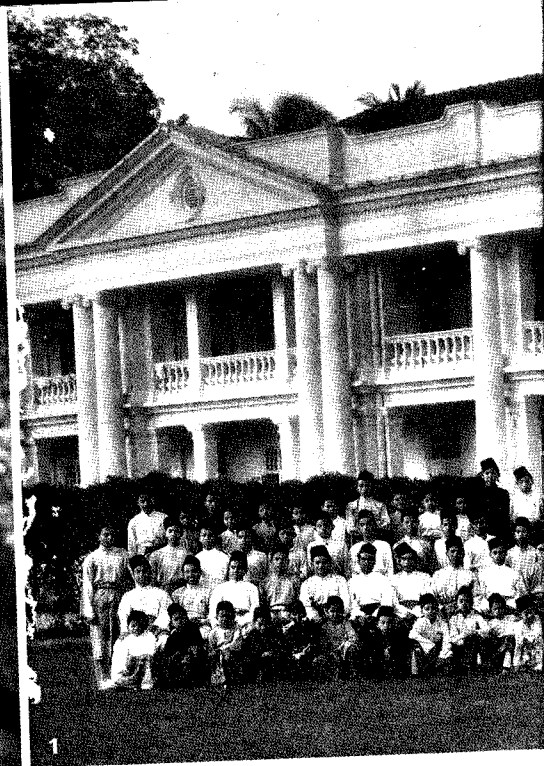


100 years of attitude

NEW BOOK ON ONCE-LEGENDARY
MALAY INSTITUTION THAT CONTINUES
TO INFLUENCE NATIONAL LIFE

PICTURES COURTESY OF MCKK



in conjunction with the centenary celebrations of MCKK (1905-2005), might help explain the Hotel California part. In six chapters, it traces the historical development of the Malay Residential School, the precursor to MCKK, from Jan 2, 1905 to 2004. The book explores, with some inside information, the strategy and tactics of the British colonial masters and provides the context to certain events and the ideological background for setting up this elite boarding school.

The British, unlike the French, Dutch or the Portuguese, took a very long-term view of their colonial interests. MCKK was set up precisely for the purpose of creating a layer of loyal civil servants who could communicate both ways – to the master and to the natives. It was never the intention of the Brits (or any other colonial master) to educate or liberate the natives.

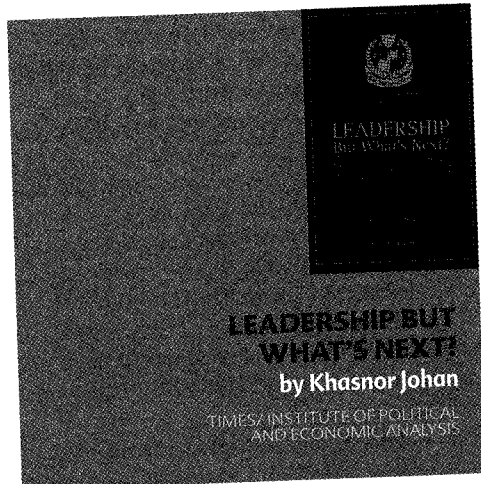
Reading the 243 pages of this book is like reading the executive brief on the historical transformation of Tanah Melayu into present-day Malaysia. Malay College Kuala Kangsar might not have been the hotbed of Malay nationalism that Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) was, but it was the old boys of MCKK who finally became the 'trusted managers' of the British to secure their interests through Malayan independence.

Yes, MCKK was an elite boarding school based on the British public school system. Looking back at the first generation of teachers who set the benchmark, current students would be jealous. The Hargreaves, the Bazells, the Ryans, the Careys, the Dukes were not just from Oxford and Cambridge; they were products of the British public school system. It was they who cultivated the best scholarly traditions, in mind and body, of MCKK

The teachers at MCKK were no

WHEN I RETURNED to Malaysia after a sojourn of 20 years abroad, there were two sets of people who welcomed me without prejudice or malice – my old comrades from Kelab Sosialis, and the old boys of Malay College Kuala Kangsar. Being a member of Kelab Sosialis is an ideological commitment – one could decay, switch camps or simply fade away. But being an old boy of MCKK is like checking into Hotel California – you can go in, but you can't come out. For any budak kolej, this book serves to reaffirm his shared collective memory of the alma mater.

Leadership But What's Next?, published





'ordinary' graduates from teacher training colleges. They were scholars in their right. NJ Ryan wrote *Malaya Through Four Centuries*, Desmond Tate was a historian whose books are still in use today. Anthony Burgess – the script writer for Stanley Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange* – wrote his first book, *The Malayan Trilogy*, while working as an English teacher at MCKK.

Fiat Sapientia Virtus – let manliness come through wisdom – is still the motto of MCKK. It was to drive the Malay student at MCKK towards the school's golden years from 1947 to 1975, when it was apt to call it the Eton of the East. Some budak kolej would call Eton the MCKK of the West.

Naturally, there is a chapter devoted to 'What Old Boys Left Behind', the who's who of Malaysia. Budak kolej are everywhere. According to writer Rehman Rashid – another budak kolej – 'The Malay College has always been a barometer of the Malays. We're building the highways, running the media, and managing the money, yea verily, leading the nation.'

Yes, budak kolej are everywhere. I have an amusing personal anecdote: When I was detained in Bombay in 1982, our then Malaysian High Commissioner in New Delhi was someone who always introduced himself as 'call me Raz'. He's an old boy. He decided to send another budak kolej, my junior; to visit me in the Bombay lock-up. Back in Kuala Lumpur, the chief of the Royal Malaysian Police Force who was hunting me was none other than Tun Haniff Omar – another budak kolej. The whole affair looked like a replay of me sneaking out of my dorm after lights-out with the prefects hot on my scent.

But I'm sure that to any old boy, MCKK was more than a school. It's very hard to explain to the 'outsider' the meaning of Hotel California. Or the need to wear the

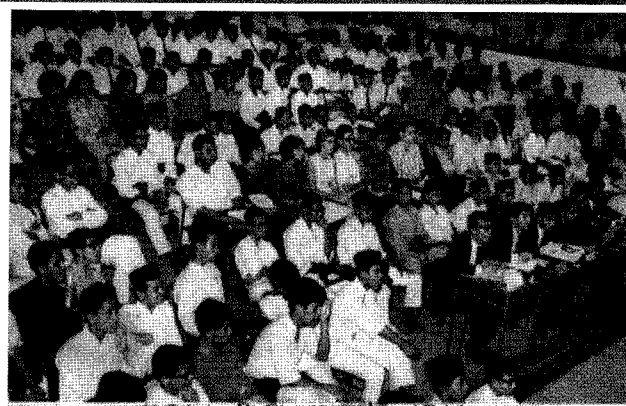
same necktie every Wednesday throughout their school life. And MCOBA – the Malay College Old Boys' Association – is the standard-bearer for other old boy networks. It is so exclusive that its membership is only open to whoever has tasted the nasi kawah at MCKK.

For the general reader who desires a peep at male bonding or 'The Full Monty' of MCKK, this is not the book to read. Such a book can only be written by another budak kolej, and not Miss Khasnor Johan, a Malaysian now living in Australia. She has written another book, *The Educating of The Malay Elite*, and *Leadership But What's Next?* can be seen as the continuation of her earlier work. The author has done a tremendous job digging up material and putting things into perspective. For the non-budak kolej, the narrative is likely to be repetitive in parts. Nevertheless, it is a good read.

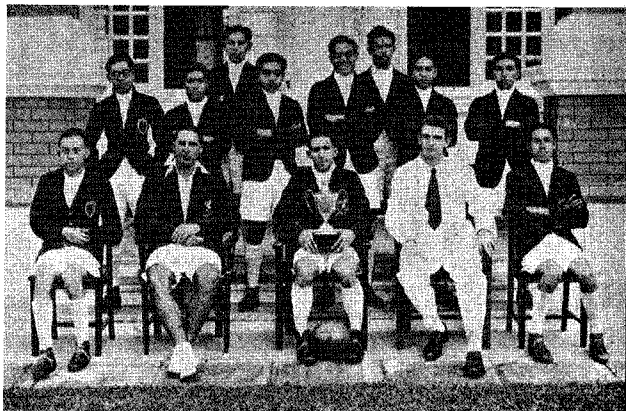
The introduction by Abdullah Ahmad aka Dolah Kok Lanas aka Tiga Abdul can do no wrong. Dolah, true to form, not only writes the introduction but also curi masuk the epilogue to reaffirm the status of his mentor as the ideal student for the next generations to emulate. I'm sure there are some 'missing names' such as the 'infamous' MCKK arts teacher, Syed Bakar. After 100 years, those missing names need to be stored on a proper hard disk for the next bicentennial celebration, I hope.

The current state of the Malay College leaves much to be desired; the state of its learning is in slow decline, the mirror image of the state of our nation. To rectify this malaise, one must have the courage to bring back the tradition of elitist learning, once the trademark of Malay College Kuala Kangsar.

P/S: I am not a 'thoroughbred' MCKK boy. I came in to do my sixth form education but MCKK aided me tremendously. The educational and scholarly space given



2 breeding ground of Malaysian politicians



Main picture Today's MCKK boys stand to attention for the school's centenary celebrations. Alumni currently in positions of influence include Datuk Shahrir Samad, Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz, Tan Sri Hassan Marican, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim
1 Undated picture of Malay elite 2 Mock parliament, 1966 3 Football 1st XI, 1938-1939

me towards developing my full potential turned me into what author Khasnor Johan calls someone 'perpetually rebelling against any perceived "injustice" and enjoys "disconcerting" a government leader...' Without that nasi kawah, I would not have the confidence and the attitude to check into and check out of several major prisons around the world – Hishamuddin Rais, Mohd Shah House, Class of 1969/1970. ■