

IDENTITY

THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION: THE CASE OF THE MANDAILING PEOPLE

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The issue of our time, the survival of human beings with individuated consciousness and communal ties, is in peril... Freedom, then, is the path to this new life. A freedom which begins with the individual, confirms him in his place with his people and his language and his culture, yet by that specific location of his being there, grants him a world perspective to recognise his brothers and sisters elsewhere in their 'differentness' and their challenge (The World Crisis).

INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND AIMS

The Mandailing people inhabit as their homeland the southwestern corner of the province of North Sumatra on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. For centuries they have migrated throughout the Indonesian archipelago and Peninsular West Malaysia. They have made enormous contributions to politics, society, music, literature and the press both in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Their social and cultural markers include the *markoum sisolkot*, the patrilineal clan-based Mandailing social structure governed by customary law (*adat*)¹; the *urup tulak-tulak* (Mandailing script); the tradition of consultative governance as embodied in the judicial assembly of *Namora-Natoras* (traditional institution of Mandailing governance); the totem sculpture *Sangkalon*, a symbol of justice; the *Gordang Sambilan* (nine great drums), the ritualistic Mandailing music; the *Abit Godang*, the ceremonial shawl; the *Bindu* gable that represents the Mandailing's philosophy of life; and the *rarangan* (protected areas) in environmentally challenging times.

Yet the Mandailings have been culturally marginalised in Indonesia and Malaysia. Academic works have subsumed them as an appendix of the Angkola, Batak and Malay. In Malaysia, racial politics and state-sponsored social engineering in the name of nation building, backed by the academia, have resulted in the acculturation of the Mandailings into the dominant Malay racial category. In Indonesia, the Mandailings

have been lumped into the dominant Batak group since the Dutch colonial era.

Recently, Malaysian politicians from UMNO (United Malay National Organisation) and politician-academics from Gapena (Gabungan Penulis-Penulis Nasional/ Union of National Writers) have been travelling to Indonesia, as well as sponsoring Indonesian scholars to 'Malay World' conferences, to promote the idea of *Melayu inklusif* (inclusive Malay identity) – an idea based on the colonial perception that the native people of the Indonesian archipelago and Malaysia are of the Malay race/stock (*rumpun Melayu*).²

The basic human right of the Mandailings – and of other cultural communities and indigenous peoples – to define themselves has been overlooked by most Malaysian and Indonesian intellectuals and the academia who have accepted the state's discourse on ethnicity. Responding to threats of endangered human diversity, indigenous people all over the world are reviving traditional forms of governance, communicating their cultural identity, and using modern information technology for networking and building international alliances. Of late, interest in Mandailing identity and cultural heritage in Malaysia and Indonesia has intensified owing to increased networking and the use of the Internet among concerned Mandailings. Furthermore, Mandailing scholars are part of regional movements to deconstruct mainstream history and state-constructed ethnic categories.

This project represents an effort in the same direction. In the course of the API Fellowship, the author carried out several activities to gain further understanding of the dilemmas facing Mandailing identity, and to engage others in valuing that identity. Several activities were academic: the author presented papers in symposia and colloquia, wrote articles for journals and the popular press, facilitated workshops, prepared cultural heritage guides, and accepted interviews from leading Indonesian dailies.³

But a great part of the effort was also non-academic, some of which the author would like to highlight in this paper. These are efforts related to the movement for cultural identity, the promotion of cultural pilgrimage, regional autonomy and the devolution of power, environmental management, cultural performance, the promotion of indigenised 'Mandailing-Islam', the promotion of alternative currencies, the improvement of the Mandailing website, and the holding of a photographic exhibition.

All these tasks must be seen as part of a broader concern to construct a socio-cultural and political identity for the Mandailing people, the purposes of which are: first, to strengthen Mandailing community and civil society through the development of cultural heritage resources and environmental stewardship; and second, to mobilise the Mandailing community towards increased self-determination through public participation, cultural heritage and environmental activism.

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The author took a participatory observer approach in addition to doing library and archival research. In Jakarta, he was mainly engaged in library research, and most of the relevant material was obtained from the two libraries of Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (LIPI/Indonesian Institute of Sciences) and Perpustakaan Nasional (National Library) as well as from bookshops (secondhand ones especially) and private collections such as that of Basyral Hamidy Harahap.

He managed to obtain substantial background material on Indonesia's modern history, some of which was used for his paper presentations. There is potentially more material on the Mandailings in Dutch records of the 19th century, but unfortunately the author will have to get assistance in translation as the language is inaccessible to the author.⁴ In Jakarta, the author's host

was Yayasan Pelestarian Budaya Indonesia (Indonesian Heritage Foundation).

Medan disproved the author's earlier fears that there is a paucity of material written in Bahasa Indonesia and the Mandailing language concerning the Mandailings. For years the author had been led by his fellow Indonesian scholars to believe that there was not much written on the Mandailings. Archival and library research in Medan shows that there is a substantial amount of material on and by the Mandailings. A bibliography of these works should be done to facilitate further studies of the Mandailings.

In Medan, library research was conducted at the various faculty libraries as well as the main library of Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU), the major government university in Medan. The library research at USU proved the most productive. USU has the most Bachelors' theses (*skripsi*), Masters' theses and research reports (*laporan penelitian*) on the Mandailings, albeit mainly on Mandailing literature.

Library research continued at Universitas HKBP Nommensen (private, Protestant Christian-based university), Perpustakaan Daerah Sumatera Utara (North Sumatra Provincial Library), Badan Warisan Sumatra (Sumatra Heritage Trust) and from private collections. The author's host in Medan was Badan Warisan Sumatra (Sumatra Heritage Trust).

The Universitas HKPB Nommensen's Pusat Dokumentasi dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Batak (Batak Documentation and Cultural Research Centre, previously known as Pusat Batakologi/Batakology Centre) has arguably the best collection on the Batak including some written in Dutch and German. However, the amount of materials in the collection has remained static over the last few years for lack of funding.

While in Jakarta, Medan and in the Mandailing homeland, the author conducted selected interviews to gauge perceptions of history, culture, architecture, identity, etc. Mandailing personalities, academicians, activists and conservationists (both environmental and cultural) were interviewed. These interviews were done formally as well as informally. In the course of his research, the author made two visits to the Mandailing homeland to participate in *adat* (customary) ceremonies as well as in a photographic expedition.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Nine key activities were undertaken to promote Mandailing ethnic identity. These were:

Movement for cultural identity

Over the last few years, the author has sought out and nurtured a network of Mandailing scholars and intellectuals from organisations such as the Yayasan Pengkajian Budaya Mandailing (Yapebuma), Ikatan Kebajikan Mandailing Malaysia (IMAN), Himpunan Keluarga Besar Mandailing (HIKMA) and Bindu Matogu, a Mandailing environmental non-governmental organisation (NGO). Yapebuma and Bindu Matogu are based in Medan and HIKMA in Jakarta with branches in Medan and Mandailing, whilst IMAN is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

All the groups mentioned above are directly engaged in activities promoting Mandailing cultural identity. These and other associations such as student bodies with the same objectives, are linked together through the Mandailing website. Internationally, the author maintains a network of friends and supporters, especially amongst academic and activist communities, particularly through the use of the Internet.

Promotion of cultural pilgrimage

In the early 19th century, many Mandailings left their homelands to seek their fortunes in the *rantau* (outside the homeland), especially in Minangkabau (province of West Sumatra today). After the Padri War (1820-1833), many fled to the west coast of the Malay Peninsula (West Malaysia today) via Riau and Jambi. In the late 19th century, Mandailings started to migrate to Medan when the east coast of Sumatra was opened up for plantations by the Dutch. In the early 20th century, Mandailing migrants to the west coast states of Peninsular Malaysia arrived via Medan.⁵ Consequently today there are substantial Mandailing communities in Medan and along the east coast of Sumatra.

Many Mandailing sojourners to West Malaysia returned to their Mandailing homeland regularly. For example, the author's family and relations have been visiting their homeland since the 19th century, interrupted only by the Second World War, the Independence Revolution and Konfrontasi (Confrontation) against the formation of the Malaysia. However, many of the present-day Malaysian Mandailings who know only the names of their ancestral settlements, have never set

foot in Mandailing itself.

In Malaysia, the focus of Mandailing activities is in the west coast states of Perak and Selangor, where most Mandailing migrants settled. Many well-to-do Mandailings are concentrated in Kuala Lumpur, the federal capital of Malaysia. Malaysian Mandailings do make the trip to the homeland, usually travelling via Medan, a trip that takes 12 hours by coach. The journey can now be shortened as flights are now available from Kuala Lumpur to Padang, the capital of the province of West Sumatra, Indonesia, making it possible to travel to Mandailing via Padang in only 6 hours.

Having explored Mandailing over the years, the author is now of the view that the Mandailing homeland is suitable for the promotion of cultural pilgrimage amongst Malaysian and Indonesian Mandailings. The cultural and natural attractions in Mandailing include pre-Islamic ('animistic', Hindu and Buddhist) sites; traditional sites, such as *sipelebegu* graveyards; Islamic sites, such as the *waqf*; colonial influences (Portuguese, Dutch, Japanese, etc.); sites where there were anti-colonial struggles such as the burial site of Raja Mangkutur; sites significant for the Independence movement such as the birth-place of General Abdul Haris Nasution; scenic terraced paddy fields; cultural performances including *Gordang Sambilan* performances; active volcanic mountains (such as Sorik Marapi and its surrounding hot-springs); hundred-year-old rubber trees, the seeds of which came from 19th century 'British Malaya'⁶; and extensive man-made irrigation systems (*bondar saba*).

In view of Mandailing's cultural tourism potential, a guide book that captures and promotes the cultural and natural attractions should be prepared. Cultural tourism can help build bridges between Malaysian and Indonesian Mandailings to restore and rebuild relationships that were sundered by colonialism, nationalism and regionalism. It is likely that Indonesian Mandailings can benefit from an access to a wider range of resources and expertise, while the Malaysian Mandailings can recover their roots and identity.

Regional autonomy and devolution of power

During the colonial period, Sumatra was carved up by arbitrary and artificial administrative boundaries. There is a need to remap the frontiers of the Mandailing homeland in West Sumatra and Riau along scientific

lines based on commonality of culture, language, geography and a *Volk*.

In the context of Indonesia's decentralisation, administrative units have been restructured all over the archipelago, resulting in the formation of new *Pemda* (local governments) starting in 1999. Regional autonomy is considered potentially more democratic than a centralised system as it favours pluralism and does not subject people to the same standards. It prevents the accumulation of centralist power based on one particular culture, religion, belief or ideology.

The provision of 'village parliaments' as provided in the UU (National Law) No. 22 of 1999, could enable the traditional institution of *Namora-Natoras* (Nobles and Elders) to be revived and revitalised to play a critical role in the management of local affairs. This will help Mandailings recover their tradition of consultative governance, and encourage them to challenge the newly-created district of Mandailing-Natal (abbreviation Madina)⁷ to promote participatory planning and decision-making. Although the original purview of the institutions of traditional Mandailing governance covered all aspects of *adat* life, its functions now are circumscribed to marriage and rites of passage.

The call for regional autonomy and devolution of powers within the Indonesian state has stimulated the people to engage with their authorities. In this context, on 19 October 2000, a seminar entitled *Pembangunan Mandailing-Natal* (The Development of Mandailing-Natal) was organised in Panyabungan, Lower Mandailing. Mohammed Dolok Lubis, a young lecturer, organised the seminar, with financial backing from USU and the cooperation of the newly constituted district of Mandailing-Natal. The seminar had the objectives of 'increasing the role of the sons and daughters of the district in its development in order to promote a civil, participatory Mandailing-Natal'. Mandailing scholars and activists from Medan participated in the seminar.

The general consensus of Mandailing people in Jakarta, Medan and Mandailing is that the *Pemda* (the local authority) is ineffective and possibly corrupt, reflecting the general sentiment of Indonesians towards their governments. In May 2002, when Indonesian television aired a half-hour programme on the state of *kabupaten* (district of) Mandailing-Natal, Mandailings from all over Indonesia called in criticizing the district's bureaucracy.

This is a case of Mandailing *rakyat* (people) criticizing Mandailing civil authorities. Many vocal Mandailings say that the present line-up should be replaced with a new set of more honest officers.

To foster transparency and local consultation, local-local dialogues could be conducted to explore areas of multi-sectoral collaboration and capacity building as well as making local-global links with experts and resource centres for good governance and environmental management. The objectives would be to strengthen the Mandailing people as stakeholders in national and regional development, allowing them to better realise their options in the post-modern world.

Stewardship of the Mandailing environment

The process of Indonesianisation has resulted in lands, forests and minerals being usurped as national resources to be exploited by the state and its cronies, Mandailings included. The granting of concessions to national and international logging and mining companies is part of Indonesianisation. In this way, *kabupaten* Mandailing-Natal's natural resources were appropriated in the name of national development.

In consequence many urgent issues facing Mandailing today are environment related, in particular illegal logging, the harvesting of bird's nests, and water management. Illegal logging, which has been taking place for over a decade, is the most pressing of these issues. In October 2002, the author, together with Dr. Zulkifli Lubis, an ecologist, held a series of meetings with environmental NGOs, including the North Sumatran branch of Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI, or Indonesian Forum for Environment), the leading Indonesian environmental NGO, to discuss the course of action to be taken to address the issue of illegal logging in Natal. It was decided that a second field trip should be conducted from 26 to 30 October, to verify the seriousness of the situation. The first field trip was organised in March 2002, the result of which was subsequently released to the media.⁸

In contrast to the forestry situation, where there is virtually no organised action at the local level, initiatives have been made in fisheries and water management. For centuries, communities in the district of Mandailing-Natal have managed their own watersheds and river resources under their *adat*. In the 1970s, this was formalised into river protection

(*lubuk larangan*) schemes by local committees. The Mandailing-Natal district with 29 local committees has the largest number of such schemes in the province of North Sumatra.⁹ The practice prohibits the harvesting of river resources close to human settlements for 6 to 12 months in a year.

Come 'harvesting' time, a small fee is charged to residents and sojourners¹⁰ alike to catch the fish. The income derived is then used to pay for the development of social facilities such as schools, roads and mosques, and to provide educational scholarships and administrative salaries and grants to orphans, poor families and invalids.

Given the unstable political and economic situation in Indonesia, where remote communities cannot depend on governmental funding for development, this income-generating exercise is beneficial to the community. It instils confidence and financial self-reliance. However, much still needs to be done to overcome over-exploitation of certain species, and to gain the full cooperation of the Dinas Perikanan (Fisheries Authority).

The following are suggested in addressing the problem of environmental management in the Mandailing-Natal district:

- Empowering *adat* or local communities in making equitable 'public policies' which utilise local indigenous knowledge in the management of natural and cultural resources;
- Formulating an ideology of environmental stewardship in keeping with Mandailing *adat* and Islamic principles for customary lands, *waaf* (Islamic endowments) and *harangan* (Mandailing term for prohibited zones);
- Introducing organic farming practices; and
- International marketing of eco-friendly products.

Throughout Mandailing, rivers are treated as 'sewers' for rubbish: in the past this posed no immediate environmental problems in view of the organic nature of the wastes, but with plastic packaging and other inorganic wastes, continued dumping could eventually endanger Mandailing riverine environments.

In order to address this pressing issue, a 'model' project has to be implemented for other settlements to follow

suit. Maga has been identified as a possible site for a pilot composting project.

Gordang Sambilan Competition

The performance of the *Gordang Sambilan*, a traditional set of nine drums, has ritualistic functions in *adat* ceremonies such as weddings, installations of nobles (*namora-mora*, plural for raja or chief), receptions of dignitaries, and funerals of rajas. They were also played to mark the death of a tiger, regarded by Mandailings as the king of the forest. The drums are made from old Meranti trees that have hollow centres. Meranti, or Ingol in Mandailing language, refers to a group of hardwood species found in native forests. The conservation of these trees for drum making is another good reason to preserve the diminishing Mandailing forestlands. It takes a skilled craftsman one to two months to make a completely new set of the nine drums.

Formerly, the performance of the *Gordang Sambilan* had to be approved by the huta (settlement) leaders, the *Namora-Natoras*, and a buffalo had to be slaughtered for each occasion on which they were used.

A performance of the drums requires five to seven drummers and usually lasts about half an hour. The performance of the drums is physically quite exhausting for the drummers, some of whom enter into a trance-like state while playing. The cost of the drum performance plus the shortage of buffaloes eventually led to the drums falling silent as ordinary Mandailing families did not have the means to pay for such 'extravagances'.

In order to revive the *Gordang Sambilan*, HIKMA (All Mandailing Clans Assembly) has pushed for the relaxation of customary conditions for their performance. Initially there was resistance from the conservative *namora-mora*, but this was eventually surmounted. Thus since the 1970s, the *Gordang Sambilan* has come to be considered as one of the performing arts of the Mandailing people. *Gordang Sambilan* troupes from the many settlements in Mandailing compete with each other in an annual *Gordang Sambilan* festival.¹¹

During the author's last visit he discovered that the *Gordang Sambilan* has resumed its prominent place in Mandailing society. The fact that there are new commissions for the rather expensive sets of *Gordang Sambilan* indicates that this performing art is making a comeback. The settlement of Tamiang in Upper

Mandailing was well known for its *Gordang Sambilan* craftsmanship. Now Manambin and other settlements have their own *Gordang Sambilan* craftsmen. The *Gordang Sambilan* set is displayed prominently in many settlements.

In view of the fact that the *Gordang Sambilan* is unique to Mandailing music, it has become the cultural marker of Mandailing identity. In the state of Selangor, West Malaysia, where there are significant numbers of Mandailings, IMAN has successfully lobbied for the *Gordang Sambilan* to be made the official state musical ensemble albeit compromised by subsuming it under the Malay identity. In 2001, the *Pesta Pulau Pinang* (Penang Fair) in Malaysia was officially opened with a performance of *Gordang Sambilan* by a troupe from Mandailing, Indonesia. The playing of the *Gordang Sambilan* during the Malaysian Independence Day on 31 August 2002 is perhaps the highest recognition to date for these fantastic drums.

Indigenised Mandailing Islam

The first encounter between Islam and Mandailings in the interior was probably through the port of Natal, on the west coast or by traders coming up the Batang Gadis River from Singkuang (Chinese for New Light) river north of Natal. There are indications that Islam also entered Mandailing from the east coast of Sumatra. More significantly, Mandailing society was historically transformed by a radical brand of Islam – Wahabbite Islam brought by Padris in their white garb from Minangkabau (the province of West Sumatra today).

This brand of Islam, now backed by puritan Arab states and the western intelligence community, is still a menace even today! The Padri episode was one in a series of historical incursions by Minangkabau into the Mandailing homeland, and during this time many Mandailings embraced Islam at the point of the sword.¹² The coming of Islam brought with it many values from this universal religion and its global culture.

In conversations with Dr. Nur Fadhil Lubis, who is also an API Fellow, it was revealed to the author that no one has studied the phenomena of ‘Mandailing Islam’. The author then visited tombs/mausoleums of Mandailing religious leaders, *pesantren* (Islamic schools), historic mosques and *waqf* (Islamic endowments). Previously, he had visited cultural heritage sites like tombs/mausoleums of the progenitors of Mandailing clans,

sopo godang (council house), and *bagas godang* (dwelling of the *raja*).

The author and his travelling companions had the fortune of being treated with a *zikir*¹³ session by Raja Syahbudin at his home in Maga, where he and his companions were stationed during their stay in Mandailing. The author also attended a *zikir* session marking a wedding ceremony in Maga in September 2002. This latest visit gave the author a glimpse into the practice of Islam in Mandailing society, a subject that has been largely ignored by Mandailing scholars themselves.

In stark contrast with many Islamic settlements or towns where the mosque takes centre-stage, in traditional Mandailing settlements, the most prominent buildings are the traditional *bagas godang* and *sopo godang* buildings. The indigenous architecture of Mandailing *rajas*' tombs do not conform to the appearance of typical Islamic gravestones found throughout Indonesia and Malaysia. However, the traditional architecture of Mandailing mosques is presently giving way to globalised Islamic architecture, that is, the Moghul-style mosque of domes and minarets. Likewise, the same pattern is observed with gravestones – even the dead are not spared from the imposition of globalised Islamic culture.

The author's preliminary impression is that Islam has been indigenised and harmoniously integrated into Mandailing *adat*, culture and way of life. That is to say, the interpretation and application of Islam in Mandailing is very different from that of the Minangkabau. The Minangs are matrilineal and adopt a position of custom based on Islamic law (*adat basandi syarak*), while the Mandailings are patrilineal and adopt a position of *adat* on par with Islamic law. This is reflected in the maxim *ombar do adat ugamo*, that is, the *adat* is on equal footing with Islamic law.

The latter understanding is closer to the Madinan tradition (*amal* of Madina)¹⁴ than to the Shaf'ie *madhhab* (school of thought) dominant today in Malaysia and the Indonesian archipelago. In the Madinan tradition local custom *urf* is regarded as part of public benefit or public good and is to be encouraged so long as it does not go against Islamic law.

Traditionally, Islam is expressed in Mandailing terms and not in Arabic terms as with Malay-Islam. Of late,

Middle-Eastern, Indonesian and Malaysian brands of Islam appear to be making headway. Thus, there is a need to promote an understanding of an indigenised Islam distinct from globalised Islamic trends promoted through the mass media and through global Islamic publications such as annual calendars. *Madinan Islam* offers a critique of the present situation in which Muslims find themselves and also a way out of this predicament. The challenge of traditional Mandailing leadership is to retain this unique way of maintaining and reconciling traditional customs with the Islamic religion in the face of globalised revisionist-modernist Wahhabite (Arab)-Islam and regional statist Malay-Islam.

Alternative economic and development models

Concerned citizens, interest groups and communities the world over are looking at alternative models of economics and development. Over the past two decades, there has been a flood of literature about organic farming, natural medicines, back-to-nature lifestyles and so on. Interestingly, the initial four-year development plans for the Mandailing-Natal district prepared by consultants that included academics took 'green' approaches into account in their development module.¹⁵

In this regard, the author himself has written works particularly on the re-introduction of bi-metallic currency and commodity trading as a means of exchange. The author has been actively promoting this at the regional and international level. In Malaysia, the Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, has taken this on and adopted bi-metallic currency as a parallel currency to the US dollar.

Since the translation and publication of the author's *Jerat Utang IMF* (1998) and *Dinar Emas Solusi Krisis Moneter* (2001) in Bahasa Indonesia, the movement to promote these alternative currencies has gained greater momentum. Nusantara Islamic Mint in Bandung and Yayasan Dinar-Dirham (Dinar-Dirham Foundation) in Medan have been set up to promote the minting, and the usage of gold and silver currencies respectively. In fact, *Logam Mulia* (literally Noble Metal), the Indonesian government mint, has already minted gold and silver *dinar* and *dirham* coins.

Recognising that the district of Mandailing-Natal has been a gold-producing region since time immemorial, the author initiated talks with Dr. Helmi Thalib, a founding

member of Yayasan Dinar-Dirham on the possibilities of setting up a *Wakala* (clearing house) in the district for the purchase of gold nuggets procured by the local population through *dulang* (panning) washing as well as for putting gold coins into circulation. A proposal is being prepared for sponsorship by Bank Muamalat, to be followed by a field survey in Mandailing-Natal district. The Yayasan will also approach the local government for its support in this project.

The idea is to explore the possibilities of introducing a distinct currency for the Mandailing-Natal district in the light of regional autonomy and of making it a distinctive part of the Mandailing identity.

In order to address the question of poverty in Mandailing-Natal district, the author has been told by Dr. Rizali H. Nasution, a Mandailing and the chairman of Yayasan Pokmas Mandiri (Foundation for Self Reliance of Groups of [Poor] People), a micro-finance institution (MFI), about plans to introduce micro-credit in Mandailing starting in mid-2003.

A Mandailing website / database

Currently the dual-language (Bahasa Indonesia/Malaysia and English) Mandailing website has around 200 pages of text and pictures, and has on average of 20,000 hits monthly. The Toyota Foundation gave seed funding to set up the site in 1998. The author has been maintaining it at his own expense since then, for it serves as a database of Mandailing studies as well as a gateway for cultural tourism to the Mandailing area. Mike Ionescu, who is currently upgrading and updating the Mandailing website, has suggested that the capacity be increased ten-fold from its current capacity and to host it on another server. At the moment the website is being hosted on a server based in Malaysia.

The benefits of increasing the website's capacity as well as changing its server will be to make it faster, to allow for the posting of photographs suitable for making reports and for general expansion. Mike has also suggested that the contents of the website be converted into Microsoft Word document format and sold as CDs. Arbain Rambey, one of Indonesia's leading photojournalists and national daily Kompas bureau chief for the province of Aceh, North Sumatra, West Sumatra and Riau (Sumbagut), has offered the use of his photographs for the website.

Mandailing photographic exhibition

From 14 to 30 September 2002, the author went with Arbain on a photographic expedition to the district of Mandailing-Natal. In this exercise, he acted as a guide while Arbain captured Mandailing and Natal in pictures. All in all, Arbain took 42 rolls of both colour, and black and white photographs, for the purposes of documentation as well as exhibition. Arbain took pictures of the remains of the pre-Islamic (*sipelebegu* – traditional faith of ancestral reverence, Hinduism and Buddhism), Islamic, Dutch and Japanese as well as post-Merdeka periods. One of Arbain's photos of a traditional dentist in Pasar Maga, Mandailing was featured in Kompas.¹⁶

On 12 October 2002, an exhibition of Arbain Rambey's photographs from this expedition was launched at Gallery One in Medan. Ibrahim Champion, a long time friend of the Mandailings, owns the gallery. The exhibition entitled *Jejak Mandailing* (literally, Mandailing Trails) displayed a total of 53 frames and was to run for one month.¹⁷ In conjunction with the exhibition, a group discussion was held on the question of Mandailing identity, with a panel including Prof. (Emeritus) Dr. M. Solly Lubis, Dr. Zulkifli Lubis and the author himself. The exhibition was very well received by Mandailings as well as non-Mandailings. One of Medan's leading dailies, *Analisa*,¹⁸ carried full-page exclusive coverage of the exhibition.

The exhibition had a visible impact on those who visited it. Many visitors interviewed at the exhibition showed that they did not know that Mandailing held such cultural treasures. The organisers received many queries on how to get there. For Mandailings who grew up in the homeland, Arbain's pictures gave them fresh insight into the Mandailing world which they previously took for granted. They could now see Mandailing with different eyes and in that sense, the exhibition was very successful.

The organisers, including the author, are now in the midst of trying to interest certain parties to bring the exhibition to Malaysia. The author assumes that the exhibition will be well-received by Malaysian Mandailings, many of whom have never laid eyes on their ancestral homeland, and this hopefully will trigger visits, and in the long run, sustained cultural pilgrimages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to promote Mandailing studies and cultural identity, research on Mandailing cultural heritage including architecture should be sustained and a strategy developed for an ecological and cultural base development approach/model that is sustainable and environmentally friendly. As such, the author proposes that the following recommendations be considered as a follow-up to the Fellowship:

- Translate selected materials from the Mandailing language (in Mandailing script *tulak-tulak* or Romanised Mandailing) into Bahasa Indonesia. This is critical for the study of Mandailing, simply because many Mandailing, including the author, can no longer speak or write the old Mandailing language. In addition, translate source materials from Dutch into English to make them accessible to a wider range of scholars.
- Compile and publish an annotated bibliography of references regarding matters Mandailing to promote and facilitate research.
- Upgrade, update and maintain the Mandailing website with the objective of it becoming a knowledge networking and resource site to nurture and sustain interest in all things Mandailing as well as to promote Mandailing studies.
- A conference would be desirable and timely to bring together community leaders, activists and scholars from Malaysia, Indonesia and elsewhere to debate the issues and chart a future direction for Mandailing studies. The conference would act as a catalyst for further initiatives in the following long-term goals:
 - 1) Enhancing the distinct cultural identity and worldview of the Mandailing people.
 - 2) Recovering language, culture and indigenous knowledge.
 - 3) Establishing an educational, cultural and environmental centre in *kabupaten* Mandailing-Natal.
 - 4) Restoring Mandailing traditions of governance to empower local communities and civil societies to engage in public participation in the context of Indonesia's decentralisation

process.

- 5) Strengthening the ties between Mandailings in Malaysia and Indonesia through the Internet, cultural pilgrimages, exchange programmes and common projects.

Notes

1. The key concepts are *marga* (patriclan), *kahanggi* (lineage), *mora* (wife-giving clan) and *anak boru* (wife-receiving clan) as well as *tarombo* (genealogy).
2. For a study of this, see Anthony Reid, "Understanding Melayu (Malay) as a source of Diverse Modern Identities," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32.3 Oct. (2001): 295-313.
3. See Appendix on Academic Activities.
4. Raymond Kennedy, *Bibliography of Indonesian Peoples and Cultures*, Southeast Asian Studies, Yale University, second revised edition 1974. First published in 1945.
5. A good summary of this migration is provided by Pande Maradjar, "Perpindahan Orang Mandailing" in the magazine *Mandailing*, No 11, Tahoen ke 2, Chamis 29 Maart (1923): 2-3.
6. According to informants, rubber was introduced into Upper Mandailing in 1918. See Donald Tugby, *Cultural Change and Identity: Mandailing Immigrants in West Malaysia*, University of Queensland Press, 1977.
7. This new district incorporated the Natal area on the west coast of the island of Sumatra and Mandailing, into a new *kabupaten* (district) of Mandailing-Natal. Natal adjacent to Mandailing, was never part of the Mandailing homeland but its relationship with Mandailing spans a few centuries. Through Natal, Islam and other foreign influences was introduced into Mandailing.
8. "WALHI blames destruction of forests in North Sumatra on six firms," *Jakarta Post*, 20 March 2002. See also <<http://www.ecologyasia.com>>.
9. Daftar Lubuk Larangan di Proponsi Daerah Tingkat I Sumatera Utara, 1999.
10. Those who return to the homeland from elsewhere in Indonesia and Malaysia for a short visit.
11. The performance of the Gordang Sambilan troupe from Maga has been featured in the Pulse of the Planet @ National Geographic.Com (<http://www.pulseplanet.com/current.html>) in a write-up by anthropologist Peter Zabielskis from New York University. The author assisted Peter Zabielskis in this venture.
12. Dja Endar Moeda, however, put the date of the spread of Islam in Mandailing as late as 1859. Dja Endar Moeda, *Riwajat Poelau Sumatra*, N. Venn Snelpersdrukkerij "Insulinde," Padang, 1903, 70.
13. Recitation in praise of God and the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.
14. For a critical discussion favouring the Madinan school over the other madhhabs within the Sunni school of thought, see Syakh Abdalqadir al-Murabit, *Root Islamic Education*, Madinah Press, 1993 (2nd ed.). First edition published in 1982. On the Madinan amal, see Yasin Dutton, *The Origins of Islamic Law, The Qur'an, the Muwata and Madinan Amal*, especially the chapter on "The 'Amal of the People of Madina", Curzon, Surrey, 1999. 32-41
15. See Draft Propeda Kabupaten Mandailing Natal 2001-5 and Pola Dasar Kabupaten Mandailing Natal 2001-5 published by Pemerintah Kabupaten Mandailing Natal.
16. *Kompas*, Kamis, 10 Oktober 2002, 11.
17. Gallery One is the exhibition space on the second floor of Restaurant Number One at Jalan KH Wahid Hasyim No. 1, Medan.
18. *Analisa*, Minggu, 13 October 2002, 12. The paper featured seven (7) of Arbain Rambey's photos as well as notes on the author's involvement in the exhibition.

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THE LANDSCAPE OF INTELLECTUALS' THOUGHTS: PATTANI IDENTITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF A RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

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“In the western world at least, intellectuals have the power that comes from political liberty, from access to information and freedom of expression. For a privileged minority, western democracy provides the leisure, the facilities, and the training to seek the truth hidden behind the veil of distortion, misrepresentation, ideology and class interests through which the events of current history are presented to us. The responsibilities of intellectuals, then, are much deeper than what Dwight MacDonalld called, ‘the responsibility of peoples’, given the unique privileges that intellectuals enjoy.... The responsibility of intellectuals is to speak the truth and to expose lies.” – Noam Chomsky

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘intellectual’ is often closely associated with educated people or people who ‘deal with ideas as expressed in words’ – ‘wordsmiths’ as Nozick (1986) calls them. However, the current discourse suggests including people not necessarily covered by the term ‘wordsmith’ but who bring their creativity of thought to re-interpretations of social reality. Such a role places a lot of expectations on intellectuals in terms of where they place their empathy. It is usually believed that intellectuals are deeply involved in seeking new ideas (discovery) and are heavily loaded with new inventions.¹

Gramsci divided intellectuals into four types, namely: *traditional intellectuals* who spread their ideas and become mediators between their community and the upper class, *organic intellectuals* who attempt to give their reflections on current affairs but to a limited audience, *critical types* who have the ability to be independent from hegemonic power and are able to set up foundations of freedom through alternative civic education, and *universal types* who struggle for humanism and a cultural structure that is conducive to humanity.²

As suggested by the opening quotation, Chomsky adds that intellectuals have the responsibility to reflect on meanings and give moral value to society.³ It seems that intellectuals have the task of reading into a situation and giving it a moral consideration as they reflect on

the situation. According to James Peck’s terminology, the main job of intellectuals is to make life more ‘sane, humane and compassionate’.⁴

In referring to them, Robert Nozick notes that intellectuals need not necessarily have a high level of education nor of intelligence. Intellectuals, according to him, are also defined by their ability to articulate their thoughts and ideas freely. Intellectuals have the will to express their thoughts and arguments, propagate new ideas, and read and discuss social phenomena. These intellectuals significantly contribute to shaping the social construction of society.⁵

Pattani was chosen as a case study because, historically, it used to be one of the centres of Islamic development in Southeast Asia. Unfortunately, it has today lost all that glory. The government, for a long period of time, has neglected conflicts of identity, ethnicity and nation-building in Pattani.

Islamic groups in Pattani have experienced massive discrimination, which has affected their sense of identity, their existence and their status of being powerless. To some extent this happened due to the nationalism of the Thais. Being a minority group, Thai Muslims lack bargaining power in relation to the majority Buddhist Thais, resulting in cases of discrimination. These cases emerge as instances of vertical conflict rather than horizontal base conflict, reflecting a collision between

the local identity and the national spirit. As a result, a resistance movement has arisen among the minority Muslims.

Ethnic conflict occurs when minority groups are shunted to underdeveloped areas. Conflict arises when the dominant structural element clashes with local ethnic constructs, spurring the rise of nationalism within that particular ethnic group.⁶

Ethnic conflicts can be examined from a variety of points of view. In analysing the situation of Pattani, the following aspects can be used as tools of analysis:

- 1) Factor of identity (Berreman 1991; Douglass 1988; Gaasholt 1989; Nagel 1986; Royce 1982).
- 2) Historical background (Melville and Melville 1971; Smith 1978; Wolf 1982).
- 3) Combination of other factors, among them: involvement of the military, crisis, unequal economics/politics access, injustice, elite circulation, not ending the process of defining nationalism, etc. (Gurr 1993; Horowitz 1985).

This theoretical overview will illuminate a variety of ethnic conflicts, including religio-minority-based conflicts.⁷ The discrimination faced by the Islamic minority group in Thailand is the result of an accumulation of many problems. In Gurr's view, these problems include economic injustice, powerlessness or lack of political access, inequality in the distribution of revenues and the struggle to retain an original identity vis-à-vis the creation of a new identity.⁸

In the realm of minority-majority relations, a form of domination is almost always present. This often amounts to the minority group being associated with backwardness, being subjected to subordination, and being rendered powerless.⁹

The relationship between majority and minority groups deteriorates as the subjugated minorities try to assert their political power and interests. In large part, this is in reaction to nationalisation programmes that try to regulate minority life through various laws and regulations. Using the excuse of national interest, the state imposes its prerogative to exploit natural and other resources in the minority groups' traditional domains. Such imposition has naturally been considered an abuse of rights. What is more, the government tends not to

compensate these groups for the things taken from them. This has created significant animosity among minority groups.

Minority groups exhibit distinct characteristics as compared to the homogeneous majority. Given such distinctions, minority groups tend to preserve their original identities in the face of new inventions that endanger their ethnicity. Models of resistance movements have been developed to help analyse this behaviour and will be tackled by this study.

To accomplish a comprehensive study, the analysis is divided into four sections as follows: an Introduction to present some background materials; a Preliminary Perspective section to begin the discussion with some basic information on the area of study; an Intellectual Thoughts section that brings together intellectuals' ideas covering historical overviews and the current social and political development as they relate to the Pattani situation; and an End Notes section to conclude the discussion based on an analysis of the intellectuals' thoughts.

This research was done via a combination of methods. The preliminary study was through library research.¹⁰ Insights were obtained through in-depth interviews and discussions with resource persons in Pattani, Yalla, Narathiwat and Bangkok.

PRELIMINARY PERSPECTIVE

Based on the census of 1992, Thais may be broken down by religion as follows: Buddhists (93.47 per cent), Muslim (3.96 per cent), Christians (0.52 per cent), and Hindus and Sikhs (0.01 per cent). The rest were unidentified. Within the Islamic group about 81 per cent were living in the southernmost section of Thailand (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Satun), while 19 per cent lived in Bangkok. It is mostly the Muslims in the south who use Malay as their lingua franca.

In Pattani, the breakdown of the population based on selected data is in Table 1.

Table 1
Population of Pattani, 2000*

Area	Population	Male	Female	Muslims	Per cent	Mosques	Schools
Muang	112 588	55 671	56 917	76 560	68.00	61	71
Yaring	75 013	37 042	39 970	71 352	95.12	83	76
Panare	42 494	21 074	21 420	29 136	68.56	33	33
Teluban	59 753	29 256	30 497	46 010	77.00	76	80
Mok	10 334	5 038	5 296	7 750	75.00	19	17
Ko Pho	14 549	7 333	7 216	14 454	99.35	26	25
Ku Wiang	18 002	8 884	9 118	17 315	96.18	30	23
Mayo	51 154	25 068	26 086	48 581	94.97	66	73
Yarang	80 045	39 824	40 221	77 075	96.29	97	98
Maikin	14 089	6 830	7 259	8 876	63.00	15	18
Nong Cik	66 739	33 669	33 070	58 095	87.05	71	68
Kokpur	63 516	31 138	32 378	30 514	48.04	59	54
Total	608 276	300 827	307 449	485 718	79.08	636	565

* Data collected by the Islamic Committee of Pattani, 2000

One can get a little confused with this table because it shows a mixture of data types. However, what is important here are the population figures, the number of mosques and schools, and the ratio of Muslims in the population. Table 2 shows that Muslims constitute the majority in the four provinces of Patani, Jala, Narathiwat and Satun. Other religions co-exist with Islam, making these four provinces pluralistic societies.

Table 2 below shows Muslims constituting the dominant group in these four areas of southern Thailand. Most of them are of Malay ancestry and are struggling to preserve their religion and cultural identity. They have stubbornly resisted being acculturated into Thai society and culture, going so far as to distance themselves even from Muslims of Thai origin or those who have chosen to adopt Thai social customs.¹¹ These Muslims

of Malay ancestry are determined to keep their distance from the dominant Thais.¹² This is despite attempts at envisioning a more pluralistic Thai society since Pridi Panomyong's appeal for mutual understanding.

This cultural distance has preserved the notion that Malay Muslims in Thailand are governed by 'foreigners', whose every effort at cultural assimilation is considered a threat to an ancestral identity. This in turn has nurtured resentment from the majority Thais who subject Muslims to many forms of discrimination, such as restricting their access to education, jobs and positions. While the government currently allows private Islamic schools to teach Malay, Arabic, Islamic doctrine, and local history, the long-term policy of secularisation of education seeks to supplant the Islamic schooling system in the Muslim areas.

Table 2
Data of Population and Religion 2000*

No	Area	Population	Muslim	Buddhist	Christian	Others
1.	Patani	608 276	485 718	119 090	1 733	1 735
2.	Jala	358 011	279 705	74 730	2 691	865
3.	Narathiwat	671 649	529 398	89 262	1 380	1 987
4.	Satun	260 265	200 700	59 234	212	119
	Total	1 898 201	1 495 521	342 316	6 016	4 706

* Based on data collected by the Islamic Committee of Pattani, 2000

Table 3
Trends in the Social Structure of Pattani

No	Main issue	Thai-Buddhist*	Thai-Muslim*	Malay-Muslim*
1	Location	Urban	Semi-urban	Rural areas (southern parts)
2	Population spread	Over most areas of the country	Southern areas	Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, Satun
3	Social and economic status	Advanced	Moderate	Low
4	Level of education	High school and upper level	High school	Primary
5	Occupation	Staff and peasant	Sales and peasant	Peasant or jobless

* According to the use of language and religious faith.

Table 4
Muslim Society in Pattani 2001*

Name of District	District Committees	Area Committees	Mosques	Schools	Teachers	Male Students	Female Students	Total
1 Muang	3	18	61	71	408	3 898	4 359	8 257
2 Jaring	3	18	83	76	348	3 697	4 544	8 241
3 Panare	3	18	33	33	145	1 740	1 980	3 720
4 Teluban	3	18	76	80	324	3 239	3 301	6 540
5 Maikin	2	16	19	17	82	615	712	1 237
6 Kokpho	2	16	26	25	103	1 031	1 072	2 103
7 TYDeng	2	16	30	23	152	1 201	1 261	2 462
8 Mayo	3	18	66	73	407	3 618	4 078	7 696
9 Jarang	3	18	97	98	581	5 149	5 550	10 699
10 Melan	2	16	15	18	73	709	894	1 603
11 Nongcik	3	18	71	68	338	3 294	3 756	7 050
12 Kokpur	3	18	59	54	245	2 338	2 539	4 877
Total	32	208	636	565	3 206	30 529	30 930	61 459

*From data collected by Pustaka, the Islamic Committee of Pattani, 2001

Table 3 shows the trends in social structure among the three main social groupings.¹³

From data collected by the Islamic Committee of Pattani, Table 4 shows that most Muslims in Pattani attend Islamic schools. Education is a significant component in analysing Muslim life in Pattani.

Conflict between minority groups and the Thai government is also triggered by stringent government regulations. Groups are required to register their organisations and must obtain a permit to conduct an organised meeting in a public place.

Several features of Thai social norms appear to be imposing a uniformity of behaviour in disregard of cultural and religious differences. When the Thai

emperor reigned, all Thais were required to profess a formal Thai identity, which comprised proclaiming oneself to be Thai, showing devotion to Buddha, and accepting the authority of the King. Not doing so was considered a form of disloyalty. A Siamization programme is also being pursued to standardise certain Thai practices. This seems to be an attempt to suppress all forms of regionalism.

One can conclude that the Thai government is seeking to terminate the separate identity of the Islamic minority group even though it currently allows Islamic regulation of marriage and divorce processes. Muslims consider the standardisation of Thai cultural practices as ultimately forcing on them devotion to Buddha.¹⁴ This is simply unacceptable and has inflamed resentment of the government.

Evidence of the requirement to show devotion to Buddha can be seen in The Anthem of His Majesty the King. Muslims not only have to pay respect and show obedience to the King, they must also 'confess' that they are 'servants of Buddha' as in the following:

.....
**Announcement of the Office of the Prime Minister on
 Stateism (No. 8)**

Re: The anthem of His Majesty the King

Since it was decreed that the name of the country is 'Thailand', the Government deems it proper to revise the anthem of His Majesty the King to exclude the word 'Siam' and to abbreviate the text and the tune to make the song more compact and appropriate. Hence the Council of Ministers unanimously voted to proclaim as the State Preference, the revision of the anthem of His Majesty the King to contain the following text:

We the servants of Virtuous Buddha Lord.

Prostrate ourselves in front of you with our hearts to salute the Lord of the land, the Great Thai King
 May whatever Your Majesty wish, flourish to the fullest of your virtuous heart. Be you blessed with victory. Victoriously!
 The shortened tune is to remain the same.
 Given on 26th. April, Buddhist Era 2483.

Phibunsongkhram

An advantageous aspect is the geographical location of the Muslim minority in the four provinces. To some extent, the geographical distance is an advantage because the distance from the central government provides seclusion.¹⁵

The Rattaniyom is the basic regulation in the uniformity policy. Rattaniyom No.11 can be seen as a model for total uniformity, as in the following citation:¹⁶

Ratthaniyom No. 11, dealing with the 'Daily activities of the Thais', proclaimed that:

1. Thais should divide each day into three parts, that is, the time to carry out occupational tasks, the time to handle personal matters, and the time to rest. This should be conducted regularly as a habit.

2. Thais should carry out their daily activities as follows:
 - a. to punctually eat their meals not more than four times
 - b. to sleep for six to eight hours
3. Thais should attend to their respective tasks without becoming discouraged or evasive. And they should stop to rest and have lunch for a period of not over an hour. After the working hours in the evening, they should exercise by playing outdoor games for at least an hour, or engage in other tasks such as growing vegetables, raising animals or plants. After cleansing their bodies, they should have their meals.
4. Thais should use their spare time at night to finish off their work, converse with members of their families or friends, educate themselves by listening to the radio, read, or go for entertainment or art exhibitions.
5. Thais should spend their holidays in manners useful for their bodies or mind such as religious activities, listen to a sermon, make merit, study, travel, play games or rest.

This call to uniformity can raise issues of discrimination. However, it is less likely to affect other groups as they tend to be more flexible in handling religious differences, but it is different for Muslims because the government has also imposed other edicts on using the Thai language, on adopting Thai names and on embracing Thai culture.¹⁷

Nationalism, according to Anderson, is, "Nothing worse than a person's faith in the moral duties incumbent on citizenship become a substitute religion."¹⁸ The Thai brand of nationalism, Siamization, is an attempt at homogenizing those who are different from the majority. This compulsory process and the idea of uniformity are factors that have strongly influenced the change in the education system, local language used and the social construction in the South. It is a major factor in the rise of the resistance movement among the Malay Muslims in southern Thailand.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE INTELLECTUALS'
 THOUGHTS**

The intellectual sees Pattani as an emergent problem that involves a complex set of factors. Therefore, it runs true to Gurr's theory, i.e. that this situation occurs because of complicated factors.

There are two different interpretations of what is happening in Pattani: the traditional views and non-traditional views. Traditional views represent those

of intellectuals whose sole source of interpretation is his or her own perspective. On the other hand, non-traditional views represent broader points of views, and are sometimes enriched with citations of 'so and so's experience and arguments'.

HISTORY OF PATTANI

A. Teeuw and D.K. Wyatt wrote in *Hikayat Pattani*¹⁹ about the meaning of Pattani,²⁰ exposing its old glory and airing its grievances after its conquest by Siam. From a traditional point of view, this history is the perfect reason to retain the spirit of Pattani. History inspires them to recreate the glory of old Pattani.²¹ The resistance is a struggle against conquest by a foreign power.²² The non-traditional view sees the history of Pattani as a thing of the past, a memory to reminisce about, whereas what ought to drive those in Pattani is the future.

ETHNICS AND ETHNICITY

The people of Pattani have no doubt that their ancestry is Malay, from whence their distinctive characteristics derive – religion (Islam), language (Malay-Jawi), and custom-tradition (Islam-Malay). Sometimes, there is no clear distinction between being Malay and Muslim, no difference between practising Islamic traditions with a Malay touch or Malay traditions that have been Islamised.²³ To traditionalists, the ethnic origin of Pattani provides it with a distinct character compared to the rest of Thailand. The government should acknowledge this distinctive character, and denying it should be a cause for resistance. The non-traditionalist view recognises this ethnic origin and considers it a contributing factor to the development of a pluralistic Thai society. Any feature that is offensive to the government should be revised.

LANGUAGE

Malay is the local language of Pattani. The language forms as much a part of the identity of the people as their religion. In fact books on Islamic teachings are written mostly in Jawi script.²⁴ Banning the Malay language, the traditionalists believe, threatens the identity of the people.²⁵ The non-traditionalist view, on the other hand, accepts a multi-lingual society as the preferred situation.

SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The state effort to fully transform traditional schools is seen by some Muslims as a way of alienating them from

their Malay ancestry and religion.²⁶ The traditional system, adopted from the education system in the *ponok*, is considered by traditionalists as most suitable for teaching Muslim values. The new education system (the *kindom* system of education) supposedly distorts the delivery of Muslim values. On the other hand, non-traditionalists believe that a dual system of education should be applied – a combination of the traditional and the new. According to them, such a combination should ease the suspicions of people about the aims of modern education.

SYMBOL AND MEMORIES

People's collective memory of their history clearly identifies their Malay origins. This memory and Islam had previously inspired them to call for special treatment and even independence from the rest of Thailand. These two things are the major symbols of every resistance movement in the South. To the traditionalists, local symbols have to be maintained in order to maintain the spirit of Pattani as a Muslim-dominated area. People are enjoined to maintain traditional sites, tombs and other historic buildings as reminders of their distinctiveness and their struggle against assimilation. The other point of view is that local symbols should nurture memories but not provoke unconstructive actions. Symbols should not be exploited as tools for anti-government agitation.

NATION AND NATIONALISM

A form of nationalism is explicitly stated in the *Rattaniyom*, a policy to create Thai nationalism symbolised by one flag. In the *Rattaniyom*, Thais are governed by a trinity: the confession of one nation (which is Thai), the confession of religion (which mostly refers to Buddha), and obedience to the King. This *Rattaniyom* was applied forcefully in earlier times.

In the traditionalist point of view, the assertion of one Thai nation in a formal document denies the Malay origin of Pattani. Non-traditionalists, however, reject this argument, saying that the aim of nationalism is to create pride in the country. Also, the sense of all groups bound together in one nation should ease the sensitivity of being a minority group as it emphasises equal relations among different groups.

MOVEMENTS

It is commonly understood that resistance movements are created because of frustrations regarding particular

programmes of the government. Three distinct forms of resistance movements can be identified: the existing but largely unheard of underground;²⁷ those who have abandoned the underground;²⁸ and new vision groups seeking more peaceful solutions.

Traditionalists believe that discrimination against the Pattani Muslims is the cause of the rise of resistance movements such as the Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO), Barisan Revolusi Nasional Melayu Pattani (BRN) and others. The non-traditionalists, however, believe that government has stopped such discrimination and urge people to take a more positive attitude as this can only bring better conditions in the future.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Traditionalists see current changes in government policy toward Muslims as an attempt to right historical wrongs. However, this is no guarantee that new policies will no longer discriminate against Muslims. On the other hand, the non-traditionalists believe that changes have actually occurred and that these should allay people's suspicions.

CONCLUSION

Being aware of the influence of globalisation, modernisation, the dynamics of economics and the political environment sheds light on Pattani's identity and the emergence of resistance movements. This is crucial to understanding the problems in Southern Thailand. The key points are summarised as follows:

1. The case of Muslims in southern Thailand reminds us of the problems faced by certain societies, which we may or may not be aware of. Some problems may be obvious and some others may not be as obvious. Details will be important in gaining more knowledge, seeking the truth and exposing lies.
2. The case suggests that any insights by people, regardless of their formal positions and education, are important in analysing the situation. Therefore, any thoughts will contribute to uncovering problems. In turn, this will call the attention of others to these problems and they can help make life more human, sane and compassionate.
3. Equal attention should be given to all three timeframes: past, present and future. Experiences in the

past that are recorded in every history of any nation; their spirit, local memories and other distinctive characteristics that are maintained, should be treated as local assets rather than liabilities. The present conditions should be seen as the good intentions of the government. The government has tried to accommodate demands by changing its policies. This should be seen as an indication that people will be able to participate in determining the future of Thailand. The resistance movement, however, should be seen as the people's right to express their reaction toward anything that is deemed 'iniquitous' (rights, treatment, access, etc.). The movement is part of the dynamics of popular government. It can be used to enhance the speed of development for a better future. In setting up the agenda for the future, what Dr. Surin called 'seized mentality' (fear of something new) has to be avoided in order to create a better and more prosperous life for all.

Notes

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15. Peter G. Gowing: Moros and Khaek, "The Position of Muslim Minorities in the Philippines and Thailand" in Ahmad Ibrahim et al, *Reading on Islam in Southeast Asia*, ISEAS, 1985, 181.

16. Omar Faruk, "The Origins and Evolution of Malay-Muslim, Ethnic Nationalism" in *Southern Thailand in Islam and Society in Southeast Asia*, 254-5.

17. See Masdar Hilmy, "Minoritas Muslim di Asia Tenggara di Tengah Pergumulan Identitas dan Dilema Integrasi," paper presented at *Workshop on Minoritas Muslim Asia Tenggara*, IAIN Sunana Ampel, Surabaya, 6 July 2000.

18. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the origin and spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983 which has been excerpted by Gerd Baumann, *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic and Religious Identity*, New York and London: Routledge, 1999.

19. See A. Teeuw and D.K Wyatt, *Hikayat Pattani*, KITLV: The Hague-Martinus Nijhoff, 1970.

20. See for example the excerpt of Tashilu Nailil Amani, quoted by Hj. Wan Mohd. Saghir Abdullah, *Al 'allamah Syeikh Ahmad Al Fathani, Ahli Fikir Islam dan Dunia Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1992, 57.

21. Interviews with the traditional ordinary Muslim villagers indicate that they will support the movement for Pattani's independence. This analyses is based on some unrecorded interviews with various classified respondents in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat during field research, September-October 2001.

22. Respondents mentioned that some people still could not accept the destiny of old Pattani after conquest by Siam. Therefore, there is no doubt that some people still strongly support every mechanism to bring back the glory of Pattani. This is based on interviews with formally educated intellectuals in Pattani and Yala, September-October 2001.

23. Respondents see clearly that some traditions and customs

performed by the Pattani are more Malay than Islam. Based on discussion with colleagues in Pattani, October 2001.

24. Hooker gives a comprehensive detail on the use of Kitab Jawi in Pattani and the other three provinces in the Southern Thailand. See, V.M Hooker in *Jawi Literature in Patani: The Maintenance of an Islamic Tradition*, paper, n.d.

25. Some respondents in Pattani underlined their fear of their children's losing the ability to understand and practise Islamic teachings. Based on some informal discussions in Pattani, September-October 2001.

26. Interviews with local Muslims underlined their fear of being converted to Buddhism. Interviews were conducted in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat from 2 August to 30 September 2001.

27. According to some respondents, the underground movement's ultimate end is to bring back the independence of Pattani. Therefore, they will keep struggling until that is achieved. Based on some respondents' views during field research in Pattani, Yala, September-October 2001.

28. Respondents regarded these people to be mentally unstable because they could be bribed by material or other rewards such as being promised positions, being given funds to do something, etc. Informal talk with some respondents in Pattani, September-October 2001.

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