MALAYSIA

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WORLD OF TODAY

MALAYSIA

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FOREWORD

"WORLD OF TODAY" series aims at providing brief and readable volumes regarding the different nations of the world, their history, culture, etc.

There is not much literature available in our languages regarding other countries. It is regrettable also that we show little interest in understanding and studying different countries of the world which surround us. Even in our older literature we find little about the world outside India.

Today, the world has radically changed. Scientific discoveries and modern means of communications and transport have made the world smaller and smaller. Visiting a far-off continent has become like visiting a town in the neighbouring province. Within a day or two one can go around the world. It is essential that we should know something of the new world in which we live. What happens in a foreign country is of vital interest to us.

These books will serve as a kind of introduction to different countries. Those who are more interested might read more detailed works on the subject. An important aim of the series is to have these books specially in our languages which are sadly lacking in such literature.

The first book in this series is 'Malaysia'. The writer Shri Sivaram is a well-known journalist and knows the country intimately. He has lived there for a long time and worked in different capacities. He was also with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose for some time.

B. V. KESKAR

PREFACE

MALAYSIA IS A LAND of superlatives. There are few countries in Asia where the soil is so fertile, the people are so hospitable, life is so cosmopolitan and so full of opportunities. Quiet achievement has been the keynote of Malaysian history since the Federation of Malaya was proclaimed independent on August 31, 1957.

The development of Malaya, and of Malaysia which was established in 1963 amidst the Indonesian "confrontation" campaign, was in striking contrast to that of most other Asian nations—no military coups, no nationalisation of foreign investments, no bloodshed over language or other issues, and a steadily rising standard of living.

Malaysia's proud experiment in constructing a multi-racial society at the cross-roads of South-East Asia, however, exploded on the streets of Kuala Lumpur, immediately after the third general elections in the country in May 1969. What followed was an orgy of blood and steel that swept large areas of Malaysia. The parliamentary system was suspended, a state of emergency was proclaimed, and a National Operations Council was set up at the Parliament Buildings in the capital.

The ruling Alliance Party, comprising the United Malay National Organisation, the Malaysian Chinese Association, and the Malaysian Indian Congress, had said in its election manifesto: "If the equation of racial stability is ever upset, there may well set in an irreversible process of national disintegration, with all the consequential carnage, too heinous for anyone to contemplate."

That grim forecast came true on May 13, 1969. For some days, while the riots spread, it looked as if Malaysia might be crippled. But the Government acted firmly and restored confidence among the people, the Malays, the Chinese, the Indians and other racial elements. Slowly, normalcy came back to Malaysia. This year Parliament was reconvened, racial harmony was restored and the even tenor of life has returned to the land.

There is little doubt that Malay statesmanship has triumphed in the tussle between the Malays and the non-Malays. These non-

Malays include nearly a million Indians and persons of Indian origin who are adjusting themselves to the changed conditions. They are generally happy in Malaysia and those who entertain doubts about their future are slowly coming back to India.

In this book, I have tried to tell the story of Malaya and Malaysia in the last fourteen years since Merdeka. I have known the country, and the entire South-East Asian region, for almost forty years of my career as a journalist, with breaks at various periods.

As an associate of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, I worked in Singapore and Malaya during the years of World War II. I was in Kuala Lumpur for the Merdeka celebrations in 1957, as Director of News Services, All India Radio. Between 1962 and 1965, when I was Editor of "The Malayan Times" in Kuala Lumpur, I was closely associated with the nation's leaders and covered the birth of Malaysia and the hectic events that followed.

Years earlier in 1929-30, I had worked in Singapore and Malaya with several newspapers. And my last assignment, again, was in Kuala Lumpur in 1966-67, with the South-East Asia Press Institute, as a consultant of the International Press Institute in Zurich.

All this association, perhaps, makes me almost a "native" of Malaysia. In fact, I functioned in Malaysia virtually on that basis. I am happy to be able to count almost everyone of the Malaysian leaders among my personal friends—and this applies to men of all communities.

In fact, in this little book, I have not been able to do full justice to many facets of life in Malaysia. Much of the material used in this book is based on personal study and observations, far too diverse and numerous to be brought into this plain story of Malaysia. My strongest impression of Malaysia, however, is that it is perhaps the only country in the world that still seems to understand India and Indians—in spite of every possible effort, by our friends, enemies and ourselves, to make ourselves misunderstood, or un-understood, by the world at large.

M. SIVARAM

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I. MERDEKA!

AUGUST 31, 1957

A NEW ASIAN nation was born that day—the Federation of Malaya, the gorgeous, green ridge between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, with its cosmopolitan community of seven million, living in peace and harmony at the cross-roads of South-East Asia.

Merdeka! Freedom!

There was magic in that word. Everywhere in Malaya that day, it was the cry of "Merdeka!" that echoed and re-echoed throughout the land, from the southern border of Thailand down to the flourishing port of Singapore at the south-eastern tip of the Continent, proclaiming the birth of a new, independent, sovereign nation.

In Kuala Lumpur, the Federal capital, and throughout the country—in the lush green kampongs along river-banks, the hill-side huts of peasants, the seaside shacks of fisherfolk, on sprawling rubber plantations, around the busy dredges of tin mines—it was a blaze of colour and pageantry, a riot of festivities and rejoicings.

That day fourteen years ago, Kuala Lumpur was a dream city, with lights blazing on all sides, flags fluttering in the air, gay crowds moving along the streets, glittering parties and functions at hotels, clubs and associations. It was the same spirit of gaiety that prevailed everywhere in the country, in the rich little towns and happy little villages.

The flag of the Federation of Malaya, bright red and white stripes, with a blue quarter inset with the crescent and an 11-point star, was proudly displayed on all sides, in all sizes, and on almost anything. And there were more flags on the towering

buildings that loomed into the landscape of what was once a muddy rivermouth.

In fact, Kuala Lumpur, one-time citadel of British colonial authority in rubber-rich Malaya, the fast-growing city that set out to become the focal point of the world's model multi-racial society, was a mean little town on stilts, at the mouth of a muddy river that empties itself into the Bay of Bengal.

But that day, fourteen years ago, was Freedom Day for Malaya. And Kuala Lumpur, August 1957, was a city of rejoicings and festivities.

From the Press enclosure in Kuala Lumpur's Merdeka Stadium on that historic day, I had a grand view of the official celebrations that marked the birth of Malaya. The stadium was partly drenched but the drizzle, just before the ceremony, was regarded as a specially good omen, heightening the popular enthusiasm. There was goodwill everywhere. There was the glow of national consciousness and national confidence.

The Merdeka Stadium was packed to capacity, with a dazzling array of people—the Malays in ceremonial dress, with multi-coloured sarongs tied around their waist over flowing pants and shirts, the Chinese in their traditional dress, sari-clad Indian women, and representatives of almost every country, many of them in the costumes of their own lands. And, then, there were long rows of boy scouts, girl guides, the national cadet corps, all in their best and smartest turn-out.

It was the red and gold pavilion on the dais that was the centre of attraction at the function. In the middle of the dais stood a long, ornate table, meant for the rulers of Malaya and the Representative of the British Crown, flanked by officials and service chiefs in full uniform.

One by one, the Malay Sultans started arriving, Royalty in all its pomp, to greet the freedom of their country. The Federation of Malaya, as it was in 1957, consisted of eleven

States, former Sultanates, and the two British Settlements on the Peninsula. The last to arrive was the Paramount Ruler of the Federation, the world's first elected King who, like any other elected Head of State, was to hold office for a specified period—in this case five years.

Then came the Duke of Gloucester, whom the Queen had deputed, in her behalf, on that historic mission. After the formalities of the occasion were over, the Duke delivered the Queen's message to the people of Malaya and handed over the Constitutional Instrument of the Transfer of Power to the Prime Minister of the Federation, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who had earlier negotiated the epoch-making change on behalf of the rulers and people of Malaya.

I had known Tunku Abdul Rahman for a fairly long time. On the eve of Merdeka, I met him while he was coming out of the studios of Radio Malaya after recording his message to the people for broadcast immediately after the proclamation of Merdeka. He was in a happy mood and he readily walked back to the studio to give me an unscheduled interview for All India Radio.

But that morning at the Merdeka Stadium, it was a grave, solemn-looking Tunku who read the Proclamation, his voice choked with emotion, his eyes damp with tears of joy. And, as if dazed by the greatness of the occasion, the Tunku looked silently at the distinguished audience before him and then led the vast multitudes in the stadium and all around it in thundering shouts of "Merdeka!"

The next moment, the flag of the Federation of Malaya glided up the mast, slowly, gracefully, the crescent and the star glowing in the morning sun. An air of absolute solemnity descended on the scene. A venerable, old Muslim divine in flowing robes came forward, his palm raised to heavens amidst the melodious call to prayer. And, finally, the fanfare of trumpets and a 101-

gun salute to mark the birth of yet another new Asian nation, the Federation of Malaya.

That was Merdeka Malaya, August 1957, an important milestone in the resurgence of Asia.

If the summer of 1943 marked the turning-point in World War II, it also brought the first glimmer of freedom for the nations of Asia, then groaning under the colonial yoke, or under alien military occupation.

The Russo-German War was raging in Europe that year. The Battle of Britain was beginning to subside. The United States Fleet, which the Japanese had "completely annihilated" a dozen times, seemed still afloat and active in the Pacific. Malaya, Singapore and all South-East Asia lay prostrate under Japanese occupation. Unrest, disaffection, and anti-Japanese guerilla warfare prevailed almost everywhere in Japan's "Greater East Asia" sphere.

In that hour of crisis, Japan announced a new deal for Asians in the occupied countries in what was called the Dai Toa (Greater East Asia) Declaration. This declaration pledged independence for Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines, "special treatment" for Malaya and other British colonial territories. Amid the dire poverty and ruthless terror of those days, however, few people in South-East Asia fancied the Dai Toa Declaration. Fewer people imagined that it was the prelude to sweeping changes in Asia, regardless of who won the war and how.

The War ended, with the surrender of Japan, almost two years after the Dai Toa Declaration. But the face of Asia began to change since then and though the post-war renaissance of Asia has produced its own problems, it has considerably influenced world affairs in the last quarter of the century.

The winds of change, which swept all Asia, soon spread to Africa. The process still continues, amid conflicts and crises, trials and tribulations, tears and triumphs, and the threat of

new imperialism, backed by an ideology that is repugnant to most Asians and Africans.

Freedom came to Malaya and Malayans, not through a long-drawn-out struggle against colonial rule as in former French Indo-China, or in the former Netherlands East Indies, but through a process of evolution, to which Malayan nationalism and British statesmanship contributed almost equally.

In August 1945, war-ravaged Malaya and Singapore welcomed the return of the British. In less than four years of Japanese occupation they were convinced that British colonialism, with all its faults, was better than Japanese military rule. The result was that, while Indonesia launched a bitter armed struggle against the return of Dutch colonial rule, and the people of Indo-China resisted the French re-occupation of their country, Malaya and Singapore seemed to be happy under the British flag again, though Britain had bowed out of some of its prized possessions like India and Burma.

Anyone who knew Malaya and Singapore before the war and during the Japanese military occupation would easily understand why the Malayans and the Singaporeans behaved slightly differently from the people of other territories under colonial rule after the surrender of Japan. True they were far less politically conscious than the people of India and Burma, even of Indonesia and Vietnam. But economically, they were far better off under British rule than at any time under Japanese military occupation. And their individual freedom and their rightful place in business and society were secure under the British laws, as long as they were reconciled to their political lot, even though under protest and without seriously upsetting the colonial regime.

But Japanese military occupation was different, in Malaya as elsewhere in South-East Asia. It was downright terror, from one end of the land to the other, affecting all strata of society.

No one kept a count of the Chinese massacred by the Japanese militarists, not even the Singapore Government that recently claimed and received some sort of "reparations" for that awful crime. No less than 100,000 Indian labourers and perhaps nearly half that number of Britons and Australians died on Japan's "death railway" between Thailand and Burma. Most of the Malays survived the ordeal for the simple reason that their likely contribution to the Japanese war effort was rather limited, as they were largely rural folk and, in any case, incapable of spearheading an organised resistance movement against the Japanese.

In the years immediately after the Japanese surrender, Malaya prospered enormously under British rule. Malaya's rubber and tin began to flow to the markets of the world. Singapore became equally prosperous, as an important supply base for troubled Indonesia, and on the strength of its flourishing entrepot trade with the mainland and with various other regions of Southeast Asia. But this streak of post-war prosperity in Malaya and Singapore had a number of forces to contend with.

Singapore was restless behind the spurt of prosperity, while the entire Peninsula in the north was in the throes of a communist insurrection. And this communist insurrection in Malaya was led by the man who, in 1945, had led the Malayan contingent of the heroes of the anti-Japanese resistance movement at the grand victory parade in London!

It was a grim conflict, a frontless, faceless war, between armed communist bands mainly Chinese, and the British security forces in Malaya. The communist insurrectionists waged a relentless guerilla war against the authorities. It was a tale of blood and steel, sweat and tears for thousands of Malayans.

The Malayan communists, who had actively sabotaged the Japanese war effort, using arms and ammunition they had received from the Allied forces, switched to an armed revolt

against the British authorities early in 1948. This communist insurrection in Malaya was timed to coincide with the outbreak of similar revolts in Burma, Indonesia and Indo-China, even in India, in conformity with the new tactical line adopted by the Cominform in 1947. The communist revolt in neighbouring Philippines also gained momentum by that time.

In Malaya, which the British then ruled through the reigning Sultans, the communist objective did not seem to be to overthrow the Government, though they had called for this. They seemed intent on crippling the Malayan economy and weakening the British position in general, through the disruption of Malaya's capacity for earning enormous foreign exchange by exploiting the country's rubber and tin.

The Government acted promptly to counter the communist revolt. It declared a state of emergency throughout the country. The emergency which lasted twelve years was ended by the Government of the Federation of Malaya that took over from Britain on August 31, 1957.

But it was a hectic campaign while it lasted. Some 35,000 British soldiers and thousands of Malayan armed police fought the communists at the height of the insurrection. For several years, the size of the rebel forces remained constant, somewhere between 5,000 and 6,000, despite deaths and captures. The insurrection cost the Government about US $ 100 million every year.

Eventually, the insurgents were forced to withdraw to the jungle region in the northeastern part of the country, adjacent to Thailand, where their numbers steadily dwindled to about 500 men by 1964. By mid-1970, however, their number had increased to well over 1,000, with the possibility of additional support in preparation for a revival of the movement.

What was significant about the Malayan communist insurrection was that, unlike similar revolts and guerilla warfare

in Burma and Indo-China, the movement failed to pose a real threat to the stability of the Government. The communist insurgents in Malaya did not have the advantage of a strongly held territorial base of control, or of widespread support from the population as a whole. Many Chinese did not support the communists, in spite of the communist victory in their homeland. Malayan communists were highly suspect among the indigenous Malay population because they were largely Chinese. Unlike Vietnam, where nationalism was a potent force which the communists exploited in their struggle for power, there was yet no Malayan nationalism. And again, unlike Vietnam or Laos, the Malayan communists did not have the benefit of a sanctuary across the border.

The communist insurrection was suppressed and the hard core communists in the movement went into hiding in the Thailand-Malaya frontier hills. They limited their activities among the local Chinese population and, in spite of numerous consultative meetings between the security forces on both sides of the border, neither side has ventured into the communist hideouts.

Meanwhile, the rebel leader on the hills, Chin Peng, one-time hero of anti-Japanese resistance in Malaya and leader of the Malayan Communist Party, has somehow managed to make frequent trips to Peking and Hanoi. His movements, however, have always been a mystery. The last time he openly came out of his jungle hideout was in September 1955, two years before the dawn of Malayan independence, after Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, who then headed a caretaker government, proclaimed an amnesty for the communist terrorists to facilitate a meeting with their leader.

The Tunku and two colleagues met Chin Peng and two of his associates in a school building in the northern State of Kedah. The leaders of the Malayan independence movement and the communists agreed to disagree but, as promised before-

hand, the Tunku and his associates allowed the communist leaders to go back to their mountain hideouts before they withdrew the offer of amnesty. Since then the communist insurrection lost momentum, though the "emergency" was formally lifted nearly five years after the epic meeting between the government leaders and the Malayan communists.

And so, on August 31, 1957, Malaya celebrated, not only the advent of national independence, but also the impending collapse of the grinding communist insurrection. The new regime provided a political meeting-ground for the people of various races and cultures inhabiting the country, which in the words of its Prime Minister, was all set to become a model United Nations of Asia at the crossroads of South-East Asia.

Amidst the grand celebrations in Kuala Lumpur and throughout the country on Merdeka Day, everybody seemed to have forgotten the hard days of the Japanese military occupation and the harsh days of the communist insurrection that followed Allied victory in World War II. Almost everybody was convinced that multi-racial Malaya, with its abundant wealth and enlightened leadership, was endowed with a bright and happy future. Perhaps a few raised anxious questions on two important considerations: the problem of drawing together Malaya's diverse races and the likelihood of a communist upsurge in South-East Asia.

For the time being, however, it was the cry of "Merdeka!" —Freedom—that echoed and re-echoed throughout Malaya. A new nation was born that day fifteen years ago, with its prosperous multi-racial society living in peace and harmony.

II. THE LONG HAUL

BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN against the communist insurrection Malaya naturally was caught in the winds of political change that wafted over Southern and South-Eastern Asia since the end of World War II. The process of de-colonisation, initiated by Britain with its withdrawal from India in 1947, had spread fast. But in the case of Malaya, because of special circumstances that governed the relations between the local population and the alien authority in power, complicated by the communist revolt that swept the land, it was a long haul to Merdeka that Malayans celebrated on August 31, 1957.

The transfer of power was smooth. British commercial interests were safe. The British Government concluded a defence pact with the Government of the Federation of Malaya. British officers still continued in the service of the Malayan Government which had changed hands. All that remained of the British Empire in Asia, after Malayan independence, was four territories—the Island City of Singapore, which had already made considerable headway with the introduction of self-government; the territories of Sarawak and North Borneo on the Indonesian-held island of Borneo; and the colony of Hongkong, astride the communist mainland of China.

The first of the British Settlements in the region was established in Penang in 1786. Stamford Raffles, the founder of Singapore, arrived almost twenty years later. Yet, it was only in the sixty years before Merdeka that Malaya went through its colonial heyday. The major political trend of this period was the attempt by British officials to unify the administration of the various territories they had dominated. This attempt, however,

proved a failure, because it coincided with two momentous movements of world history—the final phase of European imperialism and the upsurge of Asian nationalism. This meant that British expansion was continuing in Malaya and other parts of South-East Asia, at the same time as British power was on the decline elsewhere in Asia.

As the twentieth century opened, Britain was confidently promoting her influence in Malaya. Already, the "advice" of the British residents in the States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang had become a fiction for British control. For, after the so-called Federal Agreement was accepted by the rulers of these States, the Federated Malay States soon became a name for what was really an administrative union, controlled by the Resident-General in Kuala Lumpur.

In the northern part of the Malay Peninsula, British influence was extended in 1902 and, by 1909, these States of Trengannu, Kedah, Kelantan and Perlis were transferred to British Malaya. Later, these States concluded separate agreements with the British Government, accepting British advisers. By 1914, the Sultan of Johore also accepted a British adviser. Since then, Johore and the northern States were referred to as the Unfederated Malay States.

Thus, British expansion in Malaya reached its zenith in the years immediately before World War I. The constitutional position, however, was most diverse. The Crown Colony of the Straits Settlements—Singapore, Malacca, Penang, with the Province of Wellesley, and Dindings—was the only territory under direct British sovereignty. Here the Governor ruled autocratically under the British Colonial Office, with small executive and legislative councils. In the Federated Malay States, the Malay rulers remained sovereign in theory, although the Residents controlled their governments. Instead of the Malay Sultans governing under the advice of the Resident, the govern-

ment under the supervision of the Resident-General carried on the administration. In the Unfederated Malay States, the forms of "advice" seemed slightly better respected. These States retained more of their Malay character.

British control, however, never went unchallenged. In Malaya, as early as 1903, the Sultan of Perak demanded that the growing power of the Resident-General of the Federated Malay States be checked. Later, a Federal Council was created, consisting of the High Commissioner and the Sultans, but somehow it only resulted in depressing the powers of the Sultans.

The period between the two World Wars witnessed a great deal of political manipulations by the British Government but all these were primarily aimed at perpetuating British domination over Malaya. By the end of World War I, Britain had accepted that, in India and parts of Africa, the goal was eventual self-government. Yet, the Malayan territories were mainly protected States and here British policy was less clear.

In 1925, the then British High Commissioner suggested a Malayan Union, which would preserve the individuality of the States. He announced that the Sultans, State Councils and Residents of the Federated Malay States should have a position similar to that in the Unfederated States. The same proposition was mentioned again in 1931. But, in spite of all the pressure to create a unified self-governing British Malaya, the project was rejected by the British authorities. One reason that was advanced by the British rulers of those days against the creation of a unified self-governing British Malaya was that the position of the Malay Sultans was sacrosanct and that a democratic regime including the Chinese and Indian immigrants would represent a "betrayal" of the Malays.

All these debates, however, were confined to civil servants, planters and businessmen; the bulk of the inhabitants took little interest in them. Yet in the 1930s, the various communities

in Malaya showed growing political sensitivity. And the general effect of British control, constitutional diversity and communal divisions was that when the Japanese entry into World War II shattered the relative calm of Southeast Asia, there was no Malayan "nation" to resist the Japanese.

An effective façade had been presented to the world. There law and order, economic growth and many of the services of a modern State had been erected. Yet something was missing. The Chinese, the Indians, the Europeans and even the Malays owed no loyalty to Malaya as such. There had been no genuine political advance, no preparation for democratic franchise. Britain, indeed, had no clear goal for Malaya, when Japan plunged all Asia in war in December 1941.

The period between 1942 and 1945 was a great watershed in the history of Asia. Although the Japanese did not give any semblance of independence to Malaya, as in Burma and the Philippines, the period of the Japanese military occupation was a vital phase of Malayan political evolution. The Japanese at first tried to divide the various communities. Attempts were made to win the support of the Malays; Indians were recruited into an army to "liberate" their motherland; the Chinese started with numerous disadvantages under the Japanese regime but later only the communists were harshly treated; and the Europeans were interned. Still, the Japanese were not able effectively to subjugate the Malay Peninsula. The communist-dominated Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, in the jungles of Malaya, wrought havoc on the Japanese war effort.

The result was that, when the British returned to Malaya in September 1945, they discovered various nationalist parties which had flourished in the time-lag between the Japanese collapse and the British landings. This meant that there was a re-orientation of British plans for Malaya. Whereas the pre-war policy had been to preserve the Sultans and to avoid demo-

cratic advance, the British Colonial Office decided that reforms were needed for Malaya. A British envoy toured all the States and secured new treaties in which "full power and jurisdiction" were vested in the Crown, for the first time since the colonial penetration of Malaya had begun early in the 19th century.

But the British civil servants and politicians had under-estimated the resilience of the Malay aristocracy, whose rights they had preserved in the inter-war years. Thus, there arose a bitter controversy over the Malayan Union and it accelerated the bid for independence.

When the Federation of Malaya was first established in 1948, the responsibility for the country's security and development was still in the hands of the British. The main objectives at that time were two—the removal of the communist threat and the creation of a nation out of a multi-racial society. In fulfilment of both these objectives, the British soon acknowledged that the assistance and co-operation of the local political leaders were crucial. To fight the communists, it was not enough to have superior arms. And colonial rule, however efficient, was a liability which Malaya could not afford in the grim struggle for the "hearts and minds of the people".

Besides, a nation cannot be built by paternalism and goodwill alone. The new nation would have to be built on what the citizens and their leaders wanted, and their aspirations could not be determined by bureaucrats and foreign experts. Thus, the key to the history of the nine years from 1948 to Malaya's independence in 1957 was the growth of Malayan nationalism. This nationalism was to be a bulwark against the pretensions of the Malayan communist party which claimed to be nationalist.

It was also the force that brought together the majority of the people who wanted freedom and a common identity. But nationalism in a plural society has always been a complicated matter. In Malaya it was quite different from the nationalism

of homogeneous people, as in Burma or Indonesia, where it could thrive on emotional and traditional ties. Malayan nationalist leaders soon realised that the nationalism of many peoples depended instead on complex relationships, representing judicious checks and balances, and that it relied on wisdom and tolerance to a far greater extent than under any other political set-up.

Political parties, working with a multi-racial nationalism, could function in two ways. In Malaya, they could organise on non-communal lines, admitting members from all communities, or they could be based on communities, restricting membership to one of the three major racial groups in the country. For some years since 1948, Malaya witnessed the advent of political parties of both these types. For, in spite of the commonly-shared desire for freedom, nobody seemed to be sure which of the two types of political organisation would suit the country better.

The three major parties in existence at that time were the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO); the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). The UMNO was the party of the indigenous Malays; the MCA was sponsored and led by the immigrant Chinese in the country, who had already organised various associations which were going through a process of unification; and the MIC consisted of members of the Indian community. There was little co-ordination among the three groups and the British authorities were able to practise their time-honoured game of "divide and rule" against them.

The Malay statesman, Dato Onn bin Jaafar, who had founded the UMNO, sought a way out of this tangle. He founded a non-communal party, the Independence of Malaya Party, whose membership included members of all the three major racial groups. But this organisation had the effect of splitting the

UMNO, the MCA and the MIC, without effectively bolstering its own strength. It soon became clear that the majority of the people were still unprepared for an all-Malaya non-communal party. And once this became known, it paved the way for a new kind of political grouping, the coming together of two, and later three, political parties—the UMNO, the MCA and the MIC—under one flag, the Alliance Party.

It was at this stage that Tunku Abdul Rahman, who has held the centre of the Malayan and Malaysian political stage for nearly two decades, appeared on the horizon. After a none-too-hectic career as an official of the State of Kedah, in North Malaya, of which his father was the Sultan, the Tunku returned to England to continue his legal studies and was called to the Bar from the Inner Temple, London, in 1949. He was then aged 46 and in his speech on being called to the Bar, he quipped that he was probably the only student in the history of that famous Inn who had been admitted to the Bar on the silver jubilee of his enrolment as a student!

Tunku Abdul Rahman returned to Malaya early in 1949 and immediately accepted the chairmanship of the Kedah branch of the United Malay National Organisation. Two years later, he resigned from Government service to become President of the United Malay National Organisation, in succession to Dato Onn bin Jaafar, who had resigned to head the Independence of Malaya Party which, he thought, was the answer to Malaya's multi-racial problem.

In striking contrast to Dato Onn's idealistic approach to the solution of Malaya's multi-racial problem, the Tunku (as Tunku Abdul Rahman became affectionately known among the common people of Malaya) evolved a more expeditious programme of racial unity. He had long held the view that the political problems of Malaya lay in close co-operation among all the races inhabiting the country and it was this idea that led to

the political alliance of the United Malay National Organisation, with the Malayan Chinese Association, led by the late Dato Tan Cheng Lock. This alliance was formed for the purpose of contesting the first municipal elections in Malaya in 1952 and it proved a highly successful move.

By February 1953, after a series of round-table meetings between Tunku Abdul Rahman and his associates on the one side, and Dato Tan Cheng Lock and his colleagues on the other, agreement had become so close as to lead to the setting up of liaison committees between the local branches of the UMNO and the MCA throughout the country. Shortly afterwards, the Alliance evolved a common policy in regard to the holding of the general elections in the Federation. A little later, the Malayan Indian Congress joined forces with the UMNO and the Independence of Malaya Party, with its projected multi-racial organisation and outlook, was soon forgotten.

The first general elections in 1955 swept Tunku Abdul Rahman and the Alliance Party into office. The Alliance gained 51 out of 52 elected seats and the Tunku became Chief Minister and Minister for Home Affairs in the Malayan Government. That was the signal for earnest negotiations with the British Government to fulfil the national objective, viz., independence of Malaya.

One of the points in the Alliance election manifesto was a pledge to end the "Emergency" as early as possible, with the promise of an amnesty for communist terrorists. Accordingly, the Tunku persuaded the British security authorities to accept the declaration of an amnesty for the communists and arranged a personal meeting with the communist leader, Chin Peng, in December 1955. The Tunku's mission to reach an agreement with the communists in the jungles, however, proved abortive, because of his insistence that members of the Communist Party be screened, once they came out of the jungle in order to test their loyalty to the country.

The Tunku went ahead with his plans for Malayan independence. Immediately after the failure of his talks with the communist leader, he left for London to negotiate with the British Government on what was called the "Merdeka mission". This mission obtained, for the elected government of Malaya, complete control of internal defence and security, finance, and the "Malayanisation" of the public services. It was also agreed at this meeting that a constitutional commission should be set up to recommend a new constitution for the country and that Independence should be proclaimed by August 31, 1957. On his return to Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman assumed the office of Minister for Internal Security and Defence, in addition to the offices of Chief Minister and Minister for Home Affairs.

In May 1957, Tunku Abdul Rahman again went to London. This time, he took with him a delegation, comprising representatives of the Alliance Party and the Malay Rulers, in order to reach final agreement with Britain on independence for the Federation of Malaya. And the glittering ceremony at Merdeka Stadium on August 31, 1957 came at the climax of Malaya's long haul to Merdeka.

That day, in Kuala Lumpur, amid the glow and gaiety of the celebrations, I found myself analysing the political outlook in Malaya with a few colleagues, all newspapermen, who had worked with me years ago. And that group included Malays, Chinese and Indians, and a few visiting correspondents from neighbouring countries.

Almost everybody paid the highest tribute to the Tunku for the way in which he had conducted the difficult negotiations with the British Government and, at the same time, brought together the various racial and political elements in the country, and put up a united front for the demand for independence.

Not an iota of doubt was expressed by anybody about Malaya's economic future. The country's enormous resources in rubber

and tin would take care if it. Already, the face of Malaya had begun to change, in spite of the "Emergency" and the campaign against the communist insurrectionists. One aspect of Independent Malaya that induced a measure of doubt in some of us was the future of the Alliance form of government that the country had chosen, especially as it was based on racial grouping. Nobody contended that it was the best form for all time, or that it would satisfy everybody. But it was agreed that through the Alliance Party the country had established the political base on which to build a new nation. It was also recognised that, only with the majority of the people behind it, could the new nation prepare to defend itself against its enemies, both internal and external.

Against these very valid considerations of those days, there were those who indulged in long-range speculations. How long will this "marriage of convenience" endure between the political parties representing three separate racial groups, functioning in a small country like Malaya? Would Malayan statesmanship start planning immediately for shifts in the political accent and outlook for the next generation of Malayans? It was all well to talk glowingly about Malaya, with its diverse racial elements, as a model United Nations. But it disregarded certain harsh realities, at peril to itself.

For the time being, however, it was a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving for all Malaya. There was all-round recognition of the remarkable wisdom of all concerned that gave Malaya its nationhood, peacefully and without bloodshed.

III. A NEW NATION

THE NEWLY-INDEPENDENT Federation of Malaya was an unparalleled success in troubled South-East Asia. Malaya's Government, headed by Tunku Abdul Rahman, controlled an overwhelming majority in the House of Representatives, and the governing Alliance Party provided a political meeting-ground for the Malay, Chinese and Indian communities. Malaya had the second highest per capita income in all Asia, surpassed only by the tiny British-protected Sultanate of Brunei, on the island of Borneo. Malaya also forged ahead in economic development much more rapidly than any of the other Asian nations.

The Tunku chose his cabinet colleagues with scrupulous care. For the portfolio of Home Affairs and Internal Security, the Tunku brought in an old and trusted friend, Dato (Dr.) Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman, who hails from the southern State of Johore. As Minister of Finance, he chose Mr Tan Siew Sin, who headed the Malayan Chinese Association. As Minister for Works, Posts and Telecommunications, he appointed an Indian, Dato V. T. Sambanthan, who represented the Malayan Indian Congress. Most of the other cabinet posts were distributed on the basis of communal parity, with special treatment for the indigenous Malays who belonged to the UMNO (United Malay National Organisation).

This communal representation seemed to have worked very well in Malaya, at least for the time being. The men chosen by the Tunku for cabinet posts were ideally suited for the portfolios allocated to them, in point of talent, experience, and driving-force. The new leaders were not hampered by red tape or by officials in Whitehall. Whatever was essential to nation-

building was the urgent concern of the Government. This has been true ever since Merdeka Day.

Much thought and expert care had gone into the drafting of the Malayan Constitution. The Governmental system in the Federation of Malaya roughly resembled that of India, especially as it possessed a non-political Head of State, a legislature composed of two houses, one directly elected, a cabinet responsible to that House, a neutral civil service, and an independent judiciary. Not far below the surface were remnants of the British colonial administration, as exemplified by the District Officers.

There were also elements of traditional Malay rule. These Malay rulers played an important part in the constitutional structure and, together with the governors of Penang and Malacca, constituted the "Conference of Rulers". The belief that the Rulers and the States attracted strong loyalty from the people was the main reason why a Federal Constitution was chosen for Malaya.

In practice, however, the powers of the Federal Government were considerable, compared with those of the States, and the Constitution placed few obstacles to the powers of the Federal Legislature to amend the Constitution itself. Liaison between Federal and State Governments was helped by the existence of the National Finance Council, the National Land Council, and the National Council for Local Government, on which all the Governments were represented.

The chief feature of the House of Representatives, at the time of Malayan independence, was the weakness of the Opposition. Even after the 1959 elections, the ruling Alliance Party had nearly three-quarters of seats, while the Opposition was split into several groups. Yet the behaviour of the Alliance Government in the House reflected its policy in the country, to minimise expressions of communalism, and to repress any activity it

regarded as subversive, because the "Emergency" was still there for nearly three years after Merdeka. The Senate, on the other hand, was composed partly of members chosen by State Legislatures and partly of nominated members.

Beneath the institutional framework, which functioned effectively, were the social problems and tensions resulting from the existence of a multi-racial society. Cleavages of race, language and religion were intensified by external forces and influences. In essence the 1957 Constitution, and the subsequent Government policy, represented a bargain between the Malay and Chinese partners in the ruling Alliance Party.

Let us take a look at Malaya in particular and South-East Asia in general for an assessment of the racial picture inherited by the new rulers of Malaya.

Traditionally, the South-East Asian region has been a meeting-ground of races and cultures, as evidenced by its diversity of religions, and of conflicting political and economic interests. The overwhelming majority of more than 200 million people who inhabit the several lands of South-East Asia are of Mongoloid stock.

The ancestors of most of them migrated southward from China many centuries ago. Of today's major population groups, the first to move into the area were the Malays (or Indonesians, as they may be called, ethnically) who arrived between 2,500 and 1,500 B.C. The Malays are found today in Indonesia and the Philippines, where they constitute an overwhelming majority of the inhabitants, and in Malaya, where they are the single important ethnic group.

Malaya's earliest contacts from across the seas came from India. Indians came out principally to trade. Tin, scented wood and the spices of the East were in great demand by the Romans. According to historians, the missionary zeal of Buddhism was another reason for the Indian influx into South-East

Asia. Gunavarman is said to have visited Java and Sumatra about A.D. 420 and converted many Javanese rulers to Buddhism. Some settled along the coast; some others established empires in what is now northern Malaya. Anyway, the Malays today show evidence of having assimilated some of India's culture. This is evident, even today, in the Malay customs, art, religion, law, astrology, literature, music, sculpture in stone, metal work and the weaving of silk.

Though the recorded history of the Chinese in Malaya goes as far back as the 14th century, Chinese settlement in the Peninsula did not begin until the Portuguese period in the 16th century. Chinese interests were confined to trade. Malacca became the main port of call for Chinese traders, as it lay on the sea-route between India and China. Racial and cultural influence of the Chinese on the Malays was, however, slight. First the Chinese settled in very small numbers. Second, obstacles to intermarriage existed after the 17th century, as by what time, the Malays had fully embraced Islam. And it was not until the end of the 19th century, when British authority was speedily extended in the Peninsula, that the biggest influx of immigrants to Malaya took place.

It is possible to distinguish two distinct phases in the history of the modern settlement of aliens in Malaya up to about A.D. 1900. The three Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore along the coastline epitomised the early trading and strategic interests of Britain in the East. The second phase began with the "tin rush" of the second half of the 19th century. The lure of tin resulted in a flood of immigrant labourers, especially from China, to the mining areas in the Peninsula.

Meanwhile, the opening up of large estates, growing first sugar and coffee, and later rubber, caused a demand for labourers, which led to the entry of thousands of South Indians. They were first recruited as indentured labourers but this practice

soon gave way to a system of assisted immigration financed from a fund to which all the employers contributed.

Thus, the latter part of the 19th century saw both the extension and the intensification of settlement in Malaya. But this was a movement, not of indigenous peoples extending their agricultural or industrial activities, but of alien people, who, ignoring to a large extent the coastal Malay agricultural areas in the east, flooded into the new tin pioneering zone in the western foothills of Malaya. There was little competition for land or occupation between the Malays and the immigrant Chinese or Indians. Their geographical distribution and their economic functions were usually entirely different.

Through the years, Malaya developed a racial structure which became unique by the time World War II broke out. In this society of many races, the Malays make up about 48 per cent of the total population of over 7 million, the Chinese almost 40 per cent and the Indians, Pakistanis, and others together about 12 per cent. (In neighbouring Singapore, on the other hand, the Chinese make an absolute majority of almost 76 per cent.) Included in the Malay count are indigenous aborigines, numbering about 35,000. Civilisation is slowly creeping up on these people who are gradually losing their nomadic and pagan characteristics and adopting the ways of the Malays, with whom many inter-marry.

A great deal had gone into this racial mixture in Malaya—and a good many years of mass migration. Some 350 years ago, in the Philippines, the Spaniards, who then ruled that country, were fearful of the business acumen of the Chinese settlers. So, in a contrived uprising, the Spaniards butchered some 30,000 Chinese in the Philippines. Strangely enough, when the Manchu Emperor heard the tragic news, instead of sending an expeditionary force to avenge the massacre of his subjects, he declared that they deserved their fate

Plate 1—The National Mosque commonly known as Masjid Negara features a 240-foot minaret and an 18-pointed star-shaped dome, representing the 13 States of Malaysia and the 5 pillars of Islam.

Plate 2—In Malayan pottery locally mined China clay and lime are used. Picture shows a Chinese at work on the heavy potter's wheel shaping the latex cups with his skilful fingers.

Plate 3—Tourists find these "Mengkuang" (sisal hemp) hats of brilliant colours, light, cool and cheap.

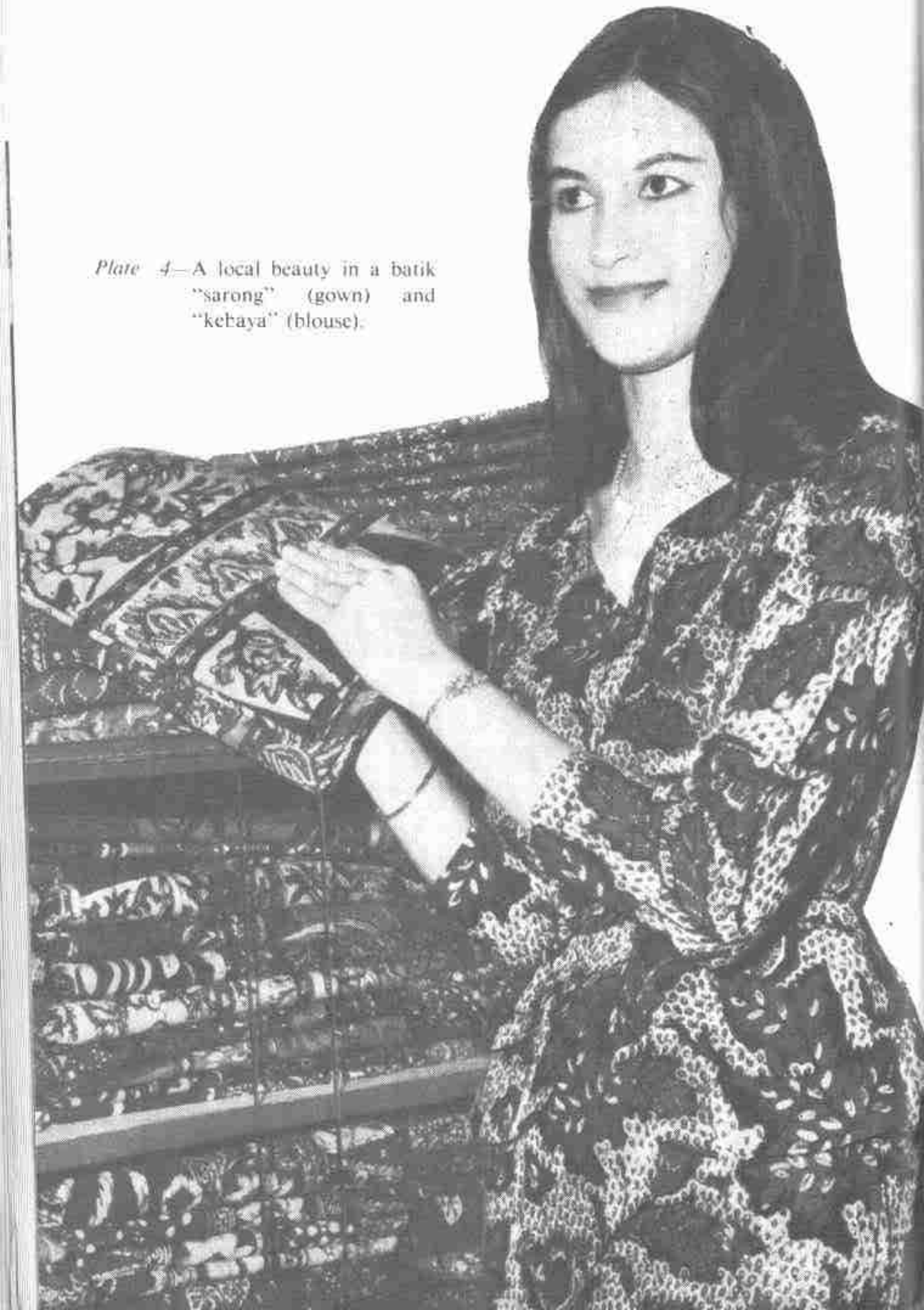


Plate 4—A local beauty in a batik "sarong" (gown) and "kebaya" (blouse).

for abandoning their ancestral graves!

That imperial decision set the pattern for Chinese migrations into South-East Asian countries. The immigrants had to look after themselves and could not expect aid from their Government when they encountered trouble in strange lands. It was under this circumstance, and spurred by the unrest that prevailed in China in those days, that the first influx of Chinese immigrants landed in Malaya.

They were mainly poor people, who first worked on the British settlements in Singapore and elsewhere. Then came the larger numbers, again to Singapore, and later to the mining centres in Malaya. Simultaneously, after the founding of Singapore and the establishment of the Straits Settlements, even larger numbers of Chinese immigrants came to Singapore and Malaya. And the Chinese had an uncanny way of multiplying themselves.

If the first immigrant happened to be a labourer, his son would be a white-collar worker and he might send his sons to study in England. The result was that, long before the advent of World War I, there was quite a large sprinkling of lawyers and doctors, teachers and others among the Chinese community in Malaya. This was the pattern of Chinese development everywhere in Southeast Asia—in Indo-China, in Indonesia, and even in Thailand.

In Indo-China and Thailand as well as elsewhere, the Chinese immigrants married local girls, but this was not easily possible in Malaya. The result was that many of the immigrant Chinese went back to their homeland to get married, and once they had settled down, the Chinese family next door was competent to seek their girls in marriage. Thus, in a few generations, these families became closely united and, if one became rich through the tin mines, the other became rich through its trading activities as a comprador. Many of the Chinese families

in Malaya and Singapore today could be traced to this pattern of development.

Fabulous tales are told about these old-time millionaires in Singapore. There was one who started life as a carrier of night-soil and later built his palace, where the first thing on entering the premises was a pair of large golden buckets, complete with the inevitable stick, made of gold, to lift the stuff on his back. Of course, the old "Towkay" also built so many other institutions like hospitals and others to commemorate his activities in Singapore!

When the Chinese Republic came into being in 1911, after the fall of the Manchu dynasty, Chinese embassies and consulates were set up in many countries. The new regime also proclaimed that overseas Chinese might go back home, and still be treated as Chinese, but that had not helped, to any appreciable degree, the overseas Chinese in times of trouble. And so, until the nations of South-East Asia became independent, the Chinese were changing their tunes of self-preservation to suit the pattern of the new times and sentiments, for or against them.

I have heard this story in South-East Asia. It seems that the Japanese, when they conquered Malaya, had prescribed for Japanese subjects, including Chinese, a new ruler in China. His name was Wang Ching-wei, who had left Chiang Kai-shek and had been installed as President of China in Nanking. The Chinese in Malaya found a way out of this duplication of rulers in China. Immediately after the Japanese advent, most Chinese who were close followers of Chiang Kai-shek had a painting of Wang Ching-wei on the rear side of the huge frame. Whenever the Japanese were around, Wang beamed at them from the mantel-piece, while Chiang came back for the family to see the moment the Japanese were out of sight!

By the time the Japanese marched into Singapore, it was a

Chinese city. But, thanks to Singapore's old ties with the British, the Japanese managed to lord it over in Singapore. The Chinese, after sulking for a while, did business with the Japanese—and made their pile of Japanese bank notes. But most of their regular business was closed and they did not know what to do with the Japanese bank notes, which they managed to accumulate. Quite a few Chinese, on the other hand, had gone out of the country and managed to send their children for education to England and the United States of America.

World War II was the turning-point in the history of the Chinese in Malaya. The anti-Japanese People's Army came into being during that time and it was this Army that finally held the British at bay in Malaya for nearly twelve years.

What took place during the first campaign, launched by the Chinese Army, has been described as a war of liberation by the Chinese, for the Chinese, to coincide with the advent of the Chinese communists to power in the homeland. That campaign, however, misfired.

The Indians, who had stayed away from the Chinese during the first phase of the campaign, seemed to have joined hands with the Chinese this time. Indians, like the Chinese, had grown with Malaya and, when Malaya came of age, the Indian community in the country thought that it had a legitimate share in the governance of Malaya. And, with Independent India, urging all Indian nationals to stay on where they were, identifying themselves with the aspirations of the people among whom they lived, this was a natural thought on the part of the Indians.

For well over a century, Indians had settled down in Malaya in large numbers. It was the plantations and the lack of employment opportunities for the unskilled that brought thousands of Indians to Malaya by the second half of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. There are harrowing tales of the number of Indians, who died on the line of duty in the

rubber estates of Malaya, and on other projects in the country. Yet, those who did not fall in the struggle for survival, did well, though, by the very nature of their job, it took them two or three generations to gain the notice of the authorities.

Meanwhile, there was another line of Indian influx into Malaya—the clerical and other categories of immigrants. These naturally followed the opening up of Malaya to trade and these immigrants stayed on in the towns. And then there were Indian traders themselves, especially the Nattukottai Chettiars, who did successfully as moneylenders in Malaya during the early years of this century.

But it must be said that Indian workers in Malaya, particularly those who were brought to work for Indians, were badly treated by their employers, both in respect of wages and working hours. The British authorities tolerated all this injustice as they were trying to perpetuate their own line of injustice, in respect of the vast majority of Indians, employed by them as workers, either on plantations or on State enterprises.

Then came the war and a great deal of upset for the Indian community. The end of the war found Malaya taking care of nearly 50,000 Indians who had survived the ordeal of the Death Railway between Thailand and Malaya. Besides, there were numerous others who required care and attention. In March 1946, when Jawaharlal Nehru visited Malaya, he was so much moved by the sufferings of the Indians, that he nominated himself as Chairman of the Relief Committee. And he gave this warning to the Malayan planters: "Rubber plantations here are run on cheap, rather exploited, labour. In future, one will not be able to exploit Indian labour as in the past."

With the advent of Indian freedom on August 15, 1947, India seemed to have gained tremendous importance in Malaya. More Indians started moving into Malaya and, in the years that followed, they elected to stay on. There were doctors, lawyers,

educationists and a wide variety of others. The independence of Malaya on August 31, 1957 was a great occasion for them. They had opted for Malaya but something had gone wrong somewhere inside Malaya since independence. And, eventually, the younger generation of Indians found itself aligned with the Chinese.

It seemed that every section was assigned its own duty—the Malays were given charge of politics which, incidentally, brought the biggest returns; the Chinese were given business which brought in quite substantial dividends; and the Indians got low-paid jobs in Government service and similar positions. This division of labour, which seemed quite natural, under the regime that started operating in Malaya in 1957, soon began to pall on the educated Chinese and Indians, who thought that there was more to their claim to citizenship in a democratic country.

IV. THE HOARY PAST

THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA is a new nation. The Federation of Malaysia, which came six years later, is a newer nation still. But Malaysia—and the vast archipelago, extending from Singapore to Australia—has had a long and hoary past long before the advent of the Western colonial powers in South-East Asia.

Men have lived in Malaysia since very ancient times. The Niah caves in Sarawak show evidence of human life before 50,000 B.C. There were settled communities in Malaysia 2,500 years ago that traded with China, India and other eastern lands.

Descending from Yunnan, China, bark-clad Mongoloid tribesmen reached the Malay Peninsula and the Archipelago sometime around 2,000 B.C. They lived in huts on piles with bamboo flooring and cultivated bananas, gourds, sugarcane and coconut-palms. Rice and millets provided them with cereals and fermented drink. They domesticated the buffalo and the pig. They paddled Katamarans and used fishing-traps of bamboos and wood. Some of them were head-hunters and erected megaliths to dead chieftains.

It was these tribesmen from Yunnan, who inter-married with other races and tribes, and finally became the Malays and Indonesians of today.

About the time of Christ, these primitive people came under the influence of two foreign races, the Yues and the Hindus.

The Yue traders were to be found everywhere in Malaya. They left bronze drums in the river in Pahang and near Klang in Selangor. They taught the craft of weaving cotton and

decorating it by the tie-and-dye method. They bequeathed a large vocabulary to Malaysia's aborigines but their art, largely on bronze, did not catch up, mainly because of the shortage of bronze in Malaya. The Yue influence declined with the advent of the Hindus.

Indian traders came to Malaysia almost since the time of the Buddha. Indian influence swamped all other cultural influences in the region, giving the Malays their alphabet, religion, astrology, medicine, law in place of the tribal custom, a political system, literature, the crafts of the goldsmith and the silversmith and the weaving of silk.

At the beginning of the Christian era, the luxury of the Persian and Roman Empires attracted the spices of the East. The construction of large Indian ships on the Persian model, the discovery of the Arabs' knowledge of the monsoon winds and the rise of sea-faring Buddhists in India—all these and more stimulated Indian voyages to Malaysia and the regions beyond.

The first important Hindu kingdom in Southeast Asia was Pnom, meaning Mountain covering the north of Malaya, Thailand and Indo-China. The Kingdom of Langkasuka, in North Malaya, was probably one of the vassals of this kingdom. According to Chinese chronicles, Langkasuka, with its walled capital, was in existence in the second century A.D. It straddled the land routes to Thailand and Indo-China and was trading with China since the fourth century.

According to H. G. Quaritch Wales, an eminent archaeologist, Sanskrit inscriptions of the fourth century, in the State of Kedah and Province Wellesley on the Peninsula next to Penang, as well as a number of Buddhist bronzes discovered in Kedah and Perak States, attest that the Indian pioneers in Malaysia were Buddhists. Mahayana Buddhism predominated the entire region until the fall of the Kingdom of Pnom and the advent of the Sri Vijaya Kingdom. Its influence

lasted between the 7th and 14th centuries.

For a long time, the Straits of Malacca and seas beyond on the archipelago remained under the control of the Sri Vijaya Empire and the Arab traders who started coming to the East. Sri Vijaya's stranglehold on commerce in the region led to constant fighting between them and the Arabs.

Finally, disintegration started. Rivals in Sumatra and elsewhere, as well as in Malaya, broke away from the Sri Vijaya Kingdom. Java established its own Mahapajit Empire. The Thais invaded Malaya from the north. And the missionaries of Islam dealt a death-blow to the old order in Malaya and Southeast Asia.

The next kingdom of any consequence in Malaysia was Malacca, founded early in the 15th century by a Javanese prince who had ruled the Island of Singapore—then called Temasek—with the title of Parameswara. The Thais (Siamese) then owned the island and the Parameswara became its ruler by killing the Thai Governor. Thailand retaliated and the Parameswara had to flee to Malacca. Then started the chequered story of the Port of Malacca and its rulers.

Islam was gaining popularity by then. Malacca in those days was not quite independent and owed allegiance to the State of Kedah in North Malaya which, in its turn, owed allegiance to the Sumatran Muslim State of Pasai. Parameswara, being a man of practical wisdom, married a Muslim princess of Sumatra and assumed the title of Megat Iskander Shah.

The Parameswara dynasty, however, was short-lived. Parameswara's successor reverted to the title of the Sri Vijaya Buddhist kings, called himself Maharaja, and established a constitution on the old Hindu pattern. His reign, however, was brief. By the middle of the 15th century, he was murdered by the Muslims of Malacca (said to be Tamils) who elevated to the throne his younger brother (whose mother was a Tamil) with the title of Sultan Muzaffar Shah.

Malacca then started on its career of conquest. It subjugated all Malaya, including Pattani and Kedah in the north, and fought off several attacks by the Thais. It also conquered the Sumatran States across the Straits and reigned supreme and unchallenged for almost a century.

From the States it conquered, the Malacca Empire exacted tributes—in gold, tin, and fighting men. But its fleet protected those States. That was the period of Malacca's heyday. The port had one quarter for Chinese traders, another for Indians, and yet another for the Javanese. Malacca, however, had to import all its rice and other foodstuffs.

A spurt in Chinese overseas trade and the mercantile activities of the Indians and Arabs probably made the Portuguese adventurer, Durate Barbosa, call Malacca "the richest seaport with the greatest number of merchants and abundance of shipping in the world". The Court of Malacca was also the centre of culture, old and new.

Vasco da Gama landed in India in 1498. Eleven years later, a Portuguese fleet entered Malacca but was beaten back by the ruler of Malacca and his allies. Two years later, the Portuguese came back under the leadership of Affonso de Albuquerque and captured the place. Albuquerque built a great fort, established a new currency, executed hoarders of rice and other essential commodities and left, leaving Malacca in charge of a Governor.

It was the high-handed Portuguese misrule of Malacca that brought about the end of the Portuguese possession of the port and the fort they had built. The fort was attacked by the Malay Sultans from adjacent territories, as well as by the Javanese and the Sumatrans. A Portuguese chronicler of those days condemned the Portuguese officials as "arrogant, indisciplined, and dissolute". It was recorded that the captain of the fort got £50,000 a year from perquisites and illegal private trade.

Then by the middle of the seventeenth century, the Dutch

East India Company had started operations, with headquarters in Batavia—modern Jakarta. The Dutch captured or intercepted all Portuguese ships and ruined the trade of Malacca. Finally, after a siege of 162 days, the Dutch wrested the city from the Portuguese and occupied the place for a little over a quarter of a century.

The Dutch were no better than the Portuguese as rulers. The population of Malacca was reduced to a fourth of what it used to be. The Dutch tried to monopolise trade. They wanted to sell cloth and to purchase tin and spices at their own prices. This move was challenged by the Javanese, Sumatran and Indian traders. Finally when the British built a Free Port in Penang, the Dutch monopoly in Malacca came to an end.

Britain was about the last of the Western colonial powers to reach Malaya and Malaysia. As a rival to Dutch Malacca, port of call between India and China, and as a repair station for warships, the Island of Penang was rented by the English East India Company in 1786 from the Sultan of Kedah at the instance of a young trading captain, Francis Light.

The Sultan in the lease agreement had stipulated that the Company should promise to help him against attack by any enemy from the interior, meaning Thailand and the State of Selangor. Sir Francis Light pledged this military aid and Penang was occupied by the British. The British Government, however, refused to accept Light's assurance to the Sultan for five years but finally signed an agreement, guaranteeing Kedah an annual rent for the Island and Province Wellesley which was ceded by Kedah in 1800. This was paid to the Sultan of Kedah until the proclamation of Malayan independence.

Singapore was an almost uninhabited mangrove swamp in the early years of the 19th century. Stamford Raffles took the first steps to acquire Singapore from the *de jure* ownership of the Sultan of Johore in 1824. By then, the fear of any Dutch

action against the Island was also removed. The Singapore of those days and of the early years of the 20th century is vividly described by Somerset Maugham in his stories of South-East Asia, and of the colonial rulers, their successes and failures.

The Dutch ceded Malacca to Britain in 1824 after a series of troubles, internal and external. By then there were three Crown colonies, Singapore, Malacca and Penang. The rest of the territory was nominally ruled by the Sultans, amidst a series of running battles between them and the British authorities. Before the British assumed control, there was a series of wars between the Sultans and the various invading armies from the neighbourhood.

The British in Malaya followed the same old policy of "divide and rule" which had proved so successful with the Maharajas and Nawabs of India. First the Malay States were brought under British protection and later the British tried some sort of unification of the States. The first phase took place before World War I and the second phase after World War II.

When State elections were held in 1955, the movement within Malaya became an independence movement. Every seat, except one, was captured by the Alliance Party—the party which had been formed by the merger of the Malaya, the Chinese and the Indians, the three major racial groups inhabiting Malaya.

Malaya and Malaysia had an eventful, hoary past. If it reminds you of the story of India, it is merely because history has a knack of repeating itself, and because the same colonial power was the final actor in India as well as in Malaysia before the dawn of Freedom.

V. THE TROPICAL PARADISE

THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA, which proclaimed its independence on August 31, 1957, is a unique country in many respects. Originally, it was a peninsula, at the tip of which lies the Port City of Singapore. Later, it became the Federation of Malaysia, including the City State of Singapore and the territories of Sarawak and Sabah, the two former British colonies on the Island of Borneo. The honeymoon with Singapore was short-lived. Misunderstandings arose between the leaders of Malaysia and the Prime Minister of Singapore and the separation agreement came about in less than two years.

Malaysia, therefore, comprises the Federation of Malaya on the Malay Peninsula, and the States of Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo. Malaya is bordered on the east by the South China Sea, on the south by the Strait of Johore, on the west by the Strait of Malacca and the Andaman Sea and on the north by Thailand.

The States of Sarawak and Sabah are bordered in the south by Indonesia's Kalimantan Province (Borneo Island). In the west, north and east are the South China Sea, the Pacific Ocean and the Celebes Sea, respectively.

As you fly from Kuala Lumpur or Singapore to the Borneo territories, you skirt a crescent across the sea. You touch Kuching, which was the capital of the White Rajas of Sarawak. From Sarawak, you fly to Jesselton, the capital of Sabah (North Borneo), and in between is the little, oil-rich independent Sultanate of Brunei, where President Sukarno engineered his first "revolution" in a bid to capture the Sultanate and the rest of Borneo.

Malaya is not a loose federation of the States which comprise it. It is a tight Federation and the Central Government in Kuala Lumpur is powerful throughout the Federation. In the old days, the Sultans were mere figureheads in charge of religious affairs. Today, the Sultans have come into their own in the affairs of State under a benign Federal Government.

The Sultanates of Malaya are Johore, Negri Sembilan, Pahang, Trengannu, Perak, Selangor, Kelantan and Kedah. Two other territories, the former British Crown colonies which joined the Federation, are Penang and Malacca. Besides, Malaysia comprises the States of Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo.

The two Borneo territories, however, have a larger area than mainland Malaya. The population of the Borneo States is still about two million, while the population of Malaya is about eight million.

There are inequalities among the States in the Malay Peninsula. The mountain ridge that runs from one end of the country to the other splits Malaya into two halves, the East and the West. The East was left undeveloped for years, whereas almost all developmental activities and the migration of Chinese and Indians were concentrated on the west coast.

Recently, the Government has been building trunk roads from the west coast to the east coast. The Government's community development programmes have brought new life to the villages of the east coast. It will not be a long time before the east coast will become just as prosperous as the west coast.

World War II in South-East Asia began on the east coast of Malaya. The Japanese landed at Kota Bahru and from there they fanned southwards and captured all Malaya and Singapore in less than two months. It was after World War II that the Malayans came to regard the east coast as strategically important.

The British had their forces stationed in North Malaya but they were no match for the Japanese. The one way of reaching

reinforcements was by sea, up from Singapore to Kota Bahru. The two British warships, the "Prince of Wales" and the "Repulse", were, however, sunk by the Japanese Kamakase pilots. From then onwards, it was a walkover for the Japanese in Malaya.

As you go by train from Padang Besar, the frontier between Malaya and Thailand, the Peninsula seems to shrink, until you get to Chumporn, less than two hundred miles up. There the distance between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific is just a little less than 25 miles.

A proposal to build a canal across the Isthmus of Kra has been there for years. In the 1930s, it created a big sensation. There were periodic reports that Thailand was constructing the Kra canal, which would reduce the distance between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific by more than a thousand miles. Ships would not have to go *via* Singapore but could get direct to the Gulf of Thailand *via* the Kra Canal. Mr Ward Price, of *The Daily Mail* (London), published a report saying that Japanese machinery and equipment had arrived at the proposed site of the canal and that construction work was already in full swing.

The imperial-minded British took the despatch seriously. They knew it would undermine the importance of Singapore as the Gateway to the Pacific and might serve as a Japanese base of operations in the event of an Anglo-Japanese conflict. Questions about the Kra Canal were asked in the British Parliament and in the French Chamber of Deputies. All Indo-China those days was a colony of France.

I was then in Thailand. In addition to my journalistic job with an English newspaper, I was correspondent of the Associated Press of America. And the AP sent me a cable asking for an on-the-spot story on the Kra Canal.

I took the train to Chumporn, then the bus to the other side of the Bay of Bengal, and completed the trip partly on foot

and partly by boat. I found neither canal nor any preparations for digging it.

My story to the AP squelched the rumours of the Kra Canal, for the time being. In fact, the story had been in the air for almost a century. The British themselves were the originators of the Kra Canal idea and had teams of British engineers surveying the project for years. It was given up because of probable Anglo-French complications.

In 1936-37, while the British, the French and the Dutch ruled supreme in South-East Asia, it was regarded as a great affront, on the part of Thailand, to think of a canal across the Isthmus of Kra. Today, however, the idea is being revived.

The driving spirit behind the Kra Canal project is Mr Chow Kuan-yan, a Shanghai industrialist, who is now a Thai subject. Mr Chow is keen on the project and, if it is carried out, it will change the geographical map of Malaya and Singapore—particularly the latter.

The Sultans of Malaya, under British rule, were mere playboys like the Maharajas and Nawabs of India. But a change has come over the Sultans of Malaya. They have been given a very high status in the Constitution and most of them today live up to the expectations of the people. They are no more the ornamental heads of States. They do mingle with the people as democratic rulers. They know also that some day there is a chance of their election as Yang di Pertuan Agong (the Supreme Ruler) of Malaysia.

Recently, the Sultan of Selangor organised a campaign to rid his territory, particularly the ancient port city of Klang, of the crows that pestered the place. The argument was on whether to shoot the crows or not. Finally, the Sultan ordered that the crows had become a nuisance and should be shot. In two days, the entire region was rid of the crow nuisance.

Perlis, the smallest state in North Malaya, gave Malaya and

Malaysia one of the most successful Yang di Pertuan Agong. He was everywhere among his people, not only at ceremonial functions, but also when people needed relief.

The first Yang di Pertuan Agong was the Sultan of Negri Sembilan, a barrister-at-law and former member of the Malayan Civil Service. The Sultan of Pahang was a great sports enthusiast. He used to hold regattas on the Pahang river—an event which was attended by a very large and distinguished gathering every year.

The Sultan of Johore, right across the Straits, was a colourful personality. During the British days, it was said that the Sultan was forbidden to spend the night in Singapore. British officials were scared of him to that extent. He had a particular fascination for white women.

I remember, in the early 1930s, when there were no air services, the late Sultan Ibrahim and his consort (an Englishwoman) arrived in Bangkok on a visit. There were strong rumours that the Sultan was contemplating a divorce from the Sultana.

I was then a small-time reporter in a Bangkok newspaper and I was assigned to meet the Sultan and find out about the divorce rumours.

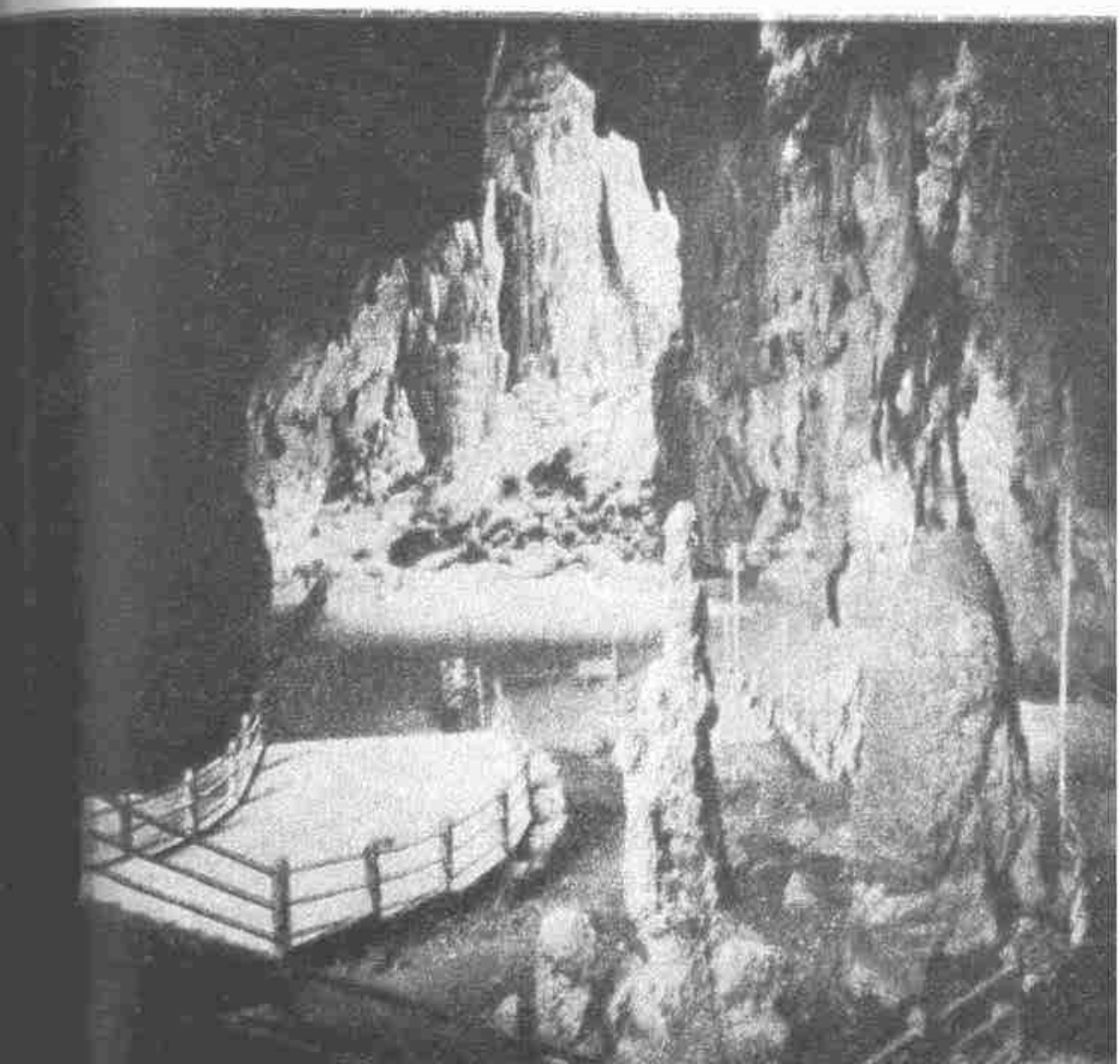
Now, the Sultan was a hefty character and quite weil known for his unceremonious methods in dealing with prying newspapermen.

I walked straight towards his room and knocked at the door. His Highness came out and, when I told him that I was a reporter, he shouted "Get out of here!" and slammed the door.

I waited a little and knocked again. This time, it was the Sultana who opened the door. I told her that there was a serious rumour that she and the Sultan were about to part company. Would she comment on it?

Immediately, she called the Sultan and said: "Darling, there is a young chap here, who says we are getting divorced

Plate I—In the largest cavern of Batu Caves, seven miles from Kuala Lumpur, is housed a Hindu shrine built in honour of the deity Lord Subramaniam.



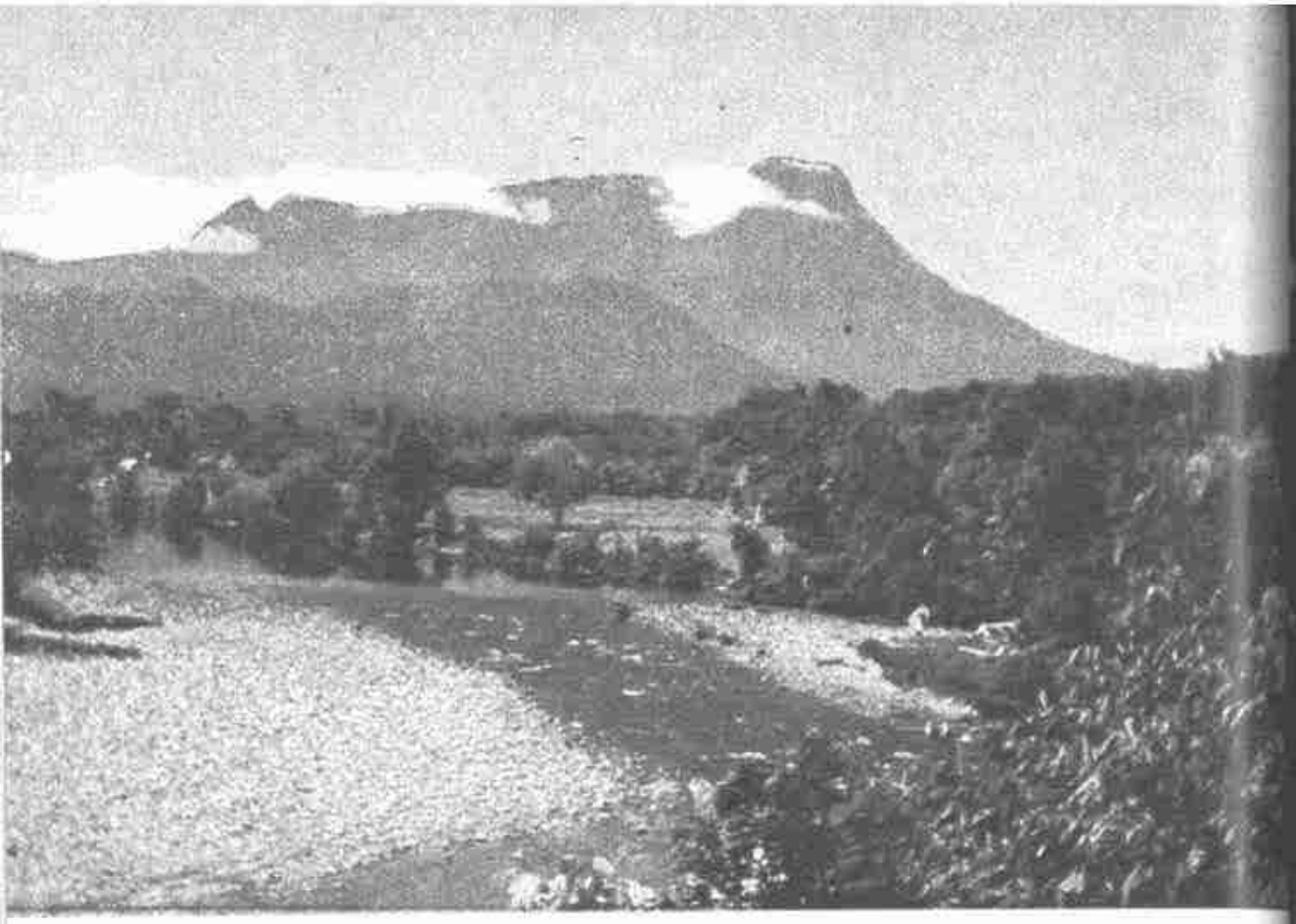


Plate II—Sabah's Mount Kinabalu, 13,455 feet high, is the highest mountain in South-East Asia.

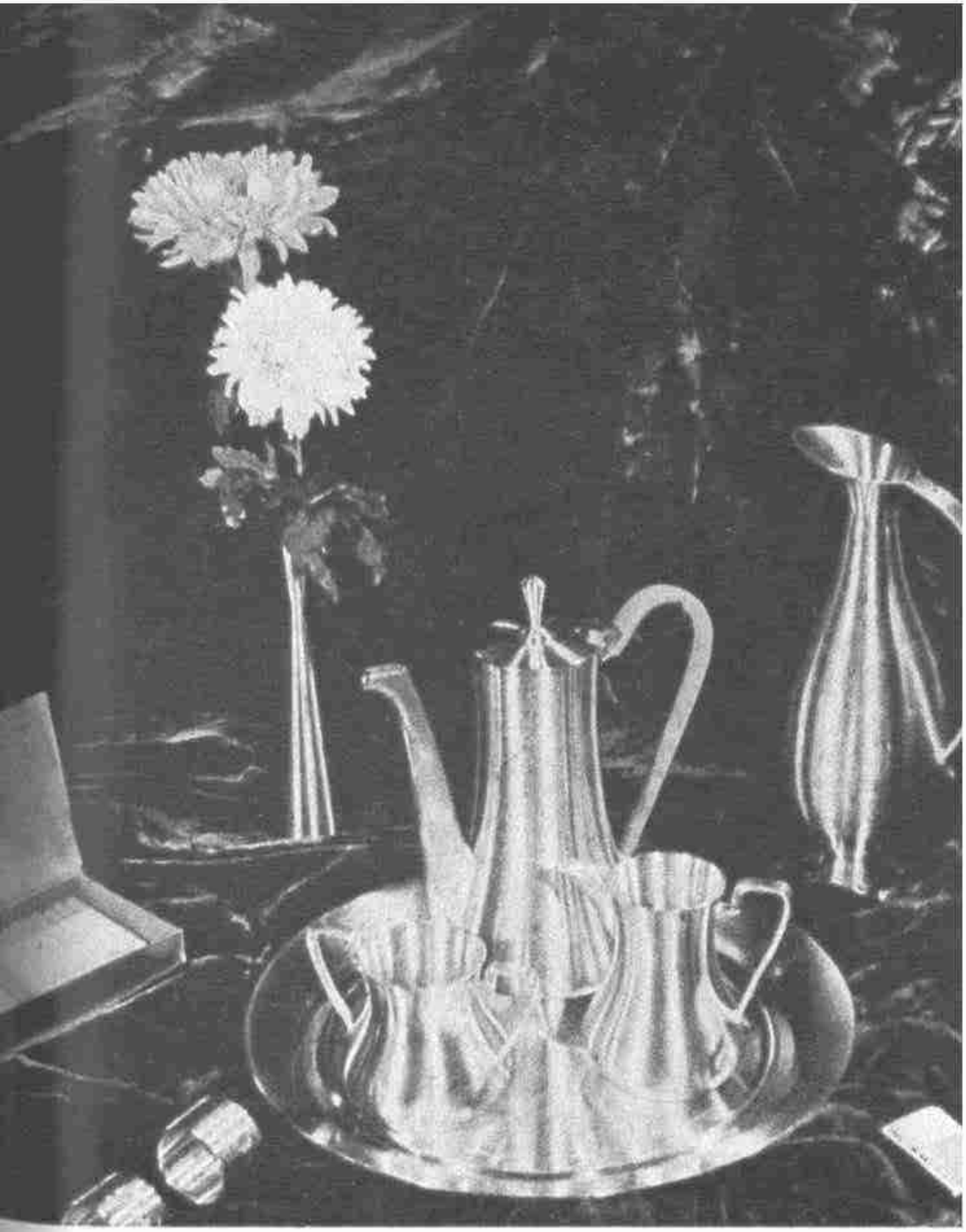


Plate III—MALAYSIAN PEWTER—Pewterware consists of 95 per cent Malaysian tin with a little copper and antimony to harden the alloy.

Plate IV—The "joget-gamelan" is the royal court dance from the State of Trengganu and is danced to the accompaniment of a gamelan orchestra.

soon. He would like to see you."

The Sultan walked in furiously. I thought I would be bundled out of the place. But I wasn't. He looked at me and said: "Didn't I see you earlier? What do you want to know? It's all stuff and nonsense—this talk of divorce. Now get out of here, before I throw you out. Get out!"

The Sultana was smiling. And I knew I got the story I wanted. At least for the time being, there was no divorce.

The headline that evening, in the Bangkok *Daily Mail*, said: "Sultan Denies Divorce Rumours".

The Sultans of Malaya have come a long way since those days. The present Supreme Ruler (Yand di Pertuan Agong) is the Sultan of Kedah, and a nephew of Tunku Abdul Rahman. The Tunku relinquished office as Prime Minister of Malaysia before his nephew's installation as the Supreme Ruler.

Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, is about twenty-five miles from Port Swettenham, which was the main port of entry for indentured labour from India for more than a hundred years. The city was founded by a Chinese miner, one of the earliest settlers in Malaya, at the confluence of the river Gomak and the river Klang. It is almost midway between the two ends of Malaya and used to be the seat of the British High Commissioner in the country.

Since Malaysian independence, Kuala Lumpur has been growing enormously, with multi-storeyed buildings in the city and a number of satellite residential towns in the suburbs. Today, it is the hub of Malaysia, the seat of the Federal Government, the Malaysian Parliament, and much of the business in the Federation. It is also the abode of Malaysia's diplomatic colony.

Kuala Lumpur is still growing in all directions. It is spotlessly clean. Motor vehicles fill the streets from early morning till midnight. There is always a cosmopolitan crowd at the

hotels and restaurants. What strikes one is the atmosphere at these places, which is extremely gay and refined. The population of Kuala Lumpur is a little over half a million.

West of Kuala Lumpur, on the way to Port Swettenham, is the new airport with every modern amenity. The new harbour at Port Swettenham is meant as a competitor to Singapore but it is not a natural harbour. Silt from the rivers that flow into the Bay of Bengal make the port unnavigable to deep sea vessels and dredging operations continue throughout the year.

The other city in Malaysia is Penang or George Town. Its population is still only a little over a quarter million. Originally, it belonged to the Sultan of Kedah who ceded it to the British. It was in Penang that Sir Francis Light first landed. Singapore came a little later.

Penang is largely a Chinese city but there are Malays and Indians too in large numbers. At the proclamation of Malayan Independence, the Tunku recalled the history of Penang. He said he was happy to get back the territory once ceded to the British by his ancestor.

Malacca, south of Kuala Lumpur, is no more the international trading centre it used to be a couple of hundred years ago. Its port facilities have gone. Malacca today is the symbol of Malaya's lost glory.

Ipoh, midway between Penang and Kuala Lumpur, is Malay's major mining centre and, therefore, a major trading centre. The population of Ipoh is about 135,000. All along the railway line which runs from north to south there are smaller towns but few are large, even by Malaysian standards.

The developing east coast of the Peninsula has few large towns, though prosperity has come in a big way to that long-neglected region. The towns worth mentioning are Kota Bahru, capital of Kelantan, Kuantan, capital of Pehang, and Kuala Trengannu, capital of the State of Trengannu.

The huge turtles of Kota Bahru are something unique on Malaya's east coast. They live along the coast in the sea, but come up to lay eggs. They are so big that you may sit on top of a turtle and it will take you along, though at the normal pace of turtles!

One cannot leave Malaya without a look at Cameron Highlands and Fraser's Hill. Both are holiday resorts but Fraser's Hill is important as the site of the big hydro-electric project which supplies electricity to a large portion of Malaya. Fraser's Hall is also the spot where statesmen from many countries meet and settle international problems over a game of golf.

VI. THE NEGLECTED PEASANTS

TRADITIONALLY, MALAYSIAN ECONOMY has been largely based on rubber and tin, which together account for a very sizeable share of the total exports from the country. Since Independence, however, there is a new change towards the establishment of industries and the diversification of agriculture.

Today, Malaysia has the highest per capita income among Asian countries, except Japan. It is well on the way to exceeding the per capita income of Japan—if there is no racial conflict in the country and if there is no war in which Malaysia might get involved.

Malaysia's economy, particularly since the beginning of the 20th century, was controlled by the British who stayed at the apex of the economic system. They were importers of consumer goods and investors in plantations and other business. Besides, the British were in political control of the country, and thus the arbiters of the destiny of the people of Malaysia.

In the country's economic sphere, the immigrant Chinese came next to the British. While the British kept at a distance from the people in their economic dealings, the Chinese were the middlemen, mainly as compradors dealing in all sorts of commodities. The Chinese were also moneylenders to the Malay villagers in the rural areas. The vast majority of Indians belonged to the category of consumers, though there were a few Indian businessmen in the towns.

Probably, the Malays were worst affected by this economic system in Malaya, which was convenient to the rest of the population. The system left the Malays in penury and indebtedness. The Malays used to lament that they were beggars in

their own country.

The Malay peasant, like peasants everywhere else, has been accused of being lazy. The peasants owned the bulk of the farmland, which they cultivated according to the old-fashioned "Kuncha" system of finance. An advance from the middleman for the sowing meant that the crop had to be sold to the middleman at the price to be decided by the middleman himself. If the middleman was operating a shop in the area, the peasant got his requirements on credit—at prices higher than those elsewhere. The result was that the peasant became indebted to the middleman on whose mercy he cultivated his farmland the next year and every succeeding year.

The Malay peasant was caught in this vicious circle and the benign British Government did nothing to remedy the plight of the peasants. The Chinese miners, planters and businessmen flourished in towns, while the Chinese middlemen in villages lived on the sweat of the Malay peasant.

The average Indian never came into the economic picture of Malaysia. Even the Indian labourers wished to get back home to India, after making some money, though this wish was seldom realised. In any case, the Indian immigrant was shortsighted. He never wanted an economic hold on the land. He never seemed to realise its importance. This applied even to the Nattukottai Chettiars of South India who used to lend money at usurious rates of interest to the city-dwellers.

The Chinese immigrants, on the other hand, were shrewd enough to assume a major role in the economy of the country. The advent of the communist regime in their home country, probably, made them shrewder on Malaysia's economic front but the Chinese had not calculated the effect of independence on the Malay population.

With the advent of independence, the Malays were quick to discover that the Chinese middlemen were at the root of

their rural economy, that the fruits of their labour went largely to outsiders. The National Government, therefore, stepped in to eliminate the middlemen and to assist the peasants.

The Government organised a quasi-Government institution called MARA to carry out the rural development programme. MARA assists the peasants in agriculture, transport, fishing and small-scale industries. It aids Malays to start such ventures and, through its organisation, markets the produce at the highest possible price. MARA runs an Institute of Technology, mainly for Malays, and it is recognised for appointments to higher positions in the Government. A Cabinet Minister is in charge of the manifold operations of MARA.

The rubber plantations in Malaya were mainly owned by the Europeans. Until some years ago, there were a few small plantations owned by the Chinese and an even smaller number of small estates were owned by the Indians. Because of the shortage of labour, the system of importing indentured labour was enforced by the British Government. Kanganis from the estates in Malaya were sent out to India, largely to the south. They recruited vast numbers of poor labourers, who were treated like so many cattle while in transit by ship from their homeland to Malaya, and were herded into the trains for far-away destinations. There they toiled in clearing work and other activities on the plantations. Probably half the number survived in the malaria-infested jungles, while the others died in the ordeal they went through for the European planters of Malaya.

Soon rubber became an organised industry in Malaya. In the last fifteen years, more than half the number of British-owned plantations were sold to Asians. These Asians sub-divided the large plantations and sold them in smaller areas to other Asians. Organised plantation labour agitated against this fragmentation of estates, as most of the new owners managed with far smaller numbers of workers. The sellers, on the other hand, reaped rich

profits from the transactions.

There is no talk of nationalising the plantations. Still the European planters want to leave and the sales of estates are going on. The Government has enforced no law against the export of profits or capital invested. The only law concerns the employment of personnel, which has been progressively Malayanised in recent years.

Even in the old days, the Malays were smallholders of rubber-growing lands. Usually, they cultivated a few acres around their farmsteads and sold their produce through the Chinese middlemen at prices offered by the latter, who often advanced money for their produce. The Government has now come up to assist the small-growers of rubber. It has eliminated the Chinese middlemen, helped the peasants with funds, and set up latest processing plants in the villages. The result is that rubber-growers in the rural areas have become prosperous. Farmers owning motor-cars and scooters have now become a fairly common sight in rural Malaya.

The next important export commodity is tin. Of course, it is an expendable asset, though there are still plenty of tin ore deposits in Malaya, and will last several scores of years. Various methods of mining are being practised in the country and the tin boom is very much in evidence throughout Malaya. Dredgers are used to mine tin ore in the larger mining areas. The biggest open-cast mine in the world is in the State of Selangor in Malaya. Much of the tin mining is done by the Chinese in Malaysia.

While tin is expendable and rubber prices may go down some day, Malaysia has diversified its agriculture. Today, Malaya which used to import almost all its requirements of rice has become nearly self-sufficient in rice, thanks to the irrigation facilities and the use of better seeds and manure. In the higher altitudes, tea and coffee are being grown. The

pineapple canning industry in the country has been extended. Oil palm plantations are coming up in large numbers. Coconut plantations are being encouraged.

Malaya also exports large quantities of iron ore, mainly to Japan. The quality of the ore is not ideal but it can be processed and is used for ship-building and other industries.

Recently, Malaya's tin and rubber as also timber is being exported to the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. As communism is banned in Malaysia, this does not represent much more than economic co-existence with the communist countries. But times might change if President Nixon's "pingpong" diplomacy proves successful.

Malaya has a variety of delicious tropical fruits. But the most unique among them is the Durian, a fruit of jungles and gardens. It looks like a small jackfruit, with a thick thorny skin, and contains between four and five seeds, covered by sweet, very tasty juicy stuff. They say it acts as a sex stimulant. The Durian certainly has Vitamin E content. Its drawback is its odour. It reminds you of being in close proximity with an ill-kept open lavatory. Yet, people are known to have sold ships, eating Durian.

Beyond the sea is the Island of Borneo and the former British colonies, Sarawak and Sabah, which joined the Malaysian Federation in 1963.

These territories are rich, and are almost unexploited. Their total population is about two million, largely Ibans. There are other tribes, too, in the territories. A good many of them have become converts to Christianity, while the rest have embraced Islam. Outside the towns, they still live in "long houses", a sort of rural community.

The coastal region is fertile and alluvial but the territories rise into hills and mountains beyond the coast. The Chinese dominate the business and industry in Sarawak, the former

White Raja's domain, which became a British colony at the end of World War II. In Sabah, too, the Chinese were the dominant section of the population, though not numerically so.

These territories are rich in timber, copper, minerals and other resources. When these assets are developed and exploited, the economy of Malaysia will improve enormously. Timber is in great demand everywhere and the forests of Sabah and Sarawak can supply almost inexhaustible quantities which are being exported to the world markets.

Sabah can grow rubber. The climate is ideal but there is a shortage of labour. The Filipinos migrated to Sabah to fill this need but the political controversy between Malaysia and the Philippines put a stop to such migration.

Because of this problem of labour, Malaysia is "hastening slowly" with the programme of developing Sabah and Sarawak. But once the resources are fully developed, few nations in Asia will have a better economy than Malaysia.

VII. THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

UNTIL 1945 and the end of World War II, there was no university in Malaya and Singapore. The highest educational institution in the region was Raffles College, named after the founder of Singapore. Raffles awarded a diploma. There was also a medical college in Singapore which awarded the LMP diploma.

Most of the junior members of the staff at Raffles College, and at the medical college, were Indians. The professors were all Europeans. There were many private schools, run mainly by Indians. They coached students to enter the professions or to join Raffles College.

After World War II, Raffles College became the nucleus of the University of Singapore. It was the only university in the entire region, including Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo territories.

In 1957, after Malaya proclaimed independence, there was a move for a separate university and the University of Malaya was set up in 1958. Still Singapore used to be the only centre for medical studies.

The University of Malaya has now become a full-fledged university and graduates from that university are given preference in Government appointments. This university still has no Faculty of Law and the Government is actively considering its expansion.

Another university was established in Penang. Both these universities follow the traditional lines and turn out a limited number of graduates each year.

Since 1969, the Malays successfully campaigned for a

National University. Here the medium of instruction is Malay, the national language. It is called the University Kebangsan and is located in Kuala Lumpur.

It is in Kuala Lumpur that the University of Malaya is also located and serves Malaya's cosmopolitan community. Meanwhile, the University Kebangsan caters to the needs of the Malay nationalists who prefer the Malay language.

India has contributed in a small way to the development of education in Malaysia by offering Indian cultural scholarships to suitable candidates, belonging to all the races inhabiting the country—the Malays, the Chinese and Indians.

The only condition attached to the grant of such scholarships is that the students who come to India must return to Malaysia after their studies and serve that country. A number of doctors, who passed from Indian medical colleges, are now serving in Malaysia.

The Constitution of Malaya, promulgated in 1957, became the basis of the Constitution of Malaysia, which was proclaimed in 1963. The Constitution said that, in ten years after independence, Malay would become the official language. But, in 1967, when the scheme was not implemented, in deference to the wishes of the Chinese and Indian communities, there arose misgivings in the minds of the nationalist Malays that the Government had no intention of implementing the programme. Later this was rectified. Today, Malay is the language of the country for official and educational purposes.

National consciousness came to Malaysia quite speedily, and Malaysia ceased looking to the West for educational development. Today they are looking to Indonesia and, in this, they are also spurred by the influence of certain Malay leaders in power in the country.

Still many Malay ministers and high officials send their children abroad, to England and Australia, for their education,

even from a tender age. If it reminds you of the practice in India, it just shows that human nature everywhere is just about the same, despite all appeals and exhortations!

The switch-over from English to Bahasa Kebangsan (national language) was something not to the liking of the Chinese and, to a smaller extent, to the Indians in Malaysia. But they have reconciled themselves to it and have started educating their children in accordance with the new system.

Chinese and Indian residents with money, at the higher levels, are sending their children abroad for studies, after they pass the high school examinations—just as the Malay ministers and high officials have been doing. But the vast majority of Chinese and Indian youths have to go through the Malay-oriented system of education and, in a few years, they might excel the Malays themselves!

The scarcity of books in the national language is a problem which the Government is attempting to solve through the Language Institute. This Institute, founded immediately after Malayan independence, has translated a number of books, mainly from English. This work is going apace but is unable to keep up with the needs of today, particularly in the technical field.

Naturally, a section of the people complain that the standards of education have been falling. But the general belief is that this is a passing phase and that, if the Language Institute fulfils its work effectively, and with some assistance from Indonesia, which have taken up the issue almost since the end of the war, Malaysia should be able to surmount the problem of the scarcity of textbooks and other reading material.

Malaysian culture, as such, is of recent origin. It took shape only in the last fifteen years and it has not yet made much of an impact on the people inhabiting the country.

If we ignore the Chinese and the Indians, who still prefer

their own ancient culture, customs and manners, however, the Malay culture is one of the most ancient in all South-East Asia.

The Malay race, originally migrating from China, settled down throughout the region, in Malaya, Indonesia, the Philippines and the numerous islands of the vast archipelago. They had a culture of their own, and they still retain it. Somehow, it seems impossible to mix and merge with Chinese and Indian cultures. This became particularly so, after the advent of the Arabs and the adoption of Islam as the religion of the Malay populations.

Thus, the Chinese and the Indians stayed apart from the Malays even from the olden days of migration to Malaysia. Perhaps, there was a measure of economic integration, or partnership, of the races inhabiting Malaysia and working together for the prosperity of the country, but there has never been an emotional integration.

The Chinese and the Indians have recently been contributing to the evolution of a national culture in Malaysia but, in reality, the culture of Malaysia is essentially a Malay culture, which is based on Indonesian culture.

It suited the former British rulers of Malaysia to keep the various communities apart. The British encouraged the Chinese to have their own shrines, educational institutions, their own clubs and associations, even their own secret societies. Similarly, the British encouraged the Indians to have their own temples and associations, even their own toddy shops.

It was "divide and rule" in Malaysia throughout the British regime. Each community merely counted the money it made in the country.

Now that Malaysia has become independent, with the Malays in the dominant position, the Chinese and the Indians must co-exist with, and gradually accept, Malaysian culture.

This is not difficult for the Indians in Malaysia to do. It is not

difficult even for the second- or third-generation Chinese in the country to accept Malaysian culture. The Malays, like the Indonesians, have accepted Islam as their religion but they are extremely generous and tolerant towards people who practise other religions. There have been Sino-Malay riots but they were politically inspired, or politically manipulated, riots. They have seldom occurred because of basic cultural differences.

In the States of Kelantan and Kedah, which were once ruled by Thailand, vast crowds throng the performance of scenes from the *Ramayana*. Even today, throughout Malaysia, Malays are the largest audiences at the screening of Hindi films in the country. Somewhow, their fancy for Tamil films comes next.

Malay dances, very much like the Indonesian dances, depict the inner thoughts of the people. The dances are graceful and there is not the slightest influence of Arab culture about the men and women who perform the dances or the dances themselves.

The role of women in Malaysia and Indonesia is very much unlike that of women in the Arab world. The women in Malaysia, as in Indonesia, move about freely, without any inhibitions. They also operate a great deal of the country's business.

In Malaysia, for example, there is a woman member of the Cabinet. This is something that does not obtain in the Arab countries.

The Malaysian dance, Ronging, is a typically Malayan dance, in which men and women take part. Unlike Western dancers, they do not touch each other. The dancers move gracefully and rhythmically, without the slightest sensual display. The Tunku was fond of such "Ronging" and so were many of his associates.

There is a rich variety of folk-dances, in which Malays, men and women, take part. They are naturally musically-minded

and artistically-inclined. In this trait they resemble the Indonesians nearby.

Recently, Malay youths have taken to pop music—and have excelled the Europeans in it. Here at least, there is an admixture of Malaysian culture—the love for pop music by the youngsters among the Chinese and Indians, too.

The Malays are a happy-go-lucky people. They have been happy, when they enjoyed the rice in the fields and the fish in the ponds. Even today, with the advent of independence, the Malays enjoy these rudimentary comforts. This is what a Malay leader told me about his own race (which includes the Indonesians):

"We are a naturally quiet, placid people. In fact, we Malays are the most peaceful people on earth—who can run amok, when roused by an intense feeling, and can mow down people in the most ruthless fashion."

VIII. TOWARDS MALAYSIA

FOR NEARLY FIVE YEARS after Merdeka, Malaya had been so successful that it won tremendous admiration in troubled South-East Asia. From August 31, 1957, Malaya had been blooming. Anyone who visited Malaya during those days could see the tempo of activity in every sphere. The community development projects were making the country prosperous. The various public health and educational projects were given the utmost importance. New roads and new towns started coming up everywhere. And more buildings started appearing in Kuala Lumpur and other cities.

There was money for all these projects; and the Tunku had chosen the best available men for each department. The Tunku went places, spreading the message of Malayan goodwill and friendship everywhere. He went to London to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. He went to Australia and New Zealand, to Thailand and the Philippines, to the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Kingdom of Belgium. Things were moving in Malaya.

Under the Federal Constitution, general elections were scheduled to be held in all States and at the Federal level before the expiry of two years after independence in 1957. The Tunku made preparations for this, even took leave from office for some time to tour the entire country in order to ensure the success of the Alliance Party in the Federal elections. The series of elections in the eleven States, however, resulted in victory for the Alliance Party in nine States. It was significant that the two States which did not vote for the Alliance Party were Trengannu and Kelantan, both on the eastern seaboard of Malaya.

Nevertheless, in the Federal elections, the Tunku's Alliance Party won 74 of the 104 seats.

The Malayan Prime Minister, in the meantime, had paved the way for ASA, the Association of South-East Asia; the first step towards commercial and cultural contact between Malaya, Thailand and the Philippines.

The ASA which was formally established in July 1961 still continues to function, despite a brief spell of inactivity during the period of the Philippines' break with Malaysia.

In May that year, there occurred one of the most significant events in the political career of Tunku Abdul Rahman. Addressing a meeting of the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Singapore towards the end of the month, the Tunku announced that Malaya should, sooner or later, have an understanding with Britain and the people of the territories of Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei. This was the Tunku's first statement on Malaysia but it found a surprisingly good reception in Britain, which agreed later to go ahead with the Malaysian concept and to appoint a special commission to enquire into public opinion in North Borneo and Sarawak.

During the best part of the critical three-year spell in Malaysia's history, I happened to be in Kuala Lumpur as editor-in-chief of the *Malayan Times*, Malaysia's nationalist daily. And I was able to see for myself some of the most astounding events that took place in Malaysia—events which might have sent smaller men than the ones who ruled in Kuala Lumpur into fits of agony and despair. For what happened was a concerted assault by Indonesia against the Malaysian move, with the Philippines chiming in, willing to attack but reluctant to hurt!

Now, it was difficult to mention in those days the word "Malaysia" without sounding like a politician. But the word "Malyasia" had been used since the 19th century as a synonym for the Malay Archipelago. And there was nothing

ambiguous about the Malay Archipelago.

It included all the islands of the southern half of South-East Asia, from the north-western tip of the Straits of Sumatra, right across to the easternmost Spice Islands, at that time part of the Netherlands East Indies. The Philippine Islands were usually not included in Malaysia, while the Malay Peninsula, south of Thailand, was commonly considered an integral part of it.

This vast expanse of land and sea had several things in common. The lingua franca of trade and communications was the Malay language and all the other languages, native to the region, were related to Malay. Also, a majority of the people shared a similar way of life, a similar social and economic organisation and similar sets of customs. The people were physically homogeneous and, for at least some three or four hundred years, the majority of them had shared a common religion, the faith of Islam.

The term "Malaysia" was widely used during the greater part of the 19th century. It was generally felt, however, during this century, that Malaysia had become non-existent, because of the Netherlands East Indies on the one hand and because of the unique circumstances under which fragments of North Borneo came under the exceptional rule of Raja Brooke and his family and the British North Borneo Company, on the other.

In Malaya, at least, the word Malaysia was retained only by a few of the Government departments, notably the census compilers, who continued to use the term to describe immigrants from the Malaysian archipelago. This usage has come to stay even today. Another party that did not find the need to change from Malaya to Malaysia was the French, who used the same word when the independence of Malaysia came about. It was not, however, until the name "Malaysia" was

revived by the second half of 1962 on a national scale, that the people came to talk in terms of Malaysia as a territorial unit.

Yet, in 1962, there were leaders in Malaya who pointed out that Malaysia should embrace entire Indonesia and, possibly, the Philippines. It was argued that this extensive concept of Malaysia had historical foundations, especially as all the islands of South-East Asia had shared a common history at some time or other during the past two thousand years.

From the foundation in the 2nd century A.D. of the Funan Empire, close maritime relations had been maintained between the Mainland and the islands of Southeast Asia. These relations merely changed in emphasis during different periods. After the fall of Funan, the centre of this maritime empire moved to Sumatra, where the empire of Sri Vijaya dominated the region for well over six hundred years. This, in turn, was succeeded by the Mahapajit Empire, with its centre on the island of Java. Then came the Malacca Empire which dominated the western half of the archipelago until the 15th century, after which groups of Europeans, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, imposed maritime trading organisations over parts of the archipelago.

Thus, behind the concept of Malaysia, there was nothing of a political nature. All that it implied was the ideal of "Melayu Raya", as the word Malaysia meant to the Malay peoples and, in the present context, the emotional appeal that the new name was bound to arouse in the hearts of these people. The essential thing that the Tunku thought of, at that time, was to achieve political stability. It was not even a question of survival for all time, but one of strengthening and enriching all members of this Union.

The formation of Malaysia, in fact, represented the realisation of the common need, long felt by the people of the territories concerned due to various common factors. All the States

that were to join Malaysia were under the system of British administration. Although British Borneo occupied only one-fourth of the island of Borneo and thereby shared a common border with Indonesia, decades of common domination had long established close links between Malaya and the Borneo territories. Political, economic and social links had so intertwined that, even after Malayan Independence in 1957, it was difficult to sever the established links.

This link was further forged by the ethnic relationship between the people of the Peninsula and the Borneo region. Whether they are Iban, Kayan, Kenyah, Kadazan, Mirut, Bajaus, Jakuns, or Malays, they are all part of the same cultural stock with a common cultural heritage. The merging of these territories into Malaysia was regarded as a logical cultural sequence of utmost significance. Besides, Free Malaya, through its own experience, was able to discover that not one of the States included in the Federation was able to stand by itself in open competition in the international sphere. And, the idea of adding to the Federation more States similarly situated was to widen this scope of mutually beneficial co-operation.

Thus, in every respect, the formation of Malaysia was a natural development, arising from the freedom of Malaya and how it had profited from this freedom. The members of the Malaysia Solidarity Committee, while agreeing to the merger, wanted to regularise the procedure and started holding meetings and discussions. During the first conference held in November it was considered desirable to establish a Commission of Inquiry, headed by Lord Cobbold, for the purpose of guaging further the feelings of the people of North Borneo and Sarawak.

This Commission, commonly called the Cobbold Commission, decided that, subject to certain safeguards and terms to fulfil them, more than two-thirds of the population favoured Malaysia, while the remaining less than one-third was sharply divided

between those who sought independence first before Malaysia could be considered, and those who strongly preferred British rule to continue for some more years in the two colonies.

In December 1962, North Borneo held territorywide local government elections, in which Malaysia was the main issue of the campaign by various contesting parties. The result was the unanimous decision in favour of Malaysia; 113 of the 119 seats were won by political parties favouring Malaysia. In Sarawak, a general election based on universal adult franchise took place in June 1963, when Malaysia again became the major platform. The results were striking: only a little over 100 seats out of the total of 429 seats were won by anti-Malaysia parties.

But all these preparations for the formation of Malaysia seemed to overlook one major consideration—the anti-Malaysia confrontation that was gaining momentum. The confrontation was openly proclaimed by Indonesian President Sukarno, whereas President Macapagal's confrontation was of the on-again-off-again variety.

It serves no useful purpose to analyse the arguments advanced by either Sukarno or Macapagal. In fact, Sukarno had no argument at all, except the underlying desire that all of British Borneo should go to Indonesia when Britain decided to quit. Macapagal's argument, based on the claims of the descendants of the Sultan of Zulu, who had become Filipino subjects, would be just as good as those of the descendants of the former Moghul Emperor, Bahadur Shah, who had died in Burma, if taken up by the Burmese Government.

Yet, Sukarno, fresh from his triumphs in West Irian, and on the lookout for more territories to conquer, at the same time ignoring the mounting problems on the home front, was able to rouse such a campaign against Malaysia that many people wondered whether the Malaysia date, August 31, would be adhered to.

This became confirmed when Sukarno went to the Manila summit on August 5, 1963 and secured an agreement which was concluded with one sole and specific purpose—to enable the Philippines and Indonesia to welcome the birth of Malaysia. Accordingly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations was invited to ascertain the views of the people in the two Borneo territories. The question of Singapore did not arise in this controversy because it had already held a referendum, which expressed in no uncertain terms the wishes of the people to join the Federation of Malaysia.

This agreement to invite a representative of the U.N. Secretary-General to ascertain the views of the people of the two Borneo territories in regard to their desire to join Malaysia left the Malaysian people in a quandary, with a scowling question-mark looming all over South-East Asia. With barely three weeks before the date set for the inauguration of Malaysia, everything about that "new bulwark of stability in South-East Asia" was shrouded in a confusing maze of intrigue and indecision. Anxious questions were asked on all sides: Will Malaysia founder amid Sukarno's confrontation tactics?

A nine-member team, under a special representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, U Thant, came to Sarawak and North Borneo, for conducting an opinion poll on whether or not the people of these British colonies were in favour of joining Malaysia. The Indonesians and the Filipinos were sending teams of observers to study the opinion poll. What Indonesia first asked for was a referendum in Sarawak and North Borneo but this later turned into a demand for an opinion poll—a check-up of the election procedure and results—by U Thant's representative.

All this was agreed upon in Manila and while the work of the U.N. team was still in progress, Sukarno changed his tactics. Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio and his spokesmen

claimed that Indonesia would not be bound by the United Nations verdict, that they could accept only the views of the Indonesian observers. There was still talk of armed preparedness to "liberate" the Borneo territories. And the usual crop of trade union leaders, front organisation men and others had renewed the anti-Malaysia campaign.

The leaders of Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo had reluctantly agreed to abide by the Tunku's decision. But inside Malaya, the opinion had been gaining ground that there should be no more concessions to the threats of Sukarno. There were people, even among friends and admirers of the Tunku, who believed that his trust in Sukarno was entirely misplaced.

In many ways, Malaysians had become disillusioned by the decisions of the Manila summit. One of the resolutions called for the formation of Maphilindo—an undefined association of Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia, to work for peace and security in Southeast Asia. But all this tall talk about the Maphilindo spirit had left most Malaysians cold, amid what they called the "tyranny of dictation" from Jakarta. The Maphilindo concept was meant to lay the foundations of what could become a new political force in South-East Asia. But Sukarno had indicated, in unmistakable terms, that if such a force were to emerge, it would be under him as its supreme commander!

Straddling the Manila summit was Indonesia's Sukarno. He had gone there threatening to destroy Malaysia. He was out to dominate the scene, just as he had done in Tokyo and elsewhere. He was the passionate revolutionary, the uncompromising nationalist, always in uniform, swinging his gold-mounted Field-Marshal's baton. At every public speech, he presented himself as the representative of more than a hundred million people, the proud possessor of South-East Asia's strongest armed forces, respected and feared among nations. And

he talked big—about self-determination, foreign bases, anti-colonialism, and the task of building a new world!

In contrast, Malaya's Tunku Abdul Rahman looked modest, infinitely less colourful. His speeches, invariably, had been along the lines of appeals for peace and understanding. He spoke of Malaya as a small country keen on maintaining and strengthening friendship with all its neighbours. Thus, the Manila summit achieved precious little—except to prove the superiority of bluff and bluster over goodwill and sincerity.

This is not the time to put the Indonesian perspective in its proper place nor to analyse why Sukarno, in 1963, thought that Malaysia might become a hindrance to his grandiose plans. Suffice it to say that, at that time, Sukarno probably had no other alternative. Little did he know that he was investing in a futile campaign, a campaign that raged loud and long, until Sukarno himself was overthrown by a coup, which he had brought upon himself. It was in Indonesia in 1967 when Sukarno was finally deposed by the People's Consultative Committee, the Indonesian Parliament. Later he died a virtual prisoner in his Palace in Jakarta.

But his campaign worked enormously, while it lasted—and it raged until the day of his overthrow from power. From the insurrection in Brunei in December 1962, which was enough to dissuade the Sultan from joining Malaysia, down to the series of talks with Malaysian leaders, with no fruitful results, the confrontation had been going on with tremendous speed. Quite a few of the Malays on the west coast joined hands with Sukarno but they were promptly jailed by the authorities. The Chinese, on the other hand, fought on the side of the Malays, forgetting their own little problems at home in Malaysia.

The Malaysia date, originally set for August 31, 1963, had to be put off by a few weeks, pending the findings of the United Nations. And finally it was announced that the U.N. team had

given its approval to the Malaysia concept. And the formal turning-over of Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo to the Malaysian family took place in September that year.

But the Malaysian celebrations of September 1963 had none of the glory and gaiety of the Merdeka Malaya celebrations of August 31, 1957. And for two years, Malaysia lived in terror of being blown up by its enemies from within and without!

Malaysia was born amidst the Indonesian confrontation. It survived mainly because the man who led the campaign against Malaysia did not outlive that operation!

IX. "CONFRONTASI"

INDONESIA'S UNDECLARED WAR against Malaysia began on April 4, 1963. The jungle war between Azahari, the Brunei rebel leader, and the security forces in that country began and ended in December 1962. Indonesia had started its "confrontasi" against Malaysia, even before proclaiming it.

On that night of Good Friday, a well armed group of "volunteers" from Jakarta slipped unnoticed across Borneo Island's border and launched a surprise attack on a frontier police station. They overran the outpost, shooting down most of its unprepared defenders. Since then, Indonesia stepped up its campaign of "confrontasi" against Malaysia on sea, land, and in the air.

Everywhere, Sukarno found his oft-repeated pledge to crush Malaysia before the end of December 1963 to be a costly one. For, in the months that followed, the outnumbered Malaysian, British and Gurkha forces had killed four Indonesian raiders for each one of their own number fallen in the fighting.

The "confrontasi" took other shapes, too. Even as the celebrations of the birth of Malaysia were taking place in Kuala Lumpur, after the U.N. Secretary-General's representative had given his approval to the proposal, President Sukarno was adamant. He went ahead with preparations to cope with Malaysia, sacking the Malaysian Embassy in Jakarta, and starting a number of border raids in Sarawak and Sabah. Finally, Sukarno's Ambassador to Malaysia, Major-General Djatikusumo, and his ring of spies were exposed and Malaysia ordered the rupture of diplomatic relations with Indonesia.

Meanwhile, as war had been raging between Malaysia and

Indonesia, President Sukarno, in his role as peacemaker, went around the world, seeking peace with Malaysia. There were a series of conferences in Bangkok, Manila, Tokyo and Pnom-Penh. But all these peace moves served only one purpose—of projecting Sukarno as a man of peace and goodwill. And, what this man of peace and goodwill did was to launch more wars against Malaysia in such out-of-the-way places as Pontian and Lubis, in Johore State, Singapore further south, and in Kota Tinggi, in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula.

Sukarno had introduced another element—the race riot in Singapore. This was definitely part of the Indonesian tactics, timed for Malaysia Day, with the support of the Barisan Socialist Party and other communist elements on the Island. The Indonesian agents had been planning a large-scale uprising. They had been distributing leaflets and sending out people for a house-to-house campaign calling for anti-government demonstrations. But, once the plot had been smashed by the security authorities after the communal unrest, which resulted in fourteen deaths in addition to about fifty wounded, the troublemakers in Singapore were promptly put in their place. Yet, the background of racial animosity lingered on in Singapore.

Nevertheless, Malaysia girded itself for a long and bitter campaign of armed resistance against mounting Indonesian attacks by sea, land and from the air. Shortly after the proclamation of Malaysia, the lines of conflict became hardened, amid unmistakable indications of a major flare-up in Indonesia's undeclared war, with Britain apparently ready to go all-out in defence of the embattled, little Commonwealth nation.

Indonesia's defiant attitude at the United Nations Security Council, to which Malaysia had taken the dispute, had accentuated the crisis, in the context of Sukarno's pledge to crush Malaysia "before the cock crows" on New Year's dawn. The first batch of British reinforcements, the crack anti-aircraft

regiment of the Bhone Army, landed in Singapore in the midst of threats of further airdropping of Indonesian paratroopers and landing of more guerilla bands along the Malayan coastline.

Large areas in the State of Johore, north of Singapore, had been bustling with military activity, tracking down Indonesian guerillas and sabotage squads. Indonesian agents even tried to establish close links with Malayan communists in their hideouts near the frontier with Thailand in the north. Despite the strengthening of naval patrols around the island of Singapore, the general impression was that Sukarno was getting all set for a far-flung confrontation against Malaysia. Indonesia's immediate objective was twofold: to create conditions of unrest and chaos inside Malaysia and to gain a foothold on Malaysian territory to be able to set up a puppet regime.

The landing of British artillery coincided with opposition members' criticism in the Malaysian Parliament of the "empty promises" of Britain and a warning that Malaysia should not place undue reliance on its defence treaty with Britain. Military observers, in Britain as well as in Malaysia, were convinced that Britain would have to send further reinforcements, if Sukarno decided to launch large-scale hostilities—anything short of an open war—to keep his January 1 deadline to crush Malaysia.

At that time, the Malaysian Army strength was estimated at about 16,000 officers and men, while the police and other ancillary forces numbered about 23,000. The vigilance corps, just organised after the Indonesian "confrontasi", consisted of untrained civilians, armed only with the baton, whose main task was to watch out for suspicious characters and to report to the security authorities. There was a move to provide members of these vigilance corps with firearms, but the training and the supply of arms would involve time in addition to considerable expenditure and was, therefore, given up.

On the British Commonwealth side, the forces in Malaysia were not considerable—just about 8,000, of which only the Gurkhas and the New Zealanders had been deployed against the Indonesian guerillas. Besides, Britain had an eye on Brunei, which was a protectorate to which the trouble from the neighbouring region could spread.

In addition, a few thousand British troops had been operating in Sarawak and Sabah, which had common frontiers with Indonesian territory.

Against this, Indonesia had a standing army of about half a million, a paramilitary force of something like 130,000, a navy comprising some 183 ships of various sizes and 28,000 officers and men, and an air force with some 30,000 personnel, and including 110 Russian Migs and 26 TU-16 bombers. Besides, it was a unique war that Indonesia had ordered. Indonesia could send out small bands of guerillas and paratroopers which could tie down quite a disproportionate number of British and Malaysian troops. One more advantage the Indonesians enjoyed over the Malaysians was the element of surprise and the assistance provided by a well-organised fifth column.

In fact, Malaysia's main worry concerned this large force of fifth columnists, drilled and trained in Indonesia. This force was said to have numbered between 3,000 and 4,000 at the zenith of the campaign. If there was an open war, Malaysia knew how to conduct it, but when the Indonesian war was through "confrontasi", with a date set for crushing Malaysia, there was nothing much for Malaysian leaders to think about, except to resist the campaign by all possible means.

This was precisely what Malaysia did. Sukarno's grandiose plans, however, did not get far enough though there was little doubt that he had done his worst by the time the curtain was wrung down on the Malaysian scene—with his downfall following the abortive communist coup in his own country,

and his subsequent dethronement early in 1967.

Beginning with the Azahari revolt in Brunei towards the end of 1962 to the end of the confrontation, Sukarno had caused enormous damage to Malaysia. In terms of military struggle, there was untold suffering among the people throughout the country, in Malaya, Singapore, and the Borneo territories. It was true that, faced with an aggressor, the Chinese and the Indians in Malaysia fought shoulder to shoulder with the Malays, whereas a few Malays in the country had openly taken the side of the Indonesians.

Why did Sukarno start this costly confrontation against Malaysia? The answer is to be found in the expansionist concept with which Sukarno started as early as July 1945, a month before the end of World War II. At that time, he had told the meeting of the investigating committee for the preparation of Indonesian Independence:

"I have never said that Indonesia comprises only those areas that were ruled by the Dutch. In fact, I have on one occasion in my life dreamt of a Pan-Indonesia, which will include not only Malaya and Papua (New Guinea) but also the Philippines... What we need to decide now is the Indonesia of the future and the extent of its territory. When I look at the islands situated between Asia and Australia and between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, I understand that they are meant to form a single entity.

"For that reason, I shall support, at this meeting, those who support that independent Indonesia should extend to Malaya and Papua. We are not inheritors of the Dutch. Malaya is already in the hands of the Japanese Government and so are Papua, North Borneo and Timor. We are not having talks with the British or the Dutch...and the hands of the Imperial Japanese Government shall decide what shall form the future Indonesia."

Well, it took the Indonesians a fairly long-drawn-out war before the Dutch forces, which tried to recapture Indonesia, eventually gave up the attempt. What they inherited from the Dutch, even after all that ordeal and the devastation caused during the Japanese occupation, was something far more substantial than what Indonesia, under President Sukarno, finally came to. But, amidst all his manipulations, Sukarno had never given up the idea of a Greater Indonesia.

When President Sukarno defined his expansionist ambitions in 1945, Mao Tse-tung had not yet seized power in China. By 1955, at the time of the Bandung conference, China had established itself as one of the leading contenders for the leadership of Asia. Shortly after Bandung, China and Indonesia had evolved an understanding which marked a turning-point in Indonesia's foreign and domestic policies. Externally, Indonesia leaned closer to Communist China, despite the temporary disagreement over the status of the Chinese minority in Indonesia. On the domestic front, Sukarno launched his system of the so-called "guided democracy" as opposed to "liberal democracy" which, he decided, was not suitable for Indonesia.

Having built up his armed forces, through the assistance of the Soviet Union and China, and having annexed West Irian, through an excellent game of bluff and bluster, Sukarno turned his attention to Malaysia. First he tried his hand, through communist agents, in the Brunei revolt which was crushed even though the Communist Party of Indonesia had proclaimed its support for the revolt. What this proved was the growing coincidence of communist and so-called nationalist objectives in Indonesia. What happened when Sukarno himself launched attacks against Malaysian outposts, across the border was to borrow the Communist Party of Indonesia's propaganda line against the "neo-colonialist" project of Malaysia.

Strange as it may seem, Sukarno succeeded by bluster and

armed forces in causing sufficient alarm in several friendly countries over the dangers of the jungle war escalating into a major conflagration. His success closely paralleled the political and diplomatic victories he had achieved prior to the Dutch decision to quit West Irian.

Sukarno's success was simple yet highly significant. His expansionist designs began to be described, even by friendly governments and the non-communist Press, in terms of a "dispute" which could be resolved at the conference table. President Sukarno was there to satisfy everybody with the assurance that all he wanted was a "political settlement". So skilful was the Jakarta propaganda line that quite a good many people, who should have known better, began to describe the Indonesian aggression against Malaysia as a "Malaysian dispute".

But, in reality, there never was a dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia, in the normally accepted sense of the term. Indonesia's so-called dispute with Malaysia was a dispute over the very existence of Malaysia. That was why Sukarno announced that Indonesia would give full support to establishing a free Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. But the story of the 20th-century fascist and colonialist dictatorships can hardly offer a more blatant illustration of the principle of divide-and-rule. The idea behind Sukarno's statement was that Malaysia must be "crushed"; that is, it must be broken up into component parts and then merged with a giant neighbour of 110 million people under President Sukarno himself!

The Indonesian assault on Malaysia was in fact a war waged on many fronts—political, military, economic, diplomatic and psychological. While it raged, it was a war whose overt character could be changed swiftly to cope with changing situations. Thus, while talking of crushing Malaysia and accepting all forms of Chinese aid, including the deployment of hundreds of Chinese to play the Indonesian game, he had no scruples

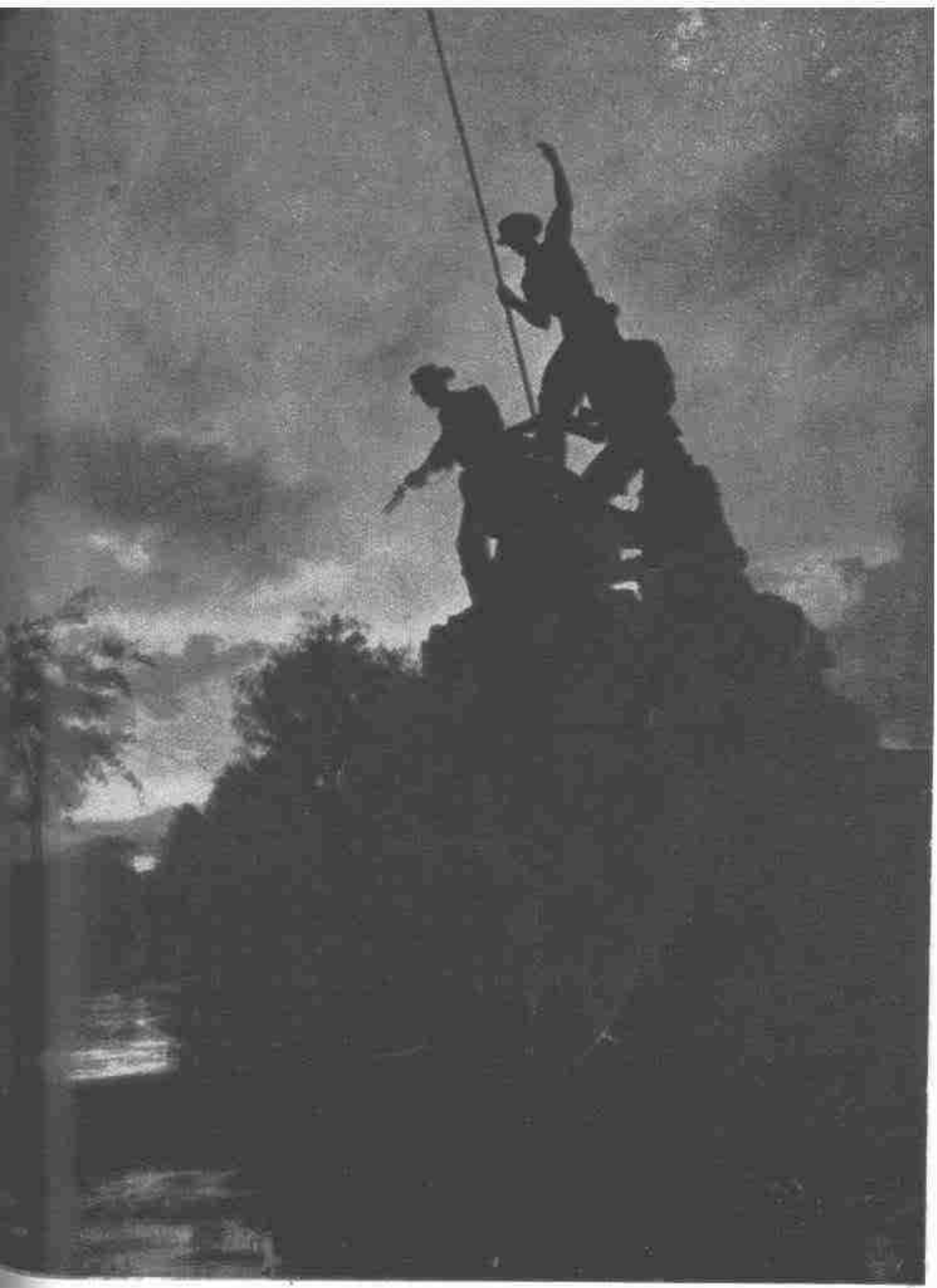


Plate V—Silhouette of the National Monument built in commemoration of those who fought and died in the 12-year Emergency.

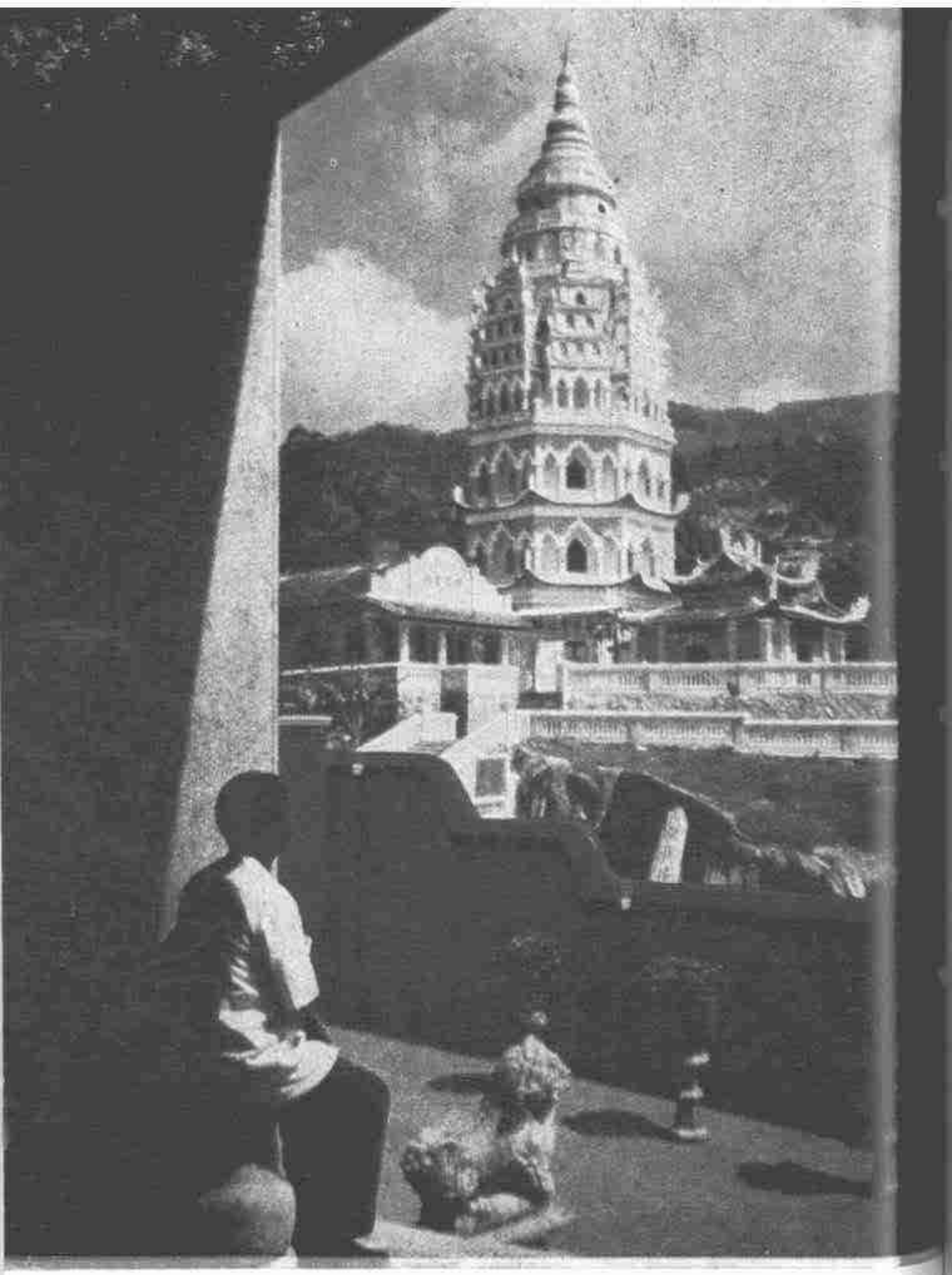


Plate VI—The Buddhist temple of "Kek Lok Si" or Temple of Supreme Bliss in the island of Penang is a popular tourist attraction.

Plate VII—The Selangor State Secretariat building in the heart of Kuala Lumpur houses some of the State and Federal Government offices.

Plate VIII—Parliament House—the 17-storey tower block—contains the offices of Members of Parliament and Senators while the Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) and the Dewan Negara (Senate) are housed in the adjoining building.

about using the Malaysian Chinese to suit his immediate purpose.

Jakarta's political warriors regarded Malaysia's plural society as an "inner contradiction" to be exploited. Thus, the disturbances in Singapore, as well as in Bukit Mertajam near Penang, were exploited by the Indonesians as a source of inflammatory propaganda. While the Singapore incidents were blamed on the Chinese, the same radio the next day broadcast messages blaming the "Malay leaders" for actions "which sparked off the racial riots in Singapore".

One very important aspect of this propaganda during the confrontation days was an extraordinary broadcast by President Sukarno, calling on the Chinese residents of Singapore to oppose Malaysia which, he said, was meant to enslave the Chinese. This looked like a very significant development, especially when related to Sukarno's understanding with Peking, and with his collaboration with the Chinese communist movements in Malaysia. But, whether or not this confrontation propaganda launched by Sukarno had produced any effect, the fact was that Singapore which is predominantly Chinese opted out of the Federation of Malaysia in less than two years after it was proclaimed.

Trouble was brewing in Malaysia, just as it was brewing in Indonesia. The Malaysian troubles were restricted to Singapore, whereas the Indonesian troubles were of a much wider scope and, naturally, took a little more time to explode. But confrontation against Malaysia was on the way out after the 1965 New Year's Day, which had dawned, and Malaysia was still in existence, in spite of Sukarno's two years of heavy war and heavier propaganda!

X. TWO PRIME MINISTERS

THE TWO YEARS that followed the proclamation of Malaysia in September 1963 were extremely difficult for the nation. On the one hand, there was the simmering "confrontasi" with Indonesia, an external aggression by an unscrupulous enemy. On the other hand, there was considerable dissension within Malaysia itself and much of it came from Singapore, the large port city at the tip of the Malayan Peninsula, which had become part of Malaysia. It was this that proved far more damaging to Malaysia as a nation than the worst that Sukarno could do in nearly three years of confrontation.

The two States in Borneo had their own problems. They were backward economically and the Malaysian Government immediately launched a programme to provide a better deal for the people. The Borneo States of Sarawak and Sabah had their own Chinese problem, too, with organised political parties attempting to challenge the new government, with its headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. This, too, was effectively handled by the Central Government. Then, there were private feuds among the new leaders of these States and these again were settled through mutual consultations and conciliation. All these troubles were going on while the nation still remained in a state of undeclared war with Indonesia.

Naturally, the strain was even greater on Singapore, with its predominantly Chinese population, where President Sukarno had inducted a racial tinge into the thinking of the people, with the flare-up of Sino-Malay incidents. Added to this were two important factors—the suspicion that the ideal of a Malaysian Malaysia, wherein everyone would enjoy the same opportunities

and responsibilities, regardless of the racial stock from which he emanated, and the tremendous personality of the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew.

Even after two years, as the head of the Government in one of the States of the Federation of Malaysia, Lee Kuan Yew continued as the Prime Minister of Singapore. Obviously, he should have been made Chief Minister of Singapore when Malaysia was formed. But in Malaysia, there were two Prime Ministers, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who functioned from Kuala Lumpur and Lee Kuan Yew who functioned from Singapore. Lee asked for changes in the Constitution of Malaysia, whereby every citizen should receive the same facilities for advancement. This meant the immediate stoppage of the special benefits received by the Malays in regard to Government jobs, in the police, the defence services and various other departments.

Politically, Singapore was far more conscious than the rest of the Federation. Lee's ascent to power in Singapore, in the midst of varying factions including the communist Barisan Socialist Party, was a miracle. But once he had gained the top position, he started consolidating his own powers. As Prime Minister of Singapore, he was supreme but he also knew that he would be chosen as the leader of some 4½ million Chinese in all Malaysia.

Lee Kuan Yew was born in Singapore and his family association with that city goes back more than 100 years. His great-grandfather, a poor Hakka peasant, came to Singapore and worked as an ordinary labourer. Lee himself speaks fluent Malay, three Chinese dialects, and English. Recently, he has been trying to speak some Tamil too, as it is recognised as one of the official languages of the State.

Lee started his education in a small Chinese school and later went to an English language school. He was an outstanding scholar and, eventually, won a scholarship to study in

Cambridge where he read law. He did well in Cambridge, finishing first in the Honours list, and got a star for distinction. He came back to Singapore for a holiday when the entire Far East was in for a big change with the Japanese occupation. That was Lee Kuan Yew's first touch with colonialism of the Japanese brand.

During World War II, Lee Kuan Yew was ordered to work for the official Japanese news agency, monitoring British news. After the war, he went back to England to complete his studies and entered the trade union movement in Singapore and through it entered politics. At one time, in the days when Singapore was still under British rule, Lee Kuan Yew was legal adviser to more than 100 unions. Then, he formed the People's Action Party in Singapore and became the island's first Prime Minister in 1959, two years after Malaya was formally proclaimed an independent State. Singapore was still only partially independent, whereas complete independence came only in 1963 when Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore voted to become part of Malaysia. And in the general elections the same year, Lee's PAP smashed the opposition parties completely and he became the supreme power in the flourishing port city.

Fenner Brockway, the British Member of Parliament, once described Lee Kuan Yew as "one of the outstanding dynamic minds in world statesmanship today". In the two years that he was in the Malaysian Parliament, he was known as a keen socialist, a determined anti-colonialist, and a shrewd realist in politics. He had the full support of a little less than two million Singaporeans for any programme he initiated. And many people started thinking of him as the next Prime Minister of Malaysia !

That probably caused the major hitch between Singapore and Malaysia. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was a man cast in an entirely different mould. The

Tunku had been in the game of politics for more than ten years by the time Malaysia had been formed and the new nation had weathered the Indonesian storm for nearly two years. The Tunku probably did not possess the hard, at times even ruthless, drive that actuated Lee Kuan Yew but he made up for this drawback by having around him a team of devoted workers, whose loyalty he commanded all along, and by his own political horse sense and, above all, by his mental purity and nobility in dealing with his friends and associates.

The Tunku used to call himself a "Happy Prime Minister". Malaysia had been making great progress, in spite of the Indonesian confrontation and the battles that flared up on the Peninsula, in the Borneo States and in Singapore. The "confrontasi" occupied much of the space in the newspapers but, behind these hectic events, the silent revolution in Malaysia had been going on. The Second Five-Year Plan, launched in 1961, had cost the State almost $ 2,700 million by 1965. In the first two years of Malaysia, the development programme was extended to the States of Sarawak and Sabah. The Prime Minister made a number of visits to friendly neighbours, with occasional visits to London.

Singapore had become more prosperous with the formation of Malaysia in 1963. Businessmen and industrialists were able to set up enterprises in the Peninsula and people were able to move freely in Singapore from the mainland. The industrial development and the services rendered by the port of Singapore, however, had a slant towards socialism, at the same time tolerating wealthy capitalists. But this form of economic advancement seemed to have a realistic sense. As one of the largest trading ports in the world, Singapore had a standard of living which was the second highest in all Asia. Wherever possible, the State had taken an active part in industrial projects. The Government operated the $ 100,000,000 industrial development

board. Singapore has had industrial peace with justice, though not doctrinal socialism, which Lee Kuan Yew has admitted as unfeasible in Singapore.

Lee Kuan Yew's dictum was that Malaysia could achieve socialism when the people's standard of living would reach that of the former colonial masters. First, he used to say, there must be created a united Malaysian people and, once this was achieved, he thought that economic issues would take the place of communal issues. And Lee Kuan Yew's ideal of creating a united Malaysia was not quite in consonance with the ideals of the Malay leaders and the members of the Malayan Chinese Association across the Johore causeway.

As head of the Government in a predominantly Chinese City State, Lee Kuan Yew occupied a rather peculiar position in the Malaysia that was set up in 1963. He was still Prime Minister of Singapore, whereas all other States had Chief Ministers. He enjoyed greater autonomy in the day-to-day administration of Singapore. And he opposed the special concessions granted to the Malays under the Constitution, not because he did not wish that Malays should be assisted in order to make up for lost time, but because it discriminated against the Chinese and other immigrants who, as Malaysians, should get the same treatment.

In Malaysia, two leaders, Dato (Dr) Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman, who was then Minister of Home Affairs and who has come back in the same position, and Tan Siew Sin, who was then Minister of Finance in the Malaysian Government, dealt with the crisis that had been developing in the country. Both of them used considerable restraint in explaining the racial tangle that confronted the nation, with particular reference to the policy of the Singapore Government in regard to the special privileges that accrued to the Malays.

Tan Siew Sin spoke to the University of Singapore Students'

Union on July 23, 1965. He narrated the story of the position of the Chinese and the Malays in Malaya and Singapore during British days, during the brief Japanese regime in the entire region, and the efforts of the Chinese Association to have more Chinese as Malaysian citizens, whose number rose from about 200,000 according to the British authorities to nearly a million when Malaya became independent in 1957. He pointed out that the "special position" of the Malays and the legitimate interests of the other communities has been guaranteed, as part of the special responsibilities of the High Commissioner, even as early as at the time of the Federation of Malaya agreement in 1948.

Tan Siew Sin, whose family, like Lee Kuan Yew's, had lived in Malaysia for almost a century and had come to know the Malay leaders far more closely than Lee, is a firm believer in inter-racial harmony. His dictum was that the gap between the two racial groups in Malaysia, the Malays and the Chinese, had been narrowing down steadily since 1957. According to him, this was not difficult to understand, because race was an irrelevant consideration in the most important spheres of human activity. He told the University students in Singapore: "The laws of health, and the laws of economic activity, to mention only two of the most important, do not acknowledge racial barriers... the acquisition of knowledge and the acquisition of modern skills are not related to one's racial origin."

Tan added: "One of the unwritten rules of political activity in the States of Malaya which have usually been observed before Malaysia is that political divisions should not run on racial lines. The result has been that, although we have disagreed on ideological lines, that is, on the basis of 'isms', on whether you belong to the left, right or centre of politics, although we have disagreed on economic and social issues, we have always taken care not to make it a contest of race against race.

"The danger of the present situation is that the main oppo-

sition to the Alliance now is based on the thesis that the Alliance is Malay-dominated and does not take into account the rights and interests of the other communities. In order, therefore, to gain popular support, this opposition must espouse the rights and interests of the non-Malays, particularly the Chinese. In the end it will become a Malay *versus* Chinese contest. This unhealthy trend and the dangers inherent in the situation are obvious.

"Life in a plural society has its difficulties but its challenges are also its opportunities. I have noticed that, in areas where the numbers of both Chinese and Malays are substantial, and thus contacts between them are frequent and widespread, there is a greater measure of racial tolerance and understanding, because thay realise that extremism of either kind would be fatal. In such areas, it is common, for example, to find Malay leaders asking the Government to give financial assistance to Chinese temples, and to find Chinese leaders asking the Government to give assistance to Malay mosques. In fact, it is not at all uncommon for the Government to receive requests from Malay leaders for assistance to Christian churches.

"In areas of States where one race predominates, racial tolerance is at its lowest. Kelantan, on the east coast, is the stronghold of the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, which is sustained by an extreme form of Malay racialism allied to religious fanaticism. In Singapore, at the opposite end of the pole, Chinese leaders who try to understand Malay feelings and sensitivities are looked upon with scorn and are usually regarded as Malay stooges and sometimes even as traitors to the Chinese cause. I am aware that, in both these States, these things are not said openly, but there is a substantial undercurrent of a whispering campaign to this effect and this can be even more damaging.

"It is perhaps for this reason that the UMNO (the United Malay Nationalist Organisation) finds it difficult to make any

headway in Kelantan, in the same way as the MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association) finds it difficult to make any headway in Singapore, because to make any headway in either of these two States, a part must espouse Malay or Chinese chauvinism, as the case may be."

Dr. Ismail, who belongs to Johore and who is regarded as the "strong man" of the Malaysian Cabinet, spoke of the racial imbalance in Malaya, which he admitted, was due to the fact that the Malays and their mode of living conformed to rural surroundings, while the Chinese and other immigrant races in Malaysia lived in an urban society and had developed qualities which fitted them to live in competitive, industrial societies. The result was that the Malays had adopted the "Tiada Apa" philosophy, an ideal philosophy in the olden days when food was abundant and life was easy. (Incidentally, the 'Tiada Apa' philosophy of the Malays has its counterpart in Indonesia where the phrase is 'Tiada Appa', in Thailand where it is the 'Mai Pen Arai' philosophy and even in the Arab countries where it is described as 'Malesh'). Dr. Ismail observed:

"Then came British colonialism and it happened that the outlook of the Malays in the countryside did not fit in with the British ideas of the rapid exploitation of the country. Therefore, with characteristic British wisdom they came to terms with the Malays, whereby the Sultans were retained, with proper dignity and decorum, yet, with all powers resting with the British Resident. The Malays were given educational facilities but the jobs they got in the Government services were of a junior nature, while the British kept the senior posts for themselves. Meanwhile, the immigrant Chinese and the Indians took to the exploitation of the land. And that was how the Malay Peninsula became rich and attracted large numbers of immigrants during the days of the British.

"As a result of British policy, the towns were developed—

and so were all the other places where the British interests lay. Roads were built into estates. Health measures were concentrated in towns and rubber plantations. Schools were opened in the major towns. The result of British policy was that, besides enriching themselves, they also relatively enriched the non-Malays of Malaya and Singapore.

"In politics, during the days of the British rule, it was not uncommon for politicians to rise racial issues. In fact, what little legislation was being practised those days was limited to the cry for representation for better wages and better working conditions for the immigrant races. The British unfortunately never made any attempt to harmonise the relationship between the various races inhabiting the land, so that when the time came for them to leave Malaya, they would leave behind a country with a multi-racial population, living contentedly together as equals. They were too busy exploiting the country. All that they were interested in was that there must be law and order, because without them, it would be impossible to exploit the resources of the country smoothly and in peace.

"When Malaya became independent in 1957, the leaders of the freedom movement created an Alliance Party of the three major racial groups—the United Malay National Organisation, the Malayan Chinese Association, and the Malayan Indian Congress. They agreed on major principles which even today form the platform of the Alliance Party. They agreed that not only the special position of the Malays should be preserved, but also pledged that this special position of the Malays should be the main weapon to uplift the social and economic standards of the Malays, so that they would ultimately be able to compete, on an equal footing, with the non-Malays. The three parties also agreed that the Malay rulers should retain their position, with one of them to be elected by the others as the Supreme Ruler for a

fixed term. Another point that they agreed upon was that there should be a common language for the new nation to be developed to become the national language and they had chosen Malay."

But the entire outlook changed with the formation of Malaysia. The Borneo States had trouble aplenty of their own, largely due to the Indonesian confrontation. The People's Action Party of Singapore, headed by Lee Kuan Yew, was unable to reconcile itself to the Federation's method of redressing the imbalance between the Malays and the immigrant races. In this, Singapore was influenced by its own theory based on its own experience of governing the Island City which, to all intents and purposes, has no racial problem. The Chinese form the bulk of the population of Singapore, whereas all the others, including the Malays, have become racial minorities.

There was a subtle campaign for quite some time, almost ever since Malaysia was created, but more especially after the general elections. In this campaign, Lee Kuan Yew, his Foreign Minister, Rajaratnam, and the People's Action Party's official machinery played their parts well. They wanted a change in the Constitution of Malaysia. They wanted the total abolition of the Yang di Pertuan Agong and all the Malay rulers, as they considered these institutions almost similar to the tribal chieftains of Africa or the former Maharajas of India. They argued that, while the Malays assumed first-class citizenship and special privileges, the non-Malays, particularly the Chinese, were cast as second-class Malaysians.

This struggle had been growing on all sides—at official meetings of the Malaysian Solidarity Committee and elsewhere. Both parties, of course, had a point of view but they both stressed their point too frequently, too strongly, and far too much, to the detriment of the national interests.

Everybody in Malaysia knew that the parting of ways was

inevitable, but few knew that it would come the way it did—that all details of the separation would be clearly worked out before the announcement was made. And that happened at the Malaysian Parliament, on August 9, 1965.

The Tunku's dream had been shattered.

XI. THE SHATTERED DREAM

On August 9, 1965, with still a few days to go for the second anniversary of Malaysia, and the Indonesian confrontation still raging, though with depleted intensity, Malaysians heard the sad news of the decision for the separation of Singapore from the country. It was Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman who announced the news to a hushed Malaysian Parliament. There were tears in his eyes, which he found difficult to check.

There was nothing of the old gaiety about the Tunku, as he read the speech. The Prime Minister of Singapore and other members of Parliament were absent. The others looked grim, as the Tunku stood up to deliver the speech. "In all my years as Leader of this House, I have never had a duty so unpleasant as this to perform. The announcement, which I am making, concerns the separation of Singapore from the rest of Malaysia."

The Tunku said that there were several reasons for taking this decision. Since the formation of Malaysia, and especially during the year 1965, there had been so many differences between the Central Government and the Singapore Government, so much so that they had reached the breaking point. At his request, Tun Abdul Razak (the Deputy Prime Minister) tried his best to iron out at least some of these differences, while he was away in London for medical treatment. But it seemed that "as soon as one issue was resolved, another cropped up; and where a patch was made here, a tear appeared elsewhere; and where one hole was plugged, other leaks appeared".

"It was impossible to find any way out of this impasse, except the course of section just taken," the Tunku told Parliament. "We have tried everything possible to avoid the separation of

Singapore from the rest of Malaysia. In the end, we find that there are only two courses of action open to us—number one is to take repressive measures against the Singapore Government for the behaviour of some of its leaders; and number two, to sever all connections with the State Government that has ceased to give even a measure of loyalty to the Centre.

"The position of the Central Government, not only at home, but worse still abroad, has been mocked on so many occasions. It is odious for me to take repressive action against the Singapore Government, for such action is repulsive to our concept of parliamentary democracy. And, even then, it would not solve the problem before us.

"The communal issue is a matter which concerns me most, because the peace and happiness of the people of this country depend on goodwill and understanding of the various races for one another. Without it, this nation would break up. We feel that repressive measures against a few would not, therefore, solve the problem, because the seeds of this contempt, fear and hatred have been sown in Singapore and, even if we try to prevent its growth, I feel that after a time, it will sprout up with more virulent force. The thousands of students abroad have been fed with all kinds of propaganda against the Central Government !"

The Tunku spoke at some length on the theme of "Malaysian Malaysia" which Lee Kuan Yew, the Singapore Prime Minister, had been expounding so vigorously during his earlier tour of Asian and African countries. In plain language, the concept of Malaysian Malaysia meant that everyone in Malaysia should be treated alike, as Malaysians, which would give the Chinese population the same rights to enter Government services and to fill other avocations. This was plausible in theory but in practice the result would be that the backward Malays would be left very much behind.

When Malaysia, where the Malays had been granted special rights according to the Constitution, objected to the so-called Malaysian Malaysia concept, except after the Malay population had developed on a level with the Chinese and other races to their rightful place in society, the Lee Kuan Yew thesis had been that this meant discrimination against the Chinese and others in Malaysia.

The Singapore Government was more progressive, it was claimed, because of the enlightened socialist policy it had been pursuing. But, asked the Tunku, what happened to the Socialist-based People's Action Party when it contested the Malaysian elections? The Tunku said that Malaysia did not ban any party, except the Communist Party.

Another contention made by the Government of Singapore was that Lee Kuan Yew claimed to be the representative of the Chinese population in all Malaysia. It was true that, while Lee had absolute control over the Chinese-dominated Singapore island, there were far more Chinese elsewhere in Malaysia. The fact was that aides of the Singapore Prime Minister had been trying to project the image of Lee Kuan Yew at home and abroad in a slightly exaggerated role. This was something that the Tunku and his associates got upset about. He told Parliament:

"There have been certain inclinations on the part of some countries to look upon the Prime Minister of Singapore as an equal partner in the Government of Malaysia and to encourage him indirectly to assert his authority and this has made the situation rather awkward for us... This is a situation which we must avoid. There can only be one Prime Minister for the nation and so the best course we can take is to allow Mr Lee Kuan Yew to be the Prime Minister of Independent Singapore in the full sense of the word, which otherwise he would not."

In addition to this basic difference of opinion, there were

other spheres in which Singapore differed from the Malaysian Government. The Singapore members of Parliament strongly opposed the Budget, as discussed earlier. There was a heated argument over the Singapore Government's financial contribution to the Centre, particularly in view of the increased cost of defence, because of the Indonesian confrontation. But the Singapore Government was prepared to meet only its share in the cost of defending Singapore. Besides, the dispute between the Centre and Singapore had been going on for nearly two years, over the rate of interest on a loan of 150 million Malaysian dollars promised by Singapore for the development of Sarawak and Sabah in Borneo. The Centre suggested the Bank Negara to fix the rate, but Singapore wanted the World Bank to decide the issue.

The Prime Minister spoke of the co-operation and support always extended to the Centre by these two States in Borneo, which had suffered a greater measure of damage in the fighting with Indonesia than other parts of Malaysia. The development of these two States was urgent, as they had been neglected by the colonial administration and the Centre had been negotiating a loan from Singapore, mainly because of the high cost of defending the country against Indonesia.

The Tunku then came down to the terms of the separation agreement with Singapore. He said that the two countries would co-operate closely on matters of Defence, Trade and Commerce. According to the agreement on external defence and mutual assistance, the Malaysian Government would continue to give all assistance to Singapore to defend itself against external aggression, while Singapore would give Malaysia the right to maintain the bases and other installations on the island and to make use of them for purposes of defence against external aggression. Besides, neither party would enter into any defence agreement with any power which

Plate 5—A Kelantan silversmith working on a filigree ornamental piece with a sure and steady hand.

Plate 6—Gravel pump tin mining involves the use of a monitor which jets water out to knock down tin-bearing soil.

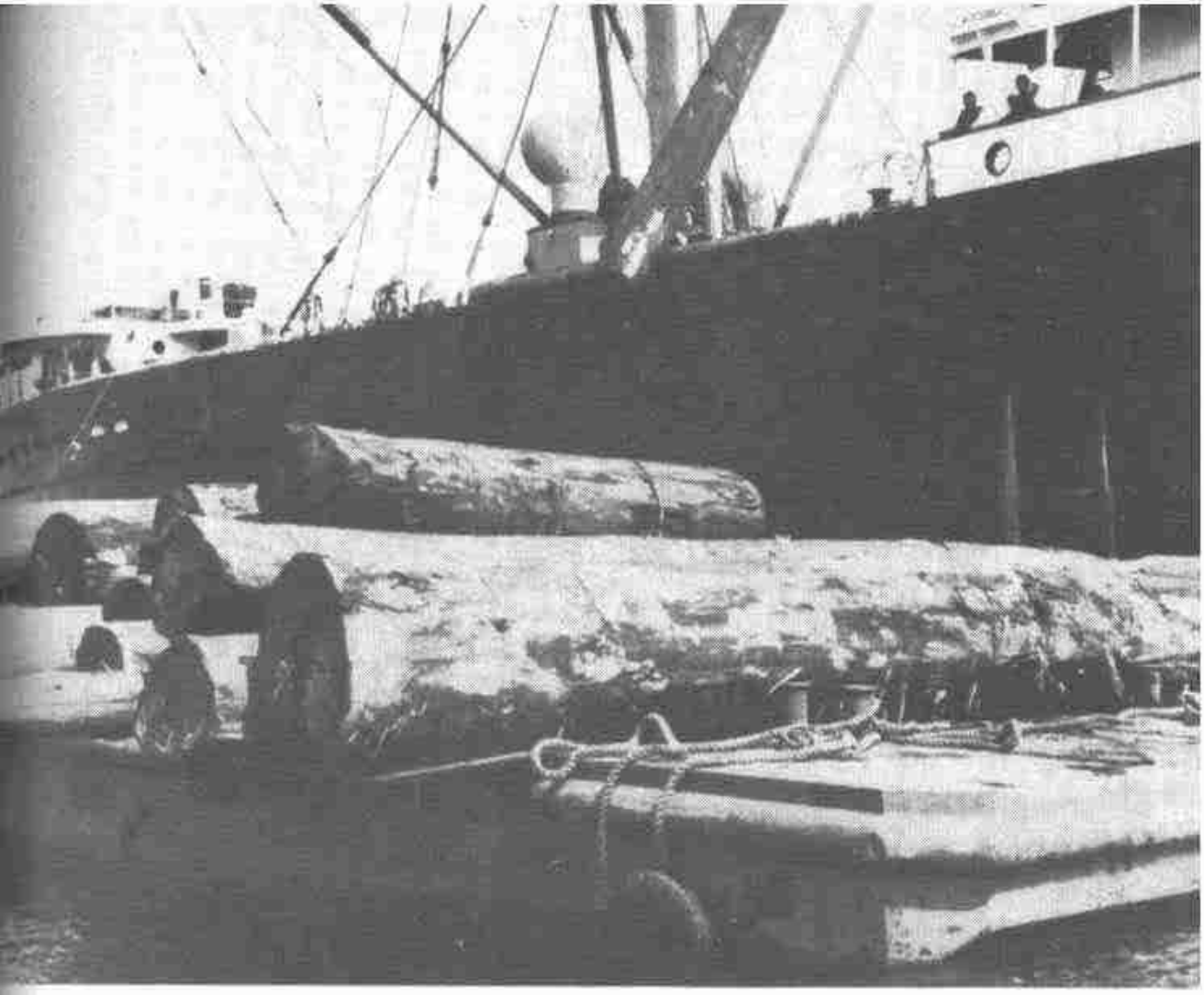


Plate 7—Loading of round logs at Tawau, Sabah, for export to Japan, one of the major importers.

Plate 8—Rope and carpet-making are two important cottage industries supported by coir which is a major by-product of the coconut.

may be detrimental to the interests of the other.

The Tunku spelt out other details of the agreement, particularly the facilities to be extended to the people for free travel between the two States, pending regulations which were to be formulated. The Constitution of Malaysia and the Malaysia Act were amended so that they would not apply to Singapore, thus giving legal validity to the arrangements for separation.

Thus the deal with Singapore was concluded. Malaysia sponsored Singapore as a separate member of the United Nations and the Commonwealth. There was a rush from Singapore to Malaysia by people who had permanent interests there after trimming their business to the minimum. There was an equally large number of businessmen from Malaysia who preferred Singapore. There were reports that the Malaysian dollar might be affected because of this migration. But all these activities died down in a few days and life between Singapore and Malaysia began its even tenor. Among the big companies, like the Malaysian Airways, became the Malaysia-Singapore Airways but business went on as usual.

Despite the simmering conflict between Malaysia and Singapore, the common people did not seem to feel the impact of the separation when the announcement came. That was mainly because the elders, on both sides, behaved moderately and in tune with requirements for the future. Lee Kuan Yew had managed to bring Singapore out of the Federation of Malaysia, into which he had taken the island city, probably with other ideas on how to shape the country. And, when the Malaysian leaders fought against his ideals, he did not probably expect the Tunku to act as he did—by agreeing to separation with Singapore.

This was particularly upsetting because it was common talk in Kuala Lumpur at the time of the formation of Malaysia that the Tunku and his associates had agreed to include Singa-

pore, with its predominantly Chinese population of almost two million, only after getting Britain's consent to do so, in the new Federation, the two States of Borneo and possibly three, the third being the oil-rich State of Brunei. Apparently, the Tunku wanted that Singapore should toe his line of policy. That was why Lee's first entry into Malaysia was a half-hearted move and, after a year, he started his own campaign against Malaysia. The separation agreement announced by the Tunku was, therefore, unavoidable.

The withdrawal of Singapore from the Federation had generated a great deal of thinking on the part of the Chinese and other immigrant races in Malaysia. They realised that Singapore was able to get out of the Federation because it had no racial problem, with its predominantly Chinese population, even the Malays getting the status of a racial minority. In the Borneo State of Sarawak, where the Chinese had settled down in large numbers and were a very aggressive racial minority, however, they still remained a minority amidst so many other ethnic groups in the State. Very much the same ratio of Chinese lived in the State of Sabah, where they did roaring business. Yet they were a racial minority and, therefore, unable to upset the machinery of Government.

In Malaysia, there were nearly three and a half million Chinese, with nearly one million Indians, and they were the largest segment of the population, with the Malays numbering four and a half million. If the Chinese and some Indians had made money and were well-off economically, the Malays owned much of the rural land and held positions of importance in the Administration. In Malaya it was the combination of these parties that fought for Merdeka, in which the Malays were very important, as sons of the soil in the vanguard for the freedom struggle. It was said that quite a few among the Chinese millionaires in Malaya were not much in favour of Merdeka

and were hoping that the British would stay on and let them make their pile unhindered by freedom struggles and other campaigns.

In the Crown colony of Singapore, however, the position was entirely different. True, absolute freedom came to Singapore with Malaysia but the Singaporeans had gained a measure of independence from British rule through their own efforts and through the goodwill of the British Government. In any case, the Singaporeans did not wish to mortgage their freedom and stay on in Malaysia. This was because of the difference in history and because the Chinese had always dominated Singapore. And this ideal became strengthened with a strong man like Lee Kuan Yew at the helm of affairs in Singapore.

The Chinese and other immigrant races in Malaysia (minus Singapore) had good reason for serious thought. They found that, despite history, the Malays, meaning the United Malay National Organisation, should do something to absorb them fully into the life of Malaysia to give their active participation in Malaysia some real meaning. And many of them thought that the Malayan Chinese Association and the Malayan Indian Congress should agitate to gain a proper share of the administration. This feud between the younger and older generations among the Chinese and the Indians of Malaysia had been going on for quite some time, even during the Indonesian confrontation. But it had gained momentum after the withdrawal of Singapore from Malaysia.

Left to himself, the Tunku might have been quite willing to see the need for racial harmony in Malaysia and to do something about it. But there were States where the people were intensely fanatic about retaining the Malay superiority over the other races in the land. This was the position, especially in Kelantan, Trengannu and, to some extent, in Kedah, and Johore which had been under the rule of the Sultans for quite a long time.

The position was entirely different on the west coast, where the Chinese had settled down in larger numbers and the Malays had been used to Chinese influence amidst them.

The general rule before the advent of Merdeka was that the Chinese dominated the towns, while the Malays dominated the countryside and the Indians had settled down in the plantations, mainly along the west coast. The Chinese businessmen had become rich in and around the towns on the east coast and the Indians stayed in the estates, without evincing much interest beyond their respective spheres of activity. The problem with the Prime Minister was that he could not embitter the Malay leaders in these States, without upsetting the unity of the country. But the Singapore Government was not concerned with any of these little problems and opted for immediate Malaysian Malaysia.

Nevertheless, there was nothing untoward in Malaysian racial relations, except in Singapore, during the time that the Indonesian confrontation lasted. But that August, in his Independence Day message on August 17, a few days after Singapore broke away from Malaysia, Sukarno seemed to have adopted a slightly different tone on the confrontation with Malaysia.

The Tunku said he was not surprised but added: "I would, however, think that, instead of playing giddy politics, I would do something to help the suffering millions in my own country. There is no use my blaming everyone else except myself for their sorry plight."

Little did the Malaysians know that Sukarno was on the way out, in the next few weeks, and that confrontation would be a thing of the past, fairly soon!

I happened to be in Kuala Lumpur in 1966. And I was surprised by the extent of economic activity and the apparent peace and harmony in the country. I asked a friend how this was possible; and his explanation was that there was enough

to go round for everyone in Malaysia. That was why, he said, Malaysia was different. He seemed to believe that the spate of prosperity in Malaysia would take care of everything else, that Malaysia would for ever remain the most peaceful land.

And, instinctively, I mused—"Man shall not live by bread alone."

XII. THE FATEFUL ELECTION

THERE WAS absolutely no shortage of bread anywhere in Malaysia. The country was immensely rich and the spate of prosperity that followed Merdeka in 1957 still continued after the formation of Malaysia, and despite the decision of Singapore to quit the Federation. The Alliance which dominated the governments in almost every State, as well as the Central Government, seemed to function as a well-knit party organisation, led by the UMNO, with the other two parties, the MCA and the MIC, playing a secondary role. It looked as if there was an unwritten code of discipline within the Alliance, wherein the Malays got the best jobs, the Chinese made the most money, and the Indians were satisfied with minor positions in the Government.

The Chinese dominated the business community in Malaysia, even when the Government tried officially to assist the Malays. That was why Enche Khir Johari, during his term of office as Minister of Commerce, used to talk of all business in Malaysia being done on the "Ali Baba" basis, with Ali (meaning the Malays) getting the permits and contracts in his name, and the Baba—all local-born Chinese are designated as Babas in Malaysia (meaning the Chinese collaborators)—actually doing the business and making most of the money. Most of the big-time businessmen found it easy to carry on their work by having one or two important Malays associated with their concerns and even British concerns resorted to this system as a means of expediting matters.

The Government had, very wisely, appointed a Chinese leader as Minister of Finance. Tan Siew Sin, the Minister of

Finance since the Alliance assumed power, was a man of undisputed integrity and a great lover of the country and its people. Tan's father was himself an industrialist and had vast interests in the country. Tan Siew Sin, who was also the National President of the Malaysian Chinese Association, was an exponent of Sino-Malay co-operation and was highly competent to handle the nation's finances.

Likewise, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry came under the charge of Dr Lim Swee Ann, after Khir Johari was shifted to the Ministry of Agriculture. Dr Lim, a former medical practitioner, was the ideal choice for that position and the Chinese as well as the Malays had no complaints against him. The same might be said of Koh Kai Boh, who became Minister of Housing, and of most other Chinese who were selected to serve the Government.

The Indians, too, were fairly well represented in the Ministry by V. T. Sambanthan, who was Minister of Works, Posts and Telegraphs, and by Manikkavasagom, who was Minister of Labour. Besides, there were large numbers of Indians in the Government service, occupying secondary positions, whereas a good majority of Chinese with ability and initiative went into business and industry. The partition of labour seemed to work so well that while the Chinese pursued business as a career and the educated Indians became professional men or entered Government service, the Malays certainly were the ruling classes in the new Malaysia and in the new Malaya since Merdeka.

Among the Malays in high positions, the Tunku chose Tun Abdul Razak, his old colleague and friend from Pahang whom he had first met in London, as Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister. Tun Razak was also Minister for National Development and was responsible for a great deal of work for the country. The idea was that, while the Tunku laid down broad policies, it was Razak who thought up the details and put

these plans into working order. A man with a sense of dedicated service, Razak had been designated by the Tunku himself as his successor and had acted as Prime Minister on several occasions.

Yet, somehow, Razak did not strike many people as a popular figure. For, as a former civil servant and as a stickler for discipline and order, and as an extremely efficient man for constructive work, he lacked that something which makes for leadership in a multi-racial society. In fact, the possession of this indefinable quality and absolute honesty of purpose constituted the Tunku's secret as leader of Malaysia.

Another, and a slightly controversial figure among the United Malay National Organisation leaders, who played a major role in consolidating national freedom, as also in fighting for it earlier, was Dr Ismail bin Dr Abdul Rahman. He had given up a lucrative medical practice to join the freedom movement and was the first Minister of the Interior, in which capacity he had headed the anti-communist campaign in the country for several years. Later, he had served as Malaysia's representative at the United Nations and come back, again, to work as Malaysia's Minister of the Interior.

There were other leaders among the Malays who had shown considerable skill and ability in statecraft. Among them was Enche Khir Johari, who has held a number of cabinet portfolios and was regarded as one of the up and coming men in the Alliance. Johari has that popular touch about him, a deftness in taking the right action even in difficult matters, and has been the Alliance Party's trouble-shooter for several years. There were many others among the Malay leaders who were staunch believers in building up Malaysia as a multi-racial nation and bent all their efforts towards that goal.

Yet, the stark reality was that his experiment had been faced with numerous setbacks. Singapore, which was logically a

part of Malaysia, had left the Federation and had blamed the favouritism shown to the Malays for its withdrawal. In the 1964 general elections, the Alliance had a clear majority in the Parliament and in all but the eastern State of Kelantan, which had been traditionally anti-Alliance Party, with its multi-racial outlook. The exit of Singapore from the Federation in August 1965 came as a shock to those who had believed in the multi-racial concept, but nobody seemed to be ready to take any tangible action. And the Alliance leaders thought that, with a better life for all, the ills of Malaysia would never become apparent, the Alliance would remain stable as the strongest political organisation in the country.

Almost immediately after the withdrawal of Singapore from Malaysia came the fall of President Sukarno in Indonesia—an occasion for great rejoicings in Malaysia. The long-drawn-out confrontation against Malaysia had ended overnight. The new regime in Indonesia, busily engaged in setting its own house in order, extended its hand of friendship which Malaysia readily grasped. Peace returned to the Borneo States and to the rest of Malaysia. External aggression had ceased. And Malaysia settled down to a new era of peace and prosperity.

The changes that came over Malaysia in the years after the end of the Indonesian confrontation were not spectacular. True, there were heated debates in the National Parliament on almost every measure of legislation introduced by the Government which, however, enjoyed a majority and was able to overcome all opposition. Yet, it was getting increasingly clear that the opposition had been steadily gaining strength and much of this opposition came from the Chinese and the Indians, in spite of the fact that these two communities were well represented in the Government.

The People's Progressive Party in Perak and the Gerakan Rayat Malaysia were insignificant parties but they seemed to

be gathering strength. In Kelantan, the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party was also gaining in popularity among the Muslim majority there and in the neighbouring States. The Tunku and his colleagues welcomed these parties and their activities, as a good sign of the opposition gathering strength and were prepared to face them in a strictly democratic manner. Little did they realise then that these parties might some day provide a powerful opposition to their own ideas of how to build a new Malaysia.

Unfortunately, Malaysia had other problems requiring its concentrated attention. National development had been making steady progress. Roads and bridges, schools and other institutions of learning, modern airports and community centres had sprung up all over the country. The development of the Borneo States was taken up in earnest especially after the end of the confrontation with Indonesia, involving an outlay of millions of dollars. Malaya, which had set up a record as one of the most prosperous States in Asia, had to face the cost of defending itself against Indonesia after the formation of Malaysia. Yet public confidence in the Tunku was so great that there was no shortage of funds. On the other hand, the relations with the former colonial power were so good that foreign capital was encouraged. The result was that new buildings started coming up in Kuala Lumpur and other places in the State. And there was a great deal of money in circulation throughout Malaysia.

Thus Malaysia flourished with peace and plenty everywhere. Yet the background of Malaya, which became Malaysia, with the addition of the Borneo States, was inescapable. Even with the large population of Chinese in the country and the smaller population of Indians, it was a State born of compromises. Neither the Chinese nor the Indians were to be suppressed, expelled, or absorbed, though Malaysia was constitutionally a Malay State. The racial minorities became citizens of the country where they had settled down; their cultures were respected.

In return for these privileges, the Malays had secured constitutional privileges and remained the dominant political power. It was with these misgivings that much of the compromises were accepted. Yet, too many Malays retained their suspicion of the Chinese, and about their loyalty to Malaysia. Many Malays recalled that, even as recently as fifteen years before, when the Malays like the Tunku and his colleagues were organising themselves to demand freedom from colonial rule, the Chinese in general were not interested in the movement. In fact, many Chinese seemed to be slightly sceptical that Merdeka would ever become a reality, and some were even hostile to the freedom movement. In fact, there was nothing surprising about it and it should not be considered that it was a particularly Chinese trait. Many immigrant ethnic groups, especially trading groups, whose main motive was profit, have been uninterested in the freedom struggles of the local people, largely because they feared for their business and economic interests, once the colonial power quit the area of their domicile.

There was, however, no point in blaming colonialism for the problems that confronted Malaysia. While it is quite true that the ethnic problems of Malaysia could be easily traced to the policy of the colonial rulers in permitting free alien immigration which eventually diluted the population, it was evident that there could be no colonial solution to colonial problems. And, it was in full recognition of this truth that Malaysia was formed on the basis of a set of compromises among the three racial groups in the country, which joined together in an anti-colonial, anti-communist alliance. The trouble was that no one at the time, in the latter half of the 1950's, was able to see what might come in the latter half of the 1960's. Or, if he did, nobody took adequate action to prevent the racial enmity that stemmed from it.

Singapore was an entirely different proposition. There, in a century and more, the influx of Chinese immigrants was enormous, with the result that all communities, especially the Malays and the Indians, had become racial minorities. The Malays in Singapore tried their best to follow the policies of the Alliance Government in Kuala Lumpur and encouraged the opposition to the Government of Lee Kuan Yew.

When the communal tensions mounted in Singapore, riots broke out between the Malays and the Chinese and, in spite of prompt action by the police and the Government, the rioting was prolonged, because of the activities of communist agents in the Port City, and by the criminal actions of the thugs of the Chinese secret societies. A local incident gained prominence as a problem of national significance. And though it showed how delicate the communal situation had been in Malaysia, no one north of the Johore causeway ever seemed to have thought that very much the same situation might well arise there.

Yet another complication seemed to have arisen among the Chinese in their general outlook. It was true that a vast majority of the Chinese, either in Malaysia or in Singapore, had never been to China, especially in the past 22 years since the communist government took over in the homeland. The Chinese, nevertheless, maintained much of the mode of living and social organisation they had brought from China, though in the home country itself these were fast changing. A good many Malaysian Chinese had been following, with deep interest, the developments inside China and, even where they did not endorse the Chinese policy of international confrontation through pressures of all kinds, political, military, psychological and economic, they somehow felt proud of the achievements of China. It does not, in the least, follow that the Chinese in Malaysia or in Singapore were sympathisers of Mao Tse-tung. Yet, it was only natural that they had a sneaking admiration for the

Chinese leader and his policies.

This loyalty for the home country, on the part of the Chinese in Malaysia, at times produced some very quaint results. In 1962, the Tunku strongly denounced the Chinese for their attack on India. The Malaysian Prime Minister, who happened to be in India at that time described the assault as revealing the "red signal of danger". Later, after he returned home, the Tunku started a fund to assist India, calling it the "Save Democracy Fund", with himself as Chairman. Contributions poured in to swell the "Save Democracy Fund", but a large part of the funds came from Indians and Malays, as well as from Chinese businessmen who endorsed the Alliance policy and programme. The queer fact was that few of the average Chinese donated to the "Save Democracy Fund" in Malaysia! At the other end, there were Chinese who gloated over the success of the Chinese forces against India!

It was clear that, while the Chinese in Malaysia had good reason to be happy over the privileges they received in that country, they were restless about the way the Chinese lived in Singapore or other predominantly Chinese States. It was also clear that quite a good many of them admired the Chinese in the home country, though very few of them would have cared to go back and remain there. At the same time, it was clear that Malaysia would be dominated by the Malays. And there were very few attempts by the Malays to disabuse them of that feeling.

It was a peculiar type of inferiority complex that had gripped the Chinese in Malaysia. To a lesser extent, perhaps, the Indians felt the same way about their plight in Malaysia. This was particularly so among the members of the present generation. Some of these Malaysian Indians might have been upset that, in spite of their talents, they did not receive proper recognition from the authorities, while some others might have felt

jealous about the way their Malay colleagues were able to get on. It was well on the part of the Malays to say that they might go back to China, or to India, if they did not like it in Malaysia. But they, too, had a stake in Malaysia and were not prepared to move out.

There was mounting disaffection among the Chinese over the Malaysian Chinese Association's leadership though it comprised decent, honest people who had served the community well. The Indian community, though smaller in number and far less influential, might have had the same complaint against the Malaysian Indian Congress and its leadership. So, these people organised themselves to claim what they believed were their rights as Malaysians. And they chose strictly constitutional means.

The general elections, held in Malaysia in May 1969, were the third since Merdeka in 1957. The second elections took place in early 1964, a few months after the formation of Malaysia and in the midst of the Indonesian "confrontasi" campaign. But the third elections were held under peaceful conditions and there was nothing to provide a surprise at the polls. Yet, that was precisely what happened when the nation's votes were counted.

In spite of all the controversy in the country, and all the tall talk of the opposition leaders, and the numerous new parties that came into being in the interval between the second and third elections, very few people expected events to turn the way they did in Malaysia. The fierce electioneering campaign started months before polling date but there were absolutely no disturbances in the country. It was a well-organised and well-conducted affair. That was why the election results came as a surprise.

In fact, the Alliance Party did win a majority in the Central Parliament. In the State of Sabah (North Borneo) Alliance can-

didates had been returned unopposed in ten constituencies, and there was a parliamentary majority for the ruling party, regardless of what happened in the staggered elections in East Malaya. But the loss of 22 seats in West Malaya, and an almost fifty per cent share of the polls, came as a shock to the Alliance election campaigners.

The picture that emerged from the State elections was even more dismal. In addition to Kelantan, where the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party which had been in power retained its advantage, the State of Perlis went to the PMIP, which also made significant gains in the neighbouring State of Trengannu. The Alliance had also lost control of the governments in two States, Penang and Perak. In Penang, the Alliance won only four of the twenty-four seats. In Perak, though short of two seats to constitute a majority, the Alliance was still the major political party. In the State of Selangor, where Kuala Lumpur is situated, there was a stalemate—and a constitutional problem. The Alliance had control now only in seven of the eleven States of the Peninsula which formed the original Malaya.

The biggest loser in the Malaysian elections had been the Malaysian Chinese Association, a partner of the Alliance, which had now come down to the position which it had held in 1959. One of the most astonishing of the results was the defeat of Dr Lin Swee Aun, the popular Minister of Commerce and Industry. He had won by a margin of more than 13,000 votes in 1964, whereas in 1969, he lost to a fairly unknown candidate of the Gerakan party by nearly 5,000 votes. Dr Tan Chee Khoon, the Gerakan leader, defeated the Alliance candidate in Kuala Lumpur by nearly 8,000 votes. A more predictable election result was the victory of Mr S. P. Seenivasagom, of the People's Progressive Party in Perak but the majority of well over 2,200 votes he secured surprised everybody.

The Alliance Party suffered many other defeats. But nobody

was prepared to countenance the loss of numerous seats suffered by the Malaysian Chinese Association. The United Malay National Organisation lost a few seats, particularly in the northern State of Kedah. But the main trend was unmistakable. It was against the Malaysian Chinese Association and in favour of other Chinese parties which advocated greater rights for the non-Malays. The men who won the elections in Penang, Perak, Selangor and other States belonged to this category.

The political scene seemed to have been dominated by prejudices, fears and suspicions. The United Malay National Organisation which, with 51 seats in Parliament against the Malaysian Chinese Association's 13 seats, thought that the UMNO as a party should have a big say in the selection of Ministers in the new Government. They thought that the Prime Minister should consult the Party before finalising the cabinet list. A spokesman told the Press: "Clearly, UMNO is in power and one has to accept this fact."

The following day, the Malaysian Chinese Association, which had been a partner of the Alliance for nearly fourteen years, decided to pull out of the Government, because of the setbacks it had suffered in the elections. The MCA would, however, remain a member of the Alliance.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the Central Working Commitee of the MCA, with its national chairman, Tan Siew Sin, in the chair. Almost all the leading members and officials of the MCA attended the meeting which had been called for an "agonizing re-appraisal" of the Party's position following the defeat of many of its candidates in the general elections. After the two-and-a-half-hour closed-door meeting Tan Siew Sin read the following statement:

"The Chinese in this country have rejected the MCA to represent them in the Government, if the results of the general elections reflect their wishes. As politicians, practising parliamen-

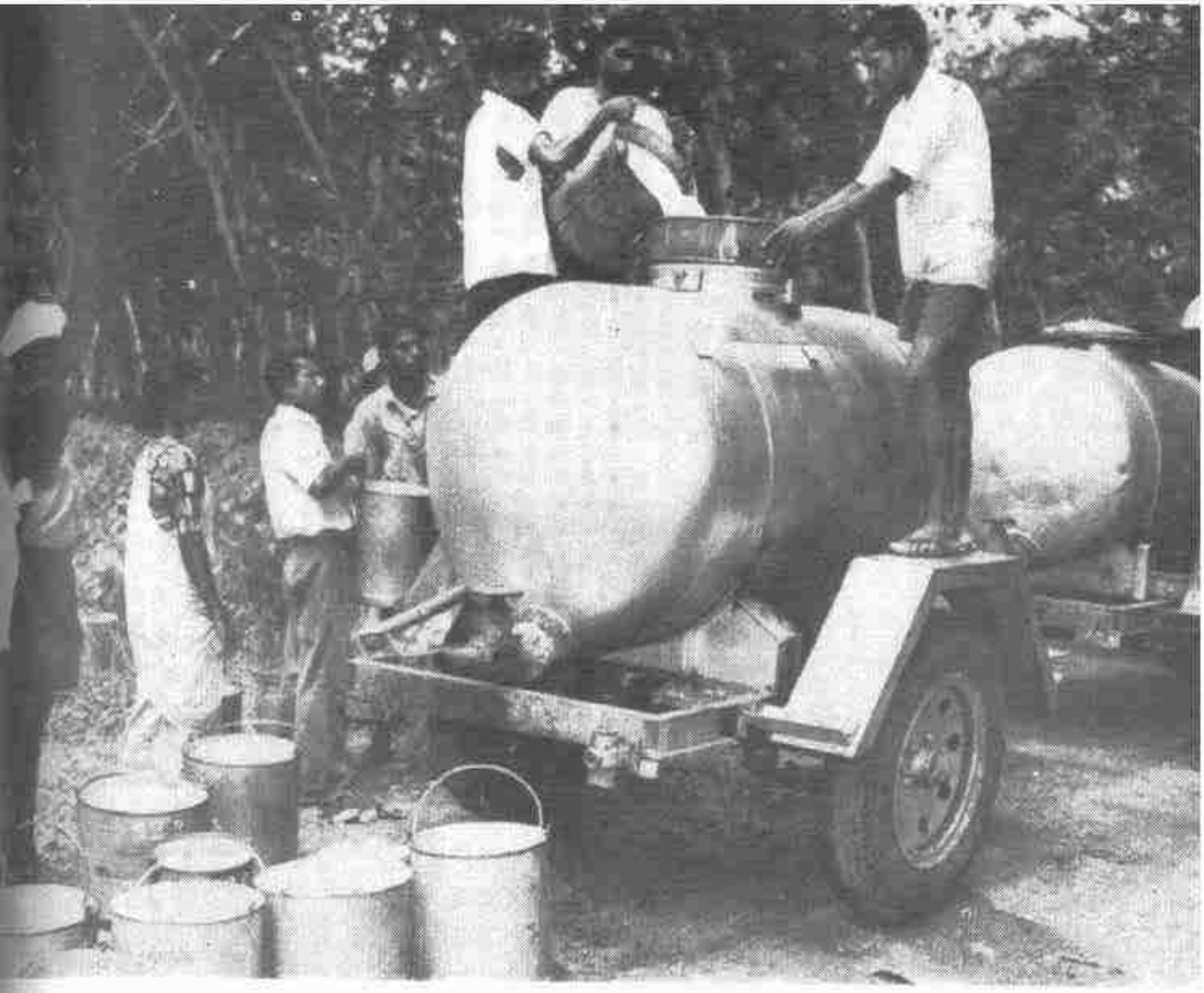


Plate 9—The rubber latex is transported by means of tankers to the factory for processing.

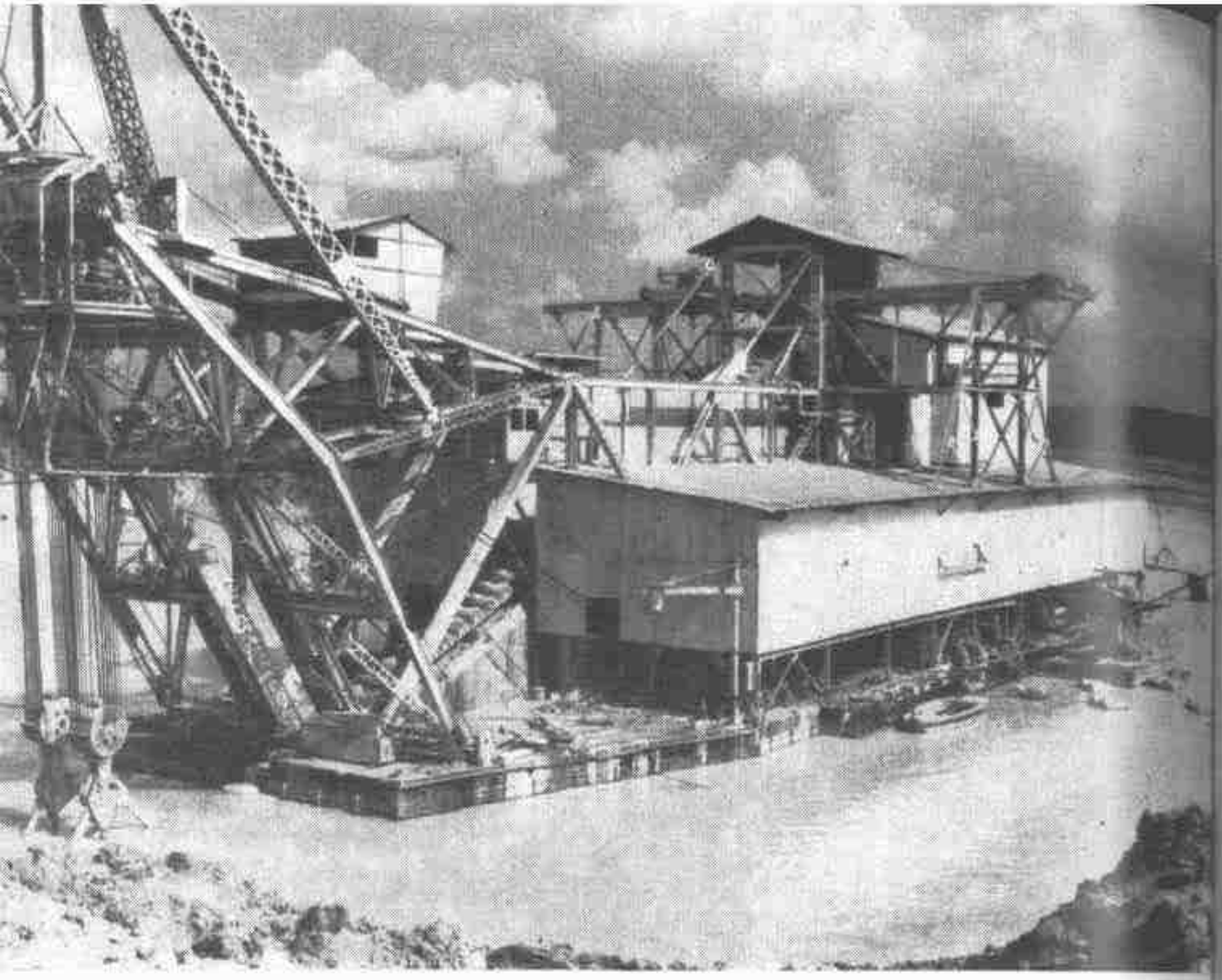


Plate 10—Malaysia supplies about 40 per cent of the world's tin. Picture shows a multi-million tin dredge in operation.

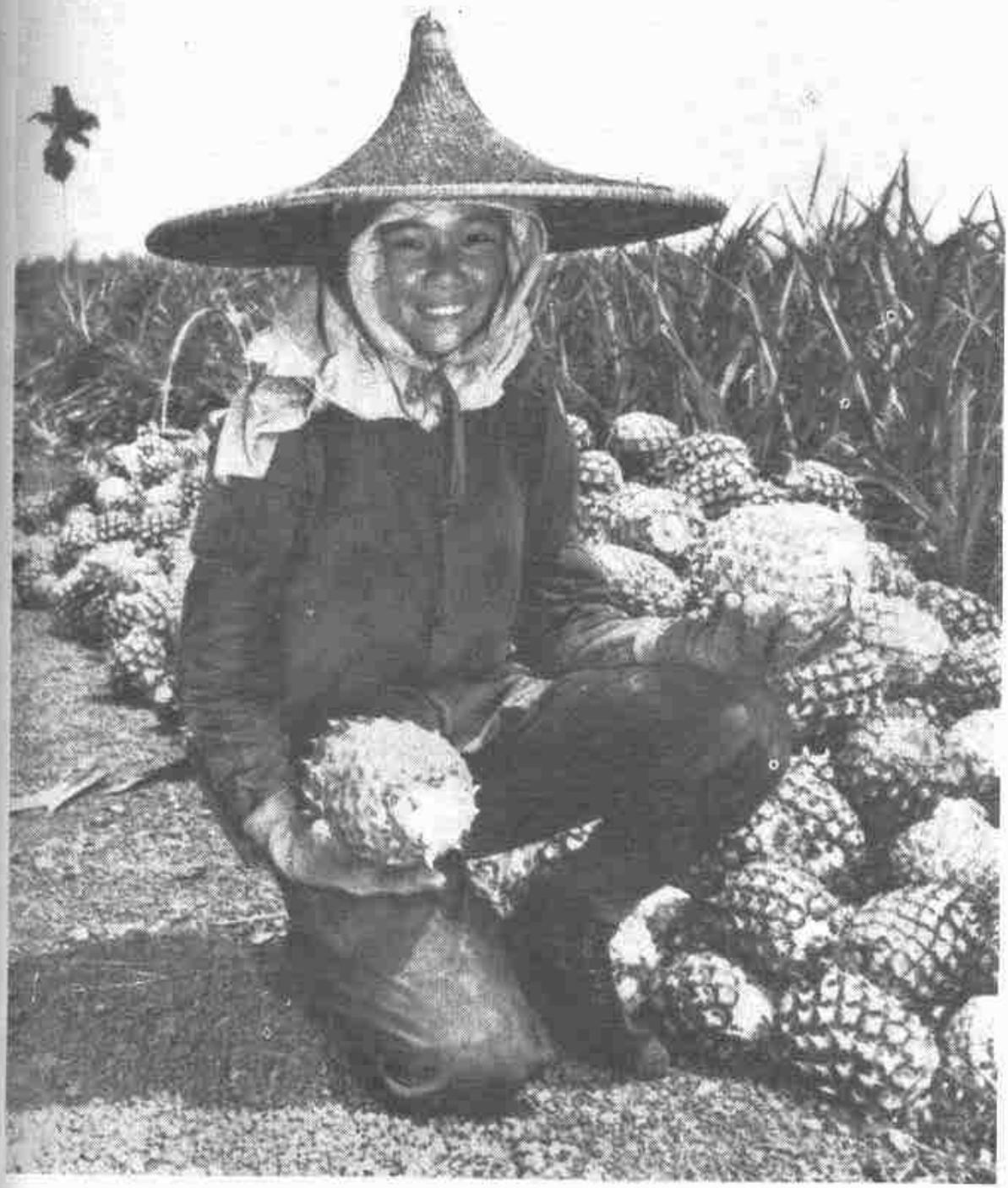


Plate 11—The day's harvest of pineapples from a plantation in Johore.

Plate 12—Rubber Tapping—Skill is required to cut 1/16 of an inch of the bark to cause the rubber latex to flow.

tary democracy, the MCA must accept this to be the case. Under the circumstances, the MCA has no alternative but to refrain from participation in the Government, in that no MCA representative will accept any appointment in the cabinet, in the Federal Government, or in the executive councils of the respective State Assemblies. However, the MCA will remain with the Government and all its representatives will be with the Government in order to give it the majority required, so that the Alliance can continue in power, both at the Federal and State levels."

The National President of the MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress), V. T. Sambanthan, said: "The question of the MIC leaving the Alliance does not arise . . . We are satisfied that the Indian community in the country voted very solidly for the Alliance."

What he did not mention, however, was the fact that quite a number of Indians contested and won the 1969 elections on tickets other than those offered by the MIC.

The decision of the Malaysian Chinese Association and the pressure exercised by the United Malay National Organisation had held up the formation of the new Central Government. The entire city of Kuala Lumpur was excited over the election results and the developments that followed. The Prime Minister returned to the capital from his native Alor Star, in North Malaya, and announced that he would call a meeting of the cabinet immediately. He said that there was no truth whatever in the rumours of his impending retirement. "I am not surrendering this country to these people (the opposition)," he said.

XIII. THE RACE RIOTS

OVER THE YEARS, Malaysia had displayed such convincing signs of being South-East Asia's rousing success story that the multi-racial camouflage disguising the reality of Malay political control had seldom been questioned. Of course, there had been occasional racial strife but such incidents had been smothered beneath a mass of impressive statistics, showing spectacular increases in the exports of tin and rubber and expansion of the per capita income. It was Tunku Abdul Rahman's favourite theme that "everyone in Malaysia is free to live his life as he chooses, and in his own way, uninterrupted and without interference, carefree like children in the sun".

But what had happened in Malaysia was that the children had grown up and the paternalism of the Tunku's political style was found to be inadequate to keep the various races of Malaysia in harmony. It was this fact that became evident at the 1969 elections. The undeniable truth was that an articulate political opposition had emerged through absolutely democratic means. But before anybody had time to think of this development and to restore some measure of racial equilibrium disrupted by the elections and their outcome, Malaysia's proud experiment in constructing a multi-racial society exploded on the streets of Kuala Lumpur on May 13, 1969!

What provoked the incident was something that had happened the previous day. Carried away by their success at the polls, the supporters of the Chinese-dominated parties staged victory parades through the streets of Kuala Lumpur. In their excitement some of the the Chinese taunted Malay by-standers. Over and over again, the Chinese demonstrators shouted that they would

soon take over the Government of Malaysia. That was a day of victory for the Chinese demonstrators.

The following day, large bands of Malays, many of them from the countryside who had poured into the capital, staged a counter-demonstration. These mobs, wearing white headbands and brandishing swords and d aggers, surged into the Chinese areas. What followed was an orgy of burning, looting and killing. As the anti-Chinese rampage developed and many houses were set ablaze and quite a few were killed, the Chinese retaliated. Armed with pistols and shotguns, the Chinese mobs struck at Malay kampongs. Huge pillars of smoke rose skyward as houses, shops and motor-cars burned. Firemen drew sniper fire as they attempted to douse the flames. The police, easily outnumbered by the mobs, watched helplessly at street corners, while the angry mobs ruled the place.

The Government was caught unawares by what had happened. It, however, acted quickly by proclaiming a state of emergency throughout Selangor State. Curfew was imposed in Penang and Perak. Yet the racial riots continued everywhere. In Kuala Lumpur, life was at a standstill. In the neighbouring township of Petaling Jaya, many people were killed by the rioters. In some areas, the Chinese mobs were joined by Indians, who had an electoral alliance with the victorious Chinese parties. Only the members of the Malaysian Chinese Association kept aloof. But for the time being, it looked as if they were helpless, amidst the mobs of Chinese and Malays on their deadly mission of murder, looting, and wrecking everything in their way.

After declaring a state of emergency, the Prime Minister went on the air with an appeal to the people to give their fullest assistance and co-operation to the security forces in the maintenance of law and order in the country. He said: "This country depends on you, the good citizens, to do your duty and stand by me, in order to help this country which we all love so much. In this

hour of need, I pray to Allah to secure you against all dangers. I will do all I can, without fear, to maintain peace in this country."

Other national leaders, particularly Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Mr Tan Siew Sin, the leader of the Malaysian Chinese Association, also went on the air. Both appealed to the people to stand solidly behind the Government, to help maintain law and order, and to avoid anything which might inflame the situation.

Yet, by 10.00 p.m., on that black night, the situation seemed to have gone completely out of control. Fires raged almost everywhere in the city. The curfew, first ordered in the predominantly Malay area of Kampong Bahru, had been extended to almost every part of the city. Angry mobs attacked a couple of police stations, cars and lorries were stopped and burned, and large crowds armed with "parangs", sticks and iron pipes roamed the streets. Meanwhile, the police received orders to shoot anyone who endangered their lives or tried to seize arms from them. Yet the rampage continued with full fury.

The orgy of blood and terror, the like of which had never before been witnessed in the Peninsula, continued for more than three days. But by that time, hundreds of people had been killed and damage to property worth millions of dollars had been caused. It was only after four days that some semblance of order was restored in Kuala Lumpur and other cities of Malaysia. Yet there was sporadic fighting in some areas where Malaysians killed Malaysians and nobody knew what it was all about.

By the week-end, the steam had gone from the rioters in most parts of Kuala Lumpur and elsewhere in Malaysia. There was a marked improvement in the city, after the first week of the troubles when hundreds of army men patrolled the entire area. In the hospitals, where the morgue was crowded, as well as in the wards where riot victims had been rushed for treatment, the Chinese and Indian doctors co-operated whole-heartedly, as also the Malay

nurses, in their humanitarian work. And there were numerous cases of individual Malays assisting their Chinese neighbours and of Chinese helping their Malay friends caught in the turmoil.

The National Operations Council, which came into being by the week-end, was almost on the same pattern as the organisation set up by the British General Templer shortly after the end of World War II to crush the communists. It froze the entire democratic process in the country. Its chairman, Tun Abdul Razak, became the country's "strong man". And, symbolically, the National Operations Council moved into the Malaysian Parliament Buildings!

The declaration of the state of emergency in the country had given the Government all the powers and authority it needed. What it had not been given, it must win—the confidence of the general public and the support of all the communities in Malaysia's multi-racial society. This meant firm and resolute action, in all circumstances, on behalf of all communities. The National Operations Council may provide the method, and the emergency powers may be the means. According to the Government's orders, such Operations Councils were set up in every State. Of course, the problems varied from State to State and the State Governments were to be consulted, though all executive authority had passed to the Central Government of Malaysia and the National Operations Council.

There was no doubt, however, that the Government was determined to be tough with the instigators of trouble. Dr Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman, Minister for Home Affairs, told the Press: "It is only right that justice must be done to those whose lives have been sacrificed. The guilty will be properly punished because we cannot afford not to do so. It is not right that innocent lives should be lost, just because politicians want to achieve their ends. Those responsible for the outbreak of violence will be brought to book."

The Home Minister was brutally frank in his talk with newsmen.

He repeatedly said that democracy was dead in Malaysia. The country, he said, could not afford the democratic process in the then prevailing chaotic state. When a member of the Press asked him, if democracy stood a chance of being revived in Malaysia, he asked: "Do you think parliamentary democracy can exist in a chaotic state?"

To the question what proportion of the country was in a chaotic state, and how he would define the term, Dr Ismail gave this sharp reply: "My definition of chaotic state is when law and order has broken down completely and we have to enforce this by special method. In my estimate, the whole country is in a chaotic state."

Two days later, Dr Ismail conceded that the Government had captured "quite a large number of hard core terrorists and they are being interrogated. The Government will do everything to ensure that such disturbances do not break out again. We cannot afford to take any risk at all. . ."

Dr Ismail said that there was no doubt that one of the main causes of the turmoil was the irresponsible conduct of some political parties and, when he was asked whether there were indications that the opposition parties had been infiltrated by cadres of the Malayan Communist Party, he replied: "There are two ways in which the Malayan Communist Party cadres can infiltrate into the opposition parties. Some do it with the co-operation of the opposition, while some do it without their co-operation. I am not going to blatantly accuse the opposition parties and without reason. I will leave it to the security forces to find out whether they have been infiltrated or not."

The Tunku, who later addressed the nation on television, blamed treacherous elements and saboteurs for much of the communal unrest in Malay ia. He said that any weakening or slackening of the Government's efforts would give these elements further encouragement to launch offensive acts. He recalled his earlier claim that the communists were responsible for the racial trouble

but quoted intelligence reports for the claim that "paid saboteurs and secret society members" were also involved in the disturbances.

The Prime Minister explained that the elections in the Borneo States of Sarawak and Sabah had to be suspended "in order to save the process of democracy". He said that, according to intelligence reports, many workers and planners of the subversive forces had gone to those States to work out the plans, which had proved so successful on the mainland—using threats, intimidation and bribery to subvert the democratic process of the election.

The Tunku declared: "There is no going back now. We will fight them hard, hit them really hard, to break their backbone and their spirit."

Though the situation started getting back to normal by the first week of June, there were indications that Malaysia was getting ready for strong measures and for an extended state of emergency. One move in that direction was the Malaysian Government's decision to expand its armed forces by three infantry battalions and to raise a para-military force of about 5,000 men. Accordingly, Malaysia approached India, Britain, Australia and New Zealand for certain types of arms to meet the emergency. And the Malaysian Government offered cash payment.

Malaysia also started consultations with Indonesia for military personnel and training facilities to meet the emergency. The Malaysian Ambassador to Indonesia, Yakub Abdul Latif, rushed back from his post to consult his Government. He said: "Anything that happens here (in Malaysia) is of immediate concern there (in Indonesia)."

By June 10, almost a month after the racial flare-up, the riots had totally subsided and life in Kuala Lumpur and elsewhere in Malaysia was beginning to get back to normal. But the fires that swept Malaysia had destroyed much more than shops, buildings and cars. The flames that raged had consumed the roots of emotional integration in the multi-racial land.

Tunku Abdul Rahman's experiment for evolving unity in the racial diversities of Malaysia seemed to have been seriously upset, if it had not dismally failed.

The main fault of the Alliance Party was that, while it pleaded for multi-racialism, it made little effort to integrate the main races. Instead, it let them retain their individuality and, at the same time, expected them to talk, act and think like one nation. There was little by way of social intercourse. A non-Malay had to become a Muslim, before he or she was able to marry a Malay. In neighbouring Thailand, for example, the Chinese immigrants did not have any such disabilities. The first-generation Chinese remained Chinese to the core, in spite of the money they made, but the subsequent generations became Thais. Inter-marriages between the Chinese and the Thais were very common. In fact, the Chinese had good connections even with members of Thailand's Royal Family.

Presumably, the Alliance Party was satisfied that arrangements with the Chinese and the Indians that Malays would be allowed to retain their racial rights and privileges, fairly permanently, in return for citizenship rights to those who had stayed in the Federation for a certain number of years, were adequate to safeguard racial harmony in the country. As the years passed, the "concessions" were forgotten. The Alliance Government made no attempt to remind the younger generations about the give-and-take arrangements. The result was continuing misunderstanding between the two groups.

Another mistake of the Alliance Party was that it failed to encourage the Malays to go into business. The result was that the Chinese and the Indians controlled nearly 80 per cent of the country's economy, occasionally with the assistance of a few well-placed Malays, leaving the common Malays just as poor as they were before independence. The Malays, therefore, had no option but to join Government service—the police, the armed forces and the administration—where they were given special treatment.

The Malays did have an advantage over the other races with the so-called "four to one" rule in the public services. This meant that four Malays had to be found Government employment before the Government took on one Chinese, Indian or anyone else. These people found that the administration was steadily becoming Malay-controlled and this led to further suspicion.

Some of these practices, originally meant to protect Malays from unfair exploitation by the other communities, had worked against the Malays. One example was that the new land law forbade the sale of land owned by a Malay to anyone except a Malay, without special sanction. This resulted in a severe reduction in the values of the lands owned by the Malays, since their market was restricted to the Malay only.

Then, there were other factors, too, which seemed to have been overlooked at the time of the Malay-Chinese-Indian arrangement for the independence of Malaya. Until the new generations started growing up, the general impression was that the Chinese were not really concerned with white-collar work, since they were keen on making money, while the Indians would not mind too much since they were mainly labourers on the plantations and small-time merchants. And in Malaysia, where Indians (including the Ceylonese, Pakistanis and anybody else who looked like an Indian), who manned the railways, the post offices and other Government departments, had jobs already anyway.

This feeling that the Chinese never wished to have Government jobs was sheer wishful thinking. People resented discrimination simply because it was there, not necessarily because they themselves might lose by such discrimination. This sense of prejudicial official policy grew with the formation of the Army and the expansion of the police force on substantially racialist lines. The Malaysian Infantry, for example, is about 95 per cent Malay. Some specialised sections are officered by the Chinese but not many. And the official explanation that all this did not indicate any "unfair discri-

mination" did not seem to convince anyone except those who stood to benefit by it.

The general feeling in the country was that Malaysia was, in fact, or would be, a Malay State. The adoption of Malay as the national language was also interpreted to prove this point. The Indians adapted themselves quickly to these changes and, anyway, they were numerically too unimportant to make a splutter of protest. From the very outset, the Indian Government had enjoined people of Indian descent in Malaysia to consider that country as their home. But the Chinese, who added up to nearly 40 per cent of the population, protested loudly for a while and then retreated into a long and bitter sulk that broke out in violence following their election victories in May 1969.

One of the most beguiling features, behind the racial storm, was Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman's own non-racial mentality. No one has ever charged him, even in the worst heat of the communal crisis in Malaysia, as a communal-minded person. It was almost as unthinkable as to have accused Jawaharlal Nehru of caste or race prejudice. The Tunku himself has a whole brood of adopted children of a mixed race. He publicly acknowledges his Mongoloid ancestry (his mother belonged to a noble family in Northern Thailand) and he is proud of him. Still, there was little doubt that a very vocal minority within his own party, a very densely racist minority, had been pushing the Alliance Government deeper and deeper into adopting policies which, left to himself, he might not have considered.

A surprisingly large number of Chinese Opposition leaders are as loyal to Malaysia as any Malay. But, as it happens in democratic elections, they made use of the extremists and their concept of "Chinese-ism". They described the Malaysian Chinese Association and the Malayan Indian Congress as the "stooges of the Malays, who are selling the interests of the Chinese, and of the Indians, to the Malays".

That sort of psychological warfare produced excellent results. For the first time, a section of the Chinese and Indians joined hands against the Alliance. When the election results were announced, the Opposition parties were surprised; the Alliance Party was shocked. The Opposition had previously only 19 seats in Parliament, whereas this time they had more than doubled their number. Eight Indians were elected on the opposition tickets, as against a lone Indian previously.

It will be futile to try to discover which came first—Malay or Chinese chauvinism. Was the rioting in Kuala Lumpur a reaction against Malay racialism or Chinese racialism? Did the Chinese, and the Indians, only retaliate against Malay chauvinism, when they voted against Chinese candidates who worked with the Malay-dominated Alliance Party?

These and many other questions seem to be irrelevant at this time. What is really relevant is that any government of a multi-racial multi-religious country, especially a democracy, must regard the protection of its minorities as one of its fundamental duties. It may be unnecessary, nor is it possible, to get people to integrate to such an extent that minority cultures are dissolved in that of the majority for the simple reason that it is the majority.

People may be expected to work for common goals and obey common laws in a multi-racial society but they cannot be forced to abandon their own language and religion and the intangible distinctions of human individuality.

XIV. THE TUNKU'S DILEMMA

PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN certainly exercised a peculiar ability to hold together the various racial groups in Malaysia. But the race riots that swept the country and the capital in May 1969 had shaken much of the popular faith in the Tunku. Many leaders of the Alliance Party seemed to have been convinced that the conservative racial groups would not be able to change the stand adopted by them. This was particularly applicable to the Chinese and the Malays. The Indians were numerically insignificant, though far more vocal than the others.

If a large section of the Malaysian Chinese broke away from Mr Tan Siew Sin's Chinese Association to form the bulwark of the Gerekan and Democratic Action Parties, there was a major split among the Malays, too: those who had voted for the UMNO and those who had voted for the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party. In the emergency that followed the race riots, there were more Malays who subscribed to the policies of the Islamic Party. Their complaint was that the riots and the emergency were caused by the Tunku because he had shown a weakness for political will by giving far too many concessions to the other racial groups, the Chinese and the Indians.

This Malay group's argument was that the Malays were the original inhabitants of the country and that they must assert themselves and run Malaysia as a Muslim country. They claimed that the Alliance Government had discriminated against the Malays. They said that they were not given better opportunities than the Indians and the Chinese, who were economically and politically strong. To the members of this party, including quite a few university graduates trained at Aligarh in India and the Al Azhar

in Cairo, the Chinese and the Indians were "foreigners" who had a good time for too long, though most of these Chinese and Indians were Malaysians by birth and other affiliations.

A growing dilemma for the Tunku had been the problem arising from this attitude of a large number of Malays. The Alliance was worried over a split among the Malays, with an increasingly large number joining the Islamic Party. He had to maintain the Alliance strength, and yet fight the purely Islamic trends evident within a large section of Malays, particularly in the countryside. Meanwhile, the liberal views propagated in the urban areas were found unacceptable to the Chinese population which now comprised a number of splinter groups, which believed that the Malaysian Chinese Association had outlived its utility.

Very much the same trends had developed in the Malaysian Indian Congress. There were nearly one million Indians in Malaysia but only half that number had voting rights, and they had been sharply split, as was evident from the number of Indians who unseated the candidates belonging to the Malaysian Chinese Association. It was also known that some Indians had joined the Chinese in the post-election celebrations in Kuala Lumpur, which set off the carnage that began on May 13, 1969. In any case, there was distinct reluctance on the part of the Malays, as well as the other faces, to remember the past and to make adjustments for the present.

Looking back at the history of Malaysia since Stamford Raffles settled down in Singapore and built up the Empire, we find the three racial strains in the country. The Malays were the original inhabitants of the land. The Chinese and the Indians came into the country to assist the Empire-builders in exploiting the resources of the country. Many of them landed at Malayan ports with nothing but the clothes they wore. They worked hard, many died in the ordeal, and quite a few made good.

It was the story of pioneers everywhere. Most of these Chinese

and Indian settlers stayed back in Malaysia. Those who were born in Malaysia, and their children, had little contact with the country of their ancestors. But their integration into Malayan society was faced with serious limitations. When Malaya became independent, most of them took up its citizenship and joined the Malays in building up a new Malaya and later a new Malaysia. It is certainly the history of the imperial sway over entire South-Eeast Asia that made Malaysia a multi-racial society but, as an independent country, it had to contend with realities.

The reality in Malaysia was that all the three racial groups had made tremendous progress since Merdeka. The pattern of progress, however, followed the decisions taken on the eve of Merdeka, whereby the Malays enjoyed political control, while the Chinese exercised economic control and the Indians were satisfied with trade unionism in the rubber plantations or small-time jobs in the Government. The Malays might claim that the Chinese were showing their economic power, at the elections and in the riots that followed, and that the Indians had acted as the Chinese camp-followers. Certainly, there was a move to put down this display of Chinese and Indian supremacy. And unfortunately for Malaysia, there were several Malays who thought that this could not be achieved as long as the Tunku stayed in power.

The people, particularly among the Malays who subscribed to this view, were behind the controversy that flared up shortly after the proclamation of the emergency, even before the riots had subsided. Their argument was that the Tunku, as Prime Minister, was a mere figurehead under the new set-up which was dominated by the Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, who as Director of Operations, at the National Operations Council, wielded the widest possible powers in Malaysia.

It was extremely significant that there was a campaign in Malaysia aimed at forcing Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman to resign. Students of the University of Malaya held demonstra-

tions for five days towards the beginning of September, a little less than three months after the riots had died down, and there were grave threats that these anti-Tunku demonstrations might touch off fresh racial violence.

When the National Operations Council acted, it proclaimed stern action against students, who seemed to be bent on forcing the Tunku out of office, and made it clear that such action would be taken against all persons, irrespective of race. That quelled the students' agitation against the Tunku. Their demand that he should resign forthwith was certainly in bad taste. It was the Tunku who had created the University of Malaya!

Meanwhile, there was little doubt that those in authority in Malaysia took a hard line against the Chinese and the Indians who had become a source of trouble for the Malays. Even Tun Razak condemned those who were responsible for the riots in no uncertain terms. He called them anti-national and said that he would not spare anyone among such anti-national elements. He told an Indian correspondent on May 19: "We are taking action against them all . . . we will take action against the Indians if they are found guilty. . ."

A week later, Mr. V. T. Sambandhan, Minister for Manpower, said that Indian and Chinese hoodlums found indulging in anti-national activities might be deported from Malaysia. He said: "There is no question of any mercy being shown to them by the Director of Operations. I do not think that the nation wants any mercy to be shown to them. . . We will take all necessary measures to rid the country of bad elements."

Very few Indians have been deported from Malaysia but there is no doubt that a few tens of thousands of Indians would be squeezed out of the country. A statement from the National Operations Council said (barely a month after the first flare-up in Malaysia) that the Director of Operations, Tun Abdul Razak, had ordered that immediate steps be taken to "require non-citizens,

permanent or otherwise, who are employed or self-employed in Malaysia, to be registered for work-permits". The order said that this was necessary to enable the Government to know the details of non-citizens residing in the country.

A flood of small, blue card-board slips began filtering into almost every corner of Malaysia, bringing dismay to more than 100,000 non-citizen workers. Shortly, they were to be unemployed—and unemployable—by law. These non-citizens and their dependants, perhaps numbering about three-quarter million, were to face a bleak future. More than half that number were Indians, while most of the rest were Chinese. Though these little card-board slips were called work-permits, they were in fact notices to stop work.

It may seem strange that such a large number of "non-citizens" are still living in Malaysia but many factors have gone into this situation, which includes a Malay language test, and which at time looks like an intelligence test. Recently, an uneducated applicant for Malaysian citizenship was asked to describe the Apollo-11 moon landing. Naturally, this applicant failed in the language test and was declared unfit for citizenship!

There have been other reasons, too, for such a large number of applications left undisposed of: the difficulties caused by old clerical errors in rendering Indian and Chinese names into Roman script for birth certificates, the absence of these facilities during the Japanese occupation of the entire South-East Asian region between 1942 and 1945, the distinctions between the former Malay States and the Straits Settlements of Malacca and Penang, and the changes at the time of Merdeka (1957), at the formation of Malaysia (1963) and at the time when Singapore was excluded from Malaysia (1965). No wonder that, even after the work-permit rule was strictly enforced, the Government was able to declare qualified only about 1,500 out of 6,000 applications which came up for scrutiny until the end of 1969!

Malaysia was ruled by decree for nearly two years. The National Operations Council was the supreme body of administration in the country; the cabinet functioned under its directive. In a few months after May 13, 1969, that Black Friday, life became fairly normal in Malaysia. Confidence among the various racial groups was slowly restored and economic activities were resumed as before.

A century ago, when the first British Resident was appointed to advise the Sultan of Selangor, the only road in the State was a few miles of rough cart track running from Kuala Lumpur to the mining camps nearby. By 1957, when the Union Jack was hauled down, Malaya had more than 6,000 miles of excellent roads and this was increased to nearly 10,000 miles by 1969. Progress in many other fields has been equally impressive.

Growth in the economy of the country has been chartered by a series of plans, the targets of which have generally been achieved. The first Malayan Development Plan, launched before Merdeka in 1957, covered a period during which public investment almost doubled that during the period 1951-1955 and the real output of the economy increased at the rate of about 3¾ per cent, while the population increase was at the rate of about 3 per cent. The second plan, adopted in 1961, was considerably more ambitious. The Government set up special planning bodies to produce and work out the blueprints and established Operations Rooms, from the national capital, through the State capitals, down to the smallest district. There were development command centres, based on military methods, with maps and charts, with which to plot the development of the country.

With the establishment of Malaysia, work was started on an integrated plan and the first Malaysian Plan came into operation in 1966 and was due to last until 1971. It aims at an annual per capita increase of about 1.7 per cent for the entire country. This would represent a considerable achievement against the popula-

tion growth, which is still about 3 per cent annually. Nevertheless, the plan requires a high rate of investment but this was very nearly met at least at the initial stages of the plan. The willingness on the part of private investors to come to Malaysia depended, above all, on the political outlook and the Government's attitude. While the Government's policy towards private investments in the country still gives no cause for any misgivings, the change of political climate in the country might have produced the effect of making private capital shy for a time, because of the emergency.

The two periods of crisis, however, have served to strengthen Malaysia. First, there was the communist insurrection in Malaya during the emergency from 1948 to 1960. After the proclamation of Merdeka in 1957, the Malayan Communist Party, which had made a serious bid to take over the country, had no more pretensions to be the party of national liberation. There were mass surrenders during the years 1958 and 1959 and the remnants of the party, the hard core communists, retreated to the mountains in northern Malaya bordering Thailand.

The second crisis came during the "confrontation" with Indonesia. In fact, this crisis brought together the Malaysians of various races and curbed the more extreme Malay nationalists who had tended to be influenced by Indonesia. In eastern Malaysia, in the States of Sarawak and Sabah (former British North Borneo), it was some time after the end of the "confrontation" and border warfare before complete peace was restored. The security situation in Sabah caused no particular anxiety but the activities of a militant communist organisation posed a grave problem in Sarawak. Separated from Malaya by nearly 400 miles of sea, the racial problems in Sarawak and Sabah are complicated, with a mixture of Malays and Chinese and various Borneans producing local difficulties besides the Kadazans in Sabah and the Ibans and Dyaks in Sarawak.

The Malaysian picture had changed drastically by the time the

third crisis had descended on the country. After the bloodbath, which lasted more than four days since May 13, 1969, and when passions ran high among the major racial groups in the country, the Government's first effort seemed to be to fix the blame for the riots. The Tunku first spoke of "dark conspiracies" to seize power. Then, the Minister of Interior, Dato Ismail, issued a warning against the machinations of Chinese secret societies. He said that there were about 300 Chinese secret societies which had been ganging up, to consolidate their position in the prevailing tension. And in an interview with Indian journalists, the Tunku declared that Communist China was the biggest threat to Asia.

Undoubtedly, the majority of Chinese in Malaysia wish to remain there. In fact, they have no place to go to. Taiwan has not got the capacity to accommodate the four million Chinese from Malaysia. If these Chinese went to Mainland China, they would become the victims of Mao-ism. Malaysia, on the other hand, has no objection to the Chinese remaining there, but certainly not as masters.

There are extremists on both sides who have adopted the hard line. The "ultras" among the Malays would let Chinese and Indians stay back amidst them, provided they did not demand any additional rights in Malaysia. The "ultras" among the Chinese and the Indians, on the other hand, argue that they had lived in Malaysia for generations, and that the Malays should not treat them as second-class citizens in Malaysia.

Despite these and other basic differences between the races in Malaysia, there emerged a general realisation, particularly among the Chinese, that the Malays, having overcome the crisis, were firmly in the saddle of power in the country. That understanding had somehow influenced the return to normalcy. The Indians did not figure largely in this power struggle. A few thousand Indians have come back home, mainly to South India. Most of them belong to the middle-income group, whose watchword has been

security. The rest belong to the two categories—those who are really well-off and would like to stay back in Malaysia, and those who have lost touch with India and would stay back in Malaysia regardless of what happens there.

What Tunku Abdul Rahman said in July 1969 added poignancy to the situation in Malaysia. He declared: "In Malaysia the races must learn to co-exist. For what is the alternative?... The alternative is for the country to be one big graveyard."

It was this statement that accelerated the return to normalcy in race relations in Malaysia and expedited the ending of the emergency and the return to parliamentary democracy.

XV. WHITHER MALAYSIA?

TWO YEARS have elapsed since the race riots of May 13, 1969, in Malaysia. The scars left by the riots took time to heal. The Government adopted stringent measures to safeguard national security. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the "Bapak" of Malaya and Malaysia, bowed out of office. He was replaced by Tun Abdul Razak, the Tunku's nominee, who was Deputy Prime Minister under him for several years. The Chinese and the Indians in Malaysia seemed to have recognised the need to string along with the Malays. Slowly but steadily, racial harmony was restored in Malaysia.

Finally, on February 22, 1971, the door of the Malaysian Parliament opened for the first time in almost two years. Till then, there was "de facto" military rule since the riots broke out on the streets of Kuala Lumpur in May 1969, immediately after the general elections. What the Government of Malaysia has done is to co-opt Chinese leaders into the Government, following the average Chinese acceptance of the leadership of the Malaysian Chinese Association. It is likely that very much the same policy would be adopted by the Government in respect of Indians, as the Malayan Indian Congress leadership has been found inadequate.

Meanwhile, the economy of the country has been booming after the first few weeks of excitement and indecision, resulting from the riots. Foreign investment in Malaysia has been steadily increasing and the Malay-dominated administration has shown that it knows how to compromise to ensure the country's prosperity. Yet, the position is that the Chinese enjoy a privileged economic position. According to a recent survey, only nine per cent of the top business executives are Malays and fewer than 14 per cent of technicians.

Among the leaders of the United Malay National Organisation, Tunku Abdul Rahman is probably the one person who has enjoyed the trust and confidence of all the races in the country. He was the leader of the struggle for Merdeka. He was in the forefront for the formation of Malaysia. He led the Malaysian campaign against Indonesia's confrontation. It was undoubtedly the personality of the Tunku that welded together the various races of Malaysia into one national entity. And when he relinquished office towards the end of 1970, the non-Malays in Malaysia recognised that they might as well keep peace with the Malays.

The Tunku's successor, Tun Abdul Razak, who has headed the National Operations Council, has been a model heir, never giving the impression that he was in a hurry to get the top job, always deferring to the Tunku's wishes, always seeking to go about the Tunku's business, and never his own. His record as a man of deeds is impressive and his reputation for integrity is impeccable.

Tun Razak's misfortune, however, is just the same as that of many politicians who have played second fiddle to outstanding leaders in history. Razak's intimates know him as a man capable of enormously hard work, loyal to the country, studious towards the task assigned to him, courteous to his subordinates. But, despite hundreds of occasions on which he has ably represented his country at home and abroad, and the constant contact he has had with newspapermen and radio reporters, they have not warmed towards him, as they have done towards the Tunku. Razak has somehow managed to give the impression of being calculating, powerful, but friendless. It takes a little time to shed that impression.

The Tunku and Tun Razak have made an exceptionally good team. But what would happen now? It will be extremely difficult for Razak to provide the people of Malaysia with a human symbol on which to hang their hopes and fears. Yet the chances are that Razak could count on the assistance and support of the leadership

of the United Malay National Organisation and could make his term of office as Prime Minister a real success.

Since the last general elections, there have been increasing signs of the rise to prominence of another leader of the UMNO—Dr Ismail, the Minister of Interior, who acted as the head of the National Operations Council during the absence of Tun Razak in Australia at the South-East Asia defence talks. Dr Ismail gives the clearest and least emotional explanation of the dilemma facing the Malaysian Government.

The Minister of Interior is sauve, urbane, and well experienced. He realises that the ethnic composition of Malaysia's population demands great concessions from each side, if national harmony is to be preserved. Unfortunately, he feels, those standing in line in the order for power within the party are more "extremist".

What bedevils peace in Malaysia has its roots in the history of the country. While it is true that the origins of the ethnic problems of today are to be found in colonial actions, in promoting indentured labour and permitting unlimited alien immigration, which inevitably diluted the population, there could never be colonial solutions to colonial problems.

It is also true that, fifteen years ago, while the Malays were organising to demand freedom for the country from colonial rule, the Chinese were not interested in the movement. Perhaps, there was nothing unusual about it, as most of the Chinese feared for their economic privileges, which they had secured from the colonial rulers. This is one reason for the reluctance of the Malays to accept the notion that the Chinese in Malaysia are entitled to the same rights and privileges as the Malays.

In fact, there are many Malays like Dr Ismail who are not really so enamoured of the special privileges enjoyed by the Malays, that they want them preserved at any cost. He is sufficiently proud of his Malay heritage that he feels embarrassed that the Malays should need special help in order to become "equal" to any other

race. In fact, there are many articulate Malays who feel that history produces problems, not solutions, and that the answers to Malaysia's present difficulties must be found in a recognition of present realities.

Another key man in the new Malaysian cabinet is Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, who, as Minister of Co-ordination and Minister for National Unity, is charged with a great responsibility. A former Malaysian Ambassador in New Delhi, Ghazali Shafie is young, enthusiastic, and enjoys the confidence of Tun Razak, just as he did when Tunku Abdul Rahman was Prime Minister.

Ghazali's answer to racial friction is a programme of "rural urbanisation" which means bringing the Malays to the towns and taking new towns to the Malays, through systematic decentralisation of industry. Close Government supervision of the industrialisation programme is designed to ensure more jobs, while a bigger share in the ownership is also provided for the Malays. Ghazali is a great visionary but not at all a racist. He has been known for his tolerance and good humour throughout his career. He should be able to manage the "wild young men" who want everything in a hurry, even if it means strongest action against the non-Malays in the country.

Thus, Tun Abdul Razak has a very devoted, patriotic and extremely tolerant team of men around him to assist the administration.

The Malays have come into their own in Malaysia. The non-Malays must recognise this fact and adjust themselves as citizens of the land.

The majority of the Indian community in Malaysia seems to have come to terms with this reality. The vast majority of the Chinese community is bound to follow suit in the years to come.

To be sure, it will be a painful process of adjustment for the Chinese, the Indians, and the Malays. But the alternative is just unthinkable.

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