The PACIFIC REVIEW

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Notes for Contributors

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Donald Zagoria (ed.), *Soviet Policy in East Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), pp.163–7
Lydia Dunn, 'Hong Kong After the Sino-British Declaration', *International Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 1985, pp.201–3.
Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 February 1987.
In second and subsequent references, the author's surname only and the short title of the book or article should be used, e.g. Dunn, 'Hong Kong' p.201.

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The PACIFIC REVIEW

Guest Editor's Introduction

Although Northeast Asia remains the power house of the Asia–Pacific it is becoming increasingly apparent that some parts at least of Southeast Asia are no longer so far behind. Singapore is already one of the four little dragons, Thailand and Malaysia are now clearly on the way to becoming the next nations to attain Newly Industrializing status, and resource-rich Indonesia exhibits great possibilities for development.

But the region is not without its problems, as some of the contributors to this special issue point out. The first is one of integration. ASEAN is by all measures the most successful of the non-European regional organisations, yet the degree of cooperation and coordination possible among the member states has (as Leifer shows) its limits, and the question remains (as Solidum argues) of how far the organisation is compatible with links with the major external powers. Nor is the region free of potentially destabilising territorial disputes, the most visible of which being that between China and Vietnam (analysed by Valencia). The political systems of the ASEAN states are also at a crossroads. While Thailand seems to be moving away from the military dominated pattern of the past (discussed by Suchit), Indonesia (despite the succession problems indicated by Crouch) shows little signs of following suit. Malaysia (the subject of Funston's contribution) has, meanwhile, been modifying in a direction still not precisely determined the institutions bequeathed by the former colonial power. In all three though achievements in political institutionalisation are impressive, acute political difficulties remain.

A further kind of integration will be necessary if Southeast Asia is to realise its undoubted potential. Fortunately the two developments that are requisite to this integration have now, after much delay, begun. The first is a settlement to the Kampuchea issue (discussed by Chang) without which constructive and mutually beneficial relations between ASEAN and Hanoi will remain impossible. The second is that economic reform of the Indo-China states (considered by Gunn) without which they (and Burma also, if it escapes from civil turmoil) will remain peripheral to the economic mainstream of the region.

However the most important issue (as Girling reminds us) is that of who will benefit from the new industrial economies being created in Southeast Asia. There is now no question but that the nations of the region will modify and adapt political structures and institutions to meet their particular needs. But in doing so they will need to weigh carefully the advantages of bureaucratic direction as against popular claims. In this respect also Southeast Asia must confront the same dilemma which presently faces not only the Northeast Asian political systems—China, Taiwan, Korea, and even in some measure Japan—but also many others around the Pacific rim, from Fiji to Chile.

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Development and Democracy in Southeast Asia

John Girling

Civil Society, State, Economy

General propositions

Let us begin with two general propositions: economic development gives rise to 'civil society'—i.e. *new* intermediate groups ranging from middle-class professionals to labour organisers and party officials—which in turn creates pressures for the development of representative institutions enabling the 'new social forces' to take part in decisions affecting them.[1] Such pressures for democracy, however, may or may not be effective, depending upon the obstacles they encounter, and in particular that combination of state power and economic possession which acts against democratic 'instability' in the name of economic growth and/or national security.

Civil society emerging

Thus there is a triangular relationship: civil society, state power, economic possession.[2] But in the developing world, civil society is usually only emerging, and its members often lack leverage over either 'traditional' or contemporary controllers of state power[3]—including military leaders, civilian officials, and large landowners—just as they lack leverage over the external or internal representatives (business owners, bankers, executives, investors) of ascendant capitalism. Under such circumstances, 'democracy' remains an aspiration for members of civil society; yet the rhetoric of democracy, and even its superficial forms, may be utilised by ruling élites, often to provide an appearance of modernity or a semblance of legitimacy.

Produced by economic development

But the longer economic development continues, especially if there are consistently high rates of growth, the more numerous will be the members of civil society and the more socially, if not politically, influential they will become. Civil society is the product of economic development: the more complex and differentiated the economic structure, the greater the demand for engineers, architects, scientists, corporate lawyers, at one end of the scale, and for skilled workers and technicians at the other end. Now the production of skilled workers requires a reasonably efficient primary and even secondary educational system, which in turn requires more (and more qualified) teachers, just as the production of engineers and technocrats requires an expansion of polytechnics and universities and thus an increase in academic staff, which also stimulates the demand for the products of the media and for other services. Thus with economic growth there is a corresponding growth in the 'intermediate' forces of civil society—that is, the professionals, intellectuals and organisers, who form a new layer of society, in effect prising society apart from the direct weight of a powerful élite on a powerless peasantry.

The first stage of analysis, accordingly, is the level of economic development, which determines the size and composition of civil society. (The actual role of civil society in any particular country is, of course, shaped by specific historical and cultural developments, including the influence of religion, and its institutional forms, the importance of intellectuals—for example, in organising or giving expression to nationalist movements—the openness of the existing regime to external currents of thought and activity, and so on).

Levels of economic development in Southeast Asia

Economic levels in Southeast Asia range from the 'newly industrialising' status of Singapore, at one extreme, to the relatively underdeveloped condition of

Indonesia (considering for the moment only the market-oriented countries) at the other. While Singapore, an urban city state dominated by an achievement-driven middle class and a technocratic 'political class', has an average GNP per head of more than $7,000, the average for Indonesia, with a population fifty times larger, is about $540; the figure for the Philippines, depressed by political and economic crises, is about $660; for Thailand, a favoured candidate for eventual NIC-achievement, $860; and for Malaysia, with a relatively small population, an energetic business class, and substantial natural resources, $1,980.[4]

Stratification

Differentiating from national averages, it has been estimated that only about 8 to 10 per cent of the total work force are employed in manufacturing in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand; in Malaysia the proportion is more than 14 per cent; and in Singapore as high as 24 per cent of the work force.[5] As for the middle-class proportion it is estimated at more than 40 per cent in Singapore, around 24 per cent in Malaysia (three-fifths non-Malays), in the Philippines perhaps 20 per cent (in a country where 45 per cent were living below the poverty line), in Thailand less than 20 per cent (and where one-third of the population lives in poverty), and a lower figure still in Indonesia, where the majority, especially in Java, lives in poverty.[6]

Economic Levels and Pressures for Democracy

Progress and regress

The paradox is that the two countries with the highest level of economic development, Singapore and Malaysia, were initially the most democratic in the region but have since regressed considerably, while Thailand, at a much lower economic level, has made the most consistent progress towards democracy in recent years. What can explain this divergence between initial expectation and present-day result? Here it is evident that factors specific to each country must be taken into account.

Singapore

Singapore demonstrates most clearly the trade-off between economic achievement, with substantial welfare services, and an increasingly restrictive political system. The leadership's calculation is that a tiny Chinese enclave cannot afford the luxury, either on security or on economic grounds, of a 'volatile' Western-type pluralist democracy. (The British system of government in Singapore, candidly announced First Deputy Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong in August 1985, had a fatal flaw, because it could allow a change of government . . .).[7] But whether the present authoritarian style of 'management', and the materialist acquiescence of most Singaporeans, will survive the passing of the first generation of post-independence leaders, is another matter.

Malaysia

Malaysia's major characteristic, by contrast, is its communal composition, which provided a 'natural' balance at independence between Chinese (and foreign) economic domination and Malay political and administrative control. Communalism was institutionalised in the ruling political party and thus in electoral results. Two important factors, however, have come increasingly to upset this initial balance: first, pressure from the Malays, especially emerging middle-class elements, for a greater share in the economy, at the expense both of foreign (largely British) enterprises and of domestic Chinese; and second, Islamic advocacy by opposition Malays, which often compels the 'ruling' Malay leadership to seek to undercut the socio-religious challenge by itself taking a more Islamic stance—again at the expense of the non-Malays. These two trends, accompanied by factionalism in the ruling Malay party, a slow-down in economic growth, and rising discontent among the Chinese, have pushed the present leadership in an increasingly authoritarian direction.

Indonesia

Indonesia, too, experienced a transition—but in a violent and convulsive fashion—from the pluralistic political culture of the early Sukarno years to barely disguised military domination under Soeharto. For in the early 1960s, despite Sukarno's replacement of parliamentary by 'guided' democracy, the president himself maintained a balance between religious groups, the communist-led mass political party, and its workers' and peasants' movements, and the military. Yet the economic crisis of the late Sukarno period, exacerbated by the 'diversion' of

military and mass energies into confrontation of Malaysia, stimulated greater activism by the communist party, which intensely alarmed the military. Sukarno's balancing act failed to prevent a collision between the two major opposing sides resulting, amid the polarisation of society, in the massacre of (largely unresisting) communists and their followers. General Soeharto's destruction of the only substantial organised opposition force—apart from orthodox and 'reformist' Muslims, who are obliged to act discreetly and indirectly in order to avoid repression—has eliminated any counterweight to military-administrative domination. The only modifications to appear in the last two decades have been, first, the military-technocratic implementation of 'rational' economic policies, including significant amounts of Western and Japanese aid and investment, accompanied until recently by immensely profitable oil-price increases, and the formation of often surreptitious partnerships with 'pariah' Chinese capital. Such economic developments have benefited 'strategic' sectors of the population, notably urban inhabitants and landowning peasants. The second modification is the gradual move towards 'institutionalisation' of what is still, in many ways, partrimonial rule.

Philippines

The **Philippines**, too, underwent a similar, but far less traumatic, change from a quasi-democratic system to an authoritarian one, and (unlike Indonesia so far) back again to democracy. Yet the institutional forms of democracy operating after independence obscured the reality of a highly unequal society, in which the great majority of the population consisted of barely-economic smallholders, a mass of poor tenant farmers and sharecroppers, and labourers on large estates; while on the other hand, a small landed (and commercial) élite exploited the opportunities of public office for private gain—but in a system of alternating party rule, as in eighteenth century Britain, which provided a semblance of democracy. It was precisely the corruption and exploitation in the system (which, unlike developments in Britain, was not transcended by reformers) that enabled President Marcos easily to dispose of his rivals, along with representative institutions, when he imposed martial law in the early 1970s. Marcos sought to establish a viable 'new society' based on the elimination of rival oligarchs, the reinforcement of bureacratic and especially military power, the emergence of a materially-satisfied middle class, the encouragement of foreign investment and technocratic policies, and a measure of land reform to create a contented middle peasantry. Personal rule, in the absence of countervailing forces, however, soon degenerated into 'crony capitalism'; this was followed by economic crisis (negative growth and immense foreign debts) and political and social crisis (increasing exploitation in the countryside; victimisation of opponents; and—the turning point—the assassination of Benigno Aquino in 1983). The emerging 'civil society' in the Philippines, conscious of the more open political system of the 1950s and 1960s, demonstrated its new-found influence in protest movements led by businesspersons and professionals. The climate of opposition intensified during the 1986 electoral crisis, which sparked off the spontaneous enthusiasm of 'people power', resulting in the fall of Marcos and the return to political democracy—but also the persistence of gross economic inequality—under President Aquino.

Thailand

Thailand represents the reverse trend in the region (apart from the more problematic situation in the Philippines) by virtue of the shift there from authoritarianism to democracy. Thailand, indeed, provides a 'classic' correspondence between development and democracy. Both the political and economic stages are particularly well marked. The economic turning point was Marshal Sarit's decision, with World Bank and Thai technocratic advice, to reverse the role of the state from one of support for economic nationalism and public corporations— in effect both harassing and competing with the private sector—to one of providing essential infrastructural services for the benefit of private enterprise. (It is no coincidence that Sarit, who had profitable links with large banks and big business, had in 1957 seized power from his military and police rivals, who were associated largely with state enterprises). The economic boom of the 1960s, swelling the demand for trained executives and professionals, brought about a massive expansion of universities, and thus of the student population. By 1973

it was the students who spearheaded the 'constitutional' demands of civil society against the obscurantist regime headed by Sarit's military successors. Although the democratic period was brutally cut short by a military coup in 1976, the by then less confident and more factionalised army leaders could not go back to the old days of the 'bureaucratic polity'. By 1980, Thailand had progressed to the stage of a 'bureaucratic-parliamentary compromise', in which business leaders played a prominent part.

Civil Society and Democracy

The role of civil society

What general conclusions can be drawn from the disparate experiences of these countries (excluding for the present the military regime in Burma and the communist party-states of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea) in terms of the interaction of civil society, state and economy? Clearly civil society is an important potential factor in Singapore with its relatively advanced level of economic development, but—unlike the turbulent period before and after independence— it has so far played a passive role. In a city without a rural hinterland there is no spatial check on the leadership of what is virtually a one-party state; while critical tendencies within the city's population are kept under close control. Democratic institutions exist: but given the scope for political manipulation in an 'enclave' environment, such performance (under the present leadership) has been reduced to one of symbolic representation and of providing a forum for the dutiful acceptance and onward transmission of orders from above.

In Malaysia, by contrast, traditional forms of (Malay) authority and a strong (Chinese) business sector tend to limit the influence of civil society. But the major constraint is the divisiveness of ethnic relations. Political parties which have tried to bridge the communal gap have made little headway, whether on a middle-class professional or on a populist worker-peasant basis. Democratic elections do, however, have more substance in Malaysia than in Singapore, because alternative choices to the ruling party alliance still exist (although increasingly under threat) both from within the Chinese community and among the Malays. The tendency nevertheless, despite factional instability, is towards a more authoritarian system. This tendency, by restricting the pluralistic potential of the media, and of cultural and professional organisations, favours the con-solidation of Malay control.

Despite the apparent triumph of civil society in the Philippines, resulting in the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship and the vindication of popular democ-racy, socio-economic conditions are not conducive to the dominance—as distinct from the emergence—of civil society. The Aquino regime, if it can be considered an emanation of civil society, provides a weak and uncertain intermediate structure between the restive military in its informal alliance with resurgent territorial magnates, on the right, and the revolutionary forces of the New People's Army, drawing strength from the rural victims of an extremely unequal society, on the left. Admittedly economic growth, and a fairer (i.e. politically imposed) distribution of the nation's wealth, could enable a centrist regime to survive—and in time provide the social content for democratic forms, which is at present lacking. But the Aquino government, confronting powerful and irreconcilable forces, may not have the benefit of time.

Civil society in Thailand, too, depends critically both on the level of economic development and on the 'learning process' of the military leaders. (Unlike the Philippines, however, the revolutionary alternative once presented by the Communist Party of Thailand has virtually disappeared). 'Centrism' thus has a reasonable chance of surviving, especially when it is accompanied by consistent economic growth, which is all the more remarkable in view of the sluggish growth or economic downturn elsewhere in the region. Centrism, however, still depends for survival upon particular personalities as well as on favourable social conditions. The king's prestige in addition to the military standing of figures like Prem and Chatichai are needed to tie together the bureaucratic and parliamentary components of the current compromise. But should a more assertive military leader emerge, then the delicate balance between bureaucrats and politicians

could again be upset. So far this seems unlikely. The 'compromise' is evidently in the interest of most segments of Thai society, including the ever-more influential business groups. Even the 'populist' postures of the enigmatic army commander, General Chavalit, are probably more attributable to personal ambition than to the desire to create an alternative corporatist regime.

Bureaucratic-Business Collusion

Obstacles to democracy

Civil society and democracy, it seems, have little chance of succeeding in countries where the level of economic development is low, the state apparatus is powerful, and a mutually advantageous partnership between military and civilian officials and business owners or executives operates either openly or beneath the surface. The latter is precisely the situation in Indonesia. Yet similar forms of collusion were no less evident in Thai society in the decades up to the 1970s. Is it possible that Thailand's transition to a bureaucratic-parliamentary

Indonesia and Thailand compared

system will be replicated in Indonesia? Two major differences between the two countries suggest doubts. First, despite the prevalence of coups, Thailand's socio-political evolution has been steady, if uninspiring, over the last four decades compared to the violent convulsions and extreme oscillations (from mass mobilisation and an influential communist party to entrenched authoritarian military rule) in Indonesia. The second factor is the far greater homogeneity of Thai society, where ethnic Chinese families have largely been assimilated, compared with Indonesia. Consider the dichotomies of the latter: Java and the outer islands; orthodox and nominal Muslims; a scattering of small landholders and a large mass of landless labourers, especially in Java; and ethnic Chinese economic dominance along with Indonesian nationalistic resentment.

Thailand's homogeneity and more steady evolution have bred a greater tolerance and openness, reinforcing the customary pragmatism of Thai leaders, and thus laying the foundations for fairly widespread material progress. Admittedly the earlier bureaucratic-business collusion in Thailand, as in Indonesia, operated against the formation of civil society, by trivialising and personalising the political parties, professional associations, trade unions and other interest groups; but the ossified and discredited military-dominated regime in Thailand was defeated in 1973 by the student-led urban revolt. Since then, the intermediate associations of civil society have not diminished, but gained in strength. Precisely the opposite development took place in Indonesia. To the Thai watershed of 1973, marking the break between military dominance and the emergence of civil society, corresponds the Indonesian watershed of 1965–66, where the reverse occurred.

Party-States

State domination outside ASEAN

Gramsci's distinction between hegemony (leadership) exercised through civil society, as in Western Europe, and state domination unchecked by civil society, as in Tsarist Russia,[8] is relevant to the *potential* for development with democracy among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as distinct from the *obstacles* to development and to democracy evident in the party-states of Burma, under General Ne Win and successors, and communist-led Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos. Rigid paternalistic controls supposedly fostering the Burmese way to socialism have resulted both in economic stagnation and political subordination. In Burma 'the state is everything', to use Gramsci's formula, while civil society has been alienated. Conditions in Vietnam, under communist party rule, are hardly less depressing. The attempt to impose a collective economy by bureaucratic-legalist methods after years of destructive warfare and under conditions of scarcity resembles the state of early Bolshevik rule in Russia. It is no accident that Lenin's drastic reversal of course in his New Economic Policy—encouraging peasant initiative and re-introducing market forces—now presents itself as an appropriate model for development both in Gorbachev's Russia and under the new leadership in Vietnam. It is also no accident that the entrenched party and state bureaucracies in both countries are the most formidable obstacle to 'restructuring'.

Developmental Authoritarianism

Development *or* democracy?

Lack of democracy and lack of development, as in the case of these party-states, is a condition which possesses few redeeming features. But if democracy were possible *without* economic development would this be preferable to development without democracy? The question is not a trivial one. It lies at the heart of the contrary argument for 'developmental authoritarianism', as in Indonesia under Soeharto, the Philippines under Marcos, and Thailand under Sarit (and also, until recently, in South Korea): the argument, that is, that democracy cannot be sustained until a sufficient level of economic development is achieved; and that to attain such a level requires conditions of political stability that would be jeopardised by any 'premature' exercise of democracy. The argument is not entirely self-serving, nor is it without merit. Effective economic development brings material satisfaction to substantial elements of the population—notably the 'strategic' city-dwellers, whose support is often crucial for a narrowly-based authoritarian regime, as well as better-off peasant farmers—and thus provides what has been aptly called 'performance legitimacy'.[9]

Democratic Legitimacy

The limitations of performance legitimacy

Performance legitimacy may assure material standards for a decent life (for some, or for many); but it cannot transcend its material conditions by ensuring positive safeguards for individuals, groups, classes and even races against the abuses of state officials and against the exploitation of those who lack bargaining power under the capitalist, or indeed any economic, system. Democracy alone can maintain such safeguards precisely because democracy itself requires the fulfilment of preconditions necessary for the genuine exercise of voting rights: basically, freedom of speech, association and movement; regular free and fair elections under universal franchise; and the rule of law. The last includes the guaranteed status of minorities as a safeguard against 'the tyranny of the majority'. These preconditions directly assure the protection of individuals and groups against political injustice, on the one hand, and indirectly (using political means to redress popular grievances) against economic abuses, on the other.

If such preconditions seem to be a commonplace of political life, a matter which is hardly worth emphasising, one needs only to look at the situation of countries where democratic safeguards do not or did not exist: for example, the persecution of communist 'suspects' and the harassment of devout Muslims in Soeharto's Indonesia; the 'salvaging' (murder) of those seeking the redress of grievances in the Philippines under Marcos—and its revival by vigilantes under Aquino; and the difference in India between the customary exercise of democracy and the repressive state of the Emergency.

Admittedly, an exclusive concern for the political nature of democracy, without regard for its 'enabling conditions',[10] fails to provide an answer to the basic question that has already been alluded to: if a landless or subsistence peasant family has barely enough food to survive during normal times, and will starve during a famine, what use is the right of voting in a democracy? The answer falls into two parts. First, there is a normative (and not merely a practical) purpose

Democracy confers legitimacy, affirms human worth

to democracy, which consists in the presumption of legitimacy: that is, that subjects willingly obey the rulers they (the majority) have chosen. The further presumption is that the *free* exercise of choice is fundamental to human dignity: i.e. it distinguishes the human being from the animal or the slave. But—in the second place—it is just as evident that a starving human being, or one obliged to work long hours for a pittance in order to survive, is being deprived of his or her dignity as a human being. This argument goes beyond politics. It accords with the highest standards both of great religions and of cultural traditions. The fundamental worth of a human being is violated, or degraded, by conditions of poverty, exploitation or oppression, which transform a human being into an 'animal'.

Thus, from a normative point of view, adequate political *and* social conditions are required for the genuine exercise of democracy. Historical experience, too

(at least in the West), supports this conclusion. In England, and later in America, it was the struggle against arbitrary and excessive state power which brought about the checks and balances that we associate with democracy: that is, the emergence of autonomous 'interest groups' in a plural society. But it was equally in England (and in continental Europe and in America) that the struggle against exploitative capitalism—for a truly human freedom—required the emergence of countervailing mass movements, notably trade unions, but also popular educational and cultural movements, and mass-based political parties.

Now it cannot justifiably be asserted, either on normative or on empirical grounds, that Third World countries are 'different' in these respects from the West. The *same* social forces are at work—and the *same* structural abuses are encountered—but at varying levels of development. Economic growth in Third World countries does give rise to an embryonic civil society, whose members strive to express their interests through representative institutions. And the same obstacles to the progress of civil society exist in developing countries that existed in England and in America: the power of a state apparatus whose controllers are unrepresentative of all but a minority; and the capitalist structure of production, within the world market system, whose immense power over the mass of citizens, either as workers or as consumers, needs to be counterbalanced politically by democratic institutions.[11]

Democracy: Lessons from Greece to Gorbachev

Democracy, as I have suggested, is both a normative and a practical necessity, providing essential safeguards for the mass of citizens. In this respect, the classic experience of Greece is revealing. Michael Mann's admirable survey points to six major characteristics of democracy.[12]

Greek democracy

* First, there is the political *equality* of citizens, whether peasants or aristocrats.

* The second factor is the overriding *loyalty* of citizens in a democracy to their city or state—not to family or lineage.

* Third is the notion of a *binding* majority, reached after free discussion, in a public assembly.

* Fourth is the importance of literacy in reinforcing a sense of cultural *identity*.

* Fifth, 'the compliance of a literate people can only be obtained and enforced by objectified written *laws*' and formal institutions.

* The sixth characteristic is demonstrated by the contrast between the Greeks and their authoritarian Persian rivals. The Persians, Greeks argued, were not lacking in intelligence, but in spirit: they did not love *freedom*, as did the Greeks.

Mann also points to the three major *threats* to democratic rule: the pressure of external forces; internal power struggles; and economic inequality. Class inequalities in Greece produced identifiable political factions, all of which engaged in struggles to maintain or to redistribute private property (especially land) as well as the state's collective wealth. Eventually, however, prosperity was increasingly monopolised by large landowners, which put the democratic system under enormous strain, so that the state at last succumbed to external attacks.[13]

Gorbachev recognises democracy's advantages

More than two thousand years later, the effort to *achieve* democracy in an authoritarian system has now been championed from a surprising quarter—the Soviet Union under Gorbachev. The latter's emphasis on the *safeguarding* function of democracy and on its *critical* function is far from irrelevant to the prospective transformation of authoritarian regimes in the Asia-Pacific region.

The safeguarding function is evident in Gorbachev's question raised at the opening session of the June 1988 Soviet Party Conference. Why, he asked, was

the Party, created to be a fully democratic organisation, unable to prevent the deformations connected with the cult of Stalin's personality? The answer was lack of democracy, which resulted in the Party falling prey to bureaucratic authoritarianism and thereby losing touch with ordinary people. As for the critical role of democracy, it is apparent in Gorbachev's admission that the authoritarian system persisted, for the reason that without democracy the Party apparatus escaped from the control of the rank-and-file. Free debate was banned and the Party became divided into bosses and subordinates, leading inevitably to political mistakes, a decline in moral standards, and abuse of power.[14]

From Development to Democracy?

The 'logic' of progress from development to democracy is thus derived from the inadequacy of a purely *political* concept of democracy (where political equality conceals economic inequality) and from the inadequacy of a purely *economic* concept of development (where material satisfaction fails to overcome the effect of political deprivation). Logically, political democracy, in addition to the 'enabling (socio-economic) conditions' for the exercise of democracy, must be the outcome. Historically this has been the case—bearing Lindblom's qualifications in mind—in the West; and similar tendencies are apparent in the East and South.

But such tendencies cannot be analysed or experienced along a single dimension—whether political, or economic, or cultural, or international. All four dimensions, as Mann has emphasised, are involved in historical and contemporary developments. Consider the case of imperial China. Why, Mann asks, did the Chinese, whose civilisation was for centuries superior to that of Europe, not achieve a comparable state of development and democracy? But imperial China first of all lacked economic dynamism (the repetitive economy of rice cultivation held back the division of labour, the long distance exchange of commodities, and development of autonomous urban centres). Second, the imperial state repressed social change, prohibiting free exchange, and overtaxing the visible flow of goods. In the third place, there was no invigorating multistate external competition. And finally, Chinese culture and religion emphasised order, conformity, and tradition.[15]

China compared with Europe

Europe, Mann argues, differed from China in all four aspects. To what extent can this be said of Southeast Asia? Undoubtedly economic development in the capitalist mode has transformed (least in Indonesia, most in Singapore) the traditional economies of the region. But in the second place bureaucratic economic regulation still persists (most in Indonesia, least in Singapore) while the state apparatus is also, and often increasingly, authoritarian in practice (perhaps least in Thailand and in the Philippines). Third, multistate external competition has powerfully affected the impulse to economic development—especially with the recent phasing down of the second major form of multistate competition, that of superpower rivalry. Finally, cultures—and even religions for the most part—are adapting both to the capitalist system and, if only in lip-service, to democratic institutions.

Prospects for Southeast Asia

This is not to argue that progress toward democracy is inevitable. All the major 'preconditions' for democracy—economic development, a mature civil society, representative institutions and mass organisations—existed in Weimar Germany, for example; but these were not sufficient to overcome the Nazi movement. Specific historical, cultural, and geopolitical conditions of previous decades—and even centuries—must also be taken into account. (One important factor was that in nineteenth century Germany the struggle for national unity— and the means to achieve it—took priority over the struggle for democracy. Since the end of the Second World War this situation has been reversed).

It is undeniable that there is a *general* tendency for economic development, the emergence of new social forces and the pressure for democratic institutions to go together. But such a tendency operates under *specific* domestic conditions, as it does within the constraints (and opportunities) of the international strategic and economic environment.

1. See Joan M. Nelson, 'Political Participation', in Myron Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington (eds.), *Understanding Political Development: An Analytic Study* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987). Nelson reviews the three major factors influencing participation: socio-economic status, organisational affiliation, and identification with a distinctive social group. She points to the liberal optimistic theory that participation strengthens commitment to the political process and therefore aids legitimacy, and to the conservative pessimistic theory that participation is likely to generate frustration and divisions among groups and therefore leads to instability; each effect, however, hinges on the responses of the regime: pp. 104, 125–126, 133, 141–145.

2. There is a particularly important discussion of this relationship, as it affects development and democracy, in Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets: The World's Political-Economic Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1977). As he points out: 'However poorly the market is harnessed to democratic purposes, only within market-oriented systems does political democracy arise'—for reasons not wholly understood: p.116. One significant factor is that decisions in a democracy are arrived at, not as result of a 'correct' analysis (as in communist regimes), but through the process of social interaction, including market forces. Nevertheless Lindblom is critical of the 'privileged' position of business: as a result, government must collaborate with business (and often defer to it) to make the system work: pp. 119–123, 141, 171, 174–176, 202, 231, 253–254.

3. 'The state refers to all those individuals who occupy offices that authorise them, and them alone, to make and apply decisions that are binding upon any and all parts of a territorially circumscribed population': Eric A. Nordlinger, 'Taking the State Seriously', in Weiner and Huntington (eds.) *Understanding Political Development*, p.362. Nordlinger seeks to bring together state-centred and society-centred analyses; he distinguishes between democratically-structured and authoritarian states, i.e. in the former case, where elected rather than bureaucratic officials are the decision-makers. The critical measure of state power is the amplitude of societal support the state enjoys and the degree of opposition it overcomes. Thus he suggests a typology of strong, independent, responsive and weak states, where strong states, for example, have high autonomy and societal support, and independent states high autonomy and low support, and so on: pp. 359–361, 366–369. See also in the same volume, Joel S. Migdal, 'Strong States, Weak States: Power and Accommodation'; relating social structure to state organisations, e.g. pp. 424–427.

4. Clive Hamilton, 'Can the rest of Asia emulate the NICs?', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1987, Table 1 (1984 figures), p. 1226.

5. Harold Crouch, 'Economic Growth and Democratisation in Southeast Asia', paper for conference on Economic Growth and Political Change in the Asia Pacific Region, Hua Hin, Thailand, June 1988.

6. Harold Crouch, *Domestic Political Structures and Regional Economic Cooperation* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984), pp. 12, 25, 40–41, 61–62, 77–78. Crouch argues that all ASEAN governments have authoritarian features, but the extent of authoritarianism varies. There is greater authoritarianism where there is a unified élite with a common ideology; less, where there is an alliance of different groups. There is also a tendency towards authoritarian control in countries with low economic development, with a small middle class, and where the lower class gets little benefit. Conversely, with a well-developed economy and substantial middle class, the government will be at least partly responsive to middle-class demands (notably pressures for an efficient and professional administration and rational decision-making): pp. 5–7. See also Garry Rodan, 'State, Capital and Industrialisation in the NICs', *Australian Outlook*, April 1988, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 37–48: a critical review of current theories of the role of the state, forms of development, and the new international division of labour.

7. Reuter report from Singapore: *Canberra Times*, 5 August 1985.

8. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds. and trans.): *Selections From The Prison Notebooks Of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 235–236, 238.

9. R. William Liddle, 'Soeharto's Indonesia: Personal Rule and Political Institutions', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 1, 1985, pp. 71–73, 77–80, 85–87.

10. Carol C. Gould, *Rethinking Democracy: Freedom and Social Cooperation in Politics, Economics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), especially Ch. 1, 'Freedom Reciprocity, and Democracy', where she points out that access to social and economic conditions is a requirement for self-development.

11. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets*, pp. 119–141, 162–169, 179.

12. Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. I, *A History of Power from the beginning to AD 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 197–207. 214.

13. Mann, *History of Power*, pp. 216–224, 228.

14. General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's opening speech at the Party special conference, 28 June 1988.

15. Mann, *History of Power*, p. 502.

Israel's President in Singapore: Political Catalysis and Transnational Politics

Michael Leifer

A foreign visit by a non-executive head of state at a counterpart's formal invitation is not normally an exceptional event. Such a visit would indicate either diplomatic good standing between governments or a mutual interest in promoting such a condition. Its political significance would be primarily symbolic because it is not the practice on such occasions for heads of states who are not heads of government to raise matters of substance in a bilateral relationship. The symbolism of a state visit is not without importance, however. A visiting head of state embodies the perceived virtues and vices of country and countrymen. Accordingly, he would not normally be invited abroad if his representative presence were deemed highly objectionable either by a significant constituency within the host state or by the government of a friendly neighbouring one. When President Chaim Herzog of Israel was invited to pay a state visit to Singapore in November 1986 by President Wee Kim Wee, the worst expectation in the island-republic was that it would be received 'with cold displeasure in Malaysia'.[1] In the event, his visit served to arouse very strong political feelings on both sides of the Strait of Johor.

Strictly speaking, catalysis is the effect produced by an agent that without undergoing change itself facilitates a chemical reaction and change in other bodies. Political catalysis was the effect produced by President Herzog because his state visit was the agent responsible for a marked adverse change in relations between Singapore and Malaysia and to a very much lesser extent between Singapore and Indonesia and Brunei. The visit was one of acute controversy becoming engaged emotively in the domestic politics of both Malaysia and Singapore, which are linked transnationally. Indeed, the domestic repercussions of the visit were disturbing for both governments which have been longstanding regional partners within the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) established in 1967, as well as within the Five Power Defence Arrangements which replaced the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement in 1971. In its wake, they have sought to limit political damage and to restore a working relationship which neither party can really afford to jeopardise beyond repair. At issue is why Chaim Herzog's presence in Singapore should have generated political furore, bringing relations with Malaysia to their lowest ebb since constitutional separation in August 1965. This article addresses that question, taking into special account the close interrelationship between domestic context and foreign policy which distinguished the stormy episode.

President Herzog's visit to Singapore was deemed provocative and not only by partisan interests who perceived Israel as a pariah-state. The best informed and most dispassionate regional publication commented after the event: 'Observers find it difficult to believe that the bilateral relationship (with Israel) is of such importance that it (Singapore) would offend its important neighbours'.[2] It should be stated, at the outset, that the invitation by the president of Singapore to his Israeli counterpart was not a calculated act designed to give offence. Such a feature of Singapore's practice of foreign policy had been evident shortly after independence when neighbouring governments appeared

Political catalysis from Herzog visit

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to require reminding that the island-republic enjoyed sovereign status. Over two decades after an enforced independence from Malaysia, Singapore has moderated a testy diplomacy. Its government, under the continuous leadership of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, has long appreciated the utility of Singapore's membership of ASEAN. Institutionalised regional cooperation has been valued because it contributes to the security and welfare of an innately vulnerable Singapore. Part of the reasoning behind a willingness to extend an invitation to President Herzog was that intra-ASEAN relationships were deemed sufficiently sturdy and resilient for the visit not to disturb any of them unduly. Left out of that calculation, however, was the contradiction between the value placed on a regional structure of special relations and an interest in sustaining a longstanding association with Israel.

Singapore's relations with Israel

Singapore's relationship with Israel had antedated its independence from Malaysia. From the beginning of the 1960s, Israeli expertise had been drawn on, particularly in medicine and youth organisation.[3] With independence, the relationship expanded to encompass military training required by Singapore to help overcome an acute geo-political vulnerability. That Singapore's membership of the recently formed Federation of Malaysia could be terminated unilaterally while a hostile Indonesia continued to prosecute a policy of confrontation was deeply alarming.[4] When a process of reconciliation conducted exclusively between Malaysia and Indonesia was expressed symbolically in a common Malay blood-brotherhood that alarm became acute in a predominantly ethnic-Chinese Singapore. And even when the structure of reconciliation was enlarged and institutionalised as ASEAN in August 1967 to include Singapore, an abiding mistrust of some new-found regional partners justified sustained access to pro-

Singapore seeks countervailing power

vision for countervailing power. That justification was reinforced by Britain's prior decision to disengage militarily from East of Suez, including Singapore. The political cost of harbouring Israeli military advisers, who have trained successive generations of national servicemen and regular soldiers, was deemed acceptable in the interest of upholding a precarious independence. Their presence became an open secret together with their Mexican *nom de guerre*. In providing for it, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew must have taken into account his earlier admonition employed to justify Singapore's short-lived participation in Malaysia. He had once pointed out that 'Singapore with its predominantly Chinese population would, if independent on its own, become a South-East Asia's Israel with every hand turned against it'.[5] Such a pejorative imagery had been contemplated in the absence of any close relationship between an independent Singapore and a country which Lee Kuan Yew had cited as an example of a pariah-state. In the event, the relationship between an independent Singapore and Israel—which

ASEAN tolerance of links with Israel

established a formal diplomatic link in May 1969—did not prove to be an obstacle to a working association with Malaysia and Indonesia, both of which supported the Palestinian cause. Tolerance of that diplomatic link was grudging but not overtly contentious, probably influenced by the fact that the two other founding members of ASEAN—Thailand and the Philippines—had established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1954 and 1957. Moreover, an Israeli diplomatic mission in Singapore did not stand in the way of an evolving special relationship between Singapore and staunchly Islamic Brunei which has been sustained in the wake of its formal independence and membership of ASEAN in January 1984.

Advantages to Singapore

Over the years, the balance of advantage in the relationship between Israel and Singapore has rested with the latter. At the limited political cost of accepting an Israeli diplomatic mission in Singapore but without being obliged to establish a Singapore mission in Tel-Aviv or even to accredit a non-resident ambassador, the government of the island-state has enjoyed continuous access to military training, technology and intelligence. Visible trade has been of limited significance, constituting less than 0.3 per cent of Singapore's total external trade. In return, Israel has extended international recognition of its legitimacy and also secured access to a useful regional monitoring post and point of informal wider