

POLITICS OF ACCOMMODATION:
A CASE STUDY OF MALAY SQUATTERS
IN KUALA LUMPUR

Thesis
submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
to the University of London

by

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January 1985



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SUMMARY

This thesis is an attempt to study local level politics among the urban poor, i.e. the squatters in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia, by focusing attention on a Malay squatter community in a squatment in the southwestern part of the city and examining their struggle to retain their illegally occupied land and their attempt to improve their living conditions in the squatment in the face of an apparently unsympathetic urban bureaucracy.

The study is prompted by Oscar Lewis' theory of 'culture of poverty' and the concept of marginality and it is the contention of this thesis that the Malay squatters are neither marginal nor do they exhibit traits of Lewis' 'culture of poverty'; they are sufficiently well organised at the community level which accounts for their success in achieving some of their communal goals and such success is attributable to their close association with politicians from the party in power.

The thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter I, the introduction, outlines the aims and scope of the thesis, its problems, theoretical orientation and provides a brief background of the country and its people. Chapter II traces the historical development of squatting in Peninsular Malaysia (formerly Malaya) with special reference to the emergence of squatting among Malays in Kuala Lumpur. Chapter III examines the development of the squatment under study and the squatters' initial involvement with political parties. Chapter IV deals with the squatter community, its economy and social networks. Chapter V takes a look at the squatters' relationship with the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the predominant party in the ruling *Barisan Nasional* (National Front) between 1967 and 1977. Chapter VI examines the basis of the squatters' dependency on UMNO and the exchanges taking place between them, while Chapter VII looks at the role of the political party in community organisation of the squatters. Chapter VIII, the conclusion, summarises the findings of the thesis, compares the Malay squatters with those of other ethnic groups and explains the nature of the relationship between the squatters and UMNO in terms of political party patronage.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost I wish to record my sincere appreciation and profound gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Andrew Turton, for his kind help and painstaking guidance in the preparation of this thesis and for the great tolerance and understanding that he has shown me in all the years that I have been under his supervision. I was far from being a model supervisee: as a foreign student my English was far from perfect, as a wife and mother of three growing children, my work pattern was often erratic and in the last three years or so, as I was called back by my employer to resume duties, I have had to shuttle back and forth between Kuala Lumpur and London. I must have given Dr Turton a very difficult and trying time but he has shown nothing but patience and kindness and was always ready to help with my problems.

Next, I wish to thank my employer, the University of Malaya, for granting me a three-year study-leave (1978-1981) to enable me to do my Ph.D in London, although the thesis itself took considerably longer than three years to complete.

To all the people of Kampung Selamat, especially my squatter respondents, I owe a special debt of gratitude or, in their terms *terhutang budi*, not only for letting me pry into their lives in order to obtain data for this thesis, but more especially for the warmth with which they welcomed me and took me to their bosom, so much so that I now feel great attachment to and a sense of affinity with them.

My fieldwork would have been well-nigh impossible without the help and assistance of government officials,

especially those at City Hall, who sometimes went out of their way to help me, and politicians from both the government and opposition parties, who gave their views freely. In this connection I must also record my appreciation for the services rendered by some of my students in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaya, as 'research assistants' at some stage of my fieldwork.

I wish also to express my sincere thanks to Professor Khoo Kay Kim, Head of the Department of History, University of Malaya, for reading through the historical sections of the thesis and to Professor A Cohen, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, and Dr Nigel Phillips, Department of Southeast Asia and the Islands, of the School of Oriental and African Studies, for having kindly read the entire thesis in its final draft, and also for their valuable comments and suggestions. I am indebted to these distinguished scholars, but for all errors and shortcomings that may be found in this thesis I alone am responsible.

Lastly, I must record my profound gratitude to my husband, without whose unflinching support and constant encouragement none of all this would have been possible. As a token of my appreciation for everything that he has done for me and also for the tolerance and understanding shown by my children when I neglected my motherly duties throughout the Ph.D programme, I dedicate this work to my husband, Zainal Abidin Bador and to our three boys: Zain Azhari, Zain Al-Fikri and Zain Al-Ashraf.

Azizah Kassim

1 January 1985.

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ABBREVIATIONS

UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
DAP	Democratic Action Party
PMIP	Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party
Gerakan	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian Peoples' Movement)
Berjasa	Barisan Juma'atul Islamiah (The Muslim Front)
UPP	Unit Penguatkuasa Perumahan (Housing Enforcement Unit)
AGM	Annual General Meeting
FTRD	Federal Territory Religious (Islam) Department
GRPC	General Report of Population Census
TOL	Temporary Occupation Licence

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Aim and Scope of the Study.

The study concerns a particular group of the urban poor, i.e. the squatters, most of whom are of peasant origin and who have migrated to the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, in the last two decades or so. The focus of attention is on their struggles to cope with urban life especially in their attempts to retain the land they occupy illegally, to seek legal rights on the said land and to gain access to basic urban amenities and social services. Inasmuch as this study concerns the ways and means by which these squatters attain their goals, the study is about politics, primarily local-level politics. The aim is to examine how goals are identified and strategies as to how these goals are to be attained, are formulated.

West Malaysia has a multi-ethnic population comprising mainly Malays, Chinese and Indians (see section 1.6). Each of these ethnic categories has its share of urban squatters. This study, however, confines itself only to Malay squatters in Kuala Lumpur, also known since 1974, as the Federal Territory. It concerns only West Malaysia or Peninsular Malaysia.

This research was undertaken in the light of growing concern on the part of the central government of Malaysia, the state government and the local authorities in various towns over the unprecedented increase in the number of urban squatters in almost every major town or state capital. Except in Kuala Lumpur, where the increase in squatting has been particularly great since 1960, no comprehensive surveys on squatting have been done to enumerate the squatters. Nevertheless, random surveys

and brief studies have been carried out and based on these estimates of the squatter population have been arrived at. Wegelin estimates that in Alor Star, the capital of the state of Kedah, squatters form 3.3% of the population; in George Town (Penang) 5.5%; in Kuantan (Pahang) 4.1%, Kelang (Selangor) 4.2% and in Kuala Trengganu (Trengganu) 5.0% (1979:94). In Kuala Lumpur, the percentage of squatters in relation to its total population has, in the last ten years, remained on average 25% (see Table 1, Chapter II). The capital is one area where urban squatting is most noticeable and most problematical to the authorities.

The proliferation of squatter areas in major towns in Malaysia coincides with the implementation of successive development programmes, known generally as Five Year Plans, by the post-independence government in its attempt to restructure the socio-economic imbalance in the country. First launched in 1960, part of these development programmes involves urban expansion and industrialization and seeks to bring into towns the indigenous Malays who were previously, during the colonial period, confined to the rural areas. Expansion of the government bureaucracy, establishment of institution of higher learning and the construction of factories in the urban centres, among other things, create ample employment opportunities which attract large scale migration from the countryside, where socio-economic developments are confined largely to the provision of some basic amenities and social services and the expansion of peasant farming and where jobs with regular income are scarce. This flow of rural labour into the urban areas has not been matched by provision of necessary basic amenities to accommodate the newcomers. The result is insufficient infra-structure creating enormous problems both to the urban authorities and to the new arrivals themselves. The main problem is housing. The homeless resort to the illegal occupation of vacant land on

which they build shelters, usually of wood and corrugated iron roofing which they call *rumah* (lit. house and/or home). They become known as *setinggan* (squatters) adding to the number of squatters already prevalent in the towns before rural-urban migration began (see Chapter II). Their housing conglomerations become known as *kampung setinggan* (squatter villages). As time goes on these new *setinggan* are joined by some opportunist squatters who occupy land illegally, not out of necessity but for purposes of profiteering such as by constructing houses for rent or sale. The number of these opportunist squatters is small. In Kuala Lumpur, official sources (1980) believe they account for only 6% of the one quarter million squatters in the city. The majority of the squatters occupy land illegally out of necessity and they are the main focus of this study.

The main concern here is the squatters of Kuala Lumpur, especially those in the squatment of Kampung Selamat, one of the 200 squatter villages in the capital. The capital city was chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, by virtue of being the centre of government, the nerve centre for industry and commerce, the main location for institutions of higher learning and the first town in the country to have a satellite town built in the fifties to site industries, it is the place where most jobs are to be found. Hence its attraction for the peasants, which in turn accounts for the largest concentration of urban squatters. Secondly, the capital was chosen for practical reasons. The writer lives and works in Kuala Lumpur, about one mile away from the nearest squatment which facilitated close and continuous research.

The writer was induced to focus attention on the Malay squatters by the following considerations:

- (a) Malay squatters, unlike their non-Malay

counterparts in the city are largely recent arrivals (see Chapter II). They are in the process of adjusting and adapting to their new social and physical environments. It would be interesting to discover the kind of mechanisms and strategies they employ in their attempt to find a niche for themselves in the urban context.

(b) The case of the Malay squatters deserve scrutiny to draw the attention of the urban authorities and others to their plight as a result of their ambiguous position vis-a-vis land. They pride themselves in being the indigenous group, the *Bumiputra* (lit. the sons of the soil) and are so recognized by the government (see Section 1.6); and the Malays believe they have inalienable rights to the land by virtue of their customary land laws (see Chapter II). Yet they find themselves without land and are forced to squat, subjected to harrassment and served with eviction notices by the authorities from time to time.

(c) The Malay squatters are generally relatively poor, with an average income much lower than the squatters of other ethnic groups, viz. the Chinese and Indians (see Chapter IV).

(d) The presence of the Malay squatters in large numbers in the capital has important political implications for inter-ethnic relations in Kuala Lumpur and for the country as a whole.

(e) Very little anthropological work has been done on urban Malays, less still on Malay squatters.

1.2 The Problems

The writer started her fieldwork in the squatments in October 1980 with the intention of testing the validity of

Oscar Lewis' theory on the "culture of poverty". As the fieldwork progressed it soon became clear that none of the characteristics of the said culture prevailed among the squatters. They had, as will be explained in Chapter IV, stable nuclear and extended families, had strong sanctions against consensual unions and early initiation to sex; and at the community level, were well organized and not disengaged from the wider society. At the level of the individual, very few showed signs of fatalism, present time orientation or many of the other personal characteristics of the individual in the "culture of poverty". At this point the writer decided to change her approach to the subject. Instead of enquiring into the absence of the "culture of poverty", it was thought more appropriate to examine the squatters in a positive manner, i.e. to seek explanations as to how they organized themselves at the family and community level so that some kind of unity was achieved which in turn enabled them to resist eviction and to influence the authorities to adopt and implement policies favourable towards them.

That the squatters were able to influence decision makers at the supra-local level to act in their favour was evidenced by their very presence and by the fact that they were receiving handouts from the authorities in the form of public amenities and social services, as will be made explicit in Chapters V, VI and VII. The authorities could have removed them each time they needed the land illegally occupied by the squatters for physical urban development. They have the powers to prosecute the squatters by virtue of such legislation as the 1963 Kuala Lumpur Federal Capital (Clearance of Squatters) By-Laws, and the Amendments to the Municipal Act 1963 (No.16 of 1967); Section 342(A) of the Municipal Ordinance dealing with clearance of areas; Section 425 of the 1965 National Land Code and the 1969 Emergency Ordinance (Sen, M.K.

1969:12; City Hall, 1978). The presence of the squatters in very large numbers proved that the authorities had not utilized such powers, and if they had, such powers had not been utilized fully.

Social scientists in Malaysia quite often explain the presence and proliferation of squatters in Kuala Lumpur in terms of the government's inability to cope with the problems imposed by the rural-urban drift. They attribute the phenomenon to the government's lack of planning and inefficiency. While there are some elements of truth in this sort of analysis, the writer feels that it is wrong to assume that the squatters are ineffectual actors in the urban scene. They are a force which influences government decisions especially in matters relating to its policy on squatting. Some of them resisted eviction, fought the authorities and won. They show sufficient ingenuity in exploiting the system and in devising strategies to hinder the authorities from implementing the law fully.

The local authority in Kuala Lumpur, previously known as the Federal Capital Commission and since 1972 as the City Hall, was often quite forceful in exercising its powers to evict squatters. In the sixties when the rapid expansion of squatter settlements began to be noticed, such actions, as verified by the former Chief Minister of Selangor (the state in which Kuala Lumpur was before it became the Federal Territory in 1974) were rampant. The local authority viewed the expansion of squatting by the recent urban migrants with alarm and apprehension and their attitudes towards the latter can be described as unsympathetic, intolerant and at times hostile. The very name of the first government committee to deal with the squatters, i.e. the Squatter Clearance Committee is indicative of such an attitude. Other evidence includes a report by Sen, M.K. (1969) on behalf of the Ministry of

Local Government and Housing which, among other things, refers to the squatter areas as "... seedbeds for thugs, secret societies and other racketeers ..." and that the practice and expansion of squatting " ... challenges the status of government as agencies for maintaining law and order; ... results in an increase in crime, juvenile delinquency and a wide variety of social problems ... loss of substantial revenues ... to the government; ... affects the physical development of Kuala Lumpur ... it economic, social and political stability; ... inhibits economic growth and investment; ... and reduces its (Kuala Lumpur's) image both at home and overseas ..." (Sen, M.K. 1969:2).

Such being the views of the authorities about squatting, it is not surprising that many squatters were served with eviction notices and squatter demolition squads were often deployed to destroy newly-built squatter houses. Many squatments were wiped out; some, however, survived these eviction and demolition exercises.

Since 1975, there seems to have been a change in the attitude of the central government and the local authority towards the squatters. The Third Malaysia Plan (1975-1980) made some provisions for the socio-economic improvements of the squatters in the capital. The City Hall in 1978 published a report outlining its programme to overcome the squatter problems. This report, like the one in 1969, still manifests the intolerance and negative view the officials in the government bureaucracy had of the squatters. The squatter settlements are described almost in the same terms as they were in 1969. The 1978 report describes them as,

- (a) "... breeding grounds for criminals, drug addicts, subversive and anti-national activities,"
- (b) "... breeding grounds for communist influence and

a base for activities which can threaten the stability of the country and the nation."

(c) "... where dangerous diseases such as denggi and dysentery originate."

(d) "... which hinders the physical development of Kuala Lumpur ..." (1978:8-9).

The squatters according to the report, because of their increasing numbers are bold enough to challenge the government and the law of the country. In view of this the report stressed the need for positive action to seek solutions to the squatters' problem. A humanitarian approach to the problem was proposed and later accepted as a guiding principle in all official dealings with the squatters. There is therefore a change in tactics on the part of the government and the City Hall. This, however, does not mean that the authorities now condone squatting (see Chapter VI). On the contrary, the squatters are now put under strict control and supervision under a specially formed unit in City Hall, i.e. the UPP, *Unit Penguatkuasa Perumahan* (lit. Housing Enforcement Unit). The UPP formulate and impose rules and regulations to curb their geographical and demographic expansion and employ hundreds of field officers to patrol the squatments daily from 9.00 a.m. till 7.00 p.m. to ensure that these rules and regulations are observed fully.

Despite these measures, the number of squatters increased and so did the acreage taken by them. Activities contrary to the new rules and regulations such as house improvements, construction of new houses and occupation of new land continue, especially during the few weeks preceding a general election. Sometimes such activities are done under the very eyes of the UPP field officers. Not only that, some sections of the squatter population are now being given basic amenities and social services by some

government agencies, including the City Hall whose express purpose is to get rid of the squatters because of the problems they pose to physical urban expansion, etc. How is all this possible? How can the squatters break the rules and regulations with such apparent impunity? Why do the local authority appear to be so charitable to the squatters who, as they describe in the 1978 report, "... pay no rent ... and create social, economic and political problems ..." for them?

The writer believes that the squatters' ability to defeat the laws and outwit the urban government bureaucracy is largely due to their close links with politicians and political organizations, a point often referred to by several writers but never elaborated (Sen, M.K. 1969 and 1979; Ishak Shaari 1976:121; Abdullah Ahmad 1979). It is the writer's hypothesis that this squatter-politician relationship is what largely accounts for the squatters' continued survival and their ability to induce, albeit indirectly, the local authority and the central government to act in their favour. The dynamics of such relationship will be studied closely to determine the nature of transactions taking place, the bases for such transactions and the expectations each party has of the other. The extent of the squatters' political consciousness will also be examined as well as their political inclinations and ideologies. The writer does not confine herself to power relations at the community (local) level, but looks outwards beyond the boundaries of the *kampung*. The squatters relate to the urban system socio-culturally, economically and politically and hence their lives are very much influenced by forces outside their village and their control. An understanding of such forces is crucial in seeking explanations for the nature of political relations that prevail in the squatment.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The most conspicuous feature of large urban centres in the developing countries in the last two decades is the presence of squattments which contain a substantial portion of the cities' population. These squattments are known by various names: in Latin America, they are called *barrios*, *barriadas*, *favelas*, *ranchos*, *colonias proletarias* or *campallas*; in Africa they are referred to as *bidonvilles* or *gourvivilles*; in India they are termed *bustees*; in Turkey they are *gecekodu* and in the Philippines they are *barung-barung*. In general terms they are shanty towns in which live between 15% and 45% of the urban population in third world countries. Their physical and environmental characteristics contrast sharply with the carefully planned concrete blocks, giving the urban precincts a tinge of 'ruralness' and giving the term town and city a somewhat different meaning and interpretation to what is generally understood in the west. The buildings are often constructed in haste, perhaps overnight, with minimal planning and with almost total disregard for human need for ventilation and sanitation. The very poor squatters may use left-over pieces of wood from construction sites, flattened oil drums or canvass to build their abode. The more fortunate may be able to buy their own wood, cement, and corrugated iron sheets. Hence there are variations in the characteristics of squattments depending on such factors as the socio-economic status of the squatters, the age of the settlement and the political climate in which they live.

One main denominator which squatters all over the world share in common is the "forcible occupation" of their dwelling or dwelling sites. In the case of tropical countries, where the climate is congenial and shelters can be constructed rapidly, it is the dwelling site that is

forcibly occupied. In the urban centres of third world countries such unlawful occupation of what appears to be no-man's-land is common. The more involved a town or city in a third world country is in physical and economic development, the more rampant is squatting.

Cities in the third world are increasingly bursting at the seams with squatters. Their governments are becoming alarmed and in many countries government bodies and academic institutions have been directed or encouraged to conduct research on squatters and the process of squatting. The bulk of this research, however, has been carried out not by anthropologists, but by other social scientists - demographers, social geographers, historians, sociologists and economists. Social anthropological works on urban squatters are still relatively few in number, perhaps understandably, because anthropologists are late-comers to urban research. Their attention was drawn towards the urban poor - the occupants of slums, ghettos and squatments - only in the sixties and in general North American anthropologists have been more involved in such research than the British. Among the studies done in the last two decades, the most notable are perhaps those of Oscar Lewis, William Mangin and Peter Lloyd, whose works will be discussed in Section 1.4.

Many of the prevalent works provide a clear picture of the social process in the squatter neighbourhood, its formation and sustenance which is essential in our understanding of urban squatting and which cannot be uncovered by the works of other social scientists such as demographers or social geographers or by architects and social planners. But anthropological works on squatters, as alluded to earlier, are few and confined largely to cities in the Latin American countries. Elsewhere in the developing countries, such studies are minimal. It is perhaps time

that anthropologists paid some attention to the squatters since they form such a large portion of the urban poor, whose massive presence in the cities signifies acute development problems. Anthropologists, with their small-scale but intensive studies, can contribute towards our present understanding of the squatter problems and their work could help guide urban planners and administrators in their search for solutions to these problems, if indeed there were any. What better way is there for the anthropologist to give his discipline a practical value!

In Malaysia in particular anthropological studies on the squatters are conspicuously lacking. Anthropological works on Malaysian societies have been mostly on the pre-urban communities: the peasants, the shifting agriculturalists and the hunters and gatherers. In the pre-war years, anthropological literature were written mainly by anthropologist/scholar administrators who seem to have a penchant for the exotic primitivity of the aborigines and the Malays. The works of such people as Evans (1937) and Schebesta (1929), for example, record various aspects of the aborigines' lives, while those of Blagden (1896) and Wilkinson (1906) and others are about the Malays in which beliefs and magic, religion, customary laws and kinship seem to have been the favourite topics. In the post-war years, the same topics were still being studied; in addition, other aspects of Malay and aboriginal life were studied which include their indigenous political structure, economic organization, social stratification, leadership and impact of development on the traditional social structure. The period before the 1960's was dominated by foreign anthropologists; since then, however, local scholars began to emerge. But even with the appearance of local scholars, the focus of attention remains

mostly the same, viz. Malay peasants and the aborigines.

This pre-occupation with the study of the peasants and aborigines reflects not only the general trend of social anthropology in the years before the sixties but also the distinction made between anthropology and sociology. Anthropologists were supposed to occupy themselves with the non-western, pre-industrial societies, and the sociologists with the complex communities in the western urbanized and industrial world.

In Malaysia, the divide and rule policy of the colonial regime kept the various ethnic groups apart: the Malays and aborigines in the countryside, the Indians in the rubber estates and the Chinese in towns. This geographical segregation led naturally to the situation in which anthropologists were concerned with the Malays and aborigines and the sociologists with the Chinese and Indians. Even when the geographical segregation was gradually eroded, when Malays began to migrate in large numbers into towns and cities in the late fifties, and when the clear distinction between anthropology and sociology began to be blurred, most anthropologists working in Malaysia still focused their attention on the countryside. Very few ventured into towns. Hence anthropological works in the towns and cities are relatively few, comprising five Ph.D theses (Maulud Yusof, 1975; Provencher 1976; Friel-Simon 1978; Khadijah Haji Muhammad 1978 and Osman M.H. 1979); one Master of Arts thesis (Yusof Suratman 1979) and a few long essays or graduation exercises written by students in the Malaysian universities as partial requirements of their Bachelor of Arts degree course. Very few of these works deal with the squatters, and whatever literature available on the subject consist of collections of ethnographic data without adequate theoretical orientation. These works are mostly

unpublished.

Most of the prevalent literature on Malaysian squatters have been written by social or urban geographers, historians, demographers, economists and urban planners. While the historians emphasize the development of squatter communities, the economists stress the problem of incomes and wages, levels of consumption and standard of living; while the geographers study their settlement patterns, the impact of their presence on housing, the job market, development and climatic changes, the demographers scrutinize their age structure, fertility rates, family size and project their possible increase. These works are macro studies which throw very little light on social processes at the micro level; very little is known about how the squatters organize themselves socially and economically and none at all about their politics, though several brief references have been made on the subject. There is therefore a gap in our knowledge of the Malaysian squatters and it is clearly the task of social anthropologists to fill the gap and it is hoped that this study will go some way towards fulfilling that task and complementing all those studies carried out by scholars in the other disciplines.

1.4 Theoretical Orientation

Anthropologists working on the urban scene find their work problematical. The most pertinent question before them is how to transfer effectively their technique of analysis to the urban context. In attempting to resolve this problem urban anthropologists have come up with three types of studies which, as summed up by Eames & Goode (1977), are: studies of peasant migrants in the city,

problem-centred studies and traditional ethnographic studies using the city as a laboratory. Quite often the three areas of studies overlap one another and the present thesis is one such example.

The present work is principally a community study; its focus of attention is a group of squatters within an identifiable geographical boundary, who consider themselves socially and politically distinct from the rest of the urban population and who among themselves have a regular and identifiable pattern of social relations and institutions. As the squatters are recent migrants facing problems of accommodation, this study is also indirectly about urban adjustments and problem-orientated.

Most studies on squatters have been guided by two main themes: the "culture of poverty" and the "concept of marginality". Anthropologists and others quite often approach their squatter respondents with a view to testing the validity of these two concepts - to see whether or not the squatters are afflicted with the characteristics of the "culture of poverty" or if it is true that they are indeed marginal in the spatial, economic, social and political sense. At this point it is perhaps essential to elaborate on the two concepts in order to illuminate prevalent approaches in the study of squatters.

(a) The Culture of Poverty. The "culture of poverty" or "sub-culture of poverty" is a conceptual model devised by Oscar Lewis to explain the life style of the urban poor, viz. the slum dwellers in Mexico City, Puerto Rico and New York where his studies were conducted. The concept was introduced in his *Five Families* (1959) and was developed in his subsequent works namely *Pedro Martinez* (1964), *Children of Sanchez* (1961), *La Vida* (1966), *The Culture of Poverty* (1966) and in his essay in collaboration

with others, *The Children of Sanchez, Pedro Martinez and La Vida* (1967).

Lewis describes the "culture of poverty" as "a label for a specific conceptual model that describes in positive terms a subculture of western society with its own structure and rationale, a way of life handed down from generation to generation along family lines" (1966:19).

He argues that this culture is not endemic to western society; it transcends regional and national boundaries. The traits of the culture are numerous and are by no means positive. Four principal ones are identifiable: first, the relationship between the subculture and the larger society which Lewis regards as "the crucial element in the culture of poverty" (1966:21), is characterized by non-integration and disengagement of the subculture from the major institutions of the society. Those afflicted by the culture do not, for example, belong to labour unions or political parties and they make little use of banks, hospitals, department stores or museums. In short, they are marginal economically, socio-culturally and politically.

Secondly, the slum community according to Lewis "has a minimum level of organizations beyond the nuclear and extended family" (1966:23) and this low level of community organization gives the culture of poverty its marginal and anomalous quality in the highly organized urban context. Thirdly, the family in the culture of poverty is unstable, often matrifocal, with the women having a dominant role in the male-female relationship and with the mother having more rights over her children and the household property. Mother centred family is the consequence of unstable unions between husbands and wives or between those contracting consensual unions. Male-female relationship out of wedlock is widespread, so also the abandonment of

children and spouses. Adultery is frequent, so is prostitution. The children are initiated to sex early in life; rivalry between children is intense and there is little privacy.

Fourthly, at the level of the individual there is in the culture of poverty a strong feeling of fatalism, helplessness, dependence and inferiority. There is a high incidence of weak ego structure, orality and "confusion of sexual identification". The individual is present-time-orientated and has little disposition to defer gratification; his outlook is local or provincial and he is not class conscious. There is also preoccupation with machismo and a high tolerance of psychological pathology.

Lewis differentiates between poverty *per se* and the culture of poverty. While the former is merely deprivations, the latter refers to the style of life induced by these deprivations. He claims that the culture is persistent in the sense that the traits of the culture linger on in the individual even after his socio-economic status has improved. Not all poor people, it seems, have the culture of poverty, as is the case with the lower caste Hindus of India, the Jews of Eastern Europe and the Cubans after the revolution. Lewis maintains that the culture of poverty prevails only when certain preconditions are present, which are:

- (1) Cash economy, wage labour and production for profit,
- (2) persistent high rate of unemployment and underemployment for unskilled labour,
- (3) low wages,
- (4) the failure to provide social, political and economic organizations either on a voluntary basis or by government imposition for the low income populations,
- (5) the existence of bilateral kinship system rather than unilateral one, and finally
- (6) the presence of a set of values in the dominant

class which stresses the accumulation of wealth and property, the possibility of upward mobility and thrift and which explains low economic status as the result of personal inadequacy or inferiority.

Given these preconditions, the poor will develop the traits of the culture of poverty and they will be trapped in this life-style for they are incapable of self-improvement. Only help from outside can wipe out the traits of the said culture and this help may take the form of psychiatric treatment in countries where the proportion of the poor is small or a 'revolutionary' solution involving structural change by redistribution of wealth and organization of the poor, when the poor form a mass of the population.

The notion of the culture of poverty confirms and reiterates the ubiquitous middle class conception of the urban poor and it is believed that this accounts for its widespread attention from governments, both in the United States of America and in the Third World and for the fact that it was used as a premise for many programmes to improve slums and squatments. Among social scientists, Lewis' theory was widely discussed and received much criticism as epitomized by the work of Valentine (1967). Whether or not we regard it as a sound theory it has undoubtedly generated much research interest in the study of the urban poor. The culture of poverty was used by many as an analytical framework in such studies, especially those done in Third World countries where a large section of the urban poor are squatters. Thus one finds social scientists applying a theory derived from the study of slum dwellers to squatters as if the two categories of people were identical.

Slums and squatments are two analytically separate concepts. Slum tenements are legal: their owners pay quit

rents and their ownership is recognized by the authorities; slums connote deterioration, squalor, acute lack of amenities, overcrowding, etc.; and in the Third World countries where urbanization and industrialization have gained momentum only in the last three decades, slums are usually confined to inner city centres. Squatments, on the other hand, are housing areas without legal status; the rights of the squatters to the houses and land they occupy are not recognized by the authorities and the squatters pay no tax or quit rents. Squatments in developing countries are mainly in the periphery of the city, where land has been usurped for the purpose of house construction. Slum therefore connotes a negative physical state, whereas squatment signifies a disrespect for and disregard of the laws, i.e. land laws.

Squatments may or may not share the physical characteristics of the slums, though quite often they do. This accounts for the tendency of many researchers to equate slums with squatments and to apply the culture of poverty theory to squatters. And indeed a few do find that traits of the culture of poverty prevail among certain squatters. Jocano's work (1975) among the Manila squatters serves as an example. Others have drawn our attention to the need to distinguish slum dwellers from urban squatters; the two categories of people having different relations to the house and land they occupy and this, it is believed, brings forth the differing attitudes to life and different forms of social organization. Mangin (1967, 1973), for instance, rejects the applicability of Oscar Lewis' theory to squatters. Writing on the *barriada* dwellers of Lima, Peru, Mangin says:

"... The *barriada* families are relatively stable compared to those in the city slums or the rural provinces. Delinquency and prostitution which are

common in the city slums are rare in the *barriadas* ... the *barriada* dwellers are well organized ... Although poor, they do not live in hopelessness characteristic of the 'culture of poverty' depicted by Oscar Lewis ..." "... They have close connections with the city through their jobs, unions, social clubs, churches and services such as medical care, social security and unemployment insurance." (1973:236).

Thus Mangin's respondents are neither disengaged from the wider society nor are they disorganized at the community level or prone to family instability. They are clearly different from the slum dwellers in Lewis' study. Other researchers in the field in Latin America and elsewhere (such as Safa 1974; Lomnitz 1974; Peattie 1968; Ross 1973; Lloyd 1980; Laquian 1971; Ray 1969 and Perlman 1976) find substantial evidence to support Mangin's contention that squatters do not share the traits of Lewis' culture of poverty.

(b) Marginality. Apart from Lewis' theory of culture of poverty, the study of the urban poor has also centred upon the concept of marginality. The origin of this concept can be traced to Park's *Human Migration and Marginal Man* (1928) in which he expounded a psychological-sociological view of the man between two cultures or 'the cultural hybrid'. According to Park,

"It is in the mind of the marginal man ... where the changes and fusion of culture are going on ... that we can best study the process of civilization and progress." (1928).

While Park sees his marginal man in positive terms, as

a potential innovator, the present stereotypes of the marginal man are the opposite. As the concept is widely used in the Latin American literature, the term 'marginality' closely resembles the word 'marginal' in the Portuguese and Spanish languages in which the term has extremely perjorative connotations. A marginal man is "... a shiftless, dangerous ne'er-do-well, usually associated with the underworld of crime, violence, drugs and prostitution" (Perlman 1976:92). The concept of marginality has been used in various ways: in spatial terms to refer to settlements on the periphery of the city, i.e. the squatterments; in economic-occupation sense in reference to jobs which are unstable, with low pay and which are not part of and contributing to the mainstream economy; the migrants newcomers and to different subcultures; to refer to deviants as well as racial and ethnic minorities. Endemic in the notion of marginality is the dualist view of society: the mainstream group and those outside it, and this distinction is not made on numerical basis but on political and economic strength as well as socio-cultural dominance. In the Latin American context, the dominant group is the elites whose base is the city, the fortress of high culture, and who are homogeneous and speak a tongue different from the local indigenous groups. From the moment the city was first 'invaded' by the indigenous migrants from the countryside, the elites view the migrants as a blight and a threat to their status quo. The settlements formed by the migrants are seen as marginal settlements and the migrants themselves as marginal people, while the word 'marginal' became a euphemism for the poor. As the number of marginal settlements and their inhabitants increased, so did the fear of the elites. They fear that the marginal labour force may become so frustrated and alienated that this may give way to social and political disruptions.

In short, the marginals are excluded from and not integrated into the mainstream society and the best way to handle them, it is believed, is to integrate them into the very system which was responsible for their emergence in the first place. To the extent that marginality focuses on non-integration, this concept bears close resemblance to Lewis' culture of poverty, and as such the evidence given by researchers to refute the presence of the culture of poverty among squatters can also be used to discount the applicability of the concept of marginality among them.

In its direct application to the study of urban squatters, the concept of marginality has been widely rejected. Lloyd (1980), whose focus of study is the *pobladores* of Medalla Melagrossa in Lima, Peru, maintains that the squatters are marginal only in spatial terms, but not in any other way. Socio-culturally, according to him, the squatters "... seem anxious to conform to those standards enumerated alike by middle classes and the churches ..." and "... the migrant poor are integrated inasmuch as they accept the dominant values in their society and aspire to the life-style enjoyed by those wealthier than themselves". Economically "they are integrated into the dominant sector of the economy", and politically "the pobladores voted in national elections; some ... belonged to political parties and party allegiance was claimed ... and they are ... very active in the affairs of their community ... " (Lloyd 1980:120-124).

Lloyd's findings reiterate earlier works by other researchers as alluded to earlier. As more work is carried out among the squatters in Third World countries, the negative view of squatters is slowly being replaced by more positive ones. We know now that squatters are organized, although their levels of organization vary; we also know of their manipulations of their social resources

in an attempt to cope with poverty, of their differing strategies in trying to retain their illegally occupied land and to improve their living conditions. What is relevant in the prevalent literature on squatters to the present study is the fact that the squatters are organized - they have an identifiable power structure, they have sufficiently active leaders who are often able to generate lively political activities designed to bring about unity to enable them to achieve their common objectives which are basically to gain official recognition of their illegally occupied land and to improve their living environments. Squatters' unity is said to be related to their length of stay in the squatment and to their success or failure in attaining their communal objectives. The older the squatment is and the more successful are the squatters in securing their common goals, the greater are the chances of their unity declining. Squatter solidarity, it is believed, is greatest at the beginning of the squatter settlement.

Few anthropologists, to the best of the present writer's knowledge, have addressed themselves specifically to squatter politics. Works on squatter politics have been done primarily by political scientists (such as Cornelius 1972; Ray 1969; Ross 1973 and Perlman 1976). Such studies quite often emphasize macro level politics. A good example is that of Perlman on the *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She provides impressive statistics on the squatters' participation in national politics which is measured in terms of the squatters' involvement in the general election, in direct action politics such as petitioning or demonstrations and their interaction with the urban administrators. She also analyses political consciousness of the squatters by testing their knowledge of the name of the president of the country and of the United States of America, of the dates of gubernatorial elections as well as their opinions on controversial issues.

While her study is informative, it fails to explain the dynamics of power relations at the local level. We are told, for instance, that the squatters did vote in the general elections, but are not offered explanations as to why they voted, for whom and under what circumstances they did so, whether it was done of their own free will or under pressure from their ward boss, the *cacique*. Her work is also behaviouristic in nature, i.e. the emphasis is on what people do, as such participation in national politics is judged by involvement in various fields or activities considered 'political'; and non-involvement signifies being non-political or having no political consciousness. There is a flaw in this kind of analysis, as non-participation in political activity can also imply a high level of political consciousness, especially if the squatters know that participating in political activities can bring them harm.

Anthropologists can complement the works of political scientists for, by contrast, they deal in micro analysis and study politics from below upwards, so to speak. This is the approach adopted in this present study which emphasizes political process and relations of power at the squatment and supra-squatment levels, in the context of the squatters' aim to achieve common goals.

1.5 Methodology

The primary data analysed in this study are the result of several periods of fieldwork carried out between April 1980 and March 1983, a total working period of almost two years in the field. Prior to this the writer had carried out a socio-economic survey in the area, viz. Kampung Selamat, which is the focus of study here, and in the adjacent squatments of Kampung Limau, Kampung Reserve Keretapi and Kampung Pantai Dalam, between March

and July 1977, with the assistance of three research assistants. The fieldwork for this thesis is in fact a sequel to the previous one. The writer therefore had a relatively long association with the squatters which proved advantageous for an understanding of political process in the squatment.

Kampung Selamat in 1977 had 100 households with 502 people. The kampung is located in an area generally known as Pantai to the southwest of Kuala Lumpur. It is one of several squatter villages that occupy the tract of land along the three-mile stretch of the Jalan Bangsar-Pantai Dalam which contains one of the highest concentration of squatters in the capital. In 1978, this locality had approximately 16,641 squatters, 84% of whom were Malays, the majority of whom were recent arrivals, having come from the countryside in the last two decades. Kampung Selamat was chosen for intensive fieldwork after a brief survey of several squatter settlements in the city and after discussions with a few officials of the City Hall who agreed that this village is in fact typical of Malay squatments in the periphery of the capital. It was also chosen for practical reasons, as it is only fifteen minutes drive from the writer's residence and place of work and a few of the squatters in the village were known to the writer personally by virtue of being employed in the same organization as she is.

Doing fieldwork in a squatter area was a difficult enterprise initially. Squatters were generally very suspicious of outsiders, especially research workers whom they usually associate with officials of government bureaucracy. The few acquaintances the writer had helped overcome this difficulty by introducing the writer to their relatives, friends and neighbours. After a series of explanations on the part of the writer as to the purpose of

the fieldwork, their suspicion was dispelled and in March 1977, the first period of fieldwork got off to a good start. It was relatively easy for the writer and her three assistants to relate to the squatters as all belong to the same ethnic group, share a common language, religion and culture.

If gaining entry and being accepted by the squatters were relatively easy, getting accommodation was not. Squatter houses were very much in demand and no vacant houses were available, and the only way a fieldworker could stay in the squatment was to live as a lodger. But most squatter families, as will be seen in Chapter IV, comprised young married couples and they were quite reluctant to accommodate people other than their kin and very close friends, especially because living space was limited. That being the case, living in the village was out of the question and the writer and her research assistants had no choice but to commute to the area every day. To find a permanent base from which the fieldwork could be operated, the writer managed to persuade an elderly couple to let the writer use one corner of her house. It was here that files were stored, contacts with other villagers made and where, some time later, two of the research assistants managed to live in for two months while some members of the family were away on holiday.

In collecting the data, the writer relied on several research techniques, the most important of which was the participant-observation method. This technique, however, could not be carried out fully, constrained by the problem of accommodation alluded to earlier. It was also found to be impractical at some points. Most of the squatters spent much of their time outside their village and these activities were almost impossible to participate in or to observe, especially if they were performed in formal contexts. Hence

the participant-observation technique seemed to be inadequate in this case and other methods of data collection had to be applied. Formal interviews with the aid of questionnaires were conducted and the validity of the information gathered was tested by cross-checking, usually through informal interviews with the respondents themselves at a later date, or with others. In the course of the fieldwork, photography was sometimes used, so was tape recording whenever possible and considered necessary.

(a) The First Period of Fieldwork (April - October 1980).

When the writer began the fieldwork for this thesis, she did so with ease as she had already established good relations with the squatters in her earlier fieldwork in 1977. She already had some data concerning the socio-economic status of the squatters in Kampung Selamat, but unfortunately much of it was by then out of date. Some demographic and physical changes had taken place in the village and these limited the usefulness of the earlier data. Twenty-two houses had been demolished by the local authority. About 100 squatters had been moved out and some others had moved in and some households had extra members due to natural increase and in-migration of relatives. It was necessary to conduct a new socio-economic survey on the village. A new set of questionnaires was formulated and the questions asked related to such variables as household composition and size, age and sex of household members, place of origin, migratory pattern, duration of stay in the squatment, education, occupation, income, consumption pattern, household goods, economic and political organization, etc. This survey, which covered all houses in Kampung Selamat

showed, among other things, that the population of the kampung had decreased from 502 in 1977 to 457 in 1980, and the number of households had gone down by 12 to 88.

This survey, as well as the subsequent fieldwork, was carried out largely by the writer alone. The only assistants the writer had were two squatters who took notes of some happenings in the village when the writer was not around, and a squatter photographer to take photographs of some of the feasts.

The survey was followed by research on local level politics which was done mainly through informal interviews, participation and observation. The writer joined most of the communal activities of the squatters, their religious meetings, rituals and celebrations, informal economic functions, women's classes, political meetings, feasts, communal work, etc. Such involvement gave the writer an insight into the internal organizations of the squatters, their local power structure, power relations among the squatters, between them and their leaders/politicians as well as their relationship with the supra-local power structures. Fifteen officials of the local party branch were interviewed together with 45 household heads and their spouses (approximately 68% of all households) to solicit information relating to political consciousness, attitudes towards political parties, party affiliations, their political goals, participation (or otherwise) in communal activities. These interviews were done in a very informal manner, in the course of conversations with the women while joining their religious or domestic science classes, for example; or, in the case of the men, while they met in their 'gossip groups' in the late afternoon either at the local sundry shop or the community hall. These informal interviews were rarely taped or written down instantaneously; they were recorded only at the end of the day. The squatters

usually expressed their views on their leaders, the political party and on the government in strict confidence and did not wish to be quoted by name for fear that whatever they said might be used against them in future. Tape recording and note-taking on the spot inhibited them from talking freely, and so they were dispensed with.

Apart from the squatters in Kampung Selamat, politicians from outside the village, especially those who had a vested interest in the squatters, especially the squatters under study, and those who had direct links with them were also interviewed; so were officials of government agencies who had direct dealings with the squatters. They include:

(1) Officials of the main ruling political party, UMNO (United Malays National Organization), which has a local branch in Kampung Selamat and gives patronage to the squatters. The party officials interviewed include committee members and party officials of the UMNO Damansara Division, UMNO's only Senator (since 1978) and UMNO's only Member of Parliament from the Federal Territory (1974-1982), a committee member of UMNO's National Youth Council and a Deputy Minister in the Ministry of the Federal Territory.

(2) Officials of UMNO's allies in the ruling BN, *Barisan Nasional* (National Front), the MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress) and MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association).

(3) Some officials from the opposition party, DAP (Democratic Action Party) in the Federal Territory, including two Members of Parliament.

(4) Formulators and implementors of the urban policy in Kuala Lumpur, among them were the Director of the Socio-Economic Research Unit, Director of Operations in the Prime Minister's Department; officials of the Ministry of the Federal Territory, including the Chief Secretary and officials of City Hall, especially those who dealt directly with the squatters in the Unit Penguatkuasa Perumahan (UPP).

With the help of City Hall through its UPP, the writer visited over 100 squatter kampungs in an attempt to compare Kampung Selamat with other squatments in the city. The UPP field officers who patrol the squatments each day of the week extended their facilities to the writer, thus enabling her to visit the squatments every day for about one month, to meet and interview squatter leaders, politicians and some squatters chosen at random. Thus the writer was able to get a comprehensive view of squatter community organizations and the roles political parties and politicians play in the lives of the squatters.

This period of fieldwork was concluded in October 1980 to enable the writer to analyse and assess the data already collected thus far. It soon became clear that the data were inadequate and it was imperative for the fieldwork to continue. The next fieldwork was carried out over a considerably long period between October 1981 and March 1983, with a break of three months from March till June 1982 which the writer spent in London to commence the writing of the thesis.

(b) The Second Period of Fieldwork (October 1981 -
March 1983)

This stage of the fieldwork was conducted while the

writer had resumed duties as a member of the academic staff of the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. Time available for the fieldwork in the squatment was therefore somewhat limited. Fortunately, part of one of the courses that the writer was teaching at the university dealt with urbanization and involved organizing undergraduate field projects during the third term holiday. This made it possible for the fieldwork to proceed quite smoothly, especially with research funds made available by the University of Malaya and with a good supply of students all only too willing to be enlisted as research assistants. That the fieldwork site, Kampung Selamat, is situated so very close to the University campus also helped quite a lot.

The main objective of the fieldwork this time was to enquire further into local level politics in Kampung Selamat, to clarify certain issues raised earlier but still remaining unclear, and to look more intensively into community organizations of other squatters to identify any similarities or difference with those of Kampung Selamat. More interviews were carried out with the squatters in the kampung as well as with politicians at the supra-local level and with members of the urban government bureaucracy. At the same time small-scale fieldwork was carried out in two other squatments, viz. Kampung Pakar and Kampung Sentosa with the help of four research assistants, in March and April 1982. Kampung Pakar is a Chinese squatment with 1,021 households while Kampung Sentosa has 1,131 households (1982) of multi-ethnic composition. Research into these two areas was designed to probe into the various ways in which other squatter groups, with different demographic compositions from those of Kampung Selamat, organized themselves at the community and sub-community level and strove to attain their common goals.

Four research assistants were enlisted to conduct the fieldwork in these two kampungs. In Kampung Pakar where the Chinese squatters, like other Chinese squatters elsewhere in the city, were uncooperative, three research assistants were deployed. Chinese research assistants were taken as an attempt to solve the problem of communication with the squatters who spoke little else except their mother tongue and who lived in a Chinese cultural milieu. One Malay research assistant was engaged for the fieldwork in Kampung Sentosa where the multi-ethnic inhabitants consisted of a large number of Malays. With supervision by the writer the research assistants collected data relating to the squatters' economy, demography, community organization, politics, etc., by conducting structured interviews and by participant observation, made possible by each one of them living as a lodger with separate squatter families. The result of this fieldwork not only provided extra information on the squatters in general, but it also generated other questions pertinent to the study of Kampung Selamat.

By March 1983, the writer had been in contact with the squatters under study for about five years (almost one third of the period since the squatment was first established) with active fieldwork covering almost two years of that period. For a research undertaking of this nature, this relatively long period, which spanned two general elections, is indeed most advantageous. It enabled the writer to follow and comprehend political process in the squatments with greater intimacy and continuity than the more conventionally limited period of fieldwork would permit.

(c) Library Research

Literature on squatters in Malaysia is largely confined to short essays and reports and many of these, which are unpublished, are kept in libraries of the various universities and colleges as well as in government departments. Part of the exercise in the fieldwork was to keep track of these works and of on-coming ones and this was done by attending seminars at the local universities and by maintaining close contacts with other researchers with similar interest. The prevalent works which are done by social scientists and urban planners, though usually rather brief, have proved invaluable in providing background information on the squatters.

Conspicuously lacking, however, were data concerning the historical development of squatting in Malaysia. Only three works are available, by Sandhu, K.S. (1972 & 1975) and Friel-Simon and Khoo, K.K. (1978) which deal with Chinese squatters. The growth and expansion of Malay squatters had not been studied and in the absence of such information the writer had to conduct her own research on the subject at the National Archives in Petaling Jaya. Most of the materials used were official files of the colonial era; later documents were not made available because of the Official Secrets Act which prohibits public viewing of official documents before a lapse of twenty-five years. Local newspapers, especially the vernacular *Utusan Melayu* between 1955 and 1970, were also examined.

1.6 West Malaysia: A General Background

Malaysia is a federation of 14 states (*negeri*) viz. Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Perak, Trengganu, Johore, Melaka, Penang, Kedah, Perlis,

Pahang, Kelantan and Wilayah Persekutuan (Federal Territory). The first two states, Sabah and Sarawak, form what is generally known as East Malaysia, while the rest constitute West Malaysia or Peninsular Malaysia (formerly Malaya). The two parts of Malaysia are separated by about 900 miles expanse of the South China Sea. West Malaysia, the focus of study here, was a British colony until its independence in 1957, after almost 100 years of British rule.

West Malaysia is situated near the equator approximately between longitude 100°E and 105°E and latitude 1°N and 7°N. It covers an area of approximately 50,915 square miles. Its population, according to the latest government survey in 1980 and published in the General Report of Population Census (GRPC), is slightly under 11 million, i.e. 10,944,800. The population is multi-racial (multi-ethnic) and for administrative purposes the government emphasizes ethnic distinction. Officially, the population is categorised into two main groups: the *Bumiputra* (lit. sons of the soil) and the *bukan Bumiputra* (lit. those not sons of the soil). The former include the indigenous groups which, in the West Malaysian context, are largely the Malays and a small number of aborigines. The latter comprise people of immigrant descent, viz. the Chinese, Indians, Europeans, Eurasians, etc. Generally, however, only four categories are recognized: Malays, Chinese, Indians and others. Malays form the largest group accounting for 55.3% of the population; Chinese form 33.8%, Indians 10.2% and others 0.7% (GRPC, 1980).

One of the main characteristics of the population is that the three main ethnic groups are segregated by geographical location and economic function. 75% of the Malays live in the rural areas engaged largely in peasant

farming. The urban areas are predominantly populated by the *bukan Bumiputra*, especially the Chinese (56%) and Indians (41%). While the majority of Chinese are involved in commerce, trade and industry, the Indians are mainly in the plantations working as labourers (GRPC, 1980:132-137).

Economically, West Malaysia is largely agricultural. Its main exports are rubber, palm oil, timber, petroleum and tin; in addition, it also exports manufactured products comprising electrical and electronic goods, textiles, processed timber and food, tobacco, etc. However, total manufactured products account for only 21% of all export earnings. The relatively low contribution made by manufactured products is indicative of the state of industrialization in the country. Industrialization began only in the late fifties, especially after independence in 1957. Initially, Kuala Lumpur, the capital, and its satellite town, Petaling Jaya, became the focus of these industrialization programmes, and beginning in the seventies industries were also sited in the state capitals, especially on the west coast, viz. Johore Baharu, Seremban, Ipoh and Penang. Industrialization brought forth urban expansion prompted largely by the immigration of the peasantry into the urban centres.

Politically, West Malaysia is governed on the pattern of western-style parliamentary democracy. Each state has its own legislative body called the *Dewan Undangan Negeri* and at the national level there is a parliament consisting of two chambers, a lower house called the *Dewan Rakyat* and an upper house called the *Dewan Negara* (Senate). Members of the *Dewan Undangan Negeri* and the *Dewan Rakyat* are elected every five years, while members of the *Dewan Negara* are appointed by the King, the *Yang*

di-Pertuan Agong.

In Peninsular Malaysia there are eight main political parties, viz. UMNO (United Malays National Organization), MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association), MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress), Gerakan (Malaysian Peoples' Action Party), Berjasa (Barisan Jumaat-ul-Islamiah, lit. the Muslim Front), DAP (Democratic Action Party), PMIP (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party) and the Socialist Front. These parties, as their names imply and will be explained later in Chapter VI, are ethnically-based or dominated by a particular ethnic group. Since independence several political parties have joined together to form a government. Initially, between 1957 and 1970, it was a coalition between the UMNO, MCA and MIC, known as the Alliance, which was in power. In 1970, the Alliance brought in the Gerakan and the PMIP to form a new partnership known as the *Barisan Nasional* (National Front) which won the general elections in 1974. In 1977, the PMIP left *Barisan Nasional* and was replaced by a newly formed party, Berjasa. In the following general elections, in 1978 and 1982, the *Barisan Nasional* won with large majorities in both the *Dewan Rakyat* and the *Dewan Undangan Negeri*.

In the current parliament the *Barisan Nasional* hold 132 of the 154 seats, with UMNO holding 70, MCA 24 and MIC 4, Gerakan 5, and with the remaining 29 seats held by the other four *Barisan Nasional's* component parties based in Sabah and Sarawak. UMNO therefore is the most dominant partner in the *Barisan Nasional* and as UMNO is a Malay party, the government is therefore Malay-dominated with Malay Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. This has been the case since independence. UMNO's political base is primarily in the rural areas where the Malays form the majority. In large

towns, such as Kuala Lumpur, where Chinese predominate, UMNO's position is relatively weak. In Kuala Lumpur, UMNO is making a strenuous attempt to rectify this and to improve its position and since roughly 25% of the population of the city are squatters, and since over 32% of these squatters are Malays, it is hardly surprising that UMNO's efforts are directed mainly at winning over the Malay squatters and it is this which forms the background for political processes in the squatment under study.

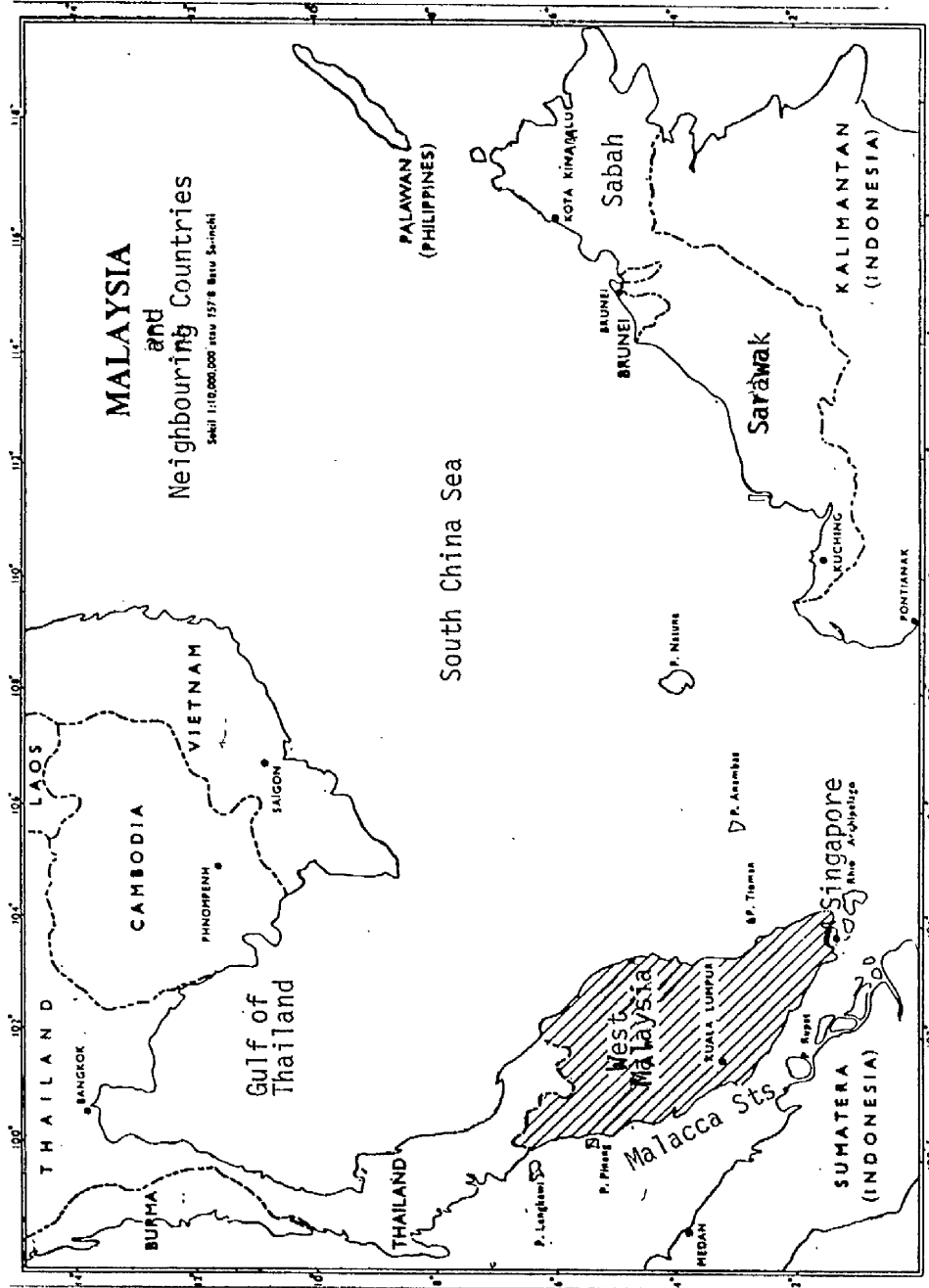


FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF WEST MALAYSIA

FIGURE 2
POLITICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION IN
WEST MALAYSIA



Source: Young, K. et al (1980)

CHAPTER II

SQUATTING IN WEST MALAYSIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KUALA LUMPUR: AN OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, it attempts to provide a general outline of the historical development of squatting by the three main ethnic groups in Malaya, especially by Malays, in the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur; second, it tries to explain in broad terms the extent and state of squatting in the capital as it is today. The chapter is intended to provide a background to the phenomenon of squatting at the 'supra-squatment' level which is relevant to the understanding of political process in the community under study.

2.1 Squatting in West Malaysia: A Historical Perspective

Squatting as generally understood today in West Malaysia and as the term is defined and used in this study refers to illegal or unlawful occupation of land, whether alienated or unalienated, by individuals or groups of individuals. Squatting thus defined, as will be explained subsequently, is not an autochthonous concept, but a foreign one introduced into the Malayan society with the introduction of British land laws and administration in the late 19th century. Squatting is based on certain basic assumptions: firstly, it assumes that there is a temporal power or authority in whom is vested the ultimate ownership of land as well as the right to alienate it; secondly, it assumes that once a piece of land has been

alienated, the person to whom it is alienated has proprietary right over it; and thirdly, it assumes that some legal machinery exists to enforce such a right.

In pre-colonial days, Malaya, which was known as *Semenanjung Tanah Melayu* (lit. Peninsula of Malay lands), was populated almost entirely by Malays who had their own laws, customary laws, including land laws. Unlike the English land laws, the Malay customary land laws did not define the authority that had ultimate control over land. Unopened land, which was in great abundance, was considered no-man's-land and Malays and Muslims had free access to it. Once a piece of land had been opened up, cleared, cultivated and/or occupied, the cultivator was deemed to have established his possessory right over the land and this right would be sustained for as long as the land showed proofs of cultivation and/or occupation and the right lapsed once the land had been abandoned and reverted to jungle, i.e. became *tanah mati* (lit. dead land) (Maxwell, W.E. 1885). There was no legal machinery to enforce such right, but generally it would be respected since it would be acknowledged by the community as a whole.

In view of this it can be said that squatting as we know it today did not exist in Malaya in pre-colonial days. It may be said that a person who went and occupied a piece of land opened and cultivated by another person could be regarded as guilty of squatting. In the first place this is an unlikely thing to happen as land was plentiful. But even if it did happen, it would still be inappropriate to call it 'squatting' since there was no law as we know it which would have made such an act unlawful or illegal in the western sense. Squatting, as we now understand it, began to appear on official records only since the British colonial period and the incidence of

squatting can be said to have come about as a direct result of changes made in the economic system as well as the system of land tenure and land administration by the colonial authorities.

When the British came their primary concern was to exploit the natural wealth and resources of the country and the economic policy was geared principally towards capitalistic development of tin-mining and export-orientated agricultural industries. Such a development, however, required not only foreign capital and labour, but also some modifications or even reforms of the native system of land tenure which was not really suitable for or conducive to the development of capitalist enterprises. The British colonial administration made a number of changes, of which the most relevant to squatting were as follows:

(a) As the Malay Customary Land Laws made no provision for land acquisition by other than Malays and Muslims, the British colonial administration advised the Malay rulers to open their states to foreigners, and the first to do so were the Sultan of Selangor and the Sultan of Perak, in 1874 (Wong, D. 1975:24-25).

(b) The British colonial authorities introduced a new system of land tenure based on the British model on the presumption, as in English land law, that all land was ultimately held by the Malay ruler who had the power to alienate land. Two methods of land alienation were introduced: first, by leasehold which affected land categorised as town land and large holdings; second, by registration which affected small holdings which between 1897 and 1926 were land of 100 acres and below and after 1926, land less than 10 acres.

Alienation by registration was adopted in order to accommodate the traditional mode of land acquisition as practised by the native Malays (Wong, D 1975:82-83).

(c) The colonial authorities introduced the British system of land administrations which included, *inter alia*, land registration and the issue of land titles (Wong, D 1975:112).

These are some of the most important changes introduced by the British colonial administration and they had far-reaching consequences. The opening of the Malay states to foreigners by the Malay rulers enabled the British capitalists, for example, to carry out tin-mining operations on a much larger scale and using methods much more sophisticated than those used by the native Malays who had been engaged in tin-mining long before the British (and the Chinese) came. It also enabled the British capitalists to acquire lands for development into plantation agriculture, particularly rubber, on a vast scale. The attribution of superior ownership of land to Malay rulers gave the colonial government virtually "a free hand to offer their lands to the world of private ownership in any form that would suit capitalist enterprises" (Wong, D 1975:24).

The development and expansion of capitalist economy based on tin-mining and plantation agriculture which began at the end of the 19th century attracted, and the colonial administration positively encouraged, mass immigration of foreign labour into the country. Most of these labour came from the south and south-east of China and the Indian sub-continent. So large was the immigration that between 1895 and 1933, 6 million Chinese and half a million Indians

entered Malaya. This huge in-migration coupled with the changes made in the land law of the country at that time can be said to be the root cause of squatting in Malaya.

Official records, as we shall see later, show that during the colonial regime there were no native Malay squatters. Squatters were all immigrants, the most predominant being Chinese, so much so that the term 'squatter' became almost synonymous with Chinese. And these immigrant squatters were found mostly near or around their workplace - tin-mines in the case of the Chinese and road and railway construction depots in the case of the Indians, and such areas developed later into urban centres.

A number of writers have attempted to explain the preponderance of immigrant, especially Chinese, squatters during the colonial period. Gullick, M (1963:67) attributes it to the government policy of alienating small holdings only to Malays. Sandhu, K.S. (1964:146), like Gullick, blames it on the discriminatory land laws and bureaucratic red-tape. According to Sandhu, Chinese applications for land titles "had to go through more than a hundred procedures to secure government authorization." And Humphry, I.M. (1971:41-42) contends that squatting among the Chinese occurred because they were "highly suspicious of authority" and also because "one quarter of the total area of the country has been designated as Malay Reservation".

It is manifestly incorrect for Humphry to attribute the incidence of squatting by immigrant population during the colonial regime to the creation of Malay Reservation areas. In the first place, the enactment of the law concerning Malay Reservation areas was necessitated by the fact that

the Malays, like the Red Indians of North America, were losing their land to the immigrant population and in danger of becoming landless (Mahathir, M 1970:70-72). Secondly, as Humphry's own map shows, the lands designated by the British colonial administration in 1920's as Malay Reservation, which are scattered all over the nine Malay states, consisted largely of remote areas or inaccessible jungle-clad mountain ranges or mountainous areas (except for the coastal areas of Kelantan and Kedah). These were areas considered worthless for capitalistic enterprise and provisions were made for excision of parts of the lands in the event that they proved to be economically valuable at some future date. Thirdly, as Humphry himself notes, these Malay Reservation areas formed only one fourth of the total area of the country, thus leaving three fourth free for acquisition by the immigrant population.

It cannot be denied that the opportunity was there for immigrant population to acquire land legally if they so wished. Not only that there were still vast areas outside the Malay Reservation available to them, they were in fact encouraged and actually invited to acquire land. As early as 1874, the Malay sultans, on the advice of the British, opened their respective states to foreigners by issuing proclamations, the first of which was the one issued by the Sultan of Perak, which reads:

"... Now, we are desirous to open our country, with a view to afford all the inhabitants of our country peace and security ..

.... Now, we make known to all European gentlemen, Chinese headmen and others, that we shall regard with great favour anyone who will come and do useful work in our country, such as opening tin-mines or gold-mines or agricultural purposes, or to carry on trade in our country, such as searching for gutta, rattan, or felling timber or following any other profitable business for themselves.

.... And we, through the advice of the aforesaid British Resident, will protect the lives and property of those who come into our country to the utmost of our ability.

.... Whosoever likes to open plantations, such as sugar-cane, pepper, tobacco, cotton or anything else, we will give the land for it free of cost and he may work on it for three years without paying any tax whatever upon the produce. Whosoever opens mines must pay taxes according to the rule of our country.

.... Now, this we make known to all men, that whosoever is willing to work in our country may either discourse with us personally, or with the British Resident in Perak." (Wong, D 1975:24-25)

It is surely difficult to imagine a more generous offer than that; and yet, not all the immigrant population availed themselves of the opportunity. The reasons why such a large number of immigrant population became squatters cannot, therefore, be expected to be found in the land policy as such; they have to be sought elsewhere, perhaps in the administration of the policy rather than the policy itself as well as in the socio-economic background of the immigrant squatters themselves. It is possible, as Sandhu says, that the chaotic administration and endless red-tape discouraged the immigrants from acquiring land legally. It is also possible that the wording of the proclamation itself put the immigrants off for if they wanted to work or open land they might "either discourse with us personally or with the British Resident". This must have appeared to be an impossible invitation in the eye of the immigrants, most of whom were of peasant origin and who were they to 'discourse' with the ruler of the state or his representative. It is equally possible that the majority of the immigrant population were ignorant of either the land law or land policy prevailing at the time; they just did not know that they could acquire land legally.

There are other socio-economic factors which would account for squatting by the immigrants. Most, if not all, of the immigrants came with the idea of eventually returning to their own native land. Their stay in Malaya was a temporary one to seek a living, maybe a fortune, and having made enough these 'bird-of-passage' would return to their own country. The British colonial authorities, too, viewed them as immigrant labour to be repatriated when their labour was no longer needed such as in times of economic recession. Uncertain of their future in Malaya, it is hardly surprising that many refrained from acquiring land legally. By not investing in land but simply squatting, they would find it easier to leave in case of repatriation or if they should decide of their own volition to go back to their native land. There may also be others who did not acquire land legally because of economic hardship and lack of money. Most of the immigrants were of the labouring class, poor and uneducated, coming to Malaya with only the clothes on their back and the barest of possessions and of course their labour to sell. As wage labourers they might be provided with accommodation, but these would be probably 'coolie-lines'; if they were not, then the only natural alternative would be to squat. And squatting had a number of attractive features: there were no taxes to pay, no dealings with the authorities; squatters were not tied down, they could move from one place to another freely in search of better opportunities.

So, the preponderance of immigrant, particularly Chinese, squatters during the colonial regime could be due to any or all of these reasons, but certainly not to the creation of Malay Reservation land.

The fact, however, remains that squatting in Malaya during the colonial period involved almost solely the

immigrant groups, in particular the Chinese. The earliest statistics on squatters in Malaya were of the Chinese. According to these statistics, in 1940 they numbered 150,000; in 1945, the number of Chinese squatters rose to 400,000 and in 1948 it somehow fell to 300,00. This fluctuation in the number of Chinese squatters is said to be due to the fluctuation in the economic fortune of the country: in times of recession, some of the immigrant labour were repatriated by the colonial administration and others chose to return voluntarily. During the 1920's the country went through such a bad time that trade was practically halted and many mines and plantations closed down. Many immigrant workers became unemployed; some returned to their own country, repatriated or voluntarily, but quite a few chose to stay and squat on State land to eke out a living through agricultural pursuits. When trade revived and the economy of the country improved and jobs became once again readily available, these 'squatters' moved back into the mines, estates or whatever, while at the same time retaining their squatter land. And as the economy of the country flourished, more and more immigrants came over to Malaya. During the great slump of 1930-32, the number of squatters rose again and after the slump their number fell but only to rise again during the Second World War and the recuperative periods following it (Sandhu, K.S. 1975:xxx, xxxi, xxxii).

After the Second World War, Chinese squatters occupied large tracts of land, both State and alienated, in the countryside. The colonial authorities, which resumed power in 1945 in Malaya, did not take any action to curb the activities of these squatters because they were regarded as providing a useful service, i.e. producing badly needed foodstuffs (Friel-Simon & Khoo, 1976:8-9). In 1948, some Chinese squatters were suspected of

collaboration with the Malayan Communist Party which was engaged in an insurrection against the British Government of Malaya. A plan for squatter settlements was worked out and it was in order to facilitate the implementation of that plan that the first survey of squatters was carried out in the late forties and early fifties.

Much of the squatting that happened during the earlier part of the colonial period took place on agricultural land. During the period of communist insurgency and the emergency that followed (1948-1960) many of the rural squatters faced considerable hardship. Those suspected of collaborating with the communist terrorists were rounded up by the authorities; others, however, were suspected by the terrorists of being government informers and were menaced by them. This forced a considerable number of the rural squatters to move out into areas close to towns or into the towns themselves.

In the post-independence era, the pattern of squatting among the immigrants and their descendants remained virtually the same; they continued to squat either on agricultural land on the periphery of urban centres or on land actually within the urban centres. However, what is of great interest to the present study is that during the post-independence period, particularly since the sixties, official records began to show that large-scale squatting in urban centres was no longer confined to the immigrant groups only, and in 1966, perhaps for the very first time in the history of the country, official records made references to urban squatting by Malays and this was only in Kuala Lumpur.

Does this mean that during the colonial period there

were really no Malay squatters and that Malays began to squat (in Kuala Lumpur) only in the sixties?

The answer to the first part of the question, i.e. whether there were any Malay squatters during the colonial period, must be sought partially if not wholly in the way the Malay Customary Land Laws were interpreted and implemented by the British colonial administration, especially those pertaining to the traditional mode of land acquisition. And the answer to the second part of the question is more a matter of nomenclature.

2.2 Malay Traditional Mode of Land Acquisition

The Customary Land Laws of the Malays gave them the right to occupy what was, before the introduction of the new land laws by the British colonial authorities, considered no-man's-land. For centuries the method of land acquisition practised by the Malays was to gain access to a piece of land that belonged to no-one, usually jungle land, then to clear, cultivate and/or settle on it. Cultivation or occupation, according to the Malay Customary Land Laws, gave the cultivator the 'right of ownership' to that piece of land. Such a manner of land acquisition is known to the Malays by the term *meneroka* or *membuka tanah* (lit. to open up land) or, if done on a large scale *membuka negeri* (lit. to open up a state) or *berbuat negeri* (lit. to create a state). A person who is involved in the opening up of land in this manner is known as *peneroka* (lit. one who opens up land) or *penduduk* (lit. settler), if he actually settled on the land.

The British colonial administration recognized the Malay Customary Land Laws and the Malay traditional mode

of land acquisition, and to the best of the writer's knowledge, the Malay Customary Land Laws have never been formally repealed or abolished. Maxwell, for example, quoted by Wong (1975:13), says that "under the Malay customs, a cultivator acquired a 'proprietary right' in land 'by the clearing of the land followed by continuous occupation', and that as such his right was 'absolute' as long as occupation continued or as long as the land bore signs of appropriation." Actually, it was this recognition of the Malay Customary Land Laws, in particular the Malay traditional mode of land acquisition, that largely accounted for the apparent non-existence of native Malay squatters during the colonial period. Since occupation of 'State' land (which belonged to no-one in particular) by Malays was not considered 'illegal' or 'unlawful', the question of squatting among and by the Malays simply did not arise. Any Malay could go and open up a piece of land that did not belong to anyone and occupy it or settle on it; he would be perfectly within his right to do so and the land would be his as long as he occupied it or for as long as it showed 'signs of appropriation'. Clearly, therefore, occupation of 'State' land without prior official permission, which would constitute squatting under English law, did occur, especially in the countryside where the Malays were mostly to be found; but such occupation of land by the Malays was never referred to or regarded as 'squatting' by the colonial administrators: the terms 'squatting' and 'squatter' were not applicable to the Malays.

Although, on the one hand, the British colonial authorities perhaps had no choice but to recognise the Malay Customary Land Laws and the traditional mode of land acquisition, if not for any other reason at least out of deference to the Malay rulers, they, on the other hand, must have wanted very much to abolish the Customary

Land Laws and the traditional land acquisition system since they were clearly incompatible not only with the English Law that they were introducing into the country, but also with the development of a capitalist economy which was their primary concern. Realizing that to abolish the Customary Land Laws and the traditional mode of land acquisition altogether was impossible, the British colonial administration did the next best thing: they tried to restrict the application of the Customary Land Laws as much as possible. In 1897, the Federated Malay States Enactment was passed which had the effect of confining the '*meneroka*' right of the Malays to the countryside and involving land not exceeding 100 acres in size. Under this Enactment land was to be 'alienated' simply by way of registration in the local registers, called the Mukim (Sub-District) Registers. The Federated Malay States Land Code 1926 further reduced the size of land that could be occupied under the customary rights. Under this Code "... small country holdings - now reduced to holdings not exceeding 10 acres - were generally to be granted under the Mukim Register without formal document ..." (Wong, D 1975:78-82). Thus in this way the British colonial administration effectively confined the Malay customary rights in land acquisition to the countryside only.

2.3 The Malays: From Settlers to Squatters

As stated above, prior to the sixties there were no references to 'Malay squatters' in any official records and that it was only in 1966 that a mention of them began to appear in official records and this was in respect of squatting in Kuala Lumpur? How do we account for this?

As we have seen the British colonial administration

never referred to Malays who occupied 'State' land without prior official authorization as 'squatters'; they called them 'colonists' (National Archive File, Malayan Union 8446/46), a term which does not carry the legal implication of an unlawful act punishable by law. And this was, as explained above, because the British colonial administration formally recognised the Malay rights under the Malay Customary Land Laws, despite their probable desire to do away with them. However, in 1965, in the post-independence era, the new Malayan government introduced the National Land Code. Article 425 of the Code states:

Any person who, without lawful authority -

- (a) occupies, or erects any building on, any State land, reserved land or mining land,
 - (b) clears, encloses or cultivates any such land or part thereof, or
 - (c) cuts any timber or produce on any such land,
- shall be guilty of an offence, and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding . . . , or imprisonment for a term not exceeding . . . , or both.

This Article has the effect, among other things, of abolishing the centuries old special right of the Malays in land under their Customary Land Laws - something which the British colonial authorities must have wanted to do very much but could not do and it is ironic that a Malay-dominated government did it instead. With this *de facto* abolition of the Malay customary right in land, any Malay who now occupies 'State, reserved or mining land' without 'lawful authority' is no longer regarded as *peneroka* or *penduduk* but a 'squatter' instead, and since the Malay language never had the word for 'squatter' in its vocabulary, a new term had to be specially coined for

the purpose, i.e. *setinggalan*. This new term appeared for the very first time in print, as far as can be ascertained by the writer, in the Malay newspaper, *Utusan Melayu*, on 27th April 1968, and incorporated later in the Malay dictionary, *Kamus Dewan*, in 1970. In spite of intensive efforts, the writer has not been able to establish, entirely satisfactorily, the origin of the term *setinggalan*. *Utusan Melayu*, the first newspaper that used the term, when approached, was unable to say who coined the word or how he did it; neither could officials in the terminology section of the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*, the official language and literary agency responsible for the development and expansion of the Malay language. It seems that the Dewan's decision to include the word *setinggalan* in the *Kamus Dewan* was based simply on the fact that the word had already been in wide popular use by the mass media and the general public for several years. Some members of the general public, however, think that the word *setinggalan* is a Malay corruption of the English word 'sten-gun'. They say, originally *kampung setinggalan* used to be called 'kampung sten-gun' because, it seems, such kampungs rose in the face of such strong opposition from the authorities who sent demolition squads, protected by soldiers carrying sten-guns, to destroy squatter houses, also because 'new villages' where Chinese squatters from various places were resettled were guarded by soldiers carrying sten-guns. All this, apparently, led to such kampungs being nicknamed 'kampung sten-gun' and the people living in such kampungs 'orang kampung sten-gun'. Later, the word 'kampung' was dropped and the squatters became 'orang sten-gun'; eventually, the word 'sten-gun' itself underwent a phonological change to suit the Malay tongue and ended up as *setinggalan*. Whether this is the correct explanation for the origin of the word *setinggalan* is perhaps not so important. What is of greater significance

is the fact that the very concept of squatting was unknown among the Malays, so much so that they did not have a word for it in their language and a special term for it came into existence only recently, after the introduction of the English Land Law.

However, to pass a law is one thing but to have the law accepted and observed by the people is quite another. Evidence seems to show that the Malays, deep in their hearts, have never really accepted the imposition of English land law over their own by the colonial authorities and subsequently the abolition of their special right to land under the traditional Customary Land Laws by their own government. When the British colonial authorities passed legislation to introduce compulsory land registration in 1897, for example, it met with such strong resistance from the Malays that "... in some places, the angry peasants had to be suppressed by force" (Wong, D 1975:72). But the most telling evidence of Malays' rejection of the English land law is perhaps the fact that they continued with their practice of acquiring land according to the traditional mode of land acquisition. This happened throughout the British colonial rule; the practice continued into the sixties, even to the present day, particularly in the countryside. Ali, S.H. (1976:16) notes that in the states of Pahang, Johore and Kedah, where his research was carried out in the early seventies, there were cases of peasant opening up land illegally, at least in the areas he studied, viz. Bagan (Johore), Kangkong (Kedah) and Kerbau (Pahang). But these cases were not very dramatic because the area of land involved was quite small. A more dramatic example of land occupation by the Malays was perhaps that which took place in the Kelantan district of Tanah Merah. Early in 1974, the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) engaged some contractors, including the

writer's husband's firm, to clear the jungle in an area called Kemahang in the Tanah Merah District for development into an oil palm plantation. According to the contractors concerned, they had great difficulty in carrying out their work properly because of the existence of an 'illegal' settlement of several hundred acres in the middle of the jungle to be cleared. The actual number of people involved in creating the settlement is unknown, but judging by the acreage cleared by them, it must have been quite large. And judging by the age of their rubber and fruit trees and coconut palms, the settlement must have been in existence for at least five years by that time. Their cashew-nut trees were already bearing fruit, so were their coconut palms; their rubber trees were already about four inches thick around the base, and there were a number of makeshift houses as well as a graveyard. And all the 'illegal' settlers were Malays: a very good example indeed of Malays opening up land and creating a settlement on it in the old, time-honoured tradition of *meneroka*. It is not known what eventually happened to the settlers; it is possible that they were offered alternative land elsewhere or absorbed as 'legal' settlers in the oil palm plantation that was being developed there.

The writer's investigation reveals that similar 'illegal' occupation of 'State' land took place in other states also; sometimes the settlers came not from within the state but from a neighbouring state. This was the case with Cemomoi, on the border between Negeri Sembilan (the writer's home state) and Pahang. Here were found in the late sixties a number of 'illegal' settlements which had been opened up by Malays from Negeri Sembilan, especially from Ulu Jempul, a *mukim* (sub-district) in the Kuala Pilah District of Negeri Sembilan(1). It seems that the State Government of Pahang have since recognized the 'illegal'

settlements by giving land titles to the 'illegal' settlers who opened up the land, thereby, in a sense, reaffirming the right of the Malays to acquire land according to the traditional mode of land acquisition.

The most dramatic and extreme example of illegal land occupation by Malays is the series of land seizure carried out by a group of Malays led by one self-styled Malay leader, Hamid Tuah, in the sixties (Ali, S.H. 1976:16-18). In 1960, Hamid Tuah led a group of fifty men in occupying State land in the State of Selangor at a place called Sungai Sireh. In 1967, he led another group, this time of 400 people, to do the same in Teluk Gong. And finally, in 1969, he again led a group of Malays for yet another land seizure. This time the number of people involved was 1,500 and they came not only from the State of Selangor, but also from the neighbouring State of Perak and tried to occupy State land at a place called Binjai Patah. Hamid Tuah's attempts at 'organized' illegal occupation of State land were resisted by the State Government.

On his first attempt, Hamid Tuah was arrested and put under 'restricted residence' (Ali, S.H. 1976:16). Hamid Tuah's attempt at land seizure and his arrest were given wide publicity by the national press which drew a great deal of sympathy. The evicted followers of Hamid Tuah staged a sit-in protest in front of the Menteri Besar's residence. They dispersed when the then Deputy Prime Minister of the country promised to give them land. The promise, however, was not kept and this led to the second attempt by Hamid Tuah. By then Hamid Tuah had become quite a celebrity and was also openly supported by some politicians, members of the opposition Socialist Front, by some university lecturers and a large number of university students who organized demonstrations and made

anti-government speeches in support of the demands of the 'land-hungary' peasants. In the end the State Government conceded and gave land to the peasants in Teluk Gong (Ali, S.H. 1976:17).

Emboldened no doubt by his previous successes, Hamid Tuah launched his third and final attempt in 1969. This time he was not so lucky. His attempt happened to take place at a time when the country was in a state of emergency following the May 13th race riots. In spite of his much larger following and in spite of the same open support by the same politicians, university lecturers and students, the Government had no difficulty in aborting the attempt by using emergency powers. About 100 of Hamid Tuah's followers were arrested; Hamid Tuah himself was again put under preventive detention and was released only the following year.

The writer's study reveals that the practice of opening up land for agricultural and/or settlement purposes in the old traditional *meneroka* fashion is still going on among the Malays in the countryside. As late as 1980, one Felda contractor(2) found hundreds of Malay 'squatters' in the jungle area contracted out to him for jungle clearing and plantation development in the State of Trengganu. This seems to confirm the impression that the Malays have never really fully accepted the superimposition of the English land law over their Customary Land Laws. Even the Government's attitude towards 'illegal' squatters seems to suggest that they do not view land occupation by the *meneroka* method as a very serious offence. Apart from the one case of Hamid Tuah, as far as can be determined, no State Government has actually prosecuted Malays who opened up State land, for agricultural or settlement purposes, without prior lawful authority,

although State Governments frequently issue threats of prosecution through the press(3). In practically all known cases, the State authorities always regularised such 'illegal' land occupation by issuing land titles to the settlers involved.

The case of Hamid Tuah is different from all the other cases of land occupation in many respects. His attempts at land seizure were the first that clearly showed signs that they were premeditated, properly organised and coordinated, probably politically inspired and motivated partly if not wholly by a desire to challenge and embarrass the government. This is totally different from occupation of land in the *meneroka* tradition which is usually spontaneous, carried out quietly without any fuss and motivated solely and entirely by the desire to find a settlement or to open land for agricultural purposes, in other words, solely out of needs without any desire to cause trouble or challenge the authorities. In retrospect it seems also clear that the Hamid Tuah's case was politicised and manipulated by certain politicians for their own ends. It is a case where the reassertion of the Malay right to land under the Customary Laws took on a political complexion and appearance of a class struggle and mini peasant revolution in the Socialist sense.

As we have seen, during the colonial period, the British colonial administrators passed legislation to restrict the practice of the traditional mode of land acquisition by the Malays to the countryside only. This essentially would have made squatters of Malays if they came and occupied unalienated land in or near towns; but the British got round this by creating Malay Reservation land not only in the countryside but also in or close to towns, of which Kampung Baru in Kuala Lumpur is a good example, and in

so doing prevented, to some extent, the possible emergence of Malay squatters in towns. However, in the post-independence era, when legislation was passed in the 1960's to prohibit unauthorised occupation of State land anywhere in the country, in towns as well as in the countryside, no new provisions were made corresponding to the colonial system of Malay land reservation in or close to towns. The old Malay Reservation land in or near towns legislated for by the British colonial administrators have, by the time of independence, been all taken up and, in some cases, become overcrowded. This means that Malays could not come to town and occupy State land after the sixties without becoming squatters in the full legal sense of the word. Furthermore, during the colonial period, there was no or little likelihood of Malays becoming urban squatters in large numbers because it was the policy of the colonial administration not to encourage Malays to move into towns and cities but to encourage them to remain in the countryside instead.

2.4 Internal Migration and Urban Squatting by Malays

During the colonial period, the 'divide and rule' policy of the British colonial administration kept the three main ethnic groups apart. They were segregated occupationally and geographically with the Malays confined mostly to the rural areas. Things began to change after independence in 1957. The government bureaucracy sited in the urban centres was expanded and the Malay language was made the official language of the country to replace English. This has had the effect of making more jobs available for Malays. In the private sector, too, more employment was created; industrialisation programme implemented in the urban centres such as Kuala Lumpur

and its satellite town, Petaling Jaya, led to the creation of thousands of jobs. Such employment opportunities, denied in the rural areas, attracted Malays from the countryside to migrate to towns. And this rural-urban migration that began in the late fifties accelerated in the sixties and seventies contributing substantially to the emergence and increase of Malay squatters in the urban centres.

The writer has elsewhere explained in detail the reasons for this rural-urban drift (Azizah Kassim 1983:60). Imbalance in socio-economic development between the urban centres and rural areas in favour of the former induced many peasants, especially the younger group, to migrate to towns looking for jobs. The urge to migrate is strengthened by a change in attitude against peasant farming in favour of paid employment or salaried jobs, i.e. *makan gaji* (lit. eating on one's salary), and the government development policies facilitated the migration process. The post-independence government regard segregation of ethnic groups on geographical, economic and occupational bases as undesirable and therefore must be rectified. Since the Malays are and have been the most backward economically, they are the ones who have been constantly urged to come forward and improve their economic position. One of the ways to do this, in the opinion of the government, is to get them involved in business activities, in trade and commerce, and this means encouraging them to come to the towns. This policy aimed at restructuring society was incorporated in the Second Malaysia Plan (1970-1975). This policy, known popularly as the New Economic Policy (NEP), makes certain provisions for the Malays and other Bumiputras, of which the one that can be said to have a direct effect on rural-urban migration is the allocation of 30% of places in institutions of higher learning, scholarships and grants, business permits

and licences, employment in public and to some extent private sectors, to Malays and other Bumiputras. In addition, various schemes worked out to give financial aid to help Malay and other Bumiputra business entrepreneurs, can also be regarded as contributory factors.

Migrants from the peasantry can be categorised generally into three groups: the educated, the less educated and the uneducated. The educated are those who have at least completed secondary education or perhaps tertiary education and these people usually have no or little difficulty in finding reasonably well paid jobs in the public or private sector and so do not normally have any problem with accommodation. The less educated, i.e. those who have completed only the lower secondary education as well as those without any formal schooling, whose number is decreasing rapidly, are the ones who have accommodation problems. Most of them end up in the lowest paid jobs, such as factory hands, taxi, bus or lorry drivers, and workers at construction sites. In the sixties, these low-paid jobs, according to Basham, R. (1978:180) would give an average income of \$100/- per month; and at present, an average income of \$300/-, which is barely enough to pay for food let alone lodging. To appreciate their plight regarding lodging or shelter, one must consider their income in relation to the cost of renting an accommodation or buying a house from private and public sectors in the urban centres. In Kuala Lumpur, for example, a single-storey, two-bedroom, terrace house, which is regarded as a low-cost house, costs about \$250/- a month to rent. To buy such a house from the public sector would cost between \$40,000/- and \$45,000/-; and from the private sector, at least \$80,000/-. This means of course that accommodation in the private sector is completely beyond the means of the low-paid workers and

and they have to depend on public housing. But in the last ten years public housing programmes have fallen behind and have not been able to keep pace with demands. In the Third Malaysia Plan (1975-1980), for instance, only one fourth of the targetted number of houses were built. There is, therefore, an acute shortage of low-cost housing in the urban areas and low-paid workers are left with practically no choice but to squat.

2.5 Squatting in Kuala Lumpur

(a) Early Squatters in Kuala Lumpur

Records on squatters prior to the Second World War are minimal; it is, therefore, difficult to determine precisely when squatting began in Kuala Lumpur. It is, however, reasonable to assume that, as in the rest of Malaya, squatting in Kuala Lumpur began with the arrival of the immigrant groups, with land registration and the introduction of private ownership as well as commercialisation of land. In short, squatting emerged only during the colonial period. Friel-Simon & Khoo (1978) contend that consciousness on the part of the authorities of the existence of squatters became evident only during the period of the great depression. Very little is known of squatters during this early period; however, as the phenomenon of squatting became widespread during the Second World War and the periods following it, the problems imposed by squatters on developments and security in the recuperative years forced the authorities to take measures to deal with the squatters. One of the measures taken was to make a survey of the squatters in Kuala Lumpur in the late forties and the survey was completed in 1951.

According to this survey there were at least 5,620 squatter households in Kuala Lumpur district, distributed over 34 localities. The area occupied by squatters was approximately 1,198.2 acres, out of which only 461.5 were State land. The list of squatter localities in Appendix I indicates that many of the squatter settlements were in areas close to the town centre where the Chinese predominated.

The figures on squatters do not give the ethnic breakdown of the squatters. But a close examination of the available official files on squatters in Kuala Lumpur kept at the National Archives in Petaling Jaya indicates that a very large proportion of them were Chinese. There were, for example, 700 squatter families consisting of more than 7,000 people in one locality alone, i.e. near the town centre between Cochrane Road and Peel Road. And there were many more in the area between Chow Kit Road and Jalan Raja Laut and in San Peng Road. There are also several documents of the fifties on Chinese squatters touching on matters of eviction, petition against eviction, complaints made by others against them, etc. (National Archives, Selangor Secretariat Files 569/53 En.IA, 145/53, D.O. KL, File 1/47, 84/50 En.I & 4, 161/50; 788/50 SJI).

There is also evidence to show that Indian squatters were also present in Kuala Lumpur but their number was small compared to the Chinese. Some of the areas occupied by them were along Loke Yew Road and Jalan Raja Bot (National Archives, D.O. KL, File 541/52 En.IA & 84/50 En.4). However, as most of them were brought into Malaya from India to work on road constructions - apart from rubber plantations - most of their squatments were to be found close to railway lines or workshops, such as in Sentul and Brickfields (Sen, M.K. 1979:188).

Apart from the Chinese and Indian squatters, there is also evidence which shows that there were squatters of Indonesian origin, e.g. the Boyans. In a letter written to the District Officer of Kuala Lumpur in 1951 (Appendix II), the Ketua Boyan (Boyan Chief) mentioned that there were 503 squatters residing in an area behind the Lucky World - an amusement park - close to the centre of the town. It is not clear if all the 503 were Boyans because in the letter he also mentioned the presence of one rich Chinese 'towkay' who had built five big houses for rent. However, the fact that he identified himself as a Boyan chief indicates that there must have been a Boyan community in the area.

In addition there were five squatter huts in Jalan Raja Laut categorised as Malay (National Archives, D.O. KL File 84/50 En.4). It is not stated whether they were of local or immigrant origin. It is hard to believe that they were local Malays from Kuala Lumpur or Selangor in view of the fact that the Government of Selangor had since 1899 made available Malay Reservation land in an area close to the centre of Kuala Lumpur, i.e. Kampung Baru (Othman, M.A. 1977:50) as well as in other areas on the periphery of the city. And the occupants of these five squatter huts were unlikely to be Malays from other Malay states in Malaya because, firstly, emigration of Malays from other Malay states into Kuala Lumpur is believed to have started only in the fifties and their number was minimal; secondly, Malays who came from other states generally found accommodation, as McGee (1979:155) says, "... in the Malay reserve area of Kampung Baru and a series of peri-urban kampungs which fringe the city ...", and some, according to the same source, stayed in government quarters for Malays who came to Kuala Lumpur then were mostly government employees working in the police or

armed forces or the Malayan Railway and other government departments which, in most cases, provided accommodation for their employees. One possible explanation is that the occupants of these five huts were Indian Muslims; it is possible that they were mistaken for Malays since Indian Muslims have names similar to Malays. But their number is so small anyway that it does not matter one way or another.

What seems to be clear from the 1951 survey as well as from other documentary evidence is that the local Malay population in Kuala Lumpur were not involved in squatting in the early fifties. The squatter population at that time seems to have consisted almost entirely of the immigrant groups, mostly Chinese and Indians and, to a very small extent, Malays of Indonesian origin who, during the colonial era, were categorised officially not as Malays but rather in terms of their sub-ethnic categories, i.e. Minangkabaus, Javanese, Boyans, Rawas, Mendilings, Banjars, etc.

In the early fifties, the colonial government took some measures to evict squatters, especially those occupying areas close to the city centre, so that the land could be used for urban development. A plan was worked out to resettle the displaced squatters in the neighbouring area of Petaling, in the southwest of Kuala Lumpur, which later developed into the present modern satellite town of Petaling Jaya. Not everyone responded to the scheme favourably because Petaling was then practically a jungle, considered remote from Kuala Lumpur without any basic urban amenities and offered practically no employment opportunities. In Kuala Lumpur, even the poorest could at least earn a living by hawking. A few of the poorer squatters did not accept the offer of resettlement probably

for economic reasons; the price of \$4,500/- for a house was probably too high for them (National Archives, Selangor Secretariat File 569/53). Today a similar house would almost certainly cost about \$45,000/-.

(b) Squatting in Kuala Lumpur in
the Post-Independence Era

The various developments that took place in Kuala Lumpur in both the private and public sectors and in the satellite town of Petaling Jaya after the Independence in 1957 led to mass immigration into Kuala Lumpur from new villages, estates, smaller towns and especially from the rural areas. This migration, which gained momentum in the 1960's, eventually led to a breakdown in the urban infrastructure creating several problems, chief of which was housing. Many of the new arrivals resorted to squatting and the incidence of squatting must have been very widespread in the early sixties and caused serious concern to the town and state authorities, for in 1963 the State Government of Selangor passed the Federal Capital (Clearance of Squatters) By-Laws, which clearly was intended to exercise some form of control over squatting in Kuala Lumpur. In 1966, for the first time after independence a survey was carried out on squatters within the Kuala Lumpur Municipality and the result of the survey shows that there were 20,611 squatter families in the Federal Capital; the total number of squatters was 139,967 which represented about 30% of the total population of the capital. There were about 15,107 squatter dwellings, accounting for 25% of the total number of dwelling units. The area of land covered by squatter settlement was about 2,935.5 acres or 13% of the total Municipality area (Sen, M.K. 1969), two and a half times higher than the acreage in 1951.

In 1969 a report on squatters in Kuala Lumpur was prepared by Sen, M.K. for the Ministry of Local Government and Housing and Kuala Lumpur Municipality, in which is stated, *inter alia*, "... the pace and degree of squatting in Kuala Lumpur has increased enormously in recent years ..." and the report calls for, among other things, "a comprehensive survey" of the incidence of squatting in the capital so that a specific policy concerning squatting could be formulated. Indeed, in the following years several surveys and studies on squatters were carried out by the authorities and others; as a result, we now have a clearer picture of the nature of squatting in Kuala Lumpur, especially the increase in the number of squatters in the last decade or so (see Table 1).

The Table shows that since 1966 the squatter population of Kuala Lumpur has increased at an annual rate of approximately 10,000 people, and in the last decade the squatters have formed an average of 25% of the total population of the capital. The area seized by squatters, too, increased, from 2,935.5 acres in 1966 to 3,698 acres in 1977. In 1980, the area illegally occupied by squatters was officially assumed to be more or less the same as in 1977, and according to the official view even if there were new areas taken over by squatters, the acreage would have been minimal and this increase would have been offset by land recovered from the squatters. Assuming that the acreage occupied by the squatters in 1980 was the same as in 1977, it means that the area of land occupied by squatters is about 1/20 of the total land area of Kuala Lumpur. It is estimated by City Hall in 1978 that only 5.4% of the illegally occupied land are privately owned; the rest are either State land or land belonging to semi-government authorities. The number of squatter locations, too, has increased. In 1977 only 106 squatter settlements were

TABLE I

SQUATTERS IN KUALA LUMPUR BETWEEN 1951-1979
ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION

Year	No. of Squatters	% of Total	Malays		Chinese		Indians	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1951	33,720	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1966	139,967	30	28,553	20.4	94,057	67.2	17,355	12.4
1968	150,000	32	30,600	20.4	100,800	67.2	18,600	12.4
1973	174,000	35	43,500	25.0	112,230	64.5	18,270	10.5
1974	200,000	25	90,000	45.0	90,000	45.0	20,000	10.0
1976	153,000	25	62,730	41.0	68,850	45.0	21,420	14.0
1977	175,360	20	76,983	43.9	78,035	44.5	20,341	11.6
1978	249,585	25	81,614	32.76	128,282	51.45	39,184	15.79

Note: This table has been compiled from several sources: Sen, M.K. (1969, 1979), Zainol Mahmud (1975), Wegelin, A. (1975), Ishak Shari (1979), Abdullah Ahmad (1980), Wehbering, G.K. (1976) and City Hall Census on Squatters 1977/78.

recorded by City Hall; in 1978 the number rose to 146; in 1979 and 1980, there were 165 and 190 respectively. In 1981, City Hall officials said the number of squatter settlements was 214. Most of these settlements were found close to places of employment, such as factories, government departments, insititutions of higher learning, upper or middle-class housing estates, etc., and they occupied reserve areas along rivers and drains, roads and railway tracks, on the edge of burial grounds and disused mining areas.

(c) The Emergence and Increase of
Malay Squatters in Kuala Lumpur

One very significant feature in the development of squatting after the independence year in 1957 is the emergence of and increase in the number of Malay squatters in Kuala Lumpur. In the 1951 official survey, the number of Malay squatters was negligible and this small number consisted of Malays of Indonesian origin who, during the colonial period, as explained earlier, were not categorised as Malays. In the 1966 survey, conducted by the Federal Commission of Kuala Lumpur, 28,553 Malay squatters were recorded.

It is difficult to tell when exactly, between 1951 and 1966, Malay squatters began to appear. However, some available evidence indicate that squatting by Malays in Kuala Lumpur must have started in the late fifties when emigration from the peasantry to the capital began to gain momentum. One such evidence is the study by Adnan Maarof (1966), one of the first to conduct a study of squatters in Kuala Lumpur, i.e. in Kampung Kerinci along Jalan Bangsar (now along the Federal Highway), in which

he states that some of his informants had been in the area since 1957, having come from various other states in Malaya. Another evidence is to be found in the Malay daily, *Utusan Melayu*, of 21st January, 1958, which carried an article in the readers page (page 5) by someone with the pen-name of M.O., Kuala Lumpur, who complained about the problems of accommodation faced by many Malays who came to Kuala Lumpur and held jobs 'with small pay'. These Malays, according to the writer of the article, moved into vacant State land and built their own houses and the writer cited as an example Kampung Kerinci, the area studied by Adnan, where, he added, many Malays had built houses despite attempts by the authorities to stop such activities.

These two pieces of evidence seem to show that by the year 1957 and 1958, Malay squatters were already prevalent in Kuala Lumpur and that many of them were migrants from the countryside. These people must have arrived in Kuala Lumpur from the peasantry around the year of independence. The number of Malays in Kuala Lumpur prior to 1957 was quite small. In 1947, Malays formed only 12.5% (21,989) of the capital's population and it is unlikely, as explained earlier in Section 2.5.(a), that they would be squatters. Ten years later, the number of Malays doubled to 47,615 accounting for 15% of the population of the capital (see Table 2). Their late arrival into the urban scene put the Malays in a disadvantaged position with respect to the acquisition of land and finding houses for accommodation and their arrival in large numbers over a short span of time of course exacerbated the housing problem. They resolved this problem in the way they were accustomed to in the countryside, i.e. by the *menoroka* method, that is occupying State land which appeared to be unused and unopened on which they built

TABLE 2
POPULATION GROWTH IN KUALA LUMPUR WITH RACIAL
COMPOSITION AND DENSITY 1891-1980

Year	Area (Sq. Miles)	Density Per Sq. Mile	Malays Number %	Chinese Number & %	Indians Number & %	Others Number & %	Total
1891	8	2,377	2,333 12.2%	13,927 73.2%	2,367 12.4%	393 2.0%	19,020 100%
1901	8	4,048	3,727 11.5%	23,181 71.6%	4,435 13.7%	1,038 3.2%	32,381 100%
1911	8	5,840	4,226 9.0%	31,152 66.7%	9,068 19.4%	2,272 4.9%	46,718 100%
1921	17	4,731	7,297 9.1%	48,587 60.4%	20,889 26.0%	3,651 4.5%	80,424 100%
1931	17	6,554	10,769 9.7%	67,929 61.0%	25,342 22.7%	7,378 6.6%	111,419 100%
1947	18	9,776	21,989 12.5%	111,693 63.5%	31,607 18.0%	10,672 6.0%	175,961 100%
1957	36	8,784	47,615 15.0%	195,832 62.0%	53,506 17.0%	19,286 6.0%	316,239 100%
1970	36	2,555	112,726 25.0%	249,566 55.2%	83,349 18.4%	6,336 1.4%	451,977 100%
1974	94	6,400	144,598 24.0%	353,381 59.0%	97,596 16.0%	5,938 1.0%	601,613 100%
1980	94	11,404	303,017 28.3%	601,261 56.1%	167,728 15.6%		1,072,006 100%

Sources: Adapted from Amato, P.W. (1976); Lau Lee Ching (1980) & Dewan Bandaraya Population Statistics for 1980. (Note: Indians & others figures for 1980 combined).

their houses while at the same time tilling the land, growing vegetables and fruit trees, and rearing chickens, unaware of the fact that such occupation was illegal, for their right to open land in the *meneroka* manner could be exercised only on agricultural land, away from the town centres, subject to registration in the Mukim Registers. They knew that their action was illegal only when the State authority - the Kuala Lumpur Municipal Council - despatched demolition squads to demolish the houses built and take some of them to court. The Malays, however, defied the authorities and continued with their occupation of the land, both out of need and out of conviction that as Malays they had a right to the land and should therefore be allowed to stay on the land.

In the subsequent years, in the sixties and seventies, more Malays arrived in Kuala Lumpur. By 1980, the number of Malays rose to 303,017, forming 28% of the city's population. As their number increased, the pressure on housing became more and more acute, and the number of Malay squatters rose in 1978 to 81,614. Malay squatters formed 32.76% of the total squatter population of Kuala Lumpur, accounting for more than one quarter of the total number of Malays in the capital city. One half of the Malays in Kuala Lumpur reside in Malay Reservation, albeit agricultural, areas such as Kampung Baru, Sungai Pencala and Gombak; the rest in urban housing estates.

Rural-urban migration is not the only factor contributing to the emergence and expansion of Malay squatters. Another factor, which is of equal significance, relates to the revocation of Temporary Occupation Licence (TOL) held by Malays. TOL, as the name suggests, is a licence permitting the use and occupation of land by an individual on a temporary basis subject to payment of

annual fees. The licence is renewable every year but not transferable and the land tuthority has the right to revoke the licence at its discretion. During the colonial times, TOL were granted to Malays living on the fringes of the Kuala Lumpur town limit (which was initially 18 square miles, later increased to 34 square miles and, in 1974, increased further to the present 94 square miles). Some of the TOL holders were given their licences way back in 1920's, as in the case of the area around Pantai-Bangsar, and were allowed to stay on the land for more than 20 years, during which time the TOL holders not only utilized the land for agricultural purposes but also to build their homes. This long tenure, according to the writer's informants, induced the TOL holders to believe that in the end they would get the land titles to the lots they occupied. Malay kampungs were formed on TOL land. In the wake of rapid urban expansion, after the Second World War and after Independence, the land on the urban fringes were needed for physical as well as economic development and the land authorities cancelled many of the temporary licences held by the Malays.

The policy of the present-day authorities is to offer compensation or alternative sites to people displaced from land required for urban development, but some of those affected would rather stay on their land even if it means defying eviction orders. Continued occupation of the land is possible because very often land earmarked for development are not utilized immediately; it may take years before such land are actually developed. Since continued occupation of the land becomes illegal, after the TOL has been withdrawn, the status of those concerned changes from TOL settlers to squatters. Of those who agree to move out, some occupy land close to their previous land so that the pattern of their lives could go on without too

much disruption. If they move out to some other place altogether, their children's schooling may be affected; they may have problems getting to work and most of all they may lose contact with their friends in the community. So, they would just squat somewhere near their old place.

Settlers on TOL land can also become squatters when the TOL holders die, because the TOL is not transferable. Cases of Malays becoming squatters in this manner were found in Kampung Pasir along Jalan Kelang Lama. In several cases, children of the deceased TOL holders do not know the implications of their parents' death on their status vis-a-vis the land. They insist they are not squatters and that they have the right to the land in the belief that their parents 'owned' the land. In one case in 1980 in the same kampung, a woman whose mother, Junai bti Pakim, had held a piece of land on TOL and who had died in 1960, continued to pay TOL fees. Since the 60's, she has built 27 dwelling units on the land and rented them all out. The City Hall knew of the case only in 1980 when one of her tenants, whom she was about to evict, came to City Hall looking for accommodation. City Hall immediately took action to demolish the houses. After four houses had been pulled down, the woman in question took out a court order to stop City Hall from demolishing the rest of the houses. The matter is still with the court. This case helps to illustrate the misconceptions that some people have regarding their status when the TOL has been revoked by the authorities.

Malays who became squatters in this way were found by the writer in the Pantai-Bangsar areas, particularly in Kampung Kerinci, Pantai Dalam, Kampung Abdullah Hukum, Kampung Selamat and Kampung Limau, besides Kampung Pasir mentioned above. Officials of City Hall as well as the

land office of the Federal Territory agree that a considerable number of Malays became squatters due to cancellation of their TOL, though, because of the sensitive nature of the issue, they refuse to elaborate. The exact number of Malays becoming squatters in this way is, therefore, anybody's guess.

The increase in the number of Malay squatters since 1970 may also be partially attributed to change in the official use of the term 'Malay'. During the colonial period, a distinction was made between the 'native' Malays and the 'non-native' ones, i.e. Malays from other parts of the Malay archipelago, most of which now form part of Indonesia, who came to Malaya after the British arrived. As alluded to earlier, these Malays from other parts of the Malay archipelago were referred to by the British in terms of their sub-ethnic categories, viz. Minangkabau, Javanese, Rawa, Mendiling, Boyan, etc.(4). In the 1947 census, the sub-ethnic grouping of these people was disregarded and all of them were aggregated under the rubric 'other Malaysians' (Nagata, J 1974:335). In 1957, when Malaya achieved independence, over one million 'other Malaysians' together with several millions Chinese and Indians became citizens of Malaya and, because these 'other Malaysians' are racially Malay, speak the Malay language, profess the Islamic faith and whose customs are practically the same as those of the 'native' Malays, they are not easily distinguishable from the local Malays; they are Malays according to the Constitution of the country and Malays by ethnic origin. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that in the 1970 census, the category 'other Malaysians' was no longer used; since that time, 'other Malaysians' have been grouped under the ethnic category 'Malay'. Thus, the application of the term 'Malay' in Malaysia has been somewhat broadened. As a result, many

squatters in Kuala Lumpur, who were previously not categorised as 'Malays' are now so categorised. And this must have increased statistically the number of Malay squatters in the Federal capital.

Finally, yet another factor which may account for the increase in the number of Malay squatters in Kuala Lumpur is the extension of the capital's boundary in 1974. Prior to that, Kuala Lumpur was both the capital of the State of Selangor as well as Malaysia, covering a total area of only 36 square miles. In 1974, Kuala Lumpur with its boundaries greatly extended to cover 94 square miles, was taken out of Selangor and declared a separate political and administrative entity, known as the Federal Territory. With the inclusion of so many new areas which were outside Kuala Lumpur into the new Federal Territory, "... thousands of squatters on the periphery of the municipality ..." (Sen, M.K. 1979) became categorised as Kuala Lumpur squatters. Quite a few of the areas on the periphery, which are not part of the Federal Territory, are either Malay Reserve land or TOL land or land occupied by Malay squatters.

Thus several factors account for the emergence and increase in the number of Malay squatters in the Federal Territory since 1957. Their increase in the last two decades, as can be seen in Table 1, can be said to be quite phenomenal. In 1966, there were only 28,553 Malay squatters in Kuala Lumpur, but by 1978 their number had increased to 81,614 - an increase of almost 300%. In contrast, there were 94,057 Chinese squatters in 1966, and in 1978 the figure rose to 128,286, an increase of about 50% only. Indian squatters increased by about 200% from 17,355 in 1966 to 39,184 in 1978. This relatively high increase in the number of Malay squatters, has turned

what was earlier considered a Chinese issue into a Malay one. As Siaw, L.K.L. observes, "... in the Federal Territory, the squatter problem is fast becoming a predominantly 'Malay' problem ..." (1976:64).

(d) The Present State of Squatting in Kuala Lumpur:
Size and Ethnic Distribution

The City Hall survey for 1978 estimates the number of squatters in Kuala Lumpur at 249,585. Since 1978, several measures have been taken to control the demographic and geographical expansion of squatters which include the 'sites and services' scheme, squatter upgrading and rehousing programme for those affected by physical developments. Between 1978 and 1980, for instance, 13,775 squatters were moved into flats and transit quarters to make way for sewerage dams, roads, flats, etc. Despite such measures the number of squatters has not gone down or stabilized; it has in fact increased to approximately 300,000 in 1983 according to City Hall sources. The total acreage of land taken is believed to have increased too. More land is occupied, especially during the weeks before a general election such as those before the 1982 general elections when hundreds of new houses are said to have sprung up in the peripheral areas of the Federal Territory.

The figures on squatting, according to City Hall officials, are on the conservative side; they think the actual figures are much higher and the writer's own studies seem to bear this out. For example, the estimates for certain squattments given in the 1978 census do appear to be too low. In Kampung Selamat, the census gives the figure for households as 3; whereas the writer's fieldwork

established that the number of households in 1977 was 100. In the neighbouring squatment of Kampung Abdullah Hukum, the discrepancy between the official figures and the actual number of households was pointed out by the Damansara UMNO Division chief. The official figures failed to include 14 households in the village and the Division chief believes that such discrepancies occur also in respect of other squatter kampungs. In 1982, in the aftermath of the general elections, the number of new houses erected was surveyed. In the Sungai Besi parliamentary constituency, one squatter village was recorded as having increased its household number by three. This figure, as the writer later found out, was wrong. There were actually about 40 new households in the squatment when the writer visited the village one month after the elections.

The discrepancies between the official figures and the actual number of squatters on the ground can be attributed, among others, to the following reasons:

- 1) The transient nature of a section of the squatter population. Individuals and families frequently move in response to changing circumstances, such as change of work-place or fortune.
- 2) The indeterminate nature of squatter boundaries which makes it difficult for field enumerators to know where one squatment ends and another begins.
- 3) The problem of getting access due to geographical or social reasons. Geographically, some squatments like those on steep slopes in Kampung Syed Putra are difficult to survey and may therefore be skipped by enumerators. Social inaccessibility

may be due to hindrance by the squatters themselves. It is generally accepted by enumerators and research workers that some Chinese squattments are almost impossible to penetrate.

- 4) Some squatters, especially those who earn a living by hawking in the city centre or elsewhere, are usually not in the squatment during the day; some houses are empty from morning till evening and enumerators can be misled into thinking that such houses have no occupants.
- 5) Lack of cooperation from squatters. Squatters are on the whole very suspicious of government officials; they often do not want the authorities to know the truth; so they often deliberately give misleading or totally wrong information.
- 6) The squatter population grows somewhat rapidly through natural increase and in-migration. This is evidenced by the village under study. As of October 1980, it had a population of 457; in November 1981, the population had increased to 493.

Squatters, therefore, account for about 30% of the city's population of one million. In terms of ethnic representation, it is believed that about 20% of the total Chinese population in Kuala Lumpur are squatters; of the Indians and Malays, 19% and 28% respectively are squatters.

Like the rest of the urban population, the squatters

are generally segregated geographically and socially on ethnic lines. In fact geographical segregation is even more marked among them compared to the rest of the urban population. The Chinese squatters are predominant in three of the five parliamentary constituencies - Kepong, Sungai Besi dan Kuala Lumpur Bandar; Malay squatters are found largely in Damansara and Setapak, and the Indian squatters, whose number is relatively small, are spread practically all over the five constituencies (see Table 3).

There is a clear tendency for the squatters of one ethnic category to group together in one locality forming a close-knit community. This tendency is more prominent among the Malays and Chinese and less so among the Indians. While it is common to see an area occupied wholly or dominantly by thousands of Chinese or Malay squatters, as is the case of the Chan Sow Lin area where there are over 5,500 Chinese in 1978, and the Kampung Kerinci area where there are over 6,000 Malays in 1978, it is rare to find such large concentration of Indian squatters in any one place. A few hundred Indian squatters may group together in one locality, such as in the case of the Indian squatters along Jalan Pantai Dalam.

Mixed squatments are also prevalent; however, in such cases, members of one ethnic category tend to confine themselves in a separate quarter in the squatment keeping their social distance from the other ethnic categories. This inclination towards compartmentalization as seen in several squatments, such as Kampung Berembang in Setapak, Kampung Sentosa and Kampung Manggis in Sungai Besi, is caused largely by cultural and religious attitudes and beliefs apart from the primordial need to be with one's kith and kin. Malays and Chinese, for example,

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF SQUATTERS IN 1978
BY ETHNICITY & CONSTITUENCY

Area	Malays	%	Chinese	%	Indians	%	Total
Kepong	5,280	14.39	26,519	72.28	4,891	13.33	36,690
Sungai Besi	6,888	17.12	30,666	76.24	2,671	6.6	40,225
Setapak	31,386	45.11	24,105	34.64	14,069	20.25	69,560
Kuala Lumpur Bandar	13,194	32.96	21,278	53.16	5,557	13.88	40,029
Damansara	25,024	39.67	25,834	40.95	12,223	19.38	63,081
Total	81,772	32.76	128,402	51.45	39,411	15.79	249,585

Source: City Hall Survey on Squatters 1978

TABLE 4
BREAKDOWN OF SQUATTERS ACCORDING TO
ETHNIC CATEGORY (1978)

Ethnic Category	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Mal/Chin	Mal/Ind	Ind/Chin	Mal/Chin/Ind
No. of Settlements	34	39	6	7	7	7	6
Percentage	32.0	36.8	5.7	6.6	6.6	6.6	5.7

Source: City Hall Survey on Squatters 1978

tend not to live close together as neighbours because the Chinese often rear pigs and pigs are abhorrent to the Malays on religious grounds. Malays keep away from Indians because of the prevalent stereotype that Indians are unclean. Chinese and Indians keep away from the Malays because the former feel that the Malay way of life limits much of their economic and socio-cultural activities. City Hall survey on squatters in 1978, shows that out of 106 squatments recorded that year, 74% or 79 of them were occupied by squatters of single ethnic groups only; the rest were mixed. The same situation is believed to prevail today (see Table 4).

NOTES

(1) Some of these settlers are known to the writer personally.

(2) Interview with Encik Omar bin Haji Harun, November 1980.

(3) There are cases of prosecution of Chinese squatters. The latest case which took place in early 1981 in Kuala Kabong, Kulai Johore, and which was widely reported in the national press, involved 18,000 acres of Malay Reservation land occupied illegally by Chinese who were said to be "People with money". It seems the Chinese started a palm oil plantation on the land (*Utusan Malaysia*, 23 March, 1981).

(4) The British colonial authorities were inconsistent in their treatment of Malays from the neighbouring countries who arrived in Malaya during the colonial period. In some cases, these non-native Malays were treated on the same terms as the local Malays. Note, for example, a letter sent by the Governor of the Malayan Union to the Siamese Government dated 6th November 1946 (National Archive File 8486/46). In the letter in which he invited Malays from Siam to come to Malaya to irrigate paddy land, the Governor says, "... if it is agreeable to the Siamese Government, Malays from the Province of Patani might care to avail themselves of the opportunity to take up land on the same terms as the local Malay inhabitants here ..."

Other non-native Malays from Indonesia, too, are known to have been accorded the same treatment as the local Malays in relation to land acquisition. This equal treatment with the local Malays is only with regards to agricultural land away from town centres. In the urban areas, as in the case of the Boyan community in Kuala Lumpur, they were treated like other immigrant groups such as the Chinese and Indians.

CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF KAMPUNG SELAMAT AND THE POLITICALISATION OF THE SQUATTERS

In Chapter II, the writer explained in broad terms the history of squatting in Malaya, especially by the Malays in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur as well as the extent and nature of squatting as it is today. This Chapter attempts to explain in detail the formation and development of a Malay squatment in the Pantai area in Kuala Lumpur and show how, in the process of establishing their settlement, the squatters became involved with political leaders and political party organization.

3.1 Paving The Way for a Squatment:

The Demise of a Traditional Malay Kampung

The Kampung Selamat squatment was formed in the middle of 1967. Prior to this date, the area which Kampung Selamat now occupies together with three other squatments, i.e. Kampung Reserve Keretapi, Kampung Limau, Kampung Pantai Halt, was a traditional Malay village known as Kampung Pantai. This village covered an area of about 250 acres of lowland bordering the western side of the Klang River in an area generally known as Pantai to the southwest of Kuala Lumpur urban centre. It was established at the beginning of the twentieth century, to be destroyed and replaced by squatments about half a century later with the physical expansion of the city and the economic development that took place in the period

after independence.

According to one of the early inhabitants of Kampung Pantai, Datuk Empat Tata, the kampung was founded by a group of Minangkabau Malays from Teluk Kuantan in Sumatra in the second decade of this century, around 1914/1915, when Minangkabaus and Kerincis began to leave Sumatra in batches to escape, among other things, the hardship imposed by the Dutch colonial rule. They came by *perahu* (small boat) and on arriving in Klang on the west coast of Selangor, some of them sailed up the Klang River until they reached a place later named Pantai. The Minangkabaus occupied the valley bordering the river, while the Kerincis occupied the hillside a few miles away in an area later known as Bukit Nenas and subsequently changed to Kampung Kerinci on the fourth mile of the Federal Highway from Kuala Lumpur to Klang.

Tata's maternal uncle was one of these early migrants. He headed a group of about ten people who cleared the area which was then a virgin jungle roamed by wild animals. They opened up the area in the manner of *meneroka*, i.e. clearing what was then a no-man's-land, cultivating the land and building their huts. In the early twenties, the kampung expanded with many more of the early settlers' relatives coming to join them from Sumatra. In the early thirties, there were between twenty and twenty-five households in Kampung Pantai, distributed sparsely all over the area and these households consisted of inter-related families. Tata remained their chief and soon he was appointed by the Selangor State authority as Datuk Empat or village chief for the whole of the Pantai area. This appointment gave official recognition to his status as village chief; at the same time he also became a part of the State bureaucracy - albeit at the lowest rung.

He was made responsible for the administration of his kampung and answerable to his superior, the *Penghulu Mukim* (chief of a sub-district) of Kuala Lumpur who was in turn accountable to the District Officer. Tata cannot remember if he was paid for holding the post of Datuk Empat in those early years; he does remember, however, in the years after independence receiving an annual stipend for his services which increased as time went by to \$200/- plus a bicycle allowance.

His position as Datuk Empat enabled Tata to help his people secure titles or 'grants' to the land they occupied. The people of the kampung were now landowners and no longer 'land openers' or *peneroka*. The issue of land titles had important economic and symbolic significance to these people. It gave them a sense of economic security; at the same time it was a tacit recognition by the British administration of their status, not as immigrants like the Chinese and Indians, but as Malays with special privileges similar to those enjoyed by the local Malays. Indeed, the Minangkabaus were by then assimilating themselves with the local Malays through intermarriage, and the similarity of their religion, customs and language, made the process of assimilation that much easier. They soon became fully assimilated and referred to themselves as *orang Melayu* (Malays).

As time went by the kampung expanded. The villagers concentrated on planting food crops, some of which were sold at the town's market, plus some cash crops, especially rubber. Prosperity in the kampung attracted a few Chinese and Indian families to come to Kampung Pantai. The Chinese worked as "coolies" (labourers) elsewhere in Kuala Lumpur and were looking for a place to stay. Like the Minangkabau Malays before

them they, too, opened up areas in the jungle outside the kampung, but unlike the Minangkabaus they were unsuccessful in getting titles to their land. This, however, is not surprising as most of the Chinese (as well as Indians and others) in Malaya were, before the formation of the Federation of Malaya in 1948, still considered immigrants by the authorities. The Chinese, it seems, bought some land from the Malays. The Indians who came were Indian Muslims who were not interested in acquiring land but to start retail trade. The number of Chinese and Indians was said to be negligible and some of them later opened retail trade and their position was peripheral to the dominant Malay community in the kampung.

With population increase in Kampung Pantai, the villagers soon found their land insufficient for their livelihood. This induced some of them to clear more land outside their kampung. Having done so, they applied for land titles, but much to their dismay and disappointment their application was turned down. Instead, they were given temporary occupation licences (TOL) to the land in 1937. The acreage of land allowed per holder was limited to about half an acre and the TOL holder was only allowed to use the land for growing vegetables. As the acreage allocated per person was considered too small and inadequate, the villagers found ways and means to secure more than one lot. One of the methods resorted to was to make every adult member of the household apply. Some were successful and were able to secure four to five lots of TOL land, thus increasing their acreage to two or three acres. For the TOL land, each holder paid an annual fee of \$1/- to the Land Office. Datuk Tata insists that "the officers at the Land Office" promised him that the TOL was a temporary measure and that after some years the TOL

holders would be given permanent titles to their land. He conveyed this promise to his people who, because of their ignorance of the prevailing land law and administration procedures, accepted the 'promise' without question. Thinking that the land would eventually become theirs anyway, the villagers used the land not only to grow vegetables, as stipulated by the Land Office, but also to plant long-term crops such as coconut palms and fruit trees and some built houses on their land. The TOL land eventually became an extension of the existing Kampung Pantai.

In the late thirties, other Malays from elsewhere in Selangor began to come to Kampung Pantai. One such person, who is still there today, is Awang Zainal. Awang, born in Perak, was raised in Selangor and later married a Selangor girl of Minangkabau descent from Batang Kali. Awang, who was working at the time as a compositor at the central office of the Malayan Railway about three and a half miles away from Kampung Pantai heard, through his wife's relatives, that someone in Kampung Pantai wanted to sell his land. He was interested to buy land there because it was close to his place of work. He went to Kampung Pantai, met the person who wanted to sell the land and after some negotiation Awang agreed to pay \$24/- for the land, i.e. Lot No.5575, Mukim Kuala Lumpur, a TOL land. In addition Awang also agreed to pay \$7/- in relevant fees to the Land Office. He then built a house on the lot and moved to live in the house with his family. That was in 1939. In 1945, when he received his war-time arrears, he 'bought' three more TOL lots which included lots No.5576 and No.5577 which adjoined the lot he bought earlier. He paid \$1,500/- for the three lots which, in those days, was a hefty sum. He registered one of the lots in his wife's name and the other two in his own name. Thus, Awang

ended up 'owning' about two acres of TOL land, bought from TOL land holders.

It is curious how Awang could buy TOL land, considering that a TOL lot is not transferable and therefore not to be sold, and it is even more curious how he could 'buy' and hold more than one TOL lots at a time. The Deputy Director of Land in the Federal Territory, when asked on the matter, regarded such transactions as irregular. According to him, Awang had paid a large sum of money to get TOL land which he could have got for only \$1/- in annual fee. He suspects that what took place was not a sale transaction, but simply an arrangement whereby a payment was made by Awang to the TOL holder for agreeing to surrender to Awang the use of the land held by him and then to recommend to some officer at the Land Office that Awang take over the TOL from him. But as far as Awang was concerned, he 'bought' the land 'with all his life savings' and in the belief that he would eventually be given permanent titles to the land. There are quite a few others like him who 'bought' TOL land from TOL land holders in Kampung Pantai.

The in-migration into Kampung Pantai increased in the fifties, especially after Independence in 1957 when Malays from the other states in Malaya began to migrate to Kuala Lumpur. There was then a great demand for housing in Kampung Pantai as there was elsewhere in Kuala Lumpur. Many of the villagers built extra houses to let to the new-comers. Among the new arrivals were Sulaiman and Ibrahim, now residents of Kampung Selamat. They recall how they came to the kampung looking for accommodation after getting a job in a place nearby. They rented a small wooden house for \$30/- a month. Sulaiman estimates that there were about 200 houses in Kampung Pantai then,

about 30 houses were sited in the area now occupied by Kampung Selamat. More than 2/3 of the residents in the kampung were 'owner-occupiers', the rest were tenants.

At about the same time in the fifties, a development of a different kind was taking place. Unknown to the villagers, tin prospecting had been taking place in the Pantai area and it was soon established that half of Kampung Pantai formed part of a wider area that contained rich deposits of tin ore. Awang remembers how, in 1959, four 'strangers' used to come to the kampung. He learned later that one of them was a politician from Kuala Lumpur, one a businessman from Perak, the third was an officer from the Land Office and the fourth was the representative of a mining company. These people came several times to the kampung to meet and negotiate with the village chief and other elders; they were trying to persuade the village elders to get the people of the kampung to agree to evacuate the area to make way for a tin mine. Then one day, Awang recalls, Datuk Empat Tata called a meeting of the landowners and TOL holders and told the residents that the State Government wanted to cancel their TOL so that the area could be mined. The news, not surprisingly, was received with considerable anger by the villagers, who had all along expected to be given permanent titles to their land. The negotiation between the interested party and the village leaders went on; finally, the mining company agreed to pay the villagers some compensations if they agreed to move out and the State Government promised to give the TOL holders alternative land. This offer softened the attitude of some of the villagers who were prepared to move out; but others remained adamant. As time went on, however, the villagers became more and more disunited in their opposition to the plan to mine the area, and before long the interested party succeeded in

persuading most of the kampung people to move out, which they did in 1961. Only Awang and his neighbour, Ali, who opposed the opening of the mine to the very end. They stayed put on their land - Awang to this very day, and his neighbour, Ali, till 1965 when he returned to Malacca, leaving his house and land in Kampung Pantai to his two children. Awang and Ali became squatters when the tin mine was opened and their TOL cancelled. Awang feels bitter about the land till this day, especially as he spent a lot of money to 'buy' the land. "The government," he says, "have robbed us Malays of our land to give to the bloody Chinese (*Cina cilaka*) to make tons of money from the tin mine." He believes some Malay officials at the Land Office had been bought over by the Chinese miner, otherwise they would not have betrayed their own ethnic group. Awang also feels that if the Malay TOL holders had stuck to their guns and stayed united in resisting the proposed mine to the end, they would not have lost their land.

Those who were affected by the evacuation were about 30 households consisting of tenants of the TOL holders. Each household was given compensations of about \$500/- by the mining company and as they were eager to start operation as quickly as possible, the mining company offered to help dismantling the houses and transporting them as well as the belongings of the evacuees to their new destination. The evacuees who found themselves homeless moved into a nearby area which was a piece of unalienated land and built their houses there, in what is known today as Kampung Limau. Some moved to a railway reserve land, also nearby, in an area known today as Kampung Reserve Keretapi. They became squatters. The TOL holders were given an alternative piece of land in exchange for the land they lost. These TOL holders, who

now lost incomes from rents and their tenants who found their lives disrupted were also bitter, like Awang, about the mining operation. But unlike Awang, the other ex-TOL holders blamed themselves partly for what happened. One ex-TOL holder, who is now a taxi driver, said, "There was nothing we could do to save our land. The Land Office had the right to cancel the TOL. Our mistake was we believed the promise of the land officer about getting the land titles. We should have insisted on the Land Office giving us the titles earlier." He believes that if they had acquired the land titles, it would have been difficult for the authorities to reclaim the land for mining purposes. The tenants of the TOL holders, too, were annoyed about the land reclamation. One of them, who is still in the area and who is now a squatter, describes the authorities' action in cancelling the Malay TOL, so that the area could be mined by a Chinese, as a 'betrayal of the Malays' (*pengkhianatan kepada orang-orang Melayu*). If such an incident happened during the colonial time, he said, he would be able to understand it, but that it happened during the post-independence period was beyond his comprehension. "We would not have felt betrayed," he said, "if the miner had been a Malay or if the TOL holders had been given a share in the mining."

Thus, by 1961, with the start of the mining operation, part of the traditional Malay kampung of Pantai was destroyed and as a direct consequence of it, Malay squatters began to appear. The remaining half of the kampung, too, met its end in November 1981 when City Hall, after four years of negotiation with the landowners and their representatives, reclaimed 44.407 acres of land in Kampung Pantai Halt, of which 35 acres had been alienated to fifty Malays for residential purposes and the rest to Chinese, for industrial purposes.

The land was reclaimed by City Hall for the purpose of constructing sewerage dams - a project which is part of a bigger plan for the physical development of the entire Pantai area.

The landowners were given monetary compensation for the loss of their land and houses plus an alternative piece of land of about 5,000 square feet for each one of them and their tenants as well as others (squatters) affected by the sewerage project were rehoused in transit quarters. However, a considerable number of them, especially those who belonged to large households and therefore could not all be accommodated in the one-room transit quarters, moved surreptitiously into squatments close to their old place or elsewhere.

Now, part of the traditional village of Kampung Pantai is gone forever; its destruction, in part, contributed to the expansion of squatting by Malays in Kuala Lumpur.

3.2 The Making of a Squatment: Kampung Selamat

The tin mining operation that took place in the area that was once part of Kampung Pantai was a small one. By the middle of 1967, the mine was exhausted and all mining activities ceased, leaving behind over fifty acres of open ground with porous sand and puddles. The mining operation then moved to the nearby area of Kampung Limau where, as mentioned earlier, some people displaced from Kampung Pantai had settled as squatters. These people, together with others, had their lives disrupted once again by the mining operation. Some of them decided to move their huts back to the old place, i.e. the part of Kampung Pantai which had been mined and which by now had become a disused mining area.

The initial occupation of the ex-mining area in Pantai differs greatly from land occupation by squatters elsewhere in the developing countries where, in many cases, such occupation, like that of Mangin's *Barriadas* in Lima, Peru (1973:234) was carefully planned and could therefore be regarded as an 'invasion'; whereas, in the case of Pantai, it was initially simply an occupation, without much visible sign of objection by the land authority. Atan, now a squatter in Pantai, was one of the pioneer squatters. He recalls that in the beginning there were only three 'houses' on the disused mine and these houses belonged to Chinese who were ex-employees of the mining company. When the Malays living around the mine noticed that the Chinese houses were not evacuated or demolished as they should be when the mining operation was completed, some of them became very angry and interpreted it not only as an attempt by the Chinese to move in more people of their own ethnic group into the area, but also as an example of acquiescence by the authorities. It was felt, according to some pioneer squatters who are still around to relate the incident, that if the area was to be occupied at all, it should be occupied by the Malays, as they were previously inhabiting the area, especially those who had been displaced by the tin mine. Also, as Malays, they considered themselves to have greater right to the land than the Chinese whom they referred to as *orang mendatang* (lit. people who came, i.e. foreigners). Some of the Malays discussed the idea of occupying the disused tin mine as they gathered together in the evening, but no attempt was made to form a proper group to plan and organise the occupation. Some were rather apprehensive about squatting on the disused mining area as there were several incidents, around that period, of squatters being evicted by the authorities in Kuala Lumpur, which meant that the squatters lost the money they spent on building

their houses.

At first, practically nobody was willing to take the risk; however, things changed when a group of about four or five people began to build houses on the disused mine. Ghani, who was living in an area close to the disused mine then, recalls how he woke up one day to find a solitary house on the disused mine and how the next day another house came up and on the third another one. No demolition squad came to pull the houses down and apprehensions of the authorities began to disappear. Within a week, about twenty people divided into small groups of three or four each moved into the disused mine to 'acquire' or 'claim' housing lots. This was done by sticking rows of wooden stakes into the ground which served as boundary markers.

Although there was no integrated plan to occupy the area, there were certain guiding principles to which they all adhered. First, each occupier could take only one lot, enough to site a house with reasonable space around the house. The greedy ones who tried to take too large an area or more than one lot were told off by the others. Second, they were to build houses quickly on the lots and that the houses would have to be occupied immediately. And third, each occupier was allowed, nay encouraged, to invite friends and relatives, albeit discreetly, to swell the number of squatters in the area so as to be able more effectively to resist any attempt by the authorities to evict them.

Within a week between twenty and twenty-five people, who were either related to one another, work mates or friends 'acquired' a lot each, measuring between 8,000 and 10,000 square feet. Soon the area was humming with activity as the squatters set about building their houses.

Ali, who was staying in Pantai with his elder brother who was one of the pioneer squatters, remembers how the houses were built. The people, according to him, formed themselves into self-help groups, *kumpulan gotong-royong*, of about six or seven people each. They took turn to build houses for members of the group and relatives and friends from outside the area also came to give a helping hand. First, they levelled the ground and in this they were lucky for the ground was dry and reasonably even otherwise they would have to buy soil by the lorry loads to fill up potholes and pools as happened in the case of many other squatters occupying disused mining sites in the mid sixties. Once the ground was levelled, work on the house began. They constructed the house using coarse planks, beams and corrugated iron sheets which they bought from sawmills and shops in Petaling Jaya. The wood, according to Ali, was then , in 1967, 'dirt cheap'. They paid 30 cents per plank and 50 cents per beam of any length and \$1/- per sheet of corrugated iron. Each squatter spent between \$300/- and \$350/- on building materials.

The actual building of the houses was usually carried out at night and the most preferred day to begin work on a house was Saturday, since employees in the private and public sectors work only half day on Saturdays. They would begin work in the late afternoon and continue till the early hours of the morning. Men and adolescent boys worked on the house while women helped by preparing food and hot and soft drink for the working teams. Some women, however, also helped with the house building, doing the lighter work such as fetching tools and implements for the working men. Each group usually built one house per night and in one night more than one group were at work. They worked non-stop, consequently by

daybreak each day at least one new house had been added to the area. As Leman, one of the pioneer squatters, explains, "Houses appear suddenly, out of nowhere, each day. Like lightning. That's why people call them *rumah kilat* (lit. lightning houses)." But the houses built were often no more than just small huts, measuring about 15 feet by 20 feet. Not all parts of the house were completed by the end of the night; parts of the wall, for example, might be left to be completed by the 'owner' himself in his own time. In general, these so-called houses were on stilts like the traditional Malay houses in the countryside, with the floor raised a few feet above the ground. In this instance, this was a particularly desirable precaution as the river nearby was prone to flooding. "They were like big boxes," explains another pioneer squatter, "with two doors, one in front and one at the back, and two large square holes in the side walls for windows." Each house was a one-room unit and the squatters called it *pondok* or 'wooden hut' which was meant to be a temporary structure which they hoped to replace, improve or extend in time to come when more money was available.

They hurried through the building of the houses, not only because the squatters needed accommodation badly, but also in order to beat the authorities. They believed in the rumour that when a squatter hut was already built and occupied, the authorities would hesitate to take action in demolishing the house and evicting the squatters. And it would be even more difficult for the authorities to evict them, it was believed, if the number of squatters involved was large. And indeed, within a period of about three weeks, between 20 and 25 houses were built, which they painted with black varnish to make them look old. The rapidity with which the houses were built plus the lack of properly co-ordinated planning among the occupiers were

not without serious setbacks. Little thought was given to the overall planning and layout of the settlement. No provisions were made for toilets and drainage and some of the houses were not systematically positioned. The outcome was a haphazard settlement.

The manner in which the disused mining area in Pantai was occupied is typical of illegal occupation of unalienated land in Kuala Lumpur in the sixties. Like in Pantai, the ex-mining areas at the 5th mile Jalan Klang Lama, 4th mile Jalan Sungai Besi and in Jalan Datuk Keramat, were all occupied by small but interrelated groups of people, each group with its own plan. And the occupation, as in the case of Pantai, was by people who may be described as working class who were motivated by the desire to 'own' a house, either because they had difficulty in finding accommodation or were about to be made homeless or because they wanted to move out of rented accommodation to reduce living expenditure.

Some land occupation taking place at a later time, i.e. in the seventies and early eighties was, unlike the illegal occupation in Pantai, consciously and carefully planned. And such plans were not conceived by the prospective squatters themselves but by others of middle-class background with affiliations with the political party in power, who hoped to gain from such occupation either financially or politically or both. This sort of occupation, which is similar to those taking place in the Latin American countries notably Peru (Ray, T. 1969:35-36), is termed by City Hall officials as "organised squatting" and examples of such occupation are Kampung Bumi Hijau, Kampung Wirajaya, Kampung Malaysia Jaya and Sri Jaya.

An elaboration of one case of organised squatting is

necessary at this juncture in order to draw out the contrast between the Pantai occupation and those which were initiated by speculative interests. One case in point is Kampung Bumi Hijau, which was planned with 'military precision' by people with education, status as well as money, i.e. a small group of army officers about to retire, in the mid-seventies. Some time in the early part of 1978, this group of people looked around for a piece of land suitable for squatting and found one in the parliamentary constituency of Setapak where, in the sixties, the Federal Government had acquired about 680 acres of land from the Hawthorne estate. This piece of land was then alienated to an educational institution, a housing co-operative and a semi-government agency. Part of the land alienated to the housing co-operative was, however, left idle and part of it had already been settled by a few people who worked the land for agricultural purposes and on which two squattments had emerged in the early seventies, allegedly, with the blessing of the late Prime Minister.

Having chosen the site, the organisers employed professionals to survey the area, plan its general layout and they then levelled and subdivided the area into lots of 60 feet by 90 feet each. Then, they looked around for people interested in joining the "housing scheme". This was not very difficult as the organisers were closely affiliated with the political party in power and one of them even claimed to be a very close relative of the Prime Minister of the time. With such credentials, it is not surprising that more than 300 people agreed to join the 'scheme' in a matter of just a few months. Furthermore, the prospective squatters were promised that their occupation of the land would be 'regularised'. Each of the participants was given one lot, for which they paid \$350/-. The payment, it seems, was for service charges: \$50/- for

surveyors fee, \$250/- for ground works and an extra \$50/- as a contribution towards the building of a community hall to be used as an office for an UMNO branch to be set up as soon as the squatment was established.

Such organised occupation as in this Bumi Hijau was not motivated by the need for housing as in Pantai, but for speculative purposes. That the occupation took place just a few months before the general elections in 1978 shows that it was partly intended also as a 'bait' for voters. Financial gains, too, cannot be ruled out as a possible motive for the organisers, though this is not easy to prove. And as for those who participated in the scheme, quite a large number of them were not in pressing need of housing. This is evidenced by the fact that many of them later sold off their lots at ten times the fee they were charged, i.e. between \$3,000/- and \$4,000/- per lot and that about seventy of the houses in the squatment, according to City Hall survey in 1978, were unoccupied; and only about one fourth of the population of Bumi Hijau in 1982 were the original squatters.

If the occupation of the Pantai disused mine was not as well planned as that of Bumi Hijau or that of other 'organised' squatments such as Malaysia Jaya, Sri Malaysia and Wirajaya, it was because the pioneer squatters in Pantai were people of a different socio-economic status and background from those who conceived and carried out the occupation of Bumi Hijau. The pioneer squatters in Pantai were largely rural migrants who, in 1967, had recently arrived from various states of Malaya. They knew little of urban life and had no contacts with people in power. They came with the minimum level of educational attainment, i.e. Malay school primary education, and without any kind of

skills suitable for urban occupation and who, on arriving in Kuala Lumpur, were employed in low-paid unskilled jobs. In order to gain some idea of their socio-economic status and background, given below are profiles of three of the pioneer squatters:

Case 1. Leman bin Bujati.

Leman arrived in Kuala Lumpur from Batang Berjuntai, a *mukim* (sub-district) in the State of Selangor in 1960 when he was 22 years old. His parents were peasant farmers eking out a living from three acres of rubber trees and two acres of orchards. There were seven of them in Leman's family and he is the scion of five children. Since finishing his primary IV Malay education, Leman had helped his parents to tap rubber and work in the orchards. He used to wake up at five in the morning to go to the family's rubber plot which is about one mile away and tap the rubber trees with a torch attached to his forehead, since it is still very dark at five o'clock in the morning. For half a day's tapping with his parents, they got about \$5/- a day. In the afternoon, they worked in the orchards and planted all types of foodcrops for their own consumption and for sale at the local weekly open market. Despite such hard work, money was always short and when Leman's younger brothers and sisters started to go to school, money became a great problem. Money was needed for books, school uniforms, bus fares, fees, etc. His father did not want to keep them in school, but Leman thought otherwise. He wanted to see his younger siblings get good education, better than his at least, and the only way he felt he could help them was by getting a paid employment. He decided to go to Kuala Lumpur and his parents did not mind. After all, Kuala Lumpur is only twenty-five miles from Batang Berjuntai and Leman could always come back to the village every weekend.

Leman had been to the capital twice before with friends and felt confident he could find his way around. He left one Monday by bus, with only two pairs of clothes (all he had then) and ten dollars in his pocket. He had heard earlier on the grapevine that the best place to start looking for a job in Kuala Lumpur was the construction sites where there was usually a great demand for unskilled labour. He did just that when he arrived in Kuala Lumpur. He went to a construction site somewhere in Pantai and was

fortunate enough to be hired right away. The building construction company engaged him on a-day-to-day basis at the rate of \$10/- per day, with accommodation provided in a makeshift shack at the construction site which he shared with other workers.

His job was to carry sand and building materials. It was back breaking but to Lemau the pay was good for he was making twice what his parents were in a day. He was prudent with money: he spent only \$2/- on himself per day, sent his parents \$50/- a month and saved whatever he could. He worked six or seven days a week to earn more money.

After a few months at the construction site he wanted to leave the makeshift shack and live elsewhere. He found it difficult to rest at night with the other workers singing, fighting and arguing most of the time. He looked around for accommodation in the nearby area and with the help of a workmate found one in Kampung Pantai. It was a one-room wooden house without any amenities and the rent was \$30/- a month.

Soon after Lemau got married, to his cousin from his native village. He took his wife to come and live in Kampung Pantai. When part of the kampung was reclaimed for the mine, he was one of those affected. He had to leave. He moved to the neighbouring area of Kampung Limau where he built a small wooden house on State land. Thus, he became a squatter. About six years later, when the mine in Kampung Pantai was exhausted, the mining operation moved to Kampung Limau, where he was squatting. Once again he had to leave and did so reluctantly. He moved his house to the disused mining area, where he had once been. And he has remained there ever since.

Case 2. Atan bin Buang.

Atan came from Pontian, Johore, arriving in Kuala Lumpur in 1961 in his late teens. He came from a family of peasant farmers, whose income was derived largely from pineapple growing and subsistence farming. His parents were poor compared to others in the village; money was never enough even for food and clothes. There were seven of them in the family and he was the bright one. While his elder brothers and sisters dropped out of school after one or two years, he continued his education until he was qualified to go to an English school. However, he was

unable to proceed to English school because the family was too poor to afford the expenses. Atan was disappointed at being forced to leave school after primary VI. He worked on the farm like the rest of the family, but as he grew older he found life in the village hard and boring. He was determined to do better and not to die as he would say "with the *cangkul* (hoe)" in his hand. He had heard from his aunt who lived in Kuala Lumpur that there were evening classes there. So, with only a few dollars and some belongings stuffed in a bag, he left home in spite of opposition from his parents. Kuala Lumpur is about one hundred miles from Pontian and Atan was still a 'young boy' and had never travelled far before. They were worried that he might get lost in the big town.

Atan took a train to Kuala Lumpur and then a bus to his aunt's place in Kampung Pantai. When he arrived, the mining operation had just started and there were vacancies for labourers. Atan had never seen a mine before, let alone worked in one; nevertheless, he decided to get a job there. He told them he was already twenty and they believed him as he was big for his age. He was hired and paid \$200/- a month, which was much more than he had expected. After working for about two months, he enrolled in an evening class in the town centre about four miles away. He bought a bicycle paying by instalments and cycled to class every evening. After a year he gave up his evening classes. He found it tough having to work eight hours during the day and study till late at night. He does not, however, think that the time he spent at evening classes was wasted as he picked up some English which gave him "confidence" in himself and he also made many friends.

While working at the mine, Atan was a lodger at his aunt's paying \$60/- a month, with food provided. However, his sleeping place was simply the *anjung* or the verandah of the house, which was very cold at night because it was only partially walled. He was keen to move out and rent a place somewhere else but was afraid to hurt his aunt's feelings. However, in 1967 he found the opportunity to leave without offending his aunt, i.e. by joining the rush to occupy the disused mine. He managed to get a lot and with the help of friends and relatives and by spending his entire savings of \$350/-, he built himself a house. His constant fear is that some day some time the demolition squad may come and pull his house down, so he prays day and night to Allah not to allow it to happen.

Case 3. Ahmad bin Abu.

Ahmad came from the matrilineal society in the Rembau District of Negeri Sembilan. He was in his early twenties when he arrived in Kuala Lumpur in 1960 looking for a job.

His parents were rubber tappers and padi planters or as he describes them *orang tak ada* (the have nots). Nevertheless, the family was doing relatively well compared with others in the village. There was enough money for them to go to school and he as well as his five brothers and sisters all went to school up to the sixth grade in the Malay medium. When he was twelve he left school and his father did not object as he was not very bright and his father thought it would be a waste of money if he was persuaded to proceed with his education. Ahmad spent his days at home helping his father tap rubber whenever he felt like it and sometimes worked in the padi-fields. He hated the work which he considered hard and was not happy not getting enough money for the work he contributed. He wanted to leave home and *pergi merantau* (to leave one's birthplace in search of fortune somewhere else) following the example of other young men in his village. Men in his matrilineal community do not inherit the ancestral property which is by customs transmitted from generation to generation through the women and partly because of this, it is common practice among men to leave, while still young, and go out into the world to seek knowledge and wealth before settling down to a married life. *Merantau* is considered essential for young men for what they acquire during the course of it usually determines their status in the community when they return. Ahmad was keen to leave and when he was eighteen applied to join the army. He was rejected because he did not have the right height; his application to join the police force was, likewise, turned down.

When he was twenty he felt he had had enough of kampung life. He was about the only young man not in school left 'hanging about' in that locality. He felt ashamed of himself and thought the other villagers looked down on him because he was not in paid employment. Finally, he pulled himself together and decided to leave for Kuala Lumpur where he heard there were many factories which needed workers. His parents did not object; in fact, he believes they were glad he was leaving because he was 'a pain in the neck' to his parents. Before leaving, he collected

from the villagers the addresses of some people he knew who were working in Kuala Lumpur so as to have somewhere or someone to turn to in times of difficulty.

When he arrived in Kuala Lumpur by bus, he looked up a friend in Kampung Baru. This friend gave him lodging until he found a job and his own place. For two weeks he walked the streets looking for a job. He went from one factory to another until his feet became blistered and his money ran out. He was reduced to drinking tap water and eating cheap *nasi lemak* (rice cooked using coconut milk instead of plain water and eaten with anchovies fried with chilli powder, usually wrapped in banana leaves), before he found a job as a machine operator at a factory in Petaling Jaya. He was paid \$150/- a month with opportunities for overtime. Having found a job, he then scouted around for accommodation close to his workplace so that travelling expenses could be kept to the minimum. He found one in Kampung Kerinci, close to Kampung Pantai, a wooden house with a rent of \$35/- a month, which he shared with five others. They also shared household expenditure and this enabled him to stretch his meagre income and was even able to save some money and send \$30/- home every month to his parents.

He had been living in Kampung Kerinci for more than five years when he heard through some friends that some people were planning to occupy the disused mine in Pantai. He decided to join in the occupation so that he could build his own house. He hated renting as it seemed demeaning to him. He was lucky for when the occupation took place he and his friends were off work and were able to go to the mining area to mark off a lot each for themselves. They built their respective houses together and when the houses were ready they left Kampung Kerinci and moved to the squatment in Pantai where they have remained to this day.

These profiles of the socio-economic status of the three pioneer squatters can be said to be typical of those involved in the occupation of the mining site in 1967. They were recent arrivals who knew little of urban life and whose life style was rural orientated and such orientation was reflected in the sort of settlement they were creating. And as migrants from various states in Malaya, they were

divided on the basis of regionalism and sub-ethnic category. As the former Menteri Besar (Chief Minister) of Selangor, in which state Kuala Lumpur once was, recalls, "Malays from different states hardly mixed in the sixties, even those from one state tended to be separated based on their district of origin. Then, there were sub-ethnic divisions: Javanese kept away from Minangkabaus who kept away from Mendilings ... The Malays of the sixties in Kuala Lumpur were not united, in fact, were sometimes jealous of and distrusted each other." It is such divisiveness which accounted for the lack of coordinated effort in occupying the disused mining area. This divisiveness among the squatters in Pantai was, as will be seen later, to change in the few weeks that followed.

3.3 Politicalisation of the Squatters

The newly formed squatter settlement is situated about one and a half miles away from the Kuala Lumpur-Klang main road and that is why its emergence was not easily noticed by the general public. For quite a few weeks it escaped the attention of the urban authorities who, then, had little means of detecting newly formed squatments. However, some non-squatters, allegedly the nearby landowners who felt uneasy and threatened by the presence of the squatters, reported the matter to the Town Hall. A demolition squad was dispatched to pull down the squatter houses. Using axes, the squad knocked down two houses on the first day, then warned the squatters to move out peacefully to avoid unnecessary destruction to properties. The following night the squatters rebuilt the damaged houses. The next day, three more houses were destroyed and again the squad warned the squatters to move out. And as on the first night, the houses were

rebuilt. On the third day the squad came again and destroyed more houses and the squatters promptly rebuilt them. What the squatters were doing was employing the resistance strategy commonly used by squatters in all parts of Kuala Lumpur at that time, i.e. to keep on rebuilding the houses until the demolition squad grew tired of them and left them alone. Most of the squatters were quite well informed on the squatting process taking place in Kuala Lumpur then, having heard about it from friends and relatives and, in some cases, having witnessed it with their own eyes. In Kampung Kerinci, according to Adnan Maarof (1967), such a strategy worked. Adnan explained for every one house demolished four sprang up nearby and after a while the demolition squad apparently grew tired of the whole thing and just left the squatters alone.

In the Pantai case, however, the demolition squad seemed really intent on destroying the settlement; they came every day for four days in succession and gave the squatters a really hard time. Finally, the squatters' patience snapped, tempers flew and they started to hurl insults and abuse at the demolition squad, calling them *orang tak berhati perut* (lit. people without heart and intestines, i.e. cruel and without pity) and accused the Malay members of the squad of being *pengkhianat bangsa* (lit. betrayers of one's race). Some of the young men in the squatment were already clenching their fists and ready to enter into a physical fight with members of the demolition squad. A senior member of the squad restrained them by telling them that if they wished the squad to stop pulling down their houses, they should go and see their superiors. "We are just doing our job," he is reported to have said, and added, "*kami cari makan*" (we are just earning a living). The squatters were apparently pacified and a terrible physical violence was thus avoided.

The advice given was apparently taken seriously by the squatters for in the evening they held an informal meeting in the open space in front of their houses. Two or three of the squatters had taken the initiative to call all the household heads together and one of them was chosen to chair the meeting which was intended to discuss ways and means of saving their houses. The chairman, it seems, stressed to the squatters the need for them to unite and drove home the importance of unity by saying that it was only through unity and united action that the squatters could hope to resist eviction and save their houses.

At the meeting someone asked the question of who informed the authorities about the illegal occupation. He pointed out that as the squatment was situated away from the town centre and out of view from the main road it would have been practically impossible for the authorities to know of its existence unless someone informed them. Fingers of suspicion were pointed at the three Chinese families who were squatting in the area. They had good reason, apparently, to inform the authorities because they wanted their own people to occupy the area. Others accused the ex-TOL holders who, according to the accusers, wanted to get the land back after the mining operation was over.

The most positive and fruitful discussion taking place at the meeting was concerning methods and strategies to be adopted in saving their houses. The younger ones in the group were in favour of resisting eviction by open and direct confrontation with the demolition squad, i.e. by resorting to physical violence, so as "to teach them a lesson so that they will in future treat poor Malays with respect". Some of them argued that the fight was

necessary because they had learned from friends elsewhere in Kuala Lumpur that only Malay squatments were being destroyed by the demolition squads but not non-Malay ones. They felt that as the *anak jati* (true sons of the soil) they had more right to occupy unused land than the *orang asing* (foreigners) - the Chinese and Indians. "Why don't they destroy Chinese squatter houses? After all, they've squatted in Kuala Lumpur for donkey's years!", shouted some of them, pointing to the three Chinese squatter huts in the area which had been left untouched by the demolition squad to prove their point.

The older men, however, were not in favour of such a drastic action. Among those present was an elderly man of about sixty from the State of Johore, who was visiting his son who was one of the squatters. He advised the squatters not to oppose the authorities. He said he had served in the army and had seen what the authorities would do to those who opposed them. "Look at the communist terrorists," he is reported to have said, "they opposed the government and see what happened to them? They were hunted down and killed. If you oppose and fight the demolition squad and if you hurt one of them, you will land in jail. How will that serve your cause?", he asked. He then suggested that the squatters approach the Town Hall officials and negotiate with them and advised that they should conduct themselves *dengan merendah diri* (with great humility) in dealing with those in power. After some discussion, the old man's advice and suggestion were accepted unanimously.

The meeting then proceeded to elect four representatives from among those present. The next day these representatives went to the Federal Commission in Kuala Lumpur town "to see the officers and discuss the

squatters' plight". But nobody was free or willing to see them. They were asked to make an appointment and were given a date two weeks ahead which was no good for their purpose. Somewhat chastened by the experience they left without making any appointment. On their return to the squatment they told the squatters who were waiting eagerly to hear the result of their mission that their visit was all in vain. "We didn't see any of the officers," they said, "we didn't even get to see the door of their office!"

The four representatives and a few others met again that night to discuss what to do next. After a long deliberation it was decided that they needed to seek the help of people with influence, i.e. *orang berpengaruh* in their vernacular. As they were new to Kuala Lumpur, they could not think of anyone to approach except their Member of Parliament for Bangsar and their State Councillor for the State constituency of Petaling. The former was an Indian from the PAP (Peoples Action Party) and the latter, also an Indian, was from the Labour Party who had stood in the 1964 general elections as a candidate for the Labour-Socialist Rakyat electoral pact. Both the PAP and the Labour-Socialist were opposition parties.

None of the squatters knew the Member of Parliament or the State Councillor personally. They were reluctant to see them because they were non-Malays and did not belong to the party in power. They were not sure that being non-Malays the MP and State Councillor would be willing to take up the case and fight for their cause, especially in view of the fact that they were not quite on the right side of the law. Non-Malay politicians, the squatters believed, would fight only for their own race. Since the MP and State Councillor were Indians, they were expected to be ready to help only Indians. That they belonged to

opposition parties made them even more unattractive to the squatters, some of whom were from the East Coast states of Kelantan and Trengganu, where the Malay opposition party, PMIP (Pan-Malayan Islamic Party), was in power and had seen how badly the two states had fared in socio-economic developments due to bad relations between the opposition political leaders and the central government. The squatters felt that being with the opposition would not help their cause. As one of the squatters put it, "What can a member of the opposition do? Only criticise. The oppositions have no power." In fact the squatters were convinced that to be seen to be on the side of the oppositions was bad enough; to be actually seeking their help would be counter productive. So it was agreed that the best and the only course of action for the squatters was to approach politicians from the Malay political party in power, i.e. UMNO (United Malays National Organisation). After all, had not UMNO repeatedly said that they were the champion of Malay causes and what better cause for the party to champion than those of Malays being driven out from land to which they believed they had a right!

Quite a large number of the squatters were UMNO members anyway before coming to Kuala Lumpur, but had not since taken the trouble to join any of the local branches in the capital. They were at first at a loss as to who to approach for help, then they decided to see the local politicians of the nearest UMNO branch, i.e. UMNO Pantai. One of the political activists in the branch, Ujang, took an interest in their case. He told the squatters' representatives that he was willing to be their leader and to fight their cause on one condition, i.e. that should anything happen to him, if he was jailed for instance, the squatters must support his family - wife and children -

financially until he was released from prison. The squatters accepted his condition.

Ujang took the squatters' representatives to see UMNO political leaders in Kuala Lumpur, including a State Councillor and a Senator, to seek their opinion on the squatters' plight. The meeting with the various UMNO leaders convinced the squatters that they had taken the right decision in seeking the help of UMNO politicians and that only by working closely with the party and party leaders that they could hope to win their battle against the urban authorities. The UMNO political leaders advised Ujang and the squatters to present their case in person to the political and administrative head of the State, the Menteri Besar, who was also the State UMNO chief.

One evening, all the squatters - men, women and children - were assembled and told to go to the Menteri Besar's residence in Jalan Raja Muda. Some went on scooters and motor-cycles, but most went by bus. They arrived at the Menteri Besar's residence at about 9.00 p.m. and were mistaken for demonstrators by the security guards. The FRU (Federal Reserve Units) were called to disperse the 'demonstrators'. Fortunately for the squatters, just then, amidst the commotion, the Menteri Besar returned and asked to talk to the leaders of the group. The squatters' representatives briefed him of their mission and were told to come the next day to his office.

The meeting with the Menteri Besar the next day was perhaps the most important turning point in the history of squatting by Malays in Kuala Lumpur. It was significant in many ways. Among other things, to the best of the writer's knowledge, this was the first time that Malay squatters made a representation to the Menteri Besar of a

state and achieved a measure of success. Perhaps what is even more significant is that the meeting gave the squatters' representatives a glimpse of the power that the Menteri Besar could wield. They related with awe afterwards how the Menteri Besar "just picked up the telephone and spoke to some officials at the Land Office and Town Hall" and how, as a result of that telephone conversation, the eviction orders were stayed. Whether by accident or design, the Menteri Besar's effective intervention succeeded in leaving a deep impression on the minds of the squatters' representatives, which had a direct bearing on the political direction that the squatters subsequently took, as will be seen shortly. When they left to return to the squatment to inform the squatters of the good news, the representatives' hearts must have been brimming not only with happiness but also gratitude. And if they had any reservations about seeking the help and protection of UMNO, this meeting dispelled them once and for all.

The Menteri Besar concerned admitted in a personal interview with the writer that many groups of squatters, particularly Malay squatters, did indeed come to seek his help at different times in the sixties and he reckoned one of them must have been the group from Pantai, though he could not remember if they were in fact the first to come and seek his help. The Menteri Besar did not see anything wrong or irregular in his intervention or in his overruling the Town Hall's decision to issue eviction orders and to demolish the squatter houses. After all, he said, Malays had to come to Kuala Lumpur to look for jobs and if the Government was unable to provide adequate accommodation for them, then the Malays should be allowed to occupy vacant land. Those in power, he insisted, had an obligation to help house these people and by getting the

eviction orders stayed, he was doing something to help them. He, however, emphasized that each time he gave permission for the squatters to stay on a piece of unalienated land, he always reminded them that they would have to move out when the land was required for development. At no point, he said, did he tell the squatters that they could stay on permanently. It must be stressed, however, that this statement was made in an interview long after the event; while there is no reason to question the veracity of the statement made by the ex-Menteri Besar, at the time the squatters must have understood differently.

The squatters in Pantai were of course jubilant when they heard the good news that they could stay on the disused mine. They were grateful and indebted (*terhutang budi*) to the Menteri Besar and in return many decided to become members of the local UMNO, i.e. the Pantai branch. The pioneer squatters have remained loyal to the party and to the Menteri Besar even to this day, even though the Menteri Besar concerned is no longer in office and was sent to jail for fraud and corruption for five years, from 1976 to 1981 when he was granted a royal pardon. One of the pioneer squatters explained his unwavering support for and loyalty to the ex-Menteri Besar by quoting a Malay *pantun* (quatrain):

*Pisang emas dibawa belayar,
Masak sebiji di atas peti,
Hutang emas boleh dibayar,
Hutang budi dibawa mati.*

The gist of the *pantun* is: a debt of gold can be repaid, but a debt of gratitude for a good deed remains unpayable till death. Indeed, in the Malay society

indebtedness for good deeds, *terhutang budi*, is something which imposes an unending obligation upon the recipient of the good deed to be forever good and loyal to the dispenser of the good deed and the society does not look kindly upon people who ignore such an obligation.

In gratitude, too, the squatters' representatives, who by then had been acknowledged by the squatters as their leaders, named the squatment *Kampung Selamat*. *Selamat* in Malay means safe or saved or peace or good. It is so named because, it seems, on the squatters' first encounter with the Menteri Besar at his residence, he greeted them most cordially with *Selamat Petang* (Good evening). The squatters became *orang Kampung Selamat* (the people of Kampung Selamat) as opposed to others in the Pantai area.

Thus Kampung Selamat was formed which involved the following processes: illegal occupation of what appeared to be no-man's-land, followed by a confrontation with the urban authorities and then intervention by political leaders of the party in power which saved the squatment. Such processes of squatment formation are not unique to Kampung Selamat, but were found repeated elsewhere throughout the sixties and seventies in Kuala Lumpur. Whether Kampung Selamat actually set a precedent is rather a moot point, but several squatments in Kampung Pandan, near Kampung Baru, in Kampung Datuk Keramat and in Sungai Besi were all formed in a similar manner. Even in the eighties, the experience of Kampung Selamat was often repeated despite the determination and efforts of City Hall to evict all squatters and demolish all squatter houses built after 1978. A case strikingly similar to the experience of Kampung Selamat took place recently in Ampang, in November 1981, when a group of about one hundred Malays tried to establish a squatter settlement.

After a series of confrontations with the City Hall's Housing Enforcement Unit, involving three demolition operations in the area over a period of about a month and the intervention of politicians from the ruling party, the squatters were finally left alone. Kampung Polo, so called because the squatment borders the Royal Polo Club, is still there today. Like Kampung Selamat, Kampung Polo was saved by political leaders from the party in power to whom the squatters are now indebted.

It must be stressed that it is only Malay squatments which have been formed in the same manner as Kampung Selamat. Chinese squatments, and to some extent Indian squatments, have gone through somewhat different processes in their formation. Most non-Malay squatments, as alluded to in Chapter II, were formed in the pre-independence era when squatting was condoned and when there were no laws against it. Thus, in the formation and early development of the squatments, the squatters did not come into direct confrontation with the law, like Kampung Selamat, and as such offered little opportunity for political leaders and political parties, especially those in power, to intervene and place the squatters in their debt. This probably explains why, as will be seen later, support for the government political leaders and political parties is less strong in non-Malay squatments than in the Malay ones.

3.4 Early Development of Kampung Selamat.

Thus, by mid-1967 a new 'residential' area emerged in Kuala Lumpur, spontaneously and without the surveyors, bankers, developers or building contractors playing a part in its formation. This residential area, Kampung Selamat,

was a collection of about twenty-five wooden houses on an open sandy field. On the west, the squatment was bordered by the railway track linking Kuala Lumpur with Port Swettenham (now called Port Klang) which separated the squatment from Kampung Reserve Keretapi, and on the east by the Klang River. On the north and south sides of the squatment were the traditional Malay villages of Kampung Limau and Kampung Pantai Halt respectively. The squatter houses, of which twenty-two belonged to Malays and the other three to Chinese, occupied only about one-third of the disused mine; the rest of the land was too porous and therefore unsuitable for habitation. Apart from the houses, there was hardly anything else in the ex-mining area; not even a tree which could provide a shade. Thus, living conditions were, in the initial stage, extremely hard and harsh. During the day, especially at midday and in the early afternoon, the corrugated iron roof, under the blazing tropical sun, turned each squatter house into a steaming hot-box, so much so that the squatters had to spend most of their time during the day underneath instead of inside the stilt house. At night the whole area was pitch dark; consequently passers-by often were not aware that there was a squatment there. And when it rained, water from the nearby river often overflowed its banks, bringing flash floods to the area. In spite of all this, the squatters stayed on, making the best of the difficult situation. Attempts were made to improve conditions in the settlement: wells were dug, pit-toilets were constructed in any convenient location, and suitable crops were grown, both for shade and for subsistence purposes. And as time went by, the houses themselves were improved and after a few years Kampung Selamat slowly turned into a reasonably decent settlement with ecological characteristics similar to those of the traditional Malay villages in the vicinity.

Towards the end of the sixties more economic and physical developments took place not only in the Pantai area but also in the neighbouring Petaling Jaya, a new industrial-cum-residential satellite town about two miles away from Kampung Selamat. The job opportunities thereby created, attracted more people to come into the area and most of the new arrivals were Malays from the rural areas. Kampung Selamat and its neighbouring areas in Pantai became a popular place of residence for the in-migrants.

By then, the loose, porous sandy land in the disused mining area next to Kampung Selamat had become firm and properly settled and many of the new migrants from the rural areas occupied it and built houses on it as the pioneer squatters did. Other unused land in the neighbouring area, viz. the railway reserve and unalienated land bordering the traditional villages of Kampung Limau and Kampung Pantai, was also snapped up by the squatters. By then, the Malays had become less afraid of the urban authorities, mainly as a result of Kampung Selamat's squatters' victory in their 'fight' against the urban authorities.

As more and more people arrived, some of the existing squatters seized the opportunity to make quick money. Those with some cash to spare built extra houses for renting as well as for selling to the newcomers. The landowners in the neighbouring traditional villages, too, took advantage of the situation and, like the opportunist squatters, built houses on unalienated land close to their own, also for renting or selling. Thus, new categories of squatters emerged. There are now squatter tenants and squatter landlords in addition to the squatter 'owner-occupiers'.

In most cases the later arrivals found their way to Kampung Selamat by virtue of their personal contact with or knowledge of someone who was already in the squatment. Any opportunity to buy or rent a squatter house, to buy or use a squatter plot, is made known to others only verbally by the squatters and such information is transmitted through their social networks of, firstly their relatives, secondly their friends. In short, later squatters were 'recruited' by the pioneers.

A very good example of how others moved into the squatment is provided by the case of Leman from house No.69. Leman is one of the pioneer squatters referred to earlier. In 1968, he sent for his eldest brother who was in his native village of Batang Berjuntai, found him a job as a security guard in a private company and later helped him build a house on 'his' plot of land and thereby enabling the brother to prepare a home for his wife and children whom he sent for subsequently. In 1969, Leman sent for another brother and this brother, too, built a house and brought his family over to the squatment. In 1970, his cousin arrived from the countryside and helped the cousin to get a job at his workplace. The cousin then married Leman's sister-in-law and after a while the cousin, too, built a house in the squatment. In the meantime, the neighbour next door to Leman had to leave and wanted to sell his house and Leman passed the information to colleagues at work. One of them bought the house and this workmate then brought his family to live in the kampung and later helped his own friend and step son in getting houses in the squatment. As a result of this informal network system of passing on information, one finds that most of the squatters are either related to one another by ties of kins and affinity or are bound by ties of friendship.

By 1969, there were at least one hundred squatter houses in Kampung Selamat, about five of which were owned by Chinese and three by Indian Muslims. The Malay squatters found themselves a leader, *ketua kampung* (lit, village leader), a man who was an employee of the Malayan Railway. The non-Malays, despite their close geographical proximity to the Malays, kept their social distance, interacting with the Malays only in economic transactions.

On May 13 that year, after the general elections, a bloody racial riot broke out in Kuala Lumpur involving Malays and non-Malays, primarily the Chinese. The riot began as a procession organised by the Chinese-dominated opposition party, DAP (Democratic Action Party), to celebrate their election victory went out of control. Some participants in the procession were said to have thrown insults and abuses at the Malay on-lookers, telling them to *balik kampung* (go back to the countryside) as the capital was now in 'Chinese hands'. The Malays retaliated and a bloody riot ensued. Violence involving Malays and Chinese broke out in several parts of Kuala Lumpur, which sent shock-waves into squatterments like Kampung Selamat where most of the Malay migrants from the countryside lived. Like many other Malays in Kuala Lumpur then, the squatters, too, were profoundly affected and incensed. Some of the Malay squatters, being poor and being recent migrants who had had great difficulty in getting a foothold in the capital, had all long been jealous and resentful of the Chinese who dominated the town and whom they blamed for their socio-economic predicament. And as noted earlier, they were also suspicious and distrusted the Chinese. Thus, they had more reason to be angry with the Chinese than other groups of Malays who were more fortunate economically than they were. In Kampung Selamat and the other squatter kampungs in Pantai, their anger was

turned in all its fury on the properties belonging to non-Malays there. In the whole of the Pantai area, four Chinese houses, five Chinese and one Indian shops dealing in textiles, grocery and provisions were set on fire and razed to the ground. One of the houses burned down was in Kampung Selamat. The non-Malays left in fear and returned only a month later when law and order had been restored. Those who lost their properties did not bother to rebuild them, they simply left and those whose houses were spared sold them off to Malays and also left the area for good. Such was their hurry to leave that they sold their houses at give-away prices. One of the Malay squatters who purchased one of the Chinese squatter houses, paid only \$1,000/- for a three-bedroom house which he rebuilt, partially with bricks and louvre windows, which ordinarily would have cost between \$4,000/- and \$6,000/-. It became the best house in the squatment then. An Indian petty trader sold his house cum sundry shop for only \$300/-, lock, stock and barrel. The squatment then became a wholly Malay settlement. The neighbouring kampungs, too, were rid of most of their non-Malay population; only a small Chinese *tok kong* (shrine) and a Chinese household living next to it in Kampung Limau were left. In 1975, the shrine, too, was burnt down due to the negligence of its keeper and the Chinese household was later assimilated into the dominant Malay society in Pantai.

The curfew imposed after the riot confined people to their homes and the squatters in Kampung Selamat utilised this time to clear whatever available space there was left in the vicinity of their squatment, i.e. land along the railway track and the river, to cultivate foodcrops. Some of these areas were, in subsequent years, used to accommodate more squatter houses.

For the squatters, the riot and the curfew period which followed, was the time of very great hardship. Foodstuffs, the sale and distribution of which in Kuala Lumpur as elsewhere in the country are almost entirely in the hands of the Chinese, were scarce and difficult to obtain. The squatters were too terrified to venture out into Chinese-dominated markets and shops to buy food, and rumours of Chinese vendors' reluctance to sell food to Malays made matters worse. They felt angry and yet helpless as there was nothing they could do to change the situation; they could not fight because they had no weapons nor the money to purchase any.

All these experiences led to important developments in the political attitudes of the squatters, which will be explained in greater detail in Chapters V and VI. Suffice it to say at this juncture that the squatters began to appreciate fully the relevance and importance of unity among the Malays, not only at the squatment level but also at supra-local levels. More squatters then joined the Malay political party, UMNO.

About one and a half years after the race riot, the squatters had to endure another extreme hardship, though of a different kind. The year 1971 was heralded in Kuala Lumpur by continuous rain that went on for weeks and in early January, an unprecedentedly big flood swept through the capital. Riverine settlements, a large number of which were squatments, were swept away by the flood. Kampung Selamat was one of those very badly affected.

Squatters who lived through the flood recall how it rained practically non-stop for about three weeks. The water from the nearby river overflowed its banks and the flood water rose submerging the lower parts of their

houses. As their houses were on stilts and flash floods occurred so often, they were not very concerned at first. Then one day the water began to rise so rapidly that in a few hours it reached the roof and the current was so strong that the roofs of some of the houses were ripped off and swept away together with furniture and other household goods. There was hardly any time to save anything; the squatters were lucky to get away with their lives onto the higher ground above the railway track. And they were lucky, too, because help from outside came swiftly. They were taken, together with others affected by the flood, to the large assembly hall, the *Dewan Tunku Canselor*, at the University of Malaya, where they were housed and fed for almost a week by the social welfare department and other voluntary organisations such as the Red Crescent. Donations, mainly in the form of clothing, were collected on their behalf.

The flood swept away about thirty houses in Kampung Selamat and damaged practically all the rest. Those made homeless were offered accommodation in flats in Jalan Cheras about 10 miles away from the squatment by the urban authorities. Not everyone was enthusiastic about the offer. The idea of having to pay a monthly rent bothered many of them. They were mostly low income earners, earning between \$150/- and \$300/- per month, and for many their employment was either temporary or insecure. Moving into flats would not only increase their expenditure, but would also create problems in times of unemployment. Then there was the question of distance from their workplace for those in employment; extra expenditure would be incurred, too, in travelling costs apart from the cost in terms of time and energy in getting to work everyday. In addition, their lives would be disrupted; they would lose their friends and neighbours.

Perhaps the greatest deterrent of all was the fact that they were offered accommodation in a high-rise block of flats. They loathed the very idea, having heard stories about lift breakdowns, water problems, the lack of space for children to play and the lack of opportunity to augment their income by home gardening and rearing poultry. As a result, most of them turned down the offer, preferring instead to rebuild their houses in the squatment from whatever building materials they could salvage. In rebuilding their houses, the distribution of the houses was more carefully planned, so also was the general layout, such that space was allowed between the houses for footpaths and mud-tracks for motorised transport, space for garages, home gardening and for clothes lines.

Most squatters affected by the flood who are still in the squatment today believe it was their political leaders in UMNO who arranged for all the help that they received during the flood and for the compensation of between \$150/- and \$200/- per household that they received from the social welfare department in the following month. Some of them were heard to remark, "Who else would help us Malays?". The flood incident gave a big boost to UMNO's image.

Flood mitigation programmes in the subsequent years helped to lessen the danger of serious floods reoccurring, although flash floods were still quite frequent. In May 1980, the squatment was subjected to another flood though, fortunately, of lesser intensity than the previous one in 1971. And again, as before, UMNO party leaders came to their rescue and help, a point which will be taken up again in a later chapter.

Despite the hazards posed by frequent flooding,

Kampung Selamat as well as other squattments in the vicinity continued to expand demographically. The population of Kampung Selamat grew; the number of households increased to 88 in 1981 and the sixty or so people in 1967 to 493. The figure would have been higher if the City Hall had not pulled down twenty-two houses in 1979 to reclaim part of the village for the construction of transit quarters. This reclamation reduced the area of the village to less than fifteen acres, with approximately only ten acres fit for habitation, the rest taken up by drains and swamps. With the addition of more dwellings and the extensions of existing ones over a much reduced area, the squatment now looks crowded, though, as will be seen later, not as congested as the older squattments closer to the city centre; certainly not congested enough to be termed a slum. Kampung Selamat has undergone considerable changes demographically and geographically over the last fourteen years.

3.5 Kampung Selamat Today

(a) Its Physical Characteristics

As has been suggested earlier, Kampung Selamat used to command a strategic position in terms of employment opportunities; today its locational significance is even more enhanced. This is due primarily to the intensive physical developments that have taken place within a radius of three miles of the squatment in the last decade. In the industrial zone of Petaling Jaya, two miles away, hundreds of factories have been built; about a quarter of a mile from the kampung, on a hill facing the Kuala Lumpur-Klang Federal Highway, stands the Radio and Television Malaysia building complex, called Angkasapuri,

FIGURE 3
LOCATION OF KAMPUNG SELAMAT WITHIN THE
FEDERAL TERRITORY PARLIAMENTARY CONSITUENCIES
(Not drawn to scale)

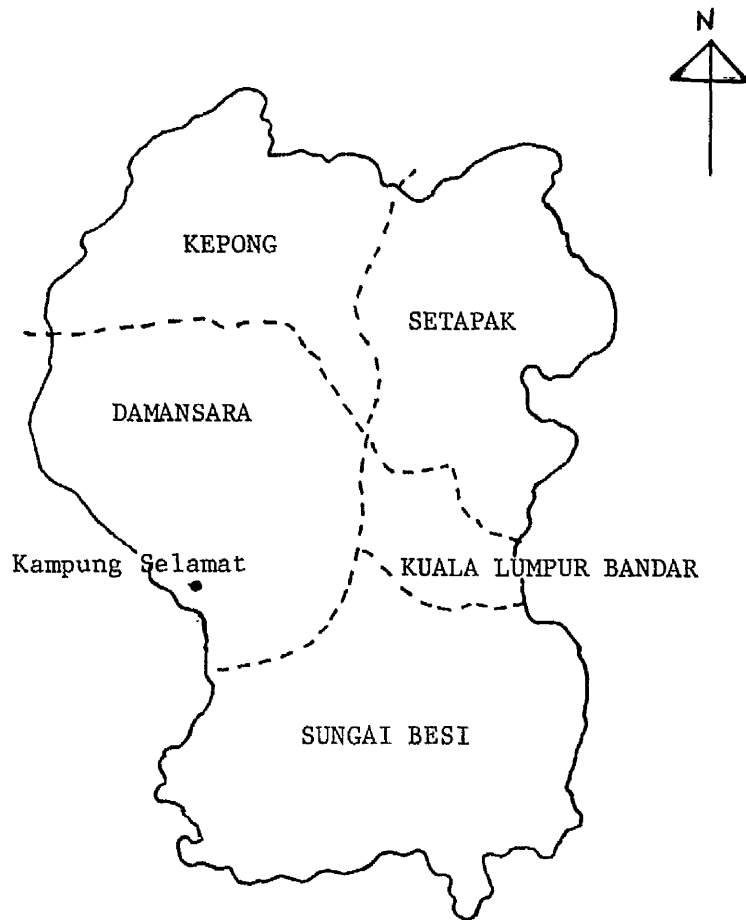


FIGURE 4
KAMPUNG SELAMAT: PHYSICAL LAYOUT

(Not drawn to scale)

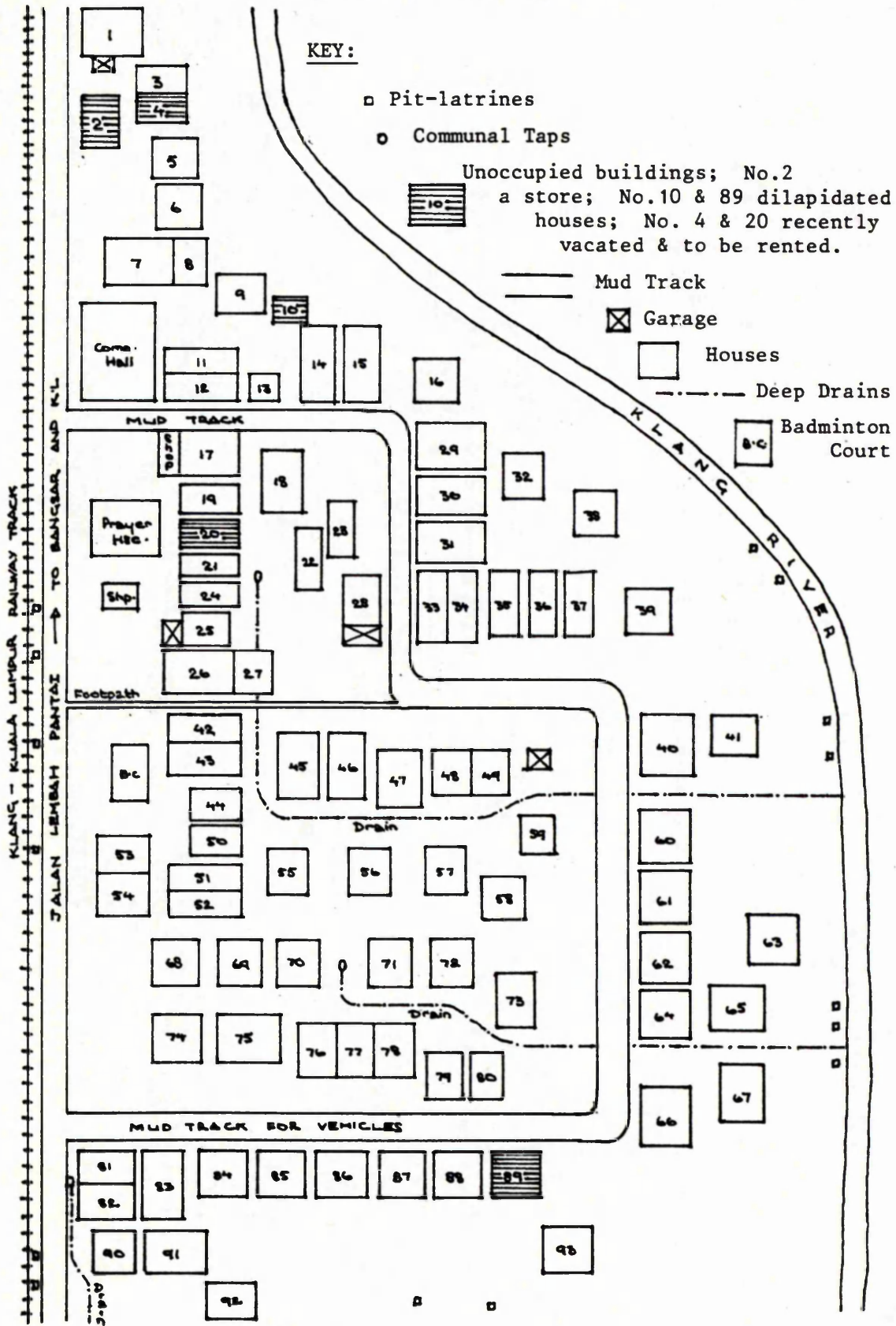
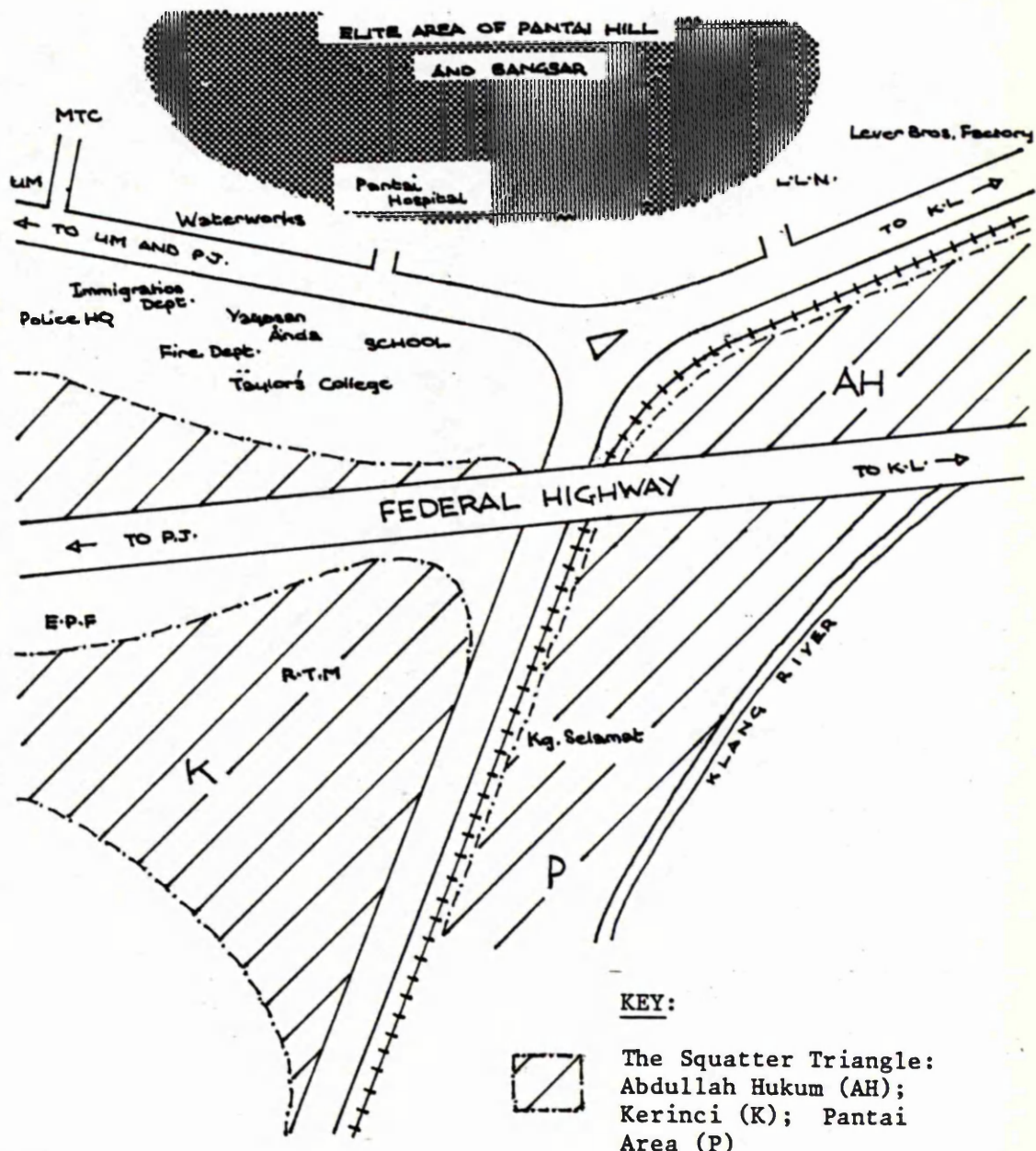


FIGURE 5

KAMPUNG SELAMAT: LOCATION IN RELATION TO
EMPLOYMENT CENTRES WITHIN 3 MILES RADIUS

(Not drawn to scale)



KEY:

- K.L. - Kuala Lumpur
- R.T.M. - Radio Television Malaysia
- L.L.N. - National Electricity Board
- P.J. - Petaling Jaya

KEY:



The Squatter Triangle:
Abdullah Hukum (AH);
Kerinci (K); Pantai
Area (P)



Elite & Middle-Class
Area

UM

University of Malaya

MTC

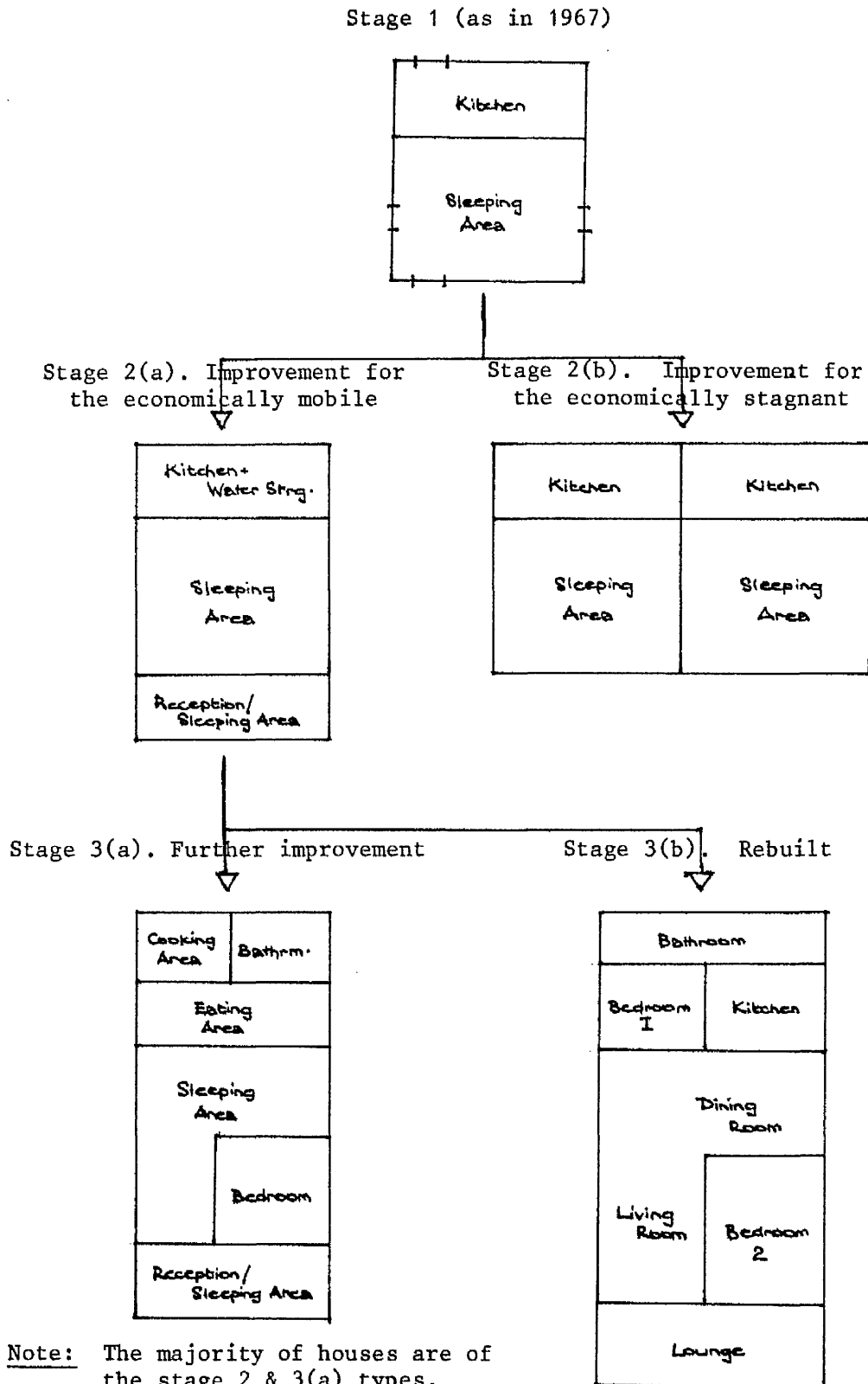
Malayan Teachers' College

EPF

Employees' Provident

Fund

FIGURE 6
STAGES IN IMPROVEMENT OF SQUATTER HOUSES



and a little further down the road along Federal Highway is the Employees Provident Fund building. Across the valley, opposite Angkasapuri, is another road, Jalan Pantai Baru, along which are sited, on one side, a primary school, a fire department, an immigration department office, two private educational institutions (the Taylor's College and Yayasan Anda), the Girl Guide building, a police station and a hostel. On the other side of the road are the National Electricity Board building, the Waterworks Authority building, close to which are the Pantai Medical Centre - an elite private hospital -, the Malaysian Teachers Training College, the Language Institute and colleges of the National University. Next to the Language Institute is the six-hundred-acre campus of the University of Malaya. Thus, within a radius of about two to three miles from Kampung Selamat one finds all kinds of offices, institutions and building complexes, all of which may be regarded as sources of employment for the squatters, in addition to all the shops, restaurants and other business concerns found along Jalan Pantai Baru and Jalan Bangsar as well as the several upper and middle-class residential areas - all within sight of the squatment.

As a result of the intensive physical developments, the squatter settlements in Pantai are practically hemmed in by modern housing estates and concrete structures, and yet they remain rural in character and appearance. Each squatment looks more like a miniature Malay village in the countryside than an urban residential area. This is true also of Kampung Selamat: its rural characteristics are typified by the design of the houses, the presence of vegetable plots, the rearing of livestock and of course by its inhabitants, who are all Malays. The only difference is the size. The squatment is relatively small in area; the houses are therefore huddled together, sometimes only

three or four feet away from each other. The agricultural plots, too, are small - some are only about sixty square feet. Whereas, in the traditional Malay kampung, everything is many times bigger.

There are ninety-three buildings in Kampung Selamat: one community hall, one prayer house (*surau*) while the rest are houses. Only eighty-eight of the houses were occupied in November 1981, the rest were vacant, two were dilapidated, another used as a store and the other two were to be rented out. The houses, which were originally built in the traditional fashion, have in most cases been modified and improved gradually as and when the owners could afford it. The most common alterations involve the front-door steps and the kitchen part of the house. Some of the front-door steps, which originally were made of wood, have been improved by replacing them with concrete steps, sometimes with decorative tiles; and the kitchen section, which in the traditional house is raised from the ground to a height slightly lower than the main part of the house, is often rebuilt and reduced to ground level with a washroom or bathroom attached. Those with more money have improved their houses further by fitting louver windows and ceiling under the roof. Those with even more money, as in the case of the six households in the squatment, have had their entire houses demolished and new ones built in their places. The new houses are of a different design, no longer according to the traditional design, but are single-storey houses with concrete floor at ground level, with the lower half of the walls in bricks with or without cement plaster, with the upper half of the wall in planed wooden planks and windows with glass panes and roof, invariably, of corrugated iron. Ninety-nine percent of the houses in Kampung Selamat now can be described as permanent structures.

Most of the houses in the squatment are detached houses; a few, however, maybe described as semi-detached, terraced or even linked houses (see Fig.4). The semi-detached and terraced houses were originally single unit houses, but have been extended or added to in order to increase living space. In all cases, the extension was initially to accommodate newly married offsprings of the family or to accommodate an in-migrating family member.

The size of the houses vary between the smallest, 15 ft. by 10 ft. and the largest, 20 ft. by 60 ft., with the majority of them to be found more towards the bigger end of the scale. Thus, in size, these houses compare favourably, not only with houses in other Malay squatments formed in the sixties elsewhere in the capital, such as Kampung Pandan and Kampung Abdullah Hukum where, as Pirie, P. (1976:50) notes the average size of the squatter house is 700 square ft., but also with houses in the middle-class urban housing estates, where a single-storey terrace house usually measures an average 20 ft. by 65 ft. And compared to houses in squatments established before the independence period, such as Kampung Toddy in Sentul, Kampung Maxwell along the road by the same name, Kampung Katijah in Brickfields and Kampung Limau along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, the houses in Kampung Selamat are certainly bigger. In the old squatments which are close to the city centre, the writer observed that for a household/family unit, 'home' was, in most cases, one of the many rows of ranshackle huts measuring anything between the smallest 8 ft. by 13 ft. and the biggest 10 ft. by 15 ft.

In Kampung Selamat, as in the case of most squatments in Kuala Lumpur, most of the houses are

haphazardly positioned. A house may have its bathroom next to another's sitting-room such that the drain carrying dirty water from the bathroom winds its way past the neighbour's sitting-room, filling it with stench. Or, someone's chicken coop may be next to a neighbour's kitchen. Nevertheless, taking the kampung as a whole, it can be said that the positioning of the houses is not without any system altogether. There is space for footpaths and mudtracks for motorised transport, large enough even for lorries to pass through. These mudtracks also serve as children's playground and occasionally, when one of the squatter households holds some kind of celebration, as space to erect tents to accommodate guests. Space is also allowed for small plots for the purposes of home gardening, for building shacks to serve as garages, for chicken coops and for lines to hang the daily washing.

With the land-building ratio of nine houses to an acre and population density of forty-nine to an acre approximately, the squatment is by no means crowded. This partly explains why out-breaks of fire are practically unknown in this kampung, although in some parts of Kuala Lumpur squatment fires are frequent, at an average rate of once every two months in the last one year or so. In this respect, Kampung Selamat is not typical of urban squatments frequently found elsewhere in the developing countries such as in Delhi, India, where the population density is over 1,000 people to an acre (Payne, G.K. 1977:94), or in Manila, in the Philippines, where according to Juppenlatz, M., "... the density of the squatter shacks ... averaged some 200-400 per hectare", and where the dwelling units are so congested that "... in the worst squatter colonies, hundreds were spaced within a few inches of each other ..." (1976:106). Nor is Kampung Selamat typical of all squatments in Kuala Lumpur; it

typifies only the peripheral squattments, i.e. the squattments on the outskirts of the capital, especially those formed in the late sixties or those formed earlier for agricultural purposes. Kampung Selamat differs greatly from the 'pre-independence' squattments close to the city centre such as the four mentioned earlier, where the population is dense. In Kampung Katijah, Brickfields; Kampung Toddy, Sentul; and Kampung Paya near Kampung Baru, all of which are almost thirty-five years old and located close to the city centre, the writer notes that the population is extremely dense, with 50-60 dwelling units on one acre of land and the population between 250 and 300 people to an acre, like those of Manila.

(b) Available Amenities

As for basic urban amenities, the only one available in the squattment is electricity which was first introduced in 1979. Kampung Selamat is among the 6% of squatters supplied with electricity in the Federal Territory. Only eighty out of the eighty-eight households enjoy electricity supply; the rest have to do without, largely because they cannot afford the initial costs of wiring and the monthly bills. Electricity is used sparingly, only for lighting, television, ironing and occasionally for fans. The television is switched on only when there is a good or favourite programme; if there is need for light late at night, kerosene lamps are used. Electricity is never used for cooking, unless absolutely necessary as during feasts when there is need to use an electric mixer to grind chillies in large quantities; for daily cooking, the squatters use either gas, which comes in cylinders, or kerosene cookers. For extra cooking, such as to prepare food for sale and for feasts, wood, coal or coconut shells are used.

Water, which is usually stored in large drums, is obtained from wells and communal standpipes supplied by the local authorities. The three standpipes not only supply the Kampung Selamat squatters but also the neighbouring squatment of Kampung Reserve Keretapi. The ratio of standpipes to squatters is one to two hundred people, which is the ratio aimed for by the City Hall. The pipes, which are fitted with multiple faucets, are linked to the squatter houses by rubber hoses. Each hose which ranges in length from twenty to two hundred feet is fixed to the faucet when water is needed and removed when it is not; and a large part of the hose is buried one foot underground to avoid being trampled or damaged in any other way. The two wells are used only in cases of emergency, for example when there is acute shortage of water and when the supply through the communal taps is interrupted. Water from the wells is considered by many as unsuitable for their daily use because the wells are located in a place at a lower level than the pit lavatories, and the water is greyish in colour so that when it is used it leaves stains on the washing and on the skin, or in the squatters' own vernacular *berkarat, macam orang kampung* (lit. covered in rusts or stains, like country people).

There is no waste or refuse disposal service; some of the squatters just dump their daily refuse on any wasteland that happens to be convenient and later burn it, collecting the ashes and using them to fertilize their flower and vegetable plants; while others throw their refuse into the nearby stream and swamp. To ease themselves, little children use the narrow drains or open spaces by their house - their excreta immediately devoured by hungry chickens and ducks or scooped with a hoe by attending adults to be buried or dumped on their vegetable plots. The rest of the people use the streams or pour-out or pit-

latrines, some of which are constructed along the railway tracks, some only two feet away, which shake each time a train passes by. During heavy rains and flash floods, which occur quite often, some of the refuse and human excreta in the kampung as well as from the neighbouring squatment, Kampung Reserve Keretapi, which is located on a slope, float about all over the place turning the whole area into a filthy and unhealthy place.

Such methods of waste and refuse disposal are typical of most squatments in the outskirts of the capital, at least in those that the writer visited. In crowded squatments close to the city centre, such as Kampung Toddy already referred, the disposal of waste and refuse is even more problematical. Unlike Kampung Selamat, there is no space to bury faeces or refuse and to burn rubbish is impossible without risking outbreaks of fire because some of the houses are very old, with roofs of dry, inflammable *nipah* (palm) leaves, covered with old polythene or linoleum sheets. On a couple of visits to Kampung Toddy, the writer noted the black stagnant drains clogged with litters and these drains which lined the narrow footways, about three feet wide, are located at the back of the rows of dwelling units. Dotted along the drains are toilet sheds and human excreta overflowed from what looked like collecting pails. Flies were everywhere and the stench was nauseating, yet the residents did not appear to be in the least bothered by it. Such scenes are repeated elsewhere in congested squatments in Kuala Lumpur, but not in Kampung Selamat or other squatments in the periphery of the city.

Such being the conditions of sewage and refuse disposal in the squatments in the capital, it is no wonder, as Khairuddin Yusof (1980:37) observes, that the

squatters are highly exposed to the risk of contracting communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, have a large number of cases of polio and that among their children worm infection is common. No medical research has been done on the residents of Kampung Selamat, but the writer believes Khairuddin Yusof's observations are applicable there, too. The signs are certainly there; quite a large number of children and adults, too, suffer from all kinds of skin diseases, particularly in the lower parts of their limbs and they, in particular the children, are prone to coughs and colds.

(c) Social Services

With the change in attitude of the government, both at the national and local levels towards the squatters from 1978, as referred to in Chapter I, a number of social services are now available to squatters. The City Hall, in conjunction with twelve other government departments in the Federal Territory, is implementing an integrated programme of human development, code-named *Program Nadi* (the Pulse Programme), whose main projects include kindergarten classes, income generating activities for women and mother and child health-care services, referred to generally as *Projek Sang Kancil* (The Mousedeer Projects). The Religious Department of the Federal Territory is sponsoring and financing religious education and the Ministry of National and Rural Development, under its *KEMAS, Kelas Kemajuan Masyarakat* (Community Development Classes) programme, is providing kindergarten as well as home science and religious classes for women. Kampung Selamat is one of the few kampungs which are beneficiaries of some of these special services. It has had a KEMAS kindergarten since September 1980,

domestic science and religious classes for women, also under KEMAS, since 1978 and a religious school for children, *Sekolah Ugama Rakyat*, set up by the Religious Department, also since 1978.

All these services are shared with the residents of the nearby squattments, Kampung Pantai Halt, Kampung Limau, Kampung Reserve Keretapi, Kampung Bukit C2 and with the residents of the nearby transit quarters as well. Apart from these services, Kampung Selamat has also been provided with a postal delivery service since 1975. The postman delivers mails to the area once a day, but he does not go to individual houses, he merely leaves them in the care of the keepers of the two sundry shops in the squatment who then inform the addressees of their letters by word of mouth.

(d) The Squatters

There are in Kampung Selamat (based on 1980 figures) 88 households, with a total population of 457, of whom 226 are adults and the rest children, and in terms of sex 237 are males, 220 females. The squatter population consists mainly of young people: 85% are below 35 years of age and of these 47% are children below the age of twelve.

The majority of the population are newcomers, having stayed in the squatment, on average, 7 years. Of the original pioneer squatters, only ten households remain, the rest having left either voluntarily or forced to move out. Those who left of their own accord, sold or rented out their houses to others. Families moved out for various reasons. For some, like the Kamaruddin family who owned house No.16, it was because the head of the household was

transferred elsewhere by his employer; others, like the Hood family who sold their house No.36 four years ago, it was to return, after the retirement of the household head, to their native village in Perak where they own land and have built a house. Yet others, like the Jamaluddin's family, who once owned house No.54, it was to move into a housing estate, as the children in the family had done reasonably well in their education to be able to secure high-income jobs, thus enabling them to move upwards socially. Those who were compelled to move out were the twenty-two households on the south side of the village, who were served notices of eviction by the City Hall as the land on which they squatted was needed by the authorities for the construction of transit quarters to house squatters displaced by physical urban development from elsewhere in the capital. The squatters who made way for the transit quarters were rehoused by the City Hall in low-cost housing in Kampung Congo, Cheras, and in the "squatter upgrading" and "sites and services" schemes in Sungai Besi.

Most of the squatters, especially the household heads, have been born outside Kuala Lumpur. Only two of the household heads interviewed were born in the squatment and they belong to the two families mentioned earlier as being the original inhabitants of the area who had resisted eviction orders in 1961. The rest of the household heads were all born in their respective states of origin - Selangor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Perak, Pahang, Johore, Kelantan and one was born in southern Thailand. Fifty-one household head came to the squatment direct from their native kampungs, while thirty-five came only after having stayed elsewhere in Kuala Lumpur, either in rented accommodation in private and public housing or in other squatments.

For seventy-six of the household heads, their arrival in Kuala Lumpur and the squatment was, unlike that of the ten pioneer squatters, kin-mediated, and for most of them, like for the pioneer squatters, their main motive in coming was to look for jobs. Only three household heads, all female, came to Kuala Lumpur to follow their respective spouses who have all since left them. And for another four household heads, their arrival in the capital was not to look for jobs. Three of them were already working, prior to migrating to Kuala Lumpur, in their respective states of Perak and Negeri Sembilan, and came to Kuala Lumpur with their family on transfer. As they were working in the public sector, i.e. with the National Electricity Board, the Malay Regiment and the Malayan Railway, they were entitled to and given government quarters where they lived until retirement; and it was only after retirement that they moved to live in Kampung Selamat. The other household head, however, never planned to live in the squatment at all. He and his wife came to visit their daughter in the kampung and had to extend their stay much longer than they ever expected because their daughter fell ill. Later, his son-in-law found him a job as a watchman at a factory in Petaling Jaya and he decided to stay on, renting a house next-door to his daughter's.

The residents of Kampung Selamat did not all become squatters because they had to. Only 80% of them squat because they have no other choice, but the rest can be described as voluntary squatters. This contradicts the assumption made by several writers on urban squatters in Kuala Lumpur, that squatters are all homogeneous, i.e. they are all poor and as such are forced to squat (Chan Kok Eng et. al., 1977; Ishak Shaari, 1977; Pirie, P. 1976; Judd, 1976). The category of voluntary squatters includes:

(1) Households where the combined household income exceeds \$1,000/- a month and thus can afford to rent accommodation in the private sector housing if they so desire. There is no shortage of private accommodation with a minimum monthly rent of \$300/-, if the advertisements in the newspapers, especially the Malay Mail, are anything to go by. In fact some people in this category were in fact living in rented private accommodation before coming to Kampung Selamat.

(2) Four cases of elderly couples who, on retirement from government service, decided to stay in the kampung instead of returning to their village of origin where they have land and a house of their own. One of them rented out the house he has in his native village for \$70/- a month. They chose to stay in Kampung Selamat primarily in order to be near their children who now live in Kuala Lumpur.

(3) The case of an elderly man and his wife mentioned earlier who came and had to attend to their sick daughter and extended their stay and later was persuaded to take a job and decided to stay on. Like (2) he and his wife were induced to stay by the desire to be with their children, four of whom are now in Kuala Lumpur, three of whom are squatters in the Pantai area.

(4) Two households who have houses in housing estates, one in Kuala Lumpur, the other in Petaling Jaya. The former is one of the beneficiaries of the 'squatter upgrading' programme, who was given the opportunity to buy a low-cost house which he did; but instead of staying in it, he chose to live in the

squatment and rent out the house for \$250/- a month. The latter bought a single-storey terrace house in Petaling Jaya several years ago and, like the former, rents it out.

(5) Three cases of households who were offered public housing but rejected the offer.

Voluntary squatting as found in Kampung Selamat is not confined to this squatment only; it is prevalent elsewhere in Kuala Lumpur. The authorities know of it; however, no attempts have been made so far to determine the numbers of the voluntary squatters. The writer, however, found many such squatters, especially in squatments on the outskirts of the city. Among those the writer met are staff of government departments and ministries, who include a high ranking civil servant with super-scale pay above \$3,000/- a month, businessmen as well as people holding low income jobs, such as factory workers, petty traders, cooks and domestic helps, but owning houses in some urban housing estates. One squatter, in particular, a cook working for a British expatriate, owns three single-storey terrace houses, and one squatter in Kampung Selamat, who left in 1979, owns five! The number of people in low-status jobs owning houses in the urban housing estates is very small, in the case of Kampung Selamat, only 2.2% of the households or 0.4% of the village population. These people are usually very discreet about such properties which they have acquired at great expense and sacrifice and would not disclose them to surveyors or researchers unknown to them, especially, as usually is the case, if they come briefly, spending only a few minutes at each door asking questions regarding their socio-economic background.

The reasons for squatting when they can afford not to as in the case of 20% of the squatters in Kampung Selamat are various. Perhaps the most important now is the opportunity to be given preference in the allocation of accommodation - flats, low-cost terrace houses in the 'site and services' or 'squatter upgrading' schemes, as the government has made it a policy to give preference to squatters, especially those affected by physical urban development. In addition, some developers, eager to begin construction works, sometimes pay squatters to move out. It is therefore considered a 'privilege' to be a squatter, but many people misuse this 'privilege'. For example, the squatter in Kampung Selamat, the one who has been given a low-cost housing in Kampung Congo when the squatment where he lived was involved in urban development and who now rents out his house in Kampung Congo, is of course hoping to and may get another public housing if Kampung Selamat is affected by some physical urban development in future. And if he does, he will probably rent out the flat, or whatever, and move again to yet another squatment and try to do the same thing again. This sort of abuse of the privilege given to the squatters is found also elsewhere in Kuala Lumpur. The writer met quite a few of such people who take advantage of the system and some of them even boasted of their success in 'outsmarting' the City Hall. They saw nothing wrong in what they were doing. One such person, in his late twenties, whom the writer met at the evacuation exercise in Kampung Katijah in Brickfields in January 1982 said, "Don't tell me what I'm doing is wrong. The politicians keep telling us to *berdikari* (stand on one's own feet, i.e. not to depend on the government) and to improve our economic conditions. I'm doing just that, in the way I know how." And pointing to a high ranking politician from the ruling party, who came to "supervise" the evacuation exercise, the young man said,

"See that man? What was he before? Now he is stinking rich and everybody knows that. How do you think he acquired his wealth? I am learning from people like him how to *berdikari*. If the authorities are stupid enough to allow themselves to be outsmarted by people like me, then they deserve to be cheated!"

The voluntary squatters, as well as the rest of the squatter population in Kampung Selamat also recognise the various advantages that can be gained from squatting and these advantages can be classified as economic and socio-cultural.

One important economic advantage of squatting in Kampung Selamat is its close proximity to places of employment. The squatters work in places within a radius of about two to seven miles from the squatment and in only two cases do they work in places about ten miles away. This means that transport costs are not very heavy and other savings can be made by coming home for lunch.

Next, squatter housing is cheap, especially if the squatter owns the house he lives in. The most difficult problem is how to raise the initial capital outlay to buy a squatter house or, if none is available, to build one. But once he has got his house, the squatter can live very cheaply indeed. Before 1979, a squatter house could be bought for between \$650/- and \$1,500/-; now, if one is available at all, a squatter house may cost between \$1,500/- and \$3,500/-. This is, nevertheless, considerably cheaper compared to non-squatter houses in the private or public sector. The cheapest house in the public sector costs at least \$45,000/- and in the private sector, as shown in Chapter II, at least \$80,000/-, i.e. twenty times more expensive than the squatter house; the latter, of

course, at that price, is a far superior house in every way compared to the squatter house. But the point is most squatters cannot afford that kind of money. If, on the other hand, a squatter wants to build his own house, this will work out even cheaper in the long run and he can begin with the very minimal structure that he can afford. In fact, as explained earlier in this chapter, this is what most of them have done: initially they build just a small hut consisting mainly of living quarters and kitchen, and then as time goes on and as their financial position improves, they improve it by building additional rooms, etc.

Once a squatter has a house of his own in the squatment he is assured of the cheapest means of living in the capital city. He can live in it practically free, for as long as he likes unless, of course, he gets evicted; he does not have to worry about rates or quit rents like the rest of the urban house owners. Thus, by living in a squatment a squatter can make substantial savings in expenditure and maybe make some extra money as illustrated by the case of household No.24.

The head of this household, who is a bachelor, was staying in a rented accommodation in Jalan Pantai Baru, paying \$300/- a month before taking up residence in Kampung Selamat in 1979. He bought over a house in the village from his cousin who was leaving the squatment because he had bought a house in a public housing estate in Cheras. He paid his cousin \$1,500/- for the house, using all his life savings. Since then he has not paid anything on accommodation. And he has been saving on water bills as water is supplied free by the authorities to the squatters in the squatment. In addition to all these savings, he has been making extra money by taking in two

lodgers who pay him a total of \$100/- a month.

Not all owner-occupiers in Kampung Selamat are able to take in lodgers and profit from squatting. All the same, like the owner of house No.24, all the squatter owner-occupiers do save a lot on accommodation and water bills. Some are also able to augment their wage income by using whatever available ground space in the squatment for home gardening and fowl rearing. Almost 60% of the households keep a small plot planted with various types of vegetables and fruit trees, such as *kacang panjang*, *kacang belimbing*, *chillies*, lemon grass, maize, sugar-cane, bananas, star fruit, *rambutan*, *papaya*, etc. In eighty of the households studied fowls are kept and in one of them even goats, ten goats.

Thus, for the owner-occupier in the squatment, squatting is not only a cheap way to live in the capital city and to save expenditure but also a way of making some extra money. In addition, owning a house is a status symbol apart from the sense of security that it provides. He has his free accommodation, something that is denied other paying tenants and house owners.

Squatter tenants, too, enjoy certain economic advantages by staying in the squatment. House rents in Kampung Selamat are definitely much cheaper than elsewhere in Kuala Lumpur. Rents in the squatment range from \$30/- to \$75/- a month, depending on the size and general condition of the house, facilities provided and its location in relation to the road and communal taps. Houses which are let for \$30/- a month usually consist of only a room and a kitchen and those let at \$75/- a month have three spacious rooms and a bathroom and have electricity supply. Such low rents are not available anywhere in

non-squatter areas. A room in the private housing sector can cost as high as \$100/- to rent per month and the cheapest dwelling unit, i.e. the single-storey terrace house, as alluded to in Chapter II, would cost between \$200/- and \$250/- a month in rent. Thus, by electing to stay in the squatment, squatters do save substantially on rents. At least three of the tenants in Kampung Selamat choose to stay in the squatment not because they cannot find accommodation elsewhere but simply in order to avoid high rents outside. They were living in rented private accommodations before coming to the squatment.

Like the owner-occupiers, squatter tenants, too, are involved in home gardening and in keeping fowls to supplement their income. To these tenants, these are some of the fringe benefits to be derived from renting accommodation in the squatment. In other words, they are free from rules and regulations, unlike the 'legal' residential areas.

Another important aspect of squatting very frequently emphasized by the residents of Kampung Selamat is its socio-cultural advantages. Most of them say that they want to be able to carry on their religious and customary practices and to them the squatment provides the necessary conditions and environments for them to do so. Like in the traditional Malay kampung, the population of Kampung Selamat is entirely Malay. They are all Muslims and share certain common customs or *adat* and their life revolves round the *surau* (prayer house) and to some extent the *dewan* (community hall), and the squatter environments resemble almost in all respects, except size, those of the traditional Malay kampung. In such a setting, the squatters say they can carry out their religious and customary practices as they have been doing in the rural

areas, some of which emphasize communal participation. Thus, in the squatment, religious classes for children are conducted at the squatment *surau* or occasionally at the house of the squatment *ustaz* or *guru ugama* (religious teacher) and usually in a group. There are other religious rites which are performed communally, such as the Friday congregational prayers and the *Hari Raya* (Muslim festival) prayers; even the five daily prayers, Muslims are encouraged to perform in groups whenever possible. Such religious practices and some others, the squatter point out, can be carried out much more easily and effectively in the squatment where the entire community is Muslim, unlike in most urban housing estates where the residents are racially and culturally mixed. The squatters also point out that there a number of Malay *kenduri* (feasts), to celebrate religious occasions and perform *rites de passage* and these *kenduris* require ample ground space since they involve communal cooking and eating and these have to be done outside the house under makeshift structures or tents. Although in some cases the houses in the squatment are quite close together, there are always open spaces available in between most houses which, the squatters say, can be used for the tents or temporary sheds; whereas, in the normal urban housing estates, such open spaces are difficult, if not impossible, to find.

The squatment, too, provides space for children to play; some houses may be only a few feet apart, but there is always space for children to play. And this, it seems, is something that mothers appreciate since they can keep an eye on the children while doing their housework. In a sense it is an ideal situation: children are not confined indoors all the time as they would be in a flat, and yet when they want to play outside they are not forced to wander too far away from the house. Even the haphazard way the houses are arranged seems to be an advantage for

it, according to some housewives, permits close intercourse between neighbours. Residents of one household are able to converse with those in the next house without even leaving their house and some houses are built at such an angle to each other that one neighbour can sit or stand by her window talking to another sitting on her front steps or kitchen door.

It is clear therefore that squatting has a number of advantages and to the squatter these advantages, it seems, far outweigh the shortcomings that are found in the squatment, such as lack of basic urban amenities as already explained. Many of the squatters, especially women, are not particularly concerned about the lack of modern amenities. They say they are already used to even worse conditions in their kampungs of origins. 80% of those interviewed consider their living conditions in the squatment satisfactory, better than in their respective kampungs of origin. 90% of them state that they would rather go on living in Kampung Selamat than be moved into public housing which, in most cases, means living in high-rise blocks of flats, although such public housing is usually provided with all the basic urban amenities. This preference for the squatment to flats or other types of public housing is exemplified by the case of three households who were offered such accommodations but turned them down.

Case 1. This involves a household headed by a deserted wife. Her house was one of those to be demolished in 1979 when part of the area in the squatment was recovered by City Hall to make way for physical developments. Like the rest of those affected by the Government land recovery programme, she was offered a house under the 'Sites and Services' housing scheme, which she had to buy from the authorities with mortgage provided at an interest rate of only 5% per annum. She rejected the offer and

insisted on staying put in the squatment. Her decision to stay on is governed by a number of considerations: firstly, she does not want to disrupt the pattern of her life and that of her children. Moving out of the squatment would mean that her work routine would be seriously affected as the 'Sites and Services' housing scheme is located about ten miles away from where she works and public transport in the area is not easily available. She may even have to leave her job if she accepts the offer of the new house. Secondly, the thought of buying the house on mortgage worried her a lot, for the fixed monthly repayment would not only take quite a large slice of her wage packet but also would put her into serious difficulties if she should become unemployed and lose her regular income. Her job is after all on a contract basis and once the contract is over she is not sure if it would be renewed or if she would be able to get another job.

Case 2. This involves a squatter who also had the opportunity to buy a house in the Government housing scheme. In his case, he bought the house on mortgage, but after living in it for a couple of months, he decided to leave and go back to the squatment, renting his house out for \$250/- a month. In this way he is able to make some money from the new house as he pays only \$150/, in mortgage repayment every month, while at the same time stay in a free accommodation in Kampung Selamat, for the house in the squatment belongs to his father who resides in the neighbouring squatment of Pantai Dalam who does not want to charge his son any rents.

Case 3. This involves a household who was offered a flat by City Hall but rejected it in favour of the squatment. He thinks the two-bedroom flat offered was too small for his family of eight and very inconvenient since it was on the top floor of the block. He has, it seems, heard about the problems of water shortage and frequent lift breakdowns in some high-rise blocks of flats in Kuala Lumpur. And above all, he seems put off by stories that go round Kuala Lumpur about some people who have died in high-rise block of flats who could not be brought down because either the lifts were not working or the staircase was too narrow, so much so that the corpses had to be held upright, as a result of which a new term, it seems, was coined "*mati tegak*" (lit. dying upright), while bringing them down. For all these reasons, he decided to turn down the flat and chose the squatment instead.

Squatting therefore has several economic and socio-cultural advantages. For a few, the economic reason is the most important. Such people buy or build squatter houses not only to live in but to rent out as well. As a result in Kampung Selamat today, as in other squattments in Kuala Lumpur, as alluded to in Chapter II, there are several categories of squatters, depending on their relation to the house they occupy. First, there are the squatters who own the house in which they live, i.e. they are owner-occupiers. Some of the owner-occupiers may have extra houses which they rent out, giving rise to the second category of squatters, i.e. the owner-occupier-cum-landlords. Their tenants form the third category, i.e. tenant-squatters. In addition, there are also a small number of absentee-landlords who are not *de facto* squatters but may be regarded as squatters because they derive income from owning properties in the squatment.

Of the total number of households in the squatment, 75 of them are owner-occupiers; the rest are tenant-squatters. Only 30 of the 75 owner-occupiers have built their own houses themselves; the rest have bought their houses from the previous squatters. It is of course cheaper to build your own house - now and then - than to buy ready-made house from someone else and of course the costs of building or buying a house have gone up considerably over the years. In 1967, it cost the ten pioneer squatters only about \$300/- each to build their own house, though as time went by more and more money was spent on its improvement. In the seventies, it cost a squatter \$1,500/- in materials alone. Towards the end of the seventies, it cost a squatter approximately \$5,000/- to have his house rebuilt. It is not possible to obtain the exact figure of the cost of building or rebuilding since the

squatters never keep records of money spent on their houses and they never take into account labour costs. Those who build their own houses do not put monetary value on those employed in the construction and erection of the houses. A house is usually built on a do-it-yourself basis or on a *gotong-royong* or communal-help basis; in either case, the labour expended is considered free.

Buying a house is a much more expensive affair and the actual price paid depends on a number of factors, such as the condition of the house, the materials used, etc. Some of the squatters who bought their houses before 1975 claim that they paid between \$600/- and \$1,500/- for their house. The increase in house price is not due to inflation alone, it is also partly due to restrictions imposed by City Hall on squatter expansion which means, in theory at least, that the number of squatter houses available in the Federal Territory remains constant. While curbing the expansion of squatments which creates an artificial shortage of squatter houses, the government at the same time, as alluded to earlier, have announced a policy of giving priority to squatters when allocating government-built houses or flats or alternative sites, which encourages people to think that the surest way of getting a government house or flat or a housing site is by becoming a squatter. This has inevitably led to a greater demand for squatter houses which in turn fuels the upward spiral of squatter house price.

The squatter landlords, resident in Kampung Selamat or not, are mostly the pioneer squatters of the squatment. In the absence of strict laws against squatting in the sixties and early seventies, many squatters built extra houses to rent out for extra income. Many of those with extra houses have sold their houses to their tenants in the

last two years, partly out fear of the consequences of the tougher measures and actions taken by City Hall in controlling squatting since 1978, and partly in order to avoid possible losses in the event that the land is reclaimed by the authorities, for in such cases compensations are paid to the occupants of the squatter houses and not the owners. Some squatter landlords have sold their extra house or houses simply in order to raise money to improve the houses in which they live. Some resident landlords, however, continue to defy the authorities and keep their houses, including those they rent out.

The number of landlords is now reduced to only six resident and four absentee landlords. One of the resident landlords own five houses, four of which are rented out; the rest own only two each, occupying one and letting the other. Of the absentee landlords, two were previously residents of Kampung Selamat; when they moved out they decided to rent their houses out instead of selling them. As for the other two, it is believed that they have never been squatters in the squatment; they bought houses in the squatment, it seems, in order to earn some extra income.

The squatter tenants are the transient population of the squatment; they move in and out of the squatment with some rapidity; they regard their stay in Kampung Selamat as temporary, biding time for an opportunity to buy a house in the squatment either from their landlord or someone else. The writer's investigation reveals that on the whole tenants have lived in Kampung Selamat between six months and two years.

CHAPTER IV

THE SQUATTER COMMUNITY: ITS ECONOMY AND SOCIAL NETWORK

Chapter II explained in broad terms the history of squatting in Malaya with special reference to the development of squatter settlements in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. Chapter III examined closely the formation and development of one such settlement, i.e. a Malay squatter settlement of Kampung Selamat and traced the squatters' early introduction to political organization and politicians in the urban context in their attempt to resist eviction. This chapter focuses on the life of the squatters as it was at the time of fieldwork, i.e. between 1980 and 1983, and analyses their socio-economic organization - the squatter community, its economy and social network - and establishes and explains the squatters' need to associate themselves closely with a political party in power.

4.1 The Squatter Community

In Kampung Selamat as well as in any other Malay squatment that the writer visited, there is a considerable amount of integration among the squatter population. Individualism is practically unknown and the interest of the community almost always takes precedence over that of the individuals. There is an overwhelming need to conform or in their local vernacular to be *macam orang lain* (lit. to be like other people), and not to relate to the rest of the community and get involved is considered bad and frowned upon. Such people are described as *macam kera sumbang* (lit. misfit monkey) which, in this little kampung, is

clearly an undesirable state. To the squatters what is of paramount importance is that they should *hidup bermasyarakat* (lit. live as a community) and such 'living' is underlined by *tolong menolong* (lit. helping one another) and *bersatu* (lit. to unite, to have unity).

The squatters live in a closely knit and cohesive community. The informal method of recruiting new residents, i.e. the kin and friend-mediated procedures, ensures that only people who are tolerant of and care for each other reside in the kampung. The population is related by ties of kinship, affinity and friendship and that the relationship between them is very close is manifested in the terms of personal address and reference used among them. Kinship terminology is used to refer to or address other people in the kampung. The elderly are always addressed by the young as *tok*, short for *datok* (in the case of males), *nenek* or *wan*, short for *uwan* (in the case of females), which are terms used for 'grandfather' and 'grandmother'. Those who are parents and relatively younger than the 'toks' and 'wans', are called *pak*, short for *bapak* (father) and *mak*, short for *emak* (mother). Children address others older than themselves as *abang* (elder brother) or *kakak* (elder sister), sometimes adding the names of the persons addressed after the teknonym. The younger ones are addressed as *adik* (younger brother or sister) or simply called by their respective names. Such forms of personal address, which are in fact terms used within a family unit, are extended to the whole community. This practice, apart from reflecting the general polite tendencies noticeable among rural Malays, also show that the squatters tend to regard themselves as members of one big family, despite the fact that not all of them are related to one another by ties of kinship. That such patterns of personal reference and address are not used to others,

such as residents of the next squatter kampung, visitors or new residents who have just arrived, seem to prove the point further. Outsiders are addressed as *cik*, short for *encik* (Mr., Miss or Mrs) followed by their names and in the case of people known to them as of a high status or holding a high office, the term *tuan* (Sir, Mr.) is used in the case of males and *cik puan* (Madam, Mrs) in the case of females.

There is a sense of belonging to a single group. Very often the people refer to themselves as *kita*, *orang kampung ini* (we, the people of this village) as opposed to *orang lain* (other people). They do not see themselves as just any squatters, but squatters of Kampung Selamat. They relate to the outside world, especially with the urban authorities, as a group. This group has a leader chosen from among themselves and it has a power structure which, as will be seen in a later chapter, is based on the local political party branch and which is responsible for organizing community functions, regulating internal order and external relations with the various government agencies in the capital. In fact this community can be described as relatively well-organized, comparable to such squatters in other Third World countries as those studied by Mangin (Peru), Safa, H.I. (Puerto Rico), Perlman, J. (Rio de Janeiro), Laquian and Feldman (the Philippines) Ross (Kenya), Lomnitz (Venezuela), Lloyd, P. (Peru), to mention only a few.

At the sub-community level one finds the squatters dividing themselves into informal groups. Such divisions, which can pose a threat to community solidarity, are based on such factors as sub-ethnic identity and common state or district of origin. The squatters arrived in Kuala Lumpur from various states in Malaya; "in each of these states the

Malays have their own dialects and local customs which are expressed in their style of dressing, cooking recipes, etc. People from each district or state show preference for each other's company and try as far as possible to have their houses close to one another. In the same way, Malays of different sub-ethnic categories, too, tend to congregate among themselves. Malays who consider themselves *Melayu betul* (real Malays) differentiate themselves from those of other descent such as the Javanese, Banjar or Minangkabau Malays. Each group has its own language; while the Malay language used by the *Melayu betul* is not only mutually intelligible among those who come from different states, but it is also understood by the Minangkabau Malays; but the Javanese language or the Banjarese is almost totally unintelligible to the other Malays. And the Javanese and Banjarese tend to use their mother tongues when in each other's company.

People from different states and sub-ethnic categories hold certain stereotyped views of each other. For example, others see the Javanese as industrious and hard-working, especially in manual work, and as prone to practising black magic (*ilmu*); the Banjarese are typecast as somewhat primitive; the male people from Negeri Sembilan are regarded as female-dominated and those from Kelantan are considered good at business with their women inclined to 'steal' other women's husbands through sexual seduction. Such stereotypes are used and discarded entirely at their own convenience. When the squatters feel the need for unity for one reason or another, they dismiss them as myths, *cakap orang* (lit. what people say), but in circumstances where there is conflict between persons from different states or of sub-ethnic categories, some are quick to use these stereotypes, i.e. the negative ones, as a means of discrediting their opponents.

Their adherence to a common religion, Islam, from which they derive many of their common cultural practices as well as the wide use of the Malay language clearly help to counteract these divisive tendencies arising out of differences in sub-ethnic categories or place of origin. Within the family and among their kin and friends, they may see themselves as Javanese or Malays from Perak, etc., but outside such social boundaries, they are *orang Melayu* (Malays) and Muslims. They are Malays who have become squatters and who face continual external threat and as such consider it vitally important to discard their internal differences. They have to *bersatu* (be united) as the squatters would say, for without unity they see no way of meeting the external threat and keeping their land; they would, as they say, be doomed (*jahanamlah kita*).

(a) The Squatter Family and Household

Community solidarity, as explained above, can be seen as an extension of that which occurs at the level of the family and household. The family is the basic social unit; family members usually live in the same house and as such a family and household unit are in most cases synonymous. Between the family and household members, there is a great deal of cooperation.

The average size of the squatter household is 5.5 persons, which is slightly lower than the average size of an urban household in Malaysia, which is estimated to be 5.8 persons. Less than half of the total number of households, i.e. 45% of them, are of the nuclear type, consisting of the husband, his wife and their children. In six of the nuclear households, some young children of the family live elsewhere. In one case, one son is attending a

residential school in Kelantan, in his first year (1980) at one of the country's elite secondary schools. In the other five cases, the young children are staying with their grandparents, usually the mothers' parents, in the countryside.

29% of the total number of households are the extended family type in which the nuclear family is joined by relatives either of the husband or of the wife. These relatives are usually adults or youths who have come to seek jobs in Kuala Lumpur. In some cases, the relatives are elderly ladies, usually the wives' mothers, who have been invited to come and stay in order to help mind the children and do light household chores, especially if the wives are in full-time employment. The relatives could also be brothers, sisters or cousins who are working their way through their upper secondary education, college or university and cannot afford to live elsewhere.

About 8 or 10% of the total number of households consist of young unmarried people of the same sex who are often related to one another. One of the joint-households comprises six female university students; four of male factory workers and the other three of girls working in a factory and an hotel.

The remaining 16% of the households consist of husband and wife, one of single persons and two of a single parent family headed by the mother.

One very noticeable feature of the squatter households is the absence of people living outside marriage. Consensual unions or extra-marital relations which seem to be widespread among the urban poor of South America and Africa (Safa, 1974; Lewis, 1966; Lloyd,

1980 & Ross, 1973) are unknown and unheard of in Kampung Selamat or, for that matter, elsewhere in Malay squatterments in the capital city. Such relationships are frowned upon as they are sinful, against the teachings of their religion and any possibility of such a relationship developing is quickly prevented by ensuring that the people involved get married properly. Marriage is seen as the only proper basis for a family life and marriage, as far as can be ascertained, is stable. Of all those who are married in the Kampung, only two (3%) have been divorced, which is a very low rate of divorce compared to that for the rest of the urban population which, in some cases, e.g. Petaling Jaya, is estimated at 25% per annum (Aziah Kassim, 1982). The low divorce rate does not mean that their marriage is without acrimony; husbands and wives are known to have quarrelled, some frequently, but friends and relatives always come to their rescue by helping them sort out their differences.

In most cases, wives are taken from their places of origin in the countryside, usually arranged for by the family, or in case of individual's choice, approved by the family. This probably partially explains why divorce is not so common for, as some elderly people in the squatment explain, the match-making in an arranged marriage is not done lightly but very carefully taking into consideration such factors as compatibility, suitability and complementarity as well as family genealogy and backgrounds. Once a marriage has taken place, the wife comes to live in the squatment and the husband immediately assumes the role of the household head with responsibility to support and provide for the family. The wife's economic contributions to the family are seen as secondary; she is expected to put her household duties before her job, if she has one. Her place is in the home

and she is referred to by her husband as *orang rumah saya* (the person or woman of my house); to her, the husband is her *suami* (husband), with authority over her and whom she cannot even call by name.

The average household consists of young people. The average age of household heads (in 1980) is 35 years. Only in seven households are the husbands and wives elderly, above 50 years old. In most households there are children of school age as well as younger ones. All children of school age are sent to the local State school where education is free though not compulsory. This largely secular education is supplemented with religious education at the *Sekolah Ugama Rakyat* (Peoples' Religious School) in the squatment outside normal school hours. 'Studying' is seen as children's main duty and this obsession with children's education reflects the squatters' high hopes and expectations and stem from their belief that only through education can upward mobility be achieved. This belief is not unsubstantiated. Quite a number of 'squatter' children have gone to college, found good jobs and moved out of the squatment, in two cases taking their parents with them.

When children grow up and start work, they are expected, if their workplace is within distance, to continue to stay with their parents until they get married and to contribute to the household expenditure; they are expected to continue their contributions even after they have left home. The writer found only one case in which this expectation was not met, that of a working girl who left home to stay with friends in a rented house in a non-squatter area. This made the mother extremely angry, so much so that each time they meet, they quarrel with the mother accusing her daughter of disloyalty and

and bringing shame on the family and the daughter accusing her mother of selfishness. Such incidents are, however, very rare indeed. The members of a nuclear family in the squatterment usually try their level best to abide by the family code of conduct and carry out their duties and obligations to the best of their ability. Keeping on good terms with one another - between husband and wife, parent and child and among siblings - is viewed as extremely important for, to the squatters, family members are their main source of help in times of need and crises. And such times come quite often in the life of the squatters, given their low income and job instability and insecurity, as will be seen in Section 4.2. With no State aid for the unemployed and minimal welfare assistance for the poor, the family is the only supportive mechanism that is available to the individuals. Family ties therefore are an insurance against future misfortunes and hardships.

(b) Extra Household Ties

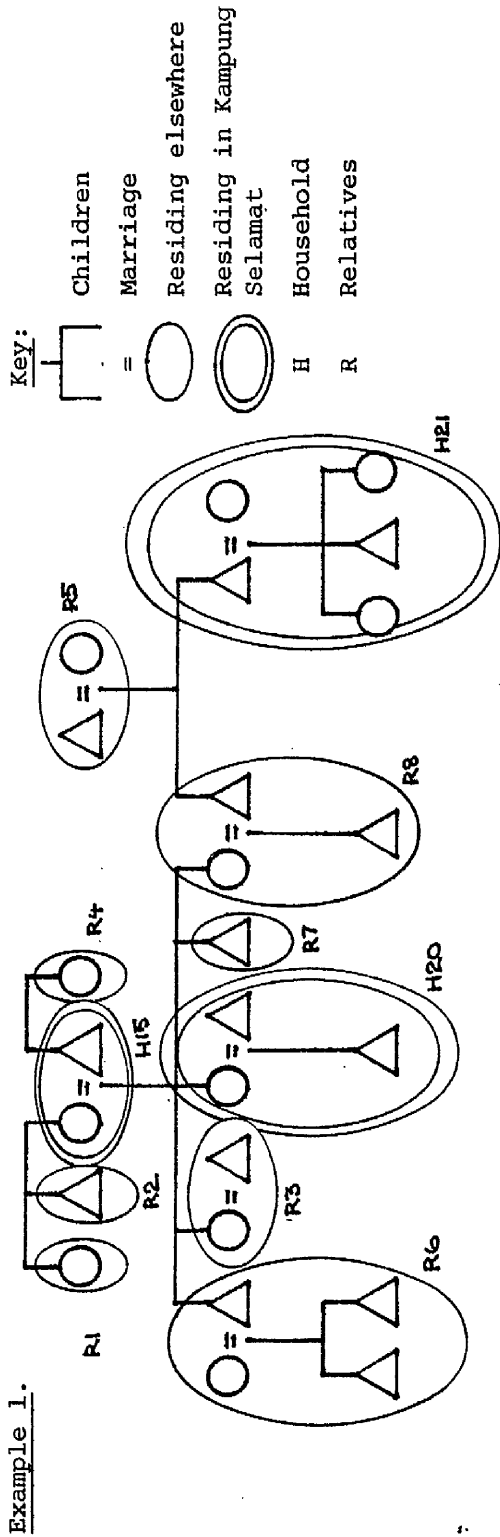
Many squatter households, as alluded to earlier, are bound by ties of kin and affinity as well as those of friendship. Friends of a family occasionally become fictive kin, i.e. *saudara angkat* (foster siblings) or *anak angkat* (foster children) through an informal process of incorporation. The process is simple and without much ceremony. What usually happens is, the friend who wishes to be incorporated into a particular family simply expresses his desire to the head of the family concerned or to his wife. In most cases they would be only too glad and ready to accept, not only because of their close relationship but also because of the economic value and the prestige to be gained by having *saudara angkat* or *anak angkat*. A family has to have certain qualities for someone to wish or choose

to be incorporated into it.

Several households with real and fictive ties of kin and affinity and of friendship interact very closely with each other and establish mutual cooperation. Their relationships are multiplex: they could be workmates on the factory floor, members of the local political party, the men may join the same religious groups for weekly rituals and the women could be classmates in the village domestic science or religious classes. Such relationships, for the average squatter, are the core of his social networks in the capital city. Outside the boundary of Kampung Selamat, some squatters do have relatives but contact with them is often limited by geographical and social distance. The constraints of time and money confine social interactions with relatives living elsewhere in the city to the imperatives. A visit is made when an urban relative is ill, has an accident, is dead or when he holds a *kenduri* (feast) to celebrate a *rite-de-passage* such as a wedding, but not otherwise. A few who have better-off relatives living in non-squatter areas, such as the middle-class residential areas, sometimes choose not to visit them for fear of bringing shame on them, unless of course it is absolutely necessary.

In addition to kin ties in the squatterment, all squatters have relatives in their respective villages of origin, (see Figures 7, 8 & 9 for examples of squatters' kin networks). The relationship with such kin is limited, too, by geographical distance. But in social terms, the squatters are by no means distant from them. Letters through the post keep them informed of each other's state of affairs and some squatters send money regularly to their country relatives and seek the latter's help in taking care of their children by sending the children to stay in

EXAMPLES OF NETWORKS OF KIN AND AFFINITY OF KAMPUNG SELAMAT

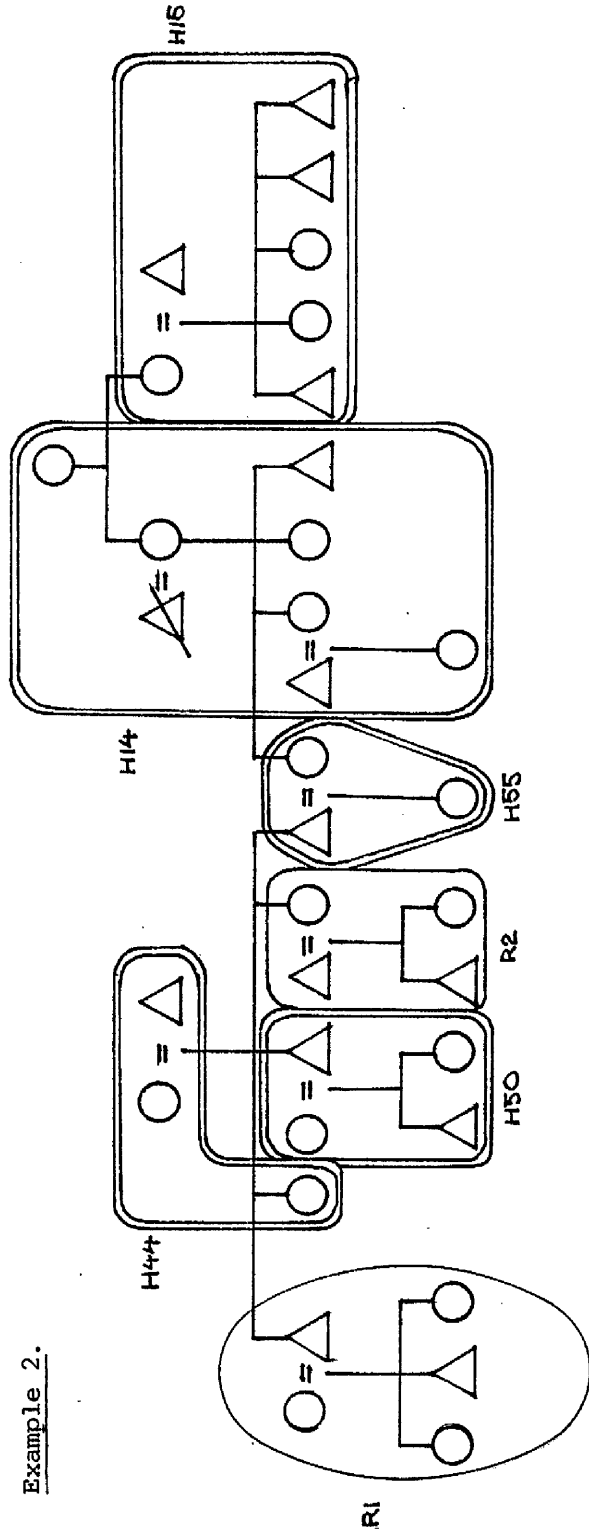


H19, H20, H21 in Kampung Selamat; R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, in their kampung of origin in Ulu Perak; R6 in the neighbouring squatment of Kampung Limau; R7 in Sungai Besi Army Camp, 3 miles away; R8 in Kampung Kerinci flats $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile away.

FIGURE 7
FAMILIES FROM ULU PERAK

Note: Figures 7, 8 & 9 are to be read with reference to Figure 4.

Example 2.



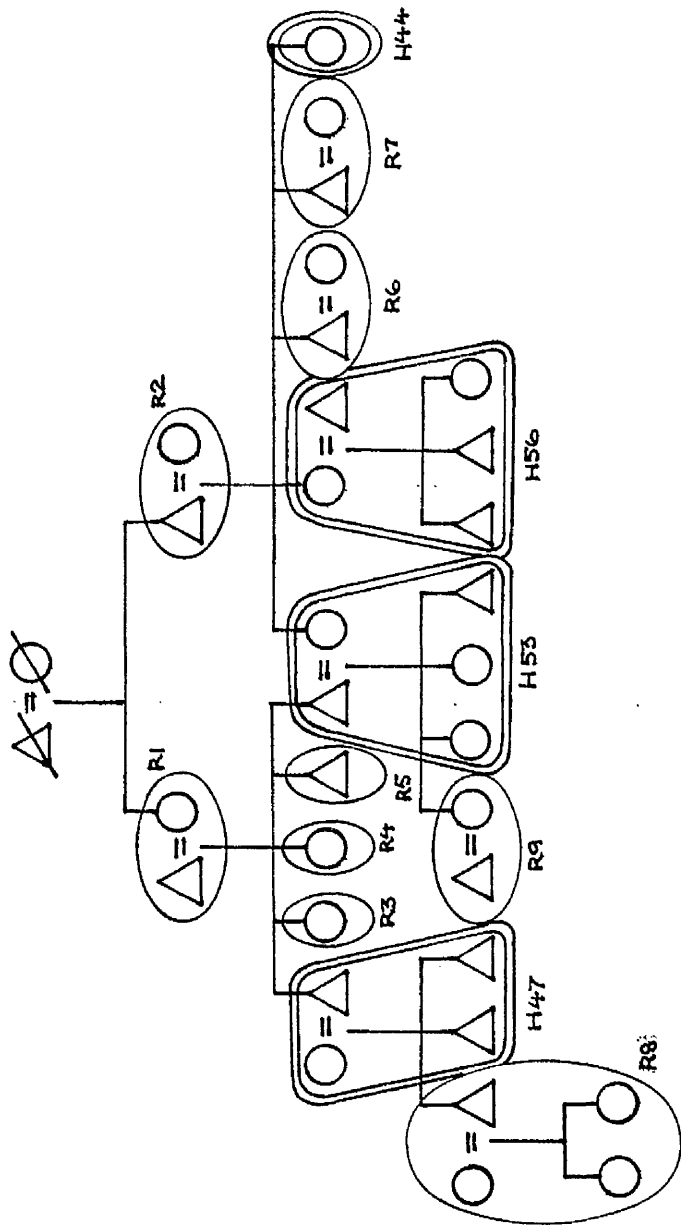
H44, H50, H55, H14, H15 are households in Kampung Selamat; R1 is household in the adjacent squatment of Kampung Reserve Ketapi; R2 is a household in a squatment in Kampung Datuk Keramat 8 miles away.

Note: H44 and H14 are pioneer squatters; they were already living in the area before it became a squatment.

FIGURE 8

FAMILIES FROM KLANG, SELANGOR

Example 3.



H44, H47, H53, H56 households in Kampung Selamat; R1, R2, R3, R4, R6, R7 in their kampung of origin in Batang Berjuntai; R5 in railway quarters 3 miles away; R8 in the middle-class residential area in Petaling Jaya and R9 in the squatment of Abdull Hukum $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile away.

Note: Heads of H53 and H56 are also first cousins; in H44, the house is shared with another female relative.

FIGURE 9
FAMILIES FROM BATANG BERJUNTAI, SELANGOR

the kampung in the country. Visits are exchanged; the squatters return to the countryside on such occasions as the religious festivals of *Hari Raya* which come twice a year, during school holidays and during the fruit and harvest seasons; and the country relatives reciprocate by staying with the squatter relatives while looking for jobs or when they come to see some important events or national celebrations which may take place in the capital.

While the squatters regard their link with their country relatives as extremely important, they are also aware that such ties assume little relevance to their day to day living in the squatment. Their relationships with kin in the countryside serve long-term objectives, while those with their neighbours, friends and kin in the squatment serve both long and immediate-term needs. In their everyday life, it is their social networks in the squatment that matter; such networks are crucial to their very survival.

Mutual cooperation or, in their local parlance, *tolong menolong*, is the essence of the relationship between closely-interrelated households. There is a continuous and intensive process of exchange among them which involves goods and services, which has important socio-economic significance. Socially, it gives them a sense of security and makes life easier; economically, as will be explained in greater detail in Section 4.2, it cushions some against destitution and helps others maintain a standard of living higher than that which their economic means would normally permit.

Cooperation between a cluster of friends and kin takes various forms. Life's crises, such as death, accidents, illness and birth, are some of the important

occasions when the help of close friends and relatives is enlisted. The case of household No.88 provides an excellent illustration of how such help is given. The wife, Minah, suffered from cancer of the breast and had to be admitted to the local hospital for a mastectomy on both breasts in 1981. This inevitably caused extreme hardship to her family, especially as there was no one to mind the children when her husband went out to work and the husband could not take time off work because they could not afford the loss of income. What made matters worse was that although the mastectomy was pronounced successful, it left Minah psychologically maladjusted, almost deranged. Fortunately for her, close friends rallied round, looked after her children, brought cooked food for the family and took turns to visit her during her one month's stay in the hospital. The value of the assistance given was fully acknowledged and appreciated by Minah, who said on her return from the hospital, "Without my friends in this kampung, I don't know what would have happened. My children could have starved to death. I could have gone completely mad. I was so upset when my breasts were removed that I felt suicidal. But my friends came, almost daily; they comforted and consoled me. Oh, they are such good people."

Minah's experience is not unique; such form of mutual help among close friends and relatives is common in the squatment. There is always the readiness to help in whatever way they can; monetary help is given if they can afford it, otherwise the help is in kind or services. Sometimes, such cooperation and mutual help is not confined to times of crisis only. In day to day living manifestations of mutual help and cooperation abound. A man who runs out of badly needed cash may get a temporary loan from a neighbour. A woman who has to go

out on some urgent errands leaves her children in the care of a friend or relative, secure in the knowledge that the children will not only be taken good care of but also fed and sometimes washed. The mother will reciprocate at some future date, not perhaps exactly in the same way, but in some form or other, to a greater or lesser degree. They are, as a result of the mutual help, indebted to each other or as they describe it *terhutang budi* (debt of deeds) and such debts, as explained in Chapter II, can never be fully repaid which more or less compels the parties concerned to keep the mutual help and cooperation going almost indefinitely.

One area in which ties of kin and friends play a very significant role is in the distribution of water which is very scarce in the squatment. Water, as already explained in Chapter III, is supplied to the kampung through three communal stand-pipes which the squatters share with their neighbours, the squatters of Kampung Reserve Keretapi. With the ratio of stand-pipes to population being one to two hundred, it is indeed a constant struggle to obtain water for daily use. And the squatters use quite a lot of water; they bathe at least twice a day, wash clothes practically every day and those who pray need water for ablution five times a day. All this is in addition to their requirements for cooking. There is always a rush and a queue for water at the stand-pipes and housewives who are entrusted with the responsibility for obtaining and storing water utilize their social networks to get water.

The stand-pipes, each with three taps, are connected to people's houses using long stretches of rubber hoses; the hoses are connected to the taps when water is needed and disconnected after use. There is no fixed time-table or rota for people who wish to draw water from the

from the stand-pipes; it is entirely on the basis of first come first served. A man may wake up very early one morning and find a tap free; he fixes his hose to it, fills the storage tank at his house asking his wife to see that it is properly filled and at the same time asking his friend or relative if she wants water next. If she does, she then takes over the use of the tap and after she has finished with it, she passes on the use of the tap to another friend or neighbour and so it goes on until everyone in the small circle of friends and relatives gets his or her turn. As one house may take over two hours to have its tank or tanks filled, it is hardly surprising that it sometimes takes one whole day before everyone in the group gets his turn and only after that can someone outside the group get a chance to use the tap.

A woman who does not belong to any such group, for example a newcomer, is likely to encounter great difficulty in getting into the water queue. Sooner or later she will be compelled to align herself and her family with some group or other in the social networks that operate in the kampung and until that is done, she will find it almost impossible to get water using the rubber hose. Under the present unwritten code of practice regulating the use of the public stand-pipes, only one option is open to her, i.e. to fetch water using buckets. She cannot remove a rubber hose that is connected to a tap and replace it with her own without the permission of the owner and such permission, if sought, is most unlikely to be granted. What she can do is to disconnect the hose briefly to fill her buckets and then replace it. Taking water in buckets is a tedious, cumbersome and time-consuming task and it can be a terrible burden to a woman with a large family whose house is situated some distance from the stand-pipes. There is therefore a great need for her to establish

inter-household cooperation with her neighbours for this reason, if not anything else.

Other instances of cooperation between kin, affines and friends designed to help them cope with the rigours of their life are too numerous to mention one by one. Such cooperation has important economic significance as the following section will illustrate.

4.2 The Squatters' Economy

In the current literature on squatters in the developing countries, the squatter population is always identified as the worst of the urban poor. In some works, like that of Juppenlatz, M. (1970), attempts are made to measure the extent of such poverty by looking, in his case, into the squatters' basic requirements for food and comparing the costs of buying such requirements with their income. Others simply put forward as proof of poverty the living conditions of the squatters, their ramshackle huts with their meagre belongings and the unsanitary conditions within and around the huts, the congested living and many other observable negative attributes of the squatment. The general assumption is that squatters are poor. But are all of them poor all over the world?

Poverty is not always easy to define as its meaning varies in time and space. In the case of Malaysia, poverty is usually determined by comparison to the official poverty line which, in 1977, is an income of \$275/- (Malaysian) per month for an urban household of five. And researchers on urban squatters, such as Ishak Shaari (1979), have arrived at the conclusion that the Kuala Lumpur squatters

are indeed poor by using this method.

Ishak Shaari's work, like the few other studies on urban squatters in the capital, is based on random samplings in selected communities; there is therefore some room for doubting the applicability of his findings to other squatters not included in his survey. The writer's present work, as will be explained, shows that although there is some germ of truth in Ishak Shaari's conclusion, it is not entirely correct to assume that everyone who resides in a squatment in Kuala Lumpur is poor. In Chapter III it is stated that there is plenty of evidence to show that some of the squatters are really quite well-off if not exactly rich. There are variations in income between squatters of different localities, between squatters of different ethnic squatments, just as there are variations in the incomes of squatters within a single community. This last and the extent of the variations can be clearly seen in the case of Kampung Selamat.

For the people of this kampung, the sources of their income lie outside the boundary of the squatment. They are dependent on the urban occupational structure for their living and their main income is derived largely from paid employment. Their economy is a cash economy and they require cash to live even if they were to live on the barest minimum. And a minimum standard of living is not exactly what they have come to the capital for; they expect something considerably better and to achieve such an objective the squatters generally show a remarkable keenness and willingness to work.

Almost every man and every teenage boy no longer at school is in some form of paid employment; so are the women, at least those who are not tied down by household

chores. Only one out of the 88 household heads is unemployed; and among the 115 adult female population in the kampung, 57% have some kind of employment and regular income. High level of employment may be attributed to a number of factors, the most significant of which are their strong desire to work, induced by lack of financial assistance from the State for the unemployed and inadequate aid for the poor, their work ethics and the availability of paid jobs in the capital. An adult, especially a male adult, is expected to work and bring home an income for the family and an adult who is without work is deemed to lack self-respect and therefore looked down upon and pitied and an adult who has self-respect but cannot find a job often feels ashamed of himself and suffers a sense of inadequacy. This notion that work and money is so vitally important is all too often reflected in their social interactions - in conversations among grown-ups, in the socialization of the children, for example. Adults gossiping with each other are frequently heard saying, "*Hai, hidup di bandar 'ni, bergerak saja nak pakai duit. Tak ada kerja nak jadi apa?*" ("Ah, this urban life, one has to pay for every move that one makes. What would happen if one had no job?"). Thus, children are constantly reminded of the need to work hard and get good grades in school so that they can get well-paid jobs or make a lot of money when they leave school. Such expressions as "who will want you if you have no job and no money?", "it doesn't matter if he is not so good-looking, as long as he has a good job and money", are so frequently used by adults that children repeat and use them in their play-acting among their peer groups.

(a) Income and Occupation

Jobs and income are therefore of paramount importance to the squatters and the jobs which are most sought after are those with regular pay because it means a regular income. To earn a living through wages or salary, i.e. *makan gaji* or *bergaji* is something prestigious and of all jobs the best is white-collar job; self-employment is not very highly favoured, it is demeaning and someone who is self-employed is often described as *tak kerja* (unemployed or without a job). In view of this attitude towards self-employment it is hardly surprising that it is seen as a job of last resort; only 8.9% of the working population of the squatment are self-employed, the rest are in regular paid-employment in the private sector (57.3%) and in the public sector (33.8%).

Over 90% of those employed are engaged in jobs officially categorised as the 'industrial and manual group', which are at the lowest end of the urban occupational hierarchy (see Table 5, 6 & 7). They work largely as labourers, drivers, security guards, machine operators in factories, cooks, gardeners, washerwomen and such like and only a very small minority are engaged in administrative jobs, most of which are in the clerical service. Their concentration in low-level jobs and occupations are due primarily to their lack of skills and low level of education. The squatters are after all recent immigrants from the rural areas and for most of them their first introduction to non-agricultural work takes place only when they arrive in the capital city.

Initially, most of the squatters did not possess any kind of skill appropriate for urban jobs which in Kuala Lumpur means working in the manufacturing, construction and service industries, in trade and commerce as well as in the public sector. Only two of the household heads had

TABLE 5
MAIN OCCUPATIONS OF ALL WORKING ADULTS BY EMPLOYER

Occupation	Employer			Total
	Government/ Semi-govt.	Private Sector	Self- Employed	
Traffic warden	2	-	-	2
Draughtsman/Tracer	2	-	-	2
Clerk	12	7	-	19
Production operator	-	35	-	35
Telephone operator	1	1	-	2
Driver	2	14	-	16
Pensioner	2	-	-	2
Labourer/Sweeper	12	17	-	29
Petty Trader	-	-	10	10
Hospital attendant	1	-	-	1
Cook	5	-	-	5
Domestic help/washerwoman	-	6	-	6
Religious/Home Science teacher	4	-	-	4
Security guards	-	13	-	13
Waiter	-	2	-	2
Printer	1	-	-	1
Library assistant	1	-	-	1
Laboratory assistant	1	-	-	1
Foreman	-	2	-	2
Gardener	1	-	-	1
Machine operator	1	-	-	1
Salesman	-	1	-	1
Barber	-	-	1	1
Motor mechanics	-	-	1	1
Car park attendant	-	-	1	1
Landlady	-	-	1	1
Chambermaid	-	3	-	3
Asst. public relations officer	1	-	-	1
Forest supervisor	2	-	-	2
Bus conductor	-	1	1	2
Office boy	-	1	-	1
College/university student	9	-	-	9
Total	60	103	15	178

TABLE 6
MAIN OCCUPATIONS OF ALL WORKING ADULTS BY SEX

Occupation	No. of Males	No. of Females	Total
Traffic warden	2	-	2
Draughtsman	2	-	2
Clerk	10	9	19
Production operator	18	17	35
Telephone operator	1	1	1
Driver	16	-	16
Pensioner	2	-	2
Labourer/Sweeper	26	3	29
Petty trader	3	7	10
Hospital attendant	1	-	1
Cook	-	4	4
Domestic help/washerwoman	-	6	6
Religious/Home science teacher	-	4	4
Security guards	13	-	13
Printer	1	-	1
Library assistant	1	-	1
Laboratory assistant	1	-	1
Foreman	2	-	2
Gardener	1	-	1
Machine operator	-	1	1
Salesman	1	-	1
Barber	1	-	1
Motor mechanics	1	-	1
Landlady	-	2	2
Chambermaid	-	3	3
Asst. public relations officer	1	-	1
Forest supervisor	2	-	2
Bus conductor	1	-	1
Office boy	1	-	1
University/college student	3	6	9
Waiter	2	-	2
Car attendant	1	-	1
Total	115	63	178

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TABLE 7
MAIN OCCUPATIONS OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS

Occupation	Employer			Total
	Government/ Semi-govt.	Private Sector	Self- Employed	
Clerk	2	5	-	7
Library assistant	1	-	-	1
Tracer	1	-	-	1
Printer	1	-	-	1
Asst. public relations officer	1	-	-	1
Traffic warden	2	-	-	2
Telephone operator	1	-	-	1
Forest supervisor	2	-	-	2
Pensioner	2	-	-	2
Laboratory assistant	1	-	-	1
Labourer/Sweeper	-	20	-	20
Driver	2	11	-	13
Security guard	-	10	-	10
Foreman	-	2	-	2
Hospital attendant	1	-	-	1
Chambermaid	-	1	-	1
Bus conductor	-	1	-	1
Gardener	1	-	-	1
Cook	1	-	-	1
Machine operator	-	1	-	1
Production operator	-	6	-	6
Petty trader	-	-	5	5
Motor mechanics	-	-	1	1
Barber	-	-	1	1
Car attendant	-	-	1	1
Landlady	-	-	1	1
University student	1	-	-	1
Unemployed	-	-	-	1
Total	20	58	10	88

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some kind of skill when they first arrived in the city; they were trained as motor mechanics at a youth training centre to which they were sent after failing their third-year secondary school examinations. The rest had only elementary and secondary school qualifications. Table 10 shows that out of the total adult population in Kampung Selamat, 57.9% have never received secondary education, with 3.6% never having been to school at all. Of those who went to secondary schools, only 25.4% passed the Fifth Form secondary school examinations, the minimum qualification required to gain entry into the clerical service; 6.4% proceeded to the Sixth Form secondary education and out of this number, one went for a one-year course at a Belgian university, the rest went to the local university and, at the time of the fieldwork, were still studying in the medical faculty. It must, however, be pointed out that these six medical students were not squatters in the true sense of the word; they were only tenants living in the kampung only for the duration of the course or until they found better and more suitable accommodation.

Some squatters have since acquired some skill or other, such as typing and shorthand, driving, etc. These skills which help enhance their job prospects were acquired by learning part-time. The squatter usually grabbed whatever job that came his way when he first arrived in the city and while on the job worked to better himself by taking part-time courses.

(i) Paid Employment. The squatters find little difficulty in getting paid employment. What they find difficult, however, is to find a paid employment that pays well. Unskilled jobs are abundant in Kuala Lumpur; there

is a great demand for labour, especially in the construction and service industries, including domestic service, so much so that some employers have to resort to illegal importation of labour force from neighbouring Indonesia. Some of these jobs are advertised in the local press which most squatters read, while others are made known to them by words of mouth. Small business concerns, such as those in the restaurant trade and those with contracts to clean premises such as government office buildings, very frequently send out recruiting agents into the squatment to look for labour. Failing that they circulate news of job vacancies through various informal means, the most important channel being the petty traders who ply their wares in the squatment everyday or those who are resident in Kampung Selamat. Once any piece of news regarding job vacancies is released to the squatters, it does not take very long before the whole community knows about it. Jobs are a constant topic of conversation; anything pertaining to them travels fast through the network of relatives, friends and neighbours. So effective is this channel of information for job seekers that none of the squatters ever makes use of the labour exchange facilities provided by the State, although some of them are aware of the existence of the facilities.

Jobs, especially in the private sector, are therefore easily available, but invariably these paid employments offer very low pay. An excellent example of the grossly inadequate remuneration given by the private sector is the case of the head of house No.69. She works as a cleaner/sweeper for five hours per day, five days a week and she gets paid only \$110/- a month for her trouble, which comes to approximately \$1.00 (about 32 pence) per hour. Yet she rarely complains because she knows of cases of people doing similar work but get much less. Private

sector employees in the squatement earn on average between \$110/- and \$350/- per month, only a very small minority of them earn more than that. This very low income level is due to a number of factors, the most important of which is perhaps the absence of any laws governing minimum wage in the private sector. Employers are at liberty to offer whatever pay they like; they offer the very minimum possible but just enough to stop the workers running away. And there is very little the workers can do to bargain for better pay and working conditions because only a few of them have access to unions and among those who are members of a trade union most, if not all, think that their unions are ineffective and cannot do anything for them anyway. So the exploitation of cheap labour continues.

The pay and fringe benefits, if any, received by the squatters working in the private sector depend to a large extent on the relative size and standing of the firms which employ them. Generally, those who are already 'confirmed' in their jobs in large firms, which are usually multi-national business concerns, get higher basic pay, supplemented with an annual bonus equivalent to one to three months' pay. Some who work in factories enjoy free transport in factory buses to and from work provided by their employers. They are also given free medical treatment but this benefit is confined only to the workers and does not extend to immediate family. And those who are employed in factories manufacturing domestic products such as soap, milk, soft drinks, cooking oil, and such like, are given opportunity to buy limited quantities of the goods that they help to produce at 'staff price', which is usually between 10% and 15% lower than the retail price in the shop. In addition there may be one or two other benefits attached to some private sector jobs which can be

enjoyed by the squatter employees only occasionally. For example, a squatter working in a factory manufacturing powdered milk for babies is entitled to one year free supply of baby milk each time his wife gives birth to a child; and an employee of a cigarette factory can apply for financial aid to help finance his children's education if they happen to be bright enough to go to the university.

All these benefits do not really add much to the squatters' income; but then they are not meant to. As the squatters themselves say, these so-called benefits are really in order to *mengabui mata kami* (lit. to throw dust in our eyes), i.e. to give them the illusion and make the workers believe that these private sector employers really care for them when in fact all that they are interested in is to exploit their labour. These squatters, like Ibrahim, are critical of some of these so-called 'fringe benefits'. About the medical facilities provided by his employer, he says, "Most of us do not get ill all that often. Once or twice maybe a year. So, how much in terms of money do we actually get from the medical benefit? We poor people can get free medicine and medical treatment from the government hospitals and clinics. If we do get ill often, the so-called medical benefit is still no good to us, for we'll just get the sack. Workers who fall ill often are no good to the factory. They'll of course not say that they sack you because you are often ill; they (the employers) concoct other reasons." On the other hand, some other fringe benefits are appreciated by Ibrahim and others like him which, they think, help quite a lot. The yearly bonus is an example. Some squatters depend on the bonus to purchase goods which are ordinarily beyond their means. Ibrahim, for example, bought his scooter with his bonus money accumulated over a number of years, using the lump sum thus accumulated as a down-payment for the

scooter with the balance paid by monthly instalments. Other squatters use their yearly bonus to meet extraordinary expenditure, especially to buy school uniforms and books for their children at the beginning of each school year.

However, not everyone who works in the private sector enjoys yearly bonus; only about 55% of the private sector workers in Kampung Selamat do and the sum involved is relatively small, between \$150/- and \$500/- a year, which is usually given at the end of the calendar year. Some factory workers who are entitled to buy goods at reduced price at the factory where they work, buy such goods regularly and sell either some or all of them outside. Rokiah, who is employed in a factory making high-grade cooking oil, usually buys all the oil that she is entitled to buy every month, about 15 *katis* (approximately 15 litres) and sells the lot for about \$35/-. She chooses to sell the oil partly because she prefers low-grade oil which she has been using all her life and which tastes better to her, but partly also because she needs the money. Naemah, who works in a soap factory, sells some of the soap-bars she is entitled to buy from her factory; Rahmah, who works in a soft-drink factory, does the same with her entitlement. The same with Hamid who works in a cigarette factory; he sells some and keeps some of the cigarettes he is entitled to buy at staff price from his factory. This practice is actually against factory regulations; the goods are sold to staff and employees at reduced price entirely for their own consumption. The squatters are aware of this and of the consequence upon their jobs if they are caught, but as Rokiah says, "Everybody is breaking the rule. So, what is there to be afraid about?"

These so-called fringe benefits are denied to workers who are classified as 'temporary', i.e. those who are new and on six-months' probation. Squatters who work in local (as opposed to foreign) business concerns which are frequently small enterprises with ten to twenty employees, do not enjoy such fringe benefits either and thus have to depend entirely on their pay. It is this very fact which accounts for the reluctance of the squatters to work in local private business organisations. Only new arrivals from the countryside accept jobs in such organisations, usually as a temporary measure until they get better ones and as a means of gaining some working experience which is essential for entry into the large established firms.

Paid employment in the private sector is marked by job insecurity and instability. At least five squatters are known to have been dismissed for such offences as smoking in a prohibited area, falling asleep while on a night duty, absenteeism and arguing with a superior or *melawan ketua*, in their vernacular. Although in practically all cases, the sacked workers claim that they have been sacked wrongfully, none of them has made any attempt to challenge their employer's decision or ask for reinstatement or claim damages against the employers concerned; they have neither the means nor the will to do so. They are not members of any trades union and have therefore no organised body to fight for them; if they felt really aggrieved they would have to fight their case themselves; they would have to engage a lawyer and take legal action against the employer. But this would inevitably cost time and money which none of them could afford. Even if they had the means to fight the employer, none of them would actually proceed with it. Such an action is considered a futile exercise, like *mentimun dengan durian* (lit. cucumber and durian, a large fruit with tough, sharp, spiky rind);

the struggle would be so one-sided that the worker (*mentimun*) would suffer more grievously in the end. In any case, once they are fired from their jobs, none of them would want to have anything more to do with the employer, let alone hope to be reinstated. As one of them said, "After what they did to me, how can I work in that place anymore? I can't stand the very sight of them, perhaps neither can they me. There was too much ill feeling around." Thus, when a worker is dismissed, the matter is just allowed to drop quietly and the squatter just looks elsewhere for another job. Fortunately for them there happen to be plenty of jobs around; if they are not too choosy and, as the experience of the five squatters show, it would not take them very long to find another employment.

Just as employers in the private sector are quick to dismiss workers for the slightest reason the squatters, too, are quick to quit their job when and if a better one comes along or, in the case of female workers, when household chores or family matters come in the way of their jobs. The squatters working in the private sector change their jobs often; practically everyone of the working population of the squatment has held at the very least two jobs. A job is only a means of earning money for a living and that is all that matters; there is no sense of loyalty to an employer or a company. As Hamid, the factory worker, says, "They throw us out when they don't want our labour. And we leave them when the job they give us is no longer good for us."

Squatters who are employed in the public sector, however, are less inclined to quit or change jobs. Jobs with the government and semi-government bodies are highly prized, not only because there is prestige attached

to these *kerja kerajaan* (government jobs), but also because such jobs usually offer better basic pay and terms and conditions of service than in the private sector. In the public sector, minimum wage is fixed by law. The lowest group of workers, i.e. the industrial and manual group to which most of the squatters employed in the public sector belong, enjoys a minimum wage of \$195/- per month, to which is added C.O.L.A (Cost of Living Allowance). In addition, government employees enjoy medical benefits for the entire family, housing loans at an interest rate of 4% per annum and a pension on retirement. Working conditions are generally better too; working hours are regular, 7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., five and a half days a week; only in certain types of jobs are workers subjected to night shifts and working at weekends. And government employees are generally entitled to thirty days paid annual leave.

Public sector jobs are popularly regarded as *senang* (easy or not so demanding) compared to those in the private sector. While in the private sector, work regulations are enforced much more strictly, in the public sector they are less so and squatters who work in the latter are able to have a much easier time: they are rarely pulled up by their bosses for coming to work late or going home early, for taking 'medical leave' frequently, some by producing false medical certificates, and so on; none of these would get them the sack as they would in the private sector. In fact, it is practically unheard of for someone to be fired from his job in the public sector and this, among other things, has led the squatters to believe that jobs in the public sector are secure.

Such being their attitude towards public sector employment, it is hardly surprising that information

regarding job vacancies is keenly sought but not so readily shared. Those with knowledge of such job vacancies will disclose it with great care and discrimination, first to their relatives, then to their friends and lastly to their neighbours. For example, when Ali who works in a government department in the city got to know that there was a vacancy for a clerk in his office, he wrote to his nephew in the countryside and asked him to apply. And it was only when the nephew arrived in the squatment to come for the interview for the job that Ali's neighbour, Ahmad, got to know about it. Ahmad's daughter, too, was looking for a job and could also have applied for it had she known about it. However, Ahmad was not angry at or slighted by Ali's secrecy regarding the job opportunity. He would have done the same, he said, if he had been in Ali's shoes.

The income of squatters in public sector employment ranges from \$200/- to \$900/- a month, with a very large proportion of the squatters earning less than \$400/- a month, which puts them more or less on the same income level as the private sector employees. On the whole, squatters who work in regular paid employment have a low income; their average income is \$301/- per month which, as will be explained in Section 4.2.(b), is less than enough for the basic requirement of an average squatter family. Most of them are forced to supplement their income by moonlighting or taking extra work which is done either by doing overtime or by taking part-time jobs or both simultaneously, as will be explained in detail later. Multiple employment is common among the squatter household heads; despite all this their income is still lower than the minimum level of \$400/- a month which the squatters consider necessary to cover their basic requirements. With the overtime and part-time work, the average monthly income

of the household heads comes to only \$353/-, which is lower than the average monthly income of Malay squatters in general in Kuala Lumpur, which is \$375/-, and much lower than the estimated average income of Indian and Chinese squatters which is \$405/- and \$453/- respectively (Abdullah Ahmad, 1980).

(ii) Self-Employment. Among the urban poor in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, a large proportion of whom are squatters, self-employment usually plays a very important role in their economy. Desai, A.R. and Pillai, A.D. (1972:112), for example, note that among the slum dwellers of Bombay, more than 17% of those with jobs in their samples are self-employed, working as vendors in petty business and skilled trades. A somewhat similar phenomenon has also been observed by Jacano, F.L. (1975) in Manila in the Philippines, by Peattie, L.R. (1968) among the squatters of La Laja in Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela, and Safa, H.I. (1974) among the squatters in Puerto Rico.

Among the squatters under study, too, self-employment seems to play an important role as both a major and supplementary source of income. In seven households, self-employment is their main source of income and in eight others the household heads, who are wage earners, resort to some kind of self-employment for extra income.

Self-employment takes various forms, of which food processing and vending seems to be the most popular. Of the full-time self-employed household heads, three are food-traders, one a textile trader, one runs a sundry-shop and the other two are a mechanic and a barber. All the

part-time self-employed are food-traders with the exception of one who is a sundry shop-keeper.

The mechanic specialises in two-wheel vehicles such as scooters and motor-cycles and has been in business for eight years. When he first came to Kuala Lumpur he had just graduated from a youth training centre where he acquired the knowledge and skill as a mechanic. He then worked for two years in a Chinese motor workshop to gain practical experience and to earn some money which he saved and later used as capital to set himself up in business. He now has a shed along Jalan Bangsar, one and a half miles from Kampung Selamat, which is his workshop. He works alone because he cannot afford to pay for an assistant although he needs one very badly. His daily work routine begins at around 8.00 a.m. and ends around 7.00 or 8.00 in the evening with a short break for lunch and tea. And for those long hours of hard work, he earns between \$400/- and \$500/- a month. Occasionally, he makes a bit more by buying and reconditioning an old vehicle and selling it.

The barber works with a partner in a small hair-dressing shop in the city centre. He has been at the job since he arrived in the capital five years ago. He began as an apprentice to his present partner, then, having proved himself, was invited by his mentor to invest some money in the business and thereby became a partner in the business. He does not make much - about \$150/- to \$200/- a month. And his income has slowly declined in the past few years, which he blames on the new habit among men, especially the younger ones, of keeping their hair long and on the growing tendency for some of them to go for modern hair-dressing involving blow-drying and perming, the techniques of which he has neither the time

nor the means to acquire. His work, which begins at nine in the morning and ends at six in the evening, according to him, is very easy compared to factory work and he has no intention of giving it up or changing jobs unless something truly big and much more profitable comes his way.

Unlike the mechanic and the barber, the sundry shop operators have their business in the squatment itself and work in conjunction with other members of their families. The full-time shop-owner, known locally as Tok, is a pensioner. Tok bought the shop lock, stock and barrel, together with the house to which the shop is attached, for \$3,500/- in 1977, using part of the money he received in gratuity from his employer on retirement. He has been in the same business ever since. The goods stocked in his shop, which he values at \$1,500/- (in 1981), consist largely of foodstuffs and certain other essential items which may be required by the squatters ranging from stationery to cough syrup. Tok buys most of the goods he sells cash from Malay middlemen with whom he enters into an agreement to supply him with the goods he wants and deliver them regularly to his shop. He occasionally accepts for sale in his shop goods brought to his shop by distributing agents with whom he has no prior agreement, in which case payment to the suppliers is made after the goods have been sold. He buys most of his goods from Malay middlemen; only when there are no Malay middlemen will he deal with the Chinese. This is because, according to him, he finds it easier to trust a Malay businessman than a Chinese, as the former is his own ethnic kind (*bangsa kita*).

His customers come from Kapung Selamat itself, from the neighbouring squatments of Kampung Reserve Keretapi

and Kampung Limau as well as from the transit quarters nearby. Tok competes for customers with the other sundry shop, run on a part-time basis by his neighbours three doors away. In terms of business turnover and the number of regular customers, the two sundry shops are about even, although at one time it looked as if the neighbour was going to take away all Tok's regular customers when the former introduced an additional attraction in his shop in the form of a large refrigerator for storing cold drinks, fruits, vegetables and other perishable goods. In his attempt to retain and win back his regular customers, Tok recently installed an electrically-powered coconut dessicator. This has turned out to be a clever move for housewives, fed up with having to scrape coconut manually for their daily cooking, find the powered dessicator at Tok's shop very convenient. Thus, Tok's shop is now as popular as his neighbour's; both have about equal number of regular customers and both give short-term credit to their customers.

Giving short-term credit to regular customers is something which neither shop can afford not to do if they wish to retain their custom. It is not something which the shop-keepers like doing; but they have no choice; they know that unless they are willing to give short-term credit, their shops may be shunned altogether. So, in spite of the risk of running bad debts, they do allow their customers to obtain goods on credit. In Tok's case, 25 people regularly take goods on credit to the value of between \$50/- and \$150/- for each person, and they normally settle their accounts at the end of every month. Another method used to please customers is to keep the shop open for business everyday including weekends from seven in the morning till about eight at night as far as possible. Even when the front-door of the shop is closed,

squatters in great need to buy something can always do so by looking for the proprietor or a member of his family in the house. In actual fact then the shop is open all hours. This is made possible primarily by members of the family taking turns to mind the shop; when Tok takes a break for his midday meal and prayer, his wife takes charge of the shop; in the evening if both of them feel particularly tired, their two children, who by then would have come home from work, take over. During the weekends, if both the husband and wife have to go somewhere, the minding of the shop is left to their son who does not work at weekends. The other sundry shop operates much in the same way, utilizing family labour to man it.

The two shop-keepers keep the simplest and most rudimentary form of book-keeping. They do not keep detailed records of their stocks, purchases and sales; they do not know the meaning of 'cash-flow', 'balance-sheet' and such things. All that they do is just keep some form of records of the goods purchased and from whom, of customers who take goods on credit and the amount they owe and put the money for goods paid in cash in the till. No attempt is ever made to calculate and take into account the value of goods taken from the shop for their own consumption nor the costs of materials and labour of goods produced by themselves and sold in the shop, such as vegetables and fruits from their own yards and food and delicacies prepared by their womenfolk in their own kitchen. The use of family labour is not taken into account because it is not paid for. At the end of the month, the shop-keepers calculate the total revenue, i.e. cash, from sales and set it against the total expenditure spent on the purchase of goods during the month and the difference between the two is what they consider 'profit' or 'loss', as the case may be. If income from sales exceeds purchasing

expenditure, the difference is what they regard as 'income', which in both cases varies from \$200/- to \$300/- a month. Clearly, this is not an accurate measure of their real income since so many factors, such as labour and costs of home-produced goods, are not taken into account, also because 'business' income is not distinguished from 'personal' income: the shop-keepers often dig into the shop's till for cash for personal use; but that is how they calculate their income from the business.

Unlike the sundry shop owners, the clothing and food vendors sell their wares outside the squatment. The clothing trader is a 65-year old pensioner. He is an itinerant trader who sells at open-air markets held every night in different parts of the capital, one of which is just near the entrance to Kampung Selamat. He owns an average size van which he uses to transport his goods from one market to another and, like the sundry shop-owners, he, too, enlists the help of his family, especially his two teenage sons. He deals in low-priced cloths, ready-made clothes for children and sarongs which he buys on credit from his regular suppliers. He always deals in cash and never bothers with book-keeping. At the end of the day he counts his cash takings for the day. He does not even know how much exactly he makes a month; all that he knows is that he is sure he is not making any loss. And all that he says when asked about his business is "*Boleh tahan*" ("It's all right"). However, judging by the fact that he owns a van which has been fully paid for and that it is always full of goods and by the fact that he has been maintaining a family of seven for the past ten years on income derived solely from the business, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that his business must be more than all right. He has a reputation as a shrewd businessman and very business-like in all his dealings,

including those with his neighbours. It is often said of him that he counts every cent that he makes and refuses to make any concessions when it comes to business, even to relatives, friends and neighbours, which has earned him the somewhat derogatory nick-name "*Haji Bakhil*" (the Selfish Haji).

To be a garment and clothes trader like Haji Bakhil, requires quite a substantial initial capital - substantial by squatter standards. Haji Bakhil says he started his business with \$1,000/-, in cash, which is a princely sum by squatter standards. The majority of squatters who wish to be self-employed, therefore, choose the forms of business which require very small capital outlay such as selling cooked food from street stalls. The three stall-holders from the squatment began their business with an initial capital of about \$150/- to \$200/-. One of them sells beef-burgers at a stall in the city centre; the other two, who have their stalls near an office and shopping area about one and a half miles from Kampung Selamat, specialize in Malaysian staple food of rice and a variety of other dishes, such as fish, chicken, beef and vegetable curries which normally goes with boiled or friend rice. Selling cooked food like this is a very lucrative business as will be explained later; but it is also a labour intensive and tedious job - *leceh*, as they say.

For the food-vendor households, their day begins at dawn. In house No.5, the household head, Ismail, and his wife get up at about 4.30 in the morning. After performing their dawn prayer, the wife goes by taxi to the wholesale market five miles away in the city. She says she does the marketing because her husband is no good at haggling which is very essential in order to keep costs as low as possible; it is for the same reason that the purchasing is

done at the wholesale market and not at the normal market, also because the wholesale market opens earlier than the ordinary market. By 6.30 she is back in the squatment with all the necessary items for the day's cooking. On average she spends about \$150/- to \$200/- per shopping, including taxi fares. Working together, the husband and wife team cleans and washes the poultry, fish, beef and vegetables bought and later, around 8.30 a.m., they transport the stuff by bicycle to their stalls. Then they start cooking, making five or six different kinds of dishes for the day. By about eleven o'clock, when some of the office workers have their morning break, some of the food will be cooked and ready for sale. The cooking continues till 1.00 p.m. when everybody breaks for lunch. Ismail then delivers food which he has pre-packed in small packets to some fifty workers who are his regular customers in the nearby offices. In the meantime his wife serves those who come personally to their stall and this goes on till about three o'clock in the afternoon. Then their children, who by then have returned home from school, come to the stall to have their meals as well as to help with the washing-up. By about five, work is over and the whole family return to the squatment. Ismail and his wife then count their takings for the day and enter in their small book the names of those who ate on credit that day at their stall. According to Ismail he makes at least \$30/- a day after deducting the costs of daily marketing. He and his wife work six days a week; they do not trade on Sundays not because they do not want to but because practically all their customers are office workers who do not work on Sundays.

Ismail can make anything up to \$700/- a month if he works hard and minds his stall regularly and he pays no income tax on what he earns. About the only tax that he

pays in the hawker's licence fee of \$6.00 per annum. Food vending, as Ismail's case shows, is comparatively lucrative; he makes more than twice what the average squatter household head earns in a month. The other food vendors, too, earn about the same as Ismail. Above all, in the food vendor's home there is always plenty to eat, so much so that practically all the members of one household are obese. The squatters are fully aware that they can make more money by selling cooked food, but very few are keen on it; most prefer to be wage-earners.

The reason for this reluctance to take up food-vending as a way of earning a living was explained to the writer by a lady in one of the evening 'gossip' sessions in which the writer participated. According to her money is not everything. "What is the point of having so much money if one is tired all day, has to sweat so much and wear dirty clothes and smells (*hangit*)?", she asked. This view, with which the other seven women in the group concurred, sums up the squatters' general attitude towards jobs. Work involving the dirtying of hands, such as food-vending, being a mechanic or a barber, has a low prestige rating among them, no matter how much money it may bring. With a few exceptions, people in such jobs often feel embarrassed about their occupations; so do members of their families. Hamidah, the wife of a food-vendor, would apologise for her clothes and appearance whenever she meets a friend or neighbour after work. "*Bukan main hangit 'ni, kotor. Nanti mandi dulu*" ("I'm so smelly and dirty. Wait, let me have a bath first"), she would often say. And Atih, the wife of the mechanic, always shakes her head disapprovingly each time her husband comes home with oil and grease all over him, saying repeatedly that he is so unlike other husbands who come home in clean, crisp shirts and smart trousers.

The lack of prestige is not the only reason why the squatters are not keen on most forms of self-employment; they are afraid to face the risks involved. The food trade, for example, involves very high risks; it can be ruined by rain or even drizzle which tends to keep customers away; rumour of epidemic or talk of badly cooked food by some jokers can have a similar effect. Daily sales fluctuate, which gives rise to uncertainty and variation in income from one month to another. It is the irregularity and uncertainty of a fixed income that is yet another factor that puts most of the squatters off self-employment. Housewives feel that they cannot budget properly without regular and fixed incomes and some of the men say the irregularity and uncertainty makes them *takut* (nervous or frightened).

(iii) Supplementary Jobs. It has been alluded to earlier that the household heads in paid employment earn very low incomes, on average about \$301/- a month, and that they are compelled to find ways and means to supplement their incomes. The most common means are to work overtime and to find part-time jobs; some do both.

Among those who work in the private sector, especially those in industrial organizations, working overtime is the most popular. This is largely because of the higher rate paid for overtime. Some factories and firms pay between one and a half and twice the normal rate. 80% of the squatters employed in the private sector work overtime; the actual number of hours worked varies from person to person depending on the individual's financial needs and capacity to work. A healthy man who is the sole breadwinner with a wife and young children to support is likely to work more hours of overtime than another with

fewer responsibilities or whose health is not so good.

Hamid, a security guard in a factory manufacturing soft drinks, who has a wife not gainfully employed and three school-going children to support, work overtime almost every weekend. Occasionally, when the financial need is really pressing or in anticipation of a heavy extra-ordinary expenditure, he even works on his days off during the week. On such occasions Hamid may work up to twelve hours at a stretch and at weekends as well. Only by doing so can he raise enough money to meet expenditure for the religious festivals, which come twice a year, and children's school uniforms, books, fees, etc., at the beginning of calendar year.

There are many others like Hamid who work overtime because they have to because of pressing financial need. A few, however, work overtime in order to save and buy what, by their standards, may be termed luxury goods. Unmarried girls, for example, often work overtime in order to have enough money to lavish on new and fashionable clothes, shoes and handbags, perfumes and make-ups or to buy jewellery, sometimes much to the dismay of their parents.

Squatters who dislike working overtime or have no opportunity to do so, such as those who work in government offices, find other means to supplement their incomes. They usually take up part-time jobs, which may be in the form of paid employment such as working as petrol pump attendants on a late night shift, as gardeners in the middle and upper-class homes or, in the case of those with the knowledge and ability as religious teachers, giving religious instructions to children in non-squatter areas, moving from house to house. The part-time work

can also take the form of some kind of self-employment, like petty-trading, doing radio and TV repair work, electrical wiring and house repairs.

In a few cases, household heads have more than one part-time jobs. A very good example is Yaakob of household No.22. His main occupation is as a gardener at a State school, one and a half miles away from the squatment, where he works from 8.00 a.m. till 1.00 p.m. for five days a week. Twice a week, in the afternoon, he takes gardening jobs at three different houses in Petaling Jaya for one and a half hours at each house. In addition he also runs a sundry shop with the assistance of his wife. He has three sources of income which, according to him, bring in approximately between \$400/- and \$450/- a month. He considers his work with the school as his main job, although his pay packet of \$180/- a month is sometimes much less than the income derived from the sundry shop. The job at the school is important to him because it gives him regular and fixed income every month. His income from the sundry shop fluctuates, sometimes quite erratically: when business is brisk and his debtors pay on time his income can go up above \$150/- a month; but there are bad times such as during the rainy seasons when flash floods can damage some of his goods or when business simply slumps. During such times he considers himself lucky if he can get even \$50/- a month. Likewise, the income from his extra gardening work is uncertain. He is paid only when he works, at the rate of \$10/- per session or \$40/- per month, by each household for whom he works. But there are times when he cannot work, prevented by illness or bad weather.

Apart from operating a sundry shop, another popular form of petty-trading taken as a part-time work is the

selling of cooked food. This is done on a very small scale and deals not with staples like the full-time food vendors, but in snacks, especially noodles, cockle-shells, and a variety of cakes. Five household heads sell cooked food in the evening as soon as they return home from work. Much of the preparation of the food is done by the wife, with the help of other household members, especially the children, while the husband is away at work. Only the selling is done by the husband, with occasional help from the wife and other members of the family.

One such part-time food vendor is Misnan of household No.60, who works as a forest supervisor at a nearby academic institution. His working hours are from 8.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., which leave him with ample free time which he would rather use to earn extra money than idling around in the squatment. He persuaded his wife to help him start a small business venture selling cakes, got himself a hawker's licence and built a wooden stall which he placed near a bus-stop. This was in 1976 and he has been at it ever since, selling cakes five days a week. With this part-time job and his full-time one, Misnan's working day usually stretches to 13 hours, beginning at 6.00 every morning when he goes to the local market to buy the necessary grocery for his trade. When he goes to work, his wife, mother-in-law and two children (who go to afternoon schools) set about preparing and making the cakes. By the time he returns home at five o'clock, everything is ready and he transports his cakes to his stall on his motor-bicycle. He spreads his cakes on trays for sale. In addition he also sells noodles cooked on the spot and iced soft drinks. He remain thus engaged till about 7.00 p.m.

Misnán's food-stall is patronised by office workers

going home from work. Tired working housewives buy his cakes to take home for the family and men, especially the young ones, stop to eat at his stall. Misnan shares the roadside with seven other food-vendors, all part-time petty-traders, five of whom come from Kampung Selamat. Each of these traders specializes in particular types of cakes and food, some cooking their food on the spot. Business, according to these traders, is *boleh tahan* (all right) and Misnan, for example, sells at least \$60/- worth of food and cakes in an evening selling time of about two hours, giving him a net income of about \$10/- to \$15/-. There are a number of pitfalls in this trade; for example, on rainy days he is unable to operate his stall, in which case he is of course deprived of his supplementary income or may incur loss altogether. Twenty days is about the average number of days he can expect to work at his part-time business in any month; thus, his estimated income from it is between \$200/- and \$250/- a month. This compares favourably with incomes from overtime work; and as Misnan and all the other food-vendors say, selling cooked food is a "very lucrative business" because "more women are working in various jobs these days and they have less time and inclination to cook." And the younger women, according to them, are "getting lazy (*malas*) and hate doing work in the kitchen". For Misnan, this type of part-time work is preferable to overtime, not only for the good money it brings but also because it gives him a break from the drudgery of his work and enables him to train his children to work and appreciate the value of money. And most of all it gives him an opportunity to meet and get to know people, especially from other squattments and to establish contact with them which is useful to him as a squatter politician, for Misnan is one of those who are active in politics in the squatment.

(iv) Women, Children and Jobs. With the low earning capacity of the male household heads, more and more women are compelled to look for jobs. 57% of the 115 adult women population in Kampung Selamat are gainfully employed. Their jobs, as shown in Table 6, are concentrated in three main spheres - in industrial organizations, mainly as production operators; in administration, mainly as clerks; and in jobs closely associated with their traditional roles, i.e. as cooks, washerwomen and cooked food vendors.

The squatter women are very keen to earn money, partly in order to be financially independent and partly to break the monotony of their daily domestic chores and also in order to meet people. They prefer paid employment which they can get much more easily than men. Factories, for example, prefer women labour to men because of the lower rate paid to women and because they are docile and easier to handle. There are plenty of jobs available in domestic service in the middle and upper class home which are open to women and not men. However, not every one of them can avail themselves of these opportunities; only those without heavy household responsibilities like the unmarried women, those without children or with children but old enough to take care of themselves, who can afford to take up paid employment. Most women in the squatment are young, between twenty and thirty-five years old and with young children; they are therefore home bound and have difficulty in combining household duties and work. Women give priority to their household duties, leaving their jobs when they give birth and when no child minder is available. They go back to work when a child minder is found or when the child is old enough to take care of himself when left alone. Thus, women are found going in and out of job quite frequently; the only exceptions are

the women who are in the category of those who hold good, secure jobs, like those working as clerks. They will not leave their jobs to be full-time housewives; they will make every effort to keep the jobs and go to great lengths in looking for child minders and if they fail, as in the case of two women, they would send their children to their respective kampungs of origin to be looked after by relatives.

Within the squatment itself, working women who need child-minders enlist the help of relatives, friends and neighbours to look after their children while they are at work. Close relatives, especially elderly ladies, are their main source of help and in many cases these relatives, usually the household heads' mothers or mothers-in-law, are brought over to the squatment from the countryside. Such help is given free. However, when friends and neighbours help out, they are paid between \$30/- and \$60/- a month, which is less than one third of the normal cost of engaging a full-time minder in areas outside the squatment.

For housewives who are stuck with their children and are still keen on earning some extra income, the only course open to them is to be self-employed. Self-employment among women almost always means working in the food trade with the help of their children. Seven women earn their income this way, selling cooked foodstuffs to hawkers, school tuck-shops, restaurants, office canteens and coffee-shops with whom they have 'contract' to supply such foodstuffs. They buy the ingredients for the food to cook at the local sundry shops or in the open-air market held in the squatment once a week or from vendors who come daily to the kampung. The foodstuffs, which include cakes, sweets, savouries and

rice, are prepared in the night when the young children are already asleep and the housewives have little else to do. One of them, Nora, makes about 100 packets of *nasi lemak*, 100 curry-puffs and two trays of *kueh talam*, which she cuts into 50 pieces, every night for six nights a week. In the morning at about six o'clock, before her husband goes out to work, she cycles to a nearby canteen about half a mile away and sells her cakes en bloc at 25% below the normal retail price. No risk is involved in this trade and Nora makes between \$10/- and \$15/- per day, depending on the number of cakes she can make per night. To her it is good money, much more than what the factory workers earn, and quite satisfying. "I don't have to buy good clothes or shoes to wear to work," she explains, "and no bus fares to pay. And my children not only have plenty of food to eat, also they have me at home to look after them." However, she admits, like the other women food-traders, that it is extremely exhausting, having to work and at the same time be a full-time housewife. Her working day stretches for almost 20 hours, beginning at 5.30 in the morning and ending at about 1.30 a.m. the next morning, on most days. She has practically no time to rest except on Sundays.

Women who are not gainfully employed are not entirely inactive economically; many of them indulge in subsistence agriculture on a very small scale, working on whatever vacant land available near the house, along the railway track on the western border of the squatment and the river on the eastern side. These home gardening plots vary in size, from the smallest of about 100 square feet to about 400 square feet of the biggest. These home gardening activities are marginal to the squatters' economy, nevertheless, they cannot be ignored because they make positive contributions to the squatters' economy.

The produce from the home gardens help reduce their expenditure on foodstuffs. The women grow tenacious, fast growing and multi-purpose crops, like tapioca, brinjals, bananas, papaya, sugar-cane, maize, pumpkins, chillies, lemon grass and several varieties of beans and other crops. The tapioca plant, for example, is easy to grow and has several uses: the shoots are used as vegetables and the roots are not only used as vegetables but also as an essential ingredient in many types of Malay cakes. The brinjal plants, especially green brinjals (*terung telunjuk*), last a long time, bearing fruit almost continuously all the year round. Women who grow such crops as these exchange such produce among themselves and very often such women need not buy vegetables or condiments, such as lemon grass, chillies, etc. as frequently as those without such crops of their own. The contributions such small scale agriculture makes to a squatter household economy can be appreciated by looking at prices of some of these items in the market. Essential condiments such as large chillies costs two for ten cents and three sticks of lemon grass costs twenty cents. An average squatter household spends between forty cents and sixty cents a day on vegetables. The saving made through home gardening can therefore be quite substantial in the long run.

Such women usually keep poultry too - chickens, ducks, geese - and in the case of one family, even goats - ten goats. This rearing of animals is also carried out on a small scale: half a dozen ducks, chickens or geese on average per house and they are mainly for home consumption. They are fed with table-scrap and dried maize bought from the local shop.

Those without any space for home gardening are often

engaged in various kinds of activities that bring in some income though not regularly. Some of them occasionally receive orders to make paper-flowers for making *bunga telur* (lit. flowered eggs), i.e. decorated eggs given to guests during Malay feasts or to be sold for house decoration; others make and sell cakes for the religious festivals, i.e. the two annual *Hari Rayas*; and yet others try to commercialise, in very small ways, their handicraft expertise in knitting, tettering, making flower-pot holders from plastics and hempstring, and tailoring by selling their products or services to relatives, friends and neighbours. Invariably, they sell their products at a cost less than half what they cost in the town centre of Kuala Lumpur or Petaling Jaya. Their elaborately made flower-pot holders, made from strings, for example, are sold at \$9/- or \$10/- each, while a similar product would cost at least \$25/- in some of the shopping complexes in down town Kuala Lumpur. And the tailoring price charged by the squatter women for making clothes and dresses for relatives and friends is almost one-third that usually charged in the city.

Women, classified as unemployed in the sample, are therefore not totally without income or totally inactive economically. The housewives involved in subsistence home-gardening, as seen earlier, help reduce household expenditure on food and the occasional income from the handicraft efforts goes some way in meeting day to day family expenses. But these economic contributions made by the women are ignored and treated as unimportant even by the women themselves.

Like the women, some children, too, make positive contribution to the household economy. This is especially so in the households engaged in petty-trading. In the food

vendors' households, for example, children help in the processing as well as in the selling of food. But such labour is not paid for, for the work expended by them is part and parcel of their obligations, *tanggung-jawab*, to the family. Children are made to work only outside their schooling hours; no squatter parent would stop a child from going to school or doing his home-work in order to get him to help at home or in the family business. As the squatter children spend most of their time in school or in doing home-work, there is very little time left for them to do anything else.

Children go to school in the morning or afternoon session. Due to shortage of space and school buildings, most schools in and around the capital have two sessions: morning session for one set of pupils and afternoon session for another. Squatter children who attend morning sessions, leave home at about 6.00 a.m. and return at about 2.00 p.m.; then from about 2.30 to 4.30 they attend religious instructions at the religious school in the squatment; after which they play or attend to their home-work. The schedule is reversed for those who go to afternoon school. There is therefore very little opportunity for the parents to utilize their children's labour for economic activities and those who do usually do so at the expense of the children's play-time. And these parents usually solicit their children's help cautiously, anxious to avoid being accused of *menghambakan anak* (lit. to enslave children), i.e. to mistreat or exploit their own children, by the rest of the community.

Apart from the petty-traders' households, where the family is both a production and consumption unit, children in other households do not work. The only exception is a single parent family of five headed by the mother. Money

being scarce in this household, the older children, two boys of twelve and thirteen years old, are compelled at time to work for their own pocket money. They resort to petty-trading, picking up *paku*, a type of edible wild ferns, from the nearby swamp and selling them at the weekly night market. As the children are known to work on their own accord and for themselves, there is no disapproval from the community of their tiny 'business' venture; in fact many praise them for their initiative and enterprise.

(v) Income in The Squatter Household. It has been stated earlier that the majority of the squatter household heads have very low income and despite the overtime they put in and the part-time jobs they take, individually or in conjunction with other members of their family, their income remains inadequate to meet the estimated basic requirement of \$400/- per family per month. Only 33% of the household heads earn more than \$400/- a month (see Table 8). For most of the squatter households, therefore, their economy cannot depend solely on the earnings of the household heads, but on those of all working members as well. In other words, combined household income is the mainstay of the squatters' economy.

In 70% of the households in Kampung Selamat, more than one person work. Wives, not tied down by household chores, as seen earlier, are usually in some kind of employment; so are children who have left school. Every working member of the household contributes to the family expenditure. It is common, for example, for an unmarried working man to give a substantial portion of his income to his parents to help buy food for the whole family, to help pay for his younger siblings' education or even to repair

the house they live in. Working wives spend most if not all of their income on the household. In the squatters' household, therefore, income is pooled and shared and such being the case, it is more meaningful to examine their combined household income rather than the income of the household head. The former will provide a more accurate picture of the squatters' economy.

While the average income of the squatter household head, including income from supplementary sources, is \$353/- per month, their average combined household income is \$579.54 per month. Their per capita income, based on the combined household income is \$112.58. All this income is derived from employment in all cases; in four cases the squatters income is supplemented by their pensions and in seven cases supplemented by income from renting out houses owned by them in the squatment and elsewhere. Income from other sources is negligible. Some of the squatters own land and houses in their respective kampung of origin, but these property very rarely bring in any income for them. Occasionally they may derive some benefits from agricultural produce of the land, such as vegetables, fruits and rice, but no monetary value is given to these and almost no one ever sells such agricultural produce for income. Ownership of such land is quite extensive among the squatters: at least one person in every household owns land in his or her kampung of origin, which may be a rubber small-holding, a paddy field, or orchard or land for residential purposes, i.e. kampung land. The acreage owned is on average quite small, between one and a half and three acres; only in one case does a squatter own five acres of rubber plantation. These land are often not put to economic use; they are either left idle or in the care of relatives in the kampung. Ownership of these land therefore contributes little, if any

to the squatters' economy; on the contrary, it puts a strain on their income as they have to pay annual taxes on them. About a quarter of the squatter households own a house in the countryside and, like the land, these houses too (except in one case) do not bring in any income as they are never rented out. Renting of houses is rarely done in the kampung in the rural areas.

Thus it can be said that the squatters' income comes almost entirely from the urban economy; and what they earn per month is much more than what the Malay peasants earn in the countryside where per household income is \$200/- per month on average, which means less than half that of the squatters. All the squatter household heads interviewed agree that their standard of living in the squatment is higher than that of their country cousins. But the peasantry is not their only point of comparison. In their daily life, sometimes they also see themselves in relation to their neighbours, the non-squatters, especially those in the middle and upper-class residential areas, where large, modern brick houses stand majestically juxtaposed in stark contrast to their own traditional wooden huts, and whose life-style, too, is so very different from their own - something which they sometimes wish they could emulate. Compared to the income of these middle and upper class residents, the income of the squatters is minuscule. The total income of all the squatter households in Kampung Selamat combined is about \$51,000/- a month; this is equivalent to the monthly income of ten Superscale D government employees living in the middle-class areas or to that of five business executives working in large business corporations living in the high-class areas. It is this tendency for some squatters to compare their economic status with that of neighbours living so close to them and the stark contrast which is so

apparent between the two that give some of the squatters a feeling of deprivation and dissatisfaction which in turn creates a feeling of resentment against the rich people whom they assume to be mostly non-Malays. It is such feelings and attitudes which underlie their involvement in politics and participation in a political organisation as will be explained later.

Based on the combined household income of the squatters, it can be said that only 28.4% of them are actually living below the poverty line of \$400/- per household per month - a poverty line which is based on the squatters' own evaluation of their minimal need per month as seen in the case of twenty-five households, as opposed to the official line of poverty which was drawn at \$275/- per month in 1977. As to what constitutes this minimal expenditure will be discussed in Section 4.2.(b). The squatters who earn less than \$400/- a month usually describe their economic status as *susah* (hard, difficult), i.e. they are the squatment's poor. Those who earn between \$400/- and \$599/- a month per household just have enough to cover their 'basic' expenses and this state of economy is seen as *cukup makan* (lit. enough to eat), which means that they are not poor, nor are they comfortable. It is only when a household has a combined earning of \$600/- or more a month can they afford to buy non-essential goods and services and live quite comfortably. In Table 8, those earning above \$600/- a month are put into two categories: households with income which range from \$600/- to \$799/-, who can purchase a few luxuries, are classified by the squatters as *boleh tahan* (lit. all right) and the rest, who have more money and therefore are in a position to buy more luxury goods and spend on other non-essentials are the *orang kaya* (lit. rich people) or *orang berduit* (lit. people with money).

TABLE 8
MONTHLY INCOME OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS &
COMBINED HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Income in \$ (Malaysian)	Income of Household Heads		Combined Household Income		Evaluation of their in- come status
	No.	%	No.	%	
No income	1		1		
100-199	6	67.0	2	28.4	Below the poverty line: Poor (<i>susah</i>)
200-299	22		6		
300-399	30		16		
400-499	13	22.7	17	34.1	Just above poverty line (<i>cukup makan</i>)
500-599	7		13		
600-699	4	8.0	9	16.0	Comfortable (<i>boleh tahan</i>)
700-799	3		5		
800-899	2	2.3	4	10.2	Very comfort- able (<i>orang kaya berduit</i>)
900-999	-		5		
1000-1099	-		6		Extremely Comfortable
1100-1199	-		1		
1200-1299	-		-		Comfortable (<i>orang kaya berduit</i>)
1300-1399	-		1	11.3	
1400-1499	-		-		
1500-1599	-		-		
1600-1699	-		1		
1700-1799	-		1		
Total	88	100.0	88	100.0	

TABLE 9
SQUATTERS' INCOME COMPARED TO
BASIC PAY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR (1980)

Occupational Groupings	Basic Pay M\$	No. of Squatter H/H* Heads with Equivalent Pay	No. of Squatter Household with Equivalent Pay
<u>Industrial & Manual Group:</u>			
Group D	195.00	6	2
Group C	295.00	52	22
Group B	485.00	27	45
<u>Timescale:</u>			
T/Scale A	865.00	2	19
T/Scale (Senr)	1805.00	-	-
<u>Superscale:</u>			
Grade G	2305.00	-	-
Grade F	2525.00	-	-
Grade E	2745.00	-	-
Grade D	2965.00	-	-
Grade C	3125.00	-	-
Grade B	3465.00	-	-
Grade A	3900.00	-	-

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*H/H = Household Head. Note: No minimum wage in private sector.

TABLE 10
LEVELS OF EDUCATION OF ADULT POPULATION

Level of Schooling attained	No. of Males	No. of Females	Total	%
Never attended school	-	8	8	3.6
Some primary education	10	20	30	13.6
Reached Primary VI	50	40	90	40.7
Reached Form III	23	14	37	16.7
Reached Form V	25	17	42	19.0
Reached Form VI	7	7	14	6.4
Total	115	106	221	

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They are the cream of the squatement community; only 21.5% of the squatter households belong to this category, of which ten households have an earning of more than \$1,000/- a month. It is from this group that most of the squatter political leaders come.

The squatters recognise the prevalent differentials in their income. However, in relation to the rest of the urban population, they see themselves as poor or, in their local parlance *kita orang miskin* (we, the poor people). The fact that a few of them may be financially better off than some other people in Kuala Lumpur, the flat-dwellers, for example, is of no consequence. They feel poor because they live in poor conditions and because they compare themselves with the urban rich and the rest of the urban population, too, see them as poor. Just how this group of people who regard themselves to be the worst of the urban population actually live can be seen through their patterns of expenditure.

(b) Expenditure and Consumption Patterns.

(i) Basic Expenditure. The expenditure and consumption patterns of the squatter households vary depending on their income capacity. Those categorised as 'rich' no doubt have extra money to spend on luxuries while the 'poor' do not. Nevertheless, taking the squatters as a whole, there are certain expenditure which practically every household considers as basic which include, as Table 12 shows, expenses on food, children's schooling, electricity bills, contribution to the prayer house and community hall, expenses to go to work and for clothing. Such expenditure, based on the examination of consumption patterns or twenty-five households, come to approximately

\$400/- a month. This is what the squatters consider the minimal requirement of an average squatter household of five, comprising two adults and three school-going children. This basic requirement does not take into consideration the costs of accommodation because the average squatter household has its own house.

Expenses on food take a large chunk of their basic expenditure. This goes to provide three meals a day, i.e. breakfast and two main meals, viz. lunch and dinner. Breakfast almost always consists of tea or coffee with sugar and occasionally with milk, and some home-made cakes of tapioca, bananas, sweet potatoes, etc., or bread and biscuits bought from the local store or even left-over food from the previous evening's dinner. Lunch and dinner consist invariably of boiled rice, eaten with at least two dishes of cooked vegetables, fish or other sea food. Meat is rarely taken as it is considered expensive and is served only on special occasions such as a feast.

In the better-off homes of those categorised as 'rich', eating habits remain similar to those of the poor. The difference is only in the quantity and quality of the food taken. The 'rich' take coffee for breakfast like the 'poor', but theirs is of the imported brand, while that of the 'poor' a local variety. The 'rich' take milk regularly, unlike the poor who take it only occasionally, and they sometimes vary their beverage, sometimes 'Horlicks', sometimes cocoa since they have the financial means to do so. Like the poor, the 'rich', too, eat boiled rice for their lunch and dinner, but unlike the poor they have more side dishes and eat better quality and therefore more expensive fish or vegetables.

Next to expenditure on food, the expenses on

TABLE 11

PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS & OTHER GOODS IN THE SQUATMENT'S
OPEN MARKET & IN PETALING JAYA AND KUALA LUMPUR
(1980)

<u>Items (Foodstuffs)</u>	<u>Price in K.L. & P. Jaya</u> (M\$0.00 cts/kati)	<u>Price in the Squatment</u> (M\$0.00 cts/kati)
Ikan bilis	3.40	2.80
Cooking oil	1.70	1.20
Onions	1.00	70
Beef	4.00	3.50
Long beans	1.00	60
Chillies	1.50	1.00
Rambutans	1.60	1.00
Nangka (jack fruit)	1.50	80
<u>Items (other goods)</u>	(M\$0.00 cts each)	(M\$0.00 cts each)
Cotton scarves	4.50	1.50
Sarongs	10.00	7.50
Imported Siamese blouses	20.00	13.00
Locally made blouses	17.00	12.00
Ladies underwear	5.50	3.00
Toys (frog)	2.50	50
Plastic basins	2.00	1.15
Materials for dresses	13.00 per yard	9.25 per yard.

TABLE 12

AN ESTIMATE OF BASIC MONTHLY EXPENDITURE
IN A SQUATTER HOUSEHOLD

<u>Items of Expenditure</u>	<u>Costs in</u> (Malaysian \$)
Food (inclusive of fuel costs)	240.00
Children's School Expenses:	
Bus fares	36.00
Religious education	5.00
Stationery, exercise books, etc	10.00
Pocket money	<u>30.00</u>
	81.00
Bus fares for household head	20.00
Pocket money for household head	30.00
Electricity bills (if any)	3.00
Contribution to Community Hall & Surau	2.00
Clothes	<u>24.00</u>
Total	400.00
	=====

children's education take quite a big slice of the squatter household's budget. Education in Malaysia is not compulsory, but all squatter children are sent to school and their parents give their children every encouragement they can. Education in the State school is free and there are provisions for free text books for poor children, to which the squatter children are entitled. But all other expenditure pertaining to children's schooling, such as compulsory school uniforms, shoes and socks, exercise books and other writing implements, costs of transport to and from school, and library recreation/sport fees, have to be borne by the parents. Children's education is therefore quite costly for the squatters accounting for over one fifth of their monthly budget. Nevertheless, none of them are willing to deny their children education because they see education as the only means by which their socio-economic status can be uplifted.

Another portion of their basic expenditure goes to the household head himself. Usually he goes to work by bus or his own motor vehicle; in either case money is needed for transport. A few cycle to work, but this mode of transportation is considered too exhausting and is resorted to only when they are really hard-up for money. The household head, too, needs some pocket money for his tea or coffee at work and for his cigarettes, if he smokes. Thus one eighth of the household expenditure is consumed by the household head alone.

Then there is the electricity bill in the case of those whose houses are supplied with electricity. This bill is usually low because electricity is used sparingly, mainly for ironing, for watching television and lighting. Ironing is done when absolutely necessary, for school clothes, for example, and not for clothes for wear. The television is

switched on only when there are really good or popular programmes, and for a limited period each night. Power for light is saved by using fluorescent lights and by using the hall for most of their activities before bedtime. If there is need to keep light on all night, a small kerosene lamp is usually used.

A squatter household makes contributions to the prayer house, *surau*, and to the community hall, too. These two centres of community activities, the former for religious functions, the latter for social ones, are run by a committee, whose full activities will be described in a later chapter. For the present it is sufficient to say that this committee organises all kinds of activities and functions which have to be financed somehow and the funds for such activities are raised from the people as and when the need arises. Such funds are collected as *sedekah* (alms) and as such payment is voluntary and the squatter can, if he so wishes, refuse to make any contributions at all. But more often than not most households pay, if not for any other reason at least in order to maintain the *nama baik* of the family. Refusing to pay can be interpreted by neighbours and friends in two ways: either the household head is stingy or he cannot afford to do so; in either case, it is bad for the image of the household concerned. Community activities held during the year include religious functions, such as prophet Muhammad's birthday, Isra' and Mi'raj, the beginning of Ramadhan (the Muslim fasting month), the two religious festivals, viz. the *Hari Raya Puasa* and *Hari Raya Haji*. Other activities include sports competitions, political party meetings, feasts for visiting dignitaries and home science classes for women. The contribution made by each household varies between \$1.00 and \$10/- depending on capabilities. On the whole, the contribution made is about \$2.00 per household per month.

Finally, there is the expenditure on clothes which is relatively small. Requirements for basic clothing are minimal in the hot tropical climate. In the squatment, children run around barefooted with only a pair of shorts on and men wear shorts and singlets or only a sarong. Only women cover themselves up much more, usually in sarongs and blouses; even then, many of them are often forced to take off their blouses in the privacy of their homes in the afternoon because of the heat. People put on their best dress only to go out of the squatment, to go to work, to visit relatives or go shopping, for example, or when there is a gathering or a feast in the squatment. Basic requirements for clothing are therefore minimal and clothes worn daily are usually of cotton material which is among the cheapest kind of textile in the market.

(ii) Non-Basic Expenditure. None of the squatters in Kampung Selamat are content with minimal living standards. They have a yen for consumer goods and some kind of entertainment which help to make life a bit more pleasant for them or help to boost their prestige. There is need for extra expenditure above what is considered basic which, in this context, will be called 'non-basic' expenditure.

The list of non-basic goods and services required by the squatters is endless. After all they live in the city and are exposed to all kinds of new ideas and things which they find difficult to resist. Most give in to their newly aroused desire, induced by advertisements through the mass media. They work very hard to earn money and spend almost all of it on non-basic goods and services. Only a few have some left for savings, even then savings are made with a view to spending, albeit later.

It is interesting to note that their idea of spending wisely is to spend money on tangible goods of utilitarian value or for religious purposes such as going on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Such spending is considered *berkat* (blessed) and money spent otherwise is seen as *tak berkat* (not blessed, wasteful). Thus one finds that the squatters are not so greatly inclined to spending money on entertainment or recreation. They go to the movies or a variety show rarely; the young may do so once in a couple of months, the older ones perhaps once a year; and men do not indulge in little vices like gambling, drinking, etc., partly for religious reasons and partly because they think any money spent that way entirely wasteful (*membazir*). Their hard earned money is spent on goods, as can be seen in their homes.

For a community with an average combined household income of about \$500/- a month and with a minimum cost of living of about \$400/- a month, the list of consumer goods owned by them is really quite impressive. In practically every house there is at least one single bed with light foam mattress, one cupboard for displaying china and other kitchen goods as well as for storing food, a wardrobe and a cooker using kerosene or gas from a sealed cylinder. In addition, in about 40% of the houses there are electrical appliances such as portable fans, rice cookers, mixers, electric kettles, electric irons; and television sets are found in 35% of the homes. Other goods found include transistor radios (80%), record players and cassettes (5%), scooters, Vespas and motor-cycles (56%) and cars (9%).

While some of the goods, such as cars, television sets, record players as well as refrigerators are considered 'luxuries' (*barang mewah*), the rest are seen as

'essentials' (*barang pakai hari-hari*) which the squatters think they should have. In this respect they are somewhat more advanced than their relatives in the countryside, where some of the consumer goods, such as some of the electrical gadgets, are not widely used and still regarded as 'luxuries'. Unlike the peasantry, where life is not governed by time, the squatters' life is practically governed by the clock and thus they need time and labour saving devices in their homes, as much as they need their own motorised transport to go to work. Hence these goods must be bought and they go to great lengths to acquire them, as shall be seen later.

Non-basic expenditure is not confined to household goods only. There are also expenses on personal items, especially clothes, shoes, watches, handbags and jewellery in the case of women. Although the basic requirement for clothing is minimal, some squatters have a considerable number of clothes, of which a few are of popular imported brands. Wrangler or Levi's jeans that cost almost one third of a factory worker's monthly pay are a common sight among the menfolk, especially when there is a community gathering and people put on their best attire; every working adult, man and woman, has a watch and ladies wear expensive Indonesian batiks, lace or lawn blouses, imported handbags and high heeled shoes when going out. The teenagers sport the latest fashion, girls in their maxi dresses and permed hair; boys in their jeans and shirts with the titles of the latest television series or big brand names written across their chest. Indeed, when it comes to dressing up for community functions or to go out, no squatters would see fit not to put on their best. And for the women, their best is not complete without their special gold jewellery, which everyone has. Women wear gold rings, bracelets, ear-rings and chains; one or two have been

seen to wear over \$1,500/- worth of gold when they attend the squatment feasts. A few wear diamonds as well.

There is no doubt that the squatters spend a relatively large sum of money on non-basic goods. This study reveals each household spends between \$35/- a month in the poorest households and \$350/- a month in the 'rich' ones on non-basic items. Such expenditure on consumer goods is not only made because the goods are essential in their daily life, but also for symbolic reasons. Prestige and social status are measured partly by a person's earning by honest means and partly by spending capacity. The more goods (especially expensive ones) that a person owns, the higher his prestige and social status. It does not matter if as a result of buying all these status-making goods they end up with no money; for to them *biar papa asal bergaya* (no matter if one is a pauper as long as one lives in style). They want to live well or at least to appear to live well.

In addition to the expenditure on personal items and household goods, extra expenses are incurred by some squatters who have dependents in the countryside. One tenth of the households send money regularly every month to their relatives - parents, siblings, etc. - in their kampungs of origin and the amount given varies from \$30/- to \$50/- a month. Some send money as and when the need arises such as when a poor relative gets ill and has no income or when his son is sitting for his secondary school examinations and requiring money for fees, or when the relative needs money for special feasts or to meet accident expenses, and such like. Everyone in the squatment, including the original settler families, has relatives in some kampung somewhere and all of them therefore are bound by social obligations which impose some financial burden on

them either regularly or occasionally.

Having seen the nature of expenditure both basic and non-basic, it can be concluded that the squatters need a lot of money to live well in the squatment. Living well in this case means living above the minimum standards and being able to purchase some if not all of the goods seen as essential. To live well the squatters need an extra income of at least \$100/- per month above their basic requirements. Thus a squatter household requires at least \$500/- a month to be able to live in a state described by them as *boleh tahan* (see Table 8). Almost 40% of the households do not have such income, yet in all the squatter homes one finds various kinds of consumer goods. How do the squatters acquire them?

The viability of their economy lies in their social resources, the way they use their ties of kin, friends and neighbours, not only to cushion themselves against the hardships of life but also to gain some comforts as well.

4.3 The Economy And Social Network.

The previous sections have tried to show the cooperation and sharing that take place among household members, especially in the process of production and redistribution of income. Such cooperation and sharing do not stop at the household level only; they also take place at the extra-household level, especially among very close neighbours who, in most cases, are related by real or fictive ties of kinship and affinity to one another.

Taking the squatment as a whole, one finds several 'fields' of intensive social interactions, each field

consisting of four to five households. Between these households, as alluded to earlier, there is usually a continuous process of cooperation, borrowing, giving and taking as well as sharing, all of which have important economic implications. Such a process which can be seen as generalised exchange is a useful redistributive mechanism enabling the poor squatters to share part of the earning of their better-off neighbours.

The ways in which such redistribution works can be seen in the case of four households, households Nos. 21, 22, 24 and 26, which are close to one another. Households 24 and 26 are related, as the two household heads are brothers. 21 and 22 are bound by fictive kin ties as the head of the former household is *anak angkat* (fictive son) of the latter. And the four families, which have been neighbours to each other for the last seven years at least, have grown very close and fond of one another that their relationship is described by them as *macam adik beradik* (lit. like siblings or brothers and sisters).

Households 24 and 26 are part-time food-sellers; 24 deals in staple food, 26 in cakes. The other two are wage-earner families, doing rather poorly compared to 24 and 26. Almost each working day, households 24 and 26 send plates of food, some of the left-overs from the day's sale, to households 21 and 22, which usually consist of rice and chicken, fish and sometimes meat, dishes as well as cakes. This is something which the latter households cannot afford to buy very frequently and although they are always at the receiving end, as it were, they never feel embarrassed or incur any loss of status. This is because they are in a position to return the favour and often do so in one way or another. For example, when the part-time food-vendor of house 24 and his wife go out in

the evening to sell food, which may last up till eleven o'clock in the night, members of households 21 and 22 help mind the children at home. Also when the wife in house 22 has extra vegetables from her home gardening effort, she gives some to her three neighbours.

Apart from the exchange of foodstuff, there is a lot of other forms of inter-borrowing and sharing between them. Women from these four households often borrow each others's cooking utensils, even personal effects which are considered by them not too private, such as scarves, slippers, handbags, etc. Men borrow each other's working tools, such as machete, chisel, hammer, etc., and also their means of transport, i.e. bicycles and scooters. Children from any of the four households walk freely into the house of another household, sometimes have meals with them and share in playing with their children's toys. The older children hand their clothes down to younger children of another household, help them with their school home-work. Ice-creams, sweets and other snacks bought at the local shop are shared among them. All this, without doubt, goes some way in redistributing the income of the better-off squatters so that their poorer neighbours are able not only to have a share of it but also to reduce their costs of living to the minimum possible.

In many cases, economic cooperation is extended beyond the cluster of closely related neighbours. This is especially so among members of the informal credit organisations, which are the main channels through which the squatters acquire most of their non-basic goods. Most of the squatters, as seen earlier, are low income earners who have great difficulty in securing formal credit facilities. About the only formal credit facility that they can get is under the hire-purchase system. But even

this is not easy for them to obtain since hire-purchase companies prefer people with fixed income. In the case of the squatters it is only those who have a personal income of more than \$400/- a month who have been known to have managed to obtain hire-purchase facilities. As the majority of the squatters earn less than \$400/- a month, they of course find it almost impossible to buy goods on hire-purchase. They have no choice but to resort to informal credit organisations.

Formal credit facilities, such as the hire-purchase, are normally for the purpose of buying goods which are normally considered 'very expensive' by the squatters, such as motorised vehicles, television sets, refrigerators, etc. The purchasing of such goods is almost always the responsibility and privilege of the men. Women deal with 'less expensive' goods, such as kitchen items, bedsheets and covers, cushion covers, imported laces or embroidered table cloths and such like. Unlike the men, the women acquire these goods through informal credit facilities, initiated by themselves or by outside dealers keen on selling their products. These informal credit facilities which depend on the women's social networks for their success are manifested in the forms of 'party sales', 'rotating credit association', 'group purchase' and 'itinerant women petty traders'. Some of these informal credit facilities will be discussed in Chapter VII.

4.4 Implications of the Squatters' Social Networks.

The squatters' social networks, based on ties of kin, affinity and of friendship are what can be described as primary social networks. These networks, as explained earlier, serve several socio-economic ends:

- (a) They help redistribute income and other economic resources within the community.
- (b) They provide channels for credit facilities, thus enabling the squatters to acquire goods that they otherwise could not.
- (c) They help reduce the costs of living by provision of free or cheap services.
- (d) They provide emotional and psychological security.

Apart from such functions, these primary social networks also account for the absence of destitution in Kampung Selamat and possibly in all the other squatter kampungs that the writer visited. In Kampung Selamat, no one starved or wore tattered clothes or was without shelter. Even the one family whose household head was unemployed for about three months in mid-1980 was not in any condition that could be regarded as destitute. When the family's savings were exhausted, some friends and neighbours lent them money although the prospect for repayment was clearly poor. Others gave gifts of raw or cooked food as well as hand-down clothes for the family's six months' old baby. And yet others, concerned that the head of the family and his wife might feel embarrassed to be the object of charity most of the time, fed their elder child when she came to their house. The family was certainly not destitute throughout the period that the household head was out of employment. In fact they led such a perfectly normal life compared to the other squatters that the writer did not suspect at first that the family had no income of their own at all.

Primary social networks at the squatment level therefore play a very important role in preventing serious hardships due to deprivation. Equally important are the squatters' ties with their relatives in the countryside. Apart from the benefits which have already been touched upon, these ties have one other important purpose. If a squatter for whatever reason cannot make it in Kampung Selamat, he can always return to his village of origin and rejoin his relatives in the security and peace of the countryside and thereby avoid the risk of facing a life of hardship and poverty in the city. This happened in the case of house No.2, who were compelled to make such a decision. The household head, a lorry driver, died in an accident while carrying out his work. He left a widow and three young children who were almost penniless and without any means of financial support. There was no way for the widow to go to work as the children were too young to be left on their own and she could not find anyone in the squatment who was in a position to mind her children for her in her absence. The whole family was in danger of a life of hardship. This was prevented when the widow's relatives from her kampung of origin came to fetch her and her children and take them back to the countryside.

There is no doubt therefore that as far as the Malay squatters are concerned their primary social networks in the squatment as well as in the countryside are of paramount importance to them in meeting their short-term and long-term needs and in overcoming some, if not all, of their socio-economic problems. But the squatters' problems are not just socio-economic only. Unlike the rest of the urban population who, on the whole, enjoy a considerable measure of security in their homes, the squatters live in a perpetual state of insecurity: they are in constant fear of

being evicted from their homes, and in the past few years such fears have intensified as a result of the increasing number of eviction operations carried out by the local authority, the City Hall, all over the Federal Territory. Their very survival is at stake and they know that their future lies in the hands of the officials at City Hall and the Ministry of the Federal Territory. They believe there are ways to influence the decisions made by such officials, but such an important task is beyond the capabilities of their primary social networks. As one squatter explains, "We are poor people. Our relatives, too, are poor people. What we need, as the old folks would say, is a big tree with thick foliage (*pohon rendang*) which can provide us the shade and shelter that we need." They need to establish extra social ties, with people in power, outside their primary social networks.

In Chapter III we saw how the pioneer squatters found the 'big tree with thick foliage' in the urban politicians and their first contact with these politicians made them realise that politicians from the political party in power *do* have certain influence over officials at City Hall. This realisation, together with their feelings of indebtedness to the politicians, induced them to foster even closer relationship with the politicians and their political party organisation. The present squatters, following in the footsteps of their predecessors, continue to maintain the ties established with the politicians and their political party organisation, thus widening their social networks considerably by creating secondary ties to complement their primary ones which proved inadequate and incapable of attending to the crucial problem of their very survival as squatters.

CHAPTER V

POLITICS, POLITICAL PARTIES & PARTY DEPENDENCY IN KAMPUNG SELAMAT (1967 - 1977)

5.1 Squatter Politics

The Malay squatters who are recent arrivals in the capital city are faced with at least two major problems in their attempt to adapt to urban life. First, as explained in Chapter IV, they are beset with socio-economic problems which arise out of their low income and job instability, and these are dealt with by careful utilisation and manipulation of their primary social networks. Secondly, they are faced with the question of their survival as squatters and as part of the urban population. For the majority of them, to continue living in the city means they have to squat because they cannot afford alternative accommodation. And as squatters, they are not only living in relative deprivation but also in constant fear of eviction. It is certainly axiomatic to say that it is the desire of every squatter eventually to secure legal rights to the land they now occupy and bring about improvement in their living conditions so as to be able to live *macam orang bandar* (lit. like the town or city people); and to live *macam orang bandar* means to have basic amenities such as piped water and electricity, postal service, proper sanitation, etc. These are goals which all squatters strive to attain. To the extent that such goals are public or communal in nature and that the squatters try to achieve them by collective efforts, all activities directed towards such objectives can, to follow the definition of Swartz et. al., be described as political (1976:1-42).

Squatter politics in Kampung Selamat operates within the framework of a political party organisation. The squatters, as will be explained at length in Chapters VI and VII, use the political party machinery as a basis for community organisations and utilise the party as a channel for achieving their own limited goals. Their politics is enmeshed with national politics and so it cannot be studied in isolation but must be seen in relation to the wider political context in the country. It is one area of study where anthropology and political science converge.

The close link between the squatters and political party organisations is not peculiar to Kampung Selamat. This phenomenon exists elsewhere in the capital, a fact which is well-known among city administrators, politicians and some sections of the general public. The 1969 Report of the Federal Capital Commission (referred to in Chapter I), for example, refers to interference from and pressure by politicians and political organisations. The Report does not detail the nature of interference and pressure, but whatever form they took, they were said to have impeded the efforts made by the local authority to control the expansion of squatting and appeared to have frustrated some officials in local government. The Report thought it appropriate to call for a policy on squatting that was free from political interference and pressure (p.20).

The 1978 Report by City Hall also alluded to earlier in Chapter I, on the other hand, notes that some squatters in Kuala Lumpur aligned themselves with certain political parties and that a few squatters became party activists and political leaders at the squatment level and used their positions in the party to apply pressure on officials of the urban authorities to give their squatments all kinds of basic amenities (p.8).

Research workers who have studied squatter communities in the capital also note the dominant role played by politicians and political parties at the squatment level and supra-squatment level, in helping to champion the squatters' cause. However, they usually make little more than just passing references. Adnan Maarof (1967) and Mahsun Taib (1972) describe briefly how Malay squatters in two different sections of Kampung Kerinci formed political party branches in the squatment and later used the party branch to protect themselves against eviction. Hamdan Haji Nordin (1977), in his study of residents of Pantai Halt, many of whom were squatters, observes how the local party branch was used to get public amenities from the local authority. Ishak Shaari (1976), whose main focus of study was the squatment in Kampung Kelantan, refers simply to "political interference" which, according to him, restrained the local authority from demolishing squatter huts. And finally, Sen, M.K. (1979), who describes the squatters as politically conscious and with a high level of political participation, contends that the squatters are greatly influenced by their local level political leaders and that such leaders seek the assistance and support of supra-local politicians, especially their members of parliament.

The close links between squatters and politicians both from the ruling Barisan Nasional and the opposition parties are also amply reported in the national newspapers. Among the most publicised cases in recent years is that of the Kampung Polo squatters, comprising twenty-two households, who were evicted by the City Hall housing enforcement unit, the UPP, in mid-October 1981. The local dailies gave the incident good coverage. The squatter houses were reported to have been demolished, and in the process of destroying the houses, officials of the UPP were

said to have used force on the squatters, for example, by ordering a mother to take her very ill baby out of the house into pouring rain so that their house could be axed down. Such reports not only brought an outcry from some members of the public as evidenced by the number of letters from readers in the newspapers and of those received by the deputy director of the UPP condemning him and threatening him for what happened, but they also brought some politicians running to the squatment and City Hall(1). Among the first to respond immediately to the incident was the Member of Parliament for Kuala Lumpur Bandar, Mr Lee Lam Thye, from the opposition party, DAP. The day after the incident he was reported to be taking up the case of the squatters with the Minister of the Federal Territory (Malay Mail, 16 October 1981). The next day, an official of UMNO's National Youth Committee, Mr Tamrin Ghaffar, released a press statement criticising the City Hall officials involved in the demolition operation for their "inhuman and callous attitudes" and in his capacity as Chairman of UMNO's National Youth Committee Housing Bureau, he called on the Ministry of the Federal Territory to discipline its staff (Malay Mail, 17 October 1981). Another newspaper, the Sunday Times, 18 October 1981, reports that an official of the Federal Territory UMNO, i.e. the chairman of the party's Housing and Land Bureau, Senator Abdul Razak Samah, visited the homeless squatters and told them of "UMNO's proposal that they (the squatters) rebuild their houses on an adjacent piece of land". The senator, the report says, also "...told the squatters that if they were not happy with the alternative land they could rebuild elsewhere in the vicinity". The squatters of Kampung Polo evidently took his advice, for the Malay Mail on 10 October, 1981 reports that they were still living in the area, having built temporary longhouses with the "blessing of UMNO and the government".

Needless to say, the political functionaries' manifest interest in the squatters is induced by, among other things, the fact that the squatters have the right to participate in political organisations and to vote in the national and state elections despite their anomalous position in the capital. Political party leaders, from both the ruling Barisan Nasional and the opposition, as seen in the newspaper reports mentioned above, make no secret about their interest in and liaison with the squatters and of their commitment to the cause of the squatters, including their quest for titles to the land they occupy illegally. However, none of the politicians interviewed would openly admit that their interest in the squatters is motivated by their desire to win the votes and get the political support of the squatters. Instead, they attribute their 'commitment' to helping the squatters to 'humanitarian reasons', and to their desire to *berkhidmat* (lit. serve or give service) and, in the case of the politicians from the opposition, to their quest for social justice as well.

Two opposition MPs, Mr. Lee Lam Thye, who represents the constituency of Kuala Lumpur Bandar since 1969, and Mr. V. David, who represents that of Damansara (1978-1982), both from the DAP, explain that they champion the interest of the squatters because they are the urban poor who, they say, have been grossly neglected by the local authority and the Federal Government. The present Government, they contend, does not understand the real cause of urban squatting and has failed to solve the squatter problem. Its present attempts to overcome this problem, they say, have led to serious hardships to so many squatter families. It is therefore, they claim, their duty as Members of Parliament to fight for the cause and interest of the squatters and to help them.(2)

Like these two MPs, the MP for Setapak (1974-1982) Hj. Idris Ibrahim, who was until 1982, also the chief of UMNO Setapak Division, openly admits his support for the squatters (3) "There is no doubt", he said, "that the squatters are on the wrong side of the law. But they are forced to break the law, to be squatters. They deserve to be helped. If politicians like us don't help them, who would? We can't simply throw them out of their homes, there are a quarter of a million of them...". He is proud to be in a position to protect and help them. He claims that he spent 60% of his financial allocation as an MP on the squatters in his constituency, for such purposes as building roads, and providing piped water and electricity. This earned him the title *Raja Setinggalan* (King of the squatters), a title of which he feels proud. (Alattas S.H., 1979:109).

Political leaders from the other component parties of the coalition Barisan Nasional, the MCA, MIC and Gerakan are equally involved with the squatters. The close association of the MCA with the squatters viz. Chinese squatters goes back to the late forties during the formative period of the party, when the squatters formed the main bulk of its supporters and members. In the sixties, with the emergence of other Chinese dominated political parties, the squatters support for MCA is believed to have declined and as part of its attempt to regain the squatters support the party conducted a survey of Kuala Lumpur squatters in 1976. A confidential report by Siaw L.K. emphasised the need for MCA to accelerate its efforts to bring more squatters into the party. There is no doubt that MCA is currently doing all it can to achieve just that. The MCA Federal Territory appears to be doing its best to help the squatters. For example, at a meeting with fire victims in Kampung Furlong, Setapak which the writer

attended in November 1981, the secretary of MCA Setapak Division, Mr. Lim Kim Pong donated \$2,000/- on behalf of his party and \$200/- on behalf of his transport company to the fire victims. In addition he offered the services of his party officials to the squatters in the aftermath of the fire. Help of a more permanent nature will soon be implemented, according to an official of the Federal Territory MCA, in the form of a kindergarten project in Chinese squatter areas. Such help, which may be construed as abetting squatting, is deemed necessary for the squatters' sake. As Mr. Lim Kim Pong(4) told the writer,

"The squatters are poor people. Some are not familiar with the local authorities. They don't know how to deal with officials, how to get things done. MCA is here to serve them ..."

The Gerakan party, which has its origin and base in the northern state of Penang, is trying to broaden its base to include Kuala Lumpur and the squatters are among its main targets. The party leaders have not been vocal in their support for the squatters, nevertheless, the writer's own investigation shows that quite a few high-ranking officials of the party are active in the squatments. In Kampung Baru Shaw, the community leader says he is getting the help of one Gerakan politician, a junior minister, to get water supply and other basic amenities for the squatment and he hopes with this minister's help to get titles to their land.

The writer came across several instances where the MIC became involved with the squatters' interests. In Kampung Udara, the squatters received a community hall and water supply with the help of the MIC. When the

squatters in Kampung Khatijah, Brickfields, were to be evicted to make way for a road and office buildings in 1981, it was the MIC leaders in Brickfields, besides the UMNO Senator from Damansara, who undertook the task of negotiating with City Hall and the private developer on the best possible terms to compensate the squatters and the best means to remove them from the area. And in the squatment of Kampung Berembang, six new squatter houses that were served eviction notices and to be demolished by the UPP in October 1981, were saved by the intervention of MIC officials from Ampang.

The relationship between the squatters and some political leaders from the various political organisations, especially political parties in the Barisan Nasional, is acknowledged in high political circles. A junior minister in the Ministry of the Federal Territory in 1980, now a full minister in the Prime Minister's Department, refers to it in a paper submitted to a workshop on squatters in 1979,

"... the squatters ... have close links with political parties which act as action groups to help solve their problems and act as their representatives in dealings with the government departments. The political parties are formed instantaneously in the squatments ... in order to obtain basic amenities ..." (Translated from the original text in Malay).

Indeed, political party branches are formed everywhere in the squatter areas in the capital. Party signboards are prominently displayed in almost every squatter kampung, proclaiming the presence of party branches. The majority of these signboards belong to political parties of the Barisan Nasional. As Lau L. Ching, writing on the administration of the Federal Territory, observes,

"Politically squatters have political power of their own. There are many instances where the squatter community forms the branches of certain political parties, especially those in the ruling government ..." (1978:91).

There are UMNO, MCA, MIC and Gerakan party branches in the squatments as testified by the parties' signboards. The opposition parties are conspicuously poorly represented. The DAP, for example, which is based in Kuala Lumpur and which has a very large following there as evidenced by the results of four successive general elections, in 1969, 1974, 1978 and 1982, has only a few signboards in the squatments. During the writer's visit to more than one hundred squatter kampungs, which include parliamentary constituencies considered to be DAP strongholds (Kepong, Sungai Besi and Kuala Lumpur Bandar), only eleven DAP signboards were sighted as against more than eighty signboards of the government political parties. The other opposition party, PMIP, which also has some supporters in the capital, especially in the parliamentary constituencies of Setapak and Damansara as testified by the number of votes it polled in the 1978 and 1982 general elections, had no party signboards displayed at all.

The absence of signboards of the opposition parties does not mean that the squatters are all for the political parties of the government in power. There are many DAP and PMIP supporters in the squatments, but they are not keen to display their support openly. This is consonant with the result of a survey by the Kuala Lumpur MCA Research Bureau, in 1981. On the political participation of the squatters in Kampung Pakar, Kuala Lumpur, the survey concludes,

"The percentage of those respondents who were non-committal or reluctant to answer constituted 44% of the sampling. Although 1.1% of respondents indicated their moral or active support for DAP, the percentage for their support may be higher and may comprise those within the 44% category."
(1981:10)

Some PMIP and DAP supporters may also register as members of the ruling coalition parties. This phenomenon can be termed as overt and covert political affiliation, that is overt support for the party in power and covert support for the opposition party. This overt and covert support is due to the widespread belief among the squatters, and to some extent among the general public as well, that the government bureaucracy is controlled by politicians from the political party in power. It is feared that open support for the opposition would incense those politicians within the government who might retaliate utilizing the urban bureaucracy, i.e. the Ministry of the Federal Territory and the City Hall. The retaliation, it is believed, may take various forms: eviction, harassment, strict enforcement of existing laws on squatting, denial of services and basic urban amenities, etc. A show of support for the party in power is considered necessary whether or not they believe in the party concerned or its policies.

The party signboard in a squatter kampung does not therefore truly reflect the political affiliation of all the squatters in that kampung, but it is an indication of the political inclination of the majority. And judging by the party signboards displayed, it can be said that squatter politics connote ethnic divisions, a reflection of prevalent demographic and political segregation. As has already been stated earlier in Chapter I, the major political parties, UMNO, MCA and MIC are ethnic parties which limit their

membership to their own respective ethnic category only, and each party champions the cause of its particular ethnic group. Political parties which are not constituted as ethnic parties, such as the DAP, Gerakan and PMIP, are nonetheless generally identified with a particular ethnic group. The DAP and Gerakan, originally constituted as multi-racial parties, draw most of their support from the Chinese community and are therefore identified by the general public as Chinese parties. Similarly, PMIP, formed as a party based on Islamic ideology, and which draws most of its support from Malays, is identified as a Malay party. In conformity with this pattern of political affiliation, the squatters invariably support political parties of their own ethnic groups or one which is associated with them. Thus one finds UMNO in Malay squattments, the MCA, Gerakan and to a lesser extent the DAP, in Chinese, and MIC in Indian squattments.

Usually, only one party's signboard is seen in a particular squatment. This is hardly surprising as the majority of the squatments consist of a single ethnic group. In the few cases where more than one ethnic groups live together within the boundaries of a squatment, more than one party signboards are displayed. An example is Bukit C2 in the Pantai area, where the UMNO and MIC banners stand side by side, an epitome of the ethnic division and dual political affiliation of its resident squatters.

In Kampung Selamat, where the population is entirely Malay, only one party signboard is visible, that of UMNO. The signboard, which is displayed in a prominent position at the main entrance to the squatment, is seen by some as proof of their support for the political party in power. Giving tangible proof of their support for the government

is extremely important, particularly because they are squatters, as one of their leaders explains,

"Because we stay here without permission (*tanpa izin*), some people at the top tend to have a negative view of us. There are people who think squatter kampungs like ours are centres of criminal and subversive activities ... it is important that we show them we are not. We are for law and order. We are for the government as you can see from our signboard ..."

Most importantly, the signboard is seen by the squatters as a *perisai sakti* (lit. magic shield) which they believe protects them from harassment by the local authorities. It is for this reason that such signboards are placed at strategic positions in the squatments, along the road where vehicles belonging to officials of local authorities are likely to pass through. The signboard symbolizes the squatters' close association with, and the protection they receive from, the party and it is expected to caution the officials before they take any action against the squatters.

5.2. The Squatters' Association with UMNO - The Early Stage

We have seen in Chapter III how the squatters' association with UMNO began. The party helped the squatters of Kampung Selamat, as well as other squatter areas in Kuala Lumpur, to achieve what they had earlier thought was an impossible objective, namely the retention of the land they occupied illegally. The Menteri Besar, intentionally or otherwise, had demonstrated to the squatters, especially the squatter leaders, the extent of his power. The squatter leaders who were involved in the

negotiation with the Menteri Besar in 1967, saw how swiftly and effectively he dealt with the problem of eviction. He was able to have the eviction orders stayed simply by making a telephone call; whereas the squatter leaders had tried and worked hard for days without success. They were overwhelmingly impressed and some were quick to realise the potential of such powers and its relevance to their own needs as individuals or as a community. As Atan, one of the pioneer squatter leaders who met the Menteri Besar at the meeting in 1967, says,

"He was certainly the man we were looking for, someone with power and influence to be our protector. He is like a big tree with a lot of shade (*pohon rendang*). Only a man like him can help us with our problems."

What appealed to him most, it seems, was the Menteri Besar's willingness to listen to their problems, his show of sympathy for their plight and most of all the fact that he appeared very accessible to them, unlike some other politicians they knew. He was in Atan's words "a real leader of the people" (*pemimpin rakyat betul-betul*).

The squatter leaders were convinced he was the sort of man with whom they ought to ingratiate themselves, and one who could be relied on for protection and help in future. Joining his party, thus becoming his supporters, was seen as an excellent way of establishing and maintaining a close relationship with him.

It was the squatter leaders who first joined the party in 1967, and the rest of the squatters followed, some at the insistence of the leaders, others of their own free will. They enrolled as members of an UMNO branch in the traditional village of Pantai Dalam, about half a mile away from

Kampung Selamat. Starting a new party branch in the squament was out of the question then, since the number of adults was less than fifty, the minimum number required to form a branch. Even if there were enough people, opening a new branch was beyond the capability of the leaders as they were not familiar with party organisation and management. Joining the Pantai Dalam branch was the best course of action that they could take under the circumstances, especially because some officials of this branch had given them moral support and guidance in their struggle against eviction by the urban authorities. Other squatters in the neighbourhood had also joined this branch.

Their entry into the party marked the beginning of a close relation between them and some functionaries of the party at the branch, division and state as well as national levels. The nature of the squatters' participation in the party branch in this initial period can only be seen through the recollections of some of the pioneer squatters who are still living in Kampung Selamat today. The branch did not keep records at the time largely because the officials did not deem it important to do so and also because there was no proper place or office where such records could be stored. Political activities of the squatters at this period, according to Leman, one of the pioneer squatter leaders, were limited. For most squatters they were confined to paying annual subscriptions, attending party gatherings to hear speeches delivered by high-ranking party politicians, attending party meetings, especially the annual general meetings of the local branch, and voting for the party's candidates or candidates supported by the party at the general elections. They were largely passive members; only five or six community leaders were party activists. These leaders acted as

middlemen between the squatters in Kampung Selamat and party officials at the branch in Pantai Dalam. They helped branch officials to organise party functions and mobilised the squatters to participate in them and, at the same time, relayed to the officials the problems and difficulties of the squatters with which they wished the party leaders to help.

The squatters relied on the head of the local UMNO branch to seek the help of his party superiors especially the state party chief to protect and promote the interests of the squatters. Initially, the squatters' expectation of the party functionaries was minimal, merely to seek protection against eviction and harassment from local authorities. However, as they became more involved with the party, they were exposed to political leaders from the supra-squatment level who came into the squatment, particularly before the 1969 general elections to solicit their support, and during such visits, the squatters were given political 'pep-talks'. They were reminded of their rights and privileges as Malays and of the need to continue to give their support to the party since, they were told, only the party was committed to protecting their rights and privileges. And in return for the squatters' support for the party, these leaders promised they would do everything they could to help the squatters. One such leader, a Senator, is reported by some squatters as having said,

"...We are Malays, the sons of the soil, and we have every right to stay on this land. You have every right to stay on your land. I will defend your right with my life and blood"

The promise which until today remains unfulfilled and which was received, according to some squatters, with

thunderous applause, had at least two important effects. First, it raised the squatters' hope and expectation. Second, it inculcated in them a sense of consciousness of their rights and privileges as Malays as opposed to the non-Malays. They began to see themselves as a 'privileged' group whose needs had to be given priority by the government. They became very optimistic of their future on the land. By the end of the sixties, the squatters were not merely expecting the party to protect them against eviction, but were also contemplating permanent stay in the squatment and expecting to get titles to the land they occupied illegally.

Convinced that their party officials would be able to help them realise their dreams, many of the squatters began to invest more money extending or repairing their houses, or building extra houses for renting out. Some of them then urged their community leaders to get their party leaders to help secure basic amenities, especially water and electricity.

By early 1971, they received their first communal tap from the local authorities. One tap was certainly not enough to cater for the needs of over three hundred people, nevertheless, the squatters were grateful to branch officials for their help. The installation of this tap was construed by many as a sign that the local authorities were softening their stand towards the squatters. Hopes for more basic amenities were raised even higher. They were promised by the party that more was to come and were urged to be patient, for the *orang atas* (lit. top people, i.e. the supra-squatment politicians in position of power in the government) were doing all they could to help them. But the wait for more largesse proved to be a long one and patience was beginning to wear thin among

the squatters.

By the beginning of 1974, the squatters had still not heard anything about their petition for water and electricity, let alone for land titles. A rift began to grow between the squatter leaders and branch officials, with the former accusing the latter of not doing enough to promote their interests as squatters. According to Leman, they had every reason to be angry. Living conditions in the squatment were going from bad to worse in the early seventies. More people were coming into the squatment and the daily scramble for water was creating dissension among the residents. Fights broke out occasionally with women shouting at each other and the men flicking knives or brandishing machetes. The unlit settlement invited burglars, making it almost impossible for some to leave their home in the evening to take part-time work. Life became harder for the squatters and all these problems, they believed, would be solved if there were more communal taps and electricity. But such amenities did not seem forthcoming and the squatters blamed the local branch officials.

The squatter leaders, who had all along assumed the role of spokesmen, accused the party officials of taking a 'casual attitude' (*indah tak indah sahaja*) towards their plight. The branch officials, the squatter leaders alleged, did not give any priority to the squatters' interests in the local party's agenda, and were not utilizing the party machinery at the local and supra-local level to help the squatters. The squatter leaders believed this was because the branch officials regarded the squatters in Kampung Selamat as peripheral members of the branch, who were new to the party and whose loyalty to the party was yet to be proven. Another reason, which was considered more

important by the squatters, was the branch officials' status as non-squatters. The party branch, being at that time in a traditional Malay village, was controlled by landowners, descendants of the original settlers in Pantai (see Chapter III), many of whom were related to one another. Because they were landowners, the squatters believed, they were not in a position to appreciate fully the hardships experienced by the squatters. They also suspected that the party officials' 'indifferent' (*sambil lewa*) attitude towards them was due to 'jealousy' (*cemburu*). The squatter areas in Kampung Selamat, as explained in Chapter III, had belonged to them until reclaimed by the state for mining. The squatters assumed the landowners to be somewhat jealous of, if not angry with, them for occupying the area which their people had toiled to open from a thick virgin jungle. And what was more, the squatters believed, the landowners must be annoyed with them for living on the land free, while they had to pay taxes.

The fact that many of the land-owning political leaders were also landlords renting out houses to the in-coming migrants from the countryside, was also seen as a significant disincentive for them to help the squatters. Squatting was bad for their house-renting trade as people would rather squat than live in rented accommodation. Should squatments like Kampung Selamat be provided with basic amenities, squatting would be made even more attractive. It was in the landowners' interest, the squatters believed, that the living conditions in the squatter villages in the neighbourhood be left as deplorable as it was.

The landowner branch officials(5) denied these allegations vehemently. They claim they understood fully

the plight of the squatters and had every sympathy with them. The branch, the previous branch chief insists, did its best for the squatters, submitting their petitions to their superiors in the party hierarchy, and if these requests went unheeded, the fault was not theirs. By blaming them, the branch officials contend, the squatters were making an error of judgement and showing ingratitude (*tak mengenang budi*). As one of the branch officials said,

"We helped them in their fight against eviction. We secured a communal tap for them. That is proof enough of our concern for them. We cannot get everything they asked for. There is a limit to what we can do."

The squatters, the branch officials believe, were inexperienced in urban politics, ignorant of the dealing that went on between leaders and supporters within the party. It was this inexperience, they think, which made the squatters impatient and angry.

The fact is the party officials did try to help the squatters by bringing to the attention of their superiors the squatters' requests for basic amenities, but the state party chief was slow to respond. This, it was believed, was due to an important political development. After the race riot of 1969, the Malaysian Parliament was suspended and the country was administered, until 1974, by the National Operations Council. This had the effect of reducing the influence and powers of politicians elected either to the Parliament or State Assembly, and as such the Menteri Besar was not in a position to do very much to help the squatters. In 1974, Kuala Lumpur was taken out of the State of Selangor to form a separate administrative and political entity. Kampung Selamat, together with the

traditional village of Pantai Dalam and other squatterments in the Pantai area, found themselves no longer part of the State of Selangor; they became part of the new state, called the Federal Territory and subject to the jurisdiction of City Hall, a government administrative agency headed by a government appointed mayor. The squatters and their local party branch were now outside the area of influence of their major political protector, the Menteri Besar of Selangor. As Selangor and City Hall were now separate political and administrative entities, the Menteri Besar had no more control or influence over the local government of Kuala Lumpur, and thereby ceased to be able to give direct help and protection to the squatters.

The squatters in Kampung Selamat were aware of the formation of the National Operations Council and the birth of the new state, the Federal Territory. They, however, failed at first to realise the implications of this new political development upon their relationship with their political party in the State of Selangor. As far as they were concerned, their failure to get basic amenities was due to the indifference or inaction of their immediate political leaders. Relation between the squatters and branch officials began to deteriorate. At this juncture, according to some of the pioneer squatter leaders, some squatters in Kampung Selamat felt that they should vote the party officials out of office and replace them with squatters. But they soon realised that this was no easy task. The party officials had been in control of the party since the branch was established in 1950 and they had strong backing from other landowners in Pantai Dalam. What is more, they were determined to hold on to their posts and firmly believed that they had every right to be leaders in the Pantai area because they were the original settlers whereas the squatters were what they called

pendatang baru (lit, new comers). The squatters resented this attitude, especially because some of the squatters regarded themselves as *Melayu jati* (real Malays) and were not prepared to have a group whom they referred to as *orang awak* (their derogatory term for Minangkabau Malays) impose their political domination over them. This resentment finally led to the squatters dissociating themselves from the Pantai Dalam UMNO branch altogether and forming their own party branch in Kampung Selamat.

By this time, 1974, starting a new branch was no longer beyond the means and capability of the community leaders. They had been party activists for some years, since 1967, and had acquired some knowledge and skill in party organisation and had made contacts with a few higher level party officials whom they could approach for help in setting up the new branch. Moreover there were now more than enough people in the squatment than the required minimum of fifty to form a branch.

5.3 The Party Branch in Kampung Selamat

The general elections in April 1974 delayed the formation of the new branch. With the entire party machinery at branch, division, state and national levels geared towards the elections, the squatters were forced to shelve their plan temporarily. Nevertheless, they made the most of the pre-election period to draw the attention of top level politicians in the party to their plight. Supra-squatment party functionaries who arrived to campaign for the party's candidate are said to have had rough receptions from the squatters. The squatters aired their grievances and dissatisfaction with the attitude of the government towards them in no uncertain terms. Party

officials in positions of power, they said, were not taking enough interest in their welfare and had been treating them badly, like *anak tiri* (step-children)(6). As a result, they claimed, some of the squatters were feeling dejected and if the top party officials were not careful, they warned, the squatters might lose their faith in the party altogether and go over to the opposition. Other squatters in the neighbourhood in Kampung Limau, Pantai Halt, Kampung Kerinci and Abdullah Hukum, were likewise making their grievances known to the party campaigners.

The actions taken by the squatters in Pantai, who by now numbered several thousands, must have been viewed with great concern by the top party officials in the party for, a few days before polling day, no less than the Prime Minister himself, the national leader of UMNO, descended upon the Pantai area to 'meet the people' who, apart from the traditional villagers of Pantai Dalam, were mainly squatters. The Prime Minister implored the people to vote for the Barisan Nasional candidate, an Indian from the MIC. His government, he is reported to have said, had devised a plan to develop the Pantai-Kerinci-Abdullah Hukum area into a modern Malay kampung, in its attempt to 'modernise' the residents and it was incumbent on the squatters to vote for the Barisan Nasional if they wanted to benefit from the plan. The squatters and others in the area regarded this as a promise of help and since the promise came from the highest authority in the country who was a Malay, they found no reason at all to doubt his sincerity.

The squatters of Kampung Selamat claim that they did indeed vote for the Barisan Nasional in the 1974 general elections, and when the coalition was returned to power, they looked forward eagerly and hopefully to the day when

the Prime Minister's promise would be fulfilled. They were keen to keep their part of the bargain, to continue giving their support to UMNO and they set about forming their new branch as soon as the elections were over. The necessary procedures took months to complete and it was not until the beginning of 1975 that the new branch was finally constituted. In the subsequent years, other squatters in the neighbourhood also broke away from the Pantai Dalam branch and formed their own party branches, all apparently for exactly the same reason, namely clash of interests between them and branch officials at Pantai Dalam.

There are no written records of the organisation and activities of the new party branch in this initial period. Again we have to rely upon the recollections of the pioneer squatters. According to some of them, the party branch records for the years 1975 and 1976 were all lost. Minutes of meetings, correspondence, etc., were in the custody of the chief of the branch and the secretary who subsequently left taking the party records with them.

According to some of the pioneer squatters, who are now branch officials, the party branch in Kampung Selamat began with about one hundred members. It had two committees, the main committee, known as the *Jawatankuasa Cawangan UMNO*, (UMNO Branch Committee) consisting of a branch chief, his deputy, a secretary, an information officer and five committee members; and a youth committee, known as the *Jawatankuasa Pergerakan Pemuda UMNO*, (UMNO Youth Movement Committee), whose organisational structure was similar to that of the main committee to which it was accountable. Normally, an UMNO branch would have another committee, the women's committee, known as the *Jawatankuasa Pergerakan Wanita UMNO*

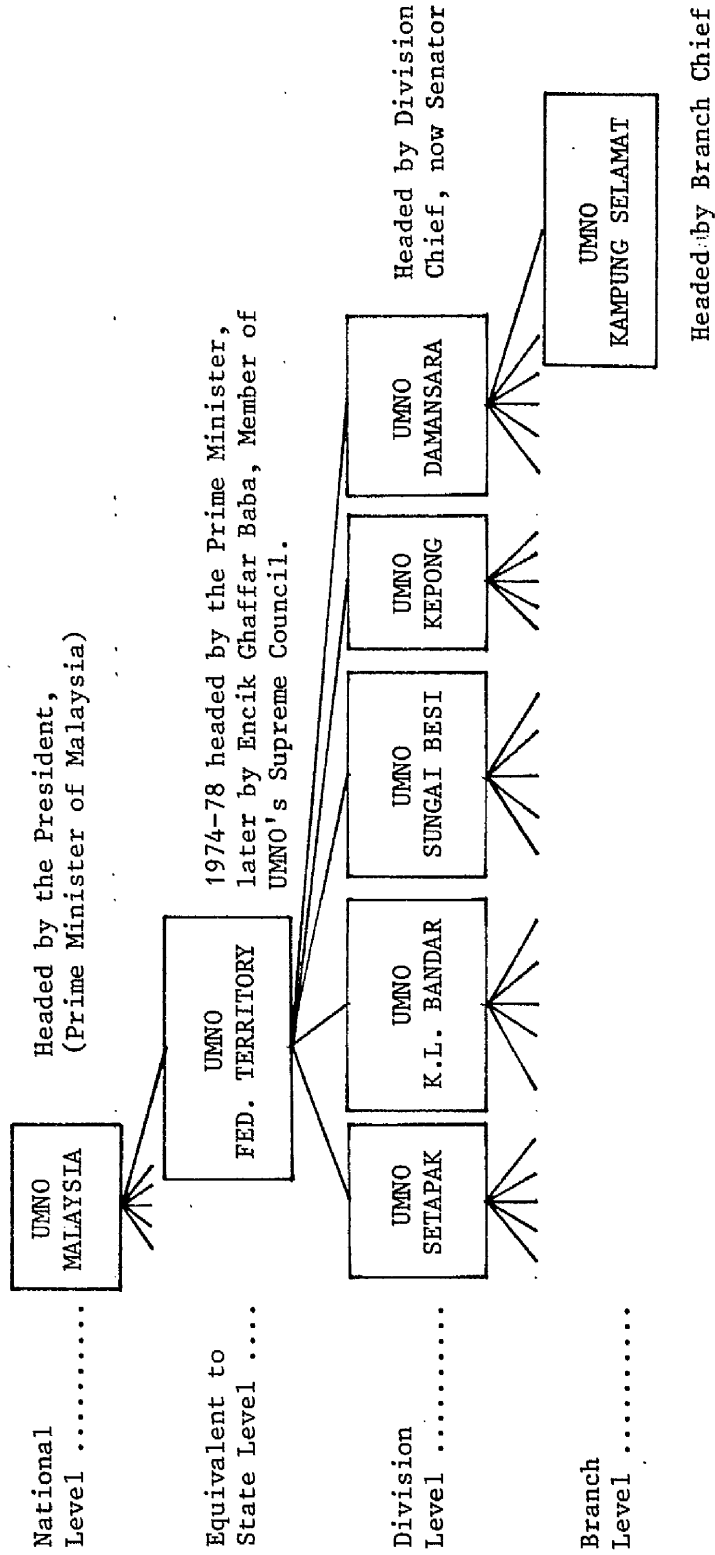
(UMNO Women's Movement Committee); but the women in Kampung Selamat in 1975 were not terribly keen to be actively involved in political organisation. Party activities were geared towards achieving community objectives which involved extra-community relations, and these political activities were seen as a public domain inappropriate for women. Women were content to be ordinary members.

The party officials consisted of the community leaders in the squatment who had all along been party activists and who had engineered the break-away from the former branch. The squatters' principal leader, the *Ketua Kampung* (Village Chief) as he was referred to, became the branch first party chief or *Ketua UMNO*. Thus the post of the branch party chief and that of the community leader were held by the same person, a pattern of leadership becoming increasingly popular in rural villages. Being both party chief and community leader simultaneously, the party chief was able to utilise the local party machinery in Kampung Selamat as a basis for community organisation and this mode of 'local government' in the squatment has been retained until now (see Chapter VII).

This branch in Kampung Selamat, together with twenty others form the UMNO Damansara Division, which in turn forms the Federal Territory UMNO together with four other divisions (Setapak, Sungai Besi, Kepong and Kuala Lumpur Bandar). The Federal Territory UMNO is part of UMNO Malaysia, whose President is the Prime Minister. Thus, through the party hierarchy the squatters are linked to the most powerful person in the country (see Figure 10).

The Kampung Selamat branch began with a serious handicap. Its principal protector, the Menteri Besar of

FIGURE 10
KAMPUNG SELAMAT UMNO BRANCH
WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARTY HIERARCHY



Selangor, as we saw earlier, was no longer in a position to help and protect them. The Menteri Besar was further incapacitated when he was convicted of fraud and corruption which involved a local bank and was sentenced to five years imprisonment though later was granted a royal pardon. The first task of the branch party chief was to look for a strong political leader within the party hierarchy, someone with influence and power who would be in a position to protect them against eviction and help secure their other objectives. Finding the right person proved to be difficult. The highest office in the Federal Territory party structure was held by the Prime Minister himself (see Figure 1). On the face of it he would have made an ideal protector or patron, but he was too remote and far too busy with affairs of state to be able to find time to attend to their limited locally orientated interests and welfare. Furthermore, the squatters thought he was not so readily accessible as the former Menteri Besar. Also Kuala Lumpur was not the political base of the Prime Minister and as such the squatter leaders did not think that he would be fully committed to helping them. They believed that only a politician who would stand to benefit directly from the squatters' votes and political support, either in the general elections or party elections, would go all out to help them.

There were two persons who would benefit and were benefitting from the squatters' votes: first, the MP for Damansara, and second, the UMNO party chief at the divisional level. The MP was an Indian from the MIC, one of the main component parties in Barisan Nasional, whom, in theory, UMNO members like the squatters in Kampung Selamat could easily approach for help; but in practice, the squatters found it hard to solicit help from him which, as will be explained later in Chapter VI, was due to their

apprehension of and lack of trust in political leaders of other ethnic origin. Thus they had to depend on their party division chief for help and protection; this division chief became their main protector, replacing the Menteri Besar. The division chief had every reason to be interested in the squatters, being dependent on the votes of branch leaders to remain in office; hence the squatter party leaders were convinced he would take care of their interests. The post of the division chief is one which is much sought after, because, to quote Datuk Harun Idris, a member of UMNO National Executive Council,

"... Party posts, even at the lowest level, carry a number of advantages ..." (8)

The office of the division chief is one of the highest offices in the state party hierarchy, and it is the key to the door to important political appointments, as is evidenced by the fact that this division chief was appointed a Senator in 1978. There are also economic advantages attached to it as high ranking party officials usually have access to business opportunities sponsored by the party or the government (see Shamsul Amri, 1983).

How the contact between the branch chief and the division chief was first established was anybody's guess. The former branch chief left in 1976, and his party colleagues at that time left such matters entirely to him and so knew little of what transpired between him and the division chief. It is assumed that the party chief in Kampung Selamat took the initiative because he was in need of the division chief's help, without which he could not hope to fulfil the expectations of his supporters in Kampung Selamat. Such expectations by then, according to Atan, a political leader and a pioneer squatter, had

increased tremendously. Some of the more important ones were:

- (a) Securing protection against eviction and to seek legal ownership of the land.
- (b) Obtaining basic amenities, such as piped water and electricity supply.
- (c) Obtaining social services, such as postal delivery service, a religious instruction class, etc.
- (d) Obtaining funds to build a prayer house, community hall, badminton court, etc.

The squatters expected their local party leaders, especially the branch chief, to secure these objectives for them by using the party machinery. As far as the squatters were concerned, these were their political aims, their *raison d'etre* for participating in party politics. Their aim was to bring changes into their community and into their squatment and not to change the outside world of which they knew very little. Their objectives were limited and inward looking, very much the same as the communal needs of other squatters in the Third World countries, such as those studied by Ross (1973) and Ray (1969). And very much like the squatters in Ray's Venezuelan study, the Kampung Selamat squatters used the party machinery to achieve these objectives. It so happened that in the case of the Kuala Lumpur squatters their own objectives were not inconsistent with the official objectives of the party.

During the first year in office 1975/76, the party officials were quite successful in their attempts to bring political largesse into the squatment. A communal tap, the second one for the squatment, and a *surau* (a prayer

house smaller than a mosque) were acquired. The communal tap, which was sited perhaps not entirely by accident in an open space next to the residence of the branch chief, was believed by the squatters to have been given by the local authority. In addition to the tap, funds were given to buy building materials such as cement, brick, corrugated iron sheets and timber for the construction of a common bath and wash area. The latter was built by a voluntary work force, a *gotong royong* group mobilised by the branch officials. As for the *surau* which was also built by a voluntary workforce, the present squatters are unsure where the financial allocation for it came from. All they know is part of the money for the *surau* came from donations from the residents in the squatment and the rest was from the *orang atas* (top people), which in the local vernacular could mean from the pockets of some high level politicians, from the allocations of an MP or from the local authority. To the people of Kampung Selamat what is important is that they got the money, not where it came from. Looking for funds for community projects is considered the task of the elected branch party leaders, especially the chief cum community leader, and for the squatters to enquire into such matters is considered impertinent and disrespectful; it is tantamount to having little confidence in the party chief's ability and resourcefulness and to distrusting him. The squatters believe that leaders, especially benevolent ones, are to be followed and not questioned; only leaders who act contrary to their followers' interest can be questioned. This is the essence of the leader-follower relationship in the Malay society as explained by Chandra Muzaffar (1979). The branch leaders have shown enough care for the people as evaluated by their success in securing some of their community goals and in so doing proved themselves to be more competent than their predecessors. They have done

jasa (deeds) for which the squatters are morally bound to feel *terhutang budi* (grateful) and one way of expressing gratitude is to refrain from enquiring into or questioning the ways in which the leaders perform their roles.

The branch party chief, too, some squatters explained, would have felt slighted if such enquiries were made. Thus there is an aura of mystery regarding the sources of funding, and in such mystification lie some of the powers of the party chief.

The 'pork-barrel' projects known to the squatters as *projek pembangunan* (lit. development projects) no doubt gave the image of the local party officials, especially the branch chief, a great boost. They proved to the squatters that they were effective leaders, who could 'deliver the goods' and impressed by their performance more squatters, it seems, joined the party. The party officials and the committee members were re-elected in 1976.

The success of the party officials in bringing some *projek pembangunan*, as the public and social amenities are referred to in the squatment, created more demands from the squatters.

Projek pembangunan, as it is used and understood by the politicians and squatters is a blanket term for all kinds of projects sponsored and implemented by the government which are designed to improve the living standards or change the lives of the people. These projects range from multi-million dollar physical development of a new town to the provision of social services and amenities as well as aids and subsidies provided by the government. Hence the squatters can ask for almost anything in the name of *projek pembangunan*. Now they were not content with just

two communal taps, they wanted more taps as well as other things, especially prayer mats, religious books such as the *mukadam* and *al-Quran*, pressure lamps and such like, and the party officials were expected to find ways and means to raise money from outside sources to buy them. The youth wing of the party had other needs, more mundane than those of the elders. They wanted a community hall as well as games and sports facilities. These were communal needs of the squatters, expressed to the party officials at formal or informal meetings, over and above their demand for legal rights to the land. And it is incumbent on the leaders to satisfy part, if not all, of such needs if they are to retain the support and loyalty of party members. The squatters were full of high hopes but these were soon to be dashed in the middle of 1976 when they heard of the Federal Government's plan for physical developments of some areas in Pantai which might involve the eviction of some of the squatters, including themselves. This plan, which would include the construction of sewerage dams, had in fact been mooted years earlier, but none of the squatters knew of it. Only when the plan was made public and incorporated in the Third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980) that the squatter population got to know about it and became aware of its serious implications. Nonetheless, nobody knew the full details of the plan and speculation was rife as to which groups of squatters would be moved and which would not. It was rumoured that Kampung Selamat was one of the squatments that would be affected by the sewerage plan and as the rumour spread, the squatters began to feel alarmed and incensed. Their fury is best described by Atan,

"We felt cheated. We were promised by the Prime Minister a modern Malay kampung. We believed him and voted for the Barisan Nasional. Now what happened? We have to move out for a

kolam najis (lit. shit pond, i.e. sewerage dam).
How do you expect us to feel? Angry? Of
course we are angry!"

The sewerage plan for Pantai was regarded by the squatters as a gross insult by the government and more especially by the local authority to their status as Malays and Muslims. *Najis* (shit) to the Malays is one of the most unclean kinds of waste matter according to their religion, so utterly deplorable that one who comes into contact with it, even in the course of normal biological functions, has to perform ablutions. To move people out in order to make way for *kolam najis* amounted to saying that people thus affected by the sewerage dams were less important than the *najis*. The wrath of the squatters was profound. Pak Awang, the original settler, who had his dream of owning his piece of land in Kampung Selamat shattered in 1971, when the land was reclaimed for mining, was perhaps the angriest of all. He said,

"People at the top must be mad. They are without feelings and totally lacking in understanding of the poor man's problems."

Others, too, in the neighbourhood, such as the squatters and landowners in Pantai Halt and Pantai Dalam were similarly annoyed. So angry were they that one City Hall official told the writer that he was warned by a couple of squatters to be more concerned about their welfare in future or they would chop his head off (*penggal leher*).

For most of the squatters in Kampung Selamat, their anger was directed towards City Hall, the agency that was to implement the sewerage project. A few, however, saw this as a failure on the part of their party politicians, especially those in positions of power, to protect the

interests of the squatters. They felt they had been "played out and treated like children"(9) and they were disgusted. It was at this point, it seems, that a few of the squatters began to associate themselves with politicians from the PMIP and DAP. The party branch began to lose the solid support of the squatters. This trend was also said to be occurring in other squatments in the vicinity as well as in the traditional village of Pantai Dalam. Their association with the opposition DAP was no more than just a very brief 'flirtation' designed to jolt some top level politicians within UMNO and to draw their attention to their plight. But their association with the PMIP was different. The PMIP then was not an opposition party, but a component member of the coalition Barisan Nasional, since 1974, and the UMNO dissenters saw it as an alternative Malay party to UMNO. They joined the PMIP and the number of PMIP supporters in Pantai must have been large enough to merit the formation of a PMIP branch in Kampung Pantai Dalam a few weeks before the general elections in 1978, at a time when the PMIP had been expelled from the Barisan Nasional. The branch, however, proved to be short-lived.

This 'sewerage scandal' not only cost UMNO party branches in the Pantai area some of their members, it also, as in the case of Kampung Selamat, undermined the squatters' faith and confidence in their leaders. Squatters in the squatment began to doubt if their party officials in the 1976/77 committee had the necessary political contacts to be able to stop the implementation of the sewerage plan and thereby save their land. The party chief and others in the branch committee used party meetings and communal gatherings to explain and emphasise to the squatters the need to put their faith in the upper level party leaders, who they understood were discussing the squatters' plight

with the *orang atas* (lit, top people), i.e. the Minister in the Ministry of the Federal Territory, officials of the Ministry and City Hall involved in the implementation of the sewerage dams. As far as they were concerned, they had performed their role as the local political leaders which was to raise the sewerage issue with their political superiors. It is up to these political superiors to fight on their behalf. But such explanations did not impress many of the squatters who went on accusing the local party leaders of inefficiency and the party of neglecting their welfare. Throughout the later period of 1976, relations between the squatters and some of the party officials became very strained. Some squatters, increasingly anxious about their future in the squatment, began accusing the party officials of not doing their job properly and hinted that they should resign. Some of the party officials took offence at such criticisms, especially because they felt that they had done a lot of *jasa* (deeds) for the squatters. This finally gave rise to factions within the branch, with one faction supporting the leadership, one against and yet another remaining neutral.

Amidst this intra-party friction, the party chief of the branch was transferred by his employer to another state; he had to leave and before leaving he sold his house in Kampung Selamat. His deputy was left to cope with the growing tension in the party until the following general meeting of the branch during the first half of 1977; the post of branch chief remained vacant until the annual general meeting as the deputy chief was reluctant to assume it. The deputy chief continued as deputy chief while at the same time becoming the community leader. According to him, he was not keen to be the principal party leader in the squatment; the task was too difficult and too much for him. He had all along been in the shadow

of the party chief, letting the party chief handle most party matters, especially extra-cumcommunity relations. Consequently, his contacts with politicians at the upper echelon of the party was limited and he acknowledged that this would affect his performance as a community and party leader. Moreover, he lacked the time for party work; his job as a watchman called for long hours and night shifts. Given all these limitations, he was not in a position to help the squatters very effectively in securing their goals. No progress whatsoever was made towards halting the implementation of the sewerage plan and of securing the legal rights to the land. The sewerage plan was carried out despite the squatters' protest.

The tense relationship between the squatters and the local level political leaders was very much felt during the 1977 annual general meeting. The deputy chief, who was supposed to chair the meeting in the absence of the party chief, failed to turn up. He went back to his native village on 'urgent business' and asked his younger brother, the party secretary, to take his place. The writer's investigation reveals that he deliberately went away in order to avoid a showdown at the meeting. True to his expectation, the incumbent leaders present were bombarded with questions relating to the sewerage project and tempers ran high. The meeting went on regardless and in the election of office bearers, most of the old officials were not re-elected. They were replaced by what the squatters called *darah baru* (lit. new blood) consisting largely of young men in their mid-thirties. The new party chief was not a pioneer squatter, though related to one, who had arrived in the squatment only three years before. The election of the new office bearers for the party branch marked the end of the era in which pioneer squatters played major leadership roles in the squatment. The new leadership was still in power in 1983.

NOTES

(1) Interview with Mr Samri Sainuddin, an official of City Hall (UPP) on 2nd December 1981 at his office.

(2) Interview with Mr Lee Lam Thye, Member of Parliament for Kuala Lumpur Bandar, on 25th June 1980, at his office, at 2A Jalan Pasar Baru, Pudu, Kuala Lumpur and with Mr V David, Member of Parliament for Damansara (1978-1982), on 16th May 1980, at the General Transport Union Building, Petaling Jaya.

(3) Interview with Haji Idris Ibrahim, Member of Parliament for Setapak (1974-1982), on 18th July 1980 at Kumpulan Syarikat Haji Ibrahim, Jalan Serekei, Off Jalan Pudu, Kuala Lumpur.

(4) Interview with Mr Lim Kim Pong, Secretary of Setapak MCA, on 3rd December 1981.

(5) Interview with Dato Tata, Village Chief, in May 1977, who has since died.

(6) In Malay folk literature, step children are usually maltreated, abused and uncared for. To the Malays, one is like a step-child if one suffers such a fate.

(7) Interview with Mr Yusri Ahmad, Pantai Dalam UMNO official, in November 1982 at his house in Kampung Pantai Dalam.

(8) Dato Harun Idris' speech on 13th December 1982 at a thanksgiving celebration after his release from prison.

(9) One is assumed to be ignorant if one is treated like a child.

CHAPTER VI

THE POLITICAL PARTY AND EXTRA-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Chapter V examined the political developments in Kampung Selamat from the time of its inception in 1967 to 1977 when the writer's first survey began, coinciding with the coming into power of the present political leaders at the local (squatment) level. This chapter focuses on interactions between the squatters and these political leaders in their attempts to attain the squatters' goals. The chapter begins by examining the reasons for the squatters' continued support for the party despite the party's obvious failure in helping them to achieve most of their demands, and considers the nature of squatters' expectations of their political leaders. It then looks into the local party machinery which represents the national party in the village and analyses the socio-economic background of party officials to establish the source of their power and influence. Finally, it deals with transactions between squatters and political leaders, at squatment and supra-squatment levels, and elucidates ways in which squatters attempt to use the local party branch and its officials to secure their objectives and how the political leaders, in turn, manipulate them for their own ends as well as for the sake of the party.

When the pioneer squatters first joined the party in 1967, they did so with one main objective in mind, which was to seek protection against eviction by the local authorities. A few years later, the squatters' expectations of UMNO increased. They now set for themselves new objectives: first, a long-term and the most important one,

to secure legal titles to the land they occupied illegally; second, a short-term objective, to secure amenities and social services for the community, so as to facilitate the first objective.

In the previous chapter we have seen how UMNO largely failed to meet these expectations. Yet despite disillusionment with the party, the squatters never actually severed their ties with UMNO, and they continue to seek the protection of this party to this day. In Kampung Selamat, as in other squatments in the Pantai-Jalan Bangsar-Kerinci area, the local party branch has always had a high number of registered members. According to the secretary of Kampung Selamat UMNO, in the five years before 1980, the local branch maintained an average annual membership of two hundred, and in 1980 there were two hundred and twenty members or some 90% of the adult (above 18 or married) population in the squatment, with an average of two members coming from each household. Why the majority of the squatter community still supports UMNO can only be understood by looking at the demographic changes in the community, the squatters' approach to political organisation, their ethnic sentiments as well as changes in attitude of the ruling party towards squatters.

6.1 The Squatters: Reasons for Sustaining UMNO

(a) Demographic Changes. One factor which may account for the continuing support for UMNO is the transitory nature of the population. In Kampung Selamat, there is a constant flow of people in and out of the squatment. Squatter tenants are the most transitory, while owner-occupiers also have many reasons for leaving. Some families become better off financially and thus can afford

alternative accommodation in the city; others are transferred elsewhere by their employers; some household heads reach retiring age and return to their villages of origin; and a few may get offers of accommodation from the employers. When house owners leave they either sell or rent out their houses, thus bringing in new sets of squatters into the squatment.

During fieldwork in 1980, only 10% of households were pioneer squatters; the rest were recent arrivals, having stayed in Kampung Selamat on average seven years only. In 1980, six households (13%) moved out; the houses they vacated were immediately occupied by others from outside Kampung Selamat. Every year since 1977, at least one household moves out. Thus, the squatter population is changing almost all the time and this has an effect on UMNO and its relationship with the squatters. It acts as a sort of safety-valve for the party as it reduces the number of disillusioned party members, since it is they, who, seeing very little future in the squatment, are the most likely to leave. Hence the strained relationship between some squatters and the political leaders never deteriorates to a stage where the squatters see fit to reject the political leaders and the party altogether.

When new squatters arrive they usually register as party members almost immediately replacing those who have left. This is done, according to them, in order to be in the good books of the village leadership which is synonymous with the party branch leadership who, as we shall see more clearly in the next chapter, control all community activities. Most squatters feel they have to be party members if they are to start life in the squatment on the right footing, regardless of whether they believe in what the national party stand for.

The new members often know little of the performance of the party in the past and even if they did few would readily share the old squatters' disenchantment with the party. Other considerations would also tend to make them overlook such matters and give the party and its leaders a try. The newly arrived squatters might have invested in a house in the squatment or paid deposits and rents for accommodation. Knowing how difficult it is to get accommodation within their means in Kuala Lumpur, they have little choice but to put their immediate interest first, even if it means hypocritically supporting a political organisation in which they have little faith.

Thus, there is always, at any one time, a relatively high number of people registered as party members. Some will be optimistic and enthusiastic supporters whether for personal or community reasons, while others will be passive and sceptical, and a few may even be cynical.

(b) Utilitarian Attitude to Politics. It has been established that the squatters approach politics in a utilitarian manner. They see the political party as a means to an end, as a channel through which they hope to achieve their goals. This is what keeps them in UMNO and prevents them from severing their ties with the party and seeking help elsewhere. They believe that only the political party in power has the potential and capacity to help them realise their objectives.

The squatters' political attitude is inward looking; they involve themselves in a political organisation merely to bring changes for themselves and their neighbourhood, not to change the world outside. This attitude to politics is best illustrated by that of one of the squatters, Pak Ali, who says,

"What is the use of joining a political party if one doesn't get anything out of it. The professional politicians (*orang politik*) get paid and are getting richer. We help them to get where they are. We vote for them. In return they and the party should help us get water supply, electricity ..."

What the squatters hope to achieve with the help of their political leaders is no longer confined to communal goals only. By 1980 they were also expecting the leaders to help them secure individual goals as well. These latter objectives are much easier for the political leaders to attend to successfully and this compensates for the politician's lack of success in achieving communal goals. Most squatters play down their individual goals and are not willing to discuss them as openly as they would communal goals. The local party leaders, especially the party chief, stress that using party machinery for personal advantage is improper. The chief, together with the head of the youth and women's committees repeatedly state during party meetings and in informal conversations with the writer that their active participation in the party is motivated solely by selfless dedication to the community and to Malays in general. They are simply performing *khidmat* (service to the people). As the branch secretary says,

"We are trying to help the people who require our services. If we don't lead them, who will? We expend a lot of our time and energy for the party. We serve the people. We don't get anything out of it ..."

What the political leaders like the branch secretary profess is one thing, what they practise, however, is another. It is quite well known among the squatters and the general public that UMNO party activists receive

personal rewards for their services to the party; and some, who have not been rewarded, work hard for the party in anticipation of such rewards. Personal rewards are given both directly and indirectly. Party activists in Kampung Selamat, are given preference in the selection of staff to man community development projects such as pre-school classes or religious classes for children. Party officials have better access to government sponsored schemes designed to uplift the socio-economic status of the Malays. Squatters in general, irrespective of their level of educational attainment, are not unaware of what working for the party means. As Shamsiah, a food vendor who never went to school, remarked,

"You think party activists work for nothing? Look at the party chief. Of course he is not paid nor does he receive any allowances for being the head of this branch. But he has a business concern, his own, besides his job as a clerk. He uses his party contacts to get customers or to get loans from the bank. Without his party contacts where would his business be?"

Like this lady, many other squatters do not believe in altruism in politics. They think political involvement must be geared towards ends which include personal advantage. They see nothing wrong in this. In the writer's conversations with them, many make it clear that they join the party in order to have access to the *orang berpengaruh* (influential people), so that in times of need such as in dealings with government agencies, there are people they can resort to for help. They see the party and its politicians as their protector and as agents who can procure them benefits, which they as ordinary citizens cannot possibly obtain through their own efforts.

The utilitarian approach to politics appears to be

similar to that of some other Malays in Kuala Lumpur. Noor Sharifah Saidi (1980:19) implies the presence of such an attitude to political parties among urban squatters in the capital,

"...in squatter areas ... the support for and strong attraction towards the party in power is obvious as long as they are given special treatment. On the contrary after they are moved into flats or resettlement areas, which the majority of the squatters dislike, there is a tendency for 'anti-establishment' attitudes to emerge ..."
(Translated from the original text in Malay)

Abdul Maulud Yusof, too, implies that a utilitarian approach to politics exists among Malays in a traditional village, Sungai Pencala, in the Federal Territory. He states that despite the presence of a PMIP branch, the villagers are in the main UMNO supporters and they express reluctance to be politically active (presumably to criticise the party in power and act contrary to the party's interest) for fear of getting out of favour with the government which in turn will jeopardise their chances of securing benefits from the authorities (1976:163).

Elsewhere, too, especially in rural villages, utilitarian politics is very much the order of the day. Husin Ali (1976:5-20) in his study of three peasant villages in the states of Pahang, Johore and Kedah, notes that the peasants give their support to political organisations and their votes in the general elections in exchange for or in anticipation of community development projects - bridges, roads, prayer houses, water supply, etc. The writer's own experience in political campaigns among the peasantry in the State of Negeri Sembilan, in the districts of Jelebu and Kuala Pilah in the 1974 elections, as well as her observations of politics in these districts in subsequent

years, confirm that a similar approach to politics prevails in Negeri Sembilan. In the Negeri Sembilan case, utilitarianism had reached such an extreme state that in the 1974 general elections, UMNO supporters and potential voters for the party's candidate in the parliamentary constituency of Jelebu and the state constituency of Seri Menanti, demanded tangible benefits to be delivered to them before polling day. Hence before the peasants marched to the polling stations to cast their votes, they saw, among other things, roads and bridges being hastily constructed, works started on their mosque, wooden poles for electrical wiring being laid out along the roadside, ostensibly for erection, but in actual fact taken away again as soon as the elections were over.

A pragmatic approach to politics can therefore be said to be typical of the country as a whole. In the squatters' case, it could be attributed to their relatively low economic status which forces them to look for outside help for social and economic advancement. Devoid of any kind of formal or informal associations which can cater for their needs and protect their interests such as the Chinese clan associations or trade guilds, the Malay squatters have to rely on political organisations such as UMNO.

Political party functionaries, especially officials of UMNO, are largely responsible for cultivating a utilitarian view of politics among the citizenry. In Kampung Selamat, for example, party officials at squatment and supra-squatment levels, emphasised repeatedly the need for people to join the party if they wanted anything from the government, and warned of the consequences of not doing so. At the fourth annual general meeting of the party branch in 1979, the branch chief said, among other things,

"... It is my hope that ... all of you will be more active and united and will help increase our membership so that our plans that have been formulated (by the branch) will be realised for (only by joining the party) that we can get more attention from the authorities."
(The writer's brackets. Translated from the AGM minutes in Malay)

The Division Chief of UMNO Damansara emphasised, if somewhat blandly, what party politics should mean to the squatters in his speech at the Kampung Selamat UMNO branch annual general meeting in February 1982, which the writer attended. Among other things, he said,

"... without UMNO, where would squatters in Kuala Lumpur be? You might not even be here today. You would have been driven out by the local authorities a long time ago. Now, you have community taps, electricity, a prayer house ... all these came through the party, through our efforts. You want more projects to come to your kampung, support the party, be loyal, stand firm by our leaders ..."

Top level officials of the party, too, adopt this kind of tactics; they expend a great deal of time and energy in oratory, promising the squatters 'development projects' in exchange for their support and votes. In the last chapter we saw how the Prime Minister himself promised the squatters a modern Malay kampung should the squatters help return his party to power in the 1974 general elections. He died in 1975, before fulfilling the promise, and his successor, likewise, made a somewhat similar promise to the squatters in 1978, a few weeks before the general elections. Only this time the bait came in a different package; what he offered was not a modern Malay kampung, but a 'squatter up-grading' project, namely legalisation of squatter settlements, and the two squatterments to be immediately affected were Kampung

Kerinci and Kampung Abdullah Hukum, and the provision of electricity and water supply to squatters in the Pantai area (Utusan Melayu, 14 June 1978).

Politicians in UMNO are in a position to offer largesse because the party is in control of all kinds of resources and the political culture in the country is such that politicians in power can distribute public funds discriminatingly for partisan causes. UMNO politicians do not just make promises; they do fulfil some of the promises, some of the time. Hence the public, like the squatters in Kampung Selamat, are conditioned to believe that the party in power is the channel for favours from government agencies. Opposition parties, without access to government resources, cannot distribute political largesse in the same way or to the same extent that the party in power can. The opposition parties, therefore, are perceived as being of little use by the squatters. As the deputy party chief in Kampung Selamat explains,

"Have you heard of opposition leaders helping squatters get anything from the authorities? They cannot do anything, they have no power. They can only talk and criticise the government. That's all. Criticisms get us nowhere. If we join the opposition we, too, likewise will be criticising the government. The more we criticise, the angrier those in power will be. In that event, you think they will give us anything? If you have anything, would you give it to someone you're angry with? I would certainly not!"

The majority if not all of the squatters share this view. To them, the political party in power and the government machinery are one and the same thing. UMNO is seen as the government and vice versa, and officials of the party and government bureaucracy are *orang kerajaan* (government people). Hence if they want anything from

the government they must support UMNO and not the opposition parties, which are seen as lame horses, more of a liability than an asset. Such a view is endorsed by politicians within the government whenever it suits them. For example, they invariably claim credit for any kind of development projects carried out successfully by the City Hall and which are of benefit to the squatters. At the same time they are quick to dissociate themselves from and blames government agencies such as City Hall for any development project that fails, is delayed or which creates inconvenience to or disrupts the squatters' life.

The preference for the party in power was well illustrated in the squatments in Pantai throughout the period between 1973 and 1978 when the ruling coalition Barisan Nasional had the PMIP as one of its component members. During this period, some squatters in the area including a few in Kampung Selamat were said to be quite open in their support for the PMIP. PMIP leaders from outside were invited to give talks and the squatters felt free to attend them. But this overt support for the party slowly diminished when the PMIP was expelled from the coalition in 1977. Presently, no PMIP supporters in the squatment will declare their support for the party openly, although they would do so in private.

Preference for the party in power is the logical consequence of the squatters' inward looking, utilitarian approach to politics and as long as UMNO remains in power, chances are that the relationship between the squatters and the party will be sustained.

(c) Ethnic Consideration. If utilitarianism was the only factor accounting for the squatters' continued support

for political organisations, then one would expect that they would choose to join any of the political parties within the Barisan Nasional. But they confined themselves to UMNO, a choice that can only be understood in the light of ethnic relations in the country. The three main ethnic groups have their own political party; each party confining its membership to its own ethnic group only. Thus, of the four political parties of the coalition, the MCA and MIC are out of the question for the Malays. Only the fourth party, the Gerakan, besides UMNO is opened to the Malay squatters. Gerakan is a multi-racial organisation, but to the squatters, as well as to the public in general, it is a non-Malay party where the leadership is controlled by Chinese. As Chinese they are expected to put the interests of Chinese first and would not be seriously concerned about Malays, especially squatter Malays who, after all, are on the wrong side of the law.

Like their predecessors, the pioneer squatters, the present residents of Kampung Selamat distrust non-Malay leaders. Such distrust is sometimes based on concrete experience. Squatters can recall a number of instances when a non-Malay MP ignored appeals for help by Malays in Kuala Lumpur. One such instance concerned Malay squatters in Pantai, in the neighbourhood of Kampung Selamat. Some of the squatters were given notice of eviction in the early seventies and as a last resort implored their non-Malay MP to help them save their houses from demolition. Said one of the UMNO officials in Kampung Selamat,

"The squatters made *nasi minyak* (ghee rice) to receive the MP; he came, ate and promised to help, but never kept his promise. The squatters lost their houses, they became homeless. Did he care? No! We didn't even see his

batang hidung (lit. the ridge of his nose, i.e. his face) after that.

This MP was a member of the opposition party and they sought his help when all other attempts had failed. Being in the opposition camp, as the squatters very well knew, there was not much he could do to save the houses except to make public protests through the local media. Nevertheless, the squatters ascribed his failure to help them not so much to his being in the opposition, but most importantly to his being a non-Malay, who would therefore not do his best to help Malays.

The subsequent non-Malay MP, too, the squatters claim, ignored the plight of the Malay squatters and this intensified their distrust of non-Malay politicians. The MP for Damansara (1974-1978), an Indian from the MIC, this time not an opposition party but UMNO's ally in the ruling coalition and for whom the squatters claim they voted in the 1974 elections, is alleged to have taken a very casual and negligent attitude towards them. While he made a habit of visiting Indian squatterments frequently, the squatters claim he never stepped into a Malay squatter area in Pantai until a few months before the next general elections in 1978, when he was to stand for re-election. In Kampung Selamat, the squatters said the only time that he 'showed his face' was two months before the elections, when he opened a community hall.

This MP did in fact attempt to meet the demands of the squatters during his tenure of office. For example, the community hall he came to open was financed from his annual allocation as an MP; so was the badminton court built in the squatment in 1977. There were also other gifts from him, such as the straw mats for use in the prayer

house. But because such gifts were distributed through UMNO branch, the MP got little credit for them compared to that accorded by the squatters to their branch party leaders who, according to them, "worked very hard, day and night to secure 'development projects' for them."

As explained earlier in Chapter V, the squatters do not usually enquire where the funds for community development projects come from, and the branch officials will or will not disclose the sources of funding depending on their interests. In this case the officials did, at the branch annual general meeting, held in April 1979, which was held in conjunction with the official opening of the community hall. In his speech at the AGM, the party branch chief said,

"... in 1977 this UMNO branch can be considered 'blessed' (*bertuah*) for in 1977 our branch has succeeded in securing some allocations from the Hon. MP, with the cooperation of UMNO Damansara Division. The allocations I am referring to are: we have secured a badminton court and a hall in which we are now having our AG. ..."
(Translated from the AGM Minutes in Malay)

Note that only a passing reference was made to the MP and his name was not mentioned, while at the same time, as the writer has underlined, emphasis was given to the part played by UMNO in securing the allocation funds. This case demonstrates how local party officials can manipulate gifts from outside to their advantage at the expense of the donor and that mistrust of non-Malay politicians is not always based on lack of concrete support for the Malay squatters' cause by non-Malay politicians.

The MP's political spoils therefore did not do him much good; they failed to produce the desired result which

was to gain the confidence and trust of the Malay squatters. On the contrary, their distrust of him seemed to have increased by the end of his term of office, so that many of the squatters in the Pantai area, according to some UMNO officials in Damansara, did not cast their votes in his favour in the 1978 general elections, which cost him his office.

Their distrust of Indian political leaders is best described by a squatter who said,

"How can we trust non-Malay politicians. And an Indian politician at that! Did not our ancestors remind us, should you see a snake and an Indian, kill the Indian first?"

That may be a harsh and an unkind judgment of the Indian people, but it does show the extent of distrust the squatters had of non-Malays. To the general public ethnic stereotyping is widespread and the laymen do not differentiate between individual and group behaviour.

Chinese politicians and Chinese in general, on the other hand, are even more distrusted than the Indians. In their relations with the Chinese, distrust is accompanied by fear and dislike. The Malay-Chinese relationship, unlike that with the Indians, has been marked by inter-racial antagonism throughout its history, and such antagonism sometimes erupted into violent clashes as happened in 1945 and the racial riot in Kuala Lumpur in 1969. The former, which was a widespread occurrence in the country, took place during the twilight period between the surrender of the Japanese in Malaya after the Second World War and the return of the British colonial administration. During this period some members of the Chinese dominated communist party committed atrocities against the Malay population in

the countryside. Some of the older residents of Kampung Selamat still recall the incidents that happened during that time vividly and with terror. The 1969 race riots, as explained in Chapter III, was confined only to the capital and this riot saw the Malays and Chinese literally slaughtering one another on some streets in the city leaving hundreds dead and wounded and considerable destruction to property (see Gagliano 1970 & Goh Cheng Teik 1978). And the present squatters who lived through the riot remember the incident bitterly, especially because of the hardship they had to endure due to the shortage of food caused by Chinese traders' refusal to sell food to the Malays. What incensed them most was the fact that the riot itself in their view was provoked by the Chinese, when jubilant supporters of the DAP threw insults at Malay passers-by while on a victory procession after the 1969 general elections.

For most of the squatters, the 1969 riot is still fresh in their memory, causing many of them to harbour deep resentment, distrust and to some extent fear of the Chinese. Such feelings which remain dormant much of the time account for the unpopularity of the Chinese-dominated but multi-racial political parties, such as the Gerakan, among Malay squatters and there is no question of their joining this *parti Cina* (Chinese party) as they call it, although it is a component member of the ruling coalition. The squatters seem convinced that Chinese, like the Indians, can never make good political leaders and that should they be in political power, the Malays would be doomed. Such convictions are demonstrated by one party official at the local branch, who says,

"When some Chinese began to taste power during the *Bintang Tiga* period in 1945, what did they do? They killed and tortured innocent Malays.

In 1969, when the DAP increased the number of seats won in the general elections, the Chinese showed their true colour again. They paraded in Kuala Lumpur and told the Malays to return to their *kampung* (villages). They thought they were in control of the capital and that they owned it. They became arrogant overnight. Remember, they were not in power then, the state government was not formed yet. Imagine what will happen if they actually hold power?"

Another squatter who lived in Singapore most of his life and who had since left the island for good, says,

"Look at what happens to the Malays in Singapore. Now the Chinese are in power, they step on (*pijak*) the Malays. It was a Malay land, wasn't it? Now, where are the Malays in Singapore? Malays are pushed out, they have no voice (*tak mendecit*, lit. do not even squeak). Do you hear the Malays there criticising Lee Kuan Yew government, like the DAP does here? No. That's Chinese power for you."

No doubt what he was referring to was power as held by Lee Kuan Yew and not 'Chinese power', but as stated earlier, to the squatters, as to most Malays, a distinction is seldom made between individual and group action in their discussions of ethnic relations. Another squatter, from the northern State of Penang, presents the case of his homeland where the Gerakan is in control in a similar light. He asks,

"Do Malays benefit as much as the Chinese from the government projects? They expand the town, widen the industrial zones and Malays have to retreat further into the *ulu* (remote interior). What do you expect when the Chinese are in power?"

These statements which reflect the extent of the squatters' distrust of the Chinese and their racist ideology

can in part be attributed to 'political conditioning', done through the speeches of political leaders in the party. UMNO, like the MCA and MIC, is an ethnically based party whose very survival depends on ethnic solidarity; this being the case party leaders feel it is incumbent on them to inculcate ethnic consciousness and this is often achieved, among other means, by instilling a sense of threat from the other ethnic groups. Party leaders at the squatement and supra-local level frequently speak of the 'threat to Malay survival' in the event that the *kaum mendatang* (lit. the immigrant groups, especially the Chinese) assume political power. And not only that, they constantly remind the squatters of the non-Malay clashes, such as the 1969 race riots to reinforce their argument. Indian political power is seldom discussed as they are not seen as a threat because of their much weaker demographic strength.

Examples of speeches imbued with racist ideology are those delivered at the annual general meetings of the party branches. In Kampung Selamat, the best examples can be found in the party's AGM on 14 February 1982. Amidst speculation of an early general elections in the middle of the year, supra-local politicians attended the AGM in full force and some delivered highly charged speeches. The chief of the Damansara UMNO Division outlined at great length the consequences if non-Malays (presumably the DAP) were in control of the government and he reminded the audience of the 1969 riot, especially the 'atrocities' committed on people of their 'own blood'. He admonished the squatters,

"If you don't unite as Malays and support UMNO, you will see yourself and your offspring shedding tears of blood in time to come. You won't have a future, not in this squatment, not any-

where in this country. You will probably be pushed out into the jungle to live on trees ..."

The Deputy Youth Leader of the Division also spoke of a non-Malay threat to Malays, in economic and political spheres, and equated the plight of Malays in general to that of Red Indians in North America. He said,

"You see on your TV screens what happened to the Red Indians. See how they were robbed of their land by the immigrant population. This will happen to you if you are divided, if you do not support this party ..."

Such speeches perpetuate the Malays' distrust and dislike of non-Malays, especially the Chinese, and act as the greatest deterrent for most of them to joining a political organisation led by non-Malays, be it the opposition DAP or the Gerakan which is UMNO's ally in the ruling Barisan Nasional. With the doors of MCA and MIC closed to them, they are left with only one party in the ruling coalition - UMNO. They thus see themselves as having no choice but to sustain their support for UMNO, given their strong ethnic sentiments, distrust of the non-Malays as well as their pragmatic approach to politics.

(d) Changes in Government Attitudes to Squatters.

Another factor which accounts for the squatters' prolonged affiliation to UMNO is the change in the attitudes of officials in the government bureaucracy and top level UMNO machinery towards squatters in Kuala Lumpur in 1978. National level politicians in the ruling party never paid much attention to the plight of the squatters despite pressures from subordinates within the party. The local authority, on the other hand, had all along treated the squatters with indifference if not contempt. This was to

change in 1978 when a report on squatters was published by City Hall, outlining what was described as their 'humanitarian' approach towards the squatter problem. Some concessions were made to the squatters: those who occupied government land prior to 1978 were not to be evicted unless the land was urgently needed for physical development. In the event of eviction, they were to be rehoused, but until such time when they were to be removed, attempts would be made by the authorities to provide them with basic amenities and social services.

Officers in City Hall charged with the implementation of the new policy towards the squatters explain this change simply as a result of 'direction from the top' which, in this case, means from the Minister of the Federal Territory to whom they were responsible. The Deputy Minister in the same ministry, the man in charge of running the ministry, a top UMNO official, attributes this change to a growing awareness among top level politicians in his party of the need to do more for the urban poor, most of whom are squatters. Squatters, he adds, have been neglected far too long and steps must be taken to check the squatters' expansion, and to improve their living conditions before they become a threat to the stability of the country. This policy must not be seen as an attempt by the government to condone squatting, but as part and parcel of the New Economic Policy (NEP) whose two-pronged objectives include eradication of poverty.

Considering that the urban squatters have always been regarded as a threat to the stability of the country by officials of the urban government bureaucracy (Report On the Squatters, 1969), why did the government not take positive steps to help the squatters earlier? Part of the answer lies in the results of the 1978 general elections

which showed that the ruling party performed very badly among the urban populace. The Barisan Nasional survived the elections with only two of the five parliamentary seats in the Federal Territory, and on the whole doing less well than in the previous general elections in 1974 (see Table 13). The Barisan Nasional won in the Kepong constituency with a very narrow margin, and lost Damansara, which was considered a safe seat, to the opposition DAP. In terms of percentage of votes cast, the Barisan Nasional did much worse than in 1974, compared with the opposition parties. In Damansara, the percentage of votes cast for the Barisan Nasional dropped by 7.8%, while those cast for the DAP increased by 19.7%; in Kuala Lumpur Bandar, Barisan Nasional votes decreased by 6.9% and DAP's votes increased by 13.8%.

The 1978 general elections results clearly showed that the Barisan Nasional was increasingly losing support in the Federal Territory. The party was not getting the support of the urban Chinese as its principal ally, the Chinese party, MCA, was not very popular in Kuala Lumpur, nor was the other ally, the Chinese dominated multi-racial Gerakan, whose base is in Penang. Barisan Nasional was relying on the support of the Malays through UMNO; hence, the Barisan Nasional's victory in the 1974 elections was in the two areas where the number of Malays is substantial, namely Setapak and Damansara. The coalition's defeat in Damansara in 1978 indicates that even the Malays were no longer giving full support to the Barisan Nasional. The election results show that 11.8% of the total votes were cast in favour of the PMIP, the theocratic Islam/Malay party in the opposition. Evidently, a large number of Damansara Malays, the majority of whom are squatters, had secretly shifted their allegiance from UMNO to the PMIP. This is hardly surprising in view of the grievances over the sewerage project in Pantai discussed earlier.

TABLE 13

PERFORMANCE OF THE RULING BARISAN NASIONAL (BN)
IN THE 1974 AND 1978 GENERAL ELECTIONS

(Parliamentary Constituencies of the Federal Territory)¹

Constituency	Percentage ² of votes polled		% of gains/5 losses to BN cf. to DAP
	1974	1978	
Kepong	<u>Pekemas</u> 40.4	<u>BN (MCA)</u> 41.3	+3.6(BN)
	BN 37.7	Pekemas 36.7	+2.7(DAP)
	DAP 17.2	DAP 20.5	
Setapak	<u>BN(UMNO)</u> 70.0	BN (UMNO) won	
	Pekemas 15.2	unopposed ³	
	DAP 14.0		
Damansara	<u>BN(MIC)</u> 47.8	<u>DAP</u> 47.1	-7.8(BN)
	DAP 27.4	BN 40.0	+19.7(DAP)
	Pekemas 20.1	PMIP 11.8	
		Pekemas 0.4	
K.L. Bandar	<u>DAP</u> 64.5	<u>DAP</u> 78.3	-6.9(BN)
	BN 27.7	BN 20.8	+13.8(DAP)
	Pekemas		
Sungaei Besi	<u>DAP</u> 55.8	<u>DAP</u> 74.4 ⁴	0.0(BN)
	BN 36.2	PMIP 12.0	+18.6(DAP)
	Pekemas 7.2	Ind 5.7	

- Notes:
- (1) The Federal Territory, unlike other states in Malaysia, has no state constituencies.
 - (2) % of total votes cast including spoilt votes.
 - (3) The opposition party PMIP candidate was disqualified due to technical error in his nomination papers.
 - (4) BN's candidate (from MCA) was disqualified due to technical error in his nomination papers.
 - (5) Comparison is not made with Pekemas because the party is hardly functioning though not yet disbanded.

The 1978 elections demonstrated, especially to UMNO, that the squatters were not only politically conscious but they were also becoming politically shrewd to be able to use their votes as a leverage against the party in power. They now had to be taken seriously if the party was to be assured of their support. It was this eventual awareness of the importance of the squatters' votes which triggered national leaders in UMNO to reappraise their attitudes towards the squatters and to instruct urban government agencies, especially City Hall, to come up with specific measures to cope with the squatters' problems. Indeed, many programmes aimed at uplifting the socio-economic status of the squatters were devised by City Hall as well as other government agencies in the capital. All this helped to placate the squatters, especially those in the Pantai-Bangsar-Kampung Kerinci area. The strained relations between UMNO and its supporters in Kampung Selamat, as elsewhere in the vicinity began to ease off.

Development programmes for the squatters take various forms and are run by various government agencies. Projects carried out by different government agencies sometimes overlap one another as the list below shows. This overlapping, which is recognised by officials of government agencies involved, reflects, on the one hand, the lack of a comprehensive programme on squatter community development and, on the other, the enthusiasm on the part of the government to 'appease' the squatters. Some of the projects also give emphasis on religion and education and the stress on religion is consonant with religious revival now taking place, especially in the capital city and this revival, if appropriately manouvered, can be beneficial to the party as it enhances ethnic unity among the Malays. The emphasis on education is in line with the NEP; education is seen as the main avenue through which

Malays can improve their economic status. The projects are:

- (1) The Ministry of National and Rural Development provides, if somewhat enigmatically, a community development service under its *Kelas Kemajuan Masyarakat* (KEMAS). Under this project, the Ministry provides several facilities which include religious and domestic science classes for women as well as kindergarten for children.
- (2) The Islamic Religious Department in the Federal Territory provides facilities for religious education for children in the form of *Sekolah Ugama Rakyat* (Peoples' Religious School).
- (3) National Unity Division in the Prime Minister's Department give facilities for kindergarten for squatter children.
- (4) Ten government departments in the Federal Territory join forces to form the *Nadi Programme*, which is coordinated by City Hall. This programme includes, among other things, three types of community development projects referred to as *Projek Sang Kancil* (the Mousedeer Projects), which are now being implemented, viz. mother and child health care services, kindergarten and income-generating projects.
- (5) The City Hall allocates one million Malaysian dollars per annum for 'development of kampungs' in the Federal Territory (including traditional Kampungs), and the funds are used to provide basic amenities such as water supply, electricity,

sanitation facilities, prayer houses, community halls, public telephones, etc. In addition, it is to give priority to squatters involved in eviction exercises by the authority in the allocation of flats and low-cost houses such as those in the 'sites and services' scheme. Squatters not affected by urban development are to be considered for 'up-grading' which involves subsidising redevelopment of their squatments in line with urban requirements and standards as well as giving them titles to their respective plots of land.

These programmes are widely publicised. Politicians (as well as their spouses) from the ruling coalition, especially UMNO, mention them at every available opportunity, especially in public speeches which are usually given extensive coverage by the government-controlled mass media, television and radio, and newspapers, especially the UMNO-controlled *Utusan Melayu*. Hence these programmes are well-known to the squatters who, after all, have access to all such media. What most squatters do not know, however, is the fact that these programmes, though impressive in number have limited budgets to work with. Even if all the programmes were combined and implemented together, they would not be enough to provide basic amenities and social services for one fifth of the quarter of a million squatters in the city. The *Sang Kancil* Projects, for instance, between 1978 and 1982, managed to provide services to only four squatments. The squatter communities, therefore, have to compete strenuously with each other to get even one of these projects. Not only that, applying for them involves a lengthy process and several bureaucratic channels. Intentionally or otherwise, this provides the enterprising

politician with an excellent opportunity to play an important role, as an intermediary, to lobby in favour of one community or other under his wings and to cut through government red tape.

The squatters do not see these programmes as the work of the government bureaucracy, but rather as that of the ruling political party, especially UMNO. This is hardly surprising since that is how such programmes are introduced to them by the party leaders. In speeches by UMNO leaders to the squatters, it is very common for them to say, "Our party has devised these development projects for you, to help uplift your standard of living ...", and to stress, "UMNO is the government, the government is UMNO." The squatters therefore assume that these resources are solely for UMNO political leaders to dispose off at their own will and that only UMNO supporters have priority as beneficiaries. Thus, once again, they are made to feel obliged if they wish to benefit from such programmes, to join or continue to support the party. By formulating and implementing these community development programmes, the party in power and government agencies have created an ideal environment for party patronage to thrive.

Now the squatters have raised their expectations to a higher level and at the same time their dependence on the government bureaucracy and the political party. How well the politicians respond to the squatters' increasing expectations will now be discussed.

6.2 The Local Party Machinery and Extra-Community Relations

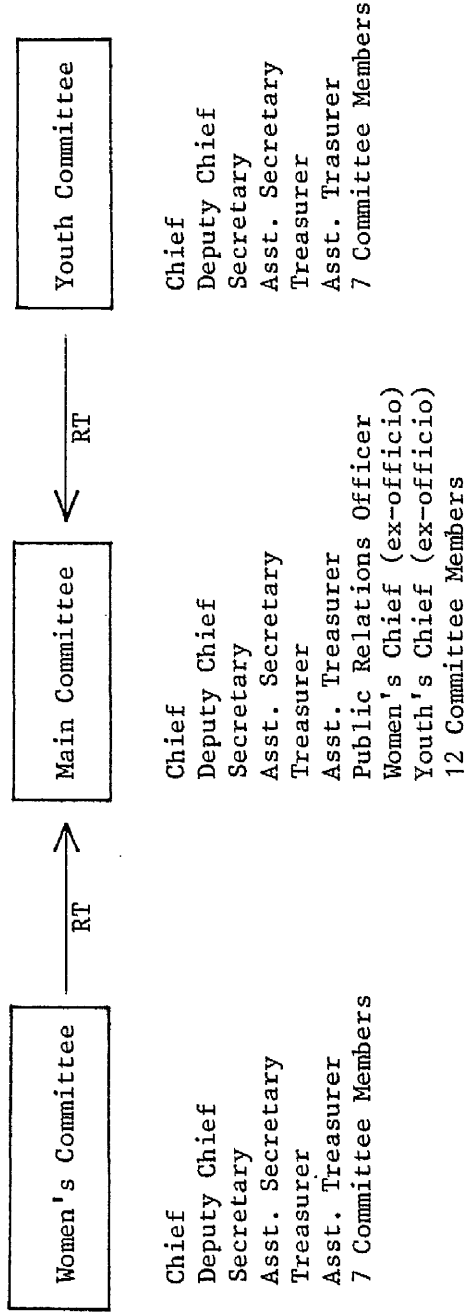
The national party is represented at the squatment level by the local party branch, which is the only power structure available. The branch comprises three committees: the main committee, the women's committee, for women members of all ages, and the youth committee, for male members under the age of forty. These committees are almost identical in structure: each has a chief, a deputy chief, a secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, assistant treasurer and a number of committee members. The only difference between them is that the main committee has an extra official, the Public Relations Officer, and that it has twelve committee members, while the others have seven each. The youth and women committees are responsible to the main committee, on which some members of the two committees sit as ex-officio members (see Figure 11). Membership of these committees quite often overlaps.

Each committee has its own responsibilities and area of influence. The women's committee caters for the needs of women and children; the youth committee for those of younger men. The main committee supervises the other two committees, coordinates their activities and attends to matters outside the spheres of responsibility of the two subordinate committees.

Party officials are the local political activists, and the higher they are within the party hierarchy the more active they often are. Among these officials, the most important is of course the chief of the main committee, who is a branch leader. On election as party chief he automatically becomes community leader, *Ketua Masyarakat*, with the task of keeping 'law and order' in the squatment as well as looking after the well-being of his community. Next to him, in order of importance, is the deputy party chief, who

FIGURE 11

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE LOCAL PARTY BRANCH



Women's Committee

Chief
Deputy Chief
Secretary
Asst. Secretary
Treasurer
Asst. Treasurer
7 Committee Members

Main Committee

Chief
Deputy Chief
Secretary
Asst. Secretary
Treasurer
Asst. Treasurer
Public Relations Officer
Women's Chief (ex-officio)
Youth's Chief (ex-officio)
12 Committee Members

Youth Committee

Chief
Deputy Chief
Secretary
Asst. Secretary
Treasurer
Asst. Treasurer
7 Committee Members

RT = Responsible to.

deputises for the party chief in his absence. Then come the women and youth chiefs.

These are the party leaders who keep the party going and who liaise between party members and party officials at the supra-local level; but mediating is not their only function, they are also in a position to distribute resources of their own, whether in material or other form, albeit in a limited way.

These squatter party officials have limited economic resources; they do not own or control land in the city, nor are they rich by urban standards in Kuala Lumpur. However, in comparison with other squatters in the community and elsewhere, they are economically and socially better off. They are the 'most advantaged' in the community, being better educated usually and therefore hold better jobs with higher levels of income. If they were married, their spouses, too, are likely to be better educated and holding good jobs, and as a result their joint household income is much higher. Their relatively high income enables them to own prestige goods which further enhances their standing within the community (see Table 14).

As shown in Table 14, ten out thirteen party officials in 1980/81, had secondary education, some up to Form Three level, having sat and passed their *Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (SRP)* examinations. Others, including the party chief, the youth and women chiefs, had all passed their fifth year secondary school examinations, the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)*, equivalent to "O" Level. The youth chief is the most 'educated' among the local political leaders; he went to an elitist government residential school until his Sixth Form and later went for a one-year course in

TABLE 14
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS 1980/81

Commi- Official	UMNO Official	Level of Education	Job	Personal Income	Means of Transport Owned	Other Prestige Indices
M	UMNO Chief	Form 5	Clerk & part-time business-man	\$800	Motorcar	Eloquent, good religious knowledge, been in UMNO 7 yrs.
A	Deputy UMNO Chief	Stad. 5	Production operator	\$550	Motorcar & Scooter	Eloquent, good religious knowledge, good mechanic, good organising ability.
I	Secretary	Form 5	Clerk	\$550	Scooter	Eloquent, good religious knowledge.
N	Treasurer	Form 3	Production operator	\$500	Scooter	Eloquent, good religious knowledge, wife a religious teacher.
	Information Officer	Form 3	Machine operator	\$550	Scooter	-

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS 1980/81 (contd.)

Commi- tee	UMNO Official	Level of Education	Job	Personal Income	Means of Transport Owned	Other Prestige Indices
Y	Youth Chief	University	Research Asst.	\$800	Motorcar	Went to university, good photographer.
O	Deputy Youth Chief	Form 5	Library Asst.	\$600	Scooter	Knows typing and shorthand.
U	Secretary	Form 4	Clerk	\$450	Scooter	Knows typing
T	Treasurer	Form 3	Production operator	\$400	-	Good religious know- ledge.
H						
W	Women Chief	Form 5	Clerk	\$800	Motorcar	Sportswoman, father own 5 houses in squ- atment, knows typing & shorthand.
O						
M	Deputy Women Chief	Std. 6	Washer-woman	\$350	-	Eloquent, very hard working, good organ- iser.
E	Secretary	Form 5	Clerk	\$450	-	Knows typing and shorthand.
N	Treasurer	Std. 6	Religious Teacher	\$300	-	Good in handicraft, pious.

glass-blowing techniques at a Belgian university. Party officials with secondary education are bilingual, fluent in and can read both Malay and English.

The party chief and the chief of the women's committee are both clerks, the former works in a private firm and the latter in a government department. The deputy party chief is a production operator in a factory, having worked there for the past seven years. The youth chief, who claims to be unable to secure a job 'appropriate to his training', is a research assistant at a government agricultural research centre.

The occupations of these three party chiefs are viewed as prestigious jobs both by squatters and other Malays. They are described as *kerja opis* (lit. office jobs) which do not involve dirtying one's hands or soiling one's clothes. Such occupations normally entail not only relatively higher pay and a more stable income, but also regular working hours. Party activists therefore have more free time and perhaps also extra money to spend on party activities. The nature and requirement of their regular jobs also enable them to know something of the structure and working of the government bureaucracy. They can also type, are conversant with meeting procedures, e.g. taking down and preparing minutes, and can write their own speeches. The deputy branch chief, whose work is confined to the factory floor, has some of these skills and knowledge acquired through long experience as a party activist. These skills and knowledge together with willingness to sacrifice time and to some extent money, as well as organising ability, are qualifications for leadership roles.

These leaders also have other qualities that appeal to

to most of the squatters. The party chief is knowledgeable in religion and can easily officiate at religious ceremonies or rituals if called upon to do so. Such an attribute seems essential for a leader to possess in a close-knit and conservative community like Kampung Selamat, especially in view of what is popularly called 'Islamic revival' which seems to be sweeping the city at present (see Nagata, J. 1980). The squatters describe such a person as the branch chief as *dunia boleh, akhirat pun boleh* (knowledgeable in both worldly and other worldly matters), a complimentary phrase often used to describe someone who is deemed to have a proper balance between the old (rural) and the new (urban) way of life.

The women chief, on the other hand, is a keen sportswoman, who excels at badminton, as testified by her large collection of trophies. A confirmed spinster of forty, she has ample time for party activities - organising functions for women, mobilising their support and attending party functions at the supra-local level. Her sporting prowess is a credit to the women's committee; she plays on their behalf in sports events organised by the party annually.

The youth chief is considered somewhat of an expert photographer. He is the squatment cameraman, in great demand on such occasions as weddings, religious rituals at the prayer house or private birthday parties. He also knows karate and is currently learning to play a musical instrument. The deputy branch chief is a good mechanic, having acquired the skill by tinkering with old cars. Such extra knowledge and skills make him, and the other party officials, a cut above the rest of the squatters and put them in a position to render service, *berbudi* (lit. to do good deeds) to others.

The four main party officials have a higher economic status than others in the squatment. This is manifested by the general conditions of their houses and material possessions. Their houses are better built and bigger and having sitting room equipped with settees and cushions. They have electricity supplies and electrical appliances such as refrigerators, television sets, record players, tape recorders, etc. Each one of them owns a car. These material possessions apart from their practical value, are prestige indices reflecting their owners' high earning and capacity to spend.

Their relatively high economic status, together with their extra skill and knowledge are the only personal resources available which they can translate into favours. A television set, for example, attracts people to the house every night; a car can be used to provide much needed transport, especially in times of emergency. Mechanical or photographic skills can be utilised when the need arises. Such services, which are frequently rendered free, have two important implications: first, the party officials reiterate their higher status in relation to the recipients of their favours; second, the recipients are put under obligation to reciprocate. Being of relatively weaker economic status, they rarely have means or opportunity to reciprocate immediately, and this puts them in a state of *terhutang budi* (indebtedness) to the party officials and this renders them open to political manipulation by the officials. For example, party officials seeking re-election or support for a particular project they wish to push through, can extract support by gently reminding those 'indebted' to them of favours received. The 'debtors' are compelled to give their support or run the risk of damaging their reputation and that of their family.

Thus party officials do have some personal resources at their disposal but these cannot be translated into power in the way landlord-patrons can use their land or house to control their tenant-clients. Squatter politicians do not own means of production and have no economic grip on the party members; their resources, when utilised, can only create moral obligations which in turn can be used to involve or retain people in the party machinery. Their main power lies in their position within the party hierarchy as political brokers between party members (squatters) and supra-local party officials. Removed from the party hierarchy, they become useless to the squatters. How this power is derived and how it is utilised by leaders and other squatters will be discussed further later.

(a) Communal Goals: Question of Priority. The prime *raison d'etre* for the squatters' involvement with the political party is their desire to use the party to secure certain goals, especially communal goals. These goals, as we have seen, are many and relate directly to their relatively deprived living conditions, but while squatters are unanimous in their need for security of tenure and for physical and social development, they fail to agree on the priorities of their many other goals. Squatters of different denominations have different priorities. While house-owners regard legalisation of occupancy should be their first concern, tenants do not, preferring instead to attend to their more immediate need for water and electricity. Those with ample supply of water from wells put electricity supply at the top of their priority list; but squatters with generators for power supply cite piped water as their main requirement. Even between the sexes and different age groups, what is considered the most important community needs varies. Homebound housewives, bored with the

routine of house tasks, want domestic science and religious classes to break the monotony, while young people want games and sports facilities. Elderly folks on the other hand, who are religiously orientated, see the needs of the women and the youth as insignificant compared to their desire for a prayer house. Thus at any one time, different sections of the community have differing requirements which they hope could be met by outside institutions especially by government agencies in the capital.

Communal needs are widely discussed; they are the constant subjects of conversations on the frequent occasions when people congregate. In the morning housewives meet at the community standpipes to wash clothes or at the local sundry shops to buy their daily groceries. In late afternoon the men crowd at the community hall while waiting for their turn to bathe at the standpipes; later many adjourn to the prayer house for the evening prayers. Occasionally there are the feasts and party sales referred to in chapter IV and VII. These are occasions when communal needs are articulated and conveyed informally to party officials who will then take them to their monthly party meetings. Women party officials will discuss women's needs at the women committee meetings; similarly, the youth at theirs, and whatever resolutions arrived at will later be brought before the main committee for approval.

Party officials, familiar with bureaucratic red tape and the difficulty of securing assistance from government agencies, do not attend to all the squatters' needs at any one time. The various goals are listed in order of priorities as seen from the party branch and party officials' point of view. Only goals which have the highest chance of being realised are pursued. The credibility of

the officials and the branch have to be maintained, and this can be done only by proving to the squatters that they are in a position to bring in political largesse. Hence, it is considered essential not to pursue goals which, in the party officials' judgement, are impossible to attain. This accounts for the local party's obsession with physical and social development projects and why it plays down the most crucial issue of land titles. The former are easier to secure, in view of the widely publicised government programmes to help the urban poor. The latter, though not impossible to attain in view of the squatter up-grading scheme, is difficult and time consuming to achieve.

The party officials' need to maintain their status quo, therefore, is one of the overriding factors that determine which of the squatters' varied goals is to be attended to first. This was amply illustrated in 1980. The squatters were concerned about the rising number of children with rashes and sores and some felt that this was directly related to the appalling sanitary conditions. They stressed the need for some lavatories to alleviate the sanitary problems. In one of the writer's interviews with one City Hall official, the writer brought the matter up and enquired if City Hall could render some help to solve the problems. The writer was told that City Hall had, in fact, allocated some funds for pour-out lavatories and there was enough left for six. City Hall could give the funds to the writer's 'squatters', to be used for buying building materials, such as cement, wood and corrugated iron sheets and the squatters would have to build the lavatories themselves. However, the official said he could not channel funds to a squatment unless there was a formal request for them. So, he asked the writer to tell the branch party officials to come and see him in one week's time to complete the formalities. The writer relayed what she thought was a

piece of really good news to the youth chief, who was enthusiastic about it and he in turn brought the matter to the attention of the local party chief. The party chief, however, received the news coldly; he refused to attend to it immediately and insisted that the matter be brought to the party's monthly committee meeting. The matter was 'considered' - and rejected. They said it would create a lot of troubles; it would cause quarrels among the squatters and there would be problems as to who should keep them clean. The squatters themselves were in favour of accepting the City Hall's offer. Nevertheless, the officials' decision prevailed and no lavatories were built. The offer was turned down not for the reasons given by the party. The writer discovered later, the real reason was that the local party chief did not like development projects to come into the squatment through any other channel except his own. The writer's offer of help was seen as a challenge to his position within the party and by rejecting the offer he was of course putting his own personal interests before the squatters'. And it seems his pride was hurt, too, because the writer did not convey the good news direct to him which, in retrospect, was perhaps an unfortunate oversight by the writer.

Party officials are keen to prove their efficacy as political brokers and to boost the party's image for the sake of the general elections; they therefore usually strive for maximum results in the shortest possible time in their attempt to bring political largesse to the squatment. They confine their efforts to communal needs which can be met quickly from government assistance, and such needs are usually the least urgent. Cases of low priority needs being met are numerous; two may serve to illustrate the point. In 1978, in the wake of the squatters' grievances against the party over the issue of the proposed sewerage project

which they thought was a threat to their squatment, the party officials pressured their superiors in the party hierarchy to show tangible proof of their concern for the squatters by giving funds to build a new community hall and a new prayer house. This request seemed rather odd to many members because the squatters already had a community hall and a prayer house. The community hall was still quite new, built only a year before and the prayer house was about three years' old, but still in good condition and was quite adequate for their purpose. A new community hall and a prayer house were therefore very low on the squatters' priority list, but the party branch chose to apply for funds for them simply because they were the easiest and quickest to obtain in an election year, when pork-barrel projects are allocated by the ruling party. Indeed, with the help of supra-local party officials, the local branch managed, as alluded to in Section 6.1.(c), to persuade the incumbent Member of Parliament, who was keen to seek re-election, to fork out \$5,000/- from his MP's allocations for the community hall and to persuade some UMNO politicians to donate towards the building of the new prayer house.

Many squatters, while grateful, felt that the whole exercise of demolishing newly built premises was wasteful, but party officials made every effort to convince them of the great need to do so. They insisted that the existing community hall was too small and was not built according to urban building standards as it was built entirely of wood. What they needed was a larger hall, with concrete foundation, louvre windows and walls partially of brick. The prayer house, too, was small and badly located; it should be replaced with a bigger one, built on a new site, convenient to every householder. In the end the officials' will prevailed, the old community hall and prayer

house were demolished and new ones were built, although there was really no urgent need for them.

In the annual general meeting of the branch in February 1982, before the general elections, the community hall was once again a dominating issue. This time the party officials appealed to the Senator for funds and this time for the purpose of extending the community hall and for the costs of wiring the building for power supply. The squatters' activities, it seems, had increased and they needed more space. The Senator agreed to provide the money, promising \$15,000/- for the purpose. By early 1984, the promise had yet to be fulfilled. Perhaps, it may have to wait till the next election year, possibly 1986.

So, the squatters may have numerous community goals, but it is the party officials who decide which among these goals are to be pursued and what the local branch decides depends very much on what is available in the government's kitty and the coffers of the party and its supra-level officials. Generally, as long as some form of assistance comes into the squatment and the survival of the squatment itself is not threatened, the squatters seem content to leave matters relating to the physical and social development of the squatment to the party officials, apparently in the belief that they know best. After all the party officials themselves are part of the squatter community and their interest is assumed to be basically the same as that of the squatters themselves. It is only when funds stop coming in and their survival on the land is threatened that the squatters begin to worry and start to scrutinise the actions of their party officials. When this happens, as in 1976, they have no qualms about removing the party officials and replacing them with others, if they feel that it is in their future interest to do so.

(b) Procedures for Acquiring Assistance and Meeting Communal Goals. The main concern of the local party branch, as stated repeatedly by the party officials at its annual general meetings, is to secure government aids to meet the communal needs of the squatters. To achieve this objective, the three committees work sometimes jointly sometimes independently of each other, dividing areas of responsibilities among themselves, the main committee dealing with matters wider than the sectional interests of youths and women.

Each committee determines the sort of communal goals it will attend to (or in the squatters's jargon, its *projek*) immediately after being elected to office at the beginning of the year. For the rest of the year the officials, especially the chief of each committee and the secretary, devote their efforts to achieving their objectives. Much of the work involves dealing with the various government bureaucracies in the capital. But party officials often do not approach these bureaucracies direct; they seek the help of their political superiors, especially the party's divisional chief. The present Division Chief, a Senator, knowledgeable about government policies and projects, especially those to be implemented in the Federal Territory, which is his political arena, is in a very good position to advise the squatters' party officials on the sort of benefits he can apply for and when and how. Such advice is essential to the squatter politicians as it lessens the possibility of failure that may ruin their political career in the squatment.

Thus, most applications whether to government or non-government institutions are made by the squatter politicians through the Division Chief, widely referred to as 'the Senator' or *Yang Berhormat* (lit. the Honourable)

among the squatters. The Senator then forwards the application to the appropriate authorities with his recommendations. The reluctance of the local party officials to deal direct with the government is due to the widespread belief among the squatters that it is futile to submit an application for assistance from the authorities without the recommendations of a prominent government party politician. As one squatter politician puts it,

"Such a letter will only end up in the waste-paper basket. Why should the government officials bother to help us? To them we are a nuisance; they want to get rid of us, not help us."

The belief is not without foundation. An official of City Hall, who deals with the distribution of aid to the squatters, admits that while in theory most City Hall officials think they should not discriminate against squatters known to support the opposition parties, but in practice they do. Some do so because of pressure from politicians from the government party, others out of their own desire to curry favour with the Minister of the Federal Territory, to whose ministry City Hall is responsible. Thus, by having their letter of application submitted through the Division Chief, the squatters increase their chances of success. In addition, it ensures that the letter is sent to the right officer in the right government department. Party officials, despite their relatively good knowledge of government bureaucracy, are never absolutely sure to whom applications are to be addressed, or whether the letters have been properly drafted. The Division Chief's help in correcting errors and so on is invaluable.

The few cases when applications for communal benefits are not made through the Division Chief usually concern

the sectional needs of the women in Kampung Selamat. The women's chief in the squatment takes such matters up with the Division Women's Chief, known affectionately as *Ibu* (lit. mother). A good example of how the women's leaders deal with their own needs was when they wanted to start the domestic science and religious classes. Before deciding to embark on the project, the women's chief in Kampung Selamat consulted the Division Women's Chief, and on being informed by the latter that such services were available, she (the squatter women's chief) instructed the secretary to write a letter of application to the Division Women's Chief, *Ibu*. It was *Ibu* who approached the Religious Department and the Ministry of National and Rural Development, and who arranged for two women teachers to be sent to start classes in the squatment. She also saw to it that the women got a kerosene cooker so that their cookery classes could function properly. All these arrangements were made with the full knowledge and consent of the main committees at the local and divisional levels.

Nearly all applications made to the authorities for whatever purpose take a long time to produce result, the length varying according to the kind of assistance requested. Those involving more than one government departments may take years. For example, the application for water supply took three years until the standpipe was installed. The delay was due to the fact that two government departments, City Hall and Department of Waterworks, were involved. It took almost a year before City Hall approved the application. Then it had to liaise with the Waterworks Department which took another year before it agreed with City Hall's decision. It then took several months before the decision was implemented and works actually began and the standpipe installed.

During the long waiting period, some sections of the squatter community may get impatient and apply pressure on the local party officials, especially the local branch chief, who in turn will counsel his superior, the Division Chief. The latter will then pressure the particular government official who received the application. Depending on the urgency of the matter, he may either telephone the official concerned or pay him a personal visit at his office, and if after all that he is still not convinced that the application will be approved, he will see the Deputy Minister of the Federal Territory or the Minister himself. In the meantime, the squatter party chief who faces the squatters everyday will have the unpleasant task of finding suitable excuses to explain the delay. Frequently, he puts the blame on the government bureaucracy, i.e. City Hall, stressing that he and his committee members have done all they can and that the matter is out of their hands.

Should, however, the squatters become even more impatient and begin to show signs of disaffection with the leadership and the party, the branch chief and his lieutenants will try to find some ways of appeasing them. The party officials may try to procure some short-term largesse for the squatters, from non-government institutions or individual philanthropists. They may even request their Division Chief to donate some material goods which they think the squatters may need. Thus, periodically, one sees in the squatment the distribution of loudspeakers, prayer mats, etc., usually at a party gathering of some sort and with great fanfare and a great deal of speech-making. The distribution of small 'gifts' in this manner is not peculiar to Kampung Selamat, it is a phenomenon which is widespread among the squatter population in the capital. In one case, namely the

parliamentary constituency of Setapak, the Member of Parliament (1974-1982), who is a millionaire, was even requested by party branch officials in the squatterments in the constituency to donate foodstuffs, such as milk and sugar, to prayer houses (mosques and *suraus*) during the fasting month of Ramadhan. The MP concerned tells the writer that he is ever willing to make such donations as it is part of his religious obligations as a Muslim.

There are times when occasional distribution of petty gifts is not enough to pacify some squatters. One such occasion was before the 1978 general elections. The squatters had requested the local party officials to apply for additional community taps and electricity supply as far back as 1975 and after three years of waiting there were no signs that the services would be forthcoming. To make matters worse there were rumours that City Hall was planning to evict them and repossess the land for the construction of a sewerage plant (to which reference has been made). According to the writer's informants, the squatters were extremely disappointed and very angry with the party and the party officials at all levels. The bolder ones among them used the annual general meeting in 1977 to express their anger and criticisms openly. A few joined the PMIP, and yet others approached the DAP party officials to help air their grievances against the treatment given them by the local authority and the national government. All this was an exercise which was meant to compel the ruling party to take a serious look at their plight and to do something about it, and not really as a demonstration of their genuine support for these opposition parties, as their officials would like to believe and often claim.

When discontentment among squatter party members

becomes too obvious to the local and supra-local party officials, the latter are obliged to distribute more substantial largesse, as in the case of Kampung Selamat in 1977, when local officials hurriedly applied for and were given funds to build their new community hall and new prayer house, as already mentioned. The two buildings were officially and ceremoniously opened by the donors, and it was during these ceremonies that the local party chief, on behalf of the villagers, announced his gratitude for the donors' *jasa baik* (good deeds) and reminded the squatters to repay this debt by giving them and their party political support, especially during the general elections.

Apart from material aid, squatters' communal goals, as alluded to earlier, include protection against any actions by City Hall which are contrary to their interests, such as attempts at eviction or reprisals for the contravention of regulations pertaining to squatting. Squatters are liable to eviction especially when the land they occupy is needed for physical development, as part of Kampung Selamat was in 1977 when the sewerage plant was underway. In this case, the squatters implored the local branch to secure the backing of the national party to forestall eviction and when that proved impossible, to negotiate on their behalf for the best possible terms under which to move out. The negotiation was left to the party chief as well as the Division Chief and some officials at the division level. Indeed in 1979, after years of negotiations, 'the best possible terms' were obtained for the twenty households (one hundred and one people), in Kampung Selamat, whose houses were to be demolished to make way for transit quarters (or longhouses): they were given the opportunity to buy low-cost houses in the 'sites and services' housing scheme in Sungai Besi. But others in neighbouring Pantai

Halt, who were similarly affected, were moved into transit quarters in Kampung Kerinci. These so-called transit quarters are no more than just single-storey, wooden longhouses, divided into sections with each section consisting of a living-room-cum-bedroom and a kitchen, intended for a household, irrespective of the size of the household. The special treatment given to the twenty households from Kampung Selamat is believed to be due to their loyalty to the party, while the sad fate of those from Pantai Halt is attributed to the fact that some of them had shown disloyalty to the party at some time, such as in 1978, when they opened a branch of the opposition PMIP in the area.

Squatters in Kampung Selamat have to cope with existing regulations imposed on them (and other squatters in the capital) by City Hall since 1979. Under these regulations, squatters are not allowed to rebuild, extend or repair their houses without permission from the UPP of the City Hall. No new houses are to be constructed and no profiteering from squatter houses or land is allowed. Such rules are not easy to observe. Squatters have several reasons why they want to alter their houses: houses made of wood frequently need to be repaired or renovated; the size of the household may increase over time through natural process of birth or incorporation of in-migrating kin from the rural areas. When any of these happens, the house may need to be extended to add more rooms. The house owner may want to install electrical wiring, in which case the house has to be improved to lessen the possibility of fire. There is always some need to repair, renovate, rebuild, extend or even shift the house to some other location. All this requires dealings with the officers of the UPP and in all such dealings the role of the party officials becomes extremely important.

Squatters are required to apply formally for permission to make house alterations which some of them do, through and with the recommendations of the local and division chiefs. The UPP will then give them the necessary forms to fill and the department will then send field officers to check on site to see whether or not the information given in the forms is correct. Only when the UPP is satisfied that the application is genuine and that all particulars given are correct will the application be considered. These bureaucratic processes can take months and at the end of the day there is no guarantee that the application will be approved. Faced with this sort of problem squatters have two courses of action open to them: first, they may follow the regulations faithfully and urge the local party leaders to hasten the process and secure the desired results, or, secondly, they may ignore the regulations and depend on their local party branch for protection in case their activities are found out by the UPP field officers. The second course of action is the more popular; none of those who made alterations to their houses illegally has been reported to the UPP by the local power structure, or by individual squatters and as such the UPP has little means of discovering them. On the few occasions when the field officers detected illegal activities, the local party chief was quick to intervene and, with the help of his superiors, managed to persuade the UPP not to prosecute the squatters who had broken the rules and regulations.

Intervention by local and supra-local party officials to prevent reprisals by the UPP on squatters engaged in illegal activities in this manner is widespread in all squatterments in Kuala Lumpur. In some areas where local politicians have a very strong backing from supra-local political figures in the ruling party, such activities are

executed in broad daylight. In the parliamentary constituency of Sungai Besi, for instance, some squatters employed contractors to build their houses and the writer, on a number of occasions in October 1980, saw house construction being carried out under the very eyes of the UPP officers, while at the same time squatters elsewhere, such as in Kampung Polo, who were engaged in the same type of activities, were seeing their houses razed to the ground. When questioned on this inconsistent action of theirs, the UPP field officers' reply was simply,

"In Sungai Besi, we are told to shut our eyes to such activities. These people have strong politicians protecting them. If we tried to follow and enforce the law on them, we'd run the risk of endangering our own *periuk nasi* (lit. rice pot, i.e. means of living). In Kampung Polo, they don't have any backers; so it is all right to enforce the law on them ..."

Another form of protection sought by the squatters from the local party branch is against prosecution for profiteering on squatter land and houses. In Kampung Selamat, profiteering takes two forms: renting out houses or rooms, and buying and selling houses. Such activities are illegal and it is incumbent on the local power structure, in this case the political party branch, or individual squatters to report such matters to the City Hall. This is not something which anyone in this close-knit community likes to do, more especially the party officials, some of whom are squatter landlords. Such profiteering therefore is never reported, unless such activities run counter to the interests of the community as a whole or to the party or party officials personally. One case which came to City Hall's knowledge was house No.96, in November 1981. The original owner of the house had earlier agreed to sell the house on an instalment basis to a

friend of a friend, but before the full price of the house had been paid, the 'vendor' changed her mind and wanted her house back claiming that she had merely been renting her house to the other person. This led to bitter squabbling between the parties involved, something which many in the community, including the party officials, thought was bad for the community. Disgusted with the bickering, the party officials refused to get involved, and in so doing forced the 'purchaser' to approach City Hall personally for help, an action which later proved counter-productive. The house was in the end bulldozed, to the loss of both 'vendor' and 'purchaser', and the community rid itself of two unwanted members. This case demonstrates that without the help of the local party branch, squatters are exposed to prosecution and action by the local authorities. Squatters are therefore as dependent on the local party officials, with the backing of the national party, for protection from action and eviction by the local authorities, as they are for financial assistance. The squatters, however, do not regard house extension and repair and letting as 'illegal' activities. After all, as one lady explained, they are not harming (*merosakkan*) anyone by such activities; they are in fact doing the community a service by improving their housing environment. Breaking urban housing regulations is not seen as an offence, like drug trafficking or burglary, which the squatters see as heinous.

(c) Political Brokers and Individual Goals. In addition to expecting local party officials, especially the party chief, to help secure communal goals, squatters also expect their chief to help, if to a lesser extent, secure personal benefits for themselves and members of their family. Occasionally, some people in the squatment have to deal

personally with government and extra-government agencies in the capital. Some want to get scholarships and free school books for their children, or financial help from the Social Welfare Department, etc.; others want to apply for small loans from banks or government financial institutions, for permits to operate school buses or taxis, or for licences to run food stalls. In most, if not all, of these cases, the applicant needs references and strong recommendations from people of high social standing. It is not easy for the squatters, whose social interactions are confined to the squatments and their workplace and who are mostly recent arrivals in the city, to find a suitable person to be their referees or to give them strong recommendations. The local party chief, by virtue of his position as the community leader, like his rural counterpart, the *Ketua Kampung*, is in a position to be a referee, but not to give recommendations because he is not a person of high social status outside the boundaries of his squatment and is perhaps not well-known enough. What he can do, and often does, is to seek favours on behalf of his squatter followers from his own superior, the Division Chief, the Senator. He puts in a word or two for the squatters to the *Yang Berhormat* and makes an appointment for the squatters to see him. All this is either done by telephone while he is at work, or by calling at the Senator's office on his way home from work in the evening or during the lunch hours.

The mediatory role of the party chief in such cases is extremely important because the Senator, who is also a businessman, is a busy man and is difficult, if not impossible, to see. People seeking his help are so numerous that those with appointments - including the writer on once occasion when she wanted to meet him - have to wait for hours before getting a chance to see him.

Those without appointments are usually turned away and asked to come some other time, as in the case of Biah, from Kampung Selamat.

Case 1: Biah.

She is a divorcee with four children, three of whom are in school. Living on her income as a sweeper and on alimony from her husband, life is a struggle, so Biah went to see her children's teachers to get exemption from paying assorted fees for them. She was given forms to fill and needed someone to be her referee and to verify the accuracy of particulars given in the forms. The local party chief was not around as he was on leave in his native kampung in Johore. Thinking that she could gain access to the Senator easily, she decided to dispense with the help of the deputy chief and went straight to the Senator's office. She failed to see him on her first attempt; the Senator's secretary made an appointment for her to see him. On the appointed day and time she came and was still unable to see him. She tried for the third time, still without success. It was only at the fourth attempt that she managed to see him. Even then, she said, she found it difficult to explain to him what she wanted as she was not used to speaking to *orang berpangkat* (lit. a titled person, i.e. person of high status), and she thinks that it would have been better if she let the local party officials mediate for her. It would have saved her time and money, viz. four trips on four afternoons and bus fares. "It's all right for me," she says, "I work only half-day, in the morning. Other people may not have time to spare in the afternoon."

Biah was eventually successful and is grateful for the Senator's help. However, not every application made to the urban bureaucracies that bears the stamp of the Division Chief, is successful, because not everybody in the city concurs with the notion that people with affiliations with the party in power should be given priority and preferences over others. Nevertheless, past failures do not stop people from continuing to seek the help of the local party officials and the supra-local officials; the squatters, like many others, seem to believe that they are inadequate

and must procure anything from the urban authorities and extra-government institutions with help from those in power. The recommendations given by the party officials and the use of party rubber-stamp offer extra hope to the applicants.

Besides seeking the help of the local party to secure material help for individual purposes, some squatters even think of asking party officials to lend a hand in solving legal problems. The two cases given below will illustrate this point:

Case 2: Noni.

Noni, one of the squatters, was involved in an accident in 1981. She was knocked down by a scooter while cycling to sell cakes early one morning. She was badly hurt in the legs and had to be treated in hospital for a couple of days and was not able to walk for months. She was not familiar with laws pertaining to accidents and compensations. So, when the scooterist offered to pay for her medical bills and give her \$100/- as compensation (*ganti rugi*), she agreed not to report the matter to the police. When news of the deal reached the squatment, the case was discussed widely and many felt that she had been tricked, and that if the case went to court, she could have got more than \$1,000/- in compensations. She was persuaded by some of her enlightened friends and neighbours to sue the scooterist, and on being told that she did not know how to go about doing such things, they advised her to approach the party chief and the Division Chief to help her pursue the matter. This, however, she did not do because she thought she would not have the time to attend court if the matter was brought to court and that she might lose more money in the end, as by having to attend court frequently she would have to cut on working days and incur extra expenses on bus fares, etc.

This case also illustrates that before the squatters utilize the services of the party officials, they sometimes weigh the pros and cons of doing so and will make use of such services only if they feel certain that their chances

of achieving their objectives are quite good. Sometimes, if intervention by the politicians is considered likely to delay matter or be counter-productive, the services of the party chiefs are dispensed with. In such cases, the squatters will seek other avenues for help, as illustrated by the following case of the Rahman family, from house No.45, in 1980:

Case 3: The Rahman Family.

In 1980, Hayati, a 17-year old girl in the family sought employment in a furniture factory. Two weeks after being employed she was involved in an accident while at work in which three fingers of her left hand were severed by one of the factory machines. She was hospitalised, later dismissed by her employer on the grounds that she became incapacitated by the accident and was therefore unable to carry out her work, and on dismissal she was not given any compensations. Her family was furious. Hayati's brother, Johari, took the matter up with the employer, confronting him and demanding that he pay his sister compensations for the accident which he considered was due to the negligence on the employer's part. The employer denied responsibility and refused to pay. Johari's option was to take legal action, but he was not keen to take court action because it would mean engaging a lawyer, which was beyond his means, and there was also the risk that the case might drag on for years. He thought of seeking the help of the local party chief as well as the Division Chief, but after lengthy discussions with the former, he decided not to. He concluded that intervention by UMNO's politicians might impede rather than expedite matters and that it might not bring about the desired result. His sister's case, he thought, was within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour and perhaps the Minister or his parliamentary secretary could exert the necessary pressure on the employer to make him pay. The Minister concerned was an Indian from the MIC and Johari surmised that his best course of action was to approach this Minister. This he did, with the help of an Indian workmate whom he knew was a strong MIC supporter, and with the Minister's intervention, Johari managed to get the employer to pay his sister \$1,200/-.

This case illustrates that in striving to achieve individual goals, the squatters are not totally dependent on the mediatory roles of the party officials at both the local and supra-local levels. They quite often explore all avenues of help that may be at their disposal, their networks of kinship, friends, neighbours, workmates and party officials, and depending on the goals to be achieved, will utilise any one of these networks which they consider to be the most advantageous. The party, according to them, is only useful in dealing with matters relating directly to government and semi-government bureaucracies over which the party and its officials have considerable influence and power; and it is for such purposes only that the services of the party officials would be enlisted. The party officials, too, keen as they are to do favours to enhance their own prestige and that of the party and to sustain the squatters' support, will not attempt to deal with matters beyond their powers. Prestige can only be attained through success; any failure on their part will be construed by the squatters as a sign of ineffectiveness and this may ruin their political careers.

In conclusion, it can be said that it is only in matters relating to communal goals that the squatters are totally dependent on the party. Even then the party's capacity to help realise the squatters' goals are limited by a number of factors, such as availability of resources and administrative red tape.

CHAPTER VII

THE POLITICAL PARTY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

In the previous chapter we saw how the squatters strive to attain their communal goals by manipulating their relations with local and supra-local party leaders. The success of these endeavours as Lloyd (1980:96) points out depends very much on two important factors, viz. the local leadership and communal cohesion. This chapter attempts to examine these two factors so as to throw some light on social relations between the squatters, their unity, conflicts and conflict resolution.

7.1 The Local Power Structure

There are two kinds of power structure in Kampung Selamat. First, the formal one which is the local party machinery, as explained in Chapter VI, Section 6.2. Secondly, the informal or traditional power structure, transferred from the rural villages and which has undergone transformations. The latter consists of the *ketua masyarakat* (community leader or chief), equivalent to the *ketua kampung* (village leader or chief) in the rural villages, his deputy and the local experts (mainly males) in various fields, such as religion, customs (*adat*), magic or even modern education. The use of a different term to describe the office of headship in the squatment from that used in the rural villages is, some squatters explain, due to the need to emphasise the difference between the status of the squatters in their relation to the land that they occupy from that of the rural villagers to their land.

Ketua, may be translated as 'leader', 'chief' or 'head', and the term *kampung* refers to the smallest territorial unit within the country's administration. The *ketua kampung* is the leader of all the people residing within such an administrative unit, and the very term therefore connotes *de jure* rights of settlement; and the leader, who is (or used to be) very often chosen by the villagers from among themselves, is recognised by the government as evidenced by the yearly stipend given to him by the State authorities. He is part of the government bureaucracy, albeit at the very lowest rung.

Masyarakat, in Malay, means 'community' or 'society'; and *ketua masyarakat* is a community leader/chief/head. The term *ketua masyarakat* therefore refers to a social unit and has no relevance or implication for the area of residence. The *Ketua Masyarakat* in Kampung Selamat is recognised by the urban authority, i.e. City Hall, as the representative of the squatters. Nevertheless, he is not considered a part of the urban administrative machinery.

Unlike in rural villages, in the course of everyday life, the two forms of power structure converge: the head or chief of the party branch, as we saw in Chapter VI, automatically assumes the role of community chief on his election as the local party chief. Likewise, his deputy automatically becomes 'deputy community chief'. The local experts, *orang yang tahu*, (lit. those who know), are incorporated into the party, holding important positions within the party, in the committees and sub-committees formed to attend to various community needs, as will be explained later. Thus, many of them function from within the party and their social roles become almost completely merged with their party roles. In other words, their social and political roles become almost indistinguishable.

This overlap between the party hierarchy and the community power structure is traceable to the formative period of Kampung Selamat. As explained in Chapter III, squatter community leaders were the first to become party activists and when the party branch in the squatment was formed in 1975, community leaders, who were already party activists, became party chief. Since then this pattern of leadership has been followed strictly - a pattern which also prevails in other Malay squatter areas.

There appears to be a conscious effort by the squatters to differentiate between community power structure and the party hierarchy. Party officials, at various times, refer to themselves either as *pemimpin parti* (party leaders) or as *pemimpin masyarakat* (community leaders) and the party chief as *Ketua UMNO* or as *Ketua Masyarakat*, depending on which role they are called upon to play. Others in the squatment make a similar distinction. When they approach their chief to seek his help to settle a quarrel between neighbours, for example, they are calling on his services as the community chief; but when they approach him to secure help to get a taxi permit, they seek his help in his capacity as the party chief. Approach to other party officials is made in a similar manner.

These examples reflect the squatters' idea of leadership at the squatment level. To them the party machinery is in theory separated from the community power structure, as the case is in most rural villages; but in practice this is hardly possible. It is the local party machinery which lends additional authority to the community power structure. The community chief is made effective only by virtue of his position within the party hierarchy; removed from the party he becomes powerless,

consequently useless to the squatters and will lose their recognition as a leader. Other community leaders, too, derive most of their power from the party. The community power structure, therefore, is dependent on the party machinery and because of this, the local party branch can be said to be the dominating power structure in the squatment, a point that will be explained further in the later part of this chapter.

The absorption of the 'traditional' community power structure into the local party machinery is facilitated by the practice at City Hall whereby, since 1978, informal recognition is given by officers to party leaders as representatives of the squatter community. On many occasions, the writer witnessed City Hall officials meeting local party officials of various squatter kampungs, either at City Hall or in the squatments, to discuss matters relating to their respective communities. Their agenda may range from crucial issues such as squatter eviction or aid to squatter fire victims to less crucial ones, such as how best officially to open a mother-and-child health care clinic or what to prepare for a forthcoming minister's visit to a squatter kampung. Through such meetings, City Hall officials, consciously or otherwise, positively sanction the local party officials as representatives of the squatters and as their leaders, because only those with leadership qualities are considered fit to be their representatives.

The pattern of leadership prevalent in Kampung Selamat is typical of mono-ethnic squatter settlements in which UMNO predominates. In areas where UMNO is not strong, such as the many Chinese dominated squatments, community leadership is either diffused or is held by the Community Liaison Committee (CLC), formed under the direction of the National Unity Unit of the Prime Minister's

Department. Such also is the case with multi-ethnic squatter settlements, where Malays, Chinese and Indians live in separate quarters within a single squatment and where there are branches from more than one political party. An example is Kampung Sentosa in the Sungai Besi parliamentary constituency, where there are UMNO, MCA and MIC branches. The various ethnic groups are brought together by the CLC, in which each political party has representatives and which is chaired by the UMNO chief in the squatment. The CLC members are recognised by City Hall as the squatters' leaders and representatives. This committee, however, has little difficulty in working together with City Hall because it is a government organ, established by and accountable to the National Unity Unit, and the political parties represented on the Committee are all government parties.

Single-ethnic squatter villages, like Kampung Selamat, may or may not be involved in a CLC set-up. If it is, as in the case of Kampung Selamat, it is more likely to be involved in an inter-squatment CLC, and such a committee would then have some significance for the squatters. Kampung Selamat is represented by one of its UMNO party officials in the Bangsar CLC, and although the role of the CLC is not immediately apparent, the squatter political leaders regard the CLC as an important extra channel through which to extract political largesse from the government.

In Kampung Selamat, where the local party machinery is the dominant power structure, the party branch controls the two main centres of community life, the *surau* (prayer house) and the community hall and is responsible for most, if not all, community activities. The local party, therefore, acts as some sort of 'local government', a system which,

although widely accepted, is not without its critics. Staunch UMNO supporters, especially the party officials, favour this type of 'local government' for obvious reasons. It enables them constantly to mobilise support for the party and even to coerce those not too keen on the party to join it. Others, such as those from the six households whose loyalty to UMNO is suspect, resent the local party's control of community affairs. They feel strongly that the party machinery should steer clear of community matters and that the party machinery should be physically distinct from the community power structure. The party, they contend, ought to concentrate on 'political' matters which, in their view, are those relating directly to party membership, government policies, party elections at various levels of the party hierarchy as well as the general elections. The party's control over community affairs in Kampung Selamat, they think, restricts their freedom and political choice. They are members of the party, but they joined not through choice but out of obligation.

These dissenting squatters from the six households also anticipate problems for the present form of 'local government' should there be intra-party strife. Factionalism within the party is common and they are convinced that squabbles between the different factions would be disastrous for the community. They cite cases where a single party's control of local affairs had been threatened by infighting between opposing factions, which worked against the interests of the squatters and jeopardised their unity. Two of these cases, confirmed by the writer, deserve mention here.

Case 1: Kampung Kerinci, Bukit C2,
(1979 - 1981).

In this squatment, UMNO was in full control of community affairs, but the failure of the leadership to bring more largesse into the community made some of the members annoyed with the leaders. Some young men, staunch party supporters, formed their own group and threatened to "throw out" the incumbent leaders if they "went on sleeping and not showing signs of doing something for the people". Incensed by the challenge from people who were still *mentah* (lit. raw) in politics, the leaders, consisting of party veterans, mobilised their supporters and enlarged their following. In the ensuing fight to increase their influence among the squatters, the two factions became extremely hostile and antagonistic towards each other as evidenced by sharp verbal exchanges between them at party meetings. The community was split, so much so that when the elected leaders of the party were able to procure financial aid for building a community hall, members of the opposing faction and their supporters refused to have anything to do with it. When labour was needed to build the hall, they refused to give their services. In the end, the hall was never built; timber bought for the purpose rotted, sacks of cement and piles of bricks were unused and remained heaped in a corner of the squatment.

Case 2: Kampung Benteng.

In 1980, City Hall, the co-ordinator of the *Nadi* Programme, decided to implement an income-generating project in Kampung Benteng, in an attempt to provide jobs for some home-bound women. A small ceramics factory was to be built in the squatment to employ the squatters themselves, and to start with a teacher was sent to teach some of the women pottery. The project was implemented with the help of the local party branch. However, some members of the branch, especially those in the youth committee, were opposed to the chief and thus were not happy to see a socio-economic project identified with him succeed. They decided to sabotage the project. The class was disturbed, the teacher threatened and at one point clay artifacts modelled by the women students and their kiln were smashed and scattered in the schoolroom. As a result, the class was suspended until City Hall investigated the matter and settled the differences between the two factions in the local party branch.

Intra-party strife, as the above illustrations show, can very easily spill over outside the party machinery to create complications for extra-party matters. This, however, is not the only problem anticipated by those who are opposed to the prevalent pattern of power structure. In their view, the party machinery can be used as a framework for community organisation only when there is only one party branch in the squatment, as in the case of Kampung Selamat now. There may come a time when other parties may gain influence among the squatters and other party branches may be formed. In such an event, these political parties, too, would want a share of control in community affairs. The outcome is expected by them to be disastrous for the community and detrimental to their cause. For these reasons, this group of squatters would prefer the present party machinery to steer clear of community affairs.

These criticisms are not unfamiliar to the party officials, exponents of the present pattern of power structure. They insist that squabbles within the party should be contained, by settling them quickly and amicably. And competition from other political parties can be avoided by checking the influence of other political parties from infiltrating into the community, and one way of achieving such an objective is for them to prove to the squatters that they are committed to their goals and are working towards such ends. The party must formulate specific strategies to sustain the full support of the squatters, and no doubt the present method of 'local government', where the community power structure is incorporated into the party machinery, is part of these strategies. The party therefore manages to control almost all community activities in the squatment and by doing so is in a position to stop leaders of other political parties

from coming into the squatment to propagate their political beliefs and to solicit support from the squatters. Other political leaders are not allowed to give political *ceramah* (talks) in Kampung Selamat or to use such public places as the *surau* or the community hall, which are identified with UMNO for such purposes, even during the few weeks before the general elections when free campaigning and canvassing by the various political parties took place. Such are the steps taken to ensure that no other political parties can find a foothold in the squatment to challenge the present power structure.

However, apart from those who are for or against, there are squatters who take a neutral view and who do not care or mind who runs community affairs or how so long as they are taken care of. These are people who are not committed to community life in the village such as the students and young unmarried workers who live in the squatment as lodgers or tenants, and family men and women who are too involved in economic activities to have time to reflect on community life. The former category, quite often regards the squatment merely as a pied-a-terre, a place to stay while at work during the week; their community interactions take place elsewhere, in their villages of origin to which they return every fortnight or once a month. The latter have a stake in the community, but are too busy and have no time to participate in its 'government' and are therefore quite happy to leave such matters to the *pemimpin* (leaders) who, they think, should know what is good and what is bad for the community. The number of these 'neutrals' is small.

In general, therefore, it can be said that the majority of the population of the squatment are content to let the

party machinery take care of community affairs in the squatment. In this respect, Kampung Selamat as well as many other squatments in the capital city, are different from many squatter settlements in other countries, where community affairs are the concern of residents' associations (Mangin 1967; Peattie 1968; Safa 1974) and where political organisations divide rather than unify the squatters.

7.2 Community Activities.

Community activities in Kampung Selamat are organised mainly by the party branch. The party gears these activities towards the needs and interests of different sections of the community and such activities cover both religious and secular spheres. To run these activities, each of the three branch committees, whose structures have been explained in Chapter VI, form sub-committees. The main committee which attends to the general interests of the squatters has five sub-committees, i.e. for religion, welfare, education, security and housing. The women's and youth's committees have three sub-committees each, dealing with culture and sports, welfare and education. The purpose of having these sub-committees is to ensure that everything runs smoothly and efficiently.

It is interesting to note that party activities and the way these activities are organised are more or less the same in practically all other Malay squatments in Kuala Lumpur. This is because party activities at the squatment level are planned and coordinated by supra-local politicians at the State level. Local level political leaders in Kuala Lumpur meet from time to time at *kursus kepimpinan* (leadership courses) or at party seminars. On these

occasions, the branch officials are given guidelines on how to plan and organise party strategies at the grass-root levels and the organisation of activities which are directly relevant to the daily life of the squatters is an integral part of these strategies. The grouping of the activities and the allocation of responsibilities to the various sub-committees, according to one party official, are modelled on the Malaysian cabinet with some modifications to suit the squatter conditions. For example, just as the Malaysian government has its Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Welfare, the squatters, too, have their equivalents of these in their committee for culture, youth and sports, committee for education and committee for welfare and housing. The squatters also have a committee for security, which is comparable to the Ministry of Defence. By catering for diverse local interests and needs, the party branch ensures that at least one member in each household, of whatever age, involves himself or herself in some activity or other in the squatment. In this way the party hopes to recruit new members as well as retain the support and loyalty of the old ones.

Although the activities are held partly to promote the party's interest, party officials never acknowledge this fact publicly. In dealing with the squatters, the officials always stress that the activities are carried out as part of their exercise to *berkhidmat untuk rakyat* (to serve the people). As party leaders they feel they have a moral duty to help the squatters. As one party official put it, "If we don't do it, who will?"

Party activities can be classified into two categories: the regular projects and the occasional ones. The former include the women's religious classes, the home science and

handicraft classes, the kindergarten, the *Sekolah Agama Rakyat* (Peoples' Religious, i.e. Islamic, School) and the men's weekly religious gatherings. The latter are organised when the need arises for such occasions as the religious festivals, such as the *Hari Raya Puasa* (festival at the end of the fasting month) and the *Hari Raya Haji* (the festival of sacrifice during pilgrimage to Mecca), prophet Muhammad's birthday and the *Israk dan Mi'raj* (Night of Ascension to Heaven). In addition, once in a while there is need for welfare services to be rendered to some sections of the community such as to help the sick or a family of a dead person in their period of bereavement; or the need to perform communal task such as to clean the village after a flood, etc. The party has specific sub-committees to organise some kinds of activity for such occasions.

The regular or on-going activities are the most important and the ones that receive the full support of the squatters. They provide much needed services which otherwise the squatters will have to acquire elsewhere. The services are subsidised; therefore, they are rendered cheaply within the means of the squatters. The kindergarten, for example, charges only \$8/- per child per month, which is less than one tenth of the fees charged by commercial kindergartens in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. The facilities provided by the party therefore go quite a long way towards reducing their costs of living and this accounts for the squatters' total support for the party.

So as to get a clearer idea of how some of the party/community activities function, some of them are explained below:-

(a) The Religious School and the Kindergarten. The religious school, which was set up in 1977 with financial help from the Federal Territory Religious (Islamic) Department (FTRD), began in the late sixties as an informal Quran reading class conducted on a voluntary basis by a party official at the *surau*. When the school was established, the Quran teacher left and two local teachers, one of whom was the party official's cousin-in-law, were appointed to replace him. The teachers, who were in the employ of the FTRD, were given the responsibility of widening the school syllabus with the guidance of the FTRD so as to give the students a broader knowledge of Islam. In the beginning lessons continued to be held at the *surau* in a very informal fashion. They sat cross-legged on the floor in groups of four or five and the teachers taught each group in turn. When the new community hall was completed in 1978, the school was moved to the hall. It was here that the classes began to take a formal shape. Chairs and tables were provided together with religious texts and the curriculum was expanded. With this improvement the school attracted children from the neighbouring squatterments - Kampung Limau, Kampung Reserve Keretapi and Pantai Halt - and later, children from the nearby transit quarters; so, the school expanded. In 1982, it had 144 students and to cope with the ever increasing number of students, the school recruited another teacher and held classes in two daily sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This arrangement suits the squatter children very well as some of them attend the secular State school in the morning and others in the afternoon and are thus able to attend religious classes during their free morning or afternoon as the case may be.

All children between the ages of six and twelve in

in Kampung Selamat attend the religious classes. Each child is charged a fee of \$3/- per month, and if there are more than one child involved, a family is charged \$5/-. But this fee is really quite small compared to the costs of engaging a private religious teacher in the city, who usually charges a fee of \$2/- to \$3/- per hour. The fees charged by the school are for buying teaching materials and equipments as well as general expenses for running and maintaining the school; the fees are not used to pay teachers salaries as these are paid for by the FTRD.

The kindergarten, which is known locally as the *Tabika*, an acronym for *Taman Bimbingan Kanak-Kanak* and is under the auspices of *KEMAS* (*Kelas Kemajuan Masyarakat*, i.e. Community Development Classes), is for children between the ages of four and six. It was started in 1981 at the insistence of the women's committee, but the actual work of securing the facility was a combined effort between the women's chief, the party chief and the secretary. The women's chief knows one of the officials in *KEMAS* and it was with the help of this official that the kindergarten was established. *KEMAS* and City Hall are jointly responsible for subsidising the kindergarten, with the former paying for the teachers and the latter supplying free milk and food for the children. In 1982, the kindergarten had 41 children from Kampung Selamat and the neighbouring squattments.

The kindergarten, like the religious school, is of substantial benefit to the squatters. Non-squatters, who live in flats or other kinds of housing estates, do not enjoy such benefits. Neither do all squatters in Kuala Lumpur; only a few selected squattments have kindergarten facilities, and the selection of which squattments depends to a very large extent on how close the relationship is

between the branch leaders and the supra-local officials and on their ability to manipulate such a relationship to their advantage. Having both a kindergarten and a religious school in one squatment is even more rare and unusual.

The kindergarten and the religious school are under the charge of the main committee, i.e. its sub-committee for education. This sub-committee is the most important in the squatment and party officials are keen to be on it not only because it has a constant supply of funds to finance its activities, but also because of the advantage the position gives them in the selection of teachers. Such jobs are usually distributed among the party officials themselves or given to members of their families or close relatives. Two of the three teachers in the religious school, who are all women, are party officials; the third is the daughter-in-law of another and who is now becoming a party activist herself after her appointment as a teacher. The assistant teacher in the kindergarten is the deputy women's chief, who was once a washerwoman. The practice of giving employment to party officials and their family members can cause quite a problem. Party officials compete among themselves and try to outsmart one another and in the process create rifts among themselves. When the post of the assistant teacher in the kindergarten was created, the deputy women's chief heard about the job through her brother, the youth chief, who was also a member of the education sub-committee. She applied for the job almost immediately and got the job, although her qualifications, as she herself admits, were far below the required standards. The party chief, chairman of the education sub-committee, was not too pleased about this, as he had his sister-in-law in mind for the job. This led to ill-feelings between the two families concerned and factions with the local party.

This sub-committee is responsible for the collection and disbursement of school fees and acts as an intermediary in respect of teachers' pay, i.e. it collects the money from the FTRD on the teachers' behalf; it is therefore open to suspicion and criticism. Some parents wonder how the school fee money is spent and in 1980, one of the women teachers accused a particular member of the committee of not making proper salary payment to the teachers. She alleged that the teachers at the religious school had not been given their full pay for about a year since the school started and that part of their pay was kept by the committee chairman. She claims that she discovered the discrepancies only when an official from the Religious Department came to inspect the religious classes one day. She put the matter right, according to her, not by seeing the chairman personally and seeking clarification from him, but by telling others about the pay discrepancies, until the news reached the chairman and he was forced to take action. After that, her pay and that of her colleague, she claims, were raised.

The writer was unable to counter-check and confirm the lady teacher's allegation with the chairman concerned, because of the great risks involved. Even just raising the issue with him could easily have jeopardised the writer's fieldwork. Nevertheless, this case is cited here because of its importance and relevance, for it throws a lot of light on the powers of the sub-committee and the possibility of abuse of such powers, and also on the reason for the enthusiasm of some party members to become party officials and to sit on this sub-committee, in particular. In addition, such a case also highlights some of the sources of conflict among the members of this squatter community in Kampung Selamat.

(b) Women's Religious and Home Science Classes. The squatter women generally are either uneducated or not very highly educated and have very little knowledge of any kind of trade that can help them improve their income level. It was with the intention of overcoming such a handicap that some enterprising women in the squatment urged the local party to organise some kind of activities tailored towards their own sectional needs. Then, in 1977, the party established its women committee, and now the committee has two important on-going projects: the women's religious classes and the home-science classes.

The religious classes were started in 1977, under the auspices of *KEMAS*, which sent an *ustazah* (female religious teacher) to the squatment once a week on Friday afternoons. The classes, which were held between 2.00 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. at the *surau* had an attendance of about ten to fifteen women (and their children) at any one time. They were informal classes; the students sat on the floor; some had exercise books and pencils to write down their lessons, others did not, in some cases, like the elderly ladies, because they could not listen and write at the same time, and in other cases, like the younger women with young children, because writing was made impossible by their boisterous children. The teacher lectured on subjects ranging from hagiography to Islamic family law. She was frequently interrupted by questions from the class or by screaming children, but never seemed to mind. She ruled out formal classes in favour of informal ones simply because most women in the squatment could not leave their children during the day.

The religious classes have had profound effects on social life in the community. The lessons which I attended throughout 1982, emphasised woman's role in the home,

viz. as a wife and a mother and her rights and obligations as a member of the community and her code of conduct according to Islamic principles. Such education, which is considered essential by the Malays, is given in the traditional rural villages by family elders or the village *ustaz* (male religious teacher) as part of their moral duty to the villagers, especially the young. In the squatterment elders and religious men were hard to come by, hence their places were taken by religious functionaries. During the fieldwork, the writer observed that some of the women tried their best to follow the religious code of conduct taught to them, in their daily lives, and some did so in order to show a good example to their children. The writer often heard women gossiping about others and criticising them and then, on realising what they had done, reproached themselves severely in public for "having committed a *dosa* (sin)" and for having forgotten what the *ustazah* had taught them. Quite often, too, women, as well as men, evaluated the action of others according to this religious code of conduct. For instance, when a wife fought so noisily with her husband that it attracted the attention of the neighbours, other women, on hearing about the incident, would remark how wrong such actions were *mengikut agama kita* (according to our religion). Religious drilling in the weekly classes no doubt helped make dutiful and subservient wives of the womenfolk which in turn accounted for family stability. It also helped induce the villagers to become good community members, making them ready to put community interest before their own.

The home science classes, started in 1979, were also held once a week, on Saturday afternoons. Like the religious classes, the home science classes, too, were under the aegis of *KEMAS* which provided the teacher to

teach home economics, cookery and handicrafts. The emphasis, according to the teacher, was on helping women find ways of contributing positively to household economy by making household goods or learning to perform tasks which would otherwise have to be paid for, so as to reduce expenditure, or, by making or preparing things for sale, so as to increase household income. Women in the squatment, it seems, had cultural values detrimental to household economy; they equated high food value with expensive imported foodstuffs and progress (*kemajuan*) with all things foreign. The teacher's observations were well-founded. The writer saw squatter women feeding their sick children with imported fruits which were very expensive by their economic standards when the local fruits, which could be bought more cheaply, are just as nutritious; sometimes, children were fed imported tinned cereals when there were fresh local ones, probably with higher food value. The teacher's mission was to "eradicate" such thinking. The teacher also thought that the squatter women were too dependent on Chinese traders and professionals for goods and services. When Malays bought foodstuffs, such as bean curds, biscuits, pickled fruits and vegetables, the teacher emphasised, they did not know under what circumstances these foodstuffs were made, or whether they were *halal* (religiously clean and permitted). Such being the case and to lessen their dependence on the Chinese, she (the teacher) felt that Malays, such as the squatters, should produce their own foodstuffs, as well as other goods and services.

It was with these objectives that these lessons were planned and programmed. So, the squatter women were taught nutrition, helped to identify locally produced foodstuffs which contain high food value and were given lessons on new methods of preparing cakes and dishes

using locally grown roots, vegetables and fruits. They made jams from local fruits, included bananas or coconuts in their cakes' mixture, instead of sultanas or currents; they learned to make some of the foodstuffs which they usually bought from the Chinese. They were also taught handicrafts such as knitting, embroidery and crochet; to make household goods with remnant fabrics; to make artificial flowers, especially the *bunga telur* from crepe paper, wool, ribbons, silk, etc.; and to make *gubahan* (lit. creation, i.e. art form) using any items of everyday wear, such as towels, blouses, shoes, etc. They also learned basic principles of tailoring.

These lessons, unlike the religious classes, appealed more to the younger group - young married women and teenagers, and not so much to ladies in their late forties or older who saw little point in it all. As one elderly lady explained,

"I am closer to the grave now. What use are all these lessons to me? Furthermore, my eyesight is no good. I can't see the needle properly. And my hands are shaky. How can I make a good job of it!"

The attendance at these classes was on average 20 people in one sitting, which was considered low by the teacher and the organisers, i.e. the women's committee. The committee had earlier chosen Monday afternoons on which to hold the classes, but because of poor response, they changed it to Saturday afternoons, which was considered more appropriate as Saturday is off day for children and half-day for most adults. Although as a result of the change there was an increase in the number of participants, the increase was not as great as had been hoped. The women's committee was worried about this, for

if the squatter women did not show sufficient enthusiasm for such classes, the sponsor might cancel them altogether. The women's party chief expressed her dissatisfaction about the women's participation in the home science classes at the annual general meeting of the women's movement members in February 1982, called on the squatter women to take full advantage of the facilities provided to improve their lot and reminded the members that it was not easy to get the classes started. The branch chief, on the other hand, appealed to the men, viz. the husbands, to support the women's activities by encouraging their wives to join the home science classes and not to obstruct such activities by forbidding their wives from doing so.

It is a fact that some men, apart from the party officials and their family members, were not too keen to let their wives participate in the cookery and handicraft classes. This was especially obvious among those with young children in the family and among the poorer sections of the community. They claimed that the classes were more of a social occasion when women would gather to gossip rather than to learn. The ladies who came, it seems, came in their best dresses, wearing expensive jewellery and such like, to 'show off' (*menunjuk-nunjuk*), giving rise to envy and jealousy and a feeling of relative deprivation among the 'have nots' (*yang tak ada*); gossiping, it was feared, could lead to misunderstandings and fights which is bad for community life. Some women, too, it seems, returned home late, stopping at their friends' places along the way, causing inconvenience to the family and annoyance to the husbands. Hence, to such men, the home science classes offered little advantage; they regarded them as a possible source of conflict among women and between husbands and wives.

Most women were in fact quite keen to attend the home science classes; it was their husbands' attitudes towards the classes and the burden of their household chores that kept them away. Women with young children, for example, were reluctant to take their children to these classes, because some of the equipments used, such as cookers, knives, scissors, needles, etc., could be quite dangerous to children. They feared too that their children might disrupt the class where students' attention and concentration were essential. Those who did attend the home science classes, however, were full of enthusiasm and praise for them. They admitted that they were social occasions, but rather than getting bored staying at home they thought it would be better to attend the classes, for it gave them a chance to meet others as well as to catch up with the latest 'village gossips'. Furthermore, these classes afforded them an excellent opportunity to arrange for the informal economic activities, viz. the party sales and rotating credit association referred to in Section 7.3. The knowledge and skill learned at these classes were put to good use. They made their own tablecloths, chairbacks, table liners, etc.; a few became 'experts' at *gubahan* and *bunga telur* that their services were sought by others in the squatment as well as outside to provide decorations for weddings, feasts, and so on, for which they got paid and thereby earned some extra income. The food-vendors applied their knowledge to their food trade. One or two of them did so well that they won prizes in handicraft and cookery competitions organised by the party at the local, division and state levels. These were the people who were keen to keep the classes going and who were concerned at the low attendance at these classes, for they not only knew the value of these classes but had actually benefitted materially from them.

(c) Occasional Activities. Occasional community activities were held in response to specific needs. For example, community labour had to be organised from time to time to clean the squatment after a flood, to help a squatter family hold a marriage feast or to hold a celebration at the local *surau*. For such occasions, the youth and women committees would deploy their members to form task forces to do all kinds of work. In the case of a marriage feast, for example, the women would help with the house decoration and, if so required, to carry out verbal invitation from house to house (*memanggil*) on behalf of the host, and most importantly to cook and serve food to guests and later to wash the dishes. The youths, on their part, would take care of tasks which were considered *berat* (heavy) and those which lay within the domain of male specialisation, such as building make-shift sheds or erecting tents, arranging tables and chairs for the guests and making open-air ovens for large-scale cooking on the eve of the feast. On the day of the feast itself, they would attend to male guests, receiving them and serving them food and finally, when the feast was over, helping with the cleaning and clearing-up operations. This form of role specialisation between the youth and women committees was repeated at almost all other feasts held in the squatment.

However, not all squatter households holding feasts took advantage of such free services offered by the party's welfare sub-committees. Some refused so as not to be obligated to party officials; instead, they would seek the help of relatives and friends from within or without the squatment or, alternatively, engage a caterer for such a purpose. Such people, whose number was small, either did not get along well with some of the party officials, or were keen to keep the political party away from social activities.

Other occasional functions which can be considered important because of their relevance to squatment unity are the religious ones. The squatters, like other Muslims, observe the fasting month of Ramadhan and celebrate the *Hari Raya Puasa*, *Hari Raya Haji*, *Israk dan Mi'raj*, and *Maulud Nabi* (Prophet Muhammad's Birthday). The fasting month was perhaps the one month in which manifestations of squatment unity were most clearly visible. Every evening men, women and children gathered at the *surau* to break their fast, the food being provided by the squatter households on rotation basis. They then performed the *maghrib* (evening) prayer together, followed by Quran reading and their special prayer, the *trawih*. The *surau*, which can accommodate about 45 people, was always full until after the *trawih*. A few devout men even stayed till midnight, studying or reciting religious texts. This routine was repeated for the whole month until the *Hari Raya Puasa* was announced by the Council of Rulers.

Maulud Nabi and *Israk dan Mi'raj* were observed every year without fail. The squatters held feasts, paid for from *sedekah* (alms/donations) from the members of the community, and they invited prominent religious functionaries to come and give talks on topics related to the occasion that they were celebrating. At these functions, too, the party chief-cum-community leader gave a speech in which he emphasised, as was his wont, the need for unity. At such functions he did not mention the party.

Although these religious functions were organised by the local party's sub-committee for religion, the role of the party in such instances was underplayed. The writer noticed that when the organisers went round collecting donations for the religious feasts, they introduced

themselves as *Jawatankuasa Surau* (the Surau Committee). Such a committee did indeed exist but its members were the very same people who formed the membership of the sub-committee for religion, a sub-committee of the party's main committee. These two committees were in fact synonymous.

This tactic of giving a committee double nomenclature was due to the awareness among the local party officials that there were some members of the community who were opposed to the party. At least six households were known to have such inclination and it was feared that if religious functions were known to be organised by the party, such people would not participate. For religious activities, the involvement of all households were considered necessary and indeed every household usually donated some money towards the cost carrying out such functions. However, not everyone attended them. Some people knew that the *Jawatankuasa Surau* and the party's sub-committee for religion were the one and the same thing and these people resented politicians' involvement in religious matters. A few even chided the politicians for trying to hoodwink them. It was in order not to annoy these people too much that the party chief did not mention UMNO's role in these activities in his speech. However, in the party's AGM minutes, religious functions held in the squatment were listed as party activities.

In many of the squatment activities, there was considerable stress on religion. As alluded to earlier, the party organised a religious school for children, religious classes for women and held important religious ceremonies to commemorate important events in the Muslim calendar. They also had weekly religious meetings, held on Thursdays at the house of any one of the squatters,

where a group of men would occupy themselves in special supplications to Allah (*membaca do'a*). This emphasis on religion could be ascribed to the Islamic revival that seems to be sweeping the country today, especially in Kuala Lumpur. It could also be due to the awareness of party officials that religious functions have important implications for squatment unity. Religion, Islam, the one thing they all have in common, is one of the most important criteria of being a Malay, and by contributing to and participating in religious functions, the squatters stressed not only their religious unity but also their ethnic unity. The more these religious functions were performed, the more conscious the squatters were of being Muslims and Malays, a state which was clearly beneficial to UMNO as an ethnic party. Religious functions, therefore, as organised by the party through its sub-committees, can be seen as a means to create and maintain unity as much as they are a manifestation of it.

We have seen how the party conduct activities which are not directly political in nature but which contribute positively towards the party's image. The party officials usually make it a point to emphasise the role of the party in these activities (except in religious functions) when the occasion arises, such as the party's AGM. These activities are often cited as proof of the party's and politicians' concern for the welfare of the squatters and as the reason why squatters should give their wholehearted support and undivided loyalty to UMNO.

7.3 Non-Political Community Activities

The local party practically controls all community activities in the squatment. It is only at the sub-committee

level that other structures, such as networks of kin and friendship, play an important part. It is common, for example, for a group of friends or relatives to get together to form a *gotong-royong* (self-help) group to carry out such tasks as cleaning the areas around each other's houses, house extensions and repairs. These *gotong-royong* groups work on the same basis as those in the traditional rural areas, where the services rendered are not paid in cash but in reciprocity. Those who have rendered a service to a friend under the *gotong-royong* arrangement can expect the friend to reciprocate at some future date in the same manner, i.e. using the *gotong-royong* system. Hence, groups of friends and relatives are linked together in a network of generalised exchange.

On the whole it is the women who are more involved in sub-community organisations, probably because they are the ones who stay in the squatment most of the time. Men usually spend most of their time engaged in economic activities which take place mainly outside the squatment. Women form informal economic organisations of their own, the most important being the party sales, rotating credit association and the group purchase. For these purposes, they utilise their own social networks of kin, friends and workmates, in the case of those in employment.

These women's activities, which are free from the political party, are important to the squatters' economy and an adumbration of such activities is necessary to examine how they function.

(a) Party Sale. The party sale is a means of purchasing goods, such as china or glassware of imported brand names which are expensive by the squatters'

standards and cannot be bought by them in the ordinary way. The usual procedure is for some squatter women who are keen to buy some goods of a specific brand name and the dealer of that particular product to get together and agree to start a series of party sales. At the first party, held at the house of the woman who wants to launch the sales, the hostess invites as many friends as she can from the squatment and elsewhere. The dealer comes to the party and displays her wares, takes orders from the 'guests' and persuades some other woman from among those present to hold the next party or, in their parlance to *sambut* (lit. to receive, respond), at her house. The person who hosts the party is paid \$10/- to \$15/- towards the costs of the party and gets a commission of between 10% and 15% of the total value of orders placed, plus a present from the dealer, which is usually in the form of an item from the promoted product but not for sale which gives the item a somewhat rarity value. The person who holds the party is also responsible for the collection of cash payments from those who have ordered goods and for the distribution of the goods to the various purchasers when they are delivered to her by the dealer.

The party sale utilises and to some extent exploits female social relationships as a channel for marketing products. The 'guests' at these parties are usually friends, relatives and workmates of the hostess and as such probably buy simply out of obligation to the hostess, and some of those who agree to hold a party do so probably in order to save face, i.e. in order not to appear anti-social or not to 'sour up' their social relationships. However, there are always some who are genuinely interested in buying the products that the dealer has to offer, especially those who feel that they can afford to spare some money for regular monthly repayments for the

goods they wish to purchase. It is these few interested ones who form the core of the party for the party sales; without them the party sales can never really get going and once begun, the cycle or season of party sales can last quite some time, maybe a year, depending on the number of women interested enough to join the party. A party sale is usually held once a month and members take turn to hold the sale at their house; so, if there are twelve members, the party cycle or season will last twelve months. The actual duration of course varies depending on the number of new members who join in to replace those who lose interest and drop out.

The dealer usually can tell when party members are beginning to lose interest, i.e. when attendance at parties becomes slack. A member loses interest for a number of reasons: she may not have money to spare, her husband may not approve and wants her to stop or maybe because she feels that she has already acquired all the sets of china and glassware that she fancies. As soon as the dealer notices the tell-tale signs of interest flagging, however, she would make every effort to revive it, perhaps by introducing sets with new or different designs; but if the loss of interest is so severe that there is no hope of reviving it, she just moves on to another place. Then perhaps another dealer with an entirely new line of products would move in and the whole process would be repeated.

During the course of the writer's fieldwork, in 1977 and 1980, practically every month there was a party sale in the squatment. In one particular month, two parties were held by two different dealers, but promoting the same product. To the squatter women these party sales may seem more like social functions; they come bringing

their children, to meet friends and neighbours, to joke and gossip, while enjoying the food and delicacies served by the hostess; but to the dealer, these parties are a serious and very lucrative way of doing business. Ordinarily, a party sale may bring in orders valued at between \$150/- and \$400/-, but at certain times, e.g. just before the *Hari Raya*, the orders may go as high as \$1,000/-. Another aspect of the party sales which the squatter women seem to find attractive is that they can do their purchasing according to what they find most convenient in terms of time and money. They can order, and often do, just one plate or two or a jug or a teapot, at any one time. It may take a woman two years to complete her dinner or tea set of that particular brand name. All these china and glassware that the women purchase at the party sales are intended more for show than for use; they are displayed in showcases in the *serambi* i.e. front part, of their house. These goods are considered 'highly prestigious' by the squatter women and used only on very special occasions, such as a wedding, when they would be used to serve the bride and bridegroom.

(b) Rotating Credit Association. The second type of informal credit facility organised by the squatter women is the so-called "rotating credit association". Such an association is formed usually on the initiative of someone who feels a strong and urgent need for extra funds to buy certain specific goods or in anticipation of a heavy extra-ordinary expenditure in the not too distant future. What she does is that she persuades her relatives, friends and neighbours, i.e. people who enjoy mutual trust, to start a group popularly called *kumpulan kutu*, with a membership of between ten and twelve people, who agree to contribute a specified amount, between \$10/- and \$20/-

every month, to a common pool. The amount of money thus accumulated each month is given to a member of the group, who may spend it in any way she chooses. Then all the members make fresh contributions to the common pool in preparation for some other member's turn to take the money. They continue to do this until everyone in the group gets her turn. On formation of the group, the members elect one of themselves to be leader whose main task is to see to the smooth running of the scheme and to organise a monthly meeting of members at which they decide whose turn it is to take the money.

The success of the *kutu* group depends entirely on goodwill and trust. A woman whose need is greatest - usually the person who initiates the scheme - is allowed to take all the money from the pool first, which means that being at the head of the queue, she enjoys what amounts to an interest free loan; while the person at the end of the queue, not only does not get any interest on the money she puts into the pool, no matter how long she keeps it in the pool waiting for her turn, but she also runs a certain risk for there is always a possibility, however remote, that someone who has had her turn and pocketed the money, may refuse to continue with her contributions. Since the arrangement is all informal, members cannot resort to legal actions to recover money from a member who has 'defaulted'. Yet the *kutu* scheme has never been known to fail; no member, it seems, has ever 'defaulted' and the secret of the success of the scheme lies entirely in social sanctions. The one thing that a member is most afraid of is being branded *tidak amanah* (dishonest, untrustworthy) since it has extremely serious implications and consequences upon the person concerned. She will be ostracised by the rest of the community and she will have closed for ever a very useful avenue for

obtaining a reasonable sum of ready cash as well as other avenues for assistance; her chances of ever being invited to join other informal economic organisations in the community will be practically nil. Thus, a woman who joins the *kutu* group will make every effort to make sure to pay her monthly contributions regularly and promptly, even if it means having to borrow from someone else to do so.

As the risk involved in a *kutu* or rotating credit association is somewhat high, since the loan is made without any security or collateral of any sort, it is natural that a great deal of importance is attached to personal honesty and integrity of the members. A woman who intends to participate in a *kutu* group will only do so if she is satisfied that all the other members are entirely reliable; similarly, members of a group are very wary of anyone who wants to join their group and will not accept her if they are not satisfied with her integrity and trustworthiness. It is this reliance on personal trust that is responsible for the tendency of a group to consist mainly of relatives, friends and neighbours who are residents of Kampung Selamat. Occasionally, someone from a neighbouring squatment may be admitted. The three credit associations in existence in the squatment during the year 1980, for example, consisted of people who had known one another for years and were familiar with one another's family; family's background and the character of individual members of the family. All of them were house-owners and were therefore people with 'roots' who were not likely to abscond with their share from the common pool.

As soon as all the members of the group have had their turn in drawing funds from the common pool, the group is disbanded but not permanently; it may be revived

again and again as and when the need arises. Experience with the squatters shows this need can come quite soon and quite often since the goods that they want to buy range from transistor radios and gold jewellery to beds and showcases. Without the help of this credit or loan facility their chances of being able to acquire such goods are slim.

(c) Group Purchase. Another way in which the women utilise their social ties for economic purposes is by organising what may be called 'group purchase'. The underlying principle of such group purchase is very similar to that of the rotating credit association. The women get together for the purpose of buying a specific type of goods which can range from hot water flasks costing \$15/- to bedspreads which cost \$100/-. The group thus formed is still called *kumpulan kutu* and like the rotating credit association, members make a monthly contribution of a specified amount to a common pool. The difference lies in the manner in which the money is used: the funds accumulated are used to buy only one single item of goods which goes to one member of the group; the following month they buy the same type of goods which goes to another member of the group. This process of pooling and buying is repeated until every member of the group gets her share, like in the rotating credit association. Another difference is that the leader of this group, who is responsible for collecting the monthly contributions and buying the goods, gets her share free.

Group purchase is widely practised in the squatment and every household has participated in such a purchase at least once. Some depend almost entirely on it to get most of the non-basic goods they need and regard essential in their daily life which they could not otherwise afford.

At the sub-community level therefore one finds several types of social and economic organisations which operate independently of the political party. These organisations, like the party-organised activities enable close and intensive social interactions between members of the community. In such interactions people step on each other's toes, have differences of opinion and have clashes of interests which, if unchecked, can pose a threat to community solidarity. The sorts of conflicts that the squatters are involved in and the manner in which the conflicts are resolved are now discussed.

7.4 Conflicts and Conflict Resolution

The need to maintain unity is paramount in a squatment because its very survival is dependent to a large extent on unity among its inhabitants. Mindful of such a need, most of the squatters make conscious efforts to avoid or lessen conflicts amongst themselves; nevertheless, conflicts do occur and when they do measures are quickly taken to resolve them. Conflict resolution is one area in which the political party plays a secondary role, the primary role being assumed by non-political structures, such as kinship, religion and network of friends as well as formal agents of social control, namely the police.

Most of the misunderstandings and quarrels which take place in the squatment stem from its general environmental conditions, such as the lack of basic amenities, overcrowding, the haphazard layout of the houses, etc. Reasons for quarrelling with neighbours are many, ranging from the innocent act of a playful child, cutting the rubber hose of the next-door household to

noise, when much needed sleep is constantly disturbed by loud playing of records from the next-door house, which may be only four feet away. Indeed, to be able to live and get along well with the neighbours in the squatment requires tremendous amount of tolerance and patience as well as enormous energy to accommodate the intransigence, follies and idiosyncracies of others. More often these necessary qualities are sustained, but there are times when patience snaps and tempers flare and the squatters come into confrontation with each other. Interestingly, most of those who are drawn into conflicts with each other are women. The reason probably lies in the fact that it is the women who are generally home-bound and, being at home most of if not the whole day, they are the ones most likely to trample on each other's toes.

Conflicts between neighbours take two common forms: the first and most frequent is one that can be described as 'latent' conflicts, which are described in the vernacular as *tidak bertegur* (lit. not accosting each other); the second is what may be described as 'manifest' conflicts, which involve open display of hostility which may take the form of noisy verbal exchanges or physical fights. The first type is very common among women in the squatment. A woman who feels slighted, annoyed or angry over a neighbour's conduct will try to refrain from open confrontation; instead, she will avoid the neighbour's company, prohibits her own children from playing with the neighbour's, or rejects the neighbour's invitation to a feast. This social distance is maintained until such time when she is ready to forgive the neighbour, or until the latter becomes aware of the strained relations and takes steps to redress the matter. The period of non-communication varies from a couple of days to a year or so. It is never permanent, however, because there will

always be neighbours and friends who will try to reconcile the two parties. Reconciliation is achieved through advice, quite often with reference to Islamic teachings. In one instance, the writer witnessed an old lady, concerned about her young neighbour's constant habit of non-communication with others, giving a small lecture on community relations from the perspective of Islam. "It is a sin," she admonished, "if you don't talk to your neighbours for more than one day. Didn't your parents tell you that? And your husband, doesn't he know about such things? If you don't believe what I am telling you, come with me to the religious class, we can ask the *ustazah* about it."

Such advice, coupled with pressure from peers to stop the state of *tidak bertegur* is enough usually to compel those concerned to comply. Reconciliation takes place informally, quite often at communal gatherings, especially religious functions, when it is customary for those present to greet one another by *berjabat salam*, i.e. the Malay form of hand-shake. There are a few who persist and in their obstinacy refuse all advice and attempts to reconcile them. Such recalcitrants have no place in the community; they will be ostracised and when life becomes intolerable they will leave and thereby the squatterment will be rid of "undesirable elements".

Latent conflicts can be resolved reasonably easily and do not therefore seriously affect community solidarity; but manifest ones are not so easy to deal with. The manner and means by which they are resolved depend on the nature of the conflicts themselves. Some may arise out of criminal actions, such as theft, burglary, etc., others out of disputes which can be described as 'civil'. The latter are usually dealt with by the authority structure in

the squatment, by the elders, by household heads or by the party chief; the former are usually referred to the police.

The writer did not witness personally any open display of hostility in the squatment during her five years' association with the squatters. During this period, three cases of fighting between neighbours were reported. Informants were quick to stress that the amount of fighting among the squatters had decreased considerably in the last five or six years since the introduction of more basic amenities into the squatment. Earlier, as already alluded to in Chapter V, fights among the squatters were common, especially over water which was then in very short supply; and burglary and theft were common during the time when there was no electricity, giving rise to suspicion among neighbours. Now, the situation has changed due largely, it seems, to the installation of more communal taps, greater availability of power supply and other social amenities. The squatters fight less, because there are fewer causes.

The three cases of fights between neighbours illustrate how such conflicts are resolved:

Case 1. This involved houses No.34 and No.35 which share a common boundary. Both houses were sold to the sitting tenants by their owners. The owner of house 35 left the squatment for good after the sale transaction, but failed before leaving to brief the purchaser of the boundaries of his housing lot. The new owner improved the house by making extensions and in so doing was said to have encroached into the lot of house 34. The head of household 34 became very angry and before he could settle the matter amicably with his neighbour, his wife and the neighbour's wife started quarelling. The dispute over the boundary was later referred to the party chief, who in turn sought the views of the previous owner

of house 34 on the matter. As the previous owner was one of the pioneer squatters and a highly respected village elder, his words concerning the original boundary between the two lots were accepted without question by the disputing parties.

Case 2. This involved house No.40 and 41 who are also immediate neighbours. The two households have plots for agricultural purposes. Household 40 kept poultry while its neighbour was involved in vegetable gardening on a small scale. All too often, the chickens from house 40 plundered the vegetable gardens, until one day the gardener could not take it anymore. The housewife from house 41 stormed at her neighbour, screaming at her to pen her chickens. The latter shouted back abusively, telling the attacker to build a fence around her garden instead. Arguments followed which resulted in the two fighting and tearing at each other. Neighbours came to their rescue and the physical combat was stopped but the shouting continued, until one of them decided to fetch her husband from work to settle the dispute. The husband, however, was unable to settle the quarrel but got drawn into the conflict instead. Nevertheless, he succeeded at least in preventing his wife from engaging in further display of open hostility by reprimanding her severely and threatening to move out if she did not make an effort to be tolerant and get along with others like "everybody else". His wife's conduct was causing his image irreparable damage and he felt *malu* (ashamed), he said. The wife, apparently, heeded the husband's threat, for after that she became subdued and refrained from getting involved in open confrontation with her neighbour, although there were times, she confided to the writer, when she 'felt like screaming her head off' to vent her anger and annoyance at her immediate neighbour.

Case 3. This involved houses No.7 and No.20 which are removed from each other, but which are connected by a common shallow drain, which was the main cause of trouble between them. The drain originated in house 20, bringing foul smelling water from the bathroom of that house into the front yard of house 7. The head of household 7 raised the matter up a number of times with household 20, but nothing was done to alleviate the problem. And some time later, to add insult to injury, household 20 built a chicken coop close to house 7, thus providing extra

stench for the household. Soon the housewives from the two households found themselves exchanging antagonistic remarks with each other whenever they met and one day a big quarrel broke out between them while their husbands were at work. The matter was reported to the party chief, who called on both the husbands to deal with the matter and to come to him only when their efforts failed. The chief's decision on the dispute was taken by both husbands as a challenge to their status as household heads, especially in relation to their authority over their respective wives. With their pride and honour at stake, they forced their spouses to put an end to the dispute and the chief heard no more of it.

These three cases of manifest conflict have two basic characteristics: the dramatis personae in them are women and men act to resolve them. Men do not involve themselves in open confrontations anymore, preferring instead to settle their differences by *berbincang*, (lit. to have mutual discussions). Women, on the other hand, deal with their differences by suppressing their feelings at first and then when they cannot contain them anymore by letting them out in open fights. *Bergaduh* (to quarrel or fight), as one elderly man explained, "is the way of the women who, after all, *tak tahu apa-apa* (hardly know anything)." Men do not resort to *bergaduh*, and those who do are said to behave "like women". Men, especially household heads are expected to keep their womenfolk under control, by whatever means, and it is considered their duty to maintain order in their household and ensure that members of the household have good relations or the appearance of good relations with immediate neighbours. Thus, at the household and sub-community level, social control is entrusted to men and it is only when they fail that the services of the party chief-cum-community chief are enlisted. But the men rarely fail, because in this small community, as in the traditional rural villages, sex differentiation with its emphasis on male superiority is still

observed somewhat piously. Even if they do, inter-household as well as intra-household disputes sometimes never reach the community chief, simply because the 'difficult' households often just leave.

Open confrontations of criminal nature or arising out of criminal activities are rare, although in the years previous to the writer's fieldwork, criminal activities were said to be common. According to some squatters, one in every two houses had been burgled or had properties lost through theft, and among goods stolen were generators, bicycles, jewellery, money and even Pyrex crockery, which are one of the many prestige indices in squatter villages. These criminal activities were believed to have been committed by outsiders, but most of them were not reported to the police. The squatters saw little point in doing so; firstly, because they could not see how the police could help them recover their stolen goods or what the police could do to reduce burglary and theft in the squatment; secondly, because they believed the police had a negative view of them and reporting such cases would only worsen their image, something which they were keen to avoid. Only if the offender was known that a case of theft or burglary would be brought to the attention of the police. Even then, the matter often never reached the court; the police would advise the parties involved to settle the matter by negotiations in what is called *selesai bawah* (lit. settlement at the bottom, i.e. outside police jurisdiction). One such case involved the theft of a gold chain from a family, who knew the identity of the thief, i.e. a member of a household from the neighbouring squatment, and reported the theft to the police. Instead of arresting and prosecuting the person who stole the chain, the police advised the two families involved to *selesai bawah*. This was done and after some negotiation, the

thief's family agreed to pay and the other family agreed to accept the cost price of the chain, which had been sold by the thief.

Cases of criminal nature like this are brought to the attention of the community chief, but his role in settling them is minimal. The most he can do is to assemble the villagers and announce that such and such a crime has been committed and then perhaps remind the squatter to be vigilant and take individual precaution. The local party could form a vigilante corps, but so far the need for it has not been felt to be strong enough. Although the party leaders, especially the party-chief-cum community chief, have little role to play in dispute settlement, their role is nevertheless significant.

The party leaders are convinced that most of the internal bickerings among neighbours are attributable to environmental factors or, in their terms, *keadaan tempat ini* (lit. the conditions of this place, i.e. the squatment). Having identified the cause, they set out to improve the social and physical conditions of the squatment, as explained in the previous chapters. By having religious classes and games facilities, for example, they hope to channel the energies of the children to positive use, rather than leave them with plenty of time for silly pranks and mischiefs which might annoy the neighbours and provoke them into unnecessary quarrels with their mothers. Likewise, the religious and home science classes for the women are also designed partly to educate them and partly to prevent them from spending their idle hours in gossiping about neighbours, which is thought harmful to good community relations. Physical and social improvements are measures consciously taken with the objective of reducing potential sources or causes of conflict and with

the improvements which have taken place in the squatment in the last five years or so, this objective seems to have been partially if not wholly achieved.

The party is also now encouraging the squatters to refer to the party leaders all matters affecting community interests, especially those relating to the use of land and housing. The construction of new houses, extensions, repairs and sales of houses, for example, should now be carried out with the knowledge of the party chief-cum-community chief, so that if anything should happen in future, he would be able to deal with it more effectively. It is anticipated that such activities can create problems, not only with the authorities, as explained in Chapter VI, but also between neighbours, and the party is anxious to avoid such problems as well as prevent disputes among the squatters. The squatters, on the whole, seem to appreciate that these measures are mainly in their interest and cooperate readily. In the matters of house sale, in particular, the presence of the party chief is much sought after. He not only witnesses money changing hands between the purchaser and the vendor, but he also puts his signature on the sale document. House 39 is one of the houses bought following this somewhat formal procedure. According to the present owner, he did this in order to avoid future complications regarding the ownership of the house. He feels that the time for informal sale transactions involving items of value, such as a house, is over, for the urban Malays, according to him, are no longer as trustworthy as they used to be in the initial stages of the squatment, or as trustworthy as the rural Malays. He must protect his interests, he says, and to do that he must formalise all important sale transactions. Since, in view of the illegal status of the land, it is not possible to have a proper légal contract, the nearest he could get to legal

formality is to have the sale transaction recognised by the squatment power structure, the political party as represented by the party chief - a line of action consistent with the policy of the local party.

The local party therefore strives to minimise conflicts among the squatters, and when conflicts do occur, its role in conflict resolution complements that of the traditional authority structure. The party's main contributions to community organisation, however, lie in the ability of its officials to utilise the party machinery as the framework for squatment organisation; it provides the squatters with effective leadership who are able to use party resources to attend to the squatters' individual needs and communal interests and who are able to bring the squatters together, instilling in them a sense of belonging, a feeling of community. Indeed, the Kampung Selamat squatters, like many other squatters in the capital, are highly organised at the supra-household level, and they resemble more the squatters in the Latin American cities studied by Mangin (1967), Peattie (1968) and Lomnitz (1967), to mention but a few, and contrast very sharply from the "culture of poverty" which Oscar Lewis (1965) and his followers assume to prevail among some sections of the urban poor, such as the squatters. The Kampung Selamat squatters differ from their South American counterparts only in the manner in which community organisation is achieved: while in the South American case, residents associations play an important part, in the Malay case, the local political party plays a central role.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This thesis is an attempt to examine the political dynamics of a Malay squatter community in the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. It seeks to explain how the squatters in Kampung Selamat organise themselves, especially at the community level, in order to achieve some kind of unity in their struggle to survive and to improve their living conditions.

The preceding chapters raise three main themes: firstly, the historical development of Malay squatters and their emergence and expansion in urban areas, in particular, Kuala Lumpur; secondly, the squatters' problems in coping with urban life, and, thirdly, their involvement with politicians and the political party, UMNO. This chapter tries to recapitulate some of the major issues discussed, but confines itself primarily to the third theme, i.e. squatter politics.

The writer contends that the Malay squatters in the capital city do not conform to Oscar Lewis' theory of 'culture of poverty'. The preceding chapters provide ample evidence that this is so. They show none of the traits of the said culture: they are organised at the family and community levels and are sufficiently integrated into the mainstream of the urban society, be it in the political, economic and socio-cultural terms. Politically, they are organised and they are involved in national politics and their participation is motivated by personal and communal gains at the local level rather than some political ideology. Economically, they are dependent on the urban

occupational structure for their living; they derive their income from the urban economy - in the formal and informal sectors - and they form part of the consumer society. In this sense they cannot be regarded as disengaged from the urban economy or not contributing to it positively. Socio-culturally, they relate to the rest of the urban Malays, especially through their customary and religious practices, such as their Friday prayers and they make every use of services to which they have access.

At the sub-community level, they have networks of kin and friends which most are able to utilise in coping with life's uncertainties imposed on them by job instability, insecurity as well as low wages. Family life is stable with consensual unions unheard of and divorce rate minimal. Life in the squatment, despite the presence of relative poverty, seems well ordered and this has its basis in the individual's attitude to life which is by no means characterised by fatalism, hopelessness or alienation, but characterised instead by a sense of optimism, hopefulness and a sense of belonging. They are convinced that some of their goals, both communal and individual, will be achieved and that the avenues for their attainment are open to them.

Such optimism can only be understood in the light of their social and cultural background and the economic and political systems under which they live. They are the *bumiputeras* with a strong sense of attachment to the country; they feel, and are encouraged by the prevailing state ideology to feel, that the country is their country (*negeri kita*) and not that of the Chinese or Indians and, despite their numerically weaker position in Kuala Lumpur, they see their ethnic group, the Malays, as the focal point of the Malaysian society. This very feeling gives them a

a sense of privilege and they are indeed privileged in some ways compared to the non-Malays. They live under a Malay-dominated government, controlled by an ethnic party committed to a specific political ideology, whose many objectives include the championing of the cause of the Malays, viz. to preserve the Malay culture, support and sustain the traditional Malay values, uphold the sanctity of Islam as the State religion, make Malay(1) the national and official language and most importantly to uplift the socio-economic status of the Malays(2). UMNO-dominated government, which has been in power since independence in 1957, has in fact formulated and implemented national development policies intended primarily to favour the Malays and since 1970 has been implementing the New Economic Policy (NEP) as alluded to in Chapter II. The NEP, which is aimed at the eradication of poverty irrespective of race as well as the abolition of race identification with geographical location and economic functions, has as one of its objectives the ownership of 30% of corporate as well as other wealth by the Bumiputeras. Various schemes have been designed and carried out to achieve this end which include, among others, financial aid for Malays or Bumiputeras in business, scholarship for Malay children in post-secondary education, quotas for Malays in institutions of higher learning, etc. The policy which is publicised widely by UMNO politicians at all levels of the party hierarchy is a household word among the squatters. They know of the policy though not much about it; to most of them it is simply a policy 'to help the Malays'.

The implementation of the NEP has been criticised by many, including academicians such as S.H. Ali (1984) and Shamsul Amri (1983), Ishak Shari and K.S. Jomo (1984) on the grounds that it benefits only a few, mainly UMNO

functionaries, and that its effect is not to eradicate poverty but to strengthen the position of UMNO political leaders. Most squatters such as the local party leaders are not unaware of these criticisms because they are expressed in seminars or speeches by opposition party leaders which are often reported in the national newspapers, but local party leaders, potential beneficiaries of the policy, do not highlight the negative aspects of the NEP. It is the squatter laymen who often talk of the inequality among Malays in relation to the NEP. Nevertheless, they are not resentful of the fact. Inequality, as one of them explained, is *adat dunia* (the way of the world) which they have no power to change even if they wanted to. They accept that some have more access to opportunities and gain more from government policies than others and it is their belief that they belong to the latter group. However, although they feel the system cannot be changed, they believe that their stake in the NEP can and what they can do is accept the system and ingratiate themselves with politicians from the party in power. This is what gives them hope in life and such hope is not entirely without basis. The squatters see with their own eyes instances of the squatment children growing up and moving up the social ladder - two went to the local university and two others went to Belgium and the United States of America, some to local colleges and others get better jobs than their parents and move out of the settlement. They also see their squatment improving as the years go by, receiving public amenities and services from the urban authorities. These are seen as proofs that some of their individual and communal goals can be achieved under the present system and this accounts for their positive attitude to life.

The favourable economic climate is another factor which can account for the absence of the so-called traits

of the 'culture of poverty'. Malaysia is in the process of rapid socio-economic development. Thousands of jobs, especially in the manufacturing, building and construction industries, are created and made available, especially in the urban areas. Unemployment, according to the latest government population census report (GRPC 1980:121-125), is relatively low, accounting for about 6.1% of the economically active population between the ages of 15 and 64, and that the unemployment is felt more in the countryside than in the urban areas. In the Federal Territory unemployment is only 3.8% compared to 8.1% and 8.7% in the less urbanised states of Kelantan and Trengganu respectively. The majority of the unemployed (64%) are between the ages of 15 and 24, i.e. those who have just left schools and colleges.

In Kuala Lumpur, therefore, jobs, especially for the unskilled and semi-skilled, are quite easy to find. In some sectors such as the building industry and domestic services there has been in the last decade an acute shortage of labour that workers had to be imported from neighbouring Indonesia, illegally until April 1984. The squatters therefore do not face unemployment problem as do their counterparts in some Latin American countries, the Philippines and India. The main problem among those in employment is low wages and the squatters respond to this by taking up multiple employment. Although the squatters, especially the household heads, spend a large proportion of their time working, on average 8-12 hours per day, they nonetheless consider their present life much better off than their previous life in the country and that of their country relatives. They have better working conditions and steady incomes which, in the case of joint-households, are four times higher than those of the peasants. Their living standards, too, are higher and

rising; they can afford consumer goods which they consider luxury items and which are normally beyond the reach of most peasants, such as TV sets, refrigerators, record players, scooters and even cars. The congenial economic atmosphere therefore enables most of the squatters to achieve what they have come to the city for, which is to improve their socio-economic status, and consequently there is little reason for them to feel hopeless and fatalistic.

Occasionally, the squatters compare their life with that of the urban middle and upper classes, such as the residents of the neighbouring Pantai Hill, and when they do the sense of relative deprivation shows through but does not always give rise to a feeling of resentment. It is only when their life is negatively affected by outside forces, believed to be the rich, that resentment is expressed. Eviction notices served on some of Kampung Selamat squatters in 1978 and to others in the neighbouring squatments in 1980, are seen as a senseless act by rich government officials insensitive to the needs of the poor. During the eviction exercise, their anger with the so-called rich people was expressed in verbal exchanges with the government officials involved, but once the exercise was over, the anger among those who remained subsided. Otherwise, the squatters view the rich with admiration and wish that they could emulate their life style, and see them as a source of employment. Their interactions with the rich, and for that matter with others outside their squatment and work groups, are limited. Therefore, it is not the rest of the urban population that is their main focus of reference, but their country relatives with whom they have close ties. It is this which gives them a sense of economic well-being and superiority although in the urban economic hierarchy, they are at the bottom of the rung.

The squatters' close interactions with their relatives in the traditional rural villages give them a sense of superiority, as does the ownership by some of such properties as houses and agricultural land in their villages of origin. All this means that they have a place to return to in times of crises and if they fail to make it in the city. They are not, to quote their own words, *dagang hanyut* (lit. floating foreigners, i.e. people without roots), but people with *kampung halaman* (land and house), whither they can and hope to return at the end of their working lives.

These are some of the factors which account for the absence of the traits of the so-called 'culture of poverty' among the squatters. The squatters are sufficiently organised with a strong sense of community to be regarded in Ross' terms as 'politically integrated' at the local level (1973). This can be attributed to internal and external forces; the latter refer to perceived threat from outside which causes insecurity. Although the government has since 1978 adopted a more humanitarian approach to the squatter problem in Kuala Lumpur and has resolved to allow squatters not immediately affected by physical developments to stay on their land, the squatters are no less worried about losing their homes. After all, physical developments are continuously taking place in the city and the Ministry of Federal Territory has now formalised a plan to restructure Kuala Lumpur which will involve decentralisation. There are plans for the establishment of new townships and it is rumoured that one of them would be sited in the Pantai area in the vicinity of Kampung Selamat. If it is true, then the squatters will have to move out and their dream of having their settlement upgraded and regularised will be shattered. Consequently, the squatters' sense of insecurity has increased lately and in

such circumstances the need for unity is felt even more strongly among them. They are an ethnically homogeneous group and in their striving for unity, common aspects of their socio-cultural background are highlighted and sub-ethnic differences are deliberately ignored. Their standard language, peasant background, customary and religious practices jointly contribute towards achieving unity at the community level. Strict adherence to Islamic religious practices further enhances communal bondage. Islam makes certain communal religious practices, e.g. Friday prayers, compulsory or obligatory, and others, e.g. *trawih* prayers during the fasting month, highly desirable. And in the obligatory daily prayers, communal or group performance of the prayers is encouraged as religiously desirable. All this goes a long way towards bringing the people together, especially the menfolk and all the congregational rituals clearly form a strong basis for squatter integration. In addition, there is the common opposition to the non-Malays, principally the Chinese.

These internal and external factors, however, cannot bring about unity among Malay squatters at extra-community level, despite the fact that in the Pantai-Kerinci-Bangsar area, there are about 25,000 Malay squatters. Considering that they live in squatments adjacent to one another, one would expect them to get together and form some sort of inter-squatment association to promote their common interests and yet this has not happened, not because such an idea has not occurred to them, but largely because of envies and jealousies between community/party chiefs. The various party chiefs compete with one another for official posts at the Division level as well as for limited political largesse for their supporters. The competition can be quite vicious, with slander and backbiting, causing strained relationship between them.

The attacks are rarely openly made; on public occasions, the appearance of unity is maintained. The leaders frequently attend each other's branch annual general meetings, and on these occasions, for example, they praise each other and shake hands in front of their supporters; but this public display of comradeship is often no more than just a show. Their attendance at each other's AGM is also not without some ulterior motives. Supra-local politicians are often invited to open such meetings and in their speeches often outline government policies and explain future plans that the government and City Hall may have for the squatters, all of which are noted by the squatter leaders. It is also on such occasions that the squatters have a 'heart-to-heart' with the politicians and inform them of their communal needs. Through the AGMs, therefore, the squatter party/community chiefs not only get information which are useful to them in performing their role in their respective squatments, but also keep track of each other's performances and progress or lack of it - knowledge which can be very useful in their fight for party posts at the Division level.

Quite often, local party leaders ally themselves with different political figures at the supra-local level. These high-level politicians may belong to different factions within UMNO and could be at loggerheads with one another. Such intra-party rivalry at the higher echelon of the party hierarchy can also spill over into the squatment causing rifts between local party chiefs. Factional squabbles occur especially before the party's biennial election of national supreme council members. It is factors such as these which hinder extra-community solidarity among the Malay squatters.

It does not mean, however, that inter-squatment

cooperation does not take place at all; it does, but confined mainly to such spheres as sports, religion and education as exemplified in the case of Kampung Selamat where the kindergarten, religious school and women domestic science and religious classes are shared by squatters from the neighbouring squattments. Water supply, too, is often shared by squatters living along the border of the squatment; so also the local sundry shop. At the individual level, too, one finds inter-squatment links in the form of networks of kin, friends and workmates; but such links and cooperation, however, contribute little to extra-community solidarity.

Such community organisational structure as seen in Kampung Selamat is shared by other Malay squattments in the city. Chinese and Indian squatters do not exhibit such an organisation structure. Among Chinese squatters, such as those in Kampung Pakar, which the writer studied, who number more than one thousand households and who are divided into five wards, the local power structure in each ward consists of an elected squatment committee which has close association with the Chinese political party, the MCA. In fact many of the squatment committee members are MCA party activists; but the party has no branches in the squatment, although many of the squatters are members of the party. The committee has a limited role in community organisation. Community activities are confined to youth sports and games at the local community hall and, occasionally, group actions mobilised by the committee to meet outside threats, e.g. from the urban authorities, as happened in 1980 when they held a demonstration against City Hall employees trying to dump rubbish outside their squatment. The committee's main function seems to be that of mediator between the squatters and the urban authorities, especially the City Hall and the Ministry of

the Federal Territory. At the community level, its organisational role is minimal; the squatters are content to be left alone to pursue their own economic activities.

If Chinese squatters, unlike the Malay ones, have a weak sense of community, it is largely because they have less fear of eviction than the Malays. Most of them have been born in the squatments, while the elderly ones have been squatters since they arrived in Malaya from China in the thirties of forties. Most are seasoned squatters who are economically better off than the Malay squatters and who, as acknowledged by the DAP MP for Kuala Lumpur Bandar, are keen to move out if given the opportunity to buy or rent public housing subsidised by the authorities. There are other factors which account for the lack of unity among the Chinese squatters. Chinese squatters within a squatter settlement are usually culturally heterogeneous. They often belong to different clans and speak different dialects which hinder close interactions between them. Their religious inclinations also vary; while the majority adhere to traditional beliefs centring on ancestor worship, some are Buddhists and atheists while others are Christians. Communal religious rituals are conspicuously absent; individual families build their own shrines, usually small ones, close to their own houses and perform their prayers separately from their neighbours. These are some of the obstacles to local level unity in Chinese squatments.

Unlike the Malay squatters in Kampung Selamat, the Chinese squatters are not dependent on their squatment committees nor on the urban authorities for material aids and services. This is verified by Professor Khairuddin Yusof(3), consultant to the Sang Kancil Project, one of the many community development programmes devised by the

government to help the urban poor. The Chinese squatters, according to him, show no interest at all in the said project. This is probably because they are already fully adjusted to the urban milieu and need little help to find jobs, especially in the private sector which in Kuala Lumpur is controlled by the Chinese. They are financially stable: in the case of Kampung Pakar, 46% of the households studied have an average household income between \$901/- and \$1,250/- a month, which is higher than the national average of \$642/- per month (Mid-Term Review of the Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-1980). They therefore have the financial resources to acquire their own communal services and build their own public buildings, such as the *Tok Kong* (Religious Hall) in Sungai Besi, at an estimated cost of \$100,000/- and which was only partially built when it was pulled down by the authorities in 1982, because it was constructed illegally on government land without proper planning permission. In addition the Chinese have evolved among themselves clan associations which play dominant roles in their lives; thus the need to depend on squatment committees or the urban authorities is minimal. Consequently, they are less dependent on the government political party, the MCA, and are not obliged to give their total support to it as the Malay squatters do to UMNO. However, they cannot dispense with the government party altogether in view of their need for an effective intermediary between themselves and the urban authorities.

As for the Indian squatters, there is a scarcity of literature on their community organisation and the writer is therefore unable to compare theirs with that of the Malays. However, the only current work on some Indian squatters in Petaling Jaya seems to suggest that community organisation among Indian squatters is also very much influenced by the government political party, the MIC, and

that like the Malay squatters, they are dependent on the authorities, especially for community services and basic amenities(4).

Community organisation in other Malay squatterments in the capital city is done on a similar pattern but not to the same degree as that of Kampung Selamat. Kampung Selamat is one of the best organised squatter communities in Kuala Lumpur, a fact acknowledged by City Hall, which accounts for its relatively high level of achievement in securing social services and basic amenities. All this can be attributed to effective and dedicated leadership. In many squatterments, local party chiefs appear to be more concerned with their own personal gains than with community interests and their quest for personal gains is so obvious sometimes that they lose the confidence and support of their squatter followers. Instances of local party leaders abusing and using their positions for personal gains are numerous. As community leaders, the local party chiefs are often entrusted by the urban authorities with the task of supervising the implementation of development projects in their respective squatterments and are given some power to decide how as well as when and where the projects are to be implemented. In the case of the provision of electricity supply and construction of buildings, for example, they are often given the responsibility of finding the contractors to carry out the jobs and some local party/community chiefs are known to take their 'cuts' from the contractors, either in money or in kind(5). Such practices, when too obvious, lead to resentment among the squatters and eventually to loss of support, and when the 'spoils' are not shared with other party chiefs or officials, it leads to the development of factions within the party and among the squatters.

The party chief and other officials in Kampung Selamat are different. In the eyes of the squatters, they are people with integrity, committed and dedicated to the cause of the squatters. The party chief, in particular, is highly respected and commands wide support and apart from the one incident, discussed in Section 7.2.(a), in which he was 'implicated' by being the chairman of the committee involved, he has not done anything to lose him the trust of his supporters. His success in securing services and amenities for the squatment more than compensates for that single mistake, if indeed the allegation made was true.

Another important factor which contributes to the chief's effectiveness as a party/community leader is the fact that he resides in the squatment. He had lived in the squatment some years before he was elected chief in 1977 and has lived there ever since. This is not true of all party/community leaders: some live in modern housing estates some distance away, while others live in some other squatments somewhere else. These 'absentee' leaders were once residents in the squatments and got elected to hold office by virtue of their being residents, who had then moved out for various reasons - in one case in order to go and live with his second wife and in another to live in a house provided by his employer - and who were keen to remain actively involved in their former squatment politics, in some cases in order to retain their power base, in others in order to protect economic interests which they had built up in the squatments. These 'absentee' party chiefs tend to neglect their responsibilities to the squatters which causes disenchantment and dissatisfaction, but they manage to get re-elected and retain their position by skillful manoeuvring and intense mobilisation of their faithful supporters.

The Kampung Selamat party chief's association with UMNO goes back a long way; he was a party activist even before he came to the city. This accounts for the high level of his political consciousness and his shrewd political calculations. He knows and understands the importance of party contacts; he knows how and when to curry favour with political superiors and how to boost his own image. He spends a lot of his free time at the party Division headquarters, doing work for his immediate superior, the Division Chief and, having gained his superior's trust and confidence, works his way up the party hierarchy into party Division committee. As a member of this committee, he has ample opportunity to meet many national leaders, some of whom he manages to persuade to come to Kampung Selamat. He takes advantage of every available opportunity or suitable occasion to invite deputy ministers and members of UMNO's Supreme Council to visit the squatment, to open their annual general meeting perhaps or to see relief work by the local branch after a flood. At the same time he makes sure that these distinguished visitors are warmly received by as large a crowd as possible, even if it means calling on the neighbouring squatters to swell the local crowd. This serves at least two purposes: it honours the guests, but it also shows the strength of support he has behind him, which is very useful when he wants to approach them for more help for the community. What is even more important about the Kampung Selamat party chief is that he understands the workings of the political system, that the government machinery is simply a channel through which the party in power distributes political largesse for partisans' purposes, and that he is fully conscious of the fact that squatters in the Federal Territory have political clouts through their votes. This understanding and awareness are something which all the party chiefs and officials have in common.

This high level of political consciousness can also be said to be induced by supra-local UMNO politicians with vested interests in the squatters. In the case of the local party chief and the other party officials, the induction comes through leadership courses and seminars organised for grass-root officials by the party; and in the case of the squatter laymen, through political speeches given by the supra-local politicians at local party meetings and gatherings. The urban setting, too, is a contributory factor. The squatters are after all in geographical proximity to centres of power and in the nerve centre of commerce and industry; and they have access to all kinds of mass media. In other words, they are better informed than those who live outside the capital city.

Thus one finds in the Malay squatters' support of the party in power an action consciously designed to achieve maximum benefits with the minimum risks. In this respect their political inclinations are not dissimilar to those of squatters in the Latin American countries, as explained by Perlman (1975), Ray (1969) and Lloyd (1980). They are not potential forces for revolution as radical literature make them out to be; they are conservative in their political thinking; they conform to the system in the hope that their goals can be achieved and some, if not all, of these goals are realised. By ingratiating themselves with the party in power, they have, at least so far, forestalled total eviction, enabling some to retain their houses and others to secure public accommodations. For those who remain, their position is entrenched and if they play their cards right they may yet see their lifelong dream come true, i.e. to have their settlement upgraded and legalised.

The close association they have with the political party in power protects the squatters from possible actions

by the City Hall; in this sense, it can be said that it contributes to the expansion of squatting in the capital city. Their relationship with UMNO can be described, to borrow Weingrod's terms (1968:383), as one of 'party-patronage', where the patron is a corporate body represented by party officials who hold power. The squatters' allegiance is to the party and positions within the party and not to the individuals who occupy these positions. The local party chief acts as a mediator between the squatters and their political patron. He pledges his and his supporters' votes to the patron or to the candidates in the patron's faction during general and party elections. He mobilises crowds for the party leaders during party rallies and organises overt support for the party for such occasions as the national day. All these services to the patron and to their party are exchanged for benefits, especially communal benefits, which do not come direct from the patron but through the urban authorities, mainly the City Hall. There is therefore a triangular relationship - squatters, City Hall and politicians.

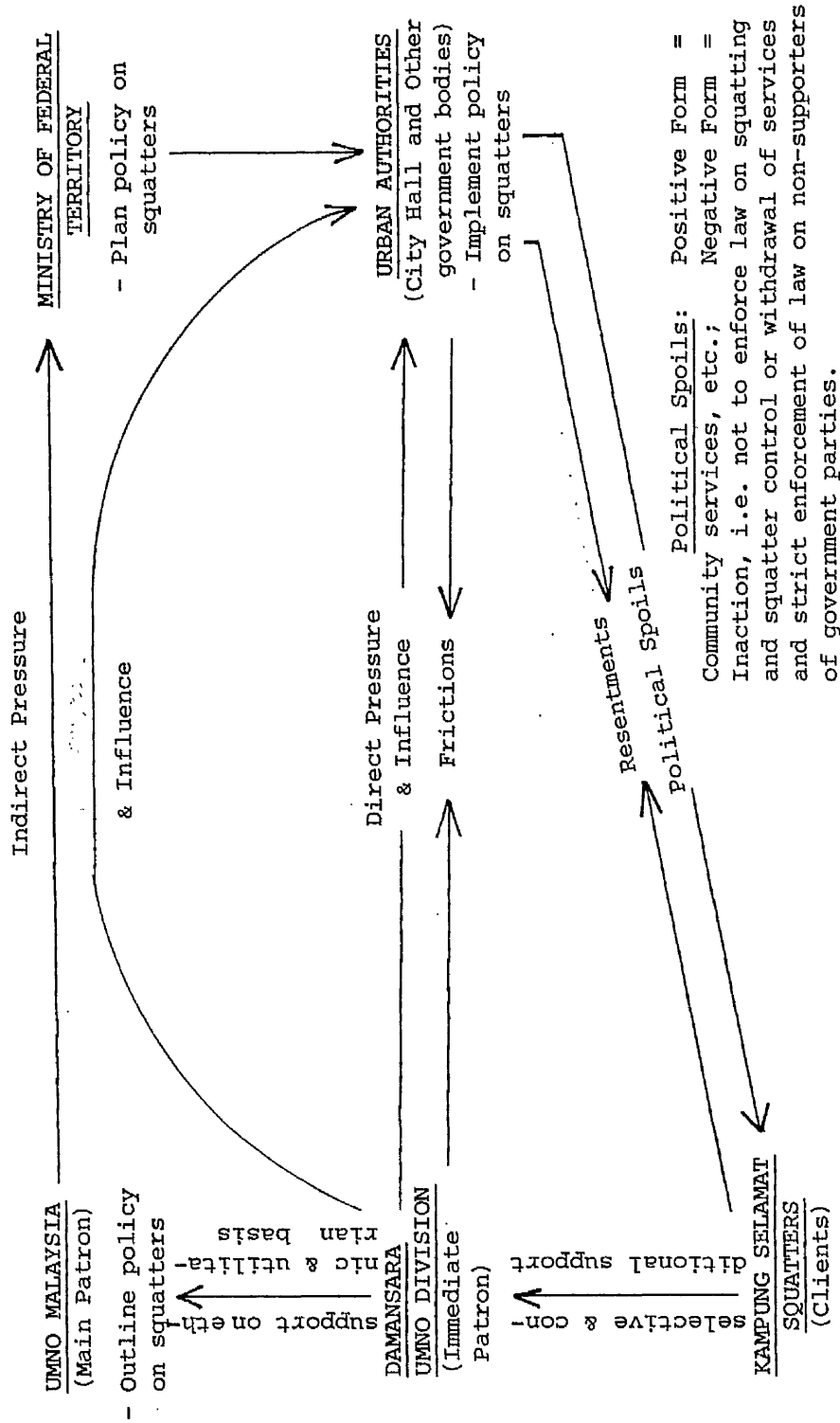
The UMNO-squatter relationship is mutually beneficial to both parties, but to the urban authorities, especially the City Hall, this patron-client tie has a restrictive impact. Bureaucrats find themselves restrained in the course of their duty which involves the implementation of laws as well as policies which are formulated, ironically, by the very political party that curbs their implementation. This gives rise to a strained relationship between the authorities and the squatters; the former resent the latter for enlisting UMNO's assistance and for bringing the party's pressure to bear on them; the latter of course regard the former as their 'enemies'. As a result of all this, the urban bureaucracy loses its independence; it becomes more an instrument of the party in power and

and functions to suit the interests of UMNO's politicians and not those of the general public; and by serving partisans' interests, the urban bureaucracy appears inconsistent in its dealings with various sections of the squatter population.

In the triangular relationship between squatters, politicians and the authorities, the urban bureaucracy invariably becomes the scape-goat for policy failures or for policies formulated by the party in power but which appear harsh and unfavourable to the squatters. This, together with the restrictions imposed by the politicians on bureaucratic processes are the basis of frequent frictions between the bureaucrats and the politicians, leaving the former demoralised and frustrated. This in turn has a negative effect on the squatters for quite often the bureaucrats vent their frustrations on the squatters by various tactics, the most common being the slowing down of bureaucratic processes which largely accounts for the considerable delay in implementing schemes designed for the squatters (see Figure 12).

In this UMNO-squatter relationship, the local party chief is clearly a political broker whose rewards from his brokerage role take the forms of social prestige as well as economic gains for himself and members of his family. His immediate superior within the party hierarchy, i.e. the Division Chief-cum-Senator, is both a broker and a patron. He is a political broker in as much as he mediates between his squatter supporters and the urban authorities as well as the top party officials. He is a patron to the extent that he has some resources made available to him by virtue of his position in the Senate and which he has the power to distribute to his followers. His patronage role is dominant; he is the squatters' immediate patron

FIGURE 12
DYNAMICS OF PARTY PATRONAGE



representing the corporate body, UMNO.

The local patron and the squatters are mutually dependent, but the balance of power is tilted in favour of the squatters. The patron has within his reach powerful apparatus, money as well as influence and power over the urban authorities which have the law on their side and enforcement units to enforce laws and regulations, and yet he has little control over the squatters. The squatters accept the patron on a selective and conditional basis and as such when they are dissatisfied with the performance of a particular patron, they can dispense with him and choose another politician from within the party to be their patron and there are always many politicians who are only too keen to find a power base in the squatment in order to further their political ambitions and sometimes economic interests as well. The patron will lose his position within the party and with it his power and influence if the squatters withdraw their support for him. The patron's dependence on the squatters is great indeed, bearing in mind UMNO's lack of popularity among the rest of the urban Malays, such as the middle and upper classes and the flat dwellers, to whom the patron-client politics, as practised here, have little significance(6). This forces the patron to be responsive and sensitive to the demands made by the squatters and to give in to some of their pressure and the patron has to change from time to time some of his and his party's policies in order to accommodate those demands. This is not as difficult as it may seem since the party is committed to the cause of the Malays and has as one of its primary objectives the socio-economic upliftment of the Malays. Hence, one finds politics of accommodation in which the political patron and party in power accommodating the demands of their clients, the squatters, in their quest for urban accommodation; and the squatters,

on their part, have to accommodate the political patron and the party in power, irrespective of their real political inclinations.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Malay squatters are not just passive recipients of policies formulated at the national level or even international level. As a consequence of their high level political consciousness and strength, they are able to exert some measure of influence over government policies which are of relevance to their lives. Their expansion, both in geographical and demographical terms, can be attributed partly to party-patronage, the dynamics of which are a reflection of the entire political culture of Malaysia. A thorough understanding and appreciation of this patron-client relationship is vitally important if the urban planners and administrators are to make any headway in their attempts to deal with the squatter problems in the capital city. Party patronage is there and it looks as if it is going to stay that way for as long as UMNO is in power and in a position to utilise public resources to sustain the present system and, with it, itself in power.

NOTES

(1) The Malay language is also known and referred to as Bahasa Malaysia (Malaysian Language).

(2) See UMNO Constitution.

(3) Personal correspondence with Professor Khairuddin Yusof.

(4) Personal correspondence with Mr S Rajoo, Lecturer, Department of Indian Studies, University of Malaya, who is currently studying Indian squatters in Petaling Jaya for his Ph.D thesis.

(5) Accusations by squatters of malpractices by local party/community leaders abound. Most of them are of course unfounded; but there are some cases which give rise to doubt and suspicion. In one squatment in Sungai Besi parliamentary constituency, the contractor engaged to build the community hall built the local party chief's house at the same time. In another case, the contract for the installation of electrical wiring in the squatment was awarded to a firm belonging to the local party chief's friend and in carrying out the job, they did the wiring for the chief's house free of charge, while the squatters had to pay between \$200/- and \$300/- per household.

The writer had no means of verifying the truth of these accusations with the party chief concerned without jeopardising her fieldwork.

(6) UMNO's lack of popularity among the middle and upper class Malays is confirmed by the frequent expressions of regrets by party officials, which are usually reported in the national press. The most recent is by the political secretary to the Minister of National and Rural Development, who is currently also UMNO's national secretary for information (Berita Harian, 26 March 1984).

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APPENDIX I

SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS IN KUALA LUMPUR IN 1951

<u>Localities</u>	<u>Acreages of Land Occupied</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Alienated</u>
1. North-East of Setapak	13	83
2. Off Seavoy Road	95	-
3. 2½ Milestone Ipoh Road	5	-
4. Off Station Road, Sentul	22	-
5. West of Anti-T.B. Clinic, 2nd Mile, Pahang Road	8	30
6. Centre of Ipoh, Maxwell & Pahang Road Triangle	-	14
7. Jalan Raja Laut Crescent	-	2
8. Jalan Raja Bot - Perkin Road	4	7
9. West of Batu Road between Broadrick & Batu Road	-	28
10. Off Broadrick Road near river	-	4
11. Behind Lucky World Park	2.5	13
12. Lot 12, Off Hale Road, Kampung Baharu	-	2.3
13. Lot 43, Off Hale Road	-	4.4
14. West of Batu Road, opposite Odeon Cinema	1.5	2.5
15. West of Batu Road, behind Coleseum Cinema	-	14
16. Centre of Batu Road, Cambell Road, Klang River	-	17
17. Off Treacher - Bukit Bintang Road Junction	-	9.5
18. Opposite Bukit Bintang Girls' School	-	5
19. Off Jalan Brunei & Jalan Sayor Pudu Road	22	40
20. Jalan Kenanga vicinity	5	17
21. San Peng Road vicinity	16	11
22. Yew Road vicinity	-	7

<u>Localities</u>	<u>Acreages of Land Occupied</u>	
	<u>State</u>	<u>Alienated</u>
23. Cochrane - Peel Road vicinity	86	-
24. Around Incinerator Reserve, Cheras Road	59	91
25. Off 2½-3rd Mile, Sungai Besi Road	-	52
26. Off Chan Sow Lin Road	2.5	106
27. South of Railway Line, 3 Mile Stone Cheras Road	30	-
28. Off 3½-4 Milestone Cheras Road	12	173
29. Riverside, off Scott Road	5	-
30. Riverside, off Kandang Kerbau Road	3	-
31. Riverside, off Temple Road	-	4
32. 2nd Milestone Lornie Road	10	-
33. Bangsar Road, opposite Power Station	30	-
34. Off 3½ Milestone Klang Road	30	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	461	736.7
	=====	=====

APPENDIX II

Abdul Kadir Karsidi
Ketua Bojain.

K.L. Lumpur.
26. 11. 51.

A.D.O.

Kuala Lumpur.

Tuan,

Dengan hormatnya di-maalumkan,
Ada-lah sa-parti Penduduk yang memakai
tanah Kerajaan di-Belakang Lucky World
Ada-lah mengandungi 50 buah rumah,
dan Banyak Orang-nya lebih kurang 503
Orang ia itu kecil besar dan ~~besar kecil~~
Lakin perempuan.

(2) Tetapi ada sa-orang tanah China
Membuat Cemen ia-nya ada mempunyai
5 buah rumah, yang besar, dan rumah
itu semua-nya di-Sawakan-nya.

Abdul

26-11-51

APPENDIX III
LOCATION OF SQUATTER AREAS
IN KUALA LUMPUR

