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Student Activism and Malaysian Politics, 1955-74:  
Revising the History of the Malay Language Society (PBMUM)

An Honors Paper for the Department of History

By Song Eraou

Bowdoin College, 2023

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## Introduction

In August 2021, ignoring strict Covid protocol Malaysian youth took to the streets in protest of the government's handling of the pandemic. Despite halting the economy and disrupting the livelihoods of many, deaths rates remained high. The protests ushered in a new era of Malaysian politics characterized by the presence of a growing number of politically aware youth eager to participate in the democratic process.<sup>1</sup> This has not always been the case. For a long time, owing to strict laws prohibiting student political participation, and the strong reprimanding approach taken by the state towards activists since 1975, the Malaysian youth have often been characterized as an apolitical group. Even an attempt to educate students on the history of student activism, for example, was considered unruly behavior—as seen in the repeated banning of political activist Fahmi Reza from the University of Malaya campus in 2010.<sup>2</sup>

To this day, enforcing the tendency of the youth—and of the general population—to avoid speaking out against injustices perpetrated by the state is the May 13 racial riots: large-scale clashes breaking out between the ethnic Malays and ethnic Chinese in 1969.<sup>3</sup> In 2022, for example, Ruler Sultan Ibrahim issued a statement reminding citizens that protest is not a part of Malaysian culture: "Have we not learned enough from the bloody street protests of the past? Have they forgotten the riots of 1969...It never achieves anything, except chaos, destruction and a black mark

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<sup>1</sup> The ensuing years would see, for example, a rising number youth-led initiatives to educate the youth on politics, a growing number of youths using social media tools to keep the nation's leaders accountable, and the formation of a political party centered around the youth. In general, the youth have begun to mobilize around the identity of youth in itself, recognizing a shared interest which transcends beyond race, religion or class.

<sup>2</sup> "Student power lecture repeatedly banned on campus," The Nut Graph, last modified August 13, 2010, <https://thenutgraph.com/student-power-lecture-repeatedly-banned-on-campus/>. He moved his lecture off-campus instead.

<sup>3</sup> May 13 was the racial riots which erupted between Malay and Chinese groups in the aftermath of the 1969 general election One way in which the shadow of the May 13 riots still hangs over the Malaysian people today is in the banning of discussion 'sensitive issues' in 1975, including race, religion and the position of the Malaysian monarchy.

on our nation's history!"<sup>4</sup> The Sultan was commenting on protests being called on the issue of rising living costs. So pervasive is the fear of another racial riot breaking out that such threats have repeatedly been used to stifle mobilization efforts by citizens against the ruling regime. This has kept the same ruling party—known for its high profile corruption scandals—in power for more than 50 years.<sup>5</sup> The state using May 13 as a cautionary tale to prevent political dissidence is only one instance of the ghost of May 13 reappearing. In fact, the effect of May 13 in shaping the nation's history is still open to discussion, limited by the lack of sources available on the riots to this day. Yet, despite the riots being used as a cautionary tale to ensure peace between the different ethnic groups—part of the state's broader policy of fostering national unity after the riots—Malaysia's reality in the coming decades would be defined by sharper divisions along racial lines.

While restrictions to freedom of speech and racial divisions seemed to define the history of post-1969 Malaysia, the late '60s and early '70s would also see a vibrant site of student activity emerging on the University of Malaya campus. In fact, the literature on student activism seems to pose a challenge to the stark narrative often painted of post-1969 Malaysia. Despite the use of laws such as the Internal Security Act (ISA) to target student demonstrations and student involvement with the rural poor, students continued to express their political opinions post-1969 and continued to mobilize around peasants' rights. Active clubs in this time include the Malay Language Society (PBMUM), the University of Malaya's Student Union (UMSU), the Socialist Club, the Association of Islamic Students (PMIUM) and more. The Malay Language Society (PBMUM)

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<sup>4</sup> Venesa Devi, "Street Protests Not the Malaysian Way, Says Johor Ruler," The Star, last modified June 24, 2022, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2022/06/24/street-protests-not-the-malaysian-way-says-johor-ruler>. Malaysia practices a system of constitutional monarchy similar to the British. As such, Ruler refers to the king, who maintains a limited—but still significant—power. This includes, for example, being able to declare a state of emergency.

<sup>5</sup> This can be seen, for example, in the *Bersih* rally taking place throughout the late 2000's and early 2010's calling for clean and fair elections. The ruling party mentioned here is the Alliance party which had ruled Malaysia from 1957 to 2018, greatly shaping Malaysia's political history.

was a particularly active club in these years, although its legacy was marred by the racial riots. This thesis takes us back to the '60s and '70s to understand not only what we can learn about PBMUM, but also of the May 13 riots. Before that, however, an introduction to the topic is necessary for those unfamiliar with the Malaysian context. This introduction thus begins with a basic history of Malaysia, laying the foundations for understanding the sociopolitical conditions of the '60s. Then, I describe the historiography of student activism from 1967-1974, focusing on the few books and articles available on the student movement—presenting a critical reading of the texts and pointing out where I hope to interject. I also comment on a historical narrative of Malaysian nation-building efforts relevant to my thesis. Finally, the last section relays my argument, methodology and contributions.

### **Background: History of Independent Malaysia**

Malaysia only came to be known by this name in 1963 through the Malaysia agreement, a merger between the Federation of Malaya (which achieved its independence earlier on in 1957) with neighboring states of Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak, effectively expelling British forces from the region. In 1965, Singapore exited—or was excluded from—the merger and became an independent nation. Malaysia's territorial outline has remained relatively unchanged since then, consisting of West Malaysia (formerly the Federation of Malaya) and the Eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak. As opposed to states in West Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak maintain some degree of autonomy from the federal government in matters such as language, education, immigration policies and more, due to stipulations outlined in the agreement. The foundation of this union between East and West, however, is largely based on the original constitution of the Federation of Malaya. For decades, Malaya's course to self-rule has been touted as a peaceful transition of power from the British empire to Malayan leaders of the Alliance party—a coalition party emerging in

the lead up to independence consisting of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). Facing pressure to renounce control amidst the global wave of decolonization after World War II, and fearing Malaya would fall under the influence of communism with the recent declaration of the Chinese Communist Party's victory in establishing the People's Republic of China, the British colonial government committed to granting Malaya independence but made it clear they were willing to negotiate only with a party capable of uniting the three main ethnic groups in the region.

Approaching 1957, Malaya had a truly multiethnic population, with the *1957 Census Report* recording a Malay population of just under 50 percent, a Chinese population of 37 percent, an Indian population of 12 percent while 'Others' made up 0.2 percent of the population.<sup>7</sup> Most Chinese and Indians were immigrants brought in by the British in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to work on Malaya's tin mines and rubber plantations in support of the empire. Malays, on the other hand, had roots in the Malay peninsula since pre-historic times, although the concept of Malay as a race only emerged in the late eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, due to Britain's divide and rule policy these ethnic communities operated in different economic, socio-cultural, and linguistic spheres. One reason why the British insisted on Malayan rulers including Chinese communities in the new Malayan nationality was for fear of these communities being enticed to join the Malayan Communist Party (MCP)—a party which earlier, in 1947, had declared armed struggle against the British. While the MCP's aims found little appeal amongst the Malays and Indians, Chinese communities formed the backbone of the party. The colonial government was thus partial to the Alliance as the nation's new leaders since it claimed to be a multiracial party

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<sup>7</sup> Cheah, *Malaysia*, 79. Note: "Others" refer to the indigenous peoples of West Malaysia.

<sup>8</sup> I use the words 'race' and 'ethnicity' synonymously here, which is common when discussing the different ethnic groups in Malaysia. When I say Chinese or Indian, I am referring to the Malaysian Chinese or Malaysian Indians, unless otherwise stated.



representing the views of different races. The party also received local support owing to its promise of equal representation of each ethnic group through its coalitional party structure, which ensured each party would retain some degree of autonomy. This contrasted with the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) which opened its membership to all races—the IMP lost to the Alliance in Malaya’s first general elections.<sup>9</sup>

Scrutinizing documents only declassified by the National Archives of Britain in the last two decades, in *The Alliance Road to Independence* historian Joseph M. Fernando argues that the Alliance party played a bigger role in bringing about independence than previous scholars gave it credit for. He writes that although the British had committed in 1949 to eventually granting Malaya independence, they were noncommittal about the timeline, and generally believed Malaya was not ready to self-govern. The Alliance party sped up the process, he argues, by pushing for federal elections to be held in 1953 and later sending a three-man delegation to raise the issue directly with the Secretary of State of Colonial Affairs in London, a factor which radically altered the roadmap to independence.<sup>10</sup> In another book, *The Making of the Malayan Constitution*, Fernando again revises the literature based on newly declassified manuscripts, this time elaborating on the constitution-drafting process.<sup>11</sup> While this effort was conducted by an independent commission, the Reid Commission, it was mainly informed by views of the Alliance party. Once more, Fernando centers the brilliance of the Alliance party, specifically the role of “conservative” leaders such as Tunku Abdul Rahman (of UMNO) and Tan Cheng Lock (of MCA) in negotiating a compromise which satisfied local communities, thus proving to the British that Malaya was ready for self-rule. These leaders displayed moderation and craftiness in keeping “radical” elements of

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<sup>9</sup> Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 279-282.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph M., *Alliance Road to Independence*, 1-10.

<sup>11</sup> Fernando, *The Making of the Malayan Constitution*.

their respective parties at bay—by this Fernando refers to certain politicians in both UMNO and MCA who were more demanding about including stipulations in the constitution which favored their own ethnic groups.<sup>12</sup> Enshrined in the final constitution is what is referred to as the “communal compromise”—the most highly contested acts which were deemed to have impact on the position of each race in the nation. The “communal compromise” included a recognition of the principle of *jus soli*, a declaration of Malay as the national language, a recognition of the role of Malay rulers (Malaysia maintains a system of constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy) and the “special position of Malays”.<sup>13</sup>

Having achieved independence from the British, the immediate tasks faced by the Alliance party were to develop the nation and ensure peace. This was not an easy task: the country was still reeling from the impact of World War II, much of Malaya’s population lived below the poverty line and the Malayan emergency was still in place to combat the ongoing communist insurgency. Despite all this, historian Cheah Boon Kheng describes the immediate post-independence years as a time of relative calm, especially in terms of ethnic relations—Tunku was largely successful at managing the nation considering its context.<sup>14</sup> Just as he acted as the voice of moderation in constitutional negotiations, he considered the demands of different ethnic groups (despite being a Malay himself) and always prioritized peace and unity in making concessions to them on issues such as language policy, economic policy, education policy and more. Despite these efforts, by 1969 the Tunku administration was receiving mounting criticism from a growing number of individuals and organizations. His attempts to pacify the different groups had been read as him being noncommittal on important issues. Ten years on, it also seemed as if not much progress had

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<sup>12</sup> Fernando, 76-84.

<sup>13</sup> Fernando.

<sup>14</sup> Cheah, *Malaysia*, 75-120.

been made: there was an increasing sense of communalism in the polity, the problem of rural poverty had not been addressed, much of the country's wealth remained in the hands of the Chinese and foreign firms, and more. The 1969 general election confirmed the people's disillusionment with the party—for the first time since independence, the Alliance lost its two-thirds majority in parliament which previously accorded it much power in passing laws and constitutional amendments.

Just three days after the election, on May 13, 1969, racial riots erupt across the capital city. Occurring mainly between Chinese and Malay civilians, the riots remain in public memory as the deadliest to have ever occurred in Malaysian contemporary history. Today, there is consensus amongst scholars that May 13 was a turning point in history. If before the riots there seemed to be potential for Malaysia to be a free and inclusive country, May 13 appeared to fundamentally change the political atmosphere in the nation. This shift occurred as a result of the New Economic Policy (NEP), passed immediately after the riots by the Tun Abdul Razak administration which took over after the riots.<sup>15</sup> The NEP was not just an economic policy, it rather described general principles guiding social and economic policies to be implemented under the new administration. It was the government's response to the riots upon assessing the factors driving it—its main goal to create unity within the nation by entrenching the special rights of Malays as outlined in the constitution, crafting a national identity centered around the *Rukun Negara* (National Principles), enforcing the national language, and more. While preaching unity and equality, the NEP included wide-ranging a quota system which heavily favored Malays and other *bumiputera*: a temporary

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<sup>15</sup> Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 307.

measure intended to create a level playing field but which have—to some extent—stayed in place to this day.<sup>16</sup>

Accompanying the NEP were a series of constitutional amendments to protect peace in the nation, namely by declaring discussion of any sensitive issue—race, religion and the monarchy—illegal. The Internal Security Act was also employed to seek out and punish political dissidents; the ‘70s saw high levels of repression in terms of freedom of speech and expression, all deemed necessary in the interest of national security. The enactment of the Universities and University Colleges Act in 1971 also served to tame and control intellectual activity, resulting in lowered academic standards and high levels of brain drain (many choosing to seek education abroad) for decades to come. Furthermore, instead of creating unity within the nation, the NEP seemed to solidify racial lines along which the nation was divided: increasing numbers of people began identifying with categories such as Malay versus non-Malay or *bumiputera* versus *non-bumiputera*. It also failed to create equality—scholars such as Raymond L.L Lee have shown, for example, how in the following decades programs under the NEP mainly benefitted the elite and upper middle class Malays, leaving many Malays at the lower end of the economic strata still resentful and insecure of their position in the nation.<sup>17</sup>

### **Historiography of Student Activism (1967 to 1974)**

Despite increasing restriction on any activity or individual raising criticism against the state post-1969, the literature on student activism shows that 1967 to 1974 were particularly active years of the student movement—students organized mass demonstrations against the state, engaged in

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<sup>16</sup> *Bumiputera* translates to “people of the land” and is a term which largely came into use only after May 13. It encapsulates not only Malays, but also the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak, who also receive privileges through the affirmative action programs. It is the Malays, however, despite being consisting of the majority of the population, who technically have the most places reserved for them in terms of government-enforced quotas.

<sup>17</sup> Lee, “The State, Religious Nationalism, and Ethnic Rationalization in Malaysia.”

lively political debate on both national and international issues, and more. Students often made headlines, in particular, for championing the cause of rural and landless peasants, their anti-establishment activity exposing them to increasing state brutality in the post-May 13 landscape. So massive was the rise in support for student efforts in this time that scholars denote 1967 as a turning point, ushering in a vibrant period of increased engagement with social and political issues. As Malaysia's leading higher education institution—and its only university up until 1970—the University of Malaya (UM) became known as the hub of student activism. UM students emerged not only as leaders of this inter-college student movement but—more importantly—grew a reputation for having important opinions to voice regarding the nation's development. It would come as no surprise then that most of University of Malaya's student activists would go on to become important politicians. Notable figures include, for instance, Anwar Ibrahim (Malaysia's current prime minister), Syed Hamid Ali, Sanusi Osman and more.<sup>20</sup> All of this came to an end in 1975, however, when student activity became severely restrained by the enforcement of laws such as the Internal Security Act (ISA) target student political activity, and the amendment of the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA) 1971 to include stricter restriction—a law banning student engagement in politics.<sup>21</sup>

A few scholarly essays and books emerged in the early '70s detailing changes in the student movement, most written by students themselves. Observing a change in the character of the student movement, students sensed a need to record what happened. In light of the state's attempt to erase

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<sup>20</sup> After years of facing detention due to his fallout with Mahathir (Malaysia's prime minister in the 80's), Anwar has been released and over time, has gained popular support. Anwar's inauguration in the most recent 2022 general election signifies the changing political tide—at least seemingly—in recent years towards a more progressive and clean politics.

<sup>21</sup> In 2018, a section of the UUCA was overruled to allow for student engagement in politics but the UUCA still remains a framework for the establishment of all higher learning institutions in Malaysia. The UUCA was implemented in 1971 but, as Weiss argues, only after its amendment in 1975 (introducing even stricter laws) did it have a severely dampening effect on the student movement.

this history in coming years, and the scarce materials remaining on the topic (especially on students' subversive activities), these works serve as valuable documentation of student activism from '67 to '74.<sup>22</sup> The first work of this kind was a long-forgotten final year undergraduate thesis written by the 1970/1971 president of the Malay Language Society of the University of Malaya (PBMUM): Noordin bin Abd. Razak's thesis "Malay Language Society (PBMUM): A Study of the Changing Attitudes of Malay Students at the University of Malaya."<sup>23</sup> Noordin Razak's thesis was motivated by his desire to challenge rising claims made by the governing party that students were "anti-establishment, irresponsible, anti-academic, anti-intellectual, and so on."<sup>24</sup> His thesis remains the only study of PBMUM's history as an organization, a language club playing an important role in the student movement. Drawing from PBMUM's annual reports, publications, interviews with students and ex-students and more, it also serves as rich resource of PBMUM's activities from 1967 to 1971, at times even quoting directly from annual reports.<sup>25</sup>

The thesis begins by describing the Malay Language Society (PBMUM) in its early years and placing it into the broader context of language movements in the '50s. Acknowledging his own participation in the movement—as club president in that year—while trying to write objectively, he shows that post-1967, PBMUM adopted different strategies in achieving its goal of making Malay the sole official language (by employing more extreme methods), and engaged with a broader range of political and economic issues, leading him to conclude that the language

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<sup>22</sup> Erasure of this history and lack of archival material may not be a coincidence. By 1975, student's rooms were increasingly getting ransacked in search of incriminating materials. As such, materials on student involvement in protests or other illegal activities are especially hard to find.

<sup>23</sup> Noordin bin Abd. Razak, "PBMUM: A Study of the Changing Attitudes of Malay Students at the University of Malaya." Note: In Malay, Malay Language Society translates to *Persatuan Bahasa Melayu* and later, *Persekutuan Bahasa Melayu*

<sup>24</sup> Nordin Razak, x. Note: "Irresponsible" referring to students causing more havoc with the country already in crisis.

<sup>25</sup> When Noordin Razak quotes from PBMUM publications on statements he himself makes, he spells his name slightly differently (Nordin). This may have been a spelling mistake. The fact that this happens twice—especially when quoting from his more subversive speeches—gives reason to believe he was avoiding retribution from the campus administration.

club had turned into a broad ‘student’ organization.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, in another part of his thesis, he also characterizes PBMUM as a Malay organization, an organization claiming to protect the interests of Malays and one in which large numbers of Malays on campus chose to join. So large was the influx of students joining PBMUM in these few years that even as president, Noordin Razak struggled with describing what the club was and what its cause was. With claims by authorities that the club had been taken over by Malay extremists, its leadership was under pressure to define it. Most of the thesis is focused, thus, on understanding the changing political attitudes of its members—mainly consisting of Malay students, although the club did not close its membership to non-Malay members and as such, had a few non-Malay members.

The club president argues that one important factor driving Malay students’ engagement with social issues was the influx of poor and working-class Malays to campus. Experiencing discrimination on campus had inspired their political awakening. They saw the low admission rates and high failure rates of Malay students as evidence of discrimination by the university administration. A sense of solidarity was felt between students and other poor Malays in the nation; by 1970 half the population lived below the poverty line while 74% of these were Malay.<sup>27</sup> Apart from this, the opening of the Speaker’s Corner in 1967 was also cited as a factor of increased political engagement, providing a space where students could engage in debates on political developments of the day. Indeed, the Speaker’s Corner was the site out of which many initiatives, demonstrations and strikes by the students emerged. It was an important cultural heritage of the student movement, destroyed in 1975 as part of the state’s containment policy.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Noordin Razak is the first to propose 1967 as a turning point in the student movement, which scholars later concur with.

<sup>27</sup> Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 309.

<sup>28</sup> Khong Kim Hoong, "Dr Khong Kim Hoong: Speaker's Corner," Facebook, last modified October 19, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/imaginedmalaysia/videos/dr-khong-kim-hoong-speakers-corner/813384322756425/> Some scholars have argued it was the destruction of this site which had a massive effect on quelling student protests, depriving them of spaces in which they were able to engage in critical and important debate.

In 1971, a committee headed by Abdul Majid bin Ismail was appointed by the state to study campus life in the University of Malaya and make recommendations as to how to improve cultural contact between students on campus. This was in line with the state's central goal of fostering national unity in the wake of the May 13 riots. The resulting publication, "Report of the Committee Appointed by the National Operations Council to Study Campus Life of Students," found that relations between Malays and non-Malays on campus were startlingly tense, with many Malays preferring to identify with the Malay Language Organization (PBMUM)—agreeing with Noordin Razak—while non-Malays dominated the University of Malaya's Student Union (UMSU). As UM's student government responsible for ensuring the welfare of all students on campus, UMSU registration were automatic for all students.<sup>29</sup> So bad was the rift between Malay and non-Malay undergraduates and the insularity of Malay student communities, the committee notes, that PBMUM refused to affiliate with the Chinese-dominated UMSU. Some Malay students even made a show of declaring their independence from UMSU, alleging that the student union did not do enough to advocate for Malays on campus.<sup>30</sup>

PBMUM's activism regarding such matters, despite being a language group, led the committee to characterize PBMUM as a "quasi-political group" or in the words of students—a "Malay society representing Malay interests which it regards as national interests."<sup>32</sup> They also note that "it does not regard itself as racialist but as the guardians of truly nationalist aspirations."<sup>33</sup> The report is another valuable source to look at because it covers in detail the tension between

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<sup>29</sup> UMSU's low registration rates in this time has even led some to argue how this meant the voice of non-Malays on campus were not being heard, or that non-Malays were not politically active in this time. This can be countered by noting the numerous non-Malay student leaders of the movement such as Khong Kim Hoong.

<sup>30</sup> Ismail, "Report of the Committee Appointed by the National Operations Council to Study Campus Life of Students." Muhammad, *Mahasiswa Menggugat*.

<sup>32</sup> Ismail, "Report of the Committee Appointed by the National Operations Council to Study Campus Life of Students," 50.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 50.



PBMUM and UMSU. Last but not least, other sources on the student movement written in the 70s include Muhammad Abu Bakar's *Student's Striking: An Analysis and Observation From Within Of Student Activism in This Country* and Hassan Karim's and Nor Hamid's *With the People! The Student Movement in Malaysia: 1967-1974*.<sup>34</sup> Muhammad Abu Bakar's book *Student Striking* is particularly important because it was the first—and only—attempt to situate student activism within the broader context of politics in this time. With a heavy focus on the voice of students, at times he overemphasizes the effect students had on the broader polity, disregarding other factors on the national scale.

Almost thirty years later, in 2008 political scientist Meredith Weiss revisits the oft-forgotten history of student activism in her book *Student Activism in Malaysia: Crucible, Mirror, Sideshow*.<sup>35</sup> Weiss employs historical methods to situate Malaysian student activism—or what she classifies as student activism—in the broader context of Malaysian politics, education and institutions from pre-independence up until 2010.<sup>36</sup> Of particular interest to Weiss was the relationship between students and the state, connecting and comparing their activism with institutional change happening on the national scale, especially change related to education policy. She also studies the effect of the state's containment policies on the student movement which she notes effectively quelled most, if not all, student activism post-1975—especially left-wing activism. Weiss' work contributes to literature on trans-national student activism, using the Malaysian example to advance a characterization of student activism. She works off a loose definition of student activism as “students' (usually undergraduates') collective mobilization vis-

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<sup>34</sup> Muhammad, *Mahasiswa Menggugat*. Karim and Nor Hamid, *With The People!: The Malaysian Student Movement, 1967-1974*.

<sup>35</sup> Weiss, *Student Activism in Malaysia*.

<sup>36</sup> By oft-forgotten I am referring to the younger generation or the post—UUCA generation, who make up the bulk of the Malaysian population today. It is also not often considered in a history of contemporary Malaysia. She also challenges two long-held beliefs popular amongst the Malaysian public today—that protest is not part of Malaysian culture and that Malaysian students are generally apolitical.

à-vis state, economic, societal and campus powerholders,” allowing her to identify Malaysian students’ engagement in a wide range of activism.

Combing through a wide range of student publications, national newspapers, government publications and more, her narrative centers political debates taking place within the student movement, emphasizing how students were not a homogenous entity. Chapter Four, “The Heydays of Protest: 1967-1974,” for example, shows that students held diverse opinions on political issues of the day and exhibited varying levels of support for student-led initiatives. They were critical, eager to get involved and most importantly, strategic in choosing what issues to take on and how. Weiss also notes, however, that at its height the student movement experienced serious weaknesses: “Most significant among these...were ethnic tensions and monoracial orientations.”<sup>38</sup> She comes to this conclusion based on increasing instances of conflict between the Malay-dominated PBMUM and Chinese-dominated UMSU. In the section “The Awakening Specter of Communalism on Campus,” for example, she writes:

*Behind this organizational split were a deeply pervasive racial consciousness and political alienation that had developed since 1969...what marked Malay students was the relative insignificance of all variables except race in shaping their political, social and economic attitudes, including a ‘definite lack of tolerance for the non-Malays and their welfare,’ and a lack of interest in compromise.<sup>39</sup>*

It was not just Malays who had developed a more insular and exclusive community, she notes, but also Muslims (all Malays are Muslims).<sup>40</sup> Giving examples of the rise of Muslim student movement in this time, she prepares readers for the turn to Islamist activism post-1975.

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<sup>38</sup> Weiss, *Student Activism in Malaysi*, 181.

<sup>39</sup> Weiss, 175.

<sup>40</sup> It should be noted here that there is strong coalescence between Malay and Muslim identities, with Malay culture largely being based on Islamic influence. Almost all Malays today are—at least officially—Muslim. This is enforced by strict laws which make it very hard (almost impossible) to convert of out Islam.

One voice missing and misrepresented in this discussion, however, is that of PBMUM members themselves. Supporting Weiss' assessment of racial relations on campus are a series of surveys conducted in the '70s by academics concerned with rising communalism amongst the students. She often takes from Abdul Majid's "Report," for example, in giving examples of the rift between PBMUM and UMSU. In doing so, however, she does not consider why the report was written and how the intentions of the committee may have colored the interpretation of the crisis between PBMUM and UMSU. As part of the state's aggressive development plans post-May 13, the committee was responsible for making recommendations in developing the UUCA—a law which provided the blueprint for creating and managing all new universities in the coming period. The resulting law would greatly limit student and university autonomy. Essentially, claims of communalism in the report were used as justification by the state to control all student political activity. While this may have been driven by genuine concern of another racial riot breaking out, its impact was enormous. Assessing evidence given by the committee of rising communalism also reveals some discrepancies in the information they include. They note, for example, the genuine political differences existing between PBMUM and UMSU which suggests that the tension between these groups was not strictly racial. Yet, they still paint these divisions as being motivated by ethnic differences. They also note how PBMUM had a small number of non-Malay students while UMSU was technically a multiracial organization, suggesting that the PBMUM-UMSU tension did not fully represent division between Malays and Chinese on campus. Last but not least, they fail to mention the nuances in PBMUM's position regarding race and their cause around the national language, essentially overemphasizing the factor of race in their struggle.

Among the few histories of post-independent Malaysia written by trained historians is *Malaysia: The Making of the Nation*, written by distinguished Malaysian historian, Cheah Boon

Kheng.<sup>41</sup> Cheah contributes by closely assessing both primary sources and secondary sources in painting a broad picture of Malaysian life after independence. This makes it an important book to look at when situating the student movement within a broader context. The book focuses on nation-building efforts after independence, creating “an account of the contest between Malay ethno-nationalism and Malaysian nationalism in the making of the Malayan nation.”<sup>43</sup> By this, he means a nationalism or national identity centered around the Malay race versus one that revolves around a multi-ethnic national identity. As the book emphasizes the prominent role each prime minister played in nation-building, Cheah’s account of the ‘60s and ‘70s focuses on the influence of prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. Ruling from independence in 1957 to 1971, and being known as one of Malaysia’s founding fathers, Tunku is painted as a “multiracial inclusivist.” While beginning his career as a Malay exclusivist to rally Malay support in order to bring about independence, Cheah writes that upon becoming the first prime minister of the multiracial nation, Tunku’s agenda changed towards prioritizing peace and unity in the nation. As such, Tunku would often make concessions towards both the Chinese and Malay “ultras”—a term used to describe extremists which Cheah often uses—on the issue of language and education policy in order to give the impression of being fair. Cheah notes, however, that each concession seemed to further aggravate the other side.<sup>44</sup>

Despite its contributions, the book has its shortcomings. As historian Chi Tim Ho writes, it seems to reverse the course of Southeast Asian historiography which has moved towards a “history-from-below” approach or a broader regional perspective, rather employing a more traditional approach focusing on the perspectives of elites, politicians, and the nation-state.<sup>45</sup> While

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<sup>41</sup> Cheah, *Malaysia*.

<sup>43</sup> Cheah, *Malaysia*.

<sup>44</sup> Cheah, 75-120.

<sup>45</sup> Ho, “The ‘History of Nation-Building’ Series and Southeast Asian Historiograph.”

Cheah does so with the intention of centering political debates which shaped national policies and thus the nation's path, this approach also works against him as it impedes on his ability to investigate and relay factors driving the different types of nationalism emerging post-independence. The concept of an independent nation, after all, with its offer of freedom and various configurations of possible futures had large impact on the lives of ordinary people—a fact they were aware of and a fact which factored into what policies they favored, which politicians they supported, how they engaged in politics and more. In Cheah's narrative, for example, Malay "ultras," are often painted as static characters with a clear agenda of turning Malaysia into a "Malay nation-state." He presents the policies they choose to emphasize in pursuit of this agenda as a given—one main one being insisting that Malay be the only medium of instruction in schools. The logic in this is that "ultras" would naturally want to insist on any policy in favor of their race, giving them some headway in bringing about their goal. Language was a particularly important topic because it affected education and by extension, economic status (access to education ensured social mobility), political power, perpetuation of culture and more. This disregards the many leaders of the early Malay language movement who saw high hopes for Malay as an instrument to foster unity between the different ethnic groups in Malaysia, and the potential they saw for it as a tool to achieve social change. By mentioning Tunku's claim of students support for Malay "ultras" (as a result of their involvement in protests post may-13), Cheah also implicates students in this power struggle.

By only centering the voice of the political elite, Cheah's account fails to capture the fluctuating nature of such categories. Especially in the '60s, both ordinary citizens and politicians fell in and out of these categories over time, along with them the scope and definition of these categories also shifted. What inspired ordinary people—even students—to get involved in

movements (such as the language movement) at the heart of nation-building efforts and what, according to them, were seen as the stakes of not doing so? Who had the authority or influence to cast individuals into such categories and what did they stand to gain by doing so? His account of Tunku's time in office does not touch much on these questions even though the prime minister himself was an avid user of such terms. In "Historians Writing Nations: Malaysian Contests", historian Anthony Milner highlights Cheah's own role as a "historian-ideologue", pointing out how Cheah's unique perspective may have tainted the nation-building account he wrote.<sup>46</sup> This then begs the question, what informed Cheah's own choice to use such definitive terms in his narrative? It should be noted that Cheah himself is a Malaysian Chinese who lived through and gained writing experience through these political developments. These are important questions to answer to paint a fuller picture of the nation-building process in Malaysia.

Finally, like most other accounts of the '60s, Cheah offers a limited interpretation of the May 13 riots. This is understandable considering the limited archival material available on the riots itself—a state of emergency was declared, and the press was censored after the riots. In general, it is also considered a taboo or contentious topic to discuss. Many scholars are afraid to broach the topic due to Malaysia's stringent rules around discussing sensitive matters such as race and religion. Cheah's account mainly focuses on the general election leading up to the riots, arguing that disputes over the language issue largely impacted the outcome of the election which in turn, led to the eruption of the riots. The riots themselves are mainly presented through official facts and figures. Often, he takes claims made in sources regarding the riots (mainly the government-published official report and Tunku's own account) at face value, not giving the reader a clue as to who wrote them and why. In short, he does not offer much regarding May 13 other than what

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<sup>46</sup> Wang and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, *Nation-Building*, 117-160.

previous scholars have already shown. Similarly, he focuses rather on the effects of May 13 on Malaysia's nation-building path, and presents May 13 as a turning point which brought about said changes.

### **Methodology, Argument and Contribution**

In studying the history of this organization, I consult all available publications produced by members from 1955 to 1975, which includes student publications, annual reports, reports of symposiums they hosted and more.<sup>47</sup> Despite the many publications produced by students, few were kept, ranging only from 1959 to 1971, with many gap years in between in which materials written by students were lost. To fill in the gaps and get a fuller picture of student activity, I also survey articles published in national newspapers from 1967 to 1975, and the secondary literature on student activism.<sup>48</sup> To situate students' activities in the broader context of this time period, I also consult a wide range of secondary sources in the fields of political science, economics, language and literature, education policy, and ethnic studies, with a focus on language movements and later, political history. Sensing a need to look at primary sources that are misrepresented—or interpreted differently than I would—in the literature, at times I also pull from primary sources such as government publications and books by prime ministers. This is especially true when writing about May 13, an event at the core of independent Malaya's history in which there is scarce literature on what happened and an event which is also a central part of PBMUM's story.

Excavating the history of the Malay Language Society since its inception in 1955 up until 1975, I show that despite all the changes the organization experienced in the late '60s, a few common threads remain. Rather than a language organization or a quasi-political Malay

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<sup>47</sup> This includes *Berita PBMUM*—their official magazine on literature, politics and culture.

<sup>48</sup> National newspapers I consult include Alliance-friendly newspapers such as *The Straits Times* and *Berita Harian* (Daily News).

organization, I characterize PBMUM as a platform for students at the University of Malaya to meet, discuss, and mobilize around the most important issues concerning Malaysian society. PBMUM members devoted themselves towards changing the fate of the *rakyat* (the people).<sup>49</sup> By developing this argument, I challenge the three existing characterizations of PBMUM: the first being the Alliance party's claim that the organization was brainwashed by Malay extremists, a claim which undermines their cause and suggests that students lacked agency. This is important because such claims of the easily influenced nature of students have historically been used by the state to justify ending all political and intellectual discussion post may-13, worried that another race riot may happen.

Second, I counter Weiss' description of PBMUM as an organization representing an insular and exclusive Malay community on campus. Finally, I call into question the broader literature such as in Cheah's narrative which conflates the students' cause with that of the Malay "ultras", implicating them in a bid for power and Malay dominance by Malay elites. In contrast, I show how students had no such desire for superiority, their biggest concern being to advocate for equal development in the nation—a problem particularly affecting the Malay poor in this time. Moreover, by revising our understanding of the PBMUM, I challenge the Alliance party's glorification of their model of managing ethnic relations as the only way to maintain inter-ethnic peace and expose the methods they employed in maintaining their image. I show how students held nuanced views about race and politics and readily collaborated with other organizations holding different views. This history thus provides evidence of the ability of the non-elite

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<sup>49</sup> *Rakyat* is an important I will use throughout my thesis. It is a loose term encapsulating the poor, working class or in general, the non-elite Malaysian people. It is an important term describing an identity around which Malaysians have historically mobilized around.



Malaysian citizenry in this time to hold critical and productive conversations around race, class and religion, and it demonstrates their willingness to mobilize across such distinctions.

Chapter 1 tracks The Malay Language Society's (PBMUM) activities since its inception in 1955 up until 1975, painting a picture of this organization's goals, intentions, and character. By doing so I show how students had first-hand experience with issues at the core of the nation-building debate, and were uniquely situated to engage in such debates, contributing their valuable opinions to the discussion. From early on, PBMUM was adamant on the importance of the national language, both as an instrument of progress and in creating a sense of national identity. It was this latter aspiration or belief, however, which put them in precarious situations. Underlying this was a genuine belief of Malay's potential of being an inter-ethnic mode of communication between the different ethnic groups. "*Bahasa Jiwa Bangsa*" or "Language is the Soul of the Nation", the group declared, adopting the slogan of the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (DBP), a state-sponsored body responsible for developing the language.

While initially this was well-received, over time, as both Chinese and Malay language organizations began ramping up their efforts around the issue of the official language, and with rising claims of communalism, this became a highly contested issue. The much-anticipated National Language Act of 1967 was supposed to settle this issue for good; instead it both brought the language debate to the fore and revealed the Tunku administration's inadequacy in making hard decisions. The year in which the Act was supposed to pass, the ten-year anniversary of independence, also marked a crucial year in which the nation's progress was assessed to discover that not much had changed: race was still heavily tied to economic roles, a large portion of the population still lived in poverty, there was no common national identity, promises made about language policy since independence had not been achieved, and education remained inaccessible

other than to the few elite or lucky individuals. In this changing landscape, the PBMUM also shifted their strategy as an organization, engaging in more extreme methods and increasing their engagement with problems faced by the *rakyat*.

Chapter two focuses on claims of the PBMUM as Malay “ultras,” shedding light on how this image was formed as part of a broader tactic of the state post-May 13 to undermine politically dissenting voices and restore their image as capable leaders of the nation. To do so, I offer past proof of the Alliance using claims of communalism to undermine valid concerns brought up by the political opposition, arguing that they used the same method to target and discredit students’ cause. In a powerful irony, I also show that while separating itself from the so-called Malay “ultras,” the Alliance would then come to pass the same policies such “ultras” were advocating for—policies which worked to establish their power and influence. Next, I expound on the myth of the Malay “ultra” and how it was a personal myth started by Tunku. I also discuss the anti-Tunku demonstrations by the students, showing how they had valid reason for disliking Tunku. Last but not least, I address claims of communalism on the campus, shedding light on the student’s position regarding race and giving instances of their ability to collaborate across racial and class-based boundaries, challenging the common portrayal of students and their cause in historical narratives.

## Chapter 1

### The Malay Language Society (PBMUM): Voice of the Rakyat<sup>50</sup>

Here we stand hand in hand  
facing a world we understand  
a reality we have revealed  
enemies we have stripped naked  
administrators we have stripped naked  
enemies we have stripped naked  
stripped naked  
stripped naked  
stripped naked!  
in the name of god  
with honor  
with truth  
with compassion.  
No more dreams and deep slumber  
we are the children of the times  
suffocated between the boulders of our hills  
already demolished  
lying motionless at the bottom of our oceans  
already emptied  
nauseated inhaling our air  
which has been poisoned  
in the name of our nation  
in the name of our nation.....<sup>51</sup>

*Di sini kami berdiri dalam satu barisan  
berdepan dunia yang kami tahu  
dunia yang telah kami telanjangkan  
para musuh yang kami telanjangkan  
para pentadbir yang kami telanjangkan.  
para musuh yang kami telanjangkan  
telanjangkan  
telanjangkan  
telanjangkan!  
dengan nama tuhan  
atas kebenaran  
atas kejujuran  
atas kemanusiaan.  
Tiada lagi mimpi dan tidur nyenyak  
kami anak peristiwa anak zaman  
tercekik antara batu-batu gunung kami  
yang telah dirobuhkan  
terkapar didasar laut kami  
yang telah dikeringkan  
nanar didalam udara kami  
yang telah diracunkan  
dengan nama kebangsaan  
dengan nama kebangsaan.....*

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<sup>50</sup> *Rakyat* is an important term I will use throughout my thesis. It is a loose term encapsulating the poor, working class or in general, the non-elite Malaysian people. It is an important term describing an identity around which Malaysians have—historically—often mobilized around.

<sup>51</sup> From the poem titled *Demonstrasi* (Demonstration) in the PBMUM publication, *Eksposiswa*. Translated by the author. This is a special edition of a PBMUM publication released after May 13. It discusses the May 13 racial riots, how to foster unity in the nation and considers the path forward in the nation. *Eksposiswa* is a play on the English word ‘to expose,’ and the Malay word for ‘student’, *mahasiswa*.

Over the course of its lifetime, the Malay Language Society would take on a range of initiatives, including language-related initiatives, organizing strikes in support of the peasants, hosting cultural weeks, and so on. Its involvement in a broad range of activities, despite being a language society, would prod scholars, journalists, and the administration alike to attempt to classify this group. Over time, a general image has been constructed of PBMUM as a quasi-political organization representing Malay interests (which it regards as national interests). The term quasi-political does not encapsulate, however, PBMUM's continued engagement with issues at the heart of Malaysia's nation-building debate. 'An organization representing Malay interests,' on the other hand, does not explain why—when necessary—PBMUM was ready to pit itself against the Malay-dominated Alliance government or the Malay elite. Indeed, they were especially hostile towards the so-called great leader of the Malays, prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. Further, this description overemphasizes the centrality of race in their cause and paint their cause as championing only matters which may uplift the Malay race. In reality, students thought deeply about race and class, dedicated themselves to achieving equality between the different race groups in Malaysia—their main concern at the time being the high numbers of Malays living in poverty.

In this chapter, I argue that a broader characterization is needed to describe their cause, beginning to build my argument of PBMUM as a platform for students to meet, discuss, and mobilize around the most important issues concerning Malaysian society—especially devoting themselves towards changing the fate of the *rakyat*. I contend that it is precisely the ambiguity of this organization's goals, ambitions, methods, and its established image—at the time—as an organization advocating for social change which attracted so many students to the organization in the late '60s. They were attracted not to the organization per se, but to the specific issues it championed at different times. This broad definition also helps us to understand the changing

nature of PBMUM. Indeed, it was this willingness to change which was their strength, constantly questioning and challenging the established social structures and government which seemed to be the cause of the misery of the *rakyat*. This willingness to embrace change also shapes methods employed in achieving their goals—when faced with a challenge, students met, debated, collaborated, and proposed creative solutions to problems affecting their society.

To support my argument, this chapter takes readers across the range of pursuits taken on by PBMUM since its inception in 1955 up until 1974. It situates efforts taken on by the club and debates it had within the broader context of the language movement and later, the peasant movement. The chapter is organized into five sections. The first section describes race and language in the constitution, offering an understanding not only of provisions in the constitution heavily shaping the debate over language which takes place later on, but also offering painting a picture of the Malaysian political landscape leading up to Independence and beyond. The subsequent section gives an overview of the language movement in the ‘50s when PBMUM was born, showing the high hopes for the Malay language, both as an instrument to unite citizens towards a new common national identity and as a tool to change the fate of *rakyat*. The third section describes PBMUM’s work in its early years. Formed on the brink of independence and having access to a variety of important Malay language organizations at the forefront of this nationalist cause, students were in a unique position to contribute to the discussion around language. I also describe the organization’s main goal—implementing Malay as the sole official language—after independence, the challenges faced in achieving this goal and the approaches they took.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> I use Malay and the Malay language interchangeable, which is common practice.

The fourth section discusses the situation leading up to the 1967 language act, a much-anticipated bill regarding language. While Malay language organizations had high hopes of instituting Malay as the language of unity in the early years of independence, disagreements arising around the impending 1967 National Language Act made it increasingly clear that many were not on board—or even opposed to—this project. In pursuing their goal of implementing a Malay language policy, PBMUM encountered challenges not only from an administration partial to using English but from the Chinese language movement calling for Chinese to be recognized as an official language. I describe the sense crisis which thus emerged between different ethnic groups in the nation resulting from this debate. I also expound on how and why this was seen as a crisis. Last but not least, in the final section I address Nordin Razak's claims of PBMUM's changing attitude post-1967, focusing on the growing number of initiatives targeted at uplifting Malay peasants. Two factors prodded the change in strategy and goals of the organization: first, facing extreme setback in achieving their goal of implementing Malay as the sole official language. Second, the ten-year mark since independence prodding a reflection on the situation in the nation which revealed the dire situation of rural poverty—a problem particularly affecting Malay communities. These factors led to members employing more radical methods in pursuing the national language cause and attempting different ways of interacting with the Malay poor. Consequently, increased engagement with the peasants motivated and shaped their work throughout the early '70s.

### **The Road to Independence: Enshrining Communal Compromise in the Constitution**

With the colonial government setting racial unity as a pre-requisite for independent Malaya, the process of drafting the constitution involved many disagreements, not only between the Alliance party and the British representatives but also between various Malayan subgroups.

The draft's most controversial features were those dealing with citizenship and the special privileges of Malays.<sup>53</sup> The Alliance party itself, for instance, faced many challenges in writing a memorandum (to submit to the Reid Commission) inclusive of views within the coalition. Analyzing the memorandum, its drafts and discussions surrounding it, in *The Making of the Malayan Constitution* historian Fernando writes that there were three factions within the party with differing opinions on the memorandum. The first, which he describes as the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) “conservatives”, include leaders such as Tunku Abdul Rahman, Abdul Razak and Tan Cheng Lock—English-educated elites whose “political perceptions were influenced by a touch of liberal tradition and ideas acquired from British parliamentary traditions and English constitutionalism.”<sup>54</sup> This group is generally known to be more open and willing to compromise on communally sensitive issues, a fact which Fernando owes to the close working relationship between the UMNO conservative and MCA conservative leaders. The UMNO “radicals”, on the other hand, largely came from middle class backgrounds. While both “conservative” and “radical” UMNO leaders were committed on issues pertaining to Malay interests—the Malay special position, language, and religion—“radical” leaders opposed the liberalization of citizenship requirements, the recognition of the principle of *jus soli*, and multilingualism in the legislature and councils, seeing these as a threat to the political position of the Malays.<sup>55</sup> A third group, whom Fernando calls the MCA “radicals”, consisted of Chinese-educated leaders with high influence over the working-class Chinese due to their role as leaders of the chambers of commerce and clan associations.

While both “conservative” and “radical” MCA leaders were committed to the recognition

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<sup>53</sup> By this point there was a general consensus that an independent Malaya would include such privileges for Malays. Other scholars have discussed how this came to be.

<sup>54</sup> Fernando, *The Making of the Malayan Constitution*, 77.

<sup>55</sup> Fernando, 76-81.

of the principle of *jus soli*, they differed on the question of language and of special privileges. The “radical” MCA leaders wanted Mandarin to be recognized as an official language on par with Malay and rejected the provision of special privileges for Malays—fearing that this would create two classes of citizens. “Conservative” MCA leaders, however, were not keen on challenging these special privileges, worried that such a proposal might affect the close relationship they had with conservative UMNO leaders.<sup>56</sup> Ultimately, as a result of both UMNO and MCA “conservative” leaders taming the “radicals” within their respective parties, the final memorandum agreed to the principle of *jus soli* being recognized, on the condition that the special position of the Malays would be protected through a provision.<sup>57</sup> This forms the basis of the ‘communal balance’ as laid out in the constitution.

To safeguard the special position of Malays (as requested in the memorandum) while including checks and balances to protect non-Malays, the constitutional proposal written by the Reid commission included an elaborate bill of rights to guarantee the basic rights of the individual. The proposal also included a provision calling for a review of the special privileges after 15 years. Upon publication of the Reid Report on February 20, 1957, however, there was uproar from different opposition parties.<sup>58</sup> Malay opposition parties still believed that not enough was being done to protect the special privileges of Malays, and that the 15-year time limit for review of the special position was unacceptable. Chinese opposition parties, on the other hand, continued to argue against the creation of a special position for Malays. In a rush to finalize the constitution before the deadline for independence, however, such issues were glossed over despite protests from multiple parties and individuals.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Fernando, 81-84.

<sup>57</sup> Fernando, 65-94.

<sup>58</sup> Fernando, 144-149.

<sup>59</sup> Fernando, 95-188.



It should be noted that Article 153 of the final constitution (which recognizes the special position of Malays) is not exactly clear on what these special rights entail. Clause (2), for example, mentions that reservations for Malays may be enforced for “positions in the public service (other than the public service of a State) and of scholarships, exhibitions and other similar educational or training privileges...”<sup>60</sup> The full article generally describes how reservations or quotas *may* be enforced if necessary, but does not specify *how* it may be enforced—the specific ratios, time period for enforcement and more. Although only the example of quotas is used, the Article also does not rule out other ways of administering these special rights, other than ways which violate provisions made to guarantee basic right of individuals. In the final version, the 15-year time limit was also removed and Article 153 was moved from the the transitional section to the permanent section. From being a temporary measure to assist Malays economically and socially, Article 153 hence became a permanent feature.

There were also many disagreements regarding the new nation’s national and official language. For clarification, a national language is seen as the basis of integration for a country and carries a more symbolic significance as compared to the official language which has more practical implications, affecting matters such as education, administration and business. While there was less resistance to Malay as a national language, the question of Malaysia’s official language remained highly contentious. In negotiating the country’s independence, there was a general consensus within the Alliance party that: first, a national language was necessary (drawing on the example of India’s national language being Hindi), second, Malay shall be a national language and third, that the constitution should include a clause upholding the rights of non-Malays to use their

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<sup>60</sup> Malaysian Constitution, art. 153, cl. 2.

own languages and script.<sup>61</sup> On the issue of official language, on the other hand, there were disagreements on what languages to include, how long these languages should remain official languages and more. As Fernando describes, the Chinese “radicals” were initially quite adamant on including Chinese as an official language, fearing that not doing so would prevent the use of Chinese for official business and, more importantly, end the continuation of Chinese-medium schools after independence.<sup>62</sup> The Alliance joint memorandum also notes UMNO’s position of keeping English as an official language for a maximum of ten years (although Malay “radicals” disagreed), while MCA and MIC wanted it to be used for a minimum of ten years. There was also fear that by not allowing Chinese and Tamil to be used in the legislatures, potential Chinese and Indian candidates’ ability to participate in parliaments would be debilitated. Finally, as a result of compromise and practical considerations, Article 152 of the constitution decreed Malay as the national language, but stipulated that English was to remain in use as an official language alongside Malay “for a period of ten years after *Merdeka* day, and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides.”<sup>63</sup> To protect the teaching, learning and use of Chinese and Tamil in the private spheres, however, safeguards were included elsewhere in the constitution.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, medium of instruction in educational institutions was also an important consideration in constitutional negotiations. After the 1955 election, the Alliance pledged to establish national schools with a “Malayan outlook” to replace the British system where Malays, Chinese and Indians attended segregated schools. So in the lead up to independence, a 15-member committee headed by Education Minister Abdul Razak was formed to study the problem and make

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<sup>61</sup> It should be noted that in India—where many different languages and dialects are spoken—national language was also a contentious issue.

<sup>62</sup> Fernando, *The Making of the Malayan Constitution*, 82.

<sup>63</sup> Leow, *Taming Babel*, 195. Note: Merdeka Day translates to Independence Day.

<sup>64</sup> Fernando, *The Making of the Malayan Constitution*, 156.

recommendations. This committee published the Razak Report, instead recommending the creation of a common curriculum irrespective of medium of instruction, to appease Chinese and Indian communities who did not support the conversion of vernacular schools to national schools. The creation of a common curriculum was deemed important to foster a sense national unity. Another important feature of this report was that it recognized the eventual goal of making Malay the only medium of instruction. The 1957 Education Ordinance—largely based off the Razak Report—therefore established a system of national-type schools and vernacular schools. National-type schools used either Malay or English (considered a transitional move) as a medium of instruction and followed a common curriculum. In contrast, Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools could continue using Chinese or Tamil as a medium of instruction provided Malay language classes were made mandatory and the vernacular schools' syllabi were modified to reflect Independent Malaya's curriculum—previously, Chinese school textbooks carried topic and themes related to China's history and culture.<sup>65</sup> Lastly, vernacular schools did not receive public funding.

Overall, not only were there many disagreements within the Alliance coalition itself during the constitutional negotiations, differences arose also between the Alliance party and opposition parties, the British and the Malay Rulers. The final constitution was a result of compromise between these different parties and thus—as expected—could not satisfy all the different stakeholders. From the discussion above, it appears that the constitution was weighted in favor of Malays. It also appears as if Malay parties or Malays had political primacy, as their views were oftentimes accorded more significance in the final constitution. It should be noted, however, that while the Malay ruling elite enjoyed such privileges, the condition of many Malays did not reflect the elevated position they were awarded in the constitution. Much of the economy was still in the

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<sup>65</sup> Yao Sua and Hooi See, "Ethnic Contestation and Language Policy in a Plural Society." Note: Using either Mandarin or Tamil as a medium of instruction.

hands of the Chinese or foreign firms at the time of independence, and many Malays still lived in poverty. This was also partly a result of British policy—during British rule Malays were mainly left in their villages to work on agricultural activities. By 1957 a majority of Chinese, on the other hand, were living in urban areas, a result of aggressive resettlement efforts to prevent communist ideology from spreading. This explains why the ‘disadvantaged position of Malays’ was often used as justification for allowing them special rights—the special rights were partly intended as a temporary measure to uplift the Malay race to be on par with the Chinese.

### **The Malay Language Movement in the ‘50s: Language as an Instrument of Unity and**

#### **Social Change**

In January 1955, students of the Malay Studies Faculty at the University of Malaya (located in Singapore at the time) formed the Malay Language Society (PBMUM). With Malaya being on the brink of Independence, the main concern of Malay language and literary organizations was advocating for Malay to be the national language of the Federation. There was a sense of optimism shared by advocates who saw its potential as a language to unite the people of Malaya in the ensuing years of self-rule. This is because Malay had a reputation of being a *lingua franca*; the Malay language grew most rapidly under the influence of Islamic literature during the Malacca Sultanate era (1402-1511). With many traders—especially Arab traders—visiting Malacca’s international trading port, Malay became a language used for trade in this era. It should be noted, however, that it was not classical Malay which became a *lingua franca*, rather Bazaar Malay did—a pidgin language born in this period which was a simplified version of Malay with influences from Chinese and non-Malay native traders’ languages. While in the colonial era, the growth and use of classical Malay was stunted, Bazaar Malay remained in use. By the 1950s, most of Malaya’s population spoke the pidgin language, or at least had limited knowledge of it. English being harder

to master, while Chinese and Tamil remained languages used mainly within these communities, Malay language organizations hence saw the Malay's potential of being a *lingua franca* once more.

It was not only Malay's potential to unite the people, however, which inspired a rising number of Malay language organizations to be formed throughout the '50s and early '60s. At the forefront of this revival of the language movement was the organization *Angkatan Sasterawan 50* (ASAS 50) or Writer's Movement 50. Whereas previously Malay literature focused on creating "Arts for Arts Sake," with its famed slogan "Art for Society," ASAS50 infused the language movement with new goals—to use language as a tool to inspire the political awakening of the *rakyat*. Their goals included, for example, fostering Malay nationalism, opening the eyes of the *rakyat* to oppression inflicted by both the colonial government and the elite, and last but not least, advancing the promotion of Malay as the national language of Malaysia. As such, its founders would be involved in a range of projects to revive and advance the national language, including publishing articles in the realm of politics and economics, organizing congresses to develop the Malay language, promoting its use as a medium of instruction in education, and more. The '50s and '60s—especially with the arrival of independence—would see a range of language organizations being formed, demonstrating the attractiveness of ASAS50's cause. It would come as no surprise then, that such an organization would also be formed at the faculty of Malay studies of the nation's leading institution—by students aware of these developments in the nation and ready to contribute to the national cause.

### **PBMUM (1955-1959): Implementing Malay as the Sole Official Language**

An early example of the important role students played in the language movement can be seen in their involvement in 3<sup>rd</sup> Malay Language and Literary Congress in 1956. The Congress—held on the UM campus itself and attended by 200 delegates from Malaya and Indonesia—was

organized by *Angkatan Sasterawan 50* (ASAS50).<sup>66</sup> Drafted by influential members of ASAS50 such as Keris Mas and Usman Awang, its memorandum stated: “language and literature are the instruments for national unity in the struggle for Independence.”<sup>67</sup> Leading up to the event, PBMUM appointed a committee to investigate ways to unify the Malay and Indonesian languages.<sup>68</sup> Underlying this effort was a sense of solidarity felt between Malay and Indonesian writers. Especially before the relationship between Malaysia and Indonesia soured due to Indonesia’s protest of the 1963 Malaysia agreement (resulting in a confrontation between the two nations), there were efforts to combine the two languages. The students also prepared a working paper regarding spelling which eventually became the foundation of the Congress Spelling System—proposed during the congress to reform the Za’aba system previously in use and preferred by publishing houses throughout the late ‘50s and ‘60s.<sup>69</sup> Another major development from the Congress was the formation of the *Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka* (DBP), or House of Language and Literature, a state-sponsored organization whose sole purpose was to advance, develop and protect the Malay language. This organization would come to play a key role in developing the language and shaping its future throughout the ‘60s.

What made PBMUM unique was the position it occupied as a club formed by students at the nation’s leading university. Many members being students of the Malay Studies Faculty, they were under the supervision of the greatest minds in the field.<sup>70</sup> Notable professors included Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad (better known as Za’aba), a renowned writer and linguist who contributed to modernizing the Malay language by—among many other contributions—formulating the Za’aba

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<sup>66</sup> *Straits Times*, September 17, 1956.

<sup>67</sup> Hooker, *Writing a New Society*, 250.

<sup>68</sup> *Straits times*, February 2, 1956. Included in this committee was the renowned Tuan Za’aba, head of the Malay Studies Department at UM.

<sup>69</sup> Omar, “The Malay Spelling Reform,” 11.

<sup>70</sup> Nordin bin Abd. Razak, “A Study of the Changing Attitudes of Malay Students at the University of Malaya.”

spelling system in 1924 and publishing a series of grammar books in 1936. Such privileges opened their access to other important organizations. In fact, throughout the '60s PBMUM would work with and receive support from large language organizations such as the DBP, the National Language Action Front (NLAF) and more. Drawing the interest of such organizations was not only the students' intelligence; there was a general recognition in this period of the importance of higher education in the nation-building process. One of the goals language organizations chased was the implementation of Malay in higher education institutions, a goal which PBMUM was also working towards.

After independence was achieved and Malay was established as the national language, PBMUM—as did other Malay language organizations—set its eyes on making Malay the official language in ten years. It could not do so, however, unless Malay was proven to be fit for use as a modern language. At the time, classical Malay was deemed inadequate as a modern language Malay due to centuries of neglect, especially when compared to modern languages such as English, Spanish and Portuguese. It was thus deemed unfit to promote Malaya's development if used as the sole official language. Further, most of Malaya's inhabitants only spoke Bazaar Malay. Areas in which Malay terminology were particularly lacking were the “high-level administrative affairs of government, technical and scientific vocations, and higher education.”<sup>71</sup> Students set out to help in this national effort by holding language symposiums, debates and publishing their own magazines. These included, for example, *Berita PBMUM*, their general newspaper which published issues related to language, politics and culture, *Suara PBMUM* and Bahasa—literary magazines.

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<sup>71</sup> Quoting Syed Nasir, the director of the DBP, in Leow, *Taming Babel*, 93.

Much of PBMUM's efforts in these early years also went towards creating new words and phrases. The 1959 annual report boasts of committees formed within the club to create terms in the field of Arts, Science and Medicine 'for general use'.<sup>72</sup> While some guidelines for translation from English had been established at the Congress (more guidelines were added later by the DBP), this was not an easy feat and students disagreed on a range of matters. In the September 1959 edition of PBMUM's magazine, *Berita PBMUM*, for example, the student Wan Hassan wrote that one issue was the tendency of one camp within the club to take words directly from the English language while another camp preferred to only combine Malay root words resulting in, at times, odd-sounding words.<sup>73</sup> On this matter, he suggested taking the middle road by changing the spelling and pronunciation of English words to fit with the Malay pronunciation; Instead of *jentera tulis* (writing machine) to mean typewriter he suggested the word *taiprata*.<sup>74</sup> This tells us not only of the struggles in developing the Malay language, but of different approaches PBMUM members took no doubt motivated by the politics around language—standing true to the nationalist desire of speaking in one's mother tongue proved a challenging endeavor when English was still held up as the gold standard which Malay must compete with and borrow from to remain relevant.

While PBMUM led the way on language-related campaigning, they also collaborated or worked alongside other student organizations on campus to promote the national language, exhibiting the willingness of the multiracial student population in embracing the idea of a national language.<sup>75</sup> In August 1959, for example, the Socialist Club hosted a national language seminar aimed at the English-educated. Conducted in English, the seminar generally aimed to study the

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<sup>72</sup> *Berita PBMUM*, "Annual Report for the Schooling Year 1959/1960."

<sup>73</sup> *Berita PBMUM*, "National University".

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> An overwhelming number of PBMUM members were Malays. The Socialist Club and UMSU, on the other hand, were multiracial clubs.



role of Malay as a national language and discuss ways to promote its use.<sup>76</sup> The University of Malaya's Student Union (UMSU) also changed the name of their student publication, *Malayan Undergrad*, to the Malay equivalent, *Mahasiswa Negara*, and began publishing articles in both languages upon moving to the new Kuala Lumpur campus in 1959.<sup>77</sup> Apart from this, the different clubs also collaborated at times. PBMUM, UMSU and the Socialist Club made the news, for instance, in releasing a joint statement to support students at the National Language Institute who protested against their 'dictatorial' British principal.<sup>78</sup> The principal had insisted English be listed as a second official language in the student union's constitution. When Education minister Khir Johari chided UM students and threatened to close the Institute in response to the protest, a follow-up statement was released maintaining their right to comment on this "attempt to suppress the national language."<sup>79</sup> Overall, widespread dedication to the language cause across different organizations with different interests was a signature occurrence of the late '50s, displaying the widespread belief—not just limited to PBMUM—especially in the early years of independence of hopes for the Malay language to create unity.

### **PBMUM (1960-1967): Nation in Crisis**

In October 1966, PBMUM held a National Language Seminar which drew the attention of important figures such as Syed Nasir, the director of the DBP, and fifty language organizations from Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and Indonesia. A look at the seminar papers in this particular year offers a glimpse into the tense situation by the mid-60s. It also gives insight into the views of members regarding the much-anticipated 1967 National Language Act. Delivering the opening speech was club president Ismail Daud. He began his speech by explaining the organization's

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<sup>76</sup> *Berita Harian*, August 22, 1959.

<sup>77</sup> Weiss, *Student Activism in Malaysia*, 105.

<sup>78</sup> *Straits Times*, July 22, 1959.

<sup>79</sup> *Straits Times*, July 25, 1959.

history and its contributions thus far in realizing their primary goal—making Malay the sole official language. Then, he addressed the crowd:

Ladies and gentlemen, we hold this seminar in a time of crisis. We have been anxiously following the news regarding the heightening of demands and agitation by radicals within a particular political party. Ladies and gentlemen, it has been ten years since Merdeka, yet we [the nation] still do not have a national identity which we can truly call a ‘national identity’, even more disappointing is that this stems from us not having a ‘nation’ in its truest sense. Because of this, the concept of communalism arises which becomes a factor obstructing nation-building efforts. This is a clear and true reality. Matters which should only concern the concept of nationhood are increasingly being presented as communalist matters...<sup>80</sup>

The radical voices threatening to disrupt peace in the nation whom Daud describes were the Chinese language organizations. Daud claims that their calls for the Chinese language to receive status of official language added to the sense of communalism in the nation, acting as a barrier towards creating a national identity. Daud’s speech was emblematic of the sense of anxiety plaguing Malay language organizations in this moment. How did the situation come to this when for more than ten years PBMUM had been advocating for the Malay language to be the basis of unity in forging a national identity?

It should be noted that while the constitution mentions that a bill regarding language must be introduced ten years after independence, it did not offer any guarantees for Malay to be instituted as the sole official language. There was a sense of ambiguity, therefore, in how the situation would play out. The rise of a Chinese language movement in the early ‘60s would pose a challenge to Malay language organizations. Initially sidelined by the MCA in the lead up to Independence, the question of Chinese becoming an official language came back into light when in 1958, the young Lim Chong Eu rose to lead MCA. Providing impetus for this was the

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<sup>80</sup> Malay Language Society of the University of Malaya, “Malay Language Society: Speech of the President on Opening Day of the National Language Seminar,” October 29, 1966. Translated by author.

introduction of the Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) and the Federation of Malaya Certificate of Education (FMCE), two national examinations at the secondary school level to be conducted in English. These were interpreted by Chinese educationists as a step to convert vernacular schools to English-medium or Malay-medium schools since to prepare for examinations students had to be educated in English. Receiving support from Chinese communities over the issue, Lim began to advocate for Chinese to be an official language: “If the government persisted that only official languages could be used as a medium for public examinations, then the government should forthwith recognize Chinese as an official language.”<sup>81</sup> It was not the issue of national language, therefore, which was seen as a problem for Chinese educationists. They were more worried about the eventual implementation of Malay as the sole official language since this would threaten the existence of vernacular schools. Indeed, the Razak Report—forming the foundation of the 1957 Education Ordinance—promulgated the eventual adoption of the Malay language as the sole medium of instruction in education.

Underlying this sense of crisis in Malay language organizations was the pervasive belief that multilingualism was a threat, thus it was not possible for there to be two official languages in their eyes. Rachel Leow expounds on this in her book, *Taming Babel*, showing how from early on there was consensus among Malay representatives that multilingualism was directly opposed or posed a barrier to a united nation. She quotes Tunku at the first session of the House of Representatives to illustrate: “The Honorable Member spoke about uniting the people of this country and I agree with every word he said, but unfortunately he contradicted himself in the same speech. One moment he suggested there should be unity and another moment that there should be multilingualism.”<sup>82</sup> It was the DBP, however, she argues, who propagated this belief through their

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<sup>81</sup> Yao Sua and Hooi See, “Ethnic Contestation and Language Policy in a Plural Society,” 262.

<sup>82</sup> Leow, *Taming Babel*, 203.

language planning efforts. In doing so, they played a leading role in propagating a rigid understanding of language throughout the '60s—instead of being a *lingua franca* (a language of intercommunication) Malay also became a “highly exclusionist expression of Malay hegemony.”<sup>83</sup> She writes that the DBP understood any attempt to challenge Malay as the sole official language as anathema to their conception of the national project and presented it as such.

While Leow argues that language was used as “a tool to be deployed for the purpose of maintaining racial boundaries in a consociational state whose political claims to power and hegemony would come to depend on their maintenance,” I suggest—by highlighting the concern expressed by Daud—that in the late '60s there was still genuine concern (at least among the students) for national unity as the motivating factor behind their efforts. Motivating the belief that Chinese language movements were a threat, however, was not only a philosophy they were sold on, but a strong conviction of the sense of disunity in the nation. With racial riots breaking out just three years previously in Singapore—when it was part of Malaysia—they would have reason to believe so. Apart from this, there were still sharp divisions along ethnic lines and strong association of economic class with race. Further, there is a possibility that they were convinced by claims often made in the press by Malay language organizations and the Alliance party alike that demands which challenge the constitution would lead to racial riots. Nevertheless, by the time of the National Language Seminar in 1966, there had been a clear shift in PBMUM from describing their struggle in a hopeful tone of achieving national unity, to a fearful tone of trying to avoid racial riots.

The irony of the situation is clear: how could PBMUM claim to be advocating for a united nation when it rebuked and invalidated the demands of an ethnic group comprising almost half the

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 182.

population of having their language recognized? As if to pre-empt such a rebuttal, in his speech Daud proceeded to call on anybody who makes such demands to study the history of Malaysia's formation, mentioning how as part of the communal compromise UMNO had approved the principle of *Jus Soli* to grant non-Malay races citizenship, while MCA had agreed to accept Malay as the sole official language ten years after Independence. As a result, he states that about one million Chinese (referred to as *Tionghoa* by Daud) and other ethnic groups had gained citizenship.<sup>84</sup> By only mentioning these two aspects of the constitution, he implies that language should be a non-issue since the Chinese had received citizenship—they should be satisfied and not ask for more. This shows the firm belief members had of the communal compromise as being the basis of unity in the nation.

The crisis expressed by Daud reflected how contentious the debate over national language was by that time. October 1966, for example, was a particularly eventful month. By then, both Chinese and Malay language movements were increasing pressure on the Tunku to come to a decision regarding the national language. The Chinese educationists, for example, were calling for the creation of Merdeka University—a university with Chinese as the medium of instruction—while Syed Nasir had formed the National Language Action Front (NLAF) to advocate more strongly for the implementation of Malay as the sole official language.<sup>85</sup> In mid-October, Syed Nasir spoke out regarding the use of Chinese characters outside the office of MCA president Tan Siew Sin's political secretary. In an article by national newspaper *The Straits Times*, he stated how he was fed up with “the use of non-official languages on official signboards.”<sup>86</sup> In response to Tan who claimed that the signboard offered a translation to those who were only literate in Chinese, he

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid. The Chinese of Malaya were often referred to as *Tionghoa* in this period. It carries a recognition that the Chinese of Malaya were distinct from Chinese citizens from China.

<sup>85</sup> Yao Sua and Hooi See, “Ethnic Contestation and Language Policy in a Plural Society.”

<sup>86</sup> *The Straits Times*, October 18, 1966.

stated that this was simply an excuse used to justify the use of non-official languages for official functions. This issue sparked controversy with the MCA calling for the Alliance to restrain Nasir from making such claims which “will only hinder the national language movement” and disrupt racial harmony.<sup>87</sup> The MCA leader stated that Nasir’s duty was to encourage non-Malays to learn the language rather than prevent them from learning their own languages. Others, such as the UMNO youth division in Penang, supported Nasir’s bold assertion.<sup>88</sup> Such instances served to feed the tension between Malays and Chinese in the nation.

While initially supportive of the NLA, Tunku quickly distanced himself from the organization upon realizing its political implications and needing to maintain his image as the ‘fair’ leader.<sup>89</sup> Speaking at the Penang Free School shortly after this debacle, the Tunku rebuked those creating a commotion over the issue of language and expressed how he would not be easily swayed. It was clear by then that the Tunku had no intention of making many changes to the language policy already in place. In that same speech, for instance, he maintained the importance of continuing to teach English in schools, without which “the machinery of Government will be thrown out of gear.”<sup>90</sup> He also stressed the point that since universities and colleges still used English as a medium of instruction, depriving students of an education in English would also deprive them of access to higher learning whether at home or abroad. Further, he also touched on the issue of other languages: “If the right attitude was adopted by all concerned—and a sensible and right approach made—the Government might even allow more liberal use of other languages.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *The Straits Times*, October 26, 1966.

<sup>88</sup> *Berita Harian*, November 14, 1966.

<sup>89</sup> In *Malaysia: The Making of a Nation*, historian Cheah Boon Kheng characterizes Tunku’s leadership as an inclusivist and a pluralist, always taking the middle road. He argues that Tunku Malay nationalist position softened upon shouldering the responsibility of Prime Minister.

<sup>90</sup> *The Straits Times*, October 22, 1966.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

Sure enough, members of PBMUM disapproved of his position and even issued a statement in response to his speech which was given just a few days prior to the Seminar. PBMUM's statement expressed their strong opposition to Tunku's "willingness to encourage the use of other languages" and his "willingness to practice 'multilingualism'" which "goes against the constitution and language policies of Malaysia."<sup>92</sup> Once again, they claim multilingualism as being unconstitutional. Important to note here is also PBMUM's stance against the Tunku: by 1966 they had branded him as a 'super-liberal' leader who had turned his back on the Malays. In 1967, the National Language Bill was introduced. The Bill declared Malay as the sole official language but still allowed the continued use of English for official purposes. It also affirmed the right of the Government to provide translations into any other language if deemed necessary.<sup>93</sup> In an article by *Berita Harian*, Tunku mentions that the Education system will remain the same.<sup>94</sup> In essence, the bill did not change much and failed to deliver what Malay language organizations had for so long been asking for.

#### **PBMUM (1967-1974): "With the *Rakyat*"**

In "PBMUM: A Study of the Changing Attitudes of Malay Students at the University of Malaya," 1970/1971 PBMUM President Nordin Razak argues that there was a shift in Malay attitudes after '67.<sup>95</sup> One change he identifies is that while students carried on with their goal of making Malay the sole official language, their methods for pursuing this goal changed, with students being more willing to exert pressure by holding strikes, demonstrations and carrying out other rebellious acts, as opposed to their previous strategy of holding symposiums and working

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<sup>92</sup> Malay Language Society, "Opinion of the Malay Language Society on the Speech of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman on the National Language, as Reported in 'Straits Times,' October 22, 1966.

<sup>93</sup> National Language Act 1967.

<sup>94</sup> *Berita Harian*, September 2, 1967.

<sup>95</sup> Nordin bin Abd. Razak, "A Study of the Changing Attitudes of Malay Students at the University of Malaya."

alongside government bodies towards this goal. Studying the students' activities from 1967 to 1969, however, shows that despite Tunku refusing their demands regarding the National Language Act, there was not much dissension in these years regarding the language issue as compared to previous years in which students were no less willing to criticize the government regarding matters important to them. Nordin Razak's point stands true, however, for PBMUM post-May 13, which we turn to in Chapter 2. This clarification is important to make because Nordin Razak's statement of PBMUM's change in strategy regarding language-related issues is used to support his claim that 1967 was a turning point in the student movement, a novel claim he makes which is eventually adopted into subsequent literature on the student movement.

Nordin Razak also argues that after 1967, PBMUM took on activities beyond their usual scope of language-related activities. Combing through the club's activities, however, shows that they had for a long time been organizing social service projects, cultural weeks, dance performances and so on, apart from their language-related initiatives. They also regularly commented on politics, especially on the issue of national language and the national university through their magazines such as *Berita PBMUM*. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that after 1967 the club was revitalized, experiencing a surge in membership and with that, engaging with a broader range of issues and activities. While continuing on with producing their language-related goals, students engaged more in matters related to social welfare. Most fascinating, however, was the increasing fearlessness and dedication of leaders in championing the cause of the rural poor and urban squatters, beginning from 1967 up until 1974—efforts which caused them to be heavily reprimanded by government authorities especially post-1969.

In their accounts of PBMUM post-1967, both Weiss and Muhammad Abu Bakar emphasize the influence of PBMUM leaders on PBMUM's activities; as Weiss writes, "its



[PBMUM] orientation shifted, though, with changes in leadership. Sanusi Osman (president in 1967-68) was concerned with rural issues and building a dynamic national profile; Anwar (1969-70), with anti-Tunku and national education issues; Nordin Razak (1970-71) with Malay language and society on and off campus...” Muhammad Abu Bakar writes that 1967 president Sanusi Osman was a particularly influential figure influencing the changing orientation of PBMUM activities—as a member of UM’s Socialist Club, his political views and affiliations affected issues taken on by PBMUM. While the personal views of PBMUM’s leaders did inform the club’s initiatives, leaders’ views should not be conflated with that of the PBMUM membership, neither should their personalities be equated with the nature of the club.

One interesting example exhibiting the diversity in opinion which continues post-1967, and the negotiation taking place regarding how students themselves defined the club and its goals, was the incident of the *Telok Gong* squatters. In October, 1967, an emergency meeting was called by a subset of PBMUM members led by Azman Chik. Chik accused president Osman of going against club protocol, misrepresenting the club’s aims and principles, and damaging the club’s reputation with his “irrational behavior”.<sup>96</sup> Chik was referring to Sanusi Osman releasing a public statement expressing PBMUM’s solidarity with Hamid Tuah, the “rebel farmer” who had illegally cleared state land in a rural area, *Telok Gong*, to open a settlement for poor and landless peasants.<sup>97</sup> Speaking in defense of the PBMUM board, Osman states: “PBMUM does not support the illegal action of Hamid Tuah. We rather urge that the establishment give a fair consideration to the poor

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<sup>96</sup> Nordin Razak, 59-60. Direct Quote from Minutes of the Extraordinary Grand/annual meeting number 1, 1967.

<sup>97</sup> *Berita Harian*, September 22, 1967. Muhammad, *Mahasiswa Menggugat*, 60-64. *The Straits Times*, October 15, 1967. Hamid Tuah was known as a ‘rebel farmer’ who had been illegally clearing state land and opening settlements for poor and landless peasants since the 1950s, *Telok Gong* being one such encampment. In September of 1967, the chief minister had ordered their eviction to make way for other settlers (more than 2000 people had applied for the land through official channels). Following Hamid Tuah and his followers’ refusal to leave, a highly publicized conflict ensued between Hamid and the chief minister, ending with Tuah being imprisoned and the peasants’ homes razed. Hamid Tuah’s struggle drew the attention and support of UM students and lecturers alike.

and landless people... All noble endeavours and efforts which benefit the *rakyat* (people) have and will be supported”<sup>98</sup> Aware that the anti-establishment nature of such efforts would not appeal to the broader PBMUM body, Osman emphasized humanitarian reasons for supporting landless peasants. After much debate members were eventually convinced, making a unanimous decision to support the board—some members even urged them to take more active efforts in such matters.

Increased involvement with the peasants in these years was also motivated by a symposium held by PBMUM in 1967, focused on studying factors impeding development in rural and nonurban areas and proposing solutions. The motivation for hosting this event was the ten year mark since independence, prodding a reflection on “important issues affecting three quarters of our [PBMUM] country’s population.”<sup>99</sup> Demonstrating PBMUM’s willingness still to collaborate with government officials towards the country’s development in this time, the event was sponsored and attended by several government bodies and important officials. The patron of the event itself was deputy prime minister Abdul Razak who, in a letter he wrote endorsing the event, commended students’ efforts in venturing beyond the ivory tower to understand problems faced by the nation’s citizens. Razak also emphasized the need for students to put into practice theories arising from their discussions.<sup>100</sup> Clearly, students heeded his advice considering their trenchant critique of the state in support of the rural poor in the following year. Students’ willingness of having Razak serve as the patron also show the distinction students made between leaders of the Alliance in this time—while they admonished Tunku for his handling of the national language issue, they still respected Razak.

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<sup>98</sup> Nordin Razak, 59-60. Direct Quote from Minutes of the Extraordinary Grand/annual meeting number 1, 1967. Translated by author.

<sup>99</sup> Malay Language Society of the University of Malaya, “Symposium of Nonurban Residents’ Problems Conference Papers.” Translated by author.

<sup>100</sup> He also begins the letter by reminding students of the government’s commitment to solving economic and social issues in the country. The student’s willingness to work with Razak is also interesting to note—clearly Razak was viewed in higher regard as compared to Tunku, whom they had condemned regarding the language act.

The symposium covered a range of social and economic problems, revealing to the students the direness of the situation in the country despite the “colonial era having passed for ten years,” a situation which—they concluded—particularly affected Malays, who made up the bulk of the rural population.<sup>101</sup> Among the six working papers presented was one written by PBMUM themselves, “The Role of Students in Nonurban Development.” In their assessment of the country’s economic situation, causing most worry to students was that economic inequality was perceived as racial inequality. Indeed, there was widespread belief among Malays at the time that the Chinese controlled the economy, while the Chinese read the government’s economic policies targeting Malays as preferential treatment.<sup>102</sup> Recommending policies to improve rural development, students reminded readers that such policies should not be viewed as preferential treatment to Malays. They warned that such claims only served to reinforce the association between economic position and race, increasing division within the country and eventually, “it creates the possibility of racial conflict (or conflict between urban and nonurban residents, for that matter) and this will pose a massive challenge to the building of a nation made up of three ethnic groups.”<sup>103</sup> Again, the threat of racial conflict looms large for the students.<sup>104</sup>

The students also did not shy away from criticizing Alliance leaders. In the final section of the working paper, for example, surveying the effects or outgrowths of nationalism, they write:

*There is a type of nationalism in which certain leaders present themselves as one with the people, although this is done only to take over the position of the colonialists, not to change its social structure. In Malaysia, the nationalist*

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<sup>101</sup> Opening statement by Sanusi Osman, Malay Language Society of the University of Malaya, “Symposium of Nonurban Residents’ Problems Conference Papers.” Translated by author.

<sup>102</sup> Quotas for Malays were already established in the First Malaysia Plan implemented from 1966 to 1970.

<sup>103</sup> Malay Language Society of the University of Malaya, “The Role of University Students in Nonurban Development--Working Paper of PBMUM”. Translated by author.

<sup>104</sup> Just two months later, in November, racial riots take place in Penang over the devaluation of the Malayan dollar.

*struggle which began as a people's struggle has been co-opted for the upper classes, and the rakyat have been cast aside.*<sup>105</sup>

While not mentioning any leaders specifically, they were clearly referring to Tunku—an important figure in the early nationalist struggle, a fact cemented in the minds of many through his title as the “Father of Independence.” Remembering the promises of social and economic advancement flaunted by nationalist leaders and the nationalist movement in the early days of Independence, and discovering damning evidence of the lack in progress made, students assigned blame to leaders such as Tunku for overseeing the creation of a system which only changed the fate of a select group of individuals. Last but not least, in the paper students also emphasized the important role they play as spokespersons for the *rakyat*, inviting other students to take this role seriously even if it pits them against the state, motivating and foreshadowing their activities in the following years.

It is important to note that while PBMUM was an important organization throughout the late ‘60s and ‘70s advocating for the rights of the Malay poor, they collaborated with and worked alongside many other student groups. This includes UM’s Student Union (UMSU), the UM Socialist Club, UM’s Muslim Students Association and even off-campus organizations such as the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM). As such, the late ‘60s and early ‘70s saw a boom in community-service initiatives led by these different student organizations. In 1969, for example, the UMSU launched the *Project Perkhidmatan Mahasiswa* (Student Pioneer [lit. Service] Corps), a UMSU-funded initiative sending UM students to Malay villages to conduct a range of community service projects. This included teaching villagers how to read and write, teaching health maintenance and more. Students were even incentivized by being provided with a small

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<sup>105</sup> Malay Language Society of the University of Malaya, “The Role of University Students in Nonurban Development--Working Paper of PBMUM”. Translated by author.

income for joining the program during school breaks, displaying UMSU's dedication to problems concerning the rural poor and to—in their words—promoting racial harmony.<sup>106</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Early on, students were inspired by the national language cause for its promise of fostering unity between different ethnic groups in Malaysia and effecting social change. This belief was not confined to PBMUM or to Malay citizens, with many citizens of different ethnic identities joining in on the cause. It was the issue of official language, however, which became an increasingly contentious debate. Many Malays saw potential in uplifting the Malay people by changing the medium of instruction across all education institutions to Malay, especially since Malays particularly struggled with English. The Chinese, however, were worried about how the imposition of a sole official language would affect their education system—especially the maintenance of the vernacular school system. As a result, while still adamant on their goal of achieving national unity PBMUM became implicated in a cause which seemed to cause even more division around race. By 1966, a sense of crisis emerged in the country, one deeply felt by the organization. Assessing PBMUM members' thoughts on the matter, however, shows that students still expressed a genuine desire for national unity. It was rather a widespread conviction that multilingualism was a crisis, fueled by the ever-present threat of racial riot (evoked by political parties), which created the perception of a country in crisis. This was also fueled by frustrations of the *rakyat* towards Alliance policies which had failed to address the roots of racial and economic inequality, causing economic strain on much of the Malay population. Last but not least, I expound on changes in approaches

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<sup>106</sup> Weiss, 153, 183. The UMSU leader Syed Hamid Ali was a particularly loud and active advocate for rights of the rural poor squatters, even at his own expense. In retaliation, the state denied him a scholarship to study abroad and refused to employ him (although he was supposed to get a job in government). Unemployed, he continued with his activist efforts up until in 1975. When the government seized his passport as he was about to depart to Australia to continue his studies, he fled to the jungle.

and goals of the movement post-1967. Experiencing setbacks in achieving social change through the language movement, students took other types of initiatives targeted at helping the *rakyat*, and used more ‘radical’ methods of achieving their goals. Motivated by increasing exposure to the plight of the peasants, at times they found themselves even going against the establishment.

## Chapter 2

### PBMUM and May 13: Challenging Claims of Students as Malay “Ultras”

In September 1969, just four months after the deadly May 13 racial riots, the establishment-friendly national newspaper, *The Straits Times*, publicized an article titled “Ultras and Their Hidden Leader.” The article describes a plot by extremists within the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) of ascending party ranks by discrediting its leader, prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, as a legitimate and capable leader of the Malays.<sup>107</sup> The article represented the views of Tunku himself, quoting directly from his book, *May 13: Before and After*, one of the very few reports on the riots allowed to be published. In a section titled “Students,” the article elaborates on Tunku’s assertion that students had fallen under the influence of Malay extremists. Tunku comments, for example, on the 1969 PBMUM-organized demonstrations calling for his resignation, expressing his disbelief: “How does it come about that Malay youngsters are now making charges against the Government for letting down Malays, for not providing them with business opportunities?”<sup>108</sup> It was almost impossible for Tunku to accept that there were young Malays who did not subscribe to his regime. Shortly after getting their hands on the bestselling book, the students organized another anti-Tunku protest, even burning a copy of his book.

In recounting a history of May 13, historians often note this episode of Tunku accusing Malay students of being “ultra-infected.” This can be seen, for example, in Cheah’s *The Making of a Nation*.<sup>109</sup> Missing in their accounts, however, is the students’ perspective on the riots, often failing to mention the subsequent anti-Tunku protests. As such, such historical narratives ignore PBMUM’s previous efforts towards fostering unity in the nation, neglect students’ nuanced

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<sup>107</sup> *Straits Times*, September 25, 1969. As a reminder, UMNO is the Malay party in the Alliance.

<sup>108</sup> *Straits Times*, September 25, 1969.

<sup>109</sup> Cheah, *Malaysia*, 107.

understanding of the issue and in general, gives the impression that students' reasons for disliking Tunku were strictly racial—they were greedy-minded individuals wanting to reap the benefits of Malay superiority in the nation. How did a club which began with high aspirations for the Malay language to be a genuine mode of interethnic communication, or in their words, “the language of unity” come to be remembered as a group falling under the influence of Malay “ultras”, an exclusionary group with no regard for non-Malays? In this chapter, I argue that post-May 13, the Alliance's established strategy of undermining politically dissenting opinions by accusing them of hate speech and inciting racial riots, was employed to castigate students.<sup>110</sup> This strategy worked to uphold and glorify the image of the Alliance as the true guardians of peace, discrediting valid concerns raised by the political opposition of the Alliance's social and economic policies. I correct not only PBMUM's legacy, but challenge the portrayal of Malay “ultras” as an organized group with the goal of toppling Tunku's multiracial regime and claiming the country for Malays. Instead, I show how the category of Malay “ultras” was created in a bid by the Alliance party to maintain their image as capable leaders of the Malays, while adopting the same stance as the so-called Malay “ultras.”

This chapter begins by discussing the 1969 general election, an event essential to understanding the May 13 racial riots. Leading up to the general election, as a result of their language and economic policies and failure to address problems faced by the *rakyat*, the Alliance faced rising challenges from the opposition. As in previous elections, to ensure reelection they played up racialist claims to undermine the fact that this specific election saw both multiracial parties and the Islamic party challenging the Alliance's model of governance for the first time, a model based on the party's specific—and outdated—understanding of ethnic compromise. Next, I

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<sup>110</sup> By this, I specifically mean the Alliance under Tunku.



discuss events and issues directly related to the riots, expounding on what caused it through the eyes of the Malay “ultra” Mahathir and the National Operations Council (NOC).<sup>111</sup> In comparing the opinion of Mahathir versus the NOC, I show how despite Mahathir’s book *The Malay Dilemma* being banned, it expresses similar views with the NOC. In pointing out the similarities between these books and calling attention to the state’s adoption of policies proposed by Malay “ultras” themselves post May-13, I show that the distinctions made between these two parties are not as clear-cut as usually presented in historical narratives. In doing so I hope to further the debate beyond arguing whether Razak was a Malay “ultra” himself versus Razak being more willing to absorb Malay “ultras” into his parliament post-May 13 (as suggested by Cheah since Mahathir was reabsorbed into UMNO in 1972).<sup>112</sup>

In the third section, I further challenge the distinction of UMNO moderates from Malay “ultras” by showing how Tunku himself created the myth to discredit both Malay politicians within his party who challenged his rule, and the students’ valid criticism against him. In doing so, I shine light on a very often neglected fact when discussing the riots today—the student protests. This counters the narrative of the riots inspiring a complete shutdown of free speech and of a free society. Instead, I show how this small portion of society continued to exercise their democratic

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<sup>111</sup> This refers to the administrative body put in charge after the riots, more on this will be explained later. Mahathir’s identity will also be revealed later.

<sup>112</sup> There is debate going on about Razak’s allegiance. Claims that Deputy Prime Minister Razak (also from the UMNO party) was planning to take over the government from Tunku was widely circulating. This has led scholars such as Kua Kia Soong, for example, to argue that the riots were a coup by Razak to take over government. Rumors (as mentioned in oral histories) of some people knowing beforehand that the riots were going to happen seem to support this. Tunku, on the other hand, would claim (even in his book *May 13*) that deputy prime minister Razak was always his right-hand man. In fact, he claimed he had groomed Razak to take over after him. He even notes how he appointed Razak as director of operations, although claiming that Razak still responded to him. When he retired in 1971, Razak ascended to become prime minister. Cheah boon Kheng, on the other hand, both agrees that Razak was Tunku’s right hand man, but also that Razak exhibited “ultra-like” tendencies. “Razak was their man,” he writes, pointing to policies drafted by Razak such as the Razak Report which recommended Malay to be the only medium of instruction in education eventually (notice that it does not specify how many years). While most Malaysian prime ministers have a public persona associated with them, Razak remained relatively aloof and ambiguous to the public, which may be why such questions were never resolved.

rights. This may be precisely because of their identity as students, allowing them to get away with certain actions.<sup>113</sup> Lastly, I return to the student movement and address claims of communalism on campus. By pointing out the basis of such claims, I show how they were overemphasized and often ignored the signs of unity that students did exhibit. These claims were then used as justification by the state to strip students' right to political action.

### **The 1969 General Election: Rising Support for the Opposition and Alliance Threat of Racial Violence**

The 1969 general election saw the rise of multiple opposition parties. One party posing a strong challenge to the Alliance was the Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP). This party ran on the platform of maintaining Malay rights and elevating Islam, accusing Tunku of turning his back on Malays and being the source of their impoverishment. The party had a strong appeal amongst rural Malays especially in the states of Kelantan and Terengganu. Next, there was the Democratic Action Party (DAP) contesting for the first time in 1969. Founded by former members of the Singapore People's Action Party (PAP), the DAP ran on a non-communal platform, calling for equal rights and the abolishment of Malay special rights. Following in the footsteps of the PAP, they brought back the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia—first proposed by Singapore's prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew, emphasizing equality between the different races—and thus awakened a debate seemingly settled when Singapore split with Malaysia just a few years prior.

Central to the DAP's campaign was their stance on language and education—they vowed to continue acknowledging Malay as the national language while calling for Chinese, Tamil and English to be recognized as official languages. They also called for the difference between national

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<sup>113</sup> The irony here I try to point out is how claims that students were easily influenced may have helped them avoid stricter repercussions. It may also have been because students in these days enjoyed greater freedoms and—at different times—would in fact be considered valuable members contributing to the intellectual discussion.

and national-type schools to be abolished.<sup>114</sup> Compared to the manifestoes of other parties, the DAP manifesto called for the most change—their demands for the abolishment of Malay special rights and for Chinese and Tamil to be recognized as official languages called for constitutional change. Expecting both parties to fail if they stood alone in the election, DAP and Gerakan, another party contesting for the first time, formed a pact. Gerakan's campaign also centered around equality and non-communalism, although they differed from DAP on the issue of language and education. This party aimed to capture votes of the working class, emphasizing the Alliance's neglect of worker's rights and pledging to do away with undemocratic trade union regulations introduced by the Alliance.<sup>115</sup>

The Alliance campaign, on the other hand, focused on accusing every opposition party of inciting racial strife and asserting their role as the true guardians of peace and prosperity. This was the same tactic employed in previous elections. They accused DAP, for example, of trying to take away Malay rights and PAS of trying to take away non-Malay rights, warning voters that voting for these parties would bring about racial riots.<sup>116</sup> If it was not enough to accuse PMIP of being anti-Chinese (this may appeal to some Malay voters), Alliance leaders also accused PMIP of being secretly run by Communists, having an electoral agreement with the DAP and Gerakan, and so on. The Alliance campaign also emphasized the contributions they had made as the party in government for twelve years. Tunku claimed multiple times, for example, that the Alliance had created a middle class in Malaysia, whereas under British rule there were only the rich and poor classes. Still, such tactics to undermine valid causes of the political opposition were not as successful in '69. As a result of the Tunku's compromising stance regarding the national language,

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<sup>114</sup> *Berita Harian*, March 30, 1969.

<sup>115</sup> *Straits Times*, March 29, 1969.

<sup>116</sup> *Straits Times*, April 10, 1969.

and rising evidence of the Alliance's economic policies not doing enough to lift Malays out of poverty, throughout the campaigning period there was indication that the Alliance would not fare well in this election.

On May 10, polling began in West Malaysia. The results showed that the Alliance won only 66 out of the 104 seats contested, depriving it of the two-thirds majority rule it had enjoyed since independence.<sup>117</sup> Whether it could reach the two-third mark was a question never resolved, however, as this depended on the election to be held in East Malaysia, which was postponed due to the riots. Assessing the results, opposition parties captured more seats than ever before, with DAP winning 13, PAS winning 12, Gerakan 8 and PPP 4.<sup>118</sup> Notably, all parties within the Alliance coalition suffered a setback, while the MCA was hardest hit—only winning 13 seats compared to the 27 it had won in 1964. While comparing the election results to previous elections must be done carefully since there were several new parties in the '69 election, it can be concluded that most Chinese and Indian votes went to opposition parties while the Malay vote was split between UMNO and PAS. Amidst calls for Tun Tan Siew Sin, MCA's leader, to quit because “the Chinese had lost confidence in him,” Tun Tan announced MCA's withdrawal from the Alliance government on May 13.<sup>119</sup> Overall, the election results showed that people had lost trust in the Alliance party.

### **May 13 Riots: Competing Interpretations?**

On May 12, in celebration of their win—or rather their advancement in the election—DAP and Gerakan supporters held a victory parade. Mainly attended by Chinese youth, the procession marched around the capital city, Kuala Lumpur, hurling insults at Malays. The next day, UMNO

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<sup>117</sup> A two-thirds majority in parliament would allow the party to make constitutional amendments as it pleases.

<sup>118</sup> The People's Progressive party (PPP) was another opposition party contesting in 1969.

<sup>119</sup> Drummond and Hawkins, “The Malaysian Elections of 1969: An Analysis of the Campaign and the Results.”

supporters held a counter-rally in response. Around 6 pm, a fight broke out in a Kampong Bharu, a Malay neighborhood, which quickly evolved into violence and destruction throughout the city. Perpetrators murdered, looted, set fire to shophouses and other property, and more. While the police and army were quickly sent in to quell the riots, the fighting lasted for four days, with sporadic fighting being reported for the next two months. Official reports state that 196 had died, 439 were injured and the homes and properties of about 6000 residents were destroyed, making it the deadliest riots to have taken place on Malaysian soil since Independence.<sup>120</sup> While the fighting happened mainly between Malays and Chinese, it is evident that Chinese were the biggest victims—143 Chinese died as compared to 25 Malays, and 270 were injured compared to 127 Malays.<sup>121</sup> On May 16<sup>th</sup>, Tunku declared a State of Emergency. A curfew was put in place, newspapers suspended and anyone responsible for ‘inciting inter-communal hostility’ was arrested through the Internal Security Act.

As a result, the two main sources offering a detailed account of the riots are the state-published report, *The May 13 Tragedy: A Report*, and a book written by Tunku, *May 13: Before and After*, both published in 1969.<sup>122</sup> A few months after these publications were released, in 1970 UMNO politician and Malay “ultra” Dr Mahathir Mohamad subsequently published *The Malay Dilemma*—his own assessment of causes behind the riots. The book was banned immediately upon release.<sup>123</sup> Recounting significant events following May 13, historians such as Cheah and Barbara and Leonard Andaya often address both the state’s version of the riots and Mahathir’s assessment, presenting these texts as two separate narratives coming from very different standpoints—*The May*

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<sup>120</sup> Andaya and Andaya, 303. The National Operations Council, “The May 13 Tragedy: A Report,” 88-91.

<sup>121</sup> The National Operations Council, “The May 13 Tragedy: A Report,” 88-90.

<sup>122</sup> *Straits Times*, September 27, 1969. Tunku’s book was a bestseller at the time of publication, with many flocking to get their hands on the book.

<sup>123</sup> Mahathir bin Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma*.

*13 Tragedy: A Report* representing the views of moderate leaders of the Alliance and *The Malay Dilemma* representing that of the “ultras”—or extremists—of UMNO.<sup>124</sup>

With parliament being suspended due to the State of Emergency, the country came under the rule of the National Operations Council (NOC) headed by Tun Abdul Razak (former Deputy Prime Minister in the Tunku administration) as Director of Operations. It was the NOC which published *The May 13 Tragedy: A Report*, to “lay out the facts on the disturbances”, a first step towards fulfilling its responsibilities of restoring law and order, ensuring the smooth administration of the country, and restoring harmony and mutual among the various races—self-defined responsibilities declared in chapter twenty of the report. The report consists of three parts. Part One establishes the historical background for understanding the riots, giving an overview of communism in the region.<sup>125</sup> Part Two details actual events on the day of the riots, emphasizing – through a dedicated chapter titled “‘Victory’ Marches”—how it was the highly provocative and vulgar procession held by Chinese supporters of the DAP and Gerakan on May 12 that incited anger in the Malays, particularly Malay youths:

Insults such as “*Melayu balek kampong*” (Malays go back to your village), “*Melayu sekarang ta’ada kuasa lagi*” (Malays have lost power), “*sekarang kita kontrol*” (We are now in control) were hurled at every Malay in sight.<sup>126</sup>

Through many examples of vulgar acts such as these, the NOC places emphasis on the significance of hate speech (especially when invoked by supporters of opposition parties) in bringing about the racial riots. Further, in describing violent encounters, examples of aggressive actions by both

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<sup>124</sup> This is not to say that these historians are not critical of the state-published report. Often, they do not seem to trust the report as a viable source (they mention that death toll may be higher than stated) but perhaps due to lack of evidence on the riots, do not go into much detail regarding its content. The content of *The Malay Dilemma*, on the other hand, is also not discussed in much detail. The Andayas, for example, simply state that *The Malay Dilemma* was “a trenchant defence of Malay rights and an analysis of the reasons behind their inferior position.

<sup>125</sup> A large part of the book is dedicated to blaming secret societies and anti-national elements for orchestrating or playing a part in the riots.

<sup>126</sup> The National Operations Council, “The May 13 Tragedy: A Report,” 42.

Chinese and Malay perpetrators are included—at almost an equal ratio—giving no clue as to why Chinese casualties were higher. Part Three outlines the tasks ahead for the NOC, delivering the NOC’s conclusion of factors causing the riots and how to prevent further clashes. Importantly, the report is not simply an account of the riots. A significant portion is dedicated to announcing the NOC’s government’s plan moving forward—extending from their interpretation of the riots—and thus foreshadowing policies to be implemented under Razak in the coming years. It can be read as the government statement of what they saw as the problem, a pre-emptive statement justifying the suspension of civil liberties in the years to come.

Mahathir’s reputation as a Malay “ultra” began with his outspokenness in criticizing Tunku after the riots, starting with a widely publicized letter he wrote to Tunku just three weeks after May 13. In the letter, Mahathir—a junior UMNO member at the time—assigns blame to Tunku for the riots, stating that it was the prime minister’s attitude of constantly compromising that had led to the uncertain fate of Malays, the rise of Chinese political power and the subsequent humiliation of Malays on May 12, the DAP procession pushing Malays to the point of violence. He then proceeds to call for Tunku’s resignation, claiming that Tunku could not claim to be the voice of Malays in the country any more, having lost touch with the people.<sup>127</sup> In response, an UMNO council presided by Razak was quickly held to expel Mahathir from the party and Mahathir’s letter was subsequently banned, along with other materials regarding the riots.<sup>128</sup> It was while in political exile from UMNO that Mahathir wrote *The Malay Dilemma*, expanding on his views—in line with his claims in the letter—regarding the riots.

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<sup>127</sup> Mahathir Mohamad, "Mahathir 1969 Open Letter to PM Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra," Justice for Anwar and Reformasi, accessed May 4, 2023, [https://anwarite.tripod.com/mahathir\\_1969\\_open\\_letter.htm](https://anwarite.tripod.com/mahathir_1969_open_letter.htm).

<sup>128</sup> Curiously, Tunku chose to stay away from this meeting and thus the decision was mainly made by other UMNO leaders in support of Tunku.

Rather than detailing instances of communal fighting, the book focuses on his assessment of factors causing the riots, namely Malay frustration with racial and economic inequality in Malaya of which they suffered the brunt of. With there being a prevalent belief at the time that the Chinese controlled the economy—the Chinese were seemingly better off than Malays still—Malays took their frustrations out on the Chinese. Much of the book is dedicated towards understanding hereditary and cultural factors behind Malay backwardness, which he argues is important to creating policies to address the problem. He thus makes eugenicist-influenced claims such as how Malays—especially rural Malays—were prone to incest, a factor contributing to their “weakness” as a race compared to the Chinese, inviting a highly critical reception of the book to this day. Mahathir also argues that Malays are the rightful owners of Malaya and that it was the government’s failure protect and ensure their rights which brought about the conflict. Despite being banned immediately upon release, the book was widely distributed amongst the public.<sup>129</sup>

While the NOC positioned themselves as separate from Malay “ultras”, both the book and report emphasize the valid reason behind Malay frustrations, which motivated the role Malays played in the riots—Malays were frustrated with their economic and social position in the nation. As a former UMNO member, Mahathir shares a similar view with the NOC that provocative racial claims made by opposition parties throughout the campaigning period added to racial tensions. While the report does not go as far as to make the claim—as Mahathir does—that Malays were the rightful owners of Malaya, it is similarly in favor of Malay special rights as a solution to the problem. This can be seen in chapter 22, perhaps the most important part of the report, which discusses sections regarding Malay special rights in the constitution:

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<sup>129</sup> Especially among Chinese worried about the rise of Mahathir post-May 13.



Although a Constitution is a fundamental law of a country, there are some provisions in the Constitution which are more basic than others and, therefore, are “entrenched” in it.<sup>130</sup>

Since opposition parties challenging the communal compromise—such as in DAP’s call to the remove provisions for the special position of Malays in their campaign—were named as a factor of the riots, the report established that going forward provisions regarding Malay special rights in the constitution were permanent and that any attempt to change or remove it would be outlawed. In justification of Malay special rights, a short history of the Malay people in the region was even given to show that Malays were the true people of Malaya (similar to Mahathir’s claim). It is also important to note that in describing these entrenched provisions, the NOC writes that Article 152 “provides for the Malay language to be the National Language and ultimately to be the sole official language,” the latter point being added without acknowledging that no such claim is made in the original constitution.

The last three paragraphs of the chapter offer a warning of the changes to come, alerting readers that: first, it is necessary for the government to set limits to freedom of speech in order to protect these entrenched provisions, and second it may be necessary—ironically—to amend the constitution to protect these provisions. Herein lies a slight difference between the NOC and Mahathir’s assessment, the NOC believes that all public discussion around race or any other sensitive issue would create further friction and must thus be banned, while Mahathir defiantly insists on his opinion being heard. Lastly, both the book and the report agree on the importance of national unity. Mahathir argues that it was the government’s failure to create a national identity which led to the riots. As rightful owners of the land, he argues that the national identity should naturally center around the Malay race. By this he means that a homogenous citizenry must be

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<sup>130</sup> The National Operations Council, “The May 13 Tragedy: A Report,” 82.

created revolving around Malay language and culture, “the essential characteristics of the definitive race”, advocating for non-Malays to assimilate into this culture as proof of their loyalty.<sup>131</sup> The NOC similarly advocates for Malay language to be elevated to create national unity.

Thus, while condemning Malay “ultras” the state would soon adopt the very same policies they recommended. As foreshadowed in the report, the first act of parliament when it reconvened in 1971 was to push through a set of constitutional amendments removing “sensitive” issues—regarding the special position of Malays, the national language, and the sovereignty of Malay rulers—from public debate.<sup>132</sup> The government also introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) to “reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function.”<sup>133</sup> Through its wide-ranging quota system introduced in education, economic, administrative sectors and more, The NEP was the embodiment of Malay special rights as promised in the constitution, the first true and practical expression of such promises.<sup>134</sup> To counter the lack in supply of Malay managerial, professional and technical personnel to fill positions set aside for the Malays, the government accelerated the use Malay as the main medium of instruction, setting a goal that by 1975 and 1982 all English-medium primary schools and secondary schools respectively would be converted to Malay-medium schools instead. By 1983, all courses for new admission to Malaysian universities had to be conducted in Malay.<sup>135</sup> In essence, the special provisions for Malays and enforcement of

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<sup>131</sup> Mahathir bin Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma*, 135. Note: Mahathir himself is of Pakistani descent.

<sup>132</sup> Weiss, *Student Activism in Malaysia*, 133.

<sup>133</sup> “Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975,” 1. To this day, not much is known about the NOC, a body responsible for drafting the policies which were quickly passed—without much parliamentary discussion—in 1971. Cheah argues that there was a degree of negotiation going on between the Alliance and opposition parties in this time regarding the path forward albeit behind closed doors. There is reason to believe that there was some consensus between Malay and non-Malay leaders regarding these policies. This also shows the Alliance leadership’s deep belief post-1969 that political discussion should take place between the select few “responsible” leaders and intellectuals.

<sup>134</sup> The quota system enforced through the NEP remains in place to this day. It fundamentally shifted how race was understood, creating much resentment amongst many non-Malays towards Malays. One important figure put forth, for example, was that by 1990 30% of the wealth of the country should belong to Malays and other *bumiputera*.

<sup>135</sup> “Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975,” 236.

the Malay language in education, which Malay nationalists—including PBMUM—had been advocating for since independence causing heated debate, was swiftly enforced by the state post-1971.

### **The Myth of the Malay “Ultra”: Tunku’s Strategy of Regaining Malay Support**

With their party losing support during the election and a racial riot breaking out from a rally held by UMNO youth, the Alliance faced the burden of restoring their image as moderate leaders of the nation. While not having a clear definition before the riots, the concept of Malay “ultras” was created by moderate Alliance leaders to establish themselves as moderates and to restore their image as capable leaders. Before the riots, for instance, there is no mention in the press of Tunku using the term “ultra”. In fact, the word was first used by prime minister Lee Kuan Yew to describe Malay extremists responsible for inciting violence in the wake of the 1964 Singapore riots—an event similar to the May 13 riots albeit on a smaller scale.<sup>136</sup> In subsequent years, Lee also claimed that there were “ultras” in the UMNO party, a claim refuted by members such as Dato Syed Jaafar Albar.<sup>137</sup> It can be gleaned from context of its use that the term “ultras” was a derogatory term generally referring to Malay extremists.<sup>138</sup> They were not, however, an organized group, and those labelled as an “ultra” often rejected the term, making the effort of clearing their name in the press whenever faced with charges of being an “ultra”. In general, there was no real definition of a Malay “ultra” in this time. As the language policy debate developed, of course, prominent actors often accused include Syed Nasir and Dato Syed Albar Jaafar.

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<sup>136</sup> *Straits Budget*, August 12, 1964. The exact quote ended with: “...like the Frenchman who wanted Algeria to be part of France.” The riots happened between Malays and Chinese shortly after the merger between Malaysia and Singapore

<sup>137</sup> Dato Syed Jaafar Albar is one of those claimed to be “ultras”. He shared the same view as Mahathir after the riots.

<sup>138</sup> The word is mostly used only to describe Malay extremists, while Chinese are usually called Chinese chauvinists.

It was Tunku himself who clarified—or rather created—the meaning of a Malay “ultra” by naming actors in this category and stating its goals, at a time when his reputation as a capable Malay leader was being challenged. The first mention of the term by Tunku is in his book, *May 13: Before and After*, in which he describes a ploy by UMNO “ultras”—led by Mahathir—to take over leadership of UMNO, with a long-term plan for UMNO to “take over the whole administration of the Government on their own as one Party.”<sup>139</sup> For the first time, Tunku acknowledges the existence of such “ultras” within UMNO and gives a description of their goals, a claim that was widely publicized and debated in the press. Owing to the lack of archival material regarding party discussions (especially those happening behind closed doors), there is no proof that Mahathir or the other “ultras”—or those previously labelled as “ultras”—had such a plan. Of course, the contents of Mahathir’s book seems to affirm such claims of him wanting a Malay or Malay-dominated Malaysia.

Tunku also associates Malay “ultras” in government with PBMUM members. He writes, for example, “it is now clear that these people have been using students of institutions of higher learning to do their dirty work for them,” launching into a whole section about how student anti-Tunku demonstrations were simply the work of “ultras” using easily-influenced students to discredit him and accumulate power for their own personal gain, simply contributing to the disruption of peace in the nation. It is clear, however, that Tunku chided the students to undermine their cause. Indeed, PBMUM members were the only known citizens in this time to organize protests after the riots, showing proof of Malays losing faith in the Alliance. Students were willing to break emergency laws for a cause they thought was important—the May 13 riots served as proof of everything they had been warning government officials about.

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<sup>139</sup> Rahman, *May 13, Before and After*, 120-121.

Students were also unapologetic of their reaction, publishing a special publication titled *PBMUM 1969/70* which focuses on the May 13 racial riots. The publication states their views regarding the riots.<sup>140</sup> The main reason given was that in their eyes, Tunku's strategy of "rule with toleration" had led Malays to concede too many of their rights, leaving them frustrated with their condition and deciding to take matters into their own hands. Examples given in support of this claim include how he had failed to make Malay the sole official language in 1967, that he had failed to implement an education plan based on the Razak and Rahman Talib Reports and overall, that he had failed to enforce Article 153 in the constitution regarding the special rights of Malays.<sup>141</sup> Some also claimed that that he was part of the elite Malay "hoarding the special rights for themselves" and leading to the poor condition of many Malays. In essence, PBMUM interpreted the riots as being a result of the government's—specifically the Alliance party under Tunku's leadership—neglect of everything they had been campaigning for in previous years.

The publication also details the demonstrations they organized. Just a few days after the general meeting, a PBMUM mass demonstration drew over 1000 Malay students who held up signs condemning Tunku and asking him to step down. In late August, another such demonstration was organized, drawing in even more students. Unfortunately, by this time the NOC had ramped up punishment on any anti-Tunku activity. The Federal Reserve Unit was sent to the campus, deploying tear gas on protesting students for the first time. The publication also notes that the release of Tunku's book, *13 May: Before and After*, evoked even more anger in the students, who made a public display of burning the book and declaring that it was full of lies.<sup>142</sup> Interestingly,

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<sup>140</sup> "Renchana Bergambar," PBMUM 69/70, 16.

<sup>141</sup> Noordin bin Abd. Razak, "A Study of the Changing Attitudes of Malay Students at the University of Malaya," 71-75.

<sup>142</sup> "Renchana Bergambar," PBMUM 69/70, 16-21.

the caption accompanying the picture of the burning book was “Only ‘13 May’ has become victim to the fire... The NOC’s report of 13 May has not...” signaling their approval of the NOC report.<sup>143</sup>

### **PBMUM post-May 13: Countering Claims of Communalism on Campus**

In January 1970, hearing that a committee was being formed to study campus relations on campus in the wake of May 13, students had a split reaction. The UM Student Union (UMSU) refused to collaborate, cautious that the government wanted to uncover and punish students’ illegal activities. In contrast, even though it was the PBMUM who had been responsible for organizing the anti-Tunku protests, they expressed their full cooperation with the study. This decision was, of course, carefully considered by members, as revealed in a letter published in “PBMUM 1969/1970,” expressing their position regarding the committee, signed by club president Anwar Ibrahim.<sup>144</sup> Students were hopeful that the committee would show an understanding for their cause. They saw themselves in line with the government’s declaration of fostering unity in the nation. They were hopeful that the report would shed light on the barriers faced by Malay students on campus.

To them, these institutional barriers were the true source of racial division. Seeing as Malays (especially those coming from lower class backgrounds) struggled with most of the classes in the Science and Math departments being in English, they demanded the accelerated and full implementation of Malay as the medium of instruction across all departments. They also demanded that the committee “take firm action in eliminating all forms of discrimination and sabotage existing on the UM campus.”<sup>145</sup> Herein lies how the leaders of PBMUM in the 69/70 school year interpreted their cause: they emphasized the importance of alleviating discrimination on campus

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<sup>143</sup> “*Renchana Bergambar*,” PBMUM 69/70, 21.

<sup>144</sup> *Renchana Bergambar*,” PBMUM 69/70, 24.

<sup>145</sup> *Renchana Bergambar*,” PBMUM 69/70, 24.

and felt important that there exist an organization focusing on advocating for Malay students on campus. This is as opposed to PBMUM advocating for structural change that would enforce Malay superiority over non-Malays, as suggested by the term Malay “ultra”. It is also important to note that according to them, the main enemy they identified for causing their situation was the campus administration, and its policies which did properly account for welfare of Malay students. It was not—as the press at the time claimed—their fellow non-Malay students or the non-Malay population.

The published report found that there was growing polarization between Malays and non-Malays on campus. They came to this conclusion because of the conflict between what they described as the Chinese-dominated UM Student’s Union (UMSU) and the Malay-dominated PBMUM. Indeed, even if PBMUM had noble reasons for asserting their national language goals, their approach would put them at odds with others on the campus community. To illustrate, in October 1970 PBMUM students launched *Operasi Ganyang Bahasa Asing* (Operation Crush Foreign Languages).<sup>146</sup> Frustrated with the university administration’s slowness in implementing the use of Malay in the university—especially in light of the May 13 crisis—students splattered paint on signboards with English wording, others tearing down notices in English and burning them at the Speaker’s Corner. The UMSU was the first to condemn their actions, calling them an act of destruction and vandalism, despite expressing their understanding of the demonstrators. PBMUM was particularly irritated with the word ‘vandalism’, issuing a statement giving UMSU 24 hours to retract their statement. UMSU in turn refused to do so, rather inviting PBMUM to a debate. 3000 students (mostly PBMUM members) attended the widely publicized debate held at the Tunku Chanselor hall. While the issue was resolved after 45 minutes with UMSU agreeing to

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<sup>146</sup> Nordin bin Abd. Razak, “A Study of the Changing Attitudes of Malay Students at the University of Malaya,” 89-90.

retract their statement, rumors had already been spread by journalists worried of a racial riot breaking out on the UM campus.<sup>147</sup>

The tension between PBMUM and UMSU—which had begun before this incident—was particularly worrying to the committee. In trying to understand its underlying factors, they laid out views held by both groups. Essentially, PBMUM accused UMSU of not caring enough about the national language issue as they displayed a lukewarm reaction to it. They also accused UMSU of being oblivious to the plight of the Malay-medium students (those coming from Malay-medium schools who struggled with using English) in its role as an organization responsible for ensuring the general welfare of the students. UMSU, on the other hand, insisted that they had always supported the gradual introduction of the Malay language, that they had effectively cared for the welfare of students in matters such as transport, accommodation and more, and that their official publication “*Mahasiswa Negara*” (Student of the Nation) was already bilingual. Laying out grievances expressed by PBMUM towards UMSU, the committee concluded that “whatever conclusions may be drawn on the basis of these accusations, there is no doubt that they reflect a serious and growing polarization in the University.”<sup>148</sup> The committee goes on to chide students on the issue of *Operasi Ganyang*, reminding them that such irresponsible actions could disturb the racial harmony in the nation.

Nevertheless, the conclusion drawn by the report that this represented a growing polarization between Malays and non-Malays paints over some important nuances. As pointed out in the report, PBMUM did have a number—albeit a very small number—of non-Malay members, while UMSU had a multiracial composition, including Malays and Indians.<sup>149</sup> In fact, the UMSU

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<sup>147</sup> *Straits Times*, October 9, 1970.

<sup>148</sup> The National Operations Council, “The May 13 Tragedy: A Report,” 51.

<sup>149</sup> The National Operations Council, 16.



president leading the way in the debate over the *Operasi Ganyang* debacle was himself an Indian.<sup>150</sup> This indicates that the problem was not necessarily perceived as racial by the students. The sincere concern students themselves expressed of division between the students, and hopes that the state may be able to correct underlying structures causing their situation, was taken for granted in the report. Instead of collaborating—as students had hoped—in finding solutions to these problems, the state would go on to impose infrastructure to restrict student and campus autonomy, ignoring students’ wishes. The report also fails to mention instances of collaboration between UMSU and PBMUM which still existed despite such differences, insisting that the two clubs merge in hopes that by doing so their differences would disappear. Collaboration between the two clubs can be seen, for example, in UMSU’s support of the anti-Tunku protesters. While UMSU may not have participated in the anti-Tunku demonstrations, upon four of PBMUM’s members being jailed, UMSU and PBMUM co-organized a campus-wide strike and demonstration drawing in more than 2000 students.<sup>151</sup> Thus, despite holding different political beliefs and experiencing student life differently based on ethnic background, students in the post-May 13 landscape were still able to cross racial boundaries in finding creative solutions to the nation’s ails.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter counters claims that PBMUM was taken over by Malay “ultras”—a claim which has historically been used to undermine the very real concerns students were expressing, and to impose strict laws restricting their ability to participate in the democratic process. To do so, I begin by revealing how the Alliance party often uses claims of communalism to discredit the political opposition. In doing so, they themselves played a part in creating racial tension, by painting political debate negotiating important matters in the nation in strictly racial terms. The

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<sup>150</sup> *Straits Times*, October 9, 1970.

<sup>151</sup> Nordin bin Abd. Razak, “A Study of the Changing Attitudes of Malay Students at the University of Malaya,” 74.

1969 general election would see the party employing the same method to make light of the challenge they were facing from the opposition. Then, I go on to discuss the riots. Specifically, I focus on discussing the interpretation of the riots in the eyes of the so-called Malay “ultras” to the interpretation of the state, revealing that they are not so different in content. The only difference is the state’s insistence on banning all discussion on sensitive issues post-May 13. While doing so, however, they would go on to implement policies imposing their solutions on the matter without much public debate—specifically regarding heavily-debated issues pre-1969. Then, I discussed where the term Malay “ultras” originated from, pointing out how there was never any definition of a Malay “ultra” until Tunku mentioned it in a bid to separate himself from such characters, discredit their claims, and maintain power. It should be reminded that he himself was a proponent of the communal compromise as stated in the constitution—which includes special rights—but was unwilling to accept input of the working-class Malays on what exactly those special rights entailed.

Due to the limited availability of sources on the riots, this chapter only considers the interpretation of the riots by Malays—specifically upper class or more politically aware Malays. Unfortunately, it does not consider the interpretation of Chinese communities on the riots. In “The state, religious nationalism and ethnic rationalization in Malaysia,” Raymond L.L Lee, writes that for non-Malays and especially the Chinese, the incident put an end to their attempt at political self-determination.<sup>152</sup> Attempts to gather oral histories on the riots in recent years seem to support this claim, while displaying the variety of interpretations which emerged after the riots. These oral histories also reveal how much of Malaysian life has been shaped by the riots, with citizens’ perception of the space and opportunity available for them in Malaysia colored by this event and the subsequent New Economic Policy. As Lee notes, the resulting policies implemented by the

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<sup>152</sup> Lee, “The State, Religious Nationalism, and Ethnic Rationalization in Malaysia.”

NEP served to benefit only elite and upper middle-class Malays, eventually creating more resentment between ethnic groups who endured unchanging economic strife while—post-1969—feeling that such quotas were put in place to work against them.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, I have advanced a deeper understanding of PBMUM's pursuits, its characterization, and politics beyond a language organization with a racial tint. Instead, I have shown the complex nature of issues which the club took on and the complicated terrain in which it was operating, all in the name of the *rakyat*. Early on, students were infected with idealism for the national language and its promise of creating a united and equal nation. Over time, however, as language revealed the political differences existing between Malays and Chinese in the country, students found themselves navigating an increasingly fraught situation—their cause became painted in racial terms. As such, students found themselves adding fuel to the sense of crisis between different ethnic groups emerging in the nation. Shaping this sense of crisis and motivating their insistence on the national language, however, were genuine fears they had about the lot of Malays not improving, a result of social and economic policies pursued by the Alliance. The late '60s would thus see them taking on more radical measures to achieve their goal of making Malay the sole official language and to solve problems faced by the rural poor, exposing them to greater hostility by the state.

Despite this complex situation, I show that from its inception up until 1974 there were still instances of collaboration between PBMUM and other students on campus. Students thought deeply about problems affecting society and found creative solutions, working through racial and class differences between them. Further, by exposing the state's smearing campaign of students as Malay "ultras" post-1969 as a bid to maintain power, and showing how such claims did not capture the full picture of PBMUM's cause, I call into question the concept of Malay "ultras" in itself. Instead, I show how while casting others to the political margin, the Alliance party itself had a role to play in creating ethnic tensions—by infusing all political debate with claims of racialism and

imposing their strict vision on what type of ethnic configuration was acceptable. As in the case of the students, there may be other reasons why people fall in and out of the category of extremist or non-extremist as defined by the Alliance.

Finally, in *Student Activism in Malaysia: Crucible, Mirror, Sideshow*, Meredith Weiss concludes her chapter on student activism from 1967 to 1974 by noting how the late '70s and beyond would see a more subdued campus, arising from the state's policy of containment. Quoting *Zainah Anwar's Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia: Dakwah Among the Students*, she writes, "most obviously, Islamist activism came to fill the void, offering a 'safe avenue through which students could air their grievances, channel their energies, fulfill a need to serve society and find relief from the pressures of university life and urban living.'"<sup>153</sup> Such a description of Islamist activism as a safe avenue, however, fails to capture the willingness of Islamist activists to challenge the state in pursuing their cause when needed. It should be noted, for example, that the PBMUM leader Anwar Ibrahim would go on in 1972 to form the *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* (ABIM) or Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia. ABIM would come to play an important role in the strikes and demonstrations throughout the early '70s, often leading these strikes along with other UM students.<sup>154</sup> What was the relationship between PBMUM and other Islamist organizations on- and off-campus? How would this relationship come to shape Malay-Muslim identity in the nation? Such questions call for further study.

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<sup>153</sup> Weiss, *Student Activism in Malaysia*, 184.

<sup>154</sup> Weiss' account describes many activities of the Islamic movement, but focuses heavily on rising communalism due to the heavy association between Muslim and Malay identities.

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