

BOOK REVIEWS

GAYL D. NESS, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia: A Study of Complex Organizations in Stimulating Economic Development in New States*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1967, xiv+257 pp.

The book under review is the result of the author's field research in Malaya from 1961 to 1964, (during which time this reviewer also happened to stay in that country and had the pleasure of making Dr. Ness' acquaintance.) As Dr. Ness states in the opening chapter, the central theme of this study is the recent use of *complex organizations* to stimulate modernization in the new states (p. 30), a subject which has received little attention, despite its apparently great importance to the modernization process. According to the author, the three phenomena—of complex organization, modernization, and new states—are interdependent or interrelated parameters of analysis and there is a sociological affinity between the three phenomena. In employing the concept of "complex organizations," Dr. Ness is indebted to Professor Amitai Etzioni (*The Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations*, 1961), whose use of the concept of a *paradigm* (borrowed from Robert K. Merton) Dr. Ness also seems to follow when he discusses social affinity in the form of what he calls a triangular paradigm. (p. 3)

After exploring the relationships between (1) the new states and the commitment to modernization, (2) new organizations and new states, Dr. Ness finds that in the new states economic development is being stimulated predominantly by subsidiary organizations—specialized agencies of the central government created to induce social and economic change. On the basis, and in the context, of the triangular paradigm, Dr. Ness proceeds to examine the concrete case of Malaya. In so doing, he keeps in mind the functional interrelationships in the characteristics of the polity, the economy and complex organizations and changes therein.

On the basis of the functionally interrelated triangular paradigm, Dr. Ness first analyzes the basic characteristics of the colonial system as being the dependent paternalistic state, the colonial economy and the ethnic plural society (Chapter II: The Changing Malayan Social System I: The Colonial System); and in the following chapter (The Changing Malayan System II: The Emergent Independent System) defines the newly emerging characteristics of the post-independence Malayan social system as the independent parliamentary democratic state, the emerging modern industrial economy and the emerging national plural society. (p. 22) By national plural society, Dr. Ness means *a society with a political community and with legitimate group differences*. (p. 23)

In pointing out the emerging new characteristics, the author adds, he is not arguing that the new system has already emerged with firm characteristics.

(p. 82) Rather, he aims to draw attention to those elements of the old system that have become centers of serious strain in the new polity. Following the description of the transition from the colonial system to the independent national system, and before proceeding to focus on an analysis of the attempt to stimulate economic development with complex organizations, Dr. Ness proposes the central thesis of his study:

... this large-scale attempt to use the central administration to stimulate economic development provides a clear view of some of the major points at which the old economy and society experienced severe strains, and the specific mechanisms of adjustment that have been fashioned to relieve those tensions. I will show how closely articulated with the still emerging polity are the adjustive forces in the economy and society. The economic and social changes reflected in this study of complex organizations and economic development in the new states are functions of the new polity. (p. 82)

The change in the character of the polity from colonial dependency to independence was brought about, in the opinion of Dr. Ness, *through the operation of outside forces rather than through the operation of forces developing within the system itself and as a result of British political policies than as a result of strains within the Malayan colonial social system.* (p. 49) And the change in the character of the polity meant change in the goals of government from custody to development; or, from a dominance of *order goals* to a dominance of *output and cultural goals* (Dr. Ness uses the typology proposed by Amitai Etzioni: order, output and cultural, for the analysis of goals. (p. 18) Dr. Ness specifies five changes in this over-all change in orientation:

1. from an emphasis on a balanced budget to an emphasis on an expanding economy.
2. from an implicit emphasis on urban development to an explicit emphasis on rural development, or development largely for the uplift of the Malays in the traditional sector.
3. Social services, especially education, moved from a position of low priority to one of high priority, and were partially redefined as elements of investment rather than consumption.
4. an increased demand for, and finally the creation of, new organizations competent to plan for and stimulate the development of the economy.
5. change in the character of protest from nationalism and communalism to communalism and class interests. (p. 90)

Thus, the focal point is pinpointed on the *political elite*. What was the character of the new *national political elite* which took a leading role in the transition from the colonial to the independent system, and which came to commit itself to the changes outlined above? Through what political process, involving what political groups did the new elite operate? And what interests were the goal changes intended to serve? Dr. Ness reasons in brief as follows. In concrete historical terms, the change in the character of the polity came as a result of British policies following the end of the Pacific War. Britain's imposition of a constitutional "Malayan Union," in which the sovereignty of the Malay sultans was to be transferred to the Crown, thereby posing an

extreme threat to the Malay elite vis-à-vis non-Malay inhabitants of the peninsula, resulted in the launching of the first legitimate political organization of any significance in Malaya, the United Malays National Organization. Dr. Ness says that the successful opposition to the union was the first step in bringing Malaya along a path leading to parliamentary democracy. (p. 51) While this statement in a sense indicates the truth, it unfortunately fails to convey a complete picture of the political process in that period, in which political forces such as the Malay Nationalist Party were involved in competition with the UMNO for hegemony in the indigenous political arena.

It is true that Dr. Ness refers to the All Malayan Council of Joint Action. (p. 54) But the way he deals with the AMCJA is most typically manifested in his statement that *the development of parties in Malaya's formative political years demonstrates the ethnic or communal base of group alignments and that parties that were ideologically intercommunal soon became, if they were not from the beginning, the exclusive preserve of one community.* (p. 54) However, the Malay Nationalist Party which Dr. Ness does not mention, though he refers to its affiliate organization PUTERA, advocated the establishment of a republic for a short time during its brief existence shortly after the Pacific War. Such a fact, and the author's failure to mention it, causes this reviewer to question the validity of one of the author's five points mentioned earlier, namely, that in the colonial period the indigenous people's protest took the form of nationalism and communalism whereas in the independent system such a protest came to be manifested in terms of communalism and class interests. This reviewer thinks that in the colonial period the indigenous people's protest involved the element of class interests too. It must be added, however, that Dr. Ness also notes: *One form of class and ethnic interest was being expressed violently from the jungle in the insurgency while another form found a more legitimate outlet in class protests in the Council.* (p. 114)

When Dr. Ness states that the change in the character of the polity came as a result of British policies, he is right if he means by that statement that the British chose to back up the political forces represented by the UMNO in the period of 1947-1948 to the disadvantage of such alternative political forces as the All Malayan Council of Joint Action and the Malay Nationalist Party, not to mention the Malayan Communist Party. Under the circumstances of that time, when the extreme left had considerable influence, it is small wonder that the British preferred to be allied with the higher echelon of the Malay traditional elite. The author's statement that the successful opposition to the Union was the first step in bringing Malaya along a path leading to parliamentary democracy can be properly and adequately understood and appreciated when one takes into account these facets of history.

If so, we have to reconsider the author's point that there was a change in the character of protest from nationalism and communalism to communalism and class interests. Granted that protests in terms of class interests on the part of such groups as the Malay Nationalist Party and the AMCJA or sections of them were expressed along respective ethnic lines, and that nation-

alism or rather two main streams of nationalism overshadowed more divisive ethnic identities, it is undeniable that the element of class interests actually was present in the post-war colonial period.

The beginning of the emergency with the outbreak of the Malayan Communist Party's insurgency marked the doom of the AMCJA and the Malay Nationalist Party. The other side of this coin is that the UMNO came to a dominant position among the indigenous political forces in the period of 1948 to 1952 under the leadership of Dato Onn, who had been appointed the first chairman of the Rural and Industrial Development Authority established to attack the problem of rural poverty early in the 1950's. And thus we come to grips with perhaps the most important problem of characterizing the difference between the group represented by Dato Onn within the UMNO and the group which replaced him and his group after 1952. According to Dr. Ness, Dato Onn stood for the establishment of an interethnic or supra-ethnic political party until around 1955. While the British colonial officials attributed Malay poverty to deficiencies in organization and also to a dysfunctional value system, Dato Onn emphasized the exploitation of the rural Malays by Chinese and Indian merchants and money-lenders resulting from the deficiencies in organization. Dato Onn was of the view that the dysfunctional value system was a reflection of the disintegration of village life, brought about largely by the paternalism of colonial rule. People had lost the old cooperative spirit and self-reliance of the traditional village. (p. 126)

However, in 1952, because Onn's policy of opening the membership of the UMNO to non-Malays such as the members of the Malayan Chinese Association, was not favorably viewed by the rank and file of the UMNO, he resigned as its president and was replaced by Tengku Abdul Rahman. In the 1952 municipal elections of Kuala Lumpur, the UMNO led by Tengku Abdul Rahman formed an "alliance" with the MCA against the Independence of Malaya Party, newly organized by Dato Onn as a supranational party. The Alliance intended to carry out inter-ethnic campaign activities to win elections without dissolving the respective political parties organized along ethnic lines. According to Dr. Ness, *the Alliance had the backing of the Malay aristocracy and many Malayan intellectuals, as well as that of the wealthy and well-organized Chinese guilds and commercial community.* (p. 55) This tussle between the two groups in the newly emerging national political elite, in which the Alliance defeated the Independence of Malaya Party, signalled the steady rise of the former's power in contrast with the fall of the latter's.

As to the conflict between these two groups and the issues involved, the author makes the following points. In the first place, according to the author, Dato Onn argued from early in the 1950's that independence could only be won if the country could demonstrate to the British that the two major races could reach a broad agreement on the accommodation of their diverse interests. As it appears now, he was much ahead of his time, advocating alignments that were essentially unacceptable both to Malaya's masses and to her lower level elites. (p. 55) Conversely, Dr. Ness attributes the rise in the political

fortune of the Alliance to its ability to appreciate the cohesive power that success in elections can exercise on the strange bedfellows of modern party politics. (p. 56)

The crux of the author's interpretation of the logic and dynamics of the post-war colonial (and anti-colonial) political process is typically expressed in the following paragraph:

The most important function of this articulation of protest and conflict (associated with the colonial situation) was to define the essentially *national* boundaries of the group. It gave the new leaders a unique identity as men of the nation and at least partly overshadowed the more divisive ethnic identities. It served to strengthen the unity of the protesters, and even to create unity where none had existed previously, as in the Alliance Party. It provided an important safety valve for deep and pervasive protests in the society, some of which had been given expression in the insurgency. Perhaps more important was a more substantive and less analytical function. The protests, many of which were dangerously divisive to the society, were focused upon a conflict which involved only a mild struggle and which was almost certain to end successfully for the new leaders. (p. 114)

The sophisticated language of this paragraph is expressing, essentially, the supreme role of nationalism in Malayan politics at that time, and that with a mild, moderate approach. In terms of the political history of Malaya, there are a few points which this reviewer would like to suggest to supplement the author's explanation of Dato Onn's advocacy of a supra-communal party and the subsequent apparent reversal of his attitude. In the view of this reviewer, Dato Onn's advocacy of a supra-communal party was made in the face of and in reaction to the serious threat posed by the extreme left of Malaya to the survival of the traditional Malay political elite. To counter this imminent menace, which erupted in the Emergency, the higher level of the traditional Malay political group including *Mentri Besars* was anxious to combine forces with the wealthy Chinese leaders whose existence was logically also threatened by the insurgency of the Malayan Communist Party, though its membership was virtually all Chinese. Early in the 1950's when the guerrilla activities of the MCP reached a peak, the sense of crisis among the upper stratum of both the Malay and Chinese communities became most acute. It was around this time that the prospects for the materialization of a supra-communal party seemed brightest to Dato Onn, as is evidenced by his heightened confidence in the favorable attitude of Mr. Tan Cheng Lock (the top leader of the Malayan Chinese) to the idea of such a supra-communal party. However, the same sense of crisis was not shared by Malaya's masses or her lower level elite who were deeply infused with communalism. This view of Dato Onn's motivation is therefore different from the author's interpretation that "he was much ahead of his time." Thus, as the tide of the internal war in Malaya turned and the strength of the MCP guerrillas began to recede, the sense of crisis became weaker and weaker, until there ensued a struggle for nationalist hegemony between factions within the conservative and moderate political forces. In this respect, this reviewer does not want to underestimate the element of personalities though Dr. Ness does in his criti-

cism of Silcock and Ungku Aziz. (p. 56)

This reviewer hastens to add that he does not consider the element of personalities per se to have been the sole conditioning factor in the issue in the conservative political group. He thinks that the Independence of Malaya Party and the Party Negara led by Dato Onn strongly reflected the interests of the top echelon of the indigenous traditional Malay bureaucrats represented by Mentri Besars, whereas the leadership of the UMNO—the core of the Alliance power—was composed of English-educated Malay bureaucrats slightly lower in social stratum than the top echelon who, because of their better qualifications as the modernizing intellectual sector of the traditional elite, were in a favorable position to achieve upward social and political mobility.

Once the Alliance defeated the Independence of Malaya Party to take the lead on the road to national independence, the new articulation of sentiments of protest took the form of development activity. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Ness argues that the social and economic changes reflected in this study are functions of the new polity. As a corollary, he maintains that the choice of particular goals and approaches to development by the Alliance reflected the accommodation and adjustment of the respective interests which the different communally organized political parties assumed or claimed to represent. Specifically, for the United Malays National Organization as the Malay member of the Alliance, it felt that it had to meet the Malay demand by emphasizing rural development. For the Malayan Chinese Association, the interests of the Malayan Chinese could be served by protecting their economic interests and working out an effective national educational policy. It should also be borne in mind that one of the major forces behind the emphasis on rural development was the desire in rapid development while avoiding an open clash with Western enterprises. (p. 62) In other words, concentration on rural development could meet the aspirations of the Malays while at the same time refraining from damaging the interests of the Malayan Chinese or Western enterprises. Thus, this was a classical example of an exercise in accommodation in a newly emerging national plural society.

In the view of Dr. Ness, Malaya's organized development effort in the 1950's experimented with all of the output, cultural and mixed output-cultural goals, concepts which he adopted and adapted from Etzioni's basic types of organizational goals. Towards the beginning of the 1950's when Dato Onn was still the top leader of the UMNO, the goal he set in his approach to development as the chairman of the Rural and Industrial Authority was mixed output-cultural goals; changing the structure of the rural economy through the extension of credit, technical assistance and rural education, co-operatives, farmers' associations, and extension work. But the subsequent period down to 1960 saw the progressive weakening of cultural and mixed cultural goals and the increasing dominance of pure output goals.

Dr. Ness traces this development of the subversion of the cultural and mixed output-cultural goals by the output goals in the case of the Rural and Industrial Development Authority and the Federal Land Development Au-

thority. And he sees the emergence of output goals as dominant as a *natural adjustment of development organizations to the basic forces in their environment* concerning their goal alternatives. These *basic forces* are (1) as mentioned earlier, the various sensitive ethnic interests as reflected in the cabinet, (2) the existing pattern of behavior of the rural Malays, and (3) state-governments and federal government agencies whose own set of priorities and their own ideas on how projects should be scheduled conflicted with the said development organizations. Also, in terms of analysis of organization, Dr. Ness points out that in the RIDA, the FLDA and the subsequently formed Ministry of Rural Development, evaluating competence was limited almost exclusively to the evaluation of *construction*. (p. 236)

Thus, towards the end of the 1950's, the major activities of the RIDA came to center around extending small loans to small producers while the FLDA emerged concerned largely with opening new land and getting settlers on that land instead of creating Malayan farmers opening up their land with their own labor from the very beginning and working in the close, warm relationship of traditional cooperation known as *gotong royong*. Out of these circumstances the Ministry of Rural Development was formed in 1959. Dr. Ness finds the significance of the Ministry's emphasis on output goals in the desire on the part of the new men of power *to use the new powers they had to produce the things the existing organization was already capable of producing*. (p. 135)

However, shortly before the appearance of this Ministry, a community development approach was again strongly advocated by Aziz bin Ishak, then Minister for Agriculture and one of the most influential leaders among the new Malay national political elite. On this problem there ensued a conflict between him and the rest of the top Malay political leadership, which lingered on into the 1960's.

After the establishment of the Ministry of Rural Development, its activities were divided into the following three phases. The first phase launched early in 1960 with the Red Book with centrally standardized instructions and rules for the implementation of the Second Economic Development Plan was defined as that in which the Government would demonstrate its ability to serve the people by providing the improvements and the social overhead capital that they wanted and needed. The second phase of the rural development program, which started in September of 1961, was defined as the self-help phase, the phase in which the people would demonstrate their willingness and ability to work for themselves. The symbol of this program was *gotong royong*, a traditional form of peasant Malay cooperation. In its formal structure, the Phase II program involved the formation of *kampung* or village development committees and the erection of Red-Book type bulletin boards that could provide standardized definitions of tasks and criteria for evaluating task performance.

The second program was an adult education program, aimed largely at eradicating illiteracy among rural Malay adults, bringing them out of their intellectual isolation from the modern world, and instilling in them a greater

consciousness of their responsibilities to the Malayan state. (p. 229)

However, the second phase of the rural development program and the adult education program suffered from a narrowing of goals back to the original output goals of the Ministry. This was because the Ministry continued to use the same criteria of evaluation and the same mechanisms of control it had utilized in Phase I, its predominantly output goal phase, largely because it lacked the ability to evaluate value changes. Thus, the second phase of the rural development program became largely a program in which collective village labor was used to produce more overhead capital. In the adult education program the lack of criteria for evaluating and controlling value change made the ministry concerned primarily with the numbers of classes and students. (pp. 229-230)

Dr. Ness mentions a second type of subversion experienced by both programs due to the ministry's inability to evaluate and thus to control value change. The ministry did settle upon the one available set of clean-cut criteria: those provided by election results. Mention has already been made of the relationships between the characteristics of the political elite and those of the rural development program. In this case the lack of suitable evaluative competence reinforced the prior infusion of politics into the rural development program and the entire program became a political tool. In states where the ruling party was in control, the rural development program was used in pork-barrel fashion to support local party leaders. On the one hand this reinforced the output goal commitment of the Phase I program, as local leaders were supported by Ministerial allocation of funds for local construction projects, especially for mosques, schools, and community halls. In the adult education program, rewards and support were given to local leaders on the basis of their ability to organize the rural population in classes, and the contents of the pedagogical materials took on a decided political bias. (p. 230)

Dr. Ness asserts that this political bias was not in any way dysfunctional for general development, because a major problem was that of breaking the power of the local Islamic functionaries, the *imams*, who symbolized the physical and intellectual isolation of the rural peoples and represented a reaction against modernization. According to the author, breaking the power of the local *imam*, shifting the center of religious gravity from the closed village to the more rational and more modern centers in Kuala Lumpur, and the Islamic College at Klang, would serve to undermine the power of the anti-modern, orthodox religious Pan Malayan Islamic Party. Thus, the author's view is that the politicization of the Adult Education Program undermined anti-modern forces and reinforced the forces of modernization.

This reviewer thinks, however, that the author's simple characterization of the local *imams* as representing a reaction against modernization requires substantiation through more research into the details of the Malay village community, the characteristics of its leadership and the religio-cultural, politico-social, and socio-economic issues involved. This reviewer suspects that the author's observations on the Malay village community are limited due

perhaps to his almost exclusive intercourse with English-educated, "modern" Malaysians including Malays. The author's dichotomy between the Alliance as the force of modernization and the Pan Malayan Islamic Party as a force of reaction may have been influenced unconsciously by the information and outlook he has derived from his use of only these data and sources in English. It has to be admitted, however, that the kind of studies in the Malay (particularly political) community to which the reviewer refers above have only recently appeared (for example Dr. William Roff's *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Yale University Press, 1967).

In this connection, this reviewer has to point out that he feels Dr. Ness did not give sufficient attention and care to his treatment of the political history of Malaya, although the analysis of the political history of Malaya as such is not the central theme of his study. And yet, judging from his basic theoretical framework, the social and economic changes observed in his study are functions of the polity, and in that sense and to that extent, more care should have been taken. For instance, a fuller treatment of the political process from 1945 to 1948, particularly in the Malay political community, would enable us to understand better and with more coherence the groups, personalities, and issues in the Malay political community of the subsequent, and particularly post-independence period. The same holds true of the treatment of the conflict between Dato Onn and his group on the one hand, and the UMNO with its new leadership on the other in the first half of the 1950's. The later rivalry between Abdul Razak and Aziz bin Ishak between 1957 and 1962 may be traced back to the latter's one-time connection with the Independence of Malaya Party around the time of its inauguration.

Thus, in exploring the interrelationships between goal changes and the changes in the political structure, it is necessary to deal more adequately with the political structure at both the national and the village levels. Dr. Ness makes the following point in this regard: that is, the use of the rural development program against the Pan Malayan Islamic Party has produced another set of goal-broadening forces in the Ministry and the central government, the effects of which, Dr. Ness says, cannot yet be assessed. In the author's view, the weakening of the antimodern wing in Malayan politics pushes the entire political orientation in the direction of modernization. The major political opponents are now felt to be parties of the left, with their appeals based in the changed social and economic structure. The author considers that, given the government's lack of ideological commitment, its pragmatism and its desire to stay in power, the Ministry appears to tend to decrease the appeal of the parties of the left by increasing its own concern for change in the social and economic structure in terms of an espousal of cultural or mixed output cultural goals including increased concern for the creation of the modern economic and social institutions associated with increases in human productivity. Concretely, Phase III of the rural development program which focused upon the problems of rural marketing was announced in February, 1962. (p. 231)

The reviewer would like to add, however, that this latest emphasis upon cultural or mixed output-cultural goals manifested in the formation of the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority has perhaps resulted from the strengthening of ethnically-defined Malay nationalism through the rather ironic catalyst of the confrontation of "neo-colonialism" in Malaya by the hyper-nationalistic former Indonesian regime and from the Malay economic interests which, as a consequence, came to find themselves with rapidly increased acuteness vis-à-vis the non-Malay economic interests. In addition to the factor of the present Alliance government's rivalry with its political opponents including the Pan Malayan Islamic Party and what Dr. Ness calls the ideological left, the factor of external impact which apparently helped to stimulate the Malay-educated sector of the political leadership and its mass following has to be taken into consideration.

The recently accelerated stress on mixed output-cultural goals seems to be attributable also to the sense of irritation on the part of the Malay peasants at their falling income due to the steadily declining rubber prices on the world market, and at the slow effect which the approach of infrastructure construction can have on the rise of income among the rural Malays. The recent shift of the center of political gravity to the left, as Dr. Ness put it, and the lately heightened stress on the mixed output-cultural goals can be interpreted as attributable to the exclusive focus on the output goal, contrary to the author's interpretation according to which the political achievements to which the program has contributed have shifted the center of political gravity to the left. Aside from the question of the cause of this recent shift, the reviewer agrees with the author on the point that the adoption of mixed output-cultural goals is probably best suited to the successful stimulation of economic development. (p. 224) But, again, the crucial question in this regard, on the basis of the author's fundamental theoretical framework, is what conditions and changes in the conditions of the polity are necessary for the purposive pursuit of such mixed output-cultural goals both within Malaya and in Malaya's relations with the West. Dr. Ness says that it seems certain that the functional alignment of the economy with the new independent state must involve the weakening of the power of Western enterprises in Malaya. He also questions whether what he considers to be inevitable sustained radical change in the political and economic forces within and outside Malaya can continue and be successful while maintaining the organizational integration of the Malayan economy with the West. To find the answer to this question, further research is required for the period subsequent to 1964, the last year of the period with which the author dealt. The increasingly active posture taken by the present Malaysian government towards the East European Bloc, the antipathy of the Malay-educated sub-leaders of the UMNO to the British which suddenly came to the surface, and the recent reported rise in the influence of the Pan Malayan Islamic Party deserve of detailed research in the future. (*Shinichi Nagai*)