

# SCORPIO

## The Communist Eraser

by

Leong Chee Woh



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2 JUL 1999  
Perpustakaan Negara  
Malaysia

In remembrance of my  
beloved parents



## FORWARD

By

GENERAL TAN SRI DATO' ZAIN HASHIM (Rtd.)  
CHIEF OF ARMY, MALAYSIA (1980-1984)  
PSM, SPMJ, SIMP, SPSK, DCSM, DPMS, DSAP,  
DSMT, PNBS, PGDK, PGAT, SMT, PJK, PPB,  
PSC, JSSC, RCDS, FMIM, FBIM, AMP (Harvard)

I first met Leong Chee Woh at a meeting of the Thailand Regional Border Committee in Kedah in 1965 when I was the Principal Staff Officer of the National Operations Committee Staff. On my posting as Brigade Commander Sarawak, we renewed our friendship together with the late Jimmy Khoo Chong Kong, then HSB Sarawak, in 1969. Here we worked closely together to eliminate the North Kalimantan Communist Party (Sarawak Communist Organisation). Our paths crossed again in Pahang in 1980 when I was the Chief of Army.

In all our contacts, both official and unofficial, we worked closely together in spite of the differences in rank - with a common aim to eliminate the militant communists. Our successes could not have been achieved without the close co-operation of the Special Branch, the Army, the Police Field Force and the other Government Agencies and in particular Chee Woh's role in those specific operations. His intimate knowledge of the communists and their modus operandi resulted in many successes.

This book should be read by all those who are responsible for the security of the Nation.

I congratulate Chee Woh for this effort and look forward to his other works.

#### Publishers Note

In keeping with the author's wishes to preserve the integrity of his literary style, the publishers have faithfully reproduced the author's manuscript without editorial intervention.

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## SCORPIO - THE COMMUNIST ERASER

### 1

#### BACKGROUND

According to the Lunar calendar I was born in the year of the Snake. Following the Western horoscope I am a Scorpio. Snakes and scorpions are poisonous and deadly. Vicious and unpleasant characteristics were to surface in me as I progressed in life.

I do not know anything about my blood antecedents, nor do I know the identity of my biological parents. From my birth certificate I know I was born on the eleventh of November, 1929, in Taiping, a small township in the northern part of Malaya. My earliest memories are of my foster family. I was one of four children, two boys and two girls, adopted by my foster parents, an overseas Chinese couple who lived in Taiping. With this family I spent my formative years up until I completed my secondary schooling. Today, although I am able to trace my biological parents who discarded me as a baby, I have no desire to do so. I honour and revere my parents who reared me and made me into the person I am.

I am most thankful to my foster parents, not only for giving me the basic necessities of life, but also for forming my character which enabled me to enjoy a most challenging and interesting life. From the vantage point of the present I look back to my childhood years with gratitude in my heart. When my parents were alive I did not have the means to repay them for all they did for me. They are now long gone and my only expression of gratitude is to pay homage at their graves

during the Ching Beng observance, a Chinese version of All souls Day, which falls on the fifth of April every year. Henceforth I shall refer to my foster parents as father and mother or dad and mum.

Father was a Baba. I do not know much about his family background. In the days of my childhood it was impolite to enquire about such matters. Father was a handsome man with hawkish eyes into which I never dared look directly. He was a traditionalist and instilled into his children Chinese customs and a knowledge of Chinese culture. He was a strict disciplinarian who caned any child who misbehaved, requiring the miscreant to bring the rotan cane to him to deliver the punishment. Despite his strictness he had a kind and generous heart. Although I remember the many beatings I endured, I do so with undiminished admiration for the man who did his duty to educate and raise his children in the best way he knew.

A Baba is an overseas Chinese who lived in the British Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore and who spoke a Malay argot. My father's mother tongue was a rare Chinese dialect called Sinneng. He was multi-lingual, speaking three further Chinese dialects - Cantonese, Hakka and Hokkien. He also spoke fluent Indian having associated with members of the Indian community since childhood. His father, who was referred to as "grandfather", and who I never met, had migrated from China, crossing the China Sea in a large wooden boat known as a tongkang. He settled in Taiping where he made his fortune from tin mining, after which he opened a chain of pawnshops in Taiping and Penang. Dad was educated in an English medium school to the permitted level of standard five. In the days of the British colonial administration to reach standard five was quite an achievement for a Chinaman. The colonial administration tailored schooling for the locals to suit its labour requirements. Quite cleverly they also ensured a good road system. The combination of an educated work force and efficient transportation expedited the smooth passage of raw materials to the British motherland for processing and eventually to be returned to the colonies in the form of commodities, thereby achieving double revenue

through duties paid both ways. Right up until Independence in 1957 shop shelves throughout Malaya were stocked with British goods.

At the turn of the century the overseas Chinese in Malaya could choose to be educated in either English medium schools or Chinese medium schools. Many parents, suspicious of Western ways, chose Chinese medium schools for their children, thereby virtually ensuring that their children would join the family business when they finished their schooling. The few children who attended English medium schools had a choice of working for the colonial administration, or British commercial companies, or joining their family business. My grandfather was a man of some vision and sent my father to an English medium school. After finishing his schooling my father worked with grandfather for several years. As a rich man grandfather was able to provide him with all the desirable material things of life. Always he dressed immaculately, with his clothes usually tailored from silk and his slippers hand made from leather and embroidered with colourful sequins and gold and silver thread. My father strictly adhered to the customs and practices then prevailing in China. Up until the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty he sported a very long pigtail. Also he enjoyed what we would describe today as the pleasures of a playboy - women, gambling, song and travel. He was envied by many of his contemporaries, especially when he drove around town in his smart Fiat convertible.

Dad was a very generous man. When he was in the position to do so, he gave generously to the needy and contributed to all charitable organisations. He was also a proud man who maintained his dignity until the end. Although, according to Chinese customs, it was obligatory for the children to look after their parents in the time of need or in their old age, he waived this because of his good understanding of human nature. In spite of his dire need of finance in his later years he would not solicit and would refuse direct offers of financial assistance even from his children. All forms of assistance had to be carried out in a very discreet manner. Money had to be put in

envelopes and placed in his favourite cupboard where he could recover them sometime later, or a note left somewhere where he could be informed that there was something for him to retrieve from a certain place in the house.

Some years after the death of my grandfather the family business collapsed. Fortunately for my father his English medium schooling came to his rescue and he managed to obtain a position with an English lawyer practising in Taiping. His monthly salary was \$20.00, an amount sufficient to meet the needs of the family and to allow him to continue to enjoy his frivolous pleasures.

Our family household consisted of my father, his two wives, his mother, four adopted children, two nephews belonging to my Tai Koo, father's elder sister, and two maids. In common with most Chinese households of the time we also had two mongrel dogs. Father's two nephews stayed with us throughout their school years because there was not an English medium school in the township where my Tai Koo Cheung, or uncle, worked.

My father had married a second wife when it was concluded my mother was infertile. After a few years of marriage without the birth of any children it became obligatory for my mother to find another wife for her husband so that heirs could be born to carry on the family line. After several years of marriage with the second wife without any children being born, it was decided that adoption was the next step to take to meet the requirement to have heirs. Each wife was allowed to adopt two children, a boy and a girl. I was the youngest of the four children and belonged to the second wife. Not long after the adoptions the second wife, who would have been my mother, passed away. She had suffered from constant headaches and for relief consumed a Chinese herbal medicine which, after some time, affected her brain to such a degree that she was certified and died in a lunatic asylum. The two latter adopted children, a girl and myself, were looked after by my father's first wife whom we addressed as "mother". We addressed

father as "Ah Suk", or uncle. The reason for addressing him as such was to trick those evil spirits who had lingered behind in this world to steal children so that they, the spirits, could reincarnate. To outwit these malevolent spirits children were given animal names or pretended not to have a father. My memories of our family are happy ones. Of course we had the usual bickering and petty quarrels common to all households but overall we lived amicably together until one by one the children grew up and went their different ways.

Father lived to the age of eighty six years despite smoking cigarettes, cigars, cheroots and even dragging heavily on a pipe, and leading a vigorous life of pleasure. Perhaps one reason for his longevity was his total abstinence from alcohol. He always maintained that a person looked very foolish and unimpressive when drunk. Father's very heavy indulgence in tobacco over a prolonged period affected his lungs and towards the end of his life, he coughed incessantly and remained awake throughout the night. One day when the coughing affected his breathing, he consulted his physician and was informed that he had contracted cancer, which was a comparatively new, unknown and painful disease with no apparent cure. He was advised to be admitted into the hospital but decided against it. Sixteen days later the cancerous lump in his throat had grown to such an extent that it choked him to death. After he passed away a close relative in whom father confided, revealed that he preferred a quick death over suffering. And, because he was an understanding man, he ensured that his loved ones were not subjected to any form of mental suffering and physical discomfort in looking after him during his illness.

Mother was a Nyonya, the female equivalent to the male Baba. She was exceptionally beautiful and always dressed very well. Nyonias wore a distinctive costume of Malay appearance consisting of a long flowing ankle length robe covering a sarong. A shirt, somewhat resembling a vest, was worn under the robe. The robe was held together with gold or silver jewelry pinning the lapels. Her thick, long flowing hair, measuring over a metre in length, was rolled into a bun on

the top of her head. Every day she spent several hours grooming her hair and on special occasions such as weddings or birthdays or religious festivals her grooming would take much longer as she adorned her bun with selected hand sewn flowers. A long strong gold or silver pin impaled the bun. As well as being decorative this pin served an essentially practical purpose. If, during intimacy, the husband experienced a condition known as Chung Fung, which literally translates as “contracted air”, but really means “suffered a heart attack”, the woman would withdraw this hairpin and pierce her husband’s vertebrae to revive him.

Although, as was the custom of the times, mother was not formally educated and could neither read nor write, she had an excellent memory which enabled her to become quite learned. She was a very pious woman and in spite of her educational handicap she memorized all the religious observances and festivals to the very letter. For me her piety had the unhappy consequence of my having to accompany her to the temple every Friday and on every religious festival. On the temple visit days she would wake up very early to begin the preparations of the offerings for the gods. In Chinese belief there are many gods so a great deal of food must be prepared to appease them all. The preparations must be thorough because the gods are all-seeing! The usual offerings were a boiled chicken with the entrails arranged by the side of the bird, barbecued or roasted duck, fruits, cakes, joss sticks, candles, tea, wine and paper money. When these were all prepared they were neatly packed into a basket so as not to arrive at the temple squashed and thereby give offence to the gods. We traveled to the temple by jinrickshaw, a man drawn cart with two large metal or wooden wheels. The lifting of the heavy basket into and out of the jinrickshaw and then carrying it to the temple altar was quite a Herculean task for a skinny ten year old boy. At the altar I had to assist to lay out the offerings in the ordained order so it would be approved by the gods. Then followed the most painful part. I had to light the candles and joss sticks which, when once alight, emitted a most pungent smoke which irritated my eyes and throat. To show discomfort would be to very definitely



displease the gods. On one occasion my temper overcame me and I described the ritual as a farce. If we had not been in the temple at the time of my outburst I still shudder to imagine what would have been the immediate outcome for me. As it was, I carried some rotan marks for several days to remind me of my blasphemous outburst. I remember my mother telling me that the gods were very generous by not punishing me there in the temple. From that day on, I had no further interest or belief in religion, a position I confirmed in later years when I could reason in a more informed manner. As it happens my children are also non-believers, possibly because as a non-believer myself I could not educate them in matters of religious faith.

In hindsight I think my father was more understanding than my mother.

My father's mother lived with us. She came from a very rich family in China and suffered from that strange Chinese status custom of having her feet bound as a young girl. She enjoyed drinking alcohol and usually, by the day's end, she would be hopelessly drunk. She had a large circle of friends who she visited every day, carrying with her a jar of Chinese wine. She did not use a wine cup but drank direct from the spout of the wine jar. On one occasion while visiting her daughter, who lived nearby, she became very drunk, slipped down the steps and broke her leg. Then she moved to the ground floor of our house and established her bedroom behind a partition in the sitting room. She was most particular about the children having their daily bath. Because the Taiping water flows down to the town from springs deep in the nearby hills the temperature of the water is so cold that even on a hot day bathing was a harsh experience. Grandmother was very alert to our ploys of avoiding the daily torment. By listening to the sound of the running water in the bathroom she would know whether we had bathed or pretended to bathe. She would threaten to report to my father anyone detected pretending to bathe. Usually this threat was enough to send the miscreant child back to the bathroom for a proper bathing session.

It was common for overseas Chinese people of the day to remain loyal to their roots of origin and whenever they referred to China, it was always as "the old country". They also believed that before they died there would be a last earthly act to perform, and this would surface with a strong yearning to tread on the ground. Although my grandmother had a premonition of her death she did not confide in anyone. The morning before she died, when the household awoke, she was found missing from her bed which had been nicely made up. Although she was handicapped with only one leg she had managed to move the distance of about fifteen yards from her bed to the front of the house. When she was found, the main doors were wide open and she was sitting on a chair facing the road with her personal belongings neatly wrapped in a sarong as if ready to travel. When my father enquired from her what she was doing, she replied that she was waiting for transport to return to "the old country". The night she passed away.

When grandmother died the country was still under the Japanese occupation and we still used kerosene lamps. On the night of her death the elders were too busy preparing for the funeral rites to accompany me upstairs to bed. As I had often teased grandmother and, as was the case with most Chinese children, I was afraid of the dark and ghosts, I was terrified my grandmother may haunt me for my naughtiness. As I walked up the stairs I closed my eyes to avoid seeing any lurking ghost, and counted the steps to the first floor landing. With a few more steps I would be at my bedside. When I jumped onto the bed I had the greatest fright of my life because my knee had brushed against the cold brass bed frame which I believed was a waiting ghost.

## 2

## EARLY LIFE

My birthplace, Taiping, lies at the foot of the hills in the north-west of the Malay Peninsular. It boasts the second highest rainfall in the world, next to Charapunjee in India. The town was started by Chinese migrants who came to this region to seek a fortune mining tin. Many succeeded but many others remained throughout their lives as poor as the day they arrived from China. My grandfather was one of those who succeeded. In the early days there were many gang wars in the township. In time these passed and the town settled down with only sporadic outbreaks of violence. I recall one story my father told me of one of his convoys of tin ore being attacked by bandits who were fought off by the convoy's armed guards with considerable bloodshed.

I remember the town when both sides of the streets were lined with Flame of the Forest trees which flowered twice a year with yellow and crimson flowers. Only the centre of the roads were bitumenised so children could play safely under these cool and shady trees. The town's proudest boast was the beautiful Lake Gardens which surrounded a large natural lake and were the favorite haunt of young and old.

Long before I started my schooling the King Edward VII School was established as a premier English medium school and renowned for producing not only men of distinction but also all round sportsmen. Before the Second World War the school had two sections - one up to standard four, located about three miles from the town centre, and the other from standard four to school certificate, located in the centre of the town. After the war these were changed to primary and secondary sections. At the age of six I joined the junior or primary section and I had completed standard four when the Japanese invaded Malaya in 1941. Then there was a lapse of four years before I resumed schooling in 1945. This long interval affected my studies after the war. During

my primary school years I walked the three miles to and from school daily.

When the Japanese soldiers entered Malaya from the north at Kota Bharu news of their atrocities quickly spread throughout the country. In the days before the soldiers entered Taiping, Japanese bombers, with the big red circle on their wings identifying them as Japanese, could be seen dropping bombs on the outskirts of the town. Every family frantically made preparations to evacuate into the hills to escape the Japanese troops who were known to plunder and rape as they made their way southwards. In those days household swill was collected daily for feeding pigs in the hog farms on the edge of the town. An elderly widow named Sau Swee Sam, who lived at the foot of the hills near the cemetery, would visit our house daily to collect the swill. We made arrangements to stay with her to avoid the Japanese until they had left the area. Her house was a one room attap shed. Six members of our household crammed into this tiny area for the two months it took for the Japanese military authorities to establish law and order. Because we did not know how long we would be hiding in the foothills we soon exhausted our fresh food supplies. Meat was not available and fresh vegetables were scarce. Fortunately we had a large stock of canned food, the bulk of which were tins of foo yue, a fermented bean curd, which had a strong and quite revolting smell. Hunger forced me to take this with my rice on one occasion but, thereafter, I chose to go hungry rather than eat it. Until today I cannot touch foo yue nor sit at a table where it is being served. The stories of rape by Japanese soldiers were numerous so, to deceive the soldiers, my two sisters had their heads shaved and wore boys clothing. During the day we hid in the hills and only returned to the hut at nightfall. We used kerosene lamps for light during this period, but as the occupation went on kerosene became another scarce commodity.

After extensive enquiries, and only when it was considered safe, we returned from the hills to our home two months after our hurried exodus. We lived in the only three storied house in our street and, in

spite of the general plundering that happened when most of the towns people evacuated to the hills, our house was untouched. The only item of value which was irreparably damaged was my father's convertible Fiat which he hid underneath a small bridge near our place of exile. After two months exposure to the elements the car was unserviceable.

Our old house still stands. It is a typical Chinese town house, measuring 24 feet in width and 170 feet in depth. On the ground floor is a sitting room for receiving visitors. Behind a partition in this room is the family room used for entertaining guests at dinners. The Kitchen God stood in the kitchen on a platform fixed to the wall. Also on the platform was a large brass urn to hold joss sticks and candles and an oil lamp which burnt twenty four hours a day. There was a smaller platform to accommodate the Earth God with the same accoutrements, but on a reduced scale. The dining room held a circular table large enough to seat the whole family. Usually I sat on the right side of my mother. We all used chopsticks, which early on caused a problem for me. As a left hander my chopsticks clashed against those of my mother. She cured me of my left-handedness by continuously cracking her chopsticks against my head. To this day the only implements I use with my right hand are chopsticks and scissors. Even in primary school, despite the attempts of my teachers to change me to write right handed, which included considerable brutalising incidents such as beating my left hand knuckles with the edge of a ruler, canings and even knocking my head against a brick wall, I remained a left hander.

Three bedrooms were located on the first floor upstairs and there was one bedroom on the top floor which was not used, except for visitors. When I was old enough to sleep on my own I moved into this bedroom. After some time I learnt that no member of the family would sleep in it because it was said to be haunted. For many months, regardless of the outside temperature I would sleep with my head and body encased in a blanket, despite being drenched all night with perspiration.

Throughout the Japanese occupation, every householder was required to report to the Japanese authorities the number of people living in their house and their age and sex. In this way the Japanese kept control over the local populace. All school children were required to learn the Japanese language. I reported to the local St. George's Institution which had been taken over as a Japanese language school. Parents were not given the option as to whether or not they sent their children to school. The Japanese demanded absolute obedience to their decrees and directives. To make their point they beheaded a number of locals and impaled the heads on stakes in the town square.

Before we attended school we were required to go to the barbershop and have our heads shaved. Every student had to wear a school uniform. On the first day, at the school assembly, we were told the daily drill. Each morning at assembly we must bow three times to the Rising Sun and sing the Japanese anthem, Kimigayo, before we marched to our class rooms. In school we learnt initially the Katakana, the most basic Japanese alphabet. Once we mastered this we learnt the Hiragana and the Kanji script. After one and a half years the Japanese authorities launched a campaign to recruit local boys to join Japanese institutions. Boys who had a fair grasp of the Japanese language were chosen. I was selected and engaged as an office boy and part time interpreter for a Lt. Colonel doctor who ran a clinic in the compound occupied by the infamous Kempetai, which was located in the secondary school section of my old school, a couple of blocks from my home.

In this position, I learnt a lot about first aid and dispensing medicine. The doctor was quite pleasant to work with. He resembled Wong Sin Sang or Teacher Wong, a famous Chinese cartoon character. He was also kindly disposed towards the local community and, because of the acute shortage of medicine in the local clinics, he treated any local in need of urgent attention. After a year in his service I was a common face in the Kempetai establishment, accepted by the officials and the workers. In the town food was scarce with the stable diet of rice

supplemented, and often substituted, by tapioca. Whatever rice obtained was old stock and was treated with quicklime to prevent weevils spoiling it. As the Japanese soldiers were well fed, the civilian workers in the Japanese institutions were permitted to take home leftover food on a rotation basis. Also every worker had his ration of cigarettes, a luxury item my father looked forward to with eagerness. It was whilst working for the doctor that I had my first taste of alcohol and my first cigarette. At the time I was thirteen years old. My initiation to these two pleasurable vices started during a Japanese New Year celebration. Little did I know on that New Year day, that these habits would stay with me for so long. For thirty nine years I continued to smoke. Until today I still enjoy the comfort of Dr Johnnie Walker, believing the doctor is good for my health!

The house next door to our home was a coffee shop. The same owner and his family had run the business for many years. My father patronised the coffee shop every day and at the end of the month my father paid his bill. It was an amicable arrangement between two friends. After dinner, I would visit the owner's children and while away the evenings in idle conversation. After I had worked with the Japanese doctor for a year or so, some new faces appeared in the coffee shop in the evenings. After some weeks one of the newcomers asked me if I would assist him in the future if the need arose. Some time later, this same person asked me whether I would help him and his friends dope some Japanese soldiers. I was very frightened because I knew the consequences of being caught involved in such activities. Probably the heads of all my family would be impaled on stakes in the town square. Politely I told him I needed a couple of days to consider the matter. The next day I trumped up an excuse for the doctor to relieve me from my job. When the man next visited the coffee shop, I told him I had been sacked from my job for misbehaviour. This put an end to the matter. When the Japanese surrendered and the liberation forces, including the Malayan People's Anti Japanese Army (MPAJA), came into town, I saw amongst them the man who approached me at the coffee shop. I am fortunate to be alive because two other boys working in the

Kempetai compound, who were approached by the same people and refused to assist, disappeared after the war and have not been heard of since.

After the stint with the doctor I was involved in many different trades - watch repairing, tailoring, shoe making, bicycle repairing and an apprenticeship as an electrician. Although I was not paid for any work I did I was grateful for the opportunity to learn some trade which might be useful to me after the war, if I chose not to return to school. In all these jobs I enjoyed free drinks and cigarettes from my bosses. After six months I became involved in black marketeering rice and other essential commodities which I obtained in the coastal areas near Taiping and carried by train to sell in Kuala Lumpur. When the war ended I made a great deal of money barter trading with the Japanese soldiers who were interned while waiting for repatriation to Japan. By this time, I was a proficient watch repairer. During the daytime, I would approach the internment camp fence and trade fruit and vegetables with the Japanese for their watches. The Japanese welcomed the chance to have fresh produce and I found their watches, once cleaned and provided with a new case and dial, were very marketable to the British soldiers. My normal price for a spruced up watch was ten tins of Gold Flake cigarettes, five tins of corned beef, five tins of sardines and other miscellaneous items which might be thrown into the exchange. A watch which was bartered for a bunch of bananas worth 15 cents fetched me \$22.50, a profit considered enormous in 1945. Because I spoke English and I enjoyed a good reputation for offering a fair deal, I built up a large clientele among the British and Indian soldiers. In a brief time I had made a great deal of money and the store room under our staircase was stacked full of rations. Alas, these good times did not last for ever.

The time arrived for me to return to school to finish my studies. Because I had a taste for money and an established flair for making money I was very reluctant to return to school. I spent a couple of months in standard five before the school year ended. The following



year I entered standard six. This was a year of struggle. I hoped I would fail the examinations and be compelled to leave school but, miraculously, I passed. Standard seven was another year of struggle. I played truant often, hoping to be expelled, but our teachers showed little interest in us because many of us were overage and impossible to discipline or control. We dressed casually and took our cigarettes with us to school. Although we were forbidden to smoke in the classrooms we were allowed to smoke in the prefects' room during recess periods. One kind teacher of geography even provided me with cigarettes after school. On one occasion, I accidentally set fire to the wall of the prefects' room when I hastily disposed of my cigarette when the bell rang for the afternoon session. All the smokers were questioned over the fire but I did not admit to being the culprit. After I completed my final year I told the headmaster I had caused the fire. My candour at this late time was premised on the fact that, as I had now completed my schooling, it did not matter what the headmaster knew.

During the middle of the first term in year eight the news leaked out that I had worked for the Japanese Kempetai doctor. The teachers needled and ridiculed me about my cooperation with the Japanese. I reasoned this treatment was unfair. When I worked for the Japanese I was only twelve years old, and I had no real choice in the matter. The experience of being a victim of unfair treatment turned me into a rebel and indelibly impressed on me a willingness to fight against injustice. At this time my father's employer passed away while he was on leave in England. This meant my father became unemployed. My daily pocket money was drastically curtailed. I decided I would leave school and work for the various trades people I worked with after I left the Kempetai doctor. I managed the accounts of these various tradesmen and received a total salary of \$25 per month, which in 1948 was quite a good salary. I had not told my parents I had left school so each day I left home in the morning at the normal hour to leave for school and returned in the afternoon as though I had come straight from school. After three months this had settled into a routine and neither my parents nor my form teacher realised I had left school for good. Then one

evening my subterfuge was discovered by my father and my form teacher at the same moment. My father had the habit of standing on the verandah of our house after the evening meal, bare chested and clad only in his sarong. On the evening in question my form teacher cycled past our house. When he saw my father he stopped for a chat during which he enquired about my state of health.

When I returned later that evening my parents discussed the matter with me. I told them that while I attended school I was a financial burden on them and that I would prefer to earn my own livelihood. I indicated I had no confidence I would pass my Senior Cambridge examinations and so they would have wasted their hard earned money in supporting me up to that point. They pleaded with me to return and said that they would not blame me if I failed the examinations. Reluctantly I agreed to return. I was also affected by my classmate's father who criticised my approach to my studies and said it would be a miracle if I passed my final year. This criticism stung me deeply and determined me to succeed. I was also very fortunate to have some discreet financial assistance from a relative who had saved her money over the years and had faith in my academic ability and my sincerity to repay her after I started working. By the time I found employment I owed my relative \$400 which I repaid with good interest as soon as possible.

At school I was a good sportsman. I played hockey, cricket, basketball, football, rugby and swimming. My strongest sport was swimming and I captained both my house and the school swimming teams. I will never forget one sporting episode. I was captain of my house basketball team when we played against another house. The referee was the sports master for our opponent's house. He blatantly favoured our opponents, thereby provoking me to repeatedly protest to him. However he ignored my protests so I ordered my team off the court. Such an act was unprecedented in the history of the school. Next morning I and my team were paraded before the headmaster. Although I accepted responsibility for the walk-off the headmaster sentenced the whole team to be caned,

by our parents, in front of him. When I told my father about this sentence he was not pleased with it, and refused to present himself at the school on the appointed day. The headmaster then ruled that if any parent did not attend the punishment session their son would be expelled from the school, so my father was forced to attend. As the team captain I was the first to be caned. But my father refused to cane me because the offence had been committed in the school. The headmaster was the appropriate person to mete out the punishment. I bent over the chair to take my punishment. As the cane landed on my buttocks I burst into loud laughter at the ridiculous nature of the whole affair.

During the final years of my school life I became very independent. I learnt to sew, cook and launder my clothing. These skills were really forced on me by my sister who, together with my mother, did the housework. Whenever we quarreled, which was quite often, my sister would refuse to wash my clothing or keep food for me if I arrived home late from school. Whenever my mother had free time I would pester her to teach me her cooking skills. Soon I was an adept cook, a skill which served me well when I left home to work. I washed my shoes and clothing on Friday by soaking them overnight, and on Saturday I left them out to dry. On Sunday morning I would iron the clothing and be ready for the new week.

During these senior school years I mixed freely with boys of my own age and older than me. I had three very close Chinese friends. One was my Chinese teacher for a brief time. He was a very friendly character and we relied on him because he was the only one of our closely knit group who was working and so had an income. Later he joined the police force, initially as a translator and then as an officer in the Special Branch. Another of my close friends was two years older than me. I met him during the period of the Japanese occupation when he and I worked in the same watch repair shop. Later in life he worked in Singapore as an English teacher until his death in 1978. The third member of our group turned out to be both mean and despicable. After

leaving school he too became a school teacher and through my encouragement he joined the police force with me. He had a successful career, reaching the top position for a Chinese police officer. This man showed no consideration for the welfare of his men and because of his very high rank became a petty dictator. He was a slave driver over his men. He enjoyed no social life or family life and expected his men to forfeit their own social and family life for the sake of work. He constantly strove for position and, without conscience, stole the limelight from his subordinates. Wherever he served in East and West Malaysia he was generally unpopular. In every situation he was quite inflexible and stubborn. The degree of his unpopularity surfaced on one occasion towards the latter part of 1992 when a group of seven retired officers were gathered together one evening. As the evening progressed the conversation centred on him with the group agreeing he was the most despicable person they knew. So great was their animosity towards him that they refused to refer to him by name and from thenceforth always referred to him as "That Fellow". Even in his retirement he still clamours for recognition, not realising that his former colleagues have forsaken him except for one or two who feel great pity for such a person. It was my greatest misfortune to have to serve with him for thirty three years.

Another two classmates whose companionship I enjoyed were an Indian Sikh and a neighbour. We spent a great deal of time together. While waiting for the results of our Senior Cambridge examinations we whiled away the hours swimming in the pools at the foot of the hills. On the way to the pools we would usually stop at the local toddy shop, a government institution which sold the potent alcoholic juice from the sap of the coconut tree, where, for five cents, we would buy a mug of toddy complemented by some rice and a curry of either eggs, chicken or crab. My Sikh friend was a very big youth and rather than have us wait in the long queue at the toddy shop he would barge through the crowd shouting the Sikh battlecry of "Teri Maa Dhi". On our return from the pools we would make a repeat visit to the toddy shop. This friend also joined the police force and attained high rank. As he worked

in criminal investigation for many years, where he became conversant with the law, when he retired he went to the United Kingdom and obtained his law degree. My other friend was Chinese. He entered Singapore university where he was involved with the famous Fajar case. He graduated and, under pressure, migrated to Australia where he became a school teacher. I have only met him once in the past forty five years.

The last year was an eternal struggle for me in school. My patience was at an end and I just wanted to get it over with as quickly as possible. Although I vowed to put in an extra effort, it was easier said than done. In order not to hurt the feelings of my parents, I went to school but did not really concentrate on my studies. I continued to play truant given the slightest excuse. The house where I lived was only about a hundred yards from the school and, whenever it rained in the mornings, I would skip class. There was an understanding between my maths teacher, who was no bigger than I, that I could miss his classes and I took advantage of it. There were many occasions when, after a late night, I would also miss class. However, when I did not play truant, I was very attentive to what the teachers taught in class. I owe my parents a great apology, as very foolishly and irresponsibly, the money that they found so difficult to scrape together for me to purchase the text books, I wasted on cigarettes and drinks. Therefore I attended classes empty handed and had to share the text book belonging to the boy who sat next to me. During the mid-term and final exams, the night before the next days subject came on, I would beg this same classmate who was my neighbour to lend me the text book for just one hour and, in that very brief period of time, I would spot ten likely questions and memorise the answers. In spite of the set backs, because I have a good memory, I retained a lot of what I managed to read and what the teachers taught.

During the final year we had a Sikh teacher who had taught us hygiene and physiology from when we were in standard seven (Form 3). In spite of his turban and moustache and beard and being hairy all over,

he was a handsome man and very well built. He would show off his physique by wearing T shirts and short pants. He had the reputation of being a Casanova. He drove around in a MG TD sports car and enjoyed wine, women and cigarettes, all of which were taboo to people of his religion. This teacher also had a mania to pinch the cheeks of young and especially good looking boys. It was obvious that he found some form of psychological pleasure when he smilingly, gently and passionately pinched the nice looking boys. One day when I informed my father of this, his advice to me was to stay clear of the friendly "Bie", as all Sikhs were called. I did not realise what he meant then, and, only in later years I discovered the true meaning of his words from a Sikh colleague, who indicated that Sikhs had always been termed sexually unnatural. When it came to the turn of the naughty ones, he became very sadistic and ensured his pinching hurt as much as possible as a form of punishment. One could observe that he derived great pleasure from the screams of the boys when he exerted pressure on their cheeks. One night he caught me drinking in a bar with two other classmates. Unknown to us at the time, it turned out that his favourite waitress was sitting with us and this incurred his displeasure, as no matter how hard he tried to attract her attention she chose to remain with us. We were in trouble with him from that day onwards. In those days teachers were allowed to mete out any form of punishment they deemed fit. The next school day, which was a Monday, he branded us in front of the class as those "who will never do good in life" and ridiculed us constantly. Before we were allowed to return to our desks he would exert the greatest pressure to pinch our cheeks to make it really hurt. Thereafter, in anticipation of what he would do, we were terrified each time he entered the class. To have to put up with the revolting and nauseating stench from his nicotine stained fingers, even though it was for a brief moment when he pinched us, terrified us more than the pain that he could inflict. In his classes we were on our best behaviour to ensure that he would not pick on us to avoid the unpleasantness.

I sat for my Senior Cambridge examinations in October, 1949. Because of my dismal performance, I was not confident that I could pass. Before the results were announced, I applied for entry to the teacher training college which was located in Singapore. It was not a requirement that one had passed the final examination before being interviewed in Singapore for the teacher training course. I had not visited that island before so I grasped the opportunity to see it. I was not optimistic about being accepted for teacher training for several reasons. My form teacher, an unpleasant and difficult Indian, stated in the remarks column of my school report that "he may be considered" and the head of the teacher training college was my former headmaster who had caned me. I, and one of my classmates, enjoyed our visit to Singapore. On the return train journey my classmate obtained a newspaper at Seremban Station which published the examination results. He returned to the train in an excited state, not glad so much for himself, but for me, because my name appeared as one who had passed. I had lived up to the expectations of my parents and I had proved to many others that their assessment of me was wrong. I also proved to myself that I had misjudged my own abilities. Although I achieved only a third grade I was very proud of this achievement because I had missed school for the four and one half years of the Japanese occupation and I had found returning to studies a very difficult thing to do.

## 3

AFTER SCHOOL  
CLERICAL SERVICE

In late April, 1950, I received a letter from the teacher training college informing me that my application for teacher training was successful. However, earlier that same month I had secured employment as a temporary clerk in the Taiping Town Council with a commencement salary of \$97.50 per month plus a subsistence allowance of \$8.00. Although I would have been paid more as a trainee teacher I turned down the offer from Singapore because the cost of staying in Singapore would have taken most of my pay, leaving me with nothing to send home to my parents. It was a more financially practical proposition for me to work in Taiping and continue to live at home.

My clerical job lasted only a short time. My senior officer was an Indian who had been educated to standard five only. His command of English was quite poor and wherever it was appropriate I corrected his correspondence. He was an unreasonable man and reprimanded me for typing parrot fashion what I was given and for being "a bright spark"! I tried to reason with him but that only made him more embittered. In order to avoid any further unpleasantness I decided to look for another job.

A Senior Cambridge Certificate was in great demand those days. By this time my close friend, the Chinese school teacher, had joined the police in Taiping as a translator. He informed me that there were vacancies in the police department for clerical workers so immediately I applied for the post of a police clerk and interpreter. I was called for an interview and then thought no more about the matter. One month later I received a letter directing me to report for duty with the police



department on 1st. August. I tendered my resignation to the Taiping Town Council to finish work at the end of July. During the remaining two weeks the Indian made life quite intolerable for me until one afternoon I gave him a thundering slap that sent his glasses flying and gave him the shock of his life. I left without bothering to pick up my salary for July. On 1st. August I reported for duty at the District Police Headquarters which was located about two hundred yards from my house. For the next fifteen days I underwent a saturation course of instruction about the duties of a police clerk. Assisted by my experience with the Taiping Town Council I absorbed everything being taught. I was told that I would be posted to a sub-district headquarters to become the chief clerk. I thought I was being treated very generously but I was soon to learn the reason for my sudden elevation. The Officer-in-Charge of the police District of Taiping was a young Englishman who I was to meet again in another capacity.

My posting was to Selama, twenty-two miles north of Taiping. It is an isolated town in the heart of the jungle. It has one principal road and one side road. Compared with Taiping it is a mere village. The produce of the area is rubber which is tapped by Chinese and Indians. It is still a god-forsaken place, but in 1950, at the time of the Communist Insurgency, no sensible, level headed and thoughtful person with a Senior Cambridge Certificate, would choose to work there. However, to me it presented a challenge so I accepted the posting. This was to be my first introduction to the brutality of Communist Terrorism. On 16th August, 1950, I arrived in Selama with a battered suitcase which my father had lent me. It took me a long time to find the police station. After making enquiries I finally located it situated on top of a small hill. The police had taken over the old Chinese school because of its situation in a good security position. The Officer-in-Charge of the station was absent. I noted a sub-inspector, a sergeant, several other rank and file personnel and two clerks. The clerks, one was Indian and the other Malay, assisted me look for accommodation in the township. In spite of a prolonged search the only accommodation available was a room at the rear of an old broken down wooden cinema which normally

screened Indian films. The adjacent room was occupied by the Indian clerk. I stayed in this room for the next three and one half months. There were two picture shows every evening. I could only return to my room after the late show had finished and the cinema hall had been cleaned and ventilated. I could have returned earlier if I could have borne the smell of human perspiration, cheroots and beetlenut. Usually I returned to my room after midnight when a new torture began. The wooden planks, which had expanded during the heat of the day, now contracted in the cool night air with loud creaking. Then early each morning before the first cockcrows were to be heard, my neighbour the Indian clerk, prayed aloud in front of his mirror for about forty five minutes after which he would sing with great gusto. My hints could not dissuade him from his daily ritual. I was glad for my off days when I could return to the peace and quiet of my family home.

The morning after my arrival I presented myself at the office and met the Officer-in-Charge of Police District (OPCD), a young and dashing Englishman who had been a second lieutenant with the Ghurka Rifles before he joined the police. He was pleasant, sympathetic, helpful and a man of action who did not relish office work. We related well from the first day. As we both had the senior Cambridge Certificate he was content to leave the day to day administration of the station to me while he went off to the bush to hunt Communist Terrorists (CTs). Often he would be away for days on end but on each return he found everything in immaculate order. He was most liberal with his cigarettes and allowed me to help myself to his supply whenever I wished. This was a great relief because I was struggling to send my family \$50 per month as I was working outstation. The OCPD also lent me his car for the weekends when I visited my parents.

One afternoon, about a month after I had arrived in Selama there was a great commotion outside the police station. One of the Special Constables (SCs) came into my office and excitedly informed me that the OCPD had brought back some dead CTs. Out of curiosity I went to look at the bodies. In the compound three dead bodies were laid out.

They were clad in khaki uniforms and one still wore a five pointed cap on his head with three red stars on the front of the cap. This was the first time I has seen dead CTs. Before I left Selama I was to see more. I learnt that the capture or elimination of CTs was on information provided by members of the public who were either motivated by the government rewards for information about the CTs or were aggrieved in some way about particular individuals in the CT organisation or were simply publicly minded citizens doing their duty. There were many true stories about the brutality of the CTs. On one occasion, in a village about twenty miles from Selama, some CTs abducted a local citizen they suspected to be a police informant and in front of the villagers they had hustled to the scene, tied him to a lamp post. One of the CTs then butchered him open at the left collar bone, inserted his hand into the wound and extracted the victim's heart which he proceeded to eat.

Sometimes, arrestees were brought into the police station and left in the cells for days before they were dealt with. Usually these were not the CT militants but people who were involved in some degree with the CT organisation. Our station did not have the manpower to deal with these types so they had to wait for Special Branch (SB) officers to come from Taiping to question them on the activities of the CT organisation. Because, in the main, CTs and their supporters among the people were Chinese, the SB officers who questioned them were also Chinese. On occasions when these prisoners, who were known as detainees, opted to stubbornly remain silent they were treated quite harshly.

In a small town even a newcomer soon finds companions and friends so loneliness does not last long. The station Indian clerk and I became friends and we were regular guests at the homes of the townspeople on festive occasions. I became friendly with a Chinese family who lived close to the cinema where I had my lodgings. This family spoke my dialect and within two months of my arrival in Selama I was being treated almost as a member of the family. From then on I was assured of regular meals and some one to wash my clothes. There were four

children in the family, three girls and a boy. The third daughter and I became good friends and this relationship would have progressed much further if I had remained in Selama for a longer period.

By mid-1950 the Communist insurgency could barely be contained by the security forces. The military did not have sufficient experience to fight a guerrilla war. The police were undermanned and could not provide the required protection to the rural population who were being physically and psychologically intimidated by the CT organisation. The police began a recruitment campaign for both officers and rank and file personnel with some preference to be given to those already working in the police department. When the recruitment circular reached our station the OCPD suggested I apply to become a police officer. I was not keen to pursue the matter because I knew my parents, in particular my mother, would object. Conservative Chinese parents oppose their children joining the army or the police force and my parents were no exception. The OCPD persisted in encouraging me to apply for officer training so in the end I agreed when we had devised a story which would hoodwink my mother into believing I was still employed in clerical duties at Selama. Quite soon after sending off my application I was called for an interview in Kuala Lumpur, and shortly afterwards I was informed I had been accepted for officer training.

On 30th. November, 1950, I boarded the train at Bagan Serai to travel to Kuala Lumpur to begin my training as an officer in the police force. I was very sad to leave Selama where in four months I had made many new friends and I had become infatuated with my neighbour's daughter. For the two months of basic training in Kuala Lumpur I would not enjoy any weekend leave. I explained my absence to my mother by telling her that because my OCPD was returning to England for leave I had to cover his duties and so I could not return to Taiping to visit the family. My father, my brother and the relative who had lent me funds during my final year at school, knew the truth. As the train slowly made its way to Kuala Lumpur I wondered what lay in store for me in the future.

## 4

## POLICE OFFICER TRAINING

Soon I discovered that life as a trainee at the Police depot at Gurney Road, Kuala Lumpur, was very tough. On the afternoon of my arrival I took my first meal in the mess hall. I remember it vividly as rice garnished with the bodies of small ants, smelly fish badly fried in coconut oil, extraordinarily tough and stringy beef and dried fish barely fit for dogs. The meal ended with coffee, the horrible flavour of which was possibly due to the cook using one of the old socks of the Commandant to strain it. The Mamak (an Indian who had embraced Islam) cook had ring worm type sores on his face and served the food bare chested.

During the next six months I found it was not easy to become a police officer. On arrival at the training depot I reported to the guard room and was ushered to a long wooden building located near the laterite parade ground. This building was to be my home for the duration of the training period. It was as basic as any building could be. The building had an asbestos roof and wooden walls and floor. It stood a couple of feet off the ground with one doorless opening on either side. At one end the bathrooms and lavatories were located. These also did not have doors. Windows lined the walls. A corridor ran down the centre of the building with beds on either side of it. The beds were four pieces of wooden planking resting on two wooden axles. About three feet above the head of the bed a wooden stand, secured to the wall, held a folded mosquito net and other objects which were permitted to be exposed during the daytime. The bag in which civilian clothing had been brought to the depot was placed under the bed. A black painted kit box at the foot of the bed was the receptacle for all other personal items including food and clothing.

After we had deposited our belongings we were led to the quartermaster's store where we were issued with our kit and uniforms. These consisted of two pairs of standard army issue boots, two suits of partly worn uniforms, a belt, a Songkok Bulat (a round cap with a tuft of wool on top) and eating utensils. On returning to our barracks we were told the daily routine which would govern the next two months of our basic training. Every morning at the bugle call at 0600 hours we had to awaken, wash and dress for the first drill parade at 0630 hours. After ninety minutes of drill we would break off for breakfast, after which we would drill for another hour. We then had weapons training which was followed by classes in law up to the midday break for lunch. The worst parts of the training were the law and Malay classes held in the afternoon when we were all too tired to concentrate on studying. The hot building and the monotonous voices of the instructors contributed to our propensity to sleep. From 1630 to 1730 hours we took sport and exercises which were followed by dinner. The evening was taken up with more law studies - the penal code, the criminal procedure code, the evidence ordinance and general law. At 2045 hours the bugle sounded for the end of the day. Every night, in four hour rotation, we did sentry duty until morning. This training program continued for five days every week. On Saturday there was a kit and barracks inspection. Everything had to be spick and span. The bathrooms and toilets had to be cleaned properly and the wooden floors of the barracks well scrubbed. Our personal kits had to be cleaned and polished to a brilliant shine. When an inspection revealed blemishes the whole barracks was confined for the weekend and often given extra drill and parades. The purpose of such rigorous training was to develop strong and resilient officers.

The recruitment age was from eighteen to twenty-eight years. Our class, C Squad, had fifty two recruits and we lost only two during the training period. C Squad was a mixed bag of Indians, Eurasians, Malays and Chinese. Some had been in government service and some were from the private sector. We were all shapes and sizes.

Those recruited as officers, and those recruited as rank and file personnel, all undertook the same basic training although the officer cadres were trained separately. We were known as Probationary Asian Inspector (PAI) trainees and we were not allowed to wear any badges of rank while undergoing training. Our instructors were of sergeant and corporal rank who used Malay for all commands and directions. In fact, apart from the law subjects which were taught in English, all other subjects were taught in Malay. European Police Lieutenants were brought in for the training in the Bren gun and other heavier weapons, and for battle craft training. The majority of these Europeans were non-commissioned officers in the British administration in Palestine who, when they arrived in Malaya, were quickly promoted to officer rank to save them having to pay compliments to local sub-inspectors, thereby saving face for the colonialists.

Our squad was separated into two groups. The sergeant of my group was a hefty Sikh (Bengali) who, although very strict on the parade ground, was very pleasant when he met us for contributions to buy ganja (cannabis) during our weekend breaks. The other group had a Malay corporal who was referred to as Tiger because of his fierceness towards the new recruits.

Most of the trainees enjoyed themselves in this environment. The pay was good and the camaraderie between the recruits was to contribute to the esprit de corps of the wider police force in the years ahead.

After completing the basic training course we were allowed weekend leave with the proviso we must return to barracks by 2100 hours on Sunday. Post basic training was much tougher but we had been well prepared over the first two months of basic training. The new course involved route marches every Friday morning and battle inoculation under simulated battle conditions in which live ammunition was used. During the last month we were sent out to the streets to do point duty, a welcome deployment because it provided opportunities to play truant in turns and enjoy the cool interiors of the coffee shops. We completed our training in May, 1951.

## 5

## POSTING AFTER TRAINING - BEKOK, JOHORE

All but five of our squad were posted to the state of Johore which, at that time, was the most affected by the CT organisation. The fortunate ones were posted to general duties, others went to jungle companies and the majority to look after resettlement villages. These villages housed people who had lived on the farms at the fringes of the jungle where they had been exploited by the CT organisation to provide food and other supplies to the CTs operating from the jungle. Under the village resettlement program, each family received a small plot of land on which to build a house within the village compound. The village was surrounded by two fences of barbed wire about thirty feet apart to prevent people leaving the compound at night or throwing food to the CTs. There were gates at strategic positions through which the villagers were permitted to leave the village during the day to cultivate their plots beyond the village. All the gates were manned by police personnel, usually SCs. At specified curfew times the gates were closed and nobody was allowed to leave the village. Anyone going to the jungle fringes could take only their cooked lunch with them and they were required to return to the village for their evening meal. This system was designed to deny food to the CTs. However, despite these stringent measures, some villagers managed to smuggle food to their friends and relations who were members of the CT organisation. There were many ingenious methods discovered by the SCs. Cooked and uncooked rice was wrapped in waterproof material and hidden in the night soil buckets which were carried out of the village to fertilise the vegetable plots. Whenever such practices were discovered, and the villagers refused to be disciplined, the government introduced central cooking whereby rice, the staple food, was cooked in a community kitchen and collected and paid for by the villagers at meal times.



My posting orders directed me to report to the Officer Superintending Police Circle (OSPC) in Segamat. An OSPC was in charge of three or more police districts. On 15th. June, 1951, I reported to the office of the OSPC who gave me a brief lecture and then directed me to report the following day to the OCPD at Labis. He was a young Englishman who briefed me on my responsibilities and also gave me some good general advice. Two weeks later I was told that my final destination was a small town called Bekok. Until I arrived in Bekok I did not really know the meaning of discomfort, abandonment, hopelessness and desperation.

Bekok is situated in the centre of the State of Johore at the southern end of the Malay Peninsular. It has one street with two rows of twenty or so shophouses built of bricks and timber. The population of five thousand was engaged principally in rubber tapping. The police station was located at one end of the street close to the railway station. The resettlement new village, which housed the people who had lived previously along the jungle fringes, was situated behind the main street. I arrived wearing civilian clothes and carrying the standard police issue .38 revolver. For security reasons no-one had been told my arrival date or time so no arrangements had been made for my accommodation. As there were neither hotel or boarding house in the town the only lodging available was the empty police station cell where, provided with a collapsible camp bed, a horse blanket and a mosquito net, I spent my first night.

Early next morning I contacted the Public Works Department (PWD) overseer who allocated me one of the vacant PWD quarters near the railway station. It consisted of a small room, a small kitchen and an outhouse which contained the bathroom and lavatory. The compound was overgrown with lalang (elephant grass). When the grounds were cleaned up the place became presentable and I found it comfortable enough for my needs. However, a month later, I had to vacate these quarters following a nocturnal shooting at me from a knoll opposite. By this time I had made many friends among the villagers so it was not

difficult for me to find alternate accommodation. I accepted free lodging above the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) office, where I remained until the end of my four month tour of duty.

Apart from my revolver the police station was equipped with one Bren gun, Mark 1 and No. 5 rifles, a Verey light pistol and just sufficient ammunition for the weapons. Our transport was one rather decrepit Land Rover. Our operational area included the Kempas estate, the Bekok estate, and the Chan Wing estate. We were also responsible for the security of the Bekok new village. From 1948 until 1959 the Government considered this area to be one of the worst for Communist insurgency activities. The local CT organisation included a number of locals who had the advantage of local knowledge over the Security Forces (SF). Despite the night curfew and the barbed wire fence around the new village the CTs still managed to obtain food from their sympathisers in Bekok. When they came to the perimeter of the fence during darkness the local dogs, knowing them, would not bark. However, when we went out to ambush them the local dogs would bark non stop thereby warning the CTs of our presence. To counter this unfair advantage I embarked on a scheme whereby all unlicensed dogs found near the perimeter of the security fence would be shot. It was then that I had my first taste of dog meat. At that time a Special Operational Volunteer Force (SOVF) group comprising mainly former CTs visited me from time to time. During these visits I would arrange the dog shooting expeditions because it was religiously taboo for my Muslim staff to handle dogs. During one of these shooting expeditions one of the SOVF told me that, rather than waste good meat, they ate the dogs, and suggested I try this meat. To my surprise I found it very palatable and since then I have retained a fondness for it.

My next major task was to devise other means of preventing the CTs from obtaining food supplies from the locals. I worked out a prophylactic plan which entailed random rifle firing at night from different locations around the perimeter of the village and at different times. This strategy worked quite well although it was very taxing on

our supply of ammunition. However I was fortunate that the major in charge of a Ghurka company garrisoned nearby gave me all the ammunition I needed provided I returned as many as possible of the empty cartridge cases.

A major problem was security for my visits to the outlying areas within my district. The CTs were well acquainted with these areas and could easily set up ambushes. They had a comprehensive network of supporters who provided them with food and information on the movements of the SF. Because Bekok has only two exit points their agents could tip them off as soon as the station land rover left the township. To outmanoeuvre the CTs either I traveled by foot, which gave me maximum flexibility for my movements, although it took a much greater time to move about, or I cadged lifts from visitors who happened to be travelling to the same areas as me. Because of my counter insurgency tactics of denying the CTs food supplies and contact with the villagers they considered me a thorn in their flesh and decided to eliminate me. In this they would have been successful but for a twist of fate. They set up an ambush on the day I had planned to visit Bekok estate but they did not know that on that day I was travelling to Johore Bahru to take an examination in Malay, and a relief police lieutenant would be making the visit to the estate. On my arrival in Johore Bahru I received the sad news that my temporary replacement had been killed in the ambush. This news distressed me deeply and I failed the examination. On my return to Bekok I traced his family in England from whence he had come three months earlier after going through a divorce. He left behind in England an aged mother and a sister. As, at that time, there was food rationing in England I sent his mother a food parcel every fortnight until she requested me to stop. In 1966 I had the pleasure and honour of visiting her at Winchmore Hill, North London.

The CTs tried various other schemes to lure me into a trap. On many occasions they derailed the night train to Bekok to decoy me to the site

where I would be ambushed. On the day following the derailments there would have been left behind evidence of their intentions.

Apart from counter insurgency responsibilities my other duties included general policing. As Bekok township was really quite a small village this was an easy task. The main law and order problem was opium smoking. There were six illegal opium dens in the township, each accommodating six to eight people lying down. Had the opium smokers not openly defied the police I would have dealt leniently with them because they were one of my sources of information on the CT organisation. My OCPD told me I could take whatever action against them I deemed appropriate but they were not to be brought before the courts. I spoke with my informants amongst them and also with the headman of the village. In the end I decided the only way to drive them underground was to make them lose face in front of the whole community. To most people, and to the Chinese especially, face is most important. So one afternoon when I knew the habitual smokers were in the dens I organised all but one of my staff to join me in a raid on the dens. All the smokers were brought out into the street carrying their opium utensils. There I assembled them in drill formation of three in each row. Each smoker was made to carry a smoking utensil, and to the beating of a gong brought from the police station, all the smokers had to march to its beat up and down the main street four times. This attracted the curiosity and attention of the townspeople who lined the road laughing and jeering at the smokers. On the last lap when the group reached the public dust bin the smokers were made to throw all their smoking utensils on the ground where they were burnt with kerosene. The smokers pleaded with me to spare their smoking pipes and as they knelt begging for this mercy they conveyed to one and all a most pitiful sight. After this episode the smokers stopped smoking openly. For this action I received my first petition which was quickly investigated. I did not know the outcome of the investigation because by then my application to transfer to the jungle company had been approved.

Another aspect of my work involved winning over the hearts and minds of the local population. As all parents love their children, and in turn love those who love their children, I spent much of my evening time making friends with the children. Out of my own pocket I bought them sweets and cheap toys from the stalls and gathered them around and told them stories. Very soon I was regarded as their hero and my popularity grew amongst their parents and the other villagers.

When I first arrived in Bekok the resettlement of the people from the fringes of the jungle had not been completed. The resettled people presented us with many problems which we tried to resolve through common sense and trial and error. Added to these daily problems we had to organise the repatriation of five hundred people back to China.

One day, during a visit to the neighbouring village of Chaah, I met the young British officer who had been the OCPD in Taiping when I joined the police as a clerk. He was commanding the 4th. Federal Jungle Company (FJC) which was based in the Rengam estate. He told me there were vacancies in 4 FJC for platoon commanders. With his encouragement I submitted my application to join him. I reasoned that I would be better off focusing on one type of police duty rather than having the broad ranging responsibilities of the Bekok posting. So after three arduous months in Bekok my tour of duty ended.

When I went to Bekok I renewed my acquaintance with the girl I met in Selama. However corresponding with her was a tedious activity because she was Chinese educated and wrote to me in Chinese whereas I was English educated and wrote to her in English. My school teacher friend in Taiping was co-opted to translate her letters to me and my letters to her, so there was little privacy in our communications. I deemed it better to end the relationship because it seemed we were not destined for each other. Five years later I met her again when she stayed with her married sister in Ipoh who happened to be my neighbour. By then I was married and had a son.

## 6

4 FEDERAL JUNGLE COMPANY  
LIFE IN THE JUNGLE

By the time my transfer order arrived for posting to 4 Federal Jungle Company (FJC), the vacancies for platoon commanders were filled. So I was initially attached to 11 FJC for two months until a vacancy arose in 4 FJC in December, 1951. I remained with the jungle companies until September, 1953. Apart from my uniforms and civilian attire, I brought with me to the camp a female chicken which I named Henrietta. She was given to me in Bekok by a woman who was repatriated to China. I kept Henrietta for the two years I was in Rengam and in Temerloh, Pahang. As we were away frequently from base on jungle operations, I found a cock friend for her. There were always left overs in the camp and so my two birds were well fed. During the time she was with me she laid countless eggs which she hatched to produce many chickens. Finally, one night in the camp in Temerloh, she was eaten by a musang (civet cat).

In terms of comfort and convenience my transfer from Bekok to 4 FJC was a proverbial leap from the frying pan into the fire. The 4 FJC camp was situated about five miles inside the Rengam rubber estate. It was at a dead end of a laterite road. The camp was makeshift with the only decent building being the officers' quarters which previously housed the estate labour supervisor. Even these quarters were very cramped with the five officers occupying three small rooms. The Officer Commanding (OC), occupied one with four other officers, two European Police Lieutenant (P/Lts) and two Asian Police Inspectors sharing the other two rooms. All other ranks stayed under canvas. Except for a handful of regulars, the other ranks were manpower call-ups who were referred to as the "Sutton Boys". At this time there was an acute shortage of able regular policemen for jungle operational

duties so man-power call-ups were used to fill the gap and regulars had the opportunity of rapid promotion. In our company the acting Sergeant Major was only a regular Lance Corporal.

4 FJC was made up of four platoons of three sections each and totaled one hundred and thirty-three men. Weapons consisted of the Bren gun, Sten gun and the normal No.5 assault rifle. Later the No.5 assault rifle was replaced by the American .300 Carbine, a much lighter weapon with a bigger magazine capacity and a more rapid fire capability. Normal operational equipment included the 44 pack, jungle clothing, boots, map case, a rubber and canvas sheet used as a raincoat cum makeshift roof shelter, and rations. The vehicle pool included Land Rovers, GMC's and Lynx armoured vehicles.

I remember very vividly the first time I went on jungle operations with the men. When we settled down for the night they offered to make my basha (temporary shelter) and cook my meal for me but I declined this kindness. At that time, I was a young man filled with pride at one pip on my shoulders and unwilling to accept help from others. I knew that making a basha and cooking a meal were simple matters. As I got down to cooking, the rain came in torrents. All I could do was find a tree stump to stretch out my poncho cape. I found a piece of short log and placed this on top of the poncho to prevent it from slipping off the tree stump as a temporary measure. While cooking my meal under the poncho I grabbed the aluminum handle of the billy can, not realising it was hot. As I dropped it, spilling the contents, and cursing loudly and colourfully, the men enjoyed a good laugh at my expense. Even worse was to come. The rain continued, and in no time the poncho became very heavily saturated with water. It slipped from the stump and I was drenched. After this miserable first night, I changed my attitude and thereafter, while the men were cooking I would make my rounds under the pretext of looking into the men's welfare. Usually, there would be plenty of food and the men would invite me to eat with them.

The first platoon was commanded by a P/Lt. He was a tall Englishman who was previously a corporal in Palestine. The second platoon was under the charge of a hefty Malay Asian Probationary Inspector. The third was commanded by another English P/Lt, and I was in charge of the fourth platoon. At the base all officers ate in the mess and were charged a nominal fee for food. A bar was available and was patronised by all except the officer who commanded the third platoon. He isolated himself and showed little inclination for friendship or comradeship. Later, I was to learn from other P/Lts why some of the Englishmen stood aloof. At that time, Malaya was under colonial rule and the white Britisher believed he was the "master". Before departing for the colonies these officers were briefed to maintain British prestige by adopting a superior attitude towards the locals. One very honest British P/Lt. admitted to me that he could not adopt a pose of superiority as he was hardly educated in his own mother tongue, and that prior to coming to Malaya he was an acting unpaid lance corporal in the army. Also, he recognised the local officers were more cultured and better educated than many of the British officers. On many occasions I read to him his letters from his wife and wrote to her on his behalf. An Irish P/Lt also disagreed with this attitude because he realised he needed the full cooperation of locals to achieve his objectives. Despite the policy of posing to be superior, in general, the P/Lts were a very friendly and likeable lot.

On the matter of racial superiority, I recall that after the Second World War and when I was still young, I had observed in my home town that at certain places which were used exclusively by Europeans, there were signboards outside such establishments which said "ASIANS AND DOGS NOT ALLOWED". In my childhood days I did not understand the meaning of the sign but in later years I understood it to mean that either Asians were to be treated as dogs or they were too dirty to mix with the Europeans. In the question of hygiene, I must claim that in Malaysia the locals bathe several times a day because of the heat and the humidity, whereas many Europeans living in Malaysia, probably through force of habit, do not bathe every day. There were many



occasions when, after prolonged jungle operations, the European P/Lts just washed their faces and around their necks and arms and gave no thought to a cleansing body bath.

When we were not on operations against the CTs, life was a monotonous round of acting as camp duty officer, carrying out kit and barrack inspections and drinking in the bar. Because the camp was about five miles into the interior there was a serious risk of ambush by the CTs if we traveled to the township at night. On the occasions we took the risk we traveled in armoured vehicles.

During the three months 4 FJC was stationed in Johore, we carried out very extensive search and destroy operations against the CTs. We conducted operations in Layang Layang, Yong Peng, Chaah, Rengam and Kluang. These were areas infested with CTs who were in the main Kongsais, a ruthless and fearless Chinese clan. Although we did not score any CT kills we made contact with the CTs on several occasions. In December, 1951, a large combined operation was launched against the CTs in an area called Sungai Sayong, situated between Rengam and Kluang. Among those who took part were the Gurkhas, The Malay Regiment, the 4th. and 6th. Police Jungle Companies and Home Guards. There was little to distinguish the government personnel from the CTs. All were Asian, all wore the same type of jungle green uniform, and all were armed with almost identical weapons. The government forces entered the operational area from designated points. Whilst 4 FJC were on their way to take up positions led by the P/Lt of the first platoon, the P/Lt saw a familiar looking armed figure standing at the foot of a hill in the rubber estate. This officer, believing this figure to be one of the friendly forces, greeted him. Instantly, he was fired upon. Only then he realised that the other person was a CT on sentry duty. The bullet hit the P/Lt's pouch containing a hand grenade which miraculously did not explode. The noise of the shot alerted a group of about sixty CTs who were having a meeting on top of the hill. After ascertaining there were SF below, they organised themselves and charged our positions. Their action was accompanied by the rousing

call of a bugle. We followed our training instructions and dislodged our back packs to provide for greater manoeuvrability when under fire. During the gun battle one of the "Sutton Boys", a corporal who carried the Bren gun, distinguished himself in repelling the enemy. For his extreme gallantry he was conferred the George Medal, the highest British gallantry award for a non-officer civilian. He was nominated to attend the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II but declined because of the condition that, on his return from London, he would be required to join the regular service.

On our return to base after the operation, one of the wireless operators reported that he had lost his wireless set during the engagement. A search party was dispatched back to the scene but the set could not be found. It was assumed that the CTs had purloined the set away during the fire fight. A police report was duly lodged at the nearest police station. The next day, orders came from higher formation to charge the wireless operator for cowardice in action, and the unfortunate wireless operator was placed under arrest and locked in a cell at Kluang police station, about twenty miles away. This apparent injustice provoked a great deal of resentment among the other ranks. Next day the men unsuccessfully attempted to bail their comrade. They approached the officers for assistance and were informed that the officers, as government servants, could not stand bail. As this message spread among the men, it was distorted to mean that the officers wanted the wireless operator punished as an example to the rest of the men. The men plotted deep into the night to get the operator out of the lock-up. I was the duty officer that night and next morning, when I awoke, I found that all the men had gone, leaving only the officers to man the camp. Shortly after this discovery we received a phone call from Kluang police station informing us that the men had laid siege to the police station and were demanding the release of their comrade or they would resort to violent action. The OC and another officer proceeded immediately to Kluang but were unable to calm the men. The Deputy Chief Police Officer (CPO) was sent from Johore Bahru and after

failing to defuse the situation he obtained clearance from the CPO to meet the demands of the men by releasing the wireless operator.

Although this incident was definitely mutiny, and although it was known that the Sgt. Major was the main instigator, no further overt action was taken against the perpetrators. Covertly however, plans were made to punish the whole company from the OC down to the lowest rank. About two months after this incident, the company was ordered to be transferred to Temerloh, Pahang, almost immediately. In those days, Pahang was the punishment state for all wrong doers in the police force.

## 7

TRANSFER TO TEMERLOH, PAHANG  
THE PUNISHMENT STATE

If conditions in Rengam, Johore, were bad, worse was to come in Chenor, Temerloh, Pahang. We were crammed into an uncompleted camp with some buildings without walls, without tap water and without electricity. Security was difficult to maintain because the camp area was not fenced and the jungle around the camp had not been cleared. Adding to these problems was the location of the camp which required a daily ten mile trip through the jungle to the nearest township to collect rations for the camp. As well as facing the risk of ambush in the jungle those personnel travelling to and from the township for the daily rations became very vulnerable when they had to leave the vehicles under escort, to cross the river on sampans (a wooden dugout) because there was no bridge linking Chenor and Temerloh.

4 FJC was beset with misfortunes. On the way from Mentakab to Temerloh the advance party's vehicle, when negotiating a very dangerous bend, crashed into the Sultan of Pahang's car. This accident created a big hue and cry but fortunately the Sultan was not a nasty person and the case was taken to court. Unfortunately for the Sultan and the driver, before the court hearing the driver was killed in a headlong collision with a lorry at the same place as the first incident. The next misfortune happened about six months after 4 FJC arrived in Chenor when the company took part in an inter police circle football competition. On the day 4 FJC played Mentakab circle, the referee was the OSPC himself. There was no doubt his decisions were favouring his own Mentakab team. His blatant bias and his disregard of the protests of the 4 FJC supporters roused them to fury. The same Sgt. Major who instigated the mutiny in Rengam then gave orders to the men to cock their weapons and shoot the referee if he continued to

show favour to his own team. Shortly after this incident the Sgt. Major and a few 4 FJC men barged onto the field, the match was called off. The Sgt. Major was put on a charge for his behaviour. When, at the orderly room parade he was asked to plead, he climbed onto the OC's table and attempted to kick the OC's face. He was placed under arrest and later dismissed from the police force.

In the early 1950's, communications linking towns were lacking. With the Communist insurgency on in many places, the movement of troops was extremely slow and dangerous. The Government then decided that a security road should be built linking Temerloh and Maran which would hasten the deployment of troops on operations. This road took a considerable time to build as machinery was lacking and 4 FJC was tasked to provide protection to the PWD labourers. Prior to the company being stationed in Temerloh, a few labourers had been shot by the CTs. There were no untoward incidents when we guarded the construction of the road.

Initially, we carried out very short patrols away from camp. When the camp was eventually completed, we went further afield. When we were in Temerloh, a Malay CT regiment operated in the area. They were camped somewhere in the Loop area. Our company operated there frequently and on one occasion engaged this group. When we arrived in Temerloh, there had been a change of two P/Lts, with one of the newcomers a former Royal Air Force (RAF) Sergeant. He had been with us for only three days when he was sent out on patrol. On the afternoon of the day in question, when he emerged from the undergrowth, he came into a large clearing with a number of thatched huts with the sound of music coming from some of the huts. The Lt. thought it was a Malay kampong until he was fired at by some CTs. Somehow he had led his platoon into the camp from an unguarded part of the CT camp perimeter. The other two platoons were some distance behind and when they finally caught up with him inside the camp, the CTs had fled leaving all their belongings behind in their hurried exit. By this time, it was late in the afternoon and although stops were set

up, these positions did not encounter any CTs. The next morning, we scoured the river bank which was not very far away and found evidence that the CTs had made their getaway in boats. A few outboard engine powered longboats belonging to the locals were commandeered to give chase but the CTs were nowhere to be found. From documents and other evidence left behind, it was established that the camp housed elements of the Central Department of Malay Works (CDMW) or the Headquarters of the 10th Malay CT Regiment.

Although the area south of the Loop was under 24 hour curfew, it was known that the Malay population living along the Pahang river bank used to break curfew and wander deep into the jungle in search of jungle produce. One month before our company entered the operational area, we posted notices along the river bank warning the residents of the impending operations. Thinking that they would take heed, the operation was launched. This was to be a month long operation with replenishment of supplies through air-drops at pre-arranged dropping zones (DZ) every week. At the end of the second week, No:4 platoon missed the air-drop as they were late to arrive at the DZ by about two to three hours. The Valetta supply aircraft was seen circling above from a distance, but as it did not see the usual smoke signal nor receive any communications, it just flew away. In spite of this, we were not too worried as usually it was not possible to exhaust one's rations completely. On crossing a stream the next morning when we were on patrol heading for the next DZ, the leading scout reported signs of human activity just off the track. On investigation, we discovered two makeshift huts along the bank with platforms on which fish were being dried. Nearby to one hut there were signs of an animal having been slaughtered. Hanging on a freshly cut branch of a tree stuck in the middle of the stream was a bundle wrapped in a piece of cloth. Suspecting it might be a booby trap, I ordered a careful look to find the bundle contained cooked rice. This site resembled a hurriedly vacated CT camp. Immediately, I called a meeting of my platoon sergeant and section leaders and decided that in view of our limited manpower and our ignorance of the strength of the enemy, we should operate as close

together as possible. All three sections were then deployed in a triangle formation with one section along the bank of the stream facing the direction we had come from and the other two sections on the other side. All three sections faced outwards with orders to fire at anything that moved as the area was under 24 hour curfew and the whole designated operational area had been cleared to the company. The section along the stream placed its Bren gun against a small tree on the bank itself. After waiting for about 45 minutes, human voices were heard coming from the direction we had taken earlier. The undergrowth there was rather thick and even at about 15 yards, we still could just make out human figures coming towards us. At this point, I gave the orders for the Bren gunner to open up and saw one of the figures dropping. Two others were seen running away and one of them was shot by a rifleman almost immediately. The other one was also killed by a member of one of the two sections deployed on the other side of the stream. When the firing stopped we heard people talking in Malay and ordered them to show themselves with their hands up. After interrogation, it was discovered to our horror that they were folks from the kampong (Malay village) along the main river who had gone into the jungle two days earlier in search of jungle produce.

There were in all seven of them; three killed, two arrested and two who escaped and probably returned to the kampong. One of those killed was the assistant Pengulu (Headman) of the kampong. Whatever story they told, I had to be cautious as they could be CTs who operated in the vicinity and who were also all Malays. The two who were alive were taken into custody and placed under guard until their true identity could be established later. It was also assumed that the three dead were CTs including those two who got away. From the scene of the incident back to the main Pahang river was about twelve miles through the jungle. The arrestees were made to assist the platoon members to carry the dead bodies strung on poles. As we had to move with great caution, it took almost two full days before we came to the river bank. By this time, the dead bodies were three days old and decomposing in the heat, the stench became unbearable. This was compounded by the thousands

of Blue Bottle flies buzzing around the dead bodies and sometimes taking a rest on the bodies of the live humans. As it was the first time that the platoon members had been subjected to such a scene, some of them vomited along the way. The platoon was warned to be extra alert when we arrived at the river bank at night as the two who escaped three days before could be genuine kampong folk, and they could have reported that they were ambushed by CTs, in which case we could expect the kampong folk to open fire on any unusual movement or sound along the river bank at night. True to my prediction, when we arrived at the river bank at night and were attracting the attention of police personnel across the river, we were fired upon by the kampong folk who thought we were CTs signaling to their comrades. They stopped firing only after we had identified ourselves.

There was one occasion when the second and fourth platoons were deployed to one location at Kampong Aw which is about five miles north-east of the camp. Their orders were to guard heavy road building machinery and carry out daily patrols up to a five mile radius from our position. My men were placed under the command of the second platoon. The platoon commander was informed of my intention to visit my men. When I was about to reach the debussing point to walk into the camp, which was still a distance away, it rained heavily. In the jungle and in the rain, your eyes can deceive you easily and a number of people have been killed through being mistaken for an enemy. When I was about 100 yards from the camp I started to shout for the platoon Commander. The sentry and the Commander were attracted by my shouting but they were not too certain about my identity. As I got nearer, he challenged me for the pass-word but in spite of the right answer having been given, he had to be doubly certain and tested me further. As we were close friends and he knew my girl friend, he asked for her name and only when I gave the right answer he allowed me into the camp.

After some time I began to regret having volunteered for posting to Jungle Companies. It took great discipline and will power to endure the



hardship in the jungle. The most uncomfortable operational environment was the jungle edge or secondary jungle where the CT's were most likely to be located. Secondary jungle is infested with all types of livestock. There are leeches which cling to you and, like Dracula, suck blood from you to inflate their bodies to about ten times their original size. Once you remove a leech from your body, the puncture it has caused to your skin oozes the same amount of blood it has sucked before the blood stops flowing. In leech infested areas, especially after it rains, there can be twenty or thirty leeches clinging all over your body. For a new comer, it can be a frightening experience to see these creatures bloated with blood and obscenely hanging from even one's most personal parts. To get rid of them you apply either salt or tobacco. The best prevention is to soak your clothes in the juice from the stem of the tobacco plant as the pungent smell deters them from clinging on to your body. Another unpleasant creature is the sand fly, a minute insect which you do not notice until you have been bitten. They inject a poison which causes such irritation that it makes you scratch until you bruise your skin to drain out the poison. If one sand fly manages to penetrate your mosquito net you will have no further sleep for the night. A third creature which causes great discomfort is the tick whose normal host is the wild boar. On occasions when patrols stop later than usual in the evening, it is difficult to make a bed for the night as it gets dark very early in the jungle, especially if there is a thick tree canopy. In these circumstances a poncho is thrown on the ground for bedding. If a wild boar has rested on the same spot during the day and some ticks had dropped off, the ticks will be attracted to the warmth of the human bodies and burrow into its human host. A burrowing tick invites frantic scratching which invariably causes the ticks body to be separated from its head with its head remaining imbedded in your flesh. The ensuing local infection causes an itch which may last up to a year.

There was hardly any variation in the operational rations issued although those for the officers differed from the men. Before any local company undertook to supply pack rations, those for the officers

were all sent from Great Britain including jungle green uniforms and other operational equipment. A 24 hour pack of rations consisted mainly of tinned food - baked beans, kidney and liver pudding, very dry biscuits (named dog biscuits), a cube of bovril, sardines, some rice, matches, a packet of ten cigarettes, tea or coffee and toilet paper. The jungle green uniforms were almost all of the same size for fitting huge Europeans. When worn by Asian officers and men shirt sleeves had to be rolled up about six times before they crossed the elbow and trousers had to be shortened by six inches or more. Baked beans were the staple diet, and after a while, no matter how hungry one became, hunger was preferred over the consumption of the ever-present beans. To this day, I avoid these reminders of those early years of my career.

Against the harsh jungle, life in camp was comparatively relaxing and enjoyable. There were the usual organised games, drinking sprees and outings to the towns. There were also the occasional brawl with members of the public when we had consumed too much liquor. In those dark days of the Emergency one was never certain when death would come and so everyone made the best of the present. The easiest way to enjoy oneself was to get drunk, and the majority of the officers and men indulged in this vice. There were many stories to be told and retold on drinking nights. There was the story about the OC falling into a well one night when the company was passing an abandoned kampong on their way to an operation. The leading scout had detected a well along the way and had alerted the man behind. This information was passed from person to person and everyone side stepped the well except the OC who had to have his own way and therefore plunged into it. The sound of him hitting the water caused great laughter all the way up and down the line which infuriated him and he exploded with some choice English swearing.

The OC was a nice man but usually misunderstood by the men as he had to be strict to maintain discipline especially with a group of hastily trained and unwilling, but legally shanghaied, youths, many fresh out of school. By English standards, he was short and because he was

rotund, he appeared even smaller. Behind his back, the men nicknamed him "Buntal", the Malay name for a round fish. Sometimes they scrawled this word on the bonnet of his Morris Minor convertible and eventually when he obtained the translation, he exclaimed "I'll ring the bastard's neck when I catch him". His Morris Minor was the only non issue vehicle in the whole camp and soon became the common property of the officers who would be allowed to use it when they went on leave provided it was well maintained. Depending on its condition at the time you wanted to borrow it you may have to provide a new tyre, replace the canvas hood or give the car a wax and polish. This was a very acceptable arrangement as renting a car in those days was out of the question. The other alternative was to travel by bus or train. These forms of transportation were not only slow but were subjected to ambushes by the CTs. The OC had also passed his Senior Cambridge and so we became good friends. Many years later, when I was on my third visit to the United Kingdom, I stayed with him and his family. He had left the police and become a school teacher after he obtained a degree at a local University. He was so proud of his degree that he hung it in his toilet facing the WC bowl so that he could see it daily. He was also a lay preacher. He visited and stayed with me on two occasions in the early 80's and passed away from cancer in 1993.

The first anniversary of our posting to Pahang was celebrated in great style. We decided we should let the great white chiefs know we had survived the punishment for one year and we were proud of this achievement. An elaborate programme was laid on. Invitations were extended to local dignitaries, including His Highness, The Sultan of Pahang, well in advance to ensure they would grace the occasion. A troupe of Joget dancers (an ethnic Malay dance performed on a wooden stage to the accompaniment of music) was engaged at exorbitant expense from Kuala Lumpur for the event. There were sports, a shooting competition and a big feast. The Sultan arrived at the appointed time and was greeted by all the officers who were lined up at the entrance of the camp. A wooden stage had been built for the joget troupe and all invited guests plus the officers were seated on tables in

front of the stage. The boss of the local mill provided the timber for the stage so he was a prominent guest. As hosts, the officers sat at the same table as the Sultan. During the course of the night, when His Highness spoke to me in royal classical Malay, I was caught off-guard, and not being particularly well educated in Malay (this was still in Colonial times), I addressed him as Towkay. The Sultan was very amused and thereafter spoke to all of us in English much to the annoyance of his aides and the OC. His Highness was very attracted to the belle of the Joget troupe and married her at a later date.

In March, 1953, when I was still with the Jungle Companies, I attended my first course at the Far East Land Forces (FARELF) training centre, Johore. FARELF was a British army establishment, and British bureaucracy being what it was, housed us in the Sergeants Mess because Asian Police Inspectors were not considered Gazetted Officers. The course I attended was the Small Arms Instructors Course. There was nothing much more to what had been taught during basic and post basic training in the Police Depot. The only novelty in the course was the technique of downing an aeroplane (Tar Fei Kei) with small arms. The course was a waste of time and had I known what the syllabus was in advance, I would have hesitated to attend it. At that time I was recovering from a bad bout of bronchitis. My frequent visits to the hospital meant I missed most of the classes and so failed to qualify as a small arms instructor. In retrospect this was fortuitous as that particular qualification may have tied me down to general duties and prevented my career taking an interesting and truly adventurous path. The other Asian officer who attended the course was the one referred to earlier as "That Fellow" Even at that very early stage of his career he endeavoured to project himself into the limelight.

Also in this same year of 1953, two P/Lts completed their contracts and were replaced by a Welshman and an Irishman. These were the two who divulged the British policy of maintaining British prestige in the colonies by posing as superior to the locals. The Welshman, who was a coal miner before he was drafted into the army, was barely educated.

However he was very adept in the usage of the crudest and most colourful phrases of the English language. He unfailingly commenced a sentence with the four letter word. His most popular phrase one was "F..... S..." as his interpretation of a bugger. When the occasion called for it, he could disguise his vulgarity with phrases like "Come on Luv, let me water your flower" or "Get in nob, it's your birthday". Vulgarity had become his second nature and no amount of censure, either directly or indirectly, could deter him from this practice. He was good at telling dirty stories and would start to relate one given the slightest opportunity. For some unknown reason, he would always poke fun at the Clergy, as in the following story he told with relish: "A Sikh had just arrived a week earlier as a migrant to Great Britain. In that period, he had not made contact with anyone of his own community and was feeling rather lonely. That Sunday morning when he was wandering around aimlessly, he heard people singing inside a building. In fact he had come upon a Church service. He decided to enter the building to find out what was the occasion. When he entered the building and no one paid any attention to him, he sat down in one of the vacant seats. After the sermon was over, a small boy came round with a little black bag for contributions to the Church. He did not know what was happening and he did not want to show his ignorance by asking. All he saw was people putting money into the bag as it was produced before them. When it came to his turn, he looked into his wallet and found that he had only 5 pound notes, so he put one into the bag. As he sat not far from the pulpit, the preacher observed his generosity. After the little boy had finished taking up the collection, the preacher then announced that they had a new member with them that day whom he had observed to be most generous in his donation. The preacher then said that for this generous contribution, he would allow the Sikh to choose three Hymns." The Welshman indicated that for many past generations, many stories had circulated about the Sikhs' unnatural sexual tendencies. He continued: "When the offer was made to him, the Sikh was very elated and thought that the British were the most understanding of the human race to look into his welfare so soon upon arrival. Immediately he looked round the room and pointed his finger at

three good looking Englishmen and said, 'Him, Him and Him'." This is one of the milder stories the Welshman told.

By mid 1953, apart from the OC, I was the senior most officer with the company. It was not normal for an officer to serve more than 18 months and those senior to me had already been posted to other formations. At that time, Jungle Companies were being reorganized into Police Field Force (PFF) battalions. Before I completed my service with FJC and PFF., I was second-in-command of 4 FJC and 6 PFF which was stationed in Kerayong, Triang, Pahang. In mid 1953, I requested for a transfer to General Duties. That was probably the first miscalculation I made in my career. With sufficient seniority and already made second-in-command, I could have earned my first promotion to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) in 1954 or 1955 rather than wait until 1958. In my subsequent new appointments, I had to be assessed all over again and also compete with other officers who were there before me. In September, 1953, my posting orders came and I was sent to take charge of the Circle Police Stores located in Kuantan, Pahang.

## 8

## CIRCLE QUARTERMASTER, KUANTAN, PAHANG.

Kuantan is now the capital of the State of Pahang. In 1953 it was a small town with only two main roads and one side one. It was virtually surrounded by rubber plantations which were mainly owned and run by Europeans. Over the ensuing forty years the rubber plantations have been cleared back for the development of the town which has grown and prospered into a city. When I first arrived there in October, 1953, as a bachelor, there were many other unmarried officers there in General Duties, Criminal Investigation, Transport and Special Branch. Under the scheme of service, married officers were allowed to rent accommodation whereas the singles had to stay in the messes. There was only one mess in the whole of Kuantan and there were eight bachelor officers. All were crammed into that one dilapidated wooden building of two rooms next to the police station. There was no question of equal distribution of space and the two senior ones occupied the two rooms with the rest bedding down where they could. Two of us stayed along the corridor outside the rooms, one in the kitchen and three others in the servant's quarters at the back. The most disturbing aspect of this arrangement was the fight for the toilets in the morning and invariably, someone was always late for work. Eventually when I gained seniority with my second pip, I had a room to myself. Although we were in different departments, we built up a good camaraderie. P/Lts stayed apart from the Asian Inspectors and there was hardly any mixing as the former were usually engaged on operational duties and were seldom in town.

That was the most uneventful chapter of my career. The high sounding name boiled down to nothing more than just an officer storeman. There was no hand-over as it was a new store. It was in great disarray and stores were strewn all over the building. There was only one constable storekeeper who knew as little as I did about storekeeping, and for

months thereafter we were only engaged in arranging the stock. Before we could tidy the establishment new stores would arrive from Headquarters. I just simply did not know how to keep the stock books and each time there was an inspection, I would cart away and hide the surplus stock returned by the Districts and retain sufficient to tally with the books. There were one or two times when I just sent the unwanted surplus to be burnt at the town incinerator as the store was already stocked beyond its full capacity. There was a sub-depot situated near the police station which was manned by a P/Lt. He taught me a lot about storekeeping and we got along extremely well. Like all soldiers and policemen of that time who worked extremely hard and under great strain, he and I consumed great quantities of liquor and beer to relieve the stress.

In my duty post of Circle Quartermaster, I was one of the senior staff officers in the Police Circle under the OSPC. The OSPC, a Brit (Britisher), was a real snob, and in every way assumed the role of the accepted image of a colonialist. He was most aloof and would not even mingle with other Europeans. He appeared to suffer from an inferiority complex and at the slightest pretext, would put his officers on a charge. His wife looked very much like a man. In my six months there I visited the Districts quite often and the local officers would show me around. In this way, I learnt a lot of the geography of the Police Circle and this knowledge came in very useful in my subsequent posting into the SB.

Frankly speaking, storekeeping is a simple process but as I had not imagined or expected this posting, I found it difficult to take much interest in it. There are laid down procedures to follow like entitlement and frequency of replacement. With officers of the same rank and those below me, I was prepared not to interpret the instructions too strictly and was sympathetic towards them and usually issued what they requested. However, with senior officers, I stuck to the letter of the regulations lest I was criticised or misinterpreted. This nearly caused me my downfall because on one occasion, an officer of the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) came into my office and



demanded that his surrendered enemy personnel (SEP) be issued in excess of the normal entitlement. I would have gladly issued him with what he wanted but I was deterred from doing so because of his arrogant manner. Although he wore a crown on his shoulders and I was adorned with only with two pips, we were both of equal status as staff officers of the OSPC. When he threw rank, I showed him the Standing Orders and informed him that I had to obtain approval from higher authority at state level, i.e. from the Contingent Quartermaster, to meet his request. He was very angry and agitated to be denied by an Asian officer and one of inferior rank and stomped away. Two days later, he came back much more sobered up but when I showed him the negative reply which had arrived in the form of a signal message, he flew into another rage.

Until months later, I was not to know that like Shylock he would claim his pound of flesh. Two weeks after this episode, a P/Lt attached to the Circle SB, Kuantan, came to enquire whether I would be interested to join the SB and what were my academic qualifications. My reply was that it was beyond my control to make such a choice and that I had to accept any posting offered to me. About three weeks after this short interview, the OSPC informed me that with effect from 1st. April, 1954, I could pack up and leave the Stores as I had been transferred to the Circle Special Branch, Kuantan. This sudden transfer to the department of the officer whom I had antagonised not long ago made me very restless and disturbed.

## 9

MOVE TO CIRCLE SPECIAL BRANCH -  
INITIATION TO SPOOK SERVICE

The SB block was located behind my previous office. It was one of those temporary buildings hurriedly erected of half brick and wood. When I reported for duty, the Circle Special Branch Officer (CSBO), Kuantan, was away from the office and although I waited the whole working day, he did return. At the time, there were four other Chinese officers and one European P/Lt attached to the Kuantan SB. We were all of the same rank but I had seniority because I had joined the force before them. There were also two Chinese translators and a few rank and file. Fortunately for me again, the CSBO was also transferred out of Kuantan to Kuala Lipis on the same day, and I did not see him again. There was no relief for him for six weeks until a Scotsman, on his return from leave in Scotland, took over the post. Until the new CSBO arrived, I had very little to do as there was no one senior to me to give me any instructions. It was then that the P/Lt divulged to me in confidence that my posting to the SB was by design and engineered by the previous CSBO who was out to fix me because he had been frustrated by a junior officer.

I was completely new to intelligence work and did not have the faintest idea what it was all about. Now and then when the other officers were not too busy, I attempted to find out from each individual their respective jobs. Most of the officers were very helpful. Before the CSBO arrived, I had learnt that the main target of the SB was the Communists who created big problems in the area. Armed CT units operated in all areas under the jurisdiction of the CSBO which included the Districts and sub-Districts of Maran, Gambang, Kuantan, Jabor Valley and the area adjacent to the southern part of the State of Trengganu. In essence, the CTs were nothing more than an organised

group of armed bandits terrorising the rural population into supporting them with finance and other logistics and surviving on hit and run tactics to avoid the SF. Nevertheless, they caused much harm and damage and large numbers of forces were deployed to get rid of them. As was and still is the practice of most officers in the SB, they were busily engaged in contacting sources of intelligence for information on CT movements, much of this work being done out of office hours. The darkness provided them and their sources the security needed for their usually prolonged briefings and debriefings.

The CSBO was an exceptionally well built Scotsman. He was friendly and for his bulk, very agile. He spoke with a Scottish burr which was most difficult to understand initially. It was most embarrassing to say "I beg your pardon" and to have him repeat what he said. In time, he got along well with all. He was very hardworking and obsessed with getting rid of the Communists. He was also a hard drinker after office hours when he relaxed with his staff. When he took up office he had no knowledge of the organisational set-up of his command or that of the enemy. As I was the next senior in rank he naturally assumed that I was the old hand there and he could draw from me all the information he required. When my answers to his questions were all negative, he enquired what I did know and after explaining that I had arrived only fourteen days before him, he stopped asking. Soon after this, in June, I was sent on a Basic SB course at the Federal Capital.

The course lasted six weeks and covered the origin and philosophy of communism, the origin of the Communist Terrorist Organisation (CTO), its strength and its location throughout the country and how it operated. It also covered tactics and techniques to counter the CTO threat including the various technical aids available to the counter insurgency agencies. The course was of great benefit to me as before then I was completely in the dark as to what intelligence work was all about. The practical exercises and field work made the course very interesting with the only negative being the monotonous drone of the same instructors' voices and the sleep inducing afternoon heat. The

knowledge I gained from this course complemented the operational experience I had enjoyed during the two years I served with the jungle company.

When I reported back for duty, the CSBO remarked that since I had received the necessary training, I should be able to contribute much to the elimination of CTs. With my natural flair for ingenuity, my jungle operational experience and my recent intelligence training, I was very adequately equipped to do battle with the CTO. During office hours I did the routine work of dealing with enquiries and submitting reports and requests to higher formation and other Government agencies. Because all sources were met clandestinely they were met after office hours and usually under cover of darkness. De-briefing reports were submitted as soon as possible after each debriefing. Although sources of intelligence were divided into different categories they were all awarded the same degree of security. For the more productive sources meetings continued well into the night, with information deserving urgent action being acted on immediately after the meetings regardless of the hour. Sometimes the sources acted as guides to ensure that the SF went to the right places. Most sources were debriefed at the quarters of the CSBO who usually sat in on the sessions no matter how long they took. It was common for debriefing sessions to last until 0100 hours. The CSBO had his own sources but because of his handicap of not knowing the Chinese dialects, the Chinese officers sat in with him. With so many officers handling sources of information, the debriefings were a nightly affair. The CSBO was most liberal with his beer and usually during long sessions of debriefing, vast quantities of beer were drunk.

The bulk of the CTs operated around Kuantan and it was there that many of them were killed. In anticipation of acting on the intelligence obtained on the CTs, advance reconnaissance patrols were carried out to prepare the ground for these eventualities. These patrols were in different forms and guises. Sometimes, they were open daylight affairs in police uniform under the pretext of checking tenants in a place or

building; some were in civilian clothes under disguise as farmers; some as civilian government officials from the Registration Office, Customs and any other that could provide the excuse and cover for the SB officers to do their recces. From these types of patrols the SB was able to plan a great number of successful operations against the CTO in Kuantan. Basically, good intelligence work is the knowledge of the people and the operational ground. With the intelligence provided by the people and with his own knowledge of the operational ground the intelligence officer can take informed and decisive action against his target.

Most of the first six months following the course was devoted to surveying the operational area in preparation for future operations. This was very hard work indeed and much time was taken in storing and indexing up this vital knowledge. The information covered such diverse matters as the location of friendly CT dogs, the land cultivated by the relatives of the CTs, the location and terrain of the farms of CTs, the normal routes taken by the CTs and their friends, and where CT sympathisers and supporters lived. Although the backlog of the daily routine work grew the planning for the elimination of the CTO carried precedence. This hard work of up to eighteen hours per day was vindicated by the subsequent operational successes.

My first success followed an informant reporting one afternoon, at the risk of exposure, that three CTs would be coming to collect food from his house in the rubber estate the next night. For fear of his own personal safety, he was reluctant to agree to the CTs being eliminated near his place of residence. Although the safety and security of sources normally took precedence over operational requirements and, although on that occasion we were sympathetic towards him, an operation was planned to eliminate the CTs. It was unknown to the source that there were only those three CTs left in his area and if the planning resulted in the elimination of all the CTs, then there was nothing for him to fear by way of retribution. Dead men tell no tales. The next morning a large routine patrol was sent out to comb the general area in full view of

prying eyes. It was timed for the patrol to pass the general area where the CTs would come for their supplies that night and on passing near to the location of the source's house, six members of the patrol dropped off, went into hiding and when nightfall came, adjusted their positions to ambush the CTs on their way back from their collection of supplies. I was a member, in fact the senior member, of that ambush group. Late in the evening, when it was already dark, we crept nearer to the house and took up final positions. At about 2130 hours, we heard people approaching from our left towards the house. As we were so close to the track, we saw three persons who were armed with long weapons slung over their shoulders. We did not open up on them as we wanted them to be weighed down by the supplies that they were to carry to make doubly sure of hitting them in the dark. On their return to the jungle and as they passed our positions, we opened fire and saw the three figures fall. This was the group's first encounter with CTs and it was difficult to tell whether they were really dead. As a result, even after about two hours, we continued with sporadic firing when we heard noises as if people were sweeping the undergrowth. Each time this noise was heard, we fired in the direction of the noise. When the noise finally stopped, we stayed in our positions until day break. When it was bright enough, we emerged from cover to survey the scene. It was a bloody sight. We had riddled the three bodies full of bullets. The bodies were still pinned down by the heavy loads of supplies. Perhaps if it had not been for these burdens one or two may have got away.

Although our party was superior to the CTs in manpower, firepower and position, I involuntarily shook like a leaf just before we opened fire. I was not frightened but the fact of being initiated into killing instinctively disturbed me. I clearly remember the wooden butt of my Sten gun sounding like someone beating a stick on a table top as it slammed into my right hip when we began firing. This first experience of killing another human built up my confidence in dealing with the CTs.

On another occasion an opium smoker, who stayed at the edge of the rubber plantation, informed us that two CTs had visited him a few days before and had coerced him into supplying them with food that same night. This area was not on the normal route of the local CT unit and it subsequently turned out the two CTs had been displaced because of SF pressure in their normal operational area. He was very adamant that we killed these two CTs because he needed the reward money very badly, but, at the same time, he was worried for his personal safety. The area had not been covered nor reconnoitered before and there was no time to carry this out. In the end, it was decided that the ambush party should be infiltrated during daylight but in a clandestine manner. A small open lorry with an open tail gate was borrowed for this purpose. Three P/Lts were placed into gunny sacks and loaded onto the vehicle and they were dumped in the undergrowth near the informant's house. This was not made known to the informant lest he got cold feet. When this action was carried out he was still in town purchasing the supplies for the CTs. As soon as it was dark the police party cut open the sacks and crawled into the house of the informant who was taken by surprise. At about 2000 hours, the two CTs came to the house to carry the supplies away. When they were only separated by the thin plank wall, the police party, who were all armed with Bren guns, opened fire and killed them both.

The SB had good coverage in the Gambang area but operations were always impeded by the barking of dogs whenever ambush or operational groups were infiltrated into the area. The dogs barked incessantly and the CTs usually aborted their missions. The suppliers must have learnt from the mistakes of other areas and made it a point to licence all their dogs so that there was no chance of them being shot. Various methods to counter this problem were discussed and held in reserve for a "worthwhile big kill". The opportunity came when a SEP from this same village obtained information from his relatives that a group of about ten CTs would come to the village in about six days to collect large quantities of food supplies from a certain spot in the fencing near the jungle's edge. The suppliers, who were relatives of the

CTs, had prepared ladders made of bamboo and would slip these under the fencing for the CTs to use to climb over the barbed wire fencing. Three days before the event, the SB arranged for the psychological warfare department to announce that propaganda talks would be delivered by the authorities in various villages ending with Gambang itself on the evening when the collection of supplies was to take place. It was also made known that after the talks, popular Chinese cinema shows would be screened. This was part of the overall plan as without the cinema shows no one would attend the propaganda talks. The talks were carried out just before dusk after the villagers had finished their evening meal to ensure good attendance. The bait was the cinema show as there were no cinema halls in the outlying villages. This attracted most families away from their homes for the rare occasion of seeing a cinema show. The dogs followed the members of the family thus leaving a clear field for ambush and stop parties to be infiltrated without being detected. When the time came, the ambush parties could observe very clearly the number of CTs present and what they were doing. There were about twelve CTs and they leaned the ladders against the fencing. Whilst half climbed up the ladders at two positions, the rest remained outside and when the first group had almost reached the top of the ladder, those outside would pass up another ladder for them to climb down the other side to fetch the supplies from the other side of the fence. This exercise went on for almost a full hour watched by the ambush parties and when the CTs were on top of the ladders to get back out, they were shot at. This operation netted seven CTs. Those who escaped ran in the direction of the jungle where stop parties had been deployed. This would have been the most successful operation in the Kuantan area had it not been marred by the rashness of one gallant police officer, a Temporary Inspector (TI) who was in charge of the ambush party. It was not in the plan nor the briefing that there should be a follow up but when all the CTs were not killed, the TI in his anxiety to get them, climbed over the fence the same way as the CTs did and gave chase. The OSPC who was in charge of the mortar group at control centre nearby, ordered the mortars to open up on the fleeing CTs, ignorant of the fact that the TI had disobeyed orders and



followed the CTs. When the OSPC became aware of this, it was too late as the mortar barrage had killed the TI and the CTs had got away.

The Bukit Ubi area of Kuantan is now a thriving shopping area and fully inhabited. In the old days it was mainly cultivations with scattered small Chinese rubber holdings and houses few and far between. There was little or no contact amongst the rural folk. A group of six CTs was based in the hills nearby and, except during darkness, controlled a commanding view of the plains down below. The CTs roamed around almost with impunity and obtained most of their logistical support from this area. This group of CTs were locals and ruled the area with an iron hand. It was almost impossible to obtain any intelligence from the masses. Our sources would reveal some intelligence now and then. Through one of these sources we came to know that the CTs were making overtures to the business sector in the town to assist them. The CT courier was a youth from the Bukit Ubi area. Since the residents feared reprisals and were therefore uncooperative, a calculated risk had to be taken to develop the intelligence we had obtained. The owner of one of the shops was overtly but discreetly contacted and arrangements made to interview him. Before the interview, he had already sensed that because of their secretive approach to him the SB officers were aware of his unwilling involvement with the CTO. At the interview, again at the CSBO's residence and with plenty of beer available throughout the session, without any effort on our part, he admitted having been contacted by agents of the CTs for financial and other forms of assistance on several occasions but he had taken no physical action to help. He proved most cooperative from the onset and plans were made for him to contact us the next time the courier came round.

When this took place, a relative of his who was employed on the premises picked up the phone and alerted us. The courier was placed under local surveillance and eventually was trailed back to a farm in Bukit Ubi nearest to the foot of the hills. The shopkeeper continued maintaining contact with the courier, but stalling him along, until the

SB was ready to act. After obtaining assistance in the form of cash from the shop owner on one occasion, the courier was seen entering various sundry shops to purchase supplies. When it was observed that the supplies exceeded his normal requirements, it was concluded that they were meant for CTs. During surveillance and a reccce carried out earlier, it was observed that the courier lived alone. It was agreed to act that night. Three-men ambush teams were set up not far away from the courier's house but as near to the foot of the hill as possible. In fact, the ambush personnel stumbled onto the supplies that were placed for the CTs. Usually CTs collected their supplies quite early in the night but on this occasion they had not appeared by 0200 hours. The ambush personnel fell asleep and when they awoke to cock crows at 0530 hours they discovered to their horror that the supplies had been carted away. However this misfortune turned to good luck when three CT's returned to the scene to collect a package of salt which they had inadvertently left behind. They were seen by the ambush parties a short distance before they arrived at the collection point. Immediately they were fired on and killed. Subsequently the leader and his other crony surrendered as they were demoralised by these losses and the ongoing heavy SF pressure brought to bear on them. The leader, who was a roast pork dealer before he joined the CTO, after being released later by the authorities, resumed his old trade without competition as he was the only one in the Kuantan area who knew how to roast a whole pig. After making a fortune selling roast pork he diversified into tin mining and logging and became a millionaire property owner and drove around in a chauffeured Mercedes Benz. He never thanked the SB for his good fortune!

In addition to direct eliminations, the psychological effort, or psywar, played a big role in demoralising the CTs. In this context the media contributed to the demoralisation program by announcing kills, captures and surrenders very quickly. The psywar department took many risks visiting remote areas to make important announcements. Sometimes when CT leaders surrendered voluntarily, they assisted the government efforts by encouraging the lower ranks to give up the

armed struggle. Leaflets with messages written by them were dropped into areas where CTs operated and they also took part in broadcasting appeals to their former comrades. All these activities were coordinated by the psywar department with information and assistance provided by the SB. These activities and the relentless operational pressures applied by the SF on the ground brought about a large number of defections.

By about late 1954 very few units had survived the combined pressures applied by the SF. There were left only a few CT units which were operating without leadership. There were also some CT leaders left on their own without lower rank support to provide them with security and logistics. It was then considered timely to shorten the insurgency in the Kuantan area by concerted attacks on the leadership. Whilst SF were deployed to strategic areas to prevent the leaders from either recontacting other nearby units, or making arrangements with the masses to be ferried to other places, SB then made secret overtures to the leaders. Letters informing them of their hopeless position and an assurance of fair treatment should they surrender were sent in through known masses executives. This method was most effective and brought about the collapse of the entire CTO in the Kuantan area. When the leaders came out, they induced the lower ranks to give up the armed struggle, and, in a short time, there were no more active CTs left in the whole of the Kuantan area.

There was only limited safe and secure government accommodation to house the large number of CTs who had been induced to surrender. As a result, a great number of them were housed with the officers and this caused great anxiety to the wives especially those with young children. Neither the officers nor their families had been subjected to such close social proximity to former jungle terrorists so, naturally, they were quite anxious housing the CTs particularly on the first day the CTs had walked in from the jungle. As far as anybody knew the CTs could still harbour hostile feelings. However after some weeks it became very clear that once the CTs had made up their minds to surrender, they

became very docile and friendly. My wife was not subjected to these anxieties as she was pregnant and staying with my parents in Taiping. I was host to the most senior CT, a Central Committee Member (CCM) in the region. I had been involved in inducing him to surrender. Initially he was quite well behaved, but when he became aware of his usefulness to us and our reliance on him, he changed his attitude and behaved as if he was still an active commander. He almost dictated to us and demanded special food and treatment. As we relied on him and there were still quite a number of CTs left in the jungle, we pampered him and acceded to his demands. However when there were other SEP whom we could depend on, he was shown his proper place.

On numerous occasions, when sufficient information on the movement of CTs was not available from our sources to enable us to take action, we would set up random ambushes in areas known to be frequented by CTs. My favourite ambush spot was inside a coffin which a man had purchased well in advance to contain his body in the event of his death. The owner took great pride in maintaining the appearance of the coffin and frequently polished it to a shine. While he did not object to me using his coffin occasionally, he was most adamant that I looked after it as if it were my own property. I obtained one kill using this coffin.

In about mid 1955 Kuantan was declared a White Area, that is, an area completely free of CTs. It was the first White Area in the whole State of Pahang. The government made preparations for a large celebration and invitations were sent out to important guests from far and near. This was done by the District War Executive Committee (DWEC). From the SB., except for the CSBO, none of the other officers, who had risked and contributed so much, were invited. Naturally, the CSBO was very upset and insisted that at least one or two of his officers should be invited, but he was not to have his way. Being a man of principles, when the celebrations were being held, he refused to attend and, in the company of his own officers, celebrated the occasion in the SB office.

By late 1955 I had served in remote areas both in the State of Johore and Pahang for over four years since passing out from training. I had been twenty months with the SB in Kuantan. I had exposed myself to great danger fighting the Communists and it was time for a break and a change to more pleasant surroundings. I applied for three months vacation with effect from 1st. November, 1955, and at the same time requested for a transfer to Ipoh, Perak, at the end of my leave. I was pleasantly surprised when both my leave and transfer applications were approved.

During the twenty months I served with the SB in Kuantan, a total of 65 CTs, of whom 19 were of Branch Committee Member (BCM) rank and above, were eliminated. These successes were attributed largely to the direct result of my loyal and energetic services and the enthusiastic and intelligent manner in which I had approached the duties assigned to me. In appreciation of services rendered, sacrifices made, risks taken and the results achieved, I received my first Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner of Police. Although this is one of the lower awards I have received, I cherish and treasure this commendation more than all the others.

#### LETTER OF COMMENDATION

*I have been informed by the Chief Police Officer, Pahang, of the valuable work you have performed whilst employed in the Special Branch at Circle Headquarters, Kuantan.*

*As a result of your devotion to duty entailing very long hours of work and your intelligent appreciation of information obtained, the Security Forces were able to carry out frequent operations which resulted in the elimination of Communist Terrorists, on more than one of which operations you yourself led ambush parties. Overall successes in the Kuantan area resulted in the elimination of 65 Communist Terrorists of whom 19 were of BCM rank and above.*

*These Security Force successes were achieved very largely as a direct result of your loyal and energetic service and enthusiastic and intelligent manner in which you have approached all the duties to which you have been assigned.*

*I congratulate you on your very good work and have much pleasure in awarding you this Letter of Commendation for Merit.*

*Date: 20th March, 1956.*

*I.S. WYLIE*

*Commissioner of Police*

*Federation of Malaya*

*Kuala Lumpur*

I feel it most appropriate at this juncture to record my sincere appreciation to my first SB superior officer, the CSBO Kuantan, the hefty Scotsman, who placed so much confidence in me, guided me when necessary, and allowed me such a free hand to tackle my duties in Kuantan, although I was just a novice then to SB work. The great experience I gained from Kuantan was adapted for use in other places and achieved results which enhanced my reputation in the SB and earned me future promotions.

I met the hefty Scotsman, a member of the Freemasons (Rumah Hantu - Devil House in Malay) five years later, in 1960, in Penang. Following our common experiences in Kuantan, we had developed a strong bond and became good friends. After he left to take up another Police appointment with the SB in Brunei, I visited him on two occasions when I was attached to the SB in Sarawak. After his tour in Brunei he returned to Edinburgh, Scotland, to run a few nursing homes in his hometown. It is an irony that a man who had hunted and killed

his fellow men can be so tender and loving in his twilight years. My family and I paid him a visit in 1980 during the New Year and, in keeping with Scottish tradition, he gave me the honour of going over to the neighbours house to obtain a piece of coal in the midst of a snow storm. We still exchange greeting cards.

## 10

OUT OF THE PUNISHMENT STATE TO  
PERAK - THE STATE OF SILVER

Finally, after forty one months of hectic work and great stress, I gained relief with my three months of vacation leave. Initially, I enjoyed relaxing with my wife, our first born son, and my parents. During my posting to Kuantan I had seen little of them due to the distance from Taiping to Kuantan, lack of transportation and the risks of traveling through CT infested areas. After about two months of relaxation I became bored. To alleviate this condition I volunteered for work but this did not keep me occupied full time. When the final month of my leave drew to a close I was very happy to return to duty.

On 1st. February, 1956, I reported for duty to the Head SB , Perak, who was based in Contingent Police Headquarters (CHQ), Ipoh. The office was situated in the old sector of Ipoh town in a vast brick building with colonnades. It had been the town hall before it was requisitioned and converted into the Police Headquarters for the State of Perak. Although the building was vast, it was not sufficient to house all the formations of the department. The SB alone occupied the top floor and all other formations were crammed downstairs. Some sections, such as signals and transport, were housed nearby.

Ipoh is still my favourite town. During my last years in school, I spent most of my holidays there with my mother. She had many relatives living there. Through the pen-pal system, I also developed many friends there. So, when my posting to Ipoh came through, I could not be happier. At first, we stayed in a friend's flat free of charge. Not long after that, I moved into the first floor of a broken down building by the railway tracks. When I gained my first promotion to the rank of ASP, I moved into a single storey bungalow with a very large compound.



Later, when I gained sufficient points to qualify for Government quarters, I moved into quarters quite near to my office.

It was to be an entirely different experience in Ipoh. For sixteen months I spent the time pen-pushing. I disliked this assignment. There were many other officers there who did the same thing. In those days Chinese officers dominated the SB as the Communist insurgency problem was mainly a Chinese one. It required "a thief to catch a thief"! The work was boring but most of the officers were easy to get along with. After a while, we formed a clique comprising eight officers, and every evening after work we would congregate at the International Bar until late into the night. We looked forward to this daily relaxation and although a lot of hard liquor was consumed, somehow we were never late for work next morning although we were still a little under the weather. The senior officers, who were mostly Europeans, were most understanding and sympathetic. Except for our evening drinking sessions, work and life were uneventful. We just plodded on hoping for a change.

My chance for change came in early 1957. At that time, many operations were mounted against the CTO which resulted in captures and surrenders of CTs. There was one BCM of the CTO in Pusing who was captured and, whilst under interrogation, revealed that his camp with two CTs in it was located about a days walk from where he was captured. An escort and interpreter were required to accompany him on an operation to locate the camp. As my reputation from Kuantan had preceded me to Ipoh, I was chosen for this task. We were to lead a company of the British Lincolnshire Regiment of the 28th. Commonwealth Brigade, stationed in Ipoh, to locate and attack the camp. The operation lasted three days and each evening I was handcuffed to the Captured Enemy Personnel (CEP) who slept with me in the same basha. On the third day, when we were on top of a ridge, we came across fresh tracks which were assessed to have been made by CTs. The Company Commander sent his young subaltern down the hill to scout around. About half an hour later, he shouted from the bottom

of the hill to report that he had discovered more fresh tracks. Although this officer had a big mouth and a loud voice, he had to shout many times before he could be understood. We were then very near to the camp and all the unnecessary shouting alerted the CTs in it who fired at us. By the time we got to the camp, the CTs had escaped and we returned to base. I did not know what the Company Commander reported to the Battalion Commander but certainly his version conflicted with mine. The OCPD on hearing my side of the story, then informed the Brigade Commander about it and soon, the Battalion Commander jumped down my throat. I was not under his command and was very annoyed about this and informed the OCPD who again complained to the Brigade Commander who immediately summoned all concerned to his office. In front of all of us, he snapped at the Battalion Commander and ordered him to apologise to me for his rash behaviour in shouting at me. To me, that was true British justice. By coincidence, two days later, the two CTs who escaped from the jungle camp of the former BCM, sought safe refuge in Ipoh town. Through intelligence obtained from SB sources the refuge house was identified. Led by the District Special Branch Officer (DSBO), SB officers raided the house and captured the CTs.

In the middle of my tour at CHQ, I became very friendly with the British female secretary of the Head SB. I still do not know what attracted her to me but whenever she had some free time, or when the Head SB was away, she would come round to my desk and distract me. She looked like Olive, the girl friend of Popeye the Sailor, tall, skinny, cheeky and naughty. Nothing developed out of her teasing and encouragement until one evening when I was invited to her Christmas house party and the game of postman's knock was played. All the men were given a number which was changed quite frequently. When a number was called the holder of the number proceeded to an enclosed area where the girl would be waiting behind a partition. The man knocked on the partition and the girl asked "Who is that" to be answered "It's the Postman". The postman would then go round the partition to deliver the mail. For his effort he received a kiss and thus

the game continued. Somehow, our hostess arranged with a girl friend of hers to call my number constantly and on one of these occasions, we embraced each other. This incident aroused my interest in her and led us into various amorous escapades, until we attracted a lot of attention in and out of the office. Our affair lasted for over a year. We were both young and full of vigour and enjoyed many physical encounters, the memories of which are still very real to me. No place was taboo for our frequent love-making.

On two occasions we were caught making love under the moon-lit and starry sky. The first occasion was in the middle of the field of the Gymkhana Club in Ipoh. We were so engrossed in our love-making that we were not conscious of the approach of two inquisitive policemen. Fortunately, we were under a poncho cape and when they enquired what we were up to I hastily grabbed my purse and produced my authority card whereby they withdrew. What attracted the attention of the two officers was the Morris Minor car parked by the side of the road at about 0130 hours in the morning. The second occasion was at the Police rifle range, also in the wee hours of the morning. My mistake was not having informed the police constable on duty who I was when we passed his post to get into the range. It transpired that he became curious as to what had happened to the car that had gone into the rifle range about two hours earlier and decided to investigate. When he arrived on the scene, we were caught red-handed. As usual, the very quick production of my authority card saved many embarrassing questions and we were left alone.

As it was still Colonial days many British officers could not tolerate an Asian presuming to take advantage of a "superior" British woman. Of course they were not aware that it was she who made all the advances although I had to share the blame. One cannot clap with one hand. Various attempts were made to separate us but to no avail. In July, 1957, I was transferred from CHQ down to the District to break up our relationship. This was not a deterrent to my friend as it was just a stone's throw between the two establishments and she continued to visit

me every day. Further official strategies to break up our relationship included sending me on many unnecessary trips into the jungle. However, always on my return to civilisation, we picked up from where we had left off. She was threatened officially that if she did not desist she would be sent packing to England. When she countered this threat by saying she would return on her own steam she was termed despicable. For some unknown reason, I was never hauled up and warned. What really coloured the whole affair was the fact that we were both married. We realised it was wrong but we could not dislodge ourselves from our relationship. Even now I cannot find a reasonable or satisfactory answer as to what bound us together. The affair went on until September, 1958, when with Malayanisation, the trickle of expatriates out of Independent Malaya began and she was amongst the first few to leave. It had been a thrilling experience whilst it lasted. In the period we were together, there was never any suggestion of divorce from our legal partners and marriage to each other. On her return to England, we continued corresponding with each other until she eventually migrated to Canada in 1960 and we lost contact. In 1991, seven years after I retired, the "Bad Penny" rolled up. She had managed to obtain my address from the Management Division at Federal Police Headquarters (FHQ), which keeps records of retired officers. She wrote to me on several occasions and also spoke to me on the phone. So as not to hurt her feelings, I just replied to one or two letters but did not give her any encouragement as I decided not to rekindle our affair since there had been a lapse of thirty three years.

After such a close relationship, it was only natural that I missed her company when she departed. The vacuum caused by her return to England was very quickly filled by another woman who had watched from the side lines for a very long time. She was aware of the torrid relationship I had just ended. I met this woman during a social function and we became good friends. What attracted her to me I never attempted to find out although this new affair went on for a few years. She was young when she married and it was obvious that for reasons known only to herself, she carried a grudge and was making up for lost

time by having affairs with men. Most men could not help staring at her. She was well endowed in all the right places, possessed a mischievous smile and, for her age, very adept in the art of making love. I was ashamed of myself for my inferior knowledge of love making from the moves that she taught me. She was sex starved and would demand to be made love to very often and at the oddest times without feeling fatigue. There were many occasions when she rang the office in order to be relieved immediately and would sulk for days when she did not have her way.

My move from CHQ Perak to District SB Office, Ipoh, suited me nicely as it was more a continuation of what I had done successfully in Kuantan, the only difference being a new place and more CTs to pursue. The news of my relationship with the British secretary had preceded my transfer long before it took place but the DSBO, a thorough English gentleman who was a fighter pilot during the Second World War, was very reasonable. He took a pragmatic and liberal view and did not interfere in any way so long as I did my work and produced the desired results. He must have been acquainted with my results in Kuantan as he gave me a free hand. When I went to Ipoh District, there were many other Asian officers there before me. One Indian officer was even senior to me in service but the rest had joined after me. A few months after my arrival, the DSBO summoned all his officers to his office to make an announcement and to the surprise of all present, indicated that from that time onwards, he had nominated me as second-in-command and the rest of the officers should accept orders from me whether he was present or not. Before this, there was much bickering in the office. There were many previous occasions when in the absence of the DSBO, the other officers refused to cooperate with me and this hampered our work.

To me, knowledge of the area, the terrain and the people was the priority task and I set about doing this for almost a month. I explained to my boss the necessity of this action and having convinced him, he agreed to my overall plans. In the month that followed I was hardly in

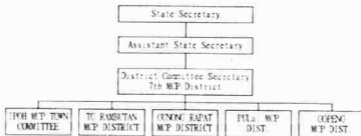
the office and spent most of the time carrying out recces of all areas under the jurisdiction of the DSBO. It was tough going as the suburbs of Ipoh are dominated by limestone hills and were CT infested. Therefore, elaborate plans had to be made before carrying out the missions as one wrong move could cost us our lives. I obtained the services of a Police Special Squad Group (PSSG), located nearby and led by a Malay sergeant who spoke a sprinkling of broken English. He had been stationed there for about a year and knew the ground very well. In the months that followed, it was his team that scored many successes in kills and captures against the CTO on information provided by the SB. In addition to recces, I interviewed a large number of our own operational personnel for background information and assimilated all the operational intelligence I obtained from them. I also spoke to a large number of SEPs who possessed knowledge of the ground and recorded all this intelligence for future reference. Recces were also conducted at night as it was anticipated that, in the future, a great deal of intelligence obtained would have to be acted upon during the hours of darkness.

One night not long after my posting to Ipoh District, the SF made contact with the CTs behind a tapioca factory at the rear of Tanjong Rambutan town. For these types of incidents, the DSBO usually sent for me for my views on further action and identification of the dead body. That night, I was celebrating the birthday of my cousin. Normally, after office hours, we had to report our movements to the duty officer so we could be contacted at any time. A mobile patrol vehicle was sent to request me to report to the police station at Tanjong Rambutan. I was quite affected by alcohol by then and was hoping that if I made a telephone call to the DSBO, who was waiting at the police station, I might be excused from traveling there. I therefore decided to make the call from a police station along the same road to Tanjong Rambutan. As bad luck would have it, when I turned the corner to park my car, there were two soldiers from the Singapore Infantry Regiment in front of the station and I nearly rammed into them. There was a hot exchange of words which lasted for some time and this soon attracted a

large audience. The Officer-in-Charge of Station (OCS) came out to investigate what the commotion was all about, and when he identified me, pacified and pleaded with me to enter the police station and not create a scene. Pointing my finger at him, I then informed him to return to his post and it was at this juncture when a Sikh constable who was just reporting for duty came on the scene. From his angle of vision, it appeared to him that I pushed his OCS and when he intervened and pushed me, I punched him and he fell into the drain. When he got out, we exchanged blows but the OCS managed to calm his constable and we went into the station. Being an officer, I was not prepared to accept such treatment from a constable and reported the incident to the OCPD by phone. His reaction was that if it was him, he would have "kicked the constable in the balls" and instructed me to wait at the station and he would send another officer to investigate. Further trouble really developed when the officer arrived. I was still befuddled from the early birthday drinking and did not know that he was standing behind me when I continued to raise my voice at the constable. He, an ASP of ethnic Chinese origin, noted my behaviour and this was later held against me when I was on a charge for drunkenness. Had I fought against this charge, I could have got away with it because medically, when I was sent to the hospital and made to read the newspaper and walk the thin white line which was the basis of a test for drunkenness, I was certified not drunk. I did not fight this charge because it was arranged between the OCPD and the DSBO, both Englishmen and both of the same rank, that if I pleaded guilty, I would be only given a reprimand. When the orderly room took place, the OCPD kept his word but this conviction was over turned by the CPO who ordered that it should be a severe reprimand. In those days, a reprimand was a local conviction and only an entry made in the Contingent records whereas a severe reprimand was noted at Federal level. It was most unfortunate for me, because not long before this incident took place, I had just gone for my first interview for promotion to the rank of ASP. Because of this entry my name was taken off the promotion list. However, a year later, on 1st. June, 1958, I was the only Inspector promoted. Because of my seniority and my meritorious service record, I could have been

promoted a year or more earlier, had it not been for this incident. In that one year's suspension, the DSBO had to submit four confidential reports on me against the normal one a year to satisfy the superiors that I had behaved myself and had continued with my good work.

During the First Emergency, as the counter Communist insurgency war from 1948 to 1960 was called, the target of the SF in the State of Perak was the 12th. Regiment of the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). The overall leader in charge of this group was the State Secretary who was a fully fledged Communist Party member who held the rank of State Committee. Under him was his Assistant State Secretary of the same rank. The State of Perak was divided into MCP districts with the Ipoh area designated the 7th. MCP District. The overall in-charge was the District Committee Secretary (DCS). The 7th. MCP District was further broken down into five areas with a District Committee Member (DCM) in control in each.



Under each DCM was a BCM and a few combatants depending on the availability and importance of each area. The best organised was the Gunong Rapat area which had a large and very active masses organisation supplying logistics to the CTO. This unit was also responsible for penetration of schools and the indoctrination of students in the Chinese middle schools in and around the Ipoh area, and organised the demonstration conducted by male and female students from a few Chinese middle schools in Ipoh in 1957. This disturbance



was to test the reaction of the Government but after two days it was quelled by stern action taken by the police. According to the law, a group of five and above with a common intention to create trouble, constitutes rioting, and the law allows the use of necessary force to disperse the rioters. It was then decided that the best way to disperse the students was to cane them publicly when they were seen in a group of five or more and this action put a stop to the demonstrations. This was another new experience.

The DCS had regular contacts with the State Secretariat to report progress and receive instructions. Contacts were seldom physical or direct but were carried out by letters or rolled slips deposited at prearranged locations, known as Dead Letter Boxes (DLB), in the jungle, which were serviced by couriers. The open mail system was used rarely because it was considered insecure. In the days of the first emergency, the MCP had not thought of forming satellite organisations and depended solely on the masses organisation for their logistics of money, supplies, food and intelligence. This system had it's weaknesses because the same people used by the CTs were also exploited by the authorities, especially the SB.

To obtain the best possible results against the CTO, dossiers were compiled which were handed to SB officers to study to enable them to work out plans to eliminate the enemy. Each officer was allocated an area and it was his responsibility to know the ground, the people and the enemy. A master chart was set up in the general office for all officers to acquaint themselves with the enemy in the Ipoh area. This chart consisted of photographs of CTs in the various areas. It was a vital administrative and operational tool and therefore kept very current. CTs killed were crossed out in red, those captured had a red line drawn across diagonally, and those who had surrendered had the words SEP written on it. The dates of each elimination was written on the photograph.

Coverage was very good and all officers were usually busily engaged in contacting their sources. As usual, all contacts were clandestine and because of the shortage of finance, there were no safe houses and the officers had to use their ingenuity to improvise the safest means of contact. Sources were usually debriefed at night inside the officers cars after they had been picked up from prearranged rendezvous (RV) and taken to another part of town where they were unknown. The telephone was normally used for emergency contacts. Every SB officer liaised with the operational troops in his area of responsibility and any information that could be acted on was immediately passed to the troops. Information on the general movements of the enemy were normally studied, plotted and filed for future reference. At times when there was a lull in information, the personnel involved would sit and plan operations based on previous information obtained. There was also very close liaison with the personnel of the adjoining Districts to exchange information or to plan combined operations.

The most difficult unit to eliminate was the Tambun Armed Work Cell (AWC) of the Tg. Rambutan Armed Work Force (AWF) of the 7th. MCP District. The reason was not for the lack of intelligence. SB Coverage in this district was about the best in the whole area. Geographical constraints made eliminations difficult. The whole of the Tambun area was dotted with hills where the CTs could hide. CTs came from the local area and knew the place well. They had a good masses organisation which provided them with the necessary logistics of food and information. It was never easy to get into the area day or night as the houses of the masses, who were mainly cultivators, were built close together. As an added precaution, the CTs briefed all house owners to keep dogs which were the main stumbling block for the SF. Each time we attempted to sneak into the 7th. MCP District area day or night, we were invariably detected by the dogs who warned their masters of our presence by their aggressive barking. Lessons learnt from Bekok and Kuantan to lure the dogs away were adopted, but these were not successful as the owners chained the dogs in their houses whenever they left them. Like the masses I too kept dogs in my

compound to alert me if strangers were around. One day I observed a pack of dogs milling around my compound, and on closer examination I discovered that they were there because my bitch was on heat. It occurred to me that most of the dogs were not from the vicinity and they must have strayed from far off as I had never seen them before. Whilst watching the dogs scrambling around my bitch, an idea occurred to me. If these dogs could stray so far to visit a bitch on heat then by using bitches on heat I should be able to lure the farm dogs from their houses. As an experiment, I smeared the blood of the bitch on heat onto pieces of cloth and kept these tightly sealed in a bottle. On my next free day I went on patrol and laid the pieces of cloth, that had been smeared with blood, at certain strategic points away and set up an observation post from where I could watch the results through a pair of binoculars. I was not surprised when a little over half an hour later, I saw packs of dogs milling around the pieces of cloth. Thereafter, I used this method on numerous occasions to lure the farm dogs away from our target areas so that I could get into ambush positions to await the arrival of CTs. This simple method enabled us to kill most of the CTs of the Tambun unit.

Towards the end of 1957 and in the wake of a very successful combined operation against the CTO in Lower Perak, a large operation was planned for Central Perak to eliminate the CTs in the Districts of Ipoh, Sungai Siput North and Kuala Kangsar. This operation involved the 2nd. Malayan Infantry Brigade (2 MIB) and the 28th. Commonwealth Infantry Brigade (28 CIB). Troops from the Royal Australian Regiments (RAR), the New Zealand Regiment (NZR), Special Air Services (SAS), the Royal Lincolns, the Loyals, the Royal Malay Regiments (RMR), PFF and Home Guards, were deployed when the operation was launched in February, 1958. It was code-named "Ginger". This operation area covered an area of approximately 1200 square miles with a population of about 125,000. A combined operation room was set up in Ipoh and every morning, sometimes even on week-ends and public holidays, meetings, nicknamed "morning prayers", were held. Each unit gave it's own briefing on the previous

days activities and the SB would then brief on any new intelligence obtained and advise the troops on possible locations where the enemy might hide. Up until this operation the CTs had enjoyed a veritable free hand in intimidating the rural folk into supporting them. The vastness of the territory and the lack of SF to contain them provided them with a licence to operate with impunity. When Op. Ginger was launched, there was a concerted troop build up and elaborate plans were made to harass and attack the CTs. SAS troops were sent into the deep jungle to flush the CTs from their habitual hide-outs. Other operational units were assigned to hunt for other CT units operating along the jungle fringes. At the same time preparations were made to deny the CTs their logistics from the villages when they emerged from the jungle. This form of harassment took its toll on the CTO with a number of surrenders whilst those members who had no intention of surrendering, took risks to obtain their supplies and were usually captured or killed. The SB was particularly geared into working out a system whereby almost instant contact could be made between the handling officers and the sources on the ground. It was anticipated that Op. Ginger would upset a lot of the CTs' plans and cause them to take risks which would expose them. All leave was suspended for the duration of the operation.

Immediately prior to and after the declaration of Independence of Malaya on 31st. August, 1957, the Merdeka Amnesty, an amnesty offer, was granted to all members of the CTO to surrender. This offer was most generous in that those who accepted the terms, were free from prosecution. From internal coverage, it was later learnt that there were quite a number in the CTO who genuinely accepted the terms whilst the majority merely exploited the generous terms to come out and plan to fight another day. During the course of Op. Ginger, a few CTs enquired through the masses whether the Merdeka Amnesty was still in force, but when told that the period had lapsed they did not follow through with their intention to surrender.

Op. Ginger kept everyone involved and fully occupied by day and night due to the constant movement and sighting of CTs within the operational area. The SB was particularly busy as they had to debrief the sources, put up the reports, liaise with the troops constantly and assist in the planning of operations. A large number of the troops were entirely new to the country and the operational areas and hence eagerly sought the informed views of the SB. During Op. Ginger there was exceptionally good rapport between the Headquarters staff of the 1st. Battalion New Zealand Army and the SB staff who occupied the same complex. This Battalion had the greatest number of kills - 16 in all - in the shortest time during the operation, and had the highest praise for the Ipoh SB who provided them with the bulk of the intelligence, whether acquired from sources or accurate appreciations. The Commanding Officer (CO) of the battalion had his office next to mine and because of his faith in my ability to produce results would pick my brains daily. When there were lull periods, he would just request me to speculate where the CTs were and I would jokingly say that I would consult my "crystal ball" and then slamming my palm on the operational map, would say that was where the CTs were. He took all these gestures as Gospel truth and would send his men out and, more often than not, they would secure results. I was definitely their Mandrake. Within the SB set-up was a sub-section manned by British Military personnel. They were called Military Intelligence Officers (MIO). Their role was to assist the SB in appreciating operational intelligence and charting CTs. At Contingent or State headquarters, it was headed by a Major. These MIO personnel were usually Royal Artillery members (Tai Phow Yau) of the British Army.

A couple of months after the launching of Ginger when it was assessed that the CTO had been really demoralised and were feeling the strain of the harassment, both physically and logistically, the SB decided to launch its own operation against the 7th. MCP District. It was assessed that if this unit could be decimated, then all other MCP districts under Op. Ginger would be demoralised further. Project "JUKEBOX" was aimed at securing the surrender of the HQ group of the 7th. MCP

district who were known to be in close contact with the State Secretariat of the CPM in the State of Perak. If we were successful in this project, we would then be one step nearer to the State HQ group. There were a number of sources who were in direct contact with the 7th. District group. Initially, a letter signed by the DSBO Ipoh, was sent in to the leader. There was no response for about six months but in August, 1958, the SB received a reply from the leader sent to a prearranged letter box. The leader thanked the Government and the SB for it's understanding and generosity. There was a summary of the difficulties faced by both sides and his desire to contribute to the ending of hostilities in order to save unnecessary expenditure which could be used for national development. He was prepared to assist the Government in bringing out his men for a payment and a guarantee of good treatment on the Merdeka Amnesty terms. If the Government accepted his terms, we were to suspend all military operations in certain areas for a period so as to enable him to make arrangements. Coming from an enemy whom we knew was on the verge of collapse, these terms were definitely not acceptable. We replied that we were prepared to offer him and his men fair treatment and he should meet us at a selected RV, known to him, by a certain time and period.

A month later, a female CT was sent out to contact the SB through the masses. She carried a message from the leader who agreed to meet us. The female CT would act as our guide to the RV. All he asked for was to be met as quickly as possible and we were to assure him that there would be no foul play. He was met the next day by an SB party comprising the DSBO, myself, another officer and an SEP. After some clarification, the leader decided to surrender and gave the signal to five of his subordinates who were in ambush positions nearby to do likewise. After his emergence, he was used extensively until November to contact the remaining CTs under his command. These attempts were not fruitful as by the time he surrendered, his subordinate units had been dislodged from the normal operational area because of Op. Ginger. JUKEBOX was suspended when the Asst. State Secretary of the 12th. Regiment CTO surrendered. Because of his rank and

influence, which could be exploited to advantage, the SB switched priorities and launched another "Q" project code-named "JUBUBES". The rest of the CTs of the 7th. MCP. District eventually surrendered on their own, due to constant harassment by the SF and the lack of food supplies.

Project "JUBUBES" contributed largely to the collapse of the CTO in Central Perak. In "Q" operations SB officers and men masqueraded as the enemy and lured the CTs into their camps and in the middle of the night while the CTs were sleeping, the ammunition from their weapons was unloaded and their hand-grenades defused. The next morning the CTs would be confronted with the fact that their so-called comrades were in fact SB personnel and they were then given the chance to surrender. They usually did not resist because they were at a disadvantage. The factor which affected them most of all was that they had been given a chance of survival when they could have been killed. It had been instilled into their minds by CPM party leaders that if they were caught, they would be tortured to extract intelligence from them, and then they would be killed. To counter this propaganda, "Q" teams usually included a former CT who had served in or was acquainted with the group coming into the trap. When the trapped CTs saw their old comrades all previous indoctrination about the ruthlessness of the SF was immediately neutralised. On other occasions SB officers, disguised as CTs, met CTs in person in the jungle and physically apprehended them when they were close enough. Life was tough whilst engaged in these operations. Before the groups even left for the jungle, all food and equipment was checked thoroughly to ensure that they were of the same standard issue as those of the CTs. After years of hard living in the jungle the CTs had acquired very finely tuned senses. As an example, they could detect the presence of the SF several miles down wind if the SF were using toilet soap which is very slightly scented. The smell of unusual food could be carried to the CTs in the same way. We were not allowed to use standard Government issue equipment either for camping or patrolling in case the CTs spotted us. Normally, we had to sleep in hammocks which was adapted from the

CT pattern. This consisted of a sheet of canvas, preferably green or light coloured 30 inches by 70 inches in size. Both ends were turned in and sewn to form a loop through which a piece of wood was inserted. When stretched, the hammock became a flat piece of cloth suspended from the ground. There is an art in sleeping on it which comes only with practice and a new comer would invariably fall off it. When based in an area for a longer period, bashas were made from jungle produce obtained from the local surroundings in case the enemy spotted and studied our movements from afar. The base camps were made miles away from where the enemy were suspected to be located and early each morning, small patrols dressed as the enemy, would be sent out in an attempt to locate them or leave messages at known DLBs. Our food was supplemented with local produce whenever it was available. For the smokers, it was an agony to have to smoke raw and untreated tobacco which tastes like burnt newspaper. To ensure maximum security, even talking aloud was not permitted, especially at night. When in town, to be certain that team members retained the pallor of jungle CTs, we were not allowed to expose ourselves unnecessarily to sunlight.

In one of these dangerous and delicate operations, I nearly lost my life when one of three CT couriers, who was suspicious of our identity, attempted to open fire with his shot gun which was pointed in my direction. But for the quick reaction of one of the members of the SB team, who managed to stick his thumb between the gun's hammer and firing pin, I would have been blown apart as I was only about twenty feet from the CT. This incident happened while we were waiting for an arranged meeting with the CTs. The contact time had long passed and we were resting and preparing to have our lunch. Whilst waiting for lunch, I was reading a comic book, a favourite part of my post school education. Because it was unbearably hot in the blukar, I undid the buttons of my CT shirt with the sleeves dropped down to my elbows exposing the tattoos on both my arms. When I was told the CTs were approaching, I thought the person warning me was joking again as he was an habitual prankster. When I glimpsed the first CT coming into



our resting place I hurriedly pulled up my shirt and tucked the comic under my backside. This operation took place in Sungai Siput North and "That Fellow" who was the DSO there, was the leader of the "Q" team. He was a meticulous organiser and no effort was spared in preparations for this and other "Q" operations. Although he was most professional and completely dedicated to the task in hand as a leader he lacked understanding and sensitivity for the feelings of others. This was a fatal flaw in his leadership. He expected everyone to share his absolute commitment and drove everyone relentlessly despite their physical and emotional states. In spite of the fact that all "Q" team members were volunteers and all missions were highly dangerous he dictated what could and what could not be taken on those operations. Before departure he would parade the group and, like a sgt. major at kit and barrack inspection, would go through all the equipment to ensure that nothing more than what he considered adequate and proper was taken along.

On one of these missions I contracted acute stomach pain, probably through eating the wrong jungle shrub. That night I was stricken with severe dysentery and visited the latrines, which were shallow holes I had dug around my basha, at least twenty times. "That Fellow" did not show the slightest sympathy towards me and next morning regarded me as though I was malingering. Only very reluctantly he arranged for me to be escorted out on foot. I had to walk more than two hours through CT infested jungle to be picked up at the road head and taken to hospital where I was admitted for two days and relieved of strenuous duties for a fortnight upon discharge. While I was on this medical leave, I learnt, that in spite of the urgency, "Q" operations had been suspended because the officers had gone on strike over the unreasonable conditions they had been subjected to by "That Fellow". At the time when I was "severely reprimanded" for my drunken behaviour, I was already engaged in "Q" operations and the punishment meted out to me played on my mind for a long time as I could not personally resolve the fact that for such a minor incident, my promotion was suspended despite the meritorious service to my credit. When I

was approached to lead the subsequent "Q" operations, I naturally declined but on the coaxing of the DSBO, who had then assumed a senior position at Contingent Headquarters, and the MIO, a Major, of Sungai Siput North, I later accepted the job. In fact, unknown to me, when the above incidents took place, I was already promoted but the announcement was made later. It was probably a blessing that I finally accepted to lead the "Q" operations as refusal might again have affected my promotion.

During our "Q" operations, on a few occasions we took along soldiers from the 1 NZ Regiment. They were mostly ethnic Maoris and came as wireless operators. Invariably they made most valuable contributions to the operations. At times, Pakehas went along for the excitement but they were kept in base when we went out to contact the CTs. They made it a point to count the number leaving and when counting the extra numbers returning they were completely flabbergasted as to how we accomplished our missions with great success with such small numbers and without losing a single man. Although renowned for their speed, I was proud that at least on one occasion, I outran a Maori, who acted as my bodyguard, when we had to run some distance through the jungle to retrieve a message that was left in a DLB. Those hand-picked few were the envy of their mates when they returned to camp with their stories of the missions.

The failure of one very important "Q" operation can be attributed very favourably to the Communists. Three days before the mission we had caught three CT jungle couriers from the Headquarters element of the 12th. Regiment MRLA. During their confinement and interrogation, it was established that if they were to be used for "Q" jobs, one of them should attempt to escape and inform their Regimental Commander of SB's ploy to apprehend him. Knowing this, we still proceeded with our plans but took the precaution of filing down the firing pins of their weapons before they were armed for the operation. On the night of the mission we were positioned on a rubber estate in the Lasah area of Sungai Siput North awaiting daylight to make our contact with the

Regimental Commander of the CTO. At about midnight rain came pouring down and two other officers with me went off to what I thought was to make shelter and return for me. I was left guarding the three semi-hostile CTs. Because of the cramped position of four of us under one poncho and the lack of circulation of our limbs, at about five in the morning, I dozed off. When I opened my eyes a while later, I found that one of them had escaped. The operation had to be aborted and the only counter action we could take to prevent contact between the one who escaped and the Regimental Commander was to fire at random hoping that we might kill the CT or frighten and drive the other group away. Not long after this, there was still another chance to capture him in Aboriginal country near Sungai Dala before he could cross into the Thai border. This was thwarted through the haste of the Perak state government to declare the end of the Emergency in Perak due to political considerations. In the Second Emergency, this same Regimental Commander, who was skilled in military tactics and the art of subversion, returned from Thailand, first to Perak, and then later to Pahang, to reactivate CT activities. He was one of the very few capable Commanders left in the CPM. Had we managed to capture him it would have shortened the Second Emergency which lasted from 1970 to 1991. This man vowed never to surrender, but many years later, staged his capture to save face.

Towards the closing stages of Op. Ginger, there was one lone CT straggler left in the Salak North area of Sungai Siput North. A simple operation was mounted to either force him to surrender or kill him. There were four officers involved in this operation - myself, the OCPD Sungai Siput North, the DSBO ("That Fellow") and the MIO also of Sungai Siput North. We set out early in the morning in a private car and debussed near the entry point. From there we took a circuitous route and crawled through blukar to get to the point where an informant had reported having seen the CT emerging from the jungle's edge. In the process, we were badly bitten by sand flies and mosquitoes. The first morning when we were in the general locality, and at the critical moment, I developed a tummy ache and had to hurriedly dig a hole. It

was at that very moment when the CT appeared and passed below the spot where I was. Had he come a little closer, he would have noticed the extra aroma. There was nothing more we could do but to return again the next morning. We were subjected to the same discomfort the next day but when he appeared, he was too far away from our positions. It had to be yet another day more before he could be accounted for. On this third morning, when he appeared, he was still out of shooting range. The OCPD and MIO were in one position whilst "That Fellow" and I were in another nearby. My favourite choice of operational weapon is still the automatic shotgun and I was thus armed that morning whilst the other person had an American carbine. The CT was a good eighty yards away from me and he was on much higher ground. Just as at practice, I asked for the carbine and took aim at the CT with the promise that I would not shoot. It was then that the agony of the three mornings ran through my mind and I argued within myself that if I took no action then, it would have to be another agonising morning. The CT was already on the move by then and I instantly decided to shoot him. He was moving between the rows of rubber trees and I took aim at the left of the next tree where he would have to pass. As soon as he appeared, I shot him and he fell immediately. I was very confident that he had been killed and requested the others to accompany me to view the body. Much to our surprise, when we were about twenty yards from where he fell, he got up and made a dash for his life. We fired at him but he was too fast for us although he was going uphill. After tracking him for about an hour we came across his hide-out. It was very well camouflaged and it would have been impossible to find it if we had not been so close on his heels. The roof was a rasam tree pulled and tied together. There were a few cooking utensils with hardly any food and he slept on the ground. He must have stayed there for quite a long time as the ground was clean and the earth packed hard with frequent usage. We continued to pursue him from the hide-out and after a short distance saw blood deposited on the leaves of the bushes along the trail. After another hour, we lost the trail completely and returned the way we came. On the way we picked up some of the leaves with blood and the pathologist later confirmed that it

was marrow blood and he would have to seek medical treatment soon. For fourteen days thereafter, we conducted psywar day and night, using the voice aircraft and loud hailer in the general area to coax him out. He finally surrendered suffering from hunger and malnutrition. His wound had turned septic but somehow not gangrenous. But for the uphill angle the bullet would have penetrated his heart. When asked whether he heard any of our appeals, he replied stating that the loud hailer almost blasted his ear drums.

On 6th. March, 1959, the State Secretary of the MCP in Perak was killed on Gunong Lang about four miles north of Ipoh town when Op. Ginger was still on. He was forced to seek refuge there because of heavy SF pressure and all his other normal places of refuge were dominated by the SF. He arrived there about two days earlier and sent one of his bodyguards down the hill to look for a CT supporter and obtain food. The bodyguard however, surrendered to the SB and gave vital information to the effect that his leader expected him back that afternoon with the supporter, and the signal for joining up with his leader was the ringing of the bicycle bell. From the top of the hill, they could observe all movement down below and on the slightest suspicion, his leader would open fire from the top. The SEP had also arranged with the other bodyguard that he was going to surrender and when he rang the bicycle's bell on his return, it was also the signal he had contacted the SB and it was in order for the other bodyguard to shoot the State Secretary. I took the place of the CT supporter and as soon as we were at the foot of the hill, I gave the signal and immediately, firing broke out at the summit of the hill. We counted six rounds being fired and when it was all over, we were informed that it took that many bullets to kill the State Secretary. He had planned and commanded the ambush which killed Sir Henry Gurney, the British High Commissioner, on the Kuala Kubu Bahru/Gap Road, Selangor, in 1951. He was a very brutal man and his underlings had waited a long time for an opportunity to kill him. The same Lincoln Regiment that was to lend support to surround the base of the hill before the operation

started, lost their way and arrived after the dead body had been carted away.

Of the 166 members of the CTO in central Perak, 158 were eliminated during Op. Ginger and 8 escaped to Thailand. The eliminations were made up of 46 killed, (with the 1 NZ Regiment killing 16), 6 captured, 49 surrenders, 5 deaths and 52 induced surrenders from SB Projects Jukebox (20), and Jujubes (32).

Central Perak was declared a white area in January, 1960. A big celebration was laid on to mark the end of CTO influence and hostilities in the State of Perak. Hundreds of officials and invited guests were invited for the occasion. These included the two British Brigade Commanders. The venue for the celebrations was the Ipoh Club and officers in uniform hung their caps in the washroom. During the course of the celebration, a naughty idea occurred to me and I decided to hide the cap of the 2 MIB Commander under the water closet in the toilet. As it turned out, because both Commanders had the same big heads, I had picked the wrong cap and hid that of the Commander of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade. It was only from his outburst when I knew that I had got the wrong one. A few days after the event, I apologised to him and he took it most sportingly.

From the time of my transfer to Perak in February, 1956 to early 1960, for my contribution to the successes to Op. Ginger and the overall improvement of the security of the State, I received three letters of Commendation, two from the CPO of Perak and one from the Commander of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade on 19 December, 1957, 17 December, 1958 and 8 January, 1960, respectively. I received my first gallantry award from His Majesty, The King of Malaysia, on 4 June, 1959. Several other SB officers and rank and file also received gallantry awards for the risks they took in "Q" operations. One officer who took part in "Q" operations in Lower and Central Perak was conferred the Gallantry Medal and the Bar to it, the only person in the country to be so honoured. It was also due to "Q" operations that I got

into further trouble. During the course of such operations when the CTs were captured and induced to surrender, arms and ammunition were also surrendered. For reasons of security and continuity these weapons were kept in SB custody in the cabinets and drawers of SB officers. Arms and ammunition included unexploded bombs from which CTs usually retrieved the explosive content. When I was posted from Ipoh District HQ to CHQ, I discovered that a number of mortar bombs had been left in one of the cabinets and therefore ordered one of my officers to surrender them to the General Duties police who indicated that it was not their responsibility to take such items into custody. I then requested the army to arrange for their bomb disposal unit to detonate the mortar bombs. It so transpired that the bomb disposal unit, which was stationed some 40 miles away, was in town that morning but, when contacted, were on their way back to base. The commander of the unit, an Indian Major, when asked to return to carry out the job, was infuriated and took the police to task for lack of coordination. The Deputy CPO naturally was annoyed at being told off and ordered an enquiry. One thing led to another and one of the officers who had taken part in the recovery of these mortar bombs was put on a charge for neglect of duty. I came to his defence and in the process nearly landed myself in trouble. However I extricated the officer and myself by explaining that if I was negligent under one part of the Police Administrative Orders, then under another section, a string of officers senior to me were just as guilty.

At the time the Head of SB, Perak, was an Englishman. He was quietly spoken, always smiling and very popular with both his regulars and the civilian staff. Also he had an eye for things beautiful, especially women. He did not interfere with the planning of operations but insisted that he was briefed on the final decision and the outcome. His name, slightly mispronounced, sounded like "Duck" and the Chinese personnel nicknamed him "Arp Chai" which is the Chinese equivalent for that same fine feathered bird. It was no disrespect in the least but more an endearment. He returned to England in late 1959, and in recent

years, has been a frequent yearly visitor back to Malaysia to meet old comrades-in-arms.

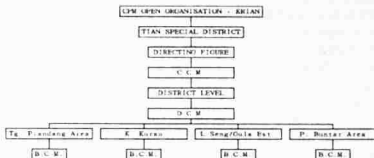
With end of "Q" operations and my promotion, I was posted back to CHQ Perak, Ipoh in May, 1959, as a Staff Officer in the section dealing with Communist subversion, where I remained until September, 1961. It was back to routine pen-pushing. By 1960 the First Emergency was over and the last CT had been forced across the Border into South Thailand. During this long campaign from 1948 to 1960, 1346 police personnel were killed and 1601 wounded. My new duties focused on the study, tracking and tracing of subversive elements and organisations that had been given low priority when Communist Terrorism had top priority. In the early years of the First Emergency when the CPM High Command had drawn up contingency plans for withdrawal into the safe sanctuary of South Thailand should their position become untenable due to heavy SF pressure, they also made contingency plans for leaving behind a capable residue of able cadres to ensure continuity and to obtain intelligence and logistics for the CPM. In my new desk officer capacity, following routine enquiries and the de-briefing of sources, we stumbled on a "stay-behind" organisation set up by the CPM in the Krian White Area, in Kuala Kurau, Perak.

This CPM organisation was called the "Open Organisation of the Krian White Area". The aim of this organisation was to maintain a high standard of security in expanding and consolidating the activities of the masses in the area. It was to cultivate suitable masses with a view to recruiting them into the CTO/CPM and to maintain the area as a source of finance for the CPM. The latter task was the most important. It also maintained a courier link with the CTO/CPM across the border in Thailand. The overall leader of the organisation was a ruthless killer who, before his emergence, commanded the 8th. Regiment of the CTO based in Kedah. He was one of the CPM's more capable leaders both in the subversive and military fields. In 1938 he was already a member of the Singapore Town Committee and after two years was transferred to Selangor to take control of Communist



activities in south Selangor. That same year he was arrested by the British but was released when the Japanese invaded Malaya. In 1942 he attended the Pan Malayan CPM High Ranking cadres meeting at the Batu Caves, Selangor, where he was captured by the Japanese. Subsequently he escaped from custody. After his escape from the Japanese he was under suspicion and kept under observation by the party hierarchy. When this suspicion faded he was appointed a Central Committee Member of the party.

The open organisation was run along the same lines as the CTO:-



Note: CCM - Central Committee Member

DCM - District Committee Member

BCM - Branch Committee Member

It was then decided that great effort had to be made to track down this organisation to see what progress it had made so far. A specially selected team would be deployed, but before this could take place the general area had to be rechecked to choose the most suitable places where the team members could be positioned. It took more than one month for the recheck. Six likely locations were chosen, all in rubber and coconut estates which were European owned. Efforts were then made to identify the owners and arrange with them for team members to be

deployed under appropriate cover. The whole exercise took about six months before deployment actually took place.

Before I accepted this assignment, five days prior to the Christmas of 1960, I met with an accident while returning to the office after lunch. The "Hefty Scotsman" had paid me a visit that morning before he proceeded to Port Swettenham, later to be re-named Port Klang, from Penang to catch the boat back to the United Kingdom on leave. I took him out for lunch and, as usual, we had one beer too many. As he did not know his way out of Ipoh, he requested that I showed him the way. It was on my journey back to the office that the accident occurred when a car shot out of the side road and rammed into the Lambretta scooter that I was riding. According to a friend of mine, who observed the accident from the front of his optical shop, the front wheel of the car landed on top of my neck. My friend presumed I had died when the ambulance driver jacked the car up and took me to the hospital. About forty five minutes later, I regained consciousness and was discharged by the houseman doctor who should have detained me for further observation instead of discharging me. That evening I suffered unbearable pains and when I rushed back to hospital, another more experienced doctor X-rayed me and found that I had a couple of fractured ribs and my neck had been twisted. I was encased almost like a mummy in a plaster cast from my head down to my waist with only my face and my arms exposed. About two days later when the plaster began to dry, it constricted and the pressure affected my breathing. I suffer from claustrophobia, and as the pressure increased, I felt that I would die from lack of oxygen and therefore returned to the hospital to have the cast removed. Initially, the doctor refused but on my pleading and then threatening, he reluctantly removed it and cautioned me that the consequences were on my shoulders. He bandaged my chest and put a plaster collar round my neck. Apart from the fractured ribs, he indicated that I had spasmodic torticollis, i.e., the muscles at the back of my neck had caught hold of one nerve, and the collar would have to remain for about six months. In those days, the smooth plastic and padded collar did not exist and each time my neck twitched, it loosened

the plaster a bit and jagged edges formed on the top of the collar which eventually cut into my flesh. One night after a long drinking bout I lost control and cut the collar with a knife. To my horror I found I could not control my head which rolled from side to side. Only with the pressure of my palm on the nape of the neck could I bring it upright. The next morning I visited the same doctor who scolded me and said that the only alternative treatment was an operation to free the nerve by cutting the muscles, but if the muscles did not heal, then my head would flop from side to side for the rest of my life. I did not have the operation and for about two years and I went around with my palm behind the nape of my neck. In this period I was subjected to all sorts of treatment - traditional, Western, consultation of the deity and the supernatural, and acupuncture. For the latter treatment, most days I had about twenty needles stuck into certain points of my body. When the needles found a nerve, they sent an electric shock along the discovered nerve. The first time the needle went into my body was a frightening experience. One day when I was watching a movie I experimented to find out what would happen. I was surprised to find my neck would stay in place without support. For thirty two years since then I have had to bear the inconvenience of my head twitching all the time. I took no action against the driver of the vehicle which collided with me because he was the son of one of my Detective Sergeants and had only just passed his driving test the day before the accident.

When Project "JUMBLE" was mounted at the end of March, 1961, I was chosen to lead the team. I still had a collar round my neck but in spite of this, I accepted the task. It was a risky business as enquiries revealed that the whole of the Open Organisation consisted of about thirteen hardened CTs who were there long before us and who exercised good control over the masses. One wrong move could have landed us in big trouble. Despite the great dangers involved in such an operation, the separation of the participating officers from their families, the physical hardships and social deprivations suffered, all ranks were paid the same meagre allowance and were not permitted, by

regulation, to keep their earnings from their undercover jobs. Two officers and ten other ranks were infiltrated into the target area to six locations, all under different cover, including assistant estate manager, university undergraduate on field assignment, rubber tappers, dog-shooters, itinerant vendors and cultivators. For the duration of the operation everyone had to live his cover as well as take part in the objective of the operation to detect the CT leader and his subordinates. Those who were subjected to the greatest strain were the rubber tappers and cultivators who worked unscheduled long hours, were subjected to mosquito and insect bites and exposed to the sun and rain. Then, in the evenings they had to conduct discreet enquiries on the enemys' activities and movements. The person who had the easiest time was the officer who posed as the university agriculture undergraduate. He had no fixed time and could move about freely at will. I posed as the assistant estate manager on the local coconut estate. I had to wake up at 0530 hours each morning, seven days a week, to take roll call of the labour force for an hour and then return to my quarters for a quick wash and breakfast before going back to the fields to ensure the labourers did their work. The estate was divided into four divisions with one hundred labourers in my division. My morning tasks included counting thousands of coconuts. There were pluckers, carriers, huskers and driers on the estate. Each plucker was contracted to pluck fifty nuts per day. He was required to pluck an extra two nuts in case there were rotten ones among his tally of fifty. As there were seldom any rotten nuts the management made four percent extra profit each day. To sustain my cover I needed to know how to count in Tamil in front of the pluckers. The work was uninteresting and monotonous especially carrying out roll call early each morning. After a while, I had to use my wits to save my efforts of checking on the men in the fields. I would be very diligent for about a week and then skip for three or four days running. The main thing was to keep them guessing when I would check on them. This ploy allowed me to gain a lot of valuable extra sleeping time. With other administration duties, my work finished at about 1630 hours each day. For about four times a week I had to remain awake till the early hours of the morning involved in my covert

role in the briefing and debriefing of sources in the operational area. Every week, to keep headquarters informed of progress, I travelled outside the area to brief an officer from HQ. There was hardly any rest or free time. Until informed by the Manager, I was not aware that the labourers had reported me for not discharging my duties properly. As he was aware of my identity and role, he play acted.

The Manager was a lanky and slim Englishman who was very friendly. He walked with a limp and had been on the estate for about seven years. Commensurate with his position, he spoke very good Tamil and was "God in his Little Acre". So that he could cover me, I kept him informed of the progress of the operation within the bounds of security. There was a standing invitation to visit him in his bungalow which was some distance from mine and in the evenings when I was not engaged in my covert role, I would sneak into his bungalow and we would talk and drink beer till very late into the night. These sessions made it more difficult to wake up and be at work by 0530 hours. To act the part properly, on a great number of occasions, tired as I was, I had to accompany the Manager to social functions which went on until the early hours of the morning.

At one of these social functions, held in the army officers' mess in Taiping, I was introduced to a female Australian officer working with the Australian Salvation Army. At that time there were still Australian and New Zealand soldiers stationed in Malaya and one of her jobs was to look after the welfare of the sick soldiers and their families. She hailed from South Australia. She liked to be pampered, possessed a fiery temper, was very blunt and did not mince her words irrespective to whom she spoke or who was present. We were attracted to each other from the time we first met and thereafter were together constantly for the duration of the operation. She was a smoocher but not a good lover and would be completely disinterested as soon as she attained physical fulfillment. He was most adventurous and would try anything once for the experience, to the extent of making love in the sea, the swimming pool, the wet-lands at the foot of the hills, and even in an insect infested

place. She stayed in the female section of the army officers' mess together with a few other female British and Australian teachers and nurses. Rather brazenly she would not hesitate to ask you into her room even when the others were present. Because of varying cultures and social differences, we disagreed on a lot of issues and quarreled frequently but somehow made up and continued with our affair until she finished her tour of duty and returned home in 1962. We had our last few quarrels on board the liner from Singapore to Hong Kong and in Hong Kong when she was on her way home. I have never heard from her since she left.

It was also during this time that I met a number of British school teachers who taught the children of British and Commonwealth servicemen still serving in Malaya. I was particularly friendly with one teacher who eventually became the Headmaster. His wife was quite a snob. Endlessly she compared conditions in Malaya with those in England. She would take every opportunity to extol, eulogize or brag about England and criticise Malaya, describing it as filthy and abounding in beggars. She regarded Emergency laws as most draconian, without realising these laws were drafted by the colonial British. She termed the killing of CTs as brutal but did not acknowledge the British killings in Ireland. In 1966, when I first went to the United Kingdom, from what I saw in Regent and Oxford streets in London, I decided to call her bluff about the welfare and immaculate conditions in her country. For the duration of my stay in London, every Saturday and Sunday afternoon, I made it a point to visit those two streets and the tube stations to photograph beggars. On my return, I showed her the pictures. Only years later when I visited her in the middle of England did I realize that her field of vision was quite narrow.

Twice a week on Tuesday and Friday evenings, except when I had to leave the estate on urgent covert duties, all members of the team reported to me at the bungalow provided by the management. At these meetings, the members briefed me on what had transpired since our last

meeting. In turn I would brief them on their assignments. Based on what they said, I would then report to HQ. At the beginning of each month, I submitted in person a monthly progress report to the Head SB, Perak, who was the coordinating officer between the people on the ground and those at Federal Police HQ Kuala Lumpur. For this operation, I was allowed to use my own car for travel between towns. The Head SB at that time was an Englishman who was very tall and stoop shouldered. He was exceptionally secretive and spoke in a very soft voice, almost in a whisper, and most times you had to bring your ears up to his lips to understand what he was saying. He was very good at his job, always gave good advice and direction and was nicknamed the "Whispering Giant". He had vast experience in his work and was rumoured to have been detached by the British MI6 to work in Malaya. Although a great number of expatriates were Malayanised with Independence in 1957, he was one of the few who was retained to stay behind until about 1965 when he returned to the United Kingdom where he worked for a spell with the Commonwealth Office before going to Hong Kong, where he has remained to this day.

Except for the leader, there was no means of identifying any of the other CTs who were attached to the Open Organisation. Even for the leader, there was only an old photograph taken some twenty years before. As it turned out, the SB team was well placed and covered most of the routes used by the villagers to enter and leave the operational area. About six weeks after deployment, one of the teams spotted a man who resembled the leader on a motor cycle but as they were on bicycles, they were unable to give chase. However, this was a good enough lead for them to concentrate their efforts in a smaller area. At the next bi-weekly meeting, slight adjustments to the positions of some personnel were made. Discreet investigations continued and at the end of May one of the group managed to pin-point the house where the leader stayed. For a few more days we went ahead with our enquiries to be absolutely certain that he actually stayed in that house. When we were sure, I decided that we should apprehend him and called a meeting of all personnel to brief them on their final role in arresting the leader.

This operation was mounted on the morning of 1 June, 1961. When one group of the team neared the house, they were spotted by the leader who was outside the house and he immediately ran inside and came out and fired his pistol at the team members who retaliated. The leader was shot. A pistol and four rounds of ammunition were recovered from his body.

With his death, we lost a very valuable potential source of information on the activities of the Open Organisation and their long term plans. The CPM definitely suffered more than us as he was a very capable CPM Central Committee Member sent out to conduct subversive activities for the Northern Bureau stretching from the Thai border down to Tanjong Malim in South Perak. Had he survived and was not apprehended, he would definitely have caused great damage to the security of the country and probably expedited the return of the CTO to Peninsula Malaysia.

After his demise, follow up enquiries led to the arrest of some of his underlings, the most important of whom was a Branch Committee Secretary (BCS). It took the SB many months to locate and apprehend him as he stayed in a very remote area on the coast and only visited the town at the end of each month to have his haircut. It was on this premise that he was caught as there was no other information about him. Surveillance was mounted for four days at a likely area where he would emerge from hiding. The surveillance personnel were deployed as technicians in the Telecom Department sent to test and repair the telephone lines. By the time they completed their first days work, the target had not appeared and they were sent out again for a second time but still without success. A different group of SB operatives was deployed on the third day to paint the telegraph poles. While the painting job should have taken two days, the SB personnel were over zealous and completed their work in a day. The target had still not been sighted and they were sent back the next day to do the job all over again. Fortunately the target appeared and was apprehended on his way to town and held for interrogation.



I complimented this CT for his perseverance, dedication and ability to endure hardship. At the time of his arrest, he was fifty two years old. We had three teams interrogating him round the clock and he would not speak nor take his meals for four full days except to ask for permission to visit the toilet to ease himself. He was a very heavy smoker but had the will power to go without his cigarettes. At the end of the fourth day, we were all thoroughly exhausted and thought that we had detained the wrong man. On the fifth morning, much to our surprise, he decided to loosen his tongue and blurted forth with everything we wanted to know. Later that evening when the atmosphere was quite friendly we enquired why he changed his mind. We felt quite humiliated when he replied that he felt sorry for us because we appeared so worn out. Thereafter, he became most cooperative and revealed to us the set up of his organisation and led us to the arrest of some of his comrades.

"JUMBLE" was not an enviable job. On the quiet, I was admonished by two very senior officers for having accepted the mission. Although to me it was another challenge, they reasoned that I sat on a career powder keg because if the self-acclaimed elite of the SB, the Technical Support Division, which controlled projects, could not deal with the task, then anyone accepting it would certainly blunder and land in hot water. For yet another achievement, I had to pay a personal price. Not long after the successful conclusion of this project, I was informed that my increments were deferred. I had been promoted for three years and normally by this time, I should have passed all the prescribed examinations to be confirmed in rank and qualify for further increments. There was, however, a concession that if through exigencies of service an officer could not pass all his exams, then he could still be confirmed but his increments would be deferred until he passed. I found myself in this situation. Because I had been subjected to great pressure of work which did not allow me enough time to study for my exams, I managed to put up a strong case for consideration to enjoy the concession. The officers at Headquarters were sympathetic but said they could not bend the rules for me because there were

hundreds of officers in the same predicament. The only consolation shown by the Department was to transfer me up to Federal HQ where I was given no work and I could devote my full working day to preparing for the examinations.

## 11

BOREDOM AT FEDERAL POLICE HQ  
KUALA LUMPUR - FEDERAL CAPITAL

In October, 1961, I reported for duty to the SB Admin. Officer, at Federal Police Headquarters, situated at Bluff Road, Kuala Lumpur. The name of the road may have been named after a person but it was most appropriately named as there were a large number of officers there who bluffed their way through most of the time. Many years later, it was renamed Jalan Bukit Aman. Except for the block where the Big White Chief sat, all the other offices were housed in semi permanent one storey wooden buildings. Although the SB was in its own compound, the buildings were insufficient to house all the staff and everyone worked under very cramped conditions.

According to the Admin. Officer, I was posted to a subsection dealing with extremism which was the only position open for the rank I held. The Head of the section was told that in practice however, I was not to be delegated any work, and the posting to his section was to justify me being held at Headquarters to enable me to study and pass my prescribed examinations. At the time I still had to pass Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, General Laws, Evidence Ordinance and Malay Examinations which included Jawi script. The Director was adamant that I did no work, and any senior officer who broke this rule and gave me work would have to answer to him. For the duration of ten months, I was engaged in assisting to put up pen pictures of potential detainees and this too was only for a duration of about two weeks.

Having been used to very hard work, the inactivity, with only the daily study of law and Malay, was most boring. Given time and concentration the study of law and Malay is not difficult as there are

set answers to these subjects. The most difficult aspect was the study of the Jawi script which can be very baffling if not tackled properly from the very beginning. I therefore placed more emphasis on the Jawi script. Three months after my arrival, I was sent to the Police College at Kuala Kubu Bahru to attend the intensive law and Malay course and whilst there I sat for my law exams and managed to pass all except the general laws. Another two months later, I sat for my Malay exams and passed them with a credit in Jawi, which is an unusual achievement. These results in such a short time boosted my confidence in passing the general laws in the next exam. Before my transfer from Perak, I had sat for my Police General Orders and Financial General Orders. Whilst at the Police College, the results were announced and I learned that I had failed in my Police General Orders. I was very disappointed over my failure and that evening at the Mess, wore a morose face. Normally, after a few drinks with the other officers and the Commandant, I was the live wire in the party. My low spirits were noticed by the Commandant, a South African whom I knew when he was Deputy CPO, Perak. When I told him the reason for my morose face he asked me to order him a drink while he went up to the office to have a look at the answers. In those days, the questions were set by the Commandant of the Police College. Before he left I informed him that I had studied very hard for that exam and the only reason, in my opinion, that I could have failed was because of loss of marks due to my bad hand writing. He returned with heartening news that I had passed and instructed me to appeal against the results through the normal channels. Later, I was officially notified that on rescrutiny, I had been accorded a pass.

When I returned from the course I spent less time on my studies and the ensuing idleness made my life all the more boring. To pass the time, I visited other officers during working hours and distracted them from their work and more often than not became a nuisance. During lunch breaks which lasted an hour, a few officers from my original training squad, who were posted to Federal Headquarters, lunched together. I joined this group and, following Asian custom, we treated each other

by taking turns to pick up the bill. There was however one officer whom we called "Quick On The Draw". He never settled up and only after someone else had called for the bill would he say it was his turn to pay. One day we decided to teach him a lesson and conspired to abandon him during the course of the lunch by disappearing one by one with varied excuses. Left alone, he paid the bill but grumbled about it for a long time afterwards. Eventually, he left the group.

It was most fortunate that a SB operation mounted in Penang against members of the CTO required my presence as it was a continuation of one of my past operations. The officer next senior to the Director called me to his office one afternoon and ordered that I proceeded immediately by air to Penang to assist the officers who ran the operation. My air ticket was waiting at the Admin. Officer's office and I was rushed to the airport in time to catch the flight to Penang. I had no money and the only clothes I carried were those I wore. As I had no time to call my wife I was assured she would be told about my absence later that day. This operation lasted one month and was a great relief after the boredom I had been experiencing.

More than a month after I returned from this operation, I sat for the remaining part of my law exam and again I was very disappointed when informed that I had failed again, this time by merely three marks. By then I had decided I would not idle any longer and I appealed to the Director to be posted back to active duty. I had to give an assurance that, henceforth, no blame should be attached to the service for my inability to pass my exams in the future. There were no immediate vacancies on the ground so I had to wait for a vacancy to occur.

Before the posting was available another misfortune befell me. I was on my way home one evening on my Lambretta scooter when it broke down at a slope nearing my house. It was drizzling then and I could not obtain any assistance to get it restarted. In the end, I attempted to push it up the incline and because of the sudden exertion, twisted my

back and caused a disk to slip. For this, I laid on my back in the lounge for almost a fortnight before I got on my feet again.

It was four months after my return from Penang when the transfer order finally came through and I was posted back to my preferred State of Perak.

## 12

## BACK TO MY HOME STATE

This second posting back to my home State was an entirely new experience. From September, 1962, for a period of eighteen months, I was completely divorced from the towns and rural areas and worked in deep jungle in the northern parts of the States of Perak and Kelantan amongst the Aborigines. Although by 1960 the CTs had been driven across the border into safe sanctuaries in South Thailand, there were indications of periodic visits by CTs to the various ladangs (Aborigine village) to maintain continuity. Before their withdrawal, the CTO had a unit dealing with the Aborigines called the Asal Organisation. This unit maintained close liaison with the Orang Asli (OA), as the Aborigines are called, to ensure assistance and logistics from the deep jungle when there was pressure from the SF in the rural areas and the plantations which normally supplied their requirements. To ensure that the OA assisted them willingly, a number of CTs were allowed to inter marry with the OA maidens, preferably daughters of the Headmen (Penghulus), and allowed to stay in the ladang to enhance their positions.

The strategy of the CPM/CTO in South Thailand was to seek refuge, reorganise and reindoctrinate it's ranks and wait for an opportune time to revive the armed struggle in the Malay Peninsula. SB considered that, in the absence of the CTO, it was timely to launch an SB operation in the deep jungle to break the hold of the CTO over the OA so that, when the CTO decided to return, the OA would deny them logistical support. This would be very important when the CTs tried to use the jungle routes to reinfiltate back to their previous operational areas. For this reason an Intelligence Collection Unit named Bamboo

Intelligence Collection (BIC) was created to augment an existing SF operation named "Bamboo".

Operationally, Op. Bamboo covered the states of Perak and Kelantan, but for ease of control there was only one central command based in Perak. Intelligence-wise, the coordinator was the Head SB, Perak. Because of the vast area being covered the collection of intelligence was handled by two units, each headed by an Assistant Superintendent of Police and called HBIC East in Kelantan and HBIC West in Perak, but both under the command of Perak. I became the HBIC East. The area of my responsibility was some of the most rugged territory in the country and covered about two thirds of the State of Kelantan. Several air reccees were carried out by Auster aircraft to pin-point suitable locations where Intelligence Posts might be established amongst the Asal villages. Ground reccees were likewise carried out.

Finally, after months of preparation, Intelligence or SB posts were set-up in Gemala (Headquarters), Betis (for Air relief), Blaur and Yai. Each post had an establishment of one SB Inspector and two other ranks, one of whom was an Aborigine, preferably recruited from the local area. The posts were in wireless contact with SB Perak HQ. The four posts looked after an approximate population of seventeen thousand OA, mainly of the Temiar tribe. In addition to the posts there was another group called the Juba Team. The responsibility of the teams on the ground was to win over the OA to the Government and obtain the necessary intelligence to counter the activities of the CTO. Intelligence so gained was sifted at SB HQ in Ipoh and together with current Government and CTO policies, was translated into propaganda material for consumption by the OA. The OA lived only in deep jungle isolated from the rest of the country. They were very poor and had few material possessions. Propaganda materials could be disseminated to them only by word of mouth. This task became the responsibility of the Juba team. It included Aborigine speakers and ex-members of the CTO. Most of the time the team members had to travel on foot for months on end from ladang to ladang for propaganda dissemination.



Within the allocated circuit of each team, there were numerous ladangs and the members were obligated to visit each ladang every two months.

To win the OA over as friends is an exceptionally difficult task. They were simple folk who did not accept outsiders quickly or easily and were suspicious of strangers. It took a long time before they took a liking to anyone not of their kith or kin and even amongst themselves, there was much misunderstanding. Their territory is sacred and outsiders are not welcome. When the teams were initially deployed, they were looked on with the greatest suspicion and great efforts had to be made before they were eventually accepted. OA owe allegiance to people who are with them constantly and who can provide them with material goods. To win them over, the Government had to provide them with welfare items such as salt, felling tools and clothing through the SB field teams and other agencies. Team members had to study their language and customs and usually had to be very sensitive not to offend them and prepared to cater to their whims and fancies. When they were very upset they would upstake and disappear into the jungle. It would take much effort to find them and coax them back. They rarely welcome visitors into their homes and it is an honour to be invited to feed with them and an insult to refuse any food served. Cooking utensils are made from jungle produce and all food is cooked in a length of bamboo sealed with leaves and thrown into the fire until the food is ready. As the food is normally not cleaned before cooking, a strong and nauseating smell emerges when the cooked food is taken out of the bamboo container. It took a long time before we got used to eating their food.

The OA are animist with a strong belief in malignant spirits. When a member of the group dies it was customary for the whole village to move, select and settle on another site across water. They staunchly believe that the evil spirit of the dead cannot follow them across water to haunt them. This inconvenience was overcome by moving the dead body and not the village across the water at night so that the spirit of the dead person would not return to haunt the inhabitants. When we

first entered the area, the OA kept to themselves and would not come over to our make-shift lodgings near their villages. They would study us from a distance but would take the welfare items provided to them which usually came via air drop. It was very difficult to convince them to use modern medicine and for most illness would consult the medicine man first. Although simple minded, they are crafty people. They believe in sharing to the extent of offering their wives which is termed "pinjam" (borrow). In our tour with them, some dishonest ones capitalised on this custom to their advantage. There were a number of occasions when they offered their wives to members of the security forces in the strictest secrecy but after the event, would lodge a formal complaint with the Headman that his wife had been seduced. In such an event, a tribal court was convened with the senior officer of the unit representing the accused. It was a foregone conclusion that the accused would be found guilty and would be fined according to his status and the officer representing would stand surety to collect the fine in installments and hand over to the aggrieved party. One boatman who served under me learnt a bitter and painful lesson when he was fined \$600.00 for a night's pleasure. He managed to control his lusts thereafter.

Like all human beings, the OA have their fancies and desires. With the men, it was the parang or the axe, some tobacco or cigarettes; with the women, make-up items and clothing, and with the children, sweets and toys. Except for the parang the other items were considered luxury items but, once in a while, they were still indented and issued on a first come first served basis. Air supply days were big affairs with everybody coming from far afield dressed in their best attire and assembling at the supply location on the eve of the drop. While the men were more orderly, the females were usually less controllable and would rush forward and grab the luxury items. As they were illiterate, sizes of clothing did not matter initially but would be brought back for exchange later if they did not fit. Salt, which is an essential commodity, was dropped in sacks and placed in a shed near to the SB posts and the villagers were allowed to take all that they required. Sometimes

hoarding of this item was detected and the Headmen would be asked to censure their people for this practice. Because their normal diet lacked nutrition and certain foods were taboo to pregnant women, most of the children were still born, and many men and women were infertile. There were many occasions when the husbands would consult the SB personnel as to why their wives could not conceive and when told in jest that if their wives cohabited with the SB staff they were likely to conceive, they did not mind.

It was obligatory for the Head BIC to visit the SB posts once very two months to look into the welfare of the members of the teams and sort out any problems on the ground and to pay respects to the Penghulus. This was the toughest aspect of the job as visits from team to team were usually conducted on foot. To the uninitiated, on the topographical map the posts appeared very near whereas, in fact, depending on the terrain, most times three inches on the map would take almost a day to foot slog. The climbing of one particular hill that was on the route between two posts took a full twelve hours to reach the summit. The SB teams communicated with one another by radio but occasionally, for reasons for strict confidentiality, the communications had to be physical visits.

By 1963, Malayanisation had almost taken its toll on the contingent of expatriate British officers. When the SB teams were deployed to Op. Bamboo, the English Head SB had been replaced by a blubbery Chinese officer, nicknamed "Siew Min Foo" (Smiling Tiger). In the Chinese idiom, "A Smiling Tiger" is not a good term to confer on a person. Like the Tiger, he was sneaky and mean. He carried a smile constantly, but underneath, would devour you alive. He cared little for the welfare of his men. He was another glory grabber and was generally disliked. In his undertakings his own interests were foremost and he would not hesitate to lie and cheat to obtain his objectives. One gross delinquency which is held against him to this day is that through deceit he acquired a vast tract of land which he cultivates and resides on in one of the hill resorts. Under the pretext of obtaining the land for

some of his subordinates, he made them sign two sets of forms, one for application and the other for transfer, for the same land. When the applications were approved, he conveniently transferred the land to himself. I cannot recall any other senior officer who abused his rank or exploited his junior officers more blatantly or unscrupulously than this man. There was one officer whom he victimised for a long time because the officer, whose good nature he had exploited constantly, just on one occasion refused to send his daily papers to his house. The victimised officer gained some satisfaction when, as officer in charge of office security, he gave explicit orders to the sentry on the day after blubbery "Smiling Tiger" retired that he should not be allowed into the SB building without prior clearance from the victimised officer. When blubbery "Smiling Tiger" returned to collect some of the things that he had left behind, he was denied entry. In all his years with the force, he had not been inside the jungle and did not have any inkling what it looked like. It would have been less damaging if he had just kept his ignorance and his remarks to himself but instead he flattered his own ego by constantly criticising his men for inefficiency and concocting frivolous complaints against those he did not like. It took a long time to convince him to visit the posts and when he did, he came by helicopter. As an indication of how detestable he was, and to awaken him to the hardships his men had to endure, on one of his visits it was intentionally arranged for him to proceed by boat and then on foot from one post to another. The boat landed him and his party further up from the normal landing point. From there he was made to trudge through secondary jungle for about half an hour where he could normally have reached the post in less than a minute. It was a very hot day and having been used to the comfort of an air-conditioned office, he had to stop twice on the way to rest. By the time he arrived at the post he was exhausted. When he was led back to the boat by the normal path he became a wiser person!

When the posts were first set up, supplies were air-dropped to the SB teams. This was the transition period where the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) was still dependent on the British Royal Air Force

(RAF) for trained pilots and aircraft. The Valetta was used for supplies before the change over to the Twin Pioneer. Valettas had to fly very high and, with the inexperienced Malaysian pilots, invariably when the chutes were dropped, they were well off the mark. It is difficult for the ordinary man to envisage the effort required to recover a 250 lb. load attached to a chute which landed about three squares - about 3000 yards - off the dropping zone. Looking for the chute was difficult enough as they were usually entangled in the canopies of very tall trees in the jungle. Getting them off the trees was a greater problem especially if the chutes hung on the edge of the branches which were too dangerous to send anyone up to dislodge. The unreachable loads had to be destroyed by shooting and belts had to be tightened a notch or two while waiting for the next drop fourteen days away. If the pilots were told they were inaccurate and far off the mark they would intentionally drop the supplies further away. Sometimes when chutes landed on the ground and off the mark they had to be dragged for miles through the jungle. This was a strenuous task and also left behind a trail of destruction. Eventually when Twin Pioneer aircraft were used, the supplies were dropped on target as they flew much lower and the pilots had become more experienced. Except for uniforms, welfare or other specified items, air supplies were repayment items and one week before they were dropped were indented through the Police Air Supply unit based in Taiping on the other side of the Peninsula. During the monsoon months towards the end of the year supplies were usually delivered late due to inclement weather and, when finally received, perishable items like vegetables and meat were rotten. These were not replaced free of charge. Sometimes also, the chutes did not open - termed candles - and all supplies would be destroyed on landing. Even in these cases replaced items were not replaced free. To compensate for the late delivery of supplies, or damage to supplies during the airdrop, the team members had to depend on the jungle to survive. Each post planted it's own vegetables and reared fish in the rivers. At times in desperation, a grenade was used to blast fish from deep pools in the rivers. This method usually netted large quantities of fish which exceeded the normal requirements and therefore had to be either sun or

salt dried for future use. Traps were set along known routes used by animals to catch them for meat.

Like all new schemes, the BICs encountered teething troubles. The officers selected had never experienced this type of posting before. Some had just graduated from the training depot and never anticipated such hardships as they had to endure. They preferred the glamour of the normal police uniform and the life of the towns. Soon they became disgruntled and troublesome. They stood aloof from the OA and were not prepared to humble themselves to mingle and win their trust and affection. Their attitudes created resentment among the OA and so for the sake of the operation they had to be replaced. It took almost six months before the operation was running satisfactorily.

Eventually, most of the OA were won over including those who initially showed hostility. A number of them were recruited as sources of intelligence. These sources had to be put to a test before they could be relied upon completely. For this purpose, SB staff who were unknown to the local villagers were dressed as CTs and infiltrated into certain areas to test the sources' reliability.

After sixteen months, from September, 1962, to the end of February, 1963, I was posted out of Op. Bamboo and given a new assignment in a foreign country.

## 13

## IN THE LAND OF THE THAIS

As early as 1952, the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) hierarchy had already made contingency plans to withdraw itself and its armed elements into the safe sanctuary of South Thailand if their positions in Peninsula Malaya became untenable. This plan was implemented with the assistance of the Thai Communist Party (TCP). By the mid fifties, the leadership had moved into South Thailand with the last CT entering at the end of 1960. When all the CTs had crossed into Thailand, the first task undertaken by the leaders was to reorganise, consolidate and reindoctrinate its members. There were about twelve hundred CTs who crossed the border with a large number either too old, sick, unwilling, demoralised, or considered ideologically unsuitable, for further combat duties. The CPM carried out a demobilisation campaign and, by 1962, the numbers had whittled down to half the former strength. Those who were considered no longer suitable were allowed to leave and were escorted out of the jungle and resettled in other remote parts of Thailand to ensure that they could not find their way back to the camps they had left. As an extra precaution, when the demobilisation campaign was completed, most of the old camps were vacated and new ones built elsewhere. After reorganisation and reindoctrination, the CPM/CTO armed units were then deployed to the Provinces of Narathiwat, Yala and Songkhla in South Thailand. Except for the Malay CT unit which was stationed in Thai Muslim territory in the Golok area of Narathiwat and called the 10th. Regiment or Central Department of Malay Works (CDMW) the other two Chinese units named the 8th. and 12th. Regiments were spread in the predominantly Thai Chinese areas of Sadao in Songkhla, and from Betong stretching up north to Ban To in Yala province.

By the late 1950's, through very informal arrangements made with Thai officials, Malaysian SB officers had been allowed to conduct enquiries about the CTO inside Thailand. In the early 1960's it was found necessary to improve on the efforts of locating and eliminating CTO members hiding inside Thailand, or dislodging them from their safe sanctuaries and driving them back to Malaya where it would be more convenient to eliminate them. The unacceptable alternative was to wait for the CTO to stage a come back to the Malay Peninsula at their own time. It was for this purpose that arrangements were made to establish SB posts and station SB officers inside Thailand along the pattern which was successfully implemented in the Op. Bamboo area in northern Malaya. Through the auspices of Thai officials, especially the SB, the Combined Intelligence Headquarters (CIH) was formed. Initially, some Malaysian SB personnel were allowed to be stationed and operate in Sadao and Betong in South Thailand. Their role was limited to collecting intelligence on the movements and activities of the CPM. These concessions were agreed to by the Thai officials on the conditions that the Malayan SB officers did not interfere in Thai politics, exercised no executive powers, and the intelligence collected was shared with the Thai agencies. The CIH was located at the Thai SB building in Songkhla at the south eastern tip of Thailand. Songkhla, situated on the Gulf of Siam, houses all the government administrative offices for South Thailand. The early settlers in this area migrated from Fukien Province in China in the 1850's and maintained very strong ties with China.

At this stage, administratively the Malayan (later Malaysian) personnel were under the command of the Head SB Kedah/Perlis, but operationally they were under the control of the Division Head in charge of Communist Terrorism. The SB officers carried out their paper work in Alor Star. This entailed putting up source handling notes, processing the reports for dissemination and briefing other officers who needed to know. Moving up and down the border for this purpose was a risky affair but, fortunately, there were no untoward incidents. To enable the officers to plan operations they had to carry out frequent recesses in



hostile country. These were conducted together with Thai officials. At the time facilities were lacking and these had to be carried out on foot. There was very close liaison and rapport between members of the two organisations. Enquiries and operations were combined affairs. After a few months, having established excellent relationship with the Thai officials at every possible level in South Thailand through close rapport, friendship, favours and other considerations, trust and respect for each other's professionalism developed. Under those given circumstances the whole of South Thailand was at my disposal as to what, when and how I chose to get things done purely for the benefit of my organisation which had placed on me the burden of maintaining cordial relationships with the Thais. For SB personnel no formal documentation was required at the border check points. A big wave to the check point officer was the usual visa! Normally, as a gesture of good manners and goodwill, I made it a point to stop at the Thai check point when entering Thailand and pay my respects to the officer on duty. The car usually carried a small stock of whisky or brandy and I would invite the officer or any of his men who could be spared to join me for drinks during lunch or dinner. Through such camaraderie mutual respect and professional acceptance were firmly established. The Thai officials trusted the integrity of the Malaysian SB officers and adopted a pragmatic policy of "hearing no evil, speaking no evil and seeing no evil". Things done or accomplished through proper protocol and diplomatic channel did exist but only in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. Such an advantageous position in South Thailand gave me tremendous satisfaction professionally and my task was made simpler.

Malaysian SB officers were allowed to recruit and run sources independently of the Thai officials. It was a very generous gesture on the part of the Thais as it is seldom that any Government would allow foreign intelligence officers to operate in their country. When the Malaysians first moved in, they were treated with the greatest suspicion by the masses who had been indoctrinated and dominated by the CTO. The CPM also had the advantage of being in Thailand long before

Malaysian personnel went there. The Thai Chinese masses who stayed along the border of South Thailand were made to pay subscriptions and taxes to the CTO in the same way as the CTO coerced the masses when it operated in Malaya. Through the masses the CTO monitored our every movement thereby making it difficult for our personnel to operate or move about freely. It was impossible to rent accommodation from any ethnic Thai Chinese as they feared reprisals from the CTO. Generally, the Thai Chinese masses were reluctant and frightened even to talk to our personnel in case they were misunderstood by the CTs and had to pay dearly with their lives. We had to rely mostly on ethnic Thais for most of our requirements except for intelligence, because the CTs were shrewd enough to leave the Thais alone.

It was extremely difficult for SB handling officers to make contacts with their local sources. They were spied on constantly and followed in the towns and many contacts had to be aborted regularly to safeguard the security of the sources. In the end, it was devised that contacts should not be carried out in the towns where the sources lived. Although this was the safest means, it was not the most practical or convenient from the sources' point of view as their work restricted them from moving away too often. Alternate and elaborate arrangements had to be made for contact. Methods used by the CTs themselves were adopted for use and DLBs were established. Some of these arrangements required great physical effort. For the more productive sources, foot patrols were organised into the rubber tapping lots of the sources in order to collect the messages or to debrief them. Usually a patrol passing by the vicinity of the house or work place of the source would drop off a member who would then either examine and pick up any message from the DLB or speak direct with the source at a pre-arranged place. After the debriefing, he would then rejoin the patrol on its return journey. Other methods included meetings in other towns. This entailed using long and round about routes which involved extra time and money. In this difficult operational environment an uncomplicated contact which could have been conducted in half an

hour in normal circumstances, now took up to two days because of the required travel to secure the meetings.

In spite of the difficulties there were successful operations against the CTO. When CTs were eliminated in Thai territory, rewards were paid to the sources by the Malaysian Government on the existing Malaysian scales, whether sources were handled by Thais or Malaysians as the CTs were still of Malaysian origin. The scale of reward differed from rank to rank for captured, killed or surrendered CTs. Rewards were also paid for arms and ammunition recovered. It was usually the rubber tappers working along the jungle fringe who were contacted by the CTs and were able to provide useful intelligence. The rewards they received were most substantial relative to their meagre earnings. In many cases the reward money was more than sufficient to purchase a house in the rural areas in South Thailand.

When rewards were paid to our sources the paying officers made it a point to caution the sources on the indiscriminate spending of their extra cash, as spending not commensurate with their earnings would attract attention. Despite these warnings there were recipients who threw caution to the winds and, arousing the suspicions of the local CTs, were assassinated. An example was a source named "Our Man Flint" because he always wore black. With his reward money he bought a new motor cycle which, on his normal income, he could never afford. Suspected by the CTs of being an informer he was caught, interrogated and tortured by the CTs until he admitted his guilt. Despite his pleas for mercy he was butchered. His eyes were gouged out, and his body, with a note pinned to it explaining that he was a traitor, was thrown on the main road for all to see. There was another source who was also assassinated by the CTs because he bought a new portable radio. Yet another source, who used his reward money to buy materials to renovate his dilapidated thatched and wooden house for a very small sum, was suspected and grilled. He was let off after he confessed to spying for the authorities. Fear of death was the weapon the CTs used to cower the population.

Hard work and risks taken had its compensations when the officers and men were not engaged on operations. In all respects the cost of living in South Thailand in the 1960's was cheap and with the substantial subsistence allowance received from the Malaysian Government, the SB personnel enjoyed a good standard of living. Visits to places of entertainment were always either in the company of Thai officers, or in groups, to avoid being eliminated easily as we were constantly kept under surveillance by the CTO. Very generous tips were given when the Malaysian personnel visited places of entertainment and food. One night club owner in Haadyai town made it a point to line up all his staff outside to receive the visitors when they knew that the Malaysian staff were patronising the premises. Except for Sadao, there were nightclubs in all places where the Field Teams (FT) were located. Those were tumultuous times and there was much uncertainty what the next hour or day would produce. Because, as an extra safety precaution, families were not allowed to reside with the officers, even married officers could not enjoy family life. Confinement to quarters would have induced a siege mentality and affected the working attitudes of the officers. Hence, in spite of the risks involved, visiting the nightclubs under tight security arrangements was the only outlet and relief for the strain and social isolation that existed. These outings eventually ended up as roaring parties which dragged on to the early hours of the morning. It was quite normal for the officers and men, whether married or unmarried, to have company when they returned to their posts. This had a dual advantage. Following Thai customs, the female Thai companions are usually very obliging and did not mind the extra effort of washing clothes and keeping house the next morning as long as they were allowed to leave in time for their evening work. Another popular form of relaxation sought after was to either visit the traditional Thai massage parlour or invite the female masseur to the house for the massage. Thai massage must be experienced to appreciate the relief one gets from it although one is transformed into an apprentice contortionist while it is carried out. A Thai massage lasts for an hour and it is a

wonder how a petite Thai girl has such strength to work for so long bouncing a man twice her weight as if he were a ball.

Generally, the Malaysian personnel who spent a lot of money were popular amongst the ethnic Thais especially the business sector which showed them many favours. It was an unwritten rule to reciprocate these favours. In those days in South Thailand imported goods were not only expensive but were difficult to obtain. Apples, grapes, lemon seeds and a host of many fruits and delicacies were in great demand. There usually was a long shopping list for the Malaysians to purchase when they went back across the border to Alor Star during weekends and public holidays. These requests originated from people of all walks of life - housewives, dance hostesses, prostitutes, trishaw peddlers, shopkeepers, children, officials and a string of many others. In return for the favours, in their own ways, they looked after our security whenever we were in town. On one occasion, when we were at dinner and had our cars parked in the dark street outside the restaurant, the trishaw peddlers chased off some suspicious looking youths who prowled around the vicinity. We would be alerted when there was any news of any impending threat. For the more promiscuous female, her favours for the night could be exchanged for some apples and a few bars of chocolates.

In 1965, the Thai and Malaysian Governments decided to formalise security arrangements for intelligence collection and operations. The Regional Border Committee (RBC) was formed with a combined headquarters office set up in Songkhla known as the Regional Border Committee Office (RBCO). In the early stages of its formation, the RBCO was housed within the Thai Southern Region Command Headquarters until its own building was completed. Each country was responsible for its own expenditure. The intelligence effort was expanded with the two CIH teams absorbed into the RBCO and other offices opened up in the Thai towns of Yala, Golok and Nathawi. At the RBCO many posts were created to cater for Administration, Intelligence, Operations, and Psychological Warfare. Posts headed by

Malaysians had Thai deputies and vice versa. Although I still led the Malaysian component, officially I became the Head of Intelligence in the new RBCO set up. Until then, the Malaysian officers of the CIH operated on a very tight budget drawn from the limited funds allocated to the Head SB, Kedah/Perlis. With the formation of the RBCO, this improved drastically as funds were then channeled direct from Kuala Lumpur for intelligence procurement and administrative purposes.

In general, with the setting up of the RBCO, things really improved. A resemblance of organisation began to appear. There was a large increase in the establishment of the Malaysian component and this contributed to the local economy. New offices were set up in all the towns where posts were approved. These offices and accommodation for the staff were rented from the locals, sometimes at exorbitant prices. It was a take it or leave it attitude with some of the landlords who were aware of the security restrictions and requirements imposed on the Malaysian staff.

With the formation of the RBCO, the Head Intelligence or Head of the Malaysian Intelligence community had to shoulder heavier responsibility. Where in the past under the CIH, I directed the activities of only two units on the ground in Betong and Sadao, three extra posts were opened up in Yala, Golok and Nathawi. Where before, I could concentrate more time looking after only two posts, now my time had to be shared with the other three posts. This involved more travel by road through areas with a strong CT presence. Security became a matter of high priority. One loose word of impending travel could have led to the loss of life. This risk was shared by all concerned. In order not to unnecessarily involve my staff in the risks associated with regular travel I usually traveled alone and I did not inform the officers in the posts or FT as they were known, of travel arrangements. However, I ensured that my Deputy at HQ made radio contact with the officer of the FT after a certain time to confirm that I had arrived safely. The main trunk roads linking Songkhla to Haadyai to Yala and Golok are now of international standard but in the early and mid sixties they were

no more than laterite and single line traffic roads pitted with pot-holes which made travel torturously slow and uncomfortable. On a hot day, even on the shortest journey, the dust from the laterite quickly transformed one into a "Hung Moh Kwai" or Red Haired Devil, or as the Chinese would normally term the Westerner, "Kwailo", as vehicles then were seldom air-conditioned and with the unbearable heat, the car windows had to be wound down. When it rained, the vehicle was plastered with a thick layer of mud which was difficult to wash off.

Due to the fact that the officers attached to the FT were new to the job and lacked experience, I found it necessary to concentrate more on the ground and left most of the paper work to my Malaysian deputy at the RBCO, Yala, which was very centrally located between the FT., was eventually chosen as my field headquarters from where I supervised the personnel on the ground. The town of Yala, situated in the midst of South Thailand, is a tranquil world of tropical splendour where enchanting women inspire you with wonder and their fragrant bodies are eye-pleasing by day and dazzling by night. The second biggest town in South Thailand, Yala is also a play-boy town to most of the Malaysians from the public and private sectors. In Yala can be found the most beautiful Thai girls engaged in the oldest profession in the world. Most of these girls hailed from Chiangmai in the north of Thailand, an area reputed to produce the most beautiful girls throughout the whole of Thailand. A town of such repute of wine, women and song obviously was appealing to Malaysian police officers of every rank in spite of the fact that remnants of the CPM also operated there.

Collection of intelligence was not the only responsibility of the Head Intelligence. I had to supervise a large staff at HQ level to ensure that all information was properly processed and disseminated to the right people. There were the monthly intelligence briefings that had to be delivered both at RBCO and Alor Star and the unplanned ones when dignitaries visited the RBCO, I was responsible for writing the

operational orders for combined operations and the translation of captured enemy documents written in Chinese.

The night before one of the monthly RBCO intelligence briefings to be held in Songkhla on the following Monday morning, the eldest son of one of the officers from the Yala FT was married and most officers attended the wedding which was held at Taiping, about 200 miles away. It was a very good 'do' and various brands of hard liquor purchased in crates from the American Green Beret officer's mess - the P.X. - at a minimum price of US\$1.00 per bottle, flowed very freely. At the end of the wedding dinner, most of the officers and men were drunk and a few even slept on the uncleared dinner tables throughout the night. It was arranged for all to depart at 0500 hours to arrive at Songkhla in time for the meeting scheduled at 1000 hours. On the way, several officers and men became sick and this caused considerable delay. A number of senior officers, from the army and police were kept waiting. When all were finally assembled, I very coolly apologised to the assembly, not for the delay, but because there was nothing at all to report, and thanked all the officers present. Without waiting for any questions from any of them, I adjourned the briefing session. Such was the tolerance shown in those days.

Staffing was another big problem. It was not possible to get the right people to staff all the FT. Knowledge of the Thai language, and SB and operational experience were the criteria of selection, but it was not possible to obtain such qualifications for all the posts. For the very few that existed, immediate arrangements were made to transfer them to staff the RBCO. The majority had to be trained or acquire the necessary experience in one form or other. There was generally a shortfall of experienced officers and, invariably, younger officers who had just joined the service or the SB were sent. It was fortunate that the powers-that-be agreed that this category could be tested first before they were finally posted. The test was for a two week period with the new comer being taken to one post after the other and subjected to both physical and mental strain. Finally, if he made it through the period



which required him to don his jungle greens and reside in the jungle, stay up late at night, and most important of all, if he could last the pace with "Doctor Johnnie Walker or Hennessy", he would pass the test. Many officers could not endure this grueling test. To serve in Thailand it was important to be able to consume and hold one's liquor as Thai officials are renowned for their capacity for liquor and many an agreement is sealed over this intoxicating fire water. To cater for the language deficiency, Malaysian officers were paid a language allowance for up to two years to learn Thai. Each officer could engage an "Ah Chaarn", a teacher, but most officers found it much easier and quicker and more relaxing to learn the language from live and walking dictionaries which were easily obtainable. Through this method, in the early months of my arrival in Thailand, I studied the language with great enthusiasm and learned the language very quickly but did not know how to write it. I was very proud of the rapid progress that I made and one day, when driving with the Thai Lt. Col, the Head of their SB in South Thailand, in the car through Haadyai town, I tried to impress him how fluent I had become and how I had progressed with his language. When the opportunity presented itself, I stopped the car suddenly along side of a beautiful Thai girl and addressed her "Ah Nu, Pai Norn Kap Phi Mai?". Where I had expected to be complimented by the Thai Colonel, after he had spoken to the girl, he censured me for having said what I had said. He enquired whether I understood what I had said to the girl and I replied that I had merely complimented her for her beauty as it was taught to me by another Thai girl. He then explained that although the grammar and pronunciation were perfect, in fact I had invited the girl to spend the night with me.

When all the duty posts were finally filled, there was an establishment of over seventy Malaysian SB officers and men who served with the RBCO. The Chief of RBCO was a Thai army special colonel equivalent in rank to a Brigadier General in other armies. In the Thai army, there is no Brigadier and the next rank after a special colonel is Major General. He was very strict with the Thai officials and was not popular. Much as they disliked him, they paid him lip service as they

were keen to remain and serve in South Thailand where there was preferential treatment. He made Major General. For each Malaysian, there was one Thai officer. All at the RBCO related extremely well with each other. Malaysians resided at a rented two storey hotel which was turned into a Mess. The officers resided upstairs whilst the rank and file stayed on the ground floor. Everybody messed together and all paid the same amount for meals which were cooked by a Thai employee paid by the Malaysian Government. Male and female staff were all housed together.

When I was posted to South Thailand, I acted in the rank of Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP). Officers holding acting ranks were normally confirmed after six months but as I still had not passed the last subject of my exams, I was not confirmed even after the six month period. It was already nine years after my promotion to ASP and I had sat for the same exam eighteen times in all. Each time before the exams took place, I had nightmares. In this period a large number of officers junior to me had overtaken me in seniority and had been promoted. I decided I would not be left behind any longer. I therefore took a fortnight's leave to swat for the last subject and memorise most of the more important sections of the enactments on which I would be tested. When the results were announced, even I was surprised that I had obtained ninety nine marks. Comments circulated that I had probably copied.

The RBCO provided the Malaysian contingent with a firmer legal status and, as a result, they could voice their opinions more freely and openly with their Thai colleagues. Whenever there was a need, the immediate assistance of the Thai counterparts was called upon. Useful information was collected against the CTs and stored for future reference. Concerted enquiries and recesses were carried out on the ground. The frequent movement inside CT dominated territory affected the prestige of the CTO over the masses. They felt that they were losing ground and therefore decided to teach the RBCO personnel, especially the Malaysians who were considered a thorn in their flesh, a lesson. In

August, 1966, when a combined patrol was returning to base in the Betong area, they were ambushed by CTs. The Malaysians suffered heavy losses with two SB officers and six men killed and two wounded. The Thai Border Patrol Police had two of their members wounded in this incident. This operation was engineered by the same person who escaped the SB "Q" operations dragnet in Perak in 1960. Until then, very little pressure was brought upon the CTs in the area and this incident incited the authorities to act with fervour. As a result, large combined operations were planned against the CTO, starting with the 12th. Regiment which was the largest and strongest unit.

In April, 1966, before this incident, I was summoned to Kuala Lumpur where I was informed that arrangements had been made to send me to attend an intelligence course with MI5 in London in September that same year. I protested against this move on the grounds of lack of finance and the pressure of work but this was waved aside. In those days, the course allowance which was applicable for the whole of the United Kingdom was only 35 shillings per day for board and lodging, and was not commensurate with the cost of living, especially in London. At that time, I definitely did not have the financial resources to sustain an eight week course in London. Although the allowance for service in South Thailand was attractive and quite generous, nothing was set aside for a rainy day as, after looking into the necessities and requirements of the household, much of the balance was spent on entertainment. As the decision was final, I was forced to save as much as possible for the expenses in England. By September, when it was time to leave, I had managed to save just over a thousand pounds. An English pound was worth \$8.76 Malaysian.

Not long after the incident in August, 1966, I prepared and delivered a full briefing on the incident to the Malaysian Prime Minister when he made an official visit to the RBCO. Before the meeting I was warned not to commit myself too much and to deflect some of the responsibility for the incident on the deceased. As a matter of principle, I did not agree with this approach and during the briefing I accepted

responsibility because I had ordered this and all previous patrols on the grounds that recces and patrols were part and parcel of intelligence gathering. I also noted that both the Thai and Malaysian Governments were spending enormous sums to eliminate the CTs so someone had to ensure that the money was put to effective use. I also emphasised that the methods we were using against the CTO must be effective for them to retaliate in such a manner. If I had excused myself from responsibility I could not have "looked all my subordinates in the eyes" in the future.

Following this briefing, there was speculation that, because of the unorthodox methods I used to discharge my duties, I had finally landed in hot water. To those who believed so, their suspicions were confirmed when I left for London the next month to attend the course. Further speculation was that I would be posted out whilst on the course and would not resume duties in Thailand. Quite a number of my jealous colleagues were greatly disappointed when, after the course and some vacation leave on the European continent, I resumed duty in South Thailand and remained there till March, 1968, which was more than a year after the incident.

The course I attended was claimed to be the Advanced Intelligence Course run by MI5 at Grosvenor Square, London. To digress a little, I saw no squares in London be they famous, infamous or ordinary ones. In my humble opinion the so called squares were basically roundabouts. Many people whom I enquired from could not give a reasonable answer why the English squares were round. This was not the only quirky thing I noted about the English. The pronunciation of English words is idiosyncratic, to say the least. For example, "is" is pronounced "is" and "land" is pronounced "land". Combine the two words and the pronunciation should be "is-land", but instead it is pronounced "ailand". When our group of four arrived at Heathrow Airport after a tiring 16,000 kilometre flight we expected to be met at the airport and shown some hospitality, particularly as this was our first visit to England. This was not the case. We sat with our luggage

beside us at the airport for three or four hours, waiting for someone to collect us and take us to our lodgings. Finally we decided to make our own way so we enquired about nearby hotels and lodging houses. Coming from a country where hospitality to strangers is instinctive we were surprised when those to whom we made our enquiries did not even bother to look up and simply pointed in the direction which required the least muscular effort. This most unattractive trait of the English was to be repeated many more times before we left the United Kingdom. This was our first taste of genuine culture shock. Many frustrating hours later, after we learned that there was a tube from the airport into the city, we booked into the first hotel we came to. It was very old and definitely not worth the price we paid. There was only one bathroom and one toilet for each floor. It was in autumn and the air was already too chilly for Malaysians who are used to 365 days of sunshine every year. Hot water had to be booked the day in advance and if you missed your timing, you went without it. The room I shared with a colleague smelled of mould.

The course joining instructions told us to report to the Malaysian High Commission (MHC) the next morning. We were to report to a military officer who, years later, became one of the Chief of Defence Forces in Malaysia. After having been shown conflicting directions by friendly and helpful Bobbies, we found the MHC hours later. The military man carried a constant smile and the first thing we did was to complain that we were left helpless at the airport. Although he must have felt guilty, he did not show it. Our own people were just as much to blame for not having made any arrangements at the airport. We did not meet him again and we did not receive any assistance from anyone else at the MHC. For the next three days we took in the sights of London. It was quite an experience to see clowns standing on soap boxes shouting at one another.

The following Monday morning all students reported to the MI5 school. When fully assembled, there were twenty five students. Two each were from Malaysia, Singapore and Hongkong, and one from

Gibraltar. The rest were all from Africa. We were divided into five syndicates. I headed one of these and the other four were Africans. As it turned out, there was nothing special about the course. On most of the subjects taught, I had acquired the knowledge from practical experience through operating against the Malayan Communists both in the Peninsula and South Thailand. Only two new things I learnt could be adapted for clandestine operations. There were lots of practical and written exercises. Desk work in writing, processing and disseminating reports was identical to the method used in Malaya as we had adopted the British SB system of working.

One practical exercise on surveillance turned out to be very comical. It was carried out during a lunch break and our syndicate's target was one of the secretaries at the training school. She was a tall woman and we were to keep her under surveillance when she went for her lunch. As good surveillance is an art of following a subject without him being conscious he is being followed, we could not get too near to her and sometimes missed her for brief moments. After having lunch she entered and browsed around in a couple of shopping complexes and then as the lunch hour drew to a close she hurried off with big strides. No one in our group had carried out foot surveillance in a busy city thoroughfare and to keep her in sight, as she strode off, we had to run along behind her. Five Asians breathlessly pounding along the pavements of London, as if on the run from the law, attracted a great deal of attention. She must have had a good laugh out of it. At least, I felt like a clown we had seen on our early sightseeing.

In the class room, the chilly temperature was a great distraction. We concentrated more on keeping warm than paying attention to the instructors. We usually shivered in our chairs as we were not used to the mid autumn weather. To the instructors the weather was fine and so they took no action to turn on the heaters to make us more comfortable. Another set-back at this course was that all the students from Africa were only from the rank and file and were not very conversant with English. They paid very little attention to their studies and depended on

the syndicate leaders to do all the work. Usually, they compared notes on what transpired after class the day before.

After five days when we knew our bearings better, we moved out of the hotel and I teamed up with the two Singaporeans and rented a house near a tube station about twenty minutes ride from Oxford Circus. For the duration of the course, we traveled on the same tube daily in the mornings, except weekends, and met the same people each time but could not get any acknowledgment to our friendly greetings. The commuters were busily reading their newspapers and as the trains were so crammed, they folded their papers to a quarter of the normal size in order not to take up too much space. Round the corner from where we stayed was a grocer's store. Every day when I alighted from the train after class, I would enter the store to make minor purchases. In those days, before the British or Westerner learnt how to eat chicken gizzard or cook fish head, these were left on one side of the store for anyone to take away to feed their cats. After purchasing, I would take some of these. When I got to know the owner, he enquired how many cats I kept not knowing that these were for our consumption. I think he was quite shocked when I told him Asians relish such delicacies.

I was a ballroom fan in those days. Every Friday or Saturday night, when there was no other commitment, I visited the Mecca cabaret which was located next to the Blue Boar Inn in Central London. In the cabaret men and women were segregated and sat facing each other across the dance hall. Except for those who brought their own partners, the men had to cross the hall to invite the ladies to dance. One night I was fascinated by an English girl who danced very gracefully on all the tempos. But much as I desired to dance with her, I was always slower than the English men to get across the floor. This carried on for about an hour until on one occasion she was not invited by anyone to dance. Quickly I approached her only to be turned down coldly stating that she did not dance at all. I was of course very frustrated and angry and still in that frame of mind walked all the way back to my lodgings in Marble Arch where I had moved to after the course while waiting for a

flight to Hamburg. I was wearing a shirt and suit and I was so angry at being rejected by the beautiful dancer I did not take heed of the very cold temperature until I felt great pain in both my nipples and thought they were about to drop off. That was my only experience of frost bite. Later, I learnt some Chinese Asians who had migrated to the United Kingdom were misbehaving themselves and causing a lot of trouble in London for the locals. Perhaps this was the reason for my rejection in the dance hall.

In the middle of the course I came to know the officer from Gibraltar quite well. We went out a lot and he really knew his way around London. He was also friendly with some of the local criminal investigation department (CID) personnel stationed in London. The CID officers took us around whenever they could spare the time and this made our stay much more interesting. Sometimes they would deposit us at the local cinema or the pub whilst they completed their chores and would fetch us later. They would stop by some store or stall along the way and request for fruits or other tit bits from the owners before they dropped us off. On no occasion did I observe payment for the goods. They were always referred to as "Governors" and were either very popular and respected or were feared by the locals. Two nights before our departure from London, we were feted at the Blue Boar Inn. Four of us had a very lavish dinner with wine and liquor. The bill came to over one hundred pounds sterling but the senior man who was with us merely gave a tip of five pounds and the waiter showed great appreciation for such a generous tip.

When I was on this course, I took the trouble to visit the mother of the P/Lt who was killed in Bekok whilst standing in for me. She stayed in Winchmore Hill, London N21. She was blind and so to imagine what I looked like, she requested that she be allowed to run her fingers over my face. We got down to conversation and I observed how very lacking the household was in their knowledge of the colonies and other countries. I was surprised when she enquired whether we had bread in our country, whether there were hospitals and motor vehicles and a



string of other questions. I was also surprised to realise that I knew more about England, its laws and customs, than she did.

Before we dispersed from the course, we were interviewed individually by two persons. I did not bother to enquire about their status but believe that they were the Directors for the Asian and South East Asian desks. I was asked whether I had benefited from the course and hesitated to reply. The first person assured me that I could speak frankly and nothing would be passed back to my superiors. It was not that I was afraid of any repercussion but I did not want to hurt his feelings. When he persisted to know my views, I informed him that very frankly I had wasted my time to have attended the course which was only fit for very junior officers and it had taught me nothing much more than what I already knew. To this he replied that there must have been a mistake as it was only a basic course that I had attended. Intuition made me prepare for this eventuality and I had taken to the interview the course joining instructions. I disagreed with him and showed him the joining instructions which I said I believe was on British Government letterhead. On examining the document, he reiterated that there was definitely a mistake and suggested that I return for a more advanced course. The other officer then very quickly changed the subject and enquired whether I had enjoyed my stay in London. His shying away from responsibility aggravated the situation and I then informed him very frankly that I was disappointed with London which was dark and sooty and the back lanes were full of rubbish. Even Buckingham Palace was black and dirty and the two main streets, Oxford and Regent, were full of beggars during the weekends. He apologised for such a state of affairs and said that the authorities were preparing to clean the city up, and on my next visit, it would certainly look much cleaner and better. When I returned home, I commented without hesitation that I had wasted my time on a course which was only fit for the rank and file. It was an insult to me and the other officers to place us with rank and file African students.

Since it was my first trip to the West, I decided to take some leave after the course. From London I flew to Hamburg where I stayed the night and visited the Rippabahn and the Glass House area. It was an education by itself to see married couples, young and old, strolling along this street which catered for the oldest profession in the world. The next day I took the train to Wolfsburg, the German town that produces the famous Beetle car. I had ordered a VW before I left Malaya. The marketing manager met me at the railway station and put me up at an hotel in front of the assembly plant. The next day I was conducted round the plant and was surprised to learn that a car rolled off the assembly line every minute. After that he took me to the Berlin wall. The next day I drove off in my brand new VW for Frankfurt and Heidelberg, the city of the "Student Prince" fame, and then on to Switzerland where I stayed the night in Lucerne. I had my first experience of snow at St. Gothards pass, just before I reached the top of the Alps. All I knew about snow I had learnt from the cinema where I saw people skiing. Believing it must be solid for people to ski on it I stopped the car and ran to the snow at the side of the road and jumped into it. To my dismay I discovered that the snow was only a thin layer covering icy water. From St. Gothards I drove into Italy and, after visiting Milan and Rome, I loaded the car on board a ship at Genoa and flew home.

After vacation leave, I resumed duties at the RBCO. My first priority was to organise and write the operational orders for combined operations against the CTO. When the first one was completed it was tabled to the full committee and passed. Before the actual operation commenced, mass arrests were carried out. From the interrogations of the arrestees additional information was provided which was to contribute greatly to the success of the subsequent operation which was launched during the first quarter of 1967 against units of the 12th. Regiment CTO located in the Betong Salient. Based on this intelligence a camp of the 12th. Regiment was pin-pointed and attacked and destroyed by combined SF of Thailand and Malaysia. It turned out to be the headquarters camp of the 12th. Regiment CTO.

The camp was built on a knoll and could only be approached from one direction. Water for the camp was tapped from a far distance using lengths of bamboo joined together. There were sentry posts on the slopes of the other three sides of the camp. There was a large parade ground about one and a half times the size of a normal football field. Immediately surrounding the camp were bunkers made from huge logs of wood. The camp could accommodate about one hundred people and there were latrines for males and females. An armoury with a forge was located underground. All cooking was carried out underground to shield the smoke from the air. It had been built about two years previously and was well camouflaged from the air. Although air reconnaissance had been carried out in the general area in the past, the camp had not been detected. Large quantities of arms and ammunition and documents were recovered and when translated, revealed very useful information on the organisation of the 12th. Regiment. This information was used in subsequent operations. The documents included a list of people in South Thailand who collaborated with the CTs, and a copy of operational orders in Thai and English. When some of the people on the list were identified subsequently, drastic action was taken against them. The capture of this camp was a great loss to the CTO. It was very centrally located, was known to the other subsidiary units and was used as a reception point for couriers. It would take a long time and much effort to regain contact with the subsidiary units from wherever their new location may be. Subsequently, many more operations were mounted against the CTO throughout South Thailand.

The split of the CPM into three factions in subsequent years can in many ways be attributed to the build up of a good intelligence network with sources infiltrated into the CTO by both Thai and Malaysian officials in the CIH. Further successes against the CTO based on accurate information, coupled with their previous elimination of spies, caused the CPM leadership to suspect that there were more spies planted within their ranks. At about the same time when the CTO had consolidated and reorganised and had dispersed CTs to the Sadao area

(8th. Regiment), Betong and Ban To areas (12th. Regiment) and the Narathiwat area (10th. Regiment/CDMW), "front and masses" organisations were also formed to expand CPM influence in these areas. A large number of elements from these organisations, the Youth Vanguard Corps, Village Associations, Women's Associations and most importantly, the Malayan Communist Youth League (MCYL), a Communist satellite organisation, were used by the authorities to gather and provide intelligence on the CTO or planted into the armed CT units.

Although the CPM Central Committee members were highly suspicious, they had no absolute proof that their lower ranks had been penetrated. Therefore, to ensure cleansing of the CTO units throughout South Thailand, the Central Committee hatched a plot where it alleged that the North Malaya Bureau (NMB), a subsidiary unit just below it, had detected a coup to topple the leadership in one of the units in the 12th. Regiment. Arising out of this "coup" a number of recruits were executed and it was alleged that before their execution, several of the so-called spies had confessed their involvement with the SF and confirmed that the armed units had been heavily penetrated by the enemy. Subsequently, the NMB issued instructions to units under its command to liquidate reactionary elements within its ranks in the 12th. Regiment. This was followed by another more positive instruction that all recruits above the age of twelve who joined after 1962 were enemy agents and should be liquidated.

The NMB sent similar instructions through the wireless net work to the 8th. Regiment which shocked its leadership. This instruction was ignored as to implement it would result in the elimination of all its members taken in after 1962 and so destroy the CPM's plan of expansion in anticipation of the revival of the armed struggle. After a discussion, the leadership concluded that this instruction was aimed at sabotaging the revolution by the NMB. After explaining these matters to its units, it was agreed the 8th. Regiment would break away from the authority of the NMB. Thereafter, there were several attempts by the

NMB to bring the 8th. Regiment back into its fold but without success. In 1970, the NMB directed a State Committee Member (SCM) of the Special District Border Committee (SDBC) to take over control of the 8th. Regiment. Subsequently he was eliminated by members of the 8th. Regiment when he tried to kill its leaders. When the Secretary General of the CPM who was then in Peking, sided with the NMB and the Central Committee, and failed to bring about a reconciliation, he was considered no longer fit to lead them. In any case he had been out of the country since 1961. On 26th. September, 1970, the senior cadres of the 8th. Regiment, after explaining to all the leaders of its subsidiary units, announced the inauguration of the Communist Party of Malaya Revolutionary Faction (CPM(RF)) and named its army the Malayan Peoples' Liberation Army (MPLA).

The 2nd. Special District (SD) of the 12th. Regiment operated in an area that stretched from the Yaha area, Yala Province, westwards to Nathawi in the Songkhla Province between the 12th. and 8th. Regiments. About the time when the 8th. Regiment was ordered to "cleanse" its ranks the same instructions were given to the leadership of the 2nd. Special District, this time by the Central Committee. This instruction was also rejected by the leaders of the 2nd. SD with a request to the Central Committee to review the directive. When the directive was ignored, the Central Committee, through its representative sent to the 2nd. SD, exerted its authority on this unit and eliminated five of its members and forced a large number of others to confess that they were spies of the enemy. Before any further damage could be done by the Central Committee representative, the leader of the 2nd. SD and his followers including others who were to be eliminated, sneaked away from camp one night and established a new base. About three months after this incident, the camp which was visited by the Central Committee's representative was attacked by Royal Thai aircraft and this led the 2nd. SD leaders to suspect that the Central Committee was in league with the authorities to sabotage the revolution. Thereafter, as a precaution, the 2nd. SD only maintained contact with the Central Committee by wireless. Appeals to the

Secretary General also met with no result. Four years later when the issue could not be resolved, the 2nd. SD broke away from the Central Committee and on 1st. August, 1974, named itself the CPM Marxist/Leninist (CPM (ML)) group. The armed wing was called the MPLA and the political or subversive wing, the Malayan Peoples Liberation League (MPLL).

After the breakaway from the CPM proper and the formation of the two new parties, the latter two held discussions on a merger. Although a merger was agreed to, there were no concrete resolutions adopted and nothing further developed.

In 1961, the CPM's Central Committee, which was based in South Thailand, had carried out a review of its past policies and charted a course for the resumption of the armed struggle. The following year it carried out intensive ideological and military training of Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) members, and increased the strength of the MNLA through recruitment in order to expand its guerrilla base in South Thailand. When these tasks were accomplished by 1965/1966 the Central Committee concentrated its efforts on the resumption of the armed struggle in the Malayan Peninsula. In preparation for this eventuality, it had formed CPM party schools run by the various CT regiments established in South Thailand. A number of schools were created within the 8th. and 12th. Regiments both in the Sadao and the Betong areas. The purpose was to train cadres from the Peninsula in ideology and weapons, after which they would be sent back to the Peninsula to await further orders for the resumption of the armed struggle. The elements selected for this training were mostly militant members from opposition political parties which existed in Malaya and Singapore at the time. These were the Labour Party of Malaya (LPM), the Party Rakyat of Malaya (PRM) and the Socialist Front (SF). These parties were heavily Communist penetrated and were subsequently banned. Selected members were given secret instructions to get to these schools either through Padang Besar or Changloon adjoining the 8th. Regiment, or through Kroh which adjoined Betong

where the 12th. Regiment was situated. In these party schools the trainees underwent what was termed "baptism of fire". Each and everyone was made to join the MCYL to ensure complete subservience to the CPM.

The area least covered was the Ban To area in Yala province. As there was hardly any information available to plan any substantive operation, it was decided to try capture a CT courier servicing the CT units in Ban To and Betong and obtain the most recent information from him. From research into information supplied by SEP in the past, all that was known was that there was a courier service once a month along that route. No dates or timings were available. The SEP happened to be serving with the Yala FT and he was used as the guide to show the route used from Ban To to Betong. The intention was to cover the route for a full month but this would have been too taxing for a small unit that would have to be on ambush alert many hours during the day and still carry out sentry duties at night. Finally, the full month period was broken into four weeks covering the track during the first and third weeks in the first month and the second and fourth weeks in the second month. The team went to the same spot each time and to cover a full week properly they took up positions two days before the actual week began. The same procedure was adopted for the next week and by this method, over a two month period, the courier route would have been manned for one full month. Nothing happened the first month when they covered week one and week three, but on the second month when they were half way through the second week, a courier came from the north and was heading south. He was spotted from a distance away with his shot gun slung over his shoulders and because he was climbing the hill, was looking down on the ground. It was most unfortunate that our man in the first position was not a very seasoned one for such duties and when the CT courier came close to him, instead of grabbing the CT, he ordered him in English to "hands up" and having been alerted, the CT instantly fired at our man and ran off.

In 1966, a platoon of the 46 Special Forces Company, 1st. Special Forces, US Army, was stationed in the Klong Ngac area to train recruits of the Thai Border Patrol Police (BPP) in guerrilla warfare. The Malaysian SB officers who operated with the BPP quite often, were well known to the Commanding Officer of the BPP, a Lt. Colonel. He introduced me to the Company Commander of the Special Forces during one of my visits to the BPP camp. Until my departure from Thailand in 1968, there was exchange of operational tactics between the Malaysians and the Special Forces although there was no official arrangement for such exchanges. The Special Forces had been told that the Malaysians had amongst their staff ex-CTs and it was this category of people that the Americans were more interested in as their experience as guerrillas before could be tapped to train the Thais. The two units got on extremely well and took part in unofficial joint exercises inside Thailand. The US forces especially admired the spirit and capability of the Malaysians for being able to survive solely on jungle produce whereas they had to rely very much on rations from air-drops. For my assistance rendered to the US Army training effort, I was made an Honorary member of the US Army Special Forces and was presented with a Green Beret with a cap badge and a letter of appreciation.

There was another group of American civilians from the Stanford Research Institute in California who were on contract to the US government and were charged with research on counter insurgency in Thailand. They were based in Bangkok but visited the South very often to obtain material for their research from both the Thais and Malaysians who were stationed there. Of course permission for these contacts had been given by the Thai and Malaysian governments. They had a team of scientists with them and these people were most interested in developing technical aids that could be used against the insurgents. The chief of this unit was quite ingenious and would invent the most complicated gadgets on request. One was the anti-intrusion device which would be very useful for ambush duties which he completed in about six weeks working from only an idea given to him.



This consisted of geophones planted into the ground covering 360 degrees from the central point. These geophones picked up from the ground, waves created by human beings which were recorded on a receiver. It took only a little while to learn how to handle the device. The first model he produced was very bulky and heavy with coils of long wires and put to the test in hilly country inside South Thailand. He and his deputy carried the device and at the end of the trip they realised that it was not a practical gadget. Two months later, they returned with an improved model which was much lighter and smaller and was without wires. When tested, it was most effective. It was further improved upon, and it was learnt that it was made a personal issue to troops stationed in Vietnam. This same device was also used for jungle trail surveillance with the geophones hooked onto a camera which when activated by sound would take a picture every ten seconds.

Monthly meetings at the RBCO were great events. Officials from both countries, from the Police, the SB, the Army, Navy, Air Force and other government agencies, totaling about fifty officials, attended this meeting. The intelligence and operational briefings preceded the meeting which usually started at 1000 hours till lunch and would continue again after lunch. There would be a formal dinner that evening at a restaurant where an unlimited supply of liquor would be served. After dinner, it was party time and all would adjourn to a posh nightclub where there would be more drinking and frolicking which would drag into the early hours of the morning.

Malaysian staff monthly meetings were just as lively. The venue alternated from post to post to allow the FT personnel a change from their place of work. There was a local understanding amongst all the staff to pay ten dollars a month for officers and five for other ranks as a contribution into a fund to be used for social events. At the end of each month, a considerable sum of about \$700.00 was accumulated with about three quarters of it spent that night on food and entertainment. \$500.00 Malaysian or 5000 Thai Bahts in those days was an enormous sum for food and entertainment and everyone taking

part enjoyed themselves thoroughly. The Malaysian staff also celebrated the anniversary of the formation of the CIH each year. This was the greatest event of the year and selected guests were invited to grace the occasion. They consisted of Thai and Malaysian officials who had been very helpful to the Malaysian staff during the past year and their food, accommodation and personal comforts were all arranged and paid for. There would be about \$3000 available for this celebration. Some of the US army personnel were also invited and they brought along their own brands of liquor and contributed crates of other types of our choosing, thereby further stretching our available resources.

Because of the very low cost of living, the cheap recreational facilities available and the friendliness of its people, visits to South Thailand were eagerly sought after by Malaysian Government officials. Sometimes, by exploiting the old boy net, even officers who had no genuine business there, also managed to make a visit. When I was in the position of command I had many visitors from both the Government and private sector. News had circulated that visitors were usually assured of a hilarious and fun filled stay. When it was time to go, they were usually reluctant to do so. To reciprocate the generosity and hospitality of the Thai SB Commanding Officer of the South Region, an offer was made to train his officers on Malaysian SB techniques and tradecraft in South Thailand which had been denied to them before my tour of duty commenced. This offer was accepted with great enthusiasm. One spin-off for the Malaysian SB was that the course exposed the identity of all the Thai SB officers in the South to the Malaysian SB officers thereby enhancing the relationship between the two services. For this purpose, the second most senior officer and one other officer from the Malaysian SB training school were invited to make an official visit to work out a program. The senior officer stayed longer than he should have. He was there to work out a training program with some Thai officers and where this could have been concluded in Songkhla itself, he was taken to all the FT locations on a familiarisation tour and at each place, thoroughly enjoyed himself. One

night after a heavy drinking session in Haadyai, he landed himself in the wrong room. In the middle of the night his large and hairy arm wandered and landed on my chest. I woke up with a start thinking that I had had a nightmare in which a gorilla had landed on me. When I asked what he was doing in my bed he explained he thought he had found his partner. For obvious reasons, he recommended that the three week course should be held at the Teacher's Training College at Yala. Interpreters were selected from Thai speaking Malaysian officers attached to Contingent SB HQ Alor Star and a Malaysian SB officer from the RBCO was attached to the visiting lecturers as their liaison officer.

In view of the favourable living conditions and the abundance of beautiful women in South Thailand I was perplexed that none of my staff practised polygamy in the four years when I was in command. If they had done so I would have closed an eye to it.

I served a total of four years in South Thailand. For my farewell, two functions were arranged. One was in Songkhla given by the RBCO and the other by my staff, US army personnel and some Thai officers which was held at Yala. The most memorable one was that held in Yala on Saturday. Since it was not a working day, the drinking session started early in the afternoon and I remember by about 1600 hours, I was well under the weather. I went to bed for a couple of hours and had to force my self to awake for the dinner that evening. There was more drinking forced upon me during and after dinner and when the time came to receive my farewell present, I had to be supported. The present which was inside a big box which was well secured, was brought in on a hand trolley by a few of the hosts. I hardly knew how to open it. I had to be assisted and took quite a long time to open the box. Finally, the present, which was a beautiful Thai girl, stepped out of the box but I was in no fit state to even appreciate what she looked like.

In June 1966, I was honoured with the 5th. class of the Most Distinguished Order of the Crown, by His Majesty, The King of

Malaysia. On 1st. March, 1968, I left for Sarawak, East Malaysia, on transfer. When I left, I felt that our efforts of four years in South Thailand had gone unnoticed and unappreciated by Bangkok. In 1974, maybe as an afterthought, I was conferred the Tri Tra Porn, 3rd. Class Most Exalted Order of the Crown of Thailand, by His Majesty, The King of Thailand. Many other officers who served in South Thailand during the same time with me were also conferred Thai honours, either the Most Exalted Order of the Crown or the Order of the White Elephant, commensurate with their ranks.

## 14

WHERE ORANG UTANS AND HORNBILL  
ABOUT - SARAWAK

Before the formation of Malaysia, Malayan school students were taught that Borneo, in which the States of Sabah and Sarawak are situated, was all thick jungle, and headhunters and orang hutans roamed the jungles. Before joining Malaysia, these states were under the White Rajah from the English Brooke family who, after the Second World War, handed over the two States to the British Government. Very few people on the mainland took much interest in Borneo and least of all did anyone dream that one day it would merge with Malaya. Although Sabah and Sarawak joined the Federation of Malaya and formed Malaysia in September, 1963, most of the mainland officers had hardly had a chance to visit the new states. During the Confrontation with Indonesia mainly PFF personnel were sent to Sarawak to assist in defending the State. After Confrontation ended, other officers from General Duties and the SB began to trickle there.

With pleasant memories of the four years of gay life in South Thailand still fresh in my mind, the posting to a place like Sarawak was quite a trauma. We had two boys by then and, because of the uncertainties about the situation in Sarawak, my wife and I decided to leave the children behind under the care of my eldest sister in Ipoh. After about two weeks leave to acclimatise the children to their auntie, my wife and I flew to Sarawak on 1 March, 1968. The post I was to take up was newly created in Contingent SB HQ at Kuching. As the chief steward announced that the plane would descend soon, we craned our necks to catch a glimpse at Kuching. As we were seated on the wrong side of the plane we could only see jungle and tall trees. This first impression momentarily confirmed my schoolboy understanding that the people in Borneo lived on the top of trees but I could not see any houses amongst

the canopies. Of course when the plane started to circle we saw Kuching. The town is situated on the banks of a broad river about sixty miles inland from the sea. The airport was a small brick building with a short runway. At the terminal, I was surprised to see one of my squad mates and two other officers from the mainland waiting to receive me. Seeing people I knew was a great relief as I had anticipated a lonely life for the term of my posting there. I had not been told that there were other SB officers from the Peninsula in Sarawak. After the formalities had been completed we were taken into town and checked into a hotel. The Head SB, who was to have received us at the airport, had been called away suddenly on urgent matters and he had therefore arranged for the alternate reception.

The next day, I reported for duty to the Head SB. He was a Chinese who hailed from Seremban. He had been with the MPAJA during the Second World War and had moved to Sarawak when the MPAJA was disbanded after the war. After various jobs he had joined the Sarawak Police Force. With his background experience, he had excelled himself in eliminating the members of the Sarawak Communist Organisation (SCO) and gained very rapid promotion before Sarawak joined Malaysia. He was normally a friendly person who carried a constant smile and assisted when there was a need to do so. After he had introduced me to the other officers, we returned to his office and got down to serious business. When certain officers were introduced to me, I felt an unwelcome and hostile response from a few of them. Very much later I learnt the reason for this hostility.

The majority of the officers at Sarawak SB Contingent HQ were local people. The others included one lone British expatriate and about five Peninsula officers of various ranks. The Deputy Head SB was a Peninsula officer who happened to be my squad mate and, although there was no animosity between us, we were not the best of friends. From our training days he was known to be unfriendly. He always indulged himself by throwing the "Sam Sok" card in the Chinese game of majong, a pastime people from his particular clan usually excelled

in. He belonged to the dialect of the Chinese people who possessed flat heads and who usually either worked as "boys" for the European masters or worked as servers in coffee shops or restaurants. Most of the seconded officers did not like him either and usually steered clear of his path. There was an Indian officer who was also from my squad and with another Chinese officer we later formed a small social clique. The two other Chinese officers from the mainland seldom mixed with us as they belonged to the same clan as the Deputy Head SB.

I was briefed that Sarawak had a long border and a very large interior with the population well spread out. In these areas lurked the Communists or armed members of the SCO known as the Pasukan Guerrilla Rakyat Sarawak (PGRS) or People's Army of Kalimantan Utara (PARAKU), depending on whether they operated in the 1st. Bureau (comprising the 1st. Division of Kuching and the 2nd. Division of Simanggang) or the 2nd. Bureau (comprising the 3rd. Division of Sibul and the 4th. Division of Miri). They operated mainly in the rural and border areas and would take refuge in safe sanctuaries inside Indonesian territory when there was pressure exerted on them by the SF. The strength of both these groups totaled about 800. The majority of the CTs were recruited from the local areas in which they operated. Because of their local knowledge of the people and the terrain, logistics, consisting of money, food and shelter and intelligence, were very easily and readily obtainable. The rural folk who were unwilling and unsympathetic towards the Communists had to string along or face the wrath of the local Communist units.

The majority of the CTs were Foochows and the others were mainly Hakkas. I have not been able to verify this, but when I enquired why it was Foochows who made up the bulk of the Communist population, I was told that it went back a long time in Chinese history when the Foochows were the most rebellious of the Chinese clans, and would defy the authorities given the slightest excuse. Because of their refractory natures they were oppressed and persecuted by the authorities. This rebellious spirit had been handed down through the

generations. Foochow speak very fast. It was quite obvious to me that they had shorter tongues than the normal Chinese and seemed to stutter and the end words of their sentences just trailed off. "Like this" was heard as "lik lis" and "that" was "lat". They ended their sentences with "heh, heh, heh" which appeared as if they were laughing to themselves. In Sibu, one day towards the end of my tour, I asked an old Foochow gentleman who has since passed away, why they spoke in such a manner. How true this is I cannot say but he seemed serious when he said it. According to him, the Chinese believe that they were all descended from animals that spoke before they reincarnated into human beings. The large size minah bird of black and yellow with a short tongue eventually reincarnated into a Foochow.

This same gentleman also related another story about the Hainanese. The back of the heads of the Hainanese are reputed to be flat as they reincarnated from the cat fish found in abundance in the swamps and padi fields. Before reincarnation, the cat fish had round heads like most normal fish. One day in a padi field when the cat fish saw a buffalo ploughing the land he teased it saying that the buffalo did not enjoy the fruits of its labour which went to the horses. The taunt went as "Ngau Kang Tien, Ma Sek Kuk". This taunting went on for a considerable length of time and although the buffalo pleaded with the cat fish, the cat fish continued to jibe at it. One day, when the buffalo was near enough to the cat fish, in anger it decided to stomp on the fish's head and flattened it. Not long after this incident, cat fish reincarnated into human beings in the form of the Hainanese.

He seemed very well versed with Chinese history, customs and traditions. To him, the Fukkien/Teochew are the richest of all the Chinese clans whether inside China or out of it. This is because of their inherent thrift. He claimed that where the normal Chinese family consumed rice during their meals, the Fukkien/Teochew ate only porridge with pickled vegetables made from left over greens and peanuts with hardly any meat. For the occasional delicacy, they had the "stinking salted fish" which was preserved just as the fish was about to



turn rotten. He explained that it was logical because, normally, rotting fish would either be discarded for feeding ducks or would be sold very cheaply; thrift again. They were the inventor of most the preserved Chinese foods on the basis of thrift and "waste not want not". Eggs bought in bulk are usually cheaper and those that could not be consumed in time before they turned bad, were pickled in ash and salt and turned into salted eggs. Those that had already turned bad were made into "century old or grandfathers eggs" which are preserved in a combination of alkalines and wrapped in husk. The Fu Yue or rotten tofu was another Fukkien invention and so were pickled vegetables. Fukkiens do not order newspapers to be delivered to their homes. They prefer to walk long distances to the shop to have their cup of coffee or tea and whilst there, read the newspaper before they walked home again. To them this has a double benefit; the exercise gained plus the free reading of the newspaper. You can visit your Teochew friend for hours and he would not serve you any drinks but just as you say you are leaving, he would then offer "have a drink of tea before you go" or "Cheak Teh Ka Khi".

After the briefing and armed with the knowledge obtained, I began to organise my work. In essence I was responsible for building up a SB network in the rural areas to gather intelligence on the movements of the CTs. The facilities available to me were negligible. Despite my rank of DSP, I had to share a small office with a translator and share a secretary-cum-typist with the lone expatriate who was not too happy with this arrangement because it lowered his dignity to have to share her with a new comer and one of a lower rank than his. It was a blessing that his contract was not renewed when it expired shortly after my arrival. We still had time before his departure to disagree on certain matters of administration and about his misconception that I was part and parcel of what remained of his little kingdom. He was an Englishman whose name resembled that of a famous swashbuckling English film star of the time but he did not, except for their common name, resemble his celluloid namesake. Very soon, whispers that there was a "neo-colonialist" in the office drifted to my ears. Although

Sarawak had joined the Federation of Malaysia for almost five years, there were still a number of local officers who resented those from the Peninsula. They believed they were quite capable of looking after their own affairs and dealing with the security situation without assistance from the mainland. The cry of "Sarawak for the Sarawakians" could be heard when it suited their whims and fancies. From the outset I determined not to be frustrated by these irritating innuendoes and to show the locals what I was not and what a "neo-colonialist" could contribute.

The road system was quite primitive with asphalted roads running for only a short distance outside the larger towns. The main form of transportation was by river but this was very slow and inefficient. Old Dakotas were used to provide air links between Kuching and Miri, the two main towns. In the face of these infrastructural difficulties surveys had to be carried out in the rural and jungle areas to make proper recommendations for the setting up of the intelligence posts. After stepping off the longboat at the jetty, the rest of the way into the interior was inevitably by foot. From my first outing, I soon learned the hardships of the local population and that of the officials. I had to trek miles into the jungle and over mountainous country to arrive at my destinations. These trips usually took a long time. If I had to survey the whole country, the two years posting would not have been long enough for this purpose. I had to pick and choose the more important areas to implement my plans. Sometimes I was accompanied by SB or general duty local officers who facilitated communications with the local population as I had no knowledge of the local dialects. Wherever we went, we were welcomed and the natives were most helpful especially the Headmen. They answered questions most willingly and contributed their suggestions. All these were very useful when it came to operational planning. After each visit into the interior, which lasted for one or two weeks or longer at times, the information gathered was collated with the notes obtained from local officials. This material formed the basis upon which I worked out my overall strategy. After months of preparatory work, I recommended that posts be opened up in

Bau (1st. Division), Lubuk Antu (2nd. Division), Ulu Katibas and Kapit in the 3rd. Division. In one of my surveys I also visited Marudi situated in the interior of the 4th. Division. Marudi is accessible by light aircraft or by boat with the latter form of transport taking many days. The visit coincided with the yearly Regatta. I arrived by aircraft quite late in the afternoon accompanied by another Peninsula officer who was the DSBO, Miri. The only accommodation available was the rest house near the airstrip and it was vacant. With all available space taken up because of the Regatta, it was strange that the rest house was still vacant. On enquiring, I was told that it was haunted and everyone and anyone who occupied the rooms would wake up and find themselves on the floor of the lounge. I am not a believer in the supernatural. In the past I had slept quite comfortably in coffins and graveyards so I rented the rest house. As a child I had been told by my elders that naughty and cheeky ghosts are frightened of certain things humans possess. Remembering this, I slept naked under the mosquito net alone in the rest house as none of the others would risk it. When I awoke, I was still on the bed inside the bedroom. The pubic hairs must have done their job.

The task of establishing a SB rural intelligence collection network was quite complex. There was much administrative planning and preparation to be undertaken before deployment. Sourcing manpower of the right calibre was a major problem. For this particular kind of field operation personnel would be isolated from their families and the general community for long periods. Sarawak already faced a shortage of local officers which meant posting officers from the Peninsula. Many Peninsula officers were reluctant to accept a posting to Sarawak for personal and other reasons in spite of the fact that the allowances were generous. Obtaining operational funding for the SB projects in Sarawak was another problem because of the priority given to combating the Communists on the Peninsula and resisting the Indonesian Confrontation. My project required finance for salaries, buildings to house the personnel on the ground, land and water transport, agent payments and many other miscellaneous items. After

months of preparatory work, I put up and discussed the first paper with the Head SB. He was most happy with the scheme and agreed with the recommendations. The sum involved was considerable and beyond the capability of the state government to finance so the paper had to be sent to Kuala Lumpur for scrutiny, discussion and approval. This itself took a very long time as there were other priorities to look into. By this time, one year had passed.

The first discussion in Kuala Lumpur was not very encouraging. I was directed to modify the paper and examine whether the project could be implemented without calling on Federal resources. I returned to Sarawak and spent the next month examining ways and means of scaling down the project without damaging its operational effectiveness. I was unable to make substantial reductions of the project costs. The amended paper was again sent back to Kuala Lumpur where it was discussed but not approved. After submitting six amended recommendations and not receiving approval the project was abandoned.

In between discussions in Kuala Lumpur, I assisted the Head SB in a great number of projects against the SCO and took part in a few operations against the CTs. Operations were also mounted to arrest the masses who were aiding the Communists. The operations to clean areas of CT support and deny the terrorists their logistics were called Melody operations. When not engaged in operations, I visited the offices of other West Malaysians to engage them in conversation to while away the time. We got on very well together and on most Saturdays after work we would meet at the Broadway cafe to have our food and drinks before we proceeded home. There were other Peninsula officers in other government departments and, with such a small Peninsula community, we soon came to know each other quite well. Government employees were compartmentalised into two groups - those who were from the Peninsula and those who were local. In my first tour of twenty three months, I cannot remember having been invited to one local social gathering apart from those held in the official

messes. By contrast with South Thailand, social life in Sarawak was simply dull. There were just the few bawdy bars in town which we stayed clear off as trouble could erupt in them without notice.

After eighteen months in Kuching, I was transferred to Sibü. As this was six months before the end of my tour I appealed against this move. The appeal was turned down. While I was in Kuching, I occupied government quarters so I requested that I be allowed to retain these quarters and not be provided with free accommodation in my new posting station in Sibü. This arrangement would avoid having to move my wife and household goods to the troubled new destination for the remaining six months of my posting to Sarawak. This request was refused. At the time the security situation in Sibü was becoming quite desperate and I did not want to expose my wife to unnecessary danger. As I was not being posted back to the Peninsula, the Government would not compensate me if I moved my household goods back to the Peninsula in advance of my posting to the Peninsula in six months. The only alternative was to move my wife back to the Peninsula and take our household belongings with me to Sibü leaving them unpacked in crates for the duration of my stay there. In Sibü there were very few houses for rent in the town so I had to rent a house on an isolated stretch of road outside the town. Security wise the house was very vulnerable but in the circumstances it was the only place I could find. If I had been permitted to send my household belongings back to the Peninsula with my wife, I could have moved into either the Army or the Police mess which provided good security. To lessen the negative security factors of my new home, I cut down the bushes in the compound which provided good hiding places and every night when I returned home alone, I turned on the headlights of the car to flood the compound to ensure that the area was clear.

In June, 1968, before my departure for Sibü, I received a letter of appreciation for meritorious service from the Head SB.

The timing of my arrival in Sibü gave me the first bad impression of the place. The town, which is below sea level, was flooded and everyone had to move about in knee deep water or travel by motor boat. The flood lasted several days and when the water receded, it left behind debris all over. Sibü town is inland and the second largest settlement in Sarawak. The population was predominantly Foochow. The politicians were Foochow, most of the government servants were also Foochow, the businessmen were Foochow and the CTs were Foochow. The economy of the area was and still is in the hands of the Foochow with the timber towkays and sawmillers enjoying the largest slice of the economic cake. Such was the Foochow preeminence in the town that even non-Foochow had to speak the Foochow dialect if they wished to survive.

My official posting was DSBO Sibü, but in practice that was not so clearcut. There was already a local officer holding that post and even when I arrived, he had not been officially informed in writing to relinquish it. Hence two officers were holding the same post. This situation made things extremely difficult for command and administrative purposes and confused the staff. As an ASP the other officer was junior to me in rank but because of the posting he was allowed to wear a crown. I was a confirmed DSP. I brought this to the attention of the Head SB who stalled on the issue. There was another anomaly. The Divisional Superintendent (DS) was also only an ASP but because he was the DS, he acted in the rank of Superintendent and wore a crown and a pip. However, I did not press the issue as I knew that in a few months I would be leaving the area so I could afford to be tolerant. There was hardly any reason to demand my rights as long as they did not interfere with my official duties.

These were not the only set backs that I faced. The Army had a Ranger battalion stationed in Sibü. The CO was a Lt. Colonel from the Peninsula. The CO of the PFF battalion stationed there was a confirmed Superintendent of Police. Not long after my arrival, I discovered that the Army, the PFF and DS did not see eye to eye on

operational matters. While the Army maintained that it had absolute control of the area operationally, the PFF claimed that it had its own areas of operation and was not under the control of either the Army or the DS. The DS was adamant that he had overall control as both the Army and PFF battalions operated within his jurisdiction. Somehow, I was the only one who created no friction and got along well with all three and therefore I acted as intermediary between the three of them. Everyone claimed his rights with no quarter given and instead of sitting down and thrashing out problems, I had to go almost a-begging from one to the other to obtain their views on operational matters. Later, I managed to get all of them round the table and from then on, the situation really began to improve.

I was the only non local officer in the SB, Sibü, and therefore an unknown factor. I sensed the locals were skeptical regarding my ability. I was new to the area and did not speak the Foochow dialect. All eyes critically assessed me. The CTs had become very bold moving in and out of the towns and villages to solicit for money and other essential commodities. By any assessment the situation was deteriorating. Intelligence coverage was considered good with the local officers and men handling the local sources who spoke the Foochow dialect. However they lacked operational experience to plan and put the intelligence to good use. The SCO/CTO had a very strong unit that operated in the town called the Sibü Town Committee and on one occasion this group had the audacity to call on the local DSBO at his house at night in order to eliminate him. He was lucky he was away that night attending a wedding dinner in town. Slowly, I inched my way into the local officers confidence by sitting in on their debriefing sessions and contributing ideas as to how to develop the intelligence for operational purposes and assist them to plan operations. Counter measures were taken to keep the CTs out of the towns to rebuild the confidence of our own personnel and that of the population. The CO of the PFF battalion assisted and deployed his men to patrol the town area from dusk to dawn. Before my arrival, local officers had not even heard of the monthly intelligence review which was very necessary for

purposes of planning either intelligence coverage or operations against the CTs.

Eventually, I sat in on all planning sessions for operations against the CTs whether they were to be mounted by the Army or the Police. We attacked area by area starting with the black ones first. The results came in quite quickly with the enemy pushed back into the rural areas. After a while, we could choose and pick our timings and the areas where we wanted the CTs killed. Local psywar effort also produced SEP who provided valuable intelligence against their former comrades.

Outside the towns we organised dialogues with the sawmillers to encourage them to contribute to the security effort. Most of the timber compartments were located in deep jungle with little or no control. Food was allowed to be kept in the compartments and, because the loggers were susceptible to CT intimidation, the CTs could obtain all the food they wanted without much effort. It was explained to the sawmillers that to contain the security situation they had to play their part. Either the loggers went out early in the mornings and took one cooked meal and returned in the evening to the main camps which were situated along the main river bank, or they had to pay for the guarding of the compartments where food was kept. This innovation was not received too well coming from an outsider. We reasoned with the sawmillers that normally the CTs had to meet a thousand people to obtain a thousand dollars to purchase supplies whereas this same value in food could be taken from the compartments very easily. This made the task of the CTs much easier and much less risky. Eventually, through patience and reasoning, we moved the sawmillers to agree to pay for the guarding of the compartments on a trial basis of six months. Before my arrival, local politicians, businessmen, and people of influence who controlled the economy, usually demanded local police officers for protection whenever they wanted to visit the interior to pursue their business. We were already very short of manpower and when the first request came during my tenure, I turned it down. They were used to being pampered in the past and did not expect to be turned



away. When this particular businessman discovered that it was a non local officer who had refused his request there was immediate reaction and I received a phone call from the Head SB directing me to provide the escorts for the businessmen. I managed to reason with him that only certain categories of Ministers were eligible for escorts. I was asked to reconsider my decision but with the reply that "I'll see what I can do" I stuck to my decision. Only after this I appreciated the influence and power of this particular businessman. He was one of two brothers who were well known sawmillers in Sibü. There was little doubt that some businessmen had supported the CTs but there was no proof of this then. It was three years later when absolute proof surfaced and one of those involved was the elder brother of the person whom I turned down for police escorts. I moved around on my own very much to expose myself to the locals engaged in business. I visited the markets and bazaars as often as I could to get acquainted with them with the view to running my own sources. Most people in the Foochow community in Sibü are related in some degree and experience the tensions and stresses common to an extended family. As an outsider I was not involved with these tensions and therefore I could establish different relationships than the locals. From the people in the towns, I came to know quite a number in the rural areas. When I had gained their confidence, I developed sources of my own and more information began to flow in to the amazement of the local officers.

In spite of the pressure, I still found time for relaxation in the evenings. These were normally drinking sessions either in the army or police messes or at the one and only famous Paris night club. It was the gathering place for the rich, the good and the bad at the time, and soon I was amorously entangled with one of the hostesses in an affair which lasted the duration of my tour. I was sorry to leave her behind although, from the very beginning, it was understood that there were no strings attached. She was single and a very friendly and helpful person, and unlike most females, not in the least demanding.

Until I worked in Sibul, I had no idea what a longhouse looked like. It really amazed me when I was taken to look at a large one situated in the heart of the jungle near to the river bank and consisting of about 100 rooms. It was built on stilts, with walls of planks, atap for roofing and bamboo floors. The building was strapped together with spliced rattan vine. Each room measured about 25 feet by 25 feet and all rooms were joined together to make the longhouse. At the front was a verandah about 20 feet wide and on top of this was an attic adjoining the wall of the room which was about 10 feet high and 5 feet wide. At the rear of the room was the kitchen. At many points along the verandah were stairs made of either wooden beams nailed together or bamboo poles bound with vine. One room housed the whole family. The verandah was used for social purposes and other gatherings. One very hospitable custom that the Ibans who stay in the longhouses practise is called the "Ngayap" or hunting for girls. Before my arrival, I was told that one could take any of the matured single girls for the evening and all one had to do was to cast around to make a selection. After the choice was made, custom permitted the chooser to visit her in her room that night. The indication that she was available was a small lighted oil lamp placed on a table near the door. Serious consequences would result if one entered the room when the light was off. There were two methods of getting into the room. The simple one was, for a very small consideration, to secure the services of her little brother or sister to leave the door unlatched that night. The difficult way was to climb up the attic, over the wall and into the room. By this time, one is so tired out and would be unfit for anything else. The first time I tried, it was the difficult way. I struggled up the pole to the top of the attic and there took some time to catch my breath before I made my next move. When my breathing was back to normal, I made my move to climb over the wall but in the darkness could not see that there were a lot of old tins and bottles scattered on the floor of the attic. I kicked over some of the tins and bottles and in the still of the night, this created a loud noise. Immediately, I could hear laughter from inside the room as the noise had awakened the occupants, father, mother, sisters, brothers and all. Undeterred, I continued with my escapade and finally after much

struggle I managed to get into the room. It was customary for the girl to sleep at the end of the row of sleepers and when I had spotted my quarry, I blew out the light and laid down beside her. Then I could hear sniggers from other members of her family. As it was the first time, I spoke to her in a very restrained manner and after what seemed an eternity, she agreed to my intentions. But it did not have a happy ending like in the story books. Whilst she was agreeable, she had her period and the great effort undertaken all came to nought. During a subsequent visit, she made it up to me and when I enquired what all the sniggering of the first night was all about, she told me the family had known in advance that she had her period and I was going to be frustrated.

Without in the least intending to be egotistical, I believe I am very competent in counter insurgency operations. In this short tour in Sibü, the 3rd. Division of Sarawak, 19 armed Paraku were killed, 10 captured and over a hundred of the SCOs active supporters were arrested. My appreciation, assessment and knowledge of operational tactics and activities of the SCO contributed to the planning of two major operations which secured these successes which were a combined effort of the GD., Border Scouts, PFF, Military and Special Branch.

Before the end of the five months, the local officers and men had accepted me into their fold. The last successful job before I left was the elimination of the leader of the CT group who had gone to the local DSBO's house at night to assassinate him. The five months passed very quickly and, had I volunteered to stay on, the results definitely would have been even better. I was sorry to leave Sibü but as a matter of principle I was bound to return to the Peninsula. There were many other officers in the Peninsula who were senior to me and it then follows that they must be cleverer than me to be promoted earlier than I was. Therefore it was logical that they too should be compelled to serve in Sarawak. There were actually other personal reasons that dissuaded me from staying. On a number of occasions I had lost control of myself and quarreled with local officers who were of the ruling Foochow clan

and there had been name-calling. I had also revealed my inner feelings about their unwarranted suspicions of Peninsula officers through their parochialism and ignorance of the wider world. I illustrated how slow and backward they were by comparing the mainland mosquito, which was difficult to kill in flight as they were so swift, against the ones in Sarawak that were slow and could be easily killed when airborne. These remarks had nearly resulted in fights. I knew that if provoked further, serious trouble would arise, and to avoid it, I told myself it was more graceful to go as soon as I was permitted to do so. I spent a few days in Kuching waiting for a seat on a plane to take me back to the mainland. During the last night of my stay in Kuching, I was feted to a dinner and was surprised that early the next morning, the Head SB was knocking on my hotel room door to take me to breakfast. He had never called on me before in the last two years and I thought this behaviour on his part very strange. On the pretext of seeking my views regarding the purchase of a new Volvo car for his personal use, he drove me around and to the airport and whilst on the way, shot the pertinent question at me requesting that I stayed back and that the Director SB would definitely cancel the transfer order if I requested so. My answer was a definite but polite "NO".

## 15

## THIRD TOUR IN THE STATE OF SILVER

In January, 1970, when I returned to serve in Perak for the third time, the 13th May, 1969, (generally known as May 13) racial riots had been brought under control. It was fortunate that I was in Sarawak then but the day before it erupted, I was in Kuala Lumpur consulting the Director SB on some intelligence matters concerning Sarawak. The CPM/CTO that had been driven across the border into South Thailand had been waiting for the right opportunity to resuscitate the armed struggle in Peninsula Malaya after reconsolidating and reindoctrinating it's armed elements since 1960. The CPM hierarchy therefore capitalised on the May 13 riots to resume activities in Malaya and, before doing so, sent a reccee group to sound out the feelings of the masses towards their receptivity of the presence of the CTO.

This reccee was conducted by a Atate Committee Member (SCM) of the 12th. Regiment. He was sent down to the State of Perak to carry out the survey and as he hailed from Sungai Siput North, he concentrated his enquiries only in and around Sungai Siput instead of casting further afield to obtain a better perspective of the situation and the feelings of the people. The SCM carried out his mission very superficially and perfunctorily and, on his return to the border, reported that the masses everywhere were very receptive to the CTO overtures and it was timely for the CPM/CTO to return and reactivate in Malaya. Based on this report, the call then went out to all CTO units to march south of the Thai border.

When I landed in Perak, I was posted to Contingent SB HQ and assumed the post of the Divisional Head in-charge of Communist activities for the whole state. There were no resident CT units operating there as yet. The CPM had taken quite a long time to prepare for their return, which the Government later termed the 2nd. Emergency, and in

fact only started to move in about early May, 1970. Before the CTO crossed the Thai-Malaysia border, news had reached the SB of the presence of the SCM and his brief mission. In anticipation of their return and to confirm whether they had actually done so, after speaking with SEPs from South Thailand, I formed a special group of SB officers and men to conduct reccees in the northern region of Perak closest to the Thai border. There were only two routes that the CTO could take to infiltrate south. The eastern route passed through some of the most rugged and mountainous territory in the state, uninhabited country where even the OA did not tread. To use this route would have caused the infiltrating group great hardship as it would have been impossible to obtain supplies and intelligence on troop movement along the way. The western route traversed along the plains after leaving the Thai border and the CTs could easily obtain supplies and tap intelligence enroute from the masses who had undergone the "baptism of fire" previously and had been left in place for such an eventuality. Based on these assessments, we focused our attention on the western route whilst the army were sent to plug the eastern route as near to the border as possible without making any secrecy about their task.

In the first and only recce conducted by the SB in the Tanah Hitam area of Grik, Perak, freshly made tracks which were well covered, were discovered by the SB party. On checking slightly further north, more evidence of tracks were found heading north towards the Border. It was then assessed that the tracks could have been made by CT scouts sent to recce in advance of a larger party. The SB group was instructed to withdraw immediately. This information was passed to the Army Commander of the area to mount an operation. There was disbelief and scepticism initially but, in the absence of other information to prove the contrary, the army accepted my views and later agreed to mount an operation. It was also assessed that quite a large group of CTs would be passing through the gulch where the tracks were discovered and to be absolutely certain that the army proceeded to the right area, the leader of the SB recce team which found the tracks was sent to lead the army into position. During planning it was agreed that the SB

would lead and place one company of soldiers into positions only on one side of the gulch and there would be no firing as soon as the first CT was sighted. Firing must wait for the main group to arrive to achieve a maximum elimination score even if this meant the forward scouts would survive. Claymore mines were also placed at strategic positions to augment fire power in the event the soldiers missed their targets. The day after the SB withdrew, a small group of about five CTs comprising the recce group came into the ambush positions. Instead of waiting for the main group to expose themselves before opening fire, the Company Commander, a Major, went against advice and triggered off the nearest Claymore mine which blasted the first CT scout and pinned him to a tree like a piece of paper glued onto a hard surface. The other CTs were also killed. Later, on checking, the army confirmed that there were tracks of about thirty five CTs trailing behind the scouts. The army stayed back for a few more days before they withdrew and one day during a heavy thunderstorm, a sentry shot one of his comrades mistaking him for a CT. Later, after the army had withdrawn from their positions and during the post mortem, it was learnt that the Company Commander had redeployed all his men immediately after the SB team had withdrawn. He had thrown away his chance of making Malaysian military history by being the unit commander to have killed thirty five CTs in a single operation. For this dismal performance, the Company Commander was recommended and awarded the second highest gallantry medal in the country. When I next met the Brigade Commander, I whispered to him that were I in his shoes I would have court martialled the Major who, many years later, attained the rank of Major General.

Arising out of this contact, it was assessed that the CTs would then use the other route for infiltration and the troops deployed there were alerted. The accuracy of the assessment was confirmed when CT couriers later stumbled onto one of the army positions deployed along the route. There was an exchange of fire but there were no casualties on either side. It was further assessed that the CTO might attempt to use the western route again and to ensure that all possible infiltration

routes were plugged, the army was sent south of the area where the incident had occurred. A few days later, a couple of civilians were shot and killed having been mistaken for CTs when they were in a curfew area.

Apart from the incident, there were no CTs detected yet in the rest of the State of Perak. Most of the time was spent on checking old routes and plotting plausible places where they might reactivate. It was believed that the previous first emergency places would be the most likely to be reactivated as the masses of the first emergency known to the CTs were still in situ and would be the ones to be recontacted should the CTs return to those areas. Stacks and stacks of old files were dug out of the archives to trace previous sources in order to alert them to keep a sharp look out for the presence of CTs. One set back in this exercise was that a large number of the old sources could not be recontacted as they had been discarded at the end of the First Emergency as a cost saving measure. Some who were located were reluctant to assist again on the grounds that they had been dismissed by their previous handling officers as soon as they were of no more use.

The knowledge of the CTO's intention to reactivate, coupled with their absence, was an advantage to the SB in that it gave the SB time to cultivate new sources in the rural areas in advance of the arrival of the CTs. In 1967, when it was known that militant youths from opposition political parties were sent to CPM party schools in South Thailand for the "baptism of fire", many were identified from records kept at the Border and it was in areas to where these youths returned after their training that the SB concentrated their efforts to recruit new sources.

The sheer vastness of the jungle made it difficult for the SF to plug all the likely loopholes of infiltration. Some months after the incident in May, 1970, a group of CTs penetrated the SF blockade and made their way south into the Sungai Siput North area of Perak. The CPM strategy was to develop the area into a model of deployment to be emulated in other parts of the country. This selection of Sungai Siput



North was based on the recce report submitted by the SCM who, incidentally, was the one who led this experimental group. In expecting a grand welcome the CPM had not considered hardships, deprivations and inconveniences the locals suffered from 1948 to 1960, and did not appreciate the fact that the locals were not prepared to endure a repetition. Whilst the reception of the party of CTs was not cold, it was no more than lukewarm. In early 1971, not long after the group's arrival, information began to trickle in and subsequently, the whole group was annihilated by the SF. It took quite a long while before the CPM decided to send another group. The leader of the group was the SCM who escaped the SB "Q" operations dragnet in 1959 in the Sungai Siput North area. This veteran of the First Emergency, with his vast experience both in combat and subversion, soon established a very strong foothold in the Sungai Siput North area. When this presence was consolidated he was ordered to lead another group south to infiltrate and activate in the State of Pahang.

At about this time in mid 1970, "That Fellow" was heading the Logistics Support Division at Federal SB HQ. In June of that year the CPM infiltrated a group of 10/12 CTs into the Kulim area of the State of Kedah adjoining Perak. The Head SB of Kedah requested for assistance from "That Fellow" who dragged me in to assist him. Somehow, he had managed to obtain the clearance for me to work interstate. I was thus kept fully occupied flitting between the two States of Perak and Kedah.

When not working in Perak I spent most of my time in the Kulim and Sungai Petani areas assisting the Head SB Kedah/Perlis. In those days there was only one SB for the two states with the HQ situated at Alor Star. Our task was handling a certain source who was contacted regularly by the group of CTs belonging to the 8th. Regiment CTO that operated in the Kulim area. Our intention was to eventually formulate a plan to capture the group of CTs to extract information from them regarding their intentions in the Kulim area. The plan involved participation of the military lending support to the overall plan but after

a few meetings with the source, the CTs decided to withdraw back into South Thailand in October, 1970. They were only in the Kulim area for about five months and were there to obtain the reaction of the masses to support the revival of the armed struggle. Their return to Thailand was probably to report the results of their findings and await further orders from the Central Committee. The CTs only reappeared in May, 1971, but by this time I was moved again to Federal SB HQ, Kuala Lumpur. In my new appointment, I was more deeply involved in this and other projects in Kulim.

I was instructed to relinquish my post in Perak after only fifteen months of service.

## 16

LOGISTICS SUPPORT DIVISION,  
FEDERAL SPECIAL BRANCH HQ.

This second posting to Kuala Lumpur was entirely different from the first one. There was very little pen-pushing involved. In 1971, CTO and subversive or CPM underground activities had escalated in the Peninsula. By then a number of CTs had been eliminated in various parts of the country. This was achieved with the assistance of certain sources who led the SF into action. This was not conducive to good security as the identity of the sources was exposed to the military and other operational personnel. To overcome this, it was considered proper that, within the SB itself, there should be an operational unit which could be deployed to protect the identity of the sources should they be used on operations. Very sophisticated and sensitive technical and operational equipment which was meant for "SB's eyes only" could also be handled by this unit. I was posted to Kuala Lumpur to set up such a unit.

On the verbal assurance that I would act one rank senior in this new posting, I agreed to move. There were very solid and valid reasons to have appealed against it. First, I had only been in my previous post for fifteen months. The usual period was two years. Secondly, I knew that I would have to leave my family behind because the new job entailed a great deal of outstation travel and it would therefore be more sensible if my family stayed back in our newly completed house. And finally, moving in mid-term would upset the children's studies. This posting was engineered by "That Fellow" and, as was usual with his promises, he never kept to his word. He relinquished duties in the logistics division not long after my arrival and had taken no action to keep his promise. "That Fellow" had been most virtuous all along but somehow at this stage became involved with a married woman whose husband

was in the same department. This affair was brought to the attention of the Director SB. "That Fellow" was censured and it was probably over this issue that he was moved away from Kuala Lumpur to Sarawak, East Malaysia.

In the final recommendation, the unit was to comprise one section each of Indians, Malays and Chinese of ten men per section. The Chinese section would be made up entirely of SEP selected from all the states and from different backgrounds as it was anticipated that the unit would eventually have to serve all the states in the Peninsula, in urban and rural areas and in the jungles. The senior officer would have the rank of Superintendent. He would be assisted by a DSP, with an ASP and Inspectors to lead each section. It took one year for the recommended structure and ranks to be approved. Before official approval, only the Chinese section was formed with personnel appropriated from other divisions and sections within the SB. The unit proved to be worth "its weight in gold" because of its incredible achievements. Although I relinquished command of the unit in 1972, just over a year after its formation, inadvertently and unwittingly, I continued to supervise and made use of its services until my retirement in 1984.

As soon as the unit was formed it was used very extensively in the Kulim area of Kedah to conduct recces to prepare the ground for an operation against the CTs when they came back from South Thailand. In early May, 1971, we were informed by the Head SB Kedah/Perlis that the CTs in the Kulim area who had withdrawn into Thailand the year before, had returned to the area. After a few meetings with the source, it was determined that the CTs were there to stay and therefore the whole unit was mobilised and moved to set up a base in the Kulim area. The personnel operated as civilians, in civilian clothes and unarmed, and were required to move around and near to the suspected area where the CTs were camped.

Meanwhile, the CTs who had returned to the Kulim area indicated on 10th. May, 1971, that they would be leaving for an undisclosed destination and would return in four days. On receipt of this intelligence, and since the SB was already well prepared, it was decided to call for a meeting with the army to mount an operation against the group of 7 CTs. The meeting was held at the 6 MIB HQ attended by a large number of SB and military officers. At this meeting it was decided that an operation would definitely be mounted provided the security of the source would not be compromised and it could be confirmed that all the CTs were in one location.

The next day, an emergency meeting was held with the source to brief him on his role when the CTs contacted him again on their return. Although there were inherent risks, his was only a very simple mission. One day before the source was to meet the CTs on 14 May, soldiers were sent in to seal off likely escape routes which the CTs might take should the whole group not be eliminated. These stop groups, comprising the military and Police Vat.69, were led into position by SB personnel and placed east and south of where the CTs were believed to be encamped.

The source proceeded to meet the CTs during the early hours on the morning of 14th. May. He had with him a length of bamboo given to him by the SB to assist him to climb the hilly region. In the piece of bamboo was installed a signaling device from which he could send signals back to the SB Tactical HQ in Kulim. Very simple instructions were given to him to operate the device. The first two pressures of the switch denoted he had arrived at the CT camp. Thereafter, each pressure was meant to denote one CT seen inside the camp. We were all on edge and excited when the first signal arrived but were much more excited when the signals representing the number of CTs in the camp were received. The beeps came in one, two, three, four, five, six, seven and eight. We were already satisfied with seven but were very happy to know that there was an extra one.

All the troops standing by for this operation were alerted. The operation was timed to commence at 0001 on 15 May. All personnel taking part to be in cordon were to be in position by 0200 hours. The assault party, comprising one company of the Rangers, was to commence from a southerly direction at first light. Involved in this operation were the full battalion of the 3rd. Malaysian Rangers supported by three companies of the Malay Regiment under command. The Rangers were stationed some twenty miles from the operational area and, when informed, the CO, a Lt. Colonel, indicated that he would move his troops by transport to arrive and debuss near to the cordon area at about 2300 hours. To move a whole battalion by road involves a large number of vehicles and in the dead of night, the noise made would be audible from miles away and would indicate to the enemy that there was troop movement in the general area. As it would more than likely alert the CTs and force them to take evasive action and thereby jeopardise the security of the source, the CO was prevented from this course of action. I suggested that his men debuss about four miles from the operational area and footslog from there to take up their positions, and they should carry only their assault weapons and their poncho capes to avoid making unnecessary noise. An argument ensued and only when I threatened to call off the operation on grounds of protecting the security of the source, he relented. It was most fortunate that it rained incessantly for about four hours when the troops were taking up positions as this eliminated any noise the soldiers would have made.

At about 0900 hours that morning the assault party came across the camp of the eight CTs, comprising six males and two females. In the initial exchange of fire, four CTs were killed outright and a few were believed wounded. The SF continued to scour the cordoned off area and in the evening, when three CTs attempted to break through the cordon about half a mile south of the first contact point, two males were killed. The wounded female CT escaped into the blukar. Six had been killed on the first day.

Since it was known that there were two more CTs to be accounted for, the operation was not called off and the soldiers were ordered to maintain their positions for the night. By nightfall, they had gone without any food for about twenty hours. As the cordon positions were all known, the SB decided to supply the soldiers in these positions with take-away food. It was arranged with the CO of the Ranger Battalion, a classmate of mine, that the SB would supply to his Tactical HQ in the operational area, cooked and packaged food, and he would arrange for it to be distributed to the troops. He was to alert his sentries in the area to allow the white SB van to pass their positions in order to drop off the food at his Tactical HQ. However, he omitted to do this and, when the van, with me inside, arrived at the first sentry position, one of the sentries nearly shot at us.

Follow up operations of combing the cordoned off area continued from the morning of 16th. May. That afternoon at about 1630 hours, the SF encountered the lone female CT who had escaped the day before carrying another dead CT. She was a most courageous woman. She stood her ground for quite a long time and each time the SF charged her position, she held them back by lobbing grenades. After about an hour of fighting, she finally abandoned the dead CT and fled. It was assessed that she might go into hiding in a nearby village where she had some friends and relatives and the local SB officer was tasked to conduct a search in the village but he neglected to do so. Intelligence received later indicated that she was actually in the village. Operations continued until 18th May but she could not be located although tracker dogs were called in to assist in the hunt in the operational area.

This project had taken one year to develop. With seven out of eight CTs eliminated it was deemed to be a major military success. The factors which contributed to this success were the close cooperation between the SB and the military, accurate intelligence provided by the source, good knowledge of the ground and the high level of discipline of the soldiers who took part. These losses frustrated the CPM's attempt to revive armed activities and masses work in the Kulim area.

Not long after this operation, intelligence was received of CT activities in other parts of the State of Kedah. The special operational unit of the SB was dispatched to the new locations and spent a lot of time carrying out probes. The area where they spent most time was the Kulim estate near the hospital which had been temporarily handed over to the SB for a special project. A platoon of the Territorial Army operated in the adjacent area to search and destroy any CTs who might be operating there. When the SB group set out for an ambush in the SB frozen area one night, they saw a person on top of the hill which divided the SB from the military, with something slim and long resting on his shoulders and walking about on top of the hill. From experience, the group of six were certain that he was a CT sentry patrolling their camp area. As this was inside the SB frozen area and when the news was flashed to me at the Tac. HQ, I ordered the leader to attack the camp. My instructions were for them to split into two groups of threes and they were to approach the camp from two directions. When they were near enough, they should then lob grenades into the camp. However, when one group was nearing the top, one of its members stepped on a twig and the noise alerted the sentry who shot at the SB group. In the initial exchange of fire, the sentry was shot but the bullet only grazed the skin on his forehead. At that instant, a machine gun opened up on the other group and it was a miracle that none of them were shot. The leader of the SB group then shouted in English to all his men to advance and attack. The platoon commander of the military had thought that they were under attack by CTs but when he heard this command in English, he thought it strange for CTs to speak in English and ordered his men to cease fire. He enquired of the attackers who they were. The SB, thinking that it was a ruse of the CTs, then ordered the officer to expose himself. He appeared waving a white towel at the same time to attract the SB's attention. The SB then learnt that the army unit camped at the other side of the foot of the hill for some time had encountered snakes and the officer had decided to move his camp to the top of the hill which was inside SB territory. The same CO of the Ranger Battalion that killed the seven CTs and to whom the Territorial Army were under command,



when informed of the incident, without checking the facts from his men, raved at me and accused the SB of having encroached into military territory and attacked his men. It was pointless to have argued with him when he was in that frame of mind and all I told him was to verify from his men where they were positioned. Later, he apologised to me.

The SB special operational unit was also deployed in the State of Kelantan on numerous occasions to assist the SB there. Incursions of CTs had been detected by the Malay residents in the rural areas and this had been reported to the SB. We assisted them to develop several projects against the CTs who consisted mainly of Malay personnel from the CDMW who had been sent down from South Thailand to indoctrinate and activate the Malay residents. One project which could have produced overwhelming results was spoilt by the army when an army group went into positions to surround a group of CTs who were celebrating Hari Raya. This army group took a right turn instead of a left turn when completing the cordon. This left one flank unplugged. When the assault began the CT's escaped through the gap.

The same SB unit also spent a lot of time in Sarawak and operated against members of the National Kalimantan Communist Party (NKCP). They also took part in operations with members of the Indonesian Army inside Indonesian territory in West Kalimantan against elements of the NKCP who sought refuge there. The operation to attack the camp of the Director of the Second Bureau, NKCP, in West Kalimantan, was marred by the fact the guide lost his way. It was a one day operation but it took four days to arrive at the camp. The SB unit was only rationed for two days and by the time we arrived at our destination, we had run short of food and were very tired. Because of an error, we entered the vicinity of the camp from the wrong direction and were spotted by a sentry who fired at us and thus alerted his comrades who made good their escape.

From early 1976 to 1990, this elite SB operational group accounted for a large number of CTs and CPM subversive elements throughout the

country. A number of officers and the rank and file, both regular and irregular, were conferred State and Federal honours for meritorious service and acts of gallantry.

I was very proud of the fact that I started this unit and was really enjoying this posting when suddenly, out of the blue, and only after one year and ten days of commanding the unit from its inception, I received my marching orders again.

## 17

## SECOND TIME ROUND TO SARAWAK

On 15th. April, 1972, I landed on the shores of Sarawak for the second time. It was not to Contingent SB HQ or any other regular SB formation that I was posted, but to an entirely new outfit that was created by the Chief Minister. This new establishment was to be responsible for the elimination of members of the NKCP whose activities in the 3rd. Division of Sarawak had escalated and were threatening overall security, causing great concern to the authorities in the state. The 3rd. Division was therefore specially legislated with its normal and security and administrative activities made independent of the state's government machinery. This independent authority, working directly under the command and control of the Chief Minister, Sarawak, who also assumed the role of Director of Operations, was named the Rajang Security Command (RASCOM).

Although divorced from the State, RASCOM followed the regular procedures with the exception of a SF Commander and the Head SB who were directly responsible to the Director of Operations, RASCOM. Also created was the post of Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This was held by a civilian, also from the Peninsula, and all heads of departments except for the Director of Operations, were Peninsula officers. In this very large set-up, I assumed the post of Deputy Head SB.

"That Fellow" was selected to be the Head SB because of his previous tour and experience in Sarawak. That was to be my first encounter working directly under him. Although I knew it was a foregone conclusion that I had to accept the posting, nevertheless I made a formal protest at being sent on a second tour to Sarawak, particularly as it was only two years since I returned from my first posting to that state. I had many strong personal reasons for remaining in the

Peninsula. My first born son was in his final year in school and needed parental guidance and comfort. It was not fair for him to be left alone on his own at that critical stage to fend for himself. My second son was in an almost similar situation as he was to sit for the important exam to advance to form three. There were so many other capable officers who could be sent. It infuriated me more when I discovered that "That Fellow" was the cause of my move. Regardless of his arguments for my posting he could not convince me it was absolutely necessary that I should be the officer to fill the new post. His action showed that he had no respect for me or my family. With complete disregard for his rank I scolded him severely. He knew he could not control the situation between us so he deviously arranged for the Director SB to speak with me and pacify me. For whatever reward that came to me later, I was chosen to be his "Whipping Boy".

The Director SB was well known to me. We were from the same kampong - Taiping - and I had known him before we both joined the force. He was a most reasonable man and although a Muslim he had no reservations in swearing in the foulest language in many languages and Chinese dialects. But at the end of the day he would always allow his officers to say their piece. The Director was well aware of my stubborn character and fighting spirit so he started with a soft approach and reasoned with me that out of so many, it was an honour for me to be chosen again. I was the right man and he could find no alternative. Using all the reasons at my disposal, I objected and appealed to him to rescind the transfer order. I did not know what "That Fellow", who had seen him before me, had said, but it was apparent that they had come to an understanding that I would have to go. When the Director found that I persisted in my stand, he changed his attitude immediately and gave me one last chance to think about it and make up my mind. He agreed to all my reasoning, but all the same, I had to go. I was acting in the rank of Superintendent then and his final parting words were that if I refused, I would not be confirmed and promoted in my acting rank. I had half an hour to think about it. It was through sheer hard work and meritorious service that I had managed to act in a senior rank and when

I was already more than half way over the wall, it would have been foolhardy on my part to have fought the transfer. Forced into that situation, I accepted and, true to his word, not long after the transfer to Sarawak, I was promoted to the rank of Superintendent which was backdated to 1st. January, 1970. It was exactly two years and four months since my last promotion. I received arrears of salary of \$10,000.00 (Ten thousand dollars) and regained all the seniority that I had lost as an ASP because I was not accorded the proper conditions to sit for my exams due to exigencies of service. Where I was the only one promoted from Inspector to ASP, I also held the record of being the only DSP who was promoted to Superintendent after two and one third years.

After a few days of leave to settle in my family, I proceeded to Sarawak. Instead of taking advantage of the perks allowed whilst on transfer, i.e. to reside in a hotel for three days whilst looking for a place to stay, the officers and men who received me at Sibu airport, took me directly to a requisitioned house that had a few spare rooms and which "That Fellow" occupied. And what a big mistake that was. I had known him for a long time dating back to school days but before this I had never stayed under his roof. That man was a workaholic and an insomniac and a great nuisance. Twenty four hours a day he thought only of work. This would not have mattered if he had confined his obsession to himself. But this was not the case. If a point was troubling him he would wake you up in the dead of night to seek your opinion. He would not disturb you directly. Instead, he would flick the light switch in the room up and down on the slightest pretext and, after a while, when he was quite certain you had been irritated and awakened, he would then enquire if you were awake. He could not wait for morning. I did not hesitate to voice my strong objections to his behaviour but this did not deter him in any way and he continued with his torturous practices. Usually he knew the answer to the point he was considering and he only desired the comfort of confirmation so that he could dismiss the matter from his mind. I was fortunate to be able to leave these lodgings after a couple of months. There were many others

who were less fortunate. They had to bear with his unreasonable behaviour because they could not voice their opinions or object because of his senior rank.

From this house, he and I moved into a vacant Government quarters. This building was situated along the bank of the river in Lanang. We were more exposed to CT threats than before as the house was near the operational area of a CT unit. It could have been easily arranged for the place to be guarded but it would have set a bad example to the other officers and other ranks that the top two SB officers were scared for their lives and needed protection. We stayed in this house for a long time until I moved out and found my own accommodation. Whilst there, we were just beginning to build up our efforts against the CTs and there was ample time for recreation in the evenings. I was out almost every night with other officers visiting the bars and nightclubs and was under the weather most mornings. At that time, I picked up from where I left off with the nightclub hostess and we were together very often. During her off days, she would visit me at the quarters together with some of her friends and in the evenings would spend the night there. This was much to the envy of "That Fellow" who, although desiring female companionship, always withdrew when arrangements had been made for him to enjoy a companion. He was so shy that when a woman was introduced to him he would only hold the tips of her fingers to shake hands with her as if to protect her from the common belief of very conservative Chinese women that, if a woman as much as allows a man to touch her hand, she would become pregnant.

This second posting was entirely different from the first one where I was on my own. This time, we went en masse as a complete organisation from the mainland and with more clout. The Military was also from the mainland and so were the Air Force and the Navy. There were very few local officers and it was so much easier to communicate. Before the creation of RASCOM, army and police operational units were from and under the General Officer Commanding 2 Division and the Commissioner of Police, both based in Kuching. These two officers

dictated the deployment of troops to the 3rd. Division according to their priorities. With the formation of RASCOM, this concept was changed and troops were placed directly under the command of the SF Commander. Likewise, the Principal Staff Officer (PSO) Police, was responsible for the command of all police personnel who served in RASCOM. The strength of the army and the police operational units was greatly increased to meet the threat.

There was very little or no interference from the local authorities, either at State or Divisional level, as RASCOM was autonomous. It acted in the manner it saw fit as long as it was on the right course and made headway in eliminating the Communists. For the first time, everything was well coordinated - the army, the police, and civil organisations. There were daily meetings to plan action against the enemy. In a very short time, the CTs began to feel the strain. The laws were enforced and many restrictions were brought in. When all loopholes were plugged it was almost impossible for the CTs to obtain supplies from the villagers. The situation became more critical for the CTs when, due to constant harassment by the SF, they were forced to retreat into deep jungle. By then the natives had been regrouped and well prepared and armed to challenge and resist the CTs. When they could not obtain supplies from the natives in the interior, and started to suffer casualties in the hands of the Ibans, in desperation they returned to the rural Chinese areas which they had formerly dominated. However their supporters had been arrested and detained, and the SF now controlled the areas. Many CTs were killed when they took the risk of going back to their previous haunts. Continued government pressure from all directions took a further toll on the CTO and the CTs were demoralised through lack of food and medical supplies. In the face of such adversity many surrendered. The surrenders in turn compounded the difficulties for the remaining CTs as they were aware that it was most likely that the SEP would be made to lead SF back to their camps and therefore they had to move and look for new secure areas. For the first time, also, the rural population and the natives in the interior felt a sense of security.

RASCOM HQ was housed in a temporary one storey building of plank walls and flooring with a zinc roof. It was situated next to the Divisional Police HQ in Sibuluan and was constructed like an army barrack with rooms lined on either side with an empty space in between the two rows of rooms. The facilities provided were not in the least conducive for producing the best work, but at the time it was the only available accommodation. Except for the SB most of the departments were located inside this building. The CEO who had an office there was usually in Kuching as he held another Federal appointment there. Without air-conditioning the humidity was uncomfortable during the hot seasons and when it rained, the noise created by the rain falling on the roof was irritating. During the rainy season the whole complex was flooded. The discomforts of the office were further compounded by the noise from the tramp of army boots when armed forces personnel made their way from one room to the other. The SB personnel were more fortunate as they were housed in a normal brick government building which they took over from some other government department on the grounds of security.

Finance was the NKCP's main asset in sustaining the insurgency. For a long time, it was suspected that the CTs were well supplied with money but not from the rural folks as they would have to travel far and wide to collect their finance and, in the process, risk running into the SF. We surmised, therefore, that there must be other sources from which they obtained money, and that these sources were the wealthy and the businessmen from the towns. News also filtered through from the rural people that there was a disparity of treatment of the rich and the poor. The former category were spared no matter what they did, even if it was to the extent of supporting the enemy, but the poor were arrested and detained even if they contributed a mere dollar. When more camps were attacked and more documents were recovered and there were more surrenders, a clearer picture was obtained regarding the CTs sources of finance. It was most startling that doctors, timber tycoons, bankers, and wealthy businessmen were all contributing to the SCO's coffers, and



that they had been doing so for a long time. When sufficient evidence was available, a mass arrest of the big time financial supporters was planned to allay suspicions of the rural folk that the Government or the authorities were biased against the rural folk.

Operation "JUDAS" was then launched and over thirty prominent people in the RASCOM area, but mostly from the town of Sibul itself, were arrested. Before this took place, an opportunity was given to those involved to come forward voluntarily to clear their cases but this call was ignored. Before they were arrested, those involved must have felt that they would be intentionally bypassed as the majority of them were of high social standing and had contributed generously to welfare schemes launched by the government. I was responsible for preparing the case files against these people and presenting them to the Director of Operations for his scrutiny and approval. Operations of such a big nature usually involved very detailed planning and many personnel. However in this case all the paper work was carried out in utmost secrecy and known only to a few officers who were specially sworn in. At this juncture, "That Fellow" suffered his second mild heart attack and was sent off on holiday leaving me to hold the fort. Although I was Deputy Head of SB, RASCOM, compared to the Head who was constantly exposed and rubbing shoulders with the prominent people, who included those to be arrested under JUDAS, I was unknown and ignored by the prominent people. To ensure that the news of the arrest did not leak out prematurely and alert the arrestees, all those who took part in the operation were only briefed immediately before it was launched and until "D" time, no one was allowed out of the briefing room or to use the telephone. Transport and manpower all stood by with no one knowing the nature of the impending operation. The team leaders were given the list of their targets and all available addresses where they could be located. The secrecy was so tight that only two in the target list were not accounted for when the operation concluded. One was out of the country whilst another was on business in the Republic of Singapore. This latter person was the elder brother of the one who demanded special privileges of police escorts when he visited

the interior on business whilst I was on my first tour of duty in Sarawak.

During, and after the arrests were made, there were many protests from the arrestees. They demanded to know the reasons and on whose authority they were arrested. The officers and men who were detailed for the operation were briefed to say that they would find out in time. In this operation, the Army provided the transport and all arrestees were taken direct to the prison where they were finger-printed and photographed and put into cells. Whether it was designed or otherwise, the arrests coincided with the visit of the Director of Operations, Sarawak, the Director of SB, and some other important dignitaries, to the State of Sabah, to celebrate its anniversary of joining Malaysia. As there were no senior officials left in Sarawak for the arrestees to complain to I was accused of having exceeded my powers and taken the law into my own hands in ordering their arrests.

They were termed as detainees under the Internal Security Act (ISA) and the normal term of detention is two years. Subject to recommendation by the Board of Review, headed by a Judge, and which sat every six months, release could be much earlier depending on the behaviour of the detainee and the recommendation of the interviewing officer. Many of these detainees had been born with silver spoons in their mouths and had never been subjected to any manual labour. In common with other prisoners and detainees, they were subjected to prison rules and regulations and had to earn their keep. It was quite a sight to see them fumbling with a brush when asked to clean their own toilets. They were subjected to regimentation, told when to wake up, when to have their baths, to eat, to sleep, work and play games. By the time they were released, some were probably thankful that, at least for a short while, they experienced and appreciated the difficulties and sufferings of the working class. The one who was in Singapore when Operation JUDAS was launched, was subsequently detained when he returned. He was placed under custody at Kuching and escorted to Sibu where he was formally arrested. He was the

wealthiest of the lot and the most influential. As soon as he alighted from the aircraft he demanded to know from the arresting officer who was in command. Pointing to me, standing nearby, the officer told him that it did not matter but he insisted on speaking to me and very arrogantly demanded that he be allowed to use his own car to wherever he would be taken. I refused him. In turn, I advised him to take off his jacket and hand his valuables to his brother who was present. I told him that police transport, which was not air-conditioned but almost just as comfortable, would take him to the prison. Upon arrival, like the rest, he was finger printed and photographed. Whilst in prison, he tested the authorities by requesting special food on the pretext that he was under medical treatment and was on a special diet. When the matter was referred to me, he was provided with a simple answer. As the Government had always been accused of showing favour to the rich and famous, it was not desirable that he should be on a special diet, but it could be considered if he agreed to provide and pay for the same food for all the other detainees in the camp.

Not long after Operation JUDAS concluded, "That Fellow" returned from leave. He spoke to various people, including relatives of the detainees, and came to the conclusion that I had mishandled the Operation JUDAS detainees when the operation was launched. I was supposed to have been too harsh towards the detainees during their arrest by unceremoniously snatching them from their homes and carting them away in military vehicles in full view of the public. Thus my approach was wrong. Subsequently, when he broached the subject, I refused to accept his double standards. To me, an arrestee is an arrestee no matter who he may be and all should be treated alike. There should be no distinction between the rich and the poor.

With pressure brought about by the SF and their financial resources depleted with the JUDAS arrests, after about a year, the security situation was reversed and the CTs were on the run. The only obvious place they could go to was West Kalimantan in Indonesia. During the Confrontation days between Malaysia and Indonesia, the Communists

were allowed refuge on Indonesian territory. When Confrontation ended, the General Border Committee (GBC) between the two countries was formed and it was through this organisation that the members of the Sarawak Communist Organisation became outlawed in Indonesia. When members of the SCO withdrew into Indonesia to what they thought was a safe haven, they were attacked not only by the Indonesian armed forces but also by the rural population. Deprived of any support in an unfriendly country, elements of the SCO who also could not return to Sarawak, had to endure great hardships and sufferings. They survived mainly on jungle produce and were deprived of the normal daily necessities of oil and salt. On top of this, they were constantly harassed by the Indonesian army.

In spite of their years of struggle, many of the SCO members could not withstand the hardships they encountered in Indonesia. This was also the case with most of the leadership. In mid 1973, overtures were made by the leadership of both the First and Second Bureau of the NKCP to end the fighting and this eventually led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State Government, whereby the CTs would lay down their arms, and the inception of Operation SRI AMAN. It was easy for the 1st. Bureau to organise their members to lay down their arms because this unit was small in number and its leadership lived side by side with the other ranks. However it was a different matter with the 2nd. Bureau, which was operating within the RASCOM area, and whose Director was never close to the ranks. The day to day running of the units at ground level was left to the DCM and BCM. The loyalty of the troops was towards the DCMs and BCMs. When the Director of the 2nd. Bureau sent instructions for the rank and file to lay down their arms the majority of the CTs in the RASCOM area refused to accept the order. Although some who had joined not long ago, and others who had become highly demoralised through shortage of food and having seen their comrades killed, welcomed this opportunity to the end of hostilities, it was not within their rights to surrender because they were very strictly controlled by their DCMs and BCMs. By this time the Director of the 2nd. Bureau was already with

the SB, RASCOM. He had lost face because his men had refused to follow his orders. He was also pressured to honour his words and therefore made last ditch attempts to coerce his men into laying down their arms. Through the masses grape vine, he managed to contact his former deputies. He was permitted to contact them as often as he desired in order to convince them. His efforts were not very successful and he was branded as selling out the revolution for his own ends.

Finally the SB took over the talking. This was not an easy task. The NKCP Director managed to organise a liaison group in the SB to make the arrangements. The CTs were now to talk to their enemy and, in so doing, would have to expose themselves and their positions. In the event of a break down of the talks they had to make alternate arrangements for their escape. Naturally they were highly suspicious and therefore made the most secure arrangements. On our part, although we agreed to talk, we were also highly suspicious of their sincerity as we would be in hostile territory without any form of guarantee that there would be no retaliatory action on their part. In spite of the superior position we were in, and the fact that we could wear them down over time because of the relentless pressure we could exert on them, we still went ahead with these plans to bring them out as soon as possible.

Even at this stage, the tenacious leaders of the NKCP continued to exploit every avenue to convert an unavoidable military defeat to a political victory. Despite the strong possibilities of foul play on the part of the CTs, I volunteered to lead the SB parties into the jungle. Together with two or three other officers, I made up the members of the team that went from place to place to talk to the leaders on the ground. usually, they were well prepared for our arrival. Meetings were conducted in the open or within buildings in the jungle or fringe areas that had been abandoned by the owners. Before our arrival, in anticipation of foul play on our part, the surrounding was well secured by the CTs to enable them to eliminate us with ease before escaping. The first of these missions was the most dangerous as the CTs would

not give any assurance that they would not resort to any form of foul play. That was by far the biggest congregation of CTs in any one place in Sarawak and, as a precaution, before my team and I left our base by helicopter for the meeting, it was arranged with the army to zero their field guns on our approximate location and fire away should the signal be given that we had run into trouble. Troops were also deployed to the surrounding area ready to close in on the CTs should the situation require their position to be attacked. This meeting went on for many hours but the expected results were not achieved. There were to be many more such meetings before the first batch of CTs were brought out "to rejoin society" - then a face saving term concocted for the occasion. There were many demands to which we would not accede as we were in a strong and superior position. Meeting them was already a very large concession as it was only a matter of time before they would all be eliminated. There were many who were prepared to leave the jungle but were prevented from doing so because their immediate leaders either had not given the orders for a total march out or wanted better terms. In any case we were not prepared yet to take any out with us. When we left this meeting, they sent along a liaison officer to arrange for future meetings. This CT who held the rank of DCM, stayed with us for about six months. When all those who were willing to lay down their arms had left the jungle, he returned to rejoin his comrades to fight again.

About a fortnight before my forty fourth birthday, I was admitted to the Sibuhospital for a slipped disc. It happened when I was at the Paris nightclub in Sibuh. When I was on a tall bar stool, I dropped my precious gold Cartier lighter and stretched down instead of getting off the stool to retrieve it. I was strung up with my legs higher than my head and was under traction for the duration of the period I was in hospital. Never in my life had I experienced such great discomfort. On the day of my birthday, the doctor in charge was not ready to discharge me. I was not prepared to be strung up any longer especially during my birthday and decided that, come what may, I would let myself down and go out to enjoy myself that night. One of the officers who came to

visit me that day was instructed to visit me again with my clothes that same night. After the doctor had been on his night rounds, I let myself down from the traction and we went off to town to celebrate. We started at the Paris nightclub and from there wandered from bar to bar with the waitress with whom I was entangled during my first tour, and eventually all of us ended up at her house at about 0300 hours. Unknown to me, at about midnight, the staff nurse noticed that I had gone missing and informed the doctor who informed "That Fellow" who organised a man-hunt for me thinking that I had been abducted by the CTs from the hospital. They found me drunk at the house of the waitress at about 0600 hours in the morning. When I awoke, I went happily back to the hospital as if nothing had happened and remained there until I was officially discharged some days later.

Up to the time when we were about to finalise arrangements to receive the first batch of CTs to rejoin society, all officers were subjected to the greatest pressure of work. No leave was allowed except on very compassionate grounds, and we were made to work from early morning until late at night. Lunches and dinners were all hurried affairs and most of the time "tar pow" (take away). "That Fellow" became more work obsessive than ever and required everyone to attend the office for these long hours whether or not they had any tasks to perform. One evening when it was way past office hours he dispersed us for dinner, but dictated that we should be back by a certain time. When about six of us were at dinner, it "rained cats and dogs" and the transport that was detailed to fetch us, came very late. It followed then that we were late back at office. When he saw us, he flew into a rage and held me responsible since I was the senior officer. I tried to explain to him but he would not listen to any explanation although he saw that we were all soaking wet. From then onwards, I swore that never again in the future would I, under any circumstances, no matter how lucrative it might be, serve under such an unreasonable man. On at least two future occasions I rejected preferment because to have accepted would have associated me with him. After this trivial incident, which he inflated into a major issue, even my professional support for him waned. I

distanced myself from him and showed no initiative and did only what I was told and nothing more. Thus I remained until the time I was transferred out of RASCOM and away from his baleful presence for ever.

After months of hard work talking to the CTs in the jungle we finally managed to convince the first batch to emerge from running and hiding. There were eighteen of them who belonged to the Sungai Bakong AWF and, on 13th December, 1973, they were airlifted out to Sibul where they were housed in a specially constructed camp for all CT returnees. One look at their appearance was enough to convince anyone they were undernourished. Although dressed in their best attire they still looked battered and worn. Two days later on 15th December, 1973, another group of sixteen from the Tulai AWF made up the second batch to leave the jungle. Many more batches were to follow and when Operation SRI AMAN concluded, a total of 487 CTs had returned to society.

When all the CTs who took advantage of the MOU terms had left the jungle, those who chose to remain and fight another day reorganised themselves and continued with the struggle. Those CTs who originally acted as liaison officers and who chose to resume fighting, were also allowed to leave us. There were about fifty in all who did not elect to lay down their arms and they were to remain a nuisance to the Sarawak Government until early 1992, when the overall leader of the NKCP, who lived in Peking, ordered a cessation of guerrilla activities following the footsteps of the CPM in 1991.

Mostly the batches of CTs who came out were transported by helicopter and landed at Sibul airport. These were occasions to be celebrated as not only very hard work and risk were involved in convincing the CTs, but the end of hostilities brought about peace, security and stability to the State of Sarawak. Funds thus saved were channelled to development. Duty free champagne flowed freely at the Mess, followed by celebrations. The expenditure for these occasions



was very minimal compared to the funds utilised in hunting for the CTs.

After the last of those who wanted to had come out were received, a special ceremony was laid on to destroy the weapons that had been brought out by the CTs. This occasion was witnessed by Federal and State dignitaries as well as the CT leaders who had given up the struggle.

The surrender of the CTs and their return to society was not the end of the matter for the SB. Although the surrendered CTs or Returned Enemy Personnel (REP) as they were officially termed, were under the supervision of the SB, the MOU specified that they were not obliged to give statements to the authorities. Although they had discarded their weapons, whilst under SB supervision, the REP who had returned to society was subjected to the same treatment by their leaders as if they was still in the jungle. It was imperative to know what the REP were actually up to and, in this connection, SB's resources were stretched to the limits in their attempts to monitor the REP. There were some who were willing to talk but they were under the constant watch of the others and feared retaliation. There were also a large number who purposely created trouble to test the patience of the SB personnel with very unreasonable demands. These were those who did not come out willingly but were ordered to do so by their leaders. A few requested to return to China. They were informed that there were no standing arrangements with the CCP to deal with such a situation. In fact, at that time there was no diplomatic exchange between Malaysia and China. When these REP insisted, arrangements were made for them to travel to China but first they had to renounce their Malaysian citizenship. To their great disappointment, when they arrived at Canton, China, they were not allowed to land and were sent back. Being stateless then, and with no valid travel documents, they were also not allowed to set foot on Malaysian soil. And so they see-sawed between Malaysia and China. This news of their predicament was

intentionally spread around and it put a stop to other REP who had the intention of going to China.

All REP were subjected to a term of rehabilitation under the ISA before they were certified fit for release back to society. This was for a period of two years, the same terms as the normal detainee who was detained to keep him out of trouble. During this term, their response to government overtures, their behaviour and attitude were studied to ensure that when they were finally released back to civilian life, they would behave like other citizens and contribute to society. Every six months, individual cases were reviewed and under the pretext of looking for more personal and family details, those who were considered more friendly were interviewed with a view to finding out what the NKCP had in mind for the future. At the end of two years, a number of them were released. Although some REP progressed quickly on their return to society and established quite good businesses, the majority just managed to earn enough to make ends meet. Those who did not qualify at the end of the two year period were further detained. Before this further detention period was confirmed, a case had to be made out to the Review Board whose decision was final.

In the first twelve months, I had provided invaluable expertise to SB RASCOM. I had played a prominent role in planning and directing numerous successful clandestine operations mounted against the NKCP which led to the elimination of a number of CTs. The most prominent of these clandestine operations involved the capture of six important cadres of the Sibü Town Committee. This unit was responsible for major incidents in Sibü town and its suburbs and was the main source of logistics for the entire 2nd. Bureau of the NKCP. Throughout this period I was also actively involved in all other coordinated RASCOM forms of offensive action and joint planning and execution of SF operations based upon SB information and intelligence appreciations. These concerted efforts ultimately served to scatter the various armed units and left them in a beleaguered position. The Director of the NKCP 2nd. Bureau, his own isolated unit decimated by eliminations,

surrenders and deserters, put out feelers for peace negotiations with the Government signaling the commencement of Operation SRI AMAN in the RASCOM area. My service from my first tour, coupled with part of the service of the current tenure of service, earned me my first meritorious service medal from Sarawak in 1973. It was the fourth class Order of the Star of Sarawak. This was not what I was recommended for and was not commensurate with my rank which should have earned me the third class. When the letter arrived indicating the gong I was to receive, I declined the award but was talked into accepting it by "That Fellow" on the grounds that it would be upgraded to the appropriate class the next year. Like a fool, I fell for his story. He did not keep his word.

By early 1974, we had been with RASCOM for almost two years and had contributed greatly to the improvement of the overall security situation in the State of Sarawak. Most of the officers and men who were posted to RASCOM were agitating to return to the mainland for various reasons. Some had been separated from their families for almost two years, some disliked the isolation of Sarawak, some could not accept the primitive working conditions any longer and there were those, who like me, who could not accept working under "That Fellow" for another moment. Vocal resentment from local SB officials had become more obvious although there was nothing in print. RASCOM was continuing and making good progress in eliminating the remainder of the CTs who did not accept the terms of the MOU. RASCOM SB was also making headway in ferreting information from the population as well as REP under supervision. There was still much to be done and the effort could not be relaxed. At this critical stage, the SB had to maintain the continuity and could not afford to change to a new set of officers. This too must have been the thinking of senior Sarawak officers including the State Director of Operations. It was at this very critical stage that "That Fellow" divulged to me an item of good and bad news at the same time. The state Government had offered certain incentives to him and me which he said would bind us further to the state for a longer period than the offer indicated. I believed we should

accept the offer if it was genuine as the same offers must have been made earlier and accepted by other senior officers in other departments. It was a very handsome offer which could have netted about a third of a million dollars. "That Fellow" decided not to accept the offer. Subsequently it was accepted by someone who was not deserving of it. Although I thought he was quite foolish not to take up the offer at the same time I grudgingly acknowledged his steadfastness and incorruptibility. My opinion of his probity was later reversed when some time later he very quietly accepted other offers for his exclusive benefit during a subsequent tour of duty in Sarawak. I was directly involved in one of these offers from the Government which was made to "That Fellow", another officer and me. We were given the opportunity to apply for government land which we could use for housing development. Just before action was taken to secure the land, "That Fellow" informed the other officer to apply for only the two of them initially because if three applications were made at once, all might not succeed. When the applications of "That Fellow" and the other officer had been approved then my application could follow. Their applications were successful but, true to form for "That Fellow", there was no follow through for mine and I was left out.

Even amongst senior officers in the police and other government departments, and least of all the public, it is difficult for those who are uninitiated to appreciate what is entailed in building up a good intelligence service. As all efforts are dependent on adequate funding and sufficient manpower, what is most obvious to those outside the organisation is the sudden influx of SB personnel to a small place and the large sums of money being expended locally for the purchase of equipment and furniture. Most people are inclined to believe that these expenditures are derived from Secret Service (SS) funds to be used at the discretion of the account holders. This is not the case as strict regulations govern all expenditure. For general requirements the expenditure is estimated well in advance and is sifted through by various government agencies before approval by the Treasury. Monies for buildings etc. is then channeled to the PWD to supervise and release

the money. Hence, abuse and indiscriminate use of public funds by the department to which the funds are allocated is curtailed. Before funds for RASCOM SB were finally approved, it existed mainly on borrowed or misappropriated furniture from other departments. When the funds finally arrived, new purchases were made and certain renovations carried out to the offices and building. It was at this stage of development of the office when the officer, who was reported previously as being a good "sam sok" majong player, visited RASCOM. He observed the renovations carried out on the office of the Head SB and considered them to be over luxurious. Instead of discussing this matter with Head SB before he returned to Federal HQ in Kuala Lumpur, he gave a distorted and factually incorrect report about SS funds being used for the renovations. This and some other later accusations sparked an enquiry which resulted in the unofficial suspension of the Head and Deputy from duty for about six months after they completed their tour of duty in Sarawak.

As SB RASCOM progressed and achieved better results, there appeared more resentment on the part of certain local Sarawak SB officers towards us. They had connections in high places and were in a position to influence senior officials in other Government departments to discredit us. When SB RASCOM was first set up, funds provided for intelligence coverage and operations were grossly inadequate, and very often it was the Director of Operations who came to the rescue with *ex gratia* payments. I was the SS accounts operator but never enquired where the funds came from. Although it was not obligatory on my part to have kept an account of the expenditure of such funds, I found it prudent to do so and even opened a separate account in the bank for this specific purpose. This form of financial assistance had gone on for a long time and there had never been a query regarding how it was expended but, during the middle of our tour with RASCOM, I received a surprise letter from an officer in the Sarawak State Government requesting a statement of expenditure from *ex gratia* payments. The letter quoted a lump sum from a certain date when *ex gratia* payments were made. This figure was very much below what

had been received. It must have shocked the government officer, who was related to the complainant, when he received my reply which contained details of expenditure of an amount far exceeding what had been quoted. The person responsible for this mischief was identified as a senior local SB officer stationed in Kuching.

There were also Federal officers who were out to belittle SB RASCOM. One day we had a visit from a very senior officer from the Ministry of Home Affairs. In his address to a full assembly of RASCOM officers from all departments, he accused SB RASCOM of being unprofessional and "building an empire" in the area but did not give any details or clarification of these absurd propositions. This was brought to the attention of the Head SB when he returned from medical leave. Being very chagrined and annoyed he protested to Federal HQ in a very strongly worded and lengthy letter and requested that the matter be brought up to the attention of the Prime Minister. We heard no more of the matter.

In June, 1974, the first batch of Peninsula SB officers and men left SB RASCOM for home postings. This exodus continued until the end of the year with "That Fellow" being the last to leave. In that year, most of the officers and some of the rank and file were honoured by the Governor of Sarawak for their devotion to duty, sacrifices made and their contribution to the improvement to the security of the state. I was recommended for the 3rd. Class Order of the Star of Sarawak but instead received the 2nd. Class of a new meritorious service medal which was created for armed forces and police personnel. I left the shores of Sarawak for the final time on 1st. October, 1974.

On my way home, I transited at Kuching and paid a courtesy call to the CEO RASCOM and had dinner with him that night. He informed me that he was being transferred to become the State Secretary of a state in the Peninsula. The Government was looking for a suitable person to fill the Head SB's post that had fallen vacant in that state. When it was suggested that "That Fellow" would be a most appropriate

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candidate, the CEO replied that if he had his choice, he would prefer me, "the devil that he knew", to my immediate past Head SB, who was "the angel that he did not know". I met him again on numerous occasions in the following years. He rose very high in the government service and subsequently became ambassador to the country that once colonised us and later granted us independence.

## 18

IN LIMBO - THEN ONE LAST TIME  
TO PERAK

All officers and men received their posting orders before they left Sarawak and were given some operational leave before taking up their new appointments. The only exceptions were "That Fellow" and me. After our leave we were informed to stay in Ipoh, our adopted hometown by then, and await further orders. To shield the real motive, we were asked to prepare a report on our experiences in RASCOM. In fact, we were kept in limbo for about four months while an enquiry was being held into our supposed misconduct while we were in Sarawak. Later, we were able to deduce that the accusations were that we had mishandled SS funds, misappropriated Government equipment and generally misbehaved ourselves. Without our defense being called for, we were later exonerated from all blame. "That Fellow" was then posted to become the Deputy Director of SB whilst I assumed the post of Deputy Head SB, Perak.

The job with the least pressure in the normal SB set up is that of the Deputy Head SB, as I was to find out. I held this position for eleven months and six days and, together with the four months in limbo, I had the most relaxing time of my career. The work was not only simple but it involved a great deal of travel outstation within the state. Basically, the Deputy Head SB deals with all the administrative duties within the SB, postings, pay, leave, promotions, recommendations, confidential reports, accounting of SS funds, the inspection of SS funds and records held by officers in the districts, and a host of other duties.

Depending on the size of the state and the number of districts within it, the Deputy Head SB has to inspect the SS records in the Districts once every six weeks to ensure that funds are spent for what they are



intended and records properly maintained. Each tour of inspection depends on the distance from HQ and may last about a week. If more than one district is inspected, then the visits can take a longer time. Mileage and subsistence allowance can be claimed for such visits. In this capacity, I was able to visit a neighbouring border Thai town quite frequently and renew my friendship with some of the Thai officers who still served there.

There were numerous occasions when I was required to assist in operational matters. CPM activities had escalated through its underground satellite organisations. These organisations had become rampant and had created havoc to impress the population and gain more support whilst at the same time belittling the Government. It was during this period that the CPM hierarchy issued orders to its underground organisations to harass the Chinese officers serving in the Government, especially those with the SB. This was in the aftermath of the racial violence of May 13, 1969, and based on the initial study of a group of CTs sent down from the Thai border who reported the situation was favourable for the resumption of the armed struggle. Armed CTs were sent south of the Thai border whilst, at the same time, members of the underground organisations (UO), who had been trained and had lain dormant for a few years, were activated to support the armed CTs. However, the CTs and the UO members found their progress hampered by the SB. The CPM could not deduce why, in spite of the political climate prevailing then, there were still Chinese officers within the SB who were still so devoted to the government. Because of this, the leaders felt that if the Chinese SB officers could be cowed into submission then the scenario would change in the CPM's favour. Consequently, orders were issued to eliminate all the Chinese SB officers who were impeding the CPM's progress. The first victim was the murder of a Chinese SB officer in Kulim in 1974. He was given no chance to defend himself and was brutally murdered when he was eating durians at home with his family one evening. The murderers knocked on his door and, as he opened it, the assassins fired at point blank range and killed him. This was followed by the murder of another

SB detective in Ipoh. And a short time later three other SB detectives were assassinated.

Urban terrorism had begun. Murders were not the only atrocities carried out by members of the Communist underground (CU). There were acts of sabotage in various parts of the country, and the UO were blatantly challenging the government by hoisting banners extolling Communism in prominent places in most of the towns throughout the Peninsula.

Acts of terrorism were unheard of before this. The authorities were caught by surprise as they had not expected the Communists to be so bold in their undertakings. The SB bore the brunt of the CPM's urban assault and lost seventeen officers and men. These acts had a demoralising effect on the lower rung officials based in the smaller towns who were constantly exposed to danger. It was therefore necessary to boost their morale with visits of senior officers from Contingent level. I was charged to travel from District to District and town to town to lecture the staff on personal security. In one place, on the night following my lecture, a detective who was in the habit of playing mahjong in a particular shop at a particular time, was shot dead when he was getting into his car after a game of mahjong.

For the responsibility was imposed on it, the SB was very much understaffed in 1975. It was not possible to gain the sympathy of the officials of other government departments, especially the Treasury, to increase the overall establishment as the full impact of terrorism was not felt yet. In certain Districts near the Thai border the problem was compounded by the presence of CT groups which had been sent from the Thai border and were establishing a foothold in Malaysia. The workload of the SB increased with the escalation of CPM activities. Extra funds were not available for intelligence procurement purposes and this impeded the work of the SB. There were occasions when sources were owed their payments or handling officers had to advance monies out of their own pockets to meet immediate requirements. In

spite of all the setbacks, the SB managed quite well until relief for finance and manpower arrived a year later.

During this short and last tour in Perak, I came across a person of very queer behaviour. He happened to be the Head SB. Usually he was very silent, spoke in a whisper and seldom joked or liked to engage in casual conversation, even during social events. He was a Muslim and kept to himself most of the time. If he smiled you could expect something to your advantage. He slouched and was slightly bent to one side when he walked. It was most difficult to gauge him. Direct discussions with him did not usually secure immediate answers which would only come later and in writing. In face to face meetings with him he would not look you in the face or tell you when the discussion was finished. His cue for you to leave was when he wiped his side of the table with a damp cloth. We related so well together that he did not even bother to organise the traditional farewell party for me when I was transferred!

In about August, 1975, I was informed that, from the beginning of the next year, I would be transferred to assume responsibility as Head SB of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. The threat posed by the CU there was greater than that in the State of Perak but until I arrived in the post I did not appreciate the magnitude of the threat. To update myself on the activities before I went there, I made arrangements for the daily situation report (SITREP) to be sent to me in Ipoh, and in my free time, I plotted every move that took place and the strategies I would make. Before I left for the new appointment I had my masterplan ready for action.

In November, 1975, the CPO, Perak, and his driver, were murdered by two underground elements on a motor bike when his car stopped at the stop-look-go sign. He was the same officer who was the Head, SB Sarawak, when I was on my first tour of duty there in 1968. The post was offered to a Chinese officer who was then the Brigade Commander of the PFF stationed in the north. This officer declined the appointment but "That Fellow", who was then the Deputy Director, SB, and who

happened to be present when the offer was made and turned down, without being offered the appointment, volunteered for it.

Whilst still serving in the State of Perak, in August, 1975, I received another Letter of Appreciation from the CPO, Perak, and another award from the King. It was the Kesastra Mangku Negara, the Fourth Grade to the Most Exalted Order of the Crown. By this time I had been decorated six times, including one award for gallantry and one decoration from the King of Thailand. Also I had received eight Departmental Citations or Letters of Commendation and Appreciation, one of which was from the Commander of the 1st. Special Forces, United States Army.

## 19

ENTANGLEMENT WITH THE COMMUNIST  
UNDERGROUND KUALA LUMPUR - THE FEDERAL  
TERRITORY

In 1976 the militant CU was at its peak of activity having carried out numerous assassinations and other acts of terrorism with impunity since 1974. Owing to its central location, Kuala Lumpur was the CU base of operations and the logistical centre servicing advance CPM/CTO units in Perak, Pahang and Selangor. As the security situation was becoming untenable, I was selected to head the Kuala Lumpur SB and charged specifically to thwart the CPM/CTO and the CU's bold thrust. When I assumed duty I was specifically asked how much time it would take me to contain the situation as Kuala Lumpur was the window to the world for Malaysia. Before I could reply I was told that I had twenty four months to complete the job. It was not long after taking up appointment as Head, SB, Kuala Lumpur, that I learnt I was not the first choice for this appointment. The Inspector General of Police's (IGP) selection was another Chinese officer who was junior in service and rank to me. He was not a very forceful or resourceful man and had not been credited with much merit in his undertakings but he was well known to the IGP. He stepped into my shoes a few years later after I had cleaned up the mess in Kuala Lumpur. Many years later when he was asked for his opinion as to whether he could have been as successful as I was if he had been given the appointment in Kuala Lumpur, he was quite honest in admitting that he might have messed it up and, in the process, spoilt his own reputation. After he took over from me, there were many occasions when news filtered back to me that he was a very impractical man who acted strictly by the book. Like "That Fellow" he did not care for the welfare of his men and none of them had a good word for him. It was "That Fellow" who was the Deputy Director of SB and a couple of other officers who managed to

convince the IGP that he was not the ideal choice for this critical posting.

Before my arrival, the rank of the Head SB was that of a Superintendent of Police but it was upgraded to the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police when I assumed command. I was promoted to that rank backdated to 1st. Jan, 1976, although I only sat in the chair from 5th. Jan, 1976. Before, and immediately after my arrival, I learnt that a few officers were doubtful about my ability to contain the urban Communist terrorist threat in the Federal capital as two officers before me had failed in their attempts to do so.

After a very short and negative briefing, I assumed command of a very demoralised organisation. My predecessor's parting words were that to survive in the Federal Capital, it was necessary to rub shoulders with politicians and prominent citizens and, if required, arrangements could be made for me to meet all those people. This runs exactly opposite to my belief of good organisation and operation. My strong belief is that once acquainted with such people you could fall victim to their manipulations and this could affect your judgment and performance. I was terribly shocked when I fully appreciated the current operational situation in the Federal capital. The staff were greatly demoralised. Up to that point in time, the CU elements had perpetrated various atrocities of murder and sabotage and other acts to promote their strength and at the same time to discredit the Government. The CU had murdered one SB sergeant in the heart of the city. In addition to this, 16 PFF personnel were killed when a grenade was lobbed into the camp one evening when roll call was in progress. The National monument had been bombed. There were ninety occasions when Communist flags and banners were hoisted in the Federal Territory. Posters and pamphlets were distributed all over the city on not less than twenty occasions.

There was a general shortage of staff and facilities to cope with the situation. Existing staff did not have the required experience. The SB had four pairs of handcuffs and were allotted only four cells. Any

requirements over and above this had to be borrowed from the general duties pool, the resources of which were inadequate and not within easy reach. The most immediate task was to uplift the morale of the SB personnel so that they could perform their duties without constant fear of risking their lives. As a first step, the rank and file were organised to work in pairs. The four SB districts inside the Federal Territory were divided into eighteen sectors with two rank and file and one officer responsible for each sector. The shortage of personnel was filled with borrowed staff from Federal SB HQ or from other states. At the time, there were a few rank and file who were on the CU's list of eliminations. It was imperative that eliminations were prevented as losing them would be of great propaganda value to the enemy and further lower the morale of the SB staff. In this respect, bullet proof vests were bought to protect these people. There was no provision for this from Government funds but fortunately there were some confiscated enemy funds available which could be used for this purpose. Further measures had to be taken to ensure as many of the staff as possible were given the necessary protection from assassination. We worked on the premise that all SB personnel were vulnerable as targets of opportunity. It was therefore arranged that until the security situation improved those who resided in the more remote areas would be picked up each morning and returned safely to their homes at the end of the days work by armed groups. Later, all regular personnel were issued with side arms for personal protection and motor cycles were issued to all the districts. It was pure luck on my part to obtain all the logistics that I required as I knew most of the officers who controlled the items.

To confuse the enemy, the first order I gave when I took over was that none of my staff would wear a tie at work. In the past, the enemy identified all tie wearers as officers and prime targets for assassination. I was provided with a chauffeur driven car but when I had to use it, I always sat in front with the driver instead of maintaining my rights and privilege of rank and position to sit in the rear. The driver would pick me up at the house but I usually alighted some distance from the office

and walked the rest of the way. I was always stopped by the sentry and at the time when I identified myself to him, in subdued tones I insisted that he paid me no compliments. My staff car was never parked at the allotted space and the enemy, in spite of keeping watch in front of the office building, never identified me as the boss man. The leader of the MPLL Mobile Unit (MU), an assassination group or "Lau Toong Tooi", whom I apprehended in August, 1976, when interrogated, identified my Deputy as the Head, SB, Kuala Lumpur, because he was in the habit of parking his car in my parking bay which I had intentionally left vacant. When all the necessary precautions had been taken to ensure the security of the personnel as much as possible, it was time to tackle the enemy. It was usually not possible to obtain any information on the CU. As a Communist satellite organisation its members had sworn allegiance to the Communist party and all planning and action were conducted and implemented by members only. Those members of the community, the masses, who may have some knowledge about the CU, were not forthcoming with information or even gossip because they were fearful of retaliation. Therefore the only avenue available for obtaining intelligence on the enemy was from the enemy itself.

To obtain intelligence from the enemy was not an easy task. The enemy had to be caught before he could be used, and even a captured enemy may not be willing or able to provide the quality of intelligence we required. There were two main groups of subversive elements active in the Federal Territory. The most violent and active group was the MPLL which was controlled by the CPM(ML). The other group was the Malayan National Liberation Front (MNLF) which was under the CPM(P) and had three subsidiary organisations, namely, the MCYL, the Malayan National Democratic Youth League (MNDYL) and the Malayan National Liberation League (MNLL). The MPLL had an estimated 530 members and the MNLF had an estimated 480 members. Although both parties were antagonistic towards each other, somehow, between them, there was a clear division of territory, and they did not fight each other. By 1976 the CPM proper had established armed units



in a number of states in the Peninsula and although there were none yet in Kuala Lumpur, the unit nearest was only twenty miles away. There were many hilly places on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur where armed resident units could be established.

I decided to put into place the plan I had evolved when I was still in Perak before I assumed command of the Federal Territory. My planned counter measures against the CU were, at the same time, a pre-emptive move against the establishment of residential armed CT units in the Federal Territory. This plan consisted of eleven principles to be implemented singly or together as circumstances dictated:

1. The harassment of the enemy included raiding known and habitual residences of subversive elements. Work-sites, construction sites, sawmills, mines, logging compartments and all other places where subversive elements commonly took up employment were also raided. The objectives were to keep the subversives or CU elements continuously on the move and deny them opportunities to consolidate, plan and execute incidents. This was psychologically a show of strength to lower the enemy's morale. Continuous harassment may also induce the enemy's defection or alternately drive the enemy into the jungle to join the armed units.
2. SB mobile units were formed. Each unit consisted of an unmarked police vehicle with wireless communications. It was commanded by an officer with four other ranks and one or two identifiers who were normally arrestees or detainees or SEP. These units conducted spot checks at varying times of the day and night on predetermined places such as new villages, construction sites, cinemas, market places, bus stands and other places where subversives might be found. Quite a large number of underground elements were apprehended through this means and it hindered the enemy from moving about freely to carry out subversive intentions.

3. Large numbers of posters in the local languages - Malay, Tamil and Chinese - with the photographs of the wanted subversives, their names in full, identity card numbers, age, addresses and race and dialect were printed, distributed and pasted all over the Federal Territory. These posters spelled out clearly that the persons named were wanted by the authorities for subversive activities. They also advised the public to report to the police on sighting and also warned the public that failure to report or harbouring a subversive carried a penalty of up to ten years imprisonment. An offer was made for the wanted persons to go forward to clear their cases. Further publicity was given to the posters over the mass media such as the press, TV, radio and cinemas. This induced some surrenders and also solicited public cooperation and involvement. It was anticipated that a large number of the hard-core subversives would be driven into the jungle.
4. When intelligence was received from arrestees or through projects there were planned arrests of selected subversive elements to reduce the CPM's threat potential, to improve coverage or to infiltrate the enemy's ranks.
5. Much time was spent on the "research" and "plotting" of past incidents to study the pattern and areas of activities, and to assess and select likely targets and locations where future incidents might be created so that these areas could be ambushed in order to capture the subversive elements when they were in the act of subversive activity.
6. SB officers on the ground were required to liaise with their local Neighbourhood Watch Committee members to record particulars of suspicious persons or movement of vehicles. They could assist the SB to select listening posts in the remote and sensitive areas. This action acted as a deterrent to

subversive elements using rural, remote and sensitive areas as meeting places among themselves and with the CTs. The other object of this exercise was to involve the public more on security matters.

7. All SB officers carried out a planned and methodical survey of their areas of responsibility to locate shops or houses that habitually rented out rooms to individuals who might be subversive elements who used the urban areas as alternative hideouts. This form of enquiry not only drove the subversives out of the city but on numerous occasions resulted in the chance arrest of subversives.
8. To deny the CU and the CTO finance and logistics which were vital to their survival, investigation into sources of CPM finance was seriously undertaken. This involved the planned and systematic investigation of big businessmen who were open to easy intimidation to provide substantial financial handouts to the underground elements. Others who were investigated for this purpose were building contractors, rubber estate and tin mine owners, holders of large timber concessions and financiers.
9. It was also vital to alienate the enemy from the masses and win the support of the people to the side of the government through psywar and psyops operations. Poster and leaflet campaigns on specific subjects or on a general theme were conducted with the Information Department. The cooperation of the press was enlisted to slant reports without basically altering the facts. Prominent and popular local leaders were asked to make statements and address gatherings on specially selected subjects usually condemning the Communists. Cooperative detainees and SEP gave statements to the press and over radio and TV which were designed to drive a wedge between the community and the CTO.

10. Except for those, who for project purposes needed protection, all other subversives and suspects who were arrested, were neutralised either by being used openly to assist the SB in raids or to give talks to the media condemning their previous association with the CU/CTO. Some were kept in detention and some were released but all would be suspected by their former colleagues as having collaborated with the Government.
  
11. To assist the authorities and expedite enquiries, certain provisions of the ISA were invoked. All owners of land used for cultivation, mining and farming were required to put up boards that stated the name of the owner, his address and identity card number. Danger belts were created in sensitive areas between rural working sites and the jungle to provide a buffer which isolated the CTs from the masses. This belt was continuously patrolled by the security forces.

The basic ground plan was designed to harass and disrupt the underground to such an extent that its members would either be apprehended or driven further underground to join the armed units in the jungle. If that could be achieved, logistics to the CTs in the jungle which were provided by the underground elements would be cut off. The CTs would then be forced to live off their food dumps. Fleeing underground elements who joined the CTO would swell their ranks and prematurely and realistically diminish their food supplies and chances of survival. This would also force the CTO members to contact the masses direct for food. This ran against the CPM's strategy of creating the satellite organisations as contacts with the masses and made them vulnerable. Two permanent roadblocks were set up at strategic locations outside the City to prevent the underground elements carting logistics to the CTs. The PFF was nominated for this duty because it had no current operational role. Initially the PFF objected that road block security was not within their operational duties. They were also oblivious to the threat that existed and felt that it should have been the

responsibility of the general duties personnel to monitor the exit points from the city. In fact these roadblocks proved to be quite critical tactical assets when a number of underground elements were arrested by the police personnel manning them, and the CTs in the jungle were denied essential logistics.

In support of the overall plan, the four districts were divided into areas vulnerable to sabotage, flag hoisting and pamphleteering by subversive elements. Within each vulnerable area the type of incident which was likely to be created, and the particular places where the incidents were likely to occur, were identified. The counter action for each incident and place was planned. When the final chart was produced, there were twenty six locations which could be sabotaged. Eleven of these were against police installations, eight against the military and seven against government civilian centres. There were thirty seven locations in the city where flags could be hoisted and twenty eight areas where they could distribute pamphlets.

Perhaps it was fortunate that the subversives limited their actions only to coincide with their respective Communist celebrations which totaled about thirty five in a year. To counter these celebrations involved a tremendous effort in manpower and it was again fortunate that while the Federal Territory had its complement of manpower to combat the CTs, there were no resident CT units and so the manpower could be diverted against the underground elements. Although there were only thirty five anniversaries to celebrate the CU did not observe the occasions on the designate day. In their view, five days before or after the due date would create the necessary impact. To counter the CU program it was essential for the SB to monitor all the vulnerable positions every night of the year.

Because there were over ninety locations to be covered every night, uniformed and armed police and military personnel patrolled sensitive and remote areas where the enemy might carry out acts of sabotage. The SB itself was the most hard pressed in these operations because

every night five teams, comprising an ASP, an Inspector and ten men stood by at base to conduct raids on haunts used by the UO members as soon as information was received from arrestees. These men were highly mobile, well armed and equipped. The forward scouts of raiding parties, who were considered the most vulnerable, were issued with bullet proof vests. Specialist interrogators remained on duty throughout the night to interrogate those who had just been arrested. I usually went with the raiding teams and took part in most of the interrogations. It was "my way" as Frank Sinatra sang, to set an example to my staff both on the ground and in the interrogation follow-up. On one occasion the Deputy Director of SB, another Chinese officer, rebuked me in front of my men for having taken part in raids when it should have been left to my subordinates to do these field operations. Although he was my senior officer I could not countenance such a rebuke from a desk bound "wallah". I told him that my style of leadership was to lead from the front and that if he was not satisfied with my performance he could take the matter up to higher channels and have me relieved of my command. Like so many of his calibre he was not competent to appreciate the operational demands of swift and spontaneous action against a clever and confident enemy.

The first few raids on known hide-outs were complete failures although we collected some useful information. One day, when I was talking to a friendly detainee, he indicated that he was aware that his organisation had rented rooms on top of the coffee shop facing SB headquarters to spy on movement of SB personnel. Arising from this, I decided that new premises had to be found for the SB. The SB headquarters at that time were located at a dead end road. It was barb-wire fenced all round with only one opening used as the entry and exit point. Anyone sitting in front of this point could therefore observe what went on day and night. When the enemy observers saw undue movement, they assumed that a raid was to take place and immediately alerted their leaders who then gave the orders to disperse and go into hiding. Up at Federal HQ, which I visited almost every morning to brief the IGP on what transpired the night before and what was to be expected that day, there

were certain blocks of offices that were vacant awaiting demolition. I decided that these derelict offices were ideally located for my headquarters and I asked the IGP to release the offices for my use. He agreed and lest somebody else should beat me to it, without waiting for any renovations, I moved my whole organisation into the new premises. The CPO who was only briefed after the decision had been made, raised no objections as long as he received daily briefings on any operational developments. When subsequent CPO's came along, they did not raise the question as to why the SB was not in the same compound. I remained silent on the matter. The last CPO, a Muslim officer, however took a different view. He maintained that the SB, being under his command, should be based in his compound. As much as I could have wished to entertain him it was already too late to move back as the previous premises had been taken over by another branch under his jurisdiction. Failing to get me back, he therefore insisted that I personally attended his weekly staff meetings which I had deputised my deputy to do. These meetings usually took a long time and concentrated on administrative, criminal and other matters out of the purview of the SB whose briefings took no more than ten minutes. At these meetings, like a giant toad he blew a lot of hot air and bragged about his personal and quite trivial exploits which were totally unconnected with the critical task in hand. These self-adulatory meetings were a waste of valuable time to me, therefore, I stood firm. He misconstrued my concern for good time management as confrontation. Three years later, when we were both in the same outfit, I realised that this quite insecure CPO resented me at a personal level.

Federal Police HQ is located in the Lake Gardens in an isolated part of the city of Kuala Lumpur. Except for festive occasions, it is usually deserted at night. The perimeter of the HQ compound was patrolled inside and outside at night to deter anyone wanting to monitor the activities within the compound. It was, therefore, very safe and the ideal place for SB to be located.

Things changed dramatically after we moved to our new base. The first attempt to catch a subversive element in the act met with success. This was in the outlying town of Kepong on the night of one of the anniversaries celebrated by the CPM proper. When an SB party was in ambush, its members spotted a person climbing a coconut tree with a long banner trailing below him. As briefed, they allowed him to climb to the top to complete his mission and when he was there attaching the banner to the palm fronds the party moved in and waited for him to descend. As he neared the ground, they pounced and subdued him and brought him back to SB HQ. It turned out he was just an ordinary member of the MRLF. Whilst he was quite responsive to interrogation, he was very protective and hesitant when asked to reveal the identity of his directing figure and other members of his organisation and their hide-outs. When he chose to remain silent, as a routine, he was taken back to his house where a search was conducted for documents and other incriminating evidence. On the ledge of the wooden wall in his room were found two rounds of .22 ammunition, one of which was blank. Hard as he tried, he could not produce a convincing story. Under the ISA, the law used to combat Communism in Malaysia, the sentence is death upon conviction for anyone found in the unlawful possession of arms and ammunition in a gazetted Controlled Area. This fact was brought to his attention and later, to escape the gallows, he provided the information which was sought. By then, there had been a lapse of more than twenty four hours and this had provided valuable time for his comrades to take evasive action. When we acted on his information and raided all the places indicated by him, the birds had flown the coop. He had learnt his lessons very well and remembered what his directing figure had taught him in the event of arrest. It was to stall for time. If the authorities pressured him, he was to reveal a little at a time, aiming to gain at least twenty four hours leeway for his comrades to take evasive action. It was standing procedure for the underground elements that if any comrade went missing for any reason for twenty four hours or more, then the others must move their base. His information however gave us an insight into a "line" of the MRLF that existed in the Kepong area.



A couple of nights later, in another counter-action, a member of the MNDYL from Johore was arrested by members of a mobile police vehicle patrol when it was parked under the viaduct. The driver from Johore had lost his way in the dark in Kuala Lumpur and had parked there to await daylight to contact his comrades. He revealed that he was the courier from the south sent to Kuala Lumpur to make contact with a sister organisation to arrange to send some underground elements from Johore and Singapore to join the CTO in Perak. Using him as bait the SB made contact with the underground in Perak who were to arrange for the recruits to join the CTO. The courier from the CTO was apprehended but the SB never learnt the truth from him as he was one of the more indoctrinated and hardened members of the CU. With the help of the man from Johore we eventually identified a number of members of the resident MNDYL unit in Kuala Lumpur which we did not know existed.

By the end of 1976, approximately seven hundred and fifty members of the CU organisations had been arrested. At one stage, for about two weeks, there were no less than fifty CU under arrest. As there were insufficient lock-ups and handcuffs, raffia twisted together as strings was used to tie the hands of the arrestees to the wire mesh around the offices. When I was on a raid during the day with a team, the Minister for the Federal Territory paid a surprise visit to the SB office. When he saw the arrestees secured in that manner, he remarked that it was most unorthodox and inhumane and should have been avoided. I happened to return to the office just before he departed and when he complained about the treatment of the arrestees, I explained to him our shortcomings. I noted that the problem could be overcome quite easily if he would order in writing their immediate release and I would endeavour to rearrest them at a later date, if it was possible. At that he thanked me for the briefing given by my staff and rode away.

To obtain the above results, the resources of manpower and other facilities were stretched to the limit. As a matter of interest, early in the

following year, I checked my official diary and discovered that during 1976 raids were conducted on the underground members hideouts on two hundred and twenty nights. These raids usually commenced at about 0100 hours and lasted till the early hours of the morning. The staff who took part were given the morning off but had to be back at their desks by 1400 hours. Although I was with the men on most of the raids, I went home for a short rest and returned to my desk by 1000 hours. For the duration of the raids and interrogations the participating officers were provided with free refreshments and some food to sustain them during the night. Of course the outmoded regulations stipulated that food allowance could only be claimed if an officer was away from HQ station for more than eight hours and twenty miles from the office. To sustain the men involved in these nocturnal operations I was forced to use funds set aside for intelligence procurement and operations. It was very clear to me that the use of these funds to sustain my staff was more than justified by the results of our operations.

All raids were conducted in a very orderly manner. The men taking part were briefed on the intelligence available and what they were to expect. There was always a sketch to show where the target house was located and, if possible, where the target himself was located inside the house. Before departure, team leaders carried search lists where items confiscated as evidence were recorded and both copies signed by the arrestee or the house owner. A team consisted of ten operatives. Usually, the target house was surrounded front and rear before the occupants were awakened. If advance information indicated the target or suspect was likely to be armed the personnel in the vanguard group would be issued with bullet proof vests. Searches were very meticulously carried out commencing with the arrestee's room and then through the whole house as there were many occasions when incriminating evidence was lost when the rest of the house was not searched.

Underground members were full of tricks which they had learnt from books written by members of the Chinese Communist Party when they

were on the run from the Nationalist Army in China. The most common hiding place for messages which were waiting to be passed on was the back of temple altars. To the Chinese it a sacrilegious to move an altar hence an altar is the safest place to hide any incriminating evidence. There were also false bottom drawers or false legs of chairs and tables. The water closet in the bathroom was also a favourite place where messages were either deposited at the bottom in waterproof material or secured by tape to the sides. On many occasions when lightning strikes were carried out and there was insufficient time to dispose off evidence, members of the underground attempted to swallow the evidence.

The CU, had a great number of pre-arranged signals worked out for meetings between the leaders and their members or between couriers of one line and another. Lamp posts were commonly used and these were selected along routes frequently used by both parties. white plaster stuck to the lamp post denoted an emergency meeting was required, or a black plaster denoted a meeting had to be aborted because something had happened. Bus stops were also favourite locations. One strip of plaster under the left side of the bus stop bench could mean that the meeting was on and the participants should meet at a prearranged location to either exchange information or rolled-slips. Letters written by underground members were usually rolled instead of being put into envelopes. There are certain methods used for sealing these rolled slips and the receiving end could easily detect if the slip had been tampered with.

Before meeting, couriers resorted to all sorts of identifications. These were also all pre-arranged before they dispersed at the previous meeting. There could be the specified newspaper folded and held in the left hand whilst the right held a plastic bag containing two oranges. Or a female courier could be holding an umbrella in one hand and a white handkerchief in the other hand. There were all sorts of improvisations known to the parties. Astute interrogation surfaced all these codes and signals from the arrestees.

SB interrogators were former Communists or regular officers or other ranks who had a good command of the Chinese language and knowledge of Communism. Of all the underground groups the MNLF was by far the best indoctrinated with Communist ideology. The Party had taken great pains to ensure that anyone recruited into the organisation was well trained. Recruitment was a carefully phased procedure. The first step was "talent spotting", a process which took a long time as the potential candidate was carefully monitored before he was "cultivated". The cultivation stage was a sensitive period because a too hasty approach could frighten the potential recruit who might report to the school authorities. The third stage of "indoctrination" was simpler as, by then, the recruiting agent would have been acquainted with the candidate for some time. The final stage was "recruitment". Candidates who could withstand hardship and would be very loyal and devoted to the party were recruited. Most of the members chose to be construction workers because, at that time, Malaysia, and especially Kuala Lumpur, was experiencing a construction boom. Because construction workers were paid on a daily basis it was possible to move from site to site to avoid detection by the authorities. Most of the construction workers earned about \$450.00 per month but the recruited were so devoted to the cause that they kept about only a third for themselves. When the CTO needed to fill vacancies, either because their members were killed or had surrendered to the authorities, underground members would be forced to join the CTO under the threat of being arrested by the authorities.

A large portion of the SB successes was due to good interrogation and the subsequent neutralisation of the arrestees. To confuse the enemy those released consisted of both cooperative and un-cooperative CU members. A small number of those who were released provided invaluable operational information, which, in some cases lead directly to the apprehension of their leaders and other members of their organisation. It was interesting to discover that generally it was easier to "break" a ranking member of the underground than the normal

member, and that, under interrogation, women were much more stubborn than men.

Compared to the MNLF, MPLL members were not as well indoctrinated but were more militant in their outlook. When the CPM(ML) broke away from the main CPM, the bulk of the manpower and financial resources were in the hands of the CPM Proper (P). Because the ML lacked the manpower and finance, it could not afford to be choosy and recruited, as quickly as possible, anyone who was prepared to join the party even if all the normal strict requirements had not been adhered to prior to recruitment. Whilst the MNLF were seldom violent in their undertakings, the MPLL was the opposite in their approach. Both factions drew a large number of their recruits from the four independent Chinese Middle Schools in Kuala Lumpur.

As the first year progressed with hundreds of the UO members arrested, Kuala Lumpur SB gained vast knowledge and stored up valuable intelligence against the CU. It could then afford to relax just a little and pick and choose its targets in advance. By this time one of the objectives had also been achieved with the majority of the UO members moving their bases out of the City into the suburbs. However they continued to conduct their business in Kuala Lumpur because, with so many people in the city, they could go about their business with virtual immunity. When circumstances required, leaders, who had side-stepped the City and based themselves in the rural areas to evade arrest, were lured back to the City and apprehended by the SB to reveal their long term plans.

In August, 1976, the National Monument bomber was arrested. She was a member of the MNLF which had planned the operation. At the time she was 24 years old and was quite well educated in English. During her interrogation she revealed how she had planned and executed the operation together with a few cronies. They had climbed the Monument, which before the event was not guarded at any time, and had placed explosive charges within the crags of the Monument. In

that operation one of the members of her team was critically wounded because he was not clear of the area when the charge was set off. In her opinion the National Monument, which was erected to commemorate the fall of the 1st. Emergency Communist Insurgency, was a constant reminder of the Communists' failure to wrest power in the country. It had to be destroyed to redeem lost prestige because the CTO was again on the march. She was very co-operative and provided information which enabled SB to disrupt her previous organisation. She was subsequently employed by the SB for many years.

The DCM of one of the MNLF districts was lured into the net one night. Prior to this his courier had been arrested and turned by SB. The courier revealed that he had made prior arrangements with his Directing Figure (DF) to meet and pass over rolled slips on a certain date. Before meeting it was also pre-arranged that certain signs would be placed at certain locations to indicate that it was safe to proceed to the meeting place. When it was time, the courier was taken out under supervision and instructed to go through all the formalities for the contact. On the actual night of the pre-arranged contact he was not used lest he took the risk to warn his DF of imminent danger at the critical moment. The place selected for the meeting was a bus stop in front of a new and popular shopping complex in the City. The DF was informed that a piece of white plaster stuck to the bottom of the right side of the bus stop seat would be the indication that it was safe for the meeting. The time chosen was when the shopping complex had just closed for the night and there were fewer people around. About half an hour before the appointed time, the bus stop was flooded with SB personnel, both officers and rank and file and male and female as if waiting for the bus, but leaving that particular seat vacant for the UO member to grope for the plaster. At the appointed time, the DF occupied the seat and when he was observed feeling for something under the seat, the SB party pounced and apprehended him. With so many people on him, he had no opportunity to resist and was apprehended. When he was searched, he had a pistol and a hand grenade. As he was not co-operative from the beginning, he was

subsequently charged in court, was proven guilty for possession of unlawful weapons and later hung.

Sometime during my first year in Kuala Lumpur, one of my subordinate officers introduced me to a businessman who operated in one of the commercial districts of the City. He had married in China as a young man before he migrated to Malaya. In those days it was common practice for the Chinese to seek their fortune overseas and he therefore left his wife behind in the village to make his fortune in Malaya. On arrival, he found work with a woman who cultivated beans and sold the sprouts as a living. When I knew him better he told me this woman was a nasty creature who abused him with filthy language and called him all sorts of offensive names. The woman was unmarried so he thought he could stop her abuse by courting her with the final objective of marrying her. His amorous advances were soon rewarded and she married him. He took over the business. In due time, she produced four children. After he took over the business, he was nicknamed the "Tau Ngah Low" meaning "Bean Sprout Man". Although he was now the boss man, the trade was not a very lucrative one and also involved a lot of hard work. Despite his limited education he possessed a sharp business mind, and, with his ingenuity, he diversified and produced chain link for fencing. In the early 1st. Emergency days, when Malaya was still a British colony, the CTs created havoc all over the country with sabotage, arson and all sorts of atrocities. Vital installations and a host of other buildings and factories needed immediate protection. It was at this juncture that he had perfected the chain link which no one else had developed. Importation would have been too costly and would have taken too long for the material to arrive. He obtained one government contract after another to wire in the airports and airfields and soon became a very rich man. To meet the large orders of his chain link fencing, he had to expand his workshop. By this time, he had become quite well known amongst the government officials who were most helpful to him. With their assistance, he managed to obtain the government land adjoining his bean sprout shack on a temporary occupational basis and built a large

factory where he produced his chain link. To meet the demands for it, he increased his work force. As a matter of economics, he employed mostly women as they were paid much lower wages than men. He contended that if he could easily court and marry his female employer when he was the employee, it would be easier to court and marry his female employees. The end result would be that after they had been taken into his household, they would then, like members of Communist satellite organisations, be under his absolute control and work for him for virtually nothing. He was a fair skinned and handsome man, and by the time I knew him he had married ten of them, two of whom had run off. What was most amazing was that all of them stayed in one complex, almost like a long house. He had thirty three children. The last time he married he was seventy years old and the woman was only nineteen. She bore him a son the next year.

When he was well established, he gained popularity amongst the local population who came to him for advice and assistance. Because he was basically an opportunist and an exploiter, he would make money from those who sought his assistance where he should have been contented with his vast wealth. With his connections in the Government, both inside the police and the civil service, he adopted a very gruff attitude and bullying behaviour. When the CU was most active in the City, and were all out to make friends and influence people to gain their support, he attracted their attention. To fit in with their plans, they decided to make an example of him and eliminate him publicly to project the image that they were the champions of the oppressed masses. Before the final action to eliminate him, the Communists had prepared leaflets/pamphlets explaining why he had to be eliminated and these were to be distributed at the scene of the incident. Most nights the businessman visited the Rukun Tetangga (Vigilante) base near to his house. As his time was not up, on the night when the Communists set out to eliminate him, he did not visit the base. In the base at the time was another person who bore some resemblance to him. The imported CTO assassin had not done his homework. Relying only on his briefing he had omitted to carry out a detailed study of the ground and the target before



the final act. In his anxiety and haste to complete the job he fired at almost point blank range as soon as he saw someone resembling the target. In fact his victim was the local butcher. Before he escaped from the scene, the killer scattered the pamphlets which rationalised the killing.

Despite his exploitation of so many people, I made it a point to protect this businessman from being eliminated by the CTO. I did not know him well but he was lucky that I had made up my mind not to allow a group of semi-literate thugs to blackmail the government or terrorise the population. Thereafter, I went to great lengths to ensure his security by posting people at his place of work and escorting him to and from his house. One day he observed the retaining wall to the house that he had built collapsing and thinking himself to be Tarzan, tried to stop it from falling further by throwing his weight to the wall. He was brought down and pinned under by the wall and was hospitalised for some time. This taxed our resources more as I had to provide sentries at the hospital. The protection provided went on for almost a year and, in that time, I got to know him much better.

All his wives and children stayed in one complex which consisted of four buildings. The sociologically interesting fact is the complete lack of tension or stress among his many wives and children. He controlled his extended family with an iron fist and anyone who created trouble brought punishment upon the whole family. He was fair to all his wives and children. Household chores were evenly distributed with two wives responsible for the marketing, two for the cooking, two for the laundry, and one looked after the seventeen dogs. All household expenses of food and other essential items were bought from the shops on credit and settled once a month. Every wife and child was paid the same allowance. There was no favouritism shown to anyone, not even to the youngest and most beautiful wife. He stayed in one house by himself. There was even a system for sexual relief. A blue light was fitted on top of the door outside his room and any of the wives who needed sexual satisfaction could enter his room if the blue light was switched

off. He was a very robust and well built man who could sustain the sexual demands of his wives.

For all the care and protection shown to him, the gratitude was repaid years later when after the CU had been decimated, his second last wife, the number 12 in line, commented to his son-in-law that it might just have been possible that the SB had fabricated the fact that he was on the Communists' elimination list!

The CPM(P) and CPM(ML) parties formed their own MUs. These units were very highly protected and the names of the members were known only to a few of the Central Committee Members who personally selected and controlled them. All training was conducted in the jungles of South Thailand where the CPM leadership was in hiding. Their identities were not even revealed to the leaders of the underground movement. Members of these MUs were allowed to move about freely all over the country to discharge their duties. Whilst the CPM(P) was more selective and potential targets had to be first cleared by the leadership, the CPM(ML) was more ruthless and indiscriminate. Its MU's were allowed to act without prior clearance as long as they reported back to the leaders after each incident. And whilst the CPM(P) financed its members, the same could not be said for the CPM(ML). Its members survived on their wits and resorted to all types of activities to sustain their operations to the extent of robbing banks. When the spate of assassinations occurred initially in various parts of the country, in the absence of intelligence, it was thought that both the CPM factions had a number of MUs under their control. It was only towards the end of 1976 that the actual situation was clarified with the arrests of MU members of both the CPM factions. Only then it emerged that there was only one MU for each faction.

The most prominent of the MUs belonged to the CPM(ML). In mid 1976, there was a series of robberies in the City. It did not dawn on the authorities, who investigated the crime, that it could have been perpetrated by the Communists. As it turned out, it was the work of the

MU belonging to the CPM(ML). The Party was running low on funds to sustain its operational troops inside South Thailand and the leadership therefore ordered the MU to procure the necessary funds. After the incidents, the leader of the MU sent the proceeds of the robberies through one of his subordinates to the CPM(ML) in South Thailand through the northwestern corridor in the State of Kelantan. In those days it was a well established fact that Communist underground elements used three routes to enter Thailand - via Padang Besar, Kedah, in the West - Kroh, Perak, in the center - and Rantau Panjang, Kelantan, in the East. Road blocks had been established at these points and the MU terrorist courier carrying the robbery money to South Thailand was arrested at the Rantau Panjang roadblock.

The road block personnel were unaware that the courier was a Communist element but arrested him when he was found with a large amount of cash for which he could not account. He was then handed over to the SB, Kelantan, for interrogation. Because he refused to talk and, as he hailed from Kuala Lumpur, he was handed over to the Kuala Lumpur SB. He was not traced on adverse records but during interrogation he admitted he was a member of a CU organisation. With the co-operation and assistance of his father, he finally broke down and revealed some very astonishing information that the SB had not known before.

He admitted he was a member of a four man unit called the No:1 MU of the MPLA. He was about twenty years old at the time of his arrest and had been a member of the CU for more than five years. He was specially selected by the CPM(ML) as a MU member and took part in the rocket attack on the RMAF base in Kuala Lumpur in 1975. In that same year he took part in the murder of a police constable in Malacca and another rocket attack on the army artillery camp in Paroi, Negri Sembilan. He and his DF were responsible for lobbing hand grenades into the PFF camp in Kuala Lumpur where police personnel were killed and wounded. Other atrocities committed by him were the attempted murder of an MPLA deserter, the burying of land mines on the beach at

Port Dickson to blow up military personnel using the beach, the attempted assassination of the Registrar of the Kuala Lumpur SB registry whom they mistook to be an SB officer, and the attempted assassination of the Malaysian Chief of Armed Forces Staff (CAFS).

He further revealed that he was the deputy leader of the No:1 MPLA MU who was sent by his leader to hand over funds from the robberies to the CTO in South Thailand and was arrested whilst attempting to cross the border through the illegal route. At the time when he departed from Kuala Lumpur he had lived together with his DF who had set no date for his return as this was determined by the CTs. His DF would normally be out of the rented premises during the day and wandering around but would be back in the house in the late hours of the night. They had an arsenal buried beneath a tombstone at the Chinese cemetery along the Old Airport Road, which included those weapons which had been used for assassinations.

The latter information provided by him on the identity of his DF and where he could be located plus where the weapons were cached created a dilemma. It took me a long time to decide whether to arrest his DF first or to recover the weapons. Both actions were equally important. If the DF was arrested first and had moved the weapons and handed them over to someone else, then we might never know of their whereabouts and the same weapons could be used for other murders. On the other hand, if the recovery of the weapons was the priority action, valuable time could have been lost and, after the event, the DF might have moved to another location. After deliberation with the senior staff I decided that we should go first for the weapons as it could prevent the further loss of lives. Led by the arrestee, the cache of weapons was recovered at night. Without the guide it would have been impossible to find the cache which was hidden under a neglected old tomb. It is taboo to the Chinese to tread into a cemetery let alone disturb a tomb.

A few hours later, during the early hours of the morning, the premises of the DF were raided. Great caution was taken as it was not known

whether he was armed. After the front and rear portions of the house were secured came the difficult part of breaking into the house without waking any of the occupants. The DF stayed in the room facing the staircase on the first floor and any noise could easily awaken him or other occupants inside the house. Based on experience, the raid was carried out at about 0400 hours when it was considered everyone would be most soundly asleep. The collapsible iron gate lock at the foot of the staircase had to be picked first before the stairs could be climbed and there was another collapsible gate at the landing on the first floor. Both the collapsible gates were very old and to prevent them from creaking, all the joints had to be oiled before we attempted to open the doors. The training in England was put to a test at this stage to pick the locks. We were very lucky to reach the landing undetected. Picking the lock to the door of the room was easy compared to the other two locks. When the door was opened three of us entered the room and while two of us pointed our guns at his head, the other switched on the room light. When he was roughly awakened he remained very cool as if he was an innocent case of mistaken identity.

The DF of the No: 1 MPLA MU was also a 20 year old Chinese. He was very robust and muscular and could compress the bull-worker to the limit with very little effort. He had an innocent look and wore a constant smile. He appeared to be level headed. In his initial interrogation, he would not admit anything and just kept silent; not even revealing his name nor that of his parents. After two days, and even when he was shown the recovered weapons, he did not admit his involvement and claimed that he knew nothing about the weapons. As a last resort, his deputy was brought in and only after that did he start to talk. He admitted that in addition to what had been revealed by his deputy, he joined the CU in 1971. He had been indoctrinated with Communist ideology when he was still studying and took part in various activities in support of the underground movement. He was the man who pulled the trigger in the murder of a SB sergeant in Kuala Lumpur in 1975. With another member he murdered the CPO, Perak, in 1975, and he committed many other atrocities. In 1976 he planted a

land mine under the culvert near to the CPO. Perak's official residence in an attempt to murder the CPO. The discovery of the land mine was due to the alertness of the CPO who made it a point to look under the culvert occasionally.

In 1976 he took command of the No:1 MU after the previous DF disappeared. It was later established that his predecessor was responsible for the murder of the IGP in 1974 and after the incident, had absconded and joined the MPLA in South Thailand. He further revealed that there were two other members who were residing in Ipoh and one of them had taken part in the murder of the CPO, Perak, with him in 1975.

This information was passed to Perak and a joint operation was planned with the CPO, and Head SB to apprehend the remaining members of the unit. "That Fellow" had taken over the post of CPO Perak by then and the Head SB was the same man who was there before I left Perak on transfer. Under cover of darkness, he led the SB to both locations where the remaining two members of the No:1 MU/ MPLA were arrested.

The DF on being questioned as to why he had committed the atrocities, simply replied that he did not know any of the victims and bore no grudge against any of them, but it was just his job and a question of honour that he carried out his assignments. At the time of his arrest, all he had with him in the room was a sling bag and a cassette on the paper cover of which were numerous figures. He had coded more than twenty names and addresses of his hit list. Included in the list were the Minister of Home Affairs, the CAFS, one other army general, the Commissioner of Police, Singapore, the CPO/Perak, the Head SB Penang, the Commandant of the SB School, and the Director of Criminal Investigation. He explained that he had obtained these names from the yearly State and Federal honours lists, and had used the telephone directory to trace the residences of the targets. I took part in his interrogation and when he was questioned whether he knew the

identity of the Head SB of Kuala Lumpur, replied that it was the fat and bald headed Malay man who owned a Blue Volvo car. This was my deputy who was in the habit of parking his car in my parking bay which I had intentionally left vacant. They had kept surveillance on the CAFS for a long time and had practised their final act on a number of occasions. It was just sheer luck that the CAFS was not killed. On the day when the opportunity arose, their effort was hampered by police vehicles which were cruising alongside the CAFS car. Due to other commitments, they did not pursue the matter further.

After each assassination, the DF would leave the country for about two to three weeks on rest and recreation and wait for the heat to cool down before he returned and planned his next assignment. He was unrepentant and reiterated on many occasions that if he had another chance, he would continue with his activities. Together with the other member who was arrested in Ipoh, he was subsequently charged in Court for the murder of the CPO, Perak, in 1975. During the trial, he flung his flip flops at the presiding Judge who found him guilty. They both lost their appeals and were hung at the Kuala Lumpur prison on 14 December, 1980.

With these arrests the eliminations of SB personnel and other government officials came to an abrupt end.

By 1977 the only CPM faction that had established any armed units in the Peninsula was the CPM(P). There were units in the states of Kedah, Perak and Pahang. When they were en route some of these units relied on the underground to supplement their logistics, but usually, to maintain secrecy, the CTs would survive on what they could carry and glean off the land until they arrived at their destinations and activated the underground elements. In the few preceding years up to 1977, the resident armed units of the CPM could rely on whatever weapons they had brought along. These were very limited because of the weight involved. But, in those years, there was a spate of incidents whereby large quantities of explosives and other forms of devices were used

against the SF which could not have been carried by the infiltrating CTs. The question at issue was the source of the extra weaponry. The only possible source was the CU.

Members of underground organisations arrested in Kuala Lumpur in 1976, especially those who belonged to the MNLA, had indicated that occasionally they had been required to travel northwards to Perak and eastwards to Pahang to deliver logistics to the CTO. Sometimes their loads were heavy but, as boxes were sealed, the arrestees could not say what the contents were. The guess was these sealed boxes must have contained weapons of some sort. In the heart of the city, at the time, some underground elements had thrown hand grenades at members of the SB when they were confronted and these were found not to have been imported. It was reasonable to surmise there may be a factory in Kuala Lumpur manufacturing arms and also supplying other logistics to the CTs.

Although towards the end of 1976 the effort to identify the whereabouts of the factory was intensified, the desired results were not forthcoming. The problem was only solved in the first half of 1977 with the arrest of a SCM of the MNLF who had been under surveillance for some time. When he finally blew the whistle the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle fell into place. At the time of his arrest he created a big commotion in the hope that such an action would be noticed by his subordinates who would then take evasive action to avoid arrest and cause the disintegration of his organisation. To obviate this consequence a little more than the necessary force had to be used to subdue him. It was imperative that his arrest be kept as quiet as possible. He was the overall leader of his outfit and his cooperation would be invaluable to the SB. If he cooperated, as an important leader, he could be used to great advantage. This desired outcome was achieved.

The SCM had already formed a Communist cell when he was still in school in 1957. By 1961 he became a member of the LPM, a Communist controlled political party. In 1967 he became the directing



figure of the Marx-Lenin-Mao Organisation (MLMO) which was also known as the Central Alliance and later converted into the MRLF. He climbed the Communist ladder very quickly and in 1970 was promoted to the rank of SCM in the MRLF. He was most active in the State of Perak where he set up a secret printing press which turned out subversive documents. He took part in the hoisting of Communist flags and pamphleteering and he was in regular contact with CTs of the 5th. Assault Unit (AU). He assisted them to recruit and sent a number of their members to join the CTO. He went to Kuala Lumpur in 1974 and became very active in providing logistics to the CTO. One year after his arrival in Kuala Lumpur, he had managed to send three more batches of recruits to join the CTO in Perak. Whilst he was in the City arrangements were made for him to visit the 6th. AU which was based in Pahang.

He was a very industrious man. If he had worked for himself he would have joined the ranks of the millionaires long ago. In Kuala Lumpur he ventured into various trades to earn money to provide logistics for the CTO. Using his female subordinates, he started one sewing unit after another to sew clothes which were sold by MRLF members in the open bazaars at night in and around Kuala Lumpur. In two years he had established a chain of sewing units and his capital had increased. By the time he was arrested, the MRLF had storerooms and godowns stacked full of clothes, clothing material and vehicles, worth a fortune. The yearly revenue from this ran into many thousands of dollars which were utilised to purchase food and other logistics for the CTs in the jungles of Perak and Pahang.

Through his own ingenuity, he started a factory in Kuala Lumpur which produced the outer casing of hand grenades and assembled the finished product using components made to order by foundries and iron-work factories. He would order the ring from one factory, the safety pin from another, the detonator holder from yet another and all these were assembled at the factory which turned out the casings at night. Detonators and fuses were all stolen from rock blasting quarries

where he had infiltrated his men. When the factory was raided on his information, thousands of completed hand grenades in packed boxes were found under the floor of the factory. Two lathe machines used to turn out the casings were recovered. A large number of hand grenades had been sent to the CTO.

He had under his command a large number of female cadres who he used to man the sewing machines to stitch clothes and other linen items. These women were also used to sell the products at various localities in the city. In one slum area he housed a cell of four females. On his information the house was raided without any recce being carried out because he believed the four females would vacate the premises because he was overdue in visiting them. The raid was carried out in the early hours of the morning. As one member of our team was nearing the front door he stepped on an empty tin and this noise alerted the occupants who made a dash for safety via the rear door. The SB party gave chase in the dark and soon lost their quarry. The SCM had indicated that the destination of the female cadres would be the CTO in the jungle. I decided to deploy the tracker dog unit to track the females. When the dog unit arrived it was already daylight. The dog was taken into the shack and soon picked up the scent. After about a quarter of an hour it came across some items of clothing that had been dropped by the fleeing females. Amongst these was a used piece of underwear. After running round the article for a number of times, the dog refused to move any further but just sat on the ground gasping for air with its tongue hanging out full length.

The information and assistance provided by the SCM caused great damage to the MRLF and the CTO. Hundreds of subversive elements under his command were subsequently lured out by him and arrested and neutralised in the three years he was under the custody of the SB in Kuala Lumpur.

It was not always a rosy path and smooth going for the SB in the arrests of underground elements. There were few occasions when the

SB shot it out with these people despite the chance being given to them to surrender when cornered. One night in early 1977, an MNLF member was lured into the heart of Chinatown in Kuala Lumpur. As it was known that he would be armed, when he was in position, SB personnel sealed off both ends of the short back lane and ordered him to surrender. When he started to run, he attempted to lob a grenade at the SB party which was gaining on him. The grenade was homemade and based on the Chinese pattern where after the safety pin had been removed, it was still necessary to bang the firing pin against a hard object before the detonator could be set off. It exploded prematurely and blew off his arm and he died a few days later.

A couple of months later, another MNLF member who held the rank of Area Committee Member (ACM), was killed in a shoot-out with a SB party at another back lane in the heart of the city. That same year, yet another was killed in a shoot-out in one of the housing estates on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. The SB personnel chased him in vehicles and on foot for about five miles before he was cornered and killed. In early 1978, in one of the four Chinese schools which were heavily penetrated, the SB raided the tuck shop of the school where a Communist indoctrination session was in progress. The MNLF cadre was taken by surprise and when ordered to surrender, made a dash for safety. Because of the school children present, the SB party could not open fire but gave chase. In desperation, he jumped and climbed over the school fence. When he was over the fence, one of the SB team members who exited the school via the main door, gained on him and brought him down with a flying tackle. Thereupon, he produced a hand grenade, pulled out the safety pin and attempted to throw it. Strange as it may seem, the SB member grabbed both his palms before he could throw the grenade. The two of them rolled on the ground for sometime until other members of the SB team arrived and secured the underground member. For this act of extreme courage, the SB detective was recommended for the highest honour for bravery in the face of adversity. I was the most disappointed when only the second grade was bestowed on him.

By the end of 1977, the CU in the country had been almost crushed with the greatest losses suffered inside the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. Most of the senior leaders had been accounted for and those who had escaped the SB onslaught had been driven into the jungle to join the CTO. SB Kuala Lumpur had accounted for about twelve hundred arrests and killed eight underground elements. In the whole country, twenty subversives were killed by the authorities. Of these, eight were killed in Kuala Lumpur. This score of eliminations exceeded the Communist's elimination of those who served in the government. The 1978 was to have been the year of escalation of Communist activities but, with the decimation of the CU, this never took place

For all the risks undertaken by the SB in Kuala Lumpur in accounting for the number of CU members, the SB only suffered one loss. This was during a mopping up operation. Certain CU members had been under surveillance for some time and with hardly any targets left to pursue, it was decided to take action against those few elements. During the course of surveillance, it was discovered that one particular subversive frequented a certain village on his motor cycle and for the duration of the visits, stopped only at a few selected houses. During the final briefing before the men set out to secure their respective targets, one particular team leader was told that there was very scanty information on the premises he was to raid and that the house had been visited only on one occasion where the target under surveillance had stopped and had spoken to someone very briefly. Nevertheless, he was informed to take all the necessary precautions when raiding the premises. The team leader was issued with a bullet proof vest for the event. As it turned out he had decided that there was no need to make use of the bullet proof vest because of the scant information available on his target premises. When the raid took place, the target house turned out to be a haven for a number of armed Communist elements. When the SB team ordered the occupants to open the door, a volley of shots came from inside the building and the team leader stopped a few of them. Had he donned his bullet proof vest, he might still be alive

today. This one and only one loss of the life of an SB officer was viewed very seriously and the most senior man in charge of Internal Security in the Government chaired the debriefing meeting. During the debriefing, he remarked that the operation was carried out most unprofessionally and the SB team should have gone in with blazing guns and mowed down everyone in sight. He had not grasped the fact that the team had not even entered the premises. This statement of being unprofessional I rebutted and in return enquired what would have been the consequences if the team had just opened fire at random and in the process killed merely old people and children who were inside. How then could we reconcile with the fact that the Government was out to win the hearts and minds of the people. I further stressed that if it was merely body counts that he wanted, then he would have his way in three days time when another operation could be conducted on another known Communist hide out or "point".

The next operation was quite simple. The "point" was an isolated wooden building on old mining land with no other houses around the vicinity. It was easy to plan the operation. By first light, there were police personnel all over the area. The house was surrounded by police at a safe distance and when all groups had reported that they were in position, a loud hailer was used to order the occupants to surrender. Instead, a hail of shots came in answer. I had gone prepared for this and took along a grenade launcher, an M79 to be precise. The gunman, an army Major attached to the SB was ordered to fire one round into the premises which lifted it from its footing. Two men came charging out of the building with handguns blazing and were picked off by sharpshooters stationed with the stop groups. Another one came out a while later and took cover between the vegetable bunds. Every now and then he randomly lobbed a grenade to dissuade the SB from charging his position. Thus he held up the SB and prolonged the operation for another hour. In the end, it was trickery that got him killed. It was organised that the next time he lobbed a grenade and dived for cover again, a few of our men would get up and trample the ground as if to charge his position. This invariably forced him to pop up his head

above the vegetable bund to observe in which direction his adversaries came from. As he did so, sharpshooters took aim and killed him. When the premises were occupied, it turned out to be one of the remaining logistics supply points to the CTO. There were hundreds of bags of rice, sugar, salt and other daily essential items waiting for the opportunity for delivery through the road blocks set up just outside the city limits to impede the logistic couriers. A number of weapons and vast quantities of ammunition of very small calibre were also recovered. The official who made the degrading remarks during the previous operation did not bother to attend the debriefing when he was informed of the results.

Most of the daylight working hours were taken up by ground operations with little time to spare for routine enquiries and to attend to paper work from HQ. The operational exigencies were so totaling demanding that the officers involved with them were usually too exhausted to concentrate on their paper work. The result was the buildup of a large backlog of routine enquiries and reports. The only reports kept current were those to do with the operations against the Communists. In this respect, I was most fortunate to have succeeded in securing the services of the same officer who performed the same administrative service when we served in Thailand. He was then in general duties and it took a great effort to arrange his transfer. He was an avid writer, very dedicated, and his work was of a very high standard. Also, he ensured that the reports were completed that same day.

In over twenty six years of service, and having served in many places and commanded many officers of all races, I had never come across a more industrious one than this officer when we worked together in Kuala Lumpur. Up until the end of my career I did not meet any other officer who matched his calibre. At the time, he was a comparatively junior officer who had served only about six years in the Police Force. He was of mixed Indian and Malay descent. Although attached to one aspect of SB work, he was a glutton for work, a fast learner and

volunteered for work where others took the easy way out. As he was brilliant, he soon mastered all aspects of work in the department. His work was of such a high standard that it deserved special recognition. When expansion of the SB came about, he was immediately recommended for promotion to gazetted rank. Seniority wise, he was placed in the midst of the five hundred group. As he had seemingly limitless potential, a special effort was made to gain him seniority on promotion so that he could qualify for more promotions in the shortest possible time. I approached the IGP and made out a special case for him. In the batch of over five hundred officers who were promoted, he was placed fourteenth in seniority. When still in service, he applied for the Inns in England and on special recommendation was accepted and in the shortest permissible time graduated with an honours degree in law. My confidence in him was well rewarded. After he graduated, he remained with the Force and was transferred to General Duties. He excelled himself in his capacity as Officer-in-Charge of Prosecutions where for his excellent performance, he was commended by various Judges. As a grooming process for higher appointment, he was moved as OCPD to one of the more important Districts in the Federal Capital. From there, he went into the Narcotics branch and later became the Chief of Malaysian Interpol from where he retired.

He was most friendly to all and sundry and wore a constant smile and very likable. Hard as he worked, in likewise manner he played. No matter how tired he was, he would not miss a single social engagement unless he was very ill. We socialised together and visited the restaurants regularly. He was a gourmet of Oriental foods, especially Chinese, and his favourite dish was what was known as the "Small Cow". His dashing personality and his ability to sweet talk attracted ladies as honey attracts ants. On his retirement he became a practising lawyer with offices in the city and outstation.

Life was filled with great excitement, expectation and anxiety when I was the Head SB of Kuala Lumpur. It was a blessing that I won the battle and managed to turn down the request of "That Fellow" who

made an attempt to transfer me out of Kuala Lumpur to Ipoh when he was the Chief of Police in the State of Perak. Sometime, during my first year in Kuala Lumpur, he had made a request to the Director SB for me to be moved to Ipoh. Although I had vowed never to work with him again after the unpleasant event during our stint together in Sarawak, I did not use this excuse to talk my way out. All that I stated was that Kuala Lumpur carried priority over the state where "That Fellow" was serving. One night, some months after this, when we were exchanging information by telephone, he enquired why I had shown such devotion to my work in Kuala Lumpur. I replied that as it was my command, the responsibility was entirely mine and I did not have to compete for recognition or share the blame with anyone.

The strain of the Kuala Lumpur command would have taken its toll on me and some of my officers had it not been for the fact that our Doctor was always at hand, day or night, to treat us. Whether it was in office or out of it, Doctor Johnny Walker's wonder tonic soothed our nerves and washed away our troubles. Great quantities were consumed outside office hours although there were many occasions when it was consumed inside the office while we waited for results to come in. Only on one occasion was I censured by the Director for consuming liquor on the premises and during a meeting. As it was already 2000 hours and well passed the end of the normal working day, I explained to him that I saw no reason why liquor should not be permitted after working hours because we were then working voluntarily and in any case the liquor was a balm to my nerves and assisted me to peak performance. When there was opportunity and this was very frequent, we would consume this at a very long established Chinese restaurant not far from the office. This establishment was introduced to me by a friend whom I met on my first tour to Sarawak. It was a very popular haunt of a conglomeration of businessmen in the city. There were fishmongers, car dealers, financiers, foundry owners, plastic products manufacturers, car repairers, panel beaters, painters, insurance agents, tin mine operators and a long list of other businessmen. We also visited the restaurant during working hours and although it may seem



inappropriate, much information was gathered during these visits. This restaurant boasted a bevy of the most beautiful waitresses in Kuala Lumpur who were groomed to be friendly with the customers and were allowed to drink and fraternise. Three of the owners had taken waitresses from the establishment as their wives. Except on Sundays the businessmen usually gathered at the bar daily from around 1630 hours until 2200 hours. Most days, there were about sixty of them and the daily consumption of liquor was calculated in crates. Most of them consumed brandy whilst I and my colleagues drank whisky. Businessmen are businessmen all the world over. They are forever out to curry favour from those in the public sector. To put it bluntly, they buy insurance for the future and have no qualms to ensure this by spending a little money. As I was a very senior government official, more often than not when I entered the restaurant, they would offer me a brandy which I would decline. In a very short time, in order to please me, they converted to drinking whisky. As we visited the restaurant very often, a number of officers were kept up late. When my officers complained that they had received unpleasant remarks from their spouses when they stayed out late with me, I instructed them to caution their wives that if they had the welfare of their husbands at heart and desired that they progressed in the Force, then they had to abide by the wishes of their husband's bosses.

The most prominent businessman amongst the daily group of drinkers who visited the restaurant was the sole owner of a mould making factory. He was a most jovial and likable character and attracted attention with the various tricks that he had up his sleeve. There was one blood tingling trick that he loved to show off most. It was breaking two chopsticks with one end pressed against his throat and the other against his palm. He would invite newcomers and visitors to use the necessary force to hit the back of his hand in order to break the chopsticks. There were very few who took up his offer for fear of the chopsticks piercing his throat and thereby being charged with culpable homicide. Invariably, the fearsome task landed with me. He could bite the sides of the thin champagne glasses and chew them to powder form

and swallow the residue. This was a great attraction with the children of the friendly liaison officers who were invited by me to the restaurant on Friday evenings. Although short, he was very robust and strong. He was nicknamed "The Strong Man" and could pierce the base of a one mm plastic ash tray with his forefinger or bend the metal cap of a bottle between his thumb and forefinger. He loved his liquor, would over indulge in it and became boisterous, but seldom caused much trouble.

I continued to patronise this restaurant when I subsequently went up to Federal HQ after relinquishing my post in Kuala Lumpur. On many occasions, the restaurant served as my office. It was just as convenient operating from it as long as the phone was nearby for me to receive calls and pass on instructions to my staff. The different secretaries under me were always informed in confidence how I could be located in an emergency. After my retirement, I continued to visit the restaurant almost daily up to the end of 1994.

Notwithstanding the heavy workload it was still possible to spare some time for my personal activities. When I was in Kuala Lumpur, the women with whom I had affairs with in Ipoh before my transfer, frequently came to visit me in Kuala Lumpur. They were mainly Chinese women. There was a secretary to a Chinese business magnate; another owned a bar; there was a lady of leisure who is now a grandmother; one was a cabaret hostess who was very adept at ballroom dancing and another the proprietress of a hair salon. There were no prior warnings of their coming; they would just arrive, make their calls and hope that I was free and available. Whenever I could, and at times even when I should not, I would keep them company for the little while in order not to disappoint them. There were occasions when two of them would surface on the same day and to avoid trouble, embarrassment or a scene, I gave my standard answer for that eventuality, that I was not free. In Kuala Lumpur itself, several charming ladies took a liking to me the instant we met and without any instigation on my part, they each dropped all the hints necessary to secure relationships which lasted for many years. The same happened

during my travels to other states. Included in the women count were two of my female staff, one in Sarawak and one in Kuala Lumpur. However in these cases, as much as I would have love to proceed, I stayed clear of them as a matter of principle because I did not wish to disturb the internal discipline of the office. I do not know why women found me sexually attractive. It may be my easy going manner, my glib tongue or the fact that I was in a uniformed profession. In all sincerity, I do not treat the women who have come into contact with me very well because of my conservative belief that women are inferior. I normally cannot tolerate women who are demanding or bossy and have very little patience with them. Most of these ladies were self supporting and obtained no financial assistance from me except on very special occasions.

One passion of my life has always been the desire to be loved and to love. I have sought this ephemeral and elusive passion because it brings to one an ecstasy which cannot be described in mere words. To me it is a glimpse of the heavens about which the poets write and the saints have visions. I have found that love is the only antidote to the loneliness which lies deep within my person. Maybe, apart from killing, this is my other destiny was to bring joy to women whose paths I cross and relieve them of some of the pain of living. In sharing my love with these women I have had to endure untold inconveniences in catering to their unpredictable whims and fancies. Perhaps this was foreordained as part of my penance for sins I committed in my previous life. I have never been choosy about my women. I have lived by the simple philosophy that I make love with whoever comes along. The possession of great beauty and youth are not my criteria for choosing a woman. The younger and more beautiful the woman, the less responsive she is compared to an older woman. One motto I have strictly adhered to is that "whilst liquor increases the desire, at the same time it decreases one's performance". With equal passion, I tried to seek knowledge. Love and the pursuit of knowledge have been the private goals I have shielded from the scrutiny of my friends and colleagues.

While the women were oblivious to the danger of being in my company because of the adverse security situation, the same could not be said of a very good friend of mine when I served in Ipoh. Whenever he arrived in Kuala Lumpur, he did not call on me and usually only phoned to inform that he was around and, before I could invite him for lunch or dinner, would announce that it was only a flying visit and he was on his way home. Later another friend informed me that he would not risk being seen with me in public as he might be accidentally shot where I was the target. He was aware that as the Head of the SB in Kuala Lumpur, I was a priority target for CTO assassins.

In appreciation of the sacrifices made by the staff, a function was held every year on the date of my taking over duties in Kuala Lumpur. It was always a very grand affair and where security permitted, it was always held in some posh establishment in the city. There were sumptuous dinners to suit all religious beliefs, liquor flowed very freely, a band was available and all who were interested danced their feet off through the night. Where credit was due, the officers and men were recommended for honours and awards commensurate with their ranks.

Concurrently, as Head SB, Kuala Lumpur, I was also the Federal Projects Officer at Federal HQ and served on the SB Federal Projects Committee. In that capacity I traveled extensively throughout the country to eradicate the Communist threat in other states. These visits met with resentment from other Heads of SB in the states who were ignorant of my Federal status and therefore quite rightly objected and resented my encroachment into their territory. What was not made known to them was that I had been cleared to do this from the very highest authority and given a free hand to leapfrog into any state. My instructions were clear and simple. I should inform the local Heads if I had the time but if I felt that by informing them opportunities would be lost I should go ahead and inform them later. I was assured that complaints received at Federal level regarding my movements in the states would be dealt with appropriately. Resentment of me was not

confined to the states alone. At home base, my CPO also objected to my frequent absence from Kuala Lumpur. I could not inform him in detail of what I did and rather than risk further confrontation, decided that the best way out was to move when the situation dictated and only inform him when I returned lest he stopped me from moving out of Kuala Lumpur to discharge my other duties. There were many times when he tried to discover from me what my other duties were and when he failed to get satisfaction, he complained to the Director SB and upwards but they supported my actions. This was another sore point that he held against me.

There were also some senior staff officers at Federal level who resented me for a variety of reasons. Some suffered from inferiority complexes and other harboured professional jealousies developed because they believed my achievements exposed their inefficiency. Some were just being petty. One of these was the one mentioned before who normally liked to discard the "sam sok" when playing majong. The other was the same man who had objected to my taking part in raids with my men when I first arrived in Kuala Lumpur. They felt that I had intentionally leapfrogged over their heads and gone to brief the Director and the IGP direct and, during meetings, they had felt like fools when the bosses had more detailed knowledge that they, as senior officers, should have had. Initially I briefed the two of them regularly but ceased doing this after they had sarcastically hinted that they should not have been bothered at odd hours of the night with information which could have been passed in the morning during working hours. In this context, the Director and the IGP were much more appreciative when they were disturbed and awakened from their sleep, sometimes two or three times during the night, to be informed of the progress and results of operations against the enemy. Most of the staff officers at Federal level offered very little assistance despite the fact that they were aware that I was very understaffed. I was well known for my unorthodox methods in tackling my problems and most of them steered clear of me to avoid being implicated in any enquiry that might result from my actions.

In my capacity as Federal Projects Officer, I was actively engaged in running joint projects with SB teams in other states which resulted in successful operations against the CTO. In 1978 I had a hand in the elimination of three CTs and the capture of the Deputy Commander of an AWF in Selangor State, adjoining Kuala Lumpur. For these projects throughout the Peninsula I was fortunate to obtain the services of the special operational group formed within the SB. By 1978, SB Kuala Lumpur was in virtual control of the CU organisations and through them, controlled all the couriers running to the CT groups in the country under the control of the CPM(P).

Towards the later part of 1978, the leader of the CT group which operated in the Bentong area of Pahang, decided to leave the jungle to look for the directing figure of the South Line whom he had not heard of for some time as the latter had been turned by the SB who intentionally had withheld the normal contacts between the CT and the underground. This had then deprived the CT group of their vital logistics and therefore had forced the leader to make his move. He had arranged to hire a taxi to take him to his destination. When this information was received, a very simple operation was mounted to apprehend him. Some distance along the way from his embussing point, a road block was set up by SB personnel. When the taxi arrived at the road block, he remained very calm. Having been in the jungle for a couple of years, he looked very pale and his skin was scarred with insect bites. That itself was suspicious and the SB personnel used it as an excuse to question him. When the taxi door was opened and he was still in his seat, he was sprayed with tear gas. He reacted immediately by protecting his eyes with both hands and at that unguarded moment, the SB personnel pounced and handcuffed him. Thereupon, he created a racket in the hope that some villager might observe what had happened and would spread the news of his apprehension so that it would eventually come to the ears of his underlings.

When the arrest was brought to my attention I ordered him to be taken by a roundabout route to the logistics division of the SB in Federal HQ

for interrogation in case he was spotted whilst traveling through his normal area of operation. The arrestee had operated in the general area for about three years and was well known to the masses because of his rank and position. It was therefore a risk to move him through his operational area. The Deputy Director supervised the interrogation which was conducted personally by the chief of the interrogation section. Although he broke down after a few days and revealed his identity plus his involvement, that was the furthest he would go. He was not prepared to sell out the masses who had assisted him nor would he lead the Security Forces to attack his comrades he left behind in the camp.

In the meantime the Army had been informed of the arrest and pressured for operations to be carried out against the remainder of the group. The Army's intention was backed by the OCPD and the DSBO of the District where the CT was arrested. This request was forwarded to SB HQ where a meeting was held to decide on the best possible role the CT could play in the operation against his former comrades. Whilst the majority of the officers were for operations, I was against this concept as no matter how many or how well trained the soldiers were, there was no guarantee that they could guarantee complete success even if the information was accurate. I suggested that the best method was to conduct "Q" operations since the captured CT was the leader of the unit. It was finally decided that "Q" operations would pay the highest dividends. When the decision was conveyed back to the officers on the ground, it was not accepted with good grace. They had no clue how "Q" operations were run and the military Battalion Commander in the area threw a challenge that "Q" operations would fail, and if it did succeed, he would chop off his life multiplying organ with a knife. For academic interest, when the job was successfully concluded, like a magician, he disappeared. The CT was further interrogated by the officers in the logistics division and requested to assist in bringing out his men without bloodshed. At this juncture, I was not invited to take part in the interrogation. Having been indoctrinated by the CPM that once he had served his purpose, he would be unceremoniously disposed

off, the CEP became very suspicious of the SB's offer and would not contribute any ideas or suggestions as how this could be brought about. He sought the views of the SB. The officers who dialogued with him could not offer any because they had all along been chair bound and never acquired any operational experience let alone the complexities of "Q" operations.

And that was where I came in and saved the day and the reputation of the SB. When I was told by the Deputy Director and the interrogators that it was not possible to turn his arrest to advantage and to conduct "Q" operations, I requested to be left alone with the CT leader for about half an hour. In this time, I explained to him how simple the process could be. I allowed him to question me as much as he desired to satisfy his curiosity. In the end he agreed that it could be done and thus "Project FISHING NET" was born and I was nominated to control it. Before it could be launched, we had to allow him time to recover from the effects of the tear gas which had swollen both his eyes. This took about a fortnight and this time was used to thoroughly prepare for Project FISHING NET.

Apart from me, there was only one other officer in Federal SB HQ who had any "Q" experience. He did not speak Mandarin which was essential for this particular project and as the directing officer for the project I could not be in the jungle. We sought and obtained officers who were experienced in "Q" operations from Perak. We had our own resource of experienced ex-SEP and rank and file to make up the "Q" team. At this point in time, there were hardly any old CT uniforms in stock so new uniforms had to be made and aged to look as though they had seen long service in the jungle.

When the manpower had been assembled and the equipment readied the CEP was handed over to the personnel who were to take part in the operation and questioned in detail about, his connections with other groups that operated nearby, the personal details of his underlings, the courier routes used between groups, the DLBs located in the jungle,



the frequency of usage and who serviced them, and a long list of other questions relating to the operation.

Officers and men were sent back to the ground where the CEP operated to seek suitable accommodation for the "Q" team to launch the operations from as close as possible to their targets. Initially they encountered difficulty in securing suitable premises but eventually the problem was overcome. The sudden influx of a large group of people also attracted attention but as time went by, it was accepted as part of the local scenario.

From the inception of the Project, the Military were brought into the picture in order to obtain their fullest cooperation. The first move made against the remnants of the CEP's group of sixteen was to capture two of his men whom he had considered to be very trustworthy and could be used as couriers to other groups. A small party comprising SB personnel masquerading as CTs and guided by him was dispatched into the jungle where messages were deposited into two DLBs. These messages ordered the addressees to report to him at different places, times and dates. On the off chance that they might be spotted, the SB parties took up positions two days before the due dates. The periphery of the DLBs were ambushed by SB personnel just in case something went wrong and they would then have a chance to shoot at the CTs. The CEP and some other SB personnel would then wait at the meeting place. At the appointed times and in both positions, the CTs approached the meeting places very cautiously. When they saw their leader they threw caution to the wind and came forward. When informed that the rest of the party were all SB personnel, they did not react in any adverse manner. The well being and good condition of their leader was testimony as to how well he had been treated by the authorities since he emerged from the jungle. After explanations by their leader, the CTs agreed to follow him out of the jungle and also to assist the authorities in getting the others out without any bloodshed.

The second phase took a longer time to implement. The two new CEP had to be debriefed in great detail to find out what had happened inside the jungle in the last month. They revealed that after the leader left to seek assistance from the underground, they had been further harassed by the SF operating in the locality and because they had to move, they could not rely on the few food dumps left and were therefore hungry most of the time. A number of the CTs who had not been long with the group had shown uneasiness and voiced discontent and as a result, the deputy leader who had taken charge and had sent them individually and singly to make contact with the masses for food and intelligence. They had wandered for days and visited the prearranged DLBs on a few occasions and were very happy when they finally found messages, written by the leader, instructing them to report to him. The rest of the group had moved deeper into the jungle to await their return with food and news.

Having obtained a clearer picture the next phase of the operation was implemented. It was decided to lure the remnants out in one whole group to a location which was to our advantage from the operational point of view and known to the remnant of the CTs. The remnants would be told that the two new CEP were with the leader and to alienate suspicion, one of them would write a message to one of the remnants informing the latter how they could get to the RV. This, and the message of the leader requesting the group to proceed to the RV, would be placed in a number of DLBs known to the deputy leader.

The SF who had sealed off certain routes into the DLBs were told to withdraw to facilitate CTs to visit the DLBs and it was only after a long wait that the message was lifted from one of them. Due to operational constraints the message did not specify any date or time for the CTs to be at the RV. When the message was found missing, hurried arrangements were made to proceed to the RV area as there were last minute arrangements to be made to receive the CTs. As it was not known when the message was lifted, it was hoped that the SB group would proceed and arrive at the RV before the CTs. As luck was on

our side, we arrived at the RV before the CTs. Although it would have been advantageous to have flooded the area with troops to cordon off the area to ensure better chances of the elimination of the CTs if the talks failed to secure their surrender, it was not possible to do so as too many troops would certainly have disturbed the ground and left tell tale signs for the CTs to see. Therefore, only one platoon of police commandos went in support of the SB group. After discussion with the CEP, the commandos were initially placed where they would least likely be spotted and from where they could redeploy later if and when the situation required.

The SB party, which consisted of ten inclusive of the three CEP, made their base at the foot of a steep incline furthest from the estimated point of entry into the RV area. As it was unlikely that the CTs would come down the incline from their rear, the SB party therefore had a commanding view of the RV area. After having waited for almost two days, the group of CTs arrived at the RV. To ensure that they were to meet the right people, they observed the prearranged signal and knocked on the trunk of a tree three times in succession, with a pause in between for the next same signal repeated three times. On receiving the safe reply signal of two knocks repeated thrice, the deputy leader could then come forward to meet his leading figure alone after leaving the rest a short distance behind. As soon as the first signal was received from the CTs, a message was sent to the commandos who had hidden nearby to spread out and surround the RV area as best they could.

Apart from the leader and the other two CTs, the deputy leader was surprised to see so many other CTs present. It was at this juncture that the leader explained to him that the rest were SB personnel who had accompanied him to get the rest of the group out. The Leader assured his deputy that the Government was genuine in its commitment and if it had wanted to play foul, the CTs could have been shot whilst they entered the RV area. The senior SB officer also gave appropriate assurances but the deputy was adamant in not surrendering. There ensued a long argument and a lot of name calling but when informed

that they were surrounded, the deputy began to have second thoughts. He then asked for certain assurances which the SB officer could not grant and requested to speak to a more senior officer at Federal level who had the authority to make on the spot decisions. After that he withdrew to join his men for the night, but before he did so requested that he be allowed to discuss the matter further with his men and that before a final decision was given, the area should not be reinforced with soldiers.

On receipt of this news, I decided to meet the CTs in the jungle the next day. That night, the very sparsely spaced commandos were ordered to spread out more by taking up one man positions to create the impression that there was a large force present. To keep up the pretence, they made as much noise as possible whilst they cooked their meals and lighted fires in every position to deter the CTs from trying to escape. Due to inclement weather, the helicopter which was to take me in the next morning could not take off. By late afternoon, the officer on the ground had reported that the CTs were getting restless, had voiced that they were not going to wait much longer and were prepared to make a dash for it in spite of the fact they were surrounded. This news was relayed to the military command headquarters where I had temporarily stationed myself and where the Division and Brigade commanders waited anxiously for news. Although the weather in the meeting place was still not ideal for the helicopter to land or for anyone to be abseiled in because of the strong wind and the thick foliage of the tall trees, it was imperative that an attempt was made for me to get into the area to talk to the CT group. Eventually, together with another Chinese officer who was to act as interpreter in case the CTs refused to speak any other Chinese dialect except Mandarin, we were roped into a hastily cleared landing zone near the meeting place at about 1600 hours. We were about two hundred feet up and went down very steadily as we left the helicopter but as we descended further down, the cable began to swing from side to side and on a few occasions we were nearly flung against the trunks of trees. Finally, we landed and had to

rush to the meeting place as the weather was closing in and we had less than an hour before we had to be lifted out again.

Had it not been for the weather, the parley with the CTs would have been concluded in the morning. Because of this, I went unprepared to spend the night in the jungle and therefore had to hastily conclude the meeting with the CTs in order to get out of the jungle before daylight disappeared. From the way they talked, I gained the impression that they had made up their minds to surrender but were trying to maximise any advantages they could gain by surrendering. A number of conditions were brought up. They required an assurance of non-prosecution, a promise of welfare and jobs and an agreement that they be kept in custody for no longer than was necessary. On my part, I argued that they were in a weak position, being surrounded by the military, and I stressed it was most magnanimous of the Government to offer them a chance to surrender when they could already have been killed. We arrived at an impasse and I therefore requested them to think it over for the night and I would return in the morning to resume our talk.

By the time we were ready to be lifted out, strong winds had set in. The helicopter could not maintain a steady position and the cable swayed violently. The helicopter moved a few feet when we were about fifty feet off the ground and the sway became more intense. At this moment as we moved up, the sway pushed us towards a very tall rattan vine which was full of big and small needles. The other officer had his back to the vine and could not see what was going to happen. When we were about two feet from the vine, I stretched out my foot to prevent his body hitting the vine. My timing was a bit premature and in so doing, we changed positions which resulted in my body hitting the vine. Because of the excruciating pain, I yelled aloud and it was lucky that I held on to the harness or we would both have dropped to the ground. When we reached the army base the doctor treated me and removed more than two hundred needles from the right side of my body.

That evening the Director came on the wireless set and relayed a message to me. He had been ordered to inform me that I had thus far handled the case very amateurishly and I was to desist from further negotiations with the CTs, and next morning give them an ultimatum that if they did not surrender within half an hour, they would all be killed. If I did not carry out this instruction I would be considered disloyal, or if I felt that I was not competent enough to see the project through on these terms, a Malay officer would be sent to replace me. This conversation was heard by army personnel of all ranks who were present and I felt that for all I had done thus far on the project his public reprimand was most ungracious. It would have been just as easy for him to have hopped onto a helicopter and flown forty minutes to brief me on the decision of my superior officers in Kuala Lumpur. I knew that there was no other SB officer, nor would there ever be any, with the jungle and "Q" experience that I had accrued over the years. Armed and fortified with this knowledge I ignored the instructions, knowing in my heart that I could achieve the desired results by pursuing my methods. As a professional I could not let the Director get away with threatening to replace me with an inexperienced Malay officer. Although I knew it would not be well accepted, I informed the Director that in addition to the language problem, a Malay officer was politically unacceptable to the CTs.

The weather was fine the next day and I reached the jungle about 1000 hours in the morning for the meeting with the CTs. We opened negotiations again and time was wasted as we haggled on the terms and conditions which had been introduced. When we came to a compromise on the terms, the CTs insisted that they be given written assurance on the terms agreed upon. In order not to waste any more time as the weather might suddenly change or the CTs might change their minds, I scribbled as illegibly as possible the agreed terms and handed over the piece of paper to the leader. They studied it for a while and thereafter agreed to surrender and, that same day, all sixteen of them were airlifted to Kuala Lumpur by helicopter. If they had called our bluff, there would have been no way, with the very few troops present, that

we could have prevented them from retreating into the jungle. With some luck, we might have been able to kill one or two of them.

This CT unit was charged with the mission of spearheading the CPM's militant thrust south of the State of Pahang down south to revive armed activities in the States of Negri Sembilan, Malacca and Johore. With this unit wiped out the CPM's plans were shattered but in spite of this setback, the Commander of the 6th. AU managed to conduct activities in the State of Negri Sembilan on a limited scale.

The capture of this entire unit allowed us much leeway to conduct further "Q" operations against CTs from other units which operated nearby. We were at a great advantage because with the group which had just surrendered we had CTs "fresh from the oven". From interrogation of the new CEP, we had an insight into the activities of other CT units and this allowed us to plan in detail operations which would achieve speedy results. A Special Working Committee (SWC) was formed to conduct pocket operations against CTs who had connections with this unit. The very close rapport with the military was maintained. Their support was vital to ensure success so they were brought into the picture whenever necessary and, without jeopardizing security, we worked closely together. Over quite a brief period we managed to capture many more CTs without losing any SF although there were occasions when CTs were unavoidably sacrificed to save the lives of our own people.

In one of the pocket operations three CTs were killed in the same night. Arrangements had been made for them to meet us. The plan was to induce them to surrender but in spite of prolonged explanation and deliberations they could not be convinced. They had to be shot otherwise they would have exposed our tactics to other units that they would have met later on. Harassment of the underground elements connected with this project continued and the final tally for this SB offensive was the arrest of about sixty underground elements, all of

whom were actively preparing the ground and assisting the CTO in its projected thrust to the south of the Peninsular.

The SWC operated throughout the whole country, not only within the state of Pahang, and on the "need to know" basis, virtually took over control and command of all activities against the CTO and the underground. It had its own resources in manpower and other facilities to operate away from base, was highly mobile and was capable of taking on most targets or operations that came its way. It had the support of the special operational unit from within the SB. Local officials were only co-opted to lend support when absolutely necessary. This policy provoked a considerable amount of resentment from those who were incapable of understanding the operational situation or did not want to understand it. Much as it may have been desirable there were many times when local officials could not be summoned fast enough to attend meetings or provide support so the SWC completed the task unaided. In general the results were good.

In the wake of Project FISHING NET, another opportunity to cripple the CTO arose. A recent arrestee from the north of Pahang State had slipped up during interrogation and unintentionally revealed that a member of the masses was the contact between one group of CTs sent from the Thai border to deliver arms to another group in the Kuala Lipis area of Pahang. The area that the detainee mentioned had no known CT activity and there were no other known subversive activities there. As we were in a lull period we re-checked this information by reinterrogating the detainee. Upon reinterrogation, the detainee revealed that some months back, CTs sent from the Thai border had visited him at his tapping task and requested him to assist them to contact the local group of CTs. As he was aware that another member of the masses was in contact with CTs operating nearby he had mentioned this to the CTs who visited him. He was asked to pass a rolled-slip to the other person and had heard nothing more of the matter.



When the identity and the locality of the other CT contact was established, surveillance was applied for a long time and later the suspect was picked up. We had never before encountered a more crafty person, nor one who could lie without blinking an eyelid. The suspect remained steadfast and denied having any contact with the Communists in the area. The suspect was picked up far away from the operational area and knew that we were not in a position to visit the house to obtain evidence as it was situated in the rubber estate which was very remote from the town and where the presence of strangers would arouse suspicions. It was certain that if the suspect did not return home by a certain time, one of the sons could alert the group of local CTs who operated in the area. From talking to the first arrestee, and from observation, it was established that the suspect was extravagant and liked expensive things. When no trickery worked, the last resort was to offer money and immunity in return for services. It was still not anticipated that even with this bait, the suspect would cooperate, and we were surprised when the bait was taken and immediately questions were asked regarding the amounts that would be paid.

When we finally came to terms, the suspect talked very freely. Contact with the local group of CTs had been maintained for a number of years and they had been supplied with logistics whenever they visited the area to seek refuge from SF pressure. The local group consisted of eight CTs in all, led by a DCM who was a local. The suspect also admitted that, one day the other arrestee had handed over a message, purportedly written by CTs from the north, and requesting a meeting. As there was no previous knowledge of the new group of CTs, the leader of the local group was questioned on this. When it was confirmed that a group from the north was bringing supplies of arms and cash to augment the local group, the suspect had hastened to contact the new group but, by that time, the new group had already left the area to return north. They had informed the first arrestee that they would be away for a long time but, upon their return, they expected some news of the local group. After a statement had been recorded, the suspect (now informant) was

released. Nothing was heard for a very long time and we had given up hope.

After an absence of more than a year, suddenly, the group of CTs surfaced again towards the end of 1979. When they came back into the area, they contacted and informed the first detainee that they had tried to return to the Thai border but because of troops operating along the way, they were prevented from doing so. The masses whom they depended on previously had been arrested and they had to live off jungle produce. They had found it easier to obtain food in the south and therefore had returned to make another attempt to contact the local group. The CTs were very happy to learn that the informant had made the connection with the local group and requested that a message be handed to the informant.

When the informant received the message which was in the form of a rolled slip, the SB was immediately contacted. The CTs had requested a meeting with the informant who was to leave a message with the first arrestee whom they would contact periodically for news. On the instructions of the SB, the informant made the contact with the CTs on the rubber plot where the first arrestee worked. Before proceeding to meet the new group of CTs, the informant also communicated with the leader of the local group who also encouraged the contact to materialise. The new group of CTs were very happy that they had managed to establish a link with the local group. Before returning, the informant was given a rolled slip addressed to the leader of the local group.

The new group claimed to be members of the 16th. AU sent down from the Border to reactivate the Gua Musang area of Kelantan. When they arrived they had encountered great difficulties as SF operated in the area. Because of the presence of the SF, and the fact that they were tasked to deliver arms and ammunition, money, a wireless set and a code book to the 6th. AU that operated to the south of them, they decided to make the trip down south before they established themselves

in the Gua Musang area. The group was led by a veteran CT of DC rank who had fifteen members under him. It requested an early meeting between the two groups. This rolled slip was replaced by one written by the SB who thereafter assumed the role of the 16th. AU. Likewise, when the 6th. AU sent a reply, it was intercepted by the SB who replaced it with one of its own and also assumed the role of the 6th. AU. From here on, the SB was in complete control of the messages that passed between the two groups.

Messages went up and down the line for a few months as each group leader insisted that the other reported to him. Although the two groups were anxious to marry up, both were just as suspicious of each other and cautious in their approach. They were aware that complete groups of CTs had been captured, turned and used by the SB. In CT thinking the hosts were always at an advantage. Where the 16th. AU claimed seniority because they were sent by the North Malayan Bureau, the 6th. AU claimed that since it was in their home ground, rightly, they should play hosts. To discontinue the haggling, we decided to force the hand of the 6th. AU by stating that since they were not prepared to meet with us - the SB had by now assumed the role of the 16th. AU - we would return to the Border and report to the leadership for further instructions. When the 6th. AU received this strongly worded message, they immediately acquiesced as they were in dire need of the arms and money and the new signals code to the Border. If we had left, then the 6th. AU would have to wait at least a year before we returned. Finally, they agreed to send two of their men over to lead us to their camp.

All the arrangements for this move were planned and carried out by us. We briefed the informant in whom we now had complete faith, on our plans. An arranged taxi was used to ferry the CTs to their destination. As it would have been more difficult to apprehend two at the same time, it was planned to take them one at a time with the informant as guide. A short distance from the embarkation point, a road block was set up but this was made known to the CTs in advance to allay any suspicion when the taxi was stopped. When the taxi arrived at the road

block, the occupants were asked to produce their identity cards for inspection and when the doors were opened, the CT was apprehended. This plan was duplicated to apprehend the second CT.

We now had two CTs from the 6th. AU. They were very hostile and abusive at the beginning but when we presented two of their former comrades, who were arrested some years back, to speak to them, they changed completely and became most cooperative. They informed us of the detailed briefing from their leader. On arrival at the other (our) camp, they were to write a letter immediately back to their leader informing him of their safe arrival and this letter was to be handed over to the informant for delivery. If nothing was heard from them in 24 hours, then it was assumed that they had fallen into enemy hands. As the two captured CTs broke that same night, we had plenty of time to perfect our plans. The letters were delivered the next morning to the CTs who had camped in the rubber estate not far from the informant's house.

Rolled slips were passed to and fro and when the 16th. AU agreed to move south to join the 6th. AU we planned with the Army to deploy troops to thwart the move. Occasionally, the Army was asked to stage fire fights to deter the CTs from moving. The two CTs who had been captured and turned assisted us greatly by sending vetted coded messages back to their leader informing him of the difficulties they encountered in their attempted move down south. Finally, after about six months, the 16th. AU agreed to the suggestion of the 6th. AU to move south by road and were all twelve were captured by the SB who used the same method employed for the capture of the first two CTs. Before the conclusion of the project, two more CTs sent by the 6th. AU purportedly to meet and lead the 16th. AU were also captured by the SB at the pre-arranged rendezvous. In this instance also, another CT from the 6th. AU, who acted as sentry at the crossing point, was accidentally killed when he could not be persuaded to leave his position.

For educational purposes, the capture of the sixteen CTs during Project FROG was recorded live on video tape. This came to the attention of the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, the Malaysian King, who was the Sultan of the State of Pahang, the state in which both Projects FISHING NET and FROG were launched. He requested a detailed briefing, and together with the Director SB, I showed him the video tape and briefed him at the same time at the Palace. He was most impressed with the way the film was recorded live and enquired who was the project officer. When the DSB informed him that it was I, he was surprised that at my age I was still fit to trample all over the jungle. The next question he asked was the type of Federal honour that I had been bestowed and in my rank then, what did I qualify for. Nominations for Federal honours usually closed at the end of the year for announcement in June, and although it was May then, he ordered that the DSB recommended me for the Federal award appropriate to my rank and that I should hand the write up to him the next morning at the Palace. For the successes achieved in Projects FROG and FISHING NET and many other achievements against the CPM, I was bestowed the 3rd. Grade of the Most Exalted Order of the Crown, the Johan Mangku Negera, one month later.

These two projects took up a lot of my time. I had to flit between Kuala Lumpur and Bentong almost daily, and sometimes twice a day. At that time, the new Karak Highway between Kuala Lumpur and Bentong was being built and a return trip took up to four hours. When the new road was completed the time was reduced to about one and a half hours. Even with the new road the distance of one hundred miles to Kuala Lipis to service Project FROG took three hours each way. On one of my frequent trips to Kuala Lipis we stopped at the Bentong open air market for a drink of Chinese herbal tea. The Australian security liaison officer (SLO) accompanied me on this trip. When we ordered our drinks, he did likewise after having been assured that he would be not poisoned. To the local people he appeared as a giant, being well over six feet in height. Of lean and sinewy stature with a fair complexion he stood out in the local market place as a man from Mars

would stand out in the middle of Kuala Lumpur. It was already odd for a white man to be seen there and it was more odd when he was seen drinking Chinese herbal tea at the stalls. He attracted a lot of attention and before we could finish our drinks, a large crowd comprising mainly children had gathered round him and chanted "Kwailo, kwailo, yum leong char."

That same evening after many "yum sengs" over dinner, he was shown the "rakits" which are house boats moored by the river bank. These houses had very low roofs and when we neared the rakits, he was warned to duck his head. He was a bit too tipsy and obviously did not hear the warning so that when he was about to enter the rakit, he nearly had his head sliced off by the tin roof. Immediately his condition was treated by the ministrations of Dr Johnny Walker. When I had to stay the night in Kuala Lipis, I always had a room at the Government rest house without having to book in advance although it was a very popular one. Room number one was always vacant because it was rumoured that it was there that the Japanese Kempeitai had beheaded many people and the room was haunted. This knowledge however did not deter me from having the room and, all in, I stayed in it for about three months without any untoward incidents.

Short of four days I held the post of Head, SB, Kuala Lumpur, for three years. By the time I left the city had been cleansed of CU elements. Very few people are aware of the risks taken, the sacrifices made and the time spent by all those officers and men who worked in SB Kuala Lumpur to rid the City of the Communists' threat and contributed to the security it enjoys today. Kuala Lumpur was the hub of all Communist activity. There was close liaison between the Communists in Kuala Lumpur and those in the states and its cleansing therefore affected the efforts of the Communists all over.

By the end of 1978, due to the merit to my credit, I had the edge over other officers who were senior to me to qualify for promotion to a higher rank. Co-incidentally, a senior position at Federal SB HQ had

become vacant and I was transferred to take over the post where I attained one extra rank. However, initially, there was no one to replace me in Kuala Lumpur and therefore I had to contend with two jobs for a few months until my replacement arrived. My successor was the officer who was preferred before me to lead the SB in Kuala Lumpur. When I relinquished duties in Kuala Lumpur I had accumulated two more Departmental Citations from the CPO, Kuala Lumpur, for my collection.

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## FEDERAL SPECIAL BRANCH HQ - THE FINAL FLING

Although by now the Communist underground elements had been almost wiped out in Kuala Lumpur, they still operated in the other states. On the other hand, the CPM(P) had made considerable progress and established armed units as far down the Peninsula as South Pahang. The CPM's intention was not to stop in Pahang but to thrust further South into the State of Negri Sembilan and finally South to Johore. In this final posting to Federal HQ, I assumed the post of Divisional Head in charge of Communism, both subversive and militant, for the whole country. In this Federal capacity I not only had greater responsibility but, also, more clout.

All three factions of the CPM, namely the CPM(RF), CPM(ML) and CPM(P) were still very active in 1979. Each faction had its own militant wing, the CTO which operated inside South Thailand. Of the three factions, only the CPM(P) had established any armed units within the Peninsula and these were located in the old haunts before they were driven into South Thailand by 1960. The only difference was where they were called Regiments during the First Emergency because of the large number of people available, the second time round they were named AU but were given the same numerals for the various states. Every AU varied in strength, from thirty to eighty members, depending on the size of the state and the number of areas they were active in. When required, more manpower could be drawn from the local reserves who had gone for "baptism of fire" in South Thailand in the early 1970's. In the north in the State of Kedah was the 8th. AU; in Kelantan, the 7th., 10th. and 16th. AU; in Perak, the 5th. and 12th. Assault Units, and lastly in the State of Pahang, the 6th. AU.

The continued disruption of the underground organisations and the arrests of masses supporters in the states where there were CT units,



and the sustained SF pressure caused setbacks to the Communist armed struggle campaign. Affected by acute food shortage and losses in strength, the main concern of the CT units was to conserve their dwindling strength and prolong survival in their safe redoubts. The 5th. and 7th. AU in Perak and Kelantan depended mainly on the OA whilst the 6th. AU was preoccupied with building its masses support infrastructure in West and South Pahang, as well as in Ulu Selangor and South Perak, in order to overcome its supply problems. Concurrently the 6th. AU laid the necessary groundwork in order to expand activities in South Pahang into the Jelebu area of Negri Sembilan, primarily again to open up new supply lines.

The CT strategy in the Peninsula then was to operate in small groups and in deep jungle to avoid contact with the SF. This resulted in less contacts and fewer eliminations. In certain areas, in Pahang for instance, even though intelligence was available of CTs' presence in the jungle fringes whilst they were contacting the masses, the SF contacts that took place with the CTs were not always successful because the CTs were highly mobile and elusive. As for the future of the CPM armed struggle, directives issued by the CPM(P) and CPM(ML) indicated that both were very much concerned with the reverses suffered and the consequent lack of progress in the armed struggle campaign. To rectify the situation, emphasis was placed on the revival of CUF activities and the resuscitation of severely crippled underground organisations. Meanwhile, the CTO maintained the remnant CTs in the jungle bases as a symbol of its guerrilla effort. The CPM was relying upon the successful revival of the CUF and underground organisations to provide new recruits, logistic support and other conditions necessary for the CTO to accelerate the pace of the armed struggle.

Coinciding with the 50th. anniversary of the inauguration of the CPM, the Party announced the intention of reviving the CUF in order to take the path of subversion and deception to power. This decision was taken in compliance with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) directive to

the CPM to scale down and eventually to cease aggressive militant activities in favour of an open and legal struggle. The dismal record of the CPM armed struggle since 1948 more than justified the acceptance of the CCP line. The object of the CCP policy was to woo and win over the friendship of ASEAN countries. It did not mean that the CPM should abandon the armed struggle but should conserve the strength of its armed units until the time was opportune to take up the offensive again. As a result of the revival of the CUF, underground elements were to be directed to infiltrate legal organisations. For the CUF to be effective, the Party recognised that an important pre-requisite was Malay support. To acquire this support it directed the Malay dominated 10th. Regiment based across the Thai border to gain inroads into certain sections of the Malay masses in Kelantan, Trengganu and Pahang. Consequently, there was an increase in CPM propaganda designed to win over the Malays. This propaganda was supplemented by efforts of the 10th. Regiment to lure Malay supporters from Kelantan into CT camps inside Thailand for indoctrination and to be guided on their follow-up pro-Communist activities amongst their relatives and acquaintances in Kelantan. Selected Malay supporters were directed to set up cells in the state in order to widen the scope of Malay support for the CPM. In addition, leaders of the 10th. Regiment made attempts to establish contacts with their close relatives in Pahang in order to cultivate sympathisers who could be used to establish underground organisations among the Malays at a later date. The CUF effort was not directed only at the Malays but included all other races as well as the SF and Government servants. Appeals were made through the CPM radio, which broadcast from the Narathiwat province in South Thailand north of the Kelantan border, and through leaflets. In this context, the CPM also formed a front organisation called the Revolutionary Malay Nationalist Party (RMNP).

The aim to win over Malay support was to build up a Malay following for the CPM. Masses organisations could provide logistic support for infiltrating CTs from South Thailand into Kelantan in the future and assist in opening the eastern corridor for infiltration of CT units from

the north into Pahang and further south. The development of a CUF amongst the Malays was to split Malay solidarity and create a strong opposition to the Government.

Within the Peninsula the main preoccupation of the remaining two hundred odd CTs was to seek the necessary means to survive in the jungle edges in certain areas and in deep jungle in other places. In the State of Kedah there were only occasional sightings of small groups of CTs, but it could not be ascertained to which parent unit they belonged. In Perak, two AWFs amalgamated to form the 5th. AU. As a result of the disruption of the underground organisations and the lack of support from the masses, the 5th. AU was forced to rely heavily on the OA for food supplies. The 12th. AU which operated in northern Perak played the vital role of ferrying CTs to and from the border and providing a physical link between CTs at the Border and the 5th. AU. It also functioned as the unit to sabotage development projects that hindered CT movement from the north.

There were two CT units, the 7th. and 16th. AU, located in the State of Kelantan, which were tasked to play a strategically significant role for the long term in maintaining and developing the armed struggle within the Peninsula. The CPM(P) regarded the Ulu Kelantan area as a potential sanctuary in the event of the CTO being forced to evacuate its bases inside South Thailand. These units were expected to lay the ground work for this future need and to complete setting up the eastern corridor for future infiltration of CTs as they had been denied the use of the western corridor in Ulu Perak which had been dominated by SF and the construction of the Temenggor Dam. The 7th. AU, based near the Perak/Kelantan border, had traditionally played the role of a reception unit for CT groups moving to and from the border. The 16th. AU, which originally comprised one unit, was later broken into two which were named the 1 and 2 AWF. Whilst the 2 AWF continued with its original role of winning over and maintaining a hold over the OA, the 1 AWF's role was to link up with the 6th. AU further south in

the State of Pahang. This effort was frustrated with the capture of the entire group of sixteen CTs through the SB project codenamed FROG.

In Pahang, the 6th. AU had made considerable headway in establishing masses support among those working or living in the jungle fringes in order to overcome logistic problems. It was unlike the 5th. AU in Perak that depended entirely on the OA. The difference was that the commander was very experienced in masses work and had with him a number of CTs who hailed from the state and who were able to establish contact with their friends and relatives in the rubber estates and new villages. Through good propaganda and indoctrination, this AU was able to recruit over twenty new recruits from one village alone.

By far the most active and capable of the assault unit commanders was that of the 6th. AU. He was the one who escaped the SB "Q" operations dragnet in Perak in 1960 and had traveled with only a few veteran CTs all the way on foot from South Thailand. Within a very short time, he had swelled the armed numbers considerably to about eighty through absorption of subversives on the run from the authorities and local recruits from the villages who he had been able to brainwash to join up. This CT was most elusive. He moved and changed his base very frequently, but as he moved the intelligence continued to come in. Together with the army, I planned and mounted numerous operations against him, but somehow he managed to stay one step ahead. He was chased from district to district. On one occasion he would have been killed but for the premature setting up of a road block which he happened to observe from the top of a hill. This alerted him to upstake and move his base immediately. The constant harassment demoralised and affected his performance and he realised that his luck could not hold out indefinitely, and finally he staged his own capture in Kuala Lumpur. He had vowed never to surrender and the staged capture was to save face. Like all the others before him he tried hard to avoid getting his comrades out, lest in future he would be blamed for selling them out to the Government. He stuck to his version of having no means to contact the CTs he had left behind in the jungle or how to

induce them to surrender. When past incidents were cited he eventually agreed to assist and contributed greatly to the induced surrender of all CTs who served under him in the State of Pahang, which then was the only state where CTs operated.

The remnant CTs in the Peninsula and CTs from across the border were, however, capable of launching harassment attacks on SF bases particularly in the border areas, ambushing SF patrols and other targets in order to boost the morale of their members and for propaganda purposes. Their objective was to create the impression that the armed struggle was an ongoing insurgency in the country. Other goals were assassinating civilians who were suspected of collaborating with the Government against the CTO and compelling the reluctant masses to support the hardpressed CTs. As supply problems became more acute, CTs in Perak, Pahang and Ulu Selangor, sought fresh sources of supplies by a stepped up program to cultivate the OA and timber workers in the deep jungle. They attempted to return to former areas of support from which they had been dislodged and also tried to establish new bases in strategic locations where CTs could remain undetected for as long as possible.

To prevent more CTs from across the Border infiltrating into Malaysian territory, a linear defence scheme was designed and implemented. Security fences were also erected near to the Border and kept under close observation through constant SF patrols to prevent the CTs from cutting the fences to infiltrate southwards. Army bases were strung along the Border to cover areas which were likely corridors of infiltration. It was necessary also to revert to the previous system of the army concentrating in deep jungle whilst the police dominated and carried out operations in jungle fringes. For operations to be more effective, where CT units operated in more than one district or state, these areas were placed under one army/police operational command. Operations were sustained and troops operated in the jungle areas for much longer periods.

About three hundred underground elements remained to be accounted for. A number of them had actually been "turned" and intentionally released by the SB back to active duty to act as bait. They proved very useful on many occasions. The responsibility of reviving Communist activities southwards of Pahang into Negri Sembilan and finally to Johore was delegated to the commander of the 6th. AU. By 1978, he had established the "South Line" which controlled the underground movements in the southern states of Negri Sembilan, Malacca and Johore and also Singapore. Singapore was an independent country, but as far as the CPM hierarchy was concerned it was part and parcel of Malaya. On the outside, the DF, or the person nominated by the CTs to run the underground movements, was based in a very remote town in Bahau, Negri Sembilan. In the Communist underground movement, he was of District Committee status. He was very centrally based and his occupation as a rubber tapper enabled him to move about freely to conduct his covert activities. There was very little information on the activities of the South Line and it was imperative to know what progress it had made. With the assistance of members of another group of subversive elements which were controlled by the SB, this DF was lured into the open and secretly picked up by the SB.

He was of immense value. He managed to fill the gaps of our knowledge and revealed the names of the others connected with the South Line. Eventually, and one by one, these people were picked up and turned and used by the SB. There were occasions when SB personnel accompanied the subversive elements who were ordered to meet the CTs and provide logistics. During the mid Autumn festival, which fell in the month of September, 1978, the SB decided to observe at first hand the moral and physical condition of the CTs who operated in the Telemong area of Pahang. On the appointed night we proceeded in three vehicles and stopped at the arranged rendezvous. When the pre-arranged signal was given, a group of CTs emerged from the secondary jungle and met us. They were physically half starved but appeared very happy to meet us. They were supplied with a lot of delicacies which usually went with such an occasion.

Not long after I went up to Federal HQ, some skeletons that I had inadvertently left behind in the cupboards in Kuala Lumpur were discovered. In spite of the very good job done, I was not to be spared the rod. It would have been quite simple to have clarified everything with me, but instead, my successor had considered it necessary to place it all on record at Headquarters to mar my reputation so that the little "evil that I did would live after me" and the "good that had been done remain interred with my bones". As indicated previously, he went by the book and stuck to the rules. This was in regard to some enemy property which was utilized to augment the shortage of essential equipment required for the protection of the staff when I first assumed command in Kuala Lumpur and for which a record was kept in the Kuala Lumpur files. This letter was intentionally wrongly channeled to the Chinese man who at that time was the Deputy DSB II, in charge of operations, who I also mentioned before had shown resentment towards me on two previous occasions. His chance to discredit me lay in that letter and where he could have clarified it with me, as I sat in the office next to his, with great gusto and jubilation, he seized on the opportunity and immediately forwarded the letter to the Director. Fortunately for me, the letter finally landed with the Deputy (I) in charge of administration, for enquiry. As he was aware of the background of how that particular enemy property was disposed off, the matter was never pursued. This was not the only minor irritation that I had to face. There were more to come.

When I was half way through my tour as the Divisional Head in-charge of Communist activities throughout the country, the last CPO Kuala Lumpur that I served under before I went up to Federal HQ, was promoted and took over the post of Director of Internal Security and Public Order (DISPO). He came when project FISHING NET had just commenced and because some PFF elements under his charge were involved in the operations on the ground, I briefed him of my plans in detail to avoid any misunderstanding and to ensure his fullest cooperation. He seemed very satisfied with all the briefings that I gave

him but I was not to know that he harboured evil intentions against me until he later assumed the duty post of Director Special Branch (DSB). When he had heard that he would be posted as DSB, he had hinted to me that when he moved upstairs - the DISPO had his office on the ground floor whilst that of the DSB was located on the top floor of the complex - he would sort certain things out upstairs.

Until he became the DSB, I did not know that I was one of the many targets on his hit-list, compiled out of a very biased, distorted, disturbed, perverted and warped mind. I had never come across such a sly and vindictive man before. His actions and thoughts definitely went against his Islamic teachings. Had he paid half the attention and concentration to his work rather than plotting and scheming against his brother officers and men, the standard of the service would have been much higher. To this day people are still perplexed as to how he landed in that high position which carried such heavy responsibility and wide powers. It was obvious that a fool and a leg-man was preferred over one who was smart and could be obstructive. During his tenure a large number of officers opted for early retirement because of his harassment. For all his sins and the sufferings that he had caused to others his God would definitely not place him in Heaven or Hell where he would pollute the former and contaminate the latter place. After purgatory, the right place for him would be in Limbo. Maybe this is the intention of his maker as it is learnt that, a couple of years back, he had gone for his pilgrimage and there, had fallen ill. To the Muslims, to die during the Haj or in the Holy Land would ensure a place in Heaven but he was denied this bliss and was sent home on a stretcher as an invalid.

I had never worked directly under him before and did not really know if he was competent although I suspected he was one of those drones in the hive who eat the honey manufactured by the workers and are then rewarded for the efforts of the very same workers. I was soon to learn at first hand he was a bumbling fool. Not long after he assumed office, there was a change in the government machinery. As is customary the new official responsible for home affairs, which includes internal



security, was given a security briefing. To assist the DSB, all staff officers at Federal level had to prepare papers to enable him to brief the Minister. Hours before the Minister arrived we could observe how fidgety he was. When all had assembled he stood at the rostrum and exposed himself as an incompetent fool. He stuttered and stammered and cleared his throat after every few words and the Minister just gazed in amazement and shook his head in wonder. Luckily, the IGP came to the rescue and took over the briefing and answered all questions. I was embarrassed by this performance and very angry that this absolute fool should be my leader for the next few years.

This last stage of my career was most disturbing and unpleasant. It seemed that I had made many enemies along the way and it was only now at the twilight of my career that those people whom I had antagonised were all concentrated at one place and were given the opportunity to conspire to discredit me. The first of these was that the Deputy DSB II, who on the quiet, had made arrangements with an officer two ranks below me to move one of my officers out to another section without consulting me. I only discovered the move when officer in charge of administration in SB informed me in writing. It would only have been normal courtesy to consult me first before making the arrangements with an officer junior in rank to me, rather than to have worked behind my back. I would have agreed very willingly because, even before this, I had volunteered and released many of my men for other urgent duties. Since the Deputy DSB II had found it prudent not to discuss this matter with me, likewise, I intentionally reciprocated and vented my anger and minuted in the file back to the officer in charge of administration that I disapproved of the move and took the arrangement as bad taste. I knew that my minute would evoke resentment from the Deputy DSB II but he would not have the courage to confront me. As expected, he sent the file to the DSB, who like him, also did not have the courage to look anyone in the eye but merely commented ambiguously in writing that "this is not good". The Deputy DSB II did not have the courage to seek clarification, whilst on my part, I waited to be called when I could vent my anger further. In the end the transfer

did not take place. There was no doubt that the Deputy DSB II had a bone to pick with me over some official misunderstanding that happened way back in the early 1970's when he was the Head SB Kedah/Perlis and I was in the special operational section in the logistics division at Federal SB HQ. In the prelude leading to the mounting of the operation where seven CTs were killed in the Kulim area, there were many discussions held with the military. Invariably, I had gained the confidence of the military commander as a capable strategist in combatting the CTs. There were a few occasions where the Brigade commander had insisted that only in my presence would he proceed to discuss operational matters in a meeting called by the Head SB who had been waiting for some time before my arrival. Having felt slighted, he must have distorted the issue in his own mind and perceived me as having intentionally undermined his authority.

When the previous DSB was in office, I was charged with monitoring drug trafficking. I had made considerable inroads into this but when the new man came, without any reason whatsoever, I was ordered to relinquish this commitment. While he might have thought I would be upset, I was more than glad as it was extra curricular and not part and parcel of SB coverage. Before he came, there was very close rapport between the SB and the SLOs of friendly countries. There were monthly security briefings after which each country in turn would host a lunch. There were also many organised tours to security areas to acquaint the SLO with the problems on the ground. I was selected as the conducting officer since it was the subject that I dealt with.

The new DSB showed his hand and disclosed his wrath and dropped his first bombshell on me in the very early 80's. To his puerile mind, he felt he had dexterously manipulated and timed his move when he tendered, what he thought was a very damaging report, to the Acting IGP a few days before the IGP went on a long overseas trip. This report questioned my loyalty to the country. He and the Ag. IGP were not on the best of terms and he had anticipated that the latter would have taken drastic action against me or channeled the report to the

Ministry. However, two days before the IGP left, I was called up to answer the charges made against me. This report inferred that I might have been bought over and under the control of foreign services. I was accused of being over friendly with foreign officers and organising tours to the security areas for the foreigners without permission. I was accused of having made secret arrangements through the intelligence liaison officer of a neighbouring country to visit the American embassy and I had gone with this same officer on a trip to Korea without prior clearance. Another item in the report was that I had called up an officer who served under me when I was Head SB Kuala Lumpur to make arrangements for me to secretly meet one of the liaison officers. The text was "that I had contacted this officer whom I had codenamed "MAXI" to arrange for me to meet a friendly SLO at the usual time and place".

It was obvious that my activities and movements had been closely monitored for some time to have enabled him to compile his report. If it had been under circumstances where I was guilty, my reaction would have been entirely different when confronted with the facts. Instead, when I considered the puerility of the allegations, I found release in the kind of laughter one reserves for a Three Stooges film. I explained to the IGP that the DSB could have challenged me with the facts instead of having wasted his time to prepare the report. The DSB had created a mountain out of a mole-hill. The security briefings had been carried out even before I took over the post. The visits outstation with friendly liaison officers were all with the prior approval of the Deputy DSB II and made known to the previous Director. The visit to the American embassy was innocent. It was a new building that had just been occupied and because I happened to be on liaison duties at the Singapore High Commission, which was located on the opposite side of the road, I had requested the Singapore SLO to enquire from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) man whether we could visit the premises. As for the visit to Korea, it was genuine but again, another innocuous case. The Singapore SLO was a frequent visitor to the famous restaurant where he had his own circle of friends who were

among the conglomerate of drinkers. It was discussed on one of the drinking sessions that a tour to Korea be organised for those present who wanted to make the trip. I had included my name for it but as I was not the organiser I did not know who the others were on the list. Only when we assembled at the departure lounge at the airport was I aware that the Singapore SLO was on the tour. "MAXI" was a well known officer who served in the Special Branch in Kuala Lumpur. It was not a codename as claimed and he was merely asked to inform the SLOs that I was inviting them to drinks at the usual restaurant at the usual time at 1700 hours each Friday.

The IGP offered me a friendly word of advice after he accepted my explanation. He had paved the way for my future but now that he was on his way overseas he could not ensure whether his arrangements for me would be adhered to and, that since the DSB had formed such an opinion of me, I should tread carefully in the future. Although I was off the hook the DSB was not ready to let me off so easily. Not long after this incident he again showed his hand when the Chinese Deputy DSB II went on retirement and a relief was sought to fill the vacancy. From the subsequent events that took place, it would appear that I had been slotted for this post but it was not to take place immediately. He went out of his way to ensure that someone else filled it and eventually after continually pestering another officer who had seniority over me, this officer reluctantly accepted the job. First victory to him. This move did not upset me as I had not engineered that the man senior to me should not be given the job.

I was to be relieved of more responsibility. At this juncture, CTO activities escalated and where it was my responsibility to intervene and advise officers on the ground, I was told not to interfere as the Head S.Bs should be capable enough to tackle their respective problems. It was fortunate that this instruction was recorded in the minutes of one of the planning meetings because when the situation in some contingents started to deteriorate, the blame fell on me for not having done my job. The idiot who said it had forgotten that he had given the instructions

that I should not interfere, and in front of all and sundry, I referred him to certain minutes that had been recorded. All present could feel the resentment of this remark and his stressed demeanor showed he was aware of his public loss of face.

The war of attrition between us continued with him making and firing all the shots. He picked on me over the smallest and unimportant issues. From the time I met with the car accident back in 1960, I had refrained from wearing a tie at work as it aggravated the nerves at the back of the neck and caused me great discomfort. Unknown to many, I had a doctor's certificate to back me. He was to pick on me for it as well. Not long after the new Deputy DSB II came, he was instructed to inform me to wear my tie but I resisted it and continued with my usual attire of a bush jacket and long trousers. Even if I had not had the doctor's certificate, I still would not have worn a tie as it was not our traditional dress but a relic of colonialism which we were out to shed. To me a tie did not make me more intelligent or improve my efficiency.

When the Deputy DSB II was incapacitated due to a heart attack, I was the obvious choice to take his place. But it was still not to be smooth sailing. Normally, under such circumstances it was less strenuous on public funds for a person to act in a higher rank and be confirmed later than for him not to act and be given charge allowance to hold the higher appointment. And this was the situation I was pushed into. It was obvious what the final outcome would be, but circumstances intervened to frustrate his petty plans. By the grace of the Almighty, without my foreknowledge or prompting, the Sarawak State Government decided in 1983 to confer on me the Second Grade of the Star of Sarawak. This probably saved my day and got me my last and final promotion and the portfolio of Deputy DSB II. In speaking to some other senior staff officers I discovered that when queried by the Public Services Department (PSD) as to why I should not be promoted, being the senior most person to qualify for the rank, the DSB answered that I was considered to be Unable to Become Efficient (UBE). In his state of obsessive jealousy and stupidity he was not aware that he had made a

very derogatory assessment of a senior officer for which he could be challenged. And he could be challenged on the fact that, if I was considered UBE then why had I continued to be given charge allowance and allowed to hold for a prolonged period a higher post than my rank deserved, and why was there no objection registered against my being conferred the Second Grade of the Star of Sarawak.

To digress a little, I proceeded to Sarawak at Government expense to receive my award. It was pointless to have informed the DSB who should have been alerted of the fact by the appropriate staff officer. If he was already aware of it, he made no attempt to congratulate me. On my way back, I stopped at Kuching to visit some Sarawak serving officers who I had known from my two tours there. It was there that I bumped into "That Fellow" again. He had assumed the highest position possible in the State police. It is not clear how the conversation led to him offering to donate a very generous large sum of five figures to enable my younger son to start his motor repair garage. I was infuriated at this but kept my temper and declined his offer. This was not the first time. Earlier, working behind my back, he had given a smaller five figure sum to my elder son who had ventured into a nightclub business. I had wondered and pondered over his generosity towards my children and can only conclude that something had pricked his inner conscience.

I had anticipated that worse things could befall me with the fatuous DSB so I decided that open confrontation with him would serve no useful purpose and, in any case, would be deleterious for office discipline and morale. Because I had qualified to retire optionally on full benefits I opted for retirement eight months before my full time. Without enquiring the reasons why, with only eight months to go I had made such an application, my tormentor expedited the relevant documents and forwarded them to the Acting IGP. How he must have rubbed his hands with glee and chanted as his mantra "I have finally got rid of him". In the event he was queried as to why he had not tried to dissuade me from leaving. In a very perfunctory manner he asked me

why I wished to leave the Force. I gave the simple reply that I wished to leave. In such cases it was an accepted fact that normally, when the IGP recommended and forwarded the necessary documents to the PSD, it could be taken for granted that the early retirement would be approved. Through accumulation, I had three full months of leave and with public holidays and weekends added on, I had more than five months paid leave to my credit.

Pending approval of my retirement, I proceeded on leave. I did not visit the office and I did not enquire about my retirement. Six weeks after I started my leave I was awakened by the telephone. On answering the call, I was surprised that it was the Director of the PSD on the line. He was most courteous and apologised for ringing me at home. I sensed that something was wrong and when he spoke again, he stated that he had to inform me with regret that the Government could not approve my early retirement. Much as I pleaded and reasoned with him, the answer remained the same. He enquired further when I could return to work. As it was then a Thursday I replied that I could be back at the office the following Monday and requested that he inform the IGP of our conversation. There had only been one other occasion when a request to retire early had been turned down.

The following Monday I reported for duty direct to the Acting IGP. He was most surprised to see me because he had not been informed by the Director of the PSD. He was well aware of the circumstances why I had elected to go on early retirement and before I left his office, I requested that he inform the DSB to "get off my back" otherwise there would be fireworks in the office. Like the PSD, he too omitted to inform the DSB who was traumatised when he saw me in the conference room that afternoon. The same expression showed on the faces of some of the other staff officers who were assembled there as it was the normal meeting day. The sarcastic manner in which he enquired of my presence aggravated the situation and I was quite abrupt when I replied.

Until then I had been most patient with him and had taken things in my stride. To me it was "Ke Sera, Sera, whatever will be, will be". Since it was the Government that had turned down my request, I felt that I should exploit it to my advantage. After this episode, I decided on open confrontation with the DSB. There was nothing to lose as he would do nothing for me nor was there anything that he could do to me. I engaged him on every possible matter. At meetings, when he made a mistake, and these were many, I would challenge his decisions in front of the staff and ridicule him in the most polite way I knew. When he addressed me in minutes, I did likewise and the way I minuted back to him indicated to the uninitiated that I was the Boss. It was obvious to everyone, the regular officers and men, the clerical staff and the temporary staff, that there was a war on and this was discussed openly amongst all ranks. Although he had the rank and the authority he did not censure me as I only challenged him when I was in the right and gave him no excuse whatsoever to pick on me.

This went on for many months and when he did not retaliate I became more disgusted. I could not stand the sight of him nor to be in his presence. Thereafter, I absented myself from all meetings that he attended as it annoyed me greatly to have to sit next to him. I would go to the hospital or a private clinic and return to office after the meeting. I maintained these practices until the day I retired after having served thirty four years, seven months and seven days with the Royal Malaysia Police Force. On the day of my retirement, I did not even bother to cross to the room next door to say farewell to my despicable superior officer lest I metaphorically dirtied my hand when he extended his to shake mine.

To what lengths some people will go to vindicate their ego and damage others is incredible. Having gained no satisfaction in his attempts to damage me when I was still in service, he vented his vengeance on one of my former junior officers. This officer should have gained at least two promotions had he been more fortunate to have served under someone else. His vileness was to haunt me one more time when



fourteen months after I had retired, he, in a desperate last ditch attempt to discredit me, submitted a libelous report against me to the IGP. The IGP, on the pretext of seeking my clarification on some matter, invited me to Federal Headquarters. When I arrived in his office, he informed me that the DSB had once again submitted a very damaging report against me contained in a bulky folder in front of him. I did not even bother to read it and merely asked the IGP what it was all about. It seemed that the DSB had reported that Project FROG which was so successfully concluded, had been non-existent and that I had fabricated the whole project. It was useless to argue with him. In the first place they should have checked their facts properly before asking for my explanation. I informed the IGP that two hills from where he sat contained all the supporting evidence because the sixteen captured enemy personnel were under guard in a safe house there and could be questioned anytime for corroboration. Financial matters connected with the project were also discussed and my explanation was accepted in toto. In reality I was quite annoyed by having been called by the IGP as this action suggested he may have doubted my integrity. When I left the IGP I pondered on the human condition.

What would have been my crowning glory turned out to be a slight disappointment as my home state to which I had devoted the most time and contributed vastly to the improvement of its security, chose not to honour me appropriately. The IGP recommended me for the highest award for police officers by the State of Perak for the year of 1983. This was sabotaged and I was conferred the second grade. This was not befitting my rank. An officer in the army of the same status as myself had been awarded one higher, and two other police officers, two and three steps respectively junior to me, had been given the same award. If I had accepted the lower award I would have created a precedent whereby officers of my rank would be given a lower award in the future. Much to the annoyance of His Highness I declined to accept the inferior award. The Sultan informed the CPO of the State to convey to me that the award would be upgraded the next year. As I knew full well that in the next year I would not have done sufficient to merit the

honour, I declined. Whether it was accidental or by design, the letter of acceptance only reached me an hour before the office closed the day before the official announcement. After an argument with the State Secretary over the phone, he reluctantly agreed to have my name deleted from all the media releases.

It was not really a great loss but I would have valued the extra title in front to complement the nine awards after my name and the fourteen department citations, letters of commendation and appreciation I received during my career. I am extremely proud of the fact that until then, I can recall only two other officers who had been conferred honours on nine occasions. In their case two of the awards were for the vested positions that they held. At one stage these honours for recognition of meritorious and gallant service gave me great personal pride and satisfaction but they are now merely sheets of paper which contain nicely phrased sentences and strips of coloured ribbons on which hang finely engraved and decorated pieces of metal which are unpalatable and of no commercial value. For so many like me it is ironic that for the risks and sacrifices we made to bring about the current peace and security to our country, we acquired very little in return compared to others who have been made wealthy merely by bringing prestige to the country in isolated instances.

# 21

## CONCLUSION

Over the years, and more particularly during the closing months of my career, the jealousies and pettishness of a few of my colleagues, although hurtful to some degree, did not unduly unruffle me. I consider myself to have been lucky to have progressed so far in my career. There definitely were other officers who, in spite of their achievements, had not received the promotions they richly deserved. My service in the Police Force taught me many things, foremost of which were perseverance, fortitude and forbearance.

I fought the Communists continuously for a third of a century. In this period I was subjected to all sorts of danger from the Communist Militants and the Underground elements. These personal dangers never deterred me from my responsibilities. Fighting the Communists was a great challenge, a game of chess, a pitting of wits. I carefully studied their modus operandi, improved on it and then employed it against them. Although admirably dedicated the Communists were not a formidable foe because the basis of their cause was a monstrous lie and, at the end of the day, when they faced this truth they would capitulate. Of course they were completely ruthless and they deceived and lied at every twist and turn, but when offered the choice of staying in the jungle hoping for some distant utopia or joining society and enjoying the material comforts of contemporary society they generally behaved like the rest of us and opted for the tangible comforts of contemporary society.

I joined the Police Force to serve the country but it never dawned on me that eventually this job would turn me into an executioner. I have executed many Communists directly and indirectly as a result of my planning and guidance. I acted as an instrument of the lawful government and I never considered these actions were personal

ideological statements or moments of personal glory. Throughout my career I tried to bring the Communists in so that they could be rehabilitated into society and enjoy their remaining years in a peaceful environment. When I remember the deaths I console myself with the memory of the many more lives I saved.

Despite the perversities of human nature I found within the senior ranks of the Police Force, I believe I would in another incarnation, gladly serve the Police Force again. Of course I would hope that the idiots, yes-men, psychopaths etc., would not have been re-incarnated. I bear no grudge against the Force or any of its members, and for those people who tried to harm me for their own reasons, I forgive them for their little minds. One particular person who knows that I have criticised him has spoken to others to exonerate himself from his wrongful deeds. His claim is that he has written a lot of good about me but as I have not solicited his comments, I have not hesitated to state the facts about him. "Even God cannot change the past". I have no objections if he has the facts to discredit me. When I meet these people occasionally, I show no hostility towards them. Unlike a great number, who abused the authority vested in them when they held office, now that they are retired are ignored by their former colleagues and members of the public. In contrast, I have a vast circle of friends both inside and outside the Force. Now and then I visit the previous department I served in and render whatever service I can when called upon to do so.

## GLOSSARY OF PHRASES

Except where stated otherwise all phrases are in the Cantonese dialect.

Lau Toong Toi	A Communist Mobile Assassination Unit
Tai Koo	Fathers Elder Sister
Tai Koo Cheong	Husband of Tai Koo
Tai Phow Yau	Thai Phow means big gun. Yau means person. Idiomatically a Thai Phow Yau means a Fibber
Tar Fei Kei	Shoot the Aeroplane - idiomatically it means to masturbate
Teri Maa Dhi	In Punjabi it means to fornicate with someone else's mother
Tow Foo	Bean Curd
Yum Leong Char	To drink Chinese herbal tea
Yum Seng	Bottoms Up

## Glossary of Abbreviations

1	ACM	Area Committee member
2	ASP	Assistant Superintendent of Police - the lowest of the Police gazetted ranks
3	AU	Assault Unit - a renamed combat unit of the Communist Terrorist Organisation used during the second Malaysian Emergency from 1970 until the surrender of the Malayan Communists in 1991
4	AWC	Armed Worked Cell
5	AWF	Armed Work Force
6	BCM	Branch Committee Member - the member in charge of a Branch of the Communist Party organisation -The lowest set up in the Communist organisation
7	BCS	Branch Committee Secretary - the Secretary of the Branch
8	BIC	Bamboo Intelligence Collection - collection of intelligence on Communist activities in the Operation Bamboo area in northern Perak and Kelantan States
9	BPP	Border Patrol Police - Thai police patrols along the Thai/Malaysian border
10	CAFS	Chief of Armed Forces Staff
11	CCM	Central Committee Member - the highest rank in the Communist Party of Malaya followed by State, District and Branch
12	CCP	Chinese Communist Party
13	CDMW	Central Department of Malay Works - a Malay propaganda unit of the Communist Party of Malaya
14	CEO	Chief Executive Officer
15	CEP	Captured Enemy Personnel - a term given to captured armed Communists

16	CHQ	Contingent Police Headquarters
17	CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
18	C IB	Commonwealth Infantry Brigade - a Brigade of Commonwealth infantry soldiers stationed in Malaya after Malayan Independence which assisted the Malayan government to combat armed Communists.
19	CID	Criminal Investigation Department of the Malayan Police
20	CIH	Combined Intelligence Headquarters - HQ that housed Malayan and Thai police intelligence personnel in South Thailand
21	CO	Commanding Officer
22	CPM	Communist Party of Malaya
23	CPM (ML)	Communist Party of Malaya, Marxist/Leninist Faction - one of the two breakaway factions from the original CPM
24	CPM (P)	Communist Party of Malaya Proper - the name of the original CPM after the break-up
25	CPM (RF)	Communist Party of Malaya, Revolutionary Faction
26	CPO	Chief Police Officer of a State
27	CSBO	Circle Special Branch Officer - this post was abolished and replaced by the DSBO
28	CT	Communist Terrorist - an armed member of the CPM
29	CTO	Communist Terrorist Organisation
30	CU	Communist Underground - subversive organisations of the CPM
31	CUF	Communist United Front
32	DCM	District Committee Member
33	DCS	District Committee Secretary
34	DF	Directing Figure

- 35        DISPO     Director of Internal Security and Public Order - one of four Directors in the Royal Malaysian Police
- 36        DLB        Dead-Letter-Box - any place used by Communist elements for depositing mail
- 37        DS         Divisional Superintendent
- 38        DSB        Director Special Branch - the Director in charge of internal intelligence; a branch of the Royal Malaysian Police Force
- 39        DSBO      District Special Branch Officer - the police officer in charge of intelligence in a District
- 40        DSP        Deputy Superintendent of Police
- 41        DWEC      District War Executive Committee - during the First and Second Malayan Emergencies, DWECs were established in all Districts to combat the CTs. At State level they were known as State WEC. Members were from the civil service, military and police
- 42        DZ         Dropping Zone - a point selected for dropping supplies from the air to the security forces operating in the jungle
- 43                   Far East Land Forces ( training centre) - a British army establishment for jungle warfare training
- 44        FHQ        Federal Police Headquarters - based in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur
- 45        FJC        Federal Jungle Companies - before conversion to Police Field Force, these police operational companies were established in all states to seek and destroy the CTs that operated in the jungle
- 46        FT         Field Team
- 47        GBC        General Border Committee
- 48        HSB        Head Special Branch - police officer in charge of intelligence in the State



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49	IGP	Inspector General of Police - Head of the Royal Malaysian Police
50	ISA	Internal Security Act - originally the Emergency Regulations applied extensively against the Communists which was left behind by the British. Repealed in 1962 after Malaya gained independence
51	LPM	Labour Party of Malaya - a Chinese political party which was very heavily penetrated by the Communists and banned by the Government
52	MCA	Malayan Chinese Association - a Chinese political party which is a component of the National Front which forms the present Malaysian government
53	MCP	Malayan Communist Party - this name was later changed to Communist Party of Malaya
54	MCYL	Malayan Communist Youth League - the senior satellite organisation of the CPM Proper
55	MHC	Malaysian High Commission
56	MI5	British Security Service
57	MI6	British External Intelligence
58	MIB	Malayan Infantry Brigade
59	MIO	Military Intelligence Officer - these officers were attached to the Special Branch to assist in collating operational intelligence. British Artillery Officers were attached before Malayan Independence
60	MLMO	Marxist/Leninist/Maoist Organisation - a Communist satellite organisation
61	MNDYL	Malayan National Democratic Youth League - a Communist satellite organisation

62	MNLA	Malayan National Liberation Army
63	MNLF	Malayan National Liberation Front - a satellite organisation of the CPM (P)
64	MNLL	Malayan National Liberation League - a Communist satellite organisation
65	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
66	MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti Japanese Army - the Communist controlled Malayan patriotic army that fought the Japanese army during its occupation of Malaya
67	MPLA	Malayan People's Liberation Army
68	MPLL	Malayan People's Liberation League - the most senior satellite organisation of the CPM (ML)
69	MRLA	Malayan Races' Liberation Army - the armed wing of the CPM (P)
70	MU	Mobile Unit - name of assassination squads used by both the CPM (P) and CPM (ML)
71	NKCP	North Kalimantan Communist Party
72	NMB	North Malayan Bureau - the northern part of Malaya designated by the Communists
73	NZ	New Zealand
74	NZR	New Zealand Regiment
75	OA	Orang Asli - Malay word for Aborigines
76	OC	Officer-in-Charge
77	OCPD	Officer-in-Charge of Police District
78	OCS	Officer-in-Charge of Station
79	OSPC	Officer Superintending Police Circle - before this post was abolished, this officer controlled up to three Police Districts
80	PARAKU	People's Army of Kalimantan Utara (see PGRS)

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81	PAI	Probationary Asian Inspectors - this term was used to differentiate the Asians from the European Inspectorate during the Colonial days
82	PFF	Police Field Force - apart from the Army, the Police has its own operational units. These were in battalion formation based at strategic locations throughout the country
83	PGRS	Pasokan Guerrilla Rakyat Sarawak or People's Guerrilla Army of Sarawak - the name used by the Sarawak Communist Organisation for its armed unit
84	P/Lt	Police Lieutenant - a temporary rank given to British officers who did not qualify for permanent employment in the Malayan colonial police. They were employed on a contract basis to fight the Communists because of their experience
85	PRM	Party Rakyat Malaya - an opposition political party, banned because it was heavily penetrated by the Communists
86	PSD	Public Services Department
87	PSO	Principal Staff Officer
88	PSSG	Police Special Squad Group - special police groups formed to fight the Communists along the jungle fringes
89	PWD	Public Works Department
90	RAF	Royal Air Force - British Air Force
91	RAR	Royal Australian Regiment - part of the CIB
92	RASCOM	Rajang Security Command - a special command created in the 3rd and 4th Divisions of Sarawak to fight the Sarawak Communists

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|-----|------|---|
| 93  | RBC  | Regional Border Committee - a combined Thai/Malaysian command created to fight the Malayan Communists entrenched astride the Thai/Malaysian border  |
| 94  | RBCO | Regional Border Committee Office - this was located inside S. Thailand at Songkhla  |
| 95  | REP  | Returned Enemy Personnel  |
| 96  | RMAF | Royal Malaysian Air Force   |
| 97  | RMNP | Revolutionary Malay Nationalist Party -the revised CPM propaganda unit created to woo the Malay masses  |
| 98  | RMR  | Royal Malay Regiment  |
| 99  | RV   | Rendezvous  |
| 100 | SAS  | Special Air Services - part of the 28 CIB   |
| 101 | SB   | Special Branch - a branch of the Royal Malaysian Police and the only authorised intelligence collection agency  |
| 102 | SC   | Special Constables - during the early days of the Emergency, there were insufficient regular police to combat the Communists. As a temporary measure, special constables were recruited   |
| 103 | SCM  | State Committee Member - the second highest rank in the CPM.  |
| 104 | SCO  | Sarawak Communist Organisation  |
| 105 | SD   | Special District  |
| 106 | SDBC | Special District Border Committee - when the CPM was split into three factions, one group of CPM (P) CTs were wedged between the CPM (RF) and CPM (ML). The CPM (P) named this the Special District and created the Special District Border Committee to enable it to function satisfactorily |
| 107 | SEP  | Surrendered Enemy Personnel   |

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108	SF	Socialist Front - an opposition political party which was heavily penetrated by the Communists and banned
109	SF	(2) Security Forces
110	SITREP	Situation Report
111	SOVF	Special Operational Volunteer Force - an operational unit that comprised SEP under the control of the police
112	SS	Secret Service
113	SWC	Special Working Committee
114	TTICP	Thai Communist Party
115	TI	Temporary Inspectors - locals recruited on the same basis as P/Lt.
116	UBE	Unable to Become Efficient
117	UO	Underground Organisations - a common term used for all Communist satellite formations

## LETTER OF COMMENDATION

Lt General Datuk Abdullah bin Samsudin,  
PSAT, DSPN, JMN, SMS, SDK, PPC, PPT  
Formerly Director of Military Intelligence, Malaysia.

This book is the personal story of Mr Leong Chee Woh, a brave son of Malaysia who dedicated his life to fighting the Communist enemy who threatened our country for over forty years. His story is one of commitment, courage, heroic deeds and self sacrifice.

I first met Mr Leong in 1966 when I was head of a division at the Royal Malaysia Police Headquarters which dealt with Communist militancy. Over the years which followed, and particularly during my term of appointment as Director of Military Intelligence (1979 and 1984), Mr Leong and I shared many operational experiences and exploits in the covert war against the Communists.

I am sure all readers will enjoy this first hand account of the frustrations of fighting a silent and clandestine war, and of the moments of achievement and triumph against the enemy.

20 June, 1995

## LETTER OF COMMENDATION

By

Major General R.D.P. Hassett, C.E., C.B.E.  
Chief of General Staff, New Zealand army (1976-1978)

I first met Inspector Leong Chee Woh (as he then was) in Taiping very early in 1960 when my appointment as Brigade major of the Commonwealth Brigade brought me into close touch with the officers of Ipoh Special Branch. Leong was held in the highest regard by all the Operational Battalions of the Brigade, none more so, however, than the Battalions of the New Zealand Regiment.

The First Battalion New Zealand Regiment (1957-1959) was deployed in anti-terrorist operations in North Malaya where the Battalion Command Post was located in the same compound as the Ipoh Special Branch. It was here that close friendships were formed, personally and professionally, with Inspector Leong.

Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) Neville Wallace, the Intelligence Officer of the battalion at that time, says of Leong Chee Woh:

"His qualifications, knowledge, and actual experience of operations were unmistakable. There appeared to be little he had not undertaken on operations, his knowledge of the enemy so detailed as to be quite disconcerting at times. The most important thing I learnt from him was that if he provided the intelligence and it was accurate he expected us to perform. The Battalion's achievements in Operation GINGER were significant in that we had the greatest number of kills in the shortest time. Putting to one side the skill, patience and courage of the infantry involved, the reason for this success can be attributed to the confidence Inspector Leong and his team had in us, that if they provided the intelligence we would perform, and the confidence we had in him that

the intelligence he and his team provided was accurate and we were not being used as "jungle bashers".

The Second battalion New Zealand regiment (1959-1961) also worked closely with Leong, although by that time the tempo of the operations had slowed considerably. Nevertheless, they too had some success, largely attributable to Leong's intelligence information.

This book, "SCORPIO -The Communist Eraser" is doubly welcome. It tells the life of a man who in many ways became a legend in his own time, particularly among those New Zealanders who knew him. He was a man of great personal courage and one whose enormous contribution to the defeat of Communism in Malaysia has largely gone unrecognised. The book will also be welcomed as a contribution to a very important part of the history of the New Zealand army which, to date, has been ignored by contemporary historians.

1995



LETTER OF COMMENDATION

By

Pehin Dato G.E. Coster  
PSPNB, DSNB, OBE, CPM, PBLI, PJK (PK), DPMB  
Formerly Director of Security and Intelligence, Brunei

I have known and admired Leong Chee Woh for something like forty years. After my thirteen years in Malaysia, I served a further seventeen years in Brunei. I have, therefore, been in a most favourable position, both geographically and professionally, to vouch for the general veracity of his story. He is a man of unrivalled courage and of great resourcefulness.

1995

## LETTER OF COMMENDATION

By

Col. C.S.A. East  
28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group

It is a pleasure and a privilege to be invited by my former comrade-in-arms, Leong Chee Woh, to write this letter of commendation for his book. We first served together during the Emergency in Malaya, myself as the Brigade Major of the 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group with its headquarters at Taiping in Perak, and Chee Woh as an officer with the Special Branch of the Royal Malayan Police at Ipoh. During Operation GINGER and later Operation BAMBOO, from December, 1957 to May, 1960, I realised how dependent we of the Brigade were upon the skill, courage and dedication of the Special Branch in obtaining the intelligence which was vital to our success in operations.

Leong Chee Woh was typical of these operations, and a great bond of mutual respect developed between the police and the Commonwealth troops. I returned to Malaysia in December, 1966, to command the Australian Battalion, 4 RAR, at Terendak, following the end of Indonesian Confrontation. Then I renewed my old associations with Chee Woh and the Royal Malaysian Police. I have followed as best I could the progress of my friend during his service career, which has been crowned with success in innumerable operations against the Communist Terrorists.

I believe the Government of Malaysia owes a great debt to Leong Chee Woh and others like him who have provided the country and the government with the security to achieve the great economic success they now enjoy.

1995.



**Old family photo. Father seated fifth from left and his family are all on the right. First & second wives on his right & elder adopted daughter on extreme right. The rest are all members of his elder sister's family (Seated 3rd from left). Brother, second sister & author not adopted yet.**



Mum in her early fortiesa nyonya in full regalia



The author in Jungle Green Uniform in 1952. Note the Mark V rifle which was still standard issue.



Patrol break.



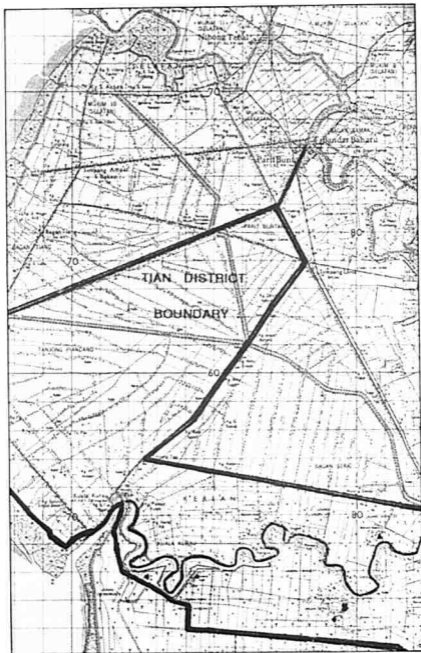
The hefty scotsman-MM. CPMG.



**Project "JUKEBOX"**

**Top picture- Author, Ct leader, DSBO IPOH,  
and SEP before meeting.**

**Bottom - Author standing, meal with Cts  
after successful meeting**





## FLAGS/INSIGNIAS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYA

COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYA  
CPM



1. THE GOLDEN SICKLE REPRESENTS PEASANTS.
2. THE GOLDEN HAMMER REPRESENTS WORKERS.
3. THE RED BACKGROUND SYMBOLIZES THE BLOODY STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION.
4. THE ABOVE IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY FLAG, WHICH IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY ALL COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD.
5. NORMALLY HOISTED IN COMMEMORATING COMMUNIST ANNIVERSARY AND FESTIVAL.

MALAYAN NATIONAL LIBERATION  
ARMY (OMLA)



1. THE GOLDEN STAR REPRESENTS UNITY AND STRUGGLE OF ALL RACES IN MALAYA.
2. RED BACKGROUND SYMBOLIZES THE BLOODSHED BY THE PEOPLE OF MALAYA IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION.
3. THE ABOVE IS MALAYA FLAG COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE FLAG OF THE MILITARY ELEMENT OF THE CPM.
4. NORMALLY HOISTED IN COMMEMORATING SUCCESSFUL BATTLES AND ANNIVERSARY OF THE MILITARY ELEMENT (OMLA).

MALAYAN NATIONAL LIBERATION  
OF ALL (OMLA)



1. THE WHITE BACKGROUND REPRESENTS THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE OF MALAYA TO ENJOY A FULLY INDEPENDENT AND DEMOCRATIC MALAYA.
2. THE GOLDEN STAR SYMBOLIZES THE UNITY AND STRENGTH OF THE MALAYAN PEOPLE IN THEIR STRUGGLE.
3. THE RED BACKGROUND SYMBOLIZES THE BLOODSHED BY THE PEOPLE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION.
4. THE ABOVE IS THE MALAYAN NATIONAL LIBERATION LEAGUE FLAG, USED BY COMMUNIST UNLAWFUL ELEMENT.
5. NORMALLY HOISTED IN COMMEMORATING ANNIVERSARIES OF UNLAWFUL ELEMENTS AND ATLEAST WITH BOMB THREAT.

MALAYAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY  
(OR THE MALAYAN ELEMENT)  
OR THE MALAYAN PEOPLE OF THE STRONG



1. THE YELLOW STAR REPRESENTS THE ARMY.
2. THE YELLOW CIRCLE SYMBOLIZES THE UNITY WITHIN THE ARMY AND THE PARTY.
3. THE RED BACKGROUND SYMBOLIZES THE BLOODSHED BY ALL RACES IN MALAYA AND THE BLOODSHED OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE.

MALAYAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION  
LEAGUE OF THE MALAYAN ELEMENTS  
OR THE MALAYAN PEOPLE OF THE STRONG



1. THE RED BACKGROUND SYMBOLIZES THE BLOODSHED OF ALL RACES IN MALAYA.
2. THE WHITE CIRCLE SYMBOLIZES THE DESIRES OF THE PEOPLE IN SUPPORT OF THE CPM LEAGUE.
3. THE RED CIRCLE SYMBOLIZES THE UNITY WITHIN THE PARTY.

MALAYAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY  
(OR THE MALAYAN ELEMENTS)  
OR THE MALAYAN PEOPLE OF THE STRONG



1. THE RED BACKGROUND SYMBOLIZES BLOODSHED IN MALAYA.
2. THE WHITE STAR SYMBOLIZES MALAYA'S LIBERTY.
3. THE RED CIRCLE SYMBOLIZES THE UNITY OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION.



Author in ambush in jungle in south  
thailand testing out experiment model  
of anti intrusion device



**Top** -"Op sri aman"sibu, Sarawak..Before discussion on surrender with leader of communists of 2nd Bureau(Centre).

**Bottom** -Author(with peak cap)and two other Special Branch officers finalising conditions with 2nd bureau nkcip leader(left)during op sri aman.Immediately behind him is the SB/CT liaison officer who surrendered earlier.



**Top** -"Op sri aman"-after communists had agreed to lay down arms

**Bottom-** First batch of Sarawak, communist terrorists who surrendered to Special Branch under op sri aman. Autho is in uniform with peak cap in the center.



**Project "Frog" - Briefing to army  
Left to right : 4th Bridge Commander,  
Chief of Army, author and 4th Division  
Commander at forward base.**

