced the above objectives. Presumably to attract wider public appeal, modifications were made to the word "Malay" to change it to "each" as in (b) and to put "that is a Malayan nation" instead of the word "nation" as in (c). These changes were understandable for the word "Malay" would sound biased towards one ethnic community whereas referring to the Malayan population in general would not.

The final product of all these reports was the Education Ordinance 1952, which was the first and only attempt by the Colonial Government to legislate an educational policy that was national in scope and character.

Undoubtedly, the Barnes Report had a strong influence on the final form of the 1952 Ordinance, especially over matters relating to the language policy in schools. This naturally invoked vicious opposition from the Chinese community who saw that nothing was mentioned about accommodating their language in the proposed educational system. For example, paragraph 9 of the 1952 Ordinance stated that:

"... the aim and purpose of the national educational policy of the Federation is to achieve a sound education of all children in the Federation using in the main, for this purpose, the official languages of the Federation and bringing together pupils of all races in a national type school with a Malayan orientation".

Although the policy provided "reasonable facilities" for the learning of Chinese and Tamil languages if the parents of the pupils so wished (Ed. Ord. 1952; para. 9), the implication of the Ordinance if it was to be implemented was far reaching. For certain, it would end the long period of educational autonomy which the Chinese enjoyed and even jealously guarded ever since they first set up schools in Malaya.

Essentially, the Education Ordinance, 1952 called for the establishment of two types of national schools which were defined as:

"any school providing for children of all races a six-year course of free primary education with a Malayan orientation and appropriate for children between the ages of six and twelve and using in the main for this purpose the official language of the Federation" (ibid.: para. 21).

Under this arrangement, English would be taught in the Malay medium schools to all children from the beginning of the first year while in the English schools, Malay would be taught from the beginning of the third year. In addition, facilities would also be made available for the learning of the Chinese and Tamil languages, "for those pupils whose parents or guardians request instruction in such languages" (ibid.:para.21).

The Education Ordinance, 1952, was a piece of legislation attempted by the Government after years of painstaking elaboration and conciliation among the various ethnic groups of the country. However, it was viewed as ambitious, especially in terms of the financial implications that it might incur. As the Report of the Mission from International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (1955:441) noted:

"the technical difficulties in implementing the Ordinance became increasingly clear within a year. Enacted at a time of national prosperity, the cost implications had been considered only in vague and general terms though

it was plainly evident that the program carried a potential financial commitment several times as large as their current education costs".

The Mission (ibid.) explained that following the outbreak of the Korean War in the middle of 1950, there had been an increase in demand for raw materials, especially rubber and tin. This economic growth boosted Malaya's gross national product from \$ 3,550 million in 1949 to \$ 7,520 million in 1951. This is a remarkable increase of about 112%. But by 1953 there was a marked decline in the export of these commodities (see Table 2) compared with the 1951 figures; the decline came to about \$ 1,740 million or 23%. Correspondingly, in 1949 Malaya's trade balance was in deficit by about \$ 129 million, but this changed in 1950, 1951 and

Table 2

Gross National Product by Origin (in millions)

	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Rubber	420	1,400	2,025	1,080	715
Mining	250	295	480	440	325
Other agriculture & forestry	840	1,030	1,380	1,355	1,430
All other activities	1,825	2,355	3,260	3,100	2,925
Gross national income	3,335	5,080	7,145	5,975	5,395
Indirect taxes	215	265	375	375	385
Gross national product (at market prices)	3,550	5,345	7,520	6,350	5,780

Source: The Economic Development of Malaya, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1955:22

1952 when the surplus was \$ 1,101, \$ 1,321 and \$ 46 million respectively in Malaya's favour. The pattern again changed in 1953 when the country faced a deficit of about \$ 218 million (The Mission, op. cit.:23).

In the Federal Legislative Council, a Member for Education explained that when the report on education was discussed in 1951 the "finances of this country were healthy and hopeful and there was a reasonable chance of implementing the several provisions of the Education Ordinance" (Legislative Council Debate, Oct. 6, 1954). He attributed the cause of the financial constraints as resulting from the depreciating value of Malaya's three main export commodities. For example, between 1951 and 1954 there was a drop of 57% in the price of rubber, 15% in the price of tin and 16% in the price of copra (see Table 3). All of these economic reasons were cited as a major obstacle towards implementing the 1952 Education Ordinance.

Table 3

Decline in the Price of Commodities

Commodities	Price in 1951 per picul	Price in 1954 per picul	Percentage * drop
Rubber	156.50	67.00	57.2
Tin	424.87½	363.17	14.5
Copra	34.50	29.00	15.9

Source: Federal Legislative Council Debate, Oct. 1954

* (the figures on percentage drop are self-derived)

In the light of these financial developments, the High Commissioner in Council appointed a Committee in November, 1953 "to examine the method of implementation of the policy outlined in the Education Ordinance, 1952, in the context of the diminishing financial resources of the Federation", to recommend the priorities for the implementation and "to explore additional sources of money for the maintenance and development of education" (Special Committee, 1954: para. 1).

Since the terms of reference were mainly on the financial aspects of implementing the 1952 Ordinance, it proposed to the Government a "waste not, want not" policy (Special Committee, 1954: para.12). Among the proposals recommended were "the reduction in the length of the primary course for intelligent children, central control over post-school certificate classes by combining small classes into one or not to allow small classes to exist, raising the fees for all evening classes other than elementary English and Malay and a more strict control over the grant-in-aid system" (Special Committee, 1954:para. 12).

The Special Committee (ibid.: para. 13) also felt that "a more realistic share of the present huge cost of education" should be borne by those who could afford to pay. It therefore proposed an increase in fees for both the primary and secondary English schools, an increase in the educational rates, by imposing taxes in the rural areas for the benefit of the rural vernacular schools and the introduction of a scheme where teacher trainees were required to repay the government a portion of the money spent on training them (Special Committee, 1954:para. 14-41). In terms of priorities, the Committee (ibid.: para. 12) considered "the

introduction of National School features into vernacular schools and the extension of training facilities for teachers" as the most important aspect of the Ordinance if it was to be implemented.

Education Ordinance 1952, and Public Reaction

The 1952 Education Ordinance was not unanimous in its acceptance. Central to the disagreement was the issues related to the re-organization of the school system and the implication it had towards the development of vernacular schools and their corresponding languages. By not considering their schools as "national" the Chinese obviously viewed the Ordinance as a mechanism of relegating their language and schools to a position that would lead to extinction. The United Chinese School Teachers Association, for example, demanded that "immediate steps be taken by the Federation Government to revoke the Education Ordinance of 1952 and to reject the White Paper on Educational policy" (The Straits Echo, August 23, 1955). The Association pointed out that it would not accept it as a condition to give up the mother tongue and thus help destroy its own culture (ibid.). It thus condemned the Ordinance as a "scheme designed to eliminate all Chinese education in the country" (ibid.). The Association even went to the extent of presenting a seven page memorandum to Miss Vijayalakshmi Pandit, President of the United Nations General Assembly when she visited the country in August 1954. The memorandum, among other things, demanded that the Federal Government take immediate steps to revoke the 1952 Ordinance which it claimed was aimed at the total elimination of Chinese schools in the country. It recommended the retention of the plural nature of the educational system with English, Tamil, Chinese and Malay being retained as the medium of

instruction. Finally, the memorandum warned that if the "problem is not logically and justifiably solved, one cannot be enthusiastic about the future of Malaya" (The Straits Times, August 16, 1954).

The Malay's opposition towards the Ordinance was spearheaded by the Federation of Malaya Malay Teachers Union. Basically, the demands of the Union were for the upgrading of the standard of Malay schools, to make Malay language the official language of the country so that it would be on a par with English, and to raise the standard of Malay school teachers (Majallah Guru, August 1954:426). Fennel (1968:383) observed that the Malay school teachers were strongly against the Ordinance for it relegated the Malay language "to a position of a language fit only for the bazaar". The Malay school teachers in Kuala Lumpur were even convinced that the "plan to set up national-type classes would mean the gradual destruction of the Malay language" (Fennel, *ibid.*:385). *Warta Negara* (May 4, 1955) commented that "it is strange that there are people who are so forgetful of the fact that the Malay race does not only comprise of two million people in Malaya and however much we agree that English is the superior language, we should not try to overlook the fact that there are 70 million people in our neighbourhood who use the Malay language".

However, the leaders of the Alliance Party which constituted the United Malay National Organisation (U.M.N.O.) and the Malayan Chinese Association (M.C.A.)¹ were neither unanimous nor consonant in their views towards the Ordinance. But somehow the issues remained subdued within the party. This was mainly because the Federal election was approaching and the Alliance, knowing the divisive nature of the matter, turned it

1. The Malayan Indian Congress (M.I.C.) only joined the Alliance on the eve of the 1955 election.

into a low key political issue for fear that it might create discord among its component partners. Secondly, the 1955 election was an experiment in political co-operation among the various communal groups and the Alliance Party had the responsibility to prove that consociational politics was possible and viable in a plural society. Thirdly, it was felt that issues that were related to ethnicity would be dealt with once the country achieved its independence. Under these circumstances, "Merdeka" (freedom) became the main theme of the 1955 election and the Alliance election manifesto shelved the whole issue of education, language and citizenship (Carnell, 1955:327-8).

In the final analysis, it should be noted that after years of labour, the Education Ordinance, 1952 failed to get off the ground. Various reasons were cited for not implementing it and the most important was the financial burden the Colonial Government had to bear if full implementation was to be carried out (Ed.Policy, Statement of the Federal Government: 1954). Nonetheless, one significant fact remained over the whole issue. Education which was meant to be a vital tool towards the development of a Malayan nation became instead a focal point of national discord. Thus, with all the political controversies that the educational issues generated and the financial problem as a *raison d'etre*, it was therefore with great political shrewdness that the whole matter of education was deferred by the Government until the people of Malaya themselves decided what would be best for them.

The post-war period thus saw a remarkable development in Malayan education. From 1946-1952, various committees were formed, reports being

published, statements of policies were issued by the Government, and finally, the Enactment of the 1952 Education Ordinance. Despite the compromises that had been reached among the various ethnic groups over the future of Malayan education, it failed to get off the ground. Clearly at this juncture of Malayan history, educational issues had already become entwined with the dynamics of ethnicity and ethnic nationalism.

Beginning of Consociational Politics

In his directive to Sir Gerald Templer, the new High Commissioner for Malaya on February 2, 1952, the Secretary of State for the Colonies stated that,

"the policy of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom is that Malaya should in due course become a fully self-governing nation. To achieve a united Malayan nation there must be a common form of citizenship for all who regard the Federation or any part of it as their real home and the object of their loyalty".

(The Times, February 8, 1952)

On October 12, 1952, in his broadcast to Australia, Templer again reiterated the idea that "it was a declared aim of British Government to grant self-government status to Malaya" (The Times, October 13, 1952). This became a reality when the Deputy High Commissioner announced in the Federal Legislative Council the appointment of a Select Committee to look into the question of Malaya having its first federal election (Legislative Council Proceedings, May 6 and 7; 1953).

Carnell (1954:222) attributed this change of heart on the part of the Government as due to the marked decline in terrorist incidents and

the development of political consciousness and understanding between the Malays and Chinese which resulted in the formation of the UMNO-MCA Alliance. Up to this point, Sino-Malay co-operation had been mostly isolated and only when it was felt necessary. Thus, the formation of the Alliance was a political watershed especially when taking into consideration that UMNO and MCA were two political parties of extreme dissimilarity from whichever perspectives they were viewed. The fact that both parties were willing to contest the election on a common platform was in itself an encouraging sign for the future development of the nation. Underlying this co-operation was the assumption that in a society where ethnicity could be identified by geographical location, voting patterns too would also follow similar lines of division. Following this principle, areas which had Chinese electoral majorities would be contested by the MCA candidates and UMNO would be contesting in areas which were mainly populated by Malays. This overt form of gerrymandering was first experimented in the state of Selangor to contest the first Kuala Lumpur municipal election held in February 1952. Its success in the election led to the development of similar arrangements throughout the country.

Scepticism grew over this new political development especially in view of the differences that existed between the UMNO-MCA partnership. The Times (January 17, 1952) cynically observed that "it is doubtful if this partnership signifies the beginning of a working compromise between the two communities". At home, UMNO-MCA co-operation was strongly accused by Party Negara as "nothing less than a betrayal of the Malay community" (Ratnam, op. cit.:192).

The success of the Alliance in the various municipal and town council elections prompted Tunku Abdul Rahman to formalise its formation nationally. On September 14, 1952, speaking at an UMNO General Assembly held in Butterworth, he said that "he would soon invite all political parties to a conference on ways and means of attaining Malaya's independence" (The Times, September 15, 1952). An agreement in principle was reached between UMNO and MCA on March 16, 1953 over the election to the Federal Legislative Council. After the conference, the Tunku was quoted as saying "I feel that Chinese-Malay understanding is an essential prerequisite for Malaya's independence" (The Times, March 17, 1953).

Besides the basic differences that existed between UMNO and MCA, they were able to agree on the minimal consensus that at the moment, unity and independence were to be of supreme importance. It was upon these vital principles that the two political parties agreed "to defer a settlement of those basic disagreements on citizenship, education, language, immigration and economic matters which had been such obstacles to Malayan political advance from 1945 to 1952" (Carnell, 1955:326).

In a plural society like Malaya where deep primordial cleavages existed among the various ethnic groups, consociationalism seemed to be a viable option for it provided "a framework of shared interests within which groups will be willing to interrelate, compromise and accommodate one another" (Apter, 1977:319). Presumably, this was what in Tunku's mind when on September 14, 1952 he invited other political parties to discuss matters related to Malaya's future. Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, Commissioner-General in Southeast Asia, in a speech delivered at the

Kuala Lumpur Press Club dinner on May 14, 1952 entailed in essence the embodiment of consociationalism. Among the comments he made in his speech he mentioned that:

"the only method by which Malay, Chinese, Indians and British could create a nation united by mutual regard and identical loyalty was by coming together to reduce their differences and expand their agreements"
(The Times, May 15, 1952).

All these developments created an atmosphere that independence was imminent. Apparently, getting the cue from this new political atmosphere, political parties began to prepare plans and strategies in anticipation of an election. The UMNO, for instance, at its annual general assembly which was held in Malacca on April 6, 1953, unanimously passed a resolution calling for the election to be held by 1954 (Carnell, 1954:223). A few months later, on July 15, 1953, a Federal Election Committee was established (Carnell, *ibid.*:224) and after considering the various electoral alternatives that might suit the country (Tinker, 1956:260-265), it was decided that the election would be held on July 27, 1955.

Within the Alliance, there was dissatisfaction over the allocation of seats. The MCA, for example, was given fifteen seats instead of twelve as initially allocated (Tinker, *op.cit.*:267). This gesture on the part of UMNO's leadership in conceding fifteen seats to the MCA created a crisis in the party, and at one stage Tunku threatened to resign as leader if his proposal was not accepted (The Eco., July 23, 1955). Significant to this development was Tunku's accommodative and compromising philosophy adopted towards the MCA and MIC despite the fact that Malays made up more than 80% of the electorate (see Table 4)

Table 4

1955 Election : communal breakdown of the electorate

Communal group	Voters	Percentage
Malays	1,078,000	84.2
Chinese	143,000	11.2
Indians	50,000	3.9
Others	9,000	0.7
TOTAL	1,280,000	100.0

Source: Ratnam, Communalism and Political Process in Malaya, 1965:187.

Typical of the principle of accommodative politics, the Alliance adopted an "ice-box policy" (Lijphart, 1966:177) over the vexed issues of citizenship and education. Besides a call for the repeal of certain provisions of the emergency regulations and a call for an independent commission to study constitutional reform, the manifesto also pledged to safeguard the special position of the Malays, to uphold the rulers as constitutional heads of state, to make the Malay language the national language within ten years, ensuring other communities of their rights to preserve their education and culture (The Times, May 18, 1955).

The result of the election was important in many ways. Firstly, the Alliance won 51 of the 52 seats obtaining 79.6% of the votes (see Table 5). The remaining seat was won by the FMIP's candidate in the Krian constituency. Secondly, the assumption that voting patterns would be along

ethnic lines proved to be wrong. All the MCA and MIC candidates who contested under the Alliance ticket in areas which were predominantly Malay, won the election. Thirdly, The Times in its leading article (July 29, 1955) commented that the Alliance victory was also a "vote for independence". There was little doubt about this last comment, for it was the "Merkeka" (freedom) platform that swept the Alliance to success and power. Fourthly, the Alliance initial experiment on consociational politics seemed to have succeeded and could be a viable alternative to a plural society. Lastly, the emergence of accommodative politics as seen in the formation of the Alliance is important in understanding the development of Malayan education, especially in relation to policy formulation and implementation.

Table 5

1955 Election: Party Performances

Party	No. of Candidates	Seats Won	Votes Polled	Percentage of Total vote (spoilt votes excluded)
Alliance	52	51	818,013	79.6
Negara	30	-	78,909	7.6
Pan-Malayan Islamic Party	11	1	40,667	3.9
National Assoc. of Perak	9	-	20,996	2.0
Perak Malay League	3	-	5,433	0.5
Labour Party	4	-	4,786	0.4
Perak Progressive Party	2	-	1,081	0.1
Independents	18	-	31,642	3.0

Source: Ratnam, op. cit.:196 (table 10).

Towards a New Educational Era

With the Alliance massive electoral victory, an internal self-government was accorded to Malaya in February 1956. Under this arrangement, the new government was given the responsibility of ruling the country except on matters related to external defence and foreign affairs. However, this new political development did not neutralise the difficulties surrounding Malayan education. Rather, these issues became even more vociferously articulated than ever. While still at its infant stage the Alliance Government was caught in the cross-fire over a problem which it skillfully suppressed during the 1955 election.

Sensing the mood was growing among the public, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who was the Chief Minister, issued a statement that his government would re-examine the whole question of education in view of the criticisms levelled at existing policy (Malay Mail, August 11, 1955). In his capacity as the new Minister of Education, Dato' Abdul Razak re-affirmed Tunku's statement on the need to review the provisions of the Education Ordinance 1952 (Govt. Press Statement, August 18, 1955, cited in Fennel, *ibid.*:422).

Although education per se was not the major issue in the Alliance camp during the 1955 election, it could not negate its growing importance either during or after the election period. For example, post-war Malaya saw a tremendous growth in school enrollments. By 1955 there were 870,362 pupils enrolled in all types of school in the Federation (Annual Report on Education for 1955:25) an increase of 9% in one year (Annual Report on Education for 1954:34). Thus, whoever ruled the country, it

was inevitable that education would remain as a major issue not only in terms of its quantitative expansion but also in terms of political controversies that it was bound to generate.

Parallel to this development was the potent question of national unity which had always been in the mind of the new government. The centrifugal forces were getting stronger and encompassing the whole arrays of disagreements that characterised any plural society. Within the Malay communities there was a task of harnessing loyalty towards the Malayan nation that would transcend the narrowness of each state's parochialism. To the immigrant communities who had been accorded citizenship status, there was also a problem of switching their allegiance to the newly found home.

It was against this background that a sense of urgency emerged within the government. The general consensus was that if a new Malayan nation was to be inculcated, efforts towards this objective must be concentrated among the younger generation of the population and invariably the onus was placed on schools. In September 1955, hardly two months after the election, a high-powered fifteen-member committee was appointed by the Government of the Federation of Malaya. The committee was chaired by Dato' Abdul Razak Bin Hussin who was also the Minister for Education and the terms of reference were:

- (a) "To examine the present Education policy of the Federation of Malaya and to recommend any alterations or adaptations that are necessary with a view to establishing a national system of education acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole which will satisfy their needs and promote cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation, having regard to the intention to make Malay the national language of the country whilst preserving and sustaining the growth of the language and culture of other communities living in the country:

- (b) For this purpose to examine the Educational structure of the country including such provisions of the Education Ordinance, 1952, as may require alterations or adaptations and the measures for its implementation contained in Council Paper on educational policy No. 67 of 1954".
(Report of the Education Committee, 1956).

The Report of this Committee, also popularly known as the Razak Report, was a watershed in the development of Malayan education. Controversial it may be, the fact remained that it was the first time that a major responsibility of charting the course of Malayan education was given to the people of Malaya themselves. Drawn from among the members of the Federal Legislative Council, the Committee included 9 Malays, 5 Chinese and an Indian.¹ In the main it was a committee bestowed with the responsibility of formulating a national system of education for the country that was in anticipation of "Merdeka". Secondly, its terms of reference were both accommodative to the principle of multi-culturalism as demanded by the immigrant communities and at the same time inflexible in its decision to elevate Malay as the national language of the country. Thirdly, by taking the Education Ordinance, 1952 as the basis for structural changes that were to be adopted, the Committee was therefore in no position to produce changes that could be construed as revolutionary. And lastly, the Razak Report reflected the determination that schools should play the role of a broker among the younger generation for the purpose of national integration.

However, the Razak Report did not end the controversial issues that surrounded Malayan education. Paradox as it might have been, the problems

1. See Chapter 4 for details of the Committee members.

were neither centred on the structural and curriculum changes that were to occur, but rather over the language of instruction that was to be adopted. The Annual Report on Education for 1955 (p. 21) did agree on the nature of the problem when it noted that "the greatest difficulty has been the conflicting claims of these different languages". The matter was not resolved even when the country was on the threshold of independence. The word "Merdeka" which was successful in developing a significant political consensus among the population did not however provide any form of catalyst towards national reconciliation especially when it touched upon the delicate issue of language and culture.

Chapter Three

Towards Nationhood

Merdeka: a Challenge to the Nation

By the end of the Second World War, the mosaic of ethnic diversities had already emerged in Malaya that fitted well into Furnivall's (op.cit: 304-35) description of a plural society. This to some extent posed a problem for the Colonial Government in its attempt to decolonise the territory. For instance, The Times (April 20, 1949) in its leading article commented that any constitutional progress in Malaya could only come by "healing communal jealousies and by reconciling the competing interest of Malayan peoples". But, the article failed to suggest any remedial solution to the problems. In fact, it reflected the country's state of political uncertainty. As Hawkins (1948:86-87) commented,

"the situation in Malaya was never darker and the only faintly glimmering star of hope was the fundamental common sense and respect for realities that distinguish Malays and Chinese".

As such, it was inevitable that the question of ethnic unity dominated the thoughts of the colonial administrators and local leaders alike.

The reasons for this gloomy development could be attributed to the following factors. First, the diverse effect of the war upon the ethnic groups and the subsequent political development that ensued were serious enough to gain immediate attention from the interested parties. Second, the threat of communist insurgents imposed a pressing need for the population to be united if the communists were to be defeated.

Although these problems were hard to resolve, somehow they were reduced and contained. Two indicators point in this direction. The first was the willingness on the part of the Malay and Chinese leaders to forge a political alliance as seen in the 1952 Municipal election held in Kuala Lumpur and the Federal election of 1955. Secondly, and in corollary to the first, the Sino-Malay unity that had been forged caused a severe setback to the communist insurgents. These developments to some extent acted as a catalyst for the Colonial Government to speed up the process of decolonisation over the country.

With the attainment of independence on August 31, 1957, the need for unity became even greater if the country was to contain the forces of political instability and destruction. It was in the light of these circumstances that national unity became the prime concern of the newly elected Government of the Federation (L.C.D. July 10, 1957: col,2844).

A significant fact about Malaya's path to independence was that it was achieved peacefully. This was in contrast to the revolutionary struggle the Indonesians had to encounter in their pursuit of independence (Woddis, 1967:35-6). To have achieved independence through peaceful means was without doubt an achievement on the part of the leadership. Lives were spared and the unnecessary loss of blood was avoided.¹ Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that national independence also entails the mobilisation of the masses towards the realisation of a common national ideology.

1. The fact that Malaya's independence was achieved "without any loss of blood" was often quoted by Tunku Abdul Rahman, the country's first premier.

As Nkrumah (1970:57) pointed out:

"In societies where there are competing ideologies, it is still usual for one ideology to be dominant. This dominant ideology is that of the ruling group. Through the ideology is the key to the inward identity of its group, it is in intent solidarist. For an ideology does not seek merely to unite a section of the people, it seeks to unite the whole of the society in which it finds itself. In its effects, it certainly reaches the whole society, when it is dominant. For besides seeking to establish common attitudes and purposes for society, the dominant ideology is that which in the light of circumstances decides what form institutions shall take, and in what channels the common effort is to be directed".

In a Malayan plural society such form of mass mobilisation was needed for the initial basis of nationhood so as to generate a sense of common experience for its diverse population. But this form of development was absent and it seems that the population in general tended to take it as a form of "givenness" rather than prizing it as a hard won commodity. Nonetheless, the serene road that led the country to independence was upset by the problems that lay ahead. These were the problems of nationhood and among the most pertinent were the processes related to nation-building and decolonisation.

The Problem of Nationhood

Hoselitz (1965:556) describes nation-building,

"as a process which requires above all the formation of a national elite with power over all parts of the country; the development of a uniform national ideology which is shared in its essentials by all persons inhabiting a national territory; and the evolution of political procedures adequate for successful interaction with other nations in the world".

Paramount to this is the development of a national identity which Verba (1965:529) defines as "the belief of individuals and the extent to which they consider themselves members of their state". In short, it is when "one searches for it, that nations need it, that people fear the loss of it" (Verba, *ibid*:529). It is thus a complex process and in a plural society the problems are multifarious.

To achieve such a coherent objective is, although difficult, not impossible. In a plural society, conflicting variables are many and no government has yet emerged unscathed from the surge of centrifugal tendencies that are current in it. At the same time, no models either from the western or eastern countries which have the problems of ethnicity could be cited for emulation. The history of internal conflicts as experienced by the newly independent states like Malaya and British Guyana do not differ much from what has been happening in countries like Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Canada. Common to the problem is the philosophical differences over the future of the state in which people wish to live, the means of achieving consensus and a "political culture" (Verba and Almond, 1963:12) that is to be adopted in the new polity. Partly, it is a process towards the development of a national identity where "the institutionalization of commitment to common political symbols" occur (Verba, *op.cit.*:530). The importance of this process is again stressed by Verba (*ibid.*:530) as "not merely that the symbol represents the nation, but that the creation of the symbol is coterminus with the creation of the nation".

Failure to fulfil the obligation towards the common political symbol often resulted in tragedies of a national scale. Recent examples were many and the sources of conflict varied. For instance, language became a divisive national issue as in the case of Belgium, Canada, Malaya and the canton of Berne in Switzerland. Sectarianism developed in Northern Ireland and the Netherlands between the Protestants and the Catholics; tribalism caused the loss of many lives in Nigeria during the sixties and in Malaya ethnic conflicts came to a climax in May 1969 when many lives were lost.

At the same time, various methods had been employed to neutralise the disintegrative elements that prevailed. For example, it was under the pretext of preserving the national boundary that the central government of Nigeria almost annihilated the whole of the Ibo tribe for trying to secede from the Federation (Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972:204-5). On the other hand, in order to avoid any form of bloodshed, a national boundary was allowed to be fragmented as in the case of Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965. All these trends tend to suggest that in a multi-ethnic society, the threat to the polity is always latent and this further exacerbated the inherent problems of nation-building itself. Ekuban (1980:129) for example, illuminates the problems by citing Africa as a case:

"Ethnicity is perhaps one of the most powerful of the divisive forces in Africa. It accounts for the creation of federalist forms of government in Nigeria, the Congo and Uganda, the attempted secession of Biafra from the rest of Nigeria in 1967 and of Togo from Ghana in the 1950's. It delayed progress towards independence in Kenya and it is a powerful factor in the movements in Zimbabwe and Namibia".

Malaya's problems arose due to the plurality of its population structure. Its society fitted well into both Furnivall's (1948) and Smith's (1965) theoretical model of a plural society. While Furnivall's (op.cit) model was essentially based on the economic and social criteria, Smith's (op.cit.) theoretical framework was defined in terms of the basic institutional system. To stress this point, Smith (op.cit.) noted that:

"pluralism and its alternative must be defined institutionally rather than in racial or ethnic terms. Cultural heterogeneity has many forms and bases, while cultural pluralism has only one, namely, diversity of the basic institutional system".

Plainly, Smith implied that it was the institutional differences that serve to distinguish differing cultural and social units. Thus the "population that contains groups practising different forms of institutional systems exhibit a corresponding diversity of cultural, social and ideational patterns" (Smith, op.cit.:88).

The successive census of 1947, 1957 and 1970 showed the almost constant feature of the Malayan population in terms of its ethnic division (see Table 1). But, nonetheless, the differences in the ethnic composition should not be construed as de facto divisive and thus alienate one ethnic group from another.¹ But Malaya's uniqueness besides being ethnically divided, lay in the claim of legitimacy over the country as asserted by the immigrants who constituted one half of the population and the indigenous Malay's rejection of this claim. This indigenous-immigrant tension was further exacerbated by the differences in terms of culture, language and religion.

1. Indonesia is an example of a multi-ethnic society which is able to reduce its divisive tendencies.

Colonialism: the Impact on Language and Culture

Tylor (1891:1) defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Culturally, pre-independent Malaya did not manifest any similarity that could act as a basis for understanding among its multi-ethnic population. Given the fact that they all eat rice, even this did not give them any form of commonality for differences existed in the way it was consumed. Culturally, and in a nutshell, they differ not only in life but also in death. As Abdullah Taib and Mohammed Yusoff (1982:108) pointed out:

"Culturally, the Malays are Muslims, speak Bahasa Melayu (Malay) and maintain their own traditional customs and practices. The Chinese are mostly Buddhists or Christians, speak a variety of Chinese dialects, and maintain traditional Chinese customs and practices. Some Chinese practices, such as the consumption of pork, the keeping of dogs in homes, and gambling, are extremely distasteful to Malays. The Indians are mostly Hindus, speak a number of Indian dialects, and maintain customs and practices of their own, some of which (such as the penchant for alcoholic drink) are also distasteful to Malays and virtually proscribed to them".

Linguistically, the divisions were even wider and without any common language to bridge them, Malaya was a miniature "tower of Babel". In due course and out of necessity, Malay became the interactive language among them. This development was least surprising for historically the language had been the lingua-franca besides being the language of administration and commerce. Its position was described by William Marsden (cited in Asmah, op.cit:5) in the following terms:

"The Malay language which has commonly been supposed original in the peninsula of Malayo, and from thence to have extended itself throughout the eastern Islands, so as to become the

... cont.

lingua-franca of that part of the globe, is spoken everywhere along the coasts of Sumatra, prevails without the mixture of any other, in the Island country of Manangkabau and its immediate dependencies, and is understood in almost every part of the island. It has been much celebrated, and justly, for the smoothness and sweetness of the sound, which have gained it the appellation of the Italian of the East. This is owing to the prevalence of vowels and liquids in the words (with many nassals which may be thought an objection) and the infrequency of any harsh combination of mute consonants. These qualities render it well adapted to poetry, which the Malays are passionately addicted to".

Paradoxically, as the British colonial power became more established, its role in administration and commerce soon declined. Following the spread of English education, the predominance of Malay as the main medium of communication either in business or governmental circles was gradually phased out. The growth of English education and the colonial policy of making English as the official language were thus among the contributory factors that caused independent Malaya a decade of linguistic crisis.

The arrival of the Chinese and Indians further transformed the cultural complexity of the country. Together with their regional and provincial differences, they also brought along their dialects which were traceable to the areas of their origins. Among the Chinese, "where so many diverse dialects mingled" the need for a common language among them was even more pressing compared to what occurred in China "where the people of a province all spoke the same dialect" (Purcell, op.cit:233-4). The adoption of Kuo-yu (the national language which was a compromise between northern and southern mandarin) in January 1920 was a turning point in the development of the Chinese language. The language soon became a common

mode of expression among the educated Chinese. As Purcell (op.cit: 227-228) observed:

"The adoption of Kuo-yu is half the story of educational development in modern China to date: the other half is the adoption of San Min Chu, or Three Principles of the People, of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, and the foundation of Chinese education".

Kuo-yu was immediately introduced into Malaya and soon became the language of instruction in Chinese schools replacing the various dialects (Chang, op.cit.:17-18). As for the Indians, since the majority came from the Tamil-speaking states of southern India, it was not difficult to institutionalise Tamil as the common language for the Indians.¹

Despite their religious differences, animosity which was based on sectarianism was practically unheard of. The Malays profess Islam which advocates monotheism and is strictly uncompromising in its attitude towards Hinduism and Taoism, the religions most Indians and Chinese respectively adhered to, and where polytheism is the norm in both, along with idol worship. The absence of any religious related conflict may be partly due to the fact that religions are closely affiliated to ethnicity. Religious boundaries seldom cross ethnic lines. In Malaya, it is an accepted fact that Malays are Muslims, the Chinese are Buddhist or Taoist, and the Indians are Hindus. Since religion is easily identifiable with ethnicity, its role as a source of conflict remained insignificant. Secondly, religion, per se, had not been communally politicised and at the same time there was no material reward attached to it. Furthermore,

1. According to the census taken in 1970, 80.9% of the Indians belonged to the Tamil speaking group. See R. Chander, 1970, Population and Housing Census, etc, p.29.

religious conversion would not make any change of status in ethnicity.

Added to these cleavages were the problems of decolonisation, a disturbing phenomenon in any newly independent state. It was a process that had to be carried out simultaneously with nation-building. Admittedly, it was not an easy task to accomplish. In Malaya, especially, where life had "grown comfortable with the British colonial bottle" (Das, June 11, 1982), the task of decolonisation was monumental. It required vital changes both in the psychological and institutional make-up so as to provide a new direction and relevance to the country's history, culture and aspirations. As Evans (Oct.1971:282) observed:

"the task of decolonisation is then the two-fold one of counteracting the massive set of reinforcing institutions which have for so long trained the colonized to reject their background, and of beginning the process of constructing a viable alternative".

Uppermost in the process was how to disaccustom the colonial psychology that had long been entrenched among the colonized, especially the leaders. For instance, the institutions that were established were all taken from the metropolitan model which was totally alien to the indigenous cultural environment. This was particularly felt in the field of education where the system that was adopted was directed more to the needs of the colonial society rather than for the benefit of the newly independent state. The defect of the colonial system of education was obvious. Nyerere (1968:46) described it as, "not designed to prepare young people for the service of their own country; instead it was motivated by a desire to inculcate the values of the colonial society and to train individuals for the service of the colonial state".

In his study of the history syllabus taught in Malayan schools during the colonial period, Santhiram (1978) pointed out how the teaching of local history was negated to the barest minimum and the students instead were exposed to the British history and its colonial glory. The educational system that was established thus prolonged the state of both educational and "intellectual dependency" (Altbach, 1982:475) that the newly independent country had towards its ex-colonial master.

The disruptive effect of the colonial schools towards the indigenous society was well elucidated by Watson (1982:28) in the following terms:

"Colonial schools were deliberately set apart from the indigenous culture with the result that those who attended them gradually grew away from their original roots, a trend that was lamented by many missionaries by the 1920s but one that was by then very difficult to reverse. Because there was a lack of clarity regarding which society and what place in society students were being prepared for, colonial schools did not necessarily prepare for leadership in the indigenous society nor for leadership in the colonial society. They were designed to fit people into a world different from that with which they were born and in which their parents lived and worked".

Hence, the colonial school system had a far-reaching effect upon the colonized. In Malaya, it was successful in alienating the English educated from the vernacular educated, besides the already natural differences that existed between the indigenous Malays and the immigrant communities. But it was the impact on the mind that created the greatest obstacle towards the process of decolonization. With the educational system being geared towards the inculcation of colonial values and norms, the outcome was not hard to envisage. With the newly acquired status they began to alienate themselves from the masses and felt culturally

inferior and confused about their indigenous heritage. As much as possible they tried to associate themselves with the colonial cultural circle, and the difficulty of being accepted as part of it made them even more convinced of the superiority of the colonial culture. Citing the impact of colonialism upon Africa, Daniel (1981:173) noted that:

"... the African came to believe in his own inferiority. He developed a sense of shame about his cultural heritage and turned his back on it. Instead, he embraced the values of an alien culture and began to ape the white man, emulating specific aspects of his life-style; dress, eating and drinking habits, music, cosmetics, even exaggerating the particular accents of the colonizer's language".

Daniel's description of the colonial influence upon the African, to a certain extent had some relevance to Malaya. The impact of colonialism, for example had left trails of confusion upon their culture, identity and values. Among the most significant was the neo-colonial psychology of using "the norms of the metropolitan culture as the yardstick against which all values, behaviours and attitudes are measured" (Evans, op.cit:281). Freire (1970:38-39) aptly described the phenomenon as "self-depreciation" for "so often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything - that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive - that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness".

Cultural Pluralism and its Dilemma

Two theories are often cited when analysing the dynamics of a plural society. The first is cultural pluralism, the philosophy which has been adopted by Switzerland and Belgium, and cultural assimilation which has

been commonly assumed to have taken place in the United States. The focus given to these theories was to provide relevance or otherwise to the integrative mechanism Malaya chose in its process of nation-building.

Assimilation is "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life" (Park & Burgess, cited in Gordon, 1964:62). This implies that during the process, ethnic identification or any form of ethnic or communal affiliation or symbol has to give way to the wider and acceptable forms of behaviour in consonant with the dominant cultural group. As Friedman (1969:348) pointed out:

"The tendency is for the ruling cultural group to enforce the adoption of certain externals, in terms of which a superficial 'adjustment' is secured. The adopting culture it must be emphasised, is not in a position to choose".

Assimilation is directly contradictory to the philosophy of cultural pluralism. While the assimilationist called for the dis-continuance of the prevalent ethnic characteristics, the goal of the cultural pluralist is "to maintain enough subsocietal separation to guarantee the continuance of the ethnic cultural tradition and the existence of the group" (Gordon, op. cit.:158). Horace Kallen, the acknowledged exponent of cultural pluralism argued strongly against the assimilation goal of multi-ethnic America. To him, blood relationship is "inalienable and unalterable" (Kallen, cited in Gordon, op. cit.:145). Taking the United States of America as a case, Kallen argued that:

"The American way is the way of orchestration. As in an orchestra, the different instruments, each with its own characteristic timbre and theme, contribute distinct and

recognizable parts to the composition, so in the life and culture of a nation, the different regional, ethnic, occupational, religion and other communities compound their different activities to make up the national spirit" (cited in Gordon, op.cit:147).

Opponents to Kallen's proposition were many. They argued that the strength of modern American Union was not the result of ethnic parochialism and institutional diversity, but rather on the role of the public school system which as an institution facilitated the progress towards the process of Americanization. As Henry Steel Commanger (1955:7-8) put it:

"Each decade after 1840 saw from two to eight million immigrants pour into America. No other people had ever absorbed such large and varied racial stocks so rapidly or so successfully. It was the public school which proved itself the most efficacious of all agencies of Americanization - Americanization not only of the children but, through them, of the parents as well".

Kallen's line of thinking appeared among the immigrant communities in Malaya. For example, Tan Cheng Lock (op.cit.:96), in his speech at the Legislative Council held in Malacca, openly expressed his resistance to assimilation by stating that, "any attempt to make the non-Malays adopt the Malay language and to assimilate into Malay culture would be most energetically resisted ... as something most obnoxious and baneful to their well-being and would be foredoomed to failure". This view was again expressed in the Fenn-Wu Report on Chinese Education (see Chapter 2). The Report, in its discussion of a "Malayan culture" stated that "by virtue of its composite population it should be a land where the developing culture draws its validity from acceptance of the high values of

other cultures. The people of Malaya will have to learn to understand and appreciate their cultural differences" (Fenn-Wu Report, op.cit: ch. 2, para. 3).

However, discussions on cultural pluralism as a social philosophy would be incomplete without understanding its mechanism as experienced by Switzerland and Belgium.

Cultural Pluralism in Switzerland

Switzerland had often been cited as a model for cultural co-existence despite its diversity in language, religion and ethnic background. Rabushka & Shepsle (op.cit.:208) observed that the Swiss were able "to combine ethnic diversity and democratic stability, no mean feat in view of the rarity with which this relationship occurs in other plural societies". While it was commendable to mention Switzerland as a successful case of stability in a plural society, consideration should also be given as to whether the country's political structure accounted for its success, and could serve as a model for other countries to emulate. Mayer (1968:707) for instance, pointed out that Switzerland is a country which is "historically unique and cannot be duplicated under different conditions". As a country, it did not originate as a nation-state and had never become one.

The Swiss Confederation initially grew out of a mutual alliance among the cantons in their struggle against the feudal rulers and the German Emperor (Rabushka & Shepsle, op.cit.:208). The ancient Swiss Confederation had no constitution, no central government, no national army and not even

a capital. This Confederation lasted for five centuries and collapsed in 1798 (Mayer, op.cit.:711-712). It was the constitution of 1848 which changed its status from a Confederation into the present Federal structure which provided equality for Germans, French and Italians (Mayer, op.cit.: 713-714).

Today, Switzerland has twenty-two cantons which are independent and autonomous from each other. Fourteen of these cantons are German-speaking, three French-speaking and one Italian-speaking. Of the remaining cantons, three have both German and French as official languages, and one has German, Romansh and Italian as its official languages (Rabushka & Shepsle, op.cit.:209-213). In cantons which are unilingual, language does not develop into a major issue and even if it does, it still remains confined within the boundary of its canton without affecting the Federation as a whole. However, in cantons where more than one official language exists, the spectre of linguistic conflict still remains eminent. A classic example of this was over the Jura problems which resulted in serious ethnic disturbances in canton Berne. The Jura had been a problem in canton Berne for a long time. It was formally annexed by canton Berne in 1815 but the trouble began when Berne refused to accept French as the official language and at the same time denied its minority representation in the canton legislature (Mayer, op.cit.:723). The population which was predominantly French-speaking and Roman Catholic had little affinity with the German-speaking inhabitants who were mostly Protestant. It was therefore a combination of linguistic and religious differences that generated the demand to secede and form a canton of its own. In fact this was the motive behind the separatist movement which was formed in 1947.

Switzerland should not therefore be "over-emphasised" as a country that has successfully neutralised any overt form of ethnic conflict. Its absence may be true in cantons where the population is mostly unilingual, but the same does not apply to cantons which have more than one official language and different religions. By citing the whole, without regard to the part, a serious error of judgement could result when analysing the dynamics of a plural society.

Another vital aspect that has to be placed into proper perspective is the position of religion and language in Switzerland. In the Malayan plural society, the separation is not only confined to ethnicity, but also extends itself to language and religion. The separation becomes even more rigid as the languages and religions are identifiable with the various ethnic groups of the country. By contrast, Switzerland's "linguistic boundaries do not coincide with but cut across the religious boundaries in most cases and therefore serve to offset one another" (Mayer, op.cit:715).

The census of 1960 (see Table 6) showed that among the German-speakers, 61.3% were Protestants and 37.2% were Roman Catholics. At the same time, among the French-speakers 53.7% were Protestants and 44.4% were Roman Catholics. The conclusion that could be drawn from this census was that in Switzerland there was a clear absence of linguistic identification with religious affiliation.

Table 6

Correlation Between Religious Affiliation
and Mother Tongue

Mother Tongue	Protestant	Roman Catholics	Old Catholics	Jews	Others
German	61.3	37.2	0.7	0.2	0.6
French	53.7	44.4	0.3	0.3	1.3
Italian	4.6	93.6	0.2	0.1	1.5
Romansh	34.6	64.8	0.3	0	0.3
TOTAL	57.1	41.3	0.6	0.2	0.8

Source: Unpublished table of the 1960 Swiss Federation Census cited in Mayer, op.cit. p.715.

Cultural Pluralism in Belgium

Up to February 7, 1968 when Paul Van den Boeynants resigned as the Prime Minister due to the political crisis that developed within his Christian Social Party (PSC), Belgium's political system "has been celebrated as a case where a highly particularistic and diffuse political culture sustained a more-or-less stable and effective government" (Coombes & Taylor, 1968:62). This catastrophic outcome which led to his resignation was the result of the split in his PSC between its Flemish and French speaking members (Coombes & Taylor, ibid:62).

Belgium is linguistically divided between the Flemings (Dutch-speakers) and the Walloons (French-speakers). Statistically, 55.4% of the population

lives in the five northern provinces, 32.6% are found in the four southern provinces and 11.4% live in Brussels (Coombes & Taylor, *ibid*:63).

In the northern provinces, the Flemish speaking population predominates, while in the four southern provinces, French-speakers form the majority. In Brussels both languages are spoken and recognised as official.

Language as an issue appeared in the Belgium political scene just before the Second World War, when boundaries were drawn to delineate linguistic spheres of influence between the Walloons and the Flemish. Initially, it was religion that became the source of conflict in Belgium. The Reformation movement which swept Europe in the fifteenth century did not demolish the influence of the Catholic church in the Belgian territories. The controversy developed over the secularization of the state as advocated by the Liberals and opposed by the Catholics. This religious cleavage was further aggravated by the linguistic difference between the Walloons and the Flanders (Urwin, 1970: 322).

Various reasons were cited over the rise of language as a major issue in Belgium's political life. According to Urwin (*ibid*:333), by the 1940s the Flanders were no more a minority in the country; secondly, the Flemish-speakers had benefitted tremendously from the speed of industrialization that was taking place; and lastly, despite the fact that they were already in the majority and had achieved so much progress, an inferiority complex remained among them. Coombes and Taylor (1968:65) observed that the new self-confidence that emerged among the Flemish came from a background of "economic depression and colonization by a French speaking elite". The Walloons on the other hand, viewed the

linguistic resurgence shown by the Flemish as a threat to their existence (Coombes & Taylor, *ibid*:65). With all these developments, it was inevitable that a showdown would happen in the state which had been so often commended for its ethnic tolerance.

The first serious polarization between these two groups occurred when the Walloon Socialist Trade Union called for a strike against the austere policy implemented by the newly formed coalition government of the Social Christians and the Liberals in 1958. The strike was only partly successful due to the refusal of the Flemish Catholic Trade Union to participate (Rabushka & Shepsle, *op.cit*:114-5). On seeing the controversy that developed out of the Austerity Law which had been passed, the Liberals withdrew from the coalition and this subsequently forced a fresh election upon the country (Ranushka & Shepsle, *op.cit*:115).

The 1961 election and the following elections of 1965 and 1968 saw the question of language emerging as a dominant issue in Belgium's politics. After the 1961 election, for instance, the government which was made up of a coalition between the Social Christians and the Socialists introduced a linguistic legislation which among other things established the "language boundaries between the Walloons and the Flemish" and at the end of 1962 a bill was passed "that declared Brussels bilingual" (Rabushka & Shepsle), *op.cit*:115).

The climax of linguistic extremism and the inter-play of ethnic politics occurred in the election of 1968. Rabushka & Shepsle (*op.cit*:117) described the election as one which saw "the overwhelming salience of language, the rise of political entrepreneur, the politics of outbidding",

and a marked absence of political moderation. The campaign was harsh to the extreme with each group bidding for support by invoking ethnic sentiments. The Volksunie (Flemish Nationalists) for instance, wanted a Federal system of government with an independent Flemish state, thus limiting the jurisdiction of the Central Government only to matters relating to economy, social policy, defence and foreign policy (Coombes & Taylor, op.cit.:68). The Walloons, not to be outdone, campaigned vigourously for the establishment of a "separate Walloon country with its own elected assembly responsible for internal Walloon affairs" (Coombes & Taylor, op.cit.:67).

Assimilation: Malay Exclusiveness?

Underlying all the examples that have been cited, a clear fact remains. Countries which possess the elements of pluralism, be they ethnic, cultural or institutional, have to face the reality of the conflict potentials that are current in it. The avenues that could lead to disagreements are many and the chances for national reconciliation become less once these differences are translated into open conflict. As Smith (1965:XI) observed, "It is perfectly clear that in any social system based on intense cleavages and discontinuity between differentiated segments, the community of values or social relations between these sections will be correspondingly low".

The examples taken from Belgium and the Jura problems in canton Berne tend to confirm the fact that nation-building in a plural society is a complex and delicate process and the philosophy of cultural pluralism has yet to prove its success. For those who argue along the lines of class

struggle (Stenson:1976, Cham:1975), the example from British Guyana was a clear indicator that ethnicity in itself is a potent force that could not be easily slurred by just an ideological slogan. In British Guyana for example, Dr. Jagan's Peoples Progressive Party which was Marxist in orientation, and his invocation on the principle of "apanjaht"¹ during the 1961 election showed that "race could not be masked by ambiguous allusions to socialist ideology" (Rabushka & Shepsle, op.cit:98). In citing the American case, Melson & Wolpe (1970:118) pointed out that, "While most white Americans have been assimilated within the secondary institutions of the society, their primary group relationships remain highly segregated by nationality or religion, and ethnicity remains a persistent fact of political life".

While cultural pluralism as a policy has not achieved much success, what is left then for a plural society to pursue? One integrative mechanism that is assumed to have taken place in the United States is the melting-pot theory. The concept envisages "that the culture of the immigrants as 'melting' completely into the culture of the host society without leaving any cultural trace at all" (Gordon, op.cit:125). However, Glazer and Moynihan (1963:12-13) had different views on what was really happening in the country. While not denying "the powerful assimilatory influences of American society operate on all who come into it, making the children of immigrants and even immigrants themselves a very different people from those they left behind", at the same time, a certain amount of reservation was also expressed.

1. A Hindi term which means "vote for your own kind".

As they pointed out:

"It was reasonable to believe that a new American type would emerge, a new nationality in which it would be a matter of indifference whether a man was of Anglo-Saxon or German or Italian or Jewish origin, and in which indeed, because of the diffusion of population through all parts of the country and all levels of the social order, and because of the consequent close contact and inter-marriage, it would be impossible to make such distinctions. This may still be the most likely result in the long run. After all, in 1960 almost half of New York City's population was still foreign-born. Yet it is also true that it is forty years since the end of mass immigration, and new processes, scarcely visible when our chief concern was with the great masses of immigrants and the problems of their 'Americanization', now emerge to surprise us. The initial notion of an American melting-pot did not, it seems, quite grasp what would happen in the short run, and this short run encompasses at least the length of a normal life time, it is not something we can ignore" (Glazer & Moynihan, *ibid*:13).

The observation made by Glazer and Moynihan is quoted at length here mainly because it tries to stress the fact that assimilation takes time and could not be realised within a generation. Secondly, the concept does not hold valid with recent immigrations into the country. Friedman (*op.cit*:350) explained this development in the following terms:

"Minorities have always composed an important part of the American social structure. The original immigrants (the 'old' minorities) accepted the assimilative conditions in the school; and, pragmatically speaking, the system worked for a long time ... but it is becoming increasingly obvious that the 'new' minorities do not fare this well. Colour prejudice clouds the future of many of them; and acculturation is easier for them than assimilation. The language and culture ties which provide security for particular groups cause difficulties in a school system which has not even acceded to the need for dual language teaching. The invisibility of the poor, the passivity and occasional withdrawals of some minority groups, all militate against assimilation".

Another important aspect about the process of assimilation in America was that the melting-pot ideal was parochial in its scope. As Gordon (op.cit:119) noted, "the proponents of the melting-pot ideal had dealt largely with diversity produced by sizeable immigration only from the countries of Northern and Western Europe - the so-called 'old immigration', consisting of people with cultures and physical appearance not greatly different from those of the Anglo-Saxon stock". The melting-pot theory might have been true during the early part of the immigration into the new world. But, with the latest wave of immigration which came mostly from countries of Eastern and Southern parts of Europe and also from the Far East, patterns of assimilation began to change. The new groups of immigrants, being mostly from neither the Anglo-Saxon nor Teutonic stock, were not easily assimilated into the mainstream of American culture (Anglo-Saxon based) due to the fact that they were different not only in their ethnic origins but also in their cultural experiences (Glazer & Moynihan, op.cit:14-17). As a corollary to that, it was in their search for security in the face of a newly found environment that the "new immigrants" sought to remain within the enclave of their own ethnic groups and this made them even more difficult to assimilate. It could be safely concluded that the melting-pot theory was a pre-twentieth century phenomenon and was essentially a conformity towards the Anglo-Saxon culture. It was in the main institutional and structural integration which produced the present form of American nationality.

But whatever may have been said about the failure of the present day assimilative policy in America, it had already benefitted from the earlier integrative process which undoubtedly laid the foundation of a strong and

cohesive American nation. Central to this successful phenomenon was the role of the English language which became the common vehicle for national communication and expression, and its integrative role as the main language of instruction in schools.

Between the two alternatives, cultural pluralism and cultural assimilation, what route should Malaya take then? As has been observed earlier, cultural pluralism as a policy had strong appeals among the immigrant communities. Their refusal to assimilate, as embodied in the speeches of Tan Cheng Lock (op.cit) and the Fenn-Wu Report on Chinese Education (op.cit) created a serious obstacle for any programme related to the process of national integration to be effectively implemented. At the same time, their demand to be recognised as fully-fledged citizens of the country and thus put them on a par with the indigenous Malays was too vocal to be left unheard. The Malayan Union Plan was to some extent in compliance with this demand. However, the plan was so vehemently opposed by the Malays that it had to be abandoned.

It should also be emphasised here that the demand for equal citizenship, especially among the Chinese immigrants, was in fact not genuine in its entirety. A survey by Singapore Chinese newspaper (Nan Chian) in the late 1940's showed that 99% of the Chinese would not give their undivided loyalty to the Malayan Union (Hawkins, op.cit:82). What spurred the demand was presumably the population of the country at that time which was in favour of the immigrant communities (see Table 7). As the table indicates, in 1941 the Malay population was only 40.5% and this made them a minority in their own country. It was quite obvious that by their

numerical superiority, the immigrants tended to legitimise their claim over the country and thus negated the presence of the indigenous Malays who were then outnumbered in population.

That sheer numbers determined the faith of an indigenous community has long left its mark in history. The modern game of popular politics which legitimises the rule by the majority tends to deny the inalienable rights of the natives whose power and authority is being usurped and at the same time sanctioned by this modern opinion. Singapore was a case when a definitive race (Malay) became a marginal group due to the influx of immigrants. The same was true with the native Indians of the United States.

Table 7

Number and Composition of the Population
in Malaya, 1941

Race	Number	Percentage of Total
Chinese	2,418,615	44.0
Malays	2,248,579	40.5
Indians	767,693	14.0
Europeans	30,251	0.5
Eurasians & others	80,035	1.0
TOTAL	5,545,173	100.0

Source: Ooi Jin-Bee, 1963:121.

As a philosophy for nation-building, cultural pluralism was unacceptable to the Malays. They perceived that being immigrants, it was their responsibility to adapt to the new social and cultural environment paramount of which was the country's language and its traditional institutions. The advocates of cultural pluralism were thus met head-on by the Malays who saw the immigrants with their numerical superiority and economic strength as a serious threat to their survival. It was essentially this feeling of insecurity that brought about the adoption of the slogan "Hidup Melayu"¹ as their rallying cry against the Malayan Union in 1946. Besides entailing the survival of the Malay race, the slogan also called for the preservation of the Malay language and culture. It was in pursuance of these objectives that demands were set that independent Malaya would have to adopt only one language and one culture and these must be Malay. As a corollary to that, the Malayan identity that was to emerge would also have to be Malay-based. This was reflected by Dato' Onn's speech in Parliament when he moved a motion demanding "that the Rupabangsa or Nationality of the Persekutuan Tanah Melayu² shall be known as 'Melayu'" (Parliamentary Debate: Feb.10,1962)³. To an outsider, it sounded as uncompromising ethnocentrism on the part of the Malays. But, viewing it from a psycho-historical angle, it was a re-assertion of the desire to restore their status-quo as the natives of the country which was on the brink of becoming a mere historical show-piece.

Nonetheless, this idea of "Malay exclusiveness" was of course rejected by the immigrant communities. It was viewed upon as tantamount

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1. Literally translated it means "Malays Live". The slogan is significant for it was adopted by UMNO during the initial period of its formation and it reappeared during the ethnic riot of May 13, 1969.
 2. "Persekutuan Tanah Melayu" means the "Federation of Malay Land".
 3. "Melayu" means Malay.

to Malay assimilation of which they strongly disapproved. There was obviously a divergent formula perceived by the various communities as to the course that the country should take in its arduous task of nation-building. The Malays wanted their language and culture to be the basis for the country's identity, whilst the immigrants were protective of their own heritage and thus against any form of assimilation into the local way of life. All these differences came to the fore with independence when the problems of nationhood emerged and the new nation tried to get consensus on the mechanics of integration that could accommodate all the divergent and controversial views.

Thus, it is within these emerging circumstances that education was chosen to play a vital role in the country's nation-building process. To a certain extent, the choice of education was not irrelevant, and as Bock (1982:79) points out:

"It is within this pervading context of conflict that education is increasingly expected to function as the single most influential force for ameliorating social conflict and facilitating orderly directed social change. Often, it is in the most intensely pluralistic societies that education is expected to play the most central nation-building role".

Chapter Four

The Development of an Educational System

The Razak Report

In the words of R.S. Peters (1967:1) education "refers to no particular process, rather it encapsulates criteria to which any one of a family of processes must conform". This description provides a wide and varied form of interpretation and utility. Unesco (1973:6) emphasised the purposes of education as "to serve the wider ends of social change and transformation". Within this context it was therefore not uncommon to see education being utilised for purposes of public policies, pursuing social, political or economic objectives. For the newly independent states which were often threatened by political disintegration due to the diverse nature of their population structure, the search for an institution that could provide a common denominator continued. But most, if not all, considered education as an important element in providing "national and social cohesion" (Unesco, *ibid*:85), besides the important role it contributed towards the development of human capital (Schultz, 1979).

It was the belief that school as an institution could provide a common experience and exposure which in the long run would narrow down the gap among the different cultural and personal backgrounds which the child brought with him into the classroom. This was the general feeling among the Malayan leaders when education was given an important task as part of a nation-building process. What necessitates this rationale was mainly the result of the pluralistic nature of the Malayan society which on the

eve of independence saw the immediate need to establish an institution that could provide the basic Malayan orientation to the young. The school as an institution was thus given the role of fulfilling this objective. In the words of Dato' Abdul Razak (LCD, May 16, 1963:col. 1150), when introducing the Report of the Education Committee, "We strongly believe that one of the essential elements in the building of a united Malayan Nation is that children of all races should learn the same things in the same way at school".

The choice of an institution that would be in accord with the practising ideology of the state was hard and difficult to make. Given the position of Malaya's multi-ethnic composition, the choice could further generate rather than diffuse the moods of discontent that were already in existence. At the same time, even after the decision had been made there remained the choice of relevant strategies that should be adopted for the objective to be realised. Related to this, two methods could be employed. One was by imposing a central ideological principle that would dictate the general direction of the society. The other was the adoption of a liberal ideological approach which provided freedom of choice and direction for the society to pursue. In a centrally directed state, any form of social policy adopted was with the view of homogenizing the existing disintegrated social components that might hamper the stability and security of the state. Thus, through a common ideological framework it was envisioned that a standardized pattern of behaviour might emerge and a centripetal tendency develop. While this social philosophy of dictating a society towards a common ideological goal may in itself prejudice the growth of a democratic ideal, nevertheless it had been proved effective

in countries where the political will of the people was harnessed towards the direction and needs of the polity.

In Malaya, the above pattern of ideology was an anathema to the leadership in general.¹ During the colonial era, the country had been advocating the laissez-faire rule which advanced the importance of private enterprise in national development. Upon independence, Malaya adopted an administrative and institutional model which mirrored the prevalent British institutions. As an example, the monarchial system was never before at its pedestal strength when the country was at the dawn of independence. Although the political power that emanated from the system was minimal, their presence and the ritualistic role they played created an aura of their indispensability among the masses. The courtly rewards which had been the by-products of the system penetrated through the various strata of the population and this further legitimised their position as the privileged ruling class. Another instance of colonial influence remaining in independent Malaya is the creation of the two Houses of Parliament. The first is the Dewan Rakyat and the other is the Dewan Negara.² The Dewan Rakyat housed the elected representatives and the Dewan Negara is for the members nominated by the Government. All these were again buttressed by the bureaucratic machinery which was the key to the colonial

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1. The leaders of the Alliance Party which sought independence from Britain had either aristocratic or propertied backgrounds. Tunku Abd. Rahman was a prince from Kedah; Tun Abdul Razak was an aristocrat from Pahang; Tun Tan Cheng came from a wealthy family. With these backgrounds it would be improbable for them to get enmeshed in such a radical ideology.
 2. Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara are equivalent to Britain's House of Commons and Lords, respectively.

"administrative hegemony" (Puthucheary, 1978:5). Independence was thus a mere continuation of the institutions that had been in existence since colonial times. No attempt was made to re-institutionalise the colonial apparatus so that it could respond to the needs of the newly independent nation. The Malayanisation process that took place following independence merely involved the change of personnel, without affecting the basic institutional structure. Thus, when the country was looking for an institution that could act a 'broker' for its diverse population, there was a limited option that could be considered as practically uncontroversial. Both the political institution and the economic model of which underpins its ideological foundation, were still at their infant stage of development. At this critical period of the nation's history, it was inevitable that school as an institution was chosen to play a major role in the process of nation-building.

While education did not in itself provide a conflict-proof arrangement (and in the context of the Malayan plural society the issue had been perennially controversial) nonetheless, it was assumed to be an institution where the effect of change would be gradual and the social disruption that accrued would be minimal. Secondly, the political role that education could play was viewed as essential towards the socialisation of the oncoming generation. As Coleman (op.cit.:3) suggested, "Once regarded as an essentially conservative, culture-preserving, culture-transmitting institution, the educational system now tends to be viewed as the master determinant of all aspects of change." Thirdly, if change was to be effected, the focus of attention should be directed towards the young and for this there would be no better place than the school. These

ideas were summed up by Dato' Abdul Razak (LCD, op.cit.:col. 1158)

as such:

"This Report on education, which, I consider is a practical one, lays the foundation of a national system of education on which a united Malayan Nation will be born and grow into a happy and stately manhood".

A year later, when he moved the Education Bill, 1957 in the Malayan Parliament, he again reiterated the important role that education could play towards the breaking down of the cultural barriers among the various ethnic groups. He emphasised that:

"It is the object of the new policy under this Bill to break down the barrier within the various types of schools and bring them together under a national system in order that by so doing we shall create a sense of communion and unity among all who live in this country as the object of their undivided loyalty". (LCD, March 7, 1957:col.2542).

It was with this understanding and philosophy that the Education Committee of 1956 was established. The formation of the Committee reflected an ardent commitment on the part of the Government towards the establishment of a common institution that could act as a "broker" for children that came from different cultural backgrounds. It was a planned strategy which attempted to break away from the system that was disjointed, uncoordinated and elitist to one which was egalitarian and popular.

The Razak Report: Philosophy and Content

The Razak Report was significant in the development of Malayan education mainly for three reasons. Firstly, the Committee was set up by the

first elected Government of Malaya following the Federal election of 1955. It was chaired by the Minister of Education and the members were all Malayan in nationality, except for the advisors who were British.¹ Secondly, it was clearly stated in its terms of reference that it was the Government's intention to establish a national system of education and was quite explicit, albeit ambiguous, in emphasising the ultimate objective of one language and one nation philosophy. Thirdly, the Committee was also given the power to recommend structural changes that might be needed to provide the educational system with its national character.

As reflected in the terms of reference (see Chapter 2), the Report was populist in its appeal rather than "etatist" (Bracher, 1970:10) in its implication. The national system of education that was to be established must be generally "acceptable" by the people. While it was the intention of the Government to make Malay the national language of the country, emphasis was also given to the "growth of the language and culture of other communities" (The Razak Report, para.1a).

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1. Members of the Committee were Dato' Abdul Razak bin Hussain (Chairman), Mr. V.T. Sambanthan, En. Suleiman bin Dato' Abdul Rahman, En. Abdul Aziz bin Haji Abdul Majid, En. Shamsudin bin Nain, Mr. Too Joon Hing, En. Abdul Rahman bin Hj. Talib, Mr. Goh Chee Yan, En. Zainal Abidin bin Sultan Mydin, Dr. Lim Chong Eu, En. Abdul Hamid Khan, Mr. Leung Cheung Long, En. Mohamed Ghazali bin Jawi, Mr. Lee Thean Hin and En. Mohamed Idris bin Mat Sil.

The Director of Education, Mr. Payne and his Deputy Mr. G. Woods were in attendance at all meetings. The Secretary was En. Mohamed Sanusi bin Baki (until Nov. 1955) and thereafter Mr. T.E. Hughes.

The Report also defined its terms of reference accordingly. Firstly, the Committee felt that the recommendations were meant for the "next ten years" (The Razak Report:para.8), a period considered to be transitional in Malayan education. Secondly, it was to recommend "an educational system acceptable to the people of the Federation as a Whole" (The Razak Report:para.9). However, the Committee noted that all the recommendations were to be based on the principle that Malay would be made the national language while at the same time protection was given to the languages and cultures of the non-Malays living in the country. Thirdly, the Committee was given the task to develop an educational system that would instil a common Malayan outlook and for this purpose it recommended the introduction of a common content curriculum for all schools, irrespective of their medium of instruction (The Razak Report:para.11). Lastly, the Committee recommended:

"... that the ultimate objective of educational policy in this country must be to bring together the children of all races under a national educational system in which the national language is the main medium of instruction, though we recognise that progress towards this goal cannot be rushed and must be gradual"
(The Razak Report:para.12).

The main elements which the Report tried to highlight was the philosophy that in a plural society schools could play a vital role in creating conditions towards the "instillation of consensus values" (Zeiglar & Peak 1971:212). This basically implied that schools became an important "link-point" for the purposes of transmitting new cultural norms. To achieve the objective, the Report stressed the importance of a common content curriculum for all schools irrespective of the language of instruction used. Rather than emphasising the key role that a common language

of instruction could play, the Report noted:

"We cannot over-emphasise our conviction that the introduction of syllabuses common to all schools in the Federation is the crucial requirement of educational policy in Malaya. It is an essential element in the development of a united Malayan nation. It is the key which will unlock the gates hitherto standing locked and barred against the establishment of an educational system 'acceptable to the people of Malaya as a whole'. Once all schools are working to a common content syllabus irrespective of the language medium of instruction, we consider the country will have taken the most important step towards establishing a national system of education which will satisfy the needs of the people and promote their cultural, social, economic, and political development as a nation" (The Razak Report:para.119).

The above recommendation was important for two main reasons. In the first place, it played down the role of a common language of instruction in schools in preference to the common content curriculum. Secondly, by attempting to equate "a national system of education" with "a common content syllabus" the Committee tended to negate the significance of a common language of instruction as an instrument for social integration as had been frequently envisaged. In the context of the Razak Report, the role of the national language merely facilitated rather than asserted a key role towards moulding a united nation. Another instance was over the question of secondary education which the Report categorically emphasised:

"All schools of this type will work to a common syllabus and for common examinations. The question of the language medium of instruction in these schools is not a matter of first importance in view of the recommendation ... that action should be taken to establish a common content syllabus for all schools. More than one medium of instruction may be used. There will be sufficient flexibility in the curriculum to allow schools or parts of schools to give special attention to particular Malayan languages and cultures" (The Razak Report;para.13c).

In terms of the recommendations, the Razak Report was cautious in its approach. Obviously, there was no element of radicalism in it that tended to suggest the complete dismantling of the existing system. In fact, at the primary level of education the Report essentially preserved and strengthened the plural school system which had been the basis of colonial education. The Report also enhanced the linguistic pluralism in the schools, while concurrently giving a strong emphasis to English as the language of international significance, and Malay by virtue of it being the national language of the country. However, there were changes which the Report recommended that could be construed as new and to some extent a great departure from previous practice. The philosophy of making the educational process an instrument of national unity was more articulated and strongly stated as compared to the past educational reports formulated during colonial times.

Another aspect of the change that was of considerable significance was when the whole process of education became the preoccupation of the Government. In other words, the Report marked the beginning of the nationalisation of the school system. Previously, education was not fully the concern of the Government. The political structure of the country (see Chapter 2), which favoured administrative de-centralization, placed the responsibility for education at the discretion of the various states. The growth of schools again depended upon the money available and the roles of the voluntary organisations in helping their development. Even after the Federation of Malaya Agreement in 1948, when the geo-politics of the country were clearly established and a centralized system of administration was created, the Government remained indifferent towards placing education into the newly formed administrative structure.

If these changes were to be felt and seen, it was mainly in the organizational structure which the Report recommended. Prior to the Razak Report, except for the English schools, vernacular education was fairly terminal and no efforts were made to streamline them into a fairly uniform unit. The Report's recommendation that "certain fundamental changes" (para.29) were to be made in the structure and organization of the school system undoubtedly had most of its immediate impact. In the first place, it defined the structure of the Malayan school system that was to appear. Secondly, the Report standardized the schools in terms of curriculum content, teacher training programmes and the system of examination. All these were further re-inforced by the newly created bureaucratic machinery which favoured the centralization of the educational system.

Having the educational system placed directly under the central control of the state had positive and negative implications. On the positive side, a centralized system provided proper control and orderly development of education throughout the polity. Under this system, spatial variation in terms of the allocation of resources as pertained to the geographical question of "who gets what where" (Smith,1979:15) could be minimised. Also, by placing education fully under the control of a central authority, it gave explicit commitment in making the schools into a vehicle in pursuance of specific objectives, be they political or national. Archer (1979:624) was in accord with the above argument when she observed that "Educational legislation is national and uniform both in conception and application in the centralized system".

On the negative side, a centralized system had to bear certain problems such as "inflexibility", lack of "autonomy" on the part of teachers and excessive "political manipulation" at the political centre (Archer, *ibid.*:254-261). In this system, the avenues to effect change were limited and the process tedious. Above all, it depended much "upon the aggregation of grievances, the acquisition of political sponsorship, and the percolation of these demands into the central decision-making arena" (Archer, *ibid.*:271). But, the most serious drawback of the system was its inability to provide immediate response to the demands for changes in policy. Archer (*ibid.*:621) summed up this decision-making problem as such:

"Because the political centre thinks long and hard before it legislates and because the intervening changes brought about through other processes are minimal in comparison, then long periods of relative stasis are typical in the centralized system".

For a new nation which was only starting its own system of education and where the problems of nation-building were monumental due to the disparity in regional development, inequality in economic opportunity and the severity of racial polarity, the Education Committee of 1956 was to some extent justified in centralizing the educational machinery, at least for the first two decades. In the first place, the country was still lacking in the various essentials required for the proper functioning of an educational system that could be national in stature. Uppermost in this was the need to establish a foundation for a unified system which was absent during the colonial time. Secondly, by having a centralized system, an equal start in the development of education could be initiated.

This was especially felt in the allocation of the country's resources, so as to ensure equality in their distribution. Thirdly, the multi-ethnic character of the population made it pertinent for the system to be centralized, thus enabling the authority to streamline the direction in accordance with the needs of the country. In this sense it could be perceived as essentially for the purposes of political and bureaucratic requirements.

The Razak Report was quite explicit in stressing the importance of curricular reforms so as to achieve a common Malayan outlook (para.115). At the same time, it also expressed the primacy of national needs as in the case of the national language policy (para.12). Nonetheless, the Report was also shrouded with ambiguity. For instance, while recommending the setting up of the national system of education, the Report further enhanced the plural school system at the primary level of education. It proposed the "establishment of standard primary schools with the national language as the medium of instruction, and the development of similar type but in which the language of instruction may be English, Tamil or Kuo-Yu" (para.13b). The Report (para.13c) was also vague as to the position of the language of instruction in the secondary schools. Lastly, the word "main" (para.12) itself provoked much controversy. To the advocates of the mono-lingual policy, the word was not precise in connotation if the ultimate objective of the national education policy was to make Malay as the "sole" medium of instruction in schools. The thrust of the argument was that the word "main" was ambiguous and vague and thus provided an indirect sanction towards the practice of multi-lingualism in schools. Among those who advocated the policy of liberalism on

language usage, the word "main" implied that other than the national language, other languages would also be recognised as the medium of instruction in schools. The controversy on the word and its implications remained (Chai, op.cit.:33) but no efforts were made to clear the air.

In the light of this development, it could be seen that besides paving the way for the establishment of a national system of education which had the ultimate aim of making schools an instrument for national integration, the various recommendations and proposals of the Report in fact generated further controversy. For a policy-document of immense importance such as the Razak Report, it lacked clarity and precision. The repercussions were far and wide, especially when the whole document was translated into action.

The Razak Report: a Compromise Without Commitment

True to its task, the Education Committee of 1956 had fulfilled its duty in recommending a system of education that was "national in scope and content". But it had the political misfortune of being vague and ambiguous. If it was intentionally planned as such, then it was done in bad taste, for, under proper scrutinization, the Report could create dissent and might hamper its due process of implementation. In the first place, its terms of reference which called for the setting up of a "national system of education acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole which will satisfy their needs and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation" (The Razak Report, para.1a) mirrored the in-built accommodative principle of which the Committee had to abide. The second aspect of the terms of reference provided recognition

to Malay as the future national language while at the same time "preserving and sustaining the growth of the language and culture of other communities living in the country" (The Razak Report, *ibid.*). The contradictory nature of the terms of reference did not provide a clear-cut proposal that could be firmly acted upon. The weakness lay in the presence of a dual proposal for every statement of objective. For instance, the Report called for the establishment of an educational system that would be national in character, while at the same time it ought to satisfy the needs of the various cultural groups. Essentially, the objective was to provide all round satisfaction but being devoid of the understanding that no national issue could fulfil every ethnic's needs. Another aspect of the incongruency in its objective was in relation to the national language of the country. This was again weakened by the presence of another supporting proposal which called for the "preservation and sustaining the growth of the language and culture of other communities" (*ibid.*).

The lack of clarity in the Report, to some extent, had its roots in the terms of reference which in turn could be attributed to the political bargaining during the period of deliberations (see Chapter 2). This was confirmed by Dato' Abdul Razak, the Minister of Education and also the Chairman of the 1956 Education Committee. Speaking in the Federation of Malaya Legislative Council Debates (May 16, 1956: col.1146) he pointed out that the primary task of the Committee was:

"to recommend a policy which would be acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole. Therefore, to achieve this paramount objective, there must be compromise - a spirit of give and take and in some instances technical and theoretical considerations had to be subordinated to this paramount objective."

From the proceedings of the Legislative Council, it was apparent that the Malays were accommodative to the needs of the immigrant communities. S.O.K. Ubaidullah, a member of the Council, heaped praise on the Malays for showing their "sagacity and far-sight". In his speech, he further added that "the Malays, who refused to accept the members of other communities into their political organization only seven years ago, have already accepted the other communities as their political partners on the one hand and have also shown them that they are willing to give their languages their legitimate place in the system of education of the country" (LCD, May 16, 1956: col.1162). He again described the Report as "a shining example of Malay liberalism" (ibid.).

It could be safely argued that the Report was a by-product of much political manipulation and bargaining. Under the context of ethnic compromise, it was therefore not unusual to see the absence of clarity in the Report. Ambiguity was meant to camouflage the details and strategies for future action. And in the final analysis, it was meant to be flexible and accommodative to the needs of the various cultural groups.

A Landmark in Structural and Organizational Innovation

Whatever might have been said about the ambiguity of objectives and the contradictory statements that were found in the Razak Report, none could deny the changes it brought to the educational history of the country. For the first time, patterns of a national educational framework were laid which could be considered as both structurally and organizationally innovative. In terms of control, the Report placed all matters related

to education under the jurisdiction of the central Government in which the Minister for Education became responsible for it. The Report (para.30) stated that:

"the Ministry will be generally responsible for educational policy throughout the Federation and, in particular, it will be responsible for secondary education in consultation with State/Settlement Governments and (inter alia) for post-secondary education, for technical education (other than trade schools), for the training of teachers and for the conduct of examinations. The Ministry will also be responsible for the control and payment of grants to be made through State/Settlement Governments to local education authorities for primary education."

The above clause placed the whole level and process of education into a national concern and this created the need for restructuring the organizational set-up of the educational machinery. The Report defined the types of schools that were to be set up, the language of instruction to be used and the nature of examinations to be taken. Under the new plan, all schools irrespective of their categories were subjected to Government inspections (The Razak Report, para. 38 & 39). This measure ended the era of complete autonomy enjoyed previously by schools which were financially independent from the Government.

The plan also categorised the primary schools into two types. One was the Standard School of which the medium of instruction would be the national language and the other was the Standard-type where the medium of instruction would be either in Kuo-yu, Tamil or English (para.54). The Report also defined Secondary education as "the education given to pupils who have satisfactorily completed the Primary course" (para.67). It proposed three types of secondary courses and these were academic,

vocational and technical streams (para. 69). However, it was the aim of the Government to "establish only one type of National Secondary School where the pupils work towards a common final examination" (para. 70).

In the realm of examinations, the Report recommended the establishment of three types of examination. The first two were meant for promotional purposes and thus acted as a selective device, while the third type was intended for certification. In the first category, pupils would have to sit for the Malayan Secondary School Entrance Examination at the end of their sixth year of primary education (see Appendix A). Those who passed would be eligible for promotion into secondary school (para. 75). At the end of the third year in secondary schools, the pupils would sit for the Lower Certificate of Education (para. 76). Again, this was for selective purposes. Those who passed the examination would proceed to the upper level of their secondary education. Finally, the Report recommended that pupils would have to sit for another examination at the end of their secondary education. The National Certificate of Education as it was called had a compulsory Malay paper in it (para. 78 & 79). But this was only another version of the Cambridge School Certificate examination which had already established itself in all English schools. As the Report (para. 81) suggested, "The form of the examination for the National Certificate will be such that the same examination and the same question papers can be used for the purposes of both the School Certificate and the National Certificate!" Thus, by taking only one examination package, the pupils would be awarded with two certificates. One was the Federation of Malaya Certificate and the other was the Cambridge School Certificate. Except for the compulsory Malay paper, the examination was totally conducted in English.

Ironically, despite the fact that Malay was to be the national language of the country and was made compulsory in schools, the position of English remained as the most important medium of instruction. The Report was unequivocal as far as the policy on English language was concerned. For instance, it stated that the language was important for purposes of employment and for higher education both inside the country and overseas (para.71). Again, the Report (para.82) added that "entry into the Government service is mostly based upon qualifications which can be gained only in Government or Aided English schools."

Another aspect of change which the Report recommended was in the field of curriculum. Paragraph 115 of the Razak Report recommended that the curriculum content and time-tables for all schools should be streamlined. "One of the fundamental requirements of educational policy in the Federation of Malaya is to orientate all schools, primary and secondary, to a Malayan outlook. We consider that the way to do this is to ensure a common content in the syllabuses of all schools" (ibid.). This recommendation ended the curricular gap that had been one of the features of the Malayan plural school system. Under the colonial set-up each school system was autonomous both in its set-up and in formulating its academic content. They had their own ways of developing their curricular objectives and contents, strategies of instruction and mode of assessment. The measure as recommended by the Report could be considered as the first major step towards the development of a common national outlook. At least this was what the Razak Report tried to imply.

However, the nationalization of the school system would be ineffective

without substantial changes to the curriculum content. Standardization alone would not mean much if the old contents in the curriculum remained. It would be a misfit if the old contents in the curriculum, which were essentially colonial in outlook, and objectives were to be adopted in the new system of education. The Razak Report was well aware of the importance of standardizing the curriculum, but paradoxically it failed to recommend the changes in content.

Again, there were serious flaws in the Report's basic assumption that "a common content in the syllabus of all Schools" would provide the much needed orientation towards the development of a "Malayan outlook". This strategy would not materialise unless it was geared towards "Malayan" in its content and philosophy. It seemed that the "Malayan" concept was mischievously phrased. Undeniably, the types of outlook that would emerge depended much on the contents of the curriculum that were to be adopted. By analysing the terminal objective of the Report which specified the type of examination which the pupils would have to take, it seems that it was a common colonial outlook which the Report tried to inculcate and not the "Malayaness" as had been indicated.¹

The Razak Report: A Taint of Neo-Colonialism

Basically, and as has been observed, the Razak Report brought along structural and organizational changes that were fitting for a newly independent nation. Other than that, the Report was not new either in its philosophy or in its recommendations. In the past, reports on education

1. This issue was argued forcefully in Parliament. See Parliamentary Debates, Aug. 10, 1960: col.2146.

had also mooted similar ideas. It was a Report which emphasised educational continuity rather than change. As an example, the Report failed to deviate from the colonial school system which provided education in four language streams. The Education Ordinance, 1952 was in fact clear in its conception of a "national school", especially at the primary level. The Ordinance (1952: para.21) defined it as "any school providing for children of all races a six-year course of free primary education with a Malayan orientation and appropriate for children between the ages of six and twelve and using in the main for this purpose the official languages of the Federation and providing facilities of instruction in Kuo-yu and Tamil". It further added that there would be only two types of national schools, i.e. either using Malay or English as the medium of instruction (see Chapter 2). In contrast, the Education Ordinance, 1957 (para.2:p.34) divided the primary school into two categories. The first was the "standard primary school" which means,

"a primary school in which the medium of instruction is the National language and in which the English language is a compulsory subject of instruction and in which facilities for the teaching of the Chinese and Tamil languages shall be made available if the parents of fifteen children in the school so request."

The second category was the "standard-type primary school" which the Ordinance (ibid.) defined as:

"a primary school in which the medium of instruction is the Chinese, Tamil or English language and in which the National language and the English language if not the medium of instruction are compulsory subjects of instruction and in which facilities for the teaching of the Chinese and Tamil languages if not the medium of instruction shall be made available if the parents of fifteen children in the school so request" (ibid.).

The paradox was that the Education Ordinance, 1952 attempted to narrow down the educational pluralism that was in existence by making the official language of the country as the language of instruction in schools, while the Razak Report, as seen in the Education Ordinance, 1957, further sanctified the four language streams at the primary level. By doing so, the Report in fact maintained the status-quo of other languages, a feature inherited from the colonial past.

From the Report it could also be concluded that the recommendations of the Committee were far from creating a single system with the national language as the common medium of instruction. In fact it was an overt attempt to make the primary school pupils bilingual and in some cases trilingual (The Razak Report, para.18,54 & 62). This was due to the disparity in the ways languages were being treated in the curriculum. For instance, pupils who attended a Malay medium school would be bilingual in the sense that English language was a compulsory subject in it. The same was true of those who attended an English medium school where the national language was a compulsory subject. However, for pupils who attended a Tamil or Chinese medium school, they would be trilingual for besides learning their own language, they would also have to learn English and Malay as compulsory subjects.

It would also be of interest to note the educational policy as stated in the Education Ordinance, 1952 and the one which was proposed by the Razak Report as enshrined in the Education Ordinance, 1957. In the former, there was an interplay of various ethnic demands and pressure over the nature of the educational system that was to take shape as seen

in the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports (see Chapter 2). But they were all done within the framework of colonialism. In the latter and in anticipation of independence, the presence of ethnic demands and pressure were in fact even greater. For instance, altogether 151 memoranda were received from all sections of the community (The Razak Report, para.3) Even more important was the process of deliberation which was carried out within a "Malayan circle" among whom had already envisaged a task of guiding the country towards nationhood. Common to all, was the framework they were deliberating upon and this was over the type of educational policy which would be suitable for a plural society like Malaya.

Under the Education Ordinance, 1952 (para. 9), the educational policy was "to achieve a sound education of all children in the Federation using in the main, for this purpose, the official languages of the Federation and bringing together pupils of all races in a national type school with a Malayan orientation". In addition, facilities were also provided for learning other languages. The Education Ordinance, 1957 (para.3) on the other hand, called for the establishment of a "national system of education acceptable to the people as a whole which will satisfy their needs and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation, with the intention of making the Malay language the national language of the country whilst preserving and sustaining the growth of the language and culture of peoples other than Malays living in the country". Without doubt, the 1957 Ordinance was a watered down and a more flexible version of the policy as compared with the earlier proposal.

Conspicuous in both the Ordinances was over the language of instruction in schools. The Education Ordinance, 1952 for instance, was unequivocal in its policy of recognising only the official languages of the country for instructional purposes. This was not the case with the Razak Report or the Educational Ordinance, 1957. It lacked the clarity and commitment in specifying the language of instruction that was to be adopted, be it national or official. Vaguely the Education Ordinance, 1957 echoed the terms of reference as outlined in the Razak Report. However, the Committee's definition over the national language and its role in the national system of education (The Razak Report, para.12) was not incorporated in the 1957 Ordinance, except in paragraph 5, which stated that "it shall be the duty of the Minister to secure the effective execution of the educational policy of the Federation including the progressive development of educational institutions where the National Language is the medium of instruction". But again, this assurance did not imply or emphasise the relevant goal as outlined in paragraph 12 of the Razak Report.

Could the Razak Report be called "national" when the national language was not given its proper place in the educational system and the curriculum content still retained its colonial character? The Education Ordinance, 1957 defined the "national language" as the Malay language. As such, the invocation of the word "national" should be justified by the implementation of the national language policy in the national system of education. Although the Razak Report did elevate the position of the national language to be on a par with English as the official language of the country by making it compulsory in all schools, it fell short of the

necessary assurances that it needed for its development so as to enable it to take the place of English. The absence of any positive recommendation that could enhance its role in the educational system implied that the Report was ambivalent in its commitment towards the national language. Indirectly, it could also be suggested that the Government was not prepared to commit itself to implementing a one-language policy in schools. This was in essence the content of the Razak Report as far as the question of the national language was concerned. When there was so much emphasis on English it was therefore not a blatant act to pronounce it as a conspiracy and an indirect attempt to promote the continued use of the colonial language.

With independence, it was normally assumed that it was the end of colonialism. But with the position of the colonial language becoming even stronger, it was seen to be the beginning of another era. Altbach (1972:543) correctly described the phenomenon of neo-colonialism that faced the newly independent nation as such:

"On the ruins of traditional colonial empire, however, has emerged a new, subtler, but perhaps equally influential kind of colonialism."

On the question of education he further stated that the preservation of linguistic status-quo of the metropole was "one of the most important aspects of neocolonialism and the impact of the colonial heritage on the Third World" (ibid.:546-7). In the words of Robinson (1981:183) the adoption of the Western model was not only expensive but also "inappropriate to most requirements of Third World countries".

Pierre Van den Berghe (cited in Buchanan, 1975:37) warned about the new form of imperialism by suggesting that:

"Of all the manifestations of neo-colonialism, the cultural and linguistic one is the most insidious, the least visible, and in the long run, the most effective ...Linguistic imperialism is the main type of colonial influence which a former great power can afford when its cultural prestige survives its political and military might,"

In the Malayan context, it was obvious that the colonial language had the upper hand at the expense of the disadvantaged majority who had all the confidence and hope over their national language. But this was not the view among the privileged few. Like the case of the Filipinos (Constantino, cited in Buchanan, op.cit.:37) where "English became the wedge that separated the Filipinos from their past and later was to separate educated Filipinos from the masses of their countrymen", the same could be said of the Malayan experience. As Buchanan (op.cit.:37) observed, "This policy of elite-training, using a non-indigenous language to inculcate non-indigenous values, deprived the societies of the Third World of their natural leaders".

The Education Bill, 1957

To provide legal effect to the recommendations of the Razak Report, the Education Bill, 1957 was introduced in the Federal Legislative Council on March 7 of the same year. In the words of Dato' Abdul Razak, the Bill represented "the maximum agreement possible under present conditions of education in this country" (LCD, March 7, 1957: col.2530). He even considered the Bill as "the constitution, the charter for the children of the new independent Malaya" (ibid.col.2531).

The debates that followed did not invoke much criticism towards the Bill. Instead, praises were showered on Dato' Abdul Razak for the "spirit of tolerance, goodwill and understanding" when formulating the Bill (ibid.:col.2558). However, certain features emerged from the debates that re-inforced the view which Buchanan (op.cit) had been expounding. For instance, a Member of the Council was relieved over the retention of English in the new school system that he made an observation that was worth noting:

"We also know that with the various languages of this country and the national language, we will get ourselves lost outside the territory and to overcome this the Bill has provided for the teaching of what is an international language, that is the English language" (LCD, March 7, 1957:col.2544).

Another Member was unhappy when English schools were placed under the "standard type" category. In his statement of appeal for the change of status he argued that:

"It is a great pity that the English school is derogated to a subsidiary position. The English school is a grand institution - an institution from the portals of which more than 90 per cent of the Honourable Members of this Council have emerged, an institution which has given to the country Ministers of State, an institution which has produced the first elected Chief Minister for the country. I am sorry to see that we are not utilising fully the services of this institution" (LCD, op.cit.)

The above statement which unnecessarily glorified the English schools was sharply rebuked by Councillor Abdul Hamid Khan. In his reply he commented that, "by August 31st we would have shed our old clothes of being colonial people for that of a new status of an independent people and we do not wish to perpetuate our colonial status by thinking that English schools are everything in the world" (LCD,op.cit:col.2559).

Unfortunately, this type of statement was rare. In most cases the debates were mild and restrained. This could be attributed to the dominance of the Alliance members who controlled fifty-one out of the fifty-two Council seats. Secondly, independence was only a few months away and it was important for the newly elected Government to see that the Bill would not create much controversy, especially when it was debated in the Council. This was to create an impression that there was a sense of solidarity and consensus among the multi-ethnic leaders of the country.

The Razak Report: Reviewed

When introducing the Education Bill, 1957 to Parliament, Dato' Abdul Razak stressed its importance in the following terms:

"that this Bill is one of the most important legislations which have ever been introduced into the Council since it is the constitution, the charter for the children of the new independent Malaya which will emerge into full nation-hood in just over five months time. This is, therefore, one of the most important piles upon which, in the shifting sands which have hitherto retarded our development as one nation, the future of this country is to be strongly and securely founded"
(LCD, March 7, 1957: col.2531).

The importance of the Bill was reflected in the above statement and this necessitated the urgent attention given to it despite the fact that the country was yet to achieve its independence and the members of the legislature were only partly being elected. Politically, it could be an advantage to the Government to give special treatment to an issue of such importance. On the other hand, it could turn out to be a liability. Since the Bill was not passed by a fully-elected Council, it could be

claimed as illegitimate by opponents of the Bill who viewed it as a final product of colonialism.

Paradoxically, the argument over the Report did not emerge within that ideological line of thought as envisaged. Instead of focussing themselves on the subject of education per se, the controversy that developed centred mostly on the question of a school system that could accommodate the divergent needs of the various ethnic groups. As such, the policy-makers had to confront not only the problems of policy-making and its due process of implementation, but also to narrow-down the diverging tendencies that the educational policy had created. The problems that emerged thus clouded the basic objective and the fundamental philosophy which the Razak Report intended to pursue. It was in this light that education could be perceived as the final product of a "political struggle" (Archer, op.cit.:3) and, in the final analysis, it came back to the basic political question of "who gets what, when and how much?" which Lassewell (1950) had appropriately expounded.

For an issue of importance, like education, there is no way that it could be de-politicized. Interest in this institution is phenomenal. The fact that "people could improve their market 'worth' from very little with no schooling to high earning capability with large amounts of schooling" (Carnoy, 1974:4) made it inevitable that education should be in the limelight of politics. As Maurice Kogan (1978:20) noted:

"... education is political. It is volatile. It strongly reflects the often conflicting and wide-ranging preferences of a society which it also helps to sustain, improve, embellish and from which it draws resources. If politics are the way

in which individuals assert their claims and have them reconciled with the claims of others, education reflects and clarifies and expresses those claims in the society, though it cannot of itself reconcile them".

Kogan's observation is appropriate for it reflects the inseparable issue of "education and politics". In Malaya for instance, the shelling began as soon as the Razak Report on Education was made public in March, 1956 and henceforth never stopped. The Malay's view of the Razak Report for example could be generalised from a speech made by Zulkifli bin Muhammed, the PMIP Deputy President. According to him, "the Islamic Party will continue to strive for realisation of the object of using the Malay language and education as the unifying factor in the country" (The Straits Echo, Aug.6,1959). To the Malays, the question of the Malay language and its position in the national education system was not an item that could be compromised. At the same time, the Chinese were even more vocal in their displeasure towards the Razak Report. They felt that the Report was in contradiction of what they had been demanding. The Report thus generated a strong disapproval from the contending groups which subsequently developed a crisis of confidence within the MCA and UMNO that together with the MIC formed a partnership in the Alliance Government. This incident, which almost split the coalition Government, occurred at a critical period when the country was facing its first post-independent election. It was with this background that the Alliance promised to include the review of the existing educational policy in its 1959 election manifesto (The Straits Echo, July 21, 1959).

Thus, in keeping with this political pressure, as suggested by a Member of the opposition party (P.D., Aug.10, 1960: col.2133) and by taking its

cue from the Razak Report itself (para.16) the Government appointed a committee¹ in February 1960 with the following terms of reference:

"To review the Education Policy set out in Federal Legislative Council Paper No. 21 of 1956 (the Report of the Education Committee, 1956) which was approved in principle by resolution of the Federal Legislative Council on the 16th of May, 1956, and in particular its implementation so far and for the future; to consider the national and financial implications of this policy including the introduction of free primary education; and to make recommendations" (The Education Review Committee, 1960, para.1).

Basically, the Education Review Committee, 1960 re-affirmed the educational policy as recommended by the Razak Report. It pointed out that the 1956 Report was suitable for the needs of the country.

"After examining the implementation of the policy recommended in the 1956 Report and considering the representations submitted to us, we are satisfied that the main features of the 1956 policy are suited to the present needs of the country" (Education Review Committee, 1960, *ibid.*:para.62).

However, the Education Review Committee proposed two new structural changes. The first was the raising of the school leaving age to fifteen, and secondly, it called for the introduction of universal free primary education effective from 1962 (Education Review Committee, 1960, para.63). In the former, the main purpose was "to raise the school leaving age to 15 and to provide nine years of education for all those pupils who did not qualify for full secondary education including the Sekolah Lanjutan Kampung² (see Appendix B).

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1. Members of the Committee were: En. Abdul Rahman bin Haji Talib (Chairman), Tun Leong Yew Koh, En. Mohd. Khir Johari, Dato' Wong Pow Nee, Capt. Abdul Hamid Khan, En. V. Manickavasagam, En. Koh Kim Leng, En. Dahari Hj. Mohd Ali and En. Abdul Chani bin Ishak.
 2. "Sekolah Lanjutan Kampung" - "Rural Continuation School".

There will be a three-year course after the end of the six-year primary course with a pronounced vocational content which will help these pupils to acquire manual skills which they will be able to apply according to their environment, whether urban or rural" (Education Review Committee,1960, para.93). As to the latter, the Education Review Committee (para.121) recommended "that primary education should be free in all fully-assisted schools; that some increase in fees in secondary schools would be justified (the rates of school fees have not been changed for a generation); and that as an incentive to the development of education in the national language no fees should be charged in national schools and classes after the primary level".

This was a change from the recommendations as outlined in the Razak Report (para.66) which stated that "a selection examination at the end of the primary course for entry to secondary schools" would be given to the pupils. For those who passed this examination, they would proceed to the secondary level of education; while those who failed would be given "a Primary School Leaving Certificate" (Razak Report:para.66). The Education Review Committee found the system defective and gave three reasons for this assessment. Firstly, under the existing system "most children end their formal education at the age of 12 or 13 (Education Review Committee, para.86). Secondly, the existing system did not create much opportunity for the majority of the pupils to proceed to secondary schools and thus created much human wastage (Education Review Committee:para.87). Thirdly, it was felt that "children at the age of 13 are too young for any normal and legal form of employment outside their own families. This creates a menacing social problem" (Education Review Committee:para.88).

With free education being provided at the primary level, the Government thus fulfilled the objective as outlined in the "Karachi Plan"¹ (Francis Wong & Tiang Hong, 1974:116). This development also entailed an automatic form of promotion at the primary level where there would be no retention for pupils in any class or standard (Education Review Committee, 1960:para.89(b)). At the post-primary level, education would be free only in the Malay medium schools, in the Rural Continuation School and to pupils from "Special Malay primary classes moving to fully-assisted secondary schools" (Education Review Committee, 1960:para.122). From here it was evident that the Education Review Committee was favouring the national language stream in the hope that by so doing it would help towards the development of education which utilised the national language as the main medium of instruction.

While the Education Review Committee agreed on the basic principles as enshrined in the Razak Report, it was somehow sceptical in the concept of an educational policy that was "acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole" as stated in paragraph 9 of that document. Pertaining to this clause, the Education Review Committee remarked that "it would, however, be incompatible with an educational policy designed to create national consciousness and having the intention of making the Malay language the national language of the country to extend and perpetuate a language and racial differential throughout the publicly-financed educational system" (Education Review Committee, 1960:para.20). In this sense, the Education Review Committee was more realistic in its perception

1. The "Karachi Plan" was proposed by seventeen Asian countries who were members of UNESCO. The Conference which was held in Karachi (December 1959 - January 1960) proposed that each member country should achieve the objective of providing at least seven years of free universal education (see Wong and Hong: op.cit.:116).

of an educational system that was to be national in stature.

However, the Education Review Committee, 1960 created a paradox of its own. Although under the terms of reference it could recommend certain changes, somehow it did not propose any remedy whatever for the ambiguities contained in the Razak Report. Instead, the Education Review Committee justified the existence of the four main languages of instruction in the primary schools and also provided the facilities for "Kuo-yu and Tamil to be taught in assisted English and Malay medium primary schools at the request of the parents of fifteen children from any school ... and by permitting the teaching of languages and culture other than Malay and English in fully assisted secondary schools" (Education Review Committee, 1960: para.20).

The Education Review Committee, 1960 somehow tried to amend the flaws by recommending certain changes at the secondary level of education. Firstly, it ended a partial grant-in-aid to secondary schools which did not conform to the national system of education in accordance with Section 37 and 39 of the Education Ordinance, 1957 (Education Review Committee, 1960, para.164). Section 37 of the 1957 Ordinance stated that:

"The Minister shall, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance, maintain all existing secondary schools which were in receipt of grant-in-aid or other similar financial assistance from the Government on the day immediately preceding the appointed date and may, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance, establish or take over and maintain other secondary schools in so far as moneys voted or provided for the purpose permit: provided that a secondary school other than a National type secondary school shall be maintained only for such period as the Minister shall deem sufficient to enable such school to conform to the requirements of a National type secondary school."

Section 39 of the Ordinance, 1957, in accordance with Section 37, gave the power to the Minister to cease maintaining any national type secondary school which failed to conform to the requirements of the Ordinance. In this case, the schools were given one year's notice to abide by the rule.

Thus, paragraph 164 of the Education Review Committee, 1960, created a dilemma for the secondary schools which had the medium of instruction other than the official languages of the country. To conform would mean that the schools would have to change the medium of instruction to either Malay or English. Failing to conform would mean the loss of financial grants. To these schools, the Education Review Committee, 1960 (para.164) recommended the following:

- "(a) that those secondary schools which are still partially assisted should be informed that they will become eligible for and will receive full assistance with effect from the 1st of January, 1962, if in the meantime they have satisfied the Minister that they have made arrangements to conform fully as from that date or earlier with all current statutory requirements;
- (b) that partial assistance as at present should continue until the end of 1961;
- (c) that partial assistance should then be discontinued under Sections 37 and 39 of the Ordinance, unless the school concerned has, in the meantime, satisfied the Minister that it has made arrangements to conform fully with all statutory requirements as from the beginning of 1962, or earlier, in which case full assistance may be granted under (a);
- (d) that schools which do not so satisfy the Minister should be regarded as independent schools ineligible for any assistance from Government funds as from the beginning of 1962."

These recommendations are quoted at length for indirectly they incorporated a strategy which would eliminate secondary schools that refused to conform to the national stated policy. This was to ensure that public funds were channelled only to schools that were willing to accept certain conditions as laid out by the Government. Under this arrangement, schools which refused to conform could still exist with the status of "independent secondary schools" but being deprived of any financial grants from the state. To some extent, this measure had a slight relevance to the strategy which Archer (op.cit:107) termed as "restrictive". The strategy implied the removal of "some of the facilities owned by the dominant group, or preventing it from supplying these resources to the educational sphere" (Archer, op.cit.:107).

Although the Education Review Committee, 1960 did not invoke any form of legislation that called for the abolition of these secondary schools that provided instruction in languages other than the country's official languages, the conforming clause nonetheless suggested that the Government was determined to recognise only two languages for instructional purposes at the secondary level of education. This new development created considerable discomfort among the Chinese community. Mr. Too Joon Hing, an independent Member of Parliament, described the Report of the Education Review Committee as deviating from the fundamental principles as had been laid out in the Razak Report (The Straits Echo, Oct. 20, 1961). In his response to the Chinese educationalists who rejected the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960, Khir Johari declared that even if Chinese were to be made one of the official languages of the country, it would not satisfy them. "They will only be satisfied when Malaya becomes part of China" (The Straits Echo, Nov. 9, 1960).

However, in Parliament, the Minister of Education argued that the issue over the language of instruction in secondary schools was not new. According to him, the schools were given three years since the enactment of the Education Ordinance, 1957, for them to adapt in accordance with the requirement for a national-type secondary school (F.D., August 10, 1960). Thus, whether the schools wished to conform or be independent was left entirely for the individual school to decide. As the Minister of Education pointed out:

"Schools which do not wish to conform until 1962 should be considered as schools which refused aid from the Government and like the 153 independent schools, they will not receive any aid from the Government" (PD, Aug. 10, 1960: col.2126).

Besides the conforming clause, the Education Review Committee, 1960 was also specific over the languages that were to be used in public examinations. Except for the Malayan Secondary School Entrance Examination which would be set in the four languages used in the primary schools, other public examinations such as the Lower Certificate and the Federation of Malaya Certificate of Education would be in the official languages of the country (Education Review Committee, 1960: para. 172, 173 & 174). To emphasise the point, the Education Review Committee (para. 175) stressed that "for the sake of national unity, the objective must be to eliminate communal secondary schools from the national system of assisted schools and to ensure that pupils of all races shall attend both National and National-type secondary schools. An essential element of this policy is that public examinations at secondary level should be conducted only in the country's official languages." Thus, under the Education Review

Committee, 1960, pupils had to be prepared for the public examination which would be conducted either in English or Malay. This implied that other than in subjects like languages and literature, the medium of instruction in all conforming schools would be the official languages of the country.

Another positive point of the Education Review Committee was the assurance given towards the development of the national language in the school system. Both the Lower Certificate and the Federation of Malaya Certificate of Education examinations would be set in the national language beginning in 1960 and 1962 respectively (Education Review Committee, 1960: para. 25).

Although the Education Review Committee did outline the steps taken towards the development of the national language in the national school system, like the Razak Report, it did not categorically provide any recommendation for the establishment of Malay secondary schools. The Education Review Committee, 1960 thus retained the policy of opening up classes in the English medium secondary schools, using Malay as the medium of instruction (Education Review Committee, para. 39c). As for making the national language the main medium of instruction, it was not committed in its implementation especially in terms of the time schedule. In this matter the Committee was ambivalent and unsure. For instance, paragraph 61 of the Education Review Committee stated that the measures which had been taken "represent firm initial steps in the process of giving the National Language its rightful place in the educational system but there is still a long road to travel before the ultimate objective of making the National Language the main medium of instruction in all

schools can be fully realised." This was again re-emphasised by the Minister of Education when he introduced the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960 to Parliament on August 10, 1960. While emphasising that the development of the national language was one of the main objectives of the national system of education, he also noted that "it is the most important instrument for national unity and it must be the basis in our national educational system" but at the end he cautioned that it must not be rushed (PD, Aug. 10, 1960: col.2130-2131).

The Education Review Committee and the Political Reaction

If the Razak Report was discussed in an atmosphere of cordiality, it was not so with the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960 when it was brought up in Parliament in August 1960. By this time, the Malayan Parliament had fully elected representatives. It was in 1959 that the first national election was held since independence and the outcome was different from the first Federal election which had taken place in 1955. In the first place, the Parliamentary seats were increased from 51 as in 1955 to 104 in 1959. Secondly, while in 1955 there was only one opposition member, this number had increased to 30 by 1959 (see Table 4). Thirdly, all the members of the legislatures were elected representatives as compared to the previous Parliament where it was shared between the elected and nominated members. With all these changes, it was inevitable that the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960 would have a rough passage through Parliament. In moving the motion that Parliament accepted in principle the policy as recommended by the Education Review Committee, the Minister of Education stressed two important issues that had been the focus of ethnic controversy. First was the conforming clause

which had been strongly opposed by the Chinese Schools Board of Governors. As to this, the Minister pointed out:

"In this respect, The Razak Report, 1956 in paragraphs 38 and 39 had stated clearly that the Government would establish two types of schools. The Report had been passed by the Legislative Council and this proved that the matter was not new. The Education Ordinance 1957 had given a period of transition which within that period, the Minister had the power to provide grants to schools other than the national-type secondary schools with a reasonable time period to enable to the schools to adapt itself in accordance with the characteristics of a national-type secondary school" (PD, August 10, 1960: col.2125).

The Minister again re-emphasised the objective that had been laid out in the Razak Report. This was:

"... to unite children from all races under a common system of education in which the national language will be the main medium of instruction. Efforts towards achieving this objective had to be done full-heartedly - I proposed to set up more classes in the Government primary schools where the medium of instruction is Malay and this process of development would continue in all stages when teachers are fully trained" (PD, Aug. 10, 1960: col.2130).

Secondly, the Minister also made a clarification on the position of the national language in the school system. He stressed that:

"However, we must face the reality. The Government has no intention of making the Malay language as the medium of instruction by sacrificing the standard of education in our schools. As had been mentioned in the 1956 Report, progress towards achieving this goal cannot be rushed but must be gradual. I call on the Honourable Members who seriously love the country and our children to be patient and trust that the Government is sincere in its determination to make the Malay language as the main medium of instruction in our schools" (PD, Aug. 10, 1960: col.2131).

When analysing the above statement, it was quite certain that the Government was not sure and even vacillated over the position of the national language in the national school system.

In the debates that followed, Mr. Veerappen, a member of the opposition submitted that "the Report is a failure" (PD, Aug. 10, 1960:col.2146). He further argued that the crux of the matter was over the examinations that were to be taken in the official languages of the country. He contended that the ruling forced Chinese students to take the examination in English. He then asked the following questions:

"Is the English language the language of Malaya? Are we trying to create Englishmen in Malaya or are we trying to create Malaysians in Malaya? Do we want a Malaysian outlook or an English outlook? ... we do not agree that English is more foreign to these people than Malay. They are in this country and they should accept the national language; but to ask them to learn a language which is 8,000 miles away is incredible" (ibid.).

A PMIP Member, En. Zulkiflee bin Muhammad was also concerned over the prominence given to the English language. While admitting its importance, he also cautioned the Government on the influence the language had and that it must be "jealously treated when implementing the policy" (FD, Aug. 10, 1960: col.2174).

Outside the House, the debates continued. As has been observed, dissatisfaction over the Razak Report was further fuelled by the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960. The issue became even more serious when political entrepreneurs, teachers, nationalists, chauvinists and the public in general began to take a very serious interest in the future of

Malayan education. Added to that, the debates that developed began to incorporate the fundamental principles that had been enshrined in the Federal Constitution. True enough, just like any other public issue, the debates on education became acutely polarised, not in terms of basic philosophy but rather in terms of ethnicity and language.

In Retrospect

In establishing a national system of education, Malaya faced a similar dilemma to that experienced by other newly independent states. The demands that the national system of education should be based on local philosophy and needs was dwarfed by the colonial interest represented by the new elites who had been the product of colonial grooming. The Razak Report was one shining example where the remnants of colonialism were clearly manifested. Of particular significance was in the area dealing with the language of instruction in schools. For instance, throughout the discussion over the Razak Report (LCD, May 16, 1956: col.1144-1205), most of the concern shown by the Council Members was on the future of the English language rather than emphasising the role that the national language should contribute towards the development of the country's national system of education. This colonial influence was so great that it had come to the stage where even among the Malay Members of the Legislative Council themselves showed very little confidence in their own language (LCD, May 16, 1956: col.1194). The same trend of thought was again expressed when the Education Bill was tabled on March 7, 1957.

Admittedly, there were changes in the structural and organisational set-up as recommended in the Razak Report. But a newly independent nation

needs more than just structural changes. What the country needed was an entirely new educational set-up, both in content and philosophy to suit the needs of an independent country. Thus, any national system of education had to be free from both the political and psychological influences of the colonial past. It was in this vital area that the Razak Report failed in its task.

Apparent in the Razak Report and the Education Review Committee, 1960 was the overt act of perpetuating inequality in opportunity at the secondary level and the re-inforcement of ethnic segregation at the primary stages of education. In the former, both committees negated the existence of rural-urban educational anomalies. The policy of opening Malay secondary classes in the English medium secondary schools was ^{an} open discrimination towards the rural-based population. This was due to the fact that most of the English medium secondary schools were located in the urban centres and therefore not easily accessible to the Malay pupils who mostly lived in the rural areas. Sheer distance from these schools generally prevented Malay pupils from attending these classes. At the same time, being attached to an established institution, the psychological barrier in terms of social interaction, opportunity in the use of facilities and the feelings of freedom and pride were conspicuously absent. In fact these "embryo classes" were like squatters that lived day by day at the discretion of the parent institutions.

Another aspect of the paradox was the continuation of the ethnic segregation as manifested by the establishment of primary schools that provided instructions in four different languages. The preservation of ethnic

schools was in fact a recognition of the concept of educational pluralism, and element of "divide and rule" which had been so successfully implemented during the period of colonial rule.

Lastly, even with the introduction of the common content syllabuses in all schools with a view "towards the development of a common Malayan outlook" (The Razak Report, 1956, para. 115 & The Education Review Committee, 1960, para. 46), it would be just an "innovation of nomenclature" (Foster, 1965:185) for in the final analysis it was the mode of evaluation and its credentialism that determined the final content of the curriculum. So long as the school leaving certificate was being dictated by an Examination Syndicate from Britain, it was inevitable that the content of the curriculum would be tilted away from Malaya. Thus, the national system of education had nothing "national" to be proud of. The reluctance of the policy makers to deviate from the umbrella of colonialism was in the final analysis the essence of Malayan education during the first decade of independence.

Chapter Five

Education, Constitution and Politics

As has been mentioned in the last chapter, the flaws of the proposed national education system as envisaged in the Razak Report were many. Among them were the retention of the plural school system at the primary level of instruction, the failure to recommend the establishment of Malay medium secondary schools, the strong colonial colouring of the structure and content of the curriculum and the ambiguity of the policy itself. However, these defects failed to generate the necessary public interest. Instead, they were all eclipsed by the language clause of the Report, especially in relation to the position of the national language and other languages in the proposed school system.

As the terms of reference in the Razak Report (para.1) suggested, it was the intention of the Government to make schools the instrument for the socialisation of the young. To achieve this end, a common language of instruction was recommended. It was not an empty formula. As Ekuban (op.cit.:128) pointed out:

"A common language is an effective instrument in forging national unity. Political slogans such as "one people, one language" heard in countries like Israel are not empty words".

But this view was in contradiction of the stand taken by the immigrant communities who felt that all languages deserved recognition, especially in the national education system of the country. This philosophical difference over the "language of instruction" in schools did

not however confine itself only to the realm of education. It somehow touched on the very basis of the country's constitutional framework, the bargaining processes that took place during the course of its formulation, and the spirit of compromise and reconciliation over certain matters related to ethnic interests. Although education per se was not incorporated directly in this bargaining process, much of the recommendations in the Razak Report were inextricably linked to the constitution itself. All these were in relation to the position of the national language in proposed national education system (Razak Report: para.1a, 12 and Ch. III) and the status given to other languages. Thus, an understanding of the Malayan constitution was therefore imperative if one was to analyse the development of Malayan education and the political process that accrued with it.

Education and Article 152 of the Constitution

In Malaya, the supremacy of the constitution is unchallenged. In the words of Malaya's foremost judge, Tun Mohammed Suffian (1976:17-18), "It is supreme in the sense that there is no law which it cannot make, repeal or amend, that no person can declare its Act invalid, and that it cannot legislate to prevent the repeal or amendment of its own enactments". For a plural society like Malaya, the Federal Constitution, besides embodying the rule of law, also acted as a source of reference for the individual and societies. It outlines one's legal position in the society and one's relationship with the state. It was in this context that the constitutional-making process became subjected to much political opposition and scrutinization when the British Government introduced the "Malayan Union" plan immediately following the end of the Second World

War (see Chapter 2). The same development occurred in 1956 when the country was preparing for its independence (Vasil, 1980:105-106). However in the latter, the differences that emerged were amicably solved through the process of bargaining and compromise among contending groups (Leifer, 1969:203).

Under these circumstances it could be summed up that the constitution of Malaya to a certain extent was a by-product of national consensus and conciliation. To use the words of Jennings (1959:82), it was "an instrument of national co-operation, and the spirit of co-operation is as necessary as the instrument". It was in the same spirit that the Federal Constitution of 1957 was written. Besides embodying "the rule of law" (Jennings, *ibid*:62) it also attempted to reconcile the various communal interests that prevailed within the polity. Of particular importance were matters that defined the position of the indigenous community vis-a-vis the immigrants, especially over the questions of citizenship, special rights of the Malays and the national language of the country. The problems that surrounded these issues were mostly based on the indigenous-immigrant sentiments that had been mentioned earlier. For instance, the non-Malay's call for the liberalisation of the citizenship requirements and the adoption of a multi-lingual policy was disagreeable to the Malays. They felt that the conferment of citizenship status would also provide these immigrants with political recognition, which the Malays were still unprepared to give, fearing that this would threaten their position as the natives of the country.¹ Secondly, the Malays were still suspicious of the loyalty of the immigrant communities towards their new home.²

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1. In terms of numbers, the Malays had only a slight edge over the immigrants. See Legislative Council Debates, July 10, 1957: col.2860.
 2. The Chinese in particular were identified with the communist terrorists who tried to impose their rule over the country. To the Malays, this meant domination from China.

As a corollary to the question of citizenship, there were also issues related to the national language and the special position of the Malays. However, these differences were reconciled during the period of constitutional negotiation and what emerged was a quid-pro-quo arrangement, where, by and large the Malays compromised over the liberalization of citizenship status for the immigrant communities in return for recognition over "the special rights of the Malays" and accepting Malay as the national language of the country.¹ As a liberalized form, the final product of the Federal Constitution provided a single nationality for those who qualified either by birth or by fulfilling certain requirements such as a period of residence, passing the national language test and by taking the oath of loyalty (Federal Constitution, Pt.111: para.14-19). This process of bargaining was essentially the spirit behind the formulation of the 1957 constitution. As Mohammed Suffian (1976:251) pointed out:

"... in return for the relaxation of the conditions for granting to non-Malays of citizenship, the rights and privileges of Malays as the indigenous people of the country were to be written into the constitution, and there were other provisions also agreed to by the non-Malay leaders."

It is not difficult to point out "the other provisions that were agreed by the non-Malays" as mentioned by Mohammed Suffian. Language was one aspect that had been the subject of political controversy during the period of the constitutional negotiation process. Tun Tan Siew Sin

1. For detailed discussions, see K. J. Ratnam (1965:Ch.3 & 4), and B. Simandjuntak (1969:84-93 and 182-186).

described how agreements over the language issue were reached:

"The non-Malay communities set great store on their own language and cultures. Let me point out that in the first instance, the Reid Constitution as originally drafted said nothing whatsoever about the preservation and development of Chinese or Tamil, or for that matter any other language. When it was suggested to the Malay leaders that the Constitution should explicitly state that the preservation and development of both Chinese and Tamil should be encouraged and fostered, they readily agreed to it. I quote this incident to indicate to those outside our immediate circle that the Malay leaders are essentially fair and statesmanlike" (LCD, July 10, 1957: col.2871).

The above principle as outlined by Tun Tan Siew Sin was clearly visible in Article 152 of the Federal Constitution which stated that:

"The national language shall be the Malay language and shall be in such script as Parliament may by law provide:

Provided that -

- (a) no person shall be prohibited or prevented from using (otherwise than for official purposes), or from teaching or learning, any other language; and
- (b) nothing in this Clause shall prejudice the right of the Federal Government or of any State Government to preserve and sustain the use and study of the language of any other community in the Federation
(Federal Constitution, Pt.XII: Art.152).

However, for official purposes the constitution still maintained the eminence of the English language. Article 152 (2) for instance, emphasised

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1. A Commission that was formed to devise a constitution for independent Malaya was headed by Lord Reid "a distinguished Lord of Appeal" from Britain. Henceforth, the Commission is often referred to as the "Reid Commission" (see Mohammed Suffian, op. cit.:11).

that "Notwithstanding the provisions of Clause (1), for a period of ten years after Merdeka Day, and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides, the English language may be used in both Houses of Parliament, in the Legislative Assembly of every State, and for all other official purposes" (Federal Constitution, op.cit.: Art.152 (2)). Also for a period of ten years after independence, all Bills that were to be introduced in both Houses of Parliament or their amendments and "Acts of Parliament and all subsidiary legislation issued by the Federal Government" (Art. 152 (3)) and all Court proceedings shall be in the English language (Art. 152 (4 & 5)).

Basically, the Merdeka constitution did not change the position of the various languages. It merely sets the dateline for the change. In fact for the first ten years after independence the status-quo on languages remained. The open-ended nature of the language clause left many questions unanswered and the most important was over the position of the national language during that ten-year period. This led to the different interpretations as to how Article 152 should be operated. First, should the ten-year period be considered as transitional, then what would be the position of the national language in relation to English? Some felt that during this transitional period and in anticipation of taking over the function of an official language from English, Malay should be increasingly used to facilitate the change that was to take place. Thus, after the end of the ten-year period, the change from English to Malay would be effective and complete. Another view was that Malay language was still inadequate and wanted more time for the change from English to Malay to take effect. This argument was often expressed by Members of

the Legislative Council during the debates on the Razak Report. For example, a Malay member of the Legislature commented that:

"We should remember that the educational policy which is already in force for decades cannot in a short period cause the other languages to disappear through legislation. We should implement it gradually because we are quite aware of the fact that there is an acute shortage of teachers at the moment, shortage in everything, we even lack the funds"
(LCD, May 16, 1956).

In the pragmatic approach of the former, while recognising the official role of English, there was also a wish to see that preparations were made immediately after independence. The gradualist on the other hand, while not as vocal, remained firmly to the words of the constitution, i.e. for the next ten years English would be the official language of the country. As to the future, it was left to Parliament to decide.

The way Article 152 of the constitution was interpreted had a strong bearing on the direction and pace of the national education policy. The Razak Report was explicit in its objective of making the national language as the main medium of instruction in schools. However, the uncertainty of the Report being implemented remained, for it also emphasised "that progress towards this goal cannot be rushed and must be gradual" (Razak Report, para.12). The Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960 (paras. 22, 28, 61 and 299), despite re-affirming the objective of making the national language the main medium of instruction in schools, created further ambiguity and dubiousness towards the implementation of the national language policy in schools.

If the constitutional objective of Article 152 was to make Malay the sole official language of the country, the national education policy as envisaged in the Razak Report should also simultaneously be moving in the same direction. But while the constitution had a fixed time period for the implementation of the national language policy, the Razak Report was vague, uncommitted and unscheduled. Since the national language policy was enshrined in the constitution, it was inevitable that it became the source of reference for those who would like to see its extension being felt in the national system of education. At the same time, with such importance being attached to the question of language, either as the national language or the language of instruction in schools, it was also inevitable that the issue would become entwined into the Malayan political scene.

Education and the Politics of Language

In Malaya, education and politics were closely related and it was almost impossible to divorce one from the other. This phenomenon could be attributed to the very nature of Malayan society which seemed not to view things beyond the perimeter of ethnic interest. The national education policy was one which became the subject of ethnic interpretations and misconceptions. Disagreement over this issue varied and much depended on how the relevant issues were perceived. This was especially true when in most cases formal education became the basis of one's upward social mobility and also a major determinant in getting access to the lucrative occupational opportunities. On the economic side, education belonged to the high investment area. For instance, "private investment in Malaya's First Five Year Plan, 1956-1960, amounting to \$ 2,000 million rose to

about \$ 2,900 million in the Second Five Year Plan, 1960-1965. The slice for education for the corresponding periods was from about \$ 61 million to \$ 252 million" (Ministry of Educ. Malaysia, 1968:26-27). In terms of numbers, there was also a tremendous increase in enrollment. For example, in 1957 the number of pupils that enrolled in the Government assisted schools was 983,701. This figure was increased to 1,729,913 in 1967 (see Table 8), an increase of 76%. Thus, in terms of the economic rewards that education could provide and the numbers that were involved in their pursuit, it was unfortunate that we had to face the basic political question of "Who gets what, when, how" and how much(Lasswell:op.cit.) when analysing the controversy that evolved around the development of Malayan education.

Table 8

No. of Pupils Enrolled in Assisted Schools

Primary and Secondary

Medium	1957	%	1967	%	% increase
Malay Primary Schools	441,567	44.9	591,560	34.2	34
English Primary Schools	130,360	13.2	289,056	16.7	122
Chinese Primary Schools	310,458	31.6	355,771	20.6	14
Tamil Primary Schools	50,766	5.2	79,203	4.6	56
English Secondary Schools	48,235	4.9	286,254	16.5	493
Malay Secondary Schools	2,315	0.2	128,069	7.4	5432
TOTAL	983,701	100.0	1,729,913	100.0	76

Source: The Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1968 Educational Statistics of Malaysia 1938 to 1967, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, figures derived from tables 4, 5, 6, 7, 12 & 13.

The crisis that developed over education began when, as part of the country's nation-building programme, a radical change of policy was made over the status of languages. Firstly, Malay was made the national language and secondly, the national language was ultimately to be the main medium of instruction in schools. These changes were received with mixed responses from the public. While Malay as the national language of the country was acceptable because of its necessity¹, the same reaction was absent when it was to be incorporated into the national education system.

Opponents to the national education policy could be identified and placed into three categories distinguishable by their educational backgrounds, and their perceptions of the policy differed in accordance with different interests and needs. Those with an English education, for instance, were in favour of retaining the eminence of the English language in schools. The Chinese educated on the other hand demanded that all the languages be treated as equal. But the Malays viewed the language question differently. While the advocates of the English language justified its importance in the context of educational progress and knowledge, and the Chinese viewed the exclusion of their language in the educational policy as parochial, undemocratic and "contravened the provisions of the United Nations Charter" (The Straits Echo, Aug. 16, 1954), the Malays perceived the whole issue on the basis of cultural legitimacy.

1. When presenting the constitutional proposal to the Legislative Council (July 10, 1957), Tunku Abdul Rahman stated that, "in any event, it is very important that our people should converse with one another in one common language and there can be no doubt that the common language must ultimately be the Malay language."

Their argument was that Malay language was native to the country and to the region, and the fact that in Indonesia, Malay¹ was used at all levels of instruction in schools tended to prove that English was not indispensable. As Dato' Abdul Razak (The Straits Echo, Nov. 15, 1955) himself pointed out:

"The Indonesian Republic has set an example to the Federation of Malaya and paved the way for the development of the Malay language. We have agreed to interchange experts on languages. If the languages could be reduced, our task of developing the Malay language in the Federation would be greatly simplified."

Of course the argument here could also be considered as rhetorically nationalistic. Nonetheless, viewed from another perspective there was some basis to it. Until independence, the Malay language in school did not reach beyond the primary level of instruction. It was only in 1958 that the first Malay secondary classes were opened. Thus there was scepticism from various quarters about the ability of the language to go beyond the enclaves of primary education. However, the Malays were confident of their language. They viewed it not in its capacity to fulfil the national obligation (such that it could function in the country's administrative and educational systems) but whether the language was given any opportunity to play that role. It should also be emphasised that the Malay language was not given any chance to develop either in administration, school or commerce by both the colonial government and the immigrant communities alike. An attempt to elevate its position as envisioned by the Barnes Report (op.cit.) failed to materialise because of the opposition from

1. In Indonesia, Malay language is called "Bahasa Indonesia" or Indonesian language.

the immigrant communities and the liberal attitudes of the colonial authority.

Debates on education took a new turn following the official release of the Razak Report on May 7, 1956. The Report which was supposed to embody the aspirations of the country as a whole unfortunately became a major source of ethnic discord. Many aspects of the Report were unacceptable to the non-Malays, especially on the position of their language in the national education system. In a plural society, it seemed inevitable that the issue became eminent considering the strong attachment each ethnic group had to their respective languages. In addition, having them incorporated into the national education system would even make it more important for they were assured of their continuity, development and recognition.

Basically, it was over the vital question of languages and their positions in the national school system that put the Government in a state of dilemma. The consociational politics, of which the Alliance Government was built was not in itself a conflict-proof arrangement. Much of the success depended on the willingness of every political leader to compromise towards moderation and the ability of the rank and file of the party to understand most of the decision-making processes that were taking place within the political framework of consociationalism. However, in a deeply fragmented society, the politics of moderation were often misconceived and misunderstood. Under such conditions, "pressure toward moderate middle-of-the-road attitudes are absent" (Lijphart, 1969:209). Furthermore, the decisions taken by these "cartel of elites" (Lijphart, *ibid.*:213)

were sometimes incongruous to the basic lines of thought as conceived by the masses. In some cases the differences were serious enough to even threaten the fragile arrangements which had been made among the various political partners. But it was most unlikely for the leaders of any political party to ignore the differences that existed for in the final analysis it was the reconciliation of these divergent views that determined their position within the party's hierarchy.

While the politics of accommodation may provide a short term consensus over policy matters, it will nevertheless remain free of conflicts as long as the participating group feels that there is no betrayal of their interest and there exists a "high degree of commitment to the maintenance of the system" among them (Lijphart, 1968:204). However, in the case of the Razak Report, the controversy that developed was over an issue that touched on the very nerve of ethnic interest. Under these circumstances, it was inevitable for an ethnic based political party to toe the line of its respective supporters rather than be committed to the cause that had been agreed upon by the central body. This nature of the controversy constantly threatened the fragile partnership of the Alliance Government, a political party based on ethnic coalition.

The Razak Report: Chinese Reaction

Ethnic related issues are easily vulnerable to chauvinistic appeals. For instance, language is one area where ethno-political conflict could easily be generated. The interplay of this variable is evident when analysing the Malayan educational development between 1955 and 1969.

This was the case with the Razak Report where the disagreement over policy was mainly centred upon the language of instruction rather than the effect of the structural changes that were to take place.

Peculiar in the debates were the demands and justifications made by each ethnic group for their respective languages to be incorporated into the new educational system. Since language is culturally and ethnically linked, the arguments seem to be more inclined towards cultural bias and as such they tend to deviate from the scope of education. It was in this temper that the Union of Chinese School Teachers Association, UCSTA, (Means, 1970:203) and the Chinese Press (Fennel, 1968:443) led their assault on the Razak Report. While the Alliance Government was successful in toning down the educational issues during the election of 1955, the same could not be effectively applied once the election was over. With the official release of the Report, the voices of dissatisfaction were again heard. For example, when the Razak Report was unveiled for the first time, The Straits Echo (May 7, 1956) hailed the new educational plan as "revolutionary". But dissatisfaction over the Report soon emerged. The Penang and Province Wellesly Chinese School Teachers Association called for the deletion of paragraph 12 of the Report which set the "ultimate objective" of making the national language as the main medium of instruction in schools. The Association felt that the controversial paragraph had contradicted the given terms of reference as expressed in paragraph 10 of the Razak Report which stated that "as a guiding principle the intention to make Malay the national language of the country whilst preserving and sustaining the growth of the language and cultures of non-Malay peoples living in the country" (The Straits Echo, May 15, 1956).

The response of the Federation of Indian School Teachers Union was also unfavourable to the Report. The Union feared that under the new educational policy, the progress of the Tamil language would be retarded and the status of Indian school teachers would be affected (The Straits Echo, June 23, 1956).

Being an ethnically based political party, the MCA was soon caught up in the controversy. Tan Siew Sin, an influential MCA Member of Parliament, in his attempt to placate the growing discontent among his party members gave his assurance to the Chinese educational institutions, teachers and the boards of management that he "personally has every confidence that there would be fairness in the implementation of the Bill (LCD, March 7, 1957: col.2553). Despite the strong opposition from the Chinese community the Education Bill, 1957, was passed without any dissent, even from among the Chinese members of the legislature. The reason for their support of the Bill was to some extent political rather than national. Firstly, debates over the Bill were held in March, a few months before independence. During this period, the constitution for independent Malaya was yet to be finalised and negotiations were still in progress especially on matters relating to the position of the country's various ethnic groups. The non-Malay members of the Legislative Council were invariably aware of this constitutional development and so as not to influence the negotiating process, they opted not to vote against the Bill. Secondly, the Razak Report was not arbitrarily imposed upon the nation. It was the outcome of a series of high-level committee discussions in which the Chinese as represented by the MCA and the Indians by the MIC were part of the decision-making process. It was therefore most unfortunate for the MCA and the MIC

leaders to be caught in these two political dilemmas. Under these conditions it was imperative for them not to oppose the Bill.

Being members of the Alliance Government, both the MCA and the MIC had to share the burden of responsibility over every policy that had been made. At the same time, it was also the party's responsibility to ensure that a fair deal was achieved whenever a policy-decision was taken. In cases where the decision taken came into conflict with the general demands of the party members, an added task emerged over the process of "selling and rationalising" this new programme. The process of reconciling these divergent opinions was not easy. It would be even harder if needs and demands were diametrically opposed. It was in this sense that the politics of compromise began to take their toll. The Razak Report was a case where it was perceived to be against the general interests of the immigrant communities. This view was especially felt within the Chinese community. The effect of the Report subsequently alienated the leaders of the MCA from their supporters, creating a crisis of confidence within the party that almost broke the consociational principle of the Alliance Government.

It all began in early 1958 when a new group within the MCA was consolidating itself in preparation for a challenge to the existing leadership. Led by Dr. Lim Chong Eu, this new group was dissatisfied and impatient towards their leaders whom they felt had failed to protect the interests of the Chinese (The Straits Times, March 3, 1958). In the leadership contest that followed, Dr. Lim defeated Tan Cheng Lock, the incumbent president of the MCA. Among the first acts of defiance initiated

by Dr. Lim was the sponsoring of the Pan-Malayan Chinese Educational Conference which strongly criticized the Government's educational policy (The Straits Echo, Sept. 22, 1958). The Conference urged the Government to adopt Chinese as one of the official languages of the country, to give Chinese schools the same treatment as other institutions in the Federation and called for the Alliance Party to commit itself of the proposal that Chinese be made an official language in the forthcoming election manifesto (The Straits Echo, Sept. 23, 1958). Tunku Abdul Rahman, as the Prime Minister and the leader of the Alliance was quick to reject the demands. He further stressed that, "no other language except Malay and English would be accepted as the official language so that the people could be brought faster together" (The Straits Echo, Sept. 29, 1958).

Strategic political changes were also felt in the MCA under the new leadership of Dr. Lim Chong Eu. Contrary to the Alliance philosophy of "settling the differences" within the party, he abrasively made sure that whatever transpired in his mind must also be heard by his supporters. For instance, he made his stand clear by declaring that the Chinese in Malaya demanded equality in status, wanted their way of life, language and schools to be protected, and equality of opportunity for economic advancement (The Straits Times, Dec. 1, 1958). These open demands made by the MCA created a political storm within the Alliance. To the UMNO and the Malays, Dr. Lim's statement was in violation of the spirit that had been embodied in the constitution. Nonetheless, it was on the eve of the 1959 parliamentary election that the crisis began to develop in the open. This came about when the MCA demanded that the party should be given forty seats out of a total 104 in the coming election, and that the

Alliance manifesto must clearly express its intention to review in general the implementation of its educational policy so that the medium of examination in Chinese schools could be the medium of instruction (The Straits Times, July 10, 1959). The turning point came when Dr. Lim's letter to Tunku Abdul Rahman was made public and the content of the letter besides asking for more seats for the MCA in the coming election also stressed that the party would "stand absolutely firm on the issue of Chinese education" and was even willing to fight alone in the election (The Straits Times, July 10, 1959). In his reply, which was also made public, Tunku Abdul Rahman openly expressed his disappointment with the present leaders of the MCA. But he was undeterred and willing to fight the election under the Alliance banner together with the MIC and the MCA members who disregarded the stand taken by their leaders (The Straits Times, July 11, 1959). The effect of the crisis upon the new leaders of the MCA was devastating. The attempt by the "Young Turks" in the party to force changes in the Alliance Government's policy by resorting to confrontation rather than negotiation seemed to have back-fired. Many of its members who were disillusioned with the Alliance policy resigned from the party (Vasil, 1972:5). Dr. Lim himself resigned from the post of president and left for Britain for medical treatment (Means, op.cit:214). With the new leadership, calm was restored in the party and its working relationship with other parties in the Alliance returned to normal - at least for the next few years.

The Razak Report and the Malays

The Malay's reaction to the Razak Report was a combination of utter dissatisfaction and concern. The Utusan Melayu (May 9, 1956) in its

editorial commented that the recommendations as envisaged in the Razak Report were not bold enough in the sense that it was willing to oppose the position of English in schools. Johor's UMNO even sent a telegram stating its position opposing the Razak Report. It considered the Report prepared by the Educational Committee as dangerous to the Malay race. The statement urged UMNO to reject the Report for accepting multi-lingualism as this could destroy the status of the Malay language as the national language of the country (Utusan Melayu, May 8, 1956). The vehement opposition shown by Johor's UMNO was in response to the statement made by Dato' Abdul Razak that "the new educational policy will eliminate most of the grievances of the Malays" (Utusan Melayu, May 8, 1956). The Malacca Division of the party, while giving its support to the educational plan, at the same time had certain reservations. As one Committee Member of the Division commented, "it is a bold step forward and acceptable to all communities living in the country. If we want to see it from the Malay point of view only, it is not very satisfactory" (The Straits Echo, May 15, 1956). However, it was the Federation of Malay School Teachers Association (FMSTA) that spearheaded Malays' grievances against the Report. The Association was particularly incensed by the fact that the Razak Report was not even translated into the Malay language (Majallah Guru, Feb. 1957:37). As to this effect, Majallah Guru (ibid.) in its editorial commented:

"We could not understand the principle taken by those who were responsible in the Education Department and who refused to produce the translation into Malay ... according to them this was related to the law and thus could not be translated into the Malay language."

Opposition to the Report by the Association was basically over three areas. The first was over paragraph 12 of the Report which was viewed by the FMSTA as implying that Malay was only made the medium of instruction in schools in addition to other languages. To the FMSTA, it was a "ploy to develop the English language and preserve other foreign languages" and thus placed them at equal status with the national language of the country (20 Tahun KPGMS, 1946-1966:59-60). The Association also felt that the existing paragraph was not assuring enough and demanded that the word "main" be abrogated and replaced by the word "sole". It suggested that paragraph 12 of the Razak Report should be, "that the National Language (Malay) should be the sole language of instruction in the national schools and schools which are aided by the government" (20 Tahun KPGMS, *ibid.*:59).

The demand that only the Malay language be made the sole medium of instruction in all Government aided schools was the common theme among the Malays when debating the new educational policy. For instance, a call of this nature was made by sixty delegates from twenty-six different organisations which met in Penang specifically to discuss the Razak Report and its implications for Malay education (Warta Negara, July 9, 1956). As to this effect the FMSTA even sent a memorandum to the Minister of Education asking that Malay be made the sole language of instruction in all national and government aided schools (Warta Negara, July 11, 1956).

On its programme of implementation, the Association agreed that changes from English to Malay should be made gradually but nonetheless within a specific time period. The Association thus proposed two time schedules for the Government to consider. In the first, the time period

it proposed was in line with Article 152 of the constitution. Its second recommendation called for the immediate change in the language of instruction in the secondary schools. Under this schedule, the change in the language of instruction from English to Malay would be complete by 1963 (20 Tahun KPGMS, op.cit.:59).

Another point with which the FMSTA disagreed was over the establishment of two types of school as proposed by the Razak Report. It urged the Government to set up only one type of school and in cases where the schools were privately managed, the national language must be made a compulsory subject and the curriculum taught must be the same as that being offered in government schools (20 Tahun KPGMS, op.cit.:60).

Finally, the FMSTA disagreed with paragraph 25 of the Report which recommended that "special arrangements" be made for Malay school teachers to enable them to teach in the standard schools.

In their meeting with Dato' Abdul Razak on August 24, 1956, the Association was given a written assurance that the Ministry had agreed that all Government schools would be converted to standard schools with Malay as the medium of instruction. In addition, Dato' Abdul Razak agreed to implement the Malay language as the medium of instruction at university level within a period of six years as proposed by the Association (20 Tahun KPGMS, op.cit.:60).

Seeing that the Government was not responding to the demands made by the Malays, Warta Negara (Sept. 1, 1956) in its hard-hitting editorial

stressed that the special privileges of the Malays and their basic rights were not items that were to be compromised. To deny the Malays their rights would also mean denying that this country belongs to the Malays. This implied that the country belongs to all ethnic groups. Majallah Guru (Sept. 1957), also in its editorial stressed that efforts towards implementing the Malay language as the sole official and national language of the Federation "as the most important attempt towards the development of a common identity."

In spite of these demands, the Government remained firm on its policy. Even up to the beginning of 1957, all the agreements that had been reached with the Minister of Education were yet to be implemented. A Special Delegates Conference was called by the FMSTA on April 21, 1957 and two days later a memorandum was sent to the Government calling for the conversion of Malay schools to standard schools, for the existing Malay schools to use Malay as the medium of instruction in all subjects, and all pupils in this school who were in standard seven or in special classes should immediately be placed in the first year level of the Malay secondary schools (20 Tahun KPGMS, op.cit.:61). However, the reply given by the Ministry of Education could not convince the Association that serious efforts were being made towards the development of Malay education as had been repeatedly demanded by them.

Like their MCA counterparts, the leaders of the UMNO encountered a similar dilemma over the question of language and education. Since the release of the Razak Report, dissatisfaction among the rank and file of the party had grown over the Government's 'mishandling of Malay education'.

In the first place, they were disappointed over the "ambiguous commitment" of the Razak Report in making Malay the sole language of instruction in schools. Secondly, their call for the immediate establishment of Malay secondary schools was not at all considered. These two issues, to a certain extent, caused a major split within the party. In Penang for example, the state's UMNO Special Representatives Assembly made a call upon UMNO Councillors at all levels to resign en bloc if Malay secondary schools were not established in a month's time (The Straits Echo, Jan. 13, 1958). In Early February, 1958, at an emergency meeting of the FMSTA, about 8,000 members of the Association decided to quit their membership of the party as a protest against the failure of the Government to start the Malay secondary schools (The Straits Echo, Feb. 1, 1958). The crisis was threatening enough to warrant the intervention of the Prime Minister himself. On September 22, 1958, a meeting was held between the representatives of the FMSTA and Tunku Abdul Rahman. At the end of the meeting the Prime Minister agreed that beginning from 1959, Malay language would be made the language of instruction in all Government schools; Malay language would be the medium of instruction for Malay pupils in the secondary schools, and the position of the teachers and supervisors as recommended by the Razak Report would be reviewed (20 Tahun KPGMS, op.cit.:64). Nonetheless, despite all these promises, nothing was done for their implementation. The Government seemed determined to stick to the Report despite the enormous political pressures that were being mounted.

The Razak Report: Other Views

While the Federation of Malay School Teachers Association provided a platform for the Malay school teachers, others who disagreed with the

Alliance Government's policy had in the Pan-Islamic Party and the People's Progressive Party their new champions. Being a political party whose ideology was exclusively based on Malayism and Islamism, UMNO's willingness to co-operate with the MCA and the MIC was an anathema to the PMIP's basic ideology. In the words of its first president, Dr. Burhanuddin, independence merely introduced a new phase in the political struggle of the Malay community, and the PMIP was dedicated to carrying out this struggle further, so as to "realise the aspirations of Islam" and the re-establishment of Malaya as a Malay country (Utusan Melayu, Sept. 7, 1957). The Government's policy of accommodating the educational needs of the immigrant communities as reflected in the Razak Report thus provided the PMIP with a powerful political arsenal in discrediting UMNO's position on the question of language and education.

The PMIP which was initially called the All Malayan Islamic Association (AMIA) was part of UMNO but withdrew from the party following its consent in relaxing the citizenship laws for immigrants. In the 1955 Federal election, the party fielded eleven candidates and won one seat in the constituency of Krian, Perak. It was the only party in that first election which prevented the Alliance from making a clean sweep. The party's opposition to the Razak Report was basically along the same line as that taken by other Malay organisations. Firstly, no assurance was given by the Report that Malay would be the national language or official language within ten years after independence. Secondly, by allowing other languages to be used as the medium of instruction in schools also implied that these languages were also recognised as official. Thirdly, the Razak Report did not imply that the status of English was to be lowered (Utusan Melayu, June 4, 1956).

As for the Chinese, with the MCA being committed to the policy of the Alliance Government, their cause was taken up by the People's Progressive Party (PPP). If the PMIP was advocating "Malay Supremacy" in all aspects of Malayan life, the PPP on the other hand attempted to abrogate all the privileges that had been bestowed on them. The PPP was led by the Seenivasagam brothers who with political shrewdness were able to exploit the dissatisfied groups within the Chinese community who were against the Government's educational policy. For instance, in a party political broadcast, D.R. Seenivasagam, the Secretary-General of the party stated that "there should be no discrimination on grounds of race or religion" (The Straits Times, Aug. 2, 1959). The party's attempt to exploit communal dissatisfaction over the Government's educational policy was evident in its 1959 election manifesto. Among other things the party insisted that the language of instruction in schools should be in the mother tongue; equal treatment must be accorded to all the educational institutions and equal employment opportunity should exist for "students from all recognised schools" (Ratnam, op.cit.:171).

The Razak Report and the 1959 Election

The results that emerged from the 1959 election tended to confirm the fact that in a plural society, political moderation was a risky affair in terms of getting electoral support. It also showed that communal issues and appeals, properly exploited could be electorally rewarding. As Melson and Wolpe (1970:114) proposed, "In a culturally plural society, the competition engendered by social mobilization will tend to be defined in communal terms." This was the case in the 1959 election when both the PPP and the PMIP took up extreme communal lines in their campaign trails

and subsequently made a tremendous impact on the Malayan political scene. In the 1955 election, for instance, the PPP was insignificant as a political force but a considerable progress was achieved in the parliamentary election of 1959 when it won four of the nineteen seats that the party contested (see Table 9). Its election manifesto, which called for multilingualism, amendments to the educational policy and equality for all citizens (The Straits Times, Aug. 1959) had a strong appeal to the Chinese voters in particular who saw the party as an alternative to the then discredited MCA.

Table 9

Result of the 1959 Election

Political Parties	Number of seats contested	Number of seats won
Alliance	104	74
PMIP	58	13
Socialist Front	38	8
PPP	19	4
Parti Negara	10	1
Malayan Party	2	1
Semangat Pemuda Melayu	1	-
Province Wellesly Labour	1	-
Independents	26	3
TOTAL	259	104

Source: Ratnam, op.cit.: derived from Tables 12 and 13:202-203

While the PPP was successful in harnessing a considerable proportion of the Chinese votes, the PMIP's success in attracting the Malay voters was even greater. In the parliamentary election of 1959, out of the fifty-eight candidates the party fielded, it won thirteen seats (see Table 9). In addition, the party was able to wrest control of the states of Kelantan and Trengganu from the Alliance.

It could be safely concluded that the unanimous mandate given to the Alliance in the 1955 election was a mandate for independence. But the 1959 election, the first held since independence, was different in its issues and needs. It was a period when the Government was embarking on its first programme of nation-building. Notably, it was a critical stage in the country's history when varying issues of an explosive kind were being discussed and decided. Conspicuous in the debates was the lingering question of education which somehow was trapped in the web of ethnic politics.

The Education Review Committee and the Controversies Continued

The Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960 was not favourably received by the public in general. The contradiction that developed was again centred on the language of instruction. However, a new phenomenon emerged in the debate. This was over the position of the English language in the educational system. While the Malays were particularly concerned about its continued retention (The Straits Echo, Feb. 4, 1960), similar reactions were absent among the non-Malay communities. On the other hand, the continued presence of the language was fully endorsed by them. For example, Mr. D.S. Ramanathan, the president of the National

Union of Teachers was quoted as saying that, "It has always been the view of our union that English is the key that opens the door to modern knowledge. The notable command of English which so many Malayan already possesses is one of our national assets" (The Straits Echo, Aug. 1960). The paradox was that Mr. Oh Seng Huat, the president of the Penang and Province Wellesley Chinese School Teachers Union even praised the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960 for giving such prominence to the English language (The Straits Echo, *ibid.*).

To the Malays, the Report of the Education Review Committee marked another step of the Alliance Government's ambiguity and uncertainty in its objective of developing a national system of education, especially with regard to making Malay the sole medium of instruction in schools. For instance, paragraph 30 of the Education Review Committee's Report stated "that it has not yet been possible to provide appropriately trained teachers to start converting former Government primary schools into Standard or National schools. We understand that the Minister of Education intends as from 1961 to introduce Malay medium streams into these schools as and when suitable teachers become available and we recommend that this should be done gradually". The Education Review Committee therefore did not provide any remedial changes towards the development of Malay education and the establishment of the Malay secondary schools in particular. The Report thus prolonged the Malays discontent over the Government's educational policy.

The non-Malays also viewed the Report with dismay and disappointment. For instance, Mr. Lim Lian Geok, the Chairman of the All-Malayan Chinese

School Teachers Association urged all Chinese school teachers to reject the Report (The Straits Echo, June 13, 1961). Among the reasons cited were that the Report did not provide any protection for the development of the Chinese language and in the long run this would destroy the Chinese ancestral culture (ibid.). This sort of argument continued unabated and the subsequent ethnic contradictions that emerged posed a serious problem for the realisation of the objectives as stated in both the educational **Reports.**

While the Malays had the PMIP as their anti-government spokesman in Parliament, the non-Malays had their representatives in the PPP. With two political parties which were diametrically opposed in both ideology and membership and at the same time sitting together as members of the opposition, more often than not eruptions broke out between them rather than them being united and confronting the Alliance Government. However, it should also be pointed out that political parties such as the PPP, the PMIP and later the United Democratic Party (UDP) were all regional in character. Despite the fact that these political parties had attracted nation-wide attention due to the extreme views they adopted on matters related to language and culture, their main bastion of support remained isolated. The PMIP for instance, had its stronghold in the North-eastern states of Kelantan and Trengganu, and in the Northern state of Kedah. The PPP had its support within the urban centre of Ipoh, in Perak and the UDP mainly had its roots in Dr. Lim's home city of Georgetown, Penang. Since these political parties differed ideologically, they were not able to provide a united front against the Government. In fact, by expressing their extreme views, they enhanced the position of the Alliance Government as the only sensible political party in the country.

Although the debates over the educational policy remained unabated, it somehow temporarily lost its sensational appeal with a new twist of the political development that emerged in the country. This began on May 27, 1961. When addressing a luncheon gathering of the Foreign Correspondents Association in Singapore, Tunku Abdul Rahman suggested that the states of Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei should merge with Malaya in a Confederation of Malaysian States (The Straits Times, May 29, 1961).¹ This new political development diverted the country's attention from internal issues like education which was considered to be parochial and chauvinistic but nevertheless important and controversial, to an issue that was vague and yet had national appeal. The sense of national fervour was even strengthened by the fact that the Malaysian Federation which was formed on September 16, 1963 was opposed by Indonesia and the Phillipines. The "confrontation policy" adopted by Indonesia towards the new Federation put the country almost in a state of war. Indonesia's avowed "crush Malaysia" policy and the Government's diplomatic efficiency in handling the crisis enhanced its public standing and prestige. It was with this strength and the issue of "patriotism" that led the Alliance to a thumping electoral victory in 1964. The result of the election was devastating to the opposition parties which had been against the formation of Malaysia ever since the idea was first expressed. For example, the PMIP's seats in Parliament were reduced from thirteen in 1959 to nine, and the PPP which had four seats previously managed to retain only two. But the party

1. For details of the formation of Malaysia, see Noordin Sopiee, From Malayan Union to the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia, K.L. 1974; and Simandjuntak B., Malayan Federalism 1945-1963, K.L. 1969, Pt. VI, pp. 118-171.

that suffered most was the Socialist Front (SF)¹. This party was accused of collaborating with Indonesia in its "crush Malaysia" policy and had its seats in Parliament reduced from eight to two (see Table 10). *Warta Mingguan* (April 25, 1964), a weekly Malay newspaper commented on the Alliance victory as the "people's choice". The paper further commented that, "If they had acted as a judge, the result of the judgement were already known".

Table 10
Comparison of the Parliamentary Election Results in 1959 and 1964

Political Parties	Seats won in 1959	Seats won in 1964
Alliance	74	89
PMIP	13	9
Party Negara	1	0
Socialist Front	8	2
PPP	4	2
Malayan Party	1	0
UDP	0	1
PAP	0	1
Independents	3	0

Source: Derived from *Filihan Raya Parlimen dan Negeri 1964*, K.L. Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia 1964: 1-5, cited in Means, op. cit.:338.

1. The Socialist Front was a merger between the Labour Party and the People's Party. Both parties shared a common socialist ideology. It was the only party in Malaya which was non-communal in its ideology and membership.

The 1964 election was significant in that for the first time the nation closed ranks with the Government in facing the threat from Indonesia and the Phillipines. It was also the only time when the country got a respite from the perennial problems of education, language and citizenship. But the period of national reconciliation which provided internal unity for the country did not last long. It ceased as soon as the threat of invasion disappeared. Another important aspect of the election was the emergence of the Singapore based Peoples Action Party into the Malayan political scene. Somehow its egalitarian ideology failed to attract the Malayan electorate. During the early period of 1965, an important strategic change was evolved when the party developed the "Malaysian Malaysia" concept which added a new flavour to the tempo of communal politics in the country. Under the slogan of "Malaysian Malaysia", the party advocated a policy of national unity based on the principle of equality and respect among the country's ethnic groups. The non-Malays, seeing the issue as relevant to their cause, responded enthusiastically to this new development. As Vasil (1972:13) noted, "the PAP through its criticism of the MCA and its demand for a 'Malaysian Malaysia' had not only brought once again to the surface the outstanding issues of the political role of the non-Malay communities and the position of their cultures and languages but also through the debates that took place it had acted as a catalyst and had articulated the views of the non-Malay communities."

This new political development was not viewed lightly by the Malays. While the "Malaysian Malaysia" concept was well received by the non-Malays, the Malays likewise responded by demanding for a more pro-Malay policy to

be enacted. Syed Nasir, the Director of the Language and Literary Agency for instance, urged the central Government to table a motion in Parliament to stop the use of English as an official language in Malaysia from September 1, 1967. He said that by doing so it would reflect the Government's determination to make the national language the only official language by 1967 (The Straits Times, June 10, 1965).

Even after the separation of Singapore from the Malaysian Federation, demands by the Chinese community for the recognition of their language in the national school system remained unabated. In fact, there was a semblance of militancy on the part of the Chinese in inciting demands that their language be recognised as one of the official languages of the country. A demonstration was planned but was aborted when the Minister of Home Affairs warned the sponsors of the repercussions it might cause (The Straits Times, August 6, 1965). It was at this point that the Chinese Associations and Guilds of Malaysia sent a memorandum to Tunku Abdul Rahman "requesting a place for the Chinese language" in the country. The Memorandum (1965: para.3) stated that the educational report, especially the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960, was discriminatory towards the Chinese language. It further emphasised that:

"Due to partiality of the 1960 Education Review and the actions of the extremists in the National Language movement, the Chinese language has now reached its critical stage and it is obvious that the children of Chinese have been deprived of their opportunity of receiving nine years of mother tongue education when there is no Comprehensive secondary school system using Chinese as the medium of instruction and examination. In Clause B No. 21 of the 1961 Education Ordinance, the Minister of Education is vested with the power to change the Chinese, English

and Indian schools into National schools at the appropriate period. We are trembling with fear when we review the past, see the present, and think of the future."

In addition, the Memorandum (1965: para.9) also called for the expansion of the Chinese language through proper legislation; demanded that the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960 be amended for not giving "due respect to the Chinese language", and wanted the Chinese language to be made the medium of instruction and examination in the comprehensive secondary schools.

This move by the Chinese could well be understood considering that the end of the ten-year period was approaching and the position of their language and education was still unresolved. It was while waiting for the year 1967 that nervousness developed within each community. The year was important for it would be the time when the fate of the various languages of the country would be constitutionally decided.

National Language Act, 1967

The Malayan constitution provided a period of ten years before Malay would be made the sole official language of the country (Federal Constitution, Art. 152: *op.cit.*). September 1, 1967 was thus looked upon with hope that the national language would finally have its proper status and this would mark another stage of its nation-building process. This enthusiasm was not only shared by the Malays. As Awang Had and Ibrahim (1980:52) observed, "the Chinese and Indians too showed their interest

in learning and developing the language. In 1958, 400 Chinese students of the Nanyang University in Singapore opted for Malay language I and II" as part of their courses.

Preparations for the full implementation of Article 152 of the constitution began soon after independence. First, as proposed by the Razak Report (para.26), "Balai Pustaka" which was formed in July 1956, had its name changed to "Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka"¹ in March 1957. It had a new role in the development of the national language.² As a Government agency, it was given the major responsibility for facilitating the production of books in the national language for use in schools. Secondly, a Language Institute (also recommended by the Razak Report, para. 19, 20 & 21) was established where teachers were specially trained to teach the national language as a subject in the school curriculum. However, in 1960 the role of the Institute began to change. In addition to training the national language teachers, the Institute also started to train teachers who would be able to teach in secondary schools by using the national language as the medium of instruction. Thirdly, and in the same year, the Government launched its first series of campaigns throughout the country to familiarise the public with the importance of the national language. Until September 1967, posters bearing the words "Bahasa Jiwa Bangsa"³ and "Jayakan Bahasa Kebangsaan"⁴ could be seen almost everywhere in the country. Fourthly, in July 1964, the National Language Action Front was formed. The Front's main objective was to fight

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1. "Balai Pustaka" means Literary Agency and "Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka" means Language and Literary Agency.
 2. See Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Ordinance, 1959.
 3. "Bahasa Jiwa Bangsa" means "Language is the soul of a race".
 4. "Jayakan Bahasa Kebangsaan" means "make the National Language a success".

for the wider use of the language so that it could become the sole official language in 1967 (The Straits Times, July 20, 1964). All these developments were in anticipation of the September 1, 1967 date.

However, the National Language Act, 1967 (see Appendix C), which was passed by Parliament on March 3, 1967 fell far below expectations. The Act did not resolve the national language controversy. In fact, it created further ethnic discord among the various ethnic groups of the country. Enloe (1967:209) described the Act as a "non-solution". It was never a panacea to the language problems as it was meant to be. The Malays were particularly bitter seeing that the Act had not fulfilled the linguistic promise as entailed by the 1957 constitution. Led by the National Language Action Front, several demonstrations were held in Kuala Lumpur which denounced the compromising attitude adopted by the Government over matters of national importance. The biggest of all the demonstrations was held on March 3, 1967, the day when the Act was to have its second reading in Parliament. At the "Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka" more than 1500 delegates representing Malay Associations from all over the country gathered to express their anger and disappointment over the Act and to the Malay leaders in particular whom they felt had betrayed their cause (Utusan Melayu, March 3, 1967). The president of the National Writers Association, Hassan Ahmad, sinisterly commented that "if all the time we compromised, we will never make the national language as the sole official language of the country" (Utusan Melayu, Feb. 24, 1967). In its hard-hitting editorial, Warta Negara (Feb. 27, 1967) described the Act as "a form of compromise or a way out to overcome the demands by the non-Malays who wanted their languages to be the official language of the country."

Within the UMNO itself, controversies developed over the Act. The Kampung Pandan Branch of the party sent a telegram to the Prime Minister asking that Parliament should postpone the second reading of the Act (Warta Negara, Feb. 28, 1967). The Penang UMNO youth even resigned "en bloc" while disagreeing with the action taken by the party's leadership (Warta Negara, March 1, 1967). Criticisms of the Act did not merely confine themselves to the Malays. Even Sim Mow Yu, the president of the United Chinese School Teachers Association said that the states of languages other than English had not been guaranteed under the Act (The Straits Times, Feb. 25, 1967).

In the Malayan Parliament, it was the PMIP that became the most outspoken critic of the Act. Its president, Dato' Mohammed Asri bin Haji Muda, described the Act as an attempt on the part of the Prime Minister to legitimise his compromising policy, the strategy that the Alliance Government adopted on matters related to citizenship, language and recruitment into the civil service (PD, March 3, 1967: col.6029). He further stressed that, "who can deny that the Act intentionally strengthened the position of English language? Or in other words, the Act which is being proposed in front of us today is an Act which indirectly tries to place the position of English language in this country in a situation which is even stronger than before " (ibid.: col.6038). Dr. Lim Chong Eu, another member of the opposition described the National Language Act, 1967 in the following terms:

"When I first looked through this Act, at first glance, I thought I was not just reading what is called the National Language Act but I was reading the National Language Act and the preservation of the special position of the English Language Act" (PD, ibid.: col.6178).

Essentially, the Act while ignoring the demands of the Malay population in general, was accommodative to the pressures mounted by the non-Malays and the English educated groups. In so doing, the Government intended to demonstrate that it was on the basis of political compromises and accommodation that national policies were formulated. This philosophy was embodied in Tunku's speech in Parliament when he emphasised that, "besides making the Malay language as the official language of the country, we must also allow the English language to be used and also the wider use of other languages as presently being practised be continued" (PD, March 2, 1967: col.5992).

But nevertheless, the Alliance Government's effort in trying to please the various ethnic groups by enacting a "non-solution" Act failed to materialise. The accommodative politics of the Alliance were henceforth viewed with scepticism as it easily succumbed to communal blackmail by any of its partners. The National Language Act, 1967 was one example where communal pressures seemed to take prior consideration over any other issues of national importance as in the case of the national language itself.

For various reasons, the Malays were particularly hostile to the March 3, 1967 linguistic legislation. For example, Clause 3 of the Act stated that, "Nothing in this Act shall affect the right of the Federal Government to use any translation of official documents or communications in the language of any other community in the Federation for such purposes as may be deemed necessary in the public interest." This part of the Act was interpreted by the Malays as contrary to the principle of making

Malay the sole official language of the country. With its ambiguity and dubiousness, it was in fact interpreted as an official sanction for multi-lingualism. Undoubtedly, it was intentional on the part of the legislators to do so. The dubiousness of the clause was in itself a strategy for it provided the Alliance Government with political space in which to manoeuvre whenever issues over the national language emerged. With the Act, the Government intended to assure the Malays, albeit without success, that it had fulfilled the constitutional obligation to make Malay the ^{official} sole language of the country. To the non-Malays, the Act gave assurance that their languages would continue to be used, "for such purpose as may be deemed necessary in the public interest" (National Language Act, 1967: Clause 3).

Another aspect of the Act which caused considerable dissatisfaction among the Malays was the continued use of English as an official language. Clause 4 of the National Language Act, 1967 stated that "the Yang Di Pertuan Agong may permit the continued use of the English language for such official purposes as may be deemed fit."

The continued retention of the English language for official purposes was the last thing that the Malay nationalists had been asking for. They argued that the position of Malay as an official language would be threatened as long as English remained eminent and sanctified. There was no question as to the validity of the argument. From whatever perspective it was viewed, the Malay language was in no position to compete with English which had already entrenched itself into all facets of Malayan life and bureaucracy. Being officially incumbent, the strength of its

position was again buttressed by the educational background of the post-independence Malayan leaders who were mostly the products of the English school system. By comparison, Malay education was still at its infant stage. It was only after a year of independence that the first Malay secondary classes were opened and in 1965, the first group of these Malay medium students entered the university (The Straits Times, July 15, 1965).

In the Malayan case, it seemed that it needed more than the proven ability of the Malay language to be the medium of instruction in schools. More important, it needed a strong political will from all sections of the community to ensure its success and this implied the reduction of the status of English. This political will was sadly lacking among the leadership. To these leaders, the English language was indispensable if the country was to progress and develop. But for a new nation like Malaya, it was a mark of political naivety to think only in terms of material development. What was also important was the spiritual strength and character from which a nation could consolidate and form the basis for development - be it spiritual or material.

The concern for the development of the Malay language vis-a-vis English could again be justified by understanding the quantitative development in the national school system between 1957 and 1967. In 1967, for instance, the average enrollment for any Malay primary school was 202 pupils. The number was increased to 255 pupils in 1967. This was an increase of 26%. As for the English schools, their average enrollment was 519 pupils in 1957 and the number increased to 788 pupils in 1967, an increase of 52%. Taking 40 as the average class size for the Malayan

primary school, in 1957 the average number of classrooms in any Malay primary school was 5 and in 1967 the number was increased to only 6. For any English school, the average number of classrooms was 13 in 1957 and by 1967 this had increased to 20.

Table 11

Comparison of Enrollments in Assisted Primary Schools for 1957 and 1967

Medium	Pupils Enrollment in Assisted Primary Schools			Number of Pupils per school		
	1957	1967	% increase	1957	1967	% increase
Malay	441,567	591,560	34	202	255	26
English	130,360	289,056	122	519	788	52
Chinese	310,458	355,771	15	329	359	9
Tamil	50,766	79,203	56	57	115	102
TOTAL	933,151	1,315,590	41	277	379	37

Source: The Ministry of Ed. Malaysia, op.cit. Figures derived from pages 32, 33, 34 and 35.

Another aspect of the disparity could be noted in the development of assisted primary schools between 1957 and 1967 (see Table 12). In 1957, the number of assisted Malay primary schools was 2,190. This number was increased to 2,324 in 1967, an increase of 6% within a period of ten years. During the same period, the assisted English primary schools saw an increase of 116, or 46%.

Table 12

Number of Assisted Primary Schools

Medium	1956	1957	1967
Malay	2,172	2,190	2,324
English	224	251	367
Chinese	941	943	990
Tamil	877	888	686
TOTAL	4,214	4,272	4,367

Source: The Ministry of Ed. Malaysia, op.cit.:53.
Figures derived from table 25.

As for the expansion in secondary schools, in 1958 the number of assisted English secondary schools were 148. By 1967, the number had increased to 408 (see Table 13). Within that period, the assisted English schools had increased by 260, or 176%. The secondary Malay classes which were started in 1958 were initially attached to the English secondary schools. It was only in 1963 that they had their own premises. In 1964, there were 22 such schools and by 1967 the number had increased to 298 (see Table 13).

Table 13

Number of Assisted Secondary Schools

Medium	1957	1958	1962	1964	1967
Malay	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	22	298
English	n.a.	148	231	271	408
Chinese	n.a.	53	nil	nil	nil
Tamil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
TOTAL	n.a.	201	231	293	706

Source: The Ministry of Ed. Malaysia, op.cit.: 54.
 Figures derived from table 26.

It could be observed that from the time of the Razak Report and the Education Review Committee Report of 1960, which unequivocally stated that the ultimate aim of the national education policy was to make Malay the main medium of instruction in schools, and from the constitutional promise of 1957, which intended to make Malay the sole official language of the country, a parallel development was also taking place that was contrary to the interests of both the constitution and the national education policy. It was assumed that by the middle of the 1960s the national education policy as envisaged in both the reports would have already taken its course. But, until 1967, the year when the legislation on the national language was to take effect, the increase in the number

of assisted English secondary schools was more than double (see Table 13). In terms of pupil enrollment, between that same period, the number that entered the English secondary schools was more than quadrupled (see Table 14).

Table 14

Enrollment in Assisted Secondary Schools Between 1960 and 1967

Medium/Year	1957	1960	1964	1967
Malay	2,315	4,953	28,067	128,069
English	48,235	72,499	151,386	286,254

Source: The Ministry of Ed. Malaysia, op.cit.:40-41.
Figures derived from tables 12 and 13.

Again, if we analysed the number of teachers that were being trained for both the primary and secondary schools between 1960 and 1967, the bias was glaringly in favour of the English rather than the national medium stream (see Table 15). Despite the fact that the objective of the national education policy was to make Malay the main medium of instruction in schools, the Government kept on training teachers that could fit into the English rather than the national schools. It was only in 1965 that a significant development was seen in the training of teachers for the national schools.¹ As for the residential teachers training colleges, except for

1. In this year the Government abolished the Secondary School Entrance Examination. Pupils were then automatically promoted to the secondary level of education. In order to cope with the increase in the secondary school enrollments, especially in the national schools, large scale teacher training programmes were carried out by the Government.

the Language Institute which provided instruction in the national language, the rest of the colleges used English as the medium of instruction. This was discontinued only in 1970 (Ministry of Ed. Malaysia, June 1971: para. 12.4).

Table 15

Number of Teachers Between 1957-1967

Medium/Year		1957	1960	1965	1967
Malay	Pri.	14,351	18,260	20,925	21,554
	Sec.	nil	n.a.	2,256	4,945
English	Pri.	5,867	5,634	7,181	8,206
	Sec.	n.a.	3,054	8,474	11,835
Chinese	Pri.	10,091	11,503	11,548	11,215
	Se.	nil	1,336	nil	nil
Tamil	Pri.	1,735	2,233	3,008	3,085
	Sec.	nil	nil	nil	nil

Source: The Ministry of Ed. Malaysia, op.cit.:50 & 5.
Figures derived from tables 22 & 23.

The Malays thus felt that without any firm assurance to reduce the status of the English language, any attempt to elevate the position of their language would remain futile. As the statistics showed (see Table 14) English secondary schools had a far higher preference than the national schools in terms of choice. Even when the ten-year period was approaching

its end, the trend in enrollment was still towards the English rather than the Malay schools. The National Language Act, 1967 therefore did not elevate the position of the Malay language nor did it reduce the importance of English; it merely juxtaposed them. This generated widespread discontent among the Malays for the Act had far reaching consequences upon the development of the country's national education policy.

National Language Act and the National Education Policy

One could develop a blueprint for national integration, but it would be absurd to expect it to be realised within a specific time period, for integration is not only vague in its conception, it is also intrinsic in nature and process. Therefore, it is two different things when taking language as an instrument for national integration and viewing its status within the framework of the constitution. In the former it is an open-ended programme with its finality hard to determine. While in the latter, the goal is subjected to human manipulation. As an example, Article 152 of the Federal Constitution was explicit in setting the time for change over the status of the various languages of the country. The National Language Act of 1967 was the outcome of the constitutional amendment which defined the position and status of every linguistic group within the country. As has been observed, the Act was disapproved of and immediately became a focus of resentment among the Malays. Many felt that for the language to play its role effectively as a national language, it had to be unequivocally and legally sanctified. Without any effective legislation, its position and practical importance would remain marginal and uncertain. This was well expressed by Boynton and Kim Lim (ed.1975:16)

when they noted that, "since laws are important for setting goals for society, one anticipates that legislatures will be important agencies in the goal setting of a society". The statement could never be more relevant than in Malaya when legislation on language was considered as another step towards the realisation of its linguistic goal. In this light, any forms of linguistic legislation had an important bearing upon the status of the national language in the national school system.

It had often been assumed that by 1967, following the constitutional amendments that made Malay the sole official language, the objective of the national education in making the national language as the only medium of instruction in schools would be immediately enforced. But, the 1967 Act did not accord this change of status outright. The Act in fact maintained the status-quo of all the languages with the position of the English schools becoming even stronger than ever. In 1957 (see Table 11) for example, the number of pupils enrolled in all assisted primary Malay schools was 441,567. By 1967 this figure had increased to 591,560, a difference of 149,993. In terms of percentage the increase was only 34%. Within the same period, the increase in the enrollment of pupils in all assisted English schools was 158,695. This was an increase of 122%. The trend towards English schools was felt even more after the passage of the Bill. In 1967, the enrollment for Malay secondary schools was 128,627. The figure continued to increase in the next two years but by 1970 the enrollment returned to its 1967 level (see Table 16). Zainal Abidin Wahid (1976:153) in his survey in the state of Selangor found that there was a significant decrease in the number of students enrolled in the Malay medium schools, while during the same period, a substantial increase in enrollment was seen in the English medium schools.

Table 16

Enrollment in Malay Secondary Schools Between 1967 and 1970

Malay Secondary Schools			Malay Secondary Students	
31.1.67	302	(including 4 private schools)	31.1.67	128,625
31.1.68	306	(including 6 private schools)	31.1.68	136,349
31.1.69	310	(including 11 private schools)	31.1.69	134,889
31.1.70	311	(including 8 private schools)	31.1.70	128,143

Source: The Ministry of Ed. Malaysia, op.cit.:40, 44, 54 54 & 55. Figures for 1968, 1969 and 1970 were taken from mimeographed publications of the Ministry of Education. These were cited by Zainal Abidin in Lim and Lowe, 1976:145.

The reason for this development was not difficult to envisage. Since 1963, the products of the national school system were already competing in the labour market. With English being the language of the Government their chances of gaining employment in the public sector were less when compared to those who had their education in the English schools. In addition, job openings in the private sector were hardly opened to them. What was available to them were those jobs that had been exclusively for the educated Malay masses since colonial times - such as serving in the armed forces, orderlies in the Government offices and becoming Malay school teachers. This resulted in social disenchantment and loss of

confidence among the Malays towards the national schools. Their response was to send their children to the English schools, but then, not everybody would be able to do so. English schools were fee-paying institutions, urban in their location and restrictive in their policy of admission.

Politically, the Language Act, 1967, was a victory for the principle of consociationalism. It had been the hallmark of the Alliance Government's administration to compromise over matters related to the question of language and education. This policy had been consistently pursued since it took over the reigns of power in 1955. Being a political party that was based on the coalition of three different ethnic groups, the Act could not provide more, fearing that it would disturb the delicate partnership that had been established. However, the middle-of-the-road strategy that the Alliance Government adopted did not solve the controversy that had been raging in the country for more than a decade. The Act in fact sowed the seeds of suspicion and anger towards the Government. This was particularly felt during the election of 1969 which saw not only the manifestation of linguistic nationalism and communal politics at its zenith but also the erosion of confidence in all Government policy.

Language and the Political Leadership

It was when deciding between English and Malay that the dilemma of choice fell upon the Malayan leaders. English was the language of the bureaucracy, judiciary and being used in the higher institutions of learning. It had been the preserve of the Malayan middle-class and its prominence in the upper crust of society manifested the status attached

to it. With the exception of the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, the rest of the political parties in the country were all led by those who had an English education. Since independence, the members of the Malayan Cabinet, with the exception of one,¹ had all been the products of the English school system.

While the leaders were English or Western educated, the rank and file were mostly educated in the vernacular schools. The differences in educational background and experience often led to severe contradictions within the parties. Enloe (op.cit.:147) for instance observed that the language question "highlights the gap between the elites of all ethnic groups and the majority of Malaysians. The elites of every group have a personal stake in the perpetuation of the English language." The leaders of UMNO for instance, while paying lip-service to matters related to the national language, was at the same time ambivalent on the prospect of reducing the importance of English. Khir Johari, in his speech at the Penang Free School, assured the English educated that the English language would remain important despite the fact that Malay was being chosen as the national language. He emphasised that English was necessary "to help this country produce the professional men and women we so badly need to build up this country of ours, and obtain the benefits from the best of higher education here and abroad" (The Straits Times, October 22, 1965).

Throughout the linguistic debates, two pertinent questions emerged.

1. The only member of the Malayan Cabinet who was fully Malay educated was Abdul Ghafar bin Baba. He joined the Cabinet in 1969.

First was the view which argued that the national language issue was of national importance and anything that was linked to it must be dealt with squarely on a national basis. At the same time, any attempt to retard or obstruct its development would be construed as unsympathetic towards the national cause and aspirations. Being the national language of the country, it was felt that everybody who professed loyalty to the country was duty-bound to ensure its success. As Asmah (op.cit.:30-31) pointed out:

"Nation-building needs the support of each and every one of its citizens as well as their acceptance of the national ideology which includes language policy. Defiance of the language policy can mean defiance of the national ideology."

Secondly, there was a gross misconception over the issue that was at stake. The vehement opposition the Malays had towards the National Language Act, 1967 was over the continued retention of English as the official language of the country. Paradoxically, instead of making an assault on the colonial left-overs, the non-Malays side-stepped the issue by reinforcing their demands for recognition of their respective languages. By this very act, one could envisage that their quest for equality in status was to some extent a failure to understand both the integrative philosophy and the historical legitimacy that the Malay language had in the country.

In the final analysis, if there was anybody that deserved the respect and admiration, it was the Malay masses who despite all the odds, kept on their pressure for the recognition of their language. However, as the National Language Act showed, their efforts came to a disappointing

conclusion. The hopes and aspirations that had been nurtured for the past ten years finally came to nothing. Far from being solved, the language question remained and this undoubtedly prolonged the mood of discontent among the Malays.

Chapter Six

The Nation Divided

Background to the Crisis

The context for the development of educational policy in Malaya from independence was the unresolved tension between different ethnic groups, particularly as this related to language and education. The Razak Report, especially was a focal point of disagreement and frustration for both the Malays and the immigrant communities. The Education Review Committee of 1960 further enhanced the controversy. For instance, teacher's organisations which had been advocating the use of English welcomed the Report but this was not so with their Chinese counterparts who saw that their language was not given proper recognition by the Government (The Straits Echo, August 5, 1961). The debates went on and the issue became particularly important in the election years of 1959 and 1969. A call to neutralise education from being made a politically charged issue was made by Aminuddin Baki, Malaya's Chief Education Advisor, when he urged all sections of the community to make "a truce on education for the sake of the rising generation" (The Straits Times, Dec. 21, 1963). He further added that "even today, despite these compromises, we still find education not fully resolved and settled but daily becoming a matter of public controversy, a delicate and explosive political issue and not unknown to have been a gamble and determinant of many elections" (ibid.).

The call by Aminuddin Baki was timely and appropriate but the public in general refused to take any cue from him. They seemed to perceive that education as an issue was too important to be left to the discretion

of the bureaucrats. The assumption was that it was through political means that their demands would be heard and considered. In the Malayan context, this sort of thinking seemed to dominate. The communal nature of the Malayan political system made it imperative that only through political means such an important issue like education would be assured of all the necessary attention.

When discussing the Malayan educational system, one could not help but to also debate the language problem. The two were symbiotically linked by virtue of Article 152 of the Federal Constitution and paragraph 12 of the Razak Report. The implication of giving official recognition to one language over the other would provide constitutional legitimacy for the language to be used as the medium of instruction in schools. Thus, in the ensuing debates over education, it was inevitable that the question of language should become the most dominant. The Chinese community for instance, were united in their demand that their language be recognised as one of the official languages of the country. Without this official status attached to it, they felt their language would remain stagnant and undeveloped, and this in turn would hamper the growth of their culture.

With the official publication of the 1960 Educational Report, the position of the Chinese language was perceived to be even more precarious. As a result of this Report, all Chinese secondary schools were required to conform if they wished to continue receiving any form of financial aid (see Chapter 5). It was therefore a matter of survival that they demanded their language be made official and thus have the advantage of being used as one of the languages of instruction in the Malayan school system.

Chai (1977:40) highlighted the educational problems of the Chinese in the following terms:

"At the heart of the problems of conversion was the question, in the minds of the Chinese educationalists, of Chinese language and culture which, to them, would be seriously attenuated if not destroyed if the Chinese schools were abolished. It should be added that there was no question about accepting Malay as the national language, or teaching the national language in the Chinese schools: for Chinese educationalists the problem was Chinese as a medium of instruction."

Scepticism over the National School System

After the election of 1964, the controversy over the national language and education became even more tense and politically provocative. This restless political atmosphere became more apparent as the ten-year period of independence was approaching when Malay would be made the sole official language of the country in accordance with Article 152 of the Federal Constitution (see Chapter 5). Pressure groups were formed by all contending parties in their quest to legitimise their demands. For instance, in July 1964 "the National Language Action Front" was formed to fight for the wider use of the language so that it could become the sole official language in 1967. This newly formed association planned to hold demonstrations against those who were not in favour of the national language (The Straits Times, July 21, 1964). At the same time, pressures were also emerging from those who were in favour of retaining English as the official language of the country. In the Malayan Parliament for example, much concern was expressed over the future of the English educated and English education in the country (Warta Negara, June 1, 1965).

A number of reasons could be attributed to the belligerent nature of these linguistic entrepreneurs.¹ Firstly, the Government itself was unsure and sometimes showed extreme ambivalence towards the national language. Conflicting statements were often expressed by the Prime Minister over its future status in the country. For example, in his reply to the letter sent by the Supervisors of the Selangor's Religious School Teachers and the Organizers of Adult Education, the Prime Minister gave a written guarantee that "when the time comes, Malay will be made the sole national and official language of the country (Warta Negara, Sept. 16, 1965). But a fortnight later he announced that concessions would be made regarding the language issue raised by the non-Malays. He stressed that if the non-Malays could give their support in the national language, then "reciprocal arrangements can be made to give due regards to the languages in use in this country besides Malay" (The Straits Times, Sept. 28, 1965). The Prime Minister did not elaborate further but emphasised that "I will try and meet, part of the way, the wishes of the non-Malays" (ibid.). This statement by Tunku caused much concern among the Malays and created a considerable disquiet within the UMNO's political circle. Syed Nasir Ismail, the Director of the Language and Literary Agency and who was also the Chairman of the National Language Month Central Executive Committee expressed the hope that Tunku's remarks on language did not mean compromising on the national language as the sole official language (The Straits Times, Sept. 29, 1965).

The ambivalence on the part of the Government had a far reaching

1. They included the "National Language Action Front", teachers' organisations and the Malay Language Society, University of Malaya.

consequence for the development of the national school system. As has been mentioned earlier (see Chapter 4), both the Razak Report and the Report of the Education Review Committee did not enhance the character of the national school by establishing its own identity at the secondary level. Both the Reports merely recommended the establishment of Malay medium classes. It was only in 1963 that the first Malay secondary school was set up. The delay in its establishment created a crisis of confidence in the national school system. This feeling was further reinforced by the Government's uncertain policy towards the national language.

In addition, confusion developed on the future of the national schools especially when the senior members of the Malayan Cabinet began to comment freely on matters related to language and education. Proponents of the national school system felt strongly that any shift in policy would affect their struggle towards achieving the national objective as envisaged in the national education policy. This was especially true when considering the fact that the whole issue of the national school system hinged strongly on the recognition of Malay as the sole official language of the country. Thus, speeches made by Ministers were construed as statements of policy and this further fuelled the state of disarray that was already prevailing. Of particular political significance was the statement made by Khir Johari, a senior member of the Malayan Cabinet and who held the post of Minister of Education. On one occasion he even stressed that "the national language will not be the sole medium of instruction in all schools, colleges and universities even after 1967" (The Straits Times, Dec. 8, 1965). The Minister further outlined the structure

of the future secondary schools which would be bilingual and the students would receive their instruction in either Malay or English (ibid.).

Khair's statement on language and education was important in two respects. In the first place, as a Minister of Education he was responsible for the country's educational policy especially on the development of secondary education (see Chapter 4). The Education Review Committee, 1960 added further clarification by stating that "the executive and legislative authority in all educational matters should rest with the Federal Government and that the educational policy in general should be directed by the Minister " (para. 65). Secondly, the statement was made in the light of the concessionary remarks made by Tunku (The Straits Times, Sept. 28, 1965) and amidst the pressure on the Government from the MCA youth movement which demanded that Chinese be made one of the official languages of the country (The Straits Times, Aug. 24, 1965). Thus, much discomfort was generated when a Minister of Education made a policy statement of such importance, for he was backed by the power that emanated from his office. It was a power which became a source of much concern to all.

Articles 152 and 153

Richard Pratte (1978:148) appropriately described the concept of "diversity" as the product created out of human ingenuity. He further noted that "the distinction that men make to create groups or factions may be drawn along regional, economic, ideological, political, occupational, etc. lines, and among the most persuasive distinctions that divide mankind are those which we designate as "ethnic" that is, those distinctions based on race, religion, or national origin". It was also as the

result of human ingenuity and weakness that these social divisions were often being exploited towards certain ends. It is not difficult to draw the same philosophical parallelism with what happened on May 13, 1969 when the country experienced its worst ethnic crisis. The extent of cultural differentiation and animosity that emerged during the crisis was not difficult to gauge. Articles 152 and 153 of the Malayan Federal Constitution which were basically cultural in their definition and implication were relentlessly questioned and scrutinised to their very core by all political parties during the period of electioneering. Article 153 (1) defined the "special position of the Malays" which assured them of positions in the public services, privileges in educational facilities, and being favoured in attaining scholarships and in obtaining licenses for business purposes. Those who were entitled to these privileges were the Malays, defined constitutionally as "a person who professes the Muslim religion, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom" (Federal Const. Pt. XII, Art. 160). These "special privileges" accorded to the Malays were strongly challenged by the non-indigenous communities. They questioned the very basis of the constitutional discrimination against them. They felt that as citizens of the Federation they should not be discriminated against in terms of language, religion and ethnic background. They demanded that equal treatment must be accorded to all who lived under the "Malayan sun". From here emerged the concept of "first-class and second-class citizens" (Raja Mukhtaruddin, 1982:15) which was often invoked to spread further discontent among the communities. However, while highlighting the discriminatory part of the constitution, these same groups failed to give prominence to the second part of Article 153 (1) which safeguarded the "legitimate interests of other communities".

The dissatisfaction towards the constitutional provisions that accorded "special privileges to the Malays was not a new phenomenon in Malayan politics. It dated back to 1948 when the clause was enshrined in the Federation of Malaya Agreement in place of the abortive Malayan Union scheme (Ratnam, 1965:54). This was again seen in 1956 when the country was formulating its constitution in preparation for independence, but opposition to it subsided following the compromise formula made among the country's major ethnic group (see Chapter 5). Following the country's independence, the feelings of discontent remained but were restrained due firstly to the state of emergency that was proclaimed throughout the country.¹ Secondly, their new citizenship status acquired under the "compromised formula" (see Chapter 5) restrained them from being assertive and vocal. Thirdly, there was no political party during that time which was willing to champion their cause.² But political development began to change in the sixties. New political parties emerged which were willing to focus their attention on the cultural grievances of their constituencies. They were the People Progressive Party (PPP) and the Democratic Action Party (DAP) an off-shoot of the People Action Party of Singapore. These two political parties were quick to identify themselves with the grievances of the immigrant communities and were unwilling to compromise over matters related to their language and education. It was in this light that a

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1. For detailed discussions on the state of emergency and the activities of the Malayan Communist Party, see Short, 1975. The Communist Insurrection in Malaya 1948-1960. London, Frederick Miller.
 2. Before the advent of any other political party, MCA was the sole spokesman for the Chinese. Initially the Chinese community was obliged to this party for its efforts in getting citizenship for them and also in protecting their business interests. But, in the late sixties, the party was rejected for associating with policies purported to be pro-Malay and not radical enough in protecting the interests of the Chinese.

bitter indigenous-immigrant confrontation was set which ushered itself into the 1969 election.

At the same time, in any form of ethnic confrontation, it would be grossly unfair to put a wholesale blame on one communal group and absolve the other from any participatory role in it. If the non-Malay political parties were harping on the cultural elements as enshrined in the constitution and which had been the main source of dissatisfaction among their followers, the same was true with the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party. The party took advantage of the Government's policy which in certain cases showed remarkable concessions towards the immigrant groups. The PMIP considered that any concession was translated as a "sell-out" on the part of the Government and UMNO in particular. It was on this theme that the party embarked on its campaign trails which ultimately scored considerable success among those who shared the same radical view (Bass, 1970:156). The party's extreme advocacy of "Islamism and Malayism" thus created much concern among the non-Malays. Although this was a "vote-catching" strategy adopted by the party, all the same it created fear among the immigrant groups which was equivalent to the fear the Malays had when their rights were challenged outright. With this development, it was inevitable that when two opposite forces of contradicting ideologies were able to harness forces of insecurity and fear, the outcome was the politics of confrontation rather than those of reconciliation.

Added to this already grim scenario was the suppressive discontent that prevailed among the Malay community at large. Since the National Language Act, 1967 was passed by Parliament (see Chapter 5), scepticism

grew over the ability of UMNO as a party in power to protect the interests of the Malays. As the 1969 election results showed, the PMIP made an "impressive" gain at the expense of UMNO's language policy (Bass, *ibid*,156).

All through this study, there has been considerable discussion on the language issue. This is for two pertinent reasons. The first is on matters of cultural relevance, where the Malays in particular regarded their language as inseparable from their future well-being and survival. This is not to deny the attachment that the other ethnic groups have to their respective languages. To the Malays, the stake over the language issue was not only high but crucial. They saw their language as the last bastion of hope in their struggle against the domination of alien cultural elements. Similar to the development that took place in Indonesia (Alisjahbana, 1949:388-392), the Malay language was also the product of Malay nationalism. The Malays attached so much importance to the language that it became a central force in the development of their nationalism. This phenomenon was expressed by Ismail Hussein (Dewan Masyarakat, Oct. 15, 1968:18) when he suggested that the development of Malay nationalism was basically linguistic in nature and it was on the issue of language that sprang a new culture or the forms of economic and educational betterment of the Malays.

Language was thus looked upon as the springboard for other forms of development, be they cultural or material. Hence, when the Government showed its ambivalence towards the national language policy, there was an outcry from the Malay community knowing that the policy could permeate through all the bureaucratic institutions of which education would greatly be affected.

At the same time, Article 152 of the constitution did not provide a full guarantee over the status of the national language. Unlike Article 153, this Article on the national language was not definite and assuring in its implication. Their worry came to a practical reality when Parliament passed the National Language Act, 1967. Being a hotly contested issue, it was envisaged that as an instrument of legislation, Parliament could have institutionalised the national language question and instantaneously protected it from being politically exploited. The failure on the part of Parliament to do so created a ferment of anger, hopelessness and despair among the Malays.

In September 1968 for instance, a year after the National Language Act, 1967 was passed by Parliament, a symposium on "Malayan Educational Policy" was held at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. The symposium was worth noting not only in terms of the working papers that were presented but also for the atmosphere of despair and frustration that surrounded the proceedings. Two cases could be cited to add further relevance to the issue under discussion. The first was the opening speech made by the chairman of the symposium. Among other things he pointed out was that "the present problem is not that we want to create a new educational policy but we ask the government to implement the policy that is already in existence" (Dewan Masyarakat, op.cit.:12). A more pathetic note was expressed when the discussion was centred upon the establishment of a "National University". Ismail Hussein (Dewan Masyarakat, op.cit.:18) cautioned the audience not to be the victim of any political illusion. He suggested that "if the establishment of a National University would only perpetuate the characteristics of the existing national schools and

produce second-class graduates and second-class citizens who will be foreigners in their own country, I feel that we should start changing our orientation so that we do not sacrifice our future generation."

It could be seen here how disillusioned were the Malays seeing their language being degraded to a second-class status and they were even more bitter when it all happened in their own motherland. With the accumulation of disappointment, there developed a sense of hopelessness. Independence did not accord the identity that they had been asking for. It was the aspiration that only through education they could recoup the lost ground which they had suffered in the economic field. Their position had almost reached the stage of an "unidentified group", like the Lapps in Sweden, living as "exiles in their own lands" (Cohen, 1976:37-38). The last straw came when they were denied the recognition of being the indigenous members of the country. It was a defensive mechanism, in defence of their cultural heritage and rights that the Malay community responded in kind.

The 1969 Crisis

It was in the light of these developments that the Federal election of 1969 left a vital scar on the nation's history. The election was a prelude to a national tragedy, for hardly three days had elapsed when the world witnessed the Malayan capital of Kuala Lumpur experiencing its worst ever ethnic crisis. The incident shook the very foundation of ethnic co-existence and tolerance assumed to have prevailed and on which independent Malaya was built. It also brought into the open the fragile nature of ethnic arrangements initiated by the ruling Alliance Government when it laid the country's foundation of nationhood.

The intensity of the violence that engulfed the country and the number of lives that were lost tended to demolish the basic philosophy and definition of politics that had been proposed by Maurice Duverger (1972:179) that:

"Men and organizations in conflict with each other use various kinds of weapons in the political struggle. Depending upon the period of history, the type of society, the political regime, and the social groups or classes in conflict, one weapon or another predominates, but one kind of weapon is ruled out, in principle - that which involves the use of physical violence. When groups or individuals confront each other with fists, clubs, rifles, or machine guns, we are outside the domain of politics. The first objective of politics is to eliminate violence, to replace bloody conflicts with more temperate forms of civil strife, and to eliminate wars, either civil or international."

Kogan (1978:15) concurred with this view when he suggested that, "politics are those processes of discourse through which members of society seek to assert and ultimately reconcile their wishes." What happened on that eventful evening in Kuala Lumpur was the transformation of the electoral process from an instrument which mediated the various conflicting ideological elements to one beyond the realms of civil political procedures. At the same time, it was also a paradox that the election which was meant to elect members to the House of Parliament with the purposes as envisaged by Duverger (op.cit.) resulted in that same institution being placed under suspension.

What happened on that evening of May 13, 1969 has been widely detailed¹

1. See Majlis Gerakan Negara, 1969. Trajadi 13 Mei. Kuala Lumpur:1969, also Tunku Abdul Putra al-Haj, 1969. Sebelum dan Selepas Mei 13. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Melayu.

and has also been the subject of academic discourses.¹ The analyses are varied, ranging from Marxist to theories of social and cultural pluralism.

At a glance, the May 13 incident could be easily analysed on the basis of the Marxist point of view which saw the conflict as the by-product of a class struggle between the peasants and the urban workers on one side against the new elites that had emerged since independence on the other. Cham (1975:450) for instance, strongly argued that the 1969 riot was essentially a class conflict, commenting:

"The racial riots in 1969 were not accidental; they were the logical and cumulative result of a long period of communal mobilization and agitation practised by the ruling class. They did not originate in the fact of cultural pluralism; they arose from racial tension and strife within the lower class whose aspirations for social mobility into higher positions were fanned but not fulfilled and whose frustration, discontent and resentment had been directed away from its culprit towards its fellow victim along racial lines."

For those who argued along the line of ethnic pluralism, it was assumed that such an occurrence was typical of any society where strong ethnic sentiments prevailed. Goh (1971:13) for instance, perceived the incident as the product of a zero-sum game between the indigenous and the immigrant communities. He argued that the crisis of confidence among the Malays had developed when its political power was seen to be eroding "from the Malay race to the immigrant minorities" (Goh, *ibid.*:13). All

1. The May Tragedy in Malaysia: A Collection of Essays (Monash University, July, 1969) and Comber, L., 1983. 13th May 1967: A Historical Survey of Sino-Malay Relations. Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann.

these reasons had their own justification. However, the root of the problem went far beyond the above arguments. It lay in the very foundation of Malayan society itself and the failure on the part of the "national leaders" to identify and solve them.

With the achievement of independence, Malaya inherited a society which was compartmentalised in terms of its ethnic composition, economic activities, geographical distribution and cultural orientation. In a nutshell, there was a clear absence of a national character for the population to be rightly associated with. The laissez-faire rule adopted by the colonial government became a copy-cat model for the new independent government. No attempt was made to adjust the various colonial legacies, be they institutional, social or cultural. With colonial policy, which was meant for colonial purposes, being prolonged and utilised, it became a misfit to the governmental machinery due to the difference in politics and objectives which the newly independent state had. As an example, the bureaucracy, seasoned by years of colonial rule and which was meant for colonial ends, was preserved intact without any changes made that could efficiently serve the needs of the new state. The educational system remained colonial in its essence and orientation without reflecting any form of national character which any independent nation could be proud of. In describing the colonial educational system in Indonesia, Kroef (1954:24) made the following observation:

"Throughout the present century the chief malady of the colonial educational system was, then, that it was not integrated in the social structure of Indonesia and that it had little or no connection with existing social needs. There can be no question of the high academic quality of this system, especially of the Western school, but as for preparing the student to take a satisfactory place in society, in conformity with the realities of the colonial system and economy, it was a dismal failure."

The failure on the part of the new leaders to invoke changes in the system of education, the orientation of the bureaucracy and all the relevant colonial frameworks and policies had far reaching implications upon the country. Swayed by the aura of colonial institutions, these leaders tended to ignore the basic essentials that made up a viable nation state. Thus, they avoided the basic questions that every new nation should ponder upon at the very moment of independence. These were the questions related to the kind of society that the country intended to build (Nyerere, op.cit.:50) and the type of people that it planned to produce. This lack of philosophising on the future of the nation made the first decade of independence ambiguous in its definition, vague in its conception and uncertain in its objectives. As a result, for a period of more than a decade, Malaya was following a course of uncertainty in dealing with the problems of ethnicity and its related process of nation-building.

In this chapter, it would be appropriate to retrace the factors that provoked the ethnic crisis. Majlis Gerakan Negara (MGN)¹ published a detailed account of the incident. The Report did not record the crisis in isolation but rather treated it as a climax that resulted from the chains of events that began immediately after the Second World War. The Report made no apology towards the immigrant communities and in fact was blunt when discussing the main source of the conflict. According to this Report, the May 13 incident was the outcome of various developments among which was the "absence of direct communication among the generations and

1. "Majlis Gerakan Negara" - National Operation Council.

the different interpretation by different ethnic groups towards the constitution which led to the increase in political aggression by the immigrant communities over the basic constitutional elements that are related to the Malay language and the position of the Malays, especially on Articles 152 and 153" (MGN, 1969:xi).

The May 13 tragedy was the aftermath of the 1969 national election which saw the manifestation of communal politics at its zenith. During the campaigning period, most major political parties tended to emphasise issues that were ethnic in nature. In this context, ideological leanings became a "non-issue" unless they were related to the interests of specific ethnic groups. Thus, when Articles 152 and 153 of the constitution became the springboard of the election campaign, the concept of "equality" that was generated was subdued in the morass of ethnic complexity and irrationality rather than treating the issue within a specific ideological framework. Hence, the campaign trail was left not with issues of policy per se, but rather with a long list of accusation and counter-accusation over the questions of political and national legitimacy. Under these circumstances, it was not hard to see ethnic issues becoming a source of political mobilisation and thus paving the way for confrontation. As Melson and Wolpe (1970:1115) suggested:

"... men become tribalists not only out of insecurity but also out of the many opportunities created by social mobilization in a communal milieu. In culturally plural societies, citizens tend to perceive their competitive world through a communal prism and to be responsive to communal appeals. Communalism therefore becomes a matter of opportunism. It matters not that, in any given competition, communal criteria are inappropriate to the determination of the outcome and may not in fact have been operative. What is important is that the personal fortunes of individuals are generally believed to depend on their communal origins and connections."

Apparent in the rioting was the communal element that was involved. It was hard to deny that it was an ethnic confrontation between the Malays and the immigrant communities. To put the blame on the communists (Tunku, 1969:10-17) was to shirk from the responsibility of what had happened. At the same time, to say that it was a "crisis of confidence" on the part of UMNO and the Malays seeing that the opposition parties had made in-roads into the electoral process (Goh, 1971:12-13) and the "Malays were shaken" due to the electoral defeat (Vasil, 1980:182), was an indirect way of putting the blame on the Malays for the whole incident. The fact that another opposition party, the PMIP retained the state of Kelantan, wrested almost half of the State Assembly seats of Trengganu and had a considerable increase in influence in the state of Kedah (see Table 17) tended to demolish the accusation levelled on UMNO and the Malays for being belligerent in actions and attitudes. In these states, UMNO-PMIP ideological differences and rivalries were even more serious than those between UMNO and the other non-political parties. But in these same states, not even one incident of note was reported. The fact that the rioting happened in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city inhabited predominantly by the immigrant communities could suggest that it was their arrogance over the newly gained electoral successes that provoked the conflict (MGN, op.cit.:40).

At the same time, there must not be any attempt to deviate from the core of the matter. It must be accepted that for such a large scale rioting to occur, there must be an all round dissatisfaction among the population. As has been described earlier, ethnic issues and problems had been the mainstay of Malayan politics before and after independence.

Table 17

1969 Election: Results for the States of Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu

	Entered			Won			Lost		
	Kedah	Kelantan	Trengganu	Kedah	Kelantan	Trengganu	Kedah	Kelantan	Trengganu
UMNO	18	29	20	12	10	9	6	19	11
MCA	5	1	-	2	1	-	3	-	-
MTC	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
PMIP	24	30	20	8	19	11	16	11	9
Gerakan	3	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-
Independents	-	6	1	-	-	-	-	6	1

Source: Vasil, 1972. Figures derived from tables 1(c):75, 1(d):76, 1(1):84.

Even a few months before the country achieved its independence, communal tension was already growing (MGN, op.cit.:17-19). For instance, in May 1959, an incident was reported and again in July 1964, the country experienced a Malay-Chinese confrontation which resulted in the loss of lives (MGN, op.cit.:20-23). But, despite these experiences, it was strange to note that the Government's programme for national development did not explicitly include the vital aspect of ethnic relations. Both the economic and educational institutions, two important instruments that could be utilised towards a purposeful national cause, remained identifiable with their pre-independent outlook and function. In addition, whenever the problems of racial conflict arose, the Government preferred to side-step the issue by putting the blame on extraneous forces like the communists or secret societies. As a short-term measure, this policy of "scapegoating" was effective but it did not provide a long and lasting solution. With the arrival of the new "Merdeka" generation into the Malayan political scene, the ethnic status-quo that was in existence began to be disturbed. Various aspects of the "constitutional compromises" (see Chapter 5) were unknown to this new generation and their validity was thus questioned. At the same time, no efforts were made to educate them. The educational system that was provided did not prepare them for understanding the evolution and development of their own society and the different values that were attached to it. Thus, the country produced a generation who possessed the knowledge but without the education and wisdom that it needed. It was with this background that saw Malaya experiencing its most serious ethnic crisis.

May 13 Crisis: Its Implications

The crisis began on the evening of May 13, 1969 when sporadic ethnic clashes spread into most parts of Kuala Lumpur and turned it into a riot torn city. In its efforts to restore order, a state of emergency was declared by the Government and this was later extended throughout the country. Following this move, Parliament was suspended and all political activities were banned. The day to day affairs of the country were placed under the National Operation Council (Majlis Gerakan Negara) of which the Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak became its first Director (The Straits Times, May 17, 1969).

The formation of the National Operation Council which included the top police and military personnel (Goh, op.cit.:27) is significant in understanding the political development following the May 13 incident. Under this new administrative set-up, Malaya was to a certain extent governed by a "military-backed civilian government". As will be seen in the next chapter, this new administration brought along sweeping changes in the country's governing institutions, never before seen in Malayan history.

The crisis also revealed that despite the political bargaining that was reached between the Malays and the non-Malays (Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 1982:89) grievances still persisted over the related issues of language and education. To a certain extent these problems created a considerable tension among the coalition members of the Alliance Government. As a result of the 1969 national election which saw the MCA suffer a humiliating

defeat, the relationship within the Alliance and the distribution of power among its members was never the same again.

Lastly, in the history of Malayan education, the May 13 incident was a catalyst in the full implementation of the national education policy which the Razak Report had recommended a decade earlier.

Chapter Seven

The New Realism

Towards National Reconciliation

The calamity that occurred on that eventful date of May 13, 1969 was a tragedy on a national scale, represented by the number of lives that were lost,¹ where violence became an outlet for the manifestation of extreme frustration. It was unfortunate that communal and political rivalries could come to such a bloody conclusion. In the context of the Malayan plural society many felt that conflict potential was always latent and that it was just a matter of time before it would be ignited. The Economist (May 17, 1969:31) commented wryly that "the communal spectre that has always haunted Malaysian politics has become a savage reality."

The extent and intensity of the racial riot suggest that it was the result of a long subjugation of anger, disappointment and despair following independence. Nonetheless, this accumulation of frustration among the population was not perceived by the Government in power. It failed to visualise the institutional defects that had been the main source of the crisis. On the other hand, the Government was more concerned about maintaining ethnic solidarity rather than solving the problems of diversity.

1. The number of people that died in this conflict could not exactly be ascertained, but The Times, May 20, 1969 gave the figure as 147 believed to have been killed. The figure released by the National Operation Council was 196.

As Vasil (1980:1) suggested:

"Problems - social, political and economic - and the failure of governments and leaders to solve them are readily presented in ethnic terms and blame is often put on ethnic adversaries."

As such, the leaders in general were not readily responsive to the demands that emerged over certain policies and issues which were of national relevance. The failure to foresee the various social and cultural problems that beset the nation and the inability to deal seriously with the deterioration of ethnic relations tended to suggest that the Government was inept and irresponsible. As a result of its own making, the May 13 incident caught the Government by surprise. The fact that it took not less than four days before order was restored in the capital of Kuala Lumpur tended to prove this argument. Out of uncertainty and panic, Parliament was suspended and the country was placed under a military-style administration - the National Operation Council (see Chapter 6).

At the same time, May 13, 1969 will always be remembered in the annals of Malayan history as a demarcator between the old and the new, the failure of the past and the hope of the future. The memorable incident was like a "new renaissance" which created an impetus towards the re-awakening of the country in general. Mistakes were admitted by the Government (The Straits Times, July 18, 1969) and the country began to embark on the politics of reconciliation, albeit with the force of legislation. Thus, the episode was also significant in that it generated the sense of new-found realism among the population.

Coser (1968:126) had suggested that conflicts could be productive

in two related ways. Firstly, they "lead to the modification and the creation of law". Secondly, "the application of new rules leads to the growth of new institutional structures". This suggestion was not far from what happened in Malaya, for the greatest of all the impact that resulted from the ethnic conflict of 1969 was the re-definition of the ethnic position particularly in relation to the indigenous and the immigrant communities. The sweeping changes that were made not only brushed aside the ethnic consensus that had permeated through the political and economic institutions but, at the same time, through the process of legislation, the Government invoked a device which discriminated positively on the "have-nots" of the country. Firstly, there was a thorough re-examination of the institutional structures that existed during the pre-1969 period. Secondly, there was a re-definition of all policies of national importance. Thirdly, an ardent effort was made towards the development of a common value system as seen in the emergence of a "national ideology" (Rukunegara). Fourthly, legislative procedures were taken to ensure that items that were termed as "sensitive" such as the national language, the special position of the Malays and the position of the Malay rulers were prohibited from public discussion.

Political Structures Re-examined

The poor showing of the Alliance Government in the 1969 election and the subsequent ethnic riots that occurred exposed the question of credibility towards the existing political system. The politics of compromise and accommodation as advocated by the Alliance were in themselves not conflict-proof. In a real sense, they could not cushion the pressure of

ethnicity from its divergent tendencies. The burden was upon the leaderships (Lijphart, 1968:122) who had to create an equal balance between the pressures of their respective constituencies and their official role of governing. At the same time, the mandate they had over the country was not permanent. It depended on the voting pattern of their respective electorates. The failure to fulfil their expected aspiration could ultimately lead to the withdrawal of this mandate and thus prevented them from returning to power. This was the impression given in the 1969 general election when the support which the Alliance Government had all along been receiving was withdrawn. As a result, both the MCA and UMNO suffered a severe crisis of confidence within the rank and file of the parties. This crisis had far reaching implications upon the ruling party. The fragile relationship, which had been the mainstay of the coalition almost cracked when the MCA decided not to participate in the Government both at Federal and State levels of administration. Tun Abdul Razak's statement which blamed the Chinese electorate for the loss of MCA candidates which thus paved the way for Malay rule, (Warta Negara, May 14, 1969) further aggravated the political rift that was developing.

To the extremists within the UMNO, the absence of MCA from the Government would pave the way for Malay political supremacy which they had been advocating. They felt strongly that it was due to the pressure from the MCA that many of the programmes which were of national importance were being compromised to accommodate the demands of the MCA. They cited, for example, the National Language Act, 1967 (see Chapter 5) which was passed by Parliament, as a document which was ineffective in its intention of making Malay the sole official language of the country. They also cited

the case of the educational system where Malay language was yet to be the main medium of instruction in all Government schools as proposed by the Razak Report (para. 12). Their grievances were many. These groups within UMNO were willing to go alone to form the Government for they felt that it was UMNO who had won the election and the MCA as a political partner had failed. They also claimed that it was UMNO's inconsistency and ambiguity in its policies over language and education that caused the party to suffer reverses in some of the states during the election (Goh, op.cit.:29-30). It was with this in mind that a group of UMNO leaders called for the top leadership of the party to hold an Emergency General Assembly to enable the party to study its policy in relation to its component partners within the Alliance (Utusan Melayu, May 14, 1969).¹

On the economic side, this same group within the party felt strongly that the pre-independence quid-pro-quo arrangement made between the Chinese and the Malays which became the basis of the Alliance framework was more to their disadvantage. While the Chinese had a share of the country's political power, the Malays were offered nothing for their economic advancement. Vasil (1980:218) highlighted the problem when he wrote:

"The basis of accommodation between the Malays and the non-Malays was the quid-pro-quo arrangement that guaranteed the Malays political paramountcy and allowed the non-Malays free play in the spheres of trade, commerce and industry. The significant result of this was that the fundamental ethnic antipathies remained

1. Among them were Dr. Mahathir Mohammed, a member of the UMNO Supreme Council; Syed Jaafar Albar, former secretary-general of UMNO; Hamzah Alang, former UMNO youth leader and Syed Nasir Ismail, also a member of the party's Supreme Council.

alive, especially among the Malays. The quid-pro-quo arrangement also precluded any substantial improvement in the economic lot of the Malay rakyat and in this added to their fears about their future in their own country".

Under these circumstances there was a strong justification for the Malays to be fearful of their economic future. The quid-pro-quo arrangement had rendered the Government ineffective in its attempt to uplift the economic well-being of the Malays. A case in point occurred in 1960 when the Minister of Agriculture, Abdul Aziz bin Ishak, was removed from his portfolio for trying to curb the activities of the Chinese middle-man in the state of Kedah. His attempt to improve the marketing facilities of the rural Malays clashed with the interests of the Chinese business sector and this was against the principle that had been agreed upon between the MCA and UMNO (Vasil, 1971:278-289).

"To go all alone" in governing the country was not beyond the capability of UMNO. In terms of electoral strength, the party could form a government without the participation of the MCA or the MIC. This was attributed to the structure of the nation's electoral boundaries which was based on spatial distribution rather than the proportion of the population. Under this arrangement, the Malays being geographically scattered in their patterns of settlement had a greater advantage over the Chinese who were mostly concentrated in the major urban areas. For instance, in 1964, out of the 104 parliamentary constituencies 57 of them had more than 50% of Malay electorates. In 1969, the number was 55 but still favoured the Malays in terms of an electoral victory (Vasil, 1972:97-100).

Based on the past election results (see Table 18) UMNO alone, without the benefit of any form of coalition with other parties could still form a government in Malaya. In the election of 1964, for example, UMNO was able to win 59 seats, a majority of 7. In the 1969 election, it won only 51 seats, short of two seats to enable the party to control the Government. It should also be noted that in all these Malay dominated constituencies, the other contending party was the PMIP. Under the extreme atmosphere of ethnic politics it was not impossible for these two parties to coalesce and thus pave the way for an absolute Malay rule if they so wished.

Table 18

The Alliance in the Malayan Federal Elections (1964-1969)

	Entered	Won	Lost
1964			
UMNO	68	59	9
MCA	33	27	6
MIC	3	3	0
1969			
UMNO	68	51	17
MCA	33	13	20
MIC	3	2	1

Source: Goh, op.cit.: Table 1, p.12.

But this was not the thinking of the ruling elite of the UMNO. The party felt that it was politically unrealistic to negate the existence of the non-Malays which constituted almost half of the country's population. Furthermore, the UMNO-MCA Alliance had been specially closed since their experiment in partnership which began during the Kuala Lumpur Municipal elections of 1952. Added to that, it had been an accepted fact that while UMNO would represent the interests of the Malays, the same role would be played by the MCA towards the Chinese community. Thus, the MCA's declared intention not to participate in the Government created an atmosphere of disquiet among the old stalwarts of UMNO, especially the Tunku. However, a different reaction emerged from the radical group within UMNO. Dr. Mahathir Mohammed, the most outspoken of them all "even voiced strong objection to MCA 's participation in the Cabinet" (Goh, op. cit.:30). His remark offended the Tunku who out of sentiment cherished the relationship with the MCA . In the controversy that followed, Dr. Mahathir bluntly accused the Tunku of "consistent capitulation to Chinese demands" (Goh, ibid.:30). He further called on the Prime Minister to resign as Party Chairman and Prime Minister, claiming that the Malays "whether in the civil service, police, army or elsewhere, had lost every shred of confidence in his leadership".

The Tunku-Mahathir controversy was significant for it brought out into the open the Malay's displeasure towards UMNO's policy of "capitulation" when pressured by the immigrant communities. Although the country's leaderships remained intact even after the crisis, there was undoubtedly a significant shift in the relationship. The most important was the end of the policy of ethnic appeasement and the politics of

compromise and accommodation which had been the guiding philosophy of the Alliance during the pre-1969 period. The final demise of this policy began on September 20, 1970 when Tunku Abdul Rahman, who embodied the spirit of consociationalism stepped down as the Prime Minister and as the President of UMNO.

Educational Policies Reviewed

A basic and pertinent question that emerged after the May 13 crisis was over the progress of the educational system as envisaged by both the Razak Report and the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960. It had been argued earlier (see Chapter 6) that the political and philosophical contradictions that developed between the indigenous and the immigrant communities over certain aspects of the policy, was to some extent a contributory factor in creating a position of "stalemate" and thus hindered its due course of implementation. Under the institutional set up of the Alliance Government, the period of "stalemate" was essential as a "cooling down" mechanism. This was one way of preventing the issue from further deterioration and controversy. The method was preferred for it allowed members of the coalition government to re-assess the political climate that developed among the masses. At the same time, for any member of the coalition to stretch any controversial issue to its limit would result in offending the other partner who had an opposing view of the subject. The fear of offending each other's point of view was a characteristic of the Alliance Government that resulted in many issues being frozen. This "icebox policy" (Lijphart, 1966:164-177) thus stagnated any programme of implementation.

Education is a crucial matter for any country. Its policy could not afford to be the victim of uncertain political or philosophical alternatives. Again, on matters related to policy, the slower the decision of its implementation is made, the more aggravated the issue would become. As Lijphart (1968:124) observed, "Decisions on controversial matters have to be made, and continuous inaction would have disastrous consequences."

The paradox was that out of the controversies which surrounded the implementation of the national system of education, a new phenomenon emerged as a compromised alternative.¹ This was in the form of the English language. Since independence, its position in the school system had increased in importance. The failure on the part of the Government to implement the national language policy in the school system as outlined by the Razak Report (para. 12) incurred institutional defects upon the development of national education in general and towards the growth of the national schools in particular. By virtue of the difference in the language of instruction at the tertiary level of education, pupils from the national school streams were hampered in their quest for improved educational status. Their educational advancement, being limited to only the secondary level, was cause for much despair. Furthermore, the medium was English, the language which was considered to be an obstacle to their future educational advancement.

1. It was assumed by the leadership of the Government that the neutrality of English would be acceptable to all. By taking this view, they also hoped to strengthen their middle-class ideology of favouring the retention of English language in the country.

By 1967, the position of the English language both in the bureaucratic processes and in the country's system of education appeared to be unassailable. While preparations were made for the crowning of the national language as envisaged by Article 152 of the Federal Constitution, attempts were also made for the English language to be retained permanently. The English educated, particularly the bureaucrats and the political elites, were concerned as the time for the switch was approaching. Tunku Abdul Rahman, in sensing this development, was quick to issue a statement assuring them that the use of English "must continue" (The Straits Times, October 22, 1966). The Tunku further stressed that "if we were to substitute English altogether with the national language, the machinery of the government will be thrown out of gear. The teaching of English in our schools must therefore go on" (The Straits Times, *ibid.*). This statement of Tunku on the need for the continued use of English was fully endorsed by the State Assembly of Penang. The House approved by 15 votes to 6 a motion supporting the views expressed by the Prime Minister on the continued use of the English language in this country" (The Straits Times, November 25, 1966).

Even after the National Language Act, 1967, despite the assurances that the role of English would be reduced¹, the stalemate over its implementation in the educational system remained. Scepticism mounted over its function and ability as the language of instruction in schools. Dr. Lim Chong Eu, a prominent leader from Penang, sensing this state of affairs urged the Government to review the progress of the Malay language. In

1. This type of assurance was often given by Tunku in defence of the Act. See *Warta Negara*, Feb. 2, 1967.

his speech at the Congress of The Teaching Profession, he openly stated that, "I do not think we can achieve the goal of making the national language the main medium of instruction for several generations" (The Straits Times, January 2, 1968). His statement reflected the lack of confidence over the national language and also the frustration that had developed over the "neither here nor there" policy adopted by the Government.

The Government's underlying policy towards the English language became clearer when it rejected the call for the establishment of the "Merdeka University"¹ which proposed to use Chinese as the medium of instruction. But in order to pacify certain sections of the Chinese community, the Government backed the MCA sponsored College which used English as its instructional medium. In addition, the Government also agreed to give financial assistance on a dollar to dollar basis and agreed in principle to recognise the diploma that it awarded (The Straits Times, July 15, 1968).

The support the Government gave to this College was significant in two ways. Firstly, it reminded us on the compromising principle that embodied the UMNO-MCA relationship. In this case the Chinese demanded the setting up of a Chinese language university but were rejected on the grounds that it was against the national education policy. As a compromise, it supported the establishment of the MCA proposed College, although by doing so it enhanced the development of English language and this in fact contradicted the basic principles enshrined in both the Razak Report

1. "Merdeka University" - "Independent University".

and the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960. Secondly, it was a tacit attempt by the Government to strengthen the position of the English language at the tertiary level of education. By supporting the establishment of the College it also attempted to achieve a dual political objective. In the first place it was to pacify the Chinese over the issue of the "Merdeka University" in view of the pending general election, albeit without much success. The other was to strengthen the position of the English language in preparation for the dual language policy that it was advocating all along. The subsequent events that emerged tended to prove that the above argument was far from being empty speculation. In early March 1969, the obsession towards the English language and education was again openly pronounced. Khir Johari, the Minister of Education, was caught up in this development when he suggested the setting up of an Eton and Harrow type of public school in Malaya (The Straits Times, March 1, 1969). To some extent his statement was in defiance of the call for his resignation made a few months earlier by the University of Malaya Malay Language Society which adopted a resolution calling for the removal of Khir Johari as Minister of Education "to avoid adventurism in the implementation of the educational policy" (The Straits Times, Sept. 30 and Oct. 2, 1968).

The continued retention of English especially at the higher level of education generated much concern and frustration among the Malays. It was even viewed as a form of institutional discrimination against Malay pupils who mostly attended the national schools. Since the language of instruction at university level was still English, the chances of entering the institution favoured those who attended the English schools. Due to

historical and geographical reasons, it was the non-Malay communities who benefitted most from the English school system. With this development in education, it was inevitable that they monopolised the enrollment of the University of Malaya at least during the first ten years of the university's inception. This was evident when one analysed the ethnic composition of the University of Malaya's student population between 1959, when it was first established, and the 1969-1970 academic session. During this period, the number of Malays entering the university was 8,956 as against the total enrollment of 30,523. This constituted only 29.3% as compared to the non-Malays share of 70.7% (see Table 19).

Table 19

Number of Students Enrolled in the University of Malaya
Between 1959-1960 and 1969-1970 Academic Sessions

Academic Year	Malays		Non-Malays		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1959-1960	62	19.2	260	80.8	322
1960-1961	144	22.1	509	77.9	653
1961-1962	217	21.5	793	78.5	1,010
1962-1963	274	20.4	1,067	79.6	1,341
1963-1964	368	20.6	1,378	79.4	1,736
1964-1965	543	24.4	1,682	75.6	2,225
1965-1966	721	25.4	2,114	74.6	2,835
1966-1967	1,038	28.8	2,565	71.2	3,603
1967-1968	1,401	30.7	3,159	69.3	4,560
1968-1969	1,825	32.8	3,741	67.2	5,566
1969-1970	2,373	35.6	4,299	64.4	6,672
TOTAL	8,956	29.3	21,567	70.7	30,523

Source: Abdul Majid Report, 1971.

Figures derived from Table 1, p. 31.

The figures as revealed by the Majid Ismail Report (1971) were even more disappointing when they were analysed in terms of faculty enrollments. In the faculty of Arts, for example, the number of Malays enrolled during the university's first eleven years was 6,351 out of the total enrollment of 15,009. This was only 42.3% (see Table 20). There was also a marked disparity between the numbers of students in terms of faculty distribution. Between the 1959-1960 to the 1965-1966 academic sessions more than 80% of the Malay students' population were enrolled in the faculty of Arts, while the remaining 20% were following courses in science (see Appendix D).

If in the faculty of Arts, the enrollment ratio did not favour the Malays, the picture was even worse when one analysed their enrollment in the Faculty of Science. During the period of study, the number of Malay students taking various courses in the sciences was only 1,269 out of a total enrollment of 12,221. This figure constituted only 10.4% (see Table 21). In the Faculty of Engineering for example, between the 1959-1960 and the 1969-1970 academic sessions only 56 Malay students were admitted out of the total enrollment of 2,847. The figure was only 2% of all the total enrollment in that Faculty (see Table 22). Even in the Faculty of Education, the number of Malays enrolled was only 381 which constituted 28.7% out of the total enrollment of 1,328 (see Table 23).

Table 20

Total Number of Students in the Faculty of Arts and their Distribution
by Race Between 1959-1960 and 1969-1970 Academic Sessions

Academic Year	Malays		Non-Malays		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1959-1960	58	35.8	104	64.2	162
1960-1961	128	36.3	225	63.7	353
1961-1962	193	34.7	363	65.3	556
1962-1963	247	34.2	476	65.8	723
1963-1964	310	34.1	598	65.9	908
1964-1965	459	38.6	729	61.4	1,188
1965-1966	606	40.5	890	59.5	1,496
1966-1967	780	42.5	1,056	57.5	1,836
1967-1968	966	36.7	1,666	63.3	2,632
1968-1969	1,115	47.8	1,217	52.2	2,332
1969-1970	1,489	52.7	1,334	47.3	2,823
TOTAL	6,351	42.3	8,658	57.7	15,009

Source: Abdul Majid Report, 1971.
Figures derived from Table II, pp. 32-33.

Table 21

Total Number of Students Enrolled in the Faculty of Sciences and their Distribution by Race Between 1959-1960 and 1969-1970 Academic Sessions

Academic Year	Malays		Non-Malays		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1959-1960	4	2.5	156	97.5	160
1960-1961	16	5.2	290	94.8	360
1961-1962	24	5.3	430	94.7	454
1962-1963	27	4.4	591	95.6	618
1963-1964	38	4.8	755	95.2	793
1964-1965	56	5.7	893	94.1	949
1965-1966	88	7.4	1,101	92.6	1,189
1966-1967	155	10.7	1,288	89.3	1,443
1967-1968	255	12.5	1,571	87.5	1,796
1968-1969	296	13.9	1,827	86.1	2,123
1969-1970	340	14.2	2,050	85.8	2,390
TOTAL	1,269	10.4	10,952	89.6	12,221

Source: Abdul Majid Report, 1971.
 Figures derived from Table II, pp. 32-33.

Table 22

Total Number of Students Enrolled in the Engineering Faculty and their Distribution by Race Between 1959-1960 and 1969-1970 Academic Sessions

Academic Year	Malays		Non-Malays		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1959-1960	1	0.8	128	99.2	129
1960-1961	4	2.5	155	97.5	159
1961-1962	4	2.0	194	98.0	198
1962-1963	5	2.2	221	97.8	226
1963-1964	2	0.8	255	99.2	257
1964-1965	4	1.5	258	98.5	262
1965-1966	3	1.1	278	98.9	281
1966-1967	5	1.6	306	98.4	311
1967-1968	11	3.4	316	96.6	327
1968-1969	6	1.8	332	98.2	338
1969-1970	11	3.1	348	96.9	359
TOTAL	56	2.0	2,791	98.0	2,847

Source: Abdul Majid Report, 1971.
 Figures derived from Table II, pp. 32-33.

Table 23

Total Number of Students Enrolled in the Faculty of Education¹ and their Distribution by Race Between 1963-1964 and 1969-1970 Academic Sessions

Academic Year	Malays		Non-Malays		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1963-1964	10	29.4	24	70.6	34
1964-1965	28	31.8	60	68.2	88
1965-1966	27	18.0	123	82.0	150
1966-1967	54	28.3	137	71.7	191
1967-1968	51	23.7	164	76.3	215
1968-1969	109	33.0	221	67.0	330
1969-1970	102	31.9	218	68.1	320
TOTAL	381	28.7	947	71.3	1,328

Source: Abdul Majid Report, 1971. Figures derived from Table II, pp. 32-33.

1. The Faculty of Education was established in 1963.

When analysing the student enrollment in the Faculty of Sciences between 1964 and 1970, the Majid Ismail Report (1971: para.88) commented:

"Thus in the past six years, the University of Malaya has produced a total of 119 Malay graduates in all the sciences put together. It will be noted that as long ago as 1965, there were 126 non-Malay graduates from the Faculty of Science alone and that the first two graduating classes in Medicine have already produced 117 non-Malay doctors. The national implications of these figures are obvious and ominous. For the limited purpose of our study, the implications are equally obvious as they point to racial segregation by faculty and to the inevitable resentment and frustration on the part of the Malay students."

The pre-1969 educational development was conceived by the majority of the Malays as discriminatory towards them. After more than a decade of independence they still remained within the enclaves of the depressed and deprived. The ideal that education would be the key to their social and economic improvement seemed to have disappeared and thus could not find the hope that they had anticipated.

Educational Policies Implemented

It has been the thrust of this thesis that the May 13 conflict was the result of the cumulative dissatisfaction over certain policies, especially in relation to Article 152 of the Federal Constitution and the failure to implement the national system of education as proposed by both the Razak Report, 1956 and the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960. Both the Government's policies over language and education have been the source of much political contradiction in terms of objective and philosophy. These problems, together with the Government's tacit intention of deviating from the original policies, greatly hampered their due course

of implementation. The post-1969 period was a serious attempt by the Government to redress some of its past mistakes. In fact the re-definition of the national education policy was the first major programme embarked upon by the Government after the May 13 conflict. This stemmed from the realisation that in the Malayan context, education was too important and volatile an issue to be the victim of an excessive political manipulation.

In an attempt to place education out of the political centre, a political figure from Sarawak was appointed as the country's new Minister of Education. The appointee was Abdul Rahman Yaakub who first joined the Malayan Cabinet following the formation of the Malaysian Federation in 1963. Before being appointed to the key post of education, he was a Federal Minister for Lands and Mines. His appointment to such an important and controversial portfolio raised much speculation. As Minister in charge of education he had a wide range of power over matters related to the development of education in the country. His authority was enshrined in the Education Ordinance, 1957 (para. 5) which stated that "It shall be the duty of the Minister to secure the effective execution of the educational policy of the Federation including the progressive development of educational institutions where the national language is the medium of instruction".

It was therefore assumed that giving such an important portfolio to an outsider¹, the Government had the intention of neutralising the issue, thus preventing it from being subject to political compromise and

1. He was considered as an outsider to the Malayan political scene. Because he was not a member of UMNO, he did not belong to the "in-group" of the party which influenced most of the Government's decisions.

appeasement. At the same time, it was also envisaged that not being a member of UMNO he would be able to reduced the inherent conflict potential that had characterised Malayan education since independence.

Contrary to all the speculation that had been heaped upon his appointment, he single-handedly issued a statement of policy that radically changed the direction of the country's educational system. By invoking the power bestowed on him, he once and for all cleared the ambiguity that had surrounded the national education policy for more than a decade. He announced that "a dynamic educational policy" would be implemented by the Government only two weeks after the May 13 crisis (The Straits Times, May 28, 1969). The important statement was made amidst the crisis that was developing within the Government and among the UMNO leaders in particular. According to Goh (op.cit.:32), the "unilateral declaration of policy" that Abdul Rahman Yaakub made over the implementation of a dynamic educational policy in the wake of an anti-Tunku campaign by students from colleges and the university, helped to restore confidence in the Government. Goh (op.cit.:32) even suggested that Abdul Rahman Yaakub's declaration of policy was "without the Tunku's knowledge or authority". But in a statement a week later (The Straits Times, June 6, 1969) he denied that it was a unilateral declaration of policy as had been widely speculated. He acknowledged the fact that the plan for a more dynamic educational system had been from his own initiative, but that it had been agreed by both the Tunku and Tun Abdul Razak (The Straits Times, *ibid.*).

Apparently, the decision that he made stunned the nation which was still recovering from the trauma of the ethnic crisis. To the Malays, his appointment as the Minister of Education was initially viewed with resignation. It was assumed that being an "outsider" he would safely initiate the freezing of all the controversial matters related to education and hence preserve the existing status-quo. The news that he had made changes in the direction of the national education system was thus viewed with extreme jubilation. To them it was a turning point as far as their national aspirations were concerned. Nonetheless, the paradox remained in the sense that it took a complete outsider to Malay politics to have the courage to make this important breakthrough.

The focal point of Abdul Rahman Yaakub's statement was the announcement that effective from 1970 all subjects except English and the pupil's mother tongue would be taught in Malay, beginning in standard one in all national-type English primary schools. He also announced that as from 1978 onwards, the form five examinations in all Government English secondary schools would be conducted in the national language. He further added that "we hope by 1978, all subjects except English and the pupil's mother tongue, will be taught in the national language in all English schools. As for the institutions of higher learning, by 1983 the medium of instruction and examination would be in the national language" (The Straits Times, July 12, 1969). About two weeks later, he again stated that by 1975 all subjects apart from English and the pupil's own language would be taught in "Bahasa Malaysia"¹ in the "Remove classes". Under

1. This was formerly the Malay language (Bahasa Melayu). The change from "Bahasa Melayu" to "Bahasa Malaysia" was to generate wider acceptance of the language.

the new programme it meant "a complete integration of the English medium with the Malay medium Remove classes" (The Straits Times, July 22, 1969). He further stressed that under this arrangement, English language would come into its rightful position as the second language in the school system. Finally, the Minister made an observation that "the greatest single benefit to be accrued from the implementation of "Bahasa Malaysia" will be the accelerated pace of national integration and unity" (The Straits Times, *ibid.*).

The response from the Chinese community was immediate and at the same time isolated. One was from the President of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce, Tan Sri T.H. Tan, who urged the Government to continue the use of English in the teaching of science subjects even in primary schools (The Straits Times, July 12, 1969). He further noted that "many other independent nations, notably India, had found it impossible to teach science subjects in their own national language especially in the advanced stage" (*ibid.*). To Tan Sri T.H. Tan, the teaching of science subjects in English was imperative if the country was not to lag behind in the scientific field (*ibid.*).

This statement made by the President of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce was significant in that he appealed for the preservation of English rather than promoting the use of Chinese language which was usual by the Chambers. This change of strategy revealed one important aspect of the language controversy. It gave a clear indication that the promotion of the Chinese language by this business group was meant for political consumption among the Chinese educated groups and the Chinese masses in

general. In reality, it was the English language that it was concerned about and which the Chinese community tried desperately to defend.

However, the call by Tan Sri T.H. Tan for the retention of English received a sharp rebuke from the Minister of Home Affairs, Tun Dr. Ismail. In his interview with "Utusan Melayu"¹, he conceded on the weakness of the Alliance Government in the past. Firstly, he admitted that the Government was "lax" in seeing that Malay special privileges were not questioned by others. Secondly, he agreed that the Government was "soft" in carrying out the national educational system and stressed the correctness of the policy which was based on the Razak Report, 1956 and the Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960. Thirdly, on the question of Malay as the official language, he gave the assurance that the Government would not allow any group to challenge it and the Government would not entertain the demand that other languages be given equal status (The Straits Times, July 18, 1969).

Here, it would be important to provide further elaboration on the political and educational development that has just been mentioned. The first was in relation to the proclamation of the "New Education Policy" by the Minister of Education. Secondly, the remark made by Dr. Ismail admitting the Government's previous weaknesses. Thirdly, the unprecedented statement made by the President of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce.

The announcement made by the Minister of Education over the full

1. "Utusan Melayu" - a Malay language newspaper written in Jawi scripts.

implementation of the national education policy was timely and appropriate to the political climate that prevailed. As an outsider to the Alliance political centre, he was aware of the controversial nature that education had created and the frustration that stemmed from the Government vacillating in its implementation. Being a Federal Minister from Sarawak in charge of the Lands and Mines portfolio before being appointed as the Minister of Education, he was an unknown figure except among the Kuala Lumpur intellectual circles. His "Melanau"¹ background did not pose an obstacle for him to be accepted and trusted especially by the Malay language activists at the University of Malaya. For instance, in 1966, he was given the honour to officiate the opening of the "National Language Seminar"² organised by the Malay Language Society, University of Malaya. The choice of Abdul Rahman Yaakub over other senior Malay ministers in the Malayan Cabinet showed the confidence the society had in his leadership. At the same time, his association with the society (PBMUM, as it was commonly known)³ was also important for it was in this Malay student movement that the aspirations of the Malay society were embodied.

The PBMUM was at that period becoming the "keeper of Malay's conscience". Again, in September, 1968, the society held a symposium on the "National

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1. "Melanau" is one of the ethnic groups in Sarawak.
 2. The Seminar which was held on October 29 and 30, 1966, was aimed at reviewing the progress in the development of the national language. The writer was a participant in this seminar. See "Seminar Bahasa Kebangsaan", 1966 organised by "Persekutuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya".
 3. PBMUM - "Persekutuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya" (Malay Language Society University of Malaya).

Education Policy" with the following objectives:

- "a. To discuss and expose the deviation from the existing educational policy as stated in the Razak and Rahman Talib Reports (Education Review Committee, 1960).
- b. To attract the attention towards the Malay medium stream who had been the victims of this deviation.
- c. To stress the importance for a country to have a dynamic educational policy.
- d. To call for the immediate establishment of a National University" (Noordin Abdul Razak, cited in Raja Mukhtaruddin, 1982:43).

To what extent Abdul Rahman Yaakub was influenced by the PEMUM is hard to gauge, but the announcement he made on May 28th, 1969 (The Straits Times) that "a dynamic educational policy" would be implemented by the Government was in fulfilment of the third objective proposed by the PEMUM during the symposium on the "National Education Policy" held in 1968. At the same time, his rapport with Malay student organisations was hard to conceal. This was clearly manifested when Malay students from the National University and the University of Malaya demonstrated on hearing that he had resigned from the Cabinet (The Straits Times, July 10, 1970). To placate the restless atmosphere that developed among the Malay population due to his untimely resignation¹ the acting Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak even had to issue a statement assuring that the national education policy would not be changed (Malay Mail, July 13, 1970). A fortnight later, and again to reassure the public, Tan Sri Hamdan, the Chief Education Advisor

1. It was rumoured that he was pressured to resign by senior UMNO members on seeing his popularity among the Malay population was overwhelmingly increasing. But the official version was that he had to be Chief Minister of Sarawak, to solve the political crisis that emerged in that state (see Goh, op.cit.: fn. p.37).

stressed that there was no going back as far as the national education policy was concerned (The Sunday Times, July 26, 1970). He emphasised that "All Government-aided national type schools (English) will be converted into national schools by 1980" (ibid.).

However, it was the "non-political" atmosphere of the post May 13 crisis that gave Abdul Rahman Yaakub the confidence in announcing the changes in the educational system. His confidence, together with the will to implement, was apparent when it took him less than two weeks between the announcement he made over the implementation of a "dynamic educational policy" to the time when his Ministry issued a professional circular to all the Chief Education Officers directing them on the changes that were to take place in 1970 (see Appendix E). Under normal political circumstances, it would be unimaginable for him to have done so without being reprimanded or removed from his post.

Adding to this "non-political" atmosphere was the new found realism that had emerged in the country. This stemmed from the realisation that the Government in particular was ambivalent and had failed to commit itself over some vital national policies, in preference to short term political gain. For example, Articles 152 and 153 of the Federal Constitution were not implemented in earnest and the educational policy became subjected to much political manipulation. It took almost twelve years for the leaders to realise these errors as Dr. Ismail himself admitted (op.cit.) It also took the same length of time for UMNO to realise the failure of its policy of compromise and accommodation at the expense of some vital national issues.

For a policy of compromise to function, it needed reciprocal responses from all participatory groups. The failure of a group to respond likewise would mean the failure of the policy. Speaking in the debate on the Report of the Education Committee 1956, Tun Dr. Ismail made the following remarks:

"One essential thing when we achieve independence is that we should not engage in crystal gazing. The various communities living in this country was not of our making, it was brought about by colonialism. This burden had to be faced. If we want to achieve independence we should not be imperialists and those who are loyal to this country must be considerate and accept the language of the country"
(LCD, May 16, 1956).

Paradoxically, the offer made by UMNO was not heeded and it took more than a decade for both the party and Dr. Ismail to realise it.

The open admission made by Dr. Ismail that there were flaws in the implementation of the national education policy was important for it sanctified the statement of policy that had been made by the Minister of Education. Being the Minister of Home Affairs, Dr. Ismail's position in the National Operation Council was both influential and powerful. Being in charge of the country's internal security, he was thus responsible for the preservation of law and order. It was Dr. Ismail who proclaimed on national television, in the midst of the 1969 ethnic riots, that "Democracy is dead" in Malaya (The Times, May 17, 1969). It was with such a political backing that there was no turning back for Abdul Rahman Yaakub. There was no alternative but to proceed with more vigour in implementing the national language policy in schools. In April 1970, when the policy was beginning to take shape he stated that he "no longer accept the attitude of compromise" and stressed that "Bahasa Malaysia must be made the medium of teaching in schools" (Malay Mail, *ibid.*).

On the other hand, the statement made by the President of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce was contradictory to the spirit of the new realism that was emerging. It was a repetition of the musty old record that would be of relevance a decade earlier. At the same time, his plea seemed to be an attempt to galvanise support among the English educated elites for the retention of English for the teaching of science subjects in schools at least. But it was of no avail. Under the new spirit of realism the country was set to follow a new course.

Rukunegara¹ - the Emergence of a National Ideology

The impact of the May 13 tragedy also called for the thorough re-examination of the country's basic ideological framework vis-a-vis the nation-building process. The shattering effect that resulted from the ethnic conflict was in itself evident and reflected the uncertain course the country was taking. At the same time, it could not be denied that the country had failed to develop the much needed centripetal values among the population. The institutional growth within that period had not been successful in inculcating a sense of shared interest in the new state. In short, the country had failed to harness the various divergent values into a common national outlook. As a result, the ethnic gaps became even wider, conflict potential became even more rampant, and the ethnic consensus that was formulated on the eve of the country's independence was collapsing.

1. Rukunegara - Principles of the Nation. More or less, the word could mean "the National Ideology".

Unlike Indonesia, where its "Pancasila"¹ became a source of national guidance and philosophy, Malaya did not develop such an ideology upon independence. No contract of that sort was formulated and in a plural society it was imperative to define the individual roles in their relationships among themselves and towards the state. What emerged was mostly based on a common understanding of "live and let live" simplistic type of philosophy. But this liberal philosophy did not invoke the corresponding response of national responsibility among the population. The weakness lay in the assumption that everybody understood their roles and commitment towards the new nation. True to the saying that "to understand everything makes one very indulgent" (Evans, ed., 1978:716) the test came after more than a decade of independence when the trauma was severely felt and realised. It was with this perception of the Malayan society after the May 13 incident that the nation began to assess itself in the light of the experience and the failings of the past. In the words of Ghazali Shafie (1978:173):

"What is now needed is a new binding energy to replace the old ones which has lost its effectiveness; we must provide a new energy that could cut across the obstacles of racialism, that could provide an overall satisfaction to all, be they Chinese or Malay, capitalists or labourers, Islam or Hindus, old or young. The people of Malaysia is determined to instill a better spirit of unity and retaining a democratic way of life. We determine to build a just, fair, liberal and democratic society, where the wealth of the nation could be shared by all. It is with this belief and determination that Rukunegara is born, which will be the guidance and principles of the country that will

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1. Upon independence Indonesia created the "Pancasila" as its national ideology. "Pancasila" means "five principles" and they are: Nationalism, Internationalism, Representative government, Social Justice and Belief in one God (see Kahin G.M., 1970:122-125).

The five principles of "Rukunegara" are: Belief in God, Loyalty to the King and Country, Respect for the Constitution, Respect for the Law and Morality.

unite the population when confronting with all the tasks in future. Rukunegara will be the basis that will determine how the people can have dialogues among each other in their search for equality which has been the aspiration of the people. Rukunegara will be the basis that will determine how the people communicate among themselves and with the country."

Rukunegara was declared on August 31, 1970, exactly twelve years after the country had achieved its independence. Basically, it was in response to the tragedy that struck the nation about fifteen months earlier. It was an attempt to fill in the philosophical vacuum which could be the basis for the nation's ideology in future. In the words of Ghazali Shafie (ibid:174-5):

"Rukunegara is a comprehensive document. It is a guidance and principle for the country and the people when determining their future. It does not only determine the relationship among the people, but also between the people and the state - what is expected by the state from the people, and even more important, what is expected by the people from the state. In other words, Rukunegara voiced the concept, trust and the determination of the people towards the Malaysian nation."

It was therefore as part of the new realism that Rukunegara was formulated. The ideology was not imposed but jointly developed by all members of Malayan society. They included representatives from the political parties, from the press, trade unions, employers, religious bodies, the public services, professional groups and the minorities of the country (Ghazali Shafie, ibid.:175). What was important about the Rukunegara was that it laid the philosophical foundation for the country when pursuing its policy of national development and integration. Thus, when the programme for national reconstruction was launched in the form of the

Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975 (1971:1), a sense of direction was observed when it categorically emphasised that, "national unity is the over-riding objective of the country". The whole plan itself was described as such:

"It represents an important stage in the series of development plans designed to eradicate poverty among the Malaysia, irrespective of race and to restructure Malaysian society in order to correct racial and economic imbalance, in the context of an expanding economy, leading towards the creation of a dynamic and just society" (Second Malaysian Plan, 1971-1975, 1971:1).

The Plan further stated that "to achieve these objectives, it will be guided by the principle of Rukunegara" (ibid.:2). At the same time, the Plan also admitted the institutional defects that existed and which in some respects contributed towards the May 13 conflict. As a remedial measure, the Plan (ibid.:9) specified that:

"the fundamental objective of the New Economic Policy is to create the institutions and processes by which Malaysia will have an enduring national harmony and unity and by which all Malaysians will share in the progress and prosperity of the nation."

The New Economic Policy which was entrenched in the Second Malaysia Plan, encompassed all aspects of social, economic and institutional reconstruction. It recognised the existence of the economic and occupational disparity among the races and it was therefore its main objective that such social inequalities should be eradicated. In his forward to the Second Malaysia Plan (1971:V), the Prime Minister stated:

"The Plan is a blue-print for the New Economic Policy. It incorporates the two-pronged objectives of eradicating poverty, irrespective of race and restructuring Malaysian society to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic functions."

What was also important about the Second Malaysia Plan was the emphasis it gave towards education for the purpose of promoting national integration and unity. The Plan (op.cit:231-2) provided a balanced insight which the national education policy should pursue and this was outlined into four major areas:

- "i. Consolidation of the educational system to promote national integration and unity;
- ii. Orientation and expansion of education and training programme towards meeting the manpower needs of the country;
- iii. Improvement of the quality of education for the building of a progressive society oriented towards the modern science and technology, and
- iv. Improvement of the research, planning and implementation capability to meet the above objectives".

The Second Malaysia Plan, besides recognising the integrative functions of education, also reinforced the need to implement¹ the Bahasa Malaysia policy in schools and at the same time called for the narrowing down of the gaps in educational opportunities among the regions and races. With the implementation of Bahasa Malaysia as the main medium of instruction in schools, the Second Malaysia Plan thus "establishes English as a second language in all schools" (The Second Malaysia Plan, op.cit.:236). This ended the era of political ambiguity and ambivalence of the past over the state of the English language in relation to the status of the national language. As it was, the effort was an overt form of social engineering necessitated by the urgent need for a genuine programme of national reconstruction.

1. The Second Malaysia Plan was merely to re-affirm the need for implementation. In reality the implementation had started in 1970.

Cultural Legitimacy and the Constitutional Process

It has been argued earlier that certain provisions of the constitution had been subjected to vigorous scrutinization during the 1969 election. The complexity of the unwritten constitutional compromises left many items in the constitution vague and hard to understand. 'Majlis Gerakan Negara' (1969:85) in its report put the primary causes of the May 13 disturbances on the failure of the people to understand some of the entrenched provisions that were written in the constitution. Thus, as a safety valve, that such a conflict would not recur, it was felt that an amendment to the constitution was needed to protect certain clauses that had been the source of much ethnic controversy. This was explicitly emphasised by the Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak when proposing the Constitutional Amendment Bill, 1971. He pointed out:

"The election campaign in April and May 1969 provided these irresponsible elements with the opportunity to arouse racial emotions to a pitch. These elements created fear and anger by questioning and ridiculing the provisions of the Constitution relating to Bahasa Malaysia and the special position of the Malays, which further exacerbated the growing sense of insecurity felt by the Malays when they see the widening gap between them and the non-Malays particularly in the economic and educational spheres" (Official Report, House of Representatives, Third Parliament, 1971:53).

This speech was important for it was given at the opening of the Parliament, suspended following the May 13 disturbances. At the same time, the speech also revealed the new philosophy of the Government which the new Malayan leaders were advocating. Apparent in the new administration was the adoption of a more pragmatic and realistic approach towards governing. The "new government" felt that in a plural society and with

the absence of any common will among the population, the execution of policies that were of national relevance would be impossible without the sanctification of the legislature.

Basically, it was with this prevalent line of thought that a new "social contract" was drawn to institutionalise the position of the various ethnic groups in relation to each other and towards the state. Unlike the previous practices where the consensus that was agreed upon was confined to a few ruling elites, the new "social contract" had no atmosphere of secrecy. It was thrashed out openly with a long term view of instilling a national commitment rather than for the immediate political exigency. This was done on February 23, 1971 when the Prime Minister presented to Parliament a Constitutional Amendment Bill which called for the removal of certain "sensitive issues" from being the subject of public discussion and to correct certain imbalances that prevailed in the country (The Straits Times, February 24, 1971). The amendment sought to empower Parliament to enact laws prohibiting Articles 152, 153 and 181¹ of the Federal Constitution from being questioned and discussed. The Bill also sought to revoke the immunity from judicial proceedings enjoyed by Members of Parliament and State Assemblies in relation to their statements in both those Houses. Lastly, the Bill sought to give power to the Yang Di Pertuan Agong to direct higher institutions of learning to reserve a certain proportion of places for Malays and other indigenous

1. Article 152 was over the National language of the country.
Article 153 was on the Special Position of the Malays.
Article 181 was over the position of the Malay Sultanates.

communities (The Straits Times, Feb. 24, 1971). According to Vasil (1980:191), the issues were debated "for a week in a highly charged atmosphere". But, nonetheless, on March 3, 1971, Parliament passed the Bill by a majority of 125 to 17.

It has to be admitted that any act of legislation would mean the imposition of the rule of law. The painful fact was that by utilising this strategy, values were externally imposed which might result in the subjugation of a group to another and the suppression of ideas among the articulate members of the society. Although it was not a sweeping piece of legislation that was motivated by selfish political ends, it remained like a "Damocles sword" that could at any time fall on the unfortunate. That it was all done within the ambit of the democratic processes, revealed the flaws attached to this institution which Giretty (1967:9) appropriately described as the "tyranny of the majority". In the context of the Malayan plural society, the disadvantages of parliamentary democracy were many. Mohammed Suffian (op.cit.:348-349) Malaya's foremost judge described the weaknesses of the institution in this tone:

"It is slow and cumbersome because Government has to consult and take into account the views of every section of the community. A democratic government tends to take decisions that are popular rather than right, because it has to think of the next election. Individual politicians have to appeal more often than not to the worst instincts of the electorate; this is especially marked in a multi-racial country where it frequently pays to exploit racial issues. The bulk of the electorate is unsophisticated and their power of reasoning minimal; and it is easiest to appeal to popular prejudices. Consequently, persons who are skilled in creating issues, irrespective of their relevance, and in exploiting popular prejudices easily get to the front, and persons who are able but unwilling to go to the hustings stay out of power and have little or no share in public life."

Despite what had been described by Mohammed Suffian about parliamentary democracy, we could not deny the basic institutional function it had in providing the power to the voters in determining the form of government they wished to see in their country.

In Malaya, parliamentary democracy was developed through the accident of history. Being a former British colony, much of it was modelled on the Westminster type. The system fitted well into the monarchical form of establishment which had long been in existence. But, the time given for political socialization was short. With independence the various institutions that emerged were not cherished but rather taken as "given". As such, scant attention was given to reflect and reappraise the fragile nature of Malayan society. In a democratic society every citizen "is supposed to be rational in his approach to politics, guided by reason, not by emotion" (Almond and Verba, 1965:29). But this was not the case in Malaya. Democratic processes were considered as licences for embarking on political excessiveness and adventurism which went beyond the realm of that much revered institution.

The first decade of independence thus saw the failure to translate the exuberance of the political will into the much needed national will which the country was lacking. Presumably, it was an attempt to redress this defect that the Government in power imposed certain national values and ideologies as guidelines for any future political acts. Unpopular as it might be, it was the end of an exhaustive search for an alternative, which in the main was directed towards the prevention of another ethnic conflict. At the same time, it was in response to the new found realism which had been described earlier.

Chapter Eight

A Study in Policy Implementation

Problems and Issues

When analysing the issues and problems that stalled the development of Malayan education between 1957-1969, two pertinent questions emerge. The first stems from the defects of the policy which are traceable to the country's governing institutions. In this instance, the Alliance political structure which incorporated all ethnic representation into the Government while providing a short term political solution to the country's multi-ethnic problems, constituted a major obstacle to both the formulation of and the implementation of educational policy. Secondly, in relation to the first was the vital question of political leadership. As educational issues became more political and ethnic in their character, the strain fell on the leaders who feared the virtual breakdown of the coalition. To ensure its political cohesion, educational policy became subjected to the process of compromise, negotiation and accommodation. Thus, even after the policy was formulated and the necessary legislation enacted, it was to receive further rectification from the Government before any form of implementation could take place. Hence, the implementation stage was even more critical for it was here that the main focus of the controversy was directed.

If the politics of compromise were meant to provide a lasting stability to the state, this was yet to be proved. In the Malayan case for instance, the strategy of compromise did not provide a useful or long term solution. The practice might be effective for the routines of governing

but coming to certain essentials like implementing an educational policy, efforts towards realising the policy objective were aborted and became the victim of the newly created political machine. As a result, there was an absence of any straightforward implementation. What emerged was what Bachrach and Baratz (1963:641) termed as "nondecision." This happened "when the dominant values, the accepted rules of the game, the existing power relations among groups, and the instruments of force, singly or in combination, effectively prevent certain grievances from developing into fully-fledged issues which call for decisions" (ibid.). This was in fact the problem of the national education policy where the stated objective did not match the expected outcome mainly because of the policy itself and the failure on the part of the leaders to provide a firm and coherent decision for its implementation.

"Policy means a statement of intention" and implementation is a process towards the realisation and achievement of stated goals and objectives (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973:xiv-xv). While policy and implementation are complementary and inter-related, it takes two different processes for them to be realised. As Pressman and Wildavsky (ibid.:xv) noted, "whether stated explicitly or not policies point to a chain of causation between initial condition and future consequences". Therefore, all policies remain unrealised and untranslated into action unless they are being implemented. At the same time, for a process of implementation to take place it needs a policy, for implementation in itself is not independent in its implication. It depends firstly, on the policy itself and secondly, on its execution. Whether any given policy is implemented again depends on the urgency of the intention as perceived by the leaders, the amount

of resources available to carry out the implementation and the commitment on the part of the leadership towards the policy.

With this understanding, it should be realised that implementation as a process is not smooth and immediate in its application. The intervening variables are many. There existed the whole array of complexities between the period of policy formulation to the period of implementation. These variables could be real or imaginary. As Grindle (1980:3) said:

"Implementation has captured their attention because it is evident that a wide variety of factors - from the availability of sufficient resources to the structure of inter-governmental relations, from the commitment of lower level officials to reporting mechanisms within the bureaucracy, from the political leverage of opponents of the policy to accidents of timing, luck, and seemingly unrelated events - can and do frequently intervene between the statement of policy goals and their actual achievement in the society."

If the implementation process itself proves to be cumbersome and fraught with obstacles, the same goes with the policy-making process. Milstein and Jennings (1973:8-9) for example, viewed policy-making "as a cycle involving movement from unsatisfactory conditions to greater satisfactions with conditions". They further observed:

"The cycle is fraught with high-risk situations. The policies that emerge on the implementation end of the cycle are but a fraction of those that are proposed at the dissatisfaction end. Even these few policies are usually severely modified by the weathering of time, expediency, challenges by other policies, and harassment by the opposition. Nor is the process static. Modified laws or new laws are open to challenges by groups that feel disadvantaged by them. In short, the cycle often begins anew as groups are constantly forming around dissatisfactions" (ibid.:9).

This implies that policy formulation itself is an arduous process. Archer (1979:3) in describing the emergence of the educational system makes an observation that "the nature of education is rarely, if ever, the practical realization of an ideal form of instruction as envisaged by a particular group. Instead, most of the time most of the forms that education takes are the political products of power struggles. They bear the marks of concession to allies and compromise with opponents. Thus to understand the nature of education at any time we need to know not only who won the struggle for control, but also how: not merely who lost, but also how badly they lost."

Since a statement of policy is important in determining the direction for its implementation, they "should be mutually supportive rather than contradictory" (Pressman & Wildavsky, op.cit.:133). Secondly, there must be clarity in the statement of policies for "ambiguity provides a means for negatively inclined judges or bureaucrats to evade the intent of policies through deliberate misinterpretation" (Baum, 1981:50).

It is in the light of this theoretical framework of policy and its implementation that the development of Malayan education is analysed. Specifically, the analysis intends to highlight the vital problems and issues that led to the non-implementation of the educational policy.

The Razak Report which outlined the statement of educational objectives for independent Malaya emerged as the by-product of political consultation and conciliation among the various ethnic groups of the country. The Report did not reflect any dominance of one group over the other.

In fact, it was sensitive to the demands and needs of all the communal groups. If there was any bias, it was visible when it gave recognition to Malay as the national language of the country and its plan to make the Malay language the main medium of instruction in schools (The Razak Report, para.12). But at the same time, the committee did not deny the existence of other languages. In fact, Chinese and Tamil languages were given recognition as the medium of instruction in primary schools (The Razak Report: para.63) while at the same time assurances were also given for their preservation and sustenance (The Razak Report; para.1a). The Report, therefore, attempted to accommodate the national needs on one hand and the demands of the various ethnic groups on the other.

Paradoxically, the public failed to respond justly to the proposals. Instead they were sceptically viewed from all quarters. In *Majallah Guru* (Sept.1, 1956:285) for example, a writer even suggested that "if there is no revolution in the society especially on the part of the Malay school teachers, there would never be any change. Only a revolution could produce a glorious result for the people and the country".

Central to the argument was the question of language and in this case the debate was between the indigenous and the immigrant communities. The issue was the choice between monolingualism as against multilingualism. The debates that transpired became perennial and resulted in the emergence of language and education as a "single-issue politics" (Goodwin & Ingram, 1980:279-297) in Malaya during the first decade of independence.

Politicians, sensitive to public opinion and reaction acted cautiously fearing that any wrong move might result in the loss of electoral support.

Out of this uncertainty, pressure groups emerged and became omnipresent in several national elections where they strongly influenced the "single-issue politics" of language and education which often became a major determinant in the electoral outcome. Out of cautiousness and at the same time being aware of the political implications that might develop, the commitment given by the Government to this issue became vague and dubious. It was in this light that the Razak Report as a policy document of importance became ineffective. As Richardson and Jordan (1979:153) correctly put it, "a policy that can be eroded or sabotaged by a powerful group or agency is not worth the paper it is written on".

Emergence of Interest Groups

Both the Razak Report and the Report of the Education Review Committee were the products of the in-group political deliberation within the Alliance Government. It was not an open forum where concerned groups were invited to participate in the discussion. Rather, it was in the form of memorandum that the public's point of view was channeled. Since it was an elected government, the claim was that any policy that emerged had the consent of the public from whom its power derived. In terms of the national educational policy, the claim was far from the truth. As reflected by the all round dissatisfaction towards the policy this became a symbol of the alienation of the Government from the mainstream of public opinion. The Reports, therefore, mirrored the aspiration and thinking of the ruling elites rather than that of the masses in general.

At the same time, it must not be denied that there existed factional interests within the ruling circle who were concerned that any emergent

policy should conform to the wishes of their respective constituencies. This phenomenon was inevitable in any form of government elected through the democratic process but it became even more felt when the power to rule was based on ethnic coalitions.

In this sense, the task of the policy-makers was essentially two-fold. In the first place, they were aware of the demands of their respective constituencies and secondly, these needs had to be reconciled within the framework of national policies and objectives. It was in their attempt to reconcile these differences that resulted in the lack of clarity and in the conflicting statement of objectives in the Razak Report (see Chapter 4). What appeared was a policy which was not endorsed by the public in general. Put simply, its effort to please all resulted in pleasing none with the exception of those who were to benefit from it. Nonetheless, this is typical of any centralised system of education which does not provide "a channel through which external and consumer demands can be filtered and satisfied" (Archer, op.cit.:256).

It was with this background that interest groups developed reflecting the dissatisfaction of the public towards the proposed education policy. The source of these grievances centred on the question of language as defined by the Federal Constitution (Article 152) in relation to other languages and its future role in the proposed national education system. The making of Malay as the national language of the country did not generate much publicity or grievances among the non-Malay population, but a row developed when other vernacular language were not recognised as official languages. The Federal Constitution accorded English and Malay

as the only official languages and this recognition was important for it penetrated the national education system as proposed by the Razak Report.

The Chinese community was particularly concerned over this development for if the policy were to be implemented, it would place the Chinese schools at a dead-end without any future in terms of gaining entrance to the tertiary level of education or getting gainful employment in the public sectors. It was the concern for the future of their language and education that led to the creation of interest groups which were mobilised by the Chinese Schools Teachers Union and the Chinese Guilds. Initially the group did not have a strong political constituency that could exert its influence upon the decision-making process of the Government. Thus, when the Report was first released, their opposition was marginal and less audible. It was only in 1959 that the group was able to mobilise mass support among the Chinese community that it became a force which any political party had to identify specifically for electoral purposes.

Within the continuum of disagreements about educational policy, the reaction of the Malays, vis-a-vis the non-Malays, was poles apart. While agreeing that English would remain as one of the official languages during the first ten years of independence which they considered as transitional, their objective was towards the achievement of a "one nation and one language" philosophy. Dato' Onn bin Jaafar in denouncing the demands of

of the non-Malays gave a stern warning that:

"We cannot give rights to people in this country who by accident of birth or by privilege of entry are bodily with us, but who in mind and in heart are not with us. We cannot give rights to those who demand rights but who are not prepared to shoulder the duties and obligations of a nation of Malaya"
(The Straits Echo, Feb. 8, 1955).

A few months later Dato' Onn again pointed out that, "under no circumstances will it recognise any other languages other than Malay as the National Language and English as the second or the official language of the Federation of Malaya. One country - One Nation - One Language."
(The Straits Echo, July 6, 1955).

The advocate of this policy felt strongly that it could be achieved through the newly formulated educational system. In fact, even long before the policy was initiated they had been aspiring to see that "Malay language once again be restored to its original position" (Majallah Guru, Jan. 1954:1). Thus the Razak Report was an utter disappointment to them. It was the first set-back in their quest for national fulfilment.

The Malays being aware of the various shortcomings of the Razak Report were concerned about the effect the policy would have on the future of Malay education once it was implemented. What they sought was clarity and a firm commitment on certain issues especially in relation to the position of the national language in a national education system and its relation with other languages. The Chinese, on the other hand, did not let the matter rest. They took every opportunity to exploit the issue in the hope of enhancing their claim for the recognition of their language in the proposed educational system.

The interest groups that emerged over the question of language and education were undisputedly ethnic in character. The pull towards ethnic alignment and extremism seemed to be greater than the force of moderation and national commitment. Their demands were far apart and under such circumstances the process of reconciliation was almost impossible. As has been observed earlier (see Chapter 5), the problems became even more controversial and intensified when these interest groups associated themselves with political parties which survived mainly on ethnic related issues.

Ambiguity: Effects on Implementation

For a policy to be effectively implemented, it had to be clear in its objectives so as to avoid being subjected to multiple interpretations.

To quote Grindle (1980:10):

"the form which policy goals themselves are stated may have a decided impact on implementation. Whether goals are stated clearly or ambiguously and whether political and administrative officials are in agreement about what the goals are will be shown to have been decisive for the implementation of a specific programme."

The effect of an ambiguous policy was therefore far-reaching. Besides the dissatisfaction it generated, it also created frustration for those who sincerely felt that any policy of national importance should not be subjected to factional interest or any form of political expediency and horse-trading. In the case of Malaya, the question of education was national in its implication and as such it had to be placed within the matrix of national priorities. Being a part of the nation-building process, educational programmes had to take precedence over other mundane matters

of politics, sectional or even ethnic interests. But paradoxically this was not the case with the Razak Report. The national scope of the Report was vague and minimal to suit the "body politics" of the country. Added to that, the essential elements that characterised the colonial system of education remained and this created further psychological problems for the national education policy to be fully realised.

Independence which was meant to be a "grand finale" where the curtain would fall and the last vestiges of colonialism would be shown the exit door, did not materialise as expected. The forces of neo-colonialism were too strong for that radical development to occur. The retention of English language as the official language of the country was one such instance and its continued existence was hard to justify. That it was indispensable for reasons of educational and bureaucratic purposes was a rationalisation given by national leaders who apparently lacked the spirit of national consciousness and the "political will" to be free of any colonial influence. This lack of firmness in getting rid of English as the official language of the country provided a strong justification for the Chinese community to exert a similar claim for their language. In fact, their reasons were even more valid considering they were in the country and in terms of numbers made up more than a third of the population. It was this nature of the debate that saw the Chinese vehemently opposed the Razak Report.

The Malays reacted differently. They wanted a guarantee and assurances that their language would be the sole official language of the country. The Razak Report, with its conflicting and ambiguous statement

of objectives (see Chapter 4) was considered by them to be unsatisfactory. While agreeing to the importance of English¹, they nevertheless wanted the official status given to the English language to be terminated. On this account they agreed to the ten-year transitional period after independence as envisaged by Article 152 of the Federal Constitution. However, as far as the national education policy was concerned, the delay in implementing the national language policy as recommended by paragraph 12 of the Razak Report was considered to be unnecessary. At the same time, the retention of the plural school system at the primary level was viewed as inimical to the philosophy that schools could be the initiating ground towards the inculcation of a common Malayan identity and hence would facilitate the process of national integration. A corollary to that, the sanctification of the separate school system, a legacy of the "divide and rule" policy of the colonial government (Loh, 1975) was seen as an obstacle to the development and growth of the national education policy as envisaged by the Razak Report. By preserving the status-quo, it was felt that it provided legitimacy towards other languages and this again was perceived as being against the country's language policy.

At this juncture, it was clear that there were conflicts in the pursuit of educational objectives which in turn frustrated the process of implementation. What followed was a state of "policy stalemate" where neither of the ethnic demands were considered nor entertained. Under these circumstances, questions began to emerge as to the state of the policy itself. Firstly, was the policy too ambitious and thus unrealisable?

1. Even the PMIP agreed to this point. See Parliamentary Debates, August 10, 1960:col. 2174.

Or was the "policy content corresponds partially to the interest of the national elites" (Cleaves, 1980:285) which the masses had failed to comprehend. As Ingram and Mann (1980:20) suggested:

"The goals of policy are often not what they seem to be, and it is a mistake to take stated purposes too literally. Government often lacks the power and will to address problems straightforwardly; thus roundabout means are chosen."

This statement was of relevance to the state of affairs that surround the national education policy. For more than a decade, the Government played around the policy of ambiguity while at the same time enhancing the interest of the "national elites" (Cleaves, op.cit.:285) by tacitly paving the way for anglicizing the national education system.

Officially, English and Malay were recognised as equal in status, but in terms of their utility this was far from being the case. Comparatively, the national language was in no condition to match the English language which had established itself in both the administrative and educational systems of the country. Admittedly, Malay language was only re-emerging. After being neglected for so long, its importance was felt following the country's independence. Its success therefore had to be evaluated not in juxtaposing it beside English but by the way it was accepted and the confidence everybody gave towards its development. It was here that the "missing link" lay. The language had failed to gain the confidence of the country's national elites and consequently this led to its non-implementation in the national education system. The fact that no attempt was ever made to get it implemented showed that the Government

was not only evasive but also irresponsible towards this issue. To quote Ingram and Mann (op.cit.:14):

"Politicians and political systems are expected to solve problems, not ignore them. Policy failure, however painful it may be to the parties who expected to benefit from it and to the taxpayers who pay for it, may be evidence of a political system that responds to problems, even if knowledge may be limited and appropriate policy tools unavailable."

Another indication of the Government's ambiguous policy was the National Language Act, 1967, which also failed to resolve the national language question (see Chapter 5). The Act symbolised the prevalent state of stalemate which has been described earlier. By playing upon the ethnic sentiments of the various communities, the Government pushed through legislation which provided the continued use of English and at the same time preserved the existing linguistic status-quo.

From the National Language Act, 1967 it is not difficult to conclude that it was the Alliance political framework that had won the day. Its policy of compromise and accommodation paved the way for middle-of-the-road legislation. Hence, the process towards implementation became even more remote than ever. Thus the Act inflicted a final blow towards the full implementation of the national education policy.

As the blue-print for national education, both the Razak Report and the Report of the Education Review Committee were passed by Parliament in 1957 and 1961 respectively. Nonetheless, the passage of the Bill did not imply any sense of urgency for implementation. During the parliamentary

debates, for example, there was nothing to suggest that there was a need for the Bill to be implemented immediately. Instead a call was made for it to be carried out cautiously with the underlying "spirit of tolerance, goodwill and understanding" (P.D., March 7, 1957:col. 2558). Since most of the members of the Razak Committee on Education were also Members of the Federal Legislative Council, it was assumed that the final product of the policy had been agreed by most, or at least what they all envisaged was faithfully included in the Report. This could also account for the full consensus the Bill received in the Legislative Assembly. According to Archer (op.cit.:622), this was typical in a centralised system where "legislation always involves concession, compromise and dilution of the goals pursued by those who help to pass it." What emerged was an Education Bill which was not only concessionary in its implication but also ambiguous in its philosophy. The effects were far-reaching for in the absence of clarity, it created a serious obstacle in the way of implementation. As Van Meter and Van Horn (1975:466) have suggested:

"the prospects of effective implementation will be enhanced by the clarity with which standards and objectives are stated and by the accuracy and consistency with which they are communicated."

In the absence of clarity, uncertainty developed over the course of direction which the policy had to pursue. It thus paved the way for "adaptive implementation" defined as "a process that allows policy to be modified, specified and revised - in a word, adapted - according to the unfolding interaction of the policy with its institutional setting. Its outcome would be neither automatic nor assured, and it would look more like a disorderly learning process than a predictable procedure" (Berman, 1980:210).

Directly or indirectly, the process of "adaptive implementation" occurred in 1968 when a minor implementation of the national language policy in the national-type schools (English) was carried out.¹ Beginning from January of that year these schools were to give instructions in the national language on subjects like Physical Education, Art and Crafts, Local Studies and Music in all primary one to primary three classes. Somehow speculation grew over these changes. Firstly, it appeared as a compensatory measure for the defective National Language Act of 1967 which still remained as a source of Malay frustration. Secondly, since the national election was only a year away, this mini-change that was introduced looked like an attempt to woo back the disgruntled UMNO members and the Malay population in general who were disappointed over the Government's language policy.

However, it should also be realised that in the case of the national education policy, and in non-political terms the implementation was not as complex as it was assumed to be. In the first place, all the hurdles related to policy-making and its legislative processes had long been cleared. Secondly, education in Malaya was a centrally-controlled institution with the Minister of Education having a wide range of power over it. Since the Minister of Education was central in the policy implementation process, the way he defined the policy was thus a major factor in determining the direction of its implementation. At the same time, his perception of the policy was again influenced by the prevalent political

1. Ministry of Education, Report on the Implementation of the National Educational Policy, 1971.

climate, the amount of political tradings and manipulations and also the strength of his personality. Since "the fate of policies cannot be separated from the course of politics" (Ingram & Mann, 1980:27) it was inevitable that the decision-making process was much dictated by political considerations rather than educational or national considerations. It was in terms of the next five years that generated the state of vacillation and "non-decision" on the part of the Government.

Again, this brings us to the question of who in reality was in control of the Government? Was it the party or the Cabinet? In the Malayan case it was the party that presented the policies to the public through its election manifesto. In most cases this manifesto was usually written in general and vague terms. They only intended to outline the general principle of the policy if the party were to be elected to form a government. Usually when a party came to power it adopted an approach that would encompass the interests that came not only from within the party but also from the public at large. In a representative form of government it was the Cabinet that was responsible for providing the details and thus fulfilling the election promises.¹ The final decision of implementing these policies again rested with the Cabinet. Therefore, it became the collective responsibility of the Cabinet for any policy that was implemented, stalled or deviated from (Mohammed Suffian, op.cit.:53, Wilson, 1976:72-76). It would be in this light that the non-implementation

1. While the politicians provide the policy, it is the bureaucrats that have to work out the details of the plan. This again has to be approved by the Cabinet (an interview with one ex-senior civil servant who preferred to remain anonymous).

of the educational policy would be examined next especially in terms of leader-member relationships in UMNO and the neo-colonial psychology that prevailed within the party.

Political Alienation, Neo-colonialism and the Implementation Problems

The United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) which was formed on May 11, 1946 in the wake of the Malay's opposition to the Malayan Union scheme, symbolised the embodiment of the Malay traditional society. Its conservative ideology and the pattern of leadership was reminiscent of the ruler-ruled social structure that was prevalent during the pre-independent period. While its organisational structure and networks were based on the modern concept of political thought, traditionalism and conservatism remained the bastions of its operational ideology. As Vasil (1980:64) observed, "even the UMNO Charter did not make any mention of independence". During the initial period of its formation, the party was "unwilling to use the slogan 'Merdeka' (independence)" which was commonly used by "the left-wing organizations" at that time (S. Husin Ali, 1975:29). As to the question of leadership, since its formation, the party was always led by a person who either had an aristocratic or royal background.¹ At the same time, the position of the party leader was never challenged although other political posts came in for open competition.²

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1. Dato' Onn bin Jaafar who was UMNO's first president came from an aristocratic family in Johor. Tunku Abdul Rahman, who replaced Dato' Onn, came from the Royal House of Kedah. Tunku's successor, Dato' Abdul Razak was a Pahang aristocrat.
 2. This was another Malay tradition. During the days of the Malay Sultanates, to oppose the Sultan was considered as "derhaka", or treason in its English equivalent.

The trust the Malays gave to the UMNO leadership seemed to be a natural transfer from the loyalty they gave to their respective traditional rulers to the present political elites that emerged from within a modern framework. As S. Husin Ali (ibid.:161) observed:

"The political leaders of the past were made up entirely of what may be termed the 'aristocracy of birth'. The basis of their power lay largely in their control over both economic and military resources. However, with the superimposition of western-style political and administrative systems and institutions, many direct and indirect changes occurred in the nature of this leadership."

By virtue of being conservative in its outlook and philosophy, the party was able to harness the support of the Malays towards the new political centre without disrupting the traditional social fabric of the Malay society. S. Husin Ali (ibid.:162) described the growth of this new power structure in the following terms:

"With the establishment of a bureaucracy, new personnel are needed to serve as the main channels between the government and the public. Besides that, the adoption of parliamentary democracy as the underlying basis for politics and government has not only brought about new institutions, but also new political personalities. Leadership and power are determined through the process of election, and although the top order requires only a small selected number, yet there has grown beyond it a large body of people who, although they do not seem to assume very important functions in politics and government, nevertheless appear to be necessary appendages in the whole system. These are the parliamentarians and councillors who, together with the bureaucrats, constitute the largest segment of the present Malay political leadership at the supra-village or national level."

Although the development of modern administrative and political frameworks had diminished the ascriptive criterion of leader-follower

relationships, their structural dichotomy still remained. The new political elites became a class of their own by positioning themselves at the top of the political structure with their supporters forming the base. In other words, the feudal concept of leadership and led still remained entrenched in their system of values and thought.

The psychological dichotomy that existed was again reinforced by the different set of education they received. While the top political leaders were English educated, the supporters were mostly the product of the Malay vernacular schools. This dichotomy in both the social and educational backgrounds inevitably produced different ways of perceiving and reacting to certain issues, and in fact, they produced a different set of "weltanschauung" altogether. Despite these divisions, UNMO as a political party remained strong and unchallenged. The main reason was that no Malay political party of its stature could provide an alternative for government. Hence, the continued support the party received from the captive Malay electorate made it complacent and the top leaders became alienated from the main stream of local political thought. In fact, even as early as 1958 the signs of alienation were already showing. For example, when the Federation of Malay School Teachers Association demanded the establishment of Malay secondary education, failing which their members would resign from UMNO, Khir Johari, the Minister of Education interpreted the the intention as self-seeking. He accused the teachers of being "concerned more for their own pockets than for the good of education, for they hoped that by forcing the immediate conversion of secondary schools to the Malay medium of instruction such would be the shortage of teachers that they (mere primary teachers) would be able to benefit from secondary wage scales " (cited in Margaret Roff, 1967:321).

Khair's statement was significant in that it reflected the state of political alienation between the leaders and the followers.¹ At the same time he also attempted to negate the role of these Malay school teachers who were mostly UMNO's activists and who also provided the base for the party's super-structure (S. Husin Ali, op.cit.:31). Furthermore, it was the aspiration of the Malays at that time to see Malay secondary schools being established as soon as possible.

A corollary to the above argument was the question of colonialism from which the Malayan leaders had failed to dissociate themselves. For instance, the ambiguous educational policy, besides having its own political motive, was also explicit in its favour of retaining the English language in the school system. Hence, the colonial school system, to some extent had reaped its harvest by creating a state of dependency upon its post colonial predecessors. As Samir Amin (1975:51) observed:

"Colonial education had the merit of being consistent in its cynical brutality. It set itself two goals. On the one hand the destruction of the complex traditional system of autonomous education, with a view to uprooting the national culture and consciousness, and on the other hand the training of an 'elite' of subordinate servants ... Neither the content of this education nor the quality of men trained in this way could lead to any autonomous development of society."

These statements of Samir Amin had some relevance to what was happening in Malaya during the first decade of the country's independence. Nonetheless, this was not to deny the contribution of colonial education towards the production of leaders who advocated strong social and political radicalism upon independence and freed their country from colonial influence²

1. Syed Nasir made a remark that some sections of the English educated remained isolated from the 'rakyat' because English did not constitute a bridge between them (The Straits Echo, Feb.4, 1960).
2. President Sukarno of Indonesia was one such leader.

in all its forms. But this phenomenon was practically non-existent in Malaya. The products of the English school system were too comfortable in the rewards they got and thus were unprepared to disrupt or sacrifice their existing way of life. It was also this group of people who took the helm of UMNO's leadership especially at the top of the party's hierarchy.

With the existing leadership structure, UMNO as a political party thus epitomised the force of moderation in Malaya. During its long history the party was yet to embark on any policy of social radicalism common to most of the new independent states. The party even viewed the concept of "republicanism" and "economic nationalisation" as politically taboo and having no place in its ideology.¹ Its position as a political force was due to its ability to harness the support of the Malay masses who were paradoxically rural in their background and educated in Malay schools. By and large, UMNO's position was unchallenged until the middle of the sixties when the PMIP, another Malay based party began to make in-roads into the Malayan political scene.

Under these circumstances and in retrospect, it was quite improbable that the national education policy would be implemented if another UMNO personality were given the education portfolio. Most probably the status-quo would have been preserved. The reason was due to UMNO itself - a political party which embodied the elements of moderation and buttressed by the twin forces of feudalism and neo-colonialism.

1. The Federal Constitution of which UMNO was its chief architect reflected this tendency. A talk with one Senior Cabinet Minister from UMNO tended to confirm this view.

Thus, the appointment of Abdul Rahman Yaakub to the post of the Minister of Education during the National Operation Council administration was extremely important. His ability to exploit the authority that emanated from the Education Ordinance 1957 and his will to implement the very controversial national language policy in the Malayan school system seemed to be a personal and political decision "par excellence".

Theoretically, in the Malayan case in particular, it could therefore be observed that the Minister of Education had a prerogative in implementing any educationally related policies. It was within his discretion and power to decide whether a policy be implemented, deviated from its original objective or placed in a state of oblivion. As Dato' Abdul Razak himself had expressed as early as 1957, "the power in this Bill is discretionary. Naturally in the implementation of the provisions of the Bill, the Minister will certainly use his discretion, and I hope he will trust that the discretion will be used reasonably and judiciously" (L.C.D., March 7, 1957:col. 2560). But even with these assurances, he had to get the "blessing" of the Cabinet of which the Prime Minister was the head. Under normal circumstances, a unilateral decision on matters of policy was rare. All major decisions that emerged were collective decisions. Failure to agree with Cabinet decisions gave the member a moral obligation to resign (Mohammed Suffian, op.cit.:53).

Thus, as a Minister in charge of education, Abdul Rahman Yaakub had the advantage of the post May 13 political development. Together with his insight and the will to implement, his unilateral declaration of the national education policy became the most successful political coup in the country's history.

The Implementation Process

It has been pointed out in the early part of the chapter that the problems that led to the non-implementation of the national education policy were two-fold. The first, it was argued, had its roots in the country's governing institutions and the second was traceable to the political leadership which failed to commit itself to the policy that was formulated. What emerged was that policy implementation was linked closely to the political philosophy of the government in power. Implementing a policy was therefore a political decision and not a routine departmental matter. As has been shown, it was the politicians who had the final decision whether the policy should be implemented and if so, what form it should take. In the Malayan case, the consequence was that the education policy was stalled for more than a decade while waiting for the political decision for its implementation. The discretionary power of the Minister concerned was open-ended and the decision was mostly dictated by the expediency of politics rather than any long term national goals and objectives. In the Malayan plural society, it was obvious that the dynamics of ethnicity became a major determinant in both policy making and its implementation. The hard fact was that the politicians being the policy makers themselves were aware of the difficulties of trying to reconcile the demands of their respective constituencies while at the same time trying to invoke certain programmes of national importance. What emerged from these conflicting demands was a policy which was incoherent, vague and often subject to multiple interpretations. The dilemma was at the implementation stage when clarity and specificity were needed in order for the vital aspects of the policy to be fully realised. But the criteria for effective implementation were markedly absent in the Razak Report.

Generally, this was the background that beset the Malayan educational policy as enshrined in the Razak Report. The vagueness and ambiguity of the Report provided leeway for those who were sceptical about the policy. By invoking vague national objectives, the Report also attempted to provide constitutional satisfaction for those who had been demanding that their needs be fulfilled. The outcome was a period of vacillation and uncertainty over the fate of the policy which in turn prolonged the status-quo of the pre-independent educational system besides the extreme frustration it created. The delay in the implementation process in turn had a negative effect and implication upon the policy itself. As Peter S. Cleaves (op.cit.:289) pointed out:

"If the policy lends itself to rapid execution, the policy-makers can reduce uncertainty to a minimum. On the other hand, the greater the duration of sequential steps involved in the implementation stage, the greater the possibilities for existing actors to alter their goals, for leadership to turn over, for new actors to enter the scene, or for unintentional consequences to take their toll."

Between 1957-1969, there was an interplay of competing variables, all geared towards different needs and objectives. These competing demands took a heavy toll on the Razak Report which under such conditions rendered itself as "non-implementable". It was only after a decade of vacillation that a process of "adaptable implementation" was carried out. Previous to that the Governemnt resigned itself to the existing set-up which saw the increasing role of the English language in the school system.

As has been observed, the process of implementing the national education policy was not done within the normal framework of political consensus.

Instead it was done in the midst of a national crisis and at a time when national consensus that had been agreed upon a decade earlier came under thorough re-examination. It was therefore an extreme form of opportunism on the part of the Minister of Education to announce the implementation of the national policy in the wake of such political and social confusion. For instance, it was only two weeks after the May 13 outbreak that the Minister made a declaration for a "dynamic system of education". A fortnight later a directive was issued to all the Chief Education Officers of every state outlining the Government's plan to implement the national language policy in schools, (see Chapter 7). Thus within a short period of one month, the implementation procedures and directives were completed. All these came about in the aftermath of the country's worst ethnic crisis where the impact was great enough to warrant the re-structuring of society and its basic institutions. This development produced drastic changes that were seen immediately after the ethnic crisis. As Archer (op.cit.:71) appropriately pointed out, "large scale change only occurs if the existing structural relations are destroyed and replaced by new ones." This observation made by Archer fitted well into the post 1969 development of education in Malaya.

In discussing the policy implementation process, Smith (1973:204-5) gives three key variables that had certain influences in any policy implementation. These were "the structure and personnel", "the leadership of the administrative organization", and "the implementing program and capacity". During the first few years of the country's independence these criteria had some relevance to the "non-implementation" state of the educational policy. But towards the end of the decade, the justification

for the vacillation and "non-decision" no longer remained valid. This was mainly because preparation for the national language policy was incorporated in the Razak Report (para. 12) where it was explicitly stated that the "ultimate objective of the educational policy in this country must be to bring together the children of all races under a national educational system in which the national language is the main medium of instruction." At the same time, the general public was made aware of this development through the national language campaign which was carried out extensively throughout the country. Hence, the sense of awareness was there to be exploited and it was a procedural matter of translating the desired objectives into an official directive as being done by the Minister of Education on July 10, 1969. But paradoxically, this opportunity was not seized upon by the "previous government".

Concurrently, the argument that the implementation failure was a direct result of the centralised system that was adopted had a certain validity although in a limited way. The inherent weakness in the centralised system was that it was often subjected to political manipulation. As Archer (op.cit.:261) pointed out:

"Political manipulation is by far the most important form of negotiation in centralised systems. Because education as a whole has so little autonomy from the government and because groups seeking change have few alternative means of obtaining them, most pressures converge on the political centre."

Under these conditions, could the de-centralised system be proved otherwise then? But again, in the Malayan context, education was not treated in isolation per se. It was part and parcel of the country's

nation-building process. Malayan educational policy was explicit in its objective of making education an instrument for national development and towards the inculcation of a common Malayan identity (The Razak Report, para. Ia & II). The adoption of a decentralised system, while providing the in-built mechanism of flexibility towards implementation would at the same time be in contradiction to the whole national philosophy which has just been described. Secondly, the decentralised system itself would enhance the divergence development which the country intended to impede. The choice of a centralised system was therefore not accidental but thoroughly planned to suit the prevailing social conditions of the Malayan plural society.

Finally, it should also be emphasised that all along, the demands were for the implementation of the national education policy and not for a change in the policy. The onus therefore lay solely on the implementors and in a centralised system it was "the man in charge" that was responsible. As to the question of why the policy was not implemented in 1967 or earlier rather than in 1969, it called for the understanding of the politics and political conditions, and also the man who managed the affairs of education during that time.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

As has been described in the previous chapters, the development of education in Malaya between 1955-1970 was one which was punctuated by uncertainty and shrouded with the atmosphere of suspicion, disappointment and frustration, and this to some extent resulted in the "Armageddon" of 1969.

The intricacies of the link between educational issues, ethnicity and the course of Malayan politics has also been shown. In fact, the Malayan plural society dictated the direction of the political system in which the nation's educational policy had to be accommodated. For instance, the Razak Report which was supposed to be instrumental in the country's nation-building programme and at the same time pave the way for national integration, failed to get fully implemented for reasons which were essentially political rather than educational or national.

In the first place, the premise on which independent Malaya was built was shrouded with unwritten formulas which became subjected to serious questioning by the post-independent generation. For example, certain provisions of the constitution, like the national language, the special rights of the Malays and the position of the Malay rulers were the by-products of these arrangements. Secondly, the vague and ambiguous position of the national language in the national school system and the Government's attempted policy of making the country bilingual as implied in the National

Language Act, 1967 revealed the Government's ultimate linguistic policy for the country. At the same time, the opposition by the immigrant communities over the national language policy in schools created the greatest barrier towards the realisation of the objective as envisaged by the Razak Report. Watson (1980:147) aptly pointed out that language makes "such a thorny question in multi-racial societies because it can become a barrier to integration if different ethnic or racial groups insist on maintaining their own languages as a means of transmitting cultural and social values, and if they resist the concept of a national language."

Thirdly, the national system of education which the Razak Report proposed continued the retention of the colonial educational set-up both in form and content. The Report, besides the structural and organisational changes it recommended, did not provide the much needed philosophical guidance and clarity, and this ultimately resulted in controversy over its interpretation. Under these conditions, the process of nation-building in which education had a prime role to play did not materialise as expected. The failure of the educational policy to get implemented was clear. It was politics and its related institutions that determined the direction of the educational policy. In the light of the controversy that emerged, the political preference was to place the issue into the position of a stalemate and thus stall its implementation.

Fourthly, the lack of confidence shown in anything indigenous resulted in much vacillation and hesitancy in implementing the stated objective as had been enshrined in the Razak Report. The neo-colonial attitudes among

the leaders not only led to the position of the national language into further disgrace but also enhanced the arguments raised by the immigrant communities that the national language was not yet prepared to take the place of English. Within the Malay community itself, there emerged a deep contradiction between the aspiration of the masses who wished to see the national language taking its proper place in the national school system and the leaders who were evasive towards the issue and preferred the continued retention of English.

Until 1969, the Razak Report which was to be the cornerstone of Malayan education, remained the source of bitter discontent among the various ethnic groups of the country. The issue was always important in the Malayan political scene and became even more so during every national election. The Education Review Committee of 1960 which was supposed to help in reducing the grievances towards the Razak Report, further exacerbated the state of the educational crisis. By enhancing the position of English at all levels of instruction and simultaneously withdrawing all forms of financial aid to any secondary school which refused to conform to the Educational Ordinance, 1957, enraged not only the Chinese community who had been demanding the recognition of their language as one of the official languages but it also created the feeling of extreme discontent among the Malays who had hoped to see the reduction of English as the medium of instruction in schools.

Fifthly, the failure on the part of the colonial government to establish a unified system of education for the country while at the same time being unconcerned about the growth of ethnic schools in fact laid the

foundations of educational pluralism which the newly independent government found it hard to dismantle. In 1951 for instance, the Government set up the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Committees specifically to look into the problems of Malay and Chinese education respectively. In retrospect, the setting up of these two committees could be considered as unnecessary. Rather than identifying the committee with its respective ethnic group, it would have been wiser on the part of the colonial government to have set up just a single committee with the objective of looking into the problems of Malayan education in general. By setting up one committee against the other, the colonial government had ignited the fuse of ethnic contradiction over matters related to education. Thus, when the Razak Report was unveiled, there was no hesitation from the Chinese community to reject it outright. The opposition continued and became even more vocal with the publication of the Education Review Committee's Report in 1960. The Education Review Committee which was set up to study the implications of the Razak Report did not provide the philosophical clarity that had been wanting. As such, the ambiguity of the educational policy remained, together with the controversies that were already latent, resulting in much indecisiveness and vacillation on the part of the Government when arriving at the point of implementation.

The study also revealed the non-lasting effect of the Alliance Government's framework of consociational politics which was in the main based on the "behaviour of the political elites" (Lijphart, 1969:211). As Lijphart (ibid.:212) pointed out, "The leaders of the rival subcultures may emerge in competitive behaviour and thus further aggravate mutual tensions and political instability, but they may also make deliberate

efforts to counteract the immobilizing effects of cultural fragmentation." This "overarching co-operation at the elite level" (ibid.) was clearly evident in the set-up of the Alliance party. It was therefore with a view to presenting the elite cohesion that the Razak Report emerged as a product of political compromise and accommodation among the component partners of the Alliance. Nonetheless, the middle-of-the-road consociational policy was always fraught with the pressures of political extremism and in the Malayan case, moderation had always been construed as a sign of political weakness and also as a "betrayal to one's own kind".

Finally, the ethnic crisis of 1969 was to some extent developed out of frustration that nothing much was achieved through the prevalent political set-up. The incidence was in fact an attempt to dismantle the existing status-quo and to re-orientate the basic approach needed for a multi-ethnic society and thus adopting a more pragmatic way of solving the problems. In the realms of education in particular, the crisis of 1969 ended the period of uncertainty and ambiguity which had been stalling the full implementation of the national education policy as envisaged in the Razak Report. The crisis also brought to the fore the various problems and issues that had been confronting the nation ever since it achieved independence in 1957. The post 1969 era thus saw a more realistic and pragmatic approach adopted in dealing with these issues. Firstly, in a parliamentary democracy it was essential that the opinion of the majority be respected. The inability to recognise the needs of the masses, could result in a political conflict that could ultimately challenge the very basis of the institution itself. Secondly, the politics of compromise and accommodation were seen to be effective only for a short term basis.

As a strategy for a long term effectiveness, it was too strenuous for the leaders to bear and the masses to endure. Thirdly, for a policy to be effectively implemented, it needs clarity, a strong personality on the part of the implementor and most of all the "will to implement" among those who were concerned with the process of policy making and implementation. Fourthly, in a multi-ethnic society, it is imperative that legislative sanction be enforced if a policy is to be effectively implemented. Finally, in a plural society it is ethnicity rather than class that creates divisiveness within the state. To quote Melson and Wolpe (1970:118), "ethnicity remains a persistent fact of political life". This statement continues to hold true for Malaysia.

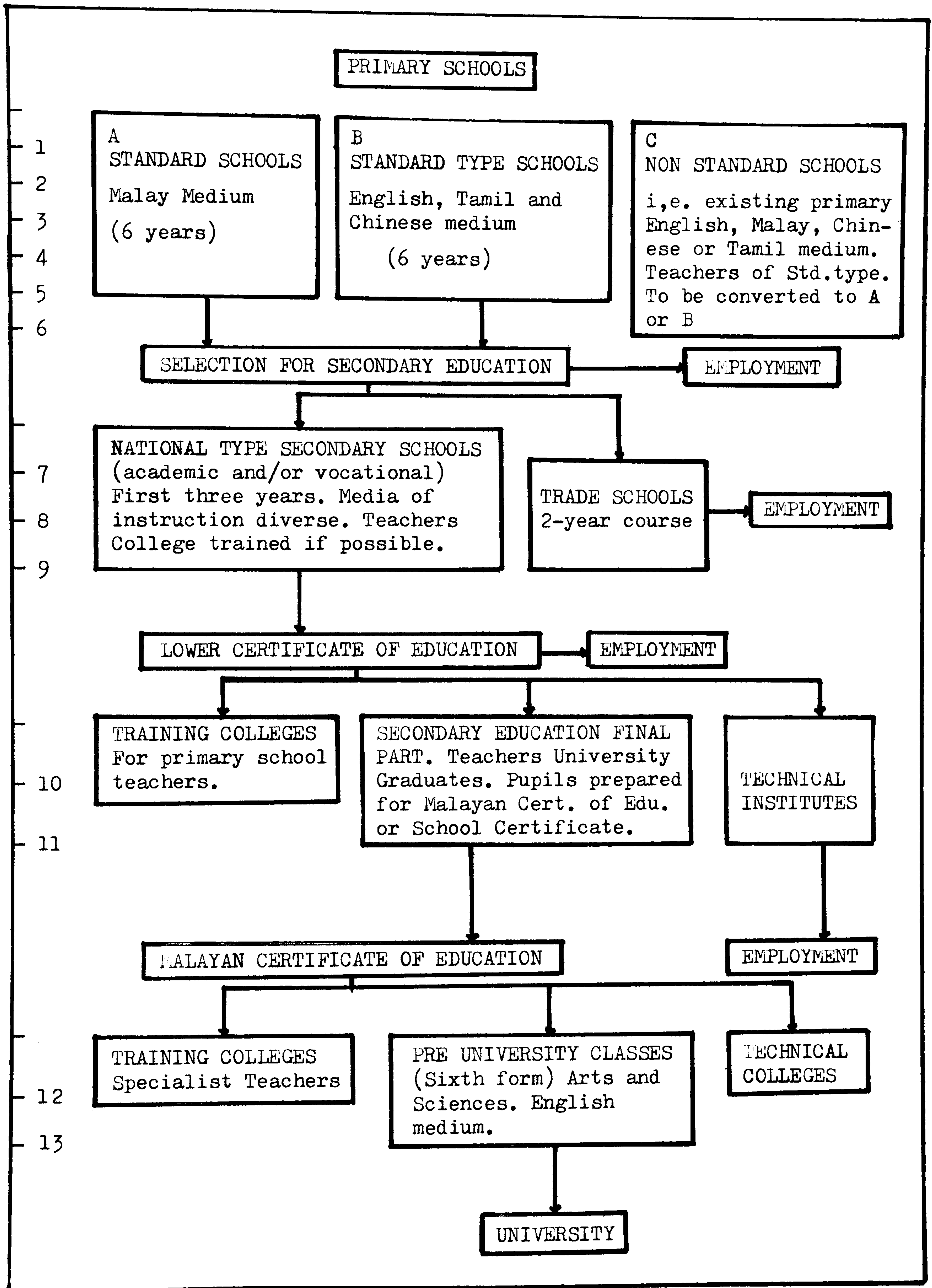
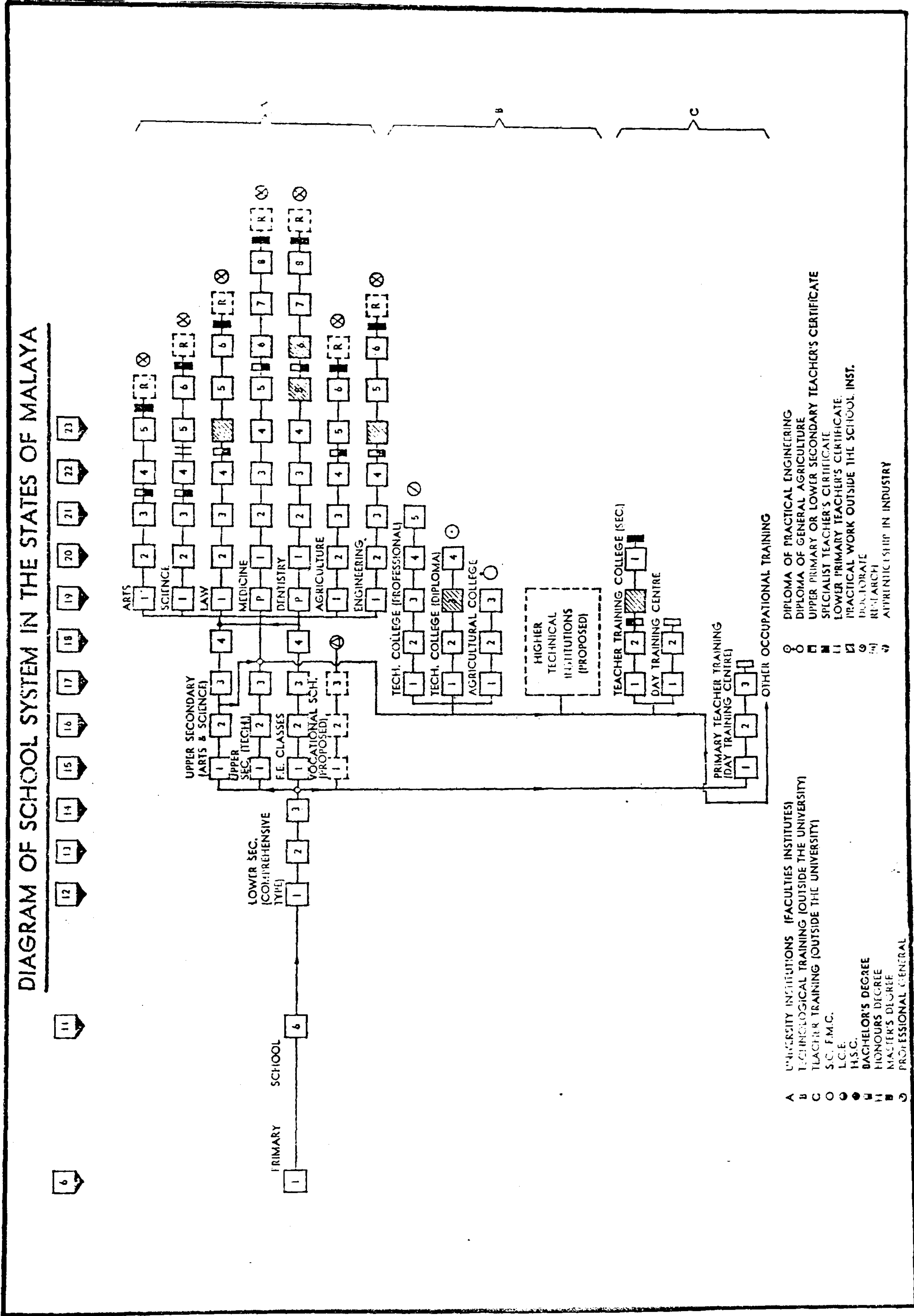


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE PROGRESS OF PUPILS UNDER THE RAZAK REPORT

Appendix B



MALAYSIA

Act of Parliament

No.7 OF 1967

NATIONAL LANGUAGE ACT, 1967

An Act to provide for the use of the national language.

(1st September, 1967)

WHEREAS Clause (1) of Article 152 of the Constitution provides that the national language shall be the Malay language:

AND WHEREAS Clauses (2) to (5) of the said Article provide for the use of the English language for purposes specified therein notwithstanding the provisions of Clause (1) for a period of ten years after Merdeka Day, and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides:

AND WHEREAS in relation to the Borneo States Clause (1) of Article 161 of the Constitution provides that no Act of Parliament terminating or restricting the use of the English language for any of the purposes mentioned in Clauses (2) to (5) of Article 152 shall come into operation as regards the use of the English language in any case mentioned in Clause (2) of Article 161 until ten years after Malaysia Day:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED by the Duli Yang Maha Mulia Seri Paduka Baginda Yang di Pertuan Agong with the advice and consent of the Dewan Negara and Dewan Ra'ayat in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. (1) This Act may be cited as the National Language Act, 1967, and shall come into force on the 1st day of September, 1967.

Short title
commencement
and applicat
ion.

(2) This Act shall not apply to the Borneo States.

2. Save as hereinafter provided in this Act and subject to the safeguards provided in Clause (1) of Article 152 of the Constitution relating to any other language and the language of any other community in the Federation the national language shall be used for official purposes.

National
language to
be used for
official
purposes.

3. Nothing in this Act shall affect the right of the Federal Government or any State Government to use any translation of official documents or communications in the language of any other community in the Federation for such purposes as may be deemed necessary in the public interest.

Use of translation.

4. The Yang di Pertuan Agong may permit the continued use of the English language for such official purposes as may be deemed fit.

Continued use of English may be permitted.

5. The President of Dewan Negara, the Speaker of the Dewan Ra'ayat or the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of any State, or other person performing for the time being the functions of any such office, may permit any member of either House of Parliament or of the Legislative Assembly, as the case may be, to use the English language in addressing, or otherwise participating in the work of, either House of Parliament or the Legislative Assembly:

Use of English language may be permitted in Parliament and Legislative Assembly.

6. The texts -

- (a) of all Bills to be introduced or amendments thereto to be moved in either House of Parliament or the Legislative Assembly of any State;
- (b) of all Acts of Parliament and all subsidiary legislation issued by the Federal Government;
- (c) of all Enactments and subsidiary legislation issued by any State Government; and
- (d) of all Ordinances promulgated by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong,

Authoritative text of laws.

shall be in the national language and in the English language, the former being authoritative unless the Yang di Pertuan Agong otherwise prescribes generally or in respect of any particular law or class of laws.

7. (1) Nothing in section 6 shall apply to the amendment of any written law enacted before the commencement of this Act until such written law has been translated into the national language.

Written laws enacted prior to this Act.

(2) Where any written law enacted before the commencement of this Act has been translated into the national language the Yang di Pertuan Agong may prescribe the translation of such law to be authoritative.

8. All proceedings (other than the giving of evidence by a witness) in the Federal Court, the High Court or any subordinate court shall be in the national language or in the English language or partly in the national language and partly in the English language:

Language of
Courts.

Provided that the Court may, either of its own motion or on the application of any part to any proceedings and after considering the interests of justice in those proceedings, order that the proceedings (other than the giving of evidence by a witness) shall be either wholly in the national language or wholly in the English language.

(Received the Royal Assent
on the 31st day of
March, 1967.)

Appendix D

Total Number of Students and their Percentage of Distribution by Race and by Faculty

From 1959-1971

Academic Year	Faculty Race	Arts	%	Science	%	Engin.	%	Agric.	%	Educ.	%	Med.	%	Economics & Pub. Admin.	Total
1959 to 1960	Malay	58	93.2	3	4.8	1	1.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62
	Chinese	65	33.3	22	11.3	108	55.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	195
	Others	39	60	6	9.2	20	30.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65
1960 to 1961	Malay	128	88.8	10	6.9	4	2.7	2	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	144
	Chinese	142	38.6	79	19.8	132	36.9	20	5.4	-	-	-	-	-	367
	Others	83	58.4	31	21.8	23	16.1	5	3.5	-	-	-	-	-	142
1961 to 1962	Malay	193	88.9	13	5.9	4	1.8	7	3.2	-	-	-	-	-	217
	Chinese	250	42.8	138	23.6	159	27.2	37	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	584
	Others	113	54.06	52	24.92	35	16.7	9	4.3	-	-	-	-	-	209
1962 to 1963	Malay	247	90.1	16	5.8	5	1.8	6	2.18	-	-	-	-	-	274
	Chinese	319	40.58	228	29.0	183	23.28	56	7.12	-	-	-	-	-	786
	Others	157	55.8	74	26.33	38	13.52	12	4.27	-	-	-	-	-	281
1963 to 1964	Malay	310	86.6	18	5.02	2	0.56	11	3.07	10	2.8	7	1.9	-	358
	Chinese	400	38.4	302	28.98	221	21.2	76	7.29	15	1.4	28	2.68	-	1,042
	Others	198	58.9	78	23.2	34	10.1	12	3.57	9	2.68	5	1.49	-	336
1964 to 1965	Malay	459	84.5	24	4.6	4	0.73	17	3.13	28	5.15	11	2.02	-	543
	Chinese	506	38.4	374	28.1	230	17.2	92	6.91	48	3.6	80	6.01	-	1,330
	Others	223	63.3	64	18.18	28	7.95	14	3.97	12	3.69	11	3.12	-	352

Appendix D cont.

Year	Academic Faculty Race	Arts %	Science %	Engin. %	Agric. %	Educ. %	Med.	% Economics & Pub. Admin. %	Total
1965 to 1966	Malay Chinese Others	606 620 270	28 472 68	3 250 28	34 102 18	27 79 44	23 146 17	3.17 8.74 3.83	721 1,669 445
1966 to 1967	Malay Chinese Others	780 729 327	50 546 74	5 280 26	56 114 15	54 89 48	44 204 29	4.24 10.02 5.46	1,038 2,034 531
1967 to 1968	Malay Chinese Others	966 800 866	84 721 73	11 293 23	60 128 14	51 127 37	70 273 46	4.99 10.66 7.66	1,401 2,559 600
1968 to 1969	Malay Chinese Others	1,115 867 350	133 843 62	6 313 19	62 159 16	109 164 57	95 360 55	5.12 11.6 8.6	1,825 3,102 639
1969 to 1970	Malay Chinese Others	1,489 930 404	150 965 74	11 328 20	70 187 17	102 171 47	109 388 71	4.5 10.98 9.25	2,373 3,532 767
1970 to 1971	Malay Chinese Others	1,996 867 402	157 1,118 88	5 365 22	91 208 25	236 147 59	128 417 86	4.09 11.0 9.89	3,123 3,785 869

Source: Majid Ismail Report, op. cit. table II.

Ref: K.P. 8664/(22)

Kementerian Pelajaran,
Rumah Persekutuan,
Kuala Lumpur.

10hb. Julai, 1969

Semua Ketua Pegawai Pelajaran,
Malaysia Barat.

Tuan,

Surat Pekeliling Ikhtisas (Professional)
No. 8/1969.

Penglaksanaan mengajar semua mata pelajaran dalam Bahasa Malaysia di Darjah Satu di Sekolah-sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan Inggeris mulai daripada Januari 1970.

Adalah seperti yang tuan telah ketahui, bahawa lima mata pelajaran, iaitu Pelajaran Jasmani dan Kesihatan, Seni Lukis dan Pertukangan Tangan, Pelajaran Tempatan dan Muzik, telah diajar dalam Bahasa Malaysia kepada Darjah-darjah Satu hingga Darjah-darjah Tiga dalam semua Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan Inggeris sejak bulan Januari, 1968, dan hanya Ilmu Sains dan Ilmu Hisab masih diajar dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

2. Sekarang Kementerian telah membuat keputusan bahawa dua lagi mata pelajaran iaitu Ilmu Sains dan Ilmu Hisab hendaklah diajar dalam Bahasa Malaysia kepada semua Darjah Satu dalam sekolah-sekolah tersebut mulai bulan Januari, 1970. Ajaran bagi semua mata pelajaran ini dalam Bahasa Malaysia akan dilaksanakan dengan beransur-maju daripada peringkat sekolah-sekolah rendah ke peringkat sekolah-sekolah menengah.

3. Jadual waktu bagi pelaksanaan mengajar semua mata pelajaran selain daripada Bahasa Inggeris dan Bahasa-bahasa Ibunda dalam Sekolah-sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Inggeris adalah seperti berikut:

<u>Tahun</u>	<u>Mata-mata pelajaran yang diajar dalam Bahasa Malaysia</u> <u>Peringkat Sekolah Rendah</u>
1970	Darjah 1 - dalam semua mata pelajaran melainkan Bahasa Inggeris.
1971	Darjah 2 - sama
1972	Darjah 3 - dalam semua mata pelajaran melainkan Bahasa Inggeris dan Bahasa-bahasa Ibunda.

<u>Tahun</u>	<u>Peringkat Sekolah Rendah</u>
1973	Darjah 4 - dalam semua mata pelajaran melainkan Bahasa Inggeris dan Bahasa-bahasa Ibunda.
1974	Darjah 5 - sama
1975	Darjah 6 - sama
	<u>Peringkat Sekolah Menengah</u>
1976	Tingkatan I - sama
1977	Tingkatan II - sama
1978	Tingkatan III - sama (Peperiksaan Sijil Rendah Pelajaran sahaja, 1978)
1979	Tingkatan IV - sama
1980	Tingkatan V - sama (Peperiksaan Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia sahaja, 1980)
1981	Tingkatan VI (Bawah) - sama
1982	Tingkatan VI (Atas) - sama (Peperiksaan Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan sahaja, 1982)

4. Adalah ditegaskan bahawa di bawah Akta Pelajaran, 1961 Bahasa Inggeris adalah wajib diajar dalam semua sekolah kebangsaan. Akta Pelajaran ini juga memerlukan bahawa kemudahan-kemudahan bagi mengajar Bahasa Cina atau Bahasa Tamil hendaklah diadakan sekiranya ibu-ibu bapa lima belas orang murid-murid dalam sebuah sekolah memohon supaya mata pelajaran itu diajar.

5. Sebagai dimaksudkan di dalam Surat Pekeliling "Professional No. 7/1979 dan No. 8/1969, mata-mata pelajaran yang perlu diajar dalam Bahasa Malaysia dalam Darjah-darjah Satu hingga Darjah-darjah Enam di Sekolah-sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan Inggeris dalam tahun 1970 adalah ditunjukkan dalam Lampiran A yang berketat.

6. Sila sampaikan kandungan-kandungan surat pekeling ini kepada perhatian Guru-guru Besar semua Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Inggeris.

Saya yang menurut perintah

(Kum Boo)
b.p. Setiausaha Tetap,
(Bahagian Sekolah - sekolah)
Kementerian Pelajaran.

Salinan: Setiausaha Tetap Kementerian Pelajaran.
Ketua Penasihat Pelajaran.
Timbalan Setiausaha.
Pengarah (Pelajaran Tinggi).
Ketua Nazir.
Pengarah (Latihan Guru-guru) - sila beritahu semua Maktab/
Pusat Perguruan.
Pengawal Peperiksaan.
Semua Pegawai Bahagian 1 dalam Kementerian Pelajaran.
Pengarah Pelajaran, Sabah (2 copies). Untuk maklumat.
Pengarah Pelajaran, Sarawak (2 copies). Untuk maklumat.

Mata-mata pelajaran yang akan diajar dalam Bahasa Malaysia di Sekolah-sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan Inggeris dalam tahun 1970

Darjah	Mata-mata- Pelajaran dalam Bahasa Malaysia	Mata-mata Pelajaran dalam Bahasa Inggeris	Bahasa-Bahasa Ibunda Murid-murid
Darjah 1	Semua mata pelajaran	Bahasa Inggeris	Tiada
Darjah 2	Seni Lukis dan Pertukangan Tangan, Pelajaran Jasmani dan Kesihatan, Pelajaran Tempatan, Muzik, Bahasa Malaysia, Pengetahuan Agama Islam	Ilmu Hisab, Ilmu Sains, Bahasa Inggeris	Tiada
Darjah 3	Seperti di atas	Seperti di atas	Bahasa-bahasa Ibunda Murid-murid
Darjah 4	Ilmu Tawarikh, Ilmu Alam, Ilmu Sivik, Seni Lukis dan Pertukangan Tangan, Pelajaran Jasmani dan Kesihatan Musik, Bahasa Malaysia, Pengetahuan Agama Islam.	Seperti di atas	Seperti di atas
Darjah 5	Ilmu Sivik, Bahasa Malaysia, Pengetahuan Agama Islam	Semua mata-mata pelajaran lain	Seperti di atas
Darjah 6	Bahasa Malaysia, Pengetahuan Agama Islam	Semua mata-mata pelajaran lain	Seperti di atas

Ingatan:

Untuk butir-butir lanjut sila rujuk kepada Surat-surat Pekeliling "Professional" No. 7/1969 dan No. 8/1969.

Bahagian Sekolah-sekolah
Kementerian Pelajaran,
10/7/1969.

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