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## THE NET AGONG

- AS I SEE IT

In this exclusive interview with the Aliran Monthly, Bapa Malaysia, TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, discusses the election of the next Yang Di Pertuan Agong expected on 2 March 1989 and various other issues pertaining to the system of Constitutional Monarchy. No one else is as well positioned as the Tunku to discuss the Monarchical System. It was the

Tunku who incorporated the system into the Malaysian Constitution at the time of Merdeka. It was he who nurtured the system in the early years of Merdeka. The Tunku himself is a well -

respected scion of the Kedah royal house - one of the oldest royal houses in the country. Editor

Aliran Monthly: What sort of qualities should His Majesty the Yang Di Pertuan Agong possess?

Tunku: He should have dignity and should possess a sense of justice and fairness. The Agong is the custodian of the Constitution and should therefore uphold the principles and ideals of our Constitution. He should protect parliamentary democracy and should be the symbol of unity and harmony among all the communities.

Aliran Monthly: Very soon, the Conference of Rulers will meet to elect our ninth Yang Di Pertuan Agung. According to a regional weekly, the election will take place on 2 March 1989.

Tunku: Yes, a new Agong will be elected soon by the Rulers. Based upon the practice in the past, the Deputy Yang Di Pertuan Agong will succeed the present Agong. It has become a convention for the Deputy Agong to become the Agong unless he has violated the rules of kingship or gone against the Constitution or brought disrepute to his office in any other way.

As I see it, the present Deputy Agong, the Sultan of Perak, will be the next King. His ascension to the throne will be significant; With the Ruler of Perak becoming the King, we would have completed the whole circle. All the 9 ruling houses would have had their turn. Perak is the last. We started with Negri Sembilan. This is the system of rotation I had in mind when we introduced the concept of choosing the Agong from among the Rulers at the time of Independence.

Aliran Monthly: It is perhaps also significant that the first Agong was a lawyer. As we complete the circle, once again a person trained in law.

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Of late, conventions have been set aside. Institutions are no longer respected. There is a lot of manipulation nowadays. Someone wants to control everything. He wants to dominate everything. In order to control he divides individuals, plays one against the other. He buys over certain people to his side. He tries to

isolate others. This creates animosity  
and dissension within the group.

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law becomes the Agong.

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'hmku: Sultan Azlan Shah is more than a lawyer. He was Chief Justice of Malaya and then the Lord President. He is a learned man. He is knowledgeable about the affairs of the nation and understands the Constitution and democracy. He has the potential to bring honour and respect to the throne.

' Our first Yang Di Pertuan

Agong was also a Ruler with great dignity. He was our first Malay lawyer. When he qualified as a lawyer, a lot of people sent congratulatory messages to me thinking that I had passed my law. You see we had the same name.

Aliran Monthly: SO Tunku you

I , uld expect the convention to be expected and the Sultan of Perak to be chosen as the next King.

Tunku: This is most likely, if all goes well. But then anything can happen. Of late, conventions have been set aside. Institutions are no longer respected. There is a lot of manipulation nowadays. Someone wants to control everything. He wants to dominate everything. In order to control he divides individuals, plays one against the other. He buys over certain people to his side. He tries to isolate others. This creates animosity and dissension within the group. This is now happening among the Rulers. Even during the British period there was no such problem within the monarchy system.

ere is a story that is making its rounds now that so-and-so is consort is a commoner and therefore the person cannot become the King. Our Constitution, I must stress, lays out the role, the duties and the responsibilities of only the Yang Di Pertuan Agong, not his consort. The consort has no constitutional role. The consort has no constitutional status. Our Constitution does not say that the consort of our King should be of royal blood; The consort of the present Japanese Emperor (the Japanese Monarchy is one of the oldest and most illustrious in the world) is a commoner.

Of course, with a commoner-consort it may be necessary to find an appropriate title for her. It would be a good thing if the Conference of Rulers can give an appropriate title to the new Permaisuri.

Permaisuri. This is merely my suggestion. In any case, this is only a small matter.

Aliran Monthly: The Conference of Rulers can be expected to adhere

to convention and tradition .....

Tunku: Yes, on the whole our Rulers are very conscious of their role and responsibility. They know what is good for the future of the Monarchy. They will do what is right.

We must also remember that the person who may have had certain ideas about the selection of the next Agong is out of action for the time being. Now that he is recuperating at home he has time to think and reflect. If he decides to do She could be called Puan, good, to uphold the rule of law and to protect democracy, it will be in V the interest of the takyat. On the other hand, if he continues in his old ways and tries to control everyone and everything, the nation will suffer even more. He must now make peace With God and man.

Aliran Monthly: Looking at some of the challenges confronting the system of constitutional monarchy, one begins to wonder whether we should at this stage reiterate certain basic principles pertaining to the system?

Tunku: It is important to reiterate that our Rulers as Constitutional Rulers should remain above politics. They should not get involved in party politics in any way. I was very strict about this when I was Prime Minister. A Ruler should not take part in a political party function. He should not unveil a plaque, for instance, commemorat- continued on page 38-

llWith the Ruler of Perak becoming the King, we would have completed the whole circle. All the nine ruling houses would have had their turn?

## ELECTIONS

A lot has been written about the Ampang Jaya by-election. In the following two articles, CHANDRA MUZAFFAR examines certain aspects of the by-election and draws some important conclusions from it.

any political analysts were

convinced that Datuk

Harun Idris the candidate

of the Semangat 46 group, would

win the Ampang Jaya by-election

and yet he lost. Why did Datuk

Harun lose? Or, to put it in another

way, how did the Barisan emerge

victorious?

In our view, a variety of factors,

some more important than others,

explain the Barisan win.

One, there was the Harun

factor itself. Among a huge segment

of the non-Malays, particularly the

Chinese electorate, there was some

antipathy towards Harun. This was

because of his alleged involvement

in the May 13th episode. All the

attempts by Tunku Abdul Rahman

and Dr Tan Chee Khoo to clear his

name did not help. Harun's alleged

link to that ethnic riot which had

led to the killing of a number of

Chinese Malaysians, was too deeply

etched in the memory of the com-

munity, to be erased in one short

election campaign. The Barisan, for

its part, through television, radio

newspapers and pamphlets, con-

stantly reminded the voters of the

danger of another May 13th riot.

The fear instilled in their minds

must have persuaded some of them

to support the Barisan rather than

Harun.

Among some of the Malay

voters, on the other hand, Harun's

May 13th image may have given

him a heroic stature of sorts. But

this was offset by yet another per-

ception of the man: Harun was also

seen as a political has-been. He was

a leader who had done his bit for

the community but he belonged to

yesterday not tomorrow. Besides,

he had a tarnished reputation

having been convicted for corrup-

tion -- a full pardon from the King

notwithstanding.

Two. Semangat 46 also lost

some support when it continued its

barbed criticisms of Prime Minister

and UMNO Baru President, Datuk

Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. even

after he was taken ill. These criti-

cisms were perceived by a section

of both the Malay and non-Malay

electorate as "bad manners" given

the circumstances.

Three, the pointed attacks made

by UMNO Baru campaigners against

Semangat 46 leaders in connection

with their alleged involvement in

financial malpractices further

eroded Harun's support base. It was

the Semangat 46 leaders who fired

the first salvo by condemning the alleged corruption of UMNO Batu personalities. But the Semangat leaders were themselves very vulnerable and when their opponents returned the fire they could not put up a convincing defence. Consequently, their credibility suffered a severe setback. Generally speaking, voters expect critics of those in power to be much more upright than the targets of their criticisms.

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AMPANG JAYA: wnvigg

THE BARISAN WON I

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Four, the Semangat group "1,5 yet another mistake. Their leaders tried to introduce the idea of a coalition comprising a number of Malay parties led by Semangat 46, working hand in hand with the Democratic Action Party (DAP), right in the midst of the byelection itself. A byelection, with all the confusion caused by accusations and counter-accusations hurled at each other, is hardly the occasion to launch an inter-party, inter-ethnic coalition. It was simply not possible to explain the concept and objectives of the coalition in the prevailing election atmosphere. Not surprisingly, the voters were not sure what Tengku Razaleigh and his Semangat group were up to. A segment of the Malay electorate was somewhat suspicious of DAP's presence in the inter-party link-up. The UMNO Baru leaders exploited this by projecting the DAP as a Chinese party out to destroy Malay political dominance and the indigenous position of the community. The Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) was also quick to point out that the Islamic Party of Malaysia's (PAS) participation in the coalition will lead inevitably to the creation of an Islamic State where non-Muslims will be stripped of all their religious freedoms. Apparently, this distorted campaign line worked with a lot of Chinese voters.

Five, in fact the MCA mounted

insants Ong Tee Keat and Sem  
 an extremely communal campaign  
 to ensure that its candidate, Ong  
 Tee Keat, would retain the Ampang  
 Jaya seat for the Barisan. Since the  
 previous Member of Parliament for  
 the constituency was also from the  
 MCA, the party argued that Ong's  
 defeat would spell doom for  
 Chinese political representation in  
 the Barisan. The MCA urged the  
 Chinese to rally around the party  
 to protect Chinese rights from  
 further encroachment by a  
 dominant Malay leadership. The  
 Chinese, the MCA argued, should  
 vote a Chinese.

The MCA's mobilisation of com-  
 munal sentiments may be one of  
 the main reasons why the Barisan  
 candidate obtained such a high  
 percentage of Chinese votes. It is  
 estimated that Ong may have  
 garnered some 80 to 85 per cent of  
 the Chinese votes cast compared to  
 10 to 15 per cent for Harun.  
 Six, it was not just the MCA  
 that was communal; Semangat 46  
 also adopted a very communal  
 posture. Some of its leaders called  
 upon the Malay voters who consti-  
 tute 68 per cent of the electorate to  
 vote Harun because he is a Malay.  
 Certain PAS officials who took part  
 in the campaign added another  
 dimension to that plea. Muslims,  
 they said, should vote only a

angats Harun

Muslim. It is wrong - according to  
 PAS's interpretation of Islamic  
 teachings - for Muslims to vote a  
 non-Muslim into power.

Though this sectarian twist to  
 Islamic universalism had some  
 impact, it failed to help Harun  
 obtain overwhelming endorsement  
 from the Malay (Muslim) electo-  
 rate. It is estimated that some 40  
 per cent of the Malays who voted  
 still chose Ong while Harun may  
 have got most of the remaining  
 votes. Equally significant, the  
 Malay/Islamic emphasis on the part  
 of Semangat 46 alienated some of  
 the Chinese and Indian voters who  
 were 'sitting on the fence'.

Seven, if communal manipula-  
 tion sank to a new depth in Am-  
 pang Jaya, political bribery,  
 political thuggery and political  
 trickery descended to its lowest  
 level ever in the by-election.  
 Ampang Jaya squatters who for  
 ages had been denied Temporary  
 Occupancy Licences (TOL) were  
 bestowed at once with these legal  
 rights. Generous adjustments were  
 made to the monthly instalments of



low-cost house owners in certain housing schemes.

While all sorts of inducements were offered, the Barisan also resorted to intimidation to win votes. Thugs were stationed outside

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certain kampungs to prevent Semangat 46 campaigners from approaching voters.' Other strong-arm tactics - including the threat of transfers and dismissal from x employment - were also used to coerce voters into supporting the Barisan. When thuggery did not have the desired effect, the ruling Coalition, it is alleged, sought to manipulate electoral rolls. There is no doubt that bribery, thuggery and trickery combined influenced to some extent, the eventual electoral outcome.

Eight, the Barisanis media propaganda also had some impact. More than in any of the other recent by-elections, the major dailies, radio and television were harnessed to the hilt to secure the Barisan candidate's victory. Television in particular which has an extra-ordinary presence in an urban constituency like Ampang Jaya was used - or rather abused - without any consideration for fairness or honesty. Be that as it may, abuse of power, though pervasive, was not the major cause of the Barisan triumph.

The above reasons apart, we must also give due weight to certain other factors. Since the Barisanis ignominious defeat in the Johor Baru by-election of 25 August 1988, the Mahathir leadership - in the cosmetic sense at least - has been trying to give the impression that it is more accommodative, less arrogant, less haughty than it was before. There is an attempt to appear less authoritarian and more democratic. Of the 5 Supreme Court Judges suspended in July 1988, 3 were restored to the bench. In the Kelantan public service transfers controversy of December 1988, the Mahathir government, in the end, adopted a conciliatory, rather than a confrontational, attitude. This paved the way for a solution of sorts. Perhaps, if the controversy had happened before 25 August 1988, the government may have been inclined to display its might and power.

It is in its handling of the UMNO crisis after 25 August that this new attitude becomes even more apparent. The Mahathir leadership has opened the doors of UMNO

Batu to all and sundry - including Tengku Razaleigh and other leaders of Semangat 46. Dr Mahathir has offered to talk ,to Razaleigh and former Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam. In October 1988, he invited the two to join his Cabinet as ministers without portfolio. Shortly after that, Dr Mahathir asked some of the other Semangat leaders elected in the 1987 UMNO election to join the partyis Supreme Council. And, in mid-January 1989, Dr Mahathir accepted the 6-point resolution of the Johor Malay Unity Congress. The resolution, among other things, calls for the restoration of the original UMNO Constitution - a major contention of the Semangat 46 group - and the reinstatement of branch and divisional committees which had held power in UMNO before the party was declared illegal. The resolution however, has yet to be implemented fully, even within the State of Johor. Though it can be argued that most of the changes in attitude shown by the present leadership are, in some ways, superficial and do not affect the essence of Mahathiris power over the party and the government, it is undeniably true that they had some impact upon the electorate in Ampang Jaya. A section of the Malay voters in particular felt that the Mahathir leadership was willing to compromise, to give in to the demands of the Semangat 46 group. This perception of the relationship between the Mahathir leadership and Semangat 46 worked to the detriment of the latter. This perception of the Mahathir leadership may also have been influenced by yet another factor. Issues such as the sacking of the Lord President and the continuing detention of a number of public epersonalities which were crucial in the Johor Baru by-election, had receded into the background by the time the Ampang Jaya contest took place. Also, almost all the ISA detainees who were in jail in August 1988 were out by January 1989. In the course of the Ampang Jaya by-election, for instance, two batches of detaihees were released For an i electorate, and; indeed for a populace, which lacks a developed political consciousness, events that have happened and cannot be changed (like Tun Sallehis dismissal) cease to have any significance after a while. There is a tendency to adjust easily and quickly to the new situation, however great the

injustice in the preceding episode.  
- Likewise, it is the mere fact that a detainee has been released, that counts. Whether his freedom with all the restrictions it carries with it, means anything or not is of little consequence to most Malaysian voters. Nor are they bothered by the continued existence of a repressive law like the Internal Security Act (ISA). One suspects that the Ampang Jaya voters - like an important section of the Malaysian public - had also become somewhat weary of the protracted conflict between UMNO Baru and Semangat 46. Given the apparent concessions that UMNO Baru had made to Semangat 46, a sizeable number of Malay voters in Ampang Jaya were inclined to blame Tengku Razaleigh and his friends for perpetuating the conflict. Indeed, it can be argued that there was even a desire among the voters for a conflict-free situation which would then result in rapid economic development. When such a mood prevails, it is often the Barisan, as the ruling Coalition with its well-worn pledge to ensure development that reaps the benefit. If anything, the economic recovery of the last few months also helped the Barisan candidate. For many of the voters, both Malay and non-Malay, the recovery has been a boost to their businesses. It has, in some instances, opened up new job opportunities. While all these and other reasons may explain the Barisan victory we cannot ignore an equally important fact: that in spite of everything the Semangat 46 candidate Datuk Harun Idris managed to secure 19,469 votes to Ongis 23,719 votes. There must be various explanations for this creditable showing by Datuk Harun. To what extent is his support a

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manifestation of a protest within a constantly evolving urban political culture? This theme we hope to explore in the future.

#### Conclusions

For the time being we can establish certain conclusions which help to refute various distortions of the Ampang Jaya by-election. One, the Barisan victory was not a victory for non-communal politics or multi-ethnic harmony. As we have shown, the Barisan and Semangat were unashamedly communal in their campaign. Two, contrary to certain analyses in the government-

controlled dailies, it is obvious  
Semangat obtained more of  
Malay. votes cast than the Barisan;  
lv  
Three, this shows, in a sense, 1 1  
that Malay political sentiment in "  
Ampang Jaya, and perhaps certain  
other places is still divided between t  
UMNO Barn and Semangat 46.,  
Four, in Ampang Jaya, as in  
Parit Raja, it appears that it was '1 V  
the Chinese vote that secured the  
Barisanis victory.  
way, the Chinese of Ampang Jaya  
had saved Mahathir and his UMNO  
)

i i  
In an indirect - 1  
Baru, for a defeat for him and his , 5  
party would have spelt doom. It ,  
would have revealed that it is not 3 "  
just in Johor that Mahathiris  
credibility is gone. Even some of  
his own supporters would have  
begun to doubt his ability to 19.,  
UMNO and the Malays. Just  
the Chinese voters helped UMNO  
to establish a degree of legitimacy  
within the Malay communit'y,s0  
the Malay voters helped the MCA 1  
to prove to one and all that it is f. '  
still a viable political party  
Five, the  
by election  
also :1  
showed that while the Semangat' '" z  
46 initiated inter-ethnic coalition )1 ;  
has some strength, it is still un- "  
certain whether it will survive in (lg  
the long run Will Semangat 46 Q'  
itself lose steam after its Ampang  
Jaya defeat and other recent  
political developments? Will the'  
proposed coalition be rendered  
irrelevant in a rapidly changing,  
highly fluid political situation? "

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DO TO OTHERS

. atuk . Harun Idris, the  
D.Semangat 46 candidate  
who was defeated in the  
Ampang Jaya by-election recent-  
ly, has complained about the dirty  
tactics of the Barisan Nasional  
(BN). A number of other Seman-  
gat ,46 leaders like Datuk Rais  
Yatim, Datin Paduka Rahmah Oth-  
man, Marina Yusuf, Datuk Suhaimi  
Kamaruddin and Datuk Zainal  
Abidin Zin have all condemned the  
BN for abusing and misusing its  
power in the by-election. After the  
Parit Raja by-election in October  
last year, the BN also came under  
fire for using unscrupulous methods  
to secure its victory.  
Semangat i46 leaders allege that  
th N has introduced a ubudaya  
3' ngll (gangster culture) into  
the electoral process. In both Parit  
Raja and Ampang Jaya, gangs of  
youths, often armed with parangs,  
t has been suggested, tried to stop  
Semangat i46 campaigners from  
:ntering certain kampungs. In  
meang Jaya, some Wanita UMNO  
members are also reported to have  
esorted to this tactic to instill fear  
n their opponents. Hordes of  
'ouths on motorcycles were also  
employed to disrupt ceramahs of  
he Semangat 46 group.  
Squatters were threatened with  
he withdrawal of their temporary  
iccupancy licences ,(TOLs) while  
esidents of low-cost flats, it is  
lleged, were told that water and  
electricity rates would be ingreased  
arbitrarily if they supported Harun  
Idris. In other instances, voters  
were ilbribedll with promises of  
new housing schemes, new schools,  
new clinics, new roads. On-the-  
spot allocations for development  
projects were made by Federal  
Ministers and the Selangor Mentri  
Besar. Indeed, even the salaries of  
Imams and Kadis in the State were  
raised automatically in order to win  
their support!  
On polling day itself, an unusual-  
ly large number of voters were  
shocked to discover that their  
names were not on the electoral  
rolls. These were people who had  
voted in the 1986 general election  
and in previous elections. This has

happened before and opposition parties have often lodged formal protests with the Election Commission. However, this time the magnitude involved was simply staggering.

It is all this blackmail, bribery, manipulation and outright cheating which has angered the Semangat I46 leadership. Their anger is justified. The BN undoubtedly played dirty in Parit Raja and Ampang Jaya - dirtier perhaps than in previous by-elections and general elections.

And yet one wonders whether the Semangat i46 leaders , of all people - have any right to complain. For most, though not all, of

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dirty tactics in Ampang Jaye by-election the dirty tactics that they now condemn, were in vogue when the Semangat i46 leaders were also part of the BN. In fact, a number of the Semangat leaders were actively involved in plotting and executing vile, vicious campaign strategies against opposition parties like PAS, the DAP and PSRM. In other words, they had employed most of the dirty tactics which are directed at them today, against the political opposition at some point or other in the past. Others (in actual fact, their former 'comrades-in-arm) are doing to them what they have done to others.

As long as they were all in power together, it did not really matter that opposition parties had to suffer at their hands. What did it matter when others were the victims of dirty tricks and filthy bribes? Now of course everything has changed. The Semangat i46 leaders are disgusted by the coarseness and crudeness of the ruling Ble campaign methods. They are morally outraged \_ because they are at the receiving end. They are just beginning to experience what others have experienced all along. Perhaps Semangat I46 leaders should reflect a little on their new experience. They will realise that there is more than a ray of wisdom in that golden rule of life: Do not do to others what you do not want Others 10 do to you. 0

INTEGRITY  
THE BANK  
NEGARA FRAUD

3 far as financial scandals go,  
A 1989 seems to be no diffe-  
rent from previous years.

We seem to have started the new  
year on a bad footing with the  
recent \$22.2 million Bank Negara  
fraud. Coming as it does together  
with the Cooperative Central Bank  
(CCB) case, it is just the latest in  
the series of financial scandals that  
has rocked this nation in the last  
few years. Readers would of course,  
be able to recollect the more  
important ones such as the Bank  
Rakyat case in the mid-1970s, the  
BMF issue, the transfer of owner-  
ship in UMBC involving the current  
Finance Minister and his family, the  
Maminco affair, the EPF-  
Makuwasa scandal, the Pan-El saga  
which sent the then MCA leader  
Tan lKoon Swan to jail in Singa-  
pore and the collapse and/or near  
collapse of many cooperative  
finance companies due to mis-  
management and corrupt practices.  
A number of these deposit-taking  
cooperatives (DTCs) were effective-  
ly controlled and (mis)managed by  
leaders from the component parties  
of the Barisan Nasional. The  
collapse of the DTCs resulted in  
millions of ordinary Malaysians  
losing much of their life-savings. As  
a result of all these financial  
scandals, the Malaysian public has  
lost billions of ringgit while a few  
unscrupulous politicians and their  
business associates have amassed  
huge fortunes.

Given this string of scandals, we  
would have expected important  
institutions like Bank Negara and  
Bank Bumiputra to have been more  
vigilant and to have exercised  
greater prudence in their opera-  
tions. So it comes as a great shock  
to many Malaysians that fraud is  
taking place in the very institution  
that is supposed to be the watch-  
dog of all other financial institu-  
tions. From press reports the basic  
facts of the case appears to be as  
follows. Sometime in July 1988,  
Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN)  
sent in \$22.2 million to Bank  
Negara Malaysia (BNM) for the  
purpose of purchasing government  
securities. Its application was un-  
successful. Before the money could  
be returned to Bank Simpanan, a  
Harun  
clerk in Bank Negara,

.....

Bank Negara: lacking in vigilance and prudence  
Othman, forged some documents  
and transfered the \$22.2 million to  
a private account at the head 0

of Bank Bumiputra Malay t  
Berhad (BBMB). From there, the  
amount was transfered to another  
private account at the Dayabumi  
branch of BBMB. This account was  
operated by a lawyer Che Man bin  
Che Mud. The entire sum of \$22.2  
million was then taken out by Che  
Man from this account in five with-  
drawals during August 1988. Mean-  
while, Bank Negara and Bank  
Simpanan were blissfully unaware  
of this massive fraud until Bank r  
Simpanan decided to submit  
another bid to purchase govern-  
ment securities in October 1988.1t ;  
was then that the fraud was dis- ;



covered. By then the perpetrators of the crime had left the country. As usual the Malaysian public was the last to know about this affair, when press reports about this case started appearing during early January 1989.

It appears that all three financial institutions involved in the fraud have very ineffective accounting and financial control systems. In the case of Bank Negara, it is hard to believe that one clerk could have forged documents to transfer the \$22.2 million out to a private account at Bank Bumiputra. The internal control system that is in place must be extremely lax to allow this to happen. This is a direct result of poor and incompetent management. In the last few years, Bank Negara has been issuing patronising statements chiding other financial institutions for their poor financial controls and credit management. Yet its own house does not seem to be in order. As a result of this affair, its credibility in managing others failed and ailing financial institutions is at stake.

As far as Bank Bumiputra is concerned, we find it extremely surprising that such a huge sum of \$22.2 million could have been withdrawn in cash over five occasions without raising any suspicion. When an ordinary account holder wants to withdraw the princely sum of, say, a thousand and ringgit, the bank makes him or her wait for sometime while the withdrawal is authorised and double checked before the cash is given out. But five withdrawals of about \$4.4 million each time over a short period of less than a month did not ring any alarm bell at the Dayabumi branch of Bank Bumiputra. There are three possible reasons for this lack of vigilance. One, it could have been collusion between Che Man and senior officials of the branch. Two, it could have been due to totally incompetent management at all levels within BBMB's Dayabumi branch. Three, it must have been a common practice for account holders at this branch to deposit and withdraw millions of ringgit in cash each time that Che Manis withdrawal of \$22.2 million in cash was not an extraordinary event at all as far as this branch was concerned; perhaps there are many accounts containing 'slush funds' in this branch! One would have thought that Bank Bumiputra would have cleaned up its act and instituted effective financial controls after having been defraud-

ed of more than two billion ringgit in the BMF scandal. But it does not seem to have learnt any lessons. In press reports about this fraud, attention has been largely focused on the conduct of Bank Negara and Bank Bumiputra. However, Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN) is not free from blame either. It submitted a bid of \$22.2 million for government securities in July 1988 and found out that it was unsuccessful only four months later in October 1988. When an ordinary individual applies for new issues of shares involving only a few thousand ringgit, he or she is usually very anxious to know the outcome of the application; if it is unsuccessful, he or she would ensure that the money is refunded as soon as possible. In this case, there appears to have been no such anxiety on the part of Bank Simpanan since no one from there ever bothered to check with Bank Negara about its \$22.2 million bid for four months. During these four months, the \$22.2 million could have earned between three to five hundred thousand ringgit for Bank Simpanan if it had been invested elsewhere. This lapse indicates that Bank Simpanan management is inept and incompetent.

Depositors in Bank Simpanan have been assured by Bank Negara that the \$22.2 million has been returned to Bank Simpanan which implies that Bank Negara has absorbed all the losses. Thus, in the end, the real losers are the taxpayers because these losses, just as all other losses that arose from earlier financial scandals, are borne by them collectively.

What can be done about this fraud? First, there should be a public inquiry about the whole matter. It is important that all the three institutions which are directly

or indirectly owned and controlled by the State, be accountable and be seen to be accountable to the citizens at large who have subsidised the losses that have occurred; Public scrutiny of their operations will make them more prudent and careful.

Secondly, existing internal control systems in all three institutions must be strengthened. An advantage of the public inquiry is that it may bring to light other weaknesses in the control system which also should be remedied as soon as possible. This will definitely reduce the possibility of such frauds occurring in the future. Thirdly, no effort must be

spared to apprehend and punish those responsible for the crime. In addition to the actual perpetrators of this crime, it is also important for senior officials in these institutions, whose incompetence allowed this fraud to occur, to accept some responsibility for the event and take appropriate action. This is one area where we should heed Dr Mahathiris advice to look east at Japan and Korea. In particular, the Governor of Bank Negara should resign from his job for allowing this fraud to happen at his bank. This will restore to Bank Negara some of its lost credibility. In the past few weeks, both the Education Minister Encik Anwar Ibrahim and the Vice-Chancellor of University of Malaya Professor Syed Hussein Alatas have been alleging that the Malaysian public does not have a strong moral revulsion against corruption and that this is one of the causes for corruption in this country. If the authorities are really interested in setting the moral tone for society at large, then action on elites who have acted irresponsibly would help. In fact, the absence of a sense of shame among our elites is a more important cause for corruption in this country. So perhaps, the Education Minister who is the Chairman of a Cabinet Committee On Malpractices can persuade the Governor of Bank Negara to set the right example by resigning from his job. 0

S. SUBRAMANIAM

Letters

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

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

HAK ASASI MANUSIA

MALAYSIA

Sejak kebelakangan ini, undang-undang ISA digunakan untuk kesalahan yang di luar tujuan sebenar pembentukan ISA. Kanun Jenayah (Penal Code) dan Kanun Prosedur Jenayah (Criminal Law Procedure Code) sudah tidak digunakan untuk jenayah yang sepatutnya digunakan ke atas mereka yang ditahan. Kerajaan nampaknya mahu senang dalam membuat kerja. Jika ISA digunakan, tanpa bukti yang kukuh pun boleh ditahan juga. Yang perlu, Menteri Hal-Ehwal Dalam Negeri berpuas hati bahawa orang yang ingin ditahan itu akan, telah atau mungkin melakukan sesuatu yang mengancam keselamatan negara. Maka ISA telah dijadikan senjata politik.

Hak Asasi Manusia harus diperjuangkan oleh semua. Apa yang menarik sekarang, bila memperjuangkan hak asasi semua pihak bersatu tanpa mengira kaum. Inilah yang kita mahu. Semangat bersatu datangnya dari hati bukan dari kempen-kempen kerajaan yang membazir. Hendaknya Hak Asasi yang dijamin di dalam perlembagaan tidak diberi dengan tangan kanan tetapi diambil pula dengan tangan kiri. Rakyat mahu kerajaan menjamin hak asasi manusia di Malaysia.

Snake

Law School

ITM, Shah Alam

suggest that it looks at the Municipal President's office first.

He and his personal secretary are occupying space sufficient for a dozen senior officers or 50 clerks. The office has plush wall-to-wall carpeting, Italian designer furniture and top-of-the line toilet fittings including a long bath.

All doors within the office including the one leading to the toilet are elaborately wood panel doors with expensive locksets.

Throw in a bed and you can rival the royal/presidential suite of a four-star hotel.

The Chief Minister's office seems spartan when compared with the Municipal President's.

Next check out the Councils departments: in one department the area used for storing files and filing cabinets is fully carpeted. Not only is there a wanton waste

of funds, the fire hazard rating is greatly increased.

If Council officials wish to wallow in luxury to inspire awe in all visitors, please spend your own money and not ratepayers' funds!

Chelvamohan

Penang

a

THANK YOU SEMANGAT

46

he people of Ampang Jaya

Parliamentary Constituency have

WALLOWING IN LUXURY TSPORW- MY Silent Prayer has not

Star dated 14 January, 1989 on

the Penang Municipal Council's

special committee to study ways to

refer to 8.8. Lim's report in The

increase revenue and cut expenditure.

if the committee is really

serious about doing a good job, I

been answered. But then this is the

essence of democracy. The majority

decision must be respected.

As a concerned citizen who has

followed the campaign closely through

the one-sided and biased reporting in the

English daily mouthpieces, I feel that

some disturbing questions need to be

answered. '

In a democracy (which Malaysia

10

1

- claim: to be), who is more important:

the candidate or the party? Datuk Hll'lll

who was the prime target for much

character assassination may have a back.

pound which leaves much to be deducted.

However, if I had been a vote! there I

would have voted for him. As our

beloved Tunku said, he symbolised our

hope for a change and provided a chance

to show the ruling elite that there were

ordinary rakyat who were not m

with the direction our country in

Will the momentum towards an alterna-

tive to the Barisan continue in spite of!

this set-back? I am no political pundit

but the large number of votes garnered

by Datuk Harun does show that an

alternative to the Barisan can emerge

provided the parties concerned are not

making use of each other for their own

motives. I sincerely hope the proposed

coalition will materialise. Then maybe

those instances of abuse of power that

we have seen in recent years will not be

repeated.

if nothing else, we rakyat have .

to thank the Semang '46 group

there are indications that the ruling elite!

are beginning to be more responsive to

the ordinary rakyat's aspirations.

Loyal Chinese Malaysia

Penang

THE NEW CURRICULUM

FOR FORM 1 STUDENTS

"What is this life if full of care

We have no time to stand and stare;

No time to stand beneath the bough

and stare as long as sheep or cow;  
No time to see when woods we pay,-  
Where squirrels hide their nut: in  
grass. "

Stew

Recently my daughter was admitted to Form 1 at the Convent .

Bukit Nanas, Kuala Lumpur. Al

of ' this week the school has started implementing the new curriculum expounded by the Minister of Education recently. ,

On Mondays, Tuesdays and Thundays my daughter is required to attend school from 9.30 am. to participate in the new curriculum. Yesterday (Mon. 16/1/89) they did "e-commerce" and! the "living skills" programme. What I'll follow I do not know. Her regular school hours are from 1.30 pm. to 6.30 pm. with a later start on Fridays.

As neither my wife nor I was able to take her to school at about 9.00 am. yesterday she had to go by the evening morning "Bas Sekolah" which leaves the area at 7.00 am. Yesterday she spent 2 hours away from home and on

1?) -

return had to do some homework which took about an hour. After dinner she went to bed exhausted'at 9.00 pm. This morning she was due to have repeated the process but she just could not wake up at 6.00 am. to catch the early bus. Luckily my wife was able to send her to school at 9.00 am. today.

I am afraid neither my daughter nor my wife can take this in the long run. Could the authorities responsible for the change in the school curriculum please explain what the new arrangement is designed for? What are we, trying to make out of our school-going children -- well-rounded individuals capable of holding their own in this world or super-beings for some imagined future superior role? '

There are other physical shortcomings in the system too. Schools do not have adequate facilities. Otherwise there would be no afternoon session. Canteens do not provide sufficiently J nced or nutritious meals. Nor do ' cater for all ethnic dietary peculiarities. Even if they did how many parents can afford to give each child up to \$3 a day to ensure they have enough to eat and drink during 12 hours at school? Taking food from home is also not possible as firstly it has to be prepared too early and secondly the children have nowhere safe to leave it till required. The Minister of Education has drawn parallels with the systems in other countries while defending our new system. Can he honestly say that in those countries too children spend the same long hours at school?

In countries where children have to stay at school over a major meal time such as lunch, a substantial meal at a subsidised cost is provided by the authorities. Will this happen here? The Honourable Minister has also suggested 46 schooling hours a week. At work my colleagues and I protest after 40 hours. To whom do we now turn w' our children are affected? Going ' y child's experience she will be spending about 60 hours a week away from home purportedly at school \_ if so, where is the time for her leisure pursuits? Can't she just "stand and stare" some of the time!

I call on all you parents out there who are similarly affected as I am to join me in opposing the new system. Please write in before it is too late.

A Concerned Parent

Kuala Lumpur

WE PRAY FOR YOU

I Mahathir, we pray for you.

You are ill now. But you are getting better. We, the simple people, hope you'll now ponder on all that has happened in the eight years you have been PM. There is a lot of wrong you have done to innocent people. You locked up innocent people. You sacked

innocent Judges. You purged UMNO of your opponents. You destroyed the livelihood of those who were not on your side. You have also hurt people with your communal remarks. That is a great sin.

But God is all-forgiving. He has given you another chance. Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, please repent, repent for your sake and the sake of all Malaysians. Repent and be good.

An Ex-Mahathir supporter

Petaling Jaya

DEMOCRACY

VS

DEVELOPMENT?

Whatever the outcome of the Ampang Jaya by-election, one thing at least is crystal clear - Malaysian politics will never be the same again.

As the rakyat becomes politically mature and aware of the issues facing the nation, we see a gradual shift away from issues of a communal or racial nature. Of course, we will find a handful of die-hard politicians doing their best to keep the old order of racial politicking alive. This is to be expected but they will not be able to resist the trend towards a multi-racial approach in facing the various issues. For instance, the rakyat is aware that the OSA is bad law, the ISA is outrightly obnoxious, and the emasculatation of the judiciary, downright disgraceful. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that these are shaping up as the crucial issues in the forthcoming general elections. t

The people desire greater democracy, freedom and justice. It is our politicians who have been left straggling way behind. Caught up as they are in their quest to preserve or gain power, they have little time or interest in democratic ideals. For example, the ISA for these politicians is a pretty useful piece of legislation which might come in handy to nip critics and rivals whenever they feel their power base is being threatened. Little does it matter that this nasty business of detaining people without trial violates a fundamental principle of the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

The rakyat can no longer be treated as juveniles to be spoonfed by the Ministry of Information and other politicians. They know when their rights are being threatened. That is why the coming general elections will undoubtedly see some momentous changes in parliamentary representation. One hopes

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that our MPs will be able to live up to the challenges ahead. No longer can the people be fooled with promises of material "development" in their areas. This "development" is their basic right anyway, irrespective of which party their MP might belong to.

Greater issues face our nation. There



is no point in becoming an NIC if the rakyat is going to be oppressed, their creative talents stifled and their intellectual growth stunted. Only when we have a society that is free and which allows human rights to flourish, can we achieve socioeconomic justice for all our citizens because human dignity would then be upheld in all strata of society. Contrary to what Singaporeis Mr Lee Kuan Yew would have us believe, we do not have to make an agonising choice between GNP growth and true democracy in our land. Let us show the world we can have our cake and eat it! Hidup Demokrasi!  
Butterworth  
KILL RUMOURS;  
TELL THE TRUTH  
certain government leaders name has been linked to a certain incident at the end of last year which resulted in someone's death. There are all sorts of rumours going around about this leader and the incident. It is believed that the Police is investigating the incident. If investigations are being carried out, there should be a full statement from the Police to that effect. The Police, owe this to the people. It is wrong to hide the truth from the public. Public accountability would have no meaning if important information concerning important persons and important events is kept under wraps. Let the people know what really happened. Otherwise theyill be forced to believe the rumours which are rampant. Kill rumours! Tell the truth!  
Abdul Shukor b Abd Rahman  
Alor Setar  
THE CURRENT  
GOVERNMENT  
It is truly unfortunate that many elected leaders have forgotten that they are not actually the tireal bosses" of the country but are merely servants, given the mandate and privilege

to serve the people who put them into public office. They seem to have the misconception that once they have gotten their authority, the electorate suddenly become their little insignificant followers' who should accept their every whim and fancy so as not to cause 'instability in the country'.

Let 'us illustrate and prove to you how misguided our elected leaders are: When a people elects its government, it is somewhat like an employer hiring his chauffeur.

Just because the chauffeur has been given the right and duty to take charge of the limousine, it does not for a single moment mean that he has become the boss. It is the same with elected government leaders. Just because they have been put into their respective positions, it does not mean that they have become the lords and masters or even gods' that must be worshipped, appeased and obeyed faithfully.

Visualise how ridiculous it is when the employer tells the driver to take him to destination A and the latter insists on driving to destination B. And to top it off, the driver tells the employer that he is being taken to destination B for his own good!

So what can the employer do as he is being driven to point B against his will? Imagine how absurd it would be when the employer starts to protest and the chauffeur tells him to sit back and shut up or else the car may run out of control and finally crash. The similarity is undeniable; there are some people in our government who are constantly trying to frighten the rakyat by saying that opposing or differing views will only cause disunity and chaos which will eventually bring the destruction of our beloved country. Undoubtedly the above parable does sound simple and a little extreme. However, we all know how true the gist of the matter is.

Remember then dear Malaysians that we the people are the REAL bosses, not those elected persons. We must refuse to be continuously intimidated and brain-washed by those power-crazy and egoistic servants/representatives of ours.

Another irksome attitude of our government is that it seems to think that just because the country's infrastructure is being improved or more investors are pouring funds into our economy or Proton Sagas are being manufactured etc, the people should and must reelect them for yet another term of office.

Tell me why should they expect such a thing? Isn't it every government's duty to serve the country and the people? If a couple wants to have children, isn't it their duty and responsibility to bring up their children, clothe them, feed them and educate them? So in the same manner, if a group of people wants to be the government, isn't it their duty and

responsibility to take care of the nation and her people?

Therefore, dear friends, we should not judge the efforts and performance of the (current) government by counting how many hhhways or tourist resorts or low-eost houses or factories have been built. Instead ask yourselves, inter alts, these questions:

a) How efficient (cekap) has it been in dealing with day-to-day affairs?

b) How clean (bersih) were all their dealings? Were there any (suspected) scandal eover-ups? Were there any highly questionable contracts made?

c) How trustworthy (amanah) has it been? Has it kept, as far as possible, all its promises or has it been giving unaccountable lame excuses to justify its inactions?

d) How accountable was it when using public funds and resources?

Remember the North-South Highway deal or the Skyhawks and the recent \$4.6 bil. weapons deal.

e) How fair has its actions been? Other than the issue of the composition of the two tribunals, it is also crucial to ask whether all the policies and laws that were made had been fair to all the different ethnic and religious groups.

f) How democratic do you personally think it has been? Was their form of democracy just lip-service or otherwise?

g) How responsible was it? Who were the ones who contributed to the lack of quorum during parliamentary meetings without good reasons?

h) How about the question of abuse of mass media?

i) What about the possible abuse of social/political status for personal profiteering?

j) How effective has its policies been in contributing to national unity in our plural society? The question of being unappreciative of the government's 'certain good policies does not arise here. To be ungrateful of the good changes that have been brought by it would mean that we are blind, unreasonable and wrong, However. to be thankful for certain things does not mean a total and unquestioning loyalty to the existing regime.

The Watchman

Kuala Lumpur

THE ARTERIES OF  
OUR SPIRIT

ere is a story from the Australian bush. A Pack of kangaroos sat in council one day, attempt-  
12

mg to unravel the oompbxlties or as law. A young ambitious joey who bind; to wine and dine in the company of- pretty female kangaroos turned the whole deliberstbns into a vicious attack

upon a revered old councilor who, he  
alleged, had insulted the lion. The  
proceedings were long and boisterous  
In the end the old kangaroo was not  
only expelled from the council but also  
excommunicated from the head. As the  
old marsupial, grey with the wisdom of  
years and sober living, hopped sway  
lame to a lonely retreat far from the  
maddening herd, he was met by an owl  
named CR, as old as he was. "Ah, you  
are not the first to discover that here in  
the bush the LAW is not an ass but I  
kangaroo," said CR. "But don't be  
despondent. The Almighty will Vindicate  
His justice and rout the evil-doers".  
Nothing similar should occur in  
Malaysia. To this end we must prevent  
the cholesterol of vain  
ambition  
debauchery and falsehood from clogging  
the arteries of our spirit. Thus trust  
God and acknowledgement of our own  
frailties will help us to strive after all  
that is noble and truthful.  
EUREKA  
Klan:  
Ask her about safety rules  
UNION?  
Go to an area where many electronics  
factory girls live, and  
get to know one of them. Ask  
her about safety rules, and ask her where  
she would complain about any health  
grievance or anything about workers'  
rights. Unless the working girl belongs to;  
an unionized factory, she is likely to be  
poorly informed about the health;  
ELECTRONICS WORKERS  
%  
hazards and workers' rights in the  
g  
a  
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i0;

electronics industry.

. What I am trying to convey is, little research has been done on the electronics industry which is considered the third most dangerous industry in terms of exposure to cancer-causing substances like benzene, cadmium, chloroform, lead and 'various acids. Besides the above mentioned problems in the electronics industry, many of the workers do isoope work' which involves up to eight hours of Qeering through microscopes. Scope workers bond tiny hair-like wire strands onto the micro-chips. On an average they are given a minimum work quota of 800 chips per day. As a result of this, over a period of time, these workers suffer from dizziness and backache and often they develop eye-defects.

Girls working the night shifts from 11.30 pm to 7.30 am run the risk of mass hysteria. I believe that mass hysteria is strongly related to the ,r i nee of channels for voicing noes. Unions can provide such an outlet.

The problem is that the non-unionised workers have nowhere to go and complain about their safety, health and workers' rights. They can go to the management, but can they be assured of an unbiased hearing? And besides that, the majority of the workers are not highly educated and ignorant of workers rights, especially the need for safety and health regulations.

However, these sort of problems in the electronics industry and industries in general can be solved, only after the formation of a national union. I do not see any reason why a democratic country like ours must create obstacles to the unionisation of workers. What sort of liberalism is this? As a concerned citizen, I would like to call upon the labour Ministry not to deny the electronics workers their fundamental right to organise and associate.

. S Sundralingam

Bruas

LOVE AND RESPECT F OR

OTHERS

am a trainee teacher. I have been wondering why the world still has some people who seem to be fanatics. Even in our country, the rakyat (not all though) are fooled sometimes by some fools. We seem to be divided by race, language, caste, class, social status, religion, political ideologies, beliefs, superstitions and all sorts of narrow concepts that hinder our nation from progressing spiritually. We should be grateful that God bestowed on our world a spiritual leader like Gandhi at the time when our world experienced two terrible True integration must take place in our hearts

x

wars. Mahatma Gandhi was a saint and he has influenced millions. He showed us

the way to attain peace. May the world respect the Mahatma (great soul) and may all politicians honour the universal principles of peace and love that Mahatma Gandhi lived and died for. We can become truly civilised if we recognise and practise true love. As a Tamilian by birth, I need to know Tamil but that does not mean I must not learn other languages, especially Bahasa Malaysia and English. All Malaysians must be allowed to learn their respective mother-tongues. Our students must be motivated to know about one's religion and culture and also the culture and religion of others. There must be more open talks and discussions so that our students are truly AWARE that Malaysia is a multi-racial country. Our young ones depend upon us for guidance and protection. It is very painful that there are some parents who teach their children to hate or dislike the way of life of others. In fact, I have personally seen and even heard our children being taught to look down upon others. The government must never allow these subversive elements to continue to grow. It is better to nip in the bud these elements from becoming a jungle of devils. Malaysia can never afford to face riots and every child born in this beloved land must be taught to value the existence of the various cultures and religions practised by the people of Malaysia. Why hate the way of life of others? Some people tend to find fault with others when they themselves have many flaws I love Tamil as my mother-tongue but I don't hate Bahasa Malaysia or English or even Mandarin. We need to wear the coat or shirt that suits us. The same shirt can never be used by all, different people need different sizes of shirts. I am Hindu by birth and once I did not look upon other religions with understanding but my parents encouraged me to go deeper into Hinduism and they made me realise that as a true Hindu, I must love and respect other religions too. My spiritual teacher helped me not only to know better but also taught me about other religions. I hope our children will also learn to respect every human being because it is

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simply our noble way to live. TRUE INTEGRATION must take place in our hearts and souls so that we learn to love all. How can we hate a person just because he/she is not of the same race or religion? The so-called integration of the rakyat through one language, one culture, one religion, one party, etc. will never be able to unite Malaysians. We all need to be SINCERE with ourselves if we are to grow. The political turmoil among the Malays cannot be solved even though both Team A and Team B are Malays, Muslims and speak Bahasa Malaysia. Similarly, intra-party fighting

is rampant in the MCA and MIC. Why do these parties must be divided even though each of them use their own common language. So it is very clear that we must attain TRUE INTEGRATION within our hearts. As long as we don't practise the universal principles as taught by the prophets, we will not be happy. We must love all and learn to live with people of different races, religions and cultures.

K .S.

Penang

IN F ORMATIVE MONTHLY

Aliran Monthly. Your publication encompasses both domestic and international affairs.

In spite of the current emasculation of the mass media you manage to inject virility into it. The impartiality in your reports is commendable.

I read your article entitled 'Shell's Role in Fuelling Apartheid' with voracious appetite. A revealing article such as this is worthy of publication to enable the public to be well-informed of the current affairs of the world. I am happy that the information obtained is from authoritative sources.

I have been a regular reader of your

Ahmad Faizin b Az' shad

Butterworth 1

#### A NEW LAW NEEDED

elections and by-elections so much so that people have come to accept the transgressions as part and parcel of democracy.

I am talking about politicians (especially Ministers) going with their cheque-books on their corrupt rounds during an election or by-election. The hand-outs given to the constituency is nothing short of bribery. It is inducement pure and simple for the citizen's ballot. The practice qualifies to be classified as a corrupt practice under any anti-corruption law.

The culprits are so-called "leaders" who masquerade as people who are incorruptible! This is the tragedy of the nation. A leader who perpetrates this corrupt practice during elections progresses to bigger and better crimes while in office. So one can understand why our jails are full of these scoundrels who in the first place lacked basic morality and decency. They merely carried corrupt practices to arrestable levels!

At least, if they distribute their own money, one can say that they are suddenly moved to be generous to a long-neglected and suffering constituency. But it is the PEOPLE'S MONEY that is distributed to them by an ostensible political benefactor - and the people are expected to be grateful and vote him in!

I think that it is only people's power that can put a stop to this despicable corrupt practice. People must reject the party or politician who indulges in such bribery of the electorate.

Better still, parliament must enact a law forbidding allocations or grants for constituencies during elections or by-elections. Only then will national problems and issues be discussed rationally. Our democracy will be richer. It has always happened in Malaysian

Pisces

Penalty

#### THE MALAYSIAN

#### ECONOMY OF 1989

The recovery of our country's economy perhaps is a triumph to most people especially those working in the government sector and the businessmen. However, it is not a bed of roses for farmers, fishermen, daily-paid workers and the lowly-paid employees. While we have the rich in mind, we must consider the poor. Otherwise they will become the victims of our own economic system. The pay-rise for those in the government sector is a great sky-high price!

A burden for the lot of the poor. The reason I am bringing this up is that the prices of goods, especially the necessities, have shot up sky-high and in this situation, the poor can hardly survive. No doubt, poverty in Malaysia cannot be



overcome totally. It is like giving bread to the rich and the privileged ones and the crust to the poor. I wonder if the government will be able to wipe out poverty in the long run.

The Victim

Sarawak

WHERE TO SEEK THE

TRUTH

Most individuals like myself read as reading is a convenient way of seeking understanding and attaining knowledge. Reading widely helps a person in developing convictions in matters such as sincerity and hypocrisy, honesty and dishonesty, wisdom and stupidity and fairness and injustice. When we read about local politics of today - the players, their words and their actions, we (or at least I) cannot help but seriously question ourselves (myself) about the character and integrity of many of the so-called political leaders in Malaysia. For example, some of these leaders would tell the people to respect one another, regardless of race or religion but soon would say things that hurt the feelings of others. Again, some of them would proudly (blindly is the right word actually) declare that they

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were elected through a democratic election but never point to the fact that the value of one vote in many rural areas is greater than that in the few urban territories in Malaysia (unlike many other nations of the world where voters possess the same weight regardless of the location they vote). Or they would attempt to justify their words and actions so that they can stay in power for as long as they want, ignoring the realities facing them. And there are those who simply refuse to admit that discrimination prevails in our society, especially in education and business. Even when buying a house one encounters discrimination.

The political predicament in Malaysia is further aggravated by the crippling control of the mass media which denies the individual the opportunity and freedom to find the answers to the relevant and disturbing questions he or she has in mind. The television, radio and newspapers here do not play their role correctly in presenting a truthful and balanced view of political events, both local as well as international. They do not carry out their work with purpose and objectivity. So, where do the ordinary (powerless), educated individuals go to before they decide as to which politicians are right or wrong? In this respect, Aliran, for one, deserves credit for striving hard to inform the public without fear or favour. Unfortunately, not many people in this country know or read Aliran publications. So far, attempts to get a licence from the present government for Aliran

to publish in the national language has failed. I feel that reading Aliran has now become a privilege rather than a right. Such is the depressing state prevalent in our country at the moment - lots and

lots of government propaganda but very few channels available for the people to check and verify, a necessity before they decide what is good for themselves and their country. So where can one find the answers?

Joseph Goh

Melaka

GOOD MOVE

It was a happy occasion to have read that the government has introduced the Chinese and Tamil languages in secondary schools. This is indeed a laudable move and a step in the right direction. This move is long overdue; it should have been implemented much earlier. However, there is still room for improvement. For instance the Chinese and Tamil languages should also be taught in the Primary School. There is nothing like learning a language in the early years. Children are receptive for all knowledge and they can learn languages fast. The government at long last is gearing its machinery towards national unity. Education is a tool through which unity of the various races can be fostered. There are other areas that the government must tackle to bring about total unity and happiness.

Toward Freedom in Democracy.

Wen Ai

Kuala Lumpur

IN SOLIDARITY

From afar, we offer all of you our heartfelt support; keep up the fantastic job and when I return, I shall join your ranks.

God bless and may peace be with

ALIRAN.

L K

Scotland

TO THE

SUPERINTENDENT,

KAMUNTING DETENTION

CENTRE

your camp (ISA Detainees) can write I came to know that the detainees at only 3 letters weekly to their families or friends. At first I thought that this was a restriction. But later I came to know it was not because at a Human Rights seminar recently, our 10<sup>th</sup> Tan Sri Haniff Omar said that all facilities were given to the detainees. As a result, 3 letters weekly for a detainee is not a restriction, as I thought before. It was because the authorities don't have enough letter pads. I agree that our government can't afford to buy letter pads. We have over 60 billion ringgit debts throughout the world. With these difficulties around, our government has to cook daily for the detainees. Our government has to spend a lot for the detainees. As a result, it makes sense that our government can't afford to buy more letter pads for the ISA detainees. And so, I am sending some letter pads here. Please distribute them to the ISA detainees equally. Please remind me

if these pads are finished, I am send  
some more.

Thanks for the cooperation.

Appalasaamy

Pahang

MALAY UNITY - iiMAKING

A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A

MOULDii

olitical leaders within the BN have  
of late been making a nuisance of  
themselves by telling the world  
that Malay unity is essential to the  
stability of Malaysia, otherwise the  
oounttyis peaceful political and  
economic climate may be destroyed and  
the people will suffer. Alatas, and Youth  
Organizations, paxticularly Anwar  
lbrahimis ABIM have also joined in the  
Malay Unity issue.

If one traces the political history of  
the country, there has always been  
Malay disunity as well as Chinese dis-  
unity since the olden days.

Then came the Malayan Union issue  
which affected the Malays in general and  
the Rulers in particulax. Out of this came  
the great rescuer - the late Dato Onn  
Jaafar who rallied the Malays thxoughout  
the length and breadth of the country to  
fight the Malayan Union. He sacrificed  
his time, energy and wealth to lead the  
crusade and he succeeded in getting what  
1 term as the greatest achievement in  
terms of Malay unity in our history. The  
British had to scrap the Malayan Union  
and the first step towards Independence  
was laid. Malay unity was further  
strengthened and the integration of the  
Malays, Chinese and Indians bloomed  
under the leadership of Tunku Abdul  
Rahman Putra Al-Haj who freed the  
country from the British.

The Federal Constitution which

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granted all the rights of the various noes  
in the country was widely accepted.

Thus peace, racial harmony and under-  
standing prevaibd. Then PAS me and  
the beginning of the Malay disunity  
started. So today UMNO can never boast  
of sepresenting the Malays anymore  
because of Ishm. The two Malay-based  
parties have been trying to show the  
Malays which is the true Islamic party.  
Malay disunity aggravated further with

the entry of BERJASA, HAMIM and  
ABIM indirectly under Anwas Ibrahim  
who is now one of UMNOis strongmen.

ABIM is now part and parcel of UMNO.

Its religious and other social activities are  
now questionable.

Malay unity was further disrupted  
during the Constitutional Crisis started  
by Dr Mahathir when he introduced Bills  
to grab the Emergency powers similar to  
that introduced by Marcos. We then had  
UMNO Malays led by him on one side  
and the Rulersi Malays on the other.  
Thus the country was in near chaos  
because the Malays who fought the  
Malayan Union did not agree with the

Malays who supported the Mahathir Union later. Thank God. God me to the rescue. Allis well that ends well There is a saying ttMan proposes; God disposes".

We must face the fact that the various races in the country are split very widely. We have Malay disunity, Chinese disunity and other smaller group of races divided among themselves. The people are divided because the leaders themselves are divided because these leaders are more itwealth oriented". The upeople oriented" leaders during the days of Bapa Malaysia, Tun Razak and Datuk Hussein Onn are gone. Now we have more slogans which are nothing but slogans only.

The BCA (Bersih, Cekap, Amanah) which if practised sincerely, will rid the country of debts - debts which muse the peoples pride and prestige to be low. Not only adults but even children in their mothers wombs are mortgaged despite the wealth God has given us. So let those who speak so much about Malay unity be more sincere and practise the RUKUNEGARA which has taken a back seat since SEMARAK and SETIA! Malay unity is the theme but in actual fact it is UMNO unity. There axe some who want to keep what they have eamed and there are those who want to get back what they have lost. There are also some who want to try their luck in politics.

So go back to the RUKUNEGARA. The SEMARAK' and SETIA axe to unite factions within UMNO and not the people. If we persist on the two TS" in the SEMARAK and SETIA we will end tip as iiASSES".

il30D BLESS MALAYSIA"

Ismail Hashim

Penang

THE ECONOMY  
PRIVATISATION AND  
THE PUBLIC GOOD

Privatisation may not work for public good. It can lead to undesirable social and economic effects. In this article, saudara Tong Veng Wye examines the basis for privatisation and questions the wisdom of such a policy. Is the private sector more efficient in providing certain services or is it motivated by profits and self-interests? Does it solve the root causes of the problems? If not, what remedial measures should be taken?

The concept of privatisation was first initiated as government policy about four years ago with the usual lack of public consultation. At that time it was an idea which, though already practised in certain other countries, was new in Malaysia. For better or for worse it was an idea which bore some novelty. A few years down the road today, privatisation is still part of government policy and has been partially implemented - mainly through the privatisation of telecommunication services.

At the time of its inception many held reservations as to the wisdom of the policy. It is doubtful whether the basis of those reservations has been proven ill-founded today. If anything the arguments against the privatisation of public services remain valid. There has been little to convince us of the advantages of privatisation. One might add that we now have even greater reason to fear privatisation. A few years ago the term quite clearly meant what it was supposed to, namely, that it would involve the handing over of certain public sector activities to the private sector - an exercise in economic management. We now know however, how real the possibility is for privatisation to mean something else and that is the accrual of benefits or contracts to private companies or individuals who are well connected with the powers that be - a mere exercise in economic mismanagement. Without a doubt there exists a close relevance between privatisation on the one hand and the public good on the other. For the privatisation which is referred to here is privatisation of the public services such as telecommunications, power supply, rail transport and the postal services. The relevance lies in the contradiction between the priorities of private business concerns and the needs of the general populace. Because the government is supposed to function as a trustee of the people in overseeing its (the people's) welfare, the public sector must necessarily exist and function with the people's interests high in its priorities. The private sector has no such obligation to the people. Production growth and profits are its prime objectives, rather than public welfare. The private sector has never been seen as working for or towards public good providing service to the public without profits in mind. That is why the public sector is sometimes referred to as the public service while nobody refers to the private sector as the private service.

Having said this, we should examine the reasons given for the government's move to privatise. We shall then suggest alternatives to privatisation and steps which should be taken in order to remove the root causes which in the first place gave rise to the move to privatise. The main reasons given for

privatisation are two fold. First, that the public sector is inefficient. Since private sector organisations are generally recognised as being more efficient, privatisation of public bodies will, it is hoped, inject the efficiency desired into the erstwhile public entities. Second, and probably the more pressing of the two reasons, the public sector

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government that public backlash against British Telecom will jeopardise the government's whole privatisation programme, particularly the proposed sale of electricity and water. In Malaysia the public has yet to be convinced of the benefits of privatising telecommunications. The public has yet to be convinced of its public good.

It is of course not the intention here to suggest that the government improves its privatisation programme by creating competition among various companies, each with a share in the market for telephones or rail transport or electricity. Such has become too great a financial burden on the basic public services. Should not be privatised in government. Not only has it become a huge financial drain but it has also led to excessive government spending thus contributing to weakened inflation. It is argued that we should therefore cut Needless to say, it simply becomes repugnant if it back through privatisation. should happen that a major privatised contract It is true that in the private sector work gets is awarded to a politically favoured tenderer done faster. The work is comparatively more through a tender process that was not fair and tensively produced and hence productivity is proper. New levels of decadence would then have Gher One of the main reasons for this has been reached. That is why the government is obliged competition. Private sector bodies have to remain to prove beyond all doubt that its letter of intent competitive in order to not only stay afloat but to United Engineers (M) Sdn Bhd for the North-also to make sure that business is profitable. South Highway contract was absolutely above

Indeed it would be most desirable from the private business point of view to acquire the highest Needless to say, it simply should be competitive with others. But it is now becomes repugnant if it quite clear that the manner in which privatisation should happen that a private company does not in a major privatised contract runs the telecommunications services it is awarded to a company remains the only company doing so. It has no one favoured competitor to compete with. The same situation will arise in the event of the privatisation of Malayan Railway board. The public has the right to know for it (KTM) just as it would with the National Electricity Board (NEB) eventually have to bear the monumental cost Board (NEB). With no competition to contend of the project. The public has the right to know with, the central motive for maintaining high that its basic right to honest government has not efficiency and productivity is lost. Instead of been infringed. competition there is monopoly. In this sense it As indicated earlier competitiveness and tomes irrational to argue for the privatisation profitability are two cornerstones of any private public service in order to achieve greater business enterprise. These two traits contribute efficiency. in large measure to greater efficiency of the private This problem is not only faced here but also sector. However, the fact remains that the profit/ in Britain where telecommunications service is still a motive the basis of has been privatised and is operated by a company which is antithetical to the idea of public service. called British Telecom. According to a report It is hardly conceivable that a private company published in the STAR of 22nd September 1987, in charge of power supply should be equally



keen  
on providing electricity to both urban and upper  
class areas and rural and lower income localities,  
Where investment incentives are real and tangible  
in one, they are less so in the other. Where profits  
British Telecom retains virtual monopoly of  
telecommunications. Despite limited competition  
from another company called Mercury  
Communications there is widespread public  
discontent about inflated charges, delays for new and investment returns can be gained in  
the short  
phones and delayed telegrams \_ complaints not term in one, worthwhile returns may take a long  
entirely unfamiliar to us here. Privatisation did time in the other. Where wealthier consumers  
not seem to have enhanced efficiency. In fact have the money to make their demands effective,  
surveys have indicated that British Telecom and their poorer counterparts lack the money to  
make  
regarded as the worst of the public services. their basic needs felt. Clearly, rural development  
British Telecom has even been coined British and poverty eradication and other such social  
Tele-contin. There is even concern within the British \$0315 can only be pursued effectively  
y 35 part of  
1 7

conscious policy by a responsible government. rather than actual need, it was inevitable that

It is more logical to expect the public sector to certain functions or positions would be filled

establish schools, health services, water pipelines twice over. In fact it might even be argued that

and roads in poorer underdeveloped areas than for it was politically necessary to do so in order to

acquisitive private concerns to do the same. In avoid the potential dangers of graduate this sense, in a developing country like Malaysia, unemployment - something which is becoming

privatisation may well be a luxury that we cannot evident today. At the same time government bodies

afford. were established with the aim of directly fostering

Apart from efficiency and productivity we are the growth Of a Bumiputra business and industrial

told that certain government bodies have to be middle class. This coupled with the use of the civil

service as a source of employment has contributed to an overgrown bureaucracy which naturally becomes a burden in lean times. On top of that it is unlikely that concentration on the middle class and urban elite will ultimately lead to the worthy goal of reducing racial and income disparities. Concentration on the middle and upper classes is a point to which we shall later return.

It should be clear at this point that the implementation of certain government policies has had a significant effect on the creation of an \$

With employment based

on political rather than

actual need, It was t

Inevitable that certain

function! or positions

would be filled twice over.

privatised because they have become a strain on unwieldy public sector. And now when the public

the public treasury. We are also told that since sector is suffering from the effects of such

government revenue is low in these recessionary implementation and economic recession it has

times the financial burden has to be lightened. to be amputated for private management. T here

Therefore the way OM is 10 privatise. This is a" is little reason to be convinced that amputation by\_

interesting argument because it raises two important expedience will benefit the public. When it comes to

questions. First, why has the Public sector become the economy however, and low government revenue

such a great financial strain on public revenue? it is not so much the implementation of policy as

AN SCCOHd. is the prevalent 10W government it is the policy itself which has created problems.

revenue wholly attributable to the world economic slowdown? in both cases. is privatisation a solution to the root causes of the problem or is it yet another dose which merely treats the symptoms of the illness?

One cannot deny that part of the reason for the growth and formation of various government bodies has been a genuine desire on the part of

In fact It is unlikely that III

ovu-olzed bmcaucrlcy I.

needed for genuine and

well-balanced .

the government to bring' development to the poor development.

and to reduce disparities. indeed it is partly the ' result of such a desire that POVCY in Malaysia is It should by now be common knowledge that

not as widespread and intense when compared to one Of the basic weaknesses of the economy is my

many other developing countries. This pursuit of vulnerability or high trade dependency. No noble social goals has given rise to the need for economy can be an island but high dependency is setting up various government bodies. This however, is highly undesirable. Our economy is open and is cannot account for the existence of a bloated and particularly dependent upon the developed burdensome public sector. In fact it is unlikely that countries. in 1980, exports comprised 60% of an over-sized bureau trace is needed for genuine the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Malaysia and well-balanced development. as compared to corresponding figures of 37% Ironically, it is sometimes the implementation for South Korea, 31% for Indonesia, 25% for of the New Economic Policy (NEP) which embodies Thailand and 14% for Japan. In 1982 exports certain laudable objectives that has resulted in the of goods and services comprised 50% of the GDP excessive growth and formation of various statutory while imports of goods and services were 54% bodies The desire to create a Bumiputera middle class has sometimes meant that the government service is seen as a ready source of employment for Bumiputera graduates. For many years an expanding economy flush with funds made it possible for the civil service to continuously create posts for rising numbers of both graduates and non-graduates. With employment based on political of the total final expenditure. Our continued and persistent concern over the availability of export markets for palm oil, crude oil, gas, timber, rubber and tin, our recent decision to pump up on! output to generate oil funds, gives us no reason to assume that the economy is any less dependent today. Apart from a world economic slowdown it is this vulnerability in our own economy that

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at least bears an equal share of the blame for why public revenue is today at a low ebb and why the spectre of privatisation has been invoked. Apart from dependency another conspicuous characteristic of the Malaysian economy is that it is a market economy which tends and does give rise to the well-off and the not so well-off. It is an economy the tenor of which is determined much more by the demands of the middle and upper classes than by the requirements of the poorer majority. Formidable though the consumptive powers of the better off may be they are nevertheless not without limits. With their basic needs met they tend to save much greater proportions of their incomes than the poorer majority who at the same time do not have enough money to make effective their basic requirements. To a large extent therefore, their market remains only a potential. The tendency is thus towards an excess of savings and under-consumption. In such a situation there is a lack of incentives to re-invest the savings of households and businesses. Left to itself the economy will run down. This is where the government steps in as a stabilising force.

Since, because of unequal distribution of income the economy is unable to keep itself afloat the government provides a boost by absorbing excess savings using it on investment projects or public consumption. However, not all the investments or expenditure will yield returns. And if most of the money is spent mainly on the demands of the middle and upper classes then again hope is being placed on that segment of society which seems unlikely to pull the economy through anyway. The economy becomes top heavy. Indeed the urban and wealth bias in our development strategies is tangible enough. Government financing thus runs into deficit. One thing leads to another as income disparities result in a lack of internal cohesion or self-reliance in the economy which in turn contributes to high dependence on the external sector. If commodity prices are good, if terms of trade are favourable and debt servicing ratios are not high then the vulnerability of the system is obscured and papered over. But if like now, such conditions do not prevail then the cracks appear and we are told it is a recession and that we need to privatise.

The foregoing argument although by no means comprehensive, would suggest that there is an urgent need to redistribute income. This would call for more attention to be paid to improve the welfare of the less privileged groups not only as a desirable humane goal but also out of necessity to restructure the economy. Although such measures may be unpopular with the entrenched and the influential, it would, I believe, be in the long term interest of the public. In this regard it is difficult to see how privatisation of public services will help in turning the economy around. It is

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more than likely that privatised services will continue to place emphasis on the more well-to-do segment of society. From this viewpoint privatisation cannot be considered a public good. There is yet another reason why we do not think that privatisation of public services will be in the public good in the long run. The replacement of the service ethic by the dictates of business and profits means that values such as acquisitiveness,

the supreme dominance of self-interest in social life and materialism will be consolidated. In a time and age of rising crime, corruption, drug and sexual abuse these are hardly values to be encouraged. The question now remains as to what steps may be taken instead of privatisation. In as far as the running of the public services is concerned, reformatory measures undertaken to improve performance are preferable to privatisation. For a start there should be a review of the wage conditions of civil servants particularly the lower salaried workers. The large income disparity between the upper echelons of the civil service and the lower ranks is inimical to the raising of levels of efficiency and productivity. If opportunity for improved wage conditions can be reflected in more equitable salary scales then perhaps the morale and self-respect of civil servants can be lifted to the benefit of overall performance. On the other hand upgrading the economic position of the lower and middle sectors may not in itself strengthen the incentive to work if promotions and rewards are not given in recognition of good work done. Merit, industry and ability must be given emphasis in the public sector. The perception of the civil service at the moment parallels that of a milking cow which will always provide benefits regardless of whether or not one works for it. Such perception and attitude must change both within and without the service. Praise and reward must be given where due just as sloth and inefficiency must be discouraged. In this connection both civil servants and the public at large should be educated on what is expected of the civil service. But if superiors in the civil service are expected to exercise greater vigilance over the performance and progress of their staff then they have to ensure that their own performance qualifies them to lead by example. It is sometimes argued that there can be no better reason for people to be honest and conscientious in their work than for them to be influenced by high levels of competence and integrity in their superiors. Nevertheless we all know that it is always difficult to coax and cajole good work ethics into workers even if they are in high positions of responsibility - or perhaps one should say especially if they are already in high positions of responsibility. This is why since 1983 Aliran had proposed the formation of an Ombudsman whose responsibility it would be to receive, investigate and act upon public complaints

against perceived deficiencies in the civil service. The status of this Ombudsman would be similar to that of the Auditor General. Moreover the establishment of an effective Ombudsman for public complaints would be a measure of the government's commitment to enhance the quality of service to the public. It would also make the civil service more accountable to the people. Quite apart from the foregoing it would also be desirable for civil servants of various ranks to be involved in the decision making process. Even if it is only relatively minor decisions like how a certain department should be set up and run, it would still be desirable to involve workers other than just the department head and his assistants. It is only logical that people will show greater initiative if they feel involved through discussion and consensus instead of just being handed a decision from above in a paternalistic manner. With various measures available to spruce up the efficiency of the public service it is by no means inconceivable that respectable levels of performance can be obtained without having to resort to privatisation. But this in itself will not overcome the problem of low government revenue. For this certain changes will have to be made to the economy.

Thus there will have to be greater emphasis on basic needs and income redistribution in order to effect a more egalitarian mode of development. Food production must be increased in order for us to be self-reliant in this very basic need instead of spending billions each year on food imports. Local development of science and technology will have to be boosted in order to reduce dependence on foreign sources with a view to exporting value added manufactured products rather than raw commodities, small and medium sized industries should become a more substantial component of the economy and we must cut down on non-essentials such as imported luxury items as well as huge prestigious projects. Lifestyles too will have to change. Our obsession with consumption of goods and services within reasonable bounds of need and propriety will eventually have to be tamed.

Ultimately change will have to come from both individuals and the larger environment. Thus while individuals may have to alter consumption patterns the government will need to examine the role played by advertisements in whetting consumer appetites. While individuals have to review the position of values like inflation, integrity in their lives the government will need to strengthen its hand against corruption, the interests of interest as well as its commitment to public accountability. The initiative lies in our hands and it is up to us to shape it as best as we can.

The above talk was given (11 July 1988) at the 'Priorities and HIV/AIDS' seminar (held on Sept 37, ms 7\_20

LATEST  
FROM ALIRAN  
OF THE 0  
MAHATHIR  
YEARS

This book consists of press statements, articles and short speeches of Aliran officials written in the period from

October 1981 to December  
1986 which coincides with  
Dr. Mahathir's first 5 years as  
Prime Minister. The important  
subjects dealt with include  
human rights and democracy,  
financial scandals and the  
Official Secrets Act. In fact  
the compilation provides a  
useful mirror of a critical  
phase in Malaysian history,  
the resolution of which is not yet  
over. The contents of this  
volume will therefore remain  
topical for months to  
come.

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PRICE: \$11.00

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JUSTICE  
h \_.  
g! SHELL  
FUELS APARTHEID  
Readers will recollect that in the Aliran Montly vol. 8: 7, 8 & 9, we carried a series of  
articles on the  
evils of apartheid. The articles culminated with a call to bo  
profit from apartheid. This boycott is  
in South Africa.  
ycott Shell which we allegedcontinues to  
part of an international campaign against Shellis involvement  
Here, we carry in full, a letter from Shell Malaysiais Public Affairs adviser J. WANG GEN  
-SIE  
explaining his companyis position. It is followed by a rejoinder from Aliran.  
SHELL  
DENIES  
FUELLING  
APARTHEID  
in South Africa with interest,  
but was disappointed to see that  
it culminated in a call to boycott  
Shell products, based on incorrect  
information.  
Shell certainly does not support  
apartheid. Far from supporting  
apartheid, Shell is totally opposed  
to it and has said so publicly on  
numerous occasions. Shell wants  
apartheid ended as quickly and  
peacefully as possible. Where Shell  
differs from its critics is in the  
means to achieve this end.  
lread your article on the situation  
Shellis position is not a pose just  
in countries outside South Africa.  
Shell South Africals Chairman is an  
outspoken critic of apartheid. He  
has also called for the release of all  
political prisoners, the ending of  
the ban on political organizations,  
the cessation of detention without  
trial of community and union  
leaders and the commencement of  
negotiations on the future with re.  
presentatives of all South Africans.  
Shell South Africa has run a series  
of adveFtisements in the South  
African press supporting press free-  
21  
dom, freedom of association, and  
the rights of all South Africans to  
choose where they live and enjoy  
political participation.  
The allegation that Shell com-  
panies outside South Africa are  
supplying oil to South Africa is not  
true. On the contrary, it is a matter  
of fact that no Shell Group com-  
pany outside South Africa supplies  
crude oil to anyone in South  
Africa. Shell fully respects the  
destination embargoes placed on  
crude by producer governments,  
and routinely incorporates these



conditions into its contracts of - onward sale: All eight oil companies operating in South Africa acquire their oil from internationally traded crude (as well as from SASOL's oil-from-coal plants.

If what is presently Shell South Africa was owned by someone else, perhaps the South African Government, the same sources of supply would be open to it. By law, all petroleum companies in South Africa are prevented from denying supplies to the military, police, or anyone else. Shell South Africa is a mature company which does not rely on its shareholders for injections of funds; disinvestment would merely mean transferring title to the assets. Any new South African owner would not necessarily operate on 'the liberal Shell principles and he would not have a presence in countries all round the world through which he can be called to account for his actions as Shell can, and frequently is. You rightly say that there are South Africans such as Oliver Tambo who call for disinvestment, saying that black people are prepared to suffer the economic hardships that disinvestment would bring. Equally there are leaders of major groups in South Africa, such as Chief Buthelezi, who are strongly opposed to disinvestment. He said When I condemn sanctions and disinvestment I do so because I have a mandate to do so and, living in the midst of black suffering as I do every day, I cannot in all conscience contribute to furthering the abject poverty and misery in which the majority of South Africans exist."

Directly and through affiliates, Shell South Africa has 8,000 employees, the majority of whom are black. There also some 2000 pensioners, and numerous agents, dealers, contractors and others. There, as here in Malaysia, Shell has a responsibility to all of these people and their dependents. Shell employees in South Africa have chosen to work and build their careers in an organization which gives equal opportunity to all its employees and which is committed to racial equality.

Shell South Africa is run on the same business principles as Shell in Malaysia, principles of which we are very proud. By its stand Shell South Africa played an important part towards breaking the system of black migratory labour by making the provision of family houses on site a condition of a major project. It has uniquely developed black

businesses, black agents and service operators in white communities and black supervisors of white sales staff in Shell's district organisation. The largest black business in South Africa, the 100,000 member Southern Africa Black Taxi Association, with combined assets of over one billion Rand, owes a great deal to the help and support of Shell South Africa. The development of a black entrepreneurial and middle class is essential to the future of South Africa and Shell is contributing very positively to it. You call for a boycott of Shell products, singling out Shell from among all the oil companies involved. There is no black boycott of Shell in South Africa. The call from Shell's black employees, dealers and customers is to stay in South Africa, with the black community looking to Shell South Africa for support.

Shell South Africa has the largest market share with the black community, some eight percent above its national average and rising. During the Soweto disturbances of 1986, Shell vehicles were among the very few that could enter Soweto freely and undamaged, and the record suggests that Shell property has been singled out for protection by the black community and not damaged.

As I said at the outset, Shell is unequivocally opposed to apartheid. Where we differ from some of our critics is on the best means of ending it peacefully. We do not believe that it is in line with the normal balanced and rational mode of argument espoused by Aliran to call for a boycott of those who genuinely differ from them on the best means to achieve the same end.

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K.L. 6th Jan 1989

I tell White South Africans once again that apartheid is an evil and cruel thing, no matter how it is dressed up. It is quite contemptuous of the rights of others. It professes to benefit all impartially, and to exact the cost from all impartially, but that is a lying profession. It declares that black men have no rights in "white" areas, when those same black men have helped to build those same "white" areas. It puts restraints on black people, on their freedom of possession and movement, that white people would find intolerable. What white person would tolerate having to seek permission from some white commissioner for his aged father and mother to come and live with him?

- ALAN PATON



1 hell does not support apart-  
Sheid . . . Shell is totally  
, opposed to it . . Shell  
South Africa's chairman is an out-  
spoken critic of apartheid.  
ue, Shell is opposed to apar-  
tl . We know that. Margaret  
Thatcher is also against apartheid  
- except that she wants to conti-  
nue trading with the apartheid  
regime. She wants to keep British  
investments in that apartheid State.  
She is quite happy to provide direct  
and indirect economic support to  
the apartheid leadership. But of  
course Mrs Thatcher is against apar-  
theid. In the meantime she is  
prepared to help keep apartheid  
alive and kicking.

Shell is doing the same thing.  
By calling for the release of poli-  
tical prisoners or for the ending of  
the ban on political organizations,  
Shell South Africa (SA) is not  
really challenging the fundamental  
power-structure of the apartheid  
'e(g. In fact, Shell SA's public  
pr uncements have had very  
ittle impact upon the Pretoria  
'egime. Even its (Shell SA's)  
:hairman John Wilson, has  
tdmitted, uWe have lost our naive  
relief that we as a multinational  
tan pressurise the legislature to  
break down the barriers of apar-  
theid."

However, it is not because Shell  
5 naive. Shell simply does not want  
0 destroy apartheid because it  
trofits from apartheid. This is why  
Lhell SA has often discouraged -  
ven hampered \_ effective action  
tom being taken against apartheid  
tws and policies. Recently, in  
988, it prevented Shell workers  
tom protesting against the silenc-  
Allran's Reply

WATER  
POURING  
OVER FUEL

ing of COSATUs(a confederation of  
trade unions) and the introduction  
of the new Labour Relations Bill.  
This prompted a COSATU Spokes-  
person, Sydney Mafumadi to state  
that Shell's claim to be contributing  
to the destruction of apartheid  
should be urejected with  
contempt. ii

Shell's way of fighting apartheid  
- rhetoric which is not backed by  
meaningful action , reminds us of  
something which the great novelist  
and thinker, Leo Tolstoy once said.

"I sit

on a

man is back

choking him

and making

him carry

me yet assure m\_vself and

others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means \_ except by getting off his back. "

2. No Shell Group company outside South Africa supplies crude oil to anyone in South Africa. Shell has always protested its innocence in this matter. And yet when evidence is provided of delivery of oil to South Africa from places like Brunei, (whose petroleum production and distribution is controlled by Shell) through complex supply routes, Shell does not seem to be willing to act firmly against the offending middle-traders. We are referring to cases where anti-apartheid groups have made public the names of such offenders. Shell has no excuse for not acting.

It is important to observe in this connection that way back in 1976 when Shell was accused of

23  
supplying crude oil to Ian Smith in Rhodesia against whom the UN Security Council had imposed a mandatory oil embargo, the President of Shell said, "No company in which Shell has interests, delivers oil to Rhodesia ".

However, in 1979 "it was revealed that Shell had supplied its Rhodesian branch with oil and that in so doing had consciously broken the mandatory UN embargo. The transactions were shrouded in a veil of secrecy

3. By law, all petroleum companies in South Africa are prevented from denying supplies to the military, police or anyone else.

One could respond to this sort of argument by stating simply that if a petroleum company has any moral principles it would not want to supply oil to the military or police of an apartheid regime. It would therefore get out of South Africa in order to keep its integrity intact.

Of course, others may continue to supply oil to the military and police and Pretoria's brutal suppression of the rights of the black population will not diminish one bit. But Shell should not use this as a justification for its policy of supplying oil to the regime. Shell is responsible for its own actions. It has to account v in the ultimate analysis .- to its own conscience and God. If Shell is totally opposed to apartheid -V as it claims to be \_ then it would not hesitate to act on the basis of lofty ethical principles, regardless of what other petroleum companies are doing in South Africa.

After all, during the Second

World War, petroleum companies in Britain and the United States went ahead with their own embargoes against Nazi Germany. Whether or not others were already boycotting the Nazi regime was a secondary consideration. It was the question of right and wrong that mattered most.

In the case of Shell SA, it not only continues to supply large quantities of fuel to the military and police, but defends this supply by organizing its own security under the Key Points Act and cooperates with the military in other ways such as paying conscripts' wages.

4. Equally there are leaders of major groups in South Africa such as Chief Buthelezi, who are strongly opposed to disinvestment.

It is a pity that Chief Buthelezi of all people has been trotted out as an example of someone opposed to disinvestment. Buthelezi has so little credibility within the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and elsewhere. Because of his readiness to support some of the cunning, deceptive policies of the minority White regime in Pretoria, he is viewed in various circles as a stooge of the regime. Buthelezi, for instance, supported the meaningless local government elections for Black townships which the Pretoria regime conducted recently.

It is not just leaders like Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress (ANC) who endorse disinvestment. The Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu is a strong supporter of disinvestment and economic sanctions. He is committed to non-violent change in South Africa. Tutu realises that if non-violent economic measures do not succeed, then radical violence will create a deep divide within the post-apartheid society in South Africa. The Reverend Allan Boesak is also an advocate of disinvestment and economic sanctions.

It is quite possible that disinvestment will increase economic hardships amongst a section of the black population in the short run. But isn't the black population suffering enough even now as a result of the whole system of apartheid?

Shouldn't we be concerned about devising effective ways and means of destroying the structures that give strength and stamina to the apartheid system?

Control over petroleum resources is undoubtedly one of the strengths of the apartheid regime. The regime's capacity to maintain its economic engine and its war

machine (war against the Black majority) depends to a great extent upon oil. Shell SA is guilty of aiding and abetting the apartheid regime for the following reasons: First, Shell is the overall oil market leader.

Second, the SAPREF Shell and BP refinery is the biggest in Africa refining much more of the embargoed oil imports than any of the other three South African refineries.

Third, Shell is the largest supplier of fuel to the South African military and police.

Fourth, Shell SA is helping to reinforce the racist regimens economic resilience through its export of South African thermal coal. In 1986, Shell SA exported 32 per cent of all South Africa's thermal coal.

Fifth, Shell is also heavily involved in gas, chemicals, base metals, forestry and other sectors of the economy. In this way, the company is playing a key role in maintaining the economic viability of the apartheid regime.

Given its dominant role in the South African economy, a withdrawal of its investments would have a huge impact upon the policies of the apartheid regime. Other multinationals operating in South Africa would also be forced to re-consider their role in the country. As South African trade union leader Cyril Ramaphosa put it, "Shell's withdrawal would be a momentous psychological breakthrough."

This also explains why we have singled out Shell "from among all the oil companies involved? It is Shell's disinvestment which has the best chance of forcing the apartheid regime to sit up and re-think its brutal denial of political power to the majority of the populace.

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5. By its stand Shell South Africa played an important part towards breaking the system of migrant labour by making provision of family houses on the condition of a major project. It has uniquely developed black townships, black agents . . . There is no denying that Shell SA has done a certain amount of community and social service to the black population. f \_

However Shell SA perhaps (1,6) not realise that community service of this sort sometimes only results in the integration of the oppressed into existing oppressive structures. It is the power structure of apartheid - which incidentally is not affected one iota by community



service projects - which we I ,  
first eliminate. Eliminating \_i  
power structure of apartheid meagts  
transferring political, economic and  
intellectual power from the white  
minority regime to the people  
regardless of their ethnic origin.  
This is not happening at all. \_  
In fact, while Shell SA has be'W:  
implementing housing schemes fit-  
the Blacks and building busines ;  
for them. the Pretoria regime he:  
been pushing out the black popul  
tion to tiself-goremng"homeland  
This is the regimes devious way P  
getting rid of the black populatio  
so that the Union of South Afri ,7.  
with its rich mineral resources an  
well-developed economic infrastru  
ture would become an 'lexc/u ' N  
it'liite zone" with only  
citizens. J.  
lf Shell SA wants to put a  
to this inhumanity then it must b  
prepared to work with genuine an -  
apartheid groups determined t .  
bring the Pretoria regime to it.  
knees.  
6t There is no black boycott o-t  
Shell in South Africa. The call fro  
Shell's black employees. dealers and IVu  
customers is to stay in Sou  
Africa, . . .  
True. there is no black boycot  
of Shell in South Africa but that'  
not difficult to understand. Shell'  
black employees and dealers may  
want Shell to stay on in Sout  
Africa since their very livelihood if 4  
dependent upon its continued p  
.--4;A

.. J..-

in-

isence in their country.

1 "One should not expect a community that is dependent upon a particular institution for its survival to participate in an open confrontation against the institution concerned; This will not happen - 'at least riot in the initial stages. 'Slaves \_did not initiate the revolt against slavery as a system of exploitation and oppression. Indeed, 'it was not the slaves who brought down the institution of slavery.

?Various other social forces were responsible for the eventual elimination of that inhuman institution.

3' It is not surprising at all that Shell's employees and others with links to Shell SA are not demanding 'its' withdrawal from South Africa.

Et' hat does not in any way diminish the importance of a Shell withdrawal. For the call for disinvestments is, in the ultimate analysis, an ethical plea. Its validity is derived almost entirely from the moral premises upon which the

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betray its global struggle against apartheid is based.

7. Shell is unequivocally opposed to apartheid. Where we differ from some of our critics is on the best means of ending it peacefully.

As we have already hinted, Shell's problem is that its deeds words. If Shell is

"unequivocally opposed to apartheid" why is Shell expanding its economic activities in South Africa? Recently, the candles division of the company commissioned a new sweating plant which will reduce its dependence on imported wax. The oil division of Shell has also made a multi-million pound investment in two new super service stations. Shell also acquired a timber-treating plant recently and plans to use its eucalyptus plantations at boring Ratray as a basis for further expansion and growth. "

The company's minerals division claims to be involved in base and precious metals exploration. It is

IF YOU WANT

reported that the Poring zinc and lead mine completed its first full year of operation in 1987 making South Africa self-sufficient in base metals.

Though most of this expansion is due to Shell SA's reinvested profits, the fact still remains that that multinational is contributing directly towards the strengthening of the apartheid economy and the apartheid state.

Why is Shell doing this? Is it part of some mysterious strategy aimed at liquidating the apartheid system which we are not able to fathom? No, the answer is actually quite simple. Shell SA wants to continue to make money - as much as possible. in 1986 Shell SA's total turnover was nearly R 3000 million, making it one of the biggest foreign companies in the African continent. This is the main reason why Shell has chosen to remain in South Africa. 0

TO OPPOSE APARTHEID:

V 'm by providing supplies for the armed forces and the police

\_25

BOYCOTT SHELL BECAUSE

SHELL FUELS APARTHEID

by breaking the international oil embargo against South Africa

by mining and exporting South African minerals

## ARMS RACE

Fear, suspense and nausea strike whenever British author MARTIN AMIS contemplates life with nuclear weapons. Here, he explains his inner turmoil and recounts the arguments with his father

novelist Kingsley Amis.

I was born on 25 August 1949: four days later, the Russians successfully tested their first atom bomb, and deterrence was in place. So I had those four carefree days. Which is more than my juniors ever had.

I didn't really make the most of them. I spent half the time under a bubble. Even as things stood, I was born in a state of shock. My mother says I looked like a son of Welles in a black rage. By the fourth day I had recovered, but the world had taken a turn for the worse. It was a nuclear world,

To tell you the truth, I didn't feel very well at all. I was terribly sleepy and feverish. I kept throwing up. I was given to fits of uncontrollable weeping. . . . When I was 11 the television started showing target-lays of south-east England: the outer bands of the home counties. the hazy eye of London. I used to leave the room as quickly as I could.

I didn't know why nuclear weapons were in my life or who had put them there. I didn't know what to do about them. I didn't want to think about them. They made me feel sick.

Now, in 1987. 38 years later; I still don't know what to do about nuclear weapons. And neither does anybody else. There are people who know then I have not read them, The extreme alternatives are nuclear war and nuclear disarmament. Nuclear war is hard to imagine: nuclear disarmament. (Nuclear war is certainly the more readily available.)

Does anyone really see nuclear disarmament. does one? Some of the blue prints for eventual abolition I am thinking. for example. of Anthony Kenyon's "Heterodexia: deterrence and utilitarian Schelling's "The Bomb and the Bomb" are wonderfully elegant and seductive: but these authors are envisioning a political world that is as subtle, as mature and (above all) as concerted as their own solitary deliberations. Nuclear war is seven minutes away, and might be over in an afternoon. How far away is nuclear disarmament?

We are waiting. And the weapons are waiting. What is the only provocation that could bring about the use of nuclear weapons? Nuclear weapons. What is the priority target for nuclear weapons? Nuclear weapons. What is the only established defence against nuclear weapons? Nuclear weapons.

How do we prevent the use of nuclear weapons?

By threatening to use nuclear weapons And we can't get rid of nuclear weapons, because of nuclear weapons The intransigence it seems, is a function of the weapon themselves. Nuclear weapons can kill a human being a dozen times over in a dozen different ways; and, death, like certain spiders, like the headlights of cars - they seem to paralyse.

I am sick of them - I am sick of nuclear weapons.

I And so is everybody else. When, in my dealings with the strange subject, I have read too much or thought too long, I experience nausea, clinical nausea. In every conceivable sense (and then, synergistically, in more senses than that) nuclear weapons make you sick. What toxicity, what power, what range. They are there and I am here - they are inert, I am alive - yet still they make me want to throw up, they make me feel sick to my stomach; they make me feel as if a child of mine has been out too long, much too long, and already it is getting dark. This is appropriate, and good practice.

Because I will be doing a lot of that, I will be doing  
a lot of throwing up it the weapons fall and I live.

:1?

Every morning, six days a week, I leave the house  
I and drive 1.5 kilometres to the flat where I work. For  
seven or eight hours I am alone. Each time I hear a  
sudden whining in the air or one of the more atrocious  
impacts of city life, or play host to a certain kind of  
unwelcome thought, I can't help wondering how it  
might be? Suppose I survive.

Suppose my eyes aren't pouring down my face,  
suppose I am untouched by the hurricane of secondary  
missiles that all mortar, metal and glass have abruptly  
become: suppose all this. I shall be obliged (and it's  
the last thing I'll feel like doing) to retrace that long  
journey home, through the firestorm, the remains of  
the 1000-kilometre-an-hour winds, the warped atoms,  
the grovelling dead.

Then - God willing, if I still have the strength and,  
of course, if they are still alive - I must find my wife  
and children and I must kill them.

What am I to do with thoughts like these? What is  
I to do with thoughts like these?

the summer of 1984. Well, I say I "became"  
interested, but really I was interested all along.  
Everyone is interested in nuclear weapons, even those  
people who affirm and actually believe that they never  
give the question a moment's thought. We are all  
interested parties. Is it possible never to think about  
nuclear weapons?

If you give no thought to nuclear weapons, if you  
give no thought to the most momentous development  
in the history of the species, then what are you giving  
them? In that case the process, the seepage, is perhaps  
preconceptual, physiological, glandular. The man with  
the cocked gun in his mouth may boast that he never  
thinks about the cocked gun. But he tastes it all the  
time.

My interest in nuclear weapons was the result of a  
coincidence. The two elements were impending  
flourhood and a tardy reading of Jonathan Schell's  
book, *Awakening Study, The Fate of the Earth*. It  
woke me up. Until then, it seems, I had been out cold.  
I hadn't really thought about nuclear weapons. I had  
just been tasting them. Now at last I knew what was  
making me feel so sick.

How do things go when morality bottoms out at  
the top? Our leaders maintain the means to perform  
the unthinkable, on our behalf. We hope, modestly  
enough, to get through life without being murdered;  
rather more confidently, we hope to get through life  
without murdering anybody ourselves.

Nuclear weapons take such matters out of our hands:  
we may die with butcher's aprons around our waists.  
I believe that many of the deformations and perversities  
of the modern setting are related to - and are certainly  
enlarged by - this massive pre-emption. Our moral  
contracts are inevitably weakened, and in unpredictable  
ways. After all, what price gratuitous, what vulgar outrage  
or moronic barbarity can compare with the black  
dream of nuclear exchange?

I first became interested in nuclear weapons during

the  
debate we are all arguing with our fathers. They  
enforced or maintained the status quo. They got it  
hugely wrong.

They failed to see the nature of what they were  
dealing with - the nature of the weapons - and now  
they are trapped in the new reality, trapped in the great  
mistake. Perhaps there will be no hope until they are  
gone.

Out on the fringes there are people who believe that  
we ought to start killing certain of our fathers, before

they kill us. This reminds me of the noble syllogism (adduced by Schell) of Failed Deterrence: ttHe, thinking I was about to kill him in self-defence, was about to kill me in self-defence.n Yes, and then he killed me in retaliation, from the grave. Our inherited reality is infinitely humiliating. We must try to do a little better. My father regards nuclear weapons as an unbudgeable given. They will always be necessary because the Soviets will always have them and the Soviets will always want to enslave the West. Arms agreements are no good because the Soviets will always cheat. Unilateral disarmament equals surrender. And anyway, it isnlt a case of ured or dead". The communist world is itself nuclear-armed and deeply divided: so itls a case of lired and deadll.

Well, dead, at any rate, is what this prescription seems to me to promise. Nuclear weapons, my father reminds me, have deterred war for 40 years. I remind him that no global abattoir presided over the century-long peace that followed Napoleons discomfiture in 1815. And the trouble with deterrence is that it canlt last out the necessary timespan, which is roughly between now and the death of the sun. Already it is falling apart, from within.

When I say that America is as much of a threat as the Soviet Union my father categorises me as someone who takes democracy lightly, who takes freedom lightly. But of course it is the weapons themselves that are the threat.

Ironically, an autocracy is much the better equipped to deal with this question, because the question is superpolitical. There is no one for the Soviets to deal with - leaders of sharply deteriorating calibre, beset I argue with my father about nuclear weapons. In this

by democracy; by politics; and doing six-month stints between mid-term elections, lame-duck periods and the informal referenda of American public life.

And there is money, the money. It would seem, at the time of writing, that the Soviet Union cant afford to go on and that the United States cant afford to stop. mg

Saul Bellow has written that there are certain evils \_ ' war and money are the examples he gives \_ that have the power to survive identification as evils. They cheerfully continue, as evils, as known evils. , Could it be a further accomplishment of nuclear weapons that they have united these continuations, in a process of terminal decay? So the world ends in the same way The Pardoneris Talei ends, with the human actors gone, leaving behind (though no one will find them) the spent weapons and the unspent money, the weapons and the money.

Anyone who has read my fathers work will have some idea of what he is like to argue with. When I told him that I was writing about nuclear weapons, he said, with a lilt. itAh. I suppose youlre. . . against them, are you'Pi Epater les bienpensants is his rule. (Once, having been informed by a friend of mine that an endangered breed of whales was being systematically turned into soap, he replied, ttIt sounds like a good way of using up whales." Actually he likes whales, I think, but that,s not the point.)

I am reliably ruder to my father on the subject of nuclear weapons than on any other, ruder than I have been to him since my teenage years. I usually end by saying something like, tiWell, weill just have to wait until you old bastards die off one by one? He usually ends by saying something like, tiThink of it. Just by closing down the Arts Council we could significantly augment our arsenal. The grants to poets could service a nuclear submarine for a year. The money spent on a Single performance of iRosenkavalieri might buy us an extra neutron warhead. If we closed down all the hospitals in London we could. . The satire is accurate in a way for I am merely going on about nuclear weapons: I donit know what to do about them.

We abandon the subject. Our sessions end amicably We fall to admiring my infant son. Perhaps he will know what to do about nuclear weapons. I too will have to die off. Perhaps he will know what to do about them. It will have to be very radical, because there is nothing more radical than a nuclear weapon and what it can do.

weapons, I further realised that in a sense I had been writing about them all along. Our time is different. All times are different, but our time is cliffkvcnt. A new fall, an infinite fall, underlies the usual indeed traditional rpresentiments of decline.

To take only one example, this would help explain why something seems to have gone wrong with time with modern time; the past and future, equally threatened, equally eheapened, now huddle in the s oon after I realised I was writing about nuclear present. The present feels narrower, the present feels a . straitened, discrepant, as the planet lives from day to 7\_ day.

It has been said -- Bellow again - that the moder situation is one of suspense: no one, no one at all, 1 has any idea how things will tum out. What we are " experiencing, in as much as it can be experienced, is ' ; the experience of nuclear war. Because the anticipatioi , , Schell again - the anxiety, the suspense, is the only '3 experience of nuclear war that anyone is going to get. it The reality (different kinds of death, in a world '3 without discourse) could hardly be called human :



experience, any more than such temporary sentence y  
as remained could be called human life. It would just 3  
be human death. So this is it, this is nuclear war - j  
and it is ruining everything.

The "effectsii of nuclear weapons have been K  
exhaustively studied, though of course nobody will u  
ever know their full extent. What are the psychological:  
effects of nuclear weapons? As yet undetonated, the ;  
worldis arsenals are already waging psychological i  
warfare; deterrence itself, for instance, is entirely :  
psychological (and, for that reason, entirely inexact). y  
The airbursts, the pre-emptive strikes, the massiv. ,  
retaliations, the uncontrollable escalations: it is alreg  
happening inside our heads. If you think about nuclear;  
weapons, you feel sick. If you donit think about them .1  
you feel sick without knowing why. Nuclear weapons 4  
repel all thought, perhaps because they can end all 5.  
thought. ,

For some reason, and it is no doubt an intriguing  
reason, the bulk ofimaginative fiction of the subject 3.  
belongs to the genres. Pentagon-and-Kremlin count-  
downs, terrorist or rogue-leader nailbiters, love and  
pain in the post-apocalyptic tundra. .

Science fiction started concerning itself with  
doomsday weapons long before such weapons were ,  
ever mooted, and nowadays about one SF novel in '  
foul is set beyond the holocaust. Meanwhile, it is  
astonishing how little the mainstream has had to say  
about the nuclear destiny \_ a destiny that does not want  
ior complication, inclusiveness, pattern, paradox, that u  
does not want for intercsr, (Nuclear weapons have many  
demerits, but drabness is not one of them.)

And yet the senior generation of writers has remained

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silent; prolific and major though many of them are. with writing lives that straddled the evolutionary firebreak of 1945, they evidently did not find the subject suggested itself naturally. They lived in one kind of world, then they lived in another kind of world: and they didn't tell us what the difference was like. I recently asked Graham Greene \_ what the difference was like, and he said that he had never really thought about it. I do not count this as any kind of defeat for Graham Greene, the most prescient writer of our time. But I do count it as some kind of victory for nuclear weapons.

' Clearly a literary theme cannot be selected. cannot be willed; it must come along at its own pace. Younger writers, writers who have lived their lives on the other side of the firebreak, are beginning to write about nuclear weapons. My impression is that the subject resists frontal assault. For myself. I feel it as a background. a background which then insidiously foregrounds itself. Maybe the next generation will go further; maybe the next generation will be more at home with the end of the world . . . . Besides, it could be argued that all writing is - all art, in all times - has a bearing on nuclear weapons in two important respects. Art celebrates life and not the other thing, not the opposite of life. And art raises the stakes, increasing the store of what might be lost. the Museum of the Holocaust. Our group has just climbed Masada. "Masada": whereas the historicity of the Masada story remains uncertain, its mythopoetic importance to the Jewish idea is clear enough. (Hence "the Masada complex", in fact a hawkish formulation used to shore up Israeli maximalism.) Suppression, revolt, beleaguering, mass suicide -- sacrifice. A holocaust is a sacrifice, "a sacrifice wholly consumed but the . . . a whole burnt offering . . . a complete sacrifice".

the northern view from the monstrous boulder of Masada is one of elemental beauty. It makes you feel what it is to live on a planet; it makes you feel what it is to live on a larger, emptier, cleaner and more innocent planet than Earth.

Everything -- the firm mountains to the left, the spurs and undulations of the plain, the Dead Sea, the misty heights of Jordan - is hugely dominated by the sky; even the burnished acres of the water can reflect only a fraction of the circumambient blue. In fact, the biosphere is shallow: space, outer space. is only an hours drive away (space is nearer than Jerusalem); but the Judean sky looks like infinity. Below the terrain is a terrain for war. conventional war: conventional death. conventional wreckage, under these same heavens. But another kind of war; a nuclear one (I thought. with double vertigo), could wreck the sky.

iv. Later that day a journalist from the Jerusalem Post told me about "the Warehouse" a building in the city:

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I write these words in Israel. Our group has just visited the desert surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards, the supposed locus of Israel's border, an hours drive away, like space. For Israel, a nuclear weapon would be a Masada weapon. That's what nuclear weapons are, Masada weapons. maybe a nuclear "priesthood", but we are the supplicants, and we have no faith. The warheads

are our godheads. Nuclear weapons could bring about the Book of Revelations in a matter of hours; they could do it today. Of course, no dead will rise; nothing will be revealed (nothing meaning two things, the absence of everything and a thing called nothing). Events that we call tacts of Godll - floods, earthquakes, eruptions , are flesh-wounds compared to the human act of nuclear war: a million Hiroshimas. Like God, nuclear weapons are free creations of the human mind. Unlike God, nuclear weapons are real. And they are here.

The A-bomb is a Z-bomb, and the arms race is a race between nuclear weapons and ourselves. It is them or us. What do nukes do? What are they for? Since when did we all want to kill each other? If things donit go wrong, and continue not going wrong the next millennium of millennia (the boasted 40 years being no more than 40 weeks in cosmic time), you get . . . What do you get? What are we getting?

At the multiracial childrenis tea-party the guests have, perhaps, behaved slightly better since the Keepers were introduced. Little Ivan has stopped pulling Fetnabls hair, though he is still kicking her leg under the table. Bobby has returned the cake that belonged to tiny Conchita, though he has his eye on that sandwich and will probably make a lunge for it sooner or later. Out on the lawn the Keepers maintain a kind of order, but standards of behavior are pretty well as troglodytic as they ever were. '

At best, the children seem strangely subdued or off-color. Although they are aware of the Keepers, they donit want to catch their eye. They donlt want to think about them. For the Keepers are 1000 feet tall, and covered in gelignite and razor-blades, toting flame-throwers and machineguns, cleavers and skewers, and fizzing with rabies, anthrax, plague.

Curiously enough, they are not looking at the children at all. With bleeding hellbound eyes, mouthing foul threats and shaking their fists, they are looking at each other. They want to take on someone their own size . . .

If they only knew it - no, if they only believed it - the children could simply ask the Keepers to leave. But it doesnt seem possible, does it? It seems - it seems unthinkable. A silence starts to fall across the lawn. The party has not been going for very long and must last until the end of time. Already the children are weepy and feverish. They all feel sick and want to gt) home. 0

M eanwhile they squat on our spiritual lives. There This extract is from Einstein h Monsters l, by Martin Amis, published by Jonathan Cape in Julv 1987.

## DETAINEES WATCH

### CHAINED FREEDOM

p to a point, 1989 has had  
U a good beginning in terms of  
ISA releases. Whether or not  
the releases had any linkage to the  
Ampang Jaya by-election is a  
matter that deserves a bit of pon-  
dering on its own. But the fact  
remains that within the month of  
January there were two batches  
ot releases. These included  
detainees like Karpal Singh. P.  
Patto. Dr Kutt Kiu Soong. Dr  
Mohd Nasir Hashim and Kamaruz-  
zuman Ismail v a multi-racial  
emancipation for what it is worth.  
Yet it would be very inappro-  
priate and even insensitive to  
think otl the releases as an emanci-  
pationi The detainees themselves  
have emphasised again .and again  
that they do not regard themselves  
tree for the simple reason that they  
have been released under stringent  
conditions. which are unjustified  
llnd even laughable considering that  
none have been tried and nothing  
proven. This is certainly not  
because the government lacks the  
laws to put them on trial. The  
detainees just happened to fulfil  
the need for sacrificial pawns in an  
unending game of political machi-  
nations. Yet they were released  
witlt conditions which. to an inge-  
nuous outsider. would make them  
appear to be highly dangerous  
citizens of Malaysia. They are  
not allowed to make statements to  
the press, they have to report  
regularly to the police, they are  
not allowed to leave their areas of  
residence without police permission  
and like good sheep, they are  
expected to be home by 10pm  
daily.

In the meantime the govern-  
ments appeal against a High Court  
decision in November last year  
to release Yeshua Jamaluddin on  
grounds of unconstitutionality,  
came up for hearing before the  
Supreme Court. it is not only the  
liberty of Yeshua that is hanging in  
the balance, but also that of Philip  
Cheong. Cheong was released on  
bail not long following Yeshuais  
release after the farmers lawyers  
raised similar arguments of uncon-  
stitutional detention. Decision by  
the Supreme Court is pending. It  
will be given in the form of a  
written judgement. The bench  
which presided was headed by  
recently appointed Lord President  
nwithout fear or tltvour" Tan Sri  
Abdul Humid Omar.

However the most glaring thing  
now is the :ontinued detention of  
opposition leader Lim Kit Siang

and his son Guan ling. All those detained under Operation Lallang have been released except them. By the time this is read. it would have been the second year that they have not been able to be reunited with their family for the Chinese New Year. How would one feel to be in the shoes? How would one feel to be the woman whose husband and son both continue to be unjustly held when others have been released?

People, we know can be very apathetic. They can be unconcerned even untouched. But there are certain truisms we cannot simply

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disregard. Lim Kit Siang has done a great deal in the struggle to check corruption and maintain accountability. He is a man who given much energy and time to the task of getting to the root of scandals and bringing them into the open. Where necessary, he pursued such matters in court. He has been at the forefront of the endeavour to stop governmental abuse of power. Despite the odds, he has managed to make Parliament more worthwhile. He had helped to make democracy more meaningful in Malaysia. 5

Whatever his weaknesses, these surely are matters which are in the interest of all Malaysians regardless of ethnic origin. The least we can do now is to show that we have not forgotten and that we do not want this wrongful detention to continue anymore.

Kit Siang's wife had the humility to send a get-well card to the Prime Minister after his coronary by-pass despite all that happened. Let us find it within our hearts to do what we can to call for the release of not only Kit Siang and Guan Eng but also all those ISA detainees who continue to be held without trial. We can write to newspapers and journals. We can write to our MP5. We could write to the Deputy Home Minister or we could write to the Deputy Prime Minister (since the Prime Minister himself is convalescing). For our own sake and that of future generations the one thing we have to learn not to do is to do nothing. 0

TONG VENG WYE

## UGAMA

I ' ang kita maksudkan dengan  
Y melihat di sini adalah apa  
. yang disebut see dalam  
bahasa Inggeris, yang oleh kamus  
i The Advanced Learner ,s Dictionary  
of Current English (1963) diertikan  
sebagai, ube aware of by using the  
a power of sight". Maksudnya adalah  
yedari dengan menggunakan  
k atan penglihatanbb, Persoalan  
ini dianggap penting, sebab, entah  
.kenapa, ada oran'g yang memper-  
:soalkan, bagaimana bentuk, jika  
amemang Tuhan itu ada.

5 Kewujudan Tuhan tidak dapat  
ldisedari dengan menggunakan ke-  
tzkuatan penglihatan. Mengapa demi-  
iskian? Untuk menjawab ini kita  
iperlu mengkaji mengapa kita dapat  
)imelihat. J. Yannel Ewusie Ph.D  
iidalam bukunya School Certificate  
Biology For Tropical Schools  
)2 (1964) menulis, "When light enters/  
n the eye and falls on the sense-eells  
iaof the retina, impulses are sent by  
11 these cells along the optic nerve to  
u the brain, where they are inter-  
cpreted as a picture of the outside  
)World. Withbut light to stimulate  
Mi )nse-cells Of the retina, we can-  
sm see".

)i Maksudnya, uApabila cahaya  
:imemasuki mata dan menimpa sel  
tperasa dari retina, rangsangan  
ldikirim oleh sel ini melalui saraf  
1: optik ke otak, di mana ia akan di-  
iterjemahkan sebagai gambar dari  
ldunia luar. Tanpa cahaya yang  
nakan merangsang sel perasa dari  
xretina, kita tidak dapat melihat."

2 Jadi syarat untuk terjadinya  
npenglihatan itu adalah mata Rita  
unesti baik, sel perasa retina mesti  
(baik, saraf optik mesti baik, dan  
rotak pun mesti baik. Bagi orang  
Lsihat yang normal, sy'arat ini  
(torpenuhi. tetapi namun masih  
:belum bisa melihat Tuhan.

Mengapa?

Suatu benda itu kelihatan kerana  
benda iersebut memancarkan ge-  
lombang elektromagnetik. Gelom-  
bang elektromagnetik inilah yang  
akan diterima oleh sel perasa retina.

Segala sesuatu yang dapat kita  
lihat adalah yang memancarkan ge-  
lombang tersebut. Sesuatu yang  
tidak memancarkan gelombang  
elektromagnetik sudah pasti tidak  
dapat kite lihat; Bukan itu saja.  
Benda yang memancarkan gelom-  
bang elektromagnetik pun belum  
tentu bisa kita lihat. Sebabnya  
adalah kerana kemampuan mata  
kita sangat terbatas.

Harlow (University of Wiscon-  
sin) McGaugh dan Thompson  
(University of California) serta  
Irvine dalam bukunya PSYCHO-  
LOGY (1971) menulis, blight

is a form of electromagnetic radiation, or radiant energy. Visible light is a very small region of the total electromagnetic spectrum, or range of wavelengths, which extends from radio waves to visible light, which has wavelengths in the range of 380 (violet) to about 760 (red) millimeters.

Ertinya. cahaya adalah satu bentuk pancaran elektromagnetik, atau tenaga sinaran. Cahaya yang kelihatan adalah daerah yang sangat kecil dari keseluruhan spektrum elektromagnetik, atau segala jarak gelombang, yang berada di antara gelombang radio dan cahaya yang dapat dilihat yang mempunyai panjang gelombang dari 380 millimicrons, untuk warna violet, sampai 760 millimicrons. untuk warna merah". Satu micron adalah sama dengan satu per sejuta meter. Satu millimicron sama dengan satu perseribu micron.

Memang sangat menarik sekali

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Mengapa Kita Tidak  
Dapat Melihat Tuhan?

gelombang elektromagnetik yang panjangnya lebih dari 760 millimicrons tidak dapat dilihat oleh mata kita, akan tetapi terasa oleh kulit kita dalam bentuk rasa panas. Ia disebut infra merah. Gelombang infra merah inilah yang membuat kulit kita terbakar.

Gelombang yang panjangnya antara 760 millimicrons sampai kira-kira 670 millimicrons akan diterjemahkan oleh otak manusia sebagai merah. Sedangkan gelombang elektromagnetik yang panjangnya antara kira-kira 670 millimicrons sampai kira-kira 590 millimicrons akan diterjemahkan oleh otak manusia sebagai orange. Antara kira-kira 590 millimicrons sampai kira-kira 530 millimicrons akan diterjemahkan sebagai kuning. Dari kira-kira 530 millimicrons sampai kira-kira 480 akan diterjemahkan sebagai hijau. Dari kira-kira 480 sampai kira-kira 430 akan diterjemahkan sebagai biru. Dari kira-kira 430 sampai kira-kira 380 akan diterjemahkan sebagai violet. Sedikit lebih pendek dari 380 millimicrons gelombang elektromagnetik itu tidak lagi dapat diterjemahkan oleh otak manusia walau pun ia juga masuk ke dalam mata, menimpa retina. Ia hanya berupa gelombang ultra violet dan kehadirannya akan merangsang kulit membentuk vitamin D.

Benda yang tidak memancarkan gelombang antara 380 millimicrons sampai 760 millimicrons tidak akan dapat dikesan oleh kekuatan penglihatan atau di atas tadi kita

katakan hipowcr of sight? Antara  
lain molekul-molekul bt oxygenhb,  
yang mengisi udara kita ini kira-kira  
21% tidak dapat kita lihat.  
Demikian pula molekul-molekul  
"nitrogen" yang terdapat dalam



udara sampai 78% puh tidak dapat kita lihat. Bukan kerana ia tidak ada, tetapi hanya kerana ia tidak memancarkan gelombang elektro-magnetik antara 380 sampai 760 millimicrons tadi.

Segala apa yang ada pun akan berubah-ubah warnanya, jika sekiranya panjang gelombang elektromagnetik yang dipancarkan tersebut berubah. H.L. Heys dalam bukunya Physical Chemistry (1966) menulls, Ms zinc oxide changes from a daltom'de composition to a bertholide one, its colour changes from white to yellow. The change, however, is reversed on cooling, when it absorbs oxygen once more. "

Ertinya, "Kerana zink oksida berubah dari komposisi "daltonide" ke llberthollidell, warnanya berubah dari putih ke kunjng. Akan tetapi perubahan kembali lagi dengan pendinginan, bila ia menyerap "oxygenll sekali lagi. Perubahan warnalini teljadi bukan kerana apa-apaL tetapi hanyalah kerana panjang gelombang elektromagnetik yang dipancarkannya berubah. Dalam keadaan dingin, intensitas tertinggi dari gelombang elektromagnetik yang dipancarkan adalah antara 380 sampai 760 millJ'Irucrons secara merata sehingga yang kelihatan adalah kombinasi dari komponen-komponen cahaya yang wujud dalam bentuk cahaya putih. Sedangkan ketika panas, gelombang elektromagnetik yang dipancarkan oleh zink oksida adalah terbanyak atau intensitasnya paling tinggi antara 530 sampai 590 millimicrons.

Demikian pula halnya dalam kehidupan kita sehari-hari, apabila warna kuning dicampurkan kepada warna blru maka ia akan berubah menjadi warna hijau. Tidak banyak perubahan yang terjadi, hanya sedikit saja perubahan panjang gelombang. lni menggambarkan keunikan mata manusia yang dika-runiakan oleh Tuhan.

Sebaliknya ketidakmampuan mata manusia menterjemahkan gelombang elektromagnetik yang lebih pendek dari 380 millimicrons dan tidak mampu pula menerjemahkan gelombang elektromagnetik yang lebih panjang dari 760 millimicrons pula menggambarkan kepada kita betapa lemahnya mata manusia. Dan dari sini pulalah menggambarkan kepada kita betapa terbatasnya kemampuan manusia itu.

Gelombang terpendek 380 millimicrons sampai gelombang 760 millimicrons yang dapat dilihat oleh manusia hanyalah satu bahagian yang sangat kecil. Sedangkan

ada gelombang yang panjangnya  
lebih dari 100 meter. Lalu bererti  
lebih dari 1000 kali 100,000  
lebih besar dari bahagian yang bisa  
kita lihat tadi. bila dibandingkan  
APPEAL

FOR J

DONATIONS

As a reform movement, ALIRAN -  
dengan satu gelombang elilkifogfp.  
magnetik sepanjang 380 meter ying  
tidak dapat kita lihat dengan mata,  
walau pun ia sebenarnya wujud.  
Ini bermakna yang terlihat hanya-  
lah 0.0000001 % darinya. ,f  
Kalau sudah menyedari hakikal  
ini, manusia tidak akan sombong  
dengan mengatakan. "Kalau Tuhan  
mcmang benar-benar ada. suya  
mahu mclihatnya" O

Dipetik daripada majalah HIM-  
MAH, No 1 Ramadhan 1404 H.  
rcrbitan Pcrsafuan Mahasiswa Uni-  
versiti Islam Indonesia.

has fearlessly stood upforltruth, justice, freedom and  
solidarityAamong all Malaysians.

Despite the difficulties and the comtraints, Alinn has been 4 w  
in the forefront of the struggle for an honest and'open ygtem , .  
of go'vemment which will be accountable and the creation of a ,, :2  
thinking, feeling and caring Malaysian society. . J J \_

To bring about greater public awareness, Miran has 0 ' '0  
frequently organized talks and forums. It has published books 7,1111;  
and produced audio cassettes on major issues concemiug-the . , ' 'V  
nation. The Aliran Monthly can boast of being the only truly);  
independent and non-partisan monthly'which presents rational  
views on major national and international issu . ' ' 5

To carry out these activities, Alimn needs funds. It is J  
financially self-supporting and depends on its members and  
well-wishel's for its financial support. \_

Throughout history nations as well as societies have always  
had to pay a price for freedom. History abounds with  
examples of noble and heroic men and women who have even 0:  
laid down their lives'in the defence of freedom and justice. - '  
Dear Malaysian, we ask you for a small sacrifice. Put your ,  
shoulder to the Aliran Wheel. Strengthen the bastion and keep  
the beacon burning. ,

Donate generously and help us to serve you.

A friend of Aliran is a friend of the people.

' Send your donations to:

The Theasurer .

No. 6 Jalan Pantai Jerjak 11, Sg. Nibong, t  
11 900 Bayan Lepas, Pulau Pinang.

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L'i

t THE CHINESE AND THE  
AFRICAN STUDENTS

he recent violence and street  
protests by the Chinese  
l against the African students  
in China have received world-wide  
attention. The reports show that  
the Chinese authority has not  
handled the situation properly. In  
fact the African students had com-  
plained of harassment by the  
police and the university authori-  
ti"

'gcism in whatever form is  
against humanity and should not be  
tolerated. In the interest of justice  
and fairness to all concerned, the  
government of China should wel-  
come international investigation on  
:the allegation of racial treatment of  
the African students. For instance,  
the UN Commission against racial  
discrimination should be allowed  
to conduct independent investiga-  
tion on the recent incidents. The  
aim will be to suggest ways to  
rectify unfair practices and to  
improve intercultural understanding  
and relationship between the  
Chinese and the Africans.

The Chinese government must  
realise that the accusation of racial  
oppression is a serious matter and  
mam u

CURRENT.- COMMENT

A record of Aliranis complete press statements  
made in the preceding months  
the recent incidents involving the  
African students have become an  
international issue. It is therefore  
also in the interest of China to  
conduct a proper investigation. If  
there is racism, and we believe there  
is, the Chinese government should  
take immediate measures to rectify  
the situation and to ensure that the  
African students can study in peace  
and live in dignity.

Segregation is not the anchr: it  
is apartheid. The Africans should be  
allowed to interact with their  
Chinese friends irrespective of sex.  
Also the African students should  
not be treated differently from the  
other foreign students such as those  
from the United States and Britain.  
It is of course racial to call the  
African students lleigui which  
literally means uBlack Ghoststl Or  
ttBlack Devils? This is especially  
painful to the African students who  
know Chinese. Imagine how they  
I'eel when they are called lleigui  
wherever they go. In fact there are  
also some Chinese outside (Thina  
who refer to the people of dark  
skin colour such as the Blacks and  
even South Indians as Heiguii This  
racial attitude is more widespread  
than is generally knownt and should

be regarded as a serious problem in  
 our fight against all forms of racism  
 THE DHAMMAPADA OF THE BUDDHA  
 including racial labelling.  
 Some African students have also  
 complained that the Chinese name  
 for Africa, Fei Zhou (the Fei Con-  
 tinent), is derogatory as the  
 character fei means "not", "evil"  
 etc. It connotes the negative sense.  
 It will be a good gesture if the  
 Chinese government leads the way  
 to provide a respectable label in  
 Chinese terminology. In fact in the  
 past the Chinese government had  
 modified the Chinese labels for  
 some of the national minorities in  
 the spirit of promoting mutual  
 respect between the Han majority  
 and the minorities. For example,  
 the Chinese character for the Yao  
 minority was changed from Ki with  
 the "dog" radical to (g with the  
 "human" radical. This is a  
 desirable change, with the "jade" radical.  
 We hope the Chinese government  
 will show the same spirit of friend-  
 ship to the Africans.  
 It is time the Chinese eradicate  
 racial stereotypes and labels for  
 certain categories of minorities and  
 foreigners. In this respect the  
 Chinese anthropologists and writers  
 have a challenging job which is to  
 lead the fight against ethnocentrism  
 and racism. The mass media should  
 also be quick to fight against  
 rumours which are racial in nature.  
 It should also be pointed out  
 that in Asia and for that matter in  
 the West too, there is very little  
 understanding of Africa, Africans  
 and their cultures. One won't be  
 surprised to find that many Asians  
 think lowly of Africans. The  
 Western media which have tremen-  
 dous influence in Asia and most  
 third world countries are partly  
 to be blamed for they have often  
 portrayed the Africans in negative  
 terms as helpless victims of famine  
 and backward people in general.  
 The lack of contact is another cause  
 for the perpetuation of certain  
 stereotypes. In fact the people  
 in Asia have less opportunity to  
 meet an African than the people  
 in some Western cities which may  
 have Africans studying there. In  
 this respect, China is to be con-  
 gratulated for providing educational  
 opportunities for Africans. She is  
 in a good position to lead the rest  
 of Asia to have more intercultural  
 interaction with the people of  
 Africa.  
 Overall the people of China and  
 the rest of the world need to learn  
 more about Africa and her people  
 as well as the real causes of  
 sufferings which have befallen

many Africans.

Tan Chee-Beng

10 January 1989 Exco Member

(The above statement has not  
appeared in any daily - Editor)

ELIMINATING  
MALPRACTICES?

LIRAN does not think that a Cabinet Committee will be able to check malpractices in government since some of the most serious malpractices in recent times are linked in one way or another, to the Cabinet. The North-South Highway contract, the Kucing Highway project, the UMBC scandal and the EPF-Makuwasa episode would be some of the better known examples.

If the government is really sincere about curbing corruption and exposing financial misdeeds then it would not hesitate to undertake the following measures.

One, it would allow the daily newspaper and Radio-and Television to analyse and evaluate without fear or favour the various financial scandals that have plagued the nation in the last 10 years.

Two, the government would remove those clauses in the Official Secrets Act and the Printing Presses and Publications Act which inhibit journalists from carrying out investigations into alleged malpractices in high places. Only if journalists, social activists and opposition politicians have the freedom to expose wrongdoings - without being hauled up by the authorities - will they be able to help create a culture which abhors corruption.

Three, the government would make the Anti-Corruption Agency an independent body not controlled in any way by the Executive. An independent Anti-Corruption Commission should be given iron-clad protection through various Constitutional guarantees and would be directly answerable to Parliament.

Four, the government would amend the present AntieCorruption Act to give more extensive powers to anti-corruption personnel to investigate and prosecute the corrupt in both the public and private sectors.

Five, the government would require all Cabinet Ministers, including the Prime Minister, to declare their assets and liabilities in a public register accessible to the ordinary citizen. This declaration of assets and liabilities should be updated annually and would be subjected to scrutiny by an independent Anti-Corruption Commission.

For a start, the government should demonstrate that it is sincere about fighting malpractices by prohibiting the Barisan Nasional from offering all sorts of inducements in the form of development

assistance to the voters of Ampang Jaya. Offering inducements to The Orangwiksli : a gentle people; voters and using State facilities and the privileges of public office to campaign for a particular candidate tantamount to bribery and corruption. If the Cabinet cannot get rid of this form of malpractice, then it should stop pretending that it is determined to eliminate the financial misdeeds of the high and mighty.

Chandra Muzaffar

1 1 January 1989 President

DISTORTED VIEW OF THE  
ORANG ASLI

recent newspaper report in a Chinese daily about cannibalism among an Orang Asli family is most irresponsible. Aliran is glad that the Director-General of the Orang Ain Department (JOA) had come out quickly to criticise the irresponsible report. The Orang Asli are a gentle people, and as explained by the Director-General, they have no history of cannibalism.

ALIRAN notes that JOA will be discussing the issue with its legal adviser. A full investigation is appropriate. At the least the newspaper concerned should apologise for its irresponsible manner of reporting about the Orang Asli.

As to the Orang Ash woman allegedly shot by a farmer, ALIRAN notes that the police and the JOA are investigating the incident. We trust that the public will be informed of the outcome and that just action will be taken. The recent irresponsible news-

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paper reports show that there is still a need to educate the Malaysian people about our indigenous minorities" such as the Orang Asli. Our newspaper should play a more positive role. They should report about the Orang Asli objectively and fairly as well as highlight the many problems which they face in the modern nation-state.

Tan Chee Bani

Exco Member

12 January 1989

(The above statement has not appeared in any daily - Editor)

THE CONDITIONAL

RELEASE OF EIGHT ISA

DETAINEES

While - Aliran welcomes the release of the eight ISA detainees yesterday, it is distressing to learn that such severe restrictions have been imposed upon their freedom. These restrictions are not only unjust but also a cruel denial of their basic human

dignity.

It is important to observe that almost all the ISA detainees from Operation Lallang released in the course of 1988 have severe restrictions imposed upon their movements and their participation in public life. These restrictions render their freedom meaningless.

Aliran calls upon the government to remove immediately the conditions imposed upon the eight detainees released yesterday and upon all the ex-detainees who have been granted conditional releases.



interests of business profits in sup:  
has acted in cohort with  
the  
issued notices.  
It is very  
to remove the blockades after being  
ey had refused  
clear that state power  
saying  
Penans.  
reports  
source

## ARREST OF PENANS

According  
(16-1-89) brings  
following comp  
logging companies.  
Penans stubborn. Th  
ment have again arrested more  
road blockades to 81.  
arrested since last week for illegal  
Forestry Director was qu  
It is significant that the  
IN SARAWAK

liran is sad to learn that the  
Police and officers of the  
Sarawak Forestry Depart-  
to neWSpaper  
the 57 arrests on Monday  
the total number  
that the department acted  
laints from two  
He called the  
Sarawak  
oted as  
protection of their livelihood

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Who are still in Kamunting should

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i-ftely

Mhe government to release immmedia-  
remaining  
and

Tunconditionally.

1:15 January 1989

seven detainees

unconditionally

(The above statement has not  
.appeared in any daily - Editor)

At the same time, Aliran urges  
Operation Lalang of October 1987.

xlll fact, all other political detainees  
also be released - immediately and  
Chandra Muzaffar

President

the

from

Are you aware of the issues affecting our future?

00 you want to know what is reaily happening?

Get a grasp of the issues and events that affect us as  
Malaysians whatever our ethnic or religious background.

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human rights. Our approach to these issues is non-

communal, non-sectarian and truly multn-racial.

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Our quest is for a just and humane society.

Join us in the struggle for Justice, Freedom and Solidarity!

Alinn does not get any foreign financial help. We depend entirely on Malaysians for support. The Alinn Monthly whose editorial team works on a voluntary basis, is one of those Means of income. That is why your support is no vital Invite your Mend: to subscribe to Alinn Monthlyf  
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livelihood which much dependi'o

the well-being of the forests. When one considers that the Penans have been but adopted a non-violent course of action - in this case by blockading roads to impede the process) of timber logging - in the face of hostile, unsympathetic political and business interests, the Penans' plight becomes obviously pathetic. It goes against the grain of justice for people to be arrested for resorting to a non-violent form of action in protection of their livelihood. As long as we are incapable of treating the less privileged of society with understanding and humanity, it will remain a hollow goal for us to seek transformation to the status of a developed industrialised country.

19 January 1989

(The above statement has not appeared in any daily - Editor)

THE AMPANG JAYA 1

BY-ELECTION

As the crucial Ampang Jaya byelection draws near, the Barisan Nasional appears to have become more and more communal in some of its pronouncements. ALIRAN is perturbed by this unhealthy trend. 5

The Barisan Nasional, through Radio and Television, keeps reminding the people of the tragedy of May 13th and the danger of another riot. It is obvious that the ulterior motive is to frighten the voters of Ampang Jaya. By instilling fear among the voters, the Barisan hopes they will come out in support of its candidate. It is immoral to use such loathsome tactics to win an electoral contest. Support should be obtained through appeals to the positive side of human nature. Exploiting latent fears is both a negative and destructive electoral tactic.

Executive Committee

27 January 1989 ALIRAN

(The above statement has not appeared in any daily - Editor)

RELEASE OF 5 18A

DETAINEES

:1 311:

e wish we could express  
our joy over the release of  
5 ISA detainees yesterday.  
: fthe severe conditions imposed  
R311 Karpal Singh, P Patto, Dr  
Bit Hashim, Yusuf Husin and  
' aruzaman Ismail are so restric-  
34eribe them as "free human  
oeings".  
' 'gALIRAN calls upon the govern-  
116111: to remove these conditions  
mmediately. The conditions  
tmix) osed upon all the other ex- I-SA  
Iuetainees should also be removed at  
Imice.

: 1"At the same time, ALIRAN asks  
the government to release immedia-  
tely and unconditionally the last  
ltwo detainees e from Operation  
Lallang, namely, Lim Kit Siang and  
' . n, Guan,Eng. It is a shame  
'ather and son should still be  
in jail. We cannot help but wonder  
Hhether there isnit an element of  
"dictiveness in the continued im-  
prisonment of the two Lims  
1. File ISA releases yesterday, and  
other previous releases seem to re-  
eal a certain pattern.Whenevel' a  
ly-election is on, some detainees  
we released. This happened in the  
Danjung Putri and Johor Baru by-  
-lections and has happened twice in  
he course of the present Ampang-  
laYa by-election. Is this a mere  
:oincidence? Or does the govern-  
ment chose to release ISA detainees  
iuring by-elections so that its  
saublic image would be bolstered? If  
it is the latter, then it shows clearly  
that political rather than security  
considerations dominate ISA  
.operations. The timing of ISA  
releases may well be yet another  
niece of evidence which helps  
List!" a point that has often  
hwade: the ISA is a political  
mol which serves the interests of  
:he ruling elite

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I

Executive

1

127 January 1989 Committee

L(The above statement has not  
appeared in any daily - Editor)

1 UMNOiS BIRTHDAY AND

CONSTITUTIONAL NORMS

1 LIRAN notes that in yes-

1 terdayls New Straits Times

(1 February 1989) there

was a report which stated that the  
King had instructed that a plaque  
be erected at the banquet hall of  
the Istana to commemorate the  
birth of UMNO. It added that

"UMNO president Datuk Seri Dr  
Mahathir Mohamadi is expected to

address the gathering just before  
the King unveils the plaque."

ALIRAN only hopes that the  
report is not true. The King who is  
a constitutional monarch, standing  
above party\_ politics. should not  
be involved' in a function organised  
by a political party. The non-  
partisan character and role of the  
monarchy should be preserved and  
protected in the interest of cons-  
titutional rule and parliamentary  
democracy.

THE POIST- 1990

ECONOMIC POLICY

A 5 readers of Aliran Monthly  
will be aware, the government has set up the National  
Economic Consultative Council to formulate a post-  
1990 Economic Policy for the nation. We welcome  
views, suggestions and proposals from readers on a  
post-1 990 Economic Policy., In particular, we would  
like submissions on the goals of a post-1 990  
Economic Policy as well as strategies and approaches  
for the attainment of those goals. Please address your  
submissions to:

Sdr. S Suhramaniam

c/o ALIRAN

6 Jalan Pantai Jerjak Sebelas

Sungai Nibong

I 1 900 Pulau Pinang

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4) fly 'y '31:: He; t

The King : above party politics.

It is of course true that UMNO was born on May 11, 1946 at the Istana grounds in Johor Batu. Due recognition should be given to this historical fact. But that does not mean that UMNO should involve the King (who is the Sultan of Johor) in a party celebration. If UMNO's inaugural meeting was held at the Istana in Johor Baru it was partly because UMNO was, up to that point, a mass Malay movement which embraced all strata of the community, including the Sultans. Its principal concern was fighting the Malayan Union which also affected the position of the Malay monarchs. UMNO became a political party, in the real sense of the word, only after that meeting. Once UMNO became a political party the Rulers were not involved in the organization. After the establishment of the Federation of Malaya Agreement in 1948 and the creation of constitutional monarchs, the Sultans scrupulously avoided party politics. Though the principle that the Rulers should stay out of party politics has been breached now and then since Merdeka, our monarchs have, on the whole, adhered to it. This is to their credit. Now more than ever before, there is a need to ensure that the non-partisan image of the monarchy is not tarnished in any way.

ALIRAN hopes that His Majesty's Cabinet will advise UMNO Secretary-General, Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, to ensure that His Majesty is not forced to compromise on constitutional proprieties.

Chandra Muzaffar

2 February 1989 President

(The above statement has not appeared in any daily - Editor)

THE NEXT AGONG - AS I SEE IT continued from page 3  
ing the birth of UMNO. It was

reported in a local newspaper that the present King, the Sultan of Johor, has been invited to unveil the plaque marking UMNO's birth at the old Istana in Johor Batu?

What if another political group like Semangat 46 invites the King or a Sultan to one of its functions? If he goes to one party function he can't refuse other political parties. I've always emphasised that the Rulers. It would be a good thing if the Conference of Rulers can give an appropriate title to the now Sultan of Permatang. This is merely my suggestion. In any case, this is only a small matter. I

should never be partisan. This is

important to preserve the principle of a Constitutional Monarchy. There is another matter I'm concerned about. When a Ruler becomes the Agong he belongs to the entire nation. He should not behave as if he is still the Sultan of his particular State. He should not identify himself too much with only his State. This has happened in the recent past.

Aliran Monthly: Docs all this mean Our Constitution, I must Stress. lay out the role, the duties and the responsibilities of only the Yang Di Pertuan Agong, not his consort. The consort has no constitutional role. that there is a need to restore the original Vision of the Monarchy as contained in the Constitution?

Tunku: After 31 years there is a need to review the role of the nation's Monarch. of the Yang Di Pertuan Agong, with the aim of strengthening his position as the

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custodian of the Constitution. began to feel quite strongly about this as a result of the 1983 Constitutional crisis. At that time the Prime Minister Dr Mahathir, made an attempt to do away with the royal assent for bills approved by Parliament. Though there was compromise and the Agong today has the power to delay assent for a month, a Bill can become law without the royal assent after a certain period of time. All bills should have the royal assent before they become law. This is to ensure that laws are not made which transgress the rule of law and the fundamental liberties contained in the Constitution. It is the duty of the Agong to act as the custodian of the Constitution. Otherwise, a political leader whose ambition knows no bounds may through legislation destroy the Constitution itself. He may replace the present form of government with something else. He may make Malaysia into a Republic and a dictatorship. In order to prevent this, I'm proposing that a committee be set up to look into how the role of the Agong as the custodian of the Constitution can be strengthened. This is for the good of the nation and people. 0



E

V THE PM,S ILLNESS continued  
from back page  
& as I know he does not find time for  
,v, the luxury of such an examination.  
When he was stricken with chest.  
.; pains he was rushed to the hospital  
'where he was placed in the Cardiac  
1 Care Unit (CCU). He was found to  
a; have a cardiac infarct with a low  
4. blood pressure, which in a patient  
9 with a heart attack is often not a  
;; good sign. Yet the news bulletin  
1 issued the next day stated that he  
, was comfortable and walking about  
in his room when in fact, he was  
ordered to bed.

The government must remember  
that in the case of a VIP in hospital  
\_ with a serious ailment it is difficult  
to keep the secret of the VIP's ill-  
ness within the hospital. There will  
many doctors attending to the  
patient. There are nurses, atten-  
dants, amahs, laboratory techni-  
cians, all of whom will know what  
is wrong with the patient. How can  
i: the hospital keep all these people  
' quiet? They have friends and re-  
latives and in a moment of weak-  
ness they will talk. In any case,  
' they will talk when they see the  
patient lying in bed while the news  
bulletin issued by the hospital  
authorities proclaims loud and bold  
that the patient is comfortable,  
walking about in his room and eat-  
ing his meals well.

The same sort of news was  
issued by the hospital authorities  
almost everyday since Jan ' 18.  
C can understand now why the  
\$rnment may not want to reveal  
t 0 whole truth regarding the  
health of the Prime Minister to the  
people of this country. It" the whole  
truth cannot be told, one would  
hope that something akin to the  
truth had been told. But the  
medical bulletins ignored the fact  
the Prime Minister had a serious  
heart attack which later neces-  
sitated a by-pass operation. The  
government has lost all credibility.  
certainly amongst the doctors.  
The director of the Kuala  
Lumpur General Hospital Dr C.  
lionsecku must know that the  
medical bulletins issued under his 1  
name made him a laughing stock  
amongst doctors in this country.  
How can a patient who has had a  
heart attack be walking about in his  
room? Is he a superman? If it was  
decided that the heart attack be  
hidden from the people of this  
country, at least the story put out  
by Dr Fonsecka should be plausi-  
ble. Dr Fonsecka has missed the  
first lesson in public relations,  
which is that his story must tell the

truth. How can the government expect the people of this country, especially the doctors, to believe any medical bulletin when it has told a lie about the Prime Minister's illness. There was no need to tell a lie.

The illness was a straight forward one. There was no need to hide it from the public. In any case, I was told the next day that the Prime Minister had low blood pressure when admitted. The day after, on Friday, I was told that an American doctor had flown in to advise on Dr Mahathir's condition. By the end of the week, the decision had been made to operate on him in Kuala Lumpur.

He had been offered two choices. One was to be flown to the United States and the other to be operated in Kuala Lumpur by local doctors. It is to Dr Mahathir's credit that he chose to be operated in Kuala Lumpur by local doctors.

It is refreshing to know that he has faith in our own doctors and that their operation was successful. I do hope that when the King's birthday honours are given out by the middle of this year the doctors involved will be suitably rewarded.

Now that we are told that the operation has been successful and Dr Mahathir is recuperating at home, the question that is on the lips of most Malaysians is WHAT NEXT? Is he going to carry on as usual and run the risk of another heart attack (which could be bad for him) or is he going to be sensible and put his house in order and then resign his post? That way he may live a few more years and enjoy the peace and comfort that he is entitled to. Since 1981 he has led a strenuous life after taking over from Hussein. I have often wondered how he manages at this pace.

Any lesser mortal may well have  
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succumbed to the pressures of his office but Dr Mahathir is alive and kicking!

In deciding his own future Dr. Mahathir can look to the examples of his own colleagues. There is the example of Tun Hussein who stepped down soon after his by-pass operation. He was wise to resign and has lived more than seven years and may he have many more years of useful life ahead. There is also the example of his deputy, Ghafar Baba, who too had a by-pass operation and has continued as Deputy Prime Minister. But with due respect to Encik Ghafar, the office of Deputy Prime Minister is not the same as that of Prime

Minister in terms of pressure and responsibility.

More than 10 years ago, I was admitted to the University Hospital after a stroke and there I met the late Tan Sri Manikavasagam. He had just been through a by-pass operation and asked me whether he should retire from office. I told him that he should certainly retire and spend the rest of his days tending to the flowers in his garden. Alas, he did not listen to my advice and a few months later, passed away after a massive heart attack.

If Dr Mahathir should retire, there may well be a tussle for the Prime Ministership. In order to avoid this, it would be sensible for Encik Ghafar to assume the Prime Ministership as a stop gap measure for about two years. After that, he should let the younger contestants fight it out among themselves. The general election may be due by late 1990 and this may have some impact upon the tight within UMNO Batu. This scenario of course takes into consideration candidates like Datuk Musa Hitam, Datuk Abdullah Badawi and Encik Anwar Ibrahim. There are also the claims of yet another candidate Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah. He is outside UMNO Baru but will tussle for high office. We are in for stirring times and let us hope that the winner will have respect for- democracy and the judiciary and will not just pay lip service to human rights and fundamental liberties. 0 i

# THE PM'S ILLNESS

GH director lied about PM's condition  
Political commentator and a medical doctor himself, TAN SRI DR TAN CHEE KHOON advises  
Dr Mahathir to step down for his own good. The PM's "chest pains" were much more serious  
than what the public was made to believe.  
The war in the Far East gave  
rise to a new word SNAFU,  
that is Situation Normal All  
F . . . Up, which was coined by the  
615 of the American Army in the  
China-Burma Theatre of the War in  
the Far East. The 615 were bored  
with the army's daily press releases  
stating that the situation was  
normal when in actual fact it  
wasn't. i  
This reminds me of the recent  
illness of the Prime Minister. On the  
morning of the Jan 18, Datuk Seri  
Dr Mahathir Mohamad had chest  
pains and was rushed to the Kuala  
Lumpur General Hospital. I remem-  
ber in 1981, shortly after Dr  
Mahathir succeeded Tun Hussein  
Onn as Prime Minister, he fainted  
while taking a ride on an elephant  
during a tour of Kedah. His medical  
attendants did not pay too much  
attention to this fainting spell of  
the doctor at that time. Here one  
must remember that the Prime  
Minister is at the same time a senior  
physician with a mind of his own.  
And like most doctors, he is a poor  
patient. He should have been tho-  
roughly examined to find  
whether he should go slow then.  
It is well known that Dr Maha-  
thir has set a very hectic pace for  
himself of late. During his recent  
visit to Europe and the United  
States he would rise at 0700 hours  
and his diary would take him right  
up to 2300 hours. Many of those  
who accompanied him were much  
younger, but could not stand the  
pace. A person with such a life-style  
should have a thorough examina-  
tion at least once a year, but as far  
continued overleaf