

TRADE UNIONISM IN MALAYA

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Trade Unionism in Malaya

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*(Past President of the Singapore
Union of Journalists)*



DONALD MOORE

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CHAPTER ONE

On August 31, 1957, the Federation of Malaya became an independent country. Tunjku Abdul Rahman Putra, Chief Minister of the Alliance Government, became Prime Minister. Smoothly, Malayans assumed complete responsibility for their own government. Already, plans had been drawn up to bring about certain administrative changes, some of which could have far-reaching effects. Among the new proposals was the abolition of the office of Trade Union Adviser, an organization created by the British Labour Government in 1945 expressly for the purpose of stimulating the development of responsible trade unionism. In its place, the Government of newly independent Malaya intended to establish a new branch of the Labour Ministry, to be known as Industrial Relations, which would be charged with the task of maintaining good relations between the employers and the trade unions. Special arrangements would be made for continuing the giving of advice and assistance on trade union matters, but the main emphasis would be upon industrial relations. With independence had come the recognition that trade unions in Malaya must stand on their own feet.

Prime Minister Rahman Putra insisted that this did not mean any change in the Government's overall attitude towards the trade union movement. In a message to the largest union in the country, the Prime Minister declared that the growth of healthy trade unionism "is being encouraged by Government to provide bargaining power to union members for the ultimate purpose of safeguarding their interest and well-being."

In a policy speech a month after the freedom celebrations, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare said: "The Alliance Government will continue its policy of fostering and encouraging the development of a responsible and genuine trade movement. It is fully appreciated that stability in industrial relations is very necessary for the industrial peace and prosperity of any country. It is, therefore, the intention of my Ministry to put more emphasis on its work in the field of industrial relations and the building

up of good employer-employee relationships. It is now fully recognized that there is a desire on both sides of industry to provide for and to operate an effective system of voluntarily agreed joint machinery for negotiations and consultation. Experience has proved that this machinery is a stronger guarantee of industrial peace and of the smooth functioning of employer-employee relations than any legislators or courts or enforcement officers can hope to achieve. Accordingly, the work of my Ministry, among other matters, will be directed mainly towards the task of stressing the need for, and assisting in the building up of, proper industrial relations machinery wherever possible and guiding industry to manage its employer-employee problems through its own joint machinery. While it is the desire of the Government to continue to render all possible encouragement and assistance in establishing ultimately what is generally accepted as 'self-government' in industry, it is recognized that it is also the duty of the Government, in fulfilment of its general responsibility for the preservation of industrial peace, to provide additional means for the settlement of industrial disputes. The normal method by which my Ministry renders assistance to employers and workers towards the settlement of their disputes are conciliation and arbitration. Throughout the modern democratic world it is being recognized that good relationship between Government, employers and trade unions is maintained and improved by the greater use of joint consultation on a tripartite basis. It is hoped that the proposed National Joint Labour Advisory Council—a body consisting of representatives from employers and employees of the principal industries and services in the Federation of Malaya together with Government officials—will bring together a pool of valuable experience which apart from other usefulness will greatly assist in the development and maintenance of sound and stable industrial relations not only in the individual industries and services but throughout the country as a whole."

Turning to the trade union movement itself, the Minister said that it was becoming more and more apparant that if trade unionism in the Federation was to be well established on truly democratic lines, and its strength increased and properly used, it was necessary not only to increase the number of subscribing numbers of trade unions, but also to create inside every trade union a large percentage of keen members fully conversant with sound trade union practices and with the problems of the industry with which they were concerned. The Minister added that by the very nature of their structure and the manner in which

they function, trade unions could be a useful and practical training ground for democracy as well as leadership.

This speech, in parts, was an attempt by the Alliance Government to answer the charge of the Malayan Trade Union Congress, at its seventh annual conference in June, 1957, that the Government had deliberately adopted policies detrimental to the interests of workers in Malaya. The charge said that the Government's practices and policies were radically in contrast to the pledges in its election platform. One trade union leader alleged that the Government created conflict among workers in a dispute which involved 65,000 daily-rated workers and the transport industry in Penang in 1956. Another leader, commenting on the warning of the Ministry of Labour against subversive elements in trade unionism, said that in the eyes of the Government anyone who attempted to safeguard the rights of workers was a subversive element.

Speaking at the tenth anniversary of the Penang Municipal Services Union on September 28, 1957, Prime Minister Tunjku Abdul Rahman Putra, said: "There are in this country about 250 unions. Some are like yours — truly good unions — others are not quite so good while a few cannot by any stretch of imagination be considered as unions, leave alone calling them good." The Prime Minister said that unions must be free from politics or political influence. "The political opportunists should not be allowed to make use of the unions to serve their political ends. The unions exist to serve the interests of the members and only as such will the unions be able to do good work expected of them by the country and by the members." The Tunjku remarked that he was pleased to observe that this union had not been infiltrated by subversive elements.

The Prime Minister summed up his attitude towards the trade union movement when he went on to say: "This country is now independent and it is the duty of everyone who owes allegiance to this country to work towards the stability of the Government. We have got to earn sufficient income to pay for our various services, social and economic development of this country, but if trouble is created by the workers, nobody would think of investing money in these industries. Therefore, it will be both in the interests of this country and in the interests of the workers themselves to give full support to the Government in order to implement any project which will promise prosperity for this country. Unions can do a lot to bring about good understanding between employers and employees, and it is with this understanding that the well-being of the workers and everybody concerned will be assured."

Perhaps this Union dinner was not the place to explain that the employers, too, had a responsibility in the creation of good worker-employer relations. Many employers in Malaya are still more concerned with the production of higher profits than they are in better working conditions and increased wages for their employees, but so far as I can trace no Minister of the Alliance Government has yet gone on record as having warned employers not to create conditions which make trouble possible — the word, trouble, in these circumstances, presumably being used by the Alliance Government to mean agitation by workers for more money, or fewer working hours.

Part of the Alliance Government's lukewarm affection for the trade union movement is no doubt due to the composition of the Alliance itself, consisting as it does of three communal movements; partly to the composition of the Cabinet, which contains no representative of the workers; and also, partly, to the decision of the secret Malayan Communist Party to continue, wherever possible, to use the trade union movement as a weapon to create suspicion and disturbance.

In October, 1957, the Federation Government suddenly arrested the president and three other high-ranking officials of the National Union of Factory and General Workers, one of the largest unions in the country. All four officials were Chinese. In a statement justifying the arrests, the Minister of Defence said that the Government was satisfied that it was still Malayan Communist Party deliberate policy to subvert for its own ends lawful organizations. The Government was determined to protect the Federation from such subversion and to counter the work of persons engaged in furthering these subversive activities. The Government intended to take steps to protect all forms of lawful organizations from penetration by individuals who plan to use such organizations for these subversive purposes, and would not hesitate to use its legal powers, including Emergency Regulations, to achieve this object.

The Ministry of Defence explained that the officials were arrested in pursuance of this policy. They had sought and obtained positions of authority in the Union and had propagated communist subversive doctrines and practices among members of the Union. The Ministry sought to assure trade unionists generally that the arrests implied no departure from the Government's declared policy of fostering a sound trade union movement, and emphasized that the arrests were made, not because the persons were trade unionists, but because of their

subversive activities which were detrimental to the peace and good order of the country.

A militant trade union, formed in 1955, the National Union of Factory and General Workers organized, in 1956, 24 different strikes which resulted in the loss of 138,534 man-days. Of this trade union's activities, an official Government report says: "This Union . . . continued its policy of sending in demands to employers and backing these demands by strike threats. This policy was in many cases successful, and improvements in wages and conditions of employment were obtained after negotiations, but in some cases the strike came quickly on the heels of the demands. Some of these strikes were successful, others were not. Little or no attempt was made to build up industrial relations machinery; and as soon as one strike finished another set of demands was put up elsewhere. The employers made little effort to combine in the face of this threat, and almost always individual employers were content to settle their own disputes without reference to other employers in the same trade."

This was precisely the pattern set by the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union, which was closed down by the Government following widespread riots in October, 1956. These riots resulted in the death of 13 persons (100 injured), and the arrest of a large group of trade union leaders, described by the Government as a hard core of communists dedicated to the physical overthrow of the Government, and the establishment, through violence, of a Communist State.

The story of the sensational rise and tragic fall of the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union, then the largest union in the Colony, is yet another lesson of communist persistence and tenacity, of communist ability and skill in organizing efficient, well-run unions, and of communist consistency when the moment is considered opportune, of using trade union structure and money to create disorder and riot.

It is a story the like of which had been told before, in Malaya as elsewhere. In Singapore, in 1946, communist-dominated trade unions organized forty-one strikes, mostly for higher wages: thirty-six of them were successful. It was not until two years later that the communists felt strong enough to begin the armed revolt, at first against colonialism, and later, when Malaya was free and independent, against an elected Government.

When the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union was formed on April 4, 1954, there were 200 members. Months

later the Communist Party moved in and 22-year old Lim Chin Siong took over as Secretary-General. Within ten months the membership jumped from 372 to 29,959. Publicly the Chief Minister, then Mr. David Marshall, labelled Lim Chin Siong as a pseudo trade unionist whose aim was destruction. Mr. Marshall said that his Government was aware that there were more such trade unionists in Singapore whose principal aim was political. Marshall said they would sacrifice the workers' interests without mercy.

Lim Chin Siong is a Chinese-speaking Chinese. He is a gifted orator. Translated into English some of his speeches appear elementary, even childish, but he was a fearless user of bitter clichés against colonialism and capitalism, particularly as represented by the European employer, and these were words which the poor and often badly educated Chinese worker wanted to hear. Soon a large number of them in Singapore came to look upon this slightly built young man as the champion of the workers. His status increased with every successful strike, every successful negotiation. In eighteen months the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union, with its president, two vice-presidents, secretary-general, five assistant general secretaries, treasurer and assistant treasurer, had called 29 strikes. Not all of them were successful. Most of them were. Members of the Union claimed that their wages had increased by 20 per cent: in addition they had won free medical aid and double pay for working on holidays. The Union's further claim that their successes and militant attitude frightened certain employers not employing Union men to raise their workers' wages is not unjustified. So long as the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union went about its organized business as a powerful trade union, the workers benefited. But that was not the real purpose of the Union.

Openly, the Union declared that "the true function of a trade union is to defeat colonialism. Only then will the worker be free from the slave state." Already the Union had offered other unions \$100 each if they would stage strikes. In addition the Union would supply free rice, sugar, and coffee. Lim Chin Siong put out a statement to the effect that "students of objective social conditions will realize that the real causes of the present labour unrest lie in general social and economic conditions which seriously affect the working and living conditions of the workers." Once his Union became powerful, Lim Chin Siong never disguised his intention to use it as a political weapon—for the present, against colonialism, against existing non-communist poli-

tical parties, and against the elected Assembly; then, in due course, against the remnants of democracy. This was consistent with the ultimate aim of the Malayan Communist Party.

Lim Chin Siong, questioned by Singapore reporters, once declared he was not a communist. But of the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union of which Lim was secretary-general, Mr. Lim Yew Hock, Chief Minister, in 1957 said this: "The Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union, like an octopus, spread its tentacles into many different trades and occupations for which it served as a headquarters and a co-ordinating body. The communists who inspired it also had a strong hold on several separate unions, which were unofficially affiliated to it"

A Government White Paper explained that in some cases Malayan Communist Party agitators take the lead in forming trade unions and other organizations; in others they use existing organizations. Communist workers infiltrated into such legitimate organizations take the greatest care to hide their connections with the Malayan Communist Party. The organizations themselves may often not realize the manner in which they are exploited or recognize the persons responsible, and in the meantime their members are being subconsciously indoctrinated with communist ideas.

States the White Paper: "In this way the M.C.P. is preparing for the day when it considers that it is strong enough to come out into the open and mobilise the united front in an all-out attempt at revolution. While in opposition, they talk of the Rights of Man, and freedoms under the constitution, for which no Communist Party once established in power has ever shown any respect. In opposition, they seek to attack the use of democratic power to restrain their activities, and seek to exploit for narrow and selfish political aims any feelings of social frustration or economic injustice. This is particularly dangerous at a time of rapid political change and social adjustment, when national ambitions for self-government are being achieved."

Was there ever any justification for Lim Chin Siong and his friends deliberately and openly using a powerful trade union movement for political purposes, assuming, for the sake of argument, that he was concerned solely with the destruction of colonialism and not, eventually, in the creation of a communist régime?

Let the People's Action Party answer that question. Here is the relevant extract from the Party official newspaper *Petir* for October, 1957: "Can we achieve socialism in Malaya by

peaceful democratic constitutional methods? The answer is 'yes'. We agree that constitutional methods cannot bring about a socialist state overnight. The struggle will be long and difficult. One single victory in a Malayan general election will not be sufficient to bring about a social transformation of the economy, and the forces of socialism are still some distance off achieving even this electoral victory. We also agree that constitutional methods cannot achieve socialism in certain countries and in certain historical epochs. In China, ravaged for decades by warlords and imperialist armies, only a political movement based on armed force, led by a disciplined communist party, could lead the country to its present state of independence and strength, and pave the way for a socialist transformation of society. Under such conditions, power must be the naked power that comes out of the rifle barrel. The Chinese communist leaders have been proved by their policy of armed revolution to be correct. But the situation in Malaya is entirely different from that of China in a number of basic features."

Rejecting belief in one-party dictatorship in Malaya, the People's Action Party asserted that it did not believe that this dictatorship could be achieved by constitutional means and by peaceful methods. Any party that wanted to establish a dictatorship could do so only by a successful armed struggle, and they did not see any party in Malaya with the resources to win power by armed revolution.

Declared the People's Action Party (after the Lim Yew Hock Government had arrested Lim Chin Siong and other "left-wing adventurers", most of them members of the People's Action Party): "Let those who talk glibly about armed revolution consider carefully the consequences of armed revolution, both to themselves and to their compatriots. If they are still convinced that the only way out is armed revolution, let them leave our Party, go across the Johore Causeway and take up arms in the Malayan jungle."

All this is cogent to trade unionism because of the need to expose the arguments of Lim Chin Siong, and his friends in the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union, that the real purpose of a trade union is to achieve a political aim. This is untrue. Let us again turn to the People's Action Party, avowedly anti-colonial and positively Asian in membership and outlook. States the Party's newspaper: "Our party believes that, while armed revolution cannot unite the three major races of Malaya, a peaceful constitutional struggle based on democratic socialism can. The masses of the Malay peasants, the masses of Indian estate and other workers, the masses of Chinese

workers and peasants are poor. They are the majority. In a system of democratic elections, the poor form the vast majority in this country, even under the present citizenship laws. Because the majority of the electorate are poor, the democratic system of free elections must inevitably give a decisive advantage to honest parties with a socialist objective. For socialism stands for the betterment of the poor by eliminating exploitation of them. Further, because our methods are peaceful, non-violent and constitutional we believe that we can unite the races of Malaya. The Malays will not trust a party which believes in violent methods of winning power, especially when the leadership of the party is almost completely Chinese."

Lim Chin Siong and the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union clearly did not subscribe to that theory.

The events which led up to the riots which, in turn, brought about the collapse of Singapore's biggest and most efficient trade union, began on September 18, 1956, when the Government moved against communist suspects. Striking "at the root of the evil forces" the Government during the ensuing month arrested fifteen persons and dissolved seven Communist-front organizations. A students' union was closed down, student leaders were arrested and 142 students (some of them 25 years old) were expelled from Middle Schools. Two schools were temporarily closed. At both of them students staged a stay-in demonstration of defiance.

In the meantime, according to the Chief Minister's statement to the Assembly, several Middle Road organizations, such as the Factory and Shop Workers' and the Singapore Bus Workers' Unions, were becoming increasingly active in providing financial, material and moral support to the stay-in students. No attempt was made to pretend that all this had anything to do with the objectives of trade unionism.

On the evening of October 24, the Chief Minister, in a broadcast over Radio Malaya, announced that he had ordered the students to be cleared out of the two schools within 24 hours. One of the schools was the Chinese High School, where Lim Chin Siong, a few years before, himself had been a student. Three hours before the police moved in, again according to the Chief Minister, Lim Chin Siong made inflammatory speeches near the Chinese High School, and afterwards some of the crowd joined the mob outside the School.

The Minister of Education, Mr. Chew Swee Kee, during the debate on the riots (which broke out soon after the police, using tear-gas, ejected the rebellious students) laid the blame firmly

upon Lim Chin Siong and "his henchmen (including C. V. Devan Nair)". It was after the arrival of these trade union leaders at the scene that the riots began. "It is," said the Minister, "significant to note that the Member for Bukit Timah (Lim Chin Siong) at that meeting (near the Chinese High School) said that instead of shouting 'Merdeka', the people should now shout, 'Pah Mata', which means 'Beat the Police'. Is there any doubt whatsoever as to who sparked off the riots?"

Thirteen people died during those riots, a hundred were injured, and considerable damage was done to private property. No trade union leader lost his life or was injured.

There had been riots before, early in 1955, in which students and workers, aroused by inflammatory speeches, had been involved, and innocent men and women had died then. But not those who had made the speeches.

Early in the morning of October 27, satisfied that the Middle Road group were actively connected with the riots, the police raided the headquarters of the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union, and three of the Union's branches. Lim Chin Siong and others were arrested. Chief Minister Lim Yew Hock said that the documents found on the premises only confirmed how right the Government was in its decision to act in defence of the peace and security of the men and women and children of all races and classes in Singapore.

There was proof that the Union leaders were planning further demonstrations in defiance of the law. One document, reported to bear the signature of James Puthuchery, an assistant secretary of the Union, called upon workers to stage a general strike and to march to the Chief Minister's office to protest against earlier arrests and the dissolution of communist-front organizations. Another document said that the period of peaceful and negative struggle was over. If this time they did not show their strength for struggle, their followers would be downhearted.

"This," said the Chief Minister, "is what calls itself a trade union. Is this in support of an industrial dispute or improvement of the conditions of the working class for whom they claim to exist?"

Mr. Lim Yew Hock described the organization as "a pure political militant organization dedicated to, and organized for, and emotionally attuned to, struggle."

"Death in struggle is glorious", said another document. Another said: "We now understand that today we have to

adopt a more violent struggle." A different document said: "If we dare not fight, then we will be the losers."

"Is this the language of genuine trade unionism?" asked the Chief Minister. "Or is this the language of a group of leaders of political subversion who are deceiving the workers and the public and using the difficulties of the working people not as something to be improved, but as something to be exploited and magnified and manipulated as an instrument to undermine government so that they can achieve power . . . Communist exploitation of the workers, as shown in these tactics, is as bad as capitalist exploitation . . ."

Added Mr. Lim Yew Hock, significantly: "The raids conducted by the police on the premises of the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union and the arrests of the leaders found there had brought about a significant change in the riot situation. There was an immediate subsidence of trouble. I leave it to Members of the Assembly to draw their own conclusion."

Mr. Lim revealed that shortly before the riots, the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union withdrew \$120,000, 80 per cent of their funds. "Where this money went and how it was spent we have at present no concrete proof, but in the light of recent events one can safely surmise the use to which this large sum of money has been put." Earlier, a Government spokesman had told the Press that the money had been withdrawn to support the insurgent Chinese High School students. Another theory was that the money had been withdrawn to subsidize the planned general strike. Someone who knew Lim Chin Siong well, believed that the money had been handed over to the Communist Party.

Asked by the Registrar of Trade Unions what had happened to the money, Lim Chin Siong, from prison, wrote a long letter in which he said that by the middle of September it was quite clear that the Labour Front Government was embarked on a purge of what it termed "subversive elements". "The actions of the Government," Lim said, "were so blatant that the officials of my Union were quite certain that it was only a matter of time before the Government acted against my Union, the largest and best organized of the trade unions in Singapore. I therefore decided that the funds of the Union, then amounting to about \$150,000, should be prevented from falling into the hands of the Government and should be kept aside to be used later for the benefit of the workers. I had a discussion of this subject with Tan Kok Wee, acting President, and Ong Peng Hong, the Treasurer, and as a result we withdrew \$50,000 in

cash on September 21, and another \$70,000 on September 24. I then discussed the matter with Devan Nair and Fong Swee Suan, Assistant General Secretaries of the Union. On or about October 2, I and Devan Nair consulted the Union's legal adviser, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. We informed him of what we had done and told him our reasons why. He advised us to put the money back into the bank. We accepted this advice and on October 4 we paid back \$100,000.

"The other \$20,000 of the \$120,000 drawn out on September 21 and 24 was used by the Treasurer to pay branch expenses and salaries of Union officials. As far as I can remember about \$7,000 was paid out in branch expenses and \$5,000 in salaries. What other items were paid out of the \$20,000 I do not know. The Treasurer could explain this as he was in charge of the money. But as events moved on towards a climax, I felt more and more that, whatever the legal position, it was wrong not to put aside the funds of the Union to be preserved for subsequent use for the benefits of the workers. I feared that the banning of the Union, and the arrest of my colleagues and myself would mean the loss to the workers of their achievements of the past two years, and of the resources they had accumulated in that time. And on October 26 I spoke to the Treasurer and acting President of the Union about taking out the funds. They both agreed with my proposal. So we three signed two cash cheques to be cashed and we kept the notes in a metal suitcase in a room at the back of the Union's premises in Middle Road. This room was normally used as sleeping quarters by the Treasurer, Assistant Secretaries and others. That was the last I knew of the whereabouts of these notes. I last saw them at about 8 p.m. on October 26th. About two o'clock the next morning the police raided the Union's premises and all Union officials, committee members and members found on the premises were placed under arrest. At 4 a.m. I was taken by the police to the C.I.D. in Robinson Road.

"On November 10th at about 5 p.m. I was informed by Mr. Lee Kuan Yew that he had that afternoon seen the Treasurer, Ong Peng Hong, at Changi Prison. The Treasurer had informed him that the \$100,000 in notes were in the metal suitcase in the room at the back of the Union premises. There was no one in the room and it was locked that night. The Treasurer was in the Union premises in the front portion when the police arrived and arrested all of us at two a.m. Mr. Lee had immediately left Changi Prison in the company of two police officers and they together had searched the back room where the

suitcase was left. The door was open. The metal suitcase was there. It was empty. Later, the police commenced investigations into the loss of the \$100,000."

In his letter, Lim Chin Siong goes on to explain that the loss was "primarily caused by the suddenness of the police raid at two in the morning. Everyone was taken by surprise and, in the shock of the moment, no one thought of taking steps to protect the \$100,000 notes in the back room. Someone must have stolen the money after my arrest at two o'clock."

Not unexpectedly, the Registrar of Trade Unions refused to accept this as a satisfactory explanation, and on February 11, 1957, the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union was closed down. Having consulted legal opinion, Lim Chin Siong must have known before he drew out the Union's money for the second time that there was no provision in the Trade Union Ordinance which enables the Registrar or the Government to freeze the funds of a trade union even if the union was dissolved on account of unlawful activities. The money belongs to the members, not to the Government. Lim Chin Siong deliberately ignored legal advice, and withdrew the money, so he says, so that the workers should not lose it should the Union be banned.

What is extraordinarily difficult to understand, if this is true, is why the Committee did not meet in the correct manner and if they were not prepared to accept their legal adviser's advice that the money was safe in the bank no matter what happened, authorize the treasurer to hand over the funds to the legal adviser for safe-keeping for the time being. Instead of doing what commonsense would have thought was obvious, Lim Chin Siong and his friends "as events moved on towards a climax", took the money out of the bank and left this large sum in a suitcase, having presumably made no plans whatsoever to protect it or hide it. Lim Chin Siong said the shock of arrest caused them to overlook the money. Yet Lim himself said he expected arrest; in fact that was why he took out the money. In the Assembly, the Union's legal adviser, Lee Kuan Yew, told the Chief Minister that Lim Chin Siong was "quietly waiting for him and his Police on the morning of the 27th of October". Here was a situation which had been anticipated. In the streets there was serious rioting. In the Union's headquarters were gathered officials of the Union hourly expecting arrest, and in the back room in a metal suitcase were the Union's funds. For two hours the police were in the premises before the officials were taken away to prison, yet apparently Lim Chin Siong spoke to no one about

this large sum of money, which had hitherto been causing him so much worry. Nor, according to his long letter, did he think about the funds again until the Union's legal adviser told him a fortnight later that they had disappeared.

Not one note of that \$100,000 has ever been traced. What Lim Chin Siong has never made public is what he intended to do with the money eventually. Did he really draw it out of the bank with no other intention than of leaving it in a suitcase in a room in premises which he expected to be raided at any moment? This was not in keeping with the careful planning and efficient organization hitherto shown by the Union in all other matters.

Rejecting this explanation, the Registrar of Trade Unions was also dissatisfied with the Union's denial that branch officials had anything to do with the use of Union premises in Bukit Timah - Lim Chin Siong's constituency - by rioters. Police estimated that some 300 rioters were on the premises when they raided it, and they put up a stout resistance, using home-made weapons, bottles, sticks and iron bars, before they were overcome. A large supply of sticks and iron bars were found inside. So were a large number of incriminating documents which clearly indicated, the police say, a programme of violence and destruction. There was also a blackboard on which were written latest reports of motor cars set on fire, attacks on police, and other riot news. Police claim that this union building was being used as a riot headquarters.

Peace came to Singapore again after the arrest of the "spurious trade union leaders", as the Chief Minister described them. The Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union was dissolved, its funds missing and 35,000 unionists leaderless. While it acted as a trade union, the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union was a model militant trade union, and there was no reason, had the leaders been believers in democracy, why the Union should not have gone on to gather more and more strength, gaining increased benefits for the workers, and gathering prestige which could, in the long run, have been used constitutionally to influence the whole economic and political life of the Colony. All this was possible, constitutionally; revolution was not only unnecessary, but, as the People's Action Party later on explained in some detail, doomed to failure.

The collapse of a powerful and successful union which had dominated the labour scene for two years had a profound effect upon the entire trade union movement in Singapore. Certain employers took advantage of the Government's action to victimize

genuine trade union leaders, and the Chief Minister, Mr. Lim Yew Hock, felt it necessary to call on all employers "to take note that trade unionism is here to stay and that any attempt to exploit the workers will give fertile ground for subversive elements to thrive."

But the dissolution of the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union did not deter those who had been exploiting the trade unions to serve the aims of the Malayan Communist Party. In a White Paper published in August, 1957, the Government revealed that a new central Union, the Singapore General Employees' Union had been founded and had begun to operate from the old premises in Middle Road. Separately, some of the former committee members of the banned Factory and Shop Workers' Union penetrated and eventually absorbed another new Union called the National Union of General Workers. Five satellite unions were also formed to act as reserves for former members of the old banned Union in case they met with difficulties in the revival of the central union. In February, the White Paper stated, the leaders of these allied unions had already renewed the Communist Front tactics of using trade unions for political purposes. The Singapore Trade Union Working Committee, claiming to represent 32 unions, was revived again. Stated the White Paper: "There is a known connection between underground elements of the Malayan Communist Party and the groups now openly forming. For example, no less than 12 identified members of the secret communist organization are active in the trade union and political fields. If the Communist Front groups are allowed to develop and consolidate unchecked, they will very shortly become a most serious threat to security which could not be removed without a very strong risk of riots and bloodshed."

On August 22, 1957, the Government arrested 35 persons, among them several trade union officials. This followed a plot, by communists who had joined the People's Action Party, to capture the People's Action Party's Central Executive. Lee Kuan Yew, secretary-general of the Party, did not call them communists. He described them as "left-wing adventurers". Mr. Lee accused the Government of deliberately suppressing certain facts so as to make it appear that this purge was intended to save the People's Action Party from capture by a communist group. Mr. Lee alleged that the Government suppressed the truth that the leaders of this group were on the point of capturing the Singapore T.U.C.

"Can the Government deny," asked Mr. Lee in the Assembly, "that the leaders of this group they have arrested were on the point of capturing the T.U.C. by the evening of the 22nd of August when the purge began? Why did not the White Paper disclose that for some time since the Chief Minister's driver, Lee Yew Seng, who looks after the T.U.C. for him, returned from his May Day visit to Peking, this group had been making progress with him; that things had reached the point where on the night of the 22nd the so-called 32 unions led by this group were about to be accepted into the T.U.C. and so capture it, leaving the Labour Front without a 'mass base'? Why was it not disclosed that on the night of the 22nd itself, when the police surrounded the premises in Middle Road, the so-called 32 Unions' Special Committee was holding a meeting to finalize arrangements for their joining in and capturing the T.U.C.? Is it not because it would have been acutely embarrassing for the Labour Front Government to confess that it acted to save the T.U.C.?" Mr. Lee went on to accuse the Government of concealing those facts and also of exploiting the conflict within the People's Action Party. Said Lee: "The Chief Minister thought he could hurt both groups in the Party, arresting one because he suspected it to be communist, and by the timing making it appear that the other had precipitated the arrests. To achieve this, the White Paper pre-occupied itself with the P.A.P. and the real reason, that the T.U.C. was then in imminent danger, was concealed."

Whether or not the Chief Minister did take advantage of the circumstances in an endeavour to score a political success over the People's Action Party, the fact remains that he moved in quickly and resolutely to prevent trade unions being used as a political weapon, and thus averted the possibility of riots and wasteful loss of life.

Thus, in 1957, trade unionism in Singapore, was once more saved from ultimate exploitation by communists and student agitators, whose deliberate policy is to use the just grievances of the workers, and the lives of men inflamed to riot, for their own political motives, which always include the overthrow of democracy and the establishment of one-party dictatorship.

But how can democratic militant trade unionism be fostered in these circumstances? Three times since 1945 the communists in Singapore built up strong powerful unions, which obtained better working conditions and more money for the workers. Three times the communists began to use these unions for their own political ends, deliberately involving workers and the public

in the risk of riots sparked off by inflammatory speeches by trade union officials. Three times the Government of the day has been forced to move in to smash these unions which had become tools of violence and disorder. What sort of cumulative effect could this be expected to have upon the mass of the workers, most of them ill-educated?

In 1957, in Singapore, there were 202 unions with a total membership of 156,500 – which meant that some 293,500 workers did not belong to unions. Of the 202 unions, 59 were affiliated to the Singapore T.U.C., of which only nine at the beginning of the year had paid their annual subscriptions. How was it possible in these circumstances for the T.U.C. to claim to speak with authority for organized labour?

CHAPTER TWO

To understand the present position of trade unionism in Malaya and to judge future development, it is helpful to know the background of the movement, which was started afresh, generally speaking, in 1948.

My own limited experience as a Government official for three years, and as a student of trade unionism in Malaya for a longer period, made me appreciate just how great the difficulties of the workers were in what was then a Colonial territory. There were lessons in the past which should be remembered, for independence has not brought an end to opposition in powerful circles to the development of a strong trade union movement capable of making its voice heard in the Assembly and in the directors' office.

For a short period I was General Sir Harold Briggs' Staff Officer in charge of Psychological Warfare against the activities of the Malayan Communist Party. My critics, and I had many, said they could not tell the difference between my propaganda and the communist propaganda: they looked upon me as an agitator because I spoke over the radio about workers' rights, often criticizing greedy businessmen and those planters obstinately unco-operative with trade unionism. I made powerful enemies. I was accused of deliberately fostering bad relations between workers and employers. I was removed from General Briggs' staff, but my weekly broadcasts continued.

During the course of a Sunday evening talk over Radio Malaya in 1950 I mentioned that one rubber company had admitted to a year's profit of some thirteen million dollars. I said that some workers in Malaya argued that greed for immediate profit must not be allowed to hurt the country's economy. "My friends," I went on, "say that there are several ways action can be taken. Some speak openly of the advantage of the nationalization of what is, after all, Malaya's basic industry. Other countries have taken over the control of their basic industries. Why not Malaya?"

Abusive, angry and bitter comments quickly followed. A prominent member of the Rubber Producers' Council, speaking in the Legislative Council, accused me of "bringing into being that dreaded condition of class hatred which is the forerunner of communism". He described the broadcast as vindictive and dangerous. A wealthy businessman said my broadcasts would lead to racial disturbances. In the House of Commons, the notorious Sir Waldron Smithers demanded that the Secretary of State for the Colonies should stop these "subversive broadcasts". Mr. James Griffiths, then Secretary of State, denied they were subversive, and he agreed with the request of Mr. Tom Driberg (1957/8 Chairman of the British Labour Party) that a small booklet containing copies of my broadcasts should be placed in the House of Commons library.

But within a fortnight I was ordered by the Malayan Government to stop my broadcasts.

Speaking at the delegates' conference of the Malayan T.U.C., the President said that, speaking with the full approval of the General Committee, he was gravely concerned with the decision to stop these Sunday evening radio talks. He spoke of "the sacrifice of an individual to appease the interests of representatives of absentee shareholders"

A few weeks later the British Labour Government fell. Soon afterwards, communists murdered Sir Henry Gurney, the High Commissioner. Within a few weeks of his death the Malayan Government announced that my contract was not to be renewed.

Even there the matter was not allowed to rest. Lord Malcolm Douglas Hamilton had to get up in the House of Commons and demand to know why the Government had employed me in the first place after the Trade Union Congress had protested at the time of my appointment because, he said, they knew that I was a man of known communist sympathies. In Britain the T.U.C. denied ever having made any protest. In Malaya the T.U.C. cabled that I had been especially helpful to labour. Demanding a withdrawal of the smear, the cable added: "The Malayan T.U.C. has complete confidence in Alex Josey who has always presented labour's case with sympathetic understanding." Hamilton's statement was, of course, completely untrue and irresponsible.

Once again the matter was raised in the House of Commons by Labour Members, and Mr. Lyttelton, the new Conservative Secretary of State for the Colonies, under severe questioning was forced, but grudgingly, to deny that I was a man of commu-

nist sympathies or that the T.U.C. had protested against my appointment. What Mr. Lyttelton should have done of course, was to have refuted Hamilton's wild outburst at the time when Hamilton made it. But he remained silent and did nothing to defend me against this attack. On the contrary, there is no reason to expect that he would ever have made any efforts to put matters right, had not James Griffiths and Tom Driberg insisted that the whole truth be made public.

This personal background I feel might be helpful to give some general idea of the atmosphere in which trade unionism in Malaya tried to thrive, even during the enlightened years of Gurney's administration. Conditions were much worse during the regime of Sir Gerald Templar.

But, to get back to the time when I was working with Sir Harold Briggs, the first Director of Operations against the communist terrorists: I was working in my office when, one day in September, 1950, a small frightened Chinese called Lam Swee was brought in.

Lam Swee looked half starved. He was also very afraid. Later he told me he thought he was going to be tortured. I gave him a cigarette and asked him to sit down. At the time, Lam Swee was the most important Malayan communist to surrender. Formerly commander of a guerilla fighting group, he had also been political commissar in the key State of Johore.

Before he went into the jungle Lam Swee had been the leader of the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions. Lam Swee was much more of a genuine trade unionist than a communist. When I knew him better I began to understand the arguments and the line of reasoning which seemed, at the time, to convince this quietly spoken man with the passionate determination to help his fellow workers that communism was necessary if trade unionism was to function effectively, and so improve their general standard of living.

Not until much later did Lam Swee discover the truth that the communist doctrine makes no provision for democratic trade unionism; that, in effect, communism and trade unionism are contradictory terms. What Lam Swee never appeared to question was what he considered to be the hopelessness of trying to organize effective democratic trade unionism (as distinct from that form of unionism looked upon by employers as being safe), in a Colonial territory, independently of the Malayan Communist Party. After many long frank talks with Lam Swee I came to the conclusion that the British in Malaya, through stupidity or

design, could not escape some responsibility for the impatient and suspicious reactions of Lam Swee, and others like him, which eventually caused confused trade unionists to join the communists in their carefully planned armed revolt. For the Government's declared policy of encouraging the healthy development of democratic trade unionism was never wholly accepted, and the hard endeavours of John Brazier, the Trade Union Adviser, to carry out that policy by stimulating the creation of more independent effective trade unions (his actual job was to do no more than give advice when asked), was often deliberately frustrated by reactionary officials and obstinate business interests.

In these circumstances it was not difficult for the Malayan Communist Party, always closely in contact with the workers, and ever willing to support their demands, first to dominate Malaya's trade union movement, and then deliberately to pursue a policy of coercion and force which they knew in the end would inevitably lead to rebellion. The Malayan Communist Party intended that the communist attack, in June 1948, would appear to be a revolt of the workers against an oppressive Government. Possibly this pretence might have been widely believed but for the adoption by the communists of what they themselves now admit to have been a wrong policy. This was the policy of deliberately using terror methods to obtain support. More than a thousand persons, mostly Chinese, were callously and brutally murdered — shot, buried alive, slashed to death, thrown into fires, strangled — before the Central Executive were forced to confess that the policy had failed. Most of those murdered were workers.

It was after quarrelling with the Central Executive over this policy of terror against the masses, that Lam Swee surrendered. Lam Swee told me he surrendered because he realized whilst he was in the jungle that other leaders in the Party were not so much interested in helping fellow workers get a decent standard of living as they were in establishing themselves in political power in a communist state. They admitted, by word and action, that they were just as willing to use the trade union movement for their own purposes as they were to terrorize the masses into supporting them. In all seriousness they advanced the old argument that the end justifies the means. They were prepared to do anything so that Malaya could become a communist state. Once Malaya was communist, they argued, the workers would get a fair deal, even if they had to kill masses of Malayan workers in order to make Malaya communist.

Lam Swee, fundamentally a believer in maximum individual freedom, found it hard to accept these arguments. He was essentially a trade unionist. To me he insisted that the trade unions in Malaya, formed soon after the war, before the Trade Union Adviser's Office was set up, by the communists, or eventually dominated by them, had done a great deal to better the lot of the workers of all races. Some of them, in the early days, had been democratic organizations.

To his surprise I agreed with him. I knew as well as he did that in 1946, in Singapore, for example, there had been forty-one strikes, mostly for higher wages, and that thirty-six of these strikes had been successful. Communist influences were often behind these strikes. What did that matter to the workers? To them any union which can get them a bigger wage packet is a good union. That reasoning is as sound in Asia as it is anywhere else. Yet those who thoughtlessly would use the trade union movement as "a bulwark against communism" overlooked this basic purpose of the trade union. Trade unions exist to defend and improve the wages and working conditions of the workers. When a union fails to do this the very reason for its existence disappears, and the union in consequence will almost certainly disintegrate. Since 1948, lack of constitutional aggressiveness on the part of the trade union movement generally (due mainly to the Emergency and also, partly, to poor organization resulting in a poor financial situation, ineffective T.U.C.'s, and a multiplicity of weak unions calling fore-doomed strikes) can be blamed for the present widespread disinterest of Malayan workers in trade unionism. Obviously there would not be many more men and women outside trade unions than inside them (which is the present position) if the unions could prove they could not only adequately protect the legitimate interests of their members, but also give them additional benefits in exchange for their dues and support.

This is what the Malayan Communist Party, setting out to dominate the trade union movement before launching their revolt, clearly understood. Thus trade unionism in Malaya in 1946 made sense to the workers of all races because when negotiations failed and they came out on strike, so well was the strike organized that employers agreed to pay them higher wages to return to work. The fact that communists directed most of the strikes does not affect the argument that a good strike, from the workers' point of view, is a successful strike, and that a good trade union is a trade union which is prepared

to use all constitutional methods to get them more money.

For months the communists went about their task of building up successful unions. Thus winning confidence, they took over key positions, obtained more power. In due course nearly the whole of the labour movement in Malaya was under their control. Even so, more than a year and a half was to pass before the Malayan Communist Party, mistakenly confident of the workers' support, felt themselves strong enough to throw the hand grenades and fire the shots which started their revolt against the government.

It is now a matter of history that they miscalculated. The workers did not rise with them. Why? If the communist-dominated trade unions had been so successful in obtaining improvements for the workers why did the workers hold back? Probably one of the reasons might have been a reluctance, then knowing a measure of stability, to do anything which could result in a return to the chaos and confusion which prevailed in Malaya towards the end of the Japanese occupation. More likely, I believe, the reason was that the trade union movement up until then was not a people's movement. The Malayan worker was not a part of the unions in a democratic sense. He belonged, and he did what was required of him as a member, because he could reasonably expect rewards (better conditions, more money) if he did. But largely the unions were not democratic organizations. Most of the power was in the hands of the communist leaders. While the workers were prepared to permit this so long as the leaders could produce the benefits, they felt no obligation to accept any of their political beliefs, especially if this meant open defiance of the government. Destitute workers, unable to obtain concessions through democratic methods, might have supported a communist-led rebellion; but not workers capable of winning concessions from employers through other means.

For their ultimate purpose, which was to involve the trade union movement in the revolt, the communists had done too well. In order to dominate the unions they had to show results. Once they did this the workers in consequence enjoyed a better standard of living. At the same time the workers began to believe in trade unions. Hence the communists' dilemma. Having proved the worth of constitutional trade unionism, the Malayan Communist Party in one sudden move now wanted the workers to repudiate peaceful trade unionism, negotiations and the constitutional weapon of the strike, and to fight the employers with militant force. This was too much to expect from

most workers, and the communist dominated unions began to lose support.

Lam Swee never believed in armed revolution, but he was prepared to fight for a principle. He believed in democratic trade unionism. He went into the jungle because he believed the communists' propaganda that the British were determined to stamp out democratic trade unionism. Two years in the jungle in close association with communist party leaders strengthened his conviction that the workers must organize. Lam Swee wept when his comrades murdered villagers. They laughed at his weakness. He told them without shame that he had no stomach for any rebellion which meant terrorizing his own people. All his working life, as a rubber tapper near Ipoh, where he was born, later as a barber in Johore, he had wanted to help his fellow workers get a better living. He told them he loved freedom. He hated servility. That was why he joined the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army during the war. He did well and became local Commissar of the South Johore branch of the Malayan Communist Party. He told me, with pride, that he was the only party leader who came from the working class.

When peace came he turned again to trade unionism. He wanted the worker to have more food, better conditions, some form of security. He became president of the Johore General Labour Union. Afterwards he was secretary of the Singapore Federation of Trade Unions. Later he became secretary-general of the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions. He was made a vice-president. He was also a member of the Harbour Board Union, and president of the Selangor Stall-Holders Union.

When he was forced to abandon his trade union activities on the orders of the Party, Lam Swee went into the jungle as Political Commissar in South Johore. This meant, in effect, that he was the leader of the revolution in that important region close to Singapore. A price of \$10,000 was placed on his head. In the jungle Lam Swee, believer in democratic trade unionism, made the dangerous mistake of criticizing the Party's policy of wanton terrorism against workers. He still believed in trying to convince people by argument, not by bullet. He still thought he could be a communist as well as a trade unionist until he was made to realize that Malayan communism was founded not on argument but upon force. He was relieved of his posts. His revolver was taken away. He knew then that his only chance to live was to escape. He did. In due course he found his way to my office in Kuala Lumpur. Later I arranged for him

to broadcast from Radio Malaya, and he spoke of his unshaken belief in trade unionism. His contemptuous condemnation of the Malayan Communist Party so upset the Central Executive, and had such effect upon party members, that the Executive were forced, shortly afterwards, to make an attempt, in special propaganda documents, to answer all the specific charges he made. The answers were not convincing.

Because he is an honest man, Lam Swee insisted upon referring in his broadcast to what he claimed had been accomplished for the workers by the united struggles of the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions, of which for a time Lam Swee had been chairman. I was strongly criticized by reactionary employers for permitting this to be said "over the Government radio". What the critics failed to understand was that Lam Swee spoke the truth. Then the communists, for their own purposes, were showing what democratic trade unionism in Malaya could do for the workers. For many reasons this was a lesson which I felt should not be entirely forgotten.

Little did I realise then that, within a few years, the Communist Party, still sticking closely to this exact pattern of development, of first creating efficient trade unions and then using them as political weapons to destroy democracy, were ready to start all over again.

Lim Chin Siong was a boy at school when the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions was crushed in 1948. Six years later he moved to Middle Road, in Singapore — and once again a powerful trade union movement was created which was to end in disaster because it deliberately used communist tactics to cause disturbances and encourage violence (having first demonstrated what could be done for the workers by determinedly following a tough line, on justifiable grievances, in a strictly constitutional manner), and thus inevitably and openly clashed with the forces of law and order which, of course, proved to be much stronger than they were.

Again democratic trade unionism, as a result, suffered another serious setback.

CHAPTER THREE

On the eve of independence, on August 30, 1957, in Petaling Jaya, modern suburb of Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaya, J. H. Oldenbroek, Secretary-General of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, officially opened Plantation House, headquarters of the National Union of Plantation Workers, the largest union in the country. This carefully designed union headquarters, with its offices and halls, and printing works, cost three hundred thousand dollars to build.

Altogether there are about 300,000 plantation workers in Malaya, most of them in the rubber industry. More than 170,000 are members of the National Union of Plantation Workers. Malaya's largest union was created on November 2, 1954, when five major rubber unions — the Johore Plantation Workers' Union, Alor Gajah Rubber Workers' Union, Perak Estate Employees' Union, Malacca Estate Employees' Union, and the Plantation Workers' Union, Malaya — amalgamated.

The oldest and largest of these five unions was the Plantation Workers' Union, Malaya, which was formed in 1946. The man behind this Union was P. P. Narayanan, a Malayan of Indian descent, now the general secretary of the National Union. To him the opening of Plantation House was the partial fulfilment of an ambition and a dream — the creation of a national union, with its own headquarters, paid staff of experts, library, newspapers printed in Tamil, Chinese and Malay.

In the whole of independent Malaya (in September, 1957) there were nearly 300 trade unions, with a total membership of approximately 223,000 workers. It is estimated that, altogether, 989,000 persons out of Malaya's six and a quarter million inhabitants can be classified as workers, and probably as many as 965,000 (in 1957) were eligible to become trade unionists.

Yet of Malaya's total labour force three out of every four workers do not belong to a trade union, and of those who are trade unionists about two-thirds belong to the National Union of Plantation Workers. This means that the 53,000 workers who are trade unionists but not members of the National Union

of Plantation Workers belong to the other 294 unions, one of which, the National Union of Factory and General Workers,* claims a membership of 20,000, and another, the National Union of Railwaymen, 7,000. There are one or two other unions with memberships of about a thousand apiece. When all this is taken into consideration, the conclusion is reached that, apart from half a dozen leading unions, the majority of the trade unions in Malaya have an average of less than 50 members each. Under the law as few as seven workers can form a union.

This fragmentation of the trade union movement is recognized, both in Singapore and in Malaya, as being a serious handicap to the development of strong and effective trade unionism. So long as each factory or business house continues to form its own union, so will the industry's bargaining strength be weakened. The National Plantation Workers' Union has shown the way. Splinter unions must be collected together and national unions formed on an industrial or occupational basis. In this way the workers in a particular industry can speak with one voice and enter into agreements on a national basis. In the words of Mr. V. Feather, Assistant General Secretary of the British Trade Union Congress, "this will achieve better results and overcome the frustration which arises from divided effort. It would also give a basis the provision of better service to the members, the industry and the country." In 1957 the Malayan Trade Union Congress set up a special committee to go into the whole question of merging the small unions into national unions.

The National Union of Plantation Workers faced the issue squarely when it admitted, in one of its reports, that "the biggest enemy of the Malayan Trade Union movement is not the employers but internal dissension and discord and inter-union competition." The attitude of this national union was that no labour movement could die or wither away as the result of continuous attacks from the employers: it only gains strength. The biggest enemy was internal dissension and discord and inter-union competition which weaken the movement and discredit trade unionism.

This same report agreed that there were some employers who would prefer trade unionism to be destroyed, or brought back to pre-war status. Among these reactionaries was a strong section of Asian employers. What they wanted, the report said, was a quick and large return for their money, whereas what the worker wanted was steady employment and a rising standard

* Under threat of suspension in 1958.

of living. This was much more likely to be achieved by strong national unions than by small weak organizations.

Just what could be achieved by a powerful national union, in a peaceful and orderly manner, was demonstrated by the National Union of Plantation Workers in 1956 when the Union cancelled the existing agreement with the employers and demanded higher wages and better working conditions. The employers refused to meet the demands of the Union. At this point the Union could have called a strike, but Narayanan personally has always been opposed to strike action, especially during the time of the Emergency. Having built up a powerful union, almost from scratch, Narayanan has always been most hesitant about risking the Union's structure and finances in this way. On this occasion, as on previous occasions, he managed to carry the Executive Committee with him and it was decided not to strike but to call a country-wide "go-slow" movement. "Go-slow" meant taking a day of rest on Fridays, doing no overtime, refusing to work after rain, and shallow tapping. Except for a few estates here and there the campaign was a complete success: it lasted 22 days. Never before in the history of the trade union movement have so many thousands of workers given such a remarkable exhibition of solidarity and united strength.

In the end the Union obtained improved wages, a day of rest after six days' continuous work, six days' annual leave with pay, and withdrawal of the employers' demand that the day following rain must be considered a day of rest. In addition, the Union also achieved the breaking down of the so-called hard core of anti-union employers and anti-union workers. Relations between managers and workers improved, and many more Chinese and Malays joined the Union.

Today the National Union of Plantation Workers has eight full-time branch offices in various parts of the country, and a total of 70 full-time paid officials. I knew the Union when its headquarters were in a tiny room at the top of some narrow stairs over a smelly dried fish shop. I knew Narayanan then as an energetic, good-humoured young man (he was born in 1923), easily approachable, always eager for advice, but never ready to surrender his right to accept or reject it. Now installed in a comfortable office in Plantation House, Narayanan himself has not changed.

Narayanan went to work for the Negri Sembilan Indian Labour Union in 1946. This was a general labour union, which was of the usual pattern of unions in those days, and this one drew its membership from plantation workers, the Public

Works Department, railwaymen, goldsmiths, cigar-workers, and other types of workers, all of them Indians.

Within three years the Union became the Negri Sembilan Plantation Workers' Union. The Government had decreed that all unions must be on an industrial basis. Thus the new Union was open to all estate-workers of all nationalities. Right from the start it remained independent of the General Labour Unions organized by the Communist Party. Narayanan became the organizing secretary.

First the Union consolidated its position in Negri Sembilan. Then it began to expand. Narayanan's objective consistently remained one national union of plantation workers. By 1952, the activities of the Negri Sembilan Plantation Workers had spread to all other estates in Malaya except Perak, Kelantan and Trengganu, and had changed its name to The Plantation Workers' Union, Malaya. Said Narayanan: "The attitude of planters was very hostile towards unionism. Due to this progress was rather slow."

Declaration of the Emergency in 1948 had brought fear and suspicion to the minds of workers in general, plantation workers in particular. They were not quite sure that the Government was sincerely trying to foster the trade union movement. Some workers thought and believed that the Government declared the Emergency to kill the unions. In some cases this is what actually happened.

Narayanan, speaking at the University of Malaya about the growth of trade unionism, said that when the Emergency was declared workers were afraid to join unions, or even to continue membership of their old unions. Some of them thought membership of a union automatically meant membership of the Malayan Communist Party. In any case joining a union meant inviting trouble either from the police or from the employers. In these circumstances the workers preferred to keep away from trade unionism.

To remove doubts from the workers' minds trade union leaders from Narayanan's Union travelled constantly, moving among the workers, explaining to them what trade unionism meant. What added to their difficulties was the fact that some former trade union workers had gone into the jungle (often with union money), and on the fringe, where tappers and others worked, contacted them and demanded money and food. They were never willing supporters of the Communist Party, most of them, but these tappers helped them because if they did not they would most likely be killed. In fact some were murdered.

Others, however, were arrested by the Government for helping the communists and a few were hanged. All this thoroughly confused many workers, and trade unionism, as a consequence, suffered.

Narayanan said, rather bitterly, that the Government did not do much to remove doubts from the minds of the workers. "Perhaps," he added, "the employing interests were too happy about it." Probably recalling General Templer's attitude towards labour when he was High Commissioner, Narayanan said that very few people in authority realized or recognized the important role the workers — the economic soldiers, he called them — played during the dark days of the Emergency in keeping the economy of the country going.

With all these difficulties it was hard work building up a powerful trade union movement. Wherever there were small unions they stuck to their own boundaries, and it was only when the employers threatened to reduce wages in 1949, owing to the fall in the price of rubber, that the 27 unions not affiliated to the General Labour Union, came together to form a Negotiating Committee to fight the employers, and elected Narayanan as their spokesman. From then on a national union was inevitable; it was bound to come.

Setting out what material gains trade unionism had obtained for the workers, Narayanan pointed out that daily payment to tappers had been abolished; so had the various differentials and departures from national wage agreements. Since 1948 wages have increased 500 per cent in the plantation industry. There were no rest days in the good old days. Now workers are eligible for a rest day after six days' work. In addition there are four social and religious days and six days' paid annual leave. On many estates where housing conditions were bad, decent cottages have been built. Pipe water is now common. If workers are asked to work on rest days they get time and a half; if they work on holidays they get double pay.

Years ago, the trade unions were never sure of their facts when they came to the negotiating table. Today an economist from Madras University heads the Research Section of the National Union.

Altogether the rubber workers pay a million dollars a year to their Union in subscriptions. There are branch offices in all States. Executive Council meetings are conducted in the Malay language although most of the members are non-Malays. Each State branch of the Union is an autonomous unit in local affairs

and has a committee of twelve or eighteen, including an elected chairman and two vice-chairmen, and an appointed secretary who can generally speak English.

On the national level there is an Executive Council with twenty-eight members. All office bearers at the national level are elected by ballot. A working committee of nine, including President, General Secretary and Financial Secretary, attends to the affairs of the Union between Executive Council meetings. Finance is centrally controlled. According to the rules, all money collected by the branches (less ten per cent commission paid to collectors) must be deposited in the account of the Union's bankers in Kuala Lumpur, every month.

Narayanan has always been aware of the necessity of the Union to keep in close touch with the members. Today the Union is unique in Malaya, and in South-East Asia, in that it owns its own modern printing press and publishes its own twice-a-week newspaper in Tamil, Malay and Chinese. The Tamil edition sells 16,000 copies an issue, and is the widest circulated newspaper, in Tamil, in the whole country.

On the question of politics, the attitude of Narayanan and the Union is that joining and supporting a political party is a personal matter for each individual member. He believes, and so do I, that in a democratic Malaya a powerful trade union movement ought to be able to bring considerable pressure on any Government, no matter which political party forms it. For that reason the Union has ignored invitations to participate in political affairs, and has instead concentrated upon building up a formidable workers' weapon to be used, aggressively when circumstances require, but always constitutionally.

CHAPTER FOUR

Labour in Malaya before the 1939-46 war was largely unorganized. Most of the labour for the rubber and tin industries came from India and China. Indian workers were recruited under arrangements which regulated the labour supply to the demand, and until 1938 the Indians felt no strong urge to organize trade unions. Conditions generally were better in Malaya than India, and the Malayan Government's Labour Department exercised paternal control and supervision over the Indian workers' wages, housing, medical care and repatriation.

On the whole, the Indian worker was content. At least he did not complain. He had long been accustomed in his own country to colonialism and paternalism.

In 1938 a third of the Indian workers on the rubber estates were thrown out of work. The rest were forced to take reduced wages. On political, not economic grounds (Indian nationalism) assisted Indian immigration into Malaya was banned. Enlightened workers and Government officials began to see the need for independent trade unions to safeguard labour's interests.

For various political and economic reasons the Malayan Governments never exercised paternal supervision or control over Chinese workers. The average Chinese has an aversion to paternalism. Besides, he came to Malaya unassisted by the Government to seek his fortune. He was prepared to look after himself: he would make his own arrangements. In India, the British-dominated Government had demanded certain limited safeguards for their workers in Malaya. The Chinese Government were not interested, or were unable to demand, a fair deal for Chinese workers in Malaya.

There have been Chinese workmen in Malaya for many years. Chinese tin miners were digging in Northern Malaya before 1786. Practically every Chinese who came to Malaya was a member of a triad society. These triads became very powerful and in 1890 they were declared unlawful. Other societies and trade guilds were formed to take their place.

Most of the Chinese workers, therefore, can be considered to have been organized, to some extent, for a great many years. But this generalization could not be applied to the Malays, or the Indians. Likewise it would be correct to say that, while the Chinese had their forms of trade unions, there was no co-ordinated Chinese labour movement until about 1946.

Rivalry between the great triads often led to clashes. In 1872 about 40,000 Chinese tin miners were working in Perak, and they belonged to different triads. Early forerunners of protection rackets later developed in large American cities, the triads were always prepared to use strong-arm methods to defend their own members and to intimidate members of other triads. Fights were inevitable. Writes W. L. Blythe, in his fascinating *Historical Sketch of Chinese Labour in Malaya* from which I have borrowed liberally, "Fights broke out which developed into fierce warfare in which huge gangs of miners plundered and burned each other's property."

In the early days the Chinese who came to Malaya to seek their fortunes came almost as slaves. Until 1854 the practice was for these workers to sell themselves, usually under promise of high wages and great opportunities, to a labour-broker. This broker paid the passage money to Malaya, the debt to be deducted from the worker's wages. More often than not, upon arrival in Singapore the coolie would discover that his services had been sold to an employer. Before the coolie could leave this man's employment he would have to pay off the amount the employer paid the broker for his services. Some workers never lived to pay off their debts, although they worked all their lives. There was little humanity in this system of recruiting labour from China, which in due course became known as the *Chue tsai* system. *Chue tsai* is Chinese for piglets. There was ample justification for the accusation that the sale of coolies under this system was no better than the buying and selling of pigs.

Conditions gradually improved, but in 1877 the newly appointed Protector of Chinese (against exploitation by Chinese as well as by European capitalists) still found it possible to refer to a scandalous state of affairs in which gangs of coolies were driven aboard tongkangs by armed men for shipment to Malaya and elsewhere.

By 1880 the Government began to do something about freeing immigrants from the burden of debt. A law was introduced to make it possible for workers coming to Malaya to "start fairly, with no other debt upon them than the exact amount of

their passage money to be worked off by regular deduction from their wages, under engagements entered into with the supervision of the Protectorate." Speculators in human labour in Malaya resented this interference, but the Government, prompted by criticism in Britain, realized that it was high time some sort of morality was introduced into the labour market.

Even so, the Government still had the interests of the employers very much at heart. Under the new law penalties were imposed on any person "who by deceit or other illegitimate persuasion induced any person to leave the Colony for services elsewhere" while the worker was under contract. As one condition of employment was a five years' contract, this law strengthened the hold of the employer over the worker. If the worker broke the contract he could be sent to prison for three years of rigorous treatment. This penalty applied, of course, to the worker, not the employer. There was no prison sentence for the employer if he broke the contract.

Shocked by the severity of this law Whitehall demanded that the terms of the contract should be reduced to one year instead of five, and that instead of rigorous imprisonment there should be simple imprisonment. There were penalties as well for anyone harbouring "a deserter" who broke his contract. Malayan planting interests stoutly opposed Whitehall's weak attitude towards their labour problems, but Whitehall insisted. Eventually a compromise was reached. Contracts would be for three years, and any labourer guilty of breaking his contract would be given the option of a fine or prison. Few labourers had any money, so the result was usually the same.

Progress was slow in Malaya, but by 1910 the maximum period for a contract had been reduced to 300 days. But round about this time there was a shortage of labour. Rubber trees were being planted and tapped. More workers were wanted. This prompted an Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council, on behalf of the employers of Perak, to make an effort to get the period for contracts extended to 600 days.

At once this proposal brought forth a spirited reply from the Resident of Pahang. Chinese workers, he declared, came to Malaya to be free, to be their own masters. If they obtained a free passage they were ready to repay it and enter into a contract to labour until it was repaid. But when that period was over they expected to be free. Any attempt to keep them for a longer period would be an offence against their self-respect and moral sense and would fail. The ordinary coolie as a rule was a very decent fellow and he regarded himself as under a

moral obligation to fulfil his contract; but not if the contract was extended beyond what he recognized as proper. As to the Unofficial Member's argument that employers regarded it as a hardship that, as soon as their men were acclimatized, they left them, why should a man who had worked 300 days on an estate leave it as soon as his contract expired? Surely if he had been properly treated on that estate and was making a good wage he would stay?

When the Governor joined in the debate in support of the Resident of Pahang, the Unofficial Member withdrew his motion. This was going too far even for a sympathetic Colonial administration.

Within two years the old contract system was abolished. Under the Labour Code of 1912 it was laid down that all contracts were to end on the 30th June, 1914, "and no contract was to be entered into by an indebted immigrant after that date". Monthly agreements took the place of the contract.

As might well have been expected, vested interests opposed the Labour Code, which might have been a reform in those days, but which nowadays can be looked upon as a document of working conditions no free trade union could ever negotiate. It was sufficiently progressive, however, to move one Unofficial Member to make an angry speech on behalf of employers.

Referring to "recent strikes in Kuala Lumpur", he said it was a great disappointment to the whole of the country to see that European employers in these particular instances had had to give in to the demands of their labourers. "That such a thing could be possible in the Federated Malay States nobody would have believed." The matter should have grave consideration if "we find that the European has to give in to the dictation of the coolie, who is probably acting under the dictation of some secret society, and I believe I have good grounds to suppose that these strikes were led by some secret society."

The Unofficial Member argued that if they were to give in to coolies like that, then the position of Europeans in the country would become very difficult, and probably there would be further trouble. The speaker wanted strikes to be made illegal. After all, he argued, "We are prepared to look after our labour. We do our best for them. We treat them almost as well as we would treat our own people, and we must expect that the labourers will respect the laws of the country and their employers." There should be a law to prevent strikes, especially among the Chinese and Tamils.

Once again this was more than the Colonial Administration was prepared to do. Working conditions under the Labour Code were still far from ideal—the Code was based essentially upon paternalism—but they were considerably better than they were in the early days, and the Administration was determined not to leave labour still largely unorganized completely to the tender mercies of reactionary employers.

Just how tough working in Malaya could be for labourers, Blythe records in his *Historical Sketch of Chinese Labour in Malaya*. In 1873, for instance, in Perak, one employer admitted, with some annoyance no doubt, that between 10 and 20 per cent of his coolies died from fever when clearing jungle. When the first mines were opened half the workers died. At the opening of the Ampang tin fields in 1857 fever and tigers reduced the working force from eighty-seven to eighteen in sixty days. That year the owner of the mine made about \$200,000.

Of passing interest, which has some bearing on the outlook of tin miners, is the reason why ownership of Malaya's tin mines passed from mainly Chinese to mainly European hands. Briefly this was because when capital was needed for mechanical methods to mine deeper and less productive areas, British companies could find the money, whereas the Chinese with their preference for personal and borrowed capital could rarely obtain sufficient. In 1920 about 64 per cent of the tin production was in the hands of the Chinese, and 36 per cent in the hands of Europeans. By 1932, mainly because of mechanization, the position was almost exactly reversed. Twenty years later the position was still roughly the same.

To return again to the secret societies, the original Malayan trade unions: what has to be remembered is that almost as far back as 1823 the Chinese in Malaya recognized them as the effective civil government. The headmen might deal with the Colonial government, but the immediate government of the Chinese was carried out by the societies. Mostly the lodges were territorial and tribal. For example, carpenters, dry-cleaners, dressmakers, came from Shanghai and Chekiang Province; barbers, rickshaw pullers, trishaw pedallers, lorry drivers, from Foochow and North Fukien Province; unskilled labour, boatmen, fishermen, sawmillers, from Amoy and South Fukien Province; vegetable gardeners from Swatow; shoemakers, rattan furniture workers, quarry workers, carpenters, mechanics, skilled workers, from Kwangtung Province; rubber millers, bakers, sawmillers, domestic servants, from Hainan island.

Because certain tribes followed certain trades the lodges of the societies naturally became associations of fellow workers. In due course some of these associations developed into guilds. From the earliest times until recent years these trade guilds catered exclusively for the interests of persons, both employer and worker, engaged in particular trades. Much of their effectiveness as trade unions was lost because of this lack of independence from the employers, and also because the guilds in effect were part of the larger secret society set-up. Even so, in Malaya, Chinese guilds for tailors, shoemakers, goldsmiths and carpenters did much to regulate wages, hours of work, holidays, and terms of apprenticeship through the medium of a joint guild committee of employers and workers.

Not until the 1920's did the Chinese form societies confined to workers. This development can be traced from the Russian Revolution and the introduction of labour organizations in China by Dr. Sun Yat Sen, Father of the Chinese Republic, in 1924. For many reasons, not the least being the generally disinterested attitude of the Colonial Government towards Chinese labour (an attitude limited mainly to the prevention of too much exploitation by the employers), political influences brought to bear by the Russian and the Chinese Communist Parties had their definite repercussions on the workers' organizations in Malaya.

Nevertheless, apart from occasional contact with underground communist groups, the great mass of workers on estates, particularly the Tamils, and mines remained unorganized as trade unionists, in the Western sense, until shortly before Japan invaded Malaya. Probably there were fifty Chinese workers' associations in the Federation in 1940, and probably the same number in Singapore. One of the oldest in Singapore was the Clerical Union, formed in 1920. The Malay Seamen's Association came into being in 1916. As a Pan-Malayan trade union, the Chinese Engineering Mechanics Association had a fairly long history. Most of the Chinese mechanics in Malaya belonged to this association, which was formed in 1875 in Province Wellesley. Mechanics near the docks at Bagan Dalam, where they worked, built a temple in which to worship and meet. Sixteen years later, in 1891, there were many more mechanics and a large meeting place was needed. So a club was built and a society formed. Membership was confined to fitters, turners, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, boiler makers, plumbers, electricians, engine drivers, moulders, pattern makers, welders, draughtsmen, and qualified engineers.

In 1895 the headquarters were moved to Penang; in 1905 to Prai, and to Penang again in 1919. From then until 1928 branches were formed in various parts of the country to meet the expanding needs of the tin industry. A branch was formed in Singapore in 1928, and contacts were established with similar societies in Canton and Hongkong.

On the outbreak of war with Japan, a Trade Union Federation was formed in Singapore under the auspices of the Communist Party. Seventy unions joined this Federation, which helped in the formation of Dalforce, which fought the Japanese after they landed on Singapore Island. Later some of them took part in the resistance movement in Singapore. For this, the Singapore Government later admitted, their leaders suffered heavily during the Japanese occupation. Among other unions, the Stevedores Union was of considerable help to the late Major-General Lim Bo Seng when organizing labour for the Services. Members of the Quarry Workers' Union helped the British Army to blow up the Causeway.

What was more natural than that the Communist Party should lead the revival of trade unionism again after the war was over? Almost at once General Labour Unions sprang up in Singapore and in the States and Settlements. Soon they were grouped together in the Pan-Malayan General Labour Union. Early in 1946 the Singapore Labour Union claimed a membership of about 200,000 workers of all nationalities. In Selangor, 38,000; in Penang, some 22,000. About 200 delegates attended the Pan-Malayan conference in Singapore in February, 1946. Resolutions were passed demanding unemployment relief, social insurance, holidays with pay and sick leave, abolition of the contract system, minimum wages and maximum hours (\$2.15 per 8-hour day for the unskilled labourer), limitation of child labour, schools for workers, prohibition of the sale of toddy and narcotics to workers. Here was a reasonable programme of reforms put forward in a democratic manner.

In this matter, as in others, the Malayan Communist Party faithfully followed the pattern of revolution laid down by Stalin. It was not until later that the two day political strike in Singapore, involving several hundred thousand workers, but which obtained nothing for them except loss of pay in certain instances, was recognized as a major blunder. For while, according to Stalin, independent trade unions are wholly incompatible with the theory and practice of Leninism, control must be firmly established and the unions used to better conditions for the workers in the current capitalist regime, before they can be employed

as a weapon of communist development. In other words, first the trade unions must be proved to be of value to the workers before they can effectively be exploited for communism. This was the pattern followed by the Singapore Factory Shop Workers' Union until it was closed down in 1957.

For a short period trade unions in Stalin's Russia served the interests of the Russian workers. All the while they also served the purpose of the communists. Today Soviet trade unions have become part of the State administration. They no longer have independence. It is true that Lenin championed the independence of the unions against Trotsky's theory that unions could not defend workers against their own state. But, in the end it was Trotsky's theory which ultimately prevailed.

In Malaya, the Communists did good work in developing the trade union movement at the outset. Had they been less impatient, had they followed Stalin's injunction more closely and concentrated more upon infiltrating the unions instead of dominating them, and using them too quickly for political purposes, Malaya's contemporary political history might be much different. As it was, unions began to drift away from the centrally organized communist dominated trade union movement. Advised, in many instances, by John Brazier and his colleagues in the Trade Union Adviser's Office, independent unions came into being. An old Socialist, Brazier fought against bitter opposition from reactionary employers, as well as the intrigues of the communists. These employers favoured rejection of communist dominated trade unionism, and a return to paternalism. Brazier told them bluntly that the only effective answer to communist dominated trade unionism was democratic trade unionism. He was ordered off estates. When asked to do so he advised unions on the procedure of organizing justifiable strikes so as to prove to workers the value and worth of their democratic unions. Brazier, believing in the workers' cause, interpreted his Directive liberally. By the end of 1947 there were more than a hundred independent trade unions. Tamil workers on estates, until then completely dominated by the General Labour Unions, began to loosen the hold of the communists and form their own estate unions.

From the beginning of 1948 the power and status of the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions, which followed the Pan-Malayan General Labour Union, began to decline.

According to S. Raja Ratnam, President of the Singapore Union of Journalists, and a staff writer of the *Straits Times*, the first serious labour trouble in Singapore in the middle thirties

was when 13,000 workers employed by the Sanitation Department of the Singapore Municipality went on strike. Earlier troubles were in the nature of unorganized protests against certain recognized abuses in the contractor system of hiring labour. The Colony was then recovering from the great slump which had brought wage cuts and the repatriation of surplus labour. With the return of prosperity there was a labour shortage, of which workers took advantage.

In October, 1936, employees of the Singapore Traction Company struck for higher wages and shorter working hours. Despite lack of leadership and some confusion over the issues, a compromise solution was reached within a few days. This settlement was shortlived. The men struck again, this time for the restoration of wage cuts made during the depression. At first the workers refused arbitration unless they were permitted to select the arbitrators themselves. Another feature was the strikers' lack of confidence in their leaders. They insisted that all decisions should be taken at mass meetings of the workers. The strike dragged on for six weeks before both sides agreed to arbitration.

Strikes continued throughout 1938 and 1939, including among others, rickshaw pullers, sawmill and railway workers. These strikes were mostly resistance to wage reductions, or anticipated cuts. The outbreak of war gave a fresh impetus to the strike wave, for it brought prosperity to industry while increasing the cost of living. It also created a labour shortage. There were demands for flat wage increases of 20 to 30 per cent, for full-pay sick leave and for an eight-hour day.

Somewhat tardily, commented Raja Ratnam, wage increases were given, but these did not halt the strike movement. Employees of the Singapore Harbour Board went on strike from January to March, 1940, and there was every indication that labour unrest would grow. In August, 1941, the Straits Settlements Government, fearing that the war effort would be jeopardized brought in legislation to outlaw strikes in essential industries and in the public transport services.

This phase ended with the Japanese occupation. Remarked Raja Ratnam: "There is no known manifestation of industrial unrest under the Japanese"

The second phase of industrial unrest began soon after the arrival of the British. Two months after V-J Day strikes had gathered momentum beginning with the strike of 7,000 Singapore dockworkers in 1945

Belief in democracy had returned to Malaya.

CHAPTER FIVE

In June, 1948 there were 302 unions in Malaya with a membership of about 150,000. Of these, 129 unions with a membership of roughly 82,000 were controlled by the Malayan Communist Party through the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions. Nearly all the officials of this federation were Communist Party men without practical experience of working on mines and estates and in factories. About a hundred more unions were believed to have been partially under communist control. Only 63 unions were in fact thought to be independent.

On May Day, 1948, a Communist Party representative, speaking at a workers' rally in Singapore declared that in 1947, when some 350,000 workers had taken part in strikes, the Party had made mistakes of compromise and unwarranted yielding. These mistakes were to be corrected. In 1948 more workers would take part in the mass struggle to hurl back the attacks of the reactionaries.

Not only was this language calculated to upset a Colonial Administration and obstinate employers. At the same time it alarmed those in Malaya with genuine belief in democratic trade unionism. The issue became clear. Should responsible industrial or occupational trade unions be encouraged and established under a proper system of registration, or should the trade union movement be dominated entirely by the Malayan Communist Party for the political purpose of setting up by force a communist state of Malaya? Or should there be no trade unionism, and a return to paternalism?

The Government, their policy determined by Whitehall fortunately, and not by Malayan reactionary employers, had no alternative. Democratic industrial or occupational trade unions were to be encouraged. Thus the struggle between the communist-controlled unions and the independent unions came to a head in June, 1948, when laws were made requiring federations of unions to be confined to unions catering for workers in similar occupations or industries, and for officials of trade

unions, except the secretary, to have had three years' experience in the industry of their union. As a result, about a hundred trade unions closed down. The Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions was also unable to conform to these requirements. Taking with them all the money they could lay their hands on, prominent communists and senior officials of the Federation disappeared into the jungle: the communist-dominated trade union movement completely collapsed. A few weeks later, three European planters were murdered.

Prevented from creating economic chaos through a controlled trade union movement, the communists turned to terrorism. The war, then described as an anti-colonial war, had begun. It was still going on after Malaya achieved independence, thus revealing the truth that the real purpose of the revolt was to establish communism in Malaya through force.

"If", declared the communists in their propaganda, "we can succeed in thoroughly disrupting the production centres this will be tantamount to a great victory for us. But in giving such a blow to the enemy it will also affect the livelihood of our fellow-workers. But for the sake of the entire national interests we must tolerate a temporary hardship, throw aside sectional interests and comply with the requirements of the national revolutionary war."

These tactics were later changed, and still later, the Communist Party abandoned the policy of wanton terrorism, confining their attacks mainly to European planters and the armed forces of law and order. But the objectives remained, even after British imperialism had given way to an elected Malayan Government.

One of the biggest mistakes made by the Malayan Communist Party, a blunder which opened the eyes of many workers, concerned their opposition to direct employment by the Singapore Harbour Board. For more than a year the Singapore Federation of Trade Unions had demanded the abolition of the contract system, under which three contractors supplied labour as and when required. The system resulted in the usual abuses, and also created an unnecessarily large pool of casual labour, much of which worked only a few days in the month. Mr. Basten, chairman of the Harbour Board, was as anxious as the communists to do away with this system. Early in January, 1948, the Harbour Board decided to make this revolutionary change: to abolish the contracting system and to employ men

direct. The change-over would take place the following month, immediately after Chinese New Year.

Basten's sudden decision confounded the communists. Almost immediately they called for a stoppage of work in protest. Why? Why oppose a reform they had been insisting upon? The sordid answer is that the Singapore Harbour Labour Union partly relied upon the contract system to build up its funds. This union had never been successful in collecting subscriptions: they had no proper register of members. Under the contract system, gang foremen obtained money irregularly. Some of the money they donated to the union: the foremen knew that in spite of all the protests about the contract system, this communist dominated union had a vested interest in the continuance of the system. Within 48 hours the strike collapsed. Today the Harbour Board employs gangs direct. They are guaranteed a 48-hour week. Each man is paid individually, not through gang leaders as before.

To those closely in touch with current events, it was apparent that the Malayan Communist Party, concerned at the workers' drift away to independent trade unions, had decided to use intimidation and violence to support their demands upon employers, and also to frighten the independent democratic trade unions. Rival trade unionists were stabbed, factories were set on fire, hand grenades thrown. In the Federation murderous attacks were made upon individuals employed in the rubber and tin industries. On one day three planters were murdered. The Malayan Communist Party was getting ready to abandon trade unionism and to concentrate the whole of its energies instead entirely upon the establishment by force of a Communist State of Malaya. On June 16th in the Federation, and a week later in Singapore, a State of Emergency was declared. Malaya was at war with a guerilla army of some five or six thousand armed communists.

The Malayan Communist Party was formed in 1928. It was never registered as a society (neither for that matter have the Freemasons) and until after the outbreak of the war against Japan it remained a secret and illegal organization. When the Japanese invaded Malaya the Malayan Communist Party, still illegal but no longer secret, offered its services to the Governments of Malaya, and the offer was accepted. Consistently the objective of the Malayan Communist Party has been to set up a Communist Republic in Malaya. The Party's sole interest in trade unionism was directed towards this end.

This was confirmed by S. S. Awbery and F. W. Dalley, two British trade unionists who came to Malaya six months before the Emergency was declared, at the invitation of the Malayan Governments, "to look thoroughly into the situation of labour and the trade unions". Referring to the evidence of written documents that the post war plans of the Malayan Communist Party during the Japanese occupation were to prepare for a Communist Republic of Malaya, they said in their report, that "The methods to be used naturally enough included as a most important object the infiltration into all labour movements and places of employment." Thus, by the time the British came back to Malaya, in September, 1945, "they had set up cells (dubbed trade unions) for every type of trade and worker, from miners and rubber workers to cabaret girls. None of these were in the smallest degree representative or democratic; and the evidence is conclusive both as regards their activities and the men appointed to hold office, that they were just mouthpieces of the Malayan Communist Party. Their organization was well tried and powerful; they had money and they had contacts with other countries which provided them with efficient propaganda of a popular kind."

They had money because 20 percent of all the money paid by the Malayan trade unionists went to the so-called Trade Union Federations. The result was that that "whilst affiliated unions with their responsibilities to their members have practically no funds and find it difficult to officer and staff their unions, the Federations are in clover. They naturally carry on an extensive propaganda through their agents in every district but apart from this, perform few, if any, of the ordinary functions of a trade union or even of a federation of trade unions and carry no genuine responsibilities. They call strikes but pay no strike pay or similar benefits; frame demands but carry out no negotiations, preferring to remain in the background and to act as the 'power behind the throne' while pushing forward union leaders whom they interfere with and often intimidate. They claim to give unions advice and help, but in practice they leave the officers of affiliated unions to do the negotiations and then prevent settlements being made when, as is usually the case, they disagree with the provisional agreement arrived at. The genuine union authority and the members themselves are disregarded throughout these skirmishings."

Awbery and Dalley rejected the claim made on behalf of the Federation that their errors were largely, if not solely, due to youthful zeal and inexperience. That was true of some of

the individual unions, but as a general explanation it did not hold water. These two British trade unionists came to Malaya well aware "of the tendency which exists — and not only among reactionary employers — to lump together under the term 'Communist' (and in consequence to condemn wholesale) all those whether communist, nationalist, genuine reformers or merely 'bad hats' who actively oppose Colonial rule". Consequently they went to some trouble to check their facts. They were convinced that while the programme of the Federations was legitimate, the Federations themselves were fronts for communist propaganda and activities. "They are not genuine Federations of democratically governed organizations, having a readily recognizable common occupational or industrial interest; rather are their affiliated units in many cases mere branches of a dominating central organization claiming power without responsibility. To put it another way, the Federations were first formed, and the constituent parts, the Unions, followed later."

In these circumstances for the unions to pay over to the Federations 20 percent of their income was an imposition almost amounting to robbery. An average British trade union pays less than one percent to the British T.U.C.

Some idea of the extent with which trade unionism developed in 1947 can be gauged from the fact that in the Federation there were 289 unions with a total membership of nearly 200,000 workers. Largest of the unions was the Negri Sembilan Rubber Estate Workers Union with 12,000 members. Then came the All-Malayan Railway Workers Union with 5,000. There were unions for everyone. Specifically there were unions catering for rickshaw pullers, clerks, rubber workers, tin workers, forest workers, hawkers, custom officials, farmers, gold and silver workers, oil workers, seamen, engineers, boiler makers, timber-mill workers, shop assistants, catering workers, builders, tailors, electricians, motor workers, medical attendants, barbers, motor drivers, mechanics, coffee shop assistants, harbourmen, fishermen, bank employees, racecourse workers, cigar makers, bakers, dressmakers, cooks, potters, telephone operators, printers, dredge workers, house workers, clog makers, lumbermen, cabaret girls, maid servants, blacksmiths, shoe makers, cinema workers.

This was the year when the Labour Department reported that "Unhappily there have been employers who have not moved with the times, and in the trade union movement there has been a certain element of professional agitation, intolerance and a degree of intimidation which is to be deprecated." One powerful union went on strike because the company where most

of their members worked refused to provide them with Union premises. This lack of knowledge of trade union methods, this obsession to look upon the strike weapon as a necessity to be threatened and used on all occasions, was typical of the times. Awbery and Dalley summed up the situation when they gave as their opinion that this tendency was partly because strikes had brought results, and also because of the survival of wartime "jungle justice", in addition to the lack of other effective means of ventilating grievances and getting constitutional remedies applied: in short because of the absence of satisfactory collective bargaining machinery, local, regional and national. In Negri Sembilan, in 1947, at various times, 18 estates reported strikes. About 2,600 Chinese tappers were affected. Some of them lost over a month's pay. In the end all the strikes failed. This, of course, had a harmful effect upon the membership of the trade unions concerned.

Reported John Brazier at the end of 1947: "The earlier misconception that existed among many employers and absent directors that trade unionism was being imposed upon a people 'who did not want it, or were not ready for it', or 'that the Government made an error in introducing trade unionism during a time of acute food shortage', show a lamentable ignorance of the history and purpose of the trade union movement both in Malaya and the world at large. The growing group consciousness among the Malayan workers prior to the war; three and a half years of Japanese occupation with its suppression of liberty of speech and group organization; the postwar political changes both inside and outside Malaya; coupled with the acute and prolonged shortage and high prices of the workers' basic food, are all factors that make for spontaneous and often militant agitation on the part of people who, after liberation, found their standards of living, through neither the fault of Government nor themselves, far below that enjoyed prior to the war, and in some cases, during the period of Japanese occupation.

"The trade union movement in Malaya", declared Brazier, "is a natural product of social, economic and political changes and any idea that British trade union practices can be imported completely into Malaya and be expected to function, is wishful thinking. Trade union principles are basic; policy and application will vary and will depend entirely upon the circumstances existing within a particular country. Malayan trade unionism is here and here to stay. . . . The great need is for tolerance and understanding."

The last six months of 1948 was a very difficult period for the trade union movement. Many of them went out of existence because they hardly existed except through the Federations. Most of those which survived were uncertain of the future. Non-communist trade union officials risked death from underground guerillas. Some employers made no attempt to hide their satisfaction that the trade union movement had been dealt a severe blow. Workers became confused. What was democratic trade unionism? What was communism? Particularly disappointing to genuine trade unionists in the Federation were the attempts made officially, as well as by employers, to re-establish panchayats (committees of village elders) which the Government, in my opinion unwisely, "regarded as a useful basis on which, by way of progressive extension of their functions and responsibilities, to build conciliation machinery at domestic level."

This would have meant a return to the bad old days of which Raymond Firth wrote so critically in his "Report on Social Science Research in Malaya". Referring to the emergence, after the war, of trade unionism in an active "even militant form", Firth said: "One cannot avoid the opinion that the prewar functions of government in this sphere had been too narrowly conceived, as being primarily those of providing for a good flow of labourers to mines and plantations, of ensuring certain minimum material standards to the labourer and enforcing a somewhat reluctant compliance on employers. It was not realized, least of all by the employers, that in industrial arrangements it might be preferable to build up a well-organized and responsible labour representation than to have to treat ultimately with leaders without training in industrial organization and whose main conception of an industrial dispute might be the presentation of demands and the threat of strikes."

In 1957 in Malaya there were still employers willing and ready to take the fullest advantage of a weak infant trade union movement without money, with very little except a readiness to believe in collective bargaining and negotiations. Firth was wrong in thinking it would serve a useful purpose for the Government to help build up "a well organized and responsible labour representation". If trade unionism is to survive in Malaya the workers must build up their own unions. All that is required of the Government is a sympathetic understanding and provision of conditions which will permit healthy trade unionism to develop. Opposition to trade unionism in any form, and there are many ways this can be practised in an independent country as

well as in a colonial territory, can only strengthen the hands of those believing in revolution.

Both the Federation government and the government in Singapore admitted that the over-riding reason for industrial peace in Malaya in 1949 was not increased wages (in fact wages were reduced), but the restrictive Emergency Regulations. One of these Regulations insisted that workers should give 14 days' notice of intention to strike. Few of the workers properly understood these regulations. Some unions thought strikes were forbidden; others hesitated to do anything which they thought might bring them into disfavour with the authorities. Such was the general uncertainty that the trade union movement in the Federation fell during 1949 from 70,000 members to 42,000. Roughly half the total number of trade unionists in the Federation were Government servants belonging to closed unions. Yet there was still enough spirit among the female employees of five Chinese rubber packing firms to strike rather than take reduced wages. Features of the strike, according to an official report, were the unanimity with which work ceased, and the impossibility of finding any workers' representatives with whom to negotiate. This perhaps was not surprising. Illiterate workers, both male and female, still remembered the arrests of union leaders said to be communists. In their minds it was dangerous to be trade union leaders, especially when a union was out on strike. After a loss of nearly 7,000 days of work the employers cancelled the proposed reduction, and the leaderless women went back to work. They had won.

CHAPTER SIX

Wrote John Brazier, the Trade Union Adviser to the Malayan Government: "Whatever one said about the communist controlled Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions, which dominated Malaya's trade unions up to the middle of 1948, one had to admit that at least its Central Executive Committee was apparently representative of the various State subsidiary Federations of State unions. It paid little regard to the workers' economic interests; but it was an organization."

When this organization was broken up, something was required to take its place. In this matter the Labour Group of the Legislative Council (six Councillors were nominated by the High Commissioner to represent Labour interests) took the initiative. They convened, in 1949, a Delegates Conference of all registered unions, and this conference set up a working committee to devise a Malayan Trade Union Council which did not permit racial, occupational, or industrial domination. In March, 1950, the unions met again, and unanimously decided to form the Malayan T.U.C. It was agreed that the T.U.C. should not be a "super-union", or a federation of trade unions, or an organization with power actively to participate in individual trade union disputes, or, in any way, exercise executive authority over affiliated unions.

Without debate the unions laid down the policy that the Central Committee of the T.U.C. should have no more power over the unions than moral authority and leadership; there was to be no interference with the domestic affairs of the unions. At that time it is doubtful if the Government would have permitted the formation of a central trade union organization in Malaya with any other policy; that part of the lesson of the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions had not been forgotten.

P. P. Narayanan was elected the first president of the T.U.C. He was then the secretary of the Plantation Workers' Union. At that time there were 27 rubber workers' unions with a total membership of 173,000 workers.

At the end of 1951 John Brazier felt it necessary to warn the Malayan T.U.C. that they must put their house in order. Things were not going well. There were considerable financial difficulties because the expense of holding meetings practically absorbed the whole of the income received from affiliated trade unions. A full time secretary could not be afforded. All the correspondence was conducted in English, a language not understood by most of the unions. Brazier pointed out the danger of the T.U.C. losing touch with the workers, and becoming a federation of English speaking union officials. P. P. Narayanan, in an appeal to the Divisional Committees for money, admitted that the funds of the T.U.C. were in an "appalling state". In his annual report, the General Secretary, X. E. Nathan, pointed out that the T.U.C.'s sole source of income was 20 cents per member per year from the members of affiliated unions. Half of this was handed over again to the Divisional Committees.

At the second annual delegates conference of the T.U.C., in 1951, Narayanan declared that it was "no exaggeration to say that the influence exerted by the Malayan T.U.C. on the life of the Malayan worker is now as clearly felt as the indelible mark made by the knife of the rubber tapper on the rubber trees." This enthusiasm was hardly justified by events: because of the language difficulty some of the affiliated unions did not know what was going on. Yet with these qualifications Narayanan was entitled to say that "it has been possible for us to achieve many things, not the least of which is unity."

What the T.U.C. could not achieve, unfortunately, was any influence upon the strike of the North Eastern Transport Service Co., an entirely Malay company which enjoyed the monopoly of the bus service in the State of Kelantan. More than 300 Malay workers were employed. Friction between the management and the workers apparently existed over a long period. Considerable dissatisfaction was developing and the union summoned an extraordinary general meeting to consider the whole situation. Unanimously the workers decided to make three demands upon the company, rejection of which would result in strike action. The first rather unusual demand, certainly not common in British trade union negotiations, was the dismissal of the managing director of the company, who once actually fired a shot from his pistol through a garage roof to emphasise a point during a heated argument with union officials. The other two demands appeared to be more reasonable: the reinstatement of six dismissed workers, and an increase in living

allowance. When the company ignored all the demands the men came out on strike. A week later all the strikers were dismissed.

At this stage the union turned to the T.U.C. and Narayanan hurried to Kota Bahru with two colleagues to see what could be done. Immediately the T.U.C. representatives urged the Malays to withdraw their demand that the managing director should be dismissed, and to concentrate instead upon the other two demands. This was agreed and the T.U.C. men, on behalf of the Malays, met the managing director. By now other workers had been engaged, and the managing director felt justified in having nothing further to do with the men he had dismissed. An appeal was made to the Commissioner of Labour to set up a Court of Inquiry to investigate the conditions of employment, but he refused. Subsequently the Malayan T.U.C. made representations to General Templer, the new High Commissioner. Sir Gerald decided not to intervene. Within a few weeks the union collapsed and died, leaving a large number of Malays puzzled about the advantages which had been claimed on behalf of democratic trade unionism.

In informed trade union circles there was a feeling that Sir Gerald Templer never fully understood the importance of the trade union movement in Malaya. For instance, when he assumed office as High Commissioner, Sir Gerald Templer did not include a single word about labour or trade unionism in his initial speech to the Legislative Council. Trade unionists were astonished, and said so. When I heard the speech I was prepared to blame his advisers, for they must at least have had a hand in preparing the draft.

But clearly Templer must be blamed personally for the muddle and confusion which followed his subsequent attempt to put matters right. He decided to send a personal message to the Malayan T.U.C. annual dinner. This is what the message said: "I have asserted, and I assert again, that it is my policy, and the policy of the Government and of Her Majesty's Government, to promote the growth of trade unions; but my primary responsibility is to ensure that this country lives once again under conditions of peace so that orderly economic and social progress may be possible. If trade unions were to allow themselves to fall again under the spell of communist influence I would be forced for the greater good of the whole community to take action. That is plain commonsense: no one will quarrel with it."

Templer explained that he sent this "friendly message" (which was in fact nothing more than a grim warning) because he had been told that disappointment had been expressed in some quarters because his speech contained no reference to labour and trade unionism. Sir Gerald added: "Of course, that omission was not deliberate." I suppose it was presumably a mistake, an error. Close on a million workers, those who sweated and toiled to produce Malaya's wealth, had just been carelessly overlooked.

Not even in his personal message to the T.U.C. did Templer have the grace or the wisdom to utter one solitary word of encouragement to those workers still clutching to their belief that democratic trade unionism was worthwhile, and was, in spite of everything — colonialism, communism, employers' hostility feudalism and paternalism — still possible in British-controlled Malaya. All he could remember to do, after ignoring labour in the first place, was to warn them of drastic action if they allowed themselves to fall again under the spell of communist influence. Another message was sent the following year which in effect told the unions they should be grateful to the employers for recognizing trade unionism.

In these remarks, Templer, the "simple soldier", revealed that he failed to grasp the fundamental issues of the Malayan problem; and as time went on it became apparent that he never would. At the end of his term of office, when the tough, dynamic, ruthless and rude General, having spent untold millions of dollars on barbed wire and the most extensive propaganda machine ever created in this region, took final leave of his thousands of well-armed troops, police and airmen and sailors, and returned to Britain, Chin Peng and the Malayan Communist Party and their ragged guerilla revolutionaries still existed, and so did the Malayan problem which Templer never understood.

For some time the Malayan T.U.C. considered the possibility of publishing a "Malayan Worker". Clearly there was need for such a publication in Tamil, Chinese, Malay and English editions. Nothing happened. Efforts to raise a Campaign Fund of \$50,000 for the T.U.C. also failed. Resolutions were passed calling upon the Government, in conjunction with workers' organizations, to consider the possibilities of nationalizing the tin industry, and to insist upon a 44 hour work-week; but the Government ignored these resolutions and continued to look upon the T.U.C. as being a harmless exhibition of democracy in a colonial territory. They knew the T.U.C. had no teeth. What purpose, there-

fore, could be served by passing a resolution which "strongly condemns the action taken by certain recalcitrant employers to bind their employees against participation in trade union activities as a condition of their employment"?

A year was to pass and the officials of the Malayan T.U.C. were still deceiving themselves. Declared an official report: "The Malayan T.U.C. can now be said to be firmly established and capable of defending and promoting the rights of the working classes of Malaya." This was nonsense. The T.U.C. could still do no more than pass resolutions which everyone ignored. True, the T.U.C. now spoke for 138 unions with a membership of 114,000 members, but still nothing had been done about employing a full time secretary. Again John Brazier referred to this matter, in a message to the Fourth annual conference, in July, 1953, when he spoke of the need for consideration to be given to the question of financial support to allow the T.U.C. "to do its job properly". If, he said, the Malayan T.U.C. was weak and could not do its job because of physical and financial limitations then "your unions are also weak". That was, in fact, an accurate summary of the whole trade union position.

No clearer example of the weakness of the rubber unions and the Malayan T.U.C. could be given than the matter raised by the Whitton Arbitration Board's report, which resulted in a reduction in rubber workers' wages. Mainly due to the untiring efforts of Mr. Charles Gamba, a Lecturer in Economics at the University of Malaya, and a keen and sympathetic student of trade unionism in Malaya, the following important resolution was also included in the report:

"During the proceedings it was realized that many of the problems raised by both parties to the dispute at the hearings could not possibly be fully studied by the Board under its terms of reference. These problems are related to replanting, organization of the industry in general, wages system, and actual production of rubber. This Board strongly suggests that Government should consider the advisability of calling a conference of experts in the rubber industry nominated by the Malayan Planting Industries Employers' Association, the Rubber Workers and by Government itself, to be entrusted with the task of examining these problems and placing before Government a report containing recommendations as to ways and means of meeting them."

This proposal was resented by the employers; the Government were most reluctant to clash with powerful rubber interests; and the Malayan T.U.C. failed completely to take the lead

in making this matter a vitally important trade union issue. Consequently the Rubber Producers' Council, a body representing vested interests in the industry seized the opportunity to persuade the Government to announce "an investigation into the competitive position of the rubber industry" with particular reference to taxation in relation to costs of production, capital, replanting, marketing and processing of smallholders' rubber, and the possibility of unemployment. No reference was made to wages, or cost of production. Neither was the Malayan T.U.C. consulted. The Government were content to deal solely with the employers. In their official eyes the employers were the rubber industry. In any case, the Government were fully aware of the weakness of the T.U.C. Here, again, Templer had an opportunity to give encouragement to organized labour: once more he failed to do anything.

Of the 138 unions affiliated to the Malayan T.U.C. in 1952, no more than 65 had paid their affiliation fees. This might reasonably be judged as the measure of active interest the unions took in the T.U.C.; an interest, it would be fair to point out, which was largely limited by the T.U.C. use of English, a language unknown to many trade union officials.

In 1952 the Government refused to investigate the possibility of nationalizing the rubber industry, a proposal made by the T.U.C., on the grounds that nationalization would not by itself ensure more stable prices for rubber, nor offer assurance of higher prices for Malayan rubber. Surprisingly, the T.U.C. were prepared to accept this, and nothing was done to put forward sound arguments for nationalization or public control which, if done properly, could have meant less money for cost of production (under which come directors' fees and agency charges etc), and more money for the people actually producing the rubber — whatever the price of rubber might have been in the world market. Had the T.U.C. been well organized, with a staff capable of making research, this might have been done.

In spite of the T.U.C.'s precarious financial position and absence of a permanent secretariat, some of the leaders insisted, in 1953, in forcing through a resolution at the annual delegates' conference to seek the establishment of trade union political funds (on the basis of a contracting-in or contracting-out principle), "in order to consolidate the workers' front". Fortunately, this was one of those resolutions which, when passed, went no further. To me, and to many others in opposition to the proposal, the move to get political funds when the T.U.C. itself was in such an uncertain stage of development, was almost

tantamount to an admission by the leaders that democratic trade unionism in Malaya was incapable of serving adequately the cause of the workers. Few of them had carefully thought out trade union policy from a political point of view, and there was now a tendency to believe that political parties might be able to achieve concessions from employers which trade unions had failed to get. There is still a great deal of confusion in the minds of trade unionists on this matter, which I have dealt with rather fully in a later chapter. The subject is of considerable importance both to Malayan unionists, and to Malayan politicians.

Up until the end of 1952, Chinese distrust in trade unions, created by the communist betrayal of 1948, was much in evidence. In 1946, in the Federation, 54 per cent of all the unions were Chinese. About 25 percent were Indians, one percent were Malays, and about 20 percent were mixed unions. By the end of the following year, in 1947, there were nearly three hundred unions with a total membership of about 200,000. Soon afterwards, in the middle of 1948, came the Emergency, when the communist unions collapsed. There were less than 42,000 trade unionists in 1949. Gradually, to some extent, confidence was restored. At the end of 1952 the figure had risen to 130,000, and altogether the unions could produce an annual income of considerably more than a million dollars. Significantly the Chinese now could account for no more than 15 percent of the strength, which was slightly better than the Malays' 13 percent. Nearly 70 percent of Malaya's trade unionists at the end of 1952 were Indians. Chinese workers, outnumbering Indians by more than three to one, were still holding back.

By the end of 1956, trade union membership in the Federation was again more than 200,000 (total income more than two and a quarter million dollars), a figure actually in excess of the highest total ever claimed by the communist-dominated Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions, yet 62 per cent of all unionists were Indians. Malaya's total labour force — rubber workers, miners, factory workers, clerks, domestic servants, teachers, restaurant workers, Government employees and so on — totalled round about a million. The Chinese and the Malays easily outnumbered the Indians, yet the Indians provided much more than half the strength of Malayan trade unionism.

But slowly the Malays are becoming interested, and the Chinese are regaining their confidence. Thus the percentage

figures in 1957 were: Indians 62 per cent, Malays 21 per cent and Chinese 16 per cent.

In Singapore, several attempts were made in 1949 and in 1950 to form a T.U.C. It did not come about until late in 1951 when 28 unions, both clerical and industrial agreed to form the Singapore Trades Union Congress. The unions claimed an aggregate membership of slightly more than 24,000 men and women. For comparison purposes it might be pointed out that there were then approximately 126,000 manual workers, apart from thousands of clerical workers in Singapore, out of a population of over a million persons. Many large industrial unions, in 1954, decided to keep outside the T.U.C. Once again ambitious personalities, projecting personal issues, prevented the special close co-operation among unions which is essential if organized labour is to speak with an authoritative voice.

At the seventh annual delegates' conference of the Malayan Trade Union Congress in 1957 it was revealed that, although there are more unions *not* affiliated to the Congress than are in fact affiliated, the Congress, through the 104 unions which are affiliated, can claim to represent 200,000 unionists. The 137 unions *not* belonging to the Congress have a total membership of 37,000 workers.

In August, 1956, Congress launched its official organ *Suara Buruh* (Voice of the Workers), a cyclostyled publication in English which has appeared regularly and monthly ever since. It is issued free of charge. Plans are still under consideration to produce editions in Malay, Chinese and Tamil.

At the seventh annual conference, the Malayan T.U.C. passed fourteen resolutions. The first deplored the Government's ban on the T.U.C.'s intention to accept an invitation from the China Trade Union Movement to attend the May Day Celebrations in Peking, and called for the immediate removal of restrictions on a genuine trade union group going to China for the purposes of trade union study. The Government's action was in keeping with its policy not to recognize the Government of the People's Republic of China, although it is hard to understand why the Government will permit businessmen to go to China but not workers' representatives. Equally difficult is it to understand why Malayan trade union officials are always so anxious to go abroad when so much work needs doing at home.

In Malaya, but not in Singapore, workers are prohibited from publicly and collectively celebrating May Day as Labour Day, and the Malayan T.U.C. at its 1957 conference urged the Government to make May Day a public holiday. At the same

time the T.U.C. called upon the Government to attempt to end the Emergency by immediately opening negotiations "with the policy of give and take" with the Communist Party. Normally the Government takes very little notice of resolutions passed by the T.U.C. or any other body of organized labour; but in this instance the Alliance Government did go out of its way publicly to reject any suggestion of negotiating with the communists until they agreed to lay down their arms and surrender. The Prime Minister took the opportunity of repeating his offer to send any communist who surrendered to China, passage paid.

The final resolution moved at the seventh annual conference read as follows: "That this Malayan T.U.C. Seventh annual delegates' conference, having closely followed the practices and policies advocated and implemented by the Alliance Government, find them radically in contrast to the pledges it had made in its election manifesto. That the Alliance Government has not only been unable to pursue a policy beneficial to the workers of this country, but in some cases it has deliberately adopted policies distinctly detrimental to the interests of workers."

The previous year the conference had passed the following resolution: "That this Malayan T.U.C. Sixth annual delegates' conference deplors the Federation Government's weak-kneed labour and trade union policy and its pronounced partiality to employers and calls upon the Government to assume a more realistic approach to workers' problems."

To these criticisms the Government replied that it reaffirmed that the Government's policy was to encourage the development of a trade union movement on sound lines.

At the first annual congress of the Singapore T.U.C. in 1952, 62 delegates represented 30 affiliated unions claiming a total membership of about 23,000. The tendency to form splinter unions had begun. At the congress there was discussion, as there had been the previous year, about the Government's ban on Government employees' trade unions from joining the T.U.C., but no progress was reported. Remembering the communists' dominance of the Federation of unions up until 1948, the Government was still frightened about letting government servants take part fully in the Singapore trade union movement, as distinct from their own union activity. The composition of the Singapore Trades Union Congress in 1954 remained largely as originally constituted: most of the unions were English speaking unions. There was still no permanent secretariat. Powerful

unions still refused to affiliate on the grounds that the T.U.C. was almost inactive, instead of joining and making it active.

In 1957, the Labour Front Government removed the ban on Government unions, and encouraged them to join the T.U.C. Chief Minister Lim Yew Hock had been the first president of the T.U.C. and had always maintained a keen personal interest. Not even that fact could do much to strengthen the position of the T.U.C., which in January, 1957, claimed a membership of 59 affiliated unions, representing 65,000 workers, out of a total of 202 Unions with a total membership of 156,500 workers. Of these 59 unions only nine had paid their subscriptions. At the end of 1957, the T.U.C. expelled 15 unions for non-payment of subscriptions. Among the defaulters was the Singapore General Employees' Union, one of the successors to the defunct Factory and Shop Workers' Union.

By 1957 it was estimated that some 450,000 persons were gainfully employed in Singapore, out of a total population of a million and a quarter, half of which is under the age of 21. At the present rate of population increase, about another 16,000 workers are available in Singapore every year. All these figures mean that one worker out of three in Singapore is a trade unionist, and this is by no means an unhealthy state of affairs in a place trying to follow the principles of Western-type democracy. What is lacking is strong democratic organization within the trade union movement itself. The snag always seems to have been that some of the best organizers of trade unionism in Singapore have been communists; the difficulty has been to find talented officials who are not communists but who possess the communists' singleness of purpose and ability to work hard and to concentrate upon details as well as wide horizons.

Inefficiency within the trade unions, and a general lack of enthusiastic interest in the T.U.C., continued in 1957 to hamper the development of organized labour in Singapore to such an extent that the strongest union in Singapore, the 17,000-strong Army Civil Services Union, went so far as to accuse the T.U.C. of having done the "greatest disservice to the country through its gross failure to discharge its obligations".

A revealing light was thrown in September, 1957, on the situation in some Singapore trade unions during a Court of Inquiry held by a Judge and two others into a trade dispute at the Singapore Harbour Board. The unions involved were the Singapore Harbour Board Staff Association, the Singapore Harbour Board Labour Union, the Singapore Wharf and Ship Labour Union, the Singapore Harbour Board Stevedore and

Wharf Workers' Union, the Confederation of the Singapore Chinese Engineering Tradesmen, the Singapore Harbour Board Engineering Workmen's Union, the Malay Seamen's Union of Singapore and the Harbour Board Employees' Union of Singapore.

This is what the Court had to say about the efficiency of the unions: "We were often shocked at the manner in which the unions operated the administration of their units. We were shown a great deal of disorder and, we felt, even of irresponsible conduct. We were not impressed by the type of oral evidence presented by the General Secretary of the Singapore Harbour Board Staff Association (Jamit Singh). Responsible trade union leaders must be willing and capable to appear before any court to give substantial and forthright evidence without quibble or evasion, on those of their functions, and the activities of their Union that, by law, can be made public. Trade union leaders must also remember that it is one of their more important duties to keep books and accounts in order. We were seriously concerned with the way some of the books and accounts were kept. We must make it clear that in no case were there indications of criminal acts nor do we imply such acts when we talk of negligence. But there was disorder and disregard for recognized administrative practices. Funds were shifted about, membership cards were improperly filled in, registration books were partly completed and cross checks showed other administrative weaknesses common to most unions mentioned before this Court. It is our hope that the Singapore Registrar of Trade Unions, whose help was most welcome to us, will take such steps to encourage the unions to remedy the faults mentioned in the previous paragraphs. A continuation of such an unhappy situation is harmful to the progress of good and sound trade unionism."

This exposure by a Court headed by a Judge brought to public notice a most unsatisfactory state of affairs, which was in any case serious, but which, in those instances where full-time paid secretaries were involved, was both serious and regrettable. The keeping of proper accounts and registers is a dull and routine business which would seldom bring the General Secretary of a Union into the limelight and almost never cause him to be interviewed or to have his picture in the newspapers; nevertheless these and other routine matters are of basic importance. Unfortunately, the political atmosphere in the past has tended to make it possible for politically ambitious trade union officials to look upon themselves more as leaders

of workers than as paid servants of unions, but the fault for slovenliness within a trade union rests ultimately not upon the general secretary but upon the Committee whose immediate instructions all officials, paid or otherwise, must carry out.

In Singapore, in 1955, there was a slight but steady decline in the cost of living, but average earnings for manual workers in industry increased by 11 per cent, resulting in an even greater increase in real income. Trade union membership went up by 70 per cent. It cannot be denied that the communist-dominated Factory and Shop Workers' Union was largely responsible for the increase of 11 per cent in workers' average earnings, and also responsible to some extent for the overall increase in the number of unionists.

In the last month of the year, the new Labour Ordinance came into force which provided that no workman in Singapore could be compelled to work more than six days a week, more than six consecutive hours without a break, more than eight hours a day of actual labour, or more than 44 hours in a week. Most workers in the Colony now work a six-day week, and an eight-hour day, and receive overtime at the rate of a time and a half, double time on holidays. Every workman is also entitled to a paid holiday on eleven scheduled public holidays a year. In addition, every worker is entitled to seven days' paid leave for every year of service with the same employer; he is also entitled to twenty-eight days' sick leave a year.

In May, 1955, four people were killed in riots following students' intervention in the Hock Lee Bus Company workers' strike. Reported the Labour Department: "The general state of excitability of employees, in many instances stimulated by over-fervent oratory, tended to make any approach to a settlement through negotiations or conciliation more difficult. In many instances, strikes were called before negotiations had commenced, and in some even when there were signs of a settlement in view . . . in a few strikes workers suffered loss of employment." Yet it must not be forgotten that workers' wages were forced up, mainly through aggressive union action, on an average in excess of 11 per cent. Of the 275 strikes in 1955, only 97 were over claims for more wages and better conditions of work: most of the rest were sympathy strikes over the bus strike and arrest of trade union officials.

In its 1955 Report the Labour Department makes the point that it was not only through strike action that improved conditions of work resulted: a very large number of agreements, the

Report states, were negotiated freely between employers and workers. This, of course, is true, but it would be less than realistic to pretend that the militant policy of the Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union did not influence this willingness of employers to listen to reasonable demands for more money.

For the first time in Singapore clerical workers went on strike, in 1955, when the Singapore Harbour Board Staff Association called a strike which lasted for over two months. Not only was the strike successful (1,300 monthly paid employees were involved), new conditions of work and a new wage structure being agreed upon; but the daily paid workers belonging to other unions also demanded and obtained increased wages and improved conditions of work without having to strike.

In the Federation, in 1956, where there were more strikes than there had been for ten years, and where union membership set up a new record, continued moderate prosperity of the major industries, with comparatively full employment, was recorded. This is a background which inevitably leads to increased wages. Government labour experts added to this the general spirit of change and political activity which had arisen with the imminence of independence, and also the political and labour activity in Singapore. Of the 213 strikes in the Federation in 1956, only 61 were primarily strikes for wage increases: 67 disputes were over the dismissal of workers. Altogether 42 strikes were entirely successful and 56 entirely unsuccessful.

S. Raja Ratnam, writing as a staff writer in the *Straits Times* in 1955 at the time of labour unrest, reminded his readers that increases in both profits and wages was largely a matter of redivision of a given quantity of product. The task before the Government, employers and workers (trade unionists) was to see that this redivision took place in an orderly and intelligent fashion and without bringing the whole economy to a standstill. If too much was extracted from an industry by way of profits it would cease to function, just as wage demands more than the industry could bear would bring it to a halt. This was true whether the method of distribution of the product was socialist, capitalist or communist. In a totalitarian regime it was easy to put the interests of the enterprise above other claims. Who is to get what is dictated and ruthlessly enforced by the ruling élite. This is why totalitarian countries have such amazing economic advantages.

Under a democracy, Raja Ratnam explained, where there was a freer scramble for the fruits of an enterprise, it was all

the more necessary there should be a willing and conscious appreciation of the requirements of the enterprise. If the struggle for wages and profits was subordinated to the requirements of the industry or enterprise then there should be no great cause for alarm. The trade unionist could indulge in his legitimate function of getting for the workers a greater share of the reward both by redivision of the proceeds where it is unfairly divided, and by increased output. But if the worker or the employer does not accept any responsibility towards the enterprise as a whole, then industrial conflict can become the prelude to economic chaos.

Unfortunately there have been occasional instances when demands by workers have been so unreasonable as to make it impossible for employers to continue in business. Closure of the enterprise, in these circumstances, has meant the employees being thrown out of work.

In Raub, in 1957, labourers, not completely understanding their obligations as workers, came out on strike and demanded wages due from their employer. The employer counter-claimed for wages in lieu of notice due from the labourers. The Labour Court made an order in favour of the employer on the grounds that the contract of service required either party to give one month's notice of termination of contract (or to pay a sum equal to one month's wages in lieu of notice) to the other party, that the strike had been called in breach of such contract, and that the amount due by the individual labourers as indemnity to the employer in giving such notice was greater than the amount due to the workers as wages. The workers had to pay the difference.

One of the great difficulties about the creation of a strong Singapore T.U.C. is the language question. Less than ten per cent of the people of Singapore speak English. An effective central organization must be able to conduct its business in English, Malay, Tamil, Mandarin, and probably another Chinese dialect as well. This, of course, is well known by many thoughtful unionists in Singapore, but it was not until the beginning of 1958 that positive steps were taken by newly elected officials, to move in a practical manner towards the establishment of a multilingual organization.

CHAPTER SEVEN

An example of the misconceptions of Malayan trade unionism held by certain influential people before Malaya became independent, are the comments made by Mr. Justice Taylor, Arbitrator appointed to settle a wage dispute in the rubber industry in 1954.

Although the employers' association were content to consider a joint committee of rubber workers' unions as representative of the workers in the industry, Mr. Justice Taylor found it necessary to challenge the committee's right to do so, although he made no remarks about a similar position which existed among the employers. This brought forth criticism from Professor Silcock, of the University of Malaya.

Declared the Professor in a letter to a Singapore newspaper: "Approximately one worker in seven in the industry is a paying member of a trade union. Mr. Justice Taylor appears to consider this a small number. Those who have had actual experience of organizing voluntary bodies in Malaya, even in safe urban areas, and even among educated folk, will take leave to disagree with him. A little imagination is, of course, necessary to appreciate the difficulties of a trade union organizer who, on the one hand, is compelled to operate on the private property of an employer (often also incidentally a special constable) and, on the other, is liable at any moment to be caught and tortured by communists who regard him as one of their chief enemies. But those who exercise this imagination will realize that this membership is no small achievement."

Mr. Justice Taylor severely criticized the unions because they said that "if several thousands of workers were forced out of employment in order to maintain wages which only the richer estates could afford, we could not care less". He suggested that this was an affront to democracy. Professor Silcock dismissed this as a most shocking suggestion. He stoutly denied that it was contrary to normal democratic trade union practice to be willing to accept the risk of some unemployment as the price of maintaining a wage. He said why. The merit of his

explanation demands complete quotation. Here it is for the future guidance of both unionists and arbitrators:

"Briefly the theoretical basis of collective bargaining is as follows. An employer or group of employers is commonly in the position of a sole buyer of labour in a district. Hence the quantity of labour that he can hire in the absence of collective bargaining depends on the wage he pays. It will therefore often be in his interest not to employ certain workers, even when the net product they would add to his business is worth more than their wages, because taking them on at the higher rate would raise the wages he had to pay to all his other workers.

"Collective bargaining confronts the employer with a fixed wage, at least for the contract. This, though sometimes higher than the wage in an unorganized market, is usually lower than that wage plus the allowance that an employer in such a market has to make for the effect of additional employment on the price of labour. Employment may, therefore, actually be increased by collective bargaining though, of course, profits are reduced. But at the time of making the contract neither unions nor employers know the level of employment that will correspond to any given wage.

"Even if the unions wish to maintain full employment (and they often try for a higher wage than the full employment wage) they have no means of knowing what wage it will secure; and if they are genuinely representing their members' interests they must anticipate some bluff on the other side.

"This is no mere theoretical picture. The most casual acquaintance with the descriptive literature would produce examples, particularly in depressions, in which wage rates were held deliberately in spite of rising unemployment. Trade union leaders are not entirely frank about this, but no competent negotiator is unaware of the market pattern."

Deliberately or otherwise the Federation Government continued to make possible what Professor Tom Silcock once caustically called "the thick fog if not a smokescreen", in which seekers after truth about costs, and basic wages and profits, were forced to stumble in their search for information. No one knew with any reasonable degree of accuracy what the cost of living in Malaya was; no one, therefore, could estimate reliably what should be a basic living wage. What could the country afford to pay its workers? How much profit was being made through their labour? What did it cost a worker and his family to live in reasonable comfort? There were few proper answers, many wild guesses. Obviously this almost total absence of reliable statistics

favoured the employers in wage negotiations, and confuses arbitrators.

Sir Henry Gurney, High Commissioner in 1950, fully appreciated all this and the Legislative Council approved a motion that "Government should, as early as possible, undertake an accurate and scientific survey to produce and thereafter maintain proper cost of living indices in the Federation." A committee was set up, but the newly formed Malayan T.U.C. did not accept an invitation to be represented. This was probably a wise decision in view of the fact that everyone else on the committee were government servants. At the same time the T.U.C. stressed that "early introduction of reliable nationally accepted cost of living indices and their periodical maintenance are matters of considerable importance to workers' organizations."

It is a fact that a cost of living index for Indian labourers was kept before 1939, and another cost of living index was started for Chinese labourers in Singapore in that year. No survey of family budgets was instituted at that time, but the types of articles consumed by Indians and Chinese were well known, and enquiries were made by the Labour Departments in order to weigh the amounts consumed during the month.

In 1947, these weighted lists of articles consumed were reviewed, with the advice of the Institute for Medical Research, and new lists were prepared. This information provided the Statistics Department with the material upon which to base the cost of living index, which was still in existence some ten years later.

This cost of living index, the authorities are prepared to admit, does not show what it costs a labourer to live. It has no connection with a minimum wage, nor does it show what a labourer should consume to maintain some specific standard of living. All that it does show is whether the cost to a labourer of purchasing certain standard articles and certain fixed amounts of these articles has gone up or down.

In 1949 a similar weighted list of articles was prepared for the Malay labourer and an index, based on the 1949 cost at 100, was started for Malays. Thus, in 1957, there were six cost of living indices, which can be considered as two sets. The first set consists of one index for Europeans and two for Asians (clerical grade), while the second set covers labourers only and provides separate indices for Malays, Chinese and Indians. None of them shows how much it costs anyone to live in Malaya.

The committee hoped that the actual survey would be under way in the middle of 1952, but before more progress could

be made by the committee Gurney was murdered by communists. In July of 1952, the new High Commissioner, Sir Gerald Templer published a White Paper which, in effect, for a large number of doubtful reasons, postponed forever the collection and evaluation of essential statistics. Not only could the six million people of Malaya not produce the 46 persons necessary to undertake the survey; there were lots and lots of other reasons which made it impossible for the Government, "anxious though they were", to undertake this important work. All the objections raised by the Government were met by the Committee with reasonable proposals to overcome them. These recommendations were considered by the High Commissioner and his Executive Council. While "agreeing with the importance of proceeding with the cost of living survey as soon as possible" the Government decided that it was necessary to postpone the scheme for the time being, and without accepting a commitment to undertake the survey in 1953. As an excuse the High Commissioner offered "the acute staffing difficulties with which almost all departments of Government are faced at the present time and the necessity to prune all extra forms of Government activities which might have no direct bearing on the prosecution of the Emergency." While fully appreciating the great importance of the survey temporary obstacles were "quite unsurmountable".

This astounding document aroused very little criticism, and nothing more was heard about the survey until 1956, when the new High Commissioner, Sir Donald MacGillivray, set up an Advisory Committee consisting of workers, employers and Government, to examine the question again. This Committee recommended that a Household Budget Survey should be planned for 1957, after which new retail price indices should be compiled. In due course, it is hoped, the worker will be able to produce figures in the indices to prove just how much it costs him to keep alive in Malaya.

CHAPTER EIGHT

No trade unions catered for Indians prior in 1939. In 1954, so rapidly had they understood the value of collective bargaining, so thoroughly had the Chinese worker been shaken by the sudden collapse of the communist trade unions in 1948, Indians dominated the trade union movement throughout the whole of the Federation. This was still the position in 1957, although there were just over twice as many Chinese and Malay workers employed on the estates, in the mines, in the shops and factories, in the transport industry and in Government service.

Before 1939 Indian associations did exist for members of a particular caste or calling or for residents from a particular Indian State but the development was not along trade union lines. Employers preferred to deal with the "panchayats", the committees of village elders. In some respects this arrangement helped to carry paternalism down to practical levels. Village committees, planning new village amenities to be supplied by the employers — a new football field perhaps — could be relied upon to frown on young men wishing to stir up trouble by forming unions and the like. Thus the objects of the caste association, of the association confined to certain residents of a particular Indian State, were mainly social, educational or cultural, or for the "general improvement of the members". The Indian Congress encouraged overseas Indians to improve their knowledge and widen their interests and activities, and to improve their social standing among the people in the country where they lived. Congress did not advise them on working conditions. For years the main Indian body in Malaya was called the Central Indian Association. Many of the members were workers, but the Association was not concerned very much with improving the lot of the working men. Probably the Batu Arang Labour Association, formed to negotiate with the Malayan Collieries, had more Indian trade unionists than any other mixed association; but the number was small. Nowhere in the country was there any purely Indian association, which could have be-

come a trade union. Indian trade unions did not come into being until after Britain came back to Malaya.

But if the Indian was not developing as a trade unionist before the Japanese invasion of Malaya, he was becoming politically conscious. As the Indian Congress gathered strength many Indians in Malaya, mostly educated men, began to identify themselves with the new nationalism in India. In 1940 and 1941 there were attempts by the Central Indian Association to organize Indian workers for nationalist, not economic purposes. Strikes followed on rubber estates, especially in Selangor. Usually these were not so much in the interest of improving the economic status of the worker as in indicating a new regard for his Indian nationalism. This, it must be remembered, was before the independence of India and the hopes which are now fulfilled for welding all the peoples of Malaya, including Indian Malaysians, into a Malayan nation.

By 1940, the communist dominated General Labour Union was already arranging strikes to impede the war effort. Russia had not then been attacked: the war was not then, in their eyes, a war against Hitlerite fascism. This was to come later. Meanwhile the General Labour Union, operating in Singapore, put out a great deal of anti-British propoganda, and strikers were instructed to occupy factories and places of employment — not to secure better working conditions, but to embarrass the British war effort against Hitlerite fascism. Government reaction was swift and several agitators were arrested and banished to China and India. The Singapore Rubber Workers Association and the Pineapple Cutters Mutual Help Association were dissolved for unlawful activities.

In the Federation about 2,500 tappers in the Bahau Rompin area, in 1940, came out on strike, demanding a daily rate of \$1 10 for a task of 350—400 trees. The manager of the estate refused to pay this and paid off the men. Communists exploited the situation and infiltrated the committee which was set up when the dismissed men set up camp at Bahau Town. Where else were the men and their families to go? On practically all the estates the workers live in barrack-type accommodation: when they are paid off they lose their accommodation and must leave the estate. What better trump card could any employer wish to have with which to intimidate "unreasonable" workers? At Bahau Town the police moved in, several days later, to arrest the leaders. Sympathetic crowds drove them back. Eventually the police opened fire. Three workers died. Most

of the men returned to work. Sympathetic strikes soon collapsed. Was this another resounding blow for democracy?

Most likely the upsurge of Indian nationalism, in addition to communist promises, on the one hand, and a hard sense of determination because Britain was at war on the other, made this ugly affair possible. Later, when Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the war in the eyes of the Malayan Communist Party, indeed of communist parties the world over, became a war for freedom, and Malayan communists then showed every readiness to co-operate fully with British authorities. Anti-British slogans disappeared; no longer did the communists consider strikes necessary. What mattered more than the interest of the workers, for long the excuse for communist exploitation of labour disputes, was an increase in the war effort against the Nazi, now at war with the beloved Soviet Union. What strange bedfellows there were, everywhere, in those days: Winston Churchill and Stalin, the Special Branch and the Malayan Communist Party.

But there were strikes in Malaya before the communists and the Indian nationalists began their agitations after the outbreak of war in Europe. In 1937 Chinese tappers on estates in Selangor stopped work because wages had not gone up with the improved price of rubber. The movement began in the Ulu Langat district. An official Government report says: "With little or no warning the Chinese tappers struck. This want of warning was a new phenomenon because Chinese workers had, up till then, always shown themselves ready to discuss the situation and work out a settlement with a good deal of give and take. Too much, however, can be made of this part of the strike, and also of the extent to which subversive elements entered into it. Wages were far too low. There was talk of a rubber boom. During the previous year there had been strikes all over the world... strikers were well organized. Bicycles and buses were used to convey instructions and information over a wide area. The organizers maintained a high standard of discipline and managed to restrain their unruly elements almost completely. The only actions which brought them to the notice of the general public were attempts to march into Kuala Lumpur to protest against what they thought were illegalities." Police prevented these marches. In the end there were negotiations and a settlement favourable to the workers. Negotiations were conducted in an atmosphere described at the time

as "excellent". This was probably Malaya's first big well-organized successful strike.

An amusing sidelight on the chaotic labour situation in 1948 is given in an official Government report. A group of prospective rubber workers came to the Singapore Commissioner of Labour, and complained noisily about the non-payment of wages from a prospective contractor for work they had never done. "This extraordinary situation arose when a contractor, in anticipation of an increase of labour requirements in rubber factories, attempted to corner the labour market and make his fortune. He engaged about one thousand workers and issued them with work cards which were entered up daily, although no work was provided. He defaulted when payment became due and some seven hundred labourers threatened him in his office, whence he had to be rescued by the police.

"He was brought to the Labour Department, followed by his cheated workmen-designate. A case was instituted in which the contractor admitted liability but said he had no assets. The following day, money still not being forthcoming, the crowd, which had hitherto been orderly, became restive. The contractor was smuggled to safety by the police, while the Commissioner, supported by some of his staff, fought a gallant rearguard action by addressing the mob from the office steps in an attempt to dissuade them from their demand for the body of the contractor or their money from the Commissioner. The action completed, the Commissioner and his staff found their retreat cut off by an angry mob which refused to permit withdrawal and penned the party in a verandah corner, from which undignified position they were rescued after some time by the arrival of a Police Riot Squad.

Three days later a smaller crowd of the same workers again besieged the Commissioner in his office, but on this occasion the arrival of one police officer sufficed to disperse them. Outside the building, however, an organized demonstration of a more militant nature took place as singing demonstrators marched seven times round the building (which did not fall down) pasting slogans on the walls, while another squad stood three deep in martial array on the office steps. In the meantime, the contractor had absconded, so the labourers received no wages for the work they had not done."

Union money is sometimes stolen by officials. Often the money is repaid in instalments. In one case in Singapore, in

1950, an official guilty of misappropriating funds from his union committed suicide. Realistically, the committee decided there was no way of recovering the money. Consequently the Union decided to regard it as a donation from the Union to the deceased.

CHAPTER NINE

Should the trade unions of Malaya, now an independent nation, and Singapore, due to become a State with complete internal self-government country in 1959 actively concern themselves in politics? This question has special significance in any Asian country which has freed, or which is in the process of freeing, itself from colonial exploitation.

The simple answer is that in a democracy which believes in the parliamentary system of government political parties form the Government, and trade unions look after the interests of the workers no matter which political party is in office.

After a hundred and fifty years' experience in a different set of circumstances the British trade union movement, which is the forerunner of all trade union movements, solved this problem by deciding definitely that trade unionism is not a political movement. Its concern is not with politics, but with industry, with the economic and social interests of trade unions. Early in their history the British trade unions learned how to distinguish between political and industrial questions. This distinction is recognized in the separate existence of the political party which is often confused with the Trade Union Congress. The British Labour Party and the British Trades Union Congress are separate bodies, each with its own clearly defined sphere of work. Since, in these days, practically every industrial question becomes sooner or later a matter for Parliamentary consideration, and maybe for legislation, the Trades Union Congress is necessarily concerned with politics; but it deals with them from its own independent standpoint and maintains an independent attitude to whatever Government is in office, whether Labour or Conservative. It has been the long standing practice of the British T.U.C. to co-operate with whatever Government is in power, and by means of joint consultation with Ministers — as with employers — to find practical solutions to the economic and social problems which have to be overcome.

Sir Vincent Tewson, General Secretary of the British T.U.C., when discussing the question of politics and trade unionism, expressed the opinion, held by many, that the greater the degree of illiteracy of the people, the greater their lack of political knowledge and their understanding of democratic trade unionism, the greater the responsibility which rests on leadership not to control men's minds and actions, but to educate people to exercise judgement on what is good for themselves and society.

Said the British T.U.C. leader: "The demagogue may be expert in making people think what he wants them to think—maybe for his own personal advantage."

The natural temptation for demagogues to make use of a mass of organized workers has existed in Singapore for more than ten years, but no one ever made such a blatant move to capture political power through a trade union as that made in November, 1957, by the former Chief Minister, David Marshall. Mr. Marshall retired from politics early that year after challenging Lee Kuan Yew of the People's Action Party to contest a by-election, a threat and a promise he failed to keep after resigning his seat in the Assembly. Mr. Marshall had already resigned from the Labour Front Party, after being defeated in an election for the chairmanship.

In what was a completely shameless attempt to return to the political arena, Marshall used his colourful personality and his gift of oratory to woo officials of the largest Union in Singapore to sponsor with him the creation of another political party—the Workers' Party—of which Mr. Marshall was to be chairman. In order that "party policy should always reflect the opinion of the working masses, the composition of the Executive Committee shall at all times have a two-thirds majority of trade unionists". Another resolution accused the T.U.C. of being a "government tool" and of not being representative of the workers' movement. Whatever might be the truth about the T.U.C.'s relationship at that time, with the Government, there was certainly no other workers' organization in Singapore to which trade unions were affiliated; and, if it was weak, then surely it should have been the task of the largest Union in the State (the Army Civil Services Union) to work within the T.U.C. to strengthen it, rather than endeavour to exploit the situation in the interest of a political party?

Of Mr. Marshall's political gymnastics I have nothing to say here, but as a trade unionist I regret that he found it necessary to involve a union in his schemes to come back again into the political arena. With his supreme confidence and his

enormous capability for self-deception, Marshall no doubt genuinely believed that both the political situation and the trade union movement would benefit from his intervention.

Probably he never considered the possibility that he might have helped the working masses much more effectively had he used his talents to persuade the workers to merge the smaller unions, to organize national unions on an occupational and trade basis, and thus to strengthen the T.U.C., perhaps under different leadership, so that when it spoke to the Government or to any political party this was a powerful voice of organized labour which would be heard with respect.

Instead of helping trade unionism, Marshall made use of it. "Real leadership," as Sir Vincent Tewson put it, "would try to teach people how to think, not merely to react."

Tewson's arguments are that trade unions exist to handle those problems which worry a person in his workaday life. Trade union and political aspirations may focus on the same ultimate objective, but that does not make a trade union a political instrument. Whatever the similarity of interest, the functions must be separate because they work in different fields. The work of the trade union may be humdrum, but its policy must be based on the day-to-day service to its members. Its function must necessarily be one which includes, not incidentally, but basically, the regulation of relations between employers and members, and that involves more than just wages and hours of work. This, Tewson says plainly, is not a political task, nor can it be performed by political parties which are geared not to the detailed problems of industry but to legislative assemblies and constituencies.

If a trade union becomes actively involved in politics, then in a sense it also becomes a political party. Why, then, in these circumstances have a separate trade union? In Western-type democracy there is provision for both political parties and trade unions, and while the trade unions maintain a watchful eye on political developments, and on all political parties, the line of demarcation between unions and political parties is clear. The consequence of the formation of Marshall's Workers' Party had it been successful would have been to make that line in Singapore even less clear than it was before.

In spite of Malaya's unhappy experience soon after the war when the Communist Party first helped to build up, and then largely dominated the trade union movement solely for their own political purposes (which, even in short term, occasionally were detrimental to the immediate practical interests of the

worker), Mr. Marshall's new adventure showed that there is still a body of opinion among Malayan trade unionists and political commentators which favours active participation of the unions in political affairs. In 1948, when the communists more or less ran the trade union movement, demonstrations and strikes were called on a large scale throughout the country to support their political arguments and aspirations. While not denying that under communist leadership Malayan trade unionists did achieve some improvements and reforms, later it was also true that the communists used the trade union movement for political manoeuvres which had not the slightest connection with the economic situation of the workers.

This lesson is not always remembered, and the argument is sometimes advanced that the principle which governs Western trade union relationship with politics need not necessarily suit the purpose of Asian trade unions. I find no reason for accepting that argument.

There is no law to prevent any trade unionist from paying subscriptions to a lawful political party. There is nothing, except apathy or wisdom to prevent trade unionists as individuals from creating lots of Workers' Parties if they are foolish enough to want to do so.

But the argument that current Asian labour problems demand a rejection of the careful distinction between politics and trade unionism which is followed in the West is unacceptable. Look what has happened in Indonesia where organized labour is unable to speak with a nationally consolidated authority because individual unions are affiliated to rival political parties.

Clearly, if there is to be an effective Labour Party in Malaya with a proper programme of socialism for independent Malaya, this party must have close associations with, and the backing of, organized labour in the country. At the moment there is no political party in this position. Neither can labour (apart from the rubber tappers) be said to be sufficiently well organized to give anybody, even themselves, much support. There is an abundance of small badly run unions (which should amalgamate in their own common interest), T.U.C.'s practically penniless and without power, and a great deal of suspicion and jealousy among leaders who should know better.

All available money and energy should be devoted to the fundamental requirement of creating a strong trade union movement, with an able central organization, prepared to take swift and drastic steps, if required, to defend workers' interests and trade union principles. In addition, a great deal of trade

union education still needs to be undertaken, even among members. Comparatively few Malayan unionists yet clearly understand all the functions and aims of a good democratic trade union. While making demands on employers, admittedly, is one of the most important functions of trade unions the world over, there should be others. In a country where there is no Social Insurance, surely another important mission should be to help members when in difficulty? What in point of fact does happen when a Malayan worker gets out of work, is that often he ceases to be a member of the union. Often when he is called out on strike he gets no strike pay and his family suffers accordingly.

In Britain, trade unionists have always believed that their unions should be concerned primarily with wages and working conditions. British workers' movements have certainly influenced political parties, but always they have insisted upon maintaining their complete independence. In communist countries unionists have lost their freedom and have become part of the State organization. In Indonesia, where unions affiliate to political parties, workers in consequence lack the authority of a single representative voice, and a consolidated national movement. Malaya must make her own choice. Employers of labour remain in independent Malaya, and would remain even if a socialist government came into power and there is no reason to expect that any employer, no matter what the circumstances or government, would no longer concern himself more with making the maximum amount of profit than with promoting the welfare of his employees. Independence has not automatically meant improvement in worker-employer relationships. Wage packets did not suddenly get larger. The necessity for independent trade unions still exists and will do, even if the Government controls the basic industries. In Britain, nationalized coal miners and railway workers have learned the value of keeping their powerful unions free and independent.

It was not unreasonable to assume before Malaya became independent that the end of colonialism might even emphasize, rather than lessen, the importance of trade unionism in Malaya, especially if in the absence of a representative Labour Party, the power of government were to fall into the hands of reactionaries, or a political party dominated by capitalists, or, alternatively, into the hands of political opportunists masquerading as socialists. After three short months of independence, and the T.U.C. comments, quoted elsewhere in these pages, on the Alliance Government's behaviour towards organized labour, it

was clear that whatever party governs the country the trade union movement must continue to build up its own strength and jealously insist upon its independence. In this way organized labour can influence employers, political parties, as well as governments.

The choice, therefore, which faces the Malayan trade unionist is that of supporting democracy or of permitting free Malaya to degenerate into a feudalistic or totalitarian type of state. To support democracy the workers must develop a strong independent trade union movement, for trade unions are an integral part of modern democracy.

For the time being politics in Malaya are mainly conducted on racial lines, and not on class or ideological lines. The fact that there is a Government which is an Alliance between the three main racial organizations — the United Malays' National Organization, the Malayan Chinese Association and the Malayan Indian Congress — emphasizes their racial exclusiveness and does nothing to overcome the truth that they could never amalgamate as a coherent political body because of their separate racial interests, which for various reasons are kept in the background.

In due course this arrangement must give way to non-racial political parties. Chinese, Malay and Indian socialists in Malaya already support the Labour Party of Malaya, which is slowly becoming stronger, but which is still in its infancy. A strong non-racial trade union movement can play an important part, through its individual members, in building up a nation-wide Malayan workers' political party which will cater for the rights and hopes of workers of all races. In this way true Malayanism can be encouraged in a practical manner, which also has the merit of being the most natural way. In Malaya people of all races have a common vested interest, as workers, in the economic situation. All want equal wages, or an opportunity to earn equal wages. They want to be paid for the job according to the work done and not according to whether a worker is a Chinese, or a Malay or an Indian. In this sense, when they go to collect their wages they are Malayan workers, for then their economic interests rise above their own racial prejudices.

In this way economic necessity can be relied upon to bring the people of Malaya together as nothing else will, just as the racial leadership interests of personalities in the Malayan Chinese Association and the United Malays' National Organization racial groups provide a unity of purpose between communalists and feudalists. The importance of a non-racial trade union movement is considerable because, in addition to everything else, it

can give continued support to any non-racial political party with a programme of socialism, which, in effect, can carry the common economic interests of the people still further. Socialism, in Cole's words "is the doctrine that the resources of production ought to be used, not for the profit of a class of capitalists, but for the common service of all people." Which means public ownership and administrative control in some form, of the principal and basic industries. There are other methods of public ownership apart from nationalization, which might not suit Malayan purposes. What could better serve the people of Malaya than socialism if this leads to national racial harmony and unity, and a better standard of living for all?

What is worth remembering is that while socialism, which is as much a way of life as it is a political or economic theory, would be most difficult to imagine without trade unions, a trade union movement can exist, and has indeed probably a greater reason for existence, under capitalism. If, therefore, independent Malaya is to become socialist much will depend upon the trade union movement. If Malaya is to remain capitalist a closely-knit trade union organization will be imperative.

Socialism is important to Malaya because a Malayan nation, founded upon common economic considerations involving the acceptance of the principle of impartial and comprehensive production and welfare schemes of advantage to Malays, Indians and Chinese, could be a definite possibility. For these are essentially practical reasons why people should want, and be prepared to sustain a Malayan nation. They would stand to gain something tangible. On the other hand to expect a Malayan nation to be evolved for abstract reasons not affecting the people's well-being, such as loyalty to the country, democracy (which the people have never known) would be less than realistic, and would probably court disaster, especially if these abstractions permit, as they probably would, the continuance of the present economic imbalance between the Malays and the Chinese. Both races help roughly equally to produce the country's wealth, but the Malays live at a lower standard. Socialism would rectify this badly weighted distribution of wealth.

If these arguments are valid, then it becomes apparent that socialism is a basic requirement if there is to be a cohesive Malayan nation, mainly because all the races socialistically would then have the same vested interest in the Malayan nation. Religion will not hold the people of Malaya together: there are many religions. Neither will culture or anything else, except the economic factor. That is the common denominator in multi-

racial Malaya. Instead of the present capitalistic scramble which permits the economic dominance of one race over another, there must be controlled socialist economy from which all Malaysians would benefit irrespective of race. The foundation for this practical idealism is a strong non-racial trade union movement which backs up and constantly influences a workers' political movement. Because this trade union support would be individual support and not mass union support, members not holding socialistic beliefs would not, of course, be committed by their unions politically. A non-socialist worker could still be a good trade unionist. This is one of the many reasons why trade unions and politics must be kept apart.

Ordinary members of the Malayan Chinese Association, led by wealthy Chinese businessmen, and the United Malays National Organization, headed by Malays loyal to a great deal of feudalism, are not yet aware of this simple fact. Nor do they accept the thesis that nothing except socialism can peacefully convert the slogan "Merdeka" and the Instrument of Independence into a united Malayan nation in which all races are in fact, as well as in theory, equal in opportunities and in social and economic privileges. They do not even recognize the truth that if trade unionism is to survive it must be non-racial. At one time the close interest shown by the Malayan Chinese Association in the development of exclusively Chinese trade unions alarmed the Malayan T.U.C., and caused the Malays to ponder over the desirability of fostering a new relationship between themselves and Malay unions. Strong words from the Malayan T.U.C., and from the office of the Trade Union Adviser, stressing the double danger of, firstly, the existence of exclusively racial unions, and secondly, the exploitation of these unions by political organizations, especially racial political organizations, resulted in a withdrawal of their trade union policies by both parties. But so long as racial bodies continue to flourish the temptation for them to associate with racial trade unions will also inevitably remain.

What, it might be asked, is holding back the emergence of powerful centrally organized labour movements in Singapore and the Federation? What is preventing the growth of what ought to be a significant movement? By now trade unionism should be in a position to influence the country's economic and political affairs. This is not the case, mainly because of the long record of communist interference in the development of the movement, and partly because of the restrictive repercussions of the communist revolt. But there are also other factors. Most

of the trade unions do not speak English. This has led to the practice of certain unions employing lawyers and others to argue their case for them with the employers. The comparative success of this practice has led others to adopt it. While the danger of this opening of the door to the control of unions by influences not connected with the trade or industry is limited, the practice is not good because it does not encourage the unions to produce their own leaders. The answer is the development of a well-run multi-lingual Trades Union Congress in which all unions can mutually help one another.

In the Federation those who dominated the Labour movement were English-speaking moderates closely associated with John Brazier, the Trade Union Adviser. In some ways this was a sad commentary on the development of trade unionism in Malaya. Ideally, the Adviser should have been more in the background. In point of fact Brazier had a considerable influence on the movement. Taking everything into consideration this, perhaps, was just as well. He was, for example, personally very active in the formation of the Malayan T.U.C. He believed a T.U.C. to be necessary and a good move for trade unionism. Awbery and Dalley said of Brazier in their Report: "We are satisfied that a very fine piece of work has been accomplished amidst many handicaps." Those who know what Brazier has done, who know something of the handicaps he had to deal with, will readily agree that this is not praise so much as a statement of fact.

Brazier retired from Government service in 1955, and the Trade Union Adviser's Office became an advisory section of the Ministry of Labour late in 1957. Affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the Malayan T.U.C. now has the benefit of advice and help from this world organization. Malaya's largest union, the National Union of Plantation Workers, which is one of the largest plantation unions in the world, maintains the closest relationship with I.C.F.T.U. officials.

Withdrawal of the Trade Union Adviser does not mean that the principles of democratic trade unionism in Malaya are so thoroughly understood by union officials or unionists that further advice or learning is unnecessary. There have been clashes between the police and workers, for instance, because of failure on the part of workers to understand the purpose and limitations of peaceful picketing. No trade union law in any country gives pickets the right or privilege to commit criminal offences. The Minister of Labour in the Federation, in a letter to the

Malayan T.U.C. pointed out that the only right given to pickets is to attend at certain places solely for the purposes of peacefully giving or obtaining information, or peacefully persuading persons to abstain from work. "It has been repeatedly decided that the English Act which corresponds to our Ordinance only legalizes a course of action which might otherwise in certain cases at common law have amounted to a civil nuisance. It does not authorize threats, intimidation or violence, or a public nuisance or a disturbance of the peace. In particular it has been held that it does not authorize pickets to obstruct workers on their way to work or to obstruct the passage of vehicles. On these points the law is the same in Malaya as it is in England. If five or more persons assemble in such a manner as to constitute an obstruction to other persons or to vehicles they are acting illegally and are an unlawful assembly."

The Minister went on to explain that strikers have a right to attend at or near a house where a person resides or at or near the place of work for the purpose of peacefully obtaining or communicating information or peacefully persuading or inducing any person to work or abstain from working. This right, however, must not be exercised in such a way as to intimidate persons or to obstruct the approach to or exit from any such house or place of work or to lead to a breach of the peace.

It is an offence against the law if the members of the picket attend in such large numbers as to cause an obstruction in a public road. If the picketers constitute an obstruction in a public place, the police may order them to move on or to disperse and they are bound to obey such a direction. Although a picket may attend at or near a house or place of work, he has no right to enter on private property without the consent of the owner. This applies to the precincts of a factory or other place of work which is picketed. Persons entering such private property or remaining after being requested to leave are trespassers and acting unlawfully.

It is, of course, also a serious offence against the law if members of a picket indulge in insults or abuse likely to cause a breach of the peace, or if they utter threats or threatening slogans or make intimidating gestures, or indulge in acts of violence, such as throwing missiles or brandishing sticks or other potential weapons. It is illegal for members of the picket to lie down in the road to prevent exit or entry into the place of work.

It is also an offence to crowd round and pester people who have indicated that they do not wish to listen to the picket.

It is also contrary to the law for pickets to commit a nuisance, as, for example, by parading up and down outside a house or place of work shouting or constantly banging on the door or otherwise annoying or interfering with the rights of the occupants.

What is important to remember is that the right to picket is closely limited by the equal right of others to go about their lawful affairs free from obstruction, molestation or intimidation. In everyone's interest picketing should be carefully organized and pickets should wear distinguishing badges.

Events in Singapore, and also, on a more moderate scale in the Federation, particularly between 1955 and 1957, showed that few trade union officials understood the law regarding picketing. In Singapore clashes between pickets acting illegally and the police led to riots which resulted in innocent people being killed.

A great many misconceptions about trade unionism still exist. One trade union in Singapore, for example, continued what they insisted upon describing as a strike, long after the employers had discharged them and filled their places with other workers willing to accept the pay and conditions which the so-called strikers had rejected. They seemed unable to understand that the employers were free to reject their demands and, properly, could employ other men in their places. Workers have a right to strike. What in effect they are doing when they strike is to refuse collectively to work for the pay and conditions which their employers offer. They are entitled to strike. No man can be compelled to work. Likewise no employer can be compelled to employ anyone. Both have the right to exert pressure, but if it is fair that no employer can compel a man to work for him against his wishes, neither can a worker force an employer to employ him on the worker's own terms. If the employer wants labour badly he will compromise. If a worker wants to eat he must work, sometimes, if he is badly organized, almost at any price.

Because the unions are weak in Malaya, because the workers must be protected from excessive exploitation, the Government still enforces a Labour Code (now called the Employment Ordinance) which specifies certain basic minimums for the workers. When the Labour Code has fallen into disuse because the trade unions can enforce better conditions through agreement with the employers, Malayan workers might then be considered well organized. This state of affairs is still a long way away.

By setting up a Wages Councils Ordinance, so as to provide for the establishment of Wages Councils in certain industries, the Federation Government in 1957 recognized the weak position of unions formed by workers in those industries. In appointing a commission of inquiry to look into the need for a Wages Council to protect the interests of 50,000 shop assistants in Malaya, the Government made it clear that if the commission found that there was a sufficiently strong union which could protect the interests of the shop assistants, there would be no need for a Wages Council. At the time of setting up the commission the Government did not believe that these workers were adequately represented.

Due to the weakness of the unions formed by seamen in Singapore, shipowners have never agreed to be restricted in the recruitment of men for their ships. Thus there was never any guarantee of continuity of employment of registered seamen, and more often than not they had to bribe an agent in order to get a job.

To the credit of the Labour Front Government, the Minister of Commerce and Industry (Mr. J. M. Junabhoj) personally and energetically concerned himself with this unsatisfactory chaotic state of affairs and late in November, 1957, managed to set up a Seamen's Registry Board in which seamen, shipowners and Government were represented. Said the Minister at the inaugural meeting of the Board, which marks a highlight in the development of worker-employer relationship in the shipping industry: "Government's participation is an indication of its interest in the welfare of local seamen and its desire to see that the machinery functions smoothly. Once this smooth functioning is achieved it would pave the way for Government to withdraw, and for new bipartite arrangements within the industry itself for regulating recruitment."

The Board will ensure that the seamen get a better deal, but that the shipowners still have the right, within reason, to select the crews they prefer. Until the seamen's unions are strong enough to handle the employers themselves Government representatives will sit on the Board to watch fair play.

One of the confusions which will have to be dispelled before trade unionism in Malaya can be said to be on a firm foundation concerns housing. On rubber estates and tin mines, and in some other industries, employers usually provide barrack-type huts for their workers. On the whole they are no credit to the employers, although progressive companies provide decent chalet-type houses and bungalows with gardens. On July 11, 1947, three

women rubber tappers living in "free" housing supplied by their employer, were among the strikers who stopped work in protest against a reduction in wages. On July 12 their employer told them to return to work. They went back on July 14 when the employer informed them that he no longer needed their services. The matter went to court, the women claiming a month's pay in lieu of notice on the grounds that they had been dismissed. The Chief Justice, Sir Harold Willan, found against them. He pointed out that the women, of their own volition, absented themselves from work for the purpose of a strike; that, although the strike was legal, they had in coming out on strike broken their contract of employment. Consequently they had not been dismissed by their employer and were thus not entitled to a month's pay.

In 1957 the Government reaffirmed its opinion that the Willan judgement was still good law.

What the Chief Justice was emphasizing was that a strike is a collective refusal to work. This means a breaking of contract. Reinstatement after a strike depends almost entirely upon the success of the strike. For this purpose strikers must insist that the strike period is ignored by the employers. They are entitled to exert pressure in this way upon employers. The employers are entitled to resist.

Now, the Willan judgement shocked a large number of trade unionists who did not apparently understand this. What they did realize was that the employers, through housing, had a strong hold over their workers. While it was clear that the workers still had the right to strike, the employers also had the right, if the strike failed, to order them out of their housing on the grounds that they had broken their contracts. This is one of the snags of living in company owned houses. There are still tied-houses in Britain, and a similar judgment to the Willan judgment would almost certainly apply to them.

Trade unionists throughout the country protested. They failed to see that the judgement was reasonable and logical, and that the wrong was that the workers were forced to live in company owned housing, in the first instance, and, in the second, that the workers had not negotiated and insisted upon a condition of work which laid it down that a worker, on a payment of reasonable rent, need not leave his housing immediately upon termination of contract.

Instead of following that line, the Malayan T.U.C. rather than demand an adequate wage to enable a man to pay rent, or to own a non-company house, passed a resolution condemn-

tributing

ing "the appalling housing conditions under which the lower strata of the population live". More, these housing conditions provided "a potential breeding ground for subversive elements". Calling for large scale building programmes the T.U.C. declared that housing was "a major problem" which must be tackled with great vigour and enthusiasm by "Government and vested interests". While the Government could not remain complacent over this matter, the T.U.C. felt that "housing should also be made a responsibility of employers". Here was a plea, almost in as many words, for more company owned housing. Willan's award, which the workers felt placed them in a weak position for collective bargaining, had apparently been forgotten.

Not unexpectedly, the Government in their reply, hinted at the dangers of thus extending paternalism. "The importance of the housing problem in the Federation (the reply added) is fully appreciated by the Government, whose policy it is to assist workers, as far as possible, to possess homes of their own." Neither the Federal nor the Singapore Government has done much to tackle this problem seriously; but that does not affect the reasoning of the argument that Malayan trade unionism must put aside the clogging thoughts of paternalism, of expecting the employer to provide more facilities, if the movement is to become truly independent and of much use in paving the way for Socialist Malaya. Let the employer pay adequate wages: the worker then can provide his own amenities.

How any industry can be reorganized, if necessary, to make this possible is a matter for full-time trade union officials to work out. One thing is certain: trade unionism in Malaya will not thrive so long as it is looked upon as providing a group of spare time enthusiasts with an interesting hobby. Trade unionism is not a game. It is hard work for full-time experts.

How trade unionism will develop in an independent Malaya free from communist terrorism depends upon many factors, not the least being the removal of the Emergency Regulations and the re-establishment of open trials for all offenders against the law of the land. When this happens the threat of communist infiltration to popular mass movements such as trade unions will be increased. There is no possibility that the Prime Minister would permit the existence in Malaya of a legal communist party, and laws either exist or could be framed forbidding persons to join the Communist Party on pain of severe penalties; but suspected members found in the trade union movement after the Emergency had ended would no longer be subjected to the risk of sudden arrest and imprisonment without open trial. Govern-

ment would have to prove their charges in open court. In effect, therefore, subversives would be able to operate with much more freedom than hitherto.

To many workers the end of the Emergency would mean the end of many reasons which held back demands for better working conditions and higher wages. In some instances workers would be justified in taking action, but in all cases careful consideration must first be given to all sides of the problem if the country's economy is not to be damaged at a time when it is undergoing transformation from a state of internal war to a state of normalcy not known for nearly a decade. It would be unwise for workers and unions to expect sudden changes overnight.

In every way it was the Chinese community which suffered most under the Emergency, and, with the removal of the restrictive regulations and curfews, fear from the minds of the Chinese worker that joining a trade union might be a dangerous move, would also disappear. There is no reason why the Chinese worker in future should not play his full part in the trade union movement, and one of the first objectives of a stronger union could be the ending of the third party contract system, which is unfair to workers and which, in the past, has prevented Chinese workers from becoming trade unionists.

There is also no good reason why the large number of unions in the Federation should not be reorganized into as few as ten national unions. One responsible union official has suggested that these ten national unions should be grouped as follows:—

1. Planting industry;
2. Mining industry;
3. Transport industry;
4. Harbour, dock and waterfront workers, etc.;
5. Factory and general workers;
6. Municipal, city, and local council workers;
7. Commercial employees, clerks, shop assistants, etc.;
8. Railway workers;
9. Central Electricity Board workers;
10. Government workers.

This may not be the best list — for example, Central Electricity Board workers could join craft trade unions — but it does give some idea of how workers can be grouped nationally. Malaya has 250 unions for less than a million workers. In Britain 21 million workers have 674 unions.

Organized properly trade unionism can be a most powerful and influential factor in the development of any country. In

Malaya trade unionism is particularly important, not only for what it can do to raise the standard of living of thousands of badly paid workers, but for what it must do if the Malayan peoples are to be brought together as a Malayan nation. In this respect, trade unionism is more essential, more telling, than any political party.

Providing there is a strong administration, an efficient and honest civil service, political parties for the time being, are not so important as talkative politicians would have us believe. France, and other countries in which politicians quarrel constantly, is regularly proving that a country can get on without politicians but not without good civil servants.

F. G. Carnell, the Oxford University lecturer, no stranger to Malaya, in a paper prepared for the Merdeka celebrations in London in 1957, held that the greatest challenge to democracy in Malaya and Singapore was how to combat communism without itself becoming totalitarian in its methods. He came to the conclusion that Malaysians had only two alternatives. They may follow India, Ceylon and Indonesia and recognize the Communist Party with all the obvious dangers that course of action may precipitate, or they can follow Thailand, South Vietnam, the Philippines and Formosa and continue to outlaw communism but at the price of diminished, if not extinguished, civil liberties. Whichever course was adopted, Carnell considered them an equal threat to the survival of parliamentary government.

He believed that parliamentary government in Malaya could never hope to satisfy the deep social frustrations of the communists, and those in sympathy with communism, unless it could provide something more than mere ballot boxes. Democracy, he held, must be built upon a ground structure of community development in the widest sense, on responsible trade unionism, community projects, voluntary bodies and youth organizations, in which the socially adrift members of Malayan society could find opportunities both for service and leadership. Carnell thought Malaysians might well learn from India, where the whole tone of India's great experiment in democracy was one of austerity. Asked Carnell: "Are Malaya's leaders prepared to make such sacrifices?" He added that there seemed to be little evidence of such leadership at the moment, and he made that remark before the announcement of bigger salaries for the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. Carnell described the characteristic feature of Malayan society as being extreme materialism, and the measurement of a man's worth wholly the

wealth he could flaunt. All the while such values persisted Carnell predicted that communism would continue to attract the youth of Malaya.

As I have already said, in my opinion trade unionism in Malaya is much more important than political parties. Ivor Jennings once wrote, "The notion that a country is governed by politicians is fallacious." Carnell supported my contention, in effect, when he wrote in his paper: "There is little use in setting up elected Parliaments, Cabinets, planning commissions, public corporations, municipalities, town councils and the like if there are no administrators or technicians to carry out their policies and decisions. This has been the tragedy of Indonesia where the Dutch conspicuously failed in the colonial period to train Indonesian administrators and technical experts. Parliamentary government has floundered in Indonesia because it has failed to get things done; it has failed even to provide a minimum framework for the preservation of law and order. In contrast, India and Ceylon inherited from the British period a trained Asian cadre of officials who have been one of the main supports of Indian and Ceylonese democracy."

Carnell was not particularly optimistic about the prospects for parliamentary democracy in the Federation and in Singapore. He considered it wishful thinking to imagine that the present successful marriage between Malay, Chinese and Indian communal-political leaders could long survive the winning of independence. There were still many sources of potential friction between the different races which could lead to communalism in free Malaya.

For this ultimate political reason, as well as for reasons of self-interest, workers of all races must organize as trade unionists, and must consider this, at least for the time being and until trade unionism is properly on its feet, to be of paramount importance. Once trade unionism is soundly constructed and properly understood, organized labour will be in a position to exert influence and pressure on whatever political party is in power.

I hold firmly the belief that to this extent the workers must follow the communist principle of getting well organized. When there is a solid structure of democratic non-racialism existing in the trade unionism, a firm foundation will automatically have been laid for the survival of parliamentary democracy in Malaya and Singapore. Upon this foundation the Malays, Chinese, Indians and others can construct a lasting united nation.

Malaya's destiny depends upon the capacity of Malaysians to unite as workers.

That is the simple, practical, and materialistic conclusion to be reached. Either the Malayan masses, in the factory, on the estates, work together for each other's day-to-day interest, through democratic well-organized national trade unions, or communalism will increase, parliamentary democracy and indeed the very survival of a united Malaya will be endangered.

Politicians and political parties will find it difficult to resist the natural tendency of linguistic and cultural revivalism in Malaya to develop; but trade unionism, based upon a vital material interest, could.

Carnell argues that the future of parliamentary government in both the Federation and Singapore is intimately bound up with the future of the English-speaking minority, which hitherto set limits to the growth of communalism, and which provided the most convinced adherents of parliamentary democracy. How, he asks, can this minority adapt itself to the significant shift in political power which is now taking place?

Expansion of the non-racial trade union movement is the answer to that question. In 1957, both Malay and Chinese workers were showing more interest in trade unionism than they had done for many years. This is an encouraging sign, for in the democratic trade union movement rests the hopes for parliamentary democracy in Malaya.

It may be dramatic, but it is nevertheless true to say that without strong trade unions Malaya is almost certain either to go communist or else to degenerate into some form of authoritarianism. It is for the workers themselves to decide.

In Singapore, largely a Chinese city, it will be the strength or weakness of organized labour which will decide the form of socialism in the Colony after 1959, when Singapore becomes a self-governing State.

In any democracy these days, much depends upon the willingness and ability of the trade union movement, no less than the employers, to face vital issues as components of a national economy. Hostility between employers and unions, particularly in a State governed by socialists, must be replaced as a norm by a common understanding that every industry and all services fit into a State pattern. Trade unionism, therefore, while continuing to serve the workers, must share with the employers and the Government an added responsibility, that of making the State's economy serve the interest of the

State's social welfare services which are aimed to benefit everyone.

Upon the Government in power, in a welfare State, is the responsibility to define the policy to deal with the State's major economic and social problems. That is the job of the politicians working closely with organized labour. Once the broad policy had been approved, it becomes the duty, and the responsibility of organized trade unionism — the T.U.C. — to see that labour plays its full part in building up the welfare State. In its own long term interest organized labour must have a national policy and a united front.

Even in a welfare State the primary task of trade unions is to maintain and improve the standard of life of the workers. Created, in a capitalistic society, to restrain unlimited power of employers, and to help members in sickness and unemployment, progress towards a welfare State does not remove the necessity for trade unions. Their basic functions, as guardians of their own particular group of workers, remain, no matter whether the employers are capitalists or the State. In addition, in a welfare State, trade unions are expected also to find answers to complex problems affecting the economy as a whole.

For example, stability in the State economy may call for wage restraint among certain categories of workers. Taxation, essential to pay for welfare facilities, may cause some prices to rise. By urging restraint upon groups of workers anxious to demand higher wages to meet the increase in the cost of living, the effect would be to bring about a redistribution of income from the higher to the lower income groups, as well as, perhaps, to narrow the differentials between the rate of wages of skilled and unskilled workers, and between, possibly, the wages of manual and clerical workers. A central wage controlling organization, set up by the T.U.C., might become a necessity.

Among some socialists, however, equality in wages among all workers is still an ideal worth while pursuing. Why, they ask, should a clerk get more money than a road sweeper? Is the clerk's work more important? Why should a strip-tease artiste in Singapore earn \$1,400 a month and a hardworking woman labourer dig and carry for less than \$100? Why should an electrical worker get \$134, a bus operator \$190, and a skilled goldworker \$110? Why should a fisherman, helping to feed the State, earn no more than \$64, a quarryman \$172, and a printer \$210? In a welfare State with an ordered economy a measure of equality in wage earning could be possible. But, so long

as Singapore continues to be a market-place for world goods, the economic basis of the State will remain largely unchanged. Singapore's welfare State, therefore, must be designed to fit within the framework of a predominantly capitalistic society. In these circumstances active trade unionism can be expected to meet with many difficulties.

Large scale unemployment in Singapore, for example is a threat which trade unions will have to face with realism. No reliable statistics of unemployment or under-employment are yet available, but some indication of the number of workless in urban areas, such as Singapore, can be gauged from the conclusions of a pilot survey carried out in another Malayan port, in Penang, in 1957. There, the survey revealed, approximately 12 percent of the male population between the ages of 16 and 20, were unemployed. Most of them had never worked.

In Singapore, a much larger port, the figures could be worse. It is a fact that jobs must, after 1960, be found either in Singapore, or elsewhere, for thousands of young people leaving schools. In the solution of this problem, as in many others equally difficult, the Singapore T.U.C. will be expected to share responsibility. This is a heavy burden which could become an opportunity to demonstrate in a practical manner to fellow workers in the Federation the true value to workers of all races, of efficient trade unionism. Such a demonstration, if successful, could have far-reaching political repercussions. In the final analysis it might well be that the ultimate unity of all the States in the Malayan Peninsula will be founded upon the solidarity and self-interest of the working class, rather than upon political argument.

APPENDIX

FEDERATION OF MALAYA

Employees' Provident Fund (March 31, 1957)

Registered employers	14,086
Registered contributors*	975,311
Amount paid into Fund by workers and Employers	\$283,193,709
Employees who have withdrawn their credit ..	50,807
Amount so far withdrawn	\$ 11,573,291

*Contributors' qualification: Workers earning less than \$400 monthly.

SINGAPORE

Central Provident Fund (May, 1958)

Registered employers	19,500
Registered Members of the Fund	272,000
Total Contributions	\$74,100,000
Employees who have withdrawn their credit ..	6,350
Amount so far withdrawn	\$ 2,026,547

Contributors' qualification: Broadly, all employees in Singapore, that is to say all persons employed under a contract of service, and certain categories of seamen who are Singapore residents.

TRADE UNION INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Singapore

1956

Income (205 unions)	\$ 1,293,786
Expenditure	\$ 972,778

Federation of Malaya

1956

Income (228 unions)	\$ 2,240,976
Expenditure	\$ 1,877,938

WORKERS IN MALAYA

(1955)

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Workers</i>
Agriculture (rubber, etc.) and forestry	429,000
Mining	44,000
Manufacturing	46,000
Building and construction	35,000
Commerce and finance	107,000
Communications and Services	55,000
Teachers in private schools	15,000
Domestic servants	50,000
Government	208,000
Total	989,000

WORKERS IN SINGAPORE

(1955)

Manual workers (including skilled workers and fishermen)	120,000
Shop assistants	65,000
Bus-drivers, taxi-drivers, trishaw riders	11,000
Licensed hawkers	10,000
Clerks, domestic servants, hotel workers etc. and others	234,000
Total	440,000

FEDERATION OF MALAYA

NUMBER OF STRIKES AND MAN-DAYS LOST

1947-1956

<i>Year</i>	<i>Strikes</i>	<i>Man-days</i>
1947	291	696,036
1948	181	370,404
1949	29	5,390
1950	48	37,067
1951	58	41,365
1952	98	44,489
1953	47	38,957
1954	77	50,831
1955	72	79,931
1956	213	562,125

SINGAPORE

NUMBER OF STRIKES AND MAN-DAYS LOST

1946-1956

<i>Year</i>	<i>Strikes</i>	<i>Man-days</i>
1946	47	851,937
1947	45	492,708
1948	20	128,657
1949	3	6,618
1950	1	4,692
1951	9	20,640
1952	5	40,105
1953	4	47,360
1954	8	135,206
1955	275	946,354
1956	29	454,455

SINGAPORE
FEDERATIONS OF TRADE UNIONS
(31st December, 1956)

Name and Address

- Singapore City Council Labour Unions Federation, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
Singapore Federation of Services Unions, 44A Upper Serangoon Road, Singapore 13.
Singapore Federation of Unions of Government Employees, 811 Serangoon Road, Singapore 12.
Singapore Trades Union Congress, 263 Towner Road, Singapore 12.
Federation of Singapore Petroleum Employees' Unions, 14 Palm Road, Siglap, Singapore 16.

TRADE UNIONS
(31st December 1956)

Name and Address

- Singapore Harbour Board Staff Association, Cantonment Road, Singapore 2.
Singapore Transport Vessels Workers Association, 115-A Cecil Street, Singapore 1.
The Singapore Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union, 172-A Rangoon Road, Singapore 8.
Malay Seamen's Union of Singapore, 102 Jalan Sultan, Singapore 7.
Chinese Seamen's Union, (Singapore Branch), 17-B Tanjong Pagar Road, Singapore 2.
Government and City Council Labour Union, 32 Race Course Lane, Singapore 8.
Singapore City Council Services Union, Room No. 12 Farrer Park Club Houses, off Kampong Java Road, Singapore 8.
Singapore Chinese Lady-Dress Makers Employees Association, 53-A Bras Basah Road, Singapore 7.
Singapore Barber Assistants Union, 64 Queen Street, Singapore 7.
The Confederation of Singapore Chinese Engineering Tradesmen, 88 Club Street, Singapore 1.
The Singapore Union of Postal and Telecommunications Workers, 921 Serangoon Road, Singapore 12.
Singapore Teachers' Union, 225 Onan Road, Singapore 15.
The Singapore Harbour Board Engineering Workmen's Union, 271 Telok Blangah Road, Singapore 4.

- Singapore Clog Workers' Union, 2 Lim Chiak Street, Singapore 7.
- Singapore Cigar Workers Union, 134 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- The Naval Base Labour Union, Block 80, H.M. Dockyard, Seletar, Singapore 27.
- Singapore Rice Transport Workers' Union, 145-B New Bridge Road, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Gold and Silver Smith Union, 301 North Bridge Road, Singapore 7.
- Singapore Chinese Printing Workers' Union, 37 Erskine Road, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Godown Labourers' Union, 42-B Cross Street, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Stevedores Union, 104-A Amoy Street, Singapore 1.
- National Chinese Seamen's Union, 32 Cheng Cheok Street, Singapore 2.
- Singapore Butchers Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Interpreters' Union, c/o Chinese Secretariat, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Tailors' Union, 336 Telok Ayer Street, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Hing Suah Porters' Union, 21 Merchant Road, Singapore 1.
- Singapore City Council Sewerage Labour Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore City Council Town Cleansing Labour Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore City Council Night Soil Workers' Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Dyers and Dry-Cleaners Union, 25 Jalan Rajah, Singapore 11.
- The Singapore Printing Employees' Union, 166 Anson Road, Singapore 2.
- Cantonese Rattan Workmen Benevolent Union, 490 Balestier Road, Singapore 11.
- Harbour Board Employees Union of Singapore, Small Building adjacent to Block No. 4 S.H.B. Quarters, Nelson Road, Singapore 4.
- Singapore Public Works Labour Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Amalgamated Malayan Pineapple Workers' Union, 149 Middle Road, Singapore 7.
- Malayan National Seamen's Union, 137-A Rangoon Road, Singapore 8.

- Singapore Coffee Shop Employees' Union, 136-C Syed Alwi Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Traction Company Employees' Union, 18 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Undertakers Service Association, 22 Pickering Street, 1st floor, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Chinese Newspaper Distributors Association, 13-1 Mohamed Ali Lane, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Rubber Commission Import and Export Labour Union, 84 Cross Street, Singapore 1.
- Air Ministry Local Staff Union, 22 Hillside Drive, Singapore 19.
- Singapore City Council Water Dept. Labour Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore City Council Health Dept. Workers' Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Admiralty Local Staff Union, 1 Farrer Park, Singapore 8.
- Singapore City Council Road Workers' Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Chinese Tailors Union, 79-A Victoria Street, Singapore 7.
- The Singapore Government Administrative and Clerical Services Union, S.C.S.A. Canteen Building, Government Offices, Singapore 6.
- Singapore Rattan Workers' Union, 130 Middle Road, Singapore 7.
- Singapore City Council Electrical Workers' Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Army Civil Service Union, 44 Upper Serangoon Road, Singapore 13.
- Singapore City Council Transport Workers Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Chinese Electrical Trade Union, 151 Middle Road, Singapore 7.
- Singapore Medical Workers' Union, 459 Balestier Road, Singapore 11.
- Malayan Gold and Silver Workers' Union, Singapore Branch, 60 Club Street, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Malay Teachers Union, 1 Lorong H, Telok Kurau, Singapore 15.
- Singapore Dance Hostesses' Association, 19 Lorong 10, Geylang, Singapore 14.
- Qantas Empire Airways Local Employees Union, 71 Kampong Amber, Singapore 15.
- Singapore Wharf and Ship Labour Union, 24 Deli Street, Singapore 2.

- Singapore Turf Club Labour Union, 3-M 5½ milestone, Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 10.
- Singapore/Malayan Institute of Marine and Power Engineers, c/o Association of Engineers, 11 Raffles Quay, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Government Printing Office Employees Union, Government Printing Office, Upper Serangoon Road, Singapore 13.
- Chinese Journalists Union, 84 2nd floor, Robinson Road, Singapore 1.
- Postal and Telecommunications Uniformed Staff Union, Postmen Quarters, Maxwell Road, Singapore 2.
- Singapore Medical Services Union, 16 Kampong Bahru Road, Singapore 3.
- Singapore City Council Architect Dept. Workers' Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Straits Merchant Navy Officers Union, 1 Raffles Quay, Singapore 1.
- The Cantonese Restaurants Staffs' Union, Singapore, 84 Club Street, (1st floor), Singapore 1.
- The Musicians' Union of Singapore, 14 Prince Philip Avenue, Singapore 2.
- The Singapore Bus Workers' Union, 144 Queen Street, Singapore 7.
- The Singapore Coal Workers' Union, 101 Tanjong Pagar Road, (1st floor), Singapore 2.
- The Department of Broadcasting Employees' Union, c/o Dept. of Broadcasting, Caldecott Hill, 4¼ milestone, Thomson Road, Singapore 11.
- Singapore Tong Loke Shoemakers' Union, 87 Selegie Road, Singapore 7.
- The Woodbridge Hospital Uniformed Staff Union, c/o Woodbridge Hospital, Yio Chu Kang Road, Singapore 19.
- The Government Health Technical Staff Union, 21 Woo Mon Chew Road, Singapore 16.
- The Survey Dept. Technical Employees' Trade Union, Survey Office, 5th floor, Fullerton Building, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Motor-Vehicle Drivers' Union, 64-A Queen Street, Singapore 7.
- Pakistani Seamen's Union of Singapore, 58 Owen Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Rubber Milling and Manufacturing Workers' Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- The Singapore Tamil Teachers' Union, 64 St. Francis Road, Singapore 12.

- The Singapore Harbour Board Labour Union, Old Building, North of Block 3, S.H.B. Quarters, Tanjong Pagar, Singapore 2.
- Singapore Granite Quarry Workers' Union, 30-V Bukit Timah Road, 10½ milestone, Singapore 23.
- Malaysian Ship Officers' Union, 16-A Robinson Road, Singapore 1.
- The Singapore Union of Journalists, 6-8 Robinson Road, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Brick-Making Workers' Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Sawmill Workers' Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- The Singapore Government Workers' Union, 12 Cuff Road, Singapore 8.
- The Singapore Graduate Teachers Association, 24 Paya Lebar Crescent, Singapore 19.
- Singapore Improvement Trust Local Officers' Association, 176 Carpmael Road, Singapore 15.
- The English Teachers' Union (Chinese Schools), c/o 53 Armenian Street, Singapore 6.
- The Singapore Cinema and Entertainment Workers' Union, 37 Lorong 16 Geylang, Singapore 14.
- The Singapore General Labour Union, 105 Kwong Hoa Building, George Street, Singapore 1.
- The Singapore Government Junior Staff Union, S.C.S.A. Canteen Building, Empress Place, Singapore 6.
- The Government Sanitary Inspectors' Union, Singapore, 19 May Road, Singapore 12.
- The Department of Civil Aviation Workers' Union, Singapore, No. 37 Lorong 16, Geylang Road, Singapore 14.
- Singapore Petroleum Workers Union, 166 Anson Road, Singapore 2.
- The Singapore Taxi Drivers Union, 93-D Lavender Street, Singapore 12.
- The Singapore Government Storekeepers' Union, 7-2 5th Avenue, 6th milestone, Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 10.
- The Meteorological Technical Employees Union, Singapore, 107 Wilkinson Road, Singapore 15.
- The Singapore Fire Brigade Employees' Union, 167 Joo Chiat Terrace, Singapore 14.
- The Cable and Wireless Uniformed Staff Union, Singapore, 12 Cuff Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Hock Poh Sang Drivers' Union, 73-A Jalan Besar, Singapore 8.

- The Singapore Higher Services (Part I) Officers Association, S.C.S.A., Canteen Building, Empress Place, Singapore 6.
- Singapore Shoemakers' Union, 5 Malabar Street, (1st floor), Singapore 7.
- The Singapore City Council Gas Department Workers' Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- The Asian Maritime Officers' Union, 137-A Rangoon Road, Singapore 8.
- The Singapore Improvement Trust Labour Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- The Singapore Government Secretarial Staff Association, 19 Rosyth Road, Singapore 19.
- The Singapore Workers' Union, 147-151 Middle Road, Singapore 7.
- The Singapore Chinese Clerical Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- The Singapore Shop Employees' Union, 166 Anson Road, Singapore 2.
- Singapore Alliance of Teachers, 74-1 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 7.
- The Singapore Laboratory Technicians Union, c/oNorth Canal Road School Clinic, Singapore 1.
- The Chinese Middle Schools Teachers' Union of Singapore, 45 Scotts Road, Singapore 9.
- The Singapore Paint Industry Workers' Union, 21-F Kampong Heap Guan San, Singapore 4.
- The Singapore Chinese Seafarers' Association, 5 Wayang Street, Singapore 1.
- The Union of Chinese School Teachers, Singapore, 350 Outram Road, Singapore 3.
- Singapore Harbour Board Stevedore and Wharf Workers' Union, Block 2, 3rd floor, S.H.B. Quarters, Nelson Road, Singapore 4.
- The National Pakistani Seamen's Union of Singapore, 37 Norris Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Spinning Workers' Union, 52-46 Bukit Panjang Village, 10th milestone, Singapore 23.
- Artistes Union, Malaya, 271 Tembeling Road, Singapore 15.
- The Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union, 147/151, Middle Road, Singapore 7.
- Domestic Employees' Union, 107 Jalan Sultan, Singapore 7.
- Malayan Teochew Theatrical Trade Union, 135 Rangoon Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Sago Workers' Union, 3-A Allenby Road, Singapore 8.

- The Singapore Bank Employees' Union, 115-A Cecil Street, Singapore 1.
- Singapore City Council General Stores Workers Union, 76 Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Government Technical Services Union, c/o Staff Side Office, Colonial Secretariat, Empress Place, Singapore 6.
- The Singapore Ship Workers' Union, 3-A Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- The Singapore Radio and Wireless Technicians' Union, 15 Everton Road, Singapore 2.
- The Singapore General Employees' Union, 12 Cuff Road, Singapore 8.
- The Malayan Airways Local Employees' Union, 171-A Joo Chiat Road, Singapore 15.
- Singapore Wood Workers' Union, 54 Sumbawa Road, Singapore 7.
- Singapore Vessel Workers' Union, 54 Crawford Road, Singapore 7.
- Singapore Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- Bata Employees' Union (Singapore), 87 Selegie Road, Singapore 7.
- Singapore Fish Merchants Employees' Union, 145-B New Bridge Road, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Spray Painting Workers' Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Cycle and Motor Workers' Union, 75-C Jalan Besar, Singapore 8.
- The Industrial Workers' Union of Singapore, 166 Anson Road, Singapore 2.
- The Malaysian Mariners' Union, 16-A Robinson Road, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Amusements Workers Union, 493-274 off Jalan Eunos, Singapore 14.
- The Singapore Machine and Engineering Employees' Union, 81 Neil Road, Singapore 2.
- The University of Malaya Non-Academic Staff Union, House No. 4, The University, Chany Road, Singapore 10.
- The Singapore Court Ushers' Union, 35A Upper Pickering Street, Singapore 1.
- Mansfield Local Employees' Union, 158-B Alexandra Road, Singapore 3.
- The Singapore Bookshop Workers' Union, 329-B New Bridge Road, Singapore 2.
- The Singapore Air Traffic Controllers' Association, Singapore Airport, Singapore 19.

- The Singapore Motor Workshops Employees' Union, 128-B Dunlop Street, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Chinese Eating-Shop Workers' Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- Stanvac Employees' Union, 206 Owen Road, Singapore 8.
- Shell Employees' Union, 135N Charlton Road, Singapore 19.
- The Ford Salaried Staff Union, 16-B 8½ milestone, Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 21.
- The Singapore All Races Seamen's Union, 7 Wallich Street, (1st floor), Singapore 2.
- The Singapore Telephone Board Employees Union, Telephone House, Hill Street, Singapore 6.
- Singapore Midwives' Union, 65 Niven Road, Singapore 9.
- Singapore European's Employees' Union, 128-B Dunlop Street, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Textiles and General Merchants' Employees' Union, 329-B New Bridge Road, Singapore 2.
- The Singapore Pork-Butcher Shops and Abattoir Workers' Union, 8 Wayang Street, (4th floor), Singapore 1.
- Islay Kerr Local Employees' Union, 486 Margaret Drive, Singapore 3.
- Singapore Sundry-Shops Employees' Union, 3-B Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- The Singapore Chinese-School Inspectors Association, 32-B Meyer Road, Singapore 15.
- Singapore Civil Air Transport Union, 307-B Tanjong Katong Road, Singapore 15.
- Singapore Transport Employees' Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- The Singapore Motor Traders Salaried Employees' Union, 38-B Orchard Road, Singapore 9.
- Rotterdam Trading Local Employees' Union, 32 Lorong 25A, Geylang Road, Singapore 14.
- Caltex Employees' Union, 14 Palm Road, Siglap, Singapore 16.
- The Singapore Insurance Companies' Employees' Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- The Malayan Airways Local Pilots Association, 53 Pulasan Road, Singapore 15.
- The Singapore Restaurants, Bars, Eating and Coffee Shops Employees' Union, 64A Queen Street, Singapore 7.
- Singapore Business Houses Employees' Union, 275 Towner Road, Singapore 12.
- Singapore Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union, 45-B Duxton Hill, Singapore 2.

- The Singapore Government Medical, Health and Technical Workers' Union, Dept. of Pathology, General Hospital, Singapore 3.
- The Singapore Departmental Store Employees' Union, 66 Tiong Poh Road, Singapore 3.
- The Metal Box Staff Union, c/o The Metal Box Co., of Malaya Ltd., 14½ milestone, Woodlands Road, Singapore 23.
- The Singapore Cable and Wireless Staff Union, 6 Foch Road, Singapore 8.
- The Central Provident Fund Staff Association, 91 Selegie Road, Singapore 7.
- Union of Foochow and Shanghainese Restaurant Employees, 82 Tras Street Singapore 2.
- Imperial Chemical Industries (Malaya) Ltd., Local Employees' Union, 351 Joo Chiat Place, Singapore 15.
- The National Union of Building Construction Workers, 75-C Jalan Besar, Singapore 8.
- Reuter Local Employees Union, Singapore, 155-D Alexandra Road, Singapore 3.
- The Union of Singapore Lightermen, 166 Anson Road, Singapore 2.
- Foochow Coffee, Restaurant and Bar Employees' Union, Singapore, 209-B Victoria Street, Singapore 7.
- Singapore Rattan Workers' Mutual Aid Union, 7 Angus Street, Singapore 1.
- Singapore Association of Head Teachers, 12 Beng Wan Road, Singapore 12.
- Radio Malaya Local Programme Staff Union, 47 Tank Road, Singapore 9.
- The Singapore Catering Services, Staffs and Workers Trade Union, 15-D Beach Road, Singapore 7.
- George Lee Limited Employees Union, 200 Clemenceau Avenue, Singapore 9.
- The Singapore Certificated Teachers' Association, c/o Teachers' Training College (Chinese Branch) Cairndull Road, Singapore 9.
- The Singapore Government Miscellaneous Services Union, S.C.S.A. Canteen, Government Offices, Empress Place, Singapore 6.
- Fred Waterhouse Workers' Union, 91-F Redhill Close, Singapore 3.
- The Singapore Fishing Boat Workers' Union, 9 Hongkong Street, 3rd floor, Singapore 1.

- Jacobson van den Berg Local Employees' Union, 720-A Upper Serangoon Road, Singapore 19.
- Naval Base Industrial Staff Trade Union, Singapore, Block 3, Room 16, H. M. Naval Base, Seletar, Singapore 27.
- The Singapore Cement Loading and Unloading Labourers' Union, 37 Lorong 16, Geylang Road, Singapore 14.
- The Singapore Government Pharmacists Association, 53 Lloyd Road, Singapore 9.
- Singapore Government Clerical Superscale Officers' Union, c/o Volunteer Forces Record Office, Beach Road, Singapore 7.
- The Singapore Teachers' Training College Chinese Branch Lecturers Association, 32-B Meyer Road, Singapore 15.
- Christ Church School Teachers' Union, 10 Burmah Road, Singapore 8.
- Henry Waugh (Singapore) Employees' Union, 204 Cantonment Road, Singapore 2.
- Singapore "Pelni" Local Employees' Union, 584-B Havelock Road, Singapore 3.
- Singapore Harbour Board Workers Union, 12 Tian Lye Street, Singapore 2.
- The Singapore English Schools Tamil Teachers' Union, 188-A Race Course Road, Singapore 8.
- Singapore Hair Dressing Workers' Union, 3 Allenby Road, Singapore 8.
- The Commissioner-General's Local Employees' Union, 31 Woodsville Road, Singapore 13.

FEDERATION OF MALAYA

TRADE UNIONS (30th September, 1957)

- Kedah Government Clerical Union, UMNO Building, 13, Jalan Tunku Ibrahim, Alor Star.
- Kedah Government Junior Medical Staff Union, General Hospital, Alor Star.
- Kedah and Perlis Government Junior Staff Union, Jalan Rajah, Alor Star.
- Kedah and Perlis Government Hospital Employees' Union, General Hospital Attendants Quarters, Alor Star.
- Government Workers' Union, Kedah and Perlis, 13, Jalan Ibrahim, Sungei Patani.
- Irrigation Staff Union, Federation of Malaya, Irrigation Inspectors Quarters, Ayer Hitam, Alor Star.
- Central Kedah Cigar Rollers' Union, 654 Pekan Lama, Sungei Patani.
- Estate Asian Staff Union, 66, Jalan Ibrahim, Sungei Patani.
- Bukit Mertajam Rubber Estate Workers' Union, Keland Bharu Division, Bukit Mertajam Estate, Kedah.
- Victoria Estate Labour Union, Victoria Estate, Serdang Division, Pandang Serai, Kedah.
- Kedah and Perlis Indian School Teachers' Union, Public Tamil School, Alor Star.
- Malay Teachers' Association, Perlis, 53, Jalan Raja Syed Alwi, Kangar.
- Malay Teachers' Union, Kedah, Malay School, Sungei Koroh Lama, Alor Star.
- Government Junior Staffs' Union, Penang and Province Wellesley, 34, Peons Quarters, Sungei Pinang, Penang.
- Government Seamen's Union, Federation of Malaya, 33, Aboo Sittee Lane, Penang.
- Government Hospital Junior Employees' Union, Penang and Province Wellesley, 33, Western Road, Penang.
- Government Workers' Union, Province Wellesley and South Kedah, 515, Kulim Road, Bukit Mertajam.
- Penang Settlement Medical Staff Union, Sepoy Lines Recreation Club, Penang.
- The Malayan Postal Uniformed Staff Union, 33, Aboo Sittee Lane, Penang.
- The Federation X-Ray Staff Union, 57, Barrack Road, Penang.
- Federation of Government Medical Services Union, Federation of Malaya, Sepoy Lines Recreation Club, Hospital Road, Penang.

- Penang Municipal Services Union, Municipal Office, Penang.
- The Penang Port Commission Employees' Union, 119, Anson Road, Penang.
- Municipal and Government Labour Union, 148, Dato Kramat Road, Penang.
- Penang Boatmen's Union, 3, Still Street, Penang.
- Penang Chinese Heng Woh Goldsmith Union, 40, Sungei Ujong Road, Penang
- Penang Building Association, 32a, MacAlister Road, Penang.
- European Establishment Employees' Union, 29, Nagore Road, Penang.
- Penang Firewood Workers' Association, 108, Jelutong Road, Penang.
- Batu Gantong Indian Labour Union, 141, Batu Gantong Road, Penang.
- Prai Wharf Workers' Union, 694, Main Road, Prai.
- Penang Cabaret Girls' Association, 50, Kangsar Road, Penang.
- Clerical and Administrative Staff Union, 14, Larut Road, Penang.
- North Malaya Bus Service Association, 15b, China Street Ghaut, Penang.
- The Penang and Province Wellesley Chinese Engineering Employees' Union, 2, Transfer Road, Penang.
- The Indian School Teachers' Union, 205, Dato Kramat Road, Penang.
- Eastern Smelting Company Ltd. Employees' Union, Federation of Malaya, 282h, Tanjong Tokong, Penang.
- Penang Pilot Employees' Union, 2217 Kampong Jawa, Butterworth.
- Cigar Workers' Union, Penang and Province Wellesley, 23, Kedah Road, Penang.
- Malayan Teachers' Union, Penang and Province Wellesley, 80A Burmah Road, Penang.
- Chinese School Teachers' Union, Penang and Province Wellesley, 46, Anson Road, Penang.
- Straits Steamship Dockyard Employees' Union, Butterworth, 1698, Assumption Road, Butterworth.
- Petroleum Distributive Employees' Union, Federation of Malaya, 3239, Kampong Gajah Road, Butterworth.
- North Malaya Toddy Tappers' Union, 25, Ipoh Lane, Penang.
- Penang and Province Wellesley Oilmill Workers' Union, 69, Noordin Street, Penang.
- Penang and Province Wellesley General Workers' Union, 71, Noordin Street, Penang.

- Weld Quay Workers' Union, Penang, 40, Church Street, Penang.
 Mansfield Local Employees' Union, 220, MacAlister Rd., Penang.
 Journalists' Union of North Malaya, 25, Light Street, Penang.
 The Penang Harbour Tally Clerks' Union, 20A Percy Street, Penang.
 Perak Anti-Malarial Employees' Union, 185, Sungei Pari Road, Ipoh.
 Perak State P.W.D. Employees' Union, Lahat Lane, Ipoh.
 Central Mental Hospital Employees' Union, Hospital Compound, Tanjong Rambutan.
 Perak Government Hospital Employees' Union, District Hospital, Ipoh.
 Perak Government Clerical Services Union, 21, Laxamana Road, Ipoh.
 Marine Employees' Union, Perak, Dockyard, Telok Anson.
 Government Junior Staffs' Union, Perak, 1299 Hugh Low Road, Taiping.
 The Government Medical Staff Union, Perak, District Hospital, Ipoh.
 Game Department Employees' Union, the Game Ranger's Office, Trong, Taiping.
 D.I.D. Employees' Union, Federation of Malaya, D.I.D. Workshops, Ipoh.
 Immigration Services Union, Federation of Malaya, Immigration Office, Ipoh.
 Government Toddy Shop Staffs' Union, Perak, Government Toddy Shop, Batu Gajah, Perak.
 All Malayan Federation of Government Medical Employees Trade Unions, Central Mental Hospital, Tanjong Rambutan.
 Perak Town Board Employees' Union, 186, Sungei Para Road, Ipoh.
 Perak Cigar Workers' Union, 66, Silibin Road, Ipoh.
 Perak Clerical Union, 11-13, Station Road, Ipoh.
 Perak Hydro Employees' Union, 94, Brewster Road, Ipoh.
 Perak Race Course Employees' Union, 3, Race Course Cooly Lines, Ipoh.
 Lower Perak Dressmakers Mutual Association, 8, Main Road, Telok Anson.
 Pangkor Fishery Labourers' Union, 28, 2nd Road Kechil, Pangkor Island.
 Telok Anson Building Labourers' Union, 12, Ah Chong Street, Telok Anson.
 Telok Anson Forest Workers' Union, 29, Pauline Street, Telok Anson.

- Kinta Chinese Engineering Employees Union, 4, Cowan Street, Ipoh.
- Kampar Chinese Engineering Employees' Union, 15, Jalan Gopeng, Kampar.
- The Taiping Chinese Engineering Employees' Union, 43, Tupai Road, Taiping.
- Batang Padang District Estate Staff Union, Sungei Chinoh Estate, Trolak.
- Malayan Mining Employees' Union, 203A, Birch Village Road, Taiping.
- Perak Indian School Teachers' Union, First Mile, Salama Road, Bagan Serai.
- Malay Teachers' Union, Perak, 469, Jalan Istana Negara, Bukit Chandan, Kuala Kangsar.
- Perak Building Workers' Union, 79, Theatre Street, Ipoh.
- Methodist Private School Teachers' Association, Methodist Afternoon School, Lahat Road, Ipoh.
- The Malayan Graduate Teachers' Union, 140, Jalan Ablul Jalil, Ipoh.
- North Perak Firewood Workers' Union, 97, Kota Road, Taiping.
- The Association of Teachers in English in Chinese Schools, Federation of Malaya, K6, Jalan Pasir Puteh, Ipoh.
- The National Union of Teachers, Federation of Malaya, 248, Town Lane, Sungei Siput, North Perak.
- The Federation of Malaya Teachers Union, Federation of Malaya, 226, MVI Ground, Taiping, Perak.
- The Perak River Hydro Electric Power Company's Senior and Junior Officers' Association, 88, Brewster Road, Ipoh.
- Ching Wah Company Employees' Union, 2, Market Lane, Ipoh.
- Federation Replanting Staff Union, State Replanting Office, c/o State Agricultural Office, Kuala Lumpur.
- Malayan P.W.D. Overseers' Union, 470a Loke Yew Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Locomotive Engineers' Union, Malayan Railways, 59, Travers Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Union of Telecommunication Workers of Malaya, Room 7, 4th Floor, M.C.A. Building, Ampang Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Malayan Railway Junior Officers' Union, c/o Railway Co-operative Thrift and Loan Society, Kuala Lumpur.
- All Malayan Railway Workers' Union, Ipoh Road, Sentul, Kuala Lumpur.
- Federal Telecommunications Employees' Trade Union, c/o Telecoms Stores and Workshops, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur.

- Telecoms Telephone Operators' Association, 17, Weld Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Selangor State Government Medical and Health Employees' Union, General Hospital Compound, Kuala Lumpur.
- Government Printing Department Employees' Trade Union of the Federation of Malaya, Printing Department, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Selangor Agricultural Department Workers' Trade Union, Central Experimental Station, Serdang.
- Signalmen's Union, Malayan Railway, 27a Perkins, Kuala Lumpur.
- Government Employees' Union, Selangor, 2266/3 Waterworks Quarters, Sentul Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Union of Post Office Workers, Malaya, General Post Office, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Government Clerical Services Union, Selangor, 1362 Kandang Kerbau Road, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Federation of Government Administrative and Clerical Unions, Federation of Malaya, 1362, Kandang Kerbau Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Selangor Government Medical Services Union, General Hospital, Kuala Lumpur.
- Malayan Technical Services Union, 4th Floor, Room 7, M.C.A. Building, 67, Ampang Street, Kuala Lumpur.
- Mechanised Accounting Staff Union, Malayan Railways, Mechanised Accounting Section, Malayan Railway, Kuala Lumpur.
- Malayan Railways Employees' Trade Union, 11, Jalan Haji Salleh, Sentul, Kuala Lumpur.
- Association of Trade Union Officers, Federation of Malaya, c/o Trade Union Advisers' Office, Young Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Union of Fire Fighting Services, Federation of Malaya, Block c, 18, Central Fire Station, Shaw Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Malayan Film Unit Staff Association, Bungsar Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Federation Broadcasting Staff Union, 3a, Parry Lane, Kuala Lumpur.
- Selangor P.W.D. Workers' Union, 63/1, Two and a Half Mile, Cheras Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Police Administrative and Clerical Services Union, Federation of Malaya, 248 Bluff Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Income Tax Officers' Union, Income Tax Department, Kuala Lumpur.

- Laboratory Assistants' Union, Federation of Malaya, c/o Institute for Medical Research, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Labour Officers' Union, Federation of Malaya, c/o State Labour Office, Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Petaling Jaya Authority Workers' Union, Block F, House 1, Road, 8/3, Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur.
- The National Union of Government Office Workers, Federation of Malaya, 1362, Kandang Kerbau Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Malayan Nurses' Union, Room 7, 4th Floor, M.C.A. Building, Ampang Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Central Electricity Board Junior Officers' Union, c/o Central Electricity Board Offices, Gombak Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Central Electricity Board Employees' Union, 107, Bungsar Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Kuala Lumpur Municipality Workers' Trade Union, 127, Loke Yew Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Technical Services Union, Central Electricity Board Federation of Malaya, Bungsar Power Station, Bungsar Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- War Department Civilian Staff Association, Malaya District, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Municipal Services Union, Municipal Offices, Kuala Lumpur.
- Estate Staff Union, Klang and Coast, Seafield Estate, Batu Tiga, Kuala Lumpur and Ulu Selangor Districts Estate Staff Union, B1, 4½ Mile, Klang Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Pan Malayan Gold and Silversmith Employees' Union, 44, Sultan Street, Kuala Lumpur.
- Colliery Workers' Trade Union, Selangor, F 1693 (Top Floor), Main Street, Batu Arang.
- The Colliery Asian Staff Union, Malayan Collieries, Batu Arang.
- Harbour Workers' Trade Union, Port Swettenham, 106, Watson Road, Port Swettenham.
- Selangor Clerical and Administrative Staff Union, Loke Yew Building, 1, Holland Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Selangor Cigar Workers' Trade Union, 7, Broadrick Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Klang District Chinese Engineering Employees Union, 41e, Kapar Road, Klang.
- Ulu Selangor District Chinese Engineering Employees' Union, 20, Main Street, Batu Arang.
- Kuala Lumpur District Chinese Engineering Employees' Unions, 58, Sultan Street, Kuala Lumpur.

- The Malayan Federation of Clerical and Administrative Staff Unions, c/o Thaver and Co., First Floor, Chan Wing Building, Mountbatten Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Selangor Indian School Teachers' Union, c/o Jalan Heoh Estate, Klang.
- Selangor Transport Workers' Union, 125, Ampang Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- National Union of Factory and General Workers, Federation of Malaya, 87, Ampang Street, Kuala Lumpur.
- Selangor State Chinese Catering Industry Workers' Union, 8, Gombak Lane, Batu Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Central Malaya Timber Industry Workers' Union, 72b Chow Kit Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Rubber Research Institute Staff Union, R.R.I., Ampang Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Lever Brothers Factory Workers' Union, The Canteen, Lever Brothers (Malaya) Ltd, Bungsar Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- National Union of Plantation Workers, Plantation House, Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur.
- The National Union of Teachers of Malaya, Chan Wing Building (1st Floor) Mountbatten Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- National Mining Workers Union of Malaya, 73, Ampang Street, Kuala Lumpur.
- Kesatuan Guru Bahasa Melayu, Sekolah Tempatan, Semenan-jong, Jinjang North School, Jinjang, Selangor.
- Selangor Industrial and Commercial Employees' Union, 83, Cross Street, Kuala Lumpur.
- National Union of Railwaymen, Malaya, 9, Bungsar Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Malay Administrative Service Association, c/o Selangor Secretariat, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Government Storekeepers' Union, Federation of Malaya, c/o P.W.D. Federal Stores, Cheras Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Union of Co-operative Officers, Federation of Malaya, c/o Dept. of Co-operative Development, Cenotaph Road, K. Lumpur.
- National Union of Information Services Field Staffs, Federation of Malaya, c/o Department of Information, Brockman Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Asian Customs Services Union of Malaya, U.M.N.O. Building, Batu Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- The Government Temporary Officers' Union, Federation of Malaya, 16A, Scott Road, Kuala Lumpur.

- Malayan Railway Engineering and Health Department Workers' Union, House 5, Block 5A, Railway Quarters, Bungsar Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- Pan Malayan Federation of Chinese Engineering Employees' Union, 56, Sultan Street, Kuala Lumpur.
- The All Malayan Mining Industries Staff Union, 12, Gombak Road, Ground Floor, Kuala Lumpur.
- National Union of Transport Workers, Federation of Malaya, 151, Ipoh Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- South Malaya Toddy Tappers' Union, 1A Imbi Road, K. Lumpur.
- All Malayan Estate Staff Union, 405 and 503 China Insurance Building, Batu Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- News Vendors' Union, Selangor, 73, Station Road, Sentul, Kuala Lumpur.
- Naafi Employees' Union, 143, Abdul Samad Road, K. Lumpur.
- Race Course General Employees' Union, Federation of Malaya, Race Course, Ampang Road, Kuala Lumpur.
- National Union of Cold Storage Employees, c/o M.T.U.C. Kuala Lumpur.
- State Medical Employees' Trade Union, General Hospital, Seremban, Negri Sembilan.
- Negri Sembilan Junior Medical Staff Union, General Hospital, Seremban.
- Negri Sembilan Government Workers' Union, 443, Jalan Haji Hamid, Seremban.
- Government Administrative and Clerical Services Union, Negri Sembilan, 106, Birch Road, Seremban.
- The Anti-Malarial Staff Union, 63, Kierman Crescent, Seremban.
- The Federation Forces Civil Staff Union, Port Dickson, c/o Headquarters, Port Dickson Garrison.
- Health and Sanitary Inspectors' Union, Federation of Malaya, c/o Town Council Office, Seremban.
- Negri Sembilan Indian School Teachers' Union, 106, Birch Road, Seremban.
- Negri Sembilan Chinese Engineering Employees' Union, 6, Lemon Street, Seremban.
- The Information Services Field Staff Union, Negri Sembilan and Malacca, 106 Birch Road, Seremban.
- Negri Sembilan Town Overseas' Union, c/o Town Board Office, Kuala Klawang, Jelubu, Negri Sembilan.
- The Negri Sembilan Clerical and Administrative Staff Union, 35, Lemon Street, Seremban.
- Pahang Medical and Health Workers' Trade Union, District Hospital, Bentong.

- Pahang Government Workers' Trade Union, Cherah Road, Raub, Pahang.
- The Government Junior Staff Union, Pahang, c/o Supreme Court, Raub, Pahang.
- The Pahang Medical Services Union, District Hospital, Kuantan.
- Assistant Registration Officers' Union, Federation of Malaya, Registration Office, Kuala Lipis, Pahang.
- Pahang Indian School Teachers' Union, Tamil School, Bentong.
- Pahang Motor Vehicle Employees' Union, c/o Wah Nam Coffee Shop, Benta, Pahang.
- Pahang Malay Teachers' Union, c/o Malay Boys School, Pekan, Pahang.
- Malacca Settlement Government Workers' Union, P.W.D. Lines No. 24, Malacca.
- Malacca Government Medical Labour Union, General Hospital Quarters, Malacca.
- Government Workers' Union, Alor Gajah, Labour Lines, Lelemak Road, Alor Gajah.
- The Medical Services Union, Malacca, 150 P.W.D. Building, Central Hospital, Malacca.
- Malacca Government Engineering Workers' Union, 86 Jonker Street, Top Floor, Malacca.
- Municipal Labourers' Union, Malacca, 90, Wolferstan Road, Malacca.
- Malacca Municipal Services Union, Malacca Municipal Office, Malacca.
- The Malacca Clerical and Administrative Staff Union, 86B Temple Street, Malacca.
- Malacca Lighter Workers' Union, 23, First Cross Street, Malacca.
- Harbour Labourers' Union, 99, First Cross Street, Malacca.
- The Malacca Indian School Teachers' Union, 16, Ujong Pasir, Malacca.
- The Malacca Malay Teachers' Union, 30, Riverside, Malacca.
- Malacca Chinese School Teachers' Union, 20, Tranquerah Road, Malacca.
- Federation of Indian School Teachers' Union, Alor Gajah Tamil School, Alor Gajah.
- Malacca Shoe Factory Employees' Union, 166, Heeren Street, Malacca.
- Chinese Engineering Workers' Union, Malacca and Johore, 26, Kee Ann Road, Malacca.
- Shop and Industrial Workers' Union, South Malaya, 110, Newcome Road (2nd Floor), Malacca.

- National Union of Printing Workers, Federation of Malaya, 81, Kubu Road, Malacca.
- Malacca Omnibus Employees' Union, 17, Tranquerah Road, Malacca.
- Johore Medical Workers' Union, General Hospital Attendants Quarters, Johore Bahru.
- Mersing District Government Workers' Union, 343, Jalan Temenggong, Mersing.
- Government Workers' Union, Johore West, 128, Jalan Kluang, Batu Pahat.
- Johore District Government Workers' Union, Bukit Chagar, Johore Bharu.
- Muar District Government Association, 805, Jalan Daud, Muar.
- Kluang Government Workers' Union, 319, P.W.D. Quarters, Half Mile, Jalan Batu Pahat, Kluang.
- The Johore Malay Government Workers' Union, Block 1144, P.W.D. Kebun Teh, Johore Bharu.
- Government Workers' Union Segamat, 15, Jalan Hassan, Segamat.
- Johore Medical Services Union, Johore Medical Sports Club, Johore Bharu.
- North Johore Government Workers' Union, Batu 1, Jalan Buloh Kasap, Segamat.
- Malaya Government Workers' Union, Kluang, c/o 605, P.W.D. Labourers' Quarters, Jalan Pahat, Kluang.
- Tampoi Mental Hospital Employees' Trade Union, Tampoi Mental Hospital, Johore Bharu.
- Johore State Sanitary Overseers' Union, Town Council Office, Johore Bharu.
- Government Junior Staff Union of Johore, 3, Jalan Hashim, Muar.
- Johore State Cigar Labourers' Union, 172 Jalan Ngee Heng, Johore Bharu.
- Johore State Gold and Silversmiths' Union, 12, Jalan Jenang, Batu Pahat.
- Johore Indian School Teachers' Union, Jalan Abdullah, Segamat.
- Johore Malay School Teachers' Union, 41-3, Jalan Sultanah, Batu Pahat.
- British Broadcasting Corporation (Malaya) Staff Association, 3½ mile Jalan Masai, Tebrau, Johore Bharu.
- Kesatuan Guru Melayu Lain Latchan (Persekutuan Tanah Melayu), 32, Jalan Majidi, Muar, Johore.
- Union of Teachers of English in Vernacular Schools, Federation of Malaya, 435A Jalan Daud, Muar, Johore.

- Kelantan Clerical Services Union, c/o Survery Office, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.
- Kesatuan Pegawai Rendah Obatan dan Kasihatan, State Hospital, Kota Bharu.
- Government Workers' Union, Kelantan, P.W.D. Workshop, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.
- Kelantan Penggulus' Clerical Services Union, c/o District Office, Kota Bharu.
- Government Hospital Assistants' Union, Kelantan, Kelantan Medical Sports Club, Jalan Doctor, Kota Bharu.
- Kelantan Chinese School Teachers' Union, c/o M.T.U.C., Kuala Lumpur.
- Trengganu Government Clerical Union, Government Club, Kuala Trengganu.
- Medical Staff Union, Trengganu, c/o General Hospital, Kuala Trengganu.
- Asian Customs Services Union, Trengganu, c/o Customs Office, Kuala Trengganu.
- The P.W.D. Town Board Employees' Trade Union, Trengganu, 44, Jalan Tok Lain, Kuala Trengganu.
- Malay Teachers' Union, Trengganu, c/o Malay School, Paya Bunga, Kuala Trengganu.
- The East Coast Mining and Industrial Workers' Union, 54, Lim Tech Wan Street, Kuala Dungun, Dungun, Trengganu.