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GROUP IDENTITY AND POLITICAL CHANGE:

THE ROLE OF HISTORY AND ORIGINS

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This paper is part of a series of studies having to do with the interaction of group identity and political change. It will deal particularly with the role of history and origins in the group identity patterns of members of several different groups of people with whom and about whom I have been exploring these matters in recent years. These groups are educated ex-Untouchables in India, Negroes in the United States, American Jewish immigrants in Israel, Chinese in Malaya, post-colonial Filipinos, and post-imperial Japanese. But first, some necessary underpinning:

By political change I mean mainly the great and obvious ones, e.g. the shift from colony to nation, the collapse of the old power systems and the rise of new ones at national, regional, and intercontinental levels. I am concerned primarily with the many other less obvious or less visible transformations that have come more slowly in the wake of these changes, the breakdown or re-arrangement of the many mythologies and assumptions and styles of behavior that governed the patterns of relationship within the displaced power systems in the past. The plainest of these are the superiority-inferiority patterns of races and cultures

established and maintained during the several centuries of Western white world dominance. Much that was given in these matters for so long has now been taken away. Many of our present great confusions arise from this disorderly re-ordering of so much human experience.

The relative place of virtually every group of people on earth has shifted in some way as a result of the massive displacements of this time. All the lights, angles, shadows, and reflections by which we see ourselves or are seen by others have moved or are moving, all the postures and styles of behavior ceasing to be what they were and more or less convulsively becoming something else. My own attempts to get a closer look at parts of this kaleidoscopic process have led me from the study of politics as such to an examination of the ways in which groups of people perceive others and how these perceptions relate to fluctuations in power and political interest. This led to efforts to see how members of particular groups were actually experiencing the impact of political change on their sense of themselves and their relationship to others, and this in turn has drawn me into an exploration of the nature and behavior of what I have been calling basic group identity.

"Identity" has become a cliché word widely and variously used.

It means different things to different people but it remains important because it plainly means something important to everybody. Like "personality" - or "character" or "soul" or even "psyche" or "ego" - it is something all God's children have but which remains elusive, its shape at any moment seeming to depend on which mirror one is looking into, or in which one is being seen, and by whom. To begin to try to see how writers of different kinds have been using the term "identity", and especially to see where and how they have been using it to link the individual to the larger social groups and processes of which he is part, a member of my seminar at M.I.T. has assembled a bibliography of well over a hundred items culled from the current literature of half a dozen disciplines, from psychoanalysis through anthropology and sociology to political science.* There is plainly not much clear order or even agreed definition among these many uses of identity, but all kinds of suggestive insights hover in and around some of them, especially at the broader end of the spectrum where the effort is being most explicitly made to explore the relation of the individual to the changing society in which he lives. Much sloshing still goes on in the still-shallow pools of "culture and personality" and "national character," but students of man,

* William L. Eilers, "The Uses of Identity," Unpubl. Ms., M.I.T., 1965.

society, and contemporary history are meeting each other at more and more points along this stream of inquiry and are, we hope, getting on toward faster-running and deeper waters.

What I have been learning myself, meanwhile, is that while every man's individual identity is unique, it is at the same time inseparable from the group identity he shares with others. I once described this by saying that while every man may indeed be an island, islands rarely stand alone but more usually in groups and archipelagoes that share many features in common. I have elsewhere used the metaphor of clustered groups of cells joined by common membranes.* Each person obviously acquires many group identities as he moves through life, but the reference here is to what I have been trying to distinguish by calling it basic group identity, made up of those shared holdings with which every person is quite involuntarily endowed from birth. Some of these are derived from his genes, some from his culture's past, some from its present: his ethnic being, his color and physical characteristics, his group name, its history and its origins, his nationality and national consciousness, the economy and geography of the land

* See "Group Identity and Political Change," International House Bulletin, Tokyo, April 1964.

of his birth, the legacies of his culture - language, religion, inherited value system - his family's social, economic, and political threshold, and, indeed, all the larger impinging circumstances of his time.

I have observed further that the essential function of this basic group identity is to furnish an individual with the sufficient measure of self-acceptance, self-esteem, and self-pride which his own individual identity does not always grant him. It is chiefly in relations with members of other groups that these elements of basic group identity become the essential determinants of group self-esteem. These relations occur at many levels and in many ways and in many conditions, but by far the most important of these is the political condition, i.e., the status of power in which the group identity is held. How dominant or how dominated is the group to which the individual belongs and how, therefore, is he able to bear himself in relation to others? This, I believe, is the cardinal question, and if it has been important in times of relatively stable relationships, it has become all the more so in a time like the present when all systems of power are being changed, all group relationships being revised, all group identities being forced to rearrange themselves to meet transforming circumstances. This is the current condition of all sorts and kinds of men and it is from some of them going through this experience in different:

settings that I have been trying to learn something about its nature.

The elements of group identity sort themselves out in many different weights, shapes, and measures, play different relative roles for different groups, and, under the pressures of external change, produce different levels of intensity of problem or crisis in the lives of individuals. It is probably impossible for these differences to be scaled or measured without ironing out too many of the varieties of the experience as it appears from group to group, from sector to sector within any single group, and from individual to individual. It is not always possible to draw the simple straight lines that classification requires or to flash some kind of automatic signal when one passes from one shaded area into another. Yet it is needful to distinguish, for example, between what might be called a group identity problem and a group identity crisis and to be aware that there are gradations in-between even if they cannot always be precisely named or located. The issue may gnaw deeply into the awareness of some members of a group and not of others. Some may escape this awareness none of the time, some may do so some of the time, while many find it possible to ignore it altogether while they go about their daily concerns. For some it can become an issue which overhangs every hour of life and which a person must resolve in order to function

and to meet even the simplest continuing needs of his everyday existence. In the sense of these differences, I would classify Filipinos and Japanese as having group identity problems, and educated ex-Untouchables in India and Negroes in America as going through group identity crises.

It is also going to be necessary to try to show how the various elements of group identity order themselves in any given case, a ranking of importance or saliency which varies greatly from group to group. Sometimes it is one element, sometimes another, sometimes two or more in combination, which become the nuclear center around which all the other elements move and to which they relate, e.g., as with color and physical characteristics for American Negroes, nationality or national consciousness for Chinese in Malaya, or what one might call awareness of nation for the Japanese, or history and origins for the ex-Untouchables in India. It is this element of history and origins - to which I have sometimes referred by the broader term culture past - that I will attempt here to trace through the patterns of interaction of group identity and political change as I have observed them in the six groups I have studied. If I were to attempt to shorthand it by a choice of verbs to describe what each of these groups wants to do to its past, I would come up with the following:

and repressions, or with special forms of neurotic social behavior by individuals (as in instances of Negroes or Jews "passing" in a predominantly white and Gentile society just as some educated ex-Untouchables "pass" in caste Hindu society) that one thinks of any comparable efforts to erase the past. There are parallels of a kind to be found historically, perhaps, in groups which have from time to time revised or recreated the myths of their origins in order to fit them more satisfactorily to some new set of circumstances, usually the passage of a group from some lower to some higher status, e.g., the passage of barbarian hillsmen into the milieu of more civilized lowlanders, or of former slaves to the position of freedmen. This kind of social climbing, and the re-writing of group history to go with it, has occasionally occurred in India where over lengthy periods some lower castes - though never Untouchables - have been able to hoist themselves into some more prestigious standing or association. There are partial parallels also, perhaps, in some aspects of the more recent passage of many peoples from colonial subjection to sovereign nationhood. In the pulling down of the flags, statues, and monuments put up by the erstwhile conquerors, there is some shadow of this effort to make non-history of a past of which a group is ashamed. It is not the same thing, however, as the use of the Orwellian memory chutes by the modern totalitarians in Russia and China, although there might

be some touch of resemblance to it in the need felt by some persons at certain periods in both these societies to efface backgrounds - "bourgeois" or "landholding" - which have become liabilities in the new situation.

None of these possible or partial parallels, recent or remote, seems to me, however, to have quite the ingredient of total shame and total rejection and total desire to efface origins which characterizes the newly-emergent ex-Untouchable who is seeking some tolerable way of new life for himself and his children. He views his past as totally shameful and degrading. He sees nothing in it that he would preserve or retain or pass on to his own family. Indeed it is precisely the experience of emancipation through education and his rise up the social-economic ladder that has led him to feel this shame where his fathers and grandfathers knew only passive acceptance. What he wants now, more than anything else, therefore, is to be quit of this past altogether, to keep his children from ever discovering what it was, to have them grow up without the deformities of mind and spirit which he fears this knowledge would impose upon them. As I have reported in some detail elsewhere* the ex-Untouchable in India is emerging into a society that is not itself changing rapidly enough to receive him

* India's Ex-Untouchables, John Day Co., New York, 1965.

on the new basis that is now required. He obviously cannot achieve the total severance he seeks from the past either for himself or for his children. As a result he passes into a kind of semi-limbo in which he is no longer quite subhuman, but also, by the still-prevailing standards and practices of Indian caste, not yet quite human either.

Historically, not a few Untouchables sought escape by embracing other faiths and became some of the earliest members of the Christian and Moslem communities in India but continued in many cases to retain some measure of Untouchable status even as Christians or Moslems, and even over many generations of time. More recently one large Untouchable group, the Mahars of Maharashtra, followed their great leader, B.R. Ambedkar, in mass conversions to Buddhism, but this has proved to be even less of an escape for them, and they remain a relatively small group of only two to three million; the greater bulk of India's 65,000,000 ex-Untouchables remain within the Hindu fold. Among educated Hindu ex-Untouchables, there are many who hope that they can remain in their place but achieve a more tolerable caste status by acquiring touchability, thus allowing them to blend into the greater mass of other caste groups. Others solace themselves with the hope that all caste groups will disappear so that all can start afresh under the common mantle of the newly-born Indian nationality

that belongs to all. It is not possible to suggest that either of these prospects - achievement of touchability by Untouchable castes within the cast system, or abolition of caste altogether - is likely to come to pass at any time soon, not at the present pace of social change in India. In these circumstances, the individual's best small hope is to disappear by "passing" into some more acceptable, i.e. touchable caste, and even in this he is badly blocked by the powerful persistence of caste as the governing framework of the society and the difficulty - indeed, the near impossibility - of concealing one's caste identity when it comes to the crucial occasions of marriage and death. In their own particularly poignant way, the ex-Untouchables of India cannot escape their history, not yet, and not for a long time to come.

* * *

Negroes and Africans

American Negroes seek not to erase their past but to rediscover it, to find in it those prideful associations and sources of self-acceptance so largely lost to them during the long period of their submergence. This has to do with their past as Americans and also with that part of their history and origins that lies more remotely in Africa.

There were some Negroes in America who for a long time did

want to efface the past, or more particularly their own personal connection to the slave past, and they managed this by having or claiming to have descent from Negroes who either never had been slaves or else gained their freedom at some satisfactorily early stage. This was one form of adaptation common among one narrow segment of the Negro community and it is the kind of thing which has been all but swept away by the quickened changes of the last decade or so. Now the accent is on a strong counter-assertion of the tradition of the freedom movement among Negroes with a gallery of martyrs and heroes going back at least as far as the history of the Republic itself. This tradition has only in the last few years been brought into the more common view, among both Negroes and whites, by the growth and spread of a new literature. It has been introduced into school texts to replace those which hitherto ignored it or emphasized the opposite themes of lowliness and subordination and which for generations had served to create and reinforce the characteristic patterns of Negro self-rejection and self-debasement. This burden of shame and ambivalence about the past is being rapidly shed, all the more quickly since the manner of the most recent sweeping advances by Negroes has taken on such an heroically triumphant cast. Whatever may be the other dislocations to come up across this time of transition, long before another school generation makes its way up through the grades,

Negro Americans will no longer lack for sources of prideful association with their American past. Sharply contradicting Carlyle's fatuous maxim - "Happy are the people whose annals are blank in history books" - Negro Americans will not be more content until their pages of this history are filled and have become part of the common knowledge of the nation.

The problem of blank pages remains more acute in the matter of their remoter past in Africa, which has also begun to come into new focus in this time. The recent African emergence and the establishment of independent black states in Africa have done a lot to modify the notions held by many Negro Americans both about themselves and about their African origins. But in this relationship there are profound complexities, depths of feeling and experience that have only begun to be stirred and are going to take a much longer time to be plumbed. I have attempted elsewhere to report in some detail on what I have found to be some of the essences of this matter.* Imbedded in the Negro American's view of Africa over the generations has been the core of his deepest sense of himself. This has had to do, centrally and crucially, with his physical being, his color and physical characteristics, his blackness and his Negroidness, and the values placed on these

* The New World of Negro Americans, John Day, New York 1963.

characteristics by the over-ridingly dominant white world and internalized at great depth for a long period of time by Negroes themselves. Here, I believe, lies the crux of the Negro group identity crisis, and in it the Negro's physical being and his history are closely embraced. The white world has pictured Africa as the "continent without a history" and of black men as standing somehow apart, left behind in a primeval past, untouched and untouched by the mainstreams of development of human civilization. This has been the notion of nothingness or non-being or invisibility that has dominated the white man's view of the black man and became the black man's view of himself during the centuries of white domination.

Negro resistance to this image of their remoter origins began to assert itself in America long, long ago, and the record of it will be found in a slender but continuous succession of works that stretch from those of Martin R. Delany and others before the Civil War through those of Alexander Crummell followed by W.E.B. DuBois, beginning at the turn of this century, and in the output of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, founded in 1915, and especially of its director, Carter Woodson, and others after him and since. This is a literature of many different kinds and levels but much of it represents a brave and dogged determination, maintained by many stout and remarkable individuals in the face of the universal rejection and contradiction of the self-assuredly

dominant white world, to rediscover a heritage in which black men could take pride.

Africans have joined in this effort only much more recently. African movements of self-reassertion began much later than those in America but came to their climaxes much more swiftly. Given the international political circumstances of the 1950s, the departure of colonial power from Africa was quick, almost precipitate, and Africans were vaulted into independent nationhood with great and sudden speed. A black poet, not an African but a French West Indian, had produced the concept of negritude, seeking in some mystical element in a common blackness the source of a new African self-esteem. This was now joined by the less poetic British African notion of an "African personality" to perform the same needed function. In the face of inevitable national and tribal conflicts and collisions, these mystical or semi-mystical notions of a racial or continental community among Africans are not likely to go far very soon in serving the needs of a common self-esteem. Meanwhile the names chosen by some of the new states, Ghana, Mali, and more recently, Malawi, suggest the presence of the impulse to regain contact with the more distant African past and in some of these countries fresh efforts have begun under various auspices to rediscover a history long lost or unknown.

This is going to involve the creation of new myths as well as the recreation of old ones, new versions of facts, new

interpretations - all the essential business carried on by the historians from generation to generation - and we may be in for some lively exchanges of ethnocentric notes and beams as the shutters are opened more widely on the fields of history and more eyes see in more different ways what is there. Winston Churchill has said something to the effect that history is a people's memory and - if only from his own example as historian - we know how self-serving memory can be and indeed usually is. Scholarship in history performs the role of refining the myths by the constant searching out, ordering and re-ordering of the "facts" and its resemblance to reality increases mainly as its versions and interpretations multiply. It is hardly possible to doubt that these refinements will appear soon enough as the effort continues, with increasing rigor and discipline, to revise the common state of awareness, among black men and white, of the black men's place in the human story. In this greater and deeper redressment and re-assessment of the remoter past, Negro Americans and emergent Africans share a common need and have a great common stake.

* * *

American Jews and Israel

Unlike people who carry the burden of having a history of which they are ashamed or of seeming to have no history at all, Jews are people who had almost nothing but their history to serve

them for centuries as a major source of self-esteem. Their religion, based on a body of laws and on a tradition that consists mainly of the history of their origins as a people, served as the main carrier of this sustenance over an extended period of time. During this time, Jews lost most of the other normally-shared features of a single people, including even such common physical characteristics as they might ever have had. Even their religion, as far as its specific formal practice was concerned, eventually split into several segments and took on, like the physical appearance of Jews, a great number of different local colors and variations. Being a "Jew" meant, as far as any universal or common definition could go, being a person linked to a certain history involving an ancient Law, the idea of a single God, and the conviction of being chosen to do that God's business on earth. This was a history of origins, moreover, meshed into the origins of what is called Western, or "Judeo-Christian" civilization as a whole. At various times and places through the centuries of the Diaspora, many Jews "disappeared," as individuals and sometimes in whole groups, and many more suffered all the varieties of self-hatred and self-rejection that afflicts despised and subordinated groups. But this essential view of the Jewish identity framed by the tradition of Jewish history was apparently enough to sustain the greater number of Jews for a remarkably long time in their unique apartness

and to arm them against the rejection, hostility, and persecution that reached its culmination in the Hitlerian holocaust.

The re-establishment of Israel as a Jewish state after an interval of some 2,000 years was an attempt by Jews not only to find ground on which to defend themselves against extermination but also to fix a political framework once more for the Jewish separateness, to establish a national sum for their many parts. It presents in some ways perhaps the most dramatic of all our current examples of the impact of political change on group identity, for in Israel today, where Jews have gathered from some seventy odd countries all around the world, the question of questions is: who and what is a Jew?

This question is wrapped up into a great swirl of cloudy confusion, unhelped by any light at night, and involves in some way for every Jew every aspect of the group identity complex, name, color, physical characteristics, nationality, history and origins, and the mix of culture-past and culture-present out of which the new Israeli identity is to be formed. Of these no one is more centrally fixed or more emotionally charged than the matter of history and origins.

It is a strongly-held view of Israel's Zionist elite - developed by its elders when the return was still only a remote dream and now strongly embraced by Israeli-born youth - that the last prideful

chapter of Jewish history ended when the last Israeli resistance to the invaders collapsed in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and that the Diaspora that followed was a long dark age in which the Jew became a creature of weakness and shame. In this view, proper Jewish history was resumed only in 1948 when the State of Israel was recreated by fighting Jews and all Jews could become Israelis again. This strongly positive view of the glories of the remote Jewish past has as its underside a strongly negative view of Diaspora Jewry, and above all of East European Jewry from which this Zionist elite itself stems and from which its younger Israel-born members are barely a generation removed.

In the flow of these attitudes and feelings about the past, different pools of meaning have begun to form around the terms "Jew" and "Israeli." One comes upon them readily enough in Israel now, among both the old and the young of this tradition, but especially among the young. To be an "Israeli" means not to be the "Jew" whom the Gentile world held in contempt for so long, and this is essentially the "Jew" represented by the whole stock of anti-Semitic stereotypes built up around the Diaspora Jew, or more specifically around the East European Jew. Being in Zion means to be no longer a pale and puny and money-trading "Jew", but a tan and muscular and strong soil-tilling "Israeli," no longer cringing and defenseless, no longer a homeless Yiddish-speaking wanderer

unwanted everywhere, but a Hebrew-speaking citizen of one's own ancient land, reclaimed by force of one's own arms and prowess and stoutly held by the same means. These attitudes get rather sticky when taken by brash young Israelis in relation to the great majority of Hitler's victims - some of their elders choose less extreme language at this point. But this remains an integral part of the new Israeli self-image gained by cutting across 2,000 years of Jewish history and picking up the threads of that more glorious past broken long long ago. It re-establishes the primary place of the national-historic tradition in the Jewish identity, displacing the religion to which Zionists most commonly give small place or no place at all, either as socialists who reject religion in general, or as Zionists who reject post-Biblical Judaism as part of the unwanted baggage of the Diaspora. It is the essence of the view so often bluntly stated by David Ben Gurion, longtime premier of Israel, that the Jew who does not return to Zion ceases to be a Jew in the true, i.e., the Zionist sense of the word. He dooms himself to remain a "Jew" in the shameful Diaspora sense, or to disappear into the Gentile majority, the fate usually predicted by Israeli Zionists for the great mass of the 5,000,000 Jews who are Americans.

As might be readily imagined, not many American Jews subscribe enthusiastically to the Ben Gurion-Zionist view either of the

Jewish past or of the American Jewish future. American Zionism and American Jews generally gave decisive backing to the early settlement of Palestine and to the struggle for the creation of the state and they continue to give it much-needed support now. The problem of the future relationship between American Jewry and Israel has been and continues to be heavily debated, but I think it is accurate to say that for the great mass of American Jews the main issues - at least as they are stated by Ben Gurion - are hardly even debatable. They do not have any intention or expectation of migrating to Israel to become Israelis. They do not expect to have to cower under any future anti-Semitic persecutions in the United States. They do not expect to disappear into a homogenized American society. Certain rather strongly contrary propositions appear in the argument: (1) that as American society becomes more and more effectively a plural society, the integration of American Jews is reaching the point where the great majority of them see no contradiction or even any hyphenation between being Jews and Americans; (2) that instead of being wholly assimilated - as some are and will be - into American Gentile society via inter-marriage and abandonment of their religion, the great bulk of American Jews are assimilating American history as part of their own history and are shaping themselves into a distinctive group enjoying whatever it is that unites them as Jews while sharing with all

others their common holdings as Americans; (3) that the element that will be decisive in maintaining a community of Jews within the American society will be the maintenance of the beliefs and practices of the Jewish religion in whatever changing forms it acquires in the American environment; and finally (4) that while this process is a long way from resolution, whether in Israel or America, the logic of it clearly suggests that in the two places Jews will arrive at quite different rearrangements of the assorted elements of history, nationality, and religion, in coming to new decisions about who and what they are.

Of the 5,000,000 American Jews, a tiny handful of 10,000 or so have joined the 2,000,000 other Jews from other countries who are becoming Israelis in Israel. This small group of immigrants forms a special enclave of its own in this many-sided rearrangement of Jewish locations and identifications. In their experience of trying to become Israelis, this set of issues gets most sharply and dramatically drawn. It was among members of this group that I conducted my own small inquiry in Israel and I shall be reporting elsewhere at length on the ways in which they reflect and illustrate the uniqueness of having a history not only as Jews but also as Americans. Being Jews and Americans turns out to be quite different, especially in Israel, from being Jews and anything else.

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Post-colonial Filipinos

The group identity patterns that appear most visibly on the open surfaces of Filipino life are those having to do with the various regional identities - Tagalog, Visayan, Pampangeno, Ilocano, etc. - which are still most meaningful to most Filipinos. There are other deeper and stronger feelings less directly expressed among Filipinos about their various ethnic mixes, about having Spanish or Chinese antecedents, about being darker or lighter-skinned, or having this or that kind of eyes or nose. In suggesting, however, that Filipinos feel a need to resolve their past, I am referring to the layering of Filipino history, of its Malay, Spanish, and American parts, among which some Filipinos have begun to search for an identity that they can feel is distinctively their own. Their problem arises out of the troubling fear that some of these searchers - writers, scholars, a few politicians, and some of the new radical youth - seem to feel, that they are a people who have always taken on and worn the features of others, that nothing authentically Filipino is there.

Out of this has come an impulse to look with new eyes at the remote "Malay" past. The peoples of the Philippines come from the same "Malay" or other aboriginal stock that peopled most of Southeast Asia in the prehistoric past. In the Philippines this ancient stock and its culture has been

best preserved among the mountain tribes. Until just recently these hillsmen were looked upon by the Christian Filipino lowlanders as pagan, primitive, and savage. Now the hill people are beginning to be seen by some as older, purer brothers, untainted by Spanish or Chinese infusions, or by any of the multiple borrowings of foreign ways and creeds. There is now a government Commission on Integration whose job it is to restore the mountain peoples to their rights and dignities as citizens of the republic though no one is sure whether the aim should be to assimilate or to pluralize. There is a certain cult of romantic glorification of the tribal arts, dance troupes dance their cances, scholars collect their artifacts, artists carve and paint their rough-hewn lines and bright colors. This new view of the remoter past has made its way also into the realm of high policy, the "common Malay stock" becoming a major theme in the rhetoric surrounding the abortive "Maphilindo" pact which linked the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaya for a few weeks in the summer of 1963.

The resurrection of the "Malay" past evidently can become a mixed matter as far as the search for new sources of self-esteem is concerned. It seems peculiarly relevant in this context to remark that the Malay peoples of southeastern Asia took - or were taken - more completely than any other by invading alien religions, Islam in Malaya and Indonesia, and Roman Catholicism in the

Philippines. The new arrivals found some Hindu underpinnings, also brought long before from the outside, which had been superimposed on animism of the primitive indigenous cultures. Some of these survived more or less intact as in Hindu Bali, but both Hindu and animist backgrounds showed through mainly in the way the new dominant beliefs came to be held and practiced. Whatever may be the meaning of this greater permeability, it would seem at least that all the "Malay" peoples have to dig a lot harder to uncover their own distinctive past greatnesses than, say, the Indians or the Chinese. Indeed, some Filipinos with whom I discussed this matter of their remoter ancestors seemed not only not to draw pride from the association but appeared to blame them for the meekness and weakness with which they received, accepted, and buckled under to foreign conquering force, whether of arms or of creed or both.

The Philippines, in any case, were much more thickly-layered-over than the other colonized areas of Southeast Asia. The British and Dutch colonial systems left bad enough alone, much more alone, and thus allowed much more of the previously-existing cultural systems and practices to survive. During their 300 years' rule, the Spanish reshaped much more of what they found and this was done primarily through the Catholic Church. The Church became the principal instrument of Spanish power and placed its heavy imprint on the whole culture in a great host of visible and invisible ways.

Revolution, when it finally came in the 1890s, was anti-clerical and anti-Church, and although the revolutionists voted for separation of Church and State (by a single vote), the Church survived the abuses of its friars and hierarchy, the revolution, and even the replacement of Spanish power by American. Neither an independent national church started by the anti-Spanish revolutionists, nor the Protestant creeds introduced by the Americans seriously dented the hold of the Church on the population which has remained more than 80 percent Catholic. This history, in any case, made and left the Philippines "the only Christian nation in Asia" - something of which the older generation was generally proud; it raised them above all the other heathen peoples of Asia. But now it makes some of the younger generation wince, because it is what makes them, they feel, "un-Asian" and keeps them separated from their true blood brothers.

Besides the pervasiveness of the religion, the Spanish impress was laid hard on every other aspect of the country's life, starting with its very name, which honors a Spanish monarch, and the name Filipino that the people now go by and the individual names many of them bear. (Filipino in the Spanish time referred only to Spaniards born in the Philippines; the local population, as in all of Latin America, were called Indios, a term of lowliness and contempt. After the defeat of Spain, the name Filipino was

appropriated by the Indios and made official by the new American rulers. The Spanish family names borne by so many Filipinos were acquired only in the smallest part by actual descent; the great bulk were given these names by official fiat in 1845.) The Spanish mode was pressed on the country's customs and folkways, its dancing, dress, and indirectly but powerfully, on its languages. Although only a tiny proportion of the people ever spoke Spanish, its accent and vocabulary were absorbed by the major Filipino tongues to such an extent that many Filipinos who never spoke any Spanish nevertheless speak English with what sounds very much like a Spanish or Latin American accent. It goes along with the strong Latin American aura that overhangs even some of the most Americanized precincts of Filipino life. People attribute many of their "ways" to the Spanish influence, the authoritarian family system, manana habits, florid styles of temperament, speech, and dress, and notions of "pride" and "honor." Perhaps most important of all, it was from the Spaniards that the Filipinos acquired their own aristocratic upper class, the land-owning mestizos, who in contrast to the Eurasians everywhere else in colonial Asia, became, in accordance with the Spanish practice established in Latin America, part of the ruling class. They remain, next to the "pure blood" Spaniards still in evidence, the most prestigious segment of the upperclass in the Philippines to this day. If middle and upper class Filipinos

are proud of anything at all, they are proudest of those features of their own life and society which they acquired, or can claim to have acquired, from Spain.

From their American period, which lasted about 50 years, Filipinos are most likely to say that they acquired their system of universal education - which gave them the highest literacy rate of any colony in Asia and the highest proportion of educated women - a new set of political ideas and a set of political institutions built on American models. From these, with all their remarkable imperfections, they somehow acquired the strong sense of a stake of their own in their society which made them the only people in Southeast Asia to resist the Japanese invasion. From these also comes the underpinning of the high degree of political stability and government-by-electoral-consensus which the Philippines have enjoyed all but uniquely among the newly-independent nations. They also acquired a more or less mangled English as a lingua franca spoken by an estimated 40 percent of the population, and a substantial slice of the urban population has acquired a more or less thin veneer of the supermarket-billboard-radio-TV-cars-cocacola-soap-sex-deodorant syndrome that passes in so many places for the typical externals of the good American life.

These different threads are woven together to make some of the more notable designs one can find in Filipino life now. The

formal nationalist tradition, the heroes, martyrs, holidays, observances, are all associated with the strongly anti-clerical 1896 revolution against Spain, while among its informal values, the society rates most highly its legacies from Spain, including its Roman Catholicism. There is no formal nationalist tradition at all attached to the period of American rule, while currently at the more informal levels of attitude and feeling, especially among younger intellectuals, there is strong hostility and rejection coupled with great ambivalence in relation to the American influence. It is difficult to resist the analogy which would suggest that the authoritarian grandfather has fared much better than the permissive father. Among those seeking to reassert the distinctive Filipino identity, no one is suggesting that the Catholic Church close its doors and when it comes to expressing national feeling by changing names, Dewey Boulevard becomes Roxas Boulevard. The painful difficulty is that it is the Yank inside these young Filipinos who can't go home no matter how much they rail at him to do so. I heard one mature professor bemoan the fact that the American colonizers undertook to establish a system of mass education; had they ignored it, as the Dutch did in Indonesia, Filipinos now - he thought - would be having a simpler time establishing patterns of their own.

Every so often, amid much handwringing talk about the lack of

any clear definition of "Filipino-ness," some one tries again to suggest that all cultures are mixtures of many near and far influences, absorbed and changed by the genius of the mixers, that neither the Spanish nor the American layers are the same things in the Philippines that they were in Spain or America. This is true, even obvious, but does not satisfy the seekers. They still want to discover what that unique "genius" of their own might be. Many Filipinos already gracefully wear their coat of many colors, but many will not wear it more proudly until they have re-woven the many threads of their history into some new design which they will be readier than they are now to recognize as their very own.

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The Post-Imperial Japanese

The myths of Japanese history play a large and obvious part in Japanese self-esteem. This is formal and most explicit among members of the older generation, but even the most radical among the young Japanese are likely to say they are "proud" of Japan's "tradition," or at least to identify this tradition as an essential ingredient of Japanese-ness.

This "tradition," to be sure, is variously seen. As a fellow-inquirer acutely remarked, those aspects of the Japanese

past that are valued and admired by young people in Japan now are called "Japanese" and "traditional," while those that are disliked and rejected become "feudalistic" and are not described as being distinctively "Japanese" at all. In the same way, what they like or embrace in the present-day culture, they call "modern," while anything about it they do not like becomes "Westernized," or "Americanized" or just plain "capitalistic."*

In general, however, it seems safe to say that most Japanese in one way or another enjoy whatever sensations there are to be gained from feeling that they are of a people with a long recorded history, and can have a sense of greatness conveyed by their historic myths, of beauty transmitted by their ancient arts, and even of romantic swagger borne by their folklore and transmitted, more currently, by their samurai films. The pride and pleasure they extract from this past is modified at various points, and one of the most important of these seems to be a strong sense of the special parenthood, or at least mentorhood, of China, a relationship that goes back a dozen or more centuries. This is what gave an almost patricidal quality to the emotions felt by some over the assaults on China that Japan began to make seventy years ago, and this is what supplies that special feeling of guilt that some Japanese feel uniquely

*Deborah S. Isaacs, "A Research Report on Some Young People in Changing Japan," Unpub. ms., December, 1963.

about China and about none of the other victims of Japan's abortive attempt to make itself master of all Asia.

While Japan's remoter history seems to remain a more or less stable element in Japanese self-awareness and self-esteem, it is this more recent history - of the last hundred years or so - that figures more dynamically in the group identity problem that now presses in upon so many Japanese, especially those of the present youth generation. The heart of this problem is their need to redefine the identity of the Japanese nation, for it is through the concept of the nation that everything in the Japanese culture-past and culture-present comes into focus. The Meiji transformation that began in 1868 created a nation that generated new kinds of power, put ancient myths to work to serve new ends, and which set out under the leadership of its armed forces to challenge Western power in Asia. Within scarcely half a century, it came astoundingly close to achieving its military objectives. But it failed to achieve and lead a real mobilization of Asian nationalism, and its military power alone, based on a fatally-narrow resource base, was not and never could have been a match for that of the United States, and Japan went down. As it was, Japan's attempted conquest did trigger political revolutions long overdue in most of Asia, but they did not come to a head until Japan itself was crushed. All things considered, it was by all odds one of the most extraordinary

near-misses in the history of power struggles.

What was crushed by the Defeat of 1945 was the nation created by the Meiji reforms, a semi-mystical system of total authority rising through all of the hierarchies of the society to the Emperor at the summit. Japan was transformed by the swift and deliberate embrace of modern technology into an instrument of power, and by the shrewd use of the old myths and new drives, into a system for total mobilization of the minds and energies of the people. This is the structure that was shattered in 1945, and since then Japanese have had to deal with the problem of reassembling themselves as a group. This focusses on the nation, the prewar generation trying to salvage the one they knew, the wartime generation plunged into a kind of apathetic despair by the overwhelming sense of having been betrayed by what they had believingly accepted, and the postwar youth generation vainly seeking larger coherences to replace the nation as the object of their allegiances. The process of change in Japan, going on alongside and within the remarkable economic reconstruction and transformation of the postwar decades, has been centered on this business of the nation, getting away from it, getting back to it, changing it, in some way recreating it, in any case trying to fill with something new, or at least something different, the empty space created at the center of Japanese life by the Defeat. The reach

out to supra-national substitutes has turned out, especially for the postwar youth generation, a grasp at painfully empty air. They have found their re-identification neither in international pacifism nor in internationalism communism, the former being cynically used by the latter, and the latter itself breaking spectacularly into its separate national parts, forcing even the most radical Japanese back on a new Japanism, a new "national communism" of their own.

This process of rediscovery and reshaping of the Japanese nation is going on at many different levels and appears in Japanese life now in many forms, from the resumed open re-avowal of the existence of Japanese "national interests" and the gradual restoration of flag and anthem as national symbols to the re-flocking of millions to the Shinto shrines on the traditional occasions. In new, and perhaps thinned-out ways, the gloss of Japan's ancient history is being made to shine again. But even more meaningfully, the task of reinterpreting its more recent history has begun. Some conservative writers have embarked on a bold effort to re-establish a more self-justifying view of Japan's wars of conquest in Asia and the Pacific during the first half of this century. Far from being a history of purely militarist aggression for which all Japanese should feel ashamed, runs the argument, it was in truth a war of liberation in Asia and must be

seen - through the dust and rubble of the defeat - as one of the great crowning achievements of the Japanese genius. In the discussion this opened, perhaps more clearly than in any aspect of the lively scene in Japan today, one can begin to see the fallen Japanese reintegrating their past - recent and remote - with their present and beginning, in this way, to put their national parts together again.

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The Chinese Malaysians

Chinese in Malaysia, like Chinese everywhere, are possessors of a Great Past, indeed, in what is often a not-very humble opinion common among them, the Greatest of all Past. As far as their view of themselves is concerned, this alone not only places them at the opposite end of the spectrum from India's ex-Untouchables but also in a class by themselves and distinctly above all other peoples on earth, certainly far, far above the Japanese whose tradition is junior by far to theirs and heavily derived from Chinese sources in almost all its important beginnings. This view was not only self-sustainingly held by Chinese themselves through their long periods of humiliation by foreign power, but has also been shared by a great many Westerners in some degree from the time of Marco Polo down to the present. As I have

shown elsewhere* it has been unadmirably seen by some as insupportable Chinese arrogance and self-love, or admiringly by others as a valid and enviable legacy from the long Chinese past. In individual Chinese, there are many highly varied forms of this self-awareness, and these are especially mixed now that the Communist regime has successfully re-asserted Chinese power and aroused respect and fear in the rest of the world.

The Chinese Communists and Mao Tse-tung himself are eclectic to a degree in how they link themselves to the Chinese past, but the link is explicitly made and vigorously exploited. How Chinese in China in their several generations are assimilating these changes, we actually do not know. Chinese abroad, no matter how far removed or opposed they may be to the new regime, are drawn or pleased or in some way stirred by the impact of revived Chinese power and importance. However they may view the Communist manipulation of cherished essentials of the Chinese heritage, they clearly share in the pleasurable sensations provided by the re-establishment of what was, from ancient times, Chung Kuo, or the Central Country, or in truth, the center of world. In any case, whether in response to the present power revival, or in continuing

* Scratches on Our Minds, American Images of China and India, John Day Co., New York, 1958.

attachment of some kind to the remoter cultural past, whether out of highly-educated knowledge of this tradition, or out of a partly-educated or even uneducated awareness of its existence, it is plainly here that Chinese self-esteem is most deeply-rooted. This seems to be true among Chinese of all kinds and classes, and especially so among Chinese overseas, even among many who are of the third and fourth generation out of China.

The major political changes that have come to China and Southeast Asia in the past two decades have given peculiarly greater importance to the emotional and political alignments of the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, and nowhere more so than in Malaysia where some 4,000,000 Chinese are grappling with the brand new problem of acquiring the brand new political identity of Malayan or Malaysian. In Malaysia the Chinese are not the relatively small minority they are elsewhere in the region but comprise nearly half the total population, and the most dynamic and energetic half at that. The other larger half are the Malays whose top leaders - sultans, princes, and related aristocrats - are politically dominant in the country, but whose mass is still largely illiterate, economically and socially backward, and apathetic. The shape of - there is also a small Indian minority - the new relations between these two groups/will determine the shape, indeed the fate, of Malaysia. These relations will determine the further internal evolution of Malaysian society and will bear with

great and even ominous weight on the way Malaysia will respond to the large new surrounding pressures, the expansionist pressure of neighboring Indonesia, with its great size and its appeal to Malay "unity," and from the other direction, the tangible and intangible aura of the new Chinese power stretching its influence over everyone's view of the future. The pattern of tenuous alliance and latent conflict which links Indonesia and Communist China also appears in Malaysian politics, where a fragile coalition links Malay and Chinese leaderships, the one bedevilled by a pro-Indonesian Malay opposition and the other by pro-Communist Chinese. These two in turn cautiously and tentatively relate to each other across the same barriers of mutual mistrust and rejection that lie between Malays and Chinese in general.

This apartness is based on a whole spectrum of things, recent and remote. It only begins with the staple explanation that in Malaya the merchants and traders are the "alien" Chinese and the poor farmers and fishermen are the "native" Malays. The truth of the matter cuts far deeper and is rooted in profound differences of cultural past, history, style of life. These differences are so great that contrary to their common practice elsewhere, Chinese have intermarried rather sparsely with Malays. The demanding rigidities of Islam have had much to do with this, but even the "babas" - the descendants of earlier Chinese immigrants who began

coming several centuries back, and who adopted Malay language, dress, food, and even sometimes took Malay mates - have generally remained unmistakably and identifiably Chinese. The greater mass of more recent immigrants, who began to come as laborers in the last century, remained much more apart, keeping to their own communities, establishing their own schools, educating their own children, keeping their own language, customs, and separate identity. They saw themselves as more or less temporary exiles from China, kept close ties to their kin there, sent money back, and planning to return themselves, if only to die or be buried there. Inevitably as time passed and many prospered, the British-controlled Malay states became "home" but never in the same sense that China remained their homeland. A small number in the Straits Settlements - directly-administered British colonies - followed the older immigrants in becoming British subjects or "protected persons." The great majority, however, remained politically as well as culturally tied to China. There was no such thing as a "Malayan" nationality and insofar as there was ever any question about it, the Chinese in Malaya mostly remained Chinese citizens. They helped finance the Chinese revolutions of 1911 and 1925-27, and supported the resistance to Japan when it invaded China in 1937. When the Japanese invaded Malaya itself in 1942, it was Chinese who organized armed resistance while most Malays more or less

passively welcomed the new conquerors. This had its aftermath in bloody clashes between Chinese and Malays when the war ended, and in a Chinese Communist guerrilla insurrection and terror campaign that continued into the mid-1950s. By negotiation and settlement with the British, the Malay political leaders and princes finally joined their sultanates into the new Federation of Malaya and became an independent nation in 1957. The chief internal social problem of the new state was the redefinition of the place of the Chinese in the new system and their relationship to the Malays.

The Malays regarded themselves as the only true "sons of the soil" and the Chinese essentially as "aliens," and built certain preferential advantages for themselves into the new constitution and new political system. These included restrictions on Chinese citizenship, land ownership, and ownership in certain specified enterprises, quotas (at four to one) on key places in the civil service and on scholarships for higher education. They saw to it that by careful weighting, the rural Malay districts would permanently dominate the Chinese urban areas in the new parliament. They declared Malay to be the national language and moved to eliminate or control the Chinese schools, and proceeded to spend large sums of government money to build elaborate mosques which were obviously for themselves alone. In sum, the new regime offered its Chinese citizens and inhabitants a species of second class

citizenship and indicated its readiness to accept participation of those Chinese who accepted this subordinate place in the new scheme of things. The Chinese leadership - essentially its conservative segment representing the sizeable economic stake of the Chinese in the society - cooperated in setting up this new system in an effort to find some new basis for future accommodations and a new status for Chinese Malaysians. But as might be expected, this brought on many new tensions and conflicts, particularly over the issue of language and control of schools, but also over broader political orientations. These issues were not relieved but simply extended when the enlarged Federation of Malaysia was created in 1963, bringing in Singapore - an almost all-Chinese metropolis - and the Borneo territories of Sarawak and Sabah. They remain the core issues in the further development of the new nation.

Obviously there are many ways in which both Malays and Chinese differ not only from each other but among themselves. The Chinese, for their part, vary in the degree of their Chinese-ness and differ sharply in their political and emotional alignments. One of the most important sets of these differences appears between the Chinese-educated and the English-educated Chinese. The Chinese educated - and this takes in the great majority right up to the

most recent school generations - are products of the privately-supported Chinese school system which focussed wholly in language and curriculum on the Chinese background. This included exposure to Chinese history and literature and, in the last few generations, the successful spread of the use of kuo-yu, the national Chinese language, or "Mandarin," as the common language of educated overseas Chinese. It also has inevitably included exposure to the major currents of political influence from the homeland, of the Kuomintang from Sun Yat-sen's days up to 1949, and more recently, the competing influences of Peking and Taiwan. This competition, incidentally, encouraged the older and more cautious operators of these schools to lapse into an official neutralism about homeland politics and this had the effect of deepening still further the commitment to the underlying Chinese tradition common to all. In any case, for the great majority of young Chinese until quite recently, this educational experience had the effect of centering their sense of themselves on China, on their Chinese origins, on Chinese classical and historic tradition, and, inevitably, on their present and continuing link to their Chinese homeland. In the present situation, this has led to political orientations which on the conservative side becomes accommodation and cautious waiting; and on the radical side to political activity aimed at creating a Malaysia that will eventually be associated in some satisfactory

alignment with China.

The English-educated - estimated at anywhere from 10 to 25 % according to how you count them - are generally those who moved at a very early age into the English-language stream, usually through mission schools and government-supported schools designed to supply the ruling regime with a supply of English-speaking employees and junior civil servants. Many retained the Hakka, Hokkien, or Cantonese dialects learned at home as children, but many lost even this limited speaking acquaintance with the ancestral tongue and remained wholly illiterate in Chinese as they went on to become English-speaking, English-reading, and English-writing. They completely "lost" the China their brothers were gaining in the Chinese schools and gained instead the history of the British Empire - England über alles - and fragments of the world of Drake Elizabeth, Shakespeare, Raffles, Nelson, Wordsworth and Tennyson. They acquired not merely a language but a body of knowledge or information, a way of life, an outlook, and a political orientation that carried them at a sharp tangent away from their Chinese-educated brothers. This is a difference made up of many things, many of them bitter, ironic, or paradoxical, but the hard essence of the matter is that to the Chinese-educated China remained the most important place in the world; to the English-educated it did not.

The English-educateds did not lose their Chinese-ness, but it no longer included the total commitment to their Chinese background, history, and origins which their Chinese-educated brothers acquired and fight to retain. Hence these are the Chinese who more than any other seriously seek a way of integrating as Malayans. Malaya has more truly become their homeland and they want - some of them desperately - to become fully qualified participants in its affairs.

In this aim they are deeply and painfully frustrated, in the first place by the barriers that the Malays put in their way, but even more, one suspects, by the blocks they discover within themselves. No matter how much less "Chinese" they may be than their Chinese-educated brothers, they remain very much Chinese vis-à-vis the Malays. They can perhaps feel that British - or Western - culture is worthy of respect and capable of commanding a major degree of assimilation on their part, even as Chinese. But they are quite unable to see Malay culture, or a Malay-dominated culture in anything like the same light. They can sometimes see a faint hope of joining with their English-educated Malay and Indian counterparts to build a new society based on the language and values absorbed from their English education, but this hope remains a feeble one given their present numbers and circumstances. On the other hand, they cannot see themselves assimilating at all

to the currently dominant Islamic and conservative Malay society which, despite its own great fragility and peril, continues to offer them nothing more than an unacceptable second-classness. Indeed, as they see themselves through these prisms, Chinese and Malays find it all but impossible now to see each other on any common ground.

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