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INDIAN GANGSTERISM IN KUALA LUMPUR

MY PARENTS, BROTHERS & SISTERS .....  
Thevendran S Sivanantham

also to, No Matrik 042283

INDHU, SHAH, KISHEN, THEERAN & PUNITA .....

ALL MY FRIENDS ..... for your SUCCESS.

"On the right, the right, the right,

Till the breath of death,

Shun the wrong, although the right,

Leads to death of breath."

Graduation Exercise

As Partial Requirement for  
the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

Department of Anthropology and Sociology  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement		<u>Page No</u>
Chapter I	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	In completing this work, I came across numerous obstacles, which at times discouraged me from working on this thesis. Among them were locating the respondents and financial constraints. However, with the help and encouragement from my friends and by the Grace of God, this work is now complete. I take this opportunity to thank my supervisor, En Abdul Hadi Zakaria, for his invaluable assistance. I also thank all my friends, especially the few SLIB members and also Dewa and Omar, for their never-ending encouragement. I also thank Ganeas for all his trouble in editing this work. Last, but not least, I thank all those who helped me finish this work but whose names I could not state here for specific reasons.	17
2.3	Gangs and their Areas of Operation	19
2.4	Organization of Indian Gangs	22
	THEVENDRAN Matric No 042283	
2.5	Rites and Ceremonies	28
2.5.1	Types of Ceremonies	29
2.6	Conclusion	31
Chapter III	ACTIVITIES OF THE GANG	33
3.1	Introduction	33
3.2	Fights	33
3.3	Protection Service	35
3.4	Extortion, Prostitution and Drugs	41

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		<u>Page No</u>
Chapter I	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Organized Crime, Secret Societies and Gangs	1
1.11	Gangs	3
1.12	Secret Societies	5
1.13	Indians In Organized Crime	8
1.14	Formation of Indian Gangs	9
1.2	Social Change and Organized Crime	9
1.3	Research Problem	12
1.4	Research Methodology	13
Chapter II	ORIGIN OF INDIAN GANGS	17
2.1	Introduction	17
2.2	The Origin	17
2.3	Gangs and Their Areas of Operation	19
2.4	Organization of Indian Gangs	22
2.5	Rites and Ceremonies	28
2.51	Types of Ceremonies	29
2.6	Conclusion	31
Chapter III	ACTIVITIES OF THE GANG	33
3.1	Introduction	33
3.2	Fights	33
3.3	Protection Service	35
3.4	Extortion, Prostitution and Drugs	41



		<u>Page No</u>
3.5	Other Activities	45
3.6	Interaction Between Gangs	46
3.7	Interaction Between Gangs and The Public	51
3.8	Weapons	51
3.9	Conclusion	52
Chapter IV	POLICE AND THE UNDERWORLD	56
4.1	Introduction	56
4.2	Police and Their Interpretation of Secret Societies	58
4.3	Prevention of Crime Ordinance and Emergency Ordinance	61
4.4	Identifying Gangsters	64
4.4.1	Identifying Process of Police	66
4.5	Problems Faced By The Police	68
4.6	Conclusion	70
	<u>DIAGRAMS</u>	
Chapter V	INDIAN GANGS: A WORKING CLASS PHENOMENON?	72
5.1	Introduction	72
5.2	Features of The Gang	75
5.3	What Lures Youths to Join Gangs?	76
5.4	Social Environment	82
5.5	Conclusion	89
Chapter VI	CONCLUSION	92



## SYNOPSIS

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
	Indian gangsterism in Kuala Lumpur is a twentieth century phenomenon. Started in the 1950s as an institution to provide protection services to lower caste members, it has went through numerous changes. The Indian gang sprouted throughout the city in the late 1950s. It does not have a single line of origin. Thus, we find that the various gangs differ in their rites and initiation ceremonies.	
1.1	Selected Violent Crime Reported to Police, Federal Territory	2
1.2	Rape and Assault Cases for Peninsular Malaysia, 1975-1979	2
2.1	Gangs and their Areas of Origin	20
2.2	Gangs and their Areas of Operation	21
2.3	Presence of Role Stratification and Ceremonies	28
5.1	Age when First Involved with Gangs and "protection service".	76

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The role of the police in curbing the increasing menace of these gangs has also increased lately. The fear that these

DIAGRAMS

1. Thrasher's Natural History of the Gang they involve in has brought about tighter legislation against them.

The emergence of "gangster-type" individuals is linked closely to the social environment of an individual. It is found that these gangsters who come from lower class communities go through defective socialization processes that create a delinquent. Various factors contribute towards this cause, namely, broken homes,

SYNOPSIS *parental love and control, bad neighbourhood and influence of friends.*

Indian gangsterism in Kuala Lumpur is a twentieth century phenomenon. Started in the 1950s as an institution to provide protection service to lower caste members, it has went through numerous changes till this day, where it is scorned upon as a criminal gang. The Indian gang sprouted throughout the city in the late 1950s and early 60s but it does not have a single line of origin. Thus, we find that the various gangs differ in their rites and initiation ceremonies.

These gangs are not well organized units and as such we find them constantly emerging and then dying-off. As a criminal gang, the activities of these gangs include gang fights and "table-talks", vice rings, drug pushing, extortion and "protection service". For these purposes, the gangs use a wide range of weapons, from meat choppers to revolvers.

The role of the police in curbing the increasing menace of these gangs has also increased lately. The fear that these gangs create and the atrocious activities that they involve in has brought about tighter legislation against them.

The emergence of "gangster-type" individuals is linked closely to the social environment of an individual. It is found that these gangsters who come from lower class communities go through defective socialization processes that create a delinquent. Various factors contribute towards this cause, namely, broken homes,



lack of parental love and control, bad neighbourhood and influence of friends.

Indian gangs although have not adapted themselves well to the social changes, they still pose a threat to the safety of the general public and as such it is very necessary to check their growth. While legislation is important in this aspect, of more importance is to help children and youths to go through normal and proper socialization process to avoid the emergence of delinquent features in the first place.

Keadaan ini menyebabkan terdapatnya perbezaan-perbezaan dalam amalan dan upacara inisiasi gang-gang ini.

Gang-gang ini tidak mempunyai organisasi yang baik dan ini menyebabkan gang-gang ini sering muncul dan lumpuh. Sebagai satu jenis "ritual" aktiviti-aktivitinya meliputi peparangan gang dan "table-talk", pelacuran, mengedar dadah, merugat dan "perkhidmatan perlindungan". Untuk tujuan-tujuan ini, berbagai jenis senjata, dari pisau pencincang daging hingga ke pistol, digunakan oleh ahli-ahlinya.

Parasiti polis dalam mengawal kegiatan gang-gang ini, juga telah bertambah besar. Ketakutan yang ditimbulkan oleh gang ini dan kegiatan jenayah yang mereka terlibat telah menyebabkan pengubahan undang-undang yang lebih keras terhadap mereka.

Memuculan individu-individu yang bercorak "gangster" adalah berkait rapat dengan persekitaran sosial individu tersebut. Adalah didapati bahawa "gangster" ini yang datang dari kalangan kelas pekerja seringkali melalui proses sosialisasi yang kurang



## SINOPSIS

Terdapat berbagai unsur dalam sosialisasi yang lemah seperti perpecahan rumahtangga, kekurangan kasih sayang dan kawalan ibubapa. Kegiatan geng-geng India diKuala Lumpur merupakan fenomena abad kedua puluh. Dimulakan pada tahun-tahun 50an sebagai institusi untuk memberi perlindungan kepada anggota-anggota kasta bawahan, geng-geng ini telah banyak mengalami perubahan hingga kehari ini dimana ianya dianggap sebagai institusi jenayah. Meskipun geng-geng ini mula muncul pada tahun-tahun 50an dan 60an ianya tidak mempunyai satu corak permulaan yang sama. Keadaan ini menyebabkan terdapatnya perbezaan-perbezaan dalam amalan dan upacara inisiasi geng-geng ini.

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## CHAPTER 1

memuaskan. Terdapat berbagai unsur dalam sosialisasi yang lemah seperti perpecahan rumahtangga, kekurangan kasih sayang dan kawalan ibubapa, tempat kediaman yang kurang baik dan juga pengaruh kawan.

Meskipun geng-geng India belum menyesuaikan diri sepenuhnya kepada perubahan-perubahan yang berlaku, ianya tetap merupakan satu ancaman kepada keselamatan umum. Untuk menyekat perkembangan seterusnya geng-geng ini, undang-undang yang lebih ketat perlu digubal. Bagaimanapun, faktor yang lebih penting lagi ialah untuk membolehkan kanak-kanak dan remaja melalui proses sosialisasi yang sebaik-baiknya supaya menghindarkan kemunculan ciri-ciri "delinquent".

In Malaysia, secret societies and criminal gangs are the nucleus for organized crime. Their activities include "Extortion; forcing young girls into prostitution; association with dalah pushers; collection of protection money from prostitutes, shop owners and gamblers; gang clashes over control of specific areas; commission of serious crimes such as robberies and murders; manufacture and concealment of dangerous weapons such as bearing scrapers, spears and samurai swords for use during gang clashes; and holding table-talks (negotiations) to settle disputes." (1)

1 - Polis Diraja Malaysia, Panduan Cegah Jenayah, Kuala Lumpur, 1984, P 50-51



## CHAPTER 1

### TABLE 1.1

#### INTRODUCTION Violent Crime Reported to Police by Type of Crime, Federal Territory

		TYPE OF CRIME		(1)	(2)
<u>ORGANIZED CRIME, SECRET SOCIETIES AND GANGS</u>		Murder	Assaulted Gang	Robbery	

Of late organized crime is becoming more significant.

This can be seen by the ever increasing number of violent crimes in the country in general and in Kuala Lumpur in particular (See Charts 1 & 2). One of the main characteristics of organized crime is that it uses violence and intimidation to gain and consolidate its powers. The presence of such organizations has instilled fear in the general public, for they are also the victims of gangland activities. The freedom of the general public is diminished by the presence of these organizations in the sense that the existence of such organizations is a constant threat to their lives and property.

In Malaysia, secret societies and criminal gangs are the nucleus for organized crime. Their activities include "Extortion; forcing young girls into prostitution; association with dadah pushers; collection of protection money from prostitutes, shop owners and gamblers; gang clashes over control of specific areas; commission of serious crimes such as robberies and murders; manufacture and concealment of dangerous weapons such as bearing scrapers, spears and samurai swords for use during gang clashes; and holding table-talks (negotiations) to settle disputes." (1)

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1 - Polis Diraja Malaysia, Panduan Cegah Jenayah, Kuala Lumpur, 1984, P 50-51



**TABLE 1.1****Selected Violent Crime Reported to Police by Type of Crime, Federal Territory**

YEAR	TYPE OF CRIME					
	Murder	Attempted Murder	Gang Robbery	Robbery	(1) Assault*	(2) Rape
1978	18	-	62	764	Breakdown by State in Peninsular Malaysia is not available.	
1981	29	1	81	957		

\* Includes cases causing serious and slight injury with or without weapon.

Source: Annual Statistical Bulletin Malaysia 1979, 1982.

(1) and (2) - the number of rape and assault cases for Peninsular Malaysia from 1975 - 1979 are as follows in Chart 2.

**TABLE 1.2****Rape and Assault Cases for Peninsular Malaysia, 1975-1979**

TYPE OF CRIME	YEAR				
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Assault*	1232	1323	1546	1467	1713
Rape	248	265	268	275	343

\* Includes cases causing serious and slight injury with or without weapon.

Source: Annual Statistical Bulletin Malaysia 1980.



11 GANGS

Gangs are an universal phenomenon and as such they are omnipresent. The mere mention of the word gang strikes fear in the layman, the reason being that gangs are noteworthy for their criminal activities and violent nature with which they operate. However, the existence of non-criminal gangs must not be overlooked. This will be discussed in detail later. In Malaysia, gangs are prevalent among all the major communities. The Chinese have their secret societies, the Malays had (or still have) their own version of secret societies (Flag Gangs) and the Indians also have their own gangs. One striking feature of these gangs is that they are all racialistic organizations and operate along racial lines. However, at the present day situation, these gangs also consist of members from other races. For example, the Chinese secret societies have a handful of Indian members. (Proof of this statement is the arrest of an Indian member during Triad initiation ceremony in Ulu Choh, Pontian on 24.8.1981).

4) Before proceeding further, it is best to define what is meant by a gang. According to Frederic M Thrasher, who has done extensive research on 1313 American gangs during a span of seven years, "The gang is an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the following types of behaviour: meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict and planning. The result of this collective behaviour is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity,



morale, group awareness and attachment to a local territory."<sup>(2)</sup>

Based on this definition, Thrasher goes on to explain the types of gang that prevail:-

<u>Type of Gang</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
1) Diffuse	Solidarity is not lasting, the loyalties of their members to each other and to the gang cannot be counted on too far. (3)
2) Solidified	Result of a longer development and a more intense or more extended conflict. A high degree of morale and loyalty and a minimum of internal friction contributes to a well integrated fighting machine, by means of which the gang presents a solid front against its foes. as "A group whose
3) Conventionalized	Takes form of athletic clubs, dancing, social or pleasure groups.
4) Criminal	If the gang does not become conventionalized or incorporated in some way into the structures of the community as its members grow older, it often drifts into habitual crime and becomes completely delinquent.
5) Secret Society	These gang may develop the features of a

3 - Ibid, p 46-47

2 - Frederic M Thrasher, The Gang - Abridged Edition, p 46  
 3 - Wilfred Blythe, The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaysia - a historical study, p 9



and Type of Gang the Characteristics they operate." (6) Finally, Mak Lau Fong defines secret societies as "A group which has a set of well defined norms, secret rituals and an oath that are intended subjectively to bind the members to secrecy regarding the group's affairs." (7)

Secret societies can be defined as groups which are based on their function, in imitation of such secret societies as it observes in its cultural environment. (3)

.12 SECRET SOCIETIES

1) Criminalist like the Triad Society and White Lotus Society which work against the political establishment.

Secret societies can be termed as criminal gangs which carry out certain activities for their own nefarious purposes. Although we know that criminal activities are the crux of the secret societies' functions, how do we define these secret societies? Simmel defines secret society as "A group whose existence may be open, but its goals, ritual and structure are concealed from the public." (4) W Blythe defines them as "A group whose existence may be open, but whose activities and the identities of its leader and members remain unknown to the public." (5) In the book TRIAD SOCIETIES IN HONG KONG, W P Morgan defines them as "Societies, whose members, bound by oaths of blood brotherhood, are pledged to assist one another and further the particular aims of their societies irrespective of the moral attempts to escape from social reality without victimizing anyone." (6)

3 - Ibid, p 46-47

4 - Mak Lau Fong, The Sociology of Chinese Secret Society, p 7

5 - Wilfred Blythe, The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaysia - a historical study, p 9

6 - Ibid, p 11

and civil laws of the country wherein they operate." (6) Finally, Mak Lau Fong defines secret societies as "A group which has a set of well defined norms, secret rituals and an oath that are intended subjectively to bind the members to secrecy regarding the groups' affairs." (7)

Secret societies can be classified under five categories based on their function, means of goal attainment, social orientation of the groups and modes of adaptation of the group.

The five (5) categories are:-

- 1) Confirmist like Freemasonry which is charitable in nature and work against social evils in society.
- 2) Ritualist like KGB, CIA and SIS which work for political establishment in combating those who work against establishment.
- 3) Rebellious like Ku Klux Klan and Triad Society which work against the political establishment.
- 4) Criminal like Mafia, Casa Nostra and local Chinese secret societies which work for economic gain and victimizes the civilian.
- 5) Retreatist like the early White Lotus Society which attempts to escape from social reality without victimizing anyone. (8)

9 - O T Dobree, Federation of Malaya Police - Notes On Secret Societies, p 3

6 - W P Morgan, Triad Societies in Hong Kong, p 13

7 - Mak Lau Fong, op cit, p 8

11 - O T Dobree, op cit, p 17

8 - Ibid, p 11



Existing criminal secret societies in Malaysia are the Chinese secret societies whose historical roots can be traced to 17th century China. Then, it was well known as the Triad Society.

"In its earlier phases, the Triad was a society whose members, bound by oaths of blood brotherhood, were pledged to overthrow the foreign conquerors of their country and restore the ancient ruling house of China to the throne." (9) Thus, the Triad was formed with the purpose of overthrowing the Manchus, who were looked upon as a foreign power. However, later the Triad was outlawed by the government and the Shaolin monks were killed. Out of 108 monks in the monastery, only 5 managed to escape the onslaught of the government army. Each monk went to a different province and gathered support and rallied against the Manchu government. Thus, the beginning of the Triad Society was merely for political reasons.

In Malaysia, the influx of Chinese immigrants brought about the formation of "kongsis" (10) which later came to be termed as secret societies. These secret societies served the Chinese immigrants by securing employment and accommodation for them, and functioned as a social group, that is, "It is an organized, cohesive collection of persons interacting around shared function and goals for some period of time." (11) Later,

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9 - C T Dobree, Federation of Malaya Police - Notes On Secret Societies, p 3

10 - "Kongsi" is a clan association which provided services, such as seeking employment and providing security for its members.

11 - C T Dobree, op cit, p 17



these secret societies were illegalized as the fighting between rival societies became hazardous to the economic development of the Federated Malay States. This can be seen in the extensive fights during the Larut Wars and Penang Riots, 1867, when the tin fields had to be closed down. With the introduction of greater police control for security purposes, these societies started to function illegally and became more violent in nature. So much for their changes, now the secret societies can be described as criminal gangs, each of which practises certain illegal acts for their own nefarious purposes.

### INDIANS IN ORGANIZED CRIME

Unlike the Chinese who had secret societies, the Indians do not seem to have had any proper organization which carried out criminal activities, in the years after the influx of Indian immigrants to Malaysia. The earliest record which shows the presence of Indian criminals was during the founding of Penang by Captain Francis Light. These criminals who were serving their conviction, were Indian subjects, who were brought over here for the purpose of clearing the jungles and serving the colonialists as housekeepers and so forth. There is, however, no indication that these convicts formed any specific organizations in Malaya then. In fact, most of them on completion of their term returned to India, while some managed to make it good here and managed to accumulate wealth. Thus, the presence of Indian gangs in Malaysia today, is a totally modern 20th century phenomenon. Although the

exact history of these are not known, and it remains a myth, but it can be postulated that these gangs were formed during the 1950's. Now their activities are carried out like Mafia-style. (See page 11)

#### FORMATION OF INDIAN GANGS

Indians were believed to have been members of Chinese secret societies during the middle of the present century. Having been involved in these societies for some time, they had some knowledge of organizational work. Later, they decided to break away from the Chinese secret societies to form their own Indian secret society (if at all it can be termed as such) for the purpose of 'serving' the Indian community. This theme of keeping up with the Joneses seems a common feature of the Indian community. Then, they started recruiting new members and carried out their activities which was, more often than not, bloody gang clashes. Learning from the Chinese secret societies, these Indian gangs also started their own code, hand signs, tattoo marks and "territories", so to say. All these features have a resemblance to the Chinese secret societies and this further strengthens the hypothesis of how the Indian gang came to exist. This then was the beginning of the Indian gang. (Respondents view/story of how the Indian gang emerged will be discussed in Chapter 2).

#### SOCIAL CHANGE AND ORGANIZED CRIME

In the face of social changes, the role of organized crime is also changing or it would be more apt to say that organized crime is adapting itself to the social changes around it.

Moreover, these gangs and their leaders are easily detected and arrested by the police. This is because the gang members are



This can be seen clearly in the case of the Chinese secret societies. During the beginning stages, they were merely clan association but now their activities are carried out like Mafia-style. (See page 11)

The ability to adapt itself to social changes has enabled the Chinese secret societies to continue existing, apart from strengthening its interest in criminal activities. The changes that took place among Chinese secret societies is shown below in sequence:

- 1) clan associations
- 2) protection of vested position (economic)
- 3) protection of territories
- 4) taking control of other territories
- 5) involvement in crime (gambling, vice ring, extortion, etc).

The reason for the Chinese secret societies to adapt well to social changes lies mainly in their motive - which is purely economic. They are willing to commit anything, whether legal or illegal, to protect their financial stature and sources of income. This can be seen from the shooting incidence in Kuala Lumpur on 18.9.1984, where a painter was shot dead and a car repossessor seriously injured. These societies have their own network of influential people who "put a word to the relevant authorities" when these mobsters land in trouble.

So much for the Chinese secret societies, the Indian gangs have been more or less static and have not adapted themselves well to changes around them. If, at the beginning stages, they were involved in gang clashes, now the situation is still the same. Moreover, these gangs and their leaders are easily detected and arrested by the police. This is because the gang members are



# 'KILLERS SENT BY RIVAL BOOKIES'

## Feud at race course could have sparked the killing of painter

A FEUD by rival bookies at the Kuala Lumpur race course over the week-end could have sparked the killing of a painter shot dead at point blank range in Sentul Pasar Dalam last night.

Police are working on this as a motive behind the shooting of painter Lee Soon Hock and his car reposessor friend Leo Chan Toon at a crowded food stall.

"Both men apparently had a 'contract' out on them by a rival gang as the shooting appeared to be a vendetta-like slaying," said a senior police officer.

Chan Toon could not give police details as he lapsed into unconsciousness soon after he was admitted to hospital.

Officers from the Serious Crime branch are waiting to question him.

Sources said Chan Toon allegedly told police soon after being picked up about two kilometres from the scene of the shooting, that the shooting was in retaliation over a feud with a rival group of bookies.

The shooting occurred just four hours after talks with a rival group of bookies turned "sour".

The talks at a nightclub in the Campbell shopping complex to discuss settlement of a quarrel at the race course on Sunday.

In that incident, painter Soon Huat punched another man, believed to be a bookie with a rival group.

The man later turned up with two others and swore to "get even" with the painter.

Both groups left after agreeing to talk over the matter at the Campbell complex the following day.

About 4pm yesterday, the two rival groups held talks at a nightclub in the complex.

The talks ended in deadlock. About 8pm three men drove

up to a food stall in Sentul Pasar Dalam where Soon Huat and Chan Toon were having some drinks.

Two men alighted, pulled out guns and confronted Soon Huat who dived for cover under the table as other diners watched panic-stricken.

One of the gunmen shot the painter at the back of his head before opening fire at Chan Toon who fled across the road.

The assailants then got into the car and sped off towards Jalan Gombak.

### Three times

Soon Hock's brother, Soon Wah, 18, was near the scene when the shooting took place. He heard the shots and went to have a look.

Soon Wah, a construction worker, got a shock when he saw his brother was the one who was shot.

He ran home, which was nearby, and informed his father, lorry driver Lee Kim Huat.

They went back to the scene, carried Soon Huat into their car and rushed him to hospital.

Chan Toon, who was shot three times, was picked up by a patrol car crew about two kilometres away at the 3.2km Jalan Pahang and taken to hospital.

City OCCT ACP Tuffie Nawab Din was at the scene to supervise police investigation.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF CHINESE

SECRET SOCIETIES

Malay Mail 19th September 1984



not bound by any oath of secrecy and once they are caught and interrogated by the police, they reveal everything they know about the gang and its leaders. Thus, we see Indian gangs emerge and then fade away very regularly. This phenomenon of emergence and extinction of the gangs can be understood if we base these gangs on the definition given by Thrasher, that they are spontaneously formed and their solidarity, morale and loyalty are not very high.

tionists, based on their findings in their respective countries.

#### RESEARCH PROBLEM

Existence of organized crime in Malaysia is an accepted fact. Many academic studies have been done on crime in Malaysia, namely delinquency, drugs, and secret societies. However, there has not been any sociological study on Indian gangs and their implications. Most of the work on secret societies are on Chinese secret societies. Thus, the aim of this study is to give a brief outline of the Indian gangs around Kuala Lumpur. As a brief study, it is not the aim here to concentrate on the evolvement of the Indian gang alone, but it encompasses such issues as the differences of the various Indian gangs, the threat of these gangs to the society and also the reasons for members to join these criminal gangs. Emphasis is also given on the effects of environment and socialization process on individuals who become gang members. Included here is also a chapter on the police authorities and some crime preventive laws, which are meant to show the success of the police in battling with these gangs and the efficiency of the laws in combating this menace.



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Two main methods were used for the purpose of this study that is library research and interviews. However, the number of books written on the subject of gangs are rather few let alone the subject of Indian gangs which is nearly nil. A majority of the text touch on juvenile gangs and juvenile delinquency. These books on gangs are written by American and other western educationists, based on their findings in their respective countries. Although a majority of these books are irrelevant to this study, some of their findings, assumptions and theories are also applicable to the local Indian gangs.

Interviews were carried out with former and present gang leaders. Altogether 12 gang leaders were interviewed, each interview lasting about half an hour. In some cases, the interviews would go on for an hour or more, especially interviews with former leaders (who are now leading a normal married life) who were willing to tell about their numerous experiences in gang clashes, collection of protection money, table-talks and also their confrontations and escapades from police harassment. Present gang leaders were not that willing to part with information for fear of adverse effects. They were very brief in stating their gang activities and the exact reasons for this study had to be explained to them every now and then to gain their confidence.

The interviews were carried out in an informal way. Questionnaires were not used for the interviews and even notes were not taken during the conversation. Only after having finished an



interview, the facts were compiled and this relied heavily on memory. However, for the first three interviews, notes were taken down, making it slightly formal. The reason for not using questionnaires is because Mak Lau Fong, in his research on Chinese secret societies, suggested that the presence of questionnaires would apprehend the interviewees from giving correct answers. Their apprehension is that I might be working for the police and as such whatever secret they mention might later be used against them.

The interviews were held in different places. Some were held at coffee-shops, others were held at the interviewee's home. One interview was even held at a police station. During the first three interviews, I proceeded direct to the topic and this created some sort of uneasiness among the respondents, as though they were being insulted and accused of malaise. In later interviews, a direct approach was not used. Instead, I started the conversation by inquiring about the respondent's views about current national issues and the changes happening within the society. This indirect approach helped to ease the psychological barrier which prevented the respondents from expressing freely their opinions in earlier interviews. Only after establishing a better rapport with the respondents, relevant questions pertaining to this study was directed to them.

Apart from gang members, interviews were also held with some police officers and crime reporters from some local newspapers. In the discussions with the police officers, police actions against these gangs, the acts that are used to arrest gang members and their



success in curbing the gang activities were discussed. In addition, the vast experience of some of our local news reporters gave some insight as to why individuals become gang members and the normal activities of these gangs.

Being the pioneer study on Indian gangs in Kuala Lumpur, this work is not devoid of its weaknesses. The weaknesses are mainly due to the lack of relevant literature and also because it depends heavily on what the gang leaders had to say. One of the major weaknesses is that the number of respondents, 12 of them, is minimal. This was so, because being illegal gangs, it is difficult to locate the respondents. They were mostly introduced to me through a third party and at times fourth party. In fact, fixing appointments with the third or fourth party themselves was a taxing problem. At times it even took up to 2 months to interview a respondent after knowing the third person and asking him to fix an appointment with the respondent. With some respondents, the appointments were always postponed to a further date. Even then, some of the respondents were not very willing to give their cooperation. One former leader even advised me to think about the future and not to dig about the past history, which he says is not going to help us very much. Moreover, the respondents were very suspicious of my motives for the study even after official letters were produced to them.

Secondly, it should be stressed that this study is, to a great extent, based on the assumption that the respondents gave the true picture of what had happened or what is happening within



the gang. (12) However, I have tried to present a fair and meaningful analysis from the facts and figures provided so as to reduce (as far as possible) any ambiguity or misinterpretation.

Thirdly, this study is not backed with much data, for example on the membership of a particular gang. The reason for this is that the respondents themselves are not sure or are not willing to give the data. (13) However, I have tried to insert some data wherever possible and available. The absence of some data, for example the number of gang members, makes it impossible to judge the extensiveness of the gang phenomenon. As such, to a great extent, this study depends on the frankness with which the respondents, both gang leaders and police officers, gave the answers to the questions put forward to them.

Fourthly, this study is twofold. On the one hand, it gives a description about the Indian gangs, the ceremonies and their activities. On the other hand, it gives a brief account of what lures individuals to join these gangs. This makes the study more complicated as there are two aims. However, more emphasis is given to the origin of the Indian gangs, their ceremonies and activities.

However, a few years later (during the late 1950s) due to some

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12 - Topics like the origin of Indian gangs, their organization, rites and ceremonies and gang activities are mainly based on what the respondents said.

13 - For example, the number of gang members they have and the total income from their protection service is not mentioned by them.



as to provide protection to the lower caste community, the Gang 36 started to attack higher caste members who were responsible for the attacks on the lower caste community. From this moment of time onwards, they were said to have started asking for protection fees

## ORIGIN OF INDIAN GANGS

### INTRODUCTION

The origin of Indian gangs in Malaysia is still largely under speculation. The gang leaders themselves are unsure of the origin of their gangs. Apart from being the successors of the previous leader, little else about the gang are known by them. The police authorities believe that the Indian gangs were started in the 1950's as this was when they first encountered problems of Indian gangsterism. The origin of Indian gangs was related by one of the respondents in a similar way to the police hypothesis.

### THE ORIGIN

One of the first gang was Gang 3 which operated in the San Peng area in Kuala Lumpur. This gang was, however, more of an "in-group", which was formed by some rich individuals to protect their vested business interests. They shared some group money and did not wish any outflow of money from their circle of friends. However, a few years later (during the late 1950s) due to some internal friction, they broke off and formed Gang 36 which still did not have any criminal features. At this time, there was some caste problems in this area. Some individuals from the higher caste used to harass the lower caste community, who were constantly beaten up and some were said to have died from such attacks. So



as to provide protection to the lower caste community, the Gang 36 started to attack higher caste members who were responsible for the attacks on the lower caste community. From this moment of time onwards, they were said to have started asking for protection fees and looking for new means of income, which was mainly through extortion. This turn of events also brought changes to the gang itself. Having started off as Gang 3, it was later known as Gang 36 from 1960 till 1966. After 1966, it was called Gang 360 and is also the start of criminal identity for the gang.

Another respondent gave a different picture about the origins of his gang - Gang 24. This gang operated at a local theatre in the city centre. All this while, the Indians were members in the Malay Gang 24 which operated around the said theatre. During the 1960s, the Indian members were discriminated and were unsatisfied with this treatment by the leaders. As such the respondent with some other Indian friends decided to hold a table-talk to resolve the problem. They then came to a settlement, which was, when Tamil movies were screened at the theatre the Indians will be active i.e. to say they will be the blackmarket ticket spivs. And when Malay or Hindi movies are screened the Malays would operate the blackmarket ring. Hence the Gang 24 came into operation during the mid 1960s at the said theatre. (1) However, another respondent who was a leader of Gang 24 in Batu Caves said that he took over the gang leadership from his brother during the early 1960s. As such, it can be accepted that the Gang 24 was already existing in the 1950s.

1 - This is an "area gang" which was started in the late 60s. In another area, Batu Caves, Gang 24 was already existing in the early 60s. As such, the origin of the "area gang" cannot be used to describe the origin of the pioneer Gang 24.



Based on the 12 interviews conducted with past and present gang leaders, it is a difficult task to state the exact date or year of origin of the Indian gang. Moreover, gangs are prevalent throughout the city and its outskirts and most of them have the same gang name although they do not come under one leader. In each area a different individual or a group of individuals start a new gang but name their gang with the same name as that which exist in another area. For instance, the Gang 24 in the theatre area was a newly formed gang during the mid 1960s by breaking away from the Malay Gang 24. At the same time a Gang 24 was already existing in the Batu Caves area since the 50s.

It can be deduced that the origins of the Indian gang in the city was in the late 1950s, having branched out from existing Chinese secret societies. Due to their former link with the Chinese secret societies, the Indian gangs used to identify themselves with numerical codes, just like the Chinese secret societies.

#### GANGS AND THEIR AREAS OF OPERATION

All in there are about 112 Indian gangs operating in Kuala Lumpur and its outskirts. They are Gangs 360, 303, 04, 08, 21, 24, 101, A1-81, Hati Keras, Satu Hati and Blues Gang. Even though there are only 11 gangs, it should be understood that these gangs are operational throughout the city. For instance, Gang 24 exists in the following areas:-

Gang	Area of Origin
360	San Peng
303	Batu Caves
04	Jalan Ipoh
08	Sembil
21	Cheras Municipal Quarters
24	Hospital Quarters
101	Amfang
A1-81	Puchong
Hati Keras	Pekeliling Plats
Blues Gang	
Satu Hati	

Gang 303 and 101 - their areas of origin are not known



City centre - Coliseum, Central and Hindustan theatres; Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman; Brickfield's toddy shop; Jalan Kenanga flats; Jalan Shaw flats; Sentul Pasar Dalam; Setapak and Hot Springs area.

This Gang 24 exists in 8 different parts of the city and each area has its own leader. However, some of the gangs in different areas come under the control of just one leader for example Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman and the three theatres are under one leader. Even then, those gangs of the same number consider themselves as brothers and do not fight among each other. As such a Gang 24 member is free to go to any of the areas mentioned above and he will not be harassed. The important factor is that the member should know the correct hand sign of the gang to prove that he is a true member of Gang 24.

#### Gangs and their areas of origin:

Gang	Area of Origin
360	San Peng
24	Batu Caves
21	Jalan Ipoh
08	Sentul
04	Cheras Municipal Quarters
Satu Hati	Hospital Quarters
Blues Gang	Ampang
Hati Keras	Puchong
A1-81	Pekeliling Flats

Gang 303 and 101 - their areas of origin are not known

Table 2.1

GANGS	AREAS OF OPERATION
04 (4 Lubang) 08	Cheras Municipal Quarters; Ampang. Sentul; Kepong-Jinjang; Selayang; Segambut; Batu Caves; Damansara; Kampung Maxwell; Scott Road (Brickfields); Bungsar; San Peng; Kampung Pandan; Ampang.
21	Jalan Ipoh; Damansara; Brickfields; Bungsar.
24	Batu Caves; Coliseum, Central and Hindustan theatres; Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman; Brickfields' toddy shop; Jalan Kenanga flats; Jalan Shaw flats; Sentul Pasar Dalam; Setapak; Hot Springs.
101	Sentul Pasar Dalam; Sentul Pasar Railway Quarters; Sentul toddy shop; Cheras Municipal Quarters.
303	Kampung Siam; Setapak; Jalan Ipoh Batu 5; Bungsar.
360	San Peng; Loke Yew; Imbi toddy shop; Kampong Pandan; Cheras.
satu Hati	Hospital Quarters; Cheras 2½ milestone; town centre; Brickfields; Bungsar; Hot Springs; Gurney Municipal Quarters; Kampung Loke Yew; Puchong; Serdang.
Blues Gang	Ampang; San Peng; Kampong Pandan; Cheras 2½ milestone.
Hati Keras	Puchong; Serdang.
A1-81	Pekeliling flats; Kolam Air; Sentul; Sentul Selatan; Batu Caves

2 - Table 2.2: GANGS AND THEIR AREAS OF OPERATION

Leader also known as Elder Brother  
Tiger General who is the Chief fighter  
White Fan the teacher  
Red Staff the executioner



ORGANIZATION OF INDIAN GANGS

The Indian Gangs are not well organized and this leads to the constant arrest of its members by the police. In the words of a police officer, "These gangs are loose gangs where the leaders' control is not strong." They are said as not organized in the sense that they do not have role specification, like that of the Chinese secret societies, where the roles played by the members differ from one another. Furthermore, all members are subservient to the leader and those of higher ranks. Each member has a designated role in the organization and their roles do not overlap one another. (2)

Indian gangs do not have such role differentiation. However, there is a consent to the authority and powers of the leader and chief fighter. Below the leader is the "tiger", normally the person who is next in line to the gang leadership. Apart from these 2 persons, there are a few other strong gang members who are respected for their bravery. The members' strength in the organization lies in the fact that they attend all table-talks which are held by the gang.

Apart from these few persons, there is the official treasurer. Normally, the gangs appoint a shopkeeper (normally

2 - Among the roles in the Chinese secret societies are:

Leader	also known as Elder Brother
Tiger General	who is the Chief fighter
White Fan	the teacher
Red Staff	the executioner

sundry or coffee shops) as their treasurer. They keep any money that they derive from their activities with him, although he is not an active gang member. The shopowner then deposits the gang money in his savings account. Apart from the gangs' income, the shopowner also deposits his own. This is done to prevent police detection. The logic for this can be understood by the following explanation. Gang A, which collects protection money amounting to \$24.40 per month, gives it to the shopowner for safe keeping. The gang, as an illegal society, cannot have a bank account of its own. As such, the shopowner's name is used to bank in their income. If the shopowner was to bank in \$24.40 every month, this gives rise to suspicion as to the means the shopowner derives his monthly income as the denomination is known to be the amount collected by Gang A as protection money. As such, the police will intervene and the shopowner will be questioned which, in turn, might lead to the gang being crippled by the police. To avoid all this, Gang A will give their money to the shopkeeper who deposits it in his savings account together with his own personal savings. By this way, the amount deposited varies from time to time depending on the shopkeeper's business turnover and as such there is nothing to be suspicious about. This process is done on a basis of mutual trust between the shopkeeper and the gang. From time to time, the shopkeeper will be asked to show the gang's account. It is very unlikely that the shopkeeper will cheat the gang of their money as the consequences of such a deed will be tragic and is known to the shopkeeper. its existence free of police harassment. He is also



Apart from the treasurer role played by the shopkeeper, his shop (if it is a coffee shop) is frequently used for holding table-talks. Moreover, the gang members often drink and eat at the shop for "free". The shopkeeper however deducts the amount to be paid for the meal or drink from the gang account. For all these services provided by the shopkeeper, the gang provides protection service for him at no cost. The shopkeeper is also seldom questioned regarding the amount of money he is holding. Everything is taken for granted and with good faith. The leader plays the most important role in the organization of the gang. Frequently the leader is a strong and brave personality who starts off in the organization as an ordinary member. By virtue of his fighting ability he is appointed or proclaims himself as a leader. Appointment of an individual as a leader is done by a "bapak" or a patron who was a former leader of the gang and gives support to it at times of need. The appointment is done when a present leader wishes to step down from involvement in gang activities. The reasons for ending ties with gangs are mainly due to marriage and age factors. Self-proclamation as a leader happens when an individual initiates a new gang in a territory or when he breaks away, with some strong backing, from the present gang in which he is an active member.

The leader can be considered as the brains behind the organization. He is responsible for the smooth running of the organization. He initiates ways and means by which the gang can continue its existence free of police harassment. He is also

responsible for finding means of financial security in case some of his members are arrested by police or hurt in clashes with rival gangs. He is also responsible in laying down rules and regulations which are to be adhered to strictly by his members. He also has to settle disputes, both internal and external. Finally, he is also the person to judge and punish any wrongdoers in his gang. As such, the responsibility of a gang leader is very heavy. If he manages to carry out his responsibilities well, then he will stay at the helm of the leadership with utmost security. When the leader is weak, he loses out, not only to other stronger gang members but also to the police.

The "tiger" or the fighter is another important figure in the gang. The tiger is normally a very brave person who is willing to face even death in carrying out his duties. He is the right-hand of the leader and with his backing, a leader is very safe in terms of muscle power. At every important function of the gang, the "tiger" will be present. Supporting the "tiger" are a few strong and brave men who are responsible for executing punishments or carrying out the orders of the leader like going for a gang clash. The presence of these persons at a clash shows the gangs' strength in terms of bravery. More often than not, the "tigers" are exponents of some martial arts.

Then, there are the new members who are put on probation for at least 3 months, to confirm their allegiance to the gang and its cause. These new members are not drafted immediately into the gang. When an individual wants to be a member of the gang, he is



at first asked to perform some light duties for the gang like of carrying messages. After about 3 months, he is given a break to prove his worthiness to be drafted as a member into the gang. The break is given in the form of accompanying the gang in a raid or a gang clash. If the individual shows courage during the operation, then he will be drafted as a member or else he is not. Apart from this, the gang also gets information (through its own sources) regarding the individual like his true name (in case he is cheating his name), his aims for joining the gang, previous records and so forth.

From the above description it can be seen that the Indian gang does have role specification to a certain extent but it lacks specialization. Only the leader and the "tiger" together with a few others seem to shoulder the responsibility of running the gang. As such the Indian gang is not a well-organized institution albeit illegal. Its main flaw lies in the fact that there is not much role specialization. The leader has the greatest responsibility and power. When the leader is concerned about the future of the gang, then the smooth running of the organization is ensured. On the other hand, when the leader has a carefree and careless attitude, then the organization is doomed for destruction with internal friction at first. This was what happened to one gang in Sungei Buloh. Gang 1 was operating in Batu Caves and its surrounding areas. The leader had a very strong personality and was respected very much by his members. Soon his territory of control spread to and later crippled by the police.



neighbouring areas. At this time in Sungei Buloh, the leader of Gang 2 which was operating in that area, was behaving in a manner unbecoming of a leader. He was treating his members very badly. All the gang money was being used by the leader on entertainment for himself. He did not care much about his members' well-being. Unsatisfied with their leader, some members of Gang 2 approached the leader of Gang 1, seeking his help to form a new Gang 1 in Sungei Buloh. Following this request, the leader of Gang 1 went to Sungei Buloh and set up Gang 1 there as an opposition to Gang 2, which was by now inactive and weak. As such, Sungei Buloh area was taken over by Gang 1 from Gang 2 and a local leader was appointed.

Another reason for the weak organization of the gang is that the rules and regulations of the gang are not strictly adhered to and also the members are given much freedom to find their own means of financial support. This can be seen by the involvement of individual gang members in prostitution rings and drug pushing. Although, according to the respondents, the gang collectively does not involve in such activities, some of its members are directly involved. These members earn the money for themselves and are not compelled to give a certain portion to the gang. But if they wish, they could buy the gang members food or pay for their entertainment occasionally. However, when these gang members, who are involved with prostitutes and drugs, are caught by the police, the gang will not help him out. This might also lead to the captured gang members leaking information regarding the gang. All these clearly show that the Indian gang is a very weak organization which can be easily traced and later crippled by the police.



## UTES AND CEREMONIES

Rites and ceremonies do not seem to play an important role within the gangs. Before proceeding further, it is proper to clarify the meaning of rites and ceremonies. Rites are religious ceremonies held by any sect of a community to highlight a certain phenomenon within the community. These ceremonies help to foster the integrity of the community. In this respect, the rites and ceremonies of a gang are referred solely to the ceremonial procedures held by the gang during the initiation of new members or the appointment of a member to a specific role. This is not a widely present phenomenon among the Indian gangs. Moreover at the present day, such ceremonies are practically nil. Not all the gangs have ceremonies to officialize enrolment of new members into the gang. Neither do they have a certain God as a patron unlike the Chinese secret societies which pray to Kuan Ping, the War God. From the fieldwork done, the chart below is derived to show the existence of role stratification and presence of ceremonies in some of the gangs.

Gang	Role Stratification	Ceremonies
08	✓	
24	✓	✓
360	✓	✓
Satu Hati	✓	

Table 2.3: Presence of Role Stratification and Ceremonies

TYPES OF CEREMONIES

Gang 24 - 3 leaders of Gang 24 were interviewed and of these, only 2 related the presence of some simple ceremonies to officiate the appointment of leaders. Mr A who was a leader of Gang 24 during the 1960s and 70s had the following to say: "There is no special ceremony for the intake of new ordinary members. However, for the heads or leaders, we have a ceremony. Normally the ceremony takes place at a cemetery during night time. There, 9 of us had to kneel down and take an oath of secrecy regarding the gang, its members and its activities. After the oath, each one of us were given a small cup (like those used to drink Chinese tea, but smaller in size) filled with a very bitter oil. We were told to gulp the oil without stopping and also warned not to say that the oil was bitter. At this time, without our knowledge, at the back of us were individuals wielding swords aimed at our neck. In case any one of us were to stop and say that they could not consume the bitter oil, the swords would have slashed their necks. However, all 9 of us managed to withstand the bitterness. The reason for this ceremony was to test our allegiance to the gang and our ability to withstand torture. The bitter oil figuratively means the treatment which will be given by the police when we are arrested and also the wounds that we might sustain in a gang clash. If we could not drink the bitter oil, it goes to show that our dedication and loyalty to the gang is suspect at times of torture and when caught by the police, we will release whatever knowledge we have about the gang to safeguard our own skin." had prayers and a medium was also present to conduct the prayers. The prayer



Mr B, also a Gang 24 leader had a different sort of ceremony when he was made the leader. It is not so much of a ceremony but more of an oath of loyalty. Mr B was taken to a cemetery at night, where he made an oath to keep the gang's identity secret and to run the organization in a fair manner. Here, he was briefed on the rules and regulations that must be adhered to at all times by him and his members. Among the rules were:

- 1) no drug addicts can be part of their gang
- 2) no pimps can be members of the gang
- 3) rape is prohibited
- 4) extortion from under-aged boys is prohibited
- 5) if an enemy has his wife, girlfriend or a child besides him, he should never be attacked. He can only be attacked when he is alone or with the company of adult males.

Gang 360 - 2 leaders from this gang were interviewed. Both of them gave an almost identical picture of the ceremony held by their gang for the initiation of their leaders. Mr X was a Gang 360 leader in the 60s and 70s. His picture of the ceremony which he underwent is as follows.

"In Gang 360, our tradition is to change the leader once in every five years. The appointment of a new leader will be done by the "bapak". When I was to be appointed the leader, 13 of us went to a nearby cemetery (for any ceremony held by this gang at the cemetery, only 13 persons will be present - not more and not less as this has been the tradition). There we had prayers and a medium was also present to conduct the prayers. The prayer



is held to obtain the blessing of the spirits for the new leader. After the prayer, a few chickens and a goat were slaughtered and a feast was held for the 13 of us there."

the belief here that having initiation ceremonies would help the leader have a better  
CONCLUSION its members. This is because, during such ceremonies,

It can be seen from these descriptions of the ceremonies held by Indian gangs that there are a lot of differences between the ceremonies of one gang compared to another. Furthermore, some gangs do not have any ceremony at all. However, there are a few interesting features about these gang ceremonies. Firstly, there is no one standard ceremony which is followed by these gangs. The same gang but operating in different areas under different leaders seem to have totally different ceremonies, like in the case of Gang 24. Secondly, although their ceremonies are different the venue always seem to be a cemetery. Thirdly, the presence of magico-religious ceremonies. It should be noted that initiation ceremonies being held at cemeteries mean that these gangs are also magico-religious societies. What's more with the presence of mediums who pray to the spirit for the blessing of the newly appointed leader? However, it can be argued that the reason why these gangs chose the cemetery is to prevent any detection from the public and the police as during the night time the cemetery is an unhibited area. Another interesting feature is that these initiation ceremonies are held only for leaders and occasionally other top hats. This, in a way, signifies the importance of the leader in the organization above the others. On the other hand, by not having



initiation ceremonies for the ordinary members, it does not help to create a sense of belonging to the gang among its members.

Although they are dedicated members, it is the belief here that having initiation ceremonies would help the leader have a better control of its members. This is because, during such ceremonies, fear which is instilled in everyone acts as a deterrence for the

members to stick to the gang rules and regulations. Firstly, criminal gangs and as such their activities are of criminal nature. Having a ceremony at night at a cemetery is by itself frightening. It includes gang fights, extortion, prostitution and drug trafficking apart from the "protection service" which they provide for a fee. This will ween the truly loyal members from the rest.

One important inference that can be made based on these ceremonies is that Indian gangs did not branch out from one main ideas and principles. Some gangs offer mainly protection service which goes to show that they are money-making (e.g. Gang 08) whereas others play the role of arbitrators of disputes between people in their territory and also between other gangs (e.g. Satu Hati gang). Every gang has its own version of ceremony with modifications according to the leader. Thus the springing up of Indian gangs can be attributed to the "keeping up with the Joneses" slogan.

#### FIGHTS

Gang fights are brought about by any or all of the several means below:-

- i) gang rivalry
- ii) public
- iii) intoxication
- iv) pride.

Normally when a member is attacked by some rival gang members, then the gang as a whole is involved to vindicate the rival gangs' attack. This kind of rivalries are continued indefi-

CHAPTER 3 over a long period of time. ...

Then there are situations where the public propagate

gang fights. The following description will show how this comes

### ACTIVITIES OF THE GANG

about. When an individual, Mr A, has some grudge and hatred towards

a certain person, Mr B, and wants to hurt him physically, he engages

### INTRODUCTION

Gang X to do the job. Mr A himself could not possibly do the job

Basically, all the Indian gangs in Kuala Lumpur are because of factors like timidity, small physique compared to Mr B criminal gangs and as such their activities are of criminal nature.

or not wanting to lend in trouble with the police later. On It includes gang fights, extortion, prostitution and drug traffic-

engaging Gang X, Mr A has to pay the gang a certain amount of money king apart from the "protection service" which they provide for a

which depends on whether Mr B is to be killed or his limbs slashed fee. However, it should also be noted that these activities vary

off. Another criterion which the gang uses to ascertain the amount from one gang to another due to the differences of the leaders'

to be paid is the wealth of Mr A i.e. he has to pay more if he is ideas and principles. Some gangs offer mainly protection service

wealthy and vice versa. When Gang X attacks or slashes Mr B, the which goes to show that they are money-making (e.g Gang 08) whereas

latter might seek the assistance of Gang Y to take revenge over others play the role of arbitrators of disputes between people in

Mr A. But then, since Mr A has paid Gang X for the job, he is also their territory and also between other gangs (e.g. Satu Hati gang).

eligible for protection from them. As such when Gang Y assaults him, Gang X will help Mr A and this leads to direct confrontation

### FIGHTS

between Gangs X and Y. ...

Gang fights are brought about by any or all of the

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"boozing" (drinking) sessions that the gang members have quite

i) gang rivalry

frequently. Normally, the members have a certain "hang-out" where

ii) public

they gather for these sessions. As such they become accustomed to

iii) intoxication

the place and feel proud about it. Very often they drink to a

iv) pride.

high level of intoxication which makes them irrational thinkers and

Normally when a member is attacked by some rival gang

of course noise-makers. If other clients at the coffee shop or

members, then the gang as a whole is involved to vindicate the

restaurant ignore the din made by these gangsters, then everything

rival gangs' attack. This kind of rivalries are continued indefi-

goes on fine. However, if someone were to lock, which the gangsters



nitely and over a long period of time. Then there are situations where the public propagate gang fights. The following description will show how this comes about. When an individual, Mr A, has some grudge and hatred towards a certain person, Mr B, and wants to hurt him physically, he engages Gang X to do the job. Mr A himself could not possibly do the job because of factors like timidity, small physique compared to Mr B or not wanting to land in trouble with the police later. On engaging Gang X, Mr A has to pay the gang a certain amount of money which depends on whether Mr B is to be killed or his limbs slashed off. Another criterion which the gang uses to ascertain the amount to be paid is the wealth of Mr A i.e. he has to pay more if he is wealthy and vice versa. When Gang X attacks or slashes Mr B, the latter might seek the assistance of Gang Y to take revenge over Mr A. But then, since Mr A has paid Gang X for the job, he is also eligible for protection from them. As such when Gang Y assaults him, Gang X will help Mr A and this leads to direct confrontation between Gangs X and Y. Another factor which brings about gang fights are the "boozing" (drinking) sessions that the gang members have quite frequently. Normally, the members have a certain "hang-out" where they gather for these sessions. As such they become accustomed to the place and feel proud about it. Very often they drink to a high level of intoxication which makes them irrational thinkers and of course noise-makers. If other clients at the coffee shop or restaurant ignore the din made by these gangsters, then everything goes on fine. However, if someone were to look, which the gangsters



the businessmen and shopowners in their "territory" with something consider as a stare, at them and start whispering among themselves, similar to an insurance policy. These shopowners have to pay a the gangsters will be waiting to create trouble out of it. If, monthly (weekly at times) subscription to the gang which in return they start a fight, and end it there, everything will be fine. guarantees that the shopowners' business will not be disrupted by But, if the others feel that they have been pushed around and want any outsiders or people residing in that area. If at all the to get even with the gangsters, then they will call their gang or, business is disrupted, then the gang has to pay indemnities to the if they are not members of any gang, hire a gang to fight the shopowners for the loss incurred. The amount paid as protection gangsters. Fights during drinking sessions seem to be a normal affair among these people (for that matter even between persons or prosperity of the business. For instance, Gang 24 collects who are not gang members). Sometimes after drinks, these members try to have fun by means of causing hurt or damage to the general public or to an individual person.

One other factor which brings about fights is "pride". Generally, these gang members are very proud of themselves and their gang and also carry themselves in an arrogant manner. This is especially true with the young gang members. This being the case, when they are involved in a small misunderstanding or accident, they do not or are not willing to settle the trivial harassment that might hinder their business or work progress. In issue there and then itself but create a bigger issue out of it, which ultimately results in violence.

#### PROTECTION SERVICE

Most of the gangs' major source of income is from this service. This protection service is similar to the legal security services provided by private firms. The only difference between them is that the gang's service is illegal although its rates are very much lower. In this service, the gang covers all or most of



the businessmen and shopowners in their "territory" with something similar to an insurance policy. These shopowners have to pay a monthly (weekly at times) subscription to the gang which in return guarantees that the shopowners' business will not be disrupted by any outsiders or people residing in that area. If at all the business is disrupted, then the gang has to pay indemnities to the shopowners for the loss incurred. The amount paid as protection fees depends on the gang which collects it and also on the scale or prosperity of the business. For instance, Gang 24 collects \$240.00 as the first payment from a restaurant and \$12.40 per week thereon. However, from a stall owner, the gang collected \$24.40 every month. Gang 360 on the other hand collects \$13.60 from a news stand; \$136.00 per month from a restaurant and \$3,600.00 from a contractor who was putting up a building in their area of operation. (2)

In this protection service, the gangs have to ensure that these people who are subscribing to them are free from any harassment that might hinder their business or work progress. In Batu Caves, during the 1960s, Gang 24 was collecting \$2,400.00 from a contractor who was constructing a building there. The gang had to pay for some damages caused to the building by some unknown parties. The windows in the building were broken and as such Gang 24 had to pay for it. (3)

Most of the subscribers to the gang seem to be willing to pay to the gang as the amount is nominal compared to their business turnover. Moreover, the operation of this service is



Activity of Indian Gang

beneficial to them in the sense that they might be extorted by some others if they did not subscribe to the gang.

Gangs are not the only ones to be collecting such protection money. Even some legal bodies (uniformed bodies) are known to have done this. I personally remember some police personnels who did this during the late 60s and early 70s. (1) At that time 2 or 3 police constables who are on patrol duty come by to some stalls and the stallholders would chip in some money to be given to the constables. Depending on the number of police constables, the amount paid by one stallholder varies from 30 cents to 50 cents. One of the stallholders would go around collecting the money from about 8-10 stalls and gave the money collected to the constables. (2) A few years later, when City Hall set up its Enforcement Unit who were empowered to serve summons to all non-licensed and errand stallowners, the same procedure used to be done. The only change being that now a larger amount was being collected, which was a dollar a stallholder. This collection happens once or twice a week. (3)

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- National Echo, 19.10.1981
- 1 - I was about 9 years old at this time.
  - 2 - I have personally collected the money from the stallholders and handed it to the police constables a couple of times. Among the stalls were news stands, drinks stall, food stalls and coffee stalls. The area is the old taxi stand beside the Government Dental Clinic in Jalan Tun Perak.
  - 3 - I have also personally collected and handed the money to the enforcement unit people a couple of times.



# TERROR GANG

By M. VEERA PANDIYAN and

SIVA KUMAR G

**KUALA LUMPUR, Sun.** — Residents, schoolchildren and shopkeepers in Kampung Kolam Ayer off Jalan Ipoh here are being terrorised by armed rowdy mobsters who have openly identified themselves as "Gang 360."

About half the members are made up of 15-to 17-year-old youths including several schoolboys who have become the terror of schoolchildren in the area. These youths carry penknives and an ingenious weapon—bottle opener with one end sharpened.

The *National Echo* understands that the gang became active early this year. Of late they have become "very daring" and are going on a large-scale "recruitment" of youths in the kampung and of schoolboys from nearby secondary schools.

One of the residents said the "schoolboy gang members" were the ones who gave the most problems to residents.

"They beat up children and even adults at the slightest provocation. It is difficult to fight them because they are usually in a group of about 15. And most of them carry modified bottle openers as weapons," the residents said.

Schoolchildren get beaten up if they do not pay a "subscription fee" of \$3.60 or if they enter the gang's territory — a

• SEE PAGE TWO

## RESIDENTS- LIVE IN FEAR OF 'GANG 360'

• FROM PAGE ONE

corner of the Sri Dhandayuthapani School field without permission.

Adults are intimidated into a fight if they just stare at the gang members.

Shopkeepers are also forced to pay "subscription money" — \$360 — which is probably why the gang got its name.

The modified bottle openers, besides being used by the schoolboy gangsters to threaten people, also come in handy when soft drinks are delivered to shops. The gang carts away the crates and help themselves to the drinks.

Residents said since early this year, there have been a number of fights in the school field, the most recent one last Sunday.

One of the residents picked up a wallet believed to belong to one of the schoolboy gangsters. In it was a photostated identity card and bottle opener with one end sharpened.

The "senior" gang members are present only during fights. They also come to collect protection money from shopkeepers.

It is understood that so far only one report has been lodged against the gangsters — by a father of a schoolboy who was a victim. The caretaker of the school has, however,

National Echo, 19.10.1981

## HOUSEWIFE BEATEN UP AND HOUSE FURNITURE SMASHED

*Society - Secret Society*  
KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — A 36-year-old housewife, who did not allow her two sons to join some gangsters, was severely beaten by six men with iron rods in Kampung Kasipillai here last night.

Mdm L. Kanniamma, who sustained a fractured arm and received bruises on her face and body, was saved from further injury by her four daughters who pulled her to safety.

The men, however, smashed everything in the house, including furniture, glassware and a TV set.

They also smashed two bicycles parked outside.

Mdm Kanniamma, who sought treatment at the General Hospital today, said the men broke down the front door at about 11 p.m. after she had refused to open it.

"My two sons had gone to the cinema and I asked a neighbour to come over.

"A few days earlier some gangsters in the area had approached my sons to join them but I refused permission.

"The men then demanded that I pay \$50 protection money which I also refused.

Since then I had feared reprisals so I asked my neighbour to keep me company whenever my sons were out," she said.

### SCREAMED

She said they started hitting her as soon as they had broken in. Her daughters, aged from nine to 16, pulled her to safety through the rear door.

"My daughters were screaming and when my neighbour told the men to stop they threatened to assault her if she did not hand over my business," said Mdm Kanniamma.

"They then began smashing my TV set, furniture, glassware and other articles."

They also took about \$600, added Mdm Kanniamma, who estimated the damage at \$1,500.

Police who rushed to the scene picked up two suspects. A third suspect, a relative of Mdm Kanniamma, was arrested later.

## Girl gang- raped, father slashed by 4

30 MAY 1984

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — A 14-year-old girl was abducted from her house and gang-raped after her father was slashed by four men in Puchong yesterday.

She was found by police with her dress torn and blood stained in a kongsi house.

Her father, a 43-year-old factory worker, was earlier slashed twice on the head by the four men in his house in Kampung Bohol, 10km Jalan Puchong.

He was admitted to the University Hospital but his condition was not serious.

Police have detained four suspects.

City CID chief ACP Yahaya Isa said four men, one armed with a parang and the others with sticks and knives, went to the factory worker's house about 11am yesterday and

forced open the front door.

They confronted him and demanded to see his son, a temple caretaker.

When he told them that his son was not in, they left. However, they returned about 30 minutes later and attacked him.

They then grabbed his daughter and rode off on motor-cycles. **N.S.T.**

### Teenager

Acting on information, Insp Ng Foo Kang rushed to an unoccupied kongsi house near the Seremban-Kuala Lumpur highway about 11am and found the girl abandoned there.

Eight hours later, Brickfields police picked up two suspects, one of them a teenager, in Kampung Tepl Sungai, 8.4km Jalan Kelang Lama.

The other two suspects were detained at the 10.4km Jalan Puchong by the Jalan-Bandar Anti-Secret Society Branch.

1) The Star, 12.8.1982

2) Straits Times, 30.5.1984



# WORKER DIES IN ATTACK BY GANG OF 10

21 AUG 1984

**KUALA LUMPUR, Mon.** — A construction worker was stabbed to death and his friend was injured when they were attacked by 10 armed men at Kampung Tangki Air, off Jalan Pudu Ulu, this morning.

Ravi Kandasamy, 19, had stab wounds on his chest and neck. He was also slashed on the face and head.

It is believed that he ran for about 300 metres to Kampung Shamelin before he collapsed. His body was discovered by a mandore near a longhouse at 9.30a.m.

His friend, identified only as Ramachandran, 21, was slashed on the left hand. He sought help from residents of the longhouses in Kampung Shamelin and was taken to hospital here.

Police found a parang and a gold chain at the scene of the incident.

It is believed that the killing is connected to an earlier gang clash.

City CID chief Asst Comm. Yahaya Isa said that a fight broke out between two groups of people in Kampung Tangki Air at about 3p.m. yesterday.

He said that one group fled a few minutes later and left a motor-cycle at the village.

He added that the other group later burnt the motor-cycle.

At about 12.30a.m., Ravi, Ramachandran and their friends were walking in the village when they were attacked by about 10 armed men, he said.

ACP Yahaya said police believed that the earlier fight arose from a misunderstanding.

Several longhouse residents said they heard a commotion outside at about midnight but were afraid to go out to check.

Police know the identities of the people involved in the incident and hope to make arrests soon.

## Labourer killed, two hurt in clash among 30

24 JUN 1984

**PETALING JAYA, Sat.** — A Port Klang labourer was killed and two others injured in a fight involving at least 30 people at Kampung Gandhi at the 13km Jalan Klang Lama last night.

Police rushed to the scene and seized several weapons including an axe, a parang, a bearing scraper and several broken bottles.

S. Kalida, 21, died when he was slashed on his head during the fight.

The injured were identified only as Supaya and Subramaniam, 14. They were admitted to the University Hospital and their condition

was reported to be not serious.

In follow up operations, police detained 44 people for questioning. However, 22 were released this morning while the others are helping police in their investigations.

Sources said the fight broke out when several residents in the area saw a boy throwing stones at Supaya's house at about 10.30p.m. yesterday.

They caught the boy after a short chase.

The boy was questioned and slapped when he put up a struggle.

The boy's parents came and a heated argument broke out. A fight ensued and residents in the area joined in the fray.

Deputy OCPD (crime) Deputy Supt Sharif Jenait said that when police arrived, the people had already fled.

Kalida's body was found outside Supaya's house while Supaya was found inside with wounds on his body.

Police searched the area and found Subramaniam about 200 metres away from the scene, also injured.

1) The Star, 21.8.1984

2) The Star, 24.6.1984

themselves. Giving money to the corrupt police and enforcement officers was done with the understanding that business would not be affected by these authorities, that is the latter would not issue summons to the stallowners.

The same concept applies to the gangs' protection service. If the municipality authorities warn the stallholders of forthcoming crackdowns on unlicensed stallholders, the gang helps to finance a stall when the business is bad or they imburse the shopowner with cash if his shop is burglaried or burnt down.

#### EXTORTION, PROSTITUTION AND DRUGS

Previously, during the 1960s and early 1970s gangsters were feared by the general public because the gangsters frequently went on extortion rampage. The members have a certain strategic spot where they can "look out" for any new faces around their territory. If at all, someone from elsewhere were to pass that area, the gangsters are bound to relieve that person of his or her money and jewelleries. Another place where these gangsters carry out this activity is at the local theatres. When a Tamil movie is being screened at these theatres, the gangsters will be present, normally to sell tickets on the black market. This is especially so when the movie is a hit. While some of the members will be handling the black market tickets, others (3 or 4 of them) will go out to "cari makan", a term they use to refer to extortion. Whatever amount of money they get, is used for food and drinks, and if the amount is large, then they share the money among

the girl's parents object to their relationship. The parents being traditional people, do not believe in the girl choosing her own husband and as such they object.



themselves. normally the case, she is brought to the city and stays

Not all the Indian gangs as an organization utilize prostitution as a means to earn money. However, in every gang, there are individuals who play the role of Godfather to a few prostitutes. The income that the girls earn are received by these members alone and are not paid to the gang's coffers. These girls are also not protected by the whole gang. The gang is not obliged to help members who live on the prostitutes' earnings. The member involved has to solve whatever problems he faces on his own. The girls too have no obligation towards the gang. However, it is the practice of these girls to provide food and free entertainment to the rest of the gang, once in a while.

Although some gangs deny involvement in prostitution rackets, others however confirm their involvement. These gangs have forced girls into prostitution. The methods they use are brutal and terrifying. Normally, the girls are from rural areas and are brought to the city by an individual, who is also a gang member, on the pretext that he will later marry the girl. The process by which unsuspecting girls are forced into prostitution is as follows. Firstly, a good-looking guy will go to some rural areas and slowly trap an unsuspecting girl into loving him. After a few months of "courting" the boy proposes that the girl run away from home and settle down in Kuala Lumpur. (4) If the girl agrees

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4 - The proposal to run away from home is suggested when the girl's parents object to their relationship. The parents being traditional people, do not believe in the girl choosing her own husband and as such they object.



and this is normally the case, she is brought to the city and stays with the boy who then shows his true colour. The girl is taken to a red light area and held captive in a hotel room. There the girl is tied to the bed and gang raped by about 10 - 15 persons. Apart from the gang rape which is done everyday for about a week, the gang girl is also tortured. She is beaten up by the gang, burning wax is poured over her body and cuts are made with razor blades on her body. Worst still, the cuts are treated with salt water. They During this time minimal food and drink are given to the girl. All these are done to threaten and remind the girl of the consequences she will face, if at all she attempts to run away. After about a week, the girl is led into the prostitution ring, slaving her body to fill the gangsters pockets. After the initial treatment at the hotel room, the girl is provided a home, but most of the time she will be at the hotel. All but 20 per cent of the daily earnings of the girl is collected by the gangsters.

Another way in which gangs are linked with this immoral act is when prostitutes themselves ask for the gangs' protection service. One gang has a few Singaporean girls who are paying protection money to them. This protection service is needed by the prostitutes when individuals, not necessarily gang members, start harassing them. The girls turn to the gang for protection.

Of all the gang leaders interviewed only 2 agreed and confirmed of the gangs' involvement with prostitution. The rest, however, said that only individual members are involved and not the gang as a collective body. It must be understood here that



the gangsters have close relationship among themselves and as such are obliged to one another at times of need. Therefore, it is the contention here that these gangs do run vice rings although it might be in a small scale.

Drug trafficking is another important activity of the gang. Here again it is an individual's effort and the gang as a collective body is not involved. Most of the respondents did not give any information regarding the role of the gang in the drug ring. They merely stated that there are individuals who make a living out of it and from its proceedings provide other gang members with food, drinks and entertainment. Just like in the vice ring, the individual members take the risk of being caught and if caught could not expect the gang's help in any way. (5) One leader stated that during the 1960s when the smoking of ganja was increasing, their gang had a drug wing which solely dealt with drug trafficking. This wing consists of gang members to whom the gang was obliged to help at times of difficulty. Their gang, apart from the drug wing also had a fighting wing which boasted of not a single drug addict among them.

One thing that needs to be pondered is what the gang leaders said about the drug ring, "The gang as a whole is not involved in the drug ring. Only individual members are involved and when these members are caught by the police, the gang need not necessarily help them out." However, it is worthy to note that drug pushing members often provide food, drinks and entertain-

release or not depends on who has been arrested by the police.

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5 - This is the leader's contention.



ment for the other gang members with their earnings from the drug ring. As such, a sense of obligation to the individuals is created amongst gang members. Hence, if an individual is caught for drug pushing, the problem is not just the individuals' but also the gangs'. Thus, it can be deduced that the respondents have not given the true picture regarding the drug ring for fear that such secret activities might be revealed and pose a danger to them.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES

part from this, there are also armed robberies, burglary. Another activity of the gang is social service to its members and their family. Every gang have their own treasury in which all the gangs' income are kept. When any gang member is injured during gang activities, then the gang will pay for his medical treatment. If the gang members has been sentenced to jail, then his family will be given financial aid. The amount to be given however, depends on his role in his family. If he is the sole breadwinner of the family, then a generous amount is given to the family on a monthly basis. If he is not the sole supporter then a smaller amount is given. For example, gang 08 gives a married members' family \$600.00 per month and to a bachelor's parents \$300.00 a month. Apart from this if a member has been arrested by the police under a charge, then the gang will try to work out something to get the member released. Here the amount spent is normally a large figure and whether the gang will work out the release or not depends on who has been arrested by the police. If it is a top man of the gang, then the amount spent is not given



much thought. For example, Gang 08 whose 4 members were arrested on a charge of murder, spent about \$7,000.00 within 3 days to get them out. If he goes to the blocks controlled by Gang 360, then a fight is assured. Then, there are funerals and marriages. During such occasions, the gang will contribute some cash to their member's family to help them. At times when a gang member is killed, the gang even buys a coffin for him. 36 (now known as Gang 360) was at its height. These are the main activities of the Indian gangs in Kuala Lumpur. Apart from this, there are also armed robberies, burglary and theft but all these are isolated cases and are seldom committed by the Indian gang. This kind of activities are more common with the Chinese gangs and secret societies.

Normally, when a gang member is hurt or wounded by a rival gang, a

#### INTERACTION BETWEEN GANGS

In Kuala Lumpur there are only 11 different gangs (i.e. 11 different gang names) but then these gangs have mushroomed throughout the city without any system. When an individual wants to start a gang, he gets a few strong, close friends and initiates the gang, with a code name of a gang which is already in existence. This is the method by which the Indian gangs have sprouted in Kuala Lumpur.

By interaction, it is meant here the relationship between the various gangs. This relationship is not something that can be bragged about because generally these gangs have a high degree of animosity between one another. For example, in the San Peng area, Gangs 360 and 08 are active and there is such great animosity

between them that the flats in that area have been divided into those under the control of Gang 360 and those under Gang 08. When a 08 member goes to the blocks controlled by Gang 360, then a fight is assured. This is more so when the gang members are youngsters and feel arrogant and do not wish to bow to anyone, more so to a member from a rival gang. Then, in Batu Caves during the 60s, the rivalry between Gang 24 and Gang 36 (now known as Gang 360) was at its height and each was trying to outwit the other for the control of the territory. As such, the relationship between different gangs is more often than not of a negative nature.

One way by which interaction among different gangs are brought about is by means of "table-talks" held to settle disputes. Normally, when a gang member is hurt or wounded by a rival gang, a "table-talk" will be held between the 2 gangs. Here both gang leaders and another 2 or 3 members from each gang will sit and thrash out their problems over a drink. If the leaders were to be rational, they will accept their mistake and the one who is in the wrong will agree to pay for the damages. However, if both start accusing each other and do not come to a settlement, then a fight will ensue the "table-talk". The fight itself can be carried out in 2 ways. The first way is that both will agree to fight at an agreed time, date and place. The other alternative is that when one gang does not agree, one of its members will turn the beer glass in an "upside down" way, which indicates that they want to fight. Then, the leader in whose territory the table-talk is being held will give the rival gang a certain time limit (normally 15 minutes) to get out of the shop. If the rival gang does not leave the place



within the stipulated time, then a fight will break out. If the rival gang moves out then it takes back with it, hatred towards the other gang and it will always wait for a chance to take revenge over the other gang.

On the other hand, gangs which have the same name are known as brother gangs. The members of these gangs are not harassed and are free to move about in another place where a similar gang operates. For example, a Gang 360 member from San Peng can safely go to the Loke Yew area where another Gang 360 operates. Here the members have certain signs to distinguish their gang from any other gang. A Gang 24 member will show a particular sign which has his index and forefinger pointing straight, his thumb upright while his other 2 fingers are bent towards the palm. With such signs alone these members will not be fully trusted by a gang in another area. He will also be asked the name of his gang leader and a few other names to confirm his genuine membership to Gang 24.

Apart from this, there were also efforts to bring about unity of the Indian gangs by merging all the gangs into one Indian gang which would operate throughout the city and, later, the country. Thus emerged Gang Satu Hati which encompassed within it Gangs 24, 08, 21, 360 and 101. The idea behind the formation of this gang was to stop feuds between these gangs and help them foster better relationship. With a bigger membership the gang was supposed to help the Indian community through protection from harassment. Human nature could not bear to see such an organization spring up and true to the spirit of "keeping up with the Joneses", some other individuals decided to form Gang Hati Keras to oppose Satu Hati,

Signs Used By Indian Gangs



Gang 08





which brings things back to square one, that is, gang rivalry, and

the gang rivalry is still in evidence. The contemporary Indian gangs

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control by the police in the city has proved fatal for the gang

### Gang 21

activities. The gang's activities are right, according

At present, the general public is no more the target of the gang. Only a selected few are the targets and those selected few have no regrets. They are mainly shopowners who pay protection money to the gang. Apart from these few, the general public is not bothered by the gang as long as they do not interfere with the gang's activities. Only when they interfere does the gang start harassing them.

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WEAPONS

The Indian gangs have an assortment of weapons from revolvers to ice picks. In the 1960s, the Indian gangs were said to have used firearms quite extensively. However, at the present

which brings things back to square one, that is, gang rivalry. due to the heavy penalty it carries. As the contemporary Indian gangs

### INTERACTION BETWEEN GANGS AND THE PUBLIC

At one time, the general public used to fear gangs and gangsters for their rough and tough methods. Slowly this fear is eroding. There are many reasons for this erosion but first we shall see the relation between the gang and the public.

Formerly, the public were the target or victim of gangland activities. It was unsafe to travel at night in certain areas well-known for gangsterism. Among the areas are Sentul, San Peng, Cheras 2½ milestone and Brickfields. The public used to shudder at having to go to these places because they might be victims of extortionists or snatch thieves. Now, with rapid development and increasing control by the police in the city has proved fatal for the gang activities.

At present, the general public is no more the target of the gang. Only a selected few are the targets and those selected few have no regrets. They are mainly shopowners who pay protection money to the gang. Apart from these few, the general public is not bothered by the gang as long as they do not interfere with the gang's activities. Only when they interfere does the gang start harassing them.

### WEAPONS

The Indian gangs have an assortment of weapons from revolvers to ice picks. In the 1960s, the Indian gangs were said to have used firearms quite extensively. However, at the present



day, these gangs do not utilize firearms anymore. This may be due to the heavy penalty it carries. As the contemporary Indian gangs are very active in gang fights, the weapons they use are also meant for such situations. Among them are samurai swords, "parangs", meat choppers, daggers, ice picks, bearing scrapers, chains and iron rods. These weapons can be grouped under two categories:

- 1) Those used for stabbing and
- 2) Those used for slashing.

The weapons in the first category have sharp pointed features like daggers, bearing scrapers and ice picks. Whereas the weapons in the second category are longer in length and are not as pointed as those weapons in the first category.

#### CONCLUSION

The Indian gang's basic activities are fights, extortion, prostitution, drug trafficking and protection service. These activities are carried out in varying degrees by the different gangs. Whereas some gangs are active in fights and prostitution, others might stress more on their protection service. The activities that bring in large income to the gang are protection service and drug trafficking. Even though some of the respondents have denied their gang's involvement in drug trafficking and prostitution, it is the contention here that the respondents have not given the true role of their gang in these activities. The Indian gang is now on a low key note due to the strict police control.

Another interesting feature is about the interaction between the gang members, there is both primary and secondary interaction between the various members of the gang. Normally, the interaction between the leader and his "strong men" are primary in nature. They know each other well and get together quite often. The interaction among ordinary gang members and between ordinary members and the leaders are secondary relations. In fact, some of the leaders do not know exactly who are the members, especially members from "affiliate" gangs. For instance, at a gang fight recently, Mr A who was leader of Gang X was surprised to see about seventy or so members, who had come down from various "affiliates" (some from as far as Seremban and Ipoh). He was told by his close friends that all those present were their men and only after that he knew how big his gang really was.



Above weapons with cover



Among Some of the Weapons Used by Indian Gangs



Weapons used for stabbing



Above weapons with cover



**Weapons used for slashing**



**Iron rod**



CHAPTER 4. During the riots, buildings were burnt down and hundreds were killed or injured. Such riots threatened to over-

POLICE AND THE "UNDERWORLD" (1) which, in 1890 were required by law to dissolve." (3) When these societies were not sanctioned

INTRODUCTION went into hiding and operated unlawfully. Such the emergence During the earlier part in the history of secret societies, the authorities concerned with the maintenance of law and public order did not face much of a problem. This was mainly attributed to the essence of the operation of such societies. With the influx of the Chinese immigrants during the 19th and 20th century, "kongsis" (2) were set up. The kongsis were aimed at securing employment and to help the new immigrants adapt themselves to local conditions. Thus, the kongsis were peaceful societies which were run on a clan and province of origin, from Mainland China, basis. However, during later stages, when the activities of these societies tended to threaten the peace and order of the state, intervention of the authorities concerned was unavoidable. and rackets." (4)

With this The earliest of such intervention was in 1890. "During the Penang Riot 1867, the Ghee Hin and Toh Peh Kong societies clashed for more than 10 days, with reinforcements coming in from sense of security created by the presence of the police force. The

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- Public, namely the Chinese, preferred to support a particular
- 1 - "Underworld" refers to all kind of illegal secret societies and gangs which threaten the peace of the state, and who run illegal activities like gambling dens, prostitution rings, extortion, etc.
  - 2 - These "kongsis" were clan groups which brought together members of a similar clan and helped them in seeking employment and payment of their fares from China. When a misunderstanding between members arised, the head or "kapitan" used arbitration to settle the disputes.
  - 3 -
  - 4 - Leo F Comber, Chinese Secret Society in Malaya, p 16.

the mainland. During the riots, buildings were burnt down and hundreds were killed or injured. Such riots threatened to overwhelm the administration and such, in 1890 were required by law to dissolve." (3) When these societies were not sanctioned legally, they went into hiding and operated unlawfully. Such the emergence of the term "secret" which designates their method of operation. The 20th century saw some gigantic growth in the powers of the Police Force, in their aim to eradicate the activities of these illegal societies. At this time the activities of these societies covered a wide range, "Their activities in Malaya, as in China proper, have included the organization of opposition to the government; the stirring up of anti-foreign feeling; the formation of self-protection units against robber gangs; the "protection" and extortion of money from hawkers; shopkeepers, hotelkeepers, prostitutes, labourers, opium and gambling dens; kidnapping for ransom; and the operation of criminal rings and rackets." (4) With this wide range of criminal activities, these societies caused terror among the inhabitants of the state. Thus, the public were more frightened of the actions of these society members than the sense of security created by the presence of the police force. The public, namely the Chinese, preferred to support a particular society than to cooperate with the police. This was based on the reasoning that the police are not present forever in a particular

1) Every society, whether it is registered or not;

3 - C T Dobree, Federation of Malaya Police - Notes on Secret Societies, p 9.

4 - Leon F Comber, Chinese Secret Society in Malaya, p 16.



area to offer support to the public from the secret society's harassment. If at all, anyone were to collaborate with the police, his family's and his life will be endangered.

Stringent moves were made towards abolishing the secret societies, their members and their activities, in the middle of the 20th century, especially after World War II. This can be seen by the formation of a section in the Criminal Investigation Department (C I D) of the police force, with responsibilities solely to oppose and curb secret society activities. This branch which is known as S S or anti-secret society, is duty-bound to fight crime in general and secret society activities in particular. Furthermore, the Prevention of Crime Ordinance and Emergency Ordinance, strengthened the powers of the police to this end.

#### POLICE AND THEIR INTERPRETATION OF SECRET SOCIETIES

After having spoken to some police officers, it is generally found that, the police do not deny the presence of secret society activities. But, neither do they confirm the extensiveness of these societies' activities. Police classify secret societies based on two aspects:

- 1) From the legal aspect, these are unlawful societies. According to the Societies Act 1966, Section 52 states: Society using a Triad ritual is to be deemed an unlawful society.
  - i) Every society, whether it is registered or not; which uses a Triad ritual shall be deemed to be

Police Action Against  
Gangs

# CID CHIEF: SECRET SOCIETIES ARE DEAD

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — There is no secret society in the City. They only exist in name, says City CID Chief Asst. Comm. Syed Othman bin Syed Ali.

"The thugs today only make use of the names of the feared and well-known names of secret societies to

By NG KEE SENG

instil fear in the people," he told The Star today.

"Gone are the days when secret societies were led by able leaders who had absolute control over the members."

ACP Syed Othman said

13 SEP 1980  
that secret societies were formed during the pre-war days when their sole aim was to protect society from bandits and thugs.

Today, feared names like Tiger, Generals, the Immortals, the Thug Gangs are freely used by jobless youths who are out to extort money," he said.

Unlike the old days when the leader of a secret society had absolute control over his members, the so-called gangs that go after businessmen these days for protection money are a disjointed lot out for a fast buck.

In the old days, the backgrounds of potential secret society members were checked carefully before they were sworn in ceremonially.

New members went through colourful rituals to become blood brothers and there was a sense of filial piety in every member towards the leader.

There was strict discipline and obedience among members of the society. Those who offended the rules were severely punished.

However, what is happening today is entirely different.

The CID chief said unemployed youths and drug addicts got together to commit crimes, especially extortion.

"There is no organisation and there is no one leader who has control over members. Anyone can be the leader," he said.

ACP Syed Othman said that secret societies were no longer a threat to the community here. They were more a nuisance created by youths who had gone astray.

Every month, police had to send such youths to Pulau Jerejak for rehabilitation.

## City cops cripple two notorious secret societies

20 JAN 1984

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. City police have stopped the year-long 'reign of terror' of two notorious secret societies — the 'Blues' gang and 'Gang A1-81' — in the Cheras and Pekelling areas.

This follows the arrest of nine suspected members and the seizure of an assortment of weapons, including parangs, knives and iron pipes.

Sources said today that the suspected leader of 'Gang A1-81' was among those detained.

He and three other members were picked up at the Jalan Pekelling flats in October.

The 'Blues' gang was crippled in November when police raided the Municipal quarters at 4km Jalan Cheras and detained five members, including the leader.

The suspects, mainly school dropouts, aged between 18 and 21, are helping the Anti-Secret Society Squad in Jalan Bandar in investigations.

Police sources said both gangs, nicknamed

the 'Indian Gangs', were noted for their gangland clashes with rival secret societies, going on rampage, rioting and destroying property since early last year.

Sources said the gangs were formed about the same time early last year in the Jalan Pekelling and Cheras areas.

The sources said: "At the slightest provocation they would get involved in fights with rival gang members."

1) The Star, 13.9.80

2) New Straits Times 20.1.84



the police increased.  
an unlawful society.

ii) ....., a Triad ritual means any ritual commonly used by Triad societies, any ritual closely resembling any such ritual and any part of such ritual.

2) From the concepts and definitions made by scholars in this field like Blythe, Comber, Mak Lau Fong, etc.

The police unanimously deny the existence of secret societies among the Indians in Malaysia. Indians in this field are classified as gangsters because of the absence of initiation ceremonies unlike those in Chinese secret societies. Moreover, the Indian gangs are not well-organized and do not have a set of well-defined norms. This does not mean that the Indian gangs do not have any rules or regulations with regard to their activities and membership enrolment. Although they do have, it is merely arbitrary and depends entirely on the leader to enforce it. Since Indian gangs are "loose gangs" (5) and do not have specific Triad rituals, it is very wrong to term them as secret societies. Hence, they will be termed as "gangs" and their members "gangsters".

Even though the exact date of start of these Indian gangs and their activities is not known, as has been stated in Chapter 2, these gangs emerged during the 1950s and were very active until the late 60s, after which legislation was tightened and the powers of

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5 - Indian gangs are termed as "loose gangs" because there is no proper stratification and the leader does not have much control over the activities and actions of his members.



the police increased.

decision and later the review of progress is based on the O C P D's report which is submitted to the inquiry board. As such, the

### PREVENTION OF CRIME ORDINANCE AND EMERGENCY ORDINANCE

These are the two Acts which have empowered the police in their struggle against combating the menace of these unscrupulous elements of the society. Out of this two, at present, the Emergency Ordinance (E O) is more constantly used as its powers delegated to the police are higher.

At present, the Emergency Ordinance 5/69 (P O P C - Public Order and Prevention of Crime) is much used by the police. The enactment of this Ordinance came about as a result of the riots in May 1969. The riot had created uneasiness and social unrest throughout the country and fights were very extensive, resulting in death and loss of property. The enactment of the Emergency Ordinance (E O) further empowered the police in their fight against unwanted social elements. Among others, its aim was also to cut down red tape.

Under the Prevention of Crime Ordinance (P C O), a person suspected of involving in gangland activities is put under restricted movement (6) and his movements are monitored closely by the police. The duration of restriction varies from 2 to 4 years, with the police having discretionary powers. However, within the spade of

2 years, a review is held to ascertain the detainee's progress in turning over a new leaf. During the period of restriction, the suspect is compelled to submit a weekly report to the district O C P D regarding his movements for the week.

When a person is detained by police on charges or suspicion of being involved in gangland activities, he is held under police custody for 71 days. During this time, investigations are carried out to prove the suspect's involvement. After the initial investigations, an inquiry will be held by an inquiring officer appointed

by the Minister of Home Affairs. During the inquiry, it is decided whether to restrict the detainee or to let him free, depending on the strength of evidence against him. However, the inquiry board's

Before the sentencing, a Board of Appeal under the

- 6 - Restricted movement means that a suspect is confined to a particular area under the watchful eyes of the police. When he wants to visit his parents or family, he has to get prior approval from the OCPD.



board for leniency. During detention at Pulau Jerejak (or "Pulau" decision and later the review of progress is based on the O C P D's as is commonly used), he is taught some common trades like cobbler-report which is submitted to the inquiry board. As such, the ing, carpentry and others, as the detention is meant to rehabilitate powers of restriction more or less lies with the strength of the those sent there. An offender stays in "Pulau" for 2 years, after accusation as given by the police.

which he is released but his movements restricted to a certain area At present, the Emergency Ordinance 5/69 (P O P C - or district. The restriction period lasts another 2 years during Public Order and Prevention of Crime) is much used by the police. which time the offender has to submit weekly reports to the O C P D The enactment of this Ordinance came about as a result of the riots regarding his whereabouts and activities. Furthermore, the offender in May 1969. The riot had created uneasiness and social unrest should not be seen in public after 7.00 pm. Meanwhile, the offender throughout the country and fights were very extensive, resulting in can approach the O C P D to help him secure employment. After the death and loss of property. The enactment of the Emergency Ordinance restriction period, a person is free again. Even then, this (E O) further empowered the police in their fight against unwanted depends on the progress report of the O C P D. If a person is social elements. Among others, its aim was also to cut down red believed to have not shown much progress, the police can further tape.

lengthen the restriction period by one year. Once an offender is free, his identity card is changed to that of a brown colour. This a suspected gangster for 60 days for the purpose of investigation. is to signify that such a person was/is an incorrigible person and For the purpose of investigation, an Inspector is empowered to had served sentence for criminal activities. detain a suspect for 48 hours, and A S P for 28 days, and a D S P for 30 days, making up a total of 60 days. During this period, police could not get sufficient proof to charge a suspect in court, for the first 14 days, no one (not even parents or other family they are still empowered to detain the suspect and send him to "Pulau". members) is allowed to visit the detainee. After the third week As such, when a suspect under E O wants to hire an advocate to defend himself, it is futile.

By the 60th day, an order is issued by the Minister of Home Affairs. From the year 1978 - 1984, there have been about 150 cases involving Indian gangsters. Out of this, a quarter of them were brought under restriction while the rest were sent to "Pulau". (7) Pulau Jerejak. Before the sentencing, a Board of Appeal under the

Home Ministry processes the inquiry. A detainee can appeal to the  
7 - The exact figures could not be given as police data was not available officially. These figures were given by some relevant persons.



board for leniency. During detention at Pulau Jerejak (or "Pulau" as is commonly used), he is taught some common trades like cobbling, carpentry and others, as the detention is meant to rehabilitate those sent there. An offender stays in "Pulau" for 2 years, after which he is released but his movements restricted to a certain area or district. The restriction period lasts another 2 years during which time the offender has to submit weekly reports to the O C P D regarding his whereabouts and activities. Furthermore, the offender should not be seen in public after 7.00 pm. Meanwhile, the offender can approach the O C P D to help him secure employment. After the restriction period, a person is free again. Even then, this which depends on the progress report of the O C P D. If a person is believed to have not shown much progress, the police can further lengthen the restriction period by one year. Once an offender is free, his identity card is changed to that of a brown colour. This is to signify that such a person was/is an incorrigible person and had served sentence for criminal activities. Hand signs and wearing shirts with The important factor under the E O is that even when the police could not get sufficient proof to charge a suspect in court, they are still empowered to detain the suspect and send him to "Pulau". As such, when a suspect under E O wants to hire an advocate to defend himself, it is futile. More often than not, these are gangsters. From the year 1978 - 1984, there have been about 150 cases involving Indian gangsters. Out of this, a quarter of them were brought under restriction while the rest were sent to "Pulau". (7)

However, the big bats seem to be more calm and gentlemanly as as

7 - The exact figures could not be given as police data was not available officially. These figures were given by some relevant persons.



Overall, it is said that the E O is a very useful weapon in the fight against gangsterism. It has been successfully implemented and since then the rate of gangland activities has decreased and a number of suspected gang leaders and members have been brought to the book, tortured, asked to join a gang as a member and so on, the police will investigate the matter, if a report is made by the

#### IDENTIFYING GANGSTERS

is a gang operating in the area as stated in the report. Generally, identifying gangsters is not a major problem. This is because of the presence of certain marks, signs and the overall behaviour of this group. Normally, a particular gang has its own tattoo mark which is normally some living creatures which signifies strength and strikes terror like an eagle or dragon. One gang leader whom I interviewed uses an eagle tattoo as their sign. However, not all gangs have tattoos and the usage of tattoos is in fact decreasing. This is because those who have such tattoo marks on their body are the prime suspects of police as being gang members and as such are constantly harassed. Hand signs and wearing shirts with a number of unbuttoned buttons are another frequent method of identifying a gang. Hand signs used by the Indian gang are the same as those used by the Chinese secret societies. One other way of identifying gangsters is the way in which one carries himself, especially when in a group. More often than not, these gangsters behave in an arrogant manner so as to prove that they are not afraid of anyone or to show off their affiliation to a gang. This is normally the case with an ordinary, young member of a gang. However, the big hats seem to be more calm and gentlemanly so as

not to attract uncalled-for detection especially by the police. To help the police identify gangs and gangsters, there are three major sources. Firstly is the report of victims. When a member of the public is assaulted, asked to pay "protection money" or extorted, asked to join a gang as a member and so on, the police will investigate the matter, if a report is made by the individual. If there is a gang operating in the area as stated in the report and if the police have its record of the gangsters, raids will be organized to harass and arrest them. In the case where the existence of the gang is not known or it is a newly formed gang, then the police will start an operation to identify the gang and its members before taking appropriate action against them. This process of identifying new gangs and gangsters will be discussed below. However, the rapidity of police action against these gangsters depends on the number of reports made and the assistance from the public which is the second source of identifying gangsters. Witnesses or the public in general can play an important role in identifying these gangs and eventually curbing their activities. When there is an incidence of gang clash or gangsters operating in a particular area, the public can supply the police with necessary information like who were the gangsters present, the weapons they were using and any other relevant information. In this way, the police gets tip-offs when there is about to be a clash or any other gang activities and the informer remains anonymous. The third source is the police's own investigations and its informers, who are registered with the police as such and



Police Actions Against Gangs

commonly known as "hantu". Police investigation means the duties of police detectives who are assigned to a particular area where they are well informed about any criminal activities. Here, the detectives are normally helped by the informers, who are mostly ex-convicts or ex-gang members. These informers supply the police with any information that they get to know about the gang and its activities. For example, when a clash between 2 gangs is suspected, the informer passes the word to the police who then organize raids to prevent the clash and arrest the gang members.

IDENTIFYING PROCESS OF POLICE

The police have a specific process to detect the emergence of new gangs and gangsters. This process spans from the time a report is lodged till the gangster is punished. The police have an index system where the photographs of all suspected gangsters are kept. In the case where a gangster has no record, a new file is opened when he is arrested for the first time and his photograph is also indexed.

When an official police report is made regarding gangland activities, the police will start collecting statements regarding these activities. The statements are made by the victims, witnesses and the police personnels who are involved. There is no time limit given for the collection of these statements. The police will gather more details regarding the involvement of the gangsters and when there is enough proof to pursue the matter, they will detain the suspects under Police Preventive Laws like the E O and P C O.



## Police Actions Against Gangs

### (1) 29 held, gangland weapons seized in swoop

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Cheras police arrested 29 people and seized an assortment of gangland weapons in an operation here last night.

CPD Supt. Megat Abdul Hamid Megat Jaafar said the weapons were seized from a temple and a deserted store at the 4km Cheras Road.

The weapons included four parangs, two iron pipes, a steel bar, three long blades, a wirecutter, a long knife, an axe and a pair of shears.

He said it was the scene where two rival gangs were set to clash last Saturday and Tuesday but were averted by the timely arrival of police.

In the operation today, which began



Supt. Megat Hamid (right) and Cheras area's Insp. Fadri Alias with the weapons seized in the operation.

at 9 p.m. and part of the nationwide Operasi Benteras Satu, 77 police personnel raided areas in Cheras, Jalan Ikan Mas and Ikan Ayu, Kampung Pandan India in Lorong Tujoh and Lorong Razak, and a shop in Jalan South.

Five suspects, aged between 19 and 32, were arrested in Cheras.

During the operation, a traffic offender was also issued with a warrant of arrest.

Supt. Megat Hamid said city police chief Haji Zaman Khan had instructed officers conducting operations to serve warrants of arrest on traffic offenders as well.

"There are more than 1,000 traffic summons at Jalan Bandar which have not been served upon offenders," he said.

"This is because whenever police went to the address given by the offenders, the people in the house say that the offender has moved."

He said that when they went to a house in Kampung Pandan India to look for the man, the occupants said he had moved. "But we found him relaxing inside," he said.

In Jalan Ikan Mas three illegal immigrants, two men without identity cards and 14 secret society suspects were detained.

### (2) 19 secret society suspects held

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Police detained 19 suspected secret society thugs from two rival gangs who were preparing for a showdown in Cheras last night.

They also recovered an assortment of gangland weapons — four parangs, an axe, two iron pipes, a steel bar, three iron blades, a wire gutter and a bearing scraper.

The weapons were found dumped outside a temple and a dilapidated store off the 4km Jalan Cheras.

With the arrests of the suspects, police believe they have crippled two gangs operating in the area.

Cheras OCPD Supt. Megat Abdul Hamid said his officers and men carried out the raids on gangster hide-outs off the 4km and 6km Jalan Cheras following two recent gangland clashes last week.

"We are now questioning those detained and are also checking on their background," he said.

### (3) Massive op to flush out bad hats

PETALING JAYA, Sat. — Police launched a five-hour massive operation in the district to flush out "bad hats" today.

The operation, which is part of the nationwide Operasi Benteras Satu, involved 110 personnel. Eight teams simultaneously raided 22 crime prone areas, including Old Town and New Town, Sections 2, 14 and 17, from 9 p.m.

The team assigned to Paramount Garden detained several girls from sunng bars.

Several suspected secret society members were also detained near a cinema. Some motor cycles which were illegally modified were also taken to the station.

Some people without identity cards were among those detained.

In another Operasi Benteras Satu swoop in Alor Star, police arrested 45 addicts in a 12-hour operation at the nearby Kuala Kedah fishing village yesterday.

OCPD Supt. Haji Kassim Yunus said seven others, including four Thais, were also detained for other offences in the dragnet, which began at 4 a.m.

The police checked all 50 boats at the jetty as well as 22 houses. Most of the suspects were caught in the boat.

- 1) The Star 12.11.83
- 2) New Straits Times 20.11.82
- 3) The Star 20.11.83



During this time the victims and/or witnesses have to come forward to identify those held as suspects. However, they only have to go through the photographs to confirm the identity of those suspects. There is no identifying parade involved. Moreover, the particulars of victims and witnesses are withheld by the police for their own safety. Once the suspects are confirmed as having been involved in gang activities, they are sent to "Pulau" under the E O regulations. After being released from "Pulau" and after serving their restriction term, they are still closely monitored by the police. In case there are some gangland activities in their area of residence, these ex-members will be called up for questioning even if they might not be involved. This is done so they might be able to "throw some light" regarding that incident.

#### PROBLEMS FACED BY THE POLICE

One of the major problems faced by the police in combating gangsterism is the lack of public cooperation. The public is not willing and is not brave enough to give information about this. This might be attributed to a few reasons, one of which is the fear that the gangsters might harm or even kill them later. Even so, some members of the public do give information by means of unnamed and unaddressed letters to the police. Another reason is that, "Policemen are the targets of a good deal of public hostility, and they reciprocate these feelings." (8)

Easy Availability of Gang Weapons

Foundry owner and worker detained

# Gang weapons factory

## Uncovered

*folia - A. Achvika (3)*

**PENANG, Fri. — A gangland weapons factory in the city was uncovered yesterday by police investigating a recent spate of secret society clashes. N.S.T.**

More than 150 samurai swords, knives, iron bars and spear heads were seized, making this the biggest haul by the police anti-secret society branch this year.

The weapons were manufactured at a foundry at Lebuh Armenian, State CID def ACP Sulaiman Ali said today.

The foundry owner, aged 39, and a worker, aged 19, have been detained.

ACP Sulaiman said police believed the foundry had been making and selling these weapons to secret society elements. The swords were sold for \$20 each while a knife costs \$5.

Over the past two weeks, he said, there had been seven incidents involving secret society elements. Only four of these were reported to the police.

The first occurred at Kampung Pisang in Ayer Itam on June 2 when the timely arrival of police prevented

By CHRISTOPHER NG

a clash between rival gangs.

Four suspects were arrested and an assortment of weapons recovered.

ACP Sulaiman said a gang fight occurred at Lebuh Kimberley last Saturday.

There was also an

other incident at a music hall here which led to a retaliation by a rival gang.

In all these incidents, weapons such as spears, parangs and samurai swords were used.

Police were aware that these weapons

could only have been made at foundries.

The first success was last Sunday when, acting on a tip-off, a police party led by Inspector Razali Ahmad recovered seven samurai swords, a knife and six iron bars behind a house at Weld Quay.

This **16 JUN 1984** by another tip off from a member of the public which led police to the foundry at Lebuh Armenian at 3.10pm yesterday.

The raiding party headed by Inspector R. Krishnan found an assortment of weapons including various parts which still needed to be welded together.

The haul included 42 samurai swords, 14 samurai blades and 20 iron handles.

A further search of the foundry later in the day revealed another 20 blades, 41 spearheads and 20 parangs with out handles. **N.S.T.**

ACP Sulaiman said the weapons found at Weld Quay are also believed to have been made at the same foundry.

New Straits Times 16.6.1984



As such the public feel no necessity to help the police by supplying them with information. One other important factor for the lack of public cooperation is public apathy towards such causes. As the nation gets developed, individuals tend to be more materialistic and individualistic which in turn creates a society which does not care much for the well being of the society as a whole. Individuals will only give their cooperation when they or their interest are immediately involved or at stake respectively.

Another major problem faced by the police is that gangsters obtain weapons like "samurai parangs", bearing scrapers, iron pipes and so on very easily. As such, it is not easy to prevent fights created by gangsters. Moreover, only when they are caught red-handed with these deadly weapons can they be brought to court.

## CONCLUSION

The task of the police as the law enforcement agency in Malaysia is not an easy mission. However, to strengthen this institution, great steps have been taken so that the citizens of Malaysia can cherish a peaceful and orderly state. As a sociological study, it is also important to realise the role of police agencies in crime causation. To the question of what brings about criminal behaviour, Gibbons puts it, "To begin with, individuals may get involved in actions which are forbidden in criminal law as a result of a variety of influences ..... wish to assert emphatically the possibility that the experience of being apprehended by the police may be an important causal one. Briefly stated, this

hypothesis contends that those offenders who fall into the hands of the police may find it unusually difficult to withdraw from criminal careers." (9) To the reasons of why the public's cooperation with the police is low, Gibbon offers another reasoning, "There is abundant testimony concerning the practice in many police stations of the 'third degree', by which officers have physically coerced confessions from suspects ..... These incidents have encouraged the spread of public notions that the police department is a haven for incompetents and sadists. Whether or not such images square with the facts, they have contributed to the low esteem in which policemen are held in this society." (10)

monetary gains and a platform for seeking vengeance. However, it can also be said that some of these individuals turn towards gangsterism as an alternative to reduce their social deprivations. "The range of human choice in any circumstances is narrow and the degree of free will which we all claim is in reality very limited, at least in our modern highly complex and interdependent society." (1)

Due to this disparity between aims and achievements, an individual bound by social pressure does not get the required attention to satisfy his ego and help him pursue his aims, among which is to uplift his social status.

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9 - Ibid, p 91

10 - Ibid, p 91



CHAPTER 5 for and Lewis Yablonsky. Niederhoffer and Bloch explain this phenomenon of attraction to the criminal gang with the Theory

### INDIAN GANGS: A WORKING CLASS PHENOMENON?

"(Adolescent) gangs may be profitably studied by

INTRODUCTION using as a frame of reference the theory of power.

The origin of Indian gangs, its nature and activities have already been discussed in earlier chapters. In this chapter, we will look into the question of what attracts individuals to join these gangs, which are violent by nature. No one general solution could answer this question because the gang provides different attractions for all the different individuals like power, pride, monetary gains and a platform for seeking vengeance. However, it can also be said that some of these individuals turn towards gangsterism as an alternative to reduce their social deprivations. "The range of human choice in any circumstances is narrow and the degree of free will which we all claim is in reality very limited, at least in our modern highly complex and interdependent society." (1) Due to this disparity between aims and achievements, an individual bound by social pressure does not get the required attention to satisfy his ego and help him pursue his aims, among which is to uplift his social status. the relationship between social-pathological con There are a few theories which state the causes of that individuals turning to criminal gangs. Among them are those of i- zation process which in turn decides his personality type. "The

Niederhoffer and Lewis Yablonsky. Niederhoffer and Bloch explain this phenomenon of attraction to the criminal gang with the Theory of Power which says:

1) (Adolescent) gangs may be profitably studied by using as a frame of reference the theory of power. The gangs attempt to gain status and power through the domination and manipulation of persons and events in a collective representation of the individual gang members guiding fiction which is 'to prove he is a man'.

2) The presence of the gang, real, constructive or symbolic, gives the individual ego support and courage. "He gains a psychological sense of power and manhood which he does not possess at all when he is on his own.

3) If single gangs can pose a threat to the peace and safety of the community, then the well-meaning efforts to organize several gangs into a confederation may be a very grave error." (2)

4) Lewis Yablonsky's theory of the defective socialization and the sociopath states the relationship between social-pathological condition and the personality type. Yablonsky relates that what turns an individual to be a criminal depends on the socialization process which in turn decides his personality type. "The

3 - Lewis Yablonsky, The Violent Gang, p 196



youth most susceptible to violent gang membership emerges from a social milieu that trains him inadequately for assuming constructive social roles. In fact, the defective socialization process to which he is subjected in the disorganized slum fosters a lack of social 'feelings'. At hardly any point is he trained to have human feelings of compassion or responsibility for another. The youth with this type of sociopathic personality syndrome living in the disorganized slum neighbourhood is most prone to participation in the violent gang ..... this sociopathic type of individual lacks 'social ability' or the ability adequately to access the role expectation of 'others'. He is characteristically unable to experience the pain of the violence he may inflict on another, since he does not have the ability to identify or empathize with any others." (3)

Based on these two theories, the factors that causes individuals to turn towards gangsterism and the effect of the social environment on individuals and the extent to which it is responsible for the emergence of the gang phenomenon will be discussed. The question of why individuals start to involve themselves with gangs could be argued in different ways. It can be that they are not well versed with the social norms regarding violent gangs and other criminal activities; they are unable or

unwilling to conform to the society's norms; or they want an alternative means to achieve their goals which they could not through a legitimate way. Among the causes of gangsterism are the poor economic and social state of the working class family, low level of education and education opportunities, defective socialization process of the individuals and the effects of the neighbourhood.

Table 5.1: Age when first involved with gangs

## FEATURES OF THE GANG

WHAT LURE The Indian gang is a working class phenomenon. (4) As such, the involvement of middle class and upper class members in the gang is nil. These gangs are found in settlements where Indians from working class form the majority of the residents. As such, there is an abundance of Indian gangs in the San Peng, Sentul, Brickfields and Bungsar areas.

Another important feature of the Indian gang is that the vast majority of the gangsters begin their membership at an early age, during their teens. From the fieldwork done, the age range of the respondents when they first get involved with the gang is from 11 - 18 years and the mean age is 16 years.

These delinquents form a group (gang) and try to create a self-image by non-conformist attitudes to the social and legal norms. They rebel against anything that is formal and socially accepted. However, in later stages, when the individuals are more matured, they

try to break away from the gang and adhere to the general societal

4 - None of the respondents interviewed were from middle or upper class families.

to become members of criminal gangs.



Reasons for Joining Gangs

Age when first involved	Number of Person
11	1
15	2
16	4
17	3
18	2

Table 5.1: Age when first involved with gangs

WHAT LURES YOUTHS TO JOIN GANGS?

What causes youths from working class families to join gangs can be seen from various reasoning. Among them are the minimal possibilities of achieving their aims through legitimate means; they have low status in the society, which they want to discard; and the existence of gangs in the working class neighbourhood provides an avenue to the youths to show their dislike for social norms, which are set and maintained by the middle and upper classes.

In the developed western countries, they call young individuals who involve in such anti-social activities as delinquents. These delinquents form a group (gang) and try to create a self-image by non-conformist attitudes to the social and legal norms. They rebel against anything that is formal and socially accepted. However, in later stages, when the individuals are more matured, they tend to break away from the gang and adhere to the general societal norms. Even then, some delinquents improve their criminal ability to become members of criminal gangs.

## Reasons for Joining Gangs

# WHAT LURES YOUTHS TO JOIN GANGS

## Secret Societies

SINGAPORE, Fri. — Young Singaporeans who become gangsters are generally more submissive, shy, timid and sensitive than other youths.

This probably explains why they join secret societies or "tongs" because only in a group do they find the strength and courage to exert themselves.

Adverse social and environmental factors also help push youths into joining gangs.

These findings are contained in a report, released by the Home Affairs Ministry, and drawn up by a task force of four psychologists, a psychiatrist and sociologist who carried out a study on 2,415 secret-society members.

The government commissioned the probe into

what was once the scourge of Singapore society to determine what makes a young man or woman want to join a "tong" in this computer age.

Despite a tough police crack down over the last decade there are more than 30 active "tongs" — with a total of about 100 gangs — still operating here.

And although their activities are now mostly confined to the red-light districts and rural areas, there are no indications that the societies are dying out through lack of recruits.

The study revealed that secret society members usually come from large, poor and mostly broken homes. Most had dropped out of school and because of this found themselves in poorly-paid jobs or out of work.

In the gangs they found fulfilment of their needs for thrills, adventure, social relationship and identity.

But after a few years the thrills fade and three in four youths stay on mainly for protection, for if they quit they would be open to attacks from members of rival gangs.

Secret society recruits were about 17 but some joined when they were as young as 13. Most of them were recruited by childhood friends and neighbours (34.5 per cent) or by fellow workers (21.6 per cent). Only 3.6 per cent were forced to join.

The report revealed that most of the gangsters' come from poor homes and about half the subjects interviewed came from broken homes. Many had been abused at home.

More than half lived in three-roomed flats, and a quarter in attap and zinc houses when they were first involved in secret societies.

The report said that the gangs were now nothing more than degenerates of triad societies of the past and were really "thugs".

A Ministry statement accompanying the survey said "the improving socio-economic climate in Singapore would tend to make secret societies less relevant".

A police spokesman, meanwhile, said the secret society situation was now well under control and that gang incidents had fallen from about 649 annually in the 1950s to 58 cases in 1971 and only 12 last year.

Police have been successful in crippling the gangland menace through relentless anti-secret society swoops and enforcement of the Criminal Law Act — introduced in 1958 and more commonly known in the underworld as the dreaded section 55 — under which gangsters can be detained without trial.

The CID and divisional police started "operation eagle" in 1970, to break the backbone of gangsterism in Singapore.

Gangland hideouts and haunts were raided.

This crippled gang activities as it was difficult to recruit new members when most of the older ones were detained. At present 536 secret society members are held in custody and another 430 are under police supervision.

But the attraction of the "tongs" still remain. Last August police arrested about 100 people, many of them Singaporeans, attending a secret society initiation ceremony in a rubber plantation in Johore.

About 200 managed to flee.

About 37 secret societies in Singapore are active, according to the Home Ministry.

These secret societies and triads, which first began as revolutionary groups in China under the Manchus, arrived in Singapore with early Chinese immigrants who ganged up to protect their interests. — AFP.

SOURCE: THE STAR, 8.5.1982



Youths Join Gangs At A Young Age

# 9 SCHOOLBOYS DETAINED, PARANG SEIZED

28 MAR 1984

PETALING JAYA, Tues. — Nine schoolboys were questioned yesterday on suspicion of being involved in secret society activities and fighting.

The boys, all from a school in Ladang Seaport and aged between 16 and 17, were picked up at school after lessons.

Two rotan canes and a parang were seized from the boys.

It is believed that the boys belong to two gangs which are active in Ladang Seaport and Sungai Way.

Sources said the boys were recently recruited by older members of both gangs to form smaller groups operating near the school.

The boys were released today after their parents were called to the police station to the fetch them.

The parents were advised to monitor the activities of their children so that they would not be influenced by bad elements.

Police have been cracking down on gangsterism in schools in the district after two schoolboys were injured in a gang clash near a school in Ladang Seaport last month.

One of the injured was slashed on the back while the other received a cut on his head.

Police detained six boys in that incident. Knives were among the items seized from the six.

THE STAR, 28.3.1984



goals. However, in the context of the Indian gangs, we cannot say the same occurs. This is because, the Indian gang is a criminal and violent gang by nature and the members are well aware of this. Although most members join these gangs as delinquents, they have the tendency to learn criminal abilities of fellow gang members which in turn helps to create a "better" criminal of the delinquent. The tendency to fall back to the greater society is weak. If at all they break away from the gang and its activities, this comes at a late stage, that is during their early or mid-thirties. This means that a delinquent who joins the gang at an average age of 16, leads a criminal life for about 10 - 15 years before he calls it quits.

Being born in a working class family, he desired to improve. It should be stressed here that youths in the age group of 11 - 18 years are very vulnerable to changes in their environment. The minimum provocation or challenge to their personality or wealth could trigger them to take offensive actions. For example, an individual who is constantly harassed by some other group may find it difficult to avenge their ill-treatment alone. As such, he needs help from his friends and if he could not gather enough friends, he joins a gang. This is done merely to gain courage and support for seeking vengeance. Also, at this age, they are very rebellious and high-handed, which increases the attraction of the individual to the gang. Cloward and Ohlin say that "The disparity between what lower class youths are led to be and is actually available to them is the source of a major problem of adjustment. Adolescents ..... have internalized an emphasis upon conventional



goals. Faced with limitation on legitimate avenues of access to these goals, and unable to revise their aspirations downward, they experience frustration, the exploration of non-conformist alternative may be the result." (5) This explains well the reasons given by one of the respondents interviewed on why he joined the gang.

Mr A was 11 years old when he first got involved with a gang. He is the fourth child, out of six, from a working class family. His elder brother, having been involved with gangsters, was away from home most of the time. As such, Mr A was the only reliable son in the family. He stopped schooling after Standard Six because he did badly in studies and furthermore he was not interested in it. Being born in a working class family, he desired to improve the conditions at home by providing some "necessities" like a colour television, video player, cassette deck and so on. But he could not afford all these with his pay of \$100.00 per month which he was earning after his schooling days. Later, by joining the gang he found a new way to achieve his aims. Now he is the gang leader and aims to "make money" which he does through his gangs' protection service. With a full time job which brings a steady income in addition to his income from his gangland activities, he has achieved his earlier aims. He is proud of his achievements and says that he earns more than some graduate officers with his brother, who was a gang leader, was arrested by police. After which, a rival gang started to harass Mr C and the other residents

5 - Cloward & Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs, p 75

because of his brother's rapport as a gang leader, did not want to

whom he has business dealings. In addition to this, he is always ready to help his friends financially if necessary, to prove his stature of a well-to-do person and Mr A is just 19 years old now!

Although Niederhoffer's theory of power is based on delinquents, it can still be applied to the local Indian gangs. Out of the 12 respondents interviewed in the fieldwork, 9 of them seem to have joined the gang because they wanted to be in power. For instance, Mr B who was a factory worker before he joined the gang. During his working days, Mr B normally accompanied his lady colleagues after work at night. Near their factory, a few thugs used to wait and disturb the girls. Occasionally, some girls were kidnapped and raped. Seeing all these, Mr B wanted to do something about these thugs but had not much "muscle" compared to the thugs who were in a group. Then he was asked to pay protection money by the gang near his working place. At first, he paid the dues and later he decided to join the gang to gain control over the thugs who have been harassing the factory girls. After some time, he was appointed as the gang's leader. During his term as gang leader, he was very particular about his members' activities and laid restrictions. Rape was forbidden and under-aged children should not be extorted.

Another respondent Mr C, got involved with gangs when his brother, who was a gang leader, was arrested by police. After which, a rival gang started to harass Mr C and the other residents in his area. Mr C, who was the target for the rival gang's attack, because of his brother's rapport as a gang leader, did not want to



give in to the rival gang and as such gathered a few friends and started to fight the rival gang to show he was capable of beating them. Soon, he gained control of the area and the rival gang was driven away. After this, Mr C narrated that his popularity grew and many outsiders came to him for help in organizing a gang branch in their respective areas. In the process he became a powerful gang leader who was respected by the other gangs as well. He plays a somewhat dictatorial role and all the rest are subservient to him.

### SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The social environment plays an important role in determining who are the potential individuals to be attracted by the gang. Under the scope of social environment factors like the family, level of education, neighbourhood and the socialization process in general have a great impact upon the individual. Among the root causes of delinquency in general are "Broken homes; children who have been unwanted or rejected either by their parents or by the community; children with alcoholic or criminal parents; general uncertainty on the part of adults of the moral validity of the existing code of ethics; transmission of heredity; inborn mental abnormality; and bad general environment." (6)

The family is an important institution of socialization. If, and when, it fails in its duty to nurture the children, then it paves the path for the children to involve themselves in delin-

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6 - Joanna Kelley, op cit, p 9

quent activities, which if prolonged, might end in a criminal career. All the 12 respondents' families have some similarities among them. Firstly, they are working class families, which could only afford the basic necessities for their children. Secondly, most of their fathers are alcoholics and their mothers housewives. Thirdly, they come from comparatively large families. (7) Fourthly, the familial interaction is not very strong. The father plays a somewhat dictatorial role and all the rest are subservient to him. The parents could not afford to provide proper education for all the children and the parents' strong control of the children weakens once the children are about 13 - 14 years old. The boys especially, rebel against their parents and some quit school out of their own whims. One respondent said that he ran away from home at the age of 8 and started working at a tea stall in Kuala Lumpur. Individuals who have family problems or broken homes and minimum emotional relationship with other family members and their parents find it hard to adjust to the general society and thus find alternative ways of adjustment. This leads them to join the gangs that exist in their area. "The child lacks equipment and experience necessary for a careful and unclouded evaluation of himself. The only guides he has are those of the significant adults or others who take care of him and treat him with compassion. The

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8 - Harry S Sullivan, *Conception of Modern Psychiatry*, p 131

7 - The smallest family had 7 members inclusive of parents and the largest family had 11 members.



child thus experiences and appraises himself in terms of how parents and others close to him react. By empathy, facial expression, hand gestures, words, deeds, they convey to him the attitudes they hold toward him, their regard or lack of feeling for him. This set of positive sympathetic responses needed for adequate self-growth are generally absent in the development of the youth who becomes a setting sociopathic violent gang member." (8)

The level of education is another indicator of who becomes a gang member. Of the 12 respondents, only one had sat through his Lower Certificate of Education examination. The rest were school dropouts. The dropout rate suggests that these individuals without sufficient paper qualifications land in laborious jobs which often pay little. Based on Miller's classification, it can be deduced that the majority of the Indian gang members come from the successfully aspiring lower class. As such, they have a will to elevate their status from that of a working class family. However, due to lack of interest and guidance from parents, these individuals fail in their academic pursuit and as an alternative turn towards gang activities. The irony here is that with proper guidance and motivation from parents, these individuals would have done well in their studies. This I conclude because, all the former gang leaders and

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8 - Harry S Sullivan, Conception of Modern Psychiatry, p 151

a few present leaders who were interviewed, realise and emphasize the importance of education and regret that they did not work hard during their younger days. They claim that with some "push" from their parents and elders they would have made it and would not have to live a fugitive's life now.

The working class neighbourhood provides a perfect setting for individuals to be entangled with gangsterism. In Cloward and Ohlin's words, "..... the criminal sub-culture is likely to arise in a neighbourhood milieu characterized by close bonds between different age-levels of offender and between criminal and conventional elements. As a consequence of these integrative relationships, a new opportunity structure emerges which provides alternative avenues to success-goals. Hence the pressure generated by restriction on legitimate access to success-goals are drained off. Social controls over the conduct of the young are effectively exercised, limiting expressive behaviour and constraining the discontented to adapt to instrumental, if criminalistic, styles of life." (9) The argument is that free relationship between different age groups and between individuals of criminal and non-criminal nature provides a new opportunity structure for success-goal achievement. However, with proper social control, youths may be prevented from exercising

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9 - Cloward & Ohlin, op cit, p 79



criminal characteristics. This shows that even in a criminal lightest neighbourhood, effective social control can prevent youths from involving themselves in gangs.

Indian gangs are abundantly found in areas where working class communities prevail. Hence, areas like Sentul, Cheras 2½ milestone and Brickfields were heavenly areas for these gangs to operate. Sentul was and still is a residential area for the working class, that is the railway workers. Cheras is an area of municipality houses and Brickfields has government quarters.

Of the 12 respondents who were interviewed, all of them have been affected, in varying degrees, by their neighbourhood. Mr A's residential area was polluted with gangsters during his younger days. Mr A was friendly with the gangsters in his area because they did not trouble him and infact they were nice to him. Slowly he became close to them. His friends were very much elder than him (in their early 20's, while Mr A was about 12 years old). Mr A knew very well the rapport his friends have in the neighbourhood but he did not despise them. In fact, he felt great and honoured to be seen in the company of these gangsters. He was actually idolising the gangsters and within him grew an urge to be like them. Meanwhile, if he had any problems in school with other boys, he would make use of this friendship with the gangsters to threaten them. Then, after some time, he was taken in as a member of the gang and started collecting protection money on behalf of the gang. He was given this duty by the gang leader himself and this further glorified his ego. He became more violent and could

not control his temper and was always ready to fight at the slightest irritation or provocation. Other respondents tell somewhat similar stories. children's education and other activities.

However, it should be stressed here that one of the reasons that helped Mr A's involvement in the gang was due to the lack of parental control and knowledge over his activities. Both his parents were petty traders and often came home late. Mr A himself was working as a helping hand, in a provision shop, after school. Thus, the parents were not worried about their son because they felt that their son was at school all morning and at the shop in the afternoon. Thus, any fear that they had about their son being influenced by some bad hats were removed from them. However, Mr A managed to mislead his parents with his job which formed a platform for him to have contact with his gangster friends. When his parents came to know about their son's involvement in the gang, it was too late. By then, Mr A was deeply involved with the gang and did not want to break away because he enjoyed the power and the respect he felt he got from the other gangsters and his friends. Parental control over their children is a vital necessity to prevent a youth from involving in gangs and other criminal activities. The problem in the working class family is that parents are occupied with their work most of the time and do not spend much time with their children. Even after work, they have other ways of keeping away from home. The parents, some of them, show a fatalistic character. They argue that nothing can be done about their condition which is all in the hands of God. And to escape from all their



problems they consume alcohol, which relieves them of all problems momentarily. They come back home drunk and do not seem interested in their children's education and other activities. They could not run away. Generally, the socialization process of an individual decides who are the potential gangsters. "Children who are brought up in an environment in which values are uncertain and in which the relationships of love do not abound are under serious disadvantage and those who come from stable, loving homes have an enormously much better start in life." (10) Those children who are neglected and not given enough parental love and care tend not to show emotional feelings to others when they grow older. They become immune to what others may suffer as a consequence of their actions. This being the case, they find it difficult to adapt to the society where such feelings run high. The gang provides a place where they can practice non-emotional relationships. Where some members Among all the respondents interviewed, none of them can be said to have undergone a proper socialization process. They underwent defective socialization processes which did not emphasize on the roles they should play. Moreover, their parents did not set an example for them to follow. As such, they were very much influenced by their play-groups, friends and elder family members in accepting non-conformity to social norms features. Among the respondents some lower class categories:-

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1) 'Stable' lower class - consists of youngsters who, possess, do not aspire to higher status or who have no realistic possibilities of

did not have any guidance from their parents regarding their role; others were used to watching their parents quarelling and yet others had elder brothers who were gang members. Further, they could not run away from the fact that they are a working class family and of low status in the community. The necessity to elevate this social status is realised by them and they explore whatever avenue available, whether legitimate or illegitimate, to this end.

3) Successfully aspiring lower class. This group, popularly assumed to be the most prevalent, includes those

### CONCLUSION

Although gang members are from working class families, not all the working class members are gangsters. This shows that within the lower/working class itself, there is a categorization which decides who are potential gangsters and who are not. This categorization is based on the individual's perception of goal attainment and how strong their will to achieve is. Whereas some members from the lower class will employ whatever means there is to achieve their aims, others are more realistic of their goal achievement chances and as such, live within their means of maximizing this end without any outward rebellion against the social and legal orders. W B Miller, touching on delinquent behaviour states "The gap between levels of aspiration of lower class youths and their general inability to achieve produces different types of lower class categories:-

- 1) 'Stable' lower class - consists of youngsters who, for all practical purposes, do not aspire to higher status or who have no realistic possibilities of



- status. (13) achieving such aspiration.
- 2) Aspiring but conflicted lower class. This group said so because it represents those for whom family or other community influences have produced a desire to elevate their status, but who lack the necessary personal attributes of cultural 'equipment' to make the grade, or for whom cultural pressures effectively inhibit aspiration.
- 3) Successfully aspiring lower class. This group, popularly assumed to be the most prevalent, includes those who have both the will and the capacity to elevate their status." (11)

This categorization implies that potential gangsters come from the aspiring but conflicted lower class. They form the core of the gang by being the leaders and active members. "Emphasis is placed on the fact that lower-class youths who are confronted with the largest gap between 'aspirations' and possibilities for 'achievement' are most delinquency-prone. Such youths are apt to utilize heavily the normal range of lower-class delinquent patterns of 'toughness', 'shrewdness', 'cunning', and other devices in an effort to achieve prestige and status." (12)

In the context of the Indian gang, it does not show clearly that the gangsters are interested in elevating their social

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11 - Kvaraceus & Miller, Delinquent Behaviour, p 68-69

12 - Lewis Yablonsky, op cit, p 200

status. (13) However, they are definitely concerned about elevating their status within the gang and the "underworld". It can be said so because most of the gangs are not profit-oriented gangs. If a gang is profit-oriented, then it "earns" a huge income which could be used to improve the living conditions of the gang members. The Indian gang on the other hand seems more of a venue for settling disputes and fights between one gang and another. The Indian community, later it took the form of "territorial gangs" which safeguarded its interests, against any intrusion, in a particular area. The mushrooming of Indian gangs in various parts of the city and its outskirts created feuds between rival gangs, which was filled with never ending bloodshed.

In the 1960s, the Indian gangs widened their scope of operation by venturing into drug and prostitution rings, apart from their already established protection service. The growing menace of the Indian gangs and other criminal gangs and their threat to the safety of the public brought about the legislation of the Emergency Ordinance 1969. This Act further strengthened the powers of the police authorities, who till then were using the Prevention of Crime Ordinance to curb the rising terrorism. The 70s saw a drop in the gang activities as many leaders and core members of these gangs were detained under the Emergency Ordinance. This move by the police crippled the Indian gangs. Together with them,

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13 - Of the 12 respondents only two stated that they wanted to "improve" their living standards. The other respondents' reason for joining the gang was other than elevating their status.

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1 - This is the reason why some gangs still have some kind of initiation ceremony whereas others do not have. Those leaders who were not caught by the police passed on the rites to their successors to carry on the tradition.



## CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

It has been about 30 years since the Indian gang first emerged in the 1950s in Kuala Lumpur. Within this period, its traditions and activities have gone through many changes. Started as a group to provide protection to the lower caste Indian community, later it took the form of "territorial gangs" which safeguarded its interests, against any intrusion, in a particular area. The mushrooming of Indian gangs in various parts of the city and its outskirts created feuds between rival gangs, which was filled with never ending bloodshed.

In the 1960s, the Indian gangs widened their scope of operation by venturing into drug and prostitution rings, apart from their already established protection service. The growing menace of the Indian gangs and other criminal gangs and their threat to the safety of the public brought about the legislation of the Emergency Ordinance 1969. This Act further strengthened the powers of the police authorities, who till then were using the Prevention of Crime Ordinance to curb the rising terrorism. The 70s saw a drop in the gang activities as many leaders and core members of these gangs were detained under the Emergency Ordinance. This move by the police crippled the Indian gangs. Together with them, the detained leaders took away the rituals and initiation ceremonies that the gangs practised. (1) The new faces in the gangs are not

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1 - This is the reason why some gangs still have some kind of initiation ceremony whereas others do not have. Those leaders who were not caught by the police passed on the rites to their successors to carry on the tradition.



as volatile as the old guards and their activities are more subdued. This could be attributed to the seriousness with which the police force are handling cases of gangland nature. However, the Indian gang still persists in the city because it acts as an informal institution which brings together delinquent youths. The Indian gang of today is a criminal gang, even if not totally criminal, because many of these gangs still practice collection of protection money and other activities linked with the gang before. As such, it still poses a threat to the society as a gang. (2)

From the fieldwork, it was found that the aims and reasons for joining the gang and later staying with it, changes as the members grow older and become more experienced. The stages in the life of a gang member can be discussed in three parts:

- 1) early stage - a youth wants to become a gang member as a boost for his ego; and has pride in being known as a member of a gang;
- 2) middle stage - after a few years of experience, a member starts to think about gaining control of the gang leadership. If he is the only candidate and if the present leader agrees to let him take over, there will be no squabbles. When there are a

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2 - I prefer to term to Indian gang of today as a delinquent gang because from the fieldwork, it was found that all the respondents joined the gang during their teenage days. Moreover, according to a few gang leaders, the majority of their members are those below 20.



the reasons are less than a few challengers then an internal clash might occur. At times, the present leader who dislikes the idea of someone else taking over the leadership, might play a foul game and "frame" the contender;

3) later stage - when a leader is about 30 years and above, normally he will quit to give way for "young blood". Normally a leader quits when he is intending to "settle down" with a family of his own without having to fear about anything.

- a) Thus he becomes the free man. Although he breaks away from the gang, he still owes allegiance to his gang.
- b) One leader had this to say, "Even though I am not involved directly in the gang, I do give my help, like financial aid or settling internal disputes, to help keep the gang alive. The gang is like my own child; I started it and saw it grow. How can I just see it die without doing anything?"

Many reasons are given as to what provokes these individuals to become gang members. Among them are the greed for power; to gain courage by being in the company of some well-known "hardcore" criminals; a result of poor parental control; a result of deprivation and neglect of parental love and care; influence of friends; victims of circumstances; alternate means to elevate their social status; unhealthy neighbourhood and defective socialization. Any one of

the reasons are insufficient to instigate an individual to take order in which we all play a part and for which we should share such an action. It is a multiple causal effect that turns an individual towards a gang.

Among all these causes, defective socialization is an important determinant as to what extent an individual might be

attracted by a gang. As Yablonsky states "The defective socialization process ..... produces youths with limited social feelings, identity and compassion for others. Such youths manifest sociopathic personalities that reflect some if not all of the following characteristics:-

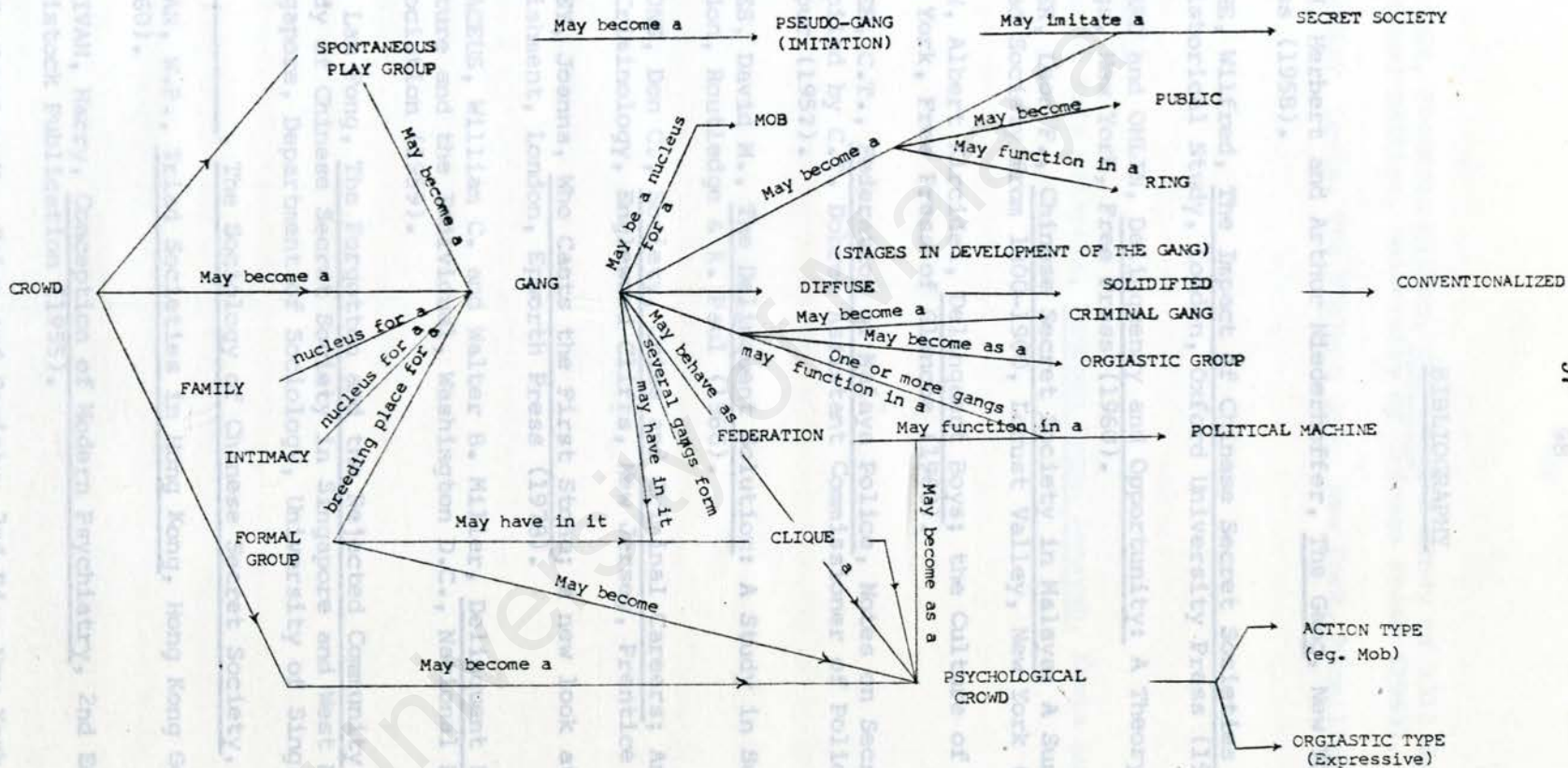
- a) a defective social conscience marked by limited feelings of guilt for destructive acts against others,
- b) limited feelings of compassion or empathy for others,
- c) the acting out of behaviour dominated by egocentrism and self-seeking goals,
- d) the manipulation of others in a way possible for immediate self-gratification without any moral concern or responsibility." (3)

What creates a sociopathic personality is an individual's social environment and his pathology which depends on his socialization, both within and without his immediate family. These being the important causes, it should not be forgotten that this gang phenomenon is a symptom of a sick society, the product of a social dis-





DIAGRAM 1: THRASHER'S NATURAL HISTORY OF THE GANG





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