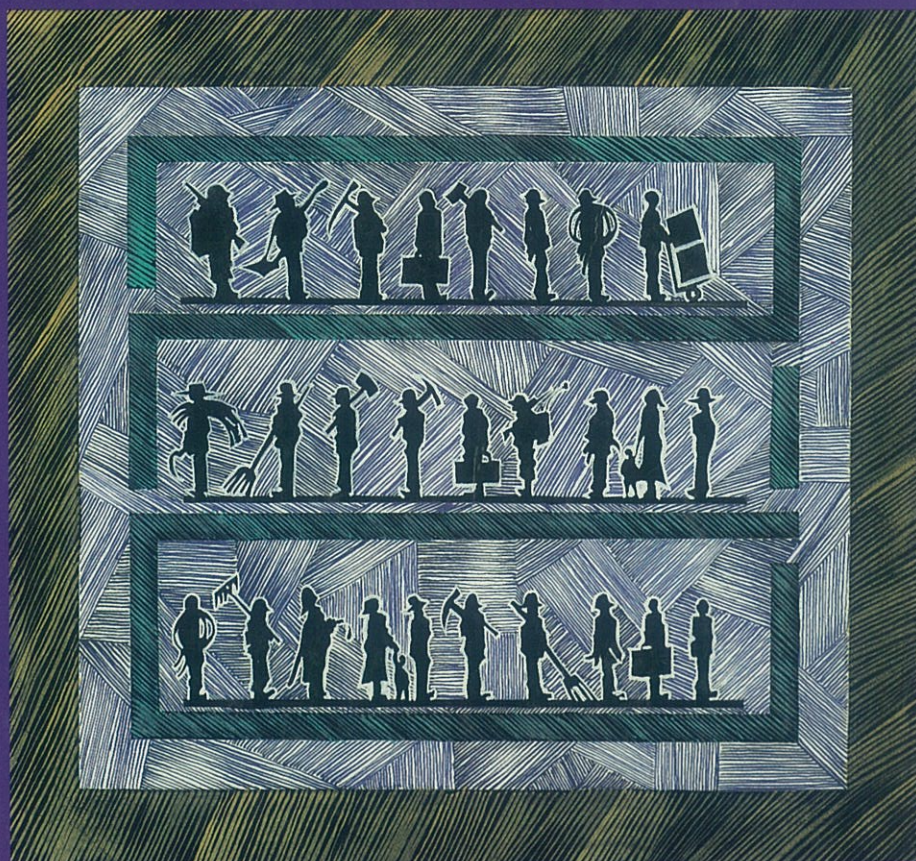


arena bulletin

ASIAN EXCHANGE

QUARTERLY
BULLETIN
OF THE
ASIAN
REGIONAL
EXCHANGE
FOR
NEW
ALTERNATIVES

STATE OF THE ASIAN PEOPLES A REPORT



Malaysia



Philippines



Indonesia

STATE OF THE ASIAN PEOPLES
A Report

A R E N A
OCTOBER 1992

Asian Exchange

Vol. 8 Nos. 1/2 Published October 1992

Opinions expressed in ASIAN EXCHANGE do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of ARENA.

Reproduction of material appearing in the bulletin and listing the bulletin as resources in other publications should be acknowledged.

Publisher: Asian Regional Exchange for
New Alternatives, Ltd. (ARENA)
Typeset and Layout Design: C. Pascual, R. Cañete
Illustrations: Bobot Balaoro
Printed by Shue Yan Printing Services, Ltd.,
Hong Kong

ISSN 0256-7520

Asian Exchange Annual Subscription Rates
(including air mail costs, in US dollars)

Japan, Australia and New Zealand	30.00
Rest of Asia (individual)	10.00
(institution)	20.00
Africa, Latin America	25.00
US and Europe	50.00

Cheques to be crossed and drawn in favour of
"Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives, Ltd."

Contents

Introduction	5
Malaysia	
The Pitfalls of NICdom	13
Philippines	
Surviving the Transition	49
Indonesia	
People as Sacrifice	87
Appendix	
Basic Comparative Data	115

INTRODUCTION

IT BEGAN AS A DREAM. Amidst a small circle of 'friends', gathered together in March 1986 in the tourist-happy-yet-culture-rich setting of Bali, the dream found a voice. And became a possibility.

It grew into a concept, taking further shape and substance at a meeting in Chiangmai in December 1987. In June the following year, it was subjected to more rigorous discussion, this time in Bombay. By January 1989, in Hong Kong, the dream was a full-fledged undertaking, an ambitious project that would hopefully start off a process of interaction, discussion and debate throughout Asia. This is what we have come to know as the SAPR — a report on the state of Asian peoples.

It was not to be just another report, though, not just another research project. It was to be a 'people's social audit' of a region that was fast gaining a reputation as *the* growth region of the world. It would present a view from below, from the eyes of over half of the world's poor, those who would be largely responsible for such growth while not necessarily partaking of it. It would be the collective effort of scholars, activists, people from all walks of life. It would take a critical look at the past and present, in the context of possibilities for the future. It would not only look at the repression of people and their movements, but also focus on people's struggles in asserting their rights, in articulating and realising their vision of a just and humane society. It would start off a continuing process of exchange and discussion, a process that would increasingly involve a broader range of individuals and groups, who would make their own inputs into subsequent reports. Thus it was hoped that the SAPR would be an effective tool for sharpening perspectives on Asian realities, an aid to people's organizations, communities (imagined and real), as well as voluntary groups working closely with the people.

As envisioned, the SAPR would consist of country profiles (at least two for each of the sub-regions of South, East and Southeast Asia); 5-6 thematic papers that would cut across boundaries of the nation-state; 'alternative' indicators on people's livelihood, people's participation and people's sovereignty; and an overview paper based on all these. As we went about identifying what had to be done, who would do it, etc., we began to realise the immensity of the task before us. Still it was a challenge we could not resist taking. And it remains a challenge to this day:

for, as expected, there were many obstacles.

For one, although we attempted to work out a standard format and style for the country profiles, different approaches were used by different teams in preparing their report. Furthermore, not all data are similarly available in all countries, and writing styles vary. Add to this the usual difficulties of coordinating a project across the region, and getting the different teams to comply with their obligations.

But there seems to be an even greater difficulty in doing an "alternative to the alternative" report. Indeed, the biggest obstacle seemed to be ourselves. Although we continue to identify with the people — many of us, I believe, are genuine in this concern and commitment — our efforts to understand them and their situation *in their own terms*, are woefully inadequate. We have gotten so used to a certain way of talking, analysing, writing, reacting, behaving, etc., that to do so any other way is virtually unthinkable. Simply put, there is a difficulty, a strong sense of unease and uncertainty, in trying something new, in refocussing, in viewing society and its people with a totally fresh look.

This has been the context of our work towards the SAPR, work which is ongoing and which we would like other groups in Asia to take up. In 1989 we identified persons and groups who would be responsible for producing the profiles for 10 countries in Asia. At the same time, a centre for the SAPR was set up in Manila, headed by University of the Philippines professor Eduardo Tadem. The Manila Centre formulated a set of guide questions and indicators on economic, socio-cultural and political aspects of civil society, for the teams in each country to use. A workshop was held in August 1990, in Thailand, where the country teams shared the preliminary results of their work. At the workshop we also went over the set of indicators that the Manila Centre had worked on, and agreed on a final set to use.

In this special issue of *Asian Exchange* we present the profiles of three countries in Southeast Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. We hope to bring out, in subsequent issues, profiles of countries in the other sub-regions of South and East Asia, as well as alternative indicators for the countries surveyed. We have used a different format, size and style for this issue, primarily because the SAPR was supposed to be different. We have in fact made use of figures, illustrations, box items, poems, stories, etc., to add to the 30-something page essay that comprises each country profile.

The papers in this volume depict three Southeast Asian societies whose people find themselves at various stages of having to deal with increasingly sophisticated forms of state authoritarianism. In Malaysia, the

rule of law has been superseded by rule *by* law. Civil life at home, at work, at school, at centres of worship and prayer, youth and recreation centres, etc., are all under attack. There seems to be no escape from the clutches of a state which is determined, at whatever cost, to attain developed nation status by the year 2020.

The shadow of the New Order State looms large in Indonesia, where rules of governance make little allowance for other than state-approved and military-enforced behaviour. Any criticism of the government is immediately interpreted as anti-developmental, anti-national. The state supposedly knows best the number of children women are to bear, how much — rather, how little — workers are to be paid, how many sacrifices people must make at the altar of development.

In February 1986 the Filipino people succeeded in removing Ferdinand Marcos from power, and entrusted the reins of government to Corazon Aquino. The transition that followed was not easy. Not only did President Aquino renege on many of her campaign promises to the people. For although she enjoyed popular support, she was more familiar with traditional politics (of the goons, guns and gold type) and, when faced with difficult decisions, often tended to favour tradition over change.

But what proved even more difficult was dismantling the structures of authoritarianism that were carefully and craftily built over 20 years of the Marcos dictatorship. The State itself resisted any efforts towards such a dismantling, in part because Aquino's leadership was not strong enough (like a man!); in part because Marcos left it morally and financially bankrupt and, while Cory could (at least at the start of her presidency) restore its morality, attaining financial viability remained an uncertainty; in part because its agents were divided between the (minority) forces that would transform the State and the forces that would march further along its authoritarian path; and to a large extent, because its logic of repression was never shaken at its roots.

In May 1992 a former general and Marcos man, Fidel V. Ramos, was voted into office as Aquino's successor. In his first few months in office he has shown himself to be at times, even more wishy washy than his predecessor (a trait, people would explain, that comes from her being a woman), and at times, unexpectedly supportive of measures that would further democracy (as in the recent repeal of the anti-subversion law that banned the Communist Party of the Philippines, and in the planned repeal of Marcos decrees that legalise arrests without a warrant). The transition in full gear? The transition in reverse? This will bear watching.

Part of the growing sophistication of the Southeast Asian states is in

fact a response to people's movements and their demands for human rights, democracy and social justice. In fact in all three countries, no matter how fierce the attack and counter-attack on people and their struggles, there remain pockets of resistance and assertion. For example, although there is only one recognised trade union in Indonesia, workers are organising themselves independently. While they remain a minority, their actions — some strikes have recently taken place — give a glimmer of hope for the rest of Indonesian society. Growing popular sentiment against the US military bases in the Philippines was the basis for the rejection in 1991 of the treaty that would have retained the bases, by 12 of the 23 senators in the upper house of Congress, the country's legislative assembly. Although this was a battle that was won in an arena that is hardly representative of Filipino society, it was a victory that can only rightly be attributed to the people.

All three Southeast Asian countries are increasingly being drawn into the global economic order, with varying degrees of success and failure. Indonesia's growth has largely been propelled by oil and debts, the latter, a result of a concerted effort by the governments of the West, particularly that of the US, to show that capitalism under Suharto is superior to "communism" under Sukarno. Malaysia's growth has been even more impressive, and attaining NICdom seems not as incredible as before. Only the Philippines finds itself in an economic mess that heavier doses of IMF-World Bank prescriptions cannot cure, but on the contrary, worsen.

Still there are many costs of the rapid growth model that is being pursued, the heaviest ones borne by the poor. While some of the impressive growth may have trickled down in Indonesia and Malaysia, the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. And those who have largely contributed to growth — workers, particularly, women workers, farmers and fisherfolk, displaced communities (by their displacement the land they were occupying is exploited for its rich resources or for tourism or for basic infrastructure primarily benefiting big business), etc. — are at best incidental beneficiaries of such growth.

What is worse, and this is particularly true in Southeast Asia, the pursuit of development has become the basis for the denial of democratic processes and the negation of human rights. This illogic must be turned on its head. This is why a social audit such as we are attempting through the SAPR, is needed. In Malaysia, for example, one major cost of the State's "2020 Vision" that must be added onto the balance sheet, so to speak, is the marginalisation of independent trade unions and other people's movements. In all three countries surveyed, the destruction of the

environment is serious, rendering environmental sustainability highly doubtful. And so on.

We ask the reader to send in your feedback on this first attempt of ours to undertake a people's audit. Needless to say, your feedback is very important. Please do send us your criticisms — constructive *and* otherwise — about this effort of ours. We need you to tell us also if such an effort is worth another try, and how best to go about doing it. While this began as an ARENA project, it is not intended to remain one. We hold on to our dream of a definitive report coming out of the Asian region, that communities, people's organizations and groups working with them can contribute to, as well as benefit from.

Maitet Diokno

MALAYSIA



The Pitfalls of NICdom

AFTER 33 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE and as we enter into the last decade of the twentieth century, Malaysia seems to be at a crossroads. A particularly negative sort of modernisation seems to be occurring. There has developed increasing authoritarianism of an unprecedented nature. With rapid industrialization, the structure of the economy has also changed dramatically. By 1990, Malaysia was poised to become another so-called Newly Industrialized Country (NIC), having achieved a remarkable GDP growth rate of about 10 percent. Towards the end of 1991, the whole officialdom was routinely mouthing the prime minister's call for Malaysia to go further distance and become a "developed country" by the year 2020. It didn't even sound too incredible. However, with increased privatisation and concentration of capital, disparities between the upper and lower classes, and between regions, were also widening. Ethnic and religious polarization had heightened and everyday culture had taken on strong consumerist dimensions. These developments will be elaborated in various parts of this report.

Rising authoritarianism

The Malaysian political system has become more authoritarian than it has ever been before. This is so inspite of elections being held regularly and the functioning of parliament without disruption throughout the past twenty-odd years. In fact, this is the interesting facet of growing authoritarianism in Malaysia: it has emerged not through the use of brute force, the suspension of the constitution, the declaration of martial law, or bloody coups but through use of coercive legislation passed by parliament.

Indeed, we have a litany of new laws and amendments to existing laws such as the Internal Security Act, Seditious Act, Official Secrets Act, Printing Act, Societies Act, Industrial Relations Act, Trade Unions Ordinance, Employment Act, the Police Act, Broadcasting Act, the Universities and University Colleges Act, Standing Orders for Government Servants and the Conduct of Parliamentary Debate — all of which have contributed to a restriction of civil liberties. The latest development in this regard is the introduction of new clauses in certain laws like the Internal Security Act (ISA), the Broadcasting Act, the Printing Act and the Societies Act to deny judicial review of the executive's decision and interpretation of the law.

There has also occurred the executive's direct assault on the formerly independent, though conservative, judiciary. On that occasion, the Lord President and several other Supreme Court judges were removed. With these developments, there is now a real danger that the judiciary, like the legislature, will become a mere rubber stamp for the executive rather than acting as a check and balance to it.

Hence, the essence of parliamentary democracy in Malaysia has slowly been eroded, the continued maintenance of its form notwithstanding. As many have noted, the Westminster notion of rule of law has slowly given way to rule by law. And with that, justice is no longer guaranteed by the law. Quite apart from the introduction of these coercive legislations and the assault on the judiciary, the government has also developed a very extensive administrative-cum-political apparatus to actually implement many of these laws and related policies to ensure its dominance. For example, at the level of the farflung *kampungs*, new villages, estates and resettlement schemes, the police is ever present. The role of the police is buttressed, in turn, by numerous other governmental organizations like the JKKK (the Village Development and Security Committee), the *Persatuan Peladang* (Farmers Organisation), *Kemas* (Community Development Organisation) and the branches of the government political parties.

This relative ability of the Malaysian state to implement what is enunciated at the top is frighteningly impressive when we compare Malaysia to its neighbours.

Such direct controls are further supplemented by more subtle and seemingly non-political means, namely, the state's cultural hegemony over civil society via its control, or at least attempts to control, the education system, media, religious and cultural activities, sports and youth activities, among others. These matters will now be elaborated.

Education

Perhaps the most obvious way cultural hegemony is exerted is via the state's virtual control of the education system. Following the introduction of the new Education Act, state control was extended from pre-school to tertiary level education. Private kindergartens and colleges alike, which have all been flourishing over the past 10 years at least, will now be brought under the control of the state.

Malaysian school children have been socialized to become individuals who are disciplined, competitive, hard-working, obedient and respectful of authority. These values are clearly enunciated in the compulsory civics and religious classes and in the conduct of extra-curricular activities.

In fact, students are taught not to question authority but to appreciate its efforts. Exposure to the various laws and an appreciation for their necessity in a potentially explosive multi-ethnic situation is also passed on. In turn, the notion of democracy that is taught focuses on the electoral process, the making of such laws by a duly-elected body, the *Dewan Rakyat*, and the rule of law, all of which must be respected if democracy is to survive in Malaysia. In fact, it is the *status quo* which is maintained, and stability rather than democracy is the end.

It is worth mentioning that universities which used to be autonomous have also come under much direct control of the state since the introduction of the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971, which has since been revised several times. Thus, although alternative views are presented in classroom situations in the universities, the dominant culture that prevails among graduates of the local universities, and of the education system as a whole is one that is generally supportive of government policies, its development strategies, and its vision of the kind of society desired. Even when students are not well socialised into this stream of thought, they are still circumscribed by its main features. This makes the task of introducing a wider notion of democracy, alternative ideas of development and especially the building of a popular movement based on challenges to the dominant culture extremely difficult.

Media

Apart from the above, cultural hegemony is also exerted via the state owned radio and television stations, and via ownership of all the major newspapers and the sole private television station by government political parties.

The effects of such tight control are manifold. Important scandals and issues detrimental to the government's reputation often go unreported. For instance, when a constitutional crisis pitting the government and the rulers occurred in 1983, Malaysians had to refer to regional publications to find out what was going on. There has also been next to no investigative reporting on the various financial scandals that have bedevilled the government. Through tight control, facts can also be distorted such that villains have emerged as heroes and vice versa. This has often been the case vis-a-vis labour disputes. The workers seldom get a fair hearing while management, which is often linked to government and the press barons, is given a sympathetic ear.

A case in point is how the General System of Preferences (GSP) issue was reported in mid-1990. The controversy arose because the AFLCIO and other American labour groups lobbied the American trade representative to remove the GSP status for Malaysian exports to the US on account of the Malaysian government's record of human rights abuses and denial of the right of electronic workers to form a national union. In response, the government charged that the local trade union movement was working hand-in-glove with their American counterparts. The union leadership was thus regarded as unpatriotic and accused of collaborating with the Americans, thereby, jeopardising the livelihood of workers. These and other charges were reported extensively by the local media. Yet the local trade union movement's actual position and its defence against these charges went virtually unreported. Also, the charges by the Americans of human rights abuses and control of labour were conveniently shunted aside.

Likewise, opposition parties are hardly ever given a fair airing of their views. Such distortions reached such a point that a boycott of some of these government controlled newspapers was called for.

A third consideration is how the media reported the government assault on the judiciary in 1988. Despite the fact that the judges were conducting various judicial reviews as provided for under the Constitution they, nonetheless, were cast as villains.

In contrast to the above, the activities and opinions of ministers and other leaders of the ruling parties are extensively reported. Much airtime

and printspace are also set aside for government propaganda. Nowadays, much of this propaganda is attractively "packaged" and "sold" to the citizenry.

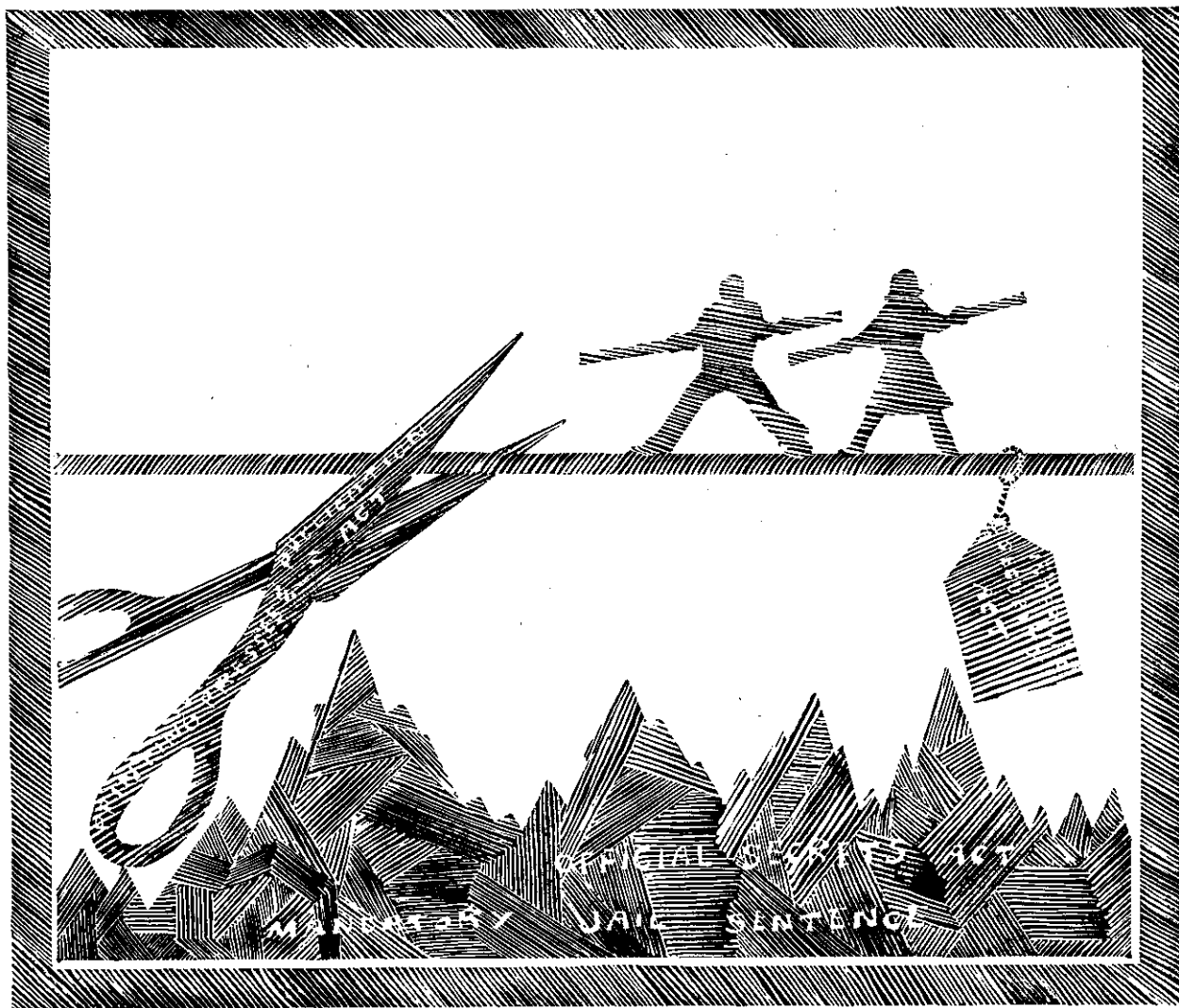
Finally, it must be stressed that the government may resort to use of the Printing and Publications Act 1984, amended in 1988, to close down newspapers it deems to be reporting in an irresponsible manner. In 1987, as mass arrests of 106 citizens was conducted, three newspapers were closed. One of these had developed a reputation for investigative reporting. It was only after the paper reshuffled its editorial staff and re-organised its ownership that publication was allowed to resume. Since then the paper has lost all semblance of its former liberal stance.

In this regard it is pertinent to mention that all newspapers and regular publications are required under the above Act to annually process and renew their publishing permits, the KDN. Thus, even those publications which are not owned or controlled by the government are forced to practise some measure of self-censorship in order to ensure renewal of their permits. Through these various ways and backed by this printing act in particular, control over the media is exerted.

Religion

For many in Malaysia, much of the time outside of work is taken up by matters related to religion. Compared to the 1970s, the government today is obviously more involved in religious matters. This is clearly seen in its Islamisation efforts. In part, this stems from the challenge that has been posed to United Malay National Organization (UMNO), the dominant Malay party in the ruling coalition, by the opposition Islamic party, Parti Islam Malaysia (PAS). Because of this new turn by the government, non-Muslims have increasingly felt threatened and have responded with revivals of their own religions and religious practices.

The positive aspect of this religious revivalism among the different religious groups in Malaysia is that they emphasise submerging one's self to God and participation in religious communities. By so doing, religious revivalism has the potential of countering state-nurtured individualism and loyalty to the governing elites. Unfortunately, however, the majority of Malaysia's religious leaders essentially share a worldview similar to that of the governing elites. Indeed, like the governing elites they are also imbued with their own ethnic biases. Thus, religious revivals have tended to revolve around the practice of rituals and the recovery of symbols. Moreover, insofar as Malays are Muslims and most non-Malays are not, religious revivalism has tended to reinforce ethnic identities as well. It is only a small group of Muslims and non-Muslims who have em-



phasised that they share certain universal values and have begun to relate those shared spiritual values to an alternative worldview and its realisation.

Control of the performing arts

Following the 1969 racial riots in Malaysia, the task of creating “a national and common culture for purposes of national unity” was given greater priority. The state began to centralize cultural activities. A Director of Culture “charged with the responsibility of promoting cultural activities consonant with the needs of the nation”, was appointed in the *Kementerian Kebudayaan Belia dan Sukan* (KKBS) or Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. Under his leadership, a nationwide congress was organized in 1971 where the national culture policy based on the following principles was formulated.

1. The national culture of Malaysia must be based on the cultures of the people indigenous to the region;
2. Elements from other cultures which are suitable and reasonable may be incorporated into the national culture; and
3. Islam will be an important element in the national culture.

Following this congress, the infrastructure to implement the new national culture policy was created. A network of state and district level offices of KKBS and local cultural committees covering the main towns was established to build a widespread organization for the development of a national culture. The government then began to support cultural activities it deemed desirable.

“National” styles of performing arts based on selected Malay folk and popular arts have been created and are presented as the “traditional” arts. As Islam is an important component of the national culture policy, *nasyid*, a type of Arabic cantillation of *syi’ar* (poetry with noble and Islamic themes) is promoted.

Besides setting up the infrastructure to implement the national culture policy and promoting approved arts, the police and other authorities began to make use of existing laws to curb cultural activities that are considered “politically subversive” or “retrograde”. For instance, under the Police Act (1967) which deals with unlawful assembly, police permits must be obtained before any theatrical play, music or dance concert can take place. To acquire a police permit, all scripts of productions and names of actors/actresses must be submitted to the police for censorship and approval before the show. Some social activists involved in creating an “alternative Malaysian culture” have been detained under the ISA.

Moreover, KKBS has introduced a set of guidelines on the types of

shows to be encouraged and those to be banned. Both the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Home Affairs have the power to instruct the police not to award permits. Thus, in September 1986, after declaring a ban on all open air rock concerts, the Ministry of Home Affairs ordered the police not to issue permits for such concerts throughout the country.

Yet government control of the arts is not total. Independent individuals and groups continually evade government control and directions even as the government continually passes new laws, introduces new guidelines, appropriates particular forms that it cannot control or bans them. These groups are able to maintain their independence through artistic innovation and are even able to venture some social comment. In this way, new ideas, themes and forms are experimented with and developed in the performing arts by these independent individuals and groups. Although they share common problems (financial, official harassment and others) and, to varying degrees, disagree with the government's national culture policy and/or its attempts to control the performing arts, nonetheless, they do not subscribe to a common notion of an alternative Malaysian culture. Instead, the vision is extremely fragmented. In this regard they may be regarded as "counterpoints" to the government's cultural policy.

Coercive legalism

The dominance of the Malaysian state over civil society may be appreciated by examining the battery of laws that have been enacted and amended over time. The post colonial state conveniently inherited a plethora of laws aimed at maintaining control over the civilian population and specifically, in Malaysia's case, combating the communist insurgency. In 1960, when the 12-year insurgency was officially declared as having ended, the draconian Internal Security Act (1960) was enacted to allow for preventive detention. It has subsequently been used to detain political opponents across the whole political spectrum, ranging from those who are believed to advocate violence such as alleged Communists, Marxists, religious extremists and racial chauvinists, to opposition and dissident figures such as priests, church workers, university lecturers, feminists, elected opposition MPs, social reformers, not to mention government MPs. The profile of the so-called "subversive" has become so stretched and diverse that it would seem that the Special Branch (SB) of the police, who effectively make the political detentions, or the Home Minister, whom it advises, has virtual *carte blanche* to use any criteria whatsoever to determine who and what is considered a "threat" to na-

tional security. The track record shows that the inordinately wide powers of the ISA have been used arbitrarily and with little restraint, particularly in recent years. Since the ISA is the most important state instrument for political repression, it will be instructive to briefly examine its legal provisions and practical effects and implications.

The ISA was enacted under Article 149 of the Malaysian Constitution, which allows for a law so enacted to be legal even if it contravenes various other constitutional provisions which guarantee liberty of the subject under Article 5. Under Section 73 of the ISA, the police may detain anyone for interrogation for 60 days on the suspicion that "he or she acted or is about to act or is likely to act in any manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia or any part thereof." It has become part of activist folklore that the 60 days could be the worst days of one's life, should one be unfortunate enough to be taken in under such "preventive" detention. Treatment could vary from actual physical torture to psychological humiliation and denial of reading materials. At the end of the 60 days, further detention of extendable two-year terms have to be authorised by the Minister of Home Affairs, as provided for in Section 8 of the Act. The charges against the detainee are then specified in a Detention Order (DO). In theory, these charges could be challenged in court through *habeas corpus* proceedings but such an action has virtually become an exercise in futility after the 1988 and 1989 amendments to the ISA as shall be explained below. Even if the detainee takes no legal recourse, he or she comes up for review by an Advisory Board to the Home Minister every six months, but the board's advice is not binding on the minister or government. In practice, the work of the Board has become farcical and the experience of ex-detainees shows a reversing of legal process whereby a political decision usually determines a release, which is then rubber stamped by the Advisory Board. The Board may also recommend unconditional or conditional releases. The conditional releases make a mockery of the word release especially when they come in the form of a Restricted Order (RO). The classic case is that of PAS youth leader Khalid Samad's "release", which turned out to be something of an SB version of house arrest:

1. He is restricted to Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya and cannot leave without written permission from the police;
2. He is restricted to his residence and cannot move houses without prior police permission;
3. He must report to the Petaling Jaya police headquarters on the first of every month; and
4. All the above conditions will still apply if he shifts house with per-

mission;

5. He is restricted to his house from 10 pm to 6 am daily except with written permission;
6. He is not allowed to speak at public rallies, trade union gatherings or meetings which are political in nature;
7. He is not allowed to write, prepare, print, or distribute articles and cassettes which are political in nature; and
8. He is not allowed to use his house or any building under his jurisdiction for gatherings which are political in nature.

The ISA has been amended 18 times, giving it more bite each time, requiring a judge to apply what in legal parlance is termed the "subjective test" rather than the "objective test" in *habeas corpus* hearings, that is, in plain words, the judge is not allowed to adjudicate on the absolute discretion of the Minister of Home Affairs to determine (subjectively) whether a political detainee is a security threat. As Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir said, in justifying the amendment:

"So far the government has been responsible for the nation's security and public order. Using the principle of 'subjective test' the government has been able to take effective measures against those who threaten security and stability. It is essential that this situation is continuously guaranteed by legislation as it is the government which is the appropriate authority to take action to protect security and stability in the country." (*New Straits Times*, 24 June 1989.)

This amendment occurred on the heels of a spate of *habeas corpus* litigation undertaken by the "Lalang" political detainees which culminated in the remarkable decision in the Ipoh High Court of March 1988. The court released the deputy leader and lawyer Mr. Karpal Singh of the Democratic Action Party (DAP) on the ground that his detention order contained a grave error and that the Home Minister (Mahathir himself) showed a "cavalier attitude" to the detention tantamount to *mala fide* or bad faith.¹ In an unbelievably blatant travesty of justice, the government acted with supreme speed eight hours after the court decision and re-arrested Mr. Karpal Singh at the town of Nibong Tebal as he was heading home to his wife and children in Penang. Mr. Karpal Singh's pleas to the

1 In another unprecedented decision, the Kuala Lumpur High Court freed the Christian Malay Jamaluddin Othman alias Yesu Jamaluddin on the ground that his detention was against his constitutional right to profess and practise his religion. Jamaluddin had in his affidavit to the court alleged being tortured, including being stripped naked to enact the crucifixion. See *The Rocket*, Vol 21, No 7, October/November 1988.

Legal Restrictions on Human Liberties and Freedoms

Constitutional Provision	Right of Freedom	Legislative Restriction
Article 5	Liberty of the person	Internal Security Act, 1960: Restricted Residence Enactment (CAP. 39); Sec. 117, Criminal Procedure Code (CAP.6)
Article 6	Protection against slavery and forced labour	Essential (Self-Reliance) Regulations, 1975; National Service Ordinance
Article 9	Protection against banishment; freedom of movement	ISA 1960; Banishment Act, 1948; Immigration acts, 1959 and 1963
Article 10(1)(a)	Freedom of speech and expression	Sedition Act, 1948 (and Amendments, 1971); Official Secrets Act, 1972 (and Amendments, 1986) Printing Presses and Publishing Act, 1948 (Amendment 1988); Control of Imported Publications Act, 1959)
Article 10(1)(b)	Freedom of peaceful assembly	Public Order (Preservation) Ordinance, 1958; Police Act, 1967 (and Amendments, 1988)
Article 10(1)(c)	Freedom of association	Trade Unions Act, 1959 (and 1980 and 1989 Amendments); Societies Act, 1966 (and 1981 Amendments); University and University Colleges Act, 1971 (and 1975 Amendments) — discipline of Student Rules and Discipline of Staff Rules
Article 10 (1) (c)	Freedom of association and right to industrial action, including strike	Essential (Prohibition of Strikes and Prescribed Industrial Actions) Regulations, 1965, Industrial Relations Act, 1967, Amendments, 1971 and 1975
Article 121	Principle of judicial review	Amendments to Article 121, 1988; Amendments to ISA, 1988; Amendments to ISA, 1989

Source: Azmi Khalid (1985: 90) and various newspapers.

apprehending police to let him finish his journey to see his family only 20-odd miles away fell on deaf ears. Late in July 1988 the Supreme Court, predictably, upheld the government's appeal against that Ipoh High Court decision in an *ex post facto* justification of Karpal's re-arrest.²

Additional teeth had been added to the ISA earlier in 1975 in the form of the Essential (Security Cases) (Amendment) Regulations (ES-CAR), which removes certain safeguards contained in the Criminal Procedure Code, allowing, among others, for witnesses to give evidence in-camera and in a manner not visible to the accused or counsel, and the Public Prosecutor to authorise the police to intercept mail, articles, telegrams, telexes and to tap telephones for vital information, in relation to a security offence.

It will not be possible here to run through the gamut of all the laws that empower the state's surveillance and control over civil society and thereby also infringe upon or limit the scope of individual freedoms and liberties. (See box for a listing of the major laws which restrict constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms.)

It is quite clear from the brief review of legislative restrictions on basic rights and freedoms that the role of civil society is drastically curbed in Malaysia in a direct way through legal instruments. This sort of political repression via a meticulous if cynical observance of law, is what critics today dub the rule *by* law rather than rule *of* law (Jomo 1988). Such coercive legalism (cf. Barraclough 1985: 819-20) has been practised by the wielders of state power with tremendous effect, and while its more subtle effect has been to create a culture fear and silence among many of its citizens, it would be giving only half the picture to say that all of civil society have been cowed by such coercion.

To the credit of its people, Malaysia has since its formal independence in 1957 experienced seven general elections in the years 1959, 1964, 1969, 1974, 1982, 1986 and 1990 of which only one resulted in overt

2. Three Supreme Court judges, including the then Acting Lord President Tan Sri Hamid Omar, presiding over the case, ruled that the factual error was of no consequence! Mr. Karpal Singh was "vicariously liable" for the particular act in question which occurred in Penang even though he was not present because he was the chairman of the Penang DAP. The honourable judges said that the court had come to accept that the best judge of national security is the authority in charge of security — that is the government, in this case, the Home Minister. See New Straits Times, 20 July 1988. As if the strength of a Supreme Court precedent was not adequate, the government went on with remarkable alacrity to codify that decision in an amendment to the ISA passed in the June/July 1988 seating of Parliament.

The Memali Siege

19 November 1985

A team of 200 policemen under orders from Acting Prime Minister and Home Affairs Minister Datuk Musa Hitam lay siege on **kampung** (village) houses occupied by an Islamic sect of about 400 people led by Ibrahim Mahmud alias Ibrahim Lybia. The police action leaves 14 civilians and four policemen dead. The villagers are armed with a few hunting rifles and spears and other rudimentary weapons. The police use heavy ar-

moured vehicles to mow down the houses. At the height of the assault some villagers, men and women, come out in the open in a state of frenzy and hysteria. Thirty-six persons allegedly involved in the incident are arrested under the ISA on 22 January 1986 but are later released in June. The government publishes a White Paper and shows an official video recording of the incident on national television.

violence in May 1969. The people are served by many active political parties and non-governmental organizations which are committed to peaceful political change and it would not be incorrect to assert that Malaysian society has by and large demonstrated a sophisticated sense for civil and democratic politics. Therefore, it is understandable why various groups among Malaysian society would be greatly alarmed when powerholders act in an excessive or arbitrary manner in shrinking the space available for civil democratic action. We will now examine a particular chain of events that have occurred since the early 1980s which illustrates these points.

Shrinking democratic space

When Dr. Mahathir Mohamad became prime minister in 1981, he promised a government which would be "efficient, clean and trustworthy" (*cekap, bersih dan amanah*). It has become a political joke that his government has been anything but that. One economic scandal after another popped up during Mahathir's term. On the political front, the worst crisis since May 1969 occurred in 1987 during "Operation Lalang" which saw the detention of 107 politicians, dissidents, social and religious activists in arguably the most elastic use of the ISA to date.

The political crackdown came at the time when the ruling UMNO faced its worst crisis over the issue of Mahathir's leadership leading to the unprecedented ruling by a court of law in February 1988 that UMNO was "illegal" because of certain malpractices. Mahathir side-stepped the issue, formed a new party with virtually the same name and forced his arch rival Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, into forming a new party, without the aura of "UMNO" to its name. As if all this political excitement was not enough, Mahathir went on in 1988 to lay siege on the judiciary, culminating in the scandalous sacking of the Lord President

Tun Salleh Abas along with the dismissal of two Supreme Court judges. Political analysts remain befuddled by the Houdini-like political escapades of Mahathir which have left him unscathed, except for a heart attack which required a bypass operation. All and sundry hoped that the Malaysian people's fortunes would take a new turn along with the Premier's "change of heart".

Indeed, an upturn of sorts occurred as fortuitous economic developments saw the economy recover to over nine percent growth by 1990 so that even as new economic scandals surfaced, they could now be conveniently swept aside or under the carpet. Thus, by the beginning of the 1990s, only the political scars of the Mahathir era remain as indelible marks on the Malaysian historical landscape. The economy and the country had regained "normalcy".

An economic success story — but who gains?

The Malaysian economy has grown impressively since independence. Its GDP grew at an average of 4.1 percent during the 1956-60 period, by five percent in 1961-65 and 5.4 percent in 1966-70. The GDP growth climbed even higher in the 1970s, averaging 7.3 percent a year between 1971-75 and 8.6 percent between 1976-80. The eighties saw a decline to 5.1 percent in 1981-85 and to 4.8 percent between 1986-88. Growth picked up again by the end of the decade, with 1988 registering 8.7 percent and 1990 posting an unprecedented 10 percent. The growth rate dipped to 8.7 percent in 1991 and to about 8.5 percent in 1992.

It should also be emphasized that Malaysia's economic "success" came with a clear shift in emphasis and tendencies in the post-1985/86 recession, a shift characterized by the buzz-words "structural adjustment" and "de-regulation" — realized in practice as "privatization", a liberalised export-oriented environment, and attempts towards "labour flexibilization".

The question is: how has this remarkable performance affected the people who have contributed so much to it — the workers?

First, workers suffered a major bout of retrenchment in the depths of the recession. Between 1983 and 1987 about 96,000 workers were retrenched, 50,568 of whom were from the manufacturing sector. (*Star*, 2 July 1987) Together with the disavowal of counter-cyclical fiscal measures, this resulted in the unemployment rate shooting up from less than five percent to 8.6 percent in 1987. The number of unemployed workers more than doubled between 1982 and 1986, crossing the half million mark. Despite the major influx of investment, unemployment declined at

Penan Logging Blockades

1986

Sarawak natives, the nomadic Penans of the Fifth Division, stage blockades in their traditional lands where heavy logging has destroyed vegetation and other sources of sustenance. A delegation of Penan leaders in traditional costume arrive in Kuala Lumpur to meet the Deputy Prime Minister Gha-

far Baba to appeal for the logging to stop but to no avail. Penans continue blockades, many are arrested under the ISA or held under remand. Many Penans have been "re-settled" in government-designated areas and deprived of their traditional lifestyles.

a painfully slow rate, so that it still stood at about 7.9 percent in 1989.

However, it appears that the unemployment rate came down in 1990 to under 6.5 percent, while the World Bank's country assessment put it at 3.3 percent. Whatever the actual figure, there is undeniably an absolute shortage of labour, especially skilled labour, at the major industrial centres in the country in 1990, and wage rates have generally gone up fairly steeply. In 1989, collective agreements concluded in the private sector generally managed to obtain increments averaging 7.3 percent, well in excess of the rate of inflation, but this was only making up for lost time as wages were kept on a short leash during the recessionary years. Nevertheless, this has prompted howls from employers who contend that wages have gone up in excess of productivity. This has been coupled with calls for a wage policy and "wage flexibility", or more generally, "labour market flexibility".

Generally, income (as compared to wealth) differentials have remained within somewhat decent limits. Basic salary/wage differentials between top management and production workers are in the range of 10-20:1, with differentials in actual take-home pay being slightly less, owing to overtime income, particularly in boom times.

While this differential could surely be narrowed, the real problems lie in the area of the labour market, employment, income and work security for production-related workers. This is particularly so in view of the fact that only some ten percent of all workers, and under 12 percent of manufacturing workers, are unionized. Government employees form the largest unionized sector and 25 percent are unionized. But this is also the sector with the highest employment, income and work security.

This last fact had an impact on the general labour market as long as government employment was expanding. But in the latter half of the eighties, this has slowed to a trickle and the trend-setting effect of government employment was not what it used to be. In addition, govern-

ment has also set the tone in holding down salaries and wages, and in passing legislation that have limited overtime and retrenchment payments, thus holding down, on the one hand, the actual take-home pay of production-related workers, and making it attractive to employers to keep a leaner workforce, making up for demand by utilization of overtime, and, on the other, making it relatively less costly for employers to shift market risks onto workers via retrenchments. Furthermore, moves towards "labour flexibility", particularly the use of contract labour, have only exacerbated the problem.

In the present economic context, labour market security is not a problem, as job-hopping at little cost has become a real possibility. But this should be set against the cyclical character of the labour market in a capitalist economy, particularly one as vulnerable to the vagaries of the world market as Malaysia's is — exports and imports amounted to 74 percent and 69 percent, respectively, of the 1988 GNP (this was 58 percent and 68 percent, respectively, of the 1981 GNP).

The basic problem is thus employment security — the problem being that there is virtually none, with the exception of one or two firms which do attempt to maintain their workforce intact through difficult times. These tend to be firms with a tradition of quality engineering. The problem is further compounded by the absence of any social security and unemployment benefits, and a system of retrenchment benefits which are insufficiently costly upon employers.

There is also little by way of income security, except that under present labour market conditions, salary increments are less likely to be granted. It should be noted, however, that there is an increasing tendency to grant such increments as discretionary payments rather than to have them reckoned in as part of the pay. Thus, this can be withdrawn at any convenient time. There is no minimum wage law for the manufacturing sector, and the government has been extremely resistant to considering any. This is all the more so in the present ideological climate of "free-marketsteering". There is also no indexation of the basic wage to some basic cost of living index, and it is also very unlikely that such an indexation will be entertained. Instead, employers are suggesting an indexation to productivity. Given the initial distribution of surplus between profits and wages, such an indexation will disadvantage workers, particularly if, as seems to be the case, the index will be a relatively inflexible one that will allow little opportunity for a greater share of any increase in productivity to be paid to wages.

Work security has been and continues to be a serious problem. The rate of industrial accidents is horrendously high. In 1986, there were

Operation Lallang

28 October 1987

In a swoop which begins in the early hours of 28 October 1987, the government arrests under the ISA some 107 critics and dissidents including, civil rights activists, opposition Muslim figures, Malay Christians, priests, church workers, university lecturers, feminists, elected opposition and government MPs and social reformers. After the initial 60-day period, according to the independent Malaysian Human Rights organization, SUARAM, at least 38 persons were given two-year detention orders (DOs). These figures differ from the statement given by the police on 29 December 1987 which were as follows:

Released unconditionally:	55
Released with conditions:	8
Released with exclusion orders:	2

Served with two-year DOs:	33
Still under detention:	8
Total	106

The findings of SUARAM not only differ on the number arrested and detained after 60 days but also suggest that there are six persons held during Operation Lallang still unaccounted for. Since there has been no information about DOs served on them, the six have long exceeded the 60-day legal limit of "preventive" detention. (See Das and Suaram 1989: 122). In June 1989, in answer to a parliamentary question of DAP MP Mr. Lim Guan Eng, the Home Minister said that 68 people are still currently held under ISA detention, 106 are on conditional release, and the longest serving detainee has been held for two years.

over 71,000 industrial accidents, of which 42 percent were in the manufacturing sector. This works out to 195 accidents daily in a year of 365 days. Of this total, there were 428 fatalities, or more than one death per day of the year, and there were 3,077 cases of permanent disablement, or more than eight cases per day.

It is in the above context that the turn towards labour flexibility must be viewed. Labour flexibility can be considered under three heads: numerical flexibility, wage flexibility and job/functional flexibility. In Malaysia, while there is some concern over job flexibility amongst more enlightened employers, labour flexibility in general refers to numerical and wage flexibility. But it is worthwhile to consider job flexibility first.

For most employers labour flexibility generally means numerical or wage flexibility. It is in this area that the absence or weakness of unions is most telling. Certain quarters in the electronics industry have, for example, mooted in hush-hush fashion, the possibility of a 4-day working week of 12 hours a day, with the work force being broken up in sections working different days of the week. Although nothing has yet materialized, it is still pertinent to point out that such a working week remains within the ambit of the law. Currently, workers generally work a 48-hour, 6-day week. As such, when they work on Sundays, they have to be given overtime and public holiday payments which, as already noted, has

been reduced by legislation. A 4-day, 12-hour rotated working week would effectively mean the elimination of such overtime, thus cutting labour costs.

From the point of view of the employers, wage flexibility is being implemented to counteract "a system where increments are permanent and are not varied downwards where there is a downturn, [where] bonuses are contractual and companies are obliged to pay them out even when they are making losses, [and where] open ended salary scales are designed to reward experience, service and loyalty rather than performance [resulting in] an inflexible wage system, unresponsive to performance, productivity and profits, growing at a compounding rate and imposing a financial burden on companies." (Abdul Farouk Ahmad, 1990) The justification for a change is that if it doesn't occur, then "when the recession recurs, those clinging on to the old system will tend to be reactive rather than responsive. ... [T]hey are likely to slash wages, retrench workers, and implement other drastic short-term measures that permanently damage morale, performance and profits ... [as] these companies will not have the option of reducing a variable portion of their compensation package." (Ibid.)

In practice, what this amounts to is a re-direction of various benefits, besides the basic wage, away from contractual obligations into discretionary payments. While it is true that this allows for greater flexibility in times of recession and may well avoid retrenchments, the lot of the worker depends a great deal upon what that basic wage is. If it is sufficiently high to cover needs and is indexed to a cost of living index, such a system may be acceptable from an economic point of view. But as already noted, such indexation will in all likelihood be fiercely resisted.

But even if it were acceptable in the economic sense, there is the question of what it does socially and to labour as a whole. As it is, labour is already fragmented — partly by law, partly by the kind of society we live in. Wage flexibility, of the sort employers have in mind, will simply shift even more power into their hands and further fragment workers, down to individual units. Discretionary rewards can and will be offered virtually down to the individual level — a person can indeed hope to do better without regard for his/her peers. Indeed, the existence of variants of such a system in the electronics industry is perhaps one reason why unionization of the industry has had difficulties — aside from the more usual difficulties arising from labour legislation and employer resistance.

Offset against this, however, was the very common practice of another mode of wage flexibility during the last recession, viz., retrenching older workers to re-hire younger ones or even the same workers at a

Assault on the Judiciary

1988

A series of events lead to the suspension on 31 May 1988 of the Lord President Tun Mohamed Salleh Abas, head of the Malaysian Judiciary. Earlier, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad had expressed hostility towards the judiciary in an interview he gave the *Time*. In that interview of November 1986, the Premier avers that the courts are villifying the political decisions and acts of the government by not interpreting the law "according to our wish." The Supreme Court had in 1987 ruled against the Malaysian government over a complicated case involving *Asian Wall Street* journalist J.B. Berthelsen. Opposition leader Mr. Lim Kit Siang sues Mahathir for contempt of court over the *Time* interview and, while Kuala Lumpur High Court judge Datuk Harun Hashim does not find the Premier guilty, he nonetheless advises Dr. Mahathir to make government legislation more water-tight if he feels the courts are overturning them. Some media exchanges are parried between Dr. Mahathir and the Lord President over the principle of the Judiciary's independence. The upshot is the Lord President's suspension in May 1988. A Commonwealth Tribunal of five judges, which includes Tun Salleh's replacement, Acting Lord President Tun Hamid Omar, is hastily set up in June to investigate Tun Salleh Abas' alleged misdemeanours amidst protest by the Malaysian Bar Council over the Prime Minister's action. The Bar Council also calls for the resignation of the Acting Lord President Tun Hamid Omar for not disqualifying himself from the

Commonwealth Tribunal and for other non-professional acts. Tun Salleh has an audience with the King in June on the advice of other rulers but is rebuffed by His Majesty in the presence of the Chief Secretary of the government and the Attorney-General. Another drama occurs in July when five Supreme Court judges are suspended by the King on the advice of Tun Hamid Omar. The five had sat to hear an injunction brought up by Tun Salleh's lawyers against the proceedings of the Commonwealth Tribunal. The report of the Commonwealth Tribunal is completed in August and finds Tun Salleh guilty of "misbehaviour". He is dismissed by the King as Lord President. A second Tribunal comprising Malaysian judges is set up to investigate the actions of the five judges and finds two of the five guilty of misdemeanor. The King dismisses the two and reinstates the other three. Protests come from far and wide over these actions, including the International Commission of Jurists, meeting in Caracas, and from the Lawasia Association for Asia and the Pacific. The Malaysian Bar Council decides to institute contempt proceedings against the new Lord President Tun Hamid Omar in March 1989. In a counter-suit in May, the Attorney-General files an application to commit Bar Council Secretary Manjeet Singh Dhillon to prison for contempt of court. The Bar Council loses its case but the government wins its case against the Council's Secretary, who is fined but not jailed for the offense in 1991.

lower starting salary, thus keeping the overall wage-bill down.

Numerical flexibility has been attempted by keeping the size of the core workforce trim and making up for shortfalls by one or both of two ways: (a) contract labour in the usual sense of the term, (b) workers on term contracts, renewable indefinitely, but also retrenchable at short notice. The use of part-time labour has not yet become widespread, although the garment industry does make use of a latter-day

“putting-out” system. Between 1985-88, firms of all sizes resorted to such measures and they anticipate that the size of this workforce relative to the regular workforce will grow. (Standing, 1989)

In brief, despite Malaysia's current economic success, what we now have is a situation of reduced employment security, reduced income security and the continuation of an extremely bad work security situation.

Religious freedom and religious intolerance

The freedom to practise one's own religion is included as one of the Fundamental Liberties guaranteed under the Constitution of Malaya of 1957 (and subsequently Malaysia in 1963). Article 11 of the Constitution, which deals specifically with religious freedom, states very clearly that:

“Every person has the right to profess and practise his religion and, subject to Clause (4), to propagate it.

“No person shall be compelled to pay any tax, the proceeds of which are separately allocated in whole or in part for the expenses of a religion other than his/her own.

“Every religious group has the right;

(a) to manage its own religious affairs

(b) to establish and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes; and

(c) to acquire, own property and hold and administer it in accordance with law.

“State law may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or policy among persons professing the Muslim religion.

“This Article does not authorise or act contrary to any general law relating to public order, public health or morality.”

The second last provision of this Article already provides a restriction to religious freedom, since organizations of minority religions may not proselytise among Muslims, whose religion, Islam, is recognized as the state religion. On the other hand, Islamic religious institutions in Malaysia, many under the auspices of the state, are allowed to proselytise freely among non-Muslims.

It is clear, therefore, that religious freedom is circumscribed by the unequal status of the different religions. Thus, although cultural and political equality form the essential pillars for the attainment of collective aspirations under the Malaysian state, certain religious groups find their membership and participation restricted by the dominant group that holds the reins of state power.

Plantation Workers Strike

31 January 1990

An overwhelming 93 percent of the 65,000 members of the National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW) vote for strike action to demand monthly wages instead of daily pay. The strike ballot is taken after earlier talks with the Malaysian Agricultural Producers Association (MAPA) fail to make headway. Monthly wages have been a long-standing demand of the daily-rated NUPW workers, who form the main workforce of the estate crops of rubber and oil palm, the chief revenue earners of Malaysia's agricultural sector. Studies have shown that these

workers' earnings declined from \$3.60 per day in 1960 to \$3.14 in 1981 after accounting for inflation. A monthly wage was one way of ensuring fairer and more stable earnings. However, in 1986, the Industrial Court rejected the NUPW's appeal for a monthly wage. This time around, the Minister of Labour terminates the strike on 3 February 1980 after merely three days and institutes compulsory arbitration by the Industrial Court. The Court subsequently ruled that the workers be entitled to a 25-day pay instead of a daily wage.

This dominance is, in part, due to the fact that Muslims form the majority, accounting for 53 percent of the population. Although the non-Muslim population forms a large minority, they are divided into several religious denominations such as Buddhists (17 percent), Chinese religions (12 percent), Hindus (7 percent), Christians (6 percent), folk religions (2 percent) and others, including non-believers, (3 percent). The Muslims, predominantly Malay, also form the indigenous population of the country. On the other hand, Buddhists and the followers of "Chinese religions" are Chinese, while Hindus are predominantly Indian.³

The considerable overlap between religious and ethnic identity, particularly in Peninsular Malaysia, is of great significance, as conflicts between the different religious groups are inextricably related to the profound political division between Malays and non-Malays. It is for this reason that many (Ackerman and Lee, 1988; Chandra, 1987; Nagata, 1984) view that the increasing conflict between the different religious groups is actually a manifestation of the conflict between Malays (*Bumiputera*), on the one hand, and non-Malays (non-*Bumiputera*) on the other.⁴

3 Source: Mid-Term Review of Fifth Malaysia Plan (1988:83)

4 The term "bumiputera" means "sons of the soil" or the "definitive people of the land." It needs to be noted, however, that not all Bumiputera are Muslims, for the indigenous population includes a sizeable non-Muslim population among the Orang Asli (aborigines) of the Malay Peninsula, and other ethnic groups like the Bidayuh, Iban,

This overlapping conflict is often attributed to the search for an exclusive identity, particularly after some of the symbols of Malay political struggle, such as the Malay language and the Malay sultanate, are no longer considered highly contestable by the non-Malay community. The Malays were simultaneously experiencing a very rapid change, with their increased integration into the national economy; the modernization of agriculture, the successful extension of mass education in rural areas and the availability of new employment opportunities in the urban areas which began to draw them into a new, unfamiliar and, sometimes, hostile environment, over which the Malays had little control at that time. This search for an exclusive identity has become particularly pressing with the implementation of the New Economic Policy since 1971, which hinges on a continuous *Bumiputera*-non-*Bumiputera* divide as a way of meeting the demands of the Malay middle and upper classes. (Chandra, 1987:24- 25) The acceptance of Malay as the national language and as the medium of instruction in national schools robbed it of its appeal as an important cultural marker that could sustain the *Bumiputera*-non-*Bumiputera* distinction, made more necessary with the New Economic Policy. (Chandra, 1987:24; Nagata, 1984:57) The Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and student and youth movements which hitherto articulated Malay nationalism (supremacy of Malay political power, upliftment of the Malay economy, and the establishment of Malay as the national language) from an Islamic angle subsequently took on a more Islamic slant; their demands now range from increased symbolic representation of Islam as the state religion to the transformation of the secular state into an Islamic one. It was within this context that Islam emerged within a short period as one of the main political problems confronting the country today. It was also in 1971 that the government proclaimed a national culture policy referred to earlier. While its content is never very clear, the principal component of the national culture is expected to conform to the tenets of Islam. For non-Muslims these are alarming signals. For with the increasing importance of Islam in Malaysia's political life, particularly with the increasingly strident calls for various forms of Islamisation, spurring the government's promotion of Islamic values and institutions⁵ in its administration, it could likely mean that non-Islamic

Melanau and the Orang Ulu of Sarawak and Kadazan and Murut of Sabah.

5 These include the establishment of an Islamic Bank, and international Islamic university, scores of Islamic religious schools and colleges, an Islamic centre under the Prime Minister's Office. Quite apart from the fairly exclusive nature of these institutions

identity would be threatened.

Non-Muslims are no longer able to secure as easily their places of worship as provided under Article 11 of the Federal Constitution. Christians are not allowed to freely consult the Indonesian translation of the Bible, the importation of which is now, with the full implementation of the national language policy, more compelling than ever before. (Tan, 1984)⁶ It is also reported that students (including non-Muslims) in teacher training colleges are required to follow a course in Islamic civilisation, while moral education classes for non-Muslim pupils in schools would, going by the very high proportion of Malay students in teaching training colleges, also be frequently taught by Muslims.

Similar developments were also noticeable in Sabah. With the rise of the Malay-dominated United Sabah National Organisation and later, Berjaya, Sabah, where Muslims constitute a minority, Islam became increasingly integrated with the federal state. It also came to reflect the dominant cultural aspirations of the Malaysian state. Islam was made the official religion of the state in 1973. Subsequently, all government-aided schools, including Christian missionary schools, were required to teach Islam when no less than 15 of its pupils demand such instruction. Christian religious instruction was prohibited during school hours even in Christian missionary schools. (Loh, 1988) Proselytisation of non-Muslims through the state apparatus had also raised considerable concern, particularly among the non-Muslim *Bumiputera*.

Although the politics of religious freedom and religious intolerance in Malaysia overlaps with the conflict between Malays and non-Malays, it is not reducible to just that. This is because state control over religion is applied to the Muslim community as well, denying certain segments of the Malay-Muslim population the same rights that non-Muslims have been denied. This is very well illustrated by the control the UMNO, the principal component party within the Barisan Nasional government, tries to impose over the PAS, arguably the strongest and the most ideological Malay opposition political party in the country. PAS had, from its inception in 1951, always called for the institution of an Islamic state. How-

(particularly the government religious schools), the development of these institutions also mean more opportunities for Malays when non-Malays already feel that they are not given a fair share of the opportunities in national, as opposed to Islamic, government institutions, such as the universities and training colleges.

6 Some of the Arabic terms such as "Allah" or "imam" used in such translations are prohibited.

ever, its earlier concerns sprang very largely from its desire for a better deal for the Malay community. (Chandra, 1987: 55-56; Funston, 1980:51) It was Malay nationalism under the guise of Islam (Funston, 1980:144), and did not, therefore, pose any fundamental challenge to UMNO's position on Islam. It was against this backdrop that PAS joined the Barisan Nasional government between 1972 and 1977, the early years of the NEP.⁷

The NEP's poverty eradication programme has been impressive, with the vast expansion of the state apparatus, absorbing in its wake a considerable section of the Malay population, that subsequently formed an important, though lower, segment of the Malay middle class. Scores of rural agencies,⁸ with many assuming duplicating functions, were created to meet the demands of the backward Malay rural communities. However, the vast sums of expenditure have not really trickled down, as they are sieved through class and party lines. (Chandra, 1987; Muhammad Ikmal, 1988; Scott, 1985; Shamsul, 1986) Thus, PAS's nationalist project under UMNO's command was a dismal failure, confirming the fears, and in the same process, increasing the influence of the more Islamic elements who had opposed PAS's compromise with UMNO in the coalition.

PAS's gradual loss of influence resulting from its alliance with UMNO, the compromising tendencies of its leaders for material gain through questionable means, encouraged perhaps by the opportunities made available by the New Economic Policy, and alienation of its lower-rung leadership and general membership, led to the emergence of a fundamentalist group that eventually assumed power in the early eighties. (Alias, 1978; Kessler, 1989) The emergence of this group represents a

7 The two principal reasons that brought these two parties within a wider coalition was the desire for political stability (averting any possible recurrence of the ethnic riots of May 13, 1969) and economic growth, particularly the development of the Malay community.

8 These include such agencies like the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), Lembaga Padi dan Beras Negara (LPN), Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA), Majuikan, Majuternak, Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Corporation (MARDEC). In addition, almost every state has at least one regional development authority (such as the Muda Agricultural Development Authority and Kedah Development Authority in Kedah, Kejora in Johore, KADA and KESEDAR in Kelantan, DARA and JENGKA in Pahang, etc.) that caters for the rural population. Agencies, such as FELDA, RISDA, that developed earlier received a bigger boost after the NEP.

part of a larger process of Islamic resurgence, which began in the second half of the sixties, but developed very rapidly in the late seventies. (Chandra, 1987; Nagata, 1984; Zainah, 1987) The rise of the fundamentalist faction in PAS since 1982 saw the increased radicalisation of PAS, and cries for an Islamic state took on a new meaning. The new PAS rejects its Malay nationalist heritage for a universal yet traditional brand of Islam — going so far as to proclaim that the special privileges of the Malays should be abolished.

The new challenge posed by PAS and other religious groups has led to increasing centralization of control over religion. In Kedah, for instance, the collection of tithe has now been assumed by the State Religious Council and is no longer administered at the local level. *Imams* and other mosque officials are appointed and remunerated by the same council. Hitherto independent but poorly endowed “hut schools” (*sekolah pondok*), historically an important source of religious radicalism, are also increasingly subjected to state control; undoubtedly the centralisation of tithe collection would have impelled them to seek government aid (facilities, salaried, and therefore, government-appointed teachers) even if this meant that they had to conform with the state’s school curriculum in return. (Nagata, 1984:45-46) Thus, increasingly, religious functionaries, teachers and religious instruction are subjected to state control. Consequently, the state apparatus has to be expanded considerably (more schools, religious training colleges, faculties in universities, larger “religious bureaucracy”, and of course similar employment and promotion opportunities within the civil service), which in turn would undoubtedly have far-reaching implications upon Islamization.

PAS under siege

Increased control over religion is also evident at the federal level, the development of the religious bureaucracy no doubt contributing to it. But it is also a response to the expansion of religious dissent. The “Memali defiance” which resulted in the death of the charismatic Ibrahim Libya, 13 of his followers and four policemen in November 1985 is another manifestation of this sort of challenge. Here, the state laid siege against “extremist” Muslim leanings, signaling the limits of its religious tolerance. Earlier, in 1983, the Penal Code and the Penal Procedure Code had been amended in order to meet the growing influence of PAS. Under the new law, those found guilty of inciting disunity and ill-will, or challenging lawful activities undertaken by the religious authorities could be fined or imprisoned.

Religion being a state and not a federal matter, incidents such as these



fall under the jurisdiction of each head of state (*sultan*), with the exception of states whose heads of state are governors. However, the influence of the Religious Affairs Department under the Prime Minister's Office has increased of late. For instance, the Kelantanese Religious Affairs Committee (under the state executive council) is reported to have sent for approval a proposed Syariah Enactment for the state of Kelantan to the Religious Affairs Department in the Prime Minister's Office. This is done even before the proposed enactment is tabled at the state legislative assembly. A head of state may thus be put in a difficult situation of having to adjust to the influence of Kuala Lumpur, contradicting the provision that all religious matters are under the final jurisdiction of the head of state. (*Harakah*, 26 January 1990) This represents another indication of the increasing centralization of control over Islam.

The increased control over religion should be seen as part of a wider process of control over civil dissent aimed at the new order of things that came with the implementation of the NEP. The NEP was a bold step (in terms of government spending, the distribution of largesse, the emergence of a new relationship between state and capital, and so on) which came under the direction of a new class of Malay entrepreneurs spawned by, and therefore, bound to, UMNO. The sweeping changes accompanying the NEP upset the relationship between classes, groups and parties, and, along with it, the ideological mind-sets by which pre-existing relations were determined. A new UMNO ideological slant emerged as the NEP began to materialize in the eighties; one which sought to establish its hegemony by introducing all sorts of restrictions on the religious practice of Muslims and non-Muslims alike as well as on the behaviour of "deviant" and dissident groups.

Malaysian women: struggling at the crossroads

On 12 December 1989, the Women's National Policy was approved by the Malaysian Cabinet, 14 years after the launching of International Women's Year in 1975 and the introduction of the Women's Decade in 1976. This 20-page document emerged after significant pressures at the international level as well as clamours from local women's groups to uplift the subordinate position of Malaysian women. Indeed, a memorandum on the above policy from the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO), an umbrella body of women NGOs, clearly points out that the policy goal should be "to ensure greater sharing, equality in access to resources, information and opportunity and returns for all women and men. These goals of equality and equity, which are ba-

sis to people-oriented development, should enable women, who form half the country's population and who are still disadvantaged, to achieve their full potential." (NCWO, 1989).

In fact, this goal put forward by the NCWO has been adopted as one of the two basic goals of the National Women's Policy, the other one being the integration of women in all sectors of national development. The sectors listed in the National Women's Policy are health, education and training, law, employment, politics, media, religion and culture. Gender subordination exists at both the personal and structural level, both of which are also conditioned by the development and cultural trends in the country. The position of women in the family, community and society is no less influenced by development strategies, which in Malaysia favour export-led industrialisation and a dependence on multinational investments for greater economic growth.

Women are not spared the onslaught of cultural and religious pronouncements and conservative interpretations of what should be the "correct women's role" in society. Hence women seem to be one of the prime targets in the tug-of-war between being profitably used by capital (and hence technically should be free and modern labour), and the rising tide of religious fundamentalism of all shades which preach that women's place should be in the domestic sphere, to be led by the head of the household who is invariably male. If at all women are to participate in the public arena, they should always be subordinate to men. Malaysian women today are at the crossroads, and they have to choose, indeed they must choose, the paths which will or will not uphold their dignity, autonomy and respect in society. The nineties is a crucial decade to decide the nature and direction of gender relations and in this, women's groups have an important role to play in addressing the burning issues faced by women today. What are these issues and how has the embryonic women's movement dealt with them? To what extent have women's groups overcome the barriers engendered by the lack of democratic space and the existing communalism in the country?

Women's work and the gender division of labour

Women in Malaysia accounted for 49 percent (7.9 million) of the total population of 16.1 million in 1986. They make up 34.6 percent of the total labour force of six million. In official labour statistics, the rest of the women (64 percent) are defined as "out of the labour force" even though the 40 percent who "look after the house" work at home, are involved in agricultural and subsistence production, or are part-time or un-

paid workers in family businesses. The non-recognition of women's contribution in these spheres undervalues their labour and value in society. The above situation is tied in with the notion of the gender division of labour in which production (normally defined as paid work) is the purview of men, distinguished from reproduction (household work, childcare, cooking, subsistence work) which is the main responsibility of women. This concept, reinforced by culture and religion, pervades almost every activity within the family, household, community and society. For women in the formal sector this has led to their double duty of working in the office and at home. Implications in the unequal division of labour has far reaching implications for women in the agricultural and industrial sectors.

Agriculture

In agriculture, even though women work side by side with men, they are seen as secondary workers, hence merely supplementing the family income. Consequently, women are often disadvantaged in terms of access and control over resources. For example, studies have pointed out that Malay village women own between 10 percent to 30 percent of total land in the community. This, despite that fact that under customary law (*adat*), daughters and wives are entitled to half the property upon death and divorce. The equal inheritance norm could have been undermined by Islamic law (*fara'id*) which provides daughters one-third of inherited property compared to two-thirds for sons.

In land development schemes, the land title is given to the men, thus ignoring women's customary rights to property. Such discrimination is also strongly felt in East Malaysia where native women always shared equal rights with men in land and other resources. However, with the introduction of land titles and the institutionalisation of private property, such rights are being eroded.

Access to other resources, for example modern credit and banking facilities, is also normally directed to the men who are identified as "farmers" and are viewed as "heads of households". Thus female-headed households which could form as high as one-third of total village households, and are usually the very poor, have little access to such facilities. As such, men, especially those from the richer strata, and not women, gain control of modern agriculture as the former are taught new methods of production.

Industry

In industry, the underlying patriarchal value, which cut across ethnic-

ity, work hand in hand with capital, leading to and justifying discrimination in wages, gender hierarchies in occupational distribution and lack of training promotion for female employees.

The female labour force is heavily concentrated in agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing. In 1980, 40 percent of women in Peninsular Malaysia were employed in this sector, compared to 40 percent in Sabah and 73.6 percent in Sarawak. Through the years, there seems to be a steady decline of women employed in agriculture, not least due to the economic development strategies which emphasise industrialisation. As such, the service and manufacturing industries are employing more and more women, i.e. 36 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively, in Peninsular Malaysia.

The establishment of export-oriented industries in the 1970s has created more jobs for women than for men. For example, more than 75 percent of electronics workers are women, particularly young females who are viewed as docile and more exploitable.

Although the number of women entering the labour market has increased, they predominate in areas which portray low skills with low remuneration, poor working conditions and limited chances for advancement. Women workers are concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs or in supportive and menial tasks such as clerical and service work. For example, in the government sector, out of 23,064 women employed in 1968 only 1.1 percent were in the senior group "A" officer category. Twenty years later, out of the 214,814 women employed, only 8.9 percent occupied the highest category.

The unequal class and gender relation is also manifested in the wage structure of the labour force. About 70 percent of the labour force earn less than M\$399 a month while less than five percent earn more than M\$2,000 per month. Female workers are paid less than men. In 1980, the average monthly wages paid to female workers were between \$9-\$209 less than those paid to male workers. In the case of daily rated workers, women received between 74 percent to 79 percent of the rates paid to their male counterparts.

Women workers are also not well organised to fight for their rights. The organised trade union movement accounts for only 10 percent of the total workforce in the country. Out of this women form 27 percent of total membership. This means that large numbers of women workers are unorganised, and particularly for women in the export-processing zones, the vagaries of the international capitalist economy have led to retrenchments without notice. Recently the government approved the setting up of in-house unions for the 85,000 electronics workers in the

country. However, electronics workers who try to set up such unions are harassed by management.

Politics

Although women's participation in public life has increased they are still not treated on par with men. Very few women are in key decision-making positions in political parties, public organisations, trade unions and in government. For example, in the administrative and diplomatic service — considered to be the cream of the civil service — there were only 39 women officers (seven percent) compared to 491 men (93 per cent) in 1988. In the 1988 Cabinet there were one Chinese and four Malay women. Three are deputy ministers while two hold full ministerial rank. Altogether there are nine women MPs and 18 state "assemblymen" compared to 168 male MPs and 429 men in the state assembly.

In the political milieu, women generally remain reliable and loyal supporters of their respective parties. Most of the political parties have a women's section which is integrated into the party structures in such a way that it supports and is secondary to the male-dominated leadership. Women's representation in key decision-making is extremely low considering, for instance, that the Wanita UMNO constituted 55 percent of total UMNO membership as of March 1983 and the Wanita MCA comprise 20 percent of total MCA membership. Again although women form 27 percent of trade union membership, they have to make greater inroads at the leadership level. According to the MTUC, less than 10 percent of union education and training is received by women. Additionally, less than eight percent of the policy-making positions belong to women. Out of a total of 816 trade union principal officers in Peninsular Malaysia in 1982, only 35 or 4.9 percent were women.

The male dominance of trade union leadership implies that women's concerns — the establishment of child care facilities, maternity leave, sexual harassment at work, equal pay — are not expressed as priority trade union issues. Given the unsympathetic attention to female workers, it is not surprising that the number of unionised female workers in 1981 represented only seven percent of the total number of female workers in the country.

Conclusion

It appears therefore that the state has penetrated deep into the sinews of civil society and into the everyday lives of ordinary people. Through coercive legalism and through its control of the education system, media, religious and cultural activities, sports and youth activities, etc., the state

has been able to perpetuate its dominance. It is no wonder then that Malaysian society is such a compliant one and that the use of law rather than brute force in most instances suffices to curb dissent and criticism.

At this point, however, we would like to suggest that there is yet another aspect of Malaysian culture to consider in order to better understand why it is generally so compliant. This has to do with the increasing penetration into Malaysia of the global materialist and consumerist culture. This has come about as a result of the increasing integration of the Malaysian economy into the global economic system dominated by the MNCs. In the cultural realm, this penetration has occurred via television and the entertainment industry, generally through advertising, tourism and travel. It is a materialism that lulls a populace into complacency. This is clearly evident among the urban upper and middle classes, whose habits, sartorial styles, eating habits, leisure activities including gender relations, and everyday lives have been shaped by this global materialist culture. In fact, some aspects of it have even penetrated into the lives of people in the estates, kampungs and new villages.

To be sure, there has also been resistance against some of the socially debilitating trends but, all too often, this resistance itself is expressed in terms of the individual rather than through solidarity with other individuals. The liberal ethic of everyone for her/himself does however engender the small comfort that while the government can ban rock concerts, the "kutu" rock (rock enthusiasts) will carry on in private circles regardless; that while laws can be passed which restrict practically all aspects of one's life, there still emerges free expression and critiques in art, culture and in fringe activities beyond the pall of government censorship.

Furthermore, Malaysia, thanks to a growing civil society, has seen the rise of consumer movements, greater environmental and gender consciousness, the activism of the Bar Council, the NGOs, and other expressions of a slightly more collective and fraternal nature. However, to realize that wider notion of democracy which encompasses as well solidarity and justice we need to link individuality and a consciousness of individualism with a concern for the larger Malaysian community. Such a people-consciousness is perhaps still many years in the making.

This country report was prepared by Johan Saravanamuttu, Muhammad Ikmal Said, Loh Kok Wah, Khoo Khay Jin, Cecilia Ng, Maznah Mohamad, Tan Sooi Beng and Hah Foong Lian.

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PHILIPPINES



There is one dream that all Filipinos share: that our children may have a better life than we have had. So there is one vision that is distinctly Filipino: the vision to make this country, our country, a nation for our children.

If we (ourselves) do not struggle with all that we have and do all that we can to vindicate our rights, we not only condemn our rights to death, we also condemn our hopes and our dreams, our present, and our children's future.

— Jose W. Diokno

Surviving the Transition

PHILIPPINE HISTORY FOR THE MOST PART is divided into periods which are described in relation to the Spanish, American and Japanese powers that ruled the country until about four and a half decades ago. Thus, the colonial experience is very much a part of the life of the people. This is probably why nationalism remains an important issue among Filipinos.

In pre-Spanish Philippines, the 7,000 or so islands were sparsely occupied by tribal groups coming from neighboring Asian lands. Trade with the Chinese was flourishing. In the early 1500s, Ferdinand Magellan, in the service of King Philip II of Spain, set out in search of spices and lands to colonize and landed in the island of Leyte. They proceeded to convert the natives to Christianity and also *baptized* the islands Filipinas, after their king.

Thus followed three centuries of rule by the *sword* and the *cross*; three centuries of suffering for the country's inhabitants who had to endure political domination, cultural repression and social discrimination at the

hands of the friars, Spanish government officials and members of the elite, who had intermarried with the colonizers.

Towards the turn of the century, anti-Spanish sentiment burned in the hearts of the enlightened intelligentsia, as well as among the poorer classes. Works of literature calling for reforms and demands for drastic changes in the status quo earned the ire of the colonizers, leading to the banishment or death of perceived perpetrators. Jose Rizal, later to be considered the country's national hero, was executed for writing two *sedition* novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, which were accused of being anti-clerical and inciting the natives to revolt against the colonial government.

Before his death, however, a poorly armed, but sufficiently patriotic group of Filipinos known as Katipuneros under the leadership of poor but well-read Andres Bonifacio led the revolution of 1896 which was to last for two years, and which ultimately gained independence for the country on June 12, 1898. Shortly thereafter, though, the Filipinos learned that instead of granting the country independence, the Spanish government had sold the people to the United States for 20 million dollars under the Treaty of Paris.

Thus began the country's love-hate relationship with Uncle Sam, although it was mostly love in the beginning. In contrast to the feudal approach of the Spaniards towards the *uncivilized* natives, the Americans appeared democratic and benevolent in their attempt to *educate* the masses, teach them English, and encourage those who would collaborate with them.

During World War II, the Japanese occupied the country, giving birth to one of the darkest periods in Philippine history. The Japanese unleashed a reign of terror which still stirs up fear and contempt among those who survived it, but apparently disregarded by their grandchildren who now flock to Japan in search of a job and a better life.

After the war, the US came returned to the islands. In 1946, independence was granted and proclaimed with Manuel Roxas as president. Although it was Manuel Quezon who consistently fought for self-rule in the US Congress, he died before the war ended.

The close relationship between the US and the Philippines continued, in spite of the status of independence of the latter. When the Hukbala-hap peasant guerilla movement flourished in the 1940s-50s in Central Luzon, it was Ramon Magsaysay, who later became president, with the help of the CIA, who succeeded in quelling the rebellion.

It was also during this period when the Bases Treaty was signed between the US and the Philippines, allowing the former to use the latter

as base for its military operations in the region. The treaty further sealed the Philippines' fate with its former colonizer, making a mockery of its newly-gained independence.

In 1965, Ferdinand Marcos became president, and quickly established a strong-man image. He won a second term in 1969. But before his term ended, however, and in the face of growing anti-government sentiment, he suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus on 21 August 1971. The following year, on September 21, he declared martial law.

Marcos' political enemies and activists were immediately jailed. TV and newspaper offices were raided and taken over by the forces of the regime. An atmosphere of fear in the face of military power surged and prevailed throughout the country.

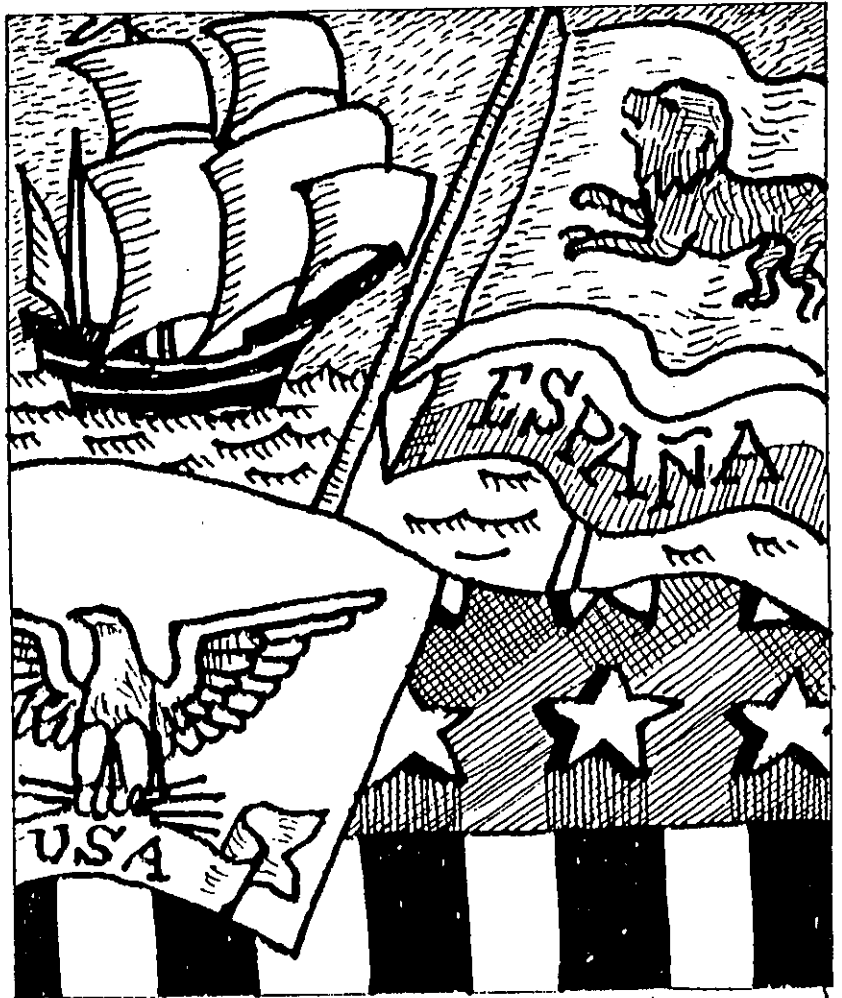
Martial law, however, did not daunt more radical anti-government Filipinos who had earlier formed the Communist Party and its guerilla arm, the New People's Army. They operated mostly in Luzon in the beginning. Fighting was also going on in the south. In Mindanao, the Muslims had, by the mid-70s, made known their desire to secede from the national government, but agreed to a ceasefire when the Tripoli Agreement was signed by the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front. The ceasefire later broke down, and fighting ensued. NPA and MNLF organizing and propaganda activities continue up to the present.

The decade of the eighties saw the ouster of Marcos and the rise of Aquino, widow of Marcos' political rival, Benigno Aquino, the most celebrated victim of the dictatorship. The Aquino government was installed through an inspiring display of *people power*, coupled with down-to-earth military rebellion by an anti-Marcos faction in the armed forces.

The euphoria over the new order gradually dissipated, though, as the government slowly but surely showed its refusal to depart radically from the elitist policies of the previous regime, in spite of several opportunities to do so.

The decade also saw the flourishing of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which have been seen by many sectors within and outside the country as more effective venues for people's participation, better vehicles for extending development assistance to communities, and more effective agencies for implementing development programs.

It was also a time of reflection and re-assessment for the mainstream Left, who had earlier disregarded popular sentiment when it called for a boycott of the snap presidential elections in which Aquino ran. In hindsight, of course, they were proven right in their assessment of Aquino as



15070.

an elitist leader, but not before being marginalized in the ensuing organization.

The first years of the Aquino administration saw several coup attempts staged by her former supporters in the armed forces, which later backfired and only succeeded in turning public anger towards them. The decade ended literally with a bang, with yet another coup attempt from the same group in December 1989. It destroyed not only what was left of public sympathy for their cause, but also the modest beginnings of a reviving economy.

The decade of the nineties began with an nerve-wracking earthquake that hit Luzon, shattering not only edifices but also lives, and hopes for a better future.

The Filipino people: surviving in the transition

The tumultuous eighties were a decade of living desperately and dangerously for many Filipinos. The period saw the crumbling of a much-hated regime, and the birth of a much-hoped for new order. Or so the people thought.

The early years of the 1980s became the final ones for the Marcos dictatorship, although not before it had wrought havoc on the Filipinos' lives. Martial rule, imposed in 1972, was beginning to take its toll. The people were getting restive in the face of the various forms of repression they had had to endure.

For example, freedom of expression was curtailed; those who behaved as though it wasn't learned of the regime's disapproval through different means, from libel suits, to arbitrary dismissal from their jobs, to bullets which silenced them forever.

There was no freedom to live in peace, especially in the countryside. Peasant families lived in constant fear of one day being forcibly ejected from their own homes as the regime unleashed its Vietnam-style tactics of flushing out *suspected rebels*.

In the workplace, there was no freedom to organize, or stage strikes. Unions were either banned or busted to make the economic scene more attractive to foreign investors, leaving workers with virtually no means of improving their lot. This held true for other sectors of the labour force as well. Tenants and other farm workers of the country's coconut, sugar, and other agricultural areas were at the mercy of landlords, plantation owners and monopoly traders who, with Marcos' blessings, bled them dry at every instance.

Against this backdrop of political repression, economic strangulation

and social discontent, the Filipinos entered the decade of the eighties.

The transition from the breakdown of authoritarianism to democratization started early in the decade when Marcos made a few concessions. He formally lifted martial law in 1981, and soon after, called for elections for a parliament, albeit a rubber-stamp one. A boycott of this farcical exercise was called by oppositionists and people's organizations, but Marcos convened his parliament anyway.

Thus, while making a few concessions to 'democracy' Marcos was firmly entrenched in power and was calling the shots. In the face of the seemingly formidable dictatorship, many sectors of society were cowed into submission. The press, except for a daring and courageous few, hid behind stories of the *true, good and the beautiful*, Imelda Marcos' favorite phrase. The Catholic church, save for its more enlightened members, turned a blind eye at the people's suffering. The academe, except for a few symposia and even fewer student leaders, became an unexciting place. Far from its being the "hotbed of unrest" in the seventies, the "martial law babies" who were now in college turned academic life into a meaningless pursuit of high grades.

The Left, of course, did not cease its organizing and propaganda activities. On the contrary, the mainstream left, i.e., the National Democratic Front (NDF), became an attractive option for those disgruntled with and suffered from the dictatorship. It was able to recruit members from all areas — countryside, universities, factories, etc.

There were other sectors, notably the professionals and the business community who, while not agreeing totally with the NDF's political agenda and tactics, also began to organize themselves along anti-fascist and/or anti-imperialist lines. Most of these groups' activities centered around providing the people with *situationers* or accounts of the real state of the nation, proof of the national hunger for truth; giving analysis and criticisms of the regime's policies; searching for alternative solutions and courses of action; and organizing.

The assassination of Benigno Aquino in August 1983 gave way to what martial law could no longer suppress — national indignation over the callousness of the dictatorship. It triggered a series of protest actions even from hitherto unorganized sectors, which further contributed to the crumbling of Marcos' hold on power.

Through the national protest against the assassination, which everyone believed was masterminded by Marcos himself, other sectors, notably members of the political and economic elite whom Marcos marginalized in favor of his cronies, were able to give vent to their own frustration.

Thus, for a couple of years, there were demonstrations, prayer vigils, protest walks and runs, symposia, concerts, rallies to protest those violently dispersed by the police, etc. Manila (as well as other major cities) was simply yellow with protest. (Yellow became the color of the anti-Marcos movement in the aftermath of the assassination because the song "Tie a yellow ribbon..." was to be played for Aquino upon his arrival.)

But it was not until 1986 that Marcos was finally removed from power during what is now referred to as the *People Power Revolution*. His fall and flight appeared to hasten the democratization process. The road to this goal looked a little wider and less thorny then.

Less than 24 hours after Marcos left, however, there was an incident which seemed to bode ill for the Filipinos' future under Aquino. It was Cory's oath-taking, which took place at an exclusive clubhouse. What should have been a momentous occasion for the millions of Filipinos who had risked their lives for Cory was witnessed only by a select few, among them, people who would later pose obstacles to their aspirations. The people felt cheated of their share of the victorious occasion. And, of course, one of the first things she did was to pay her debts to a few whom she felt she owed her presidency to. Thus, top military men were promoted, business favors dispersed, cabinet positions distributed.

Nevertheless, the people were euphoric. It was shown in the eagerness of those called upon to serve in the new government to do something to restore people's faith in their leaders. It was seen in the guerrillas who came down from the hills to try to lead normal lives again. It was expressed in the willingness of many to pay their taxes "to help Tita Cory".

The years between then and now give a more graphic picture of the forces which helped her and her government come to power, and the conflicts among themselves and vis-a-vis the people. Her first Cabinet, for example, was a rainbow coalition. It was a mix of traditional politicians, new blood and progressive spirits. Who among them would eventually prevail and dictate where the transition will lead to.

This question had, until recently, forced people to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. They were willing to give Cory a chance — after all, Marcos and his cronies plundered the country for 20 years.

For a while, the people expected that genuine democracy had a chance. Political prisoners were released, peace talks between the armed left and the government were begun, and a constitution which called for the implementation of agrarian reform, the creation of people's councils and the protection of human rights was drafted.

In terms of external affairs, while the country's love-hate relationship

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with the United States remained dominant, there have been cases when Philippine foreign policy broadened its perspective to allow the country to establish links with other powers. The anti-bases position fast gained ground, such that even government officials could not anymore come out openly with a pro-bases call. There has been a surge of nationalist sentiment.

In terms of more down-to-earth concerns, people expected greater access to economic power and opportunities. After being deprived for so long, they now wanted to own the land they have tilled for years. They hoped for jobs which paid just wages. They expected better access to basic services. They wanted genuine progress and growth, not just a semblance of it provided by a massive infusion of foreign aid, or one that was led by the consumption habits of the elite.

Unmet expectations: the economy

The Aquino government, however, passed up the chance to respond to all these. While mouthing pro-farmer lines, it implements policies inimical to the improvement of farmers' incomes and living conditions. It came up with an agrarian reform law which a landlord-dominated Congress turned into an almost toothless piece of legislation. It highlighted its bias when it ordered the police to shoot at farmers who demonstrated for better agricultural policies. It gave up the opportunity to correct its own mistakes when it did not push for the appointment of a pro-farmer Secretary of Agrarian Reform.

In response to the jobless, Aquino sought to address unemployment in the early years of her administration. She vowed to create one million jobs; so far the number of jobs created has been way off target.

Among the reasons usually cited for the recurring unemployment are political instability, lack of foreign investments, capital flight. Under martial law, Marcos made use of repressive decrees to discourage strikes and other forms of mass action. Of course, these did not stop the more militant unionists, who staged strikes when they could. Such an image of an unstable society persisted under Aquino, which was compounded by numerous coup attempts by discontented elements of the military. It is said that it is this lack of political stability which has scared off potential foreign investors. Local capitalists, meanwhile, would seem to prefer to invest abroad, or stash their money in banks or purchase high-interest government bonds.

Actually, it is not only the jobless who need to be productive, because a considerable part of those who are employed are *underemployed*. Ac-

cording to the official definition, one is underemployed if one is working less than full-time and needs additional income. This, however, disguises the other side of underemployment, which describes the condition of most Filipinos, i.e., working full-time and still needing additional income. It hides the fact that in most cases, the wages received by workers and rank-and-file employees are barely enough to provide for life's necessities, which allow them even less opportunity to pursue the "finer things in life".

Looking thus at the growing army of unemployed and underemployed, it would seem that the government has failed to provide the environment for a productive labour force and has instead passed on this responsibility to foreign companies. It has encouraged further the entry of multinational companies, and has closed its eyes to fraudulently made investments. It has promoted the creation of industrial estates in agricultural areas. Export processing zones are also encouraged, in spite of the experience that these merely use up the young labour force for foreign companies' profits. These enclaves are actually local sweatshops of mother companies based in countries like Japan whose operations here do not encourage the use of local materials nor generate foreign exchange for the local economy. The domestic labour force serves instead to respond to other countries' labour shortages at wages that are naturally several times lower than in those countries.

If not in Philippine-based foreign companies, it is in foreign lands that the labour force is found. Migrant work has figured prominently in the last few years, making human resources one of the country's more profitable exports. The brain drain plagued the labour force in the sixties and seventies, with the exodus of doctors, nurses, engineers and other professionals to developed countries like the United States.

The decade of the eighties, on the other hand, was characterized by the brawn drain (even as the brain drain continues), which saw skilled and unskilled construction workers, mostly male, troop to oil-rich and labour-scarce countries like Saudi Arabia. Recipient countries welcomed the Filipino migrants because they were cheap, educated, desperate, and therefore, eager to work.

Cities in Europe and North America used to be migrant workers' choice job sites. In recent years, the Philippines' neighbors have begun to look attractive as well as they increased their GNPs and raised their standards of living. In this shift to places closer to home, Filipino women have figured prominently, the burden of survival once again put on their shoulders.

In spite of being treated as second-class citizens in other societies, Fili-

A Mortgaged Future

According to a paper written by John Cavanagh and Robin Broad in 1989, paying the Philippine debt kills one Filipino child per hour.

To put it another way, one child per hour could have been saved if the Philippine government would only reduce yearly debt-service payments to 20 percent of export earnings. But at present, average debt-service expenditure eats up almost half of the value of Philippine exports.

The conclusion of Cavanagh and Broad assumes that a debt-service cap would be implemented and that health would get a portion of the savings from the debt-service cut equivalent to its percentage share in the government budget.

The Philippine government's appropriations for debt-servicing have increased over the years, while public health expenditures have gone down. The table below tells the whole story:

Average Share Of Total National Government Expenditures

	Debt Service	Health
1965-72	6.4%	5.2%
1972-79	5.2	3.9
1980-85	17.1	3.4
1986-89	42.0	3.2

To go back to the example of Cavanagh and Broad, one cannot rest content in saving

the life of one Filipino child per hour. For as long as the policy of siphoning off much-needed resources to pay the huge debt continues, more Filipino children will suffer its terrible consequences.

For example, at the time the national debt crisis was about to peak, respiratory infections, especially among babies, became more widespread. In 1983, according to a study done by a UP School of Economics professor, infants and children below five years of age accounted for 66 percent of pneumonia cases, 59 percent of bronchitis cases, and 57 percent of measles cases.

What is worse, it will be the Filipino children and future generations who will ultimately repay the 27-28 billion dollars today's outstanding debt.

From both the moral and economic perspectives, it is a grievous crime to pass on the burden to our children and their children. In this sense alone, the resolution of the debt crisis assumes greater urgency.

It is in this light that more than 150 people's organizations, cutting across a broad social and political spectrum, have coalesced under the Freedom from Debt Coalition to campaign for genuine debt relief and substantial debt reduction. Hopefully, the ideal of freedom from debt will be attained before a new generation takes over.

By Men Sta. Ana, Secretary-General, Freedom from Debt Coalition

pino migrants give the Philippine government little reason to complain because a big part of their income is sent home.

The other side of the dollars earned, however, is the collection of sad stories of maltreatment, breaches of contract, and abuse by employers which are common features of migrants' lives abroad. Indeed, their experiences seem to try to outdo each other in their cruelty, bizarreness, and tragedy. But only minimal effort is being done to improve the situation.

Further, expectations of better access to services would now have to

be set aside as the government seems bent on responding to its obligations to foreign countries and institutions first. A few months after Aquino came to power, she went on a trip to the US, not only to greet her supporters there, but also to make a public assurance that her government would pay all its foreign obligations. True to her promise, the government has consistently been spending almost half of its annual budget for debt service. Even migrant workers' hard-earned dollars help pay the country's ballooning debt.

Recent policies bear witness to the fact that foreign creditors come before the people's needs. Instead of debt reduction, the government's financial officials ask for more loans which the people can never hope to pay and live happily afterwards.

More populist alternatives, such as repudiation of fraudulently acquired loans, or imposition of a cap on debt payments, or calling for a debt moratorium have not been taken seriously by the country's conservative business leaders. Instead, those who advocate for these are either ignored, or simply fired from government positions.

The expectation, thus, that the Filipinos were on their way to a better life gradually changed to a realization that in terms of their economic condition, they were just going to get more of the same bitter pill that they did under Marcos.

Likewise, the hopes that EDSA paved the way towards genuine democracy were rudely dashed when people realized that all they were going to get was bourgeois democracy with all its trappings: elections dominated by money and violence, a bickering and sophomoric Congress, and elitist strategies for development.

But even bourgeois democracy is in danger of being swept away, because after four years, the dominance of anti-democratic forces in the leadership is fast coming into focus.

Resurgence of anti-democratic forces

Political clans still exercise great influence in Philippine politics, especially in the provinces. A score of them still rule like kings in their fiefdoms outside Manila. They have held power through a combination of patronage, keeping the people economically dependent, and the use of force through their private armies.

The dominance of political clans in Philippine politics extends to the national level. In the May 1987 congressional elections, more than half of the elected members of congress were identified as leaders of political clans. About one-fourth were heirs of powerful local dynasties. Very few of these clans have espoused nationalistic and progressive principles.

Another threat comes from the *military*, which is politicized and divided. Ultra-rightist factions have used their perceived power to force the government to put an end to the peace and to remove liberal and progressive-minded individuals in office. Their attempts to grab power (six times since Aquino became president: July 1986, November 1986, 27 January 1987, 9 April 1987, 28 August 1987, and December 1989) show that the military now sees itself as an alternative to the present bourgeois democratic set-up.

The politicization of the military is personified by Fidel Ramos, a general, who recently resigned as Defense Secretary to run in the 1992 presidential elections. The decision to reactivate the paramilitary forces of the Marcos dictatorship (under a different name, of course) was proof of the military's clout within the civilian government. The latter also had to back down on its investigations of military abuses. Elements of the military force likewise are able to get away with practically any crime — car-napping, bank robbery, extra-judicial killing — that people have despaired that they need protection from those who are supposed to protect them.

The *Supreme Court*, which used to be the people's last resort, recently handed down a verdict which allows the military or paramilitary forces to arrest without warrant people suspected of *subversion* or *communism*. Aquino does not even have to declare martial law anymore as any policeman can pick up any man or woman in the street whom the former thinks may be up to something *subversive*. The Supreme Court has also declared as constitutional the setting-up of *checkpoints*, which allows police to stop and search civilian vehicles.

The *business sector*, which has strong ties to foreign and transnational corporations, has the greatest influence in policy-making. Most high-ranking government officials have business connections, if not big business owners themselves. The representatives of this sector, under close influence of the IMF and the World Bank, virtually control economic policy-making bodies of the government, and are responsible for the country's open-door policy towards foreign goods and investments. They also sit as board members of multinational corporations and banks, while holding cabinet positions or acting as presidential advisers at the same time.

Conservative corporate interests have taken precedence over the people's basic needs. When there was talk of imposing a debt moratorium to respond to the disaster caused by the recent earthquake, the business sector's reaction was alarm over the projected loss of investments.

Because of these, the people's wait-and-see attitude has changed to cynicism and resignation. They could see that nothing much has changed. Directions seemed to be heading back to square one.

Cynicism prevails

This cynicism is expressed in various forms. It has become more difficult, for example, to mobilize people for political purposes. [Even the government has to bring in movie stars to attract people into attending events like Independence Day rites and EDSA anniversaries.] They seem tired of rallies and demonstrations, mass actions which they associate with EDSA, and ultimately, with EDSA's broken promises. The cynicism has affected even the middle class. In the aftermath of the recent calamities which hit the country, many groups who wanted to offer relief goods and services went directly to the affected areas and gave their donations straight to the people. They could not trust the government — even with relief goods!

Surviving on their own: the underground economy

Another proof of popular disenchantment is that people have learned to cope on their own. The underground economy has expanded considerably in recent years.

As life becomes more difficult in the countryside, more pressure is being put on the bigger cities to accommodate job-seekers.

More than 50 percent of the Philippine population live in rural areas. Yet they are slowly but surely being eased out of it because of the hard life it represents. Rural folk are increasingly confronted with low productivity, militarization, depressed incomes, lack of opportunities, lack of access to social services, declining standard of living, and fast-disappearing resources. Unilateral takeovers of big farmlands by organized farmers have become an attractive option for the landless.

It is not surprising also to find that rural folk are just raring to leave the countryside to search for greener pastures. Even children already have an idea of how difficult life is at home and like their elders, are already setting their sights on a life and livelihood abroad. Little boys in the rural areas say they "want to go to Saudi" when asked about what they want to do in the future; girls, meanwhile, "want to go to Japan".

Among those who cannot leave the country at all, the cities seem to be their Mecca of employment. Manila, for example, plays host to different regional groupings as its population increased by two million in just two years. Migrants from the provinces have joined the ranks of the

city's poor, causing the population of the lower-income groups to swell.

Since the city can offer jobs to only so many, the rest have to fend for themselves. Often, they end up vending anything from flowers to newspapers to *real estate* in slum areas. Since they cannot be absorbed by the formal economic structure in the sense of being provided with jobs and social services, they have been increasingly generating their own money-making activities for their own survival.

Among these ventures would be neighborhood convenience stores, whose number increased by 9,000 from 1982 to 1985 in Manila alone. Eateries along the roads and bakeshops likewise flourished, increasing by about 85 to 99 percent during the same period.¹

A subsector of the informal economy is the so-called *underground economy*, which is used to describe "that portion of the informal labour sector operating 'illegally', i.e., without license or not registered formally, such as beggars and scavengers". According to a study, ambulant vendors make up 80 percent of households in depressed areas in Manila. Another study estimates that in Manila alone, 22,300 vendors are not registered with the government, and are therefore operating illegally.²

As a whole, the informal sector's degree of linkage with the formal sector is not very high, as many activities performed within it can stand on their own, e.g., smuggling, begging, gambling, prostitution. There are still linkages, though, which occur in cases of subcontracting, dispensing grease money to facilitate bureaucratic processes, usury, etc.

In spite of its being effectively outside the formal economy, the informal sector, which is highly service-oriented in the Philippine case, has grown big enough to worry the government. Its knee-jerk reaction, however, has been to try to wipe its participants off the face of the city. Vendors, especially, have been subjected to demolitions, burning of goods, and even imprisonment. And yet, this sector has been estimated to have generated the equivalent of about 54 percent of the country's GNP.

In the face of widespread joblessness and limited opportunities for advancement, informal economic activities are coping mechanisms of those who are powerless and marginalized. Unless the government can think of intelligent ways to improve the formal economy and democratize access to resources and opportunities, the poor will always resort to the *underground* in order to keep their bodies and souls together.

1 IBON, 31 December 1988

2 Intersect, July 1988; IBON 31 December 1988

Her Place, By Social Decree

Many contend that the status of Filipino women in society has improved a great deal because they are allowed to vote, to educate themselves, or to hold important positions in the workplace. This is, however, one more myth that has to be dispelled.

From birth, women are trained to look at themselves as the weak, submissive counterpart of superior males. They are made to believe that a good woman's place is in the home. Internalization of such is seen in most households.

On the average, a husband spends only one-fifths of the time a wife spends on housework. If they can afford it, couples hire servants, but this does not mean exploita-

tion no longer exists. On the contrary, the fact that househelp would often be women means that female exploitation continues. In lower-income, maid-less homes, women still do the housework, in addition to factory or farm work, whether the husband is similarly employed.

In the workplace, men have superior positions even in women-dominated industries like textiles and electronics. Women are assigned the most tedious and physically exhausting tasks, while men are usually given supervisory jobs. And often women are paid less than men. Average earnings of an employed Filipina are less than two-fifths of the average earnings of her male counterpart.

Crime on the rise

The crime situation has worsened. In recent years, the average annual rate of increase of crime incidence has been almost four percent. The trend has been attributed to the present economic difficulties, pressures of an increased population, urbanization, and problems of squatters (illegal settlers) in slum areas.

Effects on the environment

The environment not only has had to suffer at the hands of greedy individuals, but unfortunately, also has had to bear the negative effects of people's survival instincts. Swidden farmers, for example, add to loggers' destructive practices by their lack of awareness of methods which can restore forests to their former state.

Swidden or slash-and-burn agriculture was first practiced by cultural communities who lived in the forests for many generations. Their practice of burning trees was balanced by planting in the affected area and then leaving the soil untouched for the next few years to allow it to regain nutrients which it may have lost. Lately, however, increasing poverty and worsening unemployment have pushed many lowlanders up the mountains for any means of survival that can be found.

The survival of future generations, however, is also at stake. Thus, in communities which have been directly affected by indiscriminate log-

ging, the people have resorted to mass actions to highlight the issue, ranging from holding rituals in ancestral mountains to “fasting for the trees”.

The people’s mass actions could probably take even more desperate turns, but it seems that trees will continue to be logged as long as it is lucrative to do so, and as long as “supplies last”. They continue to bring in precious dollars for the government and concessionaires as they find their way into the homes and buildings of affluent societies in Japan, the US, and the UK. Thus, as long as the trees enable a few to amass wealth and buy influence, they will continue to be felled. Unfortunately for the rest of the people, the forests will not be there forever.

The fishery sector faces a similar problem. The country has the longest discontinuous coastline in the world, and boasts of numerous rivers, lakes, and streams. Its marine waters cover more than two million square kilometers. Its beaches, corals, and seafood continue to attract both foreign and local tourists. Yet its close to one million fishers are among the most marginalized sectors.

The sector is made up of municipal fishers, commercial fishers, and aquaculture workers. The poorest of the lot are the municipal fishers whose small boats cannot bring in as much fish as they need to earn enough for basic necessities. Often, they have to resort to illegal fishing methods. Aside from competition from bigger fishers and fishing companies, they also have to confront dwindling catch, increasing militarization of the countryside, and worsening pollution and destruction of fishing areas and other marine resources.

Thus, small fisherfolk, who know the sea and the movement of its creatures so well, unwittingly use this knowledge to destroy marine life. For example, they know that using dynamites just before fish migrate is harmful, but, for them, it is a choice between allowing the fish to get away in order to grow, or feeding their families. There is not much of a choice, really.

The conflict between preservation of the environment and creation of livelihood for the survival of little people is also played out in the mining sector.

Among our mineral resources are copper, chromite, iron, lead zinc, mercury, and nickel, but what has been a source of income for the marginalized sector, especially in recent years, is gold. People from all walks of life — farmers, NPA guerrillas, military rank-and-file, townspeople — have literally struck a goldmine in the bowels of the southmost island of Mindanao. They come to the mines in jeeploads to dig, bent body next to bent body, and earn more money than they have ever had in their

Faulty Underground

An average of five earthquakes occur daily in various parts of the Philippines. From 1976-89, 126 major earthquakes rocked the country, causing total damages worth P284.8 million. The earthquake of 16 July 1990 was the most destructive: damage to infrastructure and utilities exceeded P2.7 billion, agricultural losses reached one billion pesos, and damage to agriculture-related facilities of the government amounted to P236 million.

The Philippines lies inside five volcanic belts and is home to around 200 volcanoes, of which 21 are considered active. There have been 147 recorded volcanic eruptions in the Philippines in the last 600 years. All wrought widespread disaster. Mt. Pinatubo alone accounted for more than P10.6 billion in damages when it erupted in June 1991.

Source: IBON Facts and Figures, 15 May 1992, p. 3.

lives. They risk their lives with the unsafe methods they use, but their alternative is losing their lives through hunger.

Indeed, the ecological crisis faced by the country today is a glaring manifestation of the structural conditions of this society. On one side are the rich and powerful few who have the means to exploit the natural resources (and they have done so with impunity). On the other are the more numerous poor, who are largely dependent on the government for employment and services, and not receiving any, resort to other means, often dangerous, to survive.

The government has instead opted to side with the elite, and has tolerated the wanton depletion of the country's natural gifts as long as doing so would assure it of the latter's support. Its economic policies have not corrected the weak linkage between local industry and natural resources. They have instead encouraged the massive transfer of natural resources abroad, once again depriving the people of the chance to enjoy the fruits of their own land.

Effects on the "hope of the motherland"

The consequences of the struggle for survival have not spared children. In 1987, more than half of the population were below 21 years old. Legal provisions concerning the interest and welfare of children and youth, however, have not been implemented seriously.

They have become a most vulnerable group in the face of a crisis-ridden economy within a politically violent context. They used to be called the "hope of the motherland". These days, however, they have become the breadwinners of their families who see them as important sources of economic support. They help in the farms, in housework, and contribute

to the family income. The war between the government and the guerrillas in the countryside has caused forced displacement of communities, and has not excluded children, who have been killed, orphaned, or have disappeared.

A different life, albeit no less violent, awaits them in the cities. About three of every 1,000 children live on the streets — vending, scavenging, begging. About 50,000 to 70,000 of Manila's children can be found on its main roads. (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 7 April 1989) They are all vulnerable to drugs, diseases, syndicates, pimps, paedophiles.

The children have become victims of political and economic violence. Future generations of Filipinos are slowly being destroyed by being forced to earn a living in the streets, and by not sparing them from the violence of guns.

Thus, instead of an improved way of life, the people have experienced a worsening of their living conditions. Instead of a movement towards democracy, the direction has been to revert to elitist politics. More work needs to be done in order to move towards the goals of genuine democracy and a better life for the majority of the people.

Alternatives: NGOs and mass movements

The flourishing of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been prominent in recent years. They first surfaced during the time of the dictatorship, and the people saw them as more acceptable vehicles of political participation and economic development.

If Marcos saw adversaries in them, Aquino attempted to coopt them. It is now a state policy to "encourage non-governmental, community-based, or sectoral organizations that promote the welfare of the nation". (1987 Constitution)

Fresh from the experience of toppling a dictator, Aquino had announced plans to form "people's councils" that would operate parallel to the state bureaucracy. These plans never materialized. Instead, NGOs and popular movements continue to be regarded by the state with suspicion. Popular movements are often tagged as "communist fronts" by a military schooled in the Cold War mentality. Their leaders and members, thus, become targets for harassment, arrest, and even assassination by military and paramilitary groups. Given these conditions, NGOs and popular movements can hardly figure in decision-making. When government does listen to movements, it is only when they engage in militant mass actions or when the former needs to refurbish its image.

Political and sectoral linkages among political mass organizations and

movements exist at formal and informal levels. The Left has three or four main political tendencies which have not united into a single coalition group with a common political program. Coalitions among the different tendencies exist, but these have served mostly as networks for maintaining linkages rather than as permanent advocacy groups.

Support organizations of foreign countries are considered as essential to political movements and NGOs for solidarity and financial purposes. Mostly European and Japanese, these foreign organizations are sources of aid to local NGOs, especially those engaged in community and sectoral organizing, livelihood projects and research. Philippine NGOs, specifically those more political in nature, have structures which could forward aid to local communities in the form of livelihood projects. The NGOs' work aims to empower the people for greater participation in decision-making, and as such are different from those which merely want to do charity work.

Issues to confront in the transition

Filipinos had high hopes for the post-Marcos period. Their experiences in recent years have destroyed these. Perhaps they were too high, or maybe they were pinned on the wrong persons. Perhaps they put too much hope on the government that, after all, has not been known to work for their interests.

What this transition phase has highlighted, instead, are some obstacles to empowerment and better life which the people now have to confront:

A failed economic strategy

In the Philippines today, it is fashionable to talk about achieving NIC status by the year 2000. It is the latest ambition of the "sick man of Asia". While not everyone agrees with the soundness of this goal, what is nevertheless accepted by all is that much work needs to be done if the country is to move towards full-fledged industrialization.

The low level of industrialization can be seen in the kind of commodities that the country imports. The country's balance of trade figures show that it is heavily dependent upon external sources for machinery, equipment, instruments, base metals, and chemical products. In fact, the commodities it exports have heavy import content. In particular, "the leap in manufactured export earnings (garments and electronics) made imports jump too, as about 33 cents of every dollar earned from these exported items comprise imported inputs."³

Garments manufacturers find it more profitable to import textiles and other components than to produce and utilize local materials. Mean-

Acronyms in the Philippine Context

ACRONYMS (Attempts to Create Other Names for Yawn-inducing, Mad Sobriquets) go a long way in the Philippines. No other people or movement can approximate the Filipino penchant for acronyms. Here is where the language of politics is politics itself.

There are no fixed rules in creating acronyms or AC's. But they should, by and large, reflect the aims of an organization or describe it (KALAYAAN, meaning freedom, and AWARE, are both women's groups; PAID! or People Against Immoral Debt, is the newsletter of the Freedom from Debt Coalition) project a symbol or image (KADENA or chain is a youth organization; TRAPO is an old rag which pertains to traditional, conservative politicians; BISIG or arm is a socialist group) call people to action (MAKIBAKA, meaning fight, is an underground women's organization; AKAPKA, literally, "embrace you", is an urban poor organisation; ACT is a teachers movement) allude to a hero (LUNA is a Filipino painter and national hero, after

whom a group of young artists calls itself shorten a term (OF for overseas Filipinos, ST for Southern Tagalog region or, lately, locally produced "Sex Trip" films or cloak a "sensitive" term (UG for the political underground, FT for full-time involvement in the UG, TNT or "Tago Nang Tago", meaning constantly hiding, for Filipinos working illegally overseas and who must therefore hide from immigration authorities).

Points are scored for originality, recall, social relevance and vivid description of the issue, condition, person, group, sector or movement which the AC represents. Personal favourites include PISTON, a machine part and the name of an organization of transport workers, WAR 3 or Workers Alliance in Region Three, and GUAPO (Spanish for handsome) which also stands for genuine alternative politicians. However we may view ACs, they do add color and spice up the Philippine political and social ARENA (Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives).

while, the wafers which are transformed into microchips for export are also imported. In 1983, for example, semiconductors had an export value of 747 million dollars, but import expenses incurred totalled 765 million dollars.⁴ In these cases, only the labour required to put these items together was the local input.

There are many factors going against the country's smooth path towards industrialization. Half the labour force is found in the agriculture sector, which has not proven to be a *profitable* employer. Agricultural productivity is low because of lack of support from the government and, more basically, because of the unequal economic and social structure in the countryside. Among those engaged in non-agricultural activities,

3 IBON, 30 September 1989

4 IBON, 31 August 1984

such as factory workers, many do not earn enough for their needs. With such a set-up, it is hard to develop a domestic market, which would have served as target consumers for outputs of industries. Thus the sector's purchasing power will remain weak if the present structure is maintained.

Indeed, the failure of the strategy of import-substitution industrialization (ISI) in the 1950s should have taught economic planners some lessons. ISI did not lead to the promised development, but instead "created ... a small domestic industrial sector with little dynamism for growth, innovation, and almost no reinvestment of profits to expand production". This was mainly because the ones who spearheaded the strategy were "landowning entrepreneurs (who) took advantage of import controls and the unfulfilled demand in the domestic market."⁵ Most of the profits were spent on imported luxury goods which only they could afford. This, operating within a rigid and unjust social structure led to the perpetuation of a weak domestic market which could not absorb the products of the newly-established local industries.

Succeeding government policies and moves, instead of trying to improve the local consumers' purchasing power, paid more attention to external markets. The consequent shift, and later the full support given, to export-oriented industrialization has, however, not improved the people's condition. Instead, it caused the depletion of the country's natural resources as raw materials and agricultural products were exported. Only import-dependent light manufactured goods such as garments and footwear were produced. The technologies learned from assembly did not make the labour force highly skilled. Nor did incomes generated also mean an improved standard of living for workers. The development strategy pursued has only strengthened the country's dependence on external sources of inputs and on specific markets.

It seems, however, that the Philippines is sticking to this externally-oriented strategy because it brings in badly-needed dollars. It needs the dollars to pay for the machinery and other materials that it imports, and for the debts incurred in its pursuit of *industrialization*. And so the vicious cycle continues.

To break this, there must be a conscious attempt by the state to chart a development strategy that will not just increase productivity, but also move to radically alter the highly unequal social structure by making possible the redistribution of resources and opportunities. The kind of tech-

5 IBON, 30 November 1989

nology needed by the country must be carefully considered. More importantly, what should be encouraged and nurtured is the country's capability to learn and use technology.⁶ Further, the kind of economic activities that the country should engage in must be deliberately thought of, taking into consideration long-term needs and goals. The industrialization strategy then that must be pursued is one that benefits the majority.

Continuing threats from a divided, but ambitious military

The numerous coup attempts staged by the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) have shown that ambitious elements in the military will not stop until they are able to wrest power from civilian leadership. Some of the coup leaders have been imprisoned, but there are still many who are at-large and are suspected of being coddled by powerful politicians. Ramos, who presents a strong-man image (in contrast to Cory's weak and indecisive personality), and who has made apparent his presidential ambition, represents another threat to the people's aspirations for democracy.

Lack of respect for human rights

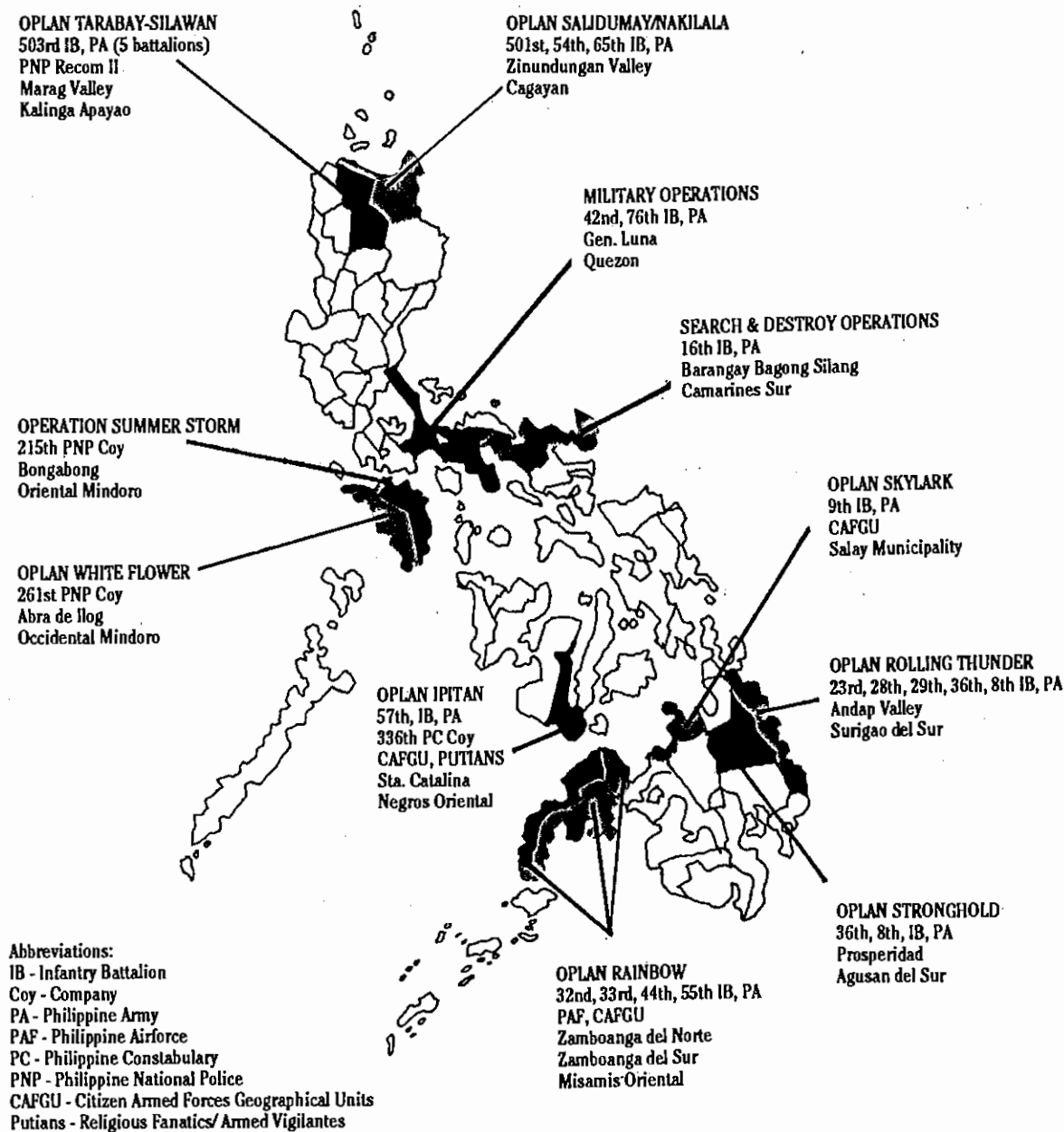
Article 13 of the Philippine Constitution gives the state the explicit role of protecting the right of all people to human dignity, reduction of social, economic and political inequalities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good. Thus, human rights (HR) do not only refer to those that involve one's civil and political life, but also one's social, economic and cultural concerns. Common usage, though, usually refers to its political aspect.

Even with the addition of certain rights prohibiting detention for political reasons and torture, agents of the government continue to arrest, search, seize without warrants, obtain confessions forcibly or without legal counsel, torture, indiscriminately abuse power, etc. These are committed against common criminals who do not have the benefit of being the primary concern of human rights groups.

In the first 1,000 days of the Aquino Government, 11,911 persons were picked up in mass arrests mostly in saturation drives, protest actions, and military operations in rural communities. Among these, 1,676 were tortured. Salvaging victims numbered 705; forced evacuation, 283

6 Noel de Dios, *Mga Suliranin ng Nabigong Industriyalisasyon*, 19 August 1989

Major Military Operations, 1991



Source: Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace, quoted in IBON 31 August 1992.

incidents; hamletting, 18 cases; abduction, 224; harassment, etc., 217; illegal divestment of property, 124 cases; arbitrary destruction of property, 76 cases.⁷ There is solid basis, therefore, for Amnesty International to rank the Philippines as among the leading countries with the worst records of human rights violations.

The government's Commission on Human Rights, tasked with investigating HR violations, is far from being the independent constitutional commission it was envisioned to be. It has degenerated into a mere office of apologists of the Aquino government for its human rights record. Presidential Decree 1850, providing for the trial in military courts of human rights cases against soldiers, has been the biggest single bar to prosecuting violators. Although more than 1,000 cases of violations had been reported to the Commission, according to AI, only 79 cases had been filed with either the military or civilian courts (when the accused are paramilitary forces or civilian officials). In the same report, AI states that by the end of 1988, no military or police officer had been convicted of a violation committed under the Aquino administration.⁸

HR groups themselves investigate, record, and file complaints of violations. HR volunteers and workers, many of them church-based, do not expect much help from either the civilian or military courts. Instead, they have to be on the lookout for their own safety and security as their work places them in a sensitive position vis-a-vis HR violators themselves.

Lawyers' groups such as the Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity and Nationalism (MABINI) and Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) provide free legal assistance to victims of human rights violations, among other cases.

Programs in some law schools which incorporate developmental legal aid is concerned with "public rather than private issues and is intent on changing instead of merely upholding existing law and social structures, particularly the distribution of power within society."⁹ Part of the help given is community-based legal education given by paralegal personnel. Much of their activities center on discussion and popularization of basic constitutional rights, human rights, judicial processes, etc.

Media as a sector which safeguards human rights is effective in exposing and publicizing violations. Newspapers periodically carry editorials

7 Philippine Human Rights Update, November-December 1988

8 Manila Chronicle, 26 October 1989

9 J.W. Diokno, Developmental Legal Aid in Rural ASEAN: Problems and Prospects

condemning human rights violations.

Amnesty International as a monitoring group conducts investigations much like local HR groups, but also recommends actions to be taken by the government. The government pays attention to its findings and their implications more than it does to local HR groups because of its concern with its international image.

Strong hold of traditional politicians in decision-making

The Philippine political scene has always been dominated by traditional politicians, i.e., those who get elected to public office not because of their brains or their love for the people but because of their money and power. They thrive on patronage and use their connections to power to further their ambitions. They are always on the lookout for events or people that can advance their political interests. They rarely hold on to their principles, as positions and influence are more important to them. They brazenly use public office for personal aggrandizement, and forget about their constituents once they are in power. Thus, they have consistently opposed policies which would democratize decision-making and restructure society, such as the land reform law, and the appointment of liberal and progressive-minded individuals to public office.

There have been attempts, particularly by progressives, to encourage politics of issues as opposed to politics of personalities and patronage, but tradition has so far proven stronger.

Foreign policy that disregards popular interests

An important factor which decides the capability of a country in drawing up a truly independent foreign policy is the degree of national self-identity its people possess, and the extent to which this has permeated the social structure.

In many instances in Philippine society, members of the elite have time and again showed their close links with foreign rulers and their interest in contrast to their oppositional stance vis- a-vis the interests of the majority in the country. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the international treaties entered into by Philippine leaders on behalf of the Filipino people, and in the foreign policy decisions they have made and implemented.

Unequal and subservient alliances

The Mutual Defense Treaty provides for an alliance where the Philip-

Philippines can be dragged into any US conflict but not vice versa.¹⁰ Imposed upon the country after World War II, this military alliance has tied the Philippines to US foreign policy and interests instead of strengthening its positions in international negotiations (which almost always are with the US).

The Philippines is being used as a US outpost over the trade lanes in the southeast Asia-Pacific region as well as serving as a link in the US defense chain in this region. While performing a crucial role in this politico-military arrangement, the Philippine government still intends to make the Philippines a member of the non-aligned states.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN, on the other hand, has failed in its goal to promote an economic alternative within the framework of regional economic cooperation. It now assumes a political character, highlighting security issues in the region. The Philippines has benefitted in principle when the organization established its support for a zone of peace, as this is believed to lessen superpower conflict in the region. In the same breath though, ASEAN subservience to the United States is clearly seen in the former's support of the latter's position vis-a-vis the Indochina conflict.¹¹

International treaties and agreements

The President as head of state "maintains diplomatic relations, enters into treaties and otherwise transact the business of foreign relations."¹² The Philippine Constitution further states that "no treaty or international agreement shall be valid and effective unless concurred in by at least two-thirds of all the members of the senate." The validity of treaties and executive agreements may further be brought to the Supreme Court. Once their unconstitutionality is declared, the treaty or agreement is repealed.

The Military Bases Agreement provided for the operation of US bases in the Philippines. This agreement gave the Americans the right to fully utilize these bases "free of rent" and other privileges, making these bases de facto US territory.¹³ The social costs of hosting the bases, such as prostitution, and the economic dislocation of tribal communities around

10 R. Simbulan, *Bases of Our Insecurity*

11 T. Encarnacion, *The ASEAN, In Search of a Raison D'etre*, *Diliman Review*, Vol 36, No 1

12 I. Cruz, *Philippine Political Law*

13 R. Simbulan, *A Guide to Nuclear Philippines*

Senate Votes US Bases Out

The Senate yesterday rejected, 12-11, the new base treaty with the United States, ending nearly a century of US military presence in the country.

In a similar vote, the chamber also approved a resolution denying an extended lease on Subic Naval Base, the largest American naval installation in Asia.

"The treaty is defeated," declared Senate President Jovito Salonga, who cast the 12th vote.

President Aquino, however, vowed to call a referendum and use "people power" to overturn the Senate decision.

The US embassy said in a statement that the United States will "stand fully behind the President in her continuing efforts to put in place the new treaty."

Anti-base spectators inside the Senate hall openly wept, hugged each other, and jumped with joy as Salonga banged his gavel to end the day-long session.

Those who voted against the treaty were Senators Salonga, Rene Saguisag, Aquilino Pimentel, Agapito Aquino, Joseph Estrada, Juan Ponce Enrile, Teofisto Guingona Jr., Sotero Laurel, Ernesto Maceda, Orlando Mercado, Wigberto Tanada and Victor Ziga.

Voting in favour were Senators Heherson Alvarez, Edgardo Angara, Neptali Gonzales, Ernesto Herrera, Jose Lina Jr., John Osmena, Vicente Paterno, Alberto Romulo, Santanina Rasul, Leticia Ramos Shahani and Mamintal Tamano.

Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, 17 September 1991.

them have always been scandalous realities in Philippine society, but apparently, they are not enough to push the government into taking a drastic step like dismantling them. Also, it has only been recently that conversion plans for the base areas were drawn up, proof that there has been no long-term desire to change the status quo. (Of course, the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in June 1991 forced the Americans to leave Clark Air Base when politics couldn't. The negotiators of both countries have since come up with vastly reduced compensation for the remaining facility in Subic Bay, now awaiting ratification or rejection by the Philippine Senate.)

Treaties on nuclear weapons which serve as evidence of the long-standing official policy of the Philippine government against nuclear weapons become mere policies on paper when the issue of the storage of such weapons in the American bases is in question, because the Americans will "neither deny or confirm" the accusation.

Foreign intervention

Foreign intervention in the Philippines is synonymous to US intervention. The presence of the bases guarantees the threat of US military intervention in the Philippines anytime the bases and their continued stay are put into danger. Likewise, foreign intervention is manifested through the

use of the bases, either as a springboard for projecting US power in the region or as a base for local operations such as counter-insurgency.¹⁴ The presence of Special Operations Forces (SOF) in the bases also gives proof to the perception that the bases continue to provide support for counter-insurgency-related operations of US troops.

JUSMAG is the facility through which the US government arms, trains, and advises Philippine troops in counter-insurgency. (*Simbulan, Bases...*) The military aid given in the form of military hardware do not in any way enhance the external defense capability of the Philippine military. This military equipment is also classified as US surplus. As a dependent of US military aid, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has become more of an extension of US troops in the Pacific.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is a mainstay in Philippine politics. For its continued success, "in March 1987, President Reagan signed a 'finding' to increase funds and personnel for the CIA in the Philippines. Besides providing for more CIA assistance to the Philippine military in the war against the New People's Army, the 'finding' also provided for more CIA intervention in Philippine political life generally, by such means as covert political action, dirty tricks, misinformation, and the formation of new political groups. The 'finding' indicated the importance given to the role of the CIA in moving the whole field of post-EDSA politics to a conservative direction."¹⁵

Government's attempt to coopt NGOs

Recently, Aquino launched a political movement called KABISIG in the hope of rallying NGOs to support and help implement government programs, and to speed up delivery of government services. It has since received a lot of flak from different sectors: from politicians who felt left out in the organization's planning, and from cause-oriented groups and individuals, who saw it as a way of coopting NGOs, and absolving government of its non-delivery of basic services.

Lack of national identity

Centuries of foreign domination have produced Filipinos who are confused as to what a Filipino is and what being Filipino means. This is seen, for example, in the heated debate that arises when the question of a

¹⁴ D.B. Schirmer, *US Bases and Intervention in the Philippines*

¹⁵ D.B. Schirmer and S.R. Shalom, *Aquino's Right Turn and the US Bases*

national language is brought up. There is much ado about how the people should treat languages of the country's colonizers like English (the medium of instruction in many schools, the language of most newspapers and TV shows, the language of the political, economic, and intellectual elite) and Spanish, which until recently, was a required course in school curricula. It is also discerned in the cultural schizophrenia which most Filipinos are afflicted with.

The country's colonial experience has also widened the gap between those who had collaborated with the foreign rulers and those who had refused to be coopted. The latter have consistently expressed nationalist aspirations vis-a-vis foreign policy issues.

The geography of the country has likewise made it difficult to unite the people, although it has made it easy for the state to benefit from the *divide and conquer* policy. This has given rise to regionalism, which is the practice of emphasizing one's regional background, and ridiculing or downgrading the characteristics and habits of other groups at the same time. Instead of a unified identity, regionalism dominates and sometimes dictates how people relate with each other. Politicians are notorious for raising the regionalism issue in trying to get votes from their constituents. Another deleterious effect is that regions that are not represented in the echelons of power can hardly expect to have access to adequate amounts of resources needed for their development.

Social cohesion of the people is expressed more through religious rites, observation of traditional practices and other cultural forms, rather than in nationalist undertakings.

For the Philippines, then, nationalism continues to be an important issue as Filipinos continue to search for their own national identity.

Autonomy (and secession) for ethnic groups

Philippine society is dominated by colonized Filipinos. Tribal communities that refused to be assimilated by the Spaniards were pushed further into the uplands and hinterlands of the country. The Muslim opposition to the western invasion was strong enough to deter Spanish incursion into their territory, and they have remained in many parts of Mindanao as of the present. Likewise, many groups in the northern part of the country have resisted assimilation into the colonized lowlands.

The seat of government, however, has always been in Manila, effectively excluding groups and communities that were far from the center. Thus, decision-making and policy formulation and implementation in the political, economic, and socio-cultural spheres have been largely car-

ried out by urban-based, Christian Filipinos.

There have been a few concessions to the plight of these communities such as a constitutional provision recognizing and promoting the rights of indigenous cultural communities. It leaves up to Congress, however, the promulgation of the laws pertaining to ethnic groups. Congress has done little or nothing towards this direction.

As minority groups, cultural communities cannot figure in national policy-making. As such, interests of such groups as the Muslims, and communities like those in the Cordillera, are barely articulated, much less considered in the formulation of government policies. Philippine political independence has not altered centuries of neglect, violation of minority rights, and disrespect of tribal lands and culture which these communities have suffered at the hands of the dominant population. Government neglect is also seen in the unjust distribution of resources. The budget allocated to Mindanao, for example, is not commensurate to its contribution to GNP.

The clamor for change in the status quo grew even louder in recent years. Demands of the affected groups ranged from greater representation in government to autonomy to secession. Many groups among them have openly revolted against the government.

In an attempt to compromise, the government called for referenda on the autonomy option for Muslim areas in Mindanao (in the south), and for the Cordillera region (in the north). The results showed that very few groups in Mindanao and in the north opted for autonomy. A probable reason for this seemingly contradictory outcome is that the people were not satisfied with the structure and procedure which an autonomous government would take as embodied in the government's proposal. It is not enough to just grant autonomy — there must also be structures which will allow autonomy to work for the benefit of the majority. If it only strengthens the powers of the local elites, then autonomy would not have made much difference.

Differences, ideological and otherwise, within the progressive movement, which pull it in divergent directions

The progressive movement in the Philippines has always been plagued by disunity primarily due to ideological differences among the main groups. The national democratic stream, which has existed for the longest period, has remained dominant because it has the largest membership and because it is the most well-organized. Then there are the social democrats, who are closer to the present leadership than the other groups. The independent socialists are by far the smallest among the three main strands, but are slowly gaining more members among the urban poor,



by J. M. W. Turner

the peasants, and the labour sector. The liberal democrats are found mostly in the professional and business sectors, and have their own organizations.

There are obviously ideological differences among them, but they have differed in terms of strategies and tactics as well. There have been occasions when unity was attempted, especially during the height of the protest movement against Marcos. These efforts eventually broke down.

Because of the boycott movement launched by the national democrats when Cory Aquino ran against Marcos, they were marginalized in the early years of the new administration. This was unfortunate because in spite of their official boycott line, many of their members in the provinces campaigned for Aquino in their individual capacity. Since then, there seems to have been a rethinking of their strategies and tactics.

There been occasions when these main groups in the progressive movement joined forces, but this has been largely on an issue-to-issue basis. There are also sector-based organizations to which these groups send their representatives.

Still, no debate on substantial issues seems to be going on among the main groups.

Conclusion

The people, however, cannot afford to be paralyzed by all of these problems. There is still reason to hope for change for the better. Things which were unthinkable before do not seem to be so unviable now. For example, attempts at forming and sustaining coalitions among different political forces such as the Freedom from Debt Coalition, the Anti-Bases Coalition, KILOS (Movement against Coups) seem successful as these coalitions have remained stable and continued to gain small victories. Sectoral alliances such as the Labour Advisory and Consultative Committee and the Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform have, in the recent past, shown their capacity to launch well-concerted mobilizations and campaigns which have produced considerable gains. Previously bickering NGOs are now able to sit together and talk about common problems.

Talk shows on TV and radio which deal with political and economic problems, even gender issues, continue to have a following and invite comment and criticism from the public. People write to newspapers to make their positions known.

There is an ecological movement which is gradually gaining support and popularity among ordinary citizens. This is probably because they are being directly hit by the consequences of environmental destruction, coupled with government neglect for its conservation and rehabilitation.

Droughts in the summer and floods in the rainy season have not only caused inconvenience. They also affect the health especially of those in poor and overcrowded areas; the productivity and income of workers (power outages caused by droughts mean no work and no pay); education of students (no water in the laboratories means no experiments; floods mean suspension of classes); growth of the economy as a whole (traffic jams caused by floods mean time and money wasted), etc.

Thus, they have gradually begun to realize that they have to do something about the worsening state of the environment. Through the guidance and initiatives of NGOs, some communities have participated in monitoring the pollution levels caused by plants and factories in their areas. In some fishing villages, the fishers have coordinated with NGOs to start resource management and control activities. They have begun formulating guidelines on who can fish when, what gears to use, etc; training leaders among themselves; forming cooperatives, etc. There have also been tree-planting initiatives both on an individual and organization-basis.

There seems to be greater flexibility among different political forces in the progressive movement. There are more attempts at organizing multi-sectoral activities. There appears to be more openness to criticism, especially in the light of political changes in other parts of the world. Organizing, although painstaking and tedious, is still going on.

The 1992 presidential election is just around the corner. Judging from the pronouncements and orientations of the more visible *presidentiables*, the people can expect more of the same elitist politics and anti-poor economics which have been obtaining in the Philippine scene especially in the recent past.

Thus, more effort needs to be exerted if the goal of popular empowerment is to be met. The people should realize that only by being organized and united will they be able to achieve this. They need to be more vigilant of their rights and vocal about their interests.

As Filipinos enter the decade of the nineties and the dawning of the 21st century, they need every bit of enthusiasm and optimism they can muster in order to deal with the obstacles that confront them in what will surely be more tumultuous years ahead. Regimes may come and go, but the people will still be there. They have their children to think of and to struggle for.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 1980** — Students stage first demonstration (since martial law was declared) to protest the Education Act of 1980.
- 1981** — Marcos *lifts* martial law and announces elections for a rubber-stamp parliament, the Batasang Pambansa; boycott of elections is launched by progressive movement.
- 1983** — Benigno Aquino, after three years of exile in the United States, comes home and is assassinated while descending plane stairs.
- August 27** — Aquino is buried after the largest and longest funeral march in the country's history.
- September 21** — Martial law anniversary. First rally is held by people's groups to protest the assassination and Marcos' martial law regime.
- 1984** — Local elections held. Boycott movement launched.
- 1986** — Protest marches, prayer rallies, demonstrations, protest runs, strikes, etc. are staged to express collective dissent and growing popular unity against the Marcos dictatorship.
- 1985** — Corazon Aquino is persuaded to run for president after a million signatures are collected and begins nationwide campaign. A boycott of known Marcos-crony companies and Marcos-controlled newspapers is launched.
- 1986** — Presidential elections are held in February amid widespread incidents of military harassment and violence. People are seen displaying unprecedented unity in protecting their ballots. Vigils in voting precincts are held to see to it that the people's ballots are counted properly, in anticipation of fraud by the dictatorship's poll body.
- February 23** — Plot by the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) faction of the military to take over the Marcos government is discovered. Ramos and Enrile, Marcos' Chief of Staff and Defense Secretary respectively, fearing arrest, quickly defect to the side of the People and ask them to protect the soldiers against the dictatorship's forces; start of four-day *people power revolution*.
- February 24-27** — *People power* at the national highway, E. de los Santos Ave. (EDSA) sends Marcos, his family, and his cronies out of Malacanang and to the US. Shortly thereafter, the Cory administration office is installed into office, with several leaders of the anti-Marcos movement and former members of the Marcos dictatorship, such as Ramos and Enrile, in positions of importance.
- 1987** — RAM stage their first coup attempt to press certain demands, notably the suspension of the government-initiated peace talks with the New People's Army, and the firing of known progressives in government. The arrested coup plotters and their men get away with push-ups.
- 1988** — Economy posts 6.8 percent growth, the biggest in recent years; brings satisfaction to economic planners. In reality, much of it is due

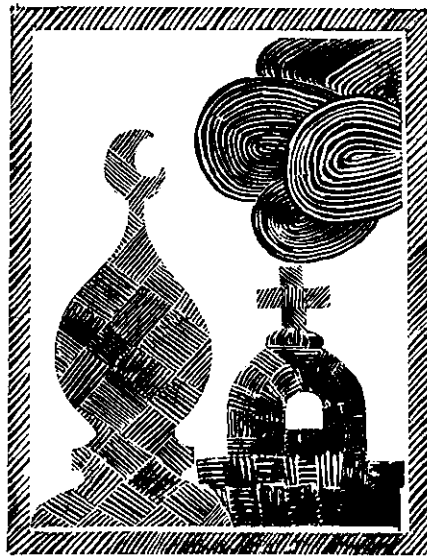
to consumption and spending by the upper and middle classes.

1989 — RAM soldiers stage another coup attempt, the bloodiest ever. The US intervenes in a display of support for Aquino's government. Wheels of the economy screech to a halt, as business confidence plummets. Public disaffection with anti-government soldiers surfaces, even as people remain dissatisfied with Aquino, her policies, and her government in general.

1990 — Strong earthquake shatters further attempts at rebuilding coup-stricken economy. Thousands die, are injured, or are rendered homeless. Government inefficiency and corruption are highlighted in the ensuing rescue process.

This country report was prepared by the Manila team under the supervision of Eduardo C. Tadem.

INDONESIA



WARNING

*IF people walk away
when the powerholders speak
we must be careful
perhaps, they are in despair*

*IF the people hide
and whisper
when they talk about their
own situation
the powerholders must be
watchful and learn to listen*

*IF people dare not complain
the situation is critical*

*and if the powerholders' words
may not be contested
truth is certainly at risk*

*IF suggestions are rejected
out of hand
voices silenced and criticism
forbidden
by accusations of subversion
in the interest of national security
then, there's only one response:
FIGHT!*

—Wiji Thukul

People as Sacrifice

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE in Indonesia today is how to stimulate change from an authoritarian to a more democratic socio-political system. The present system is too rigid with no space for different — and differing — opinions, especially those critical of government.

On the one hand, it is argued that authoritarian rule is important in creating a strong, stable government so that long term economic plans can be implemented smoothly. This claim by the government in justifying its repressive policies has some ground. Indonesia is a multi-ethnic, multi-racial society, with an unequal distribution of wealth and religious tension especially between the Moslems and the Christians. In this sense, it would be simplistic to explain the Indonesian reality as an authoritarian state dominated by the military which imposes its power over civilians.

On the other hand, this authoritarian rule has created fear among members of society. Any criticism against the government can be consid-

ered subversive and undermining political stability.¹ As a result one does not dare talk of corrupt officials, especially if they are high ranking state bureaucrats. Not only are fresh creative ideas lacking, but clean government is difficult to establish. Thus, authoritarian rule becomes a serious obstacle for socio-economic progress.

This report attempts to describe the complexity of the problem. In no way is this a complete report; it serves merely as an introduction, attempting to draw the attention of readers to some crucial problems in Indonesia today.

Roots of authoritarianism

Indonesia was a Dutch colony for about three and a half centuries. The country proclaimed independence on 17 August 1945, after it had been occupied by Japan for three and a half years during the Second World War. However, the Dutch refused to give up their power. The Indonesian people, using a combination of diplomatic maneuvers and guerrilla warfare, waged a national liberation war. In December 1949, Indonesia gained its sovereignty.

This young nation followed the economic and political system of the West, namely capitalism with parliamentary democracy. Sukarno, a pre-war leader, became the country's first president. He was basically a constitutional president with no real power. The prime minister was the head of the executive branch which was controlled by a parliament consisting of representatives of various political parties. The military was not involved in politics.

However, things started to change in the late 1950s. In the regions of Sumatra and Sulawesi people were rebelling against domination by the Javanese. Because of this, Sukarno re-enacted the 1945 Constitution which gave the president executive powers.

Meanwhile, the military became more active in politics. Under General Nasution, the military declared the "Dual Function of the Armed Forces". The military from then on was involved not only in military matters, but also in non-military activities, such as politics. This was to guarantee the social and political stability of the nation.

In its foreign policy, Sukarno aligned Indonesia with the socialist

1 Take, for instance, the case of two students and a young man in Yogyakarta who belonged to a discussion group discussing government development policies. They were arrested and sentenced to between six and eight years in prison. (Inside Indonesia, No. 19, July 1989: 8,9)

states, especially China, although it did not adopt socialism. Its political alignment with the socialist bloc led to tensions with the western world, mainly the US and Britain. These countries used their power — economic and military — to remove Sukarno from power. Economic aid was slowly stopped and by 1965 inflation was running at more than 600 percent. US military operations and secret intelligence helped fuel regional rebellions.

At the same time, the Communist Party of Indonesia (CPI) became more and more powerful. In its struggle to seize state power, the CPI had to face the military as its most serious opponent, along with the mass based Islamic parties.

The rivalry between the military and the CPI reached a head in September 1965. Around half a million people, suspected of being communist, were killed. The 1965 massacre has left a deep scar on the psyche of the Indonesian people, especially those in Central and East Java, and Bali, where the massacres took place. People learned to fear government and to refrain from getting involved in politics (including supporting NGOs). This collective trauma has contributed, in large measure, to the present authoritarian state.

Sukarno, who had been sympathetic to the CPI, was marginalized and in 1968 was replaced by General Suharto as president. General Suharto started a purge to rid the state and political organizations of leftist elements, including radical nationalists who were Sukarno's followers.

With the help of western countries, the Suharto administration managed to control economic inflation and rebuild the economy. Under the framework of political stability (provided by the military) and economic development (handled by technocrats), the New Order State laid its strong foundation.

The authoritarian state and its dynamics

After 1965, the political structure was reconstructed in order to guarantee the continuation of the New Order State, which meant the domination of the military over the state.

Following the model of western democracy, the state is divided into three branches: the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. However, unlike the western model, Indonesia does not totally follow the concept of *trias politica* where each branch enjoys autonomous power. In Indonesia, the three branches are not autonomous, but related. The role of each and their relationship to each other has never been spelt out. They say Indonesian democracy is unique as it does not follow blindly the western model. It is based on the state ideology: *Pancasila*.

People and Puppets

Wayang kulit, or the shadow puppet theatre, is performed at family and social parties, wedding ceremonies, after a good harvest, etc. The stories are based on the Mahabharata or the Bharata Yudha, old Indian epics that have become part of Indonesian culture. Although the stories are about

ancient kings, the themes revolve around society and justice. The **dalang** or story teller, in asides, comments on contemporary events.

While used by the government to indoctrinate the populace (as in the use of contraceptives) **wayang** also serves as a channel for publicly expressing people's dissatisfaction.

In practice, the executive branch is dominated by the military.² Parliament acts as a consultative body to the executive. The judiciary is also dependent on the power of the executive. When the government ruled that all judges and public attorneys had to join Golkar, the government political party, they had no choice but to comply.

The legislature consists of two different institutions — Parliament (DPR) and the People's Consultative Council (MPR).

The Parliament consists of 500 members of whom 100 are appointees from the Armed Forces.³ The remaining seats are contested by three political parties in general elections. The 500 members of parliament automatically become members of the MPR or People's Consultative Council. The MPR meets once every five years and its function is to approve the state report of the president, elect a new president, and provide the president with a GBHN (General Outlines for State Policies). In addition to the 500 members of parliament, the MPR has other members, all of whom are appointed. These 500 appointive members of the MPR consist of:

- 100 members representing the Armed Forces;
- 253 from the three political parties and Armed Forces, in accordance to the percentage composition of the four groups in parliament; and
- 147 appointed members representing the regions, such as governors,

2 The Indonesian military does not rule as an institution. So, formally, the state is not a military state. However, many important state positions are occupied by military personnel, such as cabinet ministers, governors, state intelligence, chairpersons of the national and local parliaments, and of course, at least until now, the office of the president.

3 According to Indonesian law, members of the Armed Forces do not participate in general elections. However, their participation in the legislature is guaranteed by the 100 appointed members in the parliament and another 100 members in the People's Consultative Body.

speakers of the local parliament, etc.

The government has a strong influence in the MPR where 60 percent of the members are appointed. This is the body which supposedly represents the people and elects a president. It is no exaggeration to say that the New Order Parliament is the rubber stamp of the government in power.

Political parties

The New Order State allows only three political parties to function: Golongan Karya or Golkar (the government party), Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or PPP (Moslem party), and Partai Demokrasi Indonesia or PDI (the nationalist and non-Moslem party).

Golkar, the government party, has its constituency among the public servants. Although there is no law to this effect, all public servants including judges must join this party or face dismissal.⁴

The Golkar is dominated by the military even though the majority of its members are civilians. The chairperson of Golkar has always been an army general and in fact many strategic positions are held by military personnel.

The PPP is a Moslem party. Its members come mostly from lower class villages. The third party, PDI, consists of secular minded people (but there may be some Moslem, Christian or Hindu members) from the middle and lower strata of society, both urban and rural. The majority of its members are followers of the late president Sukarno.

Government intervention plays a major role even in the two non-Golkar parties, especially at the leadership level. It is virtually impossible to elect party leaders without the consent of the government. In the 1986 national congress of the PDI, the party failed to elect its leaders. They instead asked the Minister of Interior to appoint their official leaders, and the minister readily complied.

General election

General elections are conducted every five years to elect 400 members of parliament. The candidates are nominated by the three existing parties: Golkar, PPP and PDI. In order to be a candidate, one must first obtain security clearance from the state intelligence service. The criteria for

⁴ Even the spouse of a public servant can't be active in the non-Golkar parties, as her husband or his wife may be dismissed from his/her job.



this clearance are broad and the intelligence forces are free to make their own interpretation, however arbitrary.

After one has been elected into parliament, it is still possible for the political party to replace him/her. The party does this because of internal conflict or because of pressure from the government. The government may intervene in party affairs if a member is too critical of it, thus endangering the party and its leaders. Another government regulation that limits the non-Golkar parties' movement is the concept of the "floating mass". According to this concept, villagers have to be protected from ideological conflicts. Thus, the three parties are prohibited from having branches in the villages and are allowed to enter them only a few weeks before the elections. Branches are limited to the district level. Although Golkar is also prohibited from having branches in villages, the local government (the heads of the villages) are mostly Golkar local leaders, who act as unofficial Golkar branches.

The military

The military has often proclaimed itself the saviour of the nation. It did this in 1965, when it successfully crushed the threat of a communist takeover and in the 1950s and early 1960s, when it successfully fought radical Moslems who wanted to create an Islamic state. Today, many people, including the middle class, are dissatisfied with the present situation in Indonesia. The military, at least some factions of it, seem keen to play the role of saviour once again. They are hesitant to join forces with the ruling elite now as the military may end up in disgrace if there is political turmoil.

Some social scientists think that the reason for this alternative movement in the military is not heroism, but their political marginalization by the Suharto administration. Whatever the reason, there seems to be a hidden but serious conflict among the top military leaders.

The anti-establishment military faction is now using, albeit in a very delicate way, intellectuals and students who are critical of the government to destabilize the political status-quo. They secretly back student demonstrations and anti-government statements. This strategy is supported by the marginalized business elite, who despite the corruption and their marginalized position, have benefited from the capitalist oriented system adopted by the present regime.

In 1993, the People's Consultative Body will elect a new president. This will be a crucial time as it will bring to the forefront the political fight among the political elite as the people watch from outside.

Nevertheless, if there is any change in 1993, it will be no more than a

changing of the guards. It is a palace revolution where the people play a minor supporting role.

The characteristics of economic development

Under Suharto's administration, the growth of the economy was unprecedentedly high. However, a deeper look at this growth will show some serious structural problems.

After General Suharto came to power, Western Europe, Japan and the US provided Indonesia with financial aid. A consortium of donor countries was established: the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia, known as IGGI, which since 1969 has been extending foreign aid and loans to the Indonesian government.

Inflation was brought under control. The Indonesian economy became stable and started to grow. During the first five year plan, Pelita I (1969-74) GDP growth was 8.6 percent. Pelita II (1974-79) recorded a GDP growth of 7.2 percent. During the next five year plan (1979-84) GDP growth was 4.9 percent. Pelita IV (1984-89) recorded a GDP growth of 4.4 percent and the annual GDP growth for 1989-94 is expected to be five percent.⁵

The 1970s were characterized by an economic boom at the macro level and criticism of the state from student groups and intellectuals. However, this critical voice was isolated because it was not linked to the masses. Probably, the people were not interested in opposing the government as they also reaped the fruits of the economic boom, although what they got was relatively small compared to the share of the elite.

As mentioned earlier, after Suharto came into power, loans from the capitalist industrialised countries continuously poured into Indonesia. These loans were needed to remedy the deteriorating economic condition. However, with the accumulation of a huge foreign economic experts have made a pessimistic projection of the burden of debt repayment. Hamzah Haz (Member of Parliament) and Umar Basalim (economist) in a joint article written for *Kompas* (25 March 1989), stated that 86 percent of the development expenditure or 30 percent of the total expenditure for 1988/89 came from foreign loans. The following year, 71 percent of development expenditure, or 28 percent of total expenditure, came from the same source. Between 1988-93, the period

⁵ 1989: Annex III, p.4

SAFARI Invasion

One day in September 1991, a large number of women came to the house of the Jatisari village chief. Some of them carried their young children in their arms. A number of uniformed men were waiting at the yard. It was a bright sunny day yet the women looked sad.

They were sad and frightened as they had been forced to come to this place. They were brought here from remote places and may even have been pulled out of their homes. If they refused to come, would they be accused of being unfaithful to the country? Maybe. Their fear had carried them here ... they had faced officials who had ordered them to come. Who were they to disobey these men in uniform?

So, on that sunny day, mini buses brought them to the large house on the main street. On arrival they were asked to sit on chairs that had been arranged in the hall of the house.

They had heard stories. Stories told to them by their relatives, neighbours. Stories heard on the radio. Stories about family planning programmes. They could not imagine and comprehend this strange and unusual happening. A contraceptive is injected into their bodies. Will they have a choice? They are in doubt and worry. They may not choose. This is compulsory. They cannot avoid it.

The programme is opened by a military commander. In Indonesian and refined Javanese, he praises and thanks the grace of the Lord who has given them comfort and looked after their welfare. He is pleased to receive and welcome "the mothers who have made every effort to come" and "the mothers' willingness to participate in coping with the population explosion." Will his Javanese refinement and politeness wipe away the force exercised?

An epileptic mother, faints. Maybe she could not stand the stress. The programme continues A corner of the room has been

converted into a clinic. The mothers queue up to enter.

They are given no explanations. They have no choice. Their blood pressure is recorded. The mothers are made to lie down. Five tiny needles are inserted in their arms. There are no other contraceptives available. The Family Planning officials have decided that the needles are most suitable.

The programme proceeds smoothly. These mothers have become acceptors of family planning. At last! The needles will work and last for five years. The officials are relieved and smile. They will get additional credits and promotions. The ladies of Dharma Wanita and Dharma Pertiwi watching the 'Safari' family planning are happy. They have helped their husbands to further the country's development.

"Safari family planning does not exist any more," say officials. How then does this case in Jatisari take place?

The government has to race against time to push down the population growth. This can be done with more women accepting family planning. But officials of the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN) cannot do this work on their own. They need 'military assistance'. If women cannot be persuaded to join the programme voluntarily, then force is employed. The 'Safari' family planning is a project that gives them credits for promotion and fortune.

The Jatisari case shows how people in remote villages are constantly deceived. They are 'plain and backward.' To family planning officials and those soldiers who assist them it is a 'noble task that will make the nation prosperous.' Force and power thus gain righteousness.

Source: Nirwan Dewanto, "Coercion in Family Planning Still Exists in the Era of Family Planning Movement." Paper presented at the 8th Conference of the International NGO Forum on Indonesia (INGI), Odawara, Japan, 21-23 March 1992

of the fifth five year plan, it is projected that 56 percent of development expenditure or 25 percent of the total expenditure will come from foreign loans. According to the World Bank, (Report No.7222-IND, 2 May 1988:140), from 1982 to 1986 Indonesia obtained an average of US\$4.3 billion a year as multilateral loans. In 1986/87, Indonesia received US\$5.4 billion, and US\$6.3 billion in 1987/88. From 1986/87 to 1987/88 total debt service payments were US\$ 5.4 and US\$6.9 billion, respectively. Thus new loans were being used to service the debt.

Foreign loans have been used to finance development expenditure. It is the government's hope, that the proportion of foreign loans will lessen. While this hope seems to have been fulfilled through the mid 1980s, starting 1986, the situation has worsened. Dependency of development expenditure on foreign loans was lowest in 1974/75. Since then, the percentage has fluctuated with a tendency to increase.

Foreign loans still play an important role in the performance of the Indonesian economy. Not only are they a big component for financing development, but also the amount of debt service has begun exceeding new loans. If the government is not careful in utilising these loans to increase economic productive forces, the future economy may be in danger.

The New Order State was fortunate. From the beginning of the 1970s, the price of oil rose dramatically in the international market. This was an unexpected windfall for the state. However, Indonesia has since become dependent on oil revenues. In 1982, Indonesia's earnings from oil were 82.4 percent of all export earnings. With the fall of oil prices in the international market, the share of oil earnings dropped to about 40 percent in 1988.

The fluctuation of oil prices in the international market has had a great impact on the economic performance of the country. However, the inflow of foreign loans has been steady. The western countries have been generous in giving financial assistance, which has been increasing every year. In return, Indonesia has been a compliant follower with regard to the economic advice of members of the IGGI and the World Bank. The president of the World Bank has praised Indonesia as a model third world country in developing a good and sound economic policy.

Needless to say, the costs of carrying out the IMF/World Bank adjustments have been heavy. The growth oriented development policies penalize the poor and subsidize the rich. The rich are considered the engines of economic growth and are given many facilities to expand their business. Thus it is not difficult to see why political stability takes top priority. From the viewpoint of the state, it is extremely important to stem

protests and demands for change by the people. The military is used to subdue the people and so democracy is sacrificed at the altar of development. An authoritarian system leads to a corrupt bureaucracy and nepotism. The people have no power and control over their lives.

Among the most powerless and impoverished are women. With the growing difficulties in the economy, men migrate to the cities in search of jobs leaving behind women who must then look after the family singlehandedly. Most have to bear a double burden — as breadwinners and carers of the family. Many become prostitutes, sometimes with the consent of their husbands.

The other characteristic of the Indonesian economy is unequal income distribution which compounds the problem of poverty. The situation of the poor has worsened as the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. In 1961, the Gini Coefficient was 0.30 while the income share of the poorest 40 percent of households was 25.3. By 1980, the Gini Coefficient worsened to 0.46 as also the income share of the poorest 40 percent, which fell to 10.4 percent.⁶

According to Djojohadikusumo,⁷ if 40 percent of the lowest income group get less than 12 percent of national income, this is considered gross inequality. If the income share is between 12 and 17 percent, it is considered moderately unequal. A share over 17 percent is considered low inequality. By this reckoning Indonesia's income inequality is serious.

However, in absolute terms, the situation is not so gloomy. The number of people who are considered poor is falling. In 1976, the number of poor people was estimated at 54.2 million or 40.8 percent of the population; by 1987 the number had decreased to 30 million totaling 17.4 percent of the population.⁸

The view from below

This state of affairs does not leave much space for people to actively participate in the development process and to constructively build a more equitable society. However, there are a few institutions wherein people have attempted to overcome the powerful forces which have constrained them.

6 Hasibuan, 1984:18

7 1989: Annex III, p.4

8 Poor People: those who live under the poverty line are those who get less than 2100 calories/day. Source: Djojohadikusumo, 1989: Table 6 (processed data) and Annex III, p.1

Sadisah the Shoemaker

When Nike closed its US operations, it moved most of its new factories to south Korea. But by the late 1980s, workers in south Korea had become organised and militant, demanding, among others, higher wages. So Nike moved again, to such countries as Indonesia, where labour is cheaper and more docile.

Sung Hwa Corp. (Indonesia Operations) is among many subcontractors for Nike. The daily wage for seven and a half hours of work is 2,100 Indonesia rupiah — at the current rate of exchange, \$1.03 per day. That amount is just under 14 cents per hour, less than the Indonesian government's figure for "minimum physical need."

At this factory, which makes mid-priced

Nikes, each pair of shoes requires 0.84 man-hours to produce. The labor costs to manufacture a pair of Nikes that sells for \$80 in the US is approximately 12 cents.

Sadisah works at this factory. She put in six days a week, ten and a half hours per day, for a paycheck equivalent to \$37.46 — about half the retail price of one pair of the sneakers she makes. (In one week she assembles the equivalent of 83.4 pairs!) Compare this with the US\$20 million multiyear fee that American basketball superstar Michael Jordan is reported to have earned for endorsing Nike shoes on TV — Sadisah would have to work 44,492 years to earn the same.

Source: Harper's Magazine, August 1992.

Women

Women in Indonesia as in other countries, are considered inferior to men and their role has largely been confined to the domestic sector and the family. A few people concede that women may work in the public sector as long as they do not neglect their housework; to do so would betray their very nature. The dominant notion of the role of women is conservative. Seen as a sexual object, the woman is seen as the shadow of man. This ideology prevails in Indonesian society, is subscribed to by both men and women, and is further strengthened by state policies.

What is the role of women's organizations given the increasing marginalization of women at work and the growing prostitution industry and the social, cultural and economic problems that this industry entails?

Dharma Wanita is an organization created by the government; its members are the wives of male civil servants. All wives of government employees must join this organization. If they do not, or are considered inactive, they jeopardize the career and their husbands' prospects of promotion.

The leadership structure of Dharma Wanita is not based on the ability of individuals, but according to the status of their husbands. Thus, the chairperson of Dharma Wanita is the wife of the respective office head. Women whose husbands hold minor positions can only be ordi-

nary members, even though some of them may be better qualified than the wife of the head of the department.

At present, independent women's organizations do not play a major role in society, as women are given no choice but to join Dharma Wanita. But a few have emerged and have undertaken a more independent stance. For instance, in the late 1980s, some university students initiated study circles and held demonstrations on the rights of women. Kalyanamitra, an independent women's organisation, uses its publications to raise consciousness on women's issues. Other groups have demonstrated in support of the rights of peasants whose land had been taken away by force. Though small in number these organizations are an important step forward in the struggle for basic human and civil rights.

The press

Given the situation in Indonesia, the media is a partially effective institution for social and political participation. Criticism of the government, especially against petty state bureaucrats, can be relatively effective. However, criticism directed against powerful state officials may result in the closure of the newspaper. There are many examples, such as the closing down of two dailies, *Sinar Harapan* and *Prioritas*, a few years ago and in October 1990, the closure of two weeklies, *Monitor* and *Senang*.

The press has to be very careful in playing its role. For what is and is not allowed remains unclear. The Indonesian press is based on Pancasila, which implies that the press is free but 'responsible' — again the government decides what is and is not responsible.

In spite of these limitations, the press is still used by the public to criticize the government, albeit mildly. The language has to be subtle and one has to be an expert in reading between the lines to capture the meta-messages. The people are quite adept at doing this, especially the Javanese, the largest ethnic group in Indonesia. It is part of the culture of the people not to say anything directly. Thus, euphemisms are deeply rooted in political vocabulary. For example, when someone is arrested, the word used by the people is *diamankan* which means safeguarding a person. A statement declaring the military is unified is interpreted by the people to mean that various factions within the military are fighting each other. This arises partly from culture and also because people tend to be sceptical of official statements.

University students

Since 1967, Suharto has succeeded in purging the state of leftist elements, both communist and radical nationalist. At the same time he has

Striking for Independence

Indonesia has a workforce of over 70 million and the official unemployment rate is 27.3 percent. Only 60 percent of the workforce are fully employed. Merely a quarter of the employed workers are part of the formal sector. Most workers are paid less than the official minimum wage and mechanisms to enforce the minimum wage are practically non-existent.

Since 1965, there has been no independent trade union action in Indonesia. The government has control over the national leadership of the Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia (SPSI), a trade union confederation. The lower ranks of the organization are closely supervised by the regional and local authorities, including the military.

However, in recent years there has been a marked increase in industrial unrest. Despite all the controls imposed on the workers, spontaneous strikes have been taking place with increasing frequency. In 1991, more than 110 strikes were officially recorded compared to 61 in 1990 and 19 in 1989.

One of the largest outbursts was in August 1991. There was a wave of walk-outs in the industrial complex of Tangerang, West Jakarta. Some 12,000 workers were involved. Their action drew wide coverage by the Indonesian and foreign press.

These strikes lasted only a day or two and were not part of a negotiating process but an expression of frustration and despair. The

striking workers were simply demanding the implementation of the minimum wage.

If, despite all the risks involved, workers take recourse to illegal strikes one may expect that there are good prospects for an independent trade union movement. Some leaders of the SPSI have been encouraged by these signs and are trying to move away from official policies. Others, outside the SPSI (most of them, from human rights NGOs), have been encouraged to try and set up an alternative trade union movement, the Free Trade Union Setia Kawan.

Although their objectives are totally different from those held by SPSI, what they have in mind is a union for workers. Twenty five years of the New Order seems to have been successful in wiping out the idea that a union is an instrument of the workers — a means by which they can defend their own interests.

It is crucial that a solution is found. NGOs have an essential contribution to make to the emergence of a free and democratic trade union movement. But they cannot patronise the movement and do basic union work for the workers.

Source: Tom Etty, "Some Problems in the Field of Labour," Paper prepared for the Eighth INGI Conference on People's Participation in Economic Liberalisation, Odawara, Japan, 21-23 March 1992.

strengthened the military while weakening political parties. Windfall profits from oil were an added boost which also led to massive corruption. Top ranking officials grew very rich despite their low salaries. In 1970, students in Jakarta started criticizing this state of affairs.

At first, the government reacted sympathetically. However, as corruption had become a part of the system, for the government to deal with it would mean a loss of support from the bureaucrats. Thus, under the slogan that economic development needed political stability and that the students were endangering this stability by their criticism, student dem-

onstrations which had become more numerous since 1970, were suppressed. Student leaders as well as intellectuals who supposedly influenced them were arrested.

After the large student demonstration in Bandung in 1978, the government tightened regulations and barred university students from participating in independent political activity. They could take part in politics only through joining any of the three political parties.

Moreover, rectors of universities are held accountable if students get involved in politics. Politics can mean many things — from demonstrations to inviting a speaker critical of government to give a talk — and students have been expelled for doing this.

Given this, students feel powerless. To enroll in a good university is already very difficult. Either one has to be very intelligent, or one has to be rich to afford the high entrance fee. When a student wants to be active politically, (s)he faces the risk of expulsion. Should this happen, it is difficult to register in another university, because (s)he will be required to produce a letter of recommendation from the Ministry of Education.

However, student demonstrations did occur in the beginning and latter part of 1989. Does this mean that students have become more powerful and better organized? The answer is both yes and no. The political role of the studentry has become more significant lately but this is because of conflict between top political leaders. One faction of the state elite protects the students in order to use them against its opponents. But the aspirations of the students for democracy are genuine.

Workers

The government allows only one labour union to exist. Like the political parties, the existence of the labour union is dependent on the state.

The official ideology of the labour movement in Indonesia is embodied in Pancasila labour relations, which states that employers and employees should live in harmony and avoid confrontation. They are partners in profits and work together to create surplus. With the government, they form a tripartite body that can solve all problems. Following this logic, strikes and layoffs without prior consent of the state are illegal.

However, when a conflict between labour and capital does occur, workers are often sacrificed for the sake of (economic) development. It is easier for the government to allow employers to lay off workers than to give workers the go signal to strike. Strikes are considered subversive activities, while retrenchment is considered a necessary evil for development.

Adat Rights.

Dayak is an ethnic label attached to approximately 450 groups of indigenous peoples in Kalimantan, Borneo. The land, together with its resources, is the wellspring of Dayak livelihood. The economic value of land is incorporated with the socio-cultural, political and religious aspects of life for the Dayak. Land links the past to the present and to the future. Though the state legally acknowledges **adat** land rights, it claims that land which has no title is state property. This view is in conflict with the Dayak who believe that the world is created by the Supreme Being for all people, and all have the same rights to it. Following this basic philosophy, a man who first felled a patch of primary forest has a right to it. This land is then passed down to his family or a group of families. The collective land rights of individuals, family or

group of families is the village territory. The right to collect fruits, resin, honey, hunting and fishing may be communal. Conflicts occur when the government decides to implement a project and states that it is for the public and national interest. When people refuse to give up their land, they are accused of hindering development.¹⁴ However, private companies can use the local authority's powers to use thousands of hectares of free compensated land by stating that this serves the public and national interest.

Source: Stepanus Djuweng, "The Conflicts Between the Customary Land Rights and the Development Policy in West Kalimantan: The Case of Ngabang, Nobal Dan Tumbang Titi," Pontiak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1992.

Human rights

There are a few human rights groups in Indonesia. The Human Rights Defence Institute led by a famous opposition leader, H.J.C. Princen, is tolerated by the government. Its main activity is publishing. However, most of the Institute's reports are censored and hence the impact is limited.

More effective in defending people's rights is the Legal Aid Institute. The history of this Institute goes back to the early period of the present regime in the late 1960s, when the spirit to establish a democratic society was still strong. Buyung Nasution, a lawyer and activist has been the main figure in this legal aid movement. The Institute was funded by the municipal government of Jakarta.

This Institute has become a major irritant for the present regime and many efforts have been made to tame it, but the results have been limited. Nasution has become a *persona non grata* for the ruling elite. However, as it enjoys international support, Nasution is not imprisoned although his movements are carefully monitored. Nasution had to close down his private practice because clients were constantly harassed by the government and so they stopped coming to him.

The fate of Buyung Nasution to a large degree reflects the fate of in-

dependent intellectuals in Indonesia. As long as the intellectual who is critical of the government does not have mass following and has international support, (s)he is relatively free to publicly voice his/her dissent.

The New Order State under General Suharto has emerged as one of the most powerful and stable governments in the third world. This administration has survived for almost a quarter of a century without any significant political challenge. There were some student demonstrations, some riots, some minor armed rebellions in the regions, but these have not shaken the present regime.

Potential conflicts

What are the socio-economic and political forces that unify the New Order State under President Suharto? What are the forces that operate against it? The antigovernment forces come from the socio-economic and political conflicts that are inherent in society. Some of the most important potential conflicts can be found among social classes, namely between the rich and the poor; among religious groups, mainly between the Moslems and the Christians; among racial groups, the Chinese and the indigenous Indonesians; and among ethnic groups, mainly between the Javanese and the non-Javanese.

The government, realizing the strength of these potential conflicts in disrupting the unity of the nation, punishes those who play with these issues. People have to avoid SARA (issues related to *suku, agama, ras, antar golongan*, or ethnicity, religion, race and social class) or be charged with subversion.

It goes without saying that these four potential social conflicts are not isolated but inter-related. The rich are of Chinese descent and are non-Moslem by religion. Thus, racism becomes a part of class struggle and also of religious conflict. The Javanese, the largest ethnic group, play a dominant role in the political, economic and cultural life. This situation creates a latent anti-Javanese feeling among people outside Java.

Many other potential conflicts at present are related to these four main issues.

The rich and the poor

Under the Sukarno administration, the economic role of private business was subordinate to that of the government. Entrepreneurs were under constant pressure to sacrifice their business interests for the 'revolution' (the political jargon then).

The Suharto administration changed this. The new government employed many liberal technocrats who were anti Sukarno in thought and

deed. They were the architects who laid the foundation of the present economic model.

These technocrats — almost all of whom graduated from various North American universities, in particular the University of California in Berkeley, and were thus called the Berkeley Mafia — were basically liberal economists, though more moderate than Friedmanian liberals. Since then, private entrepreneurs play an important role and provide strong support for the Suharto regime.

With the windfall profits from oil in the 1970s, big business came into being and started to expand. The economy had a high growth rate of about seven percent in the 1970s. By the 1980s, big conglomerates owned by Indonesian entrepreneurs were expanding their business overseas.

The expansion of big business does not mean that the rich get wealthier and the poor poorer; the poor also make some gains. But the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. With the expansion of business and the efforts to make high profits, the rate of exploitation has also increased. In the cities, labour conflicts have occurred frequently, though the position of the workers has been weak. In most disputes, union leaders were dismissed from their jobs and were lucky if they escaped imprisonment. Not surprisingly, only a handful of these conflicts were reported in the mass media. But class conflict in Indonesia, though silent and suppressed, may erupt in the near future.

Land has become more valuable both in the cities and in the villages. Many land disputes have led to the poor being dispossessed of their land, forcing their resettlement in other places. The case of the Kedung Ombo dam in Mid Java, and of Cimacan in West Java where people were dispossessed of agricultural land to give way to golf courses and tourist resorts, are but two examples. (See *Inside Indonesia*, April 1989: 10 - 17)

Moslem versus non-Moslem

Another area of conflict is in religion. The majority or almost 90 percent of the people are Moslems. The other 10 percent are Christian, Hindu and those who practice other religions.

However, most Moslems are the so called 'statistical Moslems' in the sense that they do not perform their religious rituals, etc. These are mainly Javanese.

Tension also exists between "fundamentalist" Moslems and others. In the 1950s, there were moves by this group to adopt Islam as the state religion. Although the pressure was quite strong, it failed to get the majority support needed in the Constitutional Assembly. In the early 1960s,

the armed rebellion that was fighting for an Islamic state was decimated. Its leader, Kartosuwiryo, was captured and executed.

Tension between Moslems and Christians has often erupted in open conflict but most of the time this is latent. As a minority community, Christians often take a defensive stance and are ambivalent to democratization. On the one hand, they prefer a democratic political system, but on the other they are afraid that democracy would lead to Indonesia becoming an Islamic state. This ambivalent attitude extends to the military: on one hand they prefer civilian leadership, but on the other they know that the military which is composed of 'statistical' Moslems, protects their minority identity.⁹

Racism

The other problem is with race. The Chinese or the Sino-Indonesians make up less than three percent of the total population; but they dominate the economy. Most owners of big conglomerates in Jakarta are Chinese.¹⁰ A latent anti-Chinese feeling is present among the majority of the Indonesian people, which often surfaces in racial riots.

The Dutch colonisers treated the Chinese as a separate group from the rest of the population. The indigenous Indonesians, called the *pribumi*, were indirectly "prohibited" from conducting business. This suited Javanese culture, as business activities were considered lowly, and many *pribumis* preferred leaving business especially, internal trade, to the Chinese, while they joined the public service. By treating the Chinese as a separate group, the Dutch could prevent the *pribumis* who were politically strong from gaining economic power. As a small country, Holland had to rely on *pribumi* administrators to rule Indonesia. By separating administrative power from the economic, the Dutch assumed, rightly, that neither would be strong enough to challenge their power.

To this day the Chinese continue to dominate the economy while the *pribumi* hold political power, and this has resulted in social jealousy and social hatred. This social and economic gap has become more pronounced under President Suharto's New Order State. Chinese businessmen received more incentives and benefits during Suharto's

9 The recent demonstration against the weekly *Monitor* (owned by a Catholic publishing corporation) because it was accused of insulting the Prophet Mohammad, has intensified this ambivalent attitude among the Christians.

10 A report on the biggest Chinese conglomerate owned by the family of Sudono Salim (Liem Soci Liong) was published in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 April 1983.

Bambang
(born 1953)

Company:

Bimantara
(est. 1982)

Activities:

oil and gas transport
animal feed
dairy
construction
industrial estates
steel
paint
auto assembly
shipping
aviation
trading
banking
television
telecommunications

Depends heavily on preferential trading arrangements. The group has monopoly over orange trading in West Kalimantan, which is deeply unpopular among farmers. During the recent Non-Aligned Summit, obtained exclusive license to import 1,000 luxury cars.

Source: Far Eastern Economic Review, 30 April 1992

Tutut
(born 1949)

Company:

Citra Lamtoro Gung
(est. 1983)

Activities:

sugar
wood
pulp and paper
pharmaceuticals
construction
toll roads
trading
television
telecommunications

Also has 17.5 percent share in Bank Central Asia, and a minority equity stake in sister Titiek's Datam group. In 1991, won government approval to air educational programmes using the transmission network of state-owned station, TVRI.

Sigit
(born 1951)
Tommy
(born 1962)

Company:

Humpuss
(est. 1984)

Activities:

oil and gas transport
wood
banking
construction
fertiliser
toll roads
trading
sugar
palm oil
shipping
aviation

Has sole concession for exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Taiwan. Awarded government contract to build US\$750-million LNG processing plant in East Kalimantan. Granted sole buying and selling monopoly over cloves, for which Indonesia's central bank extended credit of US\$325 million. Granted sole buying and selling monopoly over cloves.

Titiek
(born 1959)

Company:

Daya Tata Matra
(Datam, est. early 80s)

Activities:

banking
real estate
trading
wood processing

Depends on supply and distribution contracts with state-owned firms, in particular, Pertamina.

* Sigit has a 40 percent stake in brother Tommy's Humpuss group, but has no managerial role. Also holds a 17.5 percent share in Bank Central Asia, like sister Tutut. Owns 25 percent in a British Petroleum-owned Polyethylene plant.

administration than under the previous one. Today, nine of the ten biggest conglomerates in Indonesia, are Chinese-owned. The only *pribumi* who is on the list is Bambang Trihatmodjo, the son of the president, who ranks number nine. If we take the top 25 conglomerates, only eight are owned by *pribumis*. Eleven *pribumis* rank in the top 40 companies. (Yoon, 1989: 213-216) Besides this, small shops along the main streets in the small towns in Java are Chinese owned.

Who are the *pribumi* businessmen? Most of them are family members of high ranking state officials. Among the 11 *pribumi* leading conglomerates (out of the 40), four are close relatives of the president and two are sons of former high ranking state officials. Thus, most *pribumi* businessmen as family members of the ruling elite are dependent on state facilities. Successful Chinese businessmen are also dependent on state facilities but are now taken as partners because of their entrepreneurial expertise. The Chinese are also the scapegoats for the national economic maladies, for example, they are blamed for the existing corruption. Thus, like the colonial power, the present New Order State uses the same strategy to achieve its end. On the one hand the Chinese are used as buffers against the anger of the poor people and on the other, bureaucrats benefit as they are bribed by the Chinese to gain state patronage.

Ethnicity: Java versus non Java

Indonesia is a large country. Its land and sea area is about the same as that of the United States. But the population of 170 million is distributed unequally among the islands.

Not only are the people distributed unequally among the islands, but they also belong to different ethnic groups. Each ethnic group speaks its own language, which is seldom understood by others. There are over 100 different languages in Indonesia.

The national language, Bahasa Indonesia, can be spoken by almost all Indonesians. Most Indonesians are bi-lingual: they speak their ethnic language and the national language. Thus, the language problem does not exist as it does in other countries such as Malaysia and India.

However, there is ethnic tension. It is generally felt that the Javanese dominate national politics and the economy. This was one of the factors behind the 1957 rebellion in Sumatra and Sulawesi. While it is true that the national elite has been dominated by the Javanese, it should be noted that the Javanese are the largest ethnic group.

SARA is used by the government to justify its authoritarian rule. When intellectuals and students talk of the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the government accuses them of playing with SARA is-



sues. When people talk of the unequal distribution of wealth between Java and the other islands, they can be stopped for the same reason. When the Moslem party in a general election campaign talks about Moslem solidarity, again the SARA argument can be used to stop them.

Though these conflicts are real, SARA is used as a tool for political suppression. This has made it difficult for genuine democratic forces to emerge. Non Muslims, being a minority, are intimidated from advocating more democratic space, despite the fact that they have substantial influence in the economic and political spheres.

Conclusion

We have discussed the socio-economic and political processes in contemporary Indonesia. From the above discussion, we can identify some integrative and disintegrative factors. To sum up, they are:

Integrative factors

1. *Ideology*: The government ideology of development is unquestionably linked to economic growth and political stability. With these twin necessities, people cannot argue against, the high priority given to economic growth as opposed to fair income distribution, and against political stability at the cost of people's participation and democracy. The result of this ideology is the establishment of a strong authoritarian capitalist state, with the military playing a the dominant role.
2. *Economic growth*: The relatively high economic growth has largely benefited the middle and upper classes. Business families are divided into two categories: those close to the government and are able to get business facilities, and those that are not. In the first there are two subgroups: the relatives of high ranking government officials and the Sino-Indonesian entrepreneurs. The latter are professionals, unlike the former, who are dependent on state patronage. In the second category are those who are not close to the government and exert pressure on it to liberalise the economy. Deregulation and debureaucratization have been the most discussed topics in the 1980s. Partly due to this pressure and to the economic difficulties related to the fall in oil prices, the government did make some changes. However, the biggest chunk of the economic surplus is still in the hands of the ruling elite. They are the main supporters of the New Order State. While enjoying their rising standard of living, they are also satisfied with the way the government handles social and political unrest. Of course, many of

them have their complaints, but they would defend the present government against the communists and fundamentalist Moslems.

Disintegrative factors

1. *Unequal income distribution* has created a wide gap between the rich and the poor. Private business, by using the government apparatus keeps dispossessing the people of their land for their business interests, or removing street vendors for the sake of city cleanliness. These people, without jobs and incomes, may yet become the force that will rock the stability of the country.
2. Lack of counter-forces against the centralized state power has left the state bureaucracy uncontrolled. *Bureaucratic corruption* and *nepotism* have become endemic. This has created unhealthy rivalries between political and business elites. In time, this disharmony may erupt into political disturbance.
3. Some primordial issues are still potential forces that could disrupt societal harmony. Chinese and the *pribumi*, Moslems and Christians, and the rivalry among local ethnic groups are the most sensitive issues.

Another important factor that may disrupt the "achievement" of the New Order State is the fragility of the economy. Despite its high growth, the economy's success remains highly dependent on oil income and foreign loans. Indonesia is still a country based on the export of primary products. The continuing fall in international oil prices since 1982 has hit the Indonesian economy hard, forcing it to borrow heavily from industrialised countries, and putting a heavy debt repayment burden on ordinary people. The increasing power of bureaucrats and the military, and the resultant corruption, together with a smaller economic surplus, of which very little has trickled down to the poor, have led to a growing dissatisfaction among the people. There are more unemployed and the job market is extremely tight. Given this situation, with more latent disrupting forces than in the previous decade, and with state institutions still weak or incapable of managing various social conflicts, the military with its effective repressive might seems an unavoidable power that the ordinary citizen must reckon with. Still political liberalization and democratization may open the floodgates for potentially antagonistic forces.

This country report was prepared by Arief Budiman with the assistance of David Sulistyo and Aan Effendi, especially in collecting the data.

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APPENDIX

State of the Asian Peoples: A Report

	Indonesia	Malaysia	Philippines	Thailand
Central government expenditure				
Percentage of total expenditure 1989				
Defense	8.3	—	13.0	17.8
Education	10.0	—	17.1	19.3
Health	1.8	—	4.3	6.3
Housing amenities; social security and welfare	1.7	—	2.0	5.3
Economic services	—	—	25.9	20.4
Other	78.2	—	37.7	30.9
Total expenditure as a % of GNP	20.6	30.1	15.7	15.1
Overall surplus/deficit as a % of GNP	-2.1	-2.6	-2.8	3.1
Total current revenue as a % of GNP	18.4	26.3	12.8	17.9
Military expenditure				
Military expenditure (as % of GNP) 1986	2.5	6.1	1.7	4.0
Arms imports (US\$ millions) 1987	250	60	40	350
Growth of merchandise trade				
Merchandise trade (US\$ millions) 1989				
Exports	21,773	25,053	7,747	20,059
Imports	16,360	22,496	10,732	25,768
Average annual growth rate 1980-89				
Exports	2.4	9.8	1.3	12.8
Imports	-0.4	3.7	0.4	8.4
Structure of merchandise imports				
Percentage share of merchandise imports 1989				
Food	8	11	11	6
Fuels	8	5	13	8
Other primary commodities	10	6	7	9
Machinery and transport equipment	38	45	20	39
Other manufactures	37	33	50	38
Structure of merchandise exports				
Percentage share of merchandise exports 1989				
Fuels minerals and metals	47	19	12	3
Other primary commodities	21	37	26	43
Machinery and transport equipment	1	27	10	15
Other manufactures	31	17	52	39
Textiles and clothing	9	5	7	17

Basic Comparative Data

	Indonesia	Malaysia	Philippines	Thailand
Area (1,000 sq. km.)	1905	330	300	513
Population (millions) mid-1989	178.2	17.4	60.0	55.4
Urban population as a % of total population 1989	30	42	42	22
Labour force				
Total labour force (1,000) 1985	63,430	6,171	19,874	26,657
Percentage of labour force in different sectors 1980				
Agriculture	57	42	52	71
Industry	13	19	16	10
Services	30	39	33	19
Structure of production				
GNP per capita (US\$) 1989	500	2,160	710	1,220
Average annual growth rate of GNP (%) 1965-89	4.4	4.0	1.6	4.2
Workers' remittances from abroad (as % of GNP) 1988	0.1	0.0	1.0	—
Average annual rate of inflation 1980-89	8.3	1.5	14.8	3.2
Contribution to GDP (%) 1989				
Agriculture	23	—	24	15
Industry	37	—	33	38
Manufacturing	17	—	22	21
Service	39	—	43	47
Growth of production				
Average annual growth rate 1980-89				
Agriculture	3.2	3.9	2.0	4.1
Industry	5.3	6.5	-0.8	8.1
Manufacturing	12.7	8.0	0.5	8.1
Services	6.6	3.9	1.2	7.4
Structure of manufacturing				
Distribution of manufacturing value added (%; current price) 1988				
Food, beverages and tobacco	26	18	41	29
Textiles and clothing	13	6	7	18
Machinery and transport equipment	3	23	9	13
Chemicals	9	13	10	7
Other	49	39	32	33

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	Indonesia	Malaysia	Philippines	Thailand
Total external debt (millions of dollars) 1990				
Total external debt	67,908	19,502	30,456	25,868
Long-term debt outstanding and disbursed	54,379	17,596	17,545	25,113
Total debt service	9,151	4,088	2,823	5,434
Debt service ratio*	30.9	11.7	21.2	17.2
Demography and fertility 1989				
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	27	30	30	22
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	9	5	7	7
Total fertility rate	3.3	3.7	3.9	2.5
Life expectancy at birth				
Male	60	68	62	64
Female	63	72	66	68
Health and nutrition				
Population per				
Physician 1984	9,460	1,930	6,570	6,290
Nursing person 1984	1,260	1,010	2,680	710
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) 1989	64	22	42	28
Daily calorie supply (per capita) 1988	2,670	2,686	2,255	2,287
Malnourished children under five (millions) 1990	10.7	—	3.0	1.5
Contraceptive prevalence rate (%) 1985-87	45	51	44	66
Income distribution				
Percentage share of household income, by percentile group of household	1987	1987	1985	—
Lowest 20%	8.8	4.6	5.5	—
Second 20%	12.4	9.3	9.7	—
Third 20%	16.0	13.9	14.8	—
Fourth 20%	21.5	21.2	22.0	—
Highest 20%	41.3	51.2	48.0	—
Highest 10%	26.5	34.8	32.1	—
People below poverty line (millions) 1990	69.5	4.7	36.2	16.5
Gini Coefficient 1970-85	0.31	0.48		0.45
Education				
Adult illiteracy (%) 1985				
Female	35	34	15	12
Total	26	27	14	9

* Total debt service/export of goods & services including worker's remittances

State of the Asian Peoples: A Report

	Indonesia	Malaysia	Philippines	Thailand
Enrolled in Education 1988				
Primary: Total	119	102	110	87
Female	117	102	111	—
Secondary: Total	48	57	71	28
Female	43	57	71	—
Tertiary: Total	—	7	28	16
Primary pupil-teacher ratio 1988	28	21	33	19
Children not in primary or secondary school (millions) 1990	8.1	1.0	0.9	6.3
Female-male gaps				
Females per 100 males 1988				
Primary enrolment	93	95	97	—
Secondary enrolment	79	101	—	—
Labour force	52	45	46	82
Parliament	13	5	8	4
Natural resources				
Average annual deforestation (as % of forest area) 1980-88	0.8	1.2	1.5	2.5
Greenhouse index (Carbon heating equivalents per capita) 1988	1.3	3.2	0.9	1.8

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