A NATION IS BORN

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Being a defence of
Malayan Union

by
MICHAEL ARDIZZONE

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TO

MY WIFE

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I DO not claim to be an 'expert' on Malaya. I neither speak all its languages nor know, intimately, the customs of all its peoples.

What I have is a newspaperman's knowledge of the country; and for that I apologise to no man, for the journalist's picture is necessarily a many-sided one, unbiassed by loves and prejudices.

During my years in Malaya I often said, and, indeed, wrote, that some form of Malayan Union would have to be introduced sooner or later, both to rectify injustices and to prepare the country for eventual self-government; and when, last year, the Colonial Office announced its plan for the new Malaya I was frankly delighted.

Since then, however, I have been saddened to see criticism, informed and uninformed, biassed and merely foolish, so obscure the merits of this statesmanlike measure that the great mass of English people, who know nothing whatever about Malaya, have come to regard Union as 'just another bad smell'.

It was the unfairness of this which caused me, in April, to write *A Nation is Born*, if only to give some of the public an inkling of the general picture so that they might judge more justly for themselves; but events, these days, move faster than printing presses, and it seems now, in August, as I add this preface, that before the book is published there may be modifications to the Union plan.

For myself, I hope that if there are modifications they will be trivial, for I still believe, however unfashionable it may be to do so, that Malayan Union is fundamentally good.

There are negotiations taking place now between British

epresentatives and the Malay rulers, but their outcome, what-
ver it may be, cannot affect the views I have set out here.

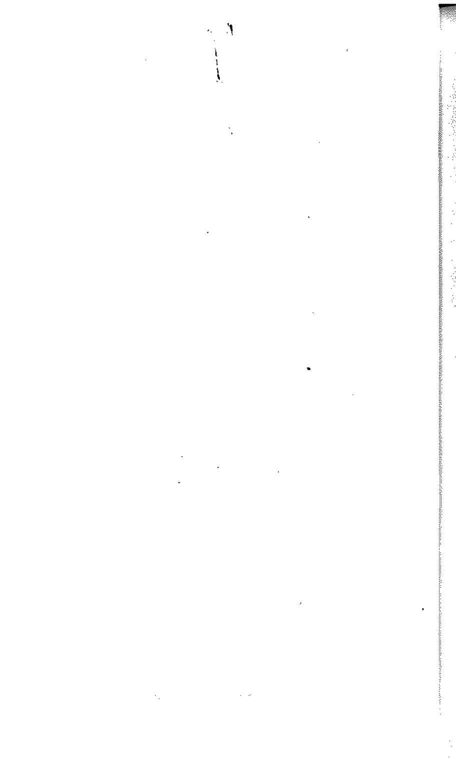
As I see it, the act of Malayan Union is the birth of a new ation.... Let us look into the antecedents of this latest addition the world family, and try to prophesy how it is going to fare.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DIRECTLY and indirectly, I have had the help of many people in the writing of this little book. There is Mr. H. B. Egmont Hake, C.B.E., formerly a member of the F.M.S. Federal Council, from whose own work, *The New Malaya and You*, I have not hesitated to borrow; there is the Press Association, of whose admirable library I have had the use; and there are the compilers of the *Malayan Year Book* and other official publications.

I would not forget, though, the late Mr. J. H. M. Robson, C.B.E., who was the 'old hand' who first introduced me to Malaya a good many years ago; nor Mr. H. S. Lee, one of the ablest of Malayan Chinese, who explained to me something of the viewpoint of his compatriots.

Then again there are all my old Malayan friends, many dead, many only slowly recovering from their long ordeal in Japanese prison camps. Without their companionship I could never have known the old Malaya as I did, nor had the temerity to write about the new.



Chapter I

CRADLE IN THE SUN

THE ten political entities which Malayan Union has now brought together under one government were the Straits Settlements (with the exception of Singapore), the four ederated Malay States and the five Unfederated Malay States.

If you had moved about these charming places, as I did in appy years before the war, you would have found little, if any, ifference between them.

In them all the sun shone daily, from early morning until he swift, dramatic fall of darkness, unsoftened by twilight.

Everywhere was the same mixture of handsome, friendly eoples, varying a little in proportion but never in type. The ame languages took you wherever you went.

Whether you were in Johore or Pahang or Malacca, or anywhere else in the little peninsula that is smaller than England, n hour's journey would have shown you the same variation f scenery—cool, green jungle, taking on a strange, purple hue vhen seen from a distance; wide fields of golden padi; groves f the poor, anaemic rubber trees which had a little of their life's lood drained away every day; long beaches of hard white and on which clear, tropical seas were gently breaking, and vhich were fringed by palm trees and delicate, lacy casuarinas; housands of acres of swampland overgrown with twining mangrove; valleys deeply scarred by man's search for tin; clean ew towns of brick and concrete, and shapely, charming native illages.

Had you, in early evening, driven slowly along some road unning through the swamp, you might have seen the kingishers perched in their thousands upon the telegraph wire at our side, flying off singly as soldiers falling out from parade

as your car came near, each one disappearing into the leafage with a flash of blue and silver.

You might have walked by night, as I once did, into a remote jungle clearing, and seen a black panther posed splendidly upon a high, white rock, and stood for a moment entranced, watching him, until he took fright and crashed away into the darkness beyond.

You might have mingled with the laughing, cosmopolitan throng in some native fair, watching the strange, formalised 'operas' of the Chinese, or the monotonous, rhythmic *ronggeng* of the Malays.

Silken-robed, quiet mannered Chinese might have entertained you to tea in rooms whose furniture would have ransomed a monarch in centuries past.

Malays might have given you black, sweet coffee in their cool, wood-built homes, and perhaps talked to you of the days when their people were sailors and pirates, and shown you old booty taken from looted junks in the Straits of Malacca.

Tamils might have asked you to their temples to witness the strange festival of Thaipusam, when men molest themselves to prove to the world their piety and devotion.

You might have eaten prawns as big as a woman's fist, fried in batter; curries whose component dishes numbered thirty or more; Chinese banquets which lasted hours and introduced you to a score of delicacies you had never seen or tasted before.

From the trees and plants growing about your home you might have sampled the delicate mangosteen, subtlest flavour in the world, that is so ethereal that it can only be eaten in the country of its growth; the native pineapple, tender and rich with juice; the potato pear, which tastes like toffee; the durian, which smells like a bad drain and has a flavour of rum, custard and garlic all in one.

In the clubs and hotels, Chinese 'boys' might have served you with the pinkish gin-sling, pleasantest and most insidious of all tropical drinks—or whisky and gin at less than sixpence a tot!

You might have danced on cool verandahs to the music of Filipino bands, or wandered into great gardens under a moon which showed every blade of grass as if lit by lamplight; and perhaps, at midnight, you might have seen the white, delicate *Keng Wah*, shyest of all orchids, blossom into fulness.

There were a thousand other things you might have done and seen, a thousand other pleasures at your command in this soft, magical land that was kind to everyone, even to those who abused it.

And it was because Malaya was like that—and indeed it remains like that, for most of its graces are given by Nature and cannot be taken away by man—that the extraordinary, comic-opera structure of its political system was able to exist.

It was a confusion of government only possible among people who did not really mind, who knew, or thought they knew, that, come what may, there would always be rice for tomorrow's tiffin, a place in the shade where one was free to sleep, and pretty clothes to wear when sleeping was over and it was time to go about among one's fellow men.

Never was a country more cruelly hit by war than Malaya, where all this pleasant confidence was swept away in a few weeks, to be followed by three and a half years of harsh and brutal tyranny.

Illusions passed when Singapore fell, and though the sun still shines on the islands of the Golden Chersonese, these can never return. Malaya has been face to face with reality. Mentally it has matured.

It is tragic for those who, like myself, have known and loved the Malaya that used to be before the invasion to see the old ways pass; but they had to pass some time, and what the Japanese did was only to hurry up a process that was inevitable.

For Malaya is a rich country, a strategic country, and some day it may be a great country. It has been nursed by the British Empire for generations, and now it must prepare to stand on its

own feet in a hard, suspicious world—and it has half a century or even less in which to do this.

There are great tasks ahead before this independence can be achieved. A few signatures have brought about, on paper, the existence of a single government for the States of the peninsula and the island of Penang—later the island and fortress of Singapore must be included too—but there can be no union in fact until the many races of Malaya learn to think together, alike and for a common purpose.

Who are these people, and how will they achieve this unity? Let us see.

Chapter 2

THE LOTUS EATERS

THE Malays have given the peninsula its name and its *lingua franca*, but they are neither its original nor its most numerous inhabitants.

Indeed, the latest available figures give the number of Malays in the country as two and a quarter millions, or 41 per cent. of the total population.

Even this, though, does not represent the true state of affairs, for the reason that a great many so-called Malays come from the neighbouring islands of the Dutch East Indies—we would call them 'Indonesians' now—and though they are the same in appearance and speak a similar language they are, in reality, alien to the peninsula.

The true Malay is one of the most charming, attractive fellows in the world. Of medium height, slim and beautifully shaped, with well-cut features and inherent good taste in dress, he is quite the best-looker to be found in the whole of the Far East.

His manners are perfect. Not only are they the product of generations of convention, but they do, at the same time, come from the depths of his gentle, friendly soul.

If a young Malay passes an older one in the road, he will pause to apologise for taking this liberty; and when one comes to know a little of the Malay character one realises that this is no mere formality—the young man is truly sorry that the importance of his particular mission has made it imperative for him to humiliate his senior by demonstrating that he can walk faster.

Actually this is a circumstance which does not often arise, for Malays do not walk fast. They seldom have anything to do which is so important as to demand rapid movement of any kind.

Theirs is a restful, *laissez faire* philosophy of living. Their wants are few, and they are not interested in the business of increasing them.

They look with wonder, and a hint of contempt, at those who think it worthwhile to work for money in the hot sun, instead of sleeping in the shade, which is their favourite occupation.

There is no reason why it should not be. That same sun makes their lives easy and pleasant.

The Malay does not drink—his religion forbids it. He does not eat heavily—a patch of ground little bigger than an Englishman's allotment will provide him and his family with all the food they need. An hour a day is about all the labour it demands of him.

His house is built of wood and roofed with the branches of the palm tree—materials ever at hand and easy to assemble.

The sun always shines, so he needs no fuel except for cooking. He sits upon his heels so he wants no chairs; he sleeps on the floor, so where is the need of a bed?

He does like to have pretty clothes for himself and his wife and children, but these are usually cheap and plentiful, and he can buy them with the few dollars which he earns by selling his surplus produce to the Chinese.

Your true Malay will never bother to work as a manual labourer. In the first place, he is an independent fellow and loathes working for anybody else; in the second, he cannot see the sense of sacrificing his liberty for several hours a day for a small gain in money. He lets others do that, and lies back and laughs at them.

Very occasionally a lucky European will get a Malay 'boy', and find that he has the finest servant in the world, who will stay with him until he dies and look after him with a loyalty and devotion unknown elsewhere. Usually, though, the Malay will scorn even housework, with all its opportunities of taking life easily.

What he will do for a generous employer, though, is to drive

car. This is an easy job and he likes it. If the car is a good one, ıen it is something to be proud of; also it is a comfortable place here he can sleep through long hours of the day.

He will keep the car clean, as he keeps himself clean, out of :lf-respect; and he will look after it mechanically as best he can, nce it is humiliation for a Malay *syce* that his vehicle should ·eak down.

The Malay's besetting vice, which is one that usually goes ınd in hand with indolence, is gambling. He will bet on anying, and with the true gambler's insistence that his luck must ›me day turn he will go on losing and losing until his debts r exceed his capacity ever to pay them. Against them he will ›rrow large sums from professional moneylenders of other ces, whom he hates and despises but does not hesitate to use. Generations of Englishmen have tried to show him the tility of gambling, without ever being successful; but they have otected him against over-exploitation of his vice by making it ıpossible for anyone to seize his house or his land as payment r debt.

The Malay is naturally artistic—his taste in clothes alone is oof of that. He has an instinctive appreciation of colour and ıe, and the ability always to place himself in the most becoming :ting, just as a cat will curl itself up against an old Chinese se.

But his artistic sense goes deeper than that. His language, ıich seems simple at first, abounds in equivocations, and is rhaps the most suitable tongue in the world for the maker of igrams.

Epigrams are the life and soul of the average Malay. He will ıke them throughout his ordinary conversation, warming at ce to the person who both appreciates and caps them, losing erest in those whom they pass by.

His dance, the *ronggeng*, in which it is a major social blunder touch one's partner, is accompanied by the singing of grams (usually obscene), and a dancer's skill is assessed as

much by the quickness of his repartee as by the agility and grace of his movements.

Looking back over the last few pages, I seem to have painted a picture of a lazy, simple, happy, colourful person, living without cares or prejudices in a tropical semi-paradise; but there is a little more to the Malay than this. Few have ever really managed to understand his character, but one has not to know him for long to discover, beneath his smiling exterior, a streak of latent, burning savagery. Here is the old, never fully broken spirit of the Malay who ruled his little peninsula in the years before the British came to bring him justice and the rule of law.

This old Malay was a fighting man, a pirate. He was a river-mouth dweller, and from his hidden strongholds his swift *prahus* would race out to plunder passing vessels. His sultans were pirate chiefs, who waged incessant wars between themselves, wars which were bloodily and brutally fought out amid the dark swamps and jungles.

The Malay gave up his piracy readily enough, and has been content now for generations to dwell at peace under the white man's protection, which has failed him only the once; but the fighting urge has never quite died out of him. Sometimes it manifests itself in sudden, strange outbursts of brutal violence. Running *amok* the Malays call this, and it would be a psychiatrist's life-study in itself.

Running *amok* is no sudden flaring of temper, such as makes a white man sometimes attack and kill his neighbour; it is the result of days and nights of brooding which gradually induce homicidal mania.

Once I happened to be on the scene of a typical *amok* only an hour or so after the man had claimed his victims and been himself brought to justice.

This man, a young and reasonably prosperous peasant, living in a village of a dozen or so houses, had had reason to believe that his pretty wife, whom he had recently married and with whom he was deeply in love, had betrayed him in the arms of

a neighbour. The village gossip, who had brought him the tale, later told the police how he had received it gravely, warning her to be silent, and then retired from his verandah into the dark recesses of his little house.

Displaying every symptom of a potential *amok*, he barred and bolted himself into the house, refusing to admit anyone and answering nothing to the shouted requests from outside.

There he stayed for three days and nights, without water or food, while the villagers walked about, silent and fearful. Foolishly, they kept the danger to themselves, though there was a police post not five miles distant.

Then, early in the third afternoon, the thing happened. The house door was suddenly thrown open, and the *amok*, his face rigid, his eyes staring, ran out on to the verandah, down the wooden steps and into the village street, waving above him a *parang*, a large, sword-like knife not unlike the South American *machete*.

Straight in his path was an old woman, hobbling home from some mission to a neighbour. He cut her open from breast to navel with one stroke.

A group of children playing in the dust scattered screaming —too late. In another second one was headless, another sat stupidly staring at a leg that was almost severed.

Out into the padi fields ran the *amok*, never turning aside, seeking no-one in particular. His fourth victim was stooping over his rice and did not hear him coming . . .

Then there was a little boy, driving a buffalo. Seeing the murderer racing towards him he was suddenly paralysed with fear, and was struck down in his turn.

Beyond was only the jungle, and here, within sight of the village, the *amok* hid for the next two hours, jeering and shouting at the frightened villagers who had shut themselves into their houses, though one had had the courage to run for help.

When the police came, the *amok* showed himself openly.

They called on him to surrender and he stood for a moment, laughing, then brandished his sword and charged the leading constable.

The first shot from the policeman's rifle passed through his chest, just below the heart, but he did not even stumble. A second hammered into this thigh. A third, straight between the eyes, stopped him almost within sword range.

And so died an *amok*, one of two or three who commit sudden murder in Malaya every year.

Had he been apprehended alive he would have been hanged, for, though his condition is unquestionably madness, British law holds that the *amok* deliberately induces it and so must be held responsible for his subsequent actions.

Really, this has been a diversion, for it would be criminally wrong to brand every Malay as a potential *amok*; I have only used the incident to show that there is this latent, warring spirit somewhere behind the Malay character, and it must be reckoned with in any attempt to sum him up.

The average Malay will pass his whole life through without a single act of violence. As long as things go comparatively smoothly for him, he will be constantly cheerful and good natured. He will resent nothing except insult. If someone should deliberately humiliate him, as foolish Europeans will sometimes do, he will lose his good temper and become surly—*sombong* is the Malay's own word for it—and more often than not he will avoid all future contact with the person who has injured him. Very occasionally, if the insult has been severe, perhaps amounting to physical assault, he will commit premeditated murder.

Such are the Malay's failings, which are natural ones enough in a country of hot sun and wild, untamed jungles. The meaner vices are hard to find in him: he is neither thief, cheat nor bully.

He is far less frequently to be seen in the dock than his cousin, the emigrant from 'Indonesia,' who almost outnumbers him.

To the European only just arrived in the country the two are indistinguishable, but in time one learns to pick out the Indonesian for his surly, unsmiling attitude, his quick resentment of authority, his readiness to work for others even to the extent of performing manual labour, and for his keen commercial sense.

Nine out of ten so-called 'Malays' who get into trouble for dishonesties and crimes of violence turn out to be Indonesians.

Hence, to those of us who have lived in Malaya, the hideous atrocities which accompanied the recent guerilla fighting in Java came as no surprise. But that is another story.

Chapter 3

THE MALAY AND HIS FRIENDS

BEFORE one can really know a man, one must learn something of his friends and of the manner in which he reacts to them. Hence the Malay must be considered against the background of the other peoples who live in his country, and who, together, greatly outnumber him.

The Malay's firmest and most loyal friend has been, and will always be, the Briton, who has given him economic protection, security, and freedom to follow the pursuit of idleness.

It is an unspeakable tragedy that in the long run that protection failed, and the Malay, who had given up his own sword at British bidding, had to endure three and a half years of Japanese tyranny. Nevertheless, the friendship and mutual respect built up in more than half a century of British influence remain.

The Malay instinctively recognises it when he refers to the Briton as '*Tuan*', his own equivalent of our word 'gentleman' used in its finest sense.

There is no compulsion on him to use this courtesy title, and, indeed, being something of a snob and a very discriminating person always, he sometimes omits it in cases where he thinks fit. An ill-mannered Briton, or a person of some other European race of which the Malay has not a high opinion, may find himself referred to as an *orang puteh*, which means, simply, 'white man', and has no very flattering significance.

In the *Tuan* the Malay has someone to like and respect, though he does think him a little mad because he works in the noonday sun, when any sensible person would be taking his ease. Only when the *Tuan* is bad-tempered and shouts at him will he change his opinion.

THE MALAY AND HIS FRIENDS

Reactions of British to Malays, however, vary much more widely—from Malayophilia, which in its worst forms is a very serious diease, to complete and lasting exasperation.

A great many Europeans suffer from a degree of Malayophilia. Indeed, it is the prevailing disease in a large section of the country's excellent civil service.

It is very hard to avoid. To begin with, the Malay is such a pleasant, ornamental fellow that the young civil servant, who is not in the position of a man who, say, desperately needs labour to get a job of work done, takes an immediate liking to him. He then learns his language, goes to live in some outstation where the Malay is his only companion, gradually becomes more and more fascinated by the Malay's colourful personality, and ends up by seeing his point of view and his point of view only.

In the eyes of the Malayophil, the other inhabitants of the country cease to exist, except as a potential danger to the rights and privileges of the Malay.

It is this, I shrewdly suspect, which is behind much of the published opposition to Malayan Union . . . and how wrong that is I hope to be able to show as this book goes on.

Civil servants and others who escape Malayophilia often fall victims to another, equally insidious disease—Sinophilia. These are the men who are sent to China to learn the language of the other great racial group in Malaya, and they, in their turn, come to think of the country as being inhabited only by Chinese, with a few other people about who are merely a nuisance.

Indianophils are rarer, for it is a sad fact that there are not many people in Malaya who love the Indians . . . but of that more anon.

What one can infer from all this is that the ideal European official for Malaya is one who learns all the three major languages current in the peninsula—Malay, Chinese and Tamil. Up to now this has been considered an impossibility; but it can be done, and though it would fill the first six or seven years of the

Euroean's Far Eastern service it would pay a handsome lividend in balanced thinking.

Europeans who are not in the Government service seldom ;ain a really profound knowledge of any of the three main anguages, and so are less prone to strong racial bias. Everyone earns 'bazaar' Malay, which is the *lingua franca* of the country ind can be picked up in a few months, but this does not give the leep insight into the Malay character which can only be gained by the student of the other,'Court' Malay, which is an exceedingly lifficult language.

Planters usually learn Tamil, which is the language of their abour forces, and many business men pick up a smattering of Cantonese for the benefit of their Chinese customers.

In this community the Malay is usually liked and respected, but no more. It is not rich in Malayophils, and has quite a large section which becomes increasingly exasperated by the Malay's philosophy.

This is hardly to be wondered at in cases, which often occur, where a European has some land or factory or business in an area which is short of labour, and has to watch it going to ruin while nearby are hundreds of able-bodied men cheerfully spending every day of the year in idleness.

He will, at first with patience, point out to the Malay the money he is prepared to pay and what it will buy in the way of extra comforts, trips to town and so on; and then the ever-polite, smiling refusal will finally break down his reserve and he will shout and storm and make a fool of himself, and lose the respect of the Malay for ever.

This man does nobody any good, and would be better out of a country which he understands so ill.

But to return to the Malay . . .

His other principal neighbour is the Chinese—industrious, pioneering, unsentimental and exceedingly astute.

When things are going well, the Malay has nothing against the Chinese whatever, and regards him as a good, though

perhaps rather foolish, neighbour. He is useful to him, for the Chinese will bring him the comforts of civilisation, at a price, even in the remotest fastnesses of the jungle.

If the British had not stepped in with their protective edicts, the Malay would have been swept out of existence, economically, by the superior skill and energy of the Chinese. As it is, he has been able to remain secure in his possessions, and benefit from the other's colonising efforts.

The Malay seldom mixes with the Chinese, except in the upper stratum of society. The two have altogether different ideas, different languages, religions and ways of living, and there is very little common ground on which they can meet.

Nevertheless, up to now there has always been room for them both, and they have gone their own ways quite comfortably with the British, above, keeping a peace which seldom showed signs of breaking.

There is a deal of quiet respect and toleration between the two of them.

For the third big racial group, the Indians, however, the Malay usually shows unbounded, and more often than not unfair contempt. This is largely because the majority of Indians in the country are the Tamil labourers, who come to work on the rubber estates from the Madras Presidency.

Though they are the inheritors of a great civilisation, these are not a people of great physical, mental or moral qualities . . . but the mere fact that they are content to be manual workers, toiling for a tiny wage, is enough to keep them low in Malay esteem.

The Malay will refer to them scathingly and usually avoid their company. As, in any case, they show no great desire for his, this does not lead to friction.

For Mohammedan Indians, who, after all, share the same religion, the Malay has slightly higher regard, but as the Mohammedans are usually traders or business men this regard is not unmixed with suspicion.

For the Sikh and Chettiar moneylenders, official and 'under he counter', who batten on him, he has nothing but hatred, which sometimes flares up into deeds of violence.

The Chettiar is at least under some kind of legal control, but he Sikh usually operates under the disguise of a watchman, ending money to the staff of the firm to which he has attached himself by a species of blackmail, and gradually getting a tranglehold over them—Indians and Chinese included.

The Malayan newspaper for which I worked for some years mployed a few Malay messenger boys, who were very deeply in-volved with the Sikh watchman, or *jaga* as he was called in Malay.

One day, the boy who occasionally answered when I rang the bell on my desk more furiously than usual came up to me, with eyes shining.

'*Tuan*', he announced, with joy in his voice, 'the *jaga* has been un over.'

Sure enough, there was the elderly Sikh lying in the roadway, having been knocked down by a passing motor-car. The whole taff of the newspaper, Europeans excepted, gathered to watch his struggles, quite unable to conceal their delight.

But this story has an unhappy ending—the man had only broken his leg, and in a few weeks he was back to his dunning.

One of his compatriots, though, met a terrible end at the ands of his victims. He was lying asleep, one hot afternoon, on his *charpoy*—the string bed from which a Sikh watchman does his 'watching'—when a number of Malays crept up beside him, gently pushed dried grass under the bed, poured petrol upon it and set it alight. This time the moneylender's account book perished with him.

There is one other community which demands mention in his review of the Malay and his neighbours. These are the boriginals, the little people who were living in the jungle long, ong before the Malay ever found his way to Malaya's shores, nd who are fast dying out for all the efforts that a wise and indly government has made to protect them.

Of these primitive people, who go about their jungle paths half naked and kill their game, somewhat inexpertly, with blowpipes, the Malay is supremely contemptuous. The aboriginal is just a 'hill man', a savage, and beneath his notice.

I shall have more to say of all these peoples as the book goes on, because, with the possible exception of the last, they have each an important part to play in the new Union; but for the moment we have not yet finished with the Malay.

Chapter 4

HE MALAY AND HIS RULERS

o understand the attitude of the Malay to his own native rulers, and that of his rulers to him, we must go back a little to consider the old, rather haphazard political em of Malaya before the war.

the Straits Settlements there were no native rulers at all. se constituted a Crown Colony, governed entirely by the sh though with a sprinkling of Asiatics on the Legislative ncil.

he Crown Colony was, actually, only a very small part of aya. It consisted of the islands of Singapore and Penang, the small mainland territories of Province Wellesley and acca.

atives of the Colony, whether Malays, Chinese, Indians or ers, were natural-born British subjects and owed allegiance to the Crown; so there was no question, as arose elsere in Malaya, of divided loyalties.

he greater part of the mainland was covered by the Federated ay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, erned jointly from the capital at Kuala Lumpur. Each had own Sultan, though the extent of his power, as we shall see n, was no greater than it is now under Malayan Union.

Negri Sembilan was, in itself, a little experiment in Union. its name, 'Nine States', literally implies, it consisted of nine states, ostensibly 'ruled' by a dignitary with the resounding of 'Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan', or, in free nslation, 'Chief of the Big Gentlemen of the Nine States'.

The Federation came into being in 1895, but actually each of rulers of the four States had long before voluntarily ceded greater part of his powers to the British, in return for pro-

tection and the rule of law, which he had seen and envied in the neighbouring Colony.

For instance, the royal house of Perak agreed in 1874 to entertain a British Resident, and to accept and *act upon* his advice in all matters other than those touching Malay religion and custom. The almost immediate reward was the end of an anarchy which had prevailed in the State for years.

The Sultan of Selangor was having similar difficulties. His own Malay chiefs were fighting among themselves, and the piracy which he was powerless to stop was ravaging his coastal trade. He, too, was glad to accept a British Resident in exchange for his powers over all but religious matters.

Negri Sembilan asked for a Resident about the same time, and Pahang followed ten years later.

For each of these four States this action ushered in a long period of peace and prosperity. The Sultans retained all of their dignity, and the respect of their subjects, and the people, as 'British-protected persons', enjoyed a measure of security they had never known before.

The concept of the Federation was a British idea, which saved a great deal of waste effort in the administration of the four States, and was probably the first step in the long road to Malayan self-government.

The important thing to remember is that the Sultans, though they had given away their *powers*, were still ostensibly the rulers of their States. Whatever laws the Federal Council passed affecting all or any of the States bore the signature of the native rulers and were, outwardly, their laws.

The Sultans, in their traditional finery, attended the opening of Federal Council meetings as if publicly to give their blessing to the work of their British advisers—*whose advice they had voluntarily bound themselves to follow.*

Here Mayalan Union has recognised what has been established fact for years. The Sultans remains Sultans, but the laws passed are no longer, even officially, their laws . . . they are the laws

of the Union Government. What was no more than a pleasant pantomime has ceased to exist.

Each of the four States now has a Malay Advisory Council, over which the Sultan presides—but it has power to legislate only for religious matters.

In addition to the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, there were five other political entities in the old Malaya—Johore, Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah and Perlis. These were known as the Unfederated Malay States.

It is a popular misconception in this country—and one which the recent controversy over Union has done nothing to clear up—that these States were 'independent', each being a little island of gallant resistance to the spread of British imperialism. In point of fact, though, nothing could be further from the truth.

Each of the States, though unwilling to come into the Federation, was 'British-protected' like the others. Johore, the largest and wealthiest, accepted a British General Adviser ('whose advice had to be asked and acted upon', etc.) in 1914. The others were all in the same position. The Sultans were rulers *de jure* but not *de facto*—except in matters of religion. They were 'assisted' in their internal government by seconded officers from the Malayan Civil Service and other departments.

This, then, is the picture—nine States, each supporting a glamorous, colourful, but politically impotent ruling house while really governed by the British Colonial Office *via* Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

But, to get back to the Malay, this impotence on the part of his native ruler did not detract from the awe and respect in which he held him. Right up to the time of the Japanese invasion, the average peasant Malay still regarded the Sultan as his real ruler, taking for fact that which was only pretence. In any case the Sultan's absolute control over matters of Mohammedan religion and custom in itself constituted sufficient greatness.

THE MALAY AND HIS RULERS

Both in the F.M.S. and the U.M.S. the Malay regarded the Briton as his friend and protector, but not his master. It was only in the Sultan that he recognised that degree of authority.

Hence it has come as rather a shock to the Malay suddenly to find that the Sultan is not his master, and to be told that he has not been for very many years.

It is plainly this disappointment that lies behind protests that have come from some sections of the Malay people.

Take, for instance, a statement issued by the Pan-Malayan Malay Congress, on April 16 last.

The Congress, it was declared, was not opposed to Malayan Union or common citizenship. Malays, in fact, recognised the need for both. The fundamental issue, however, was the transference of sovereign rights over the Malay States to the British Crown.

'The Malayan people's fight is for the return of those sovereign rights and the restoration of the Malay States to the position of protectorates within the British Commonwealth.'

In other words, all the Congress wanted was that their Sultans should retain their old *semblance* of authority . . . the continuation of a pleasant pretence.

If it were not for graver, long-term issues, that pretence might well have been allowed to go on indefinitely, but there are other people to be considered.

Chapter 5

MALAYANS ALL

A THING which frequently puzzles people who have not been to Malaya is the difference between the words 'Malay' and 'Malayan'. The fact that they more often than not use them wrongly has added to the general confusion, with the result that few Imperial controversies have ever been less well understood in this country than has the present one.

In point of fact, the two words are poles apart. A Malay is a member of the Malay race; a Malayan is a person of any other origin who happens to live in Malaya.

There are 2,250,000 Malays, and 3,050,000 Malayans.

Union is the first public recognition of the part that the Malayans have played in building up the country of their adoption, and is designed to give them rights of citizenship too long denied.

That these people, already far outnumbering the indigenous inhabitants, should remain aliens is as absurd a concept as that only Red Indians should be citizens of the United States of America.

To more than any other racial group, Malaya is indebted to the two and a quarter million Chinese who dwell within its shores. These have done far more for Malaya than any other people, being always pioneers and content to wait for years for a return on their labour. In the opening up of the country it has always been the Chinese who have gone first, the others who have followed.

It has been wrongly said of the Chinese that it is their policy to spend their working lives in Malaya, draw from it all the wealth that they can get, and then return to their native

land leaving Malaya so much the poorer. Many Chinese, it is true, do return to China after 'making their pile', but others stay in the country, founding whole dynasties of Malayan Chinese and spending their wealth locally so that it remains in the Malayan community.

The fact that they make money is not due to any qualities of acquisitiveness, only to the fact that Malaya has enormous natural riches of which the man who is prepared to work—and the Chinese is the hardest worker of all—cannot fail to take a share.

The Chinese, whether he be Cantonese, Hokkien or Hailam, comes originally from a country where living is hard, and a man may work as many hours as the sun shines and more and not scrape a bare living out of the unfriendly soil. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese have come from abject poverty in their native land, paying a few dollars for a hazardous passage by junk to the Malayan coast. Arriving penniless, they have soon been able to live to a standard immeasurably better than anything they have been used to, only because Malaya is a land of opportunity and they have been quick to seize it.

From *rikisha* boy to shopkeeper, tin miner, financier and millionaire has been the career of many of these immigrants, despite complete lack of education.

Many do, it is true, remain poor by European standards, though seldom by their own; and, whatever their poverty, they are a happy, smiling people, and it is always a pleasure to move about the places where they live and work.

The rich ones live mostly in the towns, where they build themselves fine houses and clubs, spend their money lavishly, entertain and quarrel with no man who does not seek to quarrel with them.

The poor ones go on pulling their *rikishas*, or labouring in the tin mines or on the rubber estates of their compatriots.

It is remarkable that, with their almost complete economic domination of Malaya, the Chinese have never attempted to

seize the country for themselves as people from other races might have done; but this would be foreign to their character.

As Malayans they have been excellent citizens, though not in name, respecting the laws and the rights of the other inhabitants and playing the small part in public affairs which previous Malayan constitutions have allowed them.

In the 'old' Malaya one found them holding 'unofficial' seats on the various administrative councils; but the laws, framed on a concept of 'Malaya for the Malays', permitted them no openings in the Civil Service or senior grades of the other Government Departments.

In spite of their stake in the country, therefore, they had practically no say in its affairs, and were even subject to banishment from it as aliens.

This, of course, did not apply to the Straits Settlements, where, if they were natives, they were British subjects and had British subjects' rights. Indeed, the Straits-born Chinese, as they were called, were the most numerous and important inhabitants of the Colony. They formed the major portion of the populations of Singapore, Penang and Malacca, and in the last named place had built up an exclusive community with roots far back into the centuries.

The three-quarters of a million Indians in Malaya also made a very valuable contribution to its wealth, in that they provided nearly three quarters of the labour with which the great rubber industry was built up.

These, too, are people who have come from poverty into a land of plenty, and in the past they have, certainly, tended to return to their native India after a few years with enough money to make them plutocrats in their own communities.

Rubber planters, anxious to have a settled labour force, have done everything possible to induce their Tamil coolies to stay with them, building them homes far superior to anything they would find in their own country, granting them land to cultivate vegetables, and generally making life in Malaya as

attractive for them as possible. As a result there were, in the years immediately preceding the war, signs that a few of these men might settle on their estates . . . and with the prospect of Malayan citizenship thrown in this practice should become more widespread.

A lot of hard things have been said about the Tamil coolie, but the planter, who knows him best, speaks his language and has studied his religion and his customs, usually holds him in considerable respect as a simple, hard working, good natured fellow.

Others too often see him only as a man who gets drunk on toddy on pay nights and is constantly being engaged in drunken brawls over the two subjects which appear mainly to interest him, women and money—women because the female of his own kind is short in Malaya, money because it is what he has come to the country to gain.

His tongue is uncouth to Western ears—Sir Hugh Clifford once declared that he thought it must be the language spoken in Hell—and his appearance and his manners, in a country where both are of a very high standard, are against him; but still he has done a job of work that demands recognition.

Unfortunately, he is a volatile fellow, easily swayed, and in the past agitators from India have caused him sometimes to give trouble over ideas of which he has very little appreciation; but such outbreaks have invariably been peacefully quelled by a little talk from sympathetic, understanding people.

Of the other Indians I said something in a previous chapter; but with them all—Sikhs, Punjabis, Bengalis and the rest—there is this tendency to make their money and return with it to India. People who wonder why forget that standards in the two countries are vastly different, and a poor man in the one is rich in the other.

This is well illustrated by an incident which began near Kuala Lumpur some years ago. The Sikh watchman of a house near the rifle range was one day sunning himself on the verandah

when an almost spent bullet from a machine-gun which had 'run away' reached his retreat and inflicted on him a small flesh wound. To compensate him, the military authorities gave him a money award of nearly £50.

Very soon after his recovery—which took not many days—the Sikh left the country and for years no more was heard of him, until an officer of the Indian Army, arriving to take a post with the local Volunteer Force, told a strange story of a Sikh who haunted the rifle range near his last station in India constantly exposing himself while fire was in progress.

'He's the local rich man, but a bit eccentric', declared the officer. 'He hides himself in bushes on the range and jumps out as soon as the order to fire is given. We've even found him hiding behind the targets. He ought to have been killed a thousand times over, but he never seems to have had a scratch except for one old wound in the . . .'

There was no doubting who it was.

Generally, the Sikh is not as popular in Malaya as he might be—or should be, remembering his fighting record in this war. Too many people remember the Singapore Mutiny of 1915, when a Sikh battalion got out of hand, murdered its officers and killed a lot of people before discipline was restored. Others, who were too young to remember the Mutiny, know him chiefly as an illicit moneylender, or as a policeman; and few ex-prisoners will easily forget the brutal Sikh quislings who helped the Japanese to guard them during the occupation.

Indians of the educated classes do well in Malaya. They make astute lawyers and good doctors. In business they are quick and capable and usually make money, though they do not often rival the Chinese in this respect.

The people who very seldom make money, despite everything that critics in this country may say, are the Europeans. They have neither the industry of the Chinese nor the acumen of the Indians, and, moreover, the climate does, after a short time, have a marked effect on their energies. The average

uropean is content with the reasonable wage he receives either om the Government or a commercial concern, lives up to or eyond his means while he is in Malaya, 'getting the best out f the country', and finally retires in his middle fifties with a modest pension.

I know of only one European reputed to be a millionaire in Malaya in recent years, and he ended his career ignominiously n a police court.

However, in the years immediately before the war, a new dea was beginning to gain ground in European circles. There were two factors behind it—one the knowledge that only a very small percentage of retired European Malayans who returned o England lived to enjoy their pensions for more than a decade, he other that a great mountain area known as Cameron Highlands, which possessed a temperate climate, was being opened up. People were beginning to buy land in the Highlands and to build European-type houses there against their eventual retirement, knowing that they would be among friends, that the Malaya of the plains that they had known and loved for so many years would always be no more than an hour or two's motoring away, and that in such a climate their expectation of life would be far longer than it would be if they were compelled to endure the bitter winters and pallid summers of the country of their birth.

The psychological appeal of 'home' remained strong; but there were a few—and their number was increasing—who realised that in England, when they retired, they would have little to do but play an occasional desultory round of golf year in and year out, that the contemporaries of their youth would be long scattered, that they would, in fact, have no friends and no worthwhile company beside their own. Too many of the ex-Malayans who have died early after retirement have perished not from physical disease but from broken hearts.

This is a wonderful thing in the development of Malaya, this growing desire on the part of Europeans who have given

their life's work to the country to remain in it until their deaths . . . and it is a desire which Union, with its promise of citizenship, must enhance.

Malaya can ill afford to lose the people who have worked in it for years, and will be the richer for retaining them in its kindly mountains. It will be richer materially, too, since the monies paid out in pensions will stay inside its borders.

Not that the number of Europeans in Malaya has ever been very formidable. The last census before the war showed that there were no more than 30,000 of them in the whole peninsula.

There is another community in Malaya, one that fits into no big racial group and keeps very much to itself. This is composed of the Eurasians—clever, highly-strung, charming and usually good looking, tending to age quickly and to do their best work before they are forty. It is difficult to generalise about them, but for the most part they make excellent office workers and often excel in the professions; and they have made a very handsome contribution to the country they live in.

To all these people, who before the war were either foreign nationals outright or else had the nebulous description of 'British protected persons', Union offers citizenship on equal terms, under certain conditions.

The much-prized citizenship is not being given away with both hands. It cannot be obtained by the mere temporary visitor hunting for a passport.

To become a citizen one must either be born in the countr or have lived there for a certain number of years, or be the chil of a Malayan citizen . . . and there is an oath of allegiance tha must be sworn.

Others, who have lived a lesser time in the country, may b naturalised, but only if they are of good character, speak Englis or Malay, and intend to reside in Malaya in the future.

It is well that the new Union should choose its citizens wit care, for these are the people who are going to take the counti towards self-government. It will be their work and co-operatio

that will bring about the emergence of Malaya as an independent nation, and it will be their sons and daughters, perhaps grandsons and grand-daughters, who will take the first responsibility of being Malayan democrats.

Chapter 6

WILL IT WORK?

How are these Malays and Malayans going to achieve national unity? Can they, in fact, ever do it?

These are questions that only the experience of the next few decades can decide; but one thing is certain, that without the changes that Malayan Union has effected they would have no chance at all.

Here is no problem that will be answered in time by racial fusion, such as has been seen in the U.S.A. The different peoples of Malaya can never intermarry and produce a distinctive Malayan race—their national characteristics, instincts, customs, and religions are too diverse. They must inevitably stay in their separate compartments.

This makes the task ahead of those who are building the new Malaya doubly difficult. They have a basis of traditional toleration between the communities, but over and above that they must create a civic conscience common to all, and a desire to further the interests, not of the Malays, the Chinese, the Indians or the Europeans, but of the people of Malaya as a whole.

At present, except, perhaps, among an enlightened few, there is no such desire. The Malays want to see only their own lives made secure and themselves the dominant race of the peninsula. If the country were to be handed over to them now, they would have little concern for the Malayans, and would invite swift disaster.

The Chinese, likewise, have little interest outside their own racial community. They want to see the economic structure which they have built up by their own efforts protected and maintained. They regard the Malay as a simple fellow whose

money is as good as anybody else's, the Indian labourer as so much brute force, the Indian business man as a potential rival. If Malaya were to be given to the Malays absolutely, the Chinese, as they are now, would have economic control of it at once and political control, in all but name, within a few years. The Malays would sink to the status of the Red Indians in America, and the Indians to that of the slave workers of the Third Reich.

The great majority of the Indians in Malaya are still absorbed with the prospect of making their 'fortunes' and returning to India; and it will be a long time before they can be fully weaned from this. If they, by some political freak, were to find themselves masters of the country, they would merely strip it of as much of its treasure as they could and bear the spoil off to their native land.

Hence it follows that only a fourth, disinterested party can rule Malaya from now until self-government, and for this task the British are the best fitted of all the nations of the world.

Not that we are entirely disinterested. British commercial concerns have holdings in Malaya which, even if they do not exceed the wealth of the Chinese community, are still very large.

However, the Government officials, who in this instance are the people who matter, have no such interests. There is a wise law that forbids them to invest locally in anything but State securities, and their record of incorruptibility is almost unsullied.

Wise selection in the past has produced a brand of Government servant which is unequalled anywhere else in the world. Recruits come to the country usually on a four-years' term of probation, at the end of which they either show themselves fitted for the work and are confirmed in it, or are proved unsuitable and sent home.

Almost invariably they come to love the country they work in. As I have said before, there has been the fault that, learning only one, or perhaps two, of the Asiatic languages used in the country, they often come to have a racial bias; but even that demonstrates a disinterested affection for the people, or some of

the people, they govern, which is very much better than cold tyranny or than the 'jack-in-office' brand of bureaucracy we meet too often here.

What is needed now is a team of public servants possessing the same deep understanding and sympathy which have characterised the Malayan government service for so long, but more cosmopolitan in outlook.

Government pay has always been adequate, but Malaya could afford greatly to increase it, thereby being sure of continuing to get the best type of man and at the same time being in a position to demand more of him.

It must be remembered that these men have the task not only of administering the affairs of a multi-racial population but also of preparing them to look after themselves.

The masses have to be educated in democracy—a concept now virtually unknown to them—and those among them o greater ability have to be shown how democratic governmen is conducted so that they may, in time, conduct it on their ow without assistance.

In the old Malaya only selected Malays, of all the Asiati peoples in the country, were admitted to the higher grades (the Civil Service and other Departments of the Governmen Chinese and Indians did great service in clerkships, inspecto ships and other junior offices, but to be, say, a District Offic a Magistrate, or a commissioned officer of police one had be either a European or a Malay.

Citizens of all races in the Malayan Union have now to trained to fill these offices expertly and impartially . . . an will not be easy.

There must, above all, be the support of the 'unoffic Europeans, who, by example, have always been a tremend influence in Malaya.

Many writers in the past have been unkind to them, h accused them of being narrow-minded and suburban, drunken and indolent, or brutal and domineering, or just p

fortune hunters; but, actually, none of these descriptions is in the least fair. Taken as a whole, the Europeans in Malaya have been hard working, kindly people, representing the best of middle-class Britain.

They have been charged with being snobbish towards the Asiatics, shutting themselves up in their exclusive clubs and treating all the other races as inferior beings. Again, the charge is only half true . . . clubs have been exclusive because it is in the nature of a club that it should be so, but this has implied no slight on those ineligible for membership. At the same time, most of the Europeans have had Asiatic friends, among those Asiatics who were prepared to relax their own, far more exclusive customs sufficiently to receive them.

These same Europeans have done their part in trying to bring about a true community spirit in Malaya, by recognising without question the authority of Malay District Officers and other officials, by scrupulously respecting the religions and customs of the Asiatics, and by themselves insisting on the law being dispensed with fairness to all. Indeed, during my time in Malaya, one European defaulter received what was felt to be a light sentence for a proved crime, and there was an agitation *among his compatriots* for the punishment to be made more heavy.

Various Asiatics, mostly Indians, on the other hand, have too frequently tried to make bad blood by alleging a racial discrimination which did not exist.

There is danger here for the future, self-governing Malaya . . . the likelihood that unless the ground is well prepared, Malays will never accept the ruling of a Chinese official, Chinese that of an Indian, or Indians that of a Malay.

What is certain, then, is that the central government must be strong and command intense respect throughout all the racial groups.

Which brings me down to the suggestion, made not only by some Malays but also by a number of very prominent Europeans who have served the country brilliantly in the past, that instead

the Sultans of the nine States ceding their 'sovereign' rights y should be allowed to retain them, while coming together a centrally-administered federation.

On the face of it, this is an admirable suggestion; it would oid hurting Malay feelings, it would allow the old pantomime Malay rule to continue under the shadow of British authority, d it would not greatly hinder the granting of 'citizenship' to her Asiatics who have made their home in Malaya—but at e same time it would delay indefinitely any question of self-vernment.

We may hope that in time the Chinese, Indians and others ll come to respect and obey a government of all communities, ut there is not the slightest chance that they could ever have yalty for or confidence in *nine different rulers*.

Moreover, it is too much to ask of, say, a Chinese that he hould have 'State' loyalty, that is to say that if he lives in erak he should consider himself a Perak Chinese, owing legiance to the Sultan of Perak, and so different from his eighbour in Selangor whose allegiance is to the ruling house f that other State.

Plainly, then, federation would be excellent short-term policy, ut would not take the country any distance at all towards the ltimate goal of independence.

It would work, no doubt admirably as did the old Federated Malay States, under British guidance . . . but what we must bear in mind is that sooner or later, if only from pressure of world opinion, the British will have to go; and when that happens we want to see order and not anarchy in the country which we have nursed for so many years and in the service of which so many fine Britons have given their life's labours, often their lives.

There is no guarantee that the course that has been adopted is going to work any better. The task of making multi-racial Malaya a responsible democracy may prove beyond our powers . . . but at least we are trying.

Chapter 7

LEARNING TO BE DEMOCRATS

WESTERN democracy, which we must leave firmly established in Malaya if our work there is to be complete, is a notion quite foreign to Far Eastern peoples.

There is no tradition of it in the histories of any of Malaya's three great racial groups; indeed, there is nothing remotely esembling it in the ideas which they have inherited from their orbears. We start, therefore, from scratch.

Before we can teach true democracy, though, we must have a eople sufficiently educated to assimilate it . . . people who an read and write, who have a fair knowledge of the world of vhich their country is but a tiny part, and above all, people vho can argue and reason, neither accepting blindly nor ejecting outright what they read and hear.

Here is a task that may seem easy to the average Briton, who ias hardly stirred out of his own country and who has only met hose gifted and ambitious young Asiatics who sometimes find heir way to our own schools and colleges and usually impress hose they meet with their intelligence, enlightenment and rogressive notions.

Malaya has produced its fair proportion of Asiatic scholars, ither sending them to England with special scholarships, or ducating them itself in its better schools and its own university Raffles College) at Singapore. They do not, however, represent he mass of the peoples, whose standard of education, by Vestern though not by Far Eastern ideas, is pitifully low.

The majority can neither read nor write in any language, nd have only the most confused fairy-tale notions of the world utside Malaya or the other Eastern countries of their origin.

For their ordinary tasks they need no more than they have . . but if they are one day to bear the heavy responsibility hich rests on those who hold their government and their estiny in their own hands, as do we, they must be better quipped.

Malaya has long had a system of education, which was eadily improving up to the advent of the Japanese. There ere English schools for all races, with some 46,000 pupils, and lalay, Chinese and Tamil schools where both boys and girls ere taught something of their own vernacular, with a nattering, too often woefully slight, of general knowledge.

Vernacular education was compulsory for Malays, but not for e Chinese or for the Tamils; and though all the schools came nder some measure of Government supervision, many were ferior. There were even to be found Chinese schools of the old yle, where the teacher's only qualification was a knowledge of e classics.

One could see the result of all this in any Malayan town or llage, any evening after the arrival of the newspapers. In the uare, or by the river bank, or wherever else it was usual for e inhabitants to congregate, one could see the local 'reader' uatting on his mat, waiting, like Kai Lung, until his audience ad grown to the dimensions he considered fit and had con- ibuted sufficient money to the little pile at his feet, and then nbarking on his rendering of the day's news and opinions.

I had a sad experience myself one day, pausing to listen for a w minutes while an elderly Malay expounded the current sue of the daily newspaper which I helped to produce. I had ritten, that day, a leading article on the international situation, nd was well satisfied with my effort. I had believed it lucid, owerful, balanced and altogether admirable . . . but what the otley crowd of Malays got for their half-cent contributions was omething very different. The reader seized the opportunity to ll a moral story of his own invention, in which, I am sorry to y, the 'Raja' of England figured personally in a role which he

would not have welcomed, the Germans (for this was about the time of their intervention in the Spanish Civil war) were represented as a negligible brand of water pirates, equipped with *prahus*, and the rival factions in Spain were described as being Mohammedans and Christians, for, plainly, the venerable old gentleman could think of no good reason why peoples should fight each other than that their religions were different. The political significance, which he could not grasp, was altogether ignored.

The Chinese, however, had some glimmerings of political thought. Communism was usually represented to them as being no more than a system under which they, the individual Chinese, should possess everybody else's money, and quite naturally this idea, whether expressed by a clever agitator or in writing, was very appealing. In the interests of order, the police banned the preaching of this 'communist' doctrine, which would have shocked Marx profoundly, but occasionally it would crop up in mines or rubber estates and cause brief outbreaks of robbery and violence.

The Chinese had their own vernacular newspapers, which had to be carefully checked. Some were good, as the better influences in Chinese journalism were beginning to make themselves felt outside the mother country, but all had to be closely checked for, however fantastic the matter printed might be, it was 'in the paper' and so indisputable truth to those who read it. We have the same trouble in Britain, but at least there is here a diversity of opinion among newspaper owners which ensures that most sides of the picture are shown somewhere.

Throughout Asiatic journalism there is the tendency to be fanciful, thereby pleasing a reading public which still enjoys fairy tales and will lend them a dangerous measure of credence.

Thus, there appeared once in Kuala Lumpur a man who was both thief and sexual pervert, whose custom it was to strip, cover himself with some oil or grease, and, so rendered hard

capture, break into some European house and lie down in
d beside its mistress.

After three or four unfortunate European women had woken
ddenly in the night to find this unpleasant apparition beside
em, the whole district was virtually terrorised. It was weeks
fore the man was caught.

In the meanwhile all the newspapers—English, Chinese, Malay
id Tamil—carried day to day reports of the exploits of the 'oily
an', as he was quickly dubbed, and speculated as to his race
id his identity. The editor of one of the Chinese papers told his
ger public that the 'oily man' was not a human being at all
it a divine visitor from another world, whose mission it was
test the virtue of the European women. Those who were
ainless would, on waking, find beside them a beautiful, god-
ce creature in whose embrace they would know ineffable bliss,
it those who were unfaithful to their husbands, or lazy and bad-
mpered, would find only a horrible, black, unsightly monster.

The story would have been funny had it not resulted in the
alf dozen or so victims of the 'oily man' becoming, in the eyes
a great part of the Chinese population, immoral women.
ne was the wife of a highly-placed Government servant, who
ibsequently received many letters of sympathy in his marital
isfortunes from Chinese admirers.

The English newspapers mostly maintained a reasonable
andard of journalism, and received a certain amount of
o-operation from a Government which they were not afraid to
riticise when they thought fit; but, outside the small European
ommunity, their influence was often lost through mistranslation.

Most newspapers have now resumed publication, but con-
dence in them all may have been shaken by the three and a
alf years of Japanese occupation, during which the invaders
sed local means of spreading their own propaganda.

Before the war, broadcasting, which has played so great a
art in disseminating truth, as well as lies, in Western countries,
vas not a major force in Malaya. The radio service from

Singapore was still in its infancy, and other stations were mostly in the hands of amateurs.

We are faced, then, with a population of 5,000,000 people of mixed races and allegiances, largely illiterate and for the most part either uninformed or misinformed—and these are the people who in half a century or less must bear the burden of political self-determination. First, plainly, they must go to school.

There must be nothing haphazard about such a gigantic programme of education. The unco-ordinated efforts of 'local' or racial groups can achieve little save disunity. There must be central planning and common purpose in teaching and information throughout the peninsula.

Inter-racial schools, broadcasting services in all the Asiatic languages, a first-class information bureau to lead (though not to dictate to) the press . . . these are all things I hope to see in new Malaya. In the old Malaya they seemed very, very remote.

Chapter 8

THE CITY SLICKERS

SOME years ago I happened to be in San Francisco on the day when the ferry-boat service across the bay was finally discontinued, to be replaced by the electric trains running across the newly-opened Oakland Bay bridge.

There were many expressions of regret for the old ferry-boats, on which countless good parties had been held, but the one which has stayed most in my mind was made by a business man from Oakland, on the other side of the water, who had to travel daily to and from San Francisco.

'I liked the old boats', he told me. 'They gave you a little peace every morning, before the city slickers got at you.'

Many a Malayan has had much the same thought as his train has crawled over the long Johore causeway, taking him from the pleasant, slow-moving life of the peninsula into the whirl of modern Singapore.

For Singapore has always been a little apart from Malaya as a whole—and the division between them is more than the mere strip of water that is the Strait of Johore. It is the gulf that separates the metropolitan dweller from the provincial, the townsman from the yokel.

Singapore is the most self-consciously urban place I know, as self-important as London, as busy as New York, as cosmopolitan as Shanghai. Though the whole island on which the city stands is no more than a couple of hundred square miles, it is a world in itself . . . a wonderful place of wealth and colour and a never-ending flow of traffic. There are always new faces to be seen in Singapore, new ideas, new enterprises. It has such a range of society, such a diversity of interests, that it can never be narrow or provincial. It is a great city.

The people who live there work and play harder than those whose homes are on the peninsula and who have yielded a little to the Malay's gentle philosophy of letting the world go by him. Competition is sterner for them, and if they have built for themselves positions of importance they must fight always to maintain them.

To Singapore there come yearly, in peace-time, more than 16,000 ships of all nations, for the great harbour, with its magnificent docks, lies half way between India and China, and is a natural stopping place for all shipping plying between east and west.

In this great cosmopolitan city, with its constant atmosphere of bustle and sophistication, the visitor from 'up-country', as the people of Singapore call anything north of the Johore Strait, is an outsider, a country cousin to be shown the sights and then sent back to his bit of jungle with an audible sigh of relief.

Singapore people themselves tend to stay in their own island, leaving the peninsula to look after itself. Thousands of them live out their working lives in Singapore without ever going elsewhere in Malaya.

The city used to be the capital of the old Straits Settlements, but it had little in common with Penang and nothing whatever in common with Malacca. The Malay States, Federated and Unfederated, were just a useful appendage, from which flowed a never-ending stream of rubber and tin to be shipped at Singapore for destinations all over the world.

Singapore's half-million population is more than three-fifths Chinese. The 60,000-odd Malays to be found there are mostly urbanised, and have little sympathy with their simpler compatriots in Malaya proper.

It is not surprising, then, that the Colonial Office's Malayan Union plan should, for the time being at any rate, have excluded Singapore, making it into a separate political entity.

It has been one in all but name for a great many years, in fact ever since, in the early part of the last century, Stamford

fles persuaded the ruler of Johore to cede the small, appar-
y useless island to the British Crown. In those days it was
ged with miles of mud flats, and its only inhabitants were to
found in the tiny fishing village of Sinhapura.

here is nothing to be seen of Sinhapura now. Handsome
dings, docks and warehouses stand where the fishermen
l to haul up their slender *prahus*, and ships of every flag
vd the harbour.

n Singapore you can find people who will talk to you in
y common European or Asiatic language. You can (or
ld, in normal times) buy the produce of every nation under
sun, eat the best of the world's food and drink the best of
world's wines, dine with fabulously wealthy Chinese in
ing palaces of marble, or spend stimulating dangerous
nings with sailors in dockside cafes reminiscent of Marseilles.
can dance with slender Chinese and Eurasian girls in
sure houses where Malayan rulers have sought for their
l mistresses, or in the formal setting of an officer's
s.

ut it is not only these things that separate Singapore from
rest of Malaya . . . above all is the fact that Singapore is
ntially and must always be a free port, while the rest of
aya, dependent for its livelihood upon the great rubber and
ndustries, is firmly wedded to policies of restriction.

ome day, not too far off, a special place for Singapore must
found in Malayan Union, for, despite all the differences I
been at pains to describe, Singapore *does* belong to
aya: it will always depend upon Malaya to feed its ships,
Malaya will always depend upon it for the many services
a great port can provide.

ne can see, though, that for the time being the task of
ing the nine States of the peninsula, with the addition of
acca and Penang, into one political unit is enough for any
inistration to tackle, without the business of trying to fit
apore somehow or other into the complex structure.

THE CITY SLICKERS

There is the consideration that the people of Singapore themselves will not care to be governed from the 'up-country' they have always faintly patronised, while the peoples of the rest of Malaya will never be reconciled to the idea of being subservient to Singapore, which, they feel, is out of touch with their needs and aspirations.

Some special status of 'free city' for Singapore will have to be devised by the makers of the new Malaya; but, in the meanwhile, separation as a distinct colony can do no harm.

Chapter 9

LIFE-BLOOD—RUBBER

MORE than once already I have mentioned rubber and tin. It is time now to discuss rather more fully these two great industries, which are the life-blood of ne Malayan Union. Without them Malaya could be little nore than a tropical slum, with a dwindling population nd a future hardly brighter than that of the Western Desert.

Rubber and tin are the merchandise which the new country as to offer to the world in exchange for necessities it cannot ake itself; and the manner in which it can exploit them will etermine its position in the family of nations.

Both are industries whose fortunes have varied greatly, nowing both extreme prosperity and extreme slump. Both ce an uncertain future.

Rubber has a romantic story, which has been told so many nes that I need do no more than sketch over it here.

Originally the rubber tree figured not at all in the jungles that vered Malaya. The first planters who sought their fortunes in e country experimented disastrously with coffee, more success-lly with coconuts and other minor crops. Meanwhile, rubber, owing wild, flourished in the jungles of Brazil, jealously arded by the government of that country.

Only by an act of bare-faced smuggling, for which the author, Englishman named Henry Wickham, was later knighted, s a consignment of seeds taken out of Brazil and brought to e Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. From this supply, in the ar 1877, twenty-two rubber plants were taken to Malaya— w, 69 years later, those 22 plants have multiplied themselves 300,000,000.

LIFE-BLOOD—RUBBER

By 1936 Malaya alone was meeting very nearly half the total world demand for rubber, but the industry had already known two disastrous slumps which had beggared thousands and caused infinite distress.

The first was in the years immediately after the 1914-18 war, and was part of the world-wide trade depression. The demand for raw rubber from all countries fell so swiftly that the industry, still in its infancy, was threatened with ruin.

In order that it should be saved, the first scheme of rubber restriction was introduced. It was an effort to level out losses over the industry as a whole by reducing output—and so using up rapidly accumulating stocks—and by stabilising the price.

This attempt, which has gone down to history as the 'Stevenson Scheme', was successful in part, but it had two unfortunate sequels. One was that the Americans—previously Malaya's best customers—began to reclaim their old rubber rather than buy the raw product at the fixed price. The other was that the Netherlands East Indies, encouraged by the spectacle of reasonable profits being made in Malaya, began planting and selling their own rubber—and they stayed out of the scheme.

The whole thing had to be abandoned in 1928. Almost immediately the markets of the world were flooded with stocks of rubber, and prices fell so steeply that by 1933 the industry was in a far worse position than it had been twelve years earlier. Hundreds of ruined, out-of-work planters enlisted in the Army, abroad, as privates; others were given free passages home, where they swelled the growing ranks of the unemployed.

A second restriction scheme, known as the International Rubber Regulation Agreement, came into being in 1934 and embraced both British and Dutch interests. It provided a moderate prosperity—and that is all it was—throughout the industry, and it was still in force when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour.

What, though, is the prospect for the re-awakening industry the post-war world? What are the new problems it has to ce?

To both these questions the answer is grave . . . and it is unhappy anomaly that it was Allied and not enemy action ich has darkened the future of a great Empire industry.

The Japanese, doubtless, would have liked to destroy every bber tree in Malaya before retiring from the country, defeated: t they had time to damage no more than a tenth. Some ates they levelled to make room for food crops, others they t down for firewood, a very few they worked to supply their vn rubber needs. The majority of the trees, therefore, were 't untouched, and now they are very much the better for eir long rest. The present tasks are the reassembly of the bour forces, only 35 per cent. of which are available, the aining of new planters and the rehabilitation of 'old' planters ter three and a half years of living hell in Japanese prison mps—but everything points to the industry being able to reach pre-war standard of production within a year or two.

But then, when all the deficiencies suffered in the war have en made up, there will be much more rubber in the world an it can use; for, since the Japanese walked into Malaya, the nericans have built up a synthetic-rubber industry capable, one, of meeting all of the world's needs.

This product of the industrial genius of our Allies indubitably ved us from defeat—for how could we have fought our enemies thout rubber for tyres, gasmasks, gun- and engine-mountings d the thousand and one other munitions of war?—but now it an embarrassment.

Plainly, then, there must be restriction again if the world is ot to find itself with twice as much rubber as it needs—and e new scheme must include America.

American synthetic rubber will not disappear just because e war is over. On the contrary, every indication is that it has me to stay. It is good stuff: better even than the natural

product for some purposes, though less good for others. Its manufacturing costs are steadily falling, and any shortcomings which may now exist will probably be remedied in time through research and experience.

It is no wonder, then, that the Malayan planter is wedded to restriction, for his very life depends upon it. In the new crisis that will shortly threaten his industry, though, he will need more than that—he will need encouragement from his Government, scientific assistance to enable him to lower his costs, and the skill of the inventor to find more and more uses for his product.

Already rubber is used in some 30,000 manufacturing processes, and there is no doubt that, *in time*, as many more ways of making use of it will be discovered; but experts believe that it will be ten years or more before we can learn how to absorb the whole of this double yield. In the meanwhile, Malayan planters, as well as American manufacturers, have to live.

I seem in the last few pages to have talked of Malayan rubber planting as if it were a European monopoly, but this is very far from the case. Not only is everybody in the country affected in some way by the fortunes of the industry, but actually a very large number of Asiatics, apart from those who make up the labour forces, are directly engaged in it.

European-owned estates aggregate less than half the total acreage of planted rubber. Almost as much is owned, strangely enough, by the Malays themselves, who, though unwilling to work for others, have been quite prepared to plant rubber seeds over their own small patches of land and do the little bit of daily labour required to make these few trees pay a handsome dividend.

There are some 250,000 such small-holdings, and together they compose nearly 40 per cent. of Malaya's rubber. Chinese planters have nearly ten per cent.

Mostly the small-holdings were neglected during the occupation, as the Japanese deliberately discouraged work on them, but they are yielding again now.

Chapter 10

LIFE-BLOOD—TIN

TIN has had its ups and downs, too. In the last twenty years its price has touched rock bottom at £104 a ton —far below the cost of production—and has soared ligh as £313.

efore the war Malaya was the world's largest producer of yielding fully 40 per cent. of the entire supply. Not only it thus profit from selling its natural riches, but, by putting gh duty on the export of untreated ore, it ensured that most ne tin sold was also smelted in the country—in huge plants Singapore and Penang.

Iow, the Malayan's own 'scorched earth' policy, followed by s of Japanese incompetence and neglect, has left the istry in a state of semi-ruin, from which it will take three four years to recover fully.

efore we go into details, though, we must have a look at various ways in which tin is mined in Malaya, for they have ery important bearing on both the present and the future. nder the old conditions, two thirds of Malaya's tin output contributed by European firms, which used dredges—huge bersome machines costing anything up to £400,000 to d.

Iormally, a dredge was built to work a certain area of tin-ring land, on 'lease', and the end of its term of serviceability planned to coincide with the working out of the lease. is, when there was no more tin the dredge was worn out, and fit for scrapping.

efore the advent of the dredge the Chinese had had a ual monopoly of tin mining, using their old, traditional hods of pumping or washing out the tin.

These methods were good for Malaya, because they meant the employment of very large numbers of workers, who were paid locally and spent their money in the country; but the dredge has proved a better economic proposition.

The Chinese stick to their old ways, and before the war, although they had lost their leading position in the industry, they were still producing something like a third of the total output.

In almost every valley one could see their mines, characterised by high, trellised, wooden structures for carrying pipes. One could look down into wide, shallow pits, filled with thousands of workers, men and women, toiling through the heat of the day with only their big, conical straw hats to give them shade.

When the Japanese came these were the only mines that could be worked at all, as most of the dredges had been destroyed; and the temporary conquerors used some of them to meet their own tin needs.

Nevertheless, the Chinese miners have been badly hit. In all but about a seventh of their concerns, plant has deteriorated, workings have been flooded, and labour forces dispersed. It will be two years at least before anything like normal conditions returns.

Only the really hard way of winning the tin remains unaffected. This is the hand-washing, or *dulang*, by which thousands of poor Chinese eke out a meagre living year after year, until the diseases which inevitably attack people who spend all the hours of daylight standing waist deep in water—often the bitter cold water of mountain streams—carry them off.

They are a picturesque sight, these people, until one stops to pity them as they stoop hour after hour in the river beds over their flat pans, in each of which the current may, by day's end, deposit a few black grains of tin. They live in tiny, thatched villages, often deep in the jungle, making their own society and living peacefully and happily enough.

Sometimes, at sunset, on some lonely road, one may pass a party of them walking home from the day's panning, the

men, who work as hard as the men, carrying their young
dren on their backs. Their clothes are plain black, trousers
l shirt, but they enliven them with bright red scarves.

The hand-washers have come into their own now, for, with
ctically no dredging and most of the big hydraulic mines out
action, they are producing more than they have ever done
ore—though even this means only a tiny percentage of
laya's pre-war figure.

t is a period of prosperity for them, too, for the tin price
long been fixed at £300 a ton, and their costs of working and
ng are virtually no higher than they were when the commodity
at its cheapest.

This present price may be high for the *dulang* washers, but it
ow for all the other producers, whose costs, though hard to
mate now, are very much over what they used to be and must
ain so for a long time. Indeed, the cost of getting the dredges
k into working order so that that they can finish their leases
probably run into many millions of pounds.

Mr. A. D. Storke, who is adviser on the Malayan tin mining
ustry to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, has reported
some 41 of the pre-war dedges will be working on a
ricted scale this year, another 46 by June 1947, and 17 by
uary 1948 . . . while 22 are not worth rebuilding.

Generally, Mr. Storke estimates that it will be 1949 before
ayan tin production reaches 90 per cent. of the pre-war
re.

However, given an increase in price, all tin producers the
ld over should do well in these next few years, for every
ntry is calling for this precious metal for building up its
ustries.

America, desperately short, has sent out a 'Save tin' call to
its factories; British manufacturers are demanding more
more tin to speed the export drive.

There is no doubt whatever that every scrap of the metal that
be won from the soil for a long time yet will have a purchaser.

Thus there will be no need for the schemes of restriction ich have been used before to save the tin industry from ruin, ›ugh there will still have to be co-operation among the rld's producers.

Tin restriction first came into being in the disastrous slump ır of 1931, when the price was at its lowest and unwanted ck were piling up. The International Tin Committee, which s formed then and is operating to this day, tried to equalise)duction and consumption by imposing on producers a ɔta of 77 per cent. on their 1929 standards. In the years that lowed, the amount of the quota was varied according to nand, and did succeed in keeping the industry going.

The Tin Committee also set up a central stock, which was :ful because it meant that there was never any danger of ısumers going short when demand increased unexpectedly, 1 at the same time unwanted tin was never wasted—it was ɔt for future use.

This central stock served, in time, to save the Allies from ;perate, probably fatal shortage in the war years.

In the late 30's the industry began its preparation for war, iberately building up stocks which were far above all previous ords. By the time the Japanese had over-run the Far East, :reby depriving the Allies of the world's biggest tin producer, ılaya, and the second biggest, the Netherlands East Indies, :re were stocks in hand of 140,000 tons.

During the war three other countries continued to supply the lies—Bolivia, which increased its production from 25,571 ıs in 1938 to a figure in the neighbourhood of 40,000 tons; : Belgian Congo, which more than doubled its production; 1 Nigeria which did almost the same.

All these countries are signatories to the International Tin gulation Scheme, and so their increased production does not ıstiture any danger to the reawakening tin industry of the r East. Neither has this industry, like rubber, to fight a ngerous, war-time substitute.

There will still be the need of international agreement, how-
er—not as regards production but as regards smelting.

I said at the beginning of this very brief review of the tin
lustry that Malaya smelted most of its own tin—of which it
nt the major portion to the United States. The Dutch smelted
their tin from the Netherlands East Indies at an enormous
int at Arnhem, in Holland.

Malaya's chief smelting works, at Pulau Brani, an island off
ngapore, were destroyed before the Japanese entered the
rtress, and the other smelter at Penang was so seriously
maged that it remained inoperative throughout the occupation.
rnhem, too, was wrecked. At first it was thought that none of
ese would ever work again, but now the Penang and Arnhem
nelters are being repaired.

Nevertheless, there remains a grave deficiency in the world's
nelting capacity, only partly compensated for by a large
nelter at Texas City which the Americans built for the tin which
ey purchased from Bolivia during the war.

Plainly, the Far Eastern producers will have to revise their
d policy of exporting only smelted tin, at any rate until the
ır damage is made good . . . and negotiations with other
overnments for this purpose will be an early task for the
lministrators of Malayan Union.

Chapter 11

NOT SO SLICK

MALAYAN Union is so bound up with rubber and tin that it is natural that its capital should be more or less in the geographical centre of these two industries. Kuala Lumpur, in Selangor, is the 'rubber' city; Ipoh, in 'erak, lying in the largest and richest mining area of Malaya, s the 'tin' city.

With no other considerations, both would have an equal laim to the right of entertaining the administration of the new Jnion, but Kuala Lumpur has the added qualification of having lready been a capital city for many years; hence it has been hosen.

Surprisingly few people in Britain had even heard of Kuala Lumpur until the name began to appear on the date lines of var reports from the Fast East; but, far from being an obscure outpost of Empire, it is an important, wealthy, modern, beautiful ittle city, and is as pleasant a place as is to be found anywhere East of Suez'.

However much Londoners may sneer, as they tend to do at anything that smacks of Empire-building, the fact remains that Kuala Lumpur had dial telephones considerably before most of he Metropolitan exchanges . . . and very efficient they were too.

In fact, if most Londoners could live as pleasantly and comfortably as do their compatriots in Kuala Lumpur they vould be a great deal better off than they are.

It is hard to realise, as one moves about the broad streets of his clean, attractive city, that little more than half a century ago it was no more than a tumbledown village built upon stinking mud-flats. Its name—in English, 'muddy river valley' —is the only reminder.

Its Federal Building, which housed the 'Parliament' of the ld Federation, will do very well for the new Government. It vas here, beneath the Oriental domes which were the pride of he F.M.S., that the Federal Council used to meet in all its littering panoply—the Sultans in their silken robes, with ivory-andled krises thrust into their tightly wound sarongs, standing tiffly beneath their State umbrellas as the band played their nthems; the High Commissioner, a sword at his waist, his hel-net white-plumed, his uniform glittering with gold braid and rders; the 'Official' members, in the smart white uniform of the Malayan Civil Service, the 'Unofficial' members representing ll the races of Malaya; the huge, colourful throng pressed bout.

If, when the meeting was over, one had wandered out of the Council Chamber on to the marble verandah, one would have ooked out on to the little, tree-covered hill opposite, and erhaps seen the sun glint on the bugles of the Malayan Police, rilling on their square; or perhaps, nearer at hand, on to the reat oblong of bright green turf, the *Padang*, which was park, arade ground and playing field for all Kuala Lumpur, with the amous Selangor Club, or 'Spotted Dog', scene of many a wild binge', sprawling along its far edge.

What tales you would have remembered, looking at these w, open-sided buildings—tales, perhaps, of the mad days f the first rubber boom, when planters made fortunes over-ght, and dissipated them almost as quickly; when one man e was my uncle, so I know the story to be true) made a giant yre of rattan furniture and set light to it, gravely signing a *it* for the building of a new club; or when another, borrowing n elephant from its friendly keeper, rode it on to the centre f the dance floor.

The 'Dog' was and is the life and soul of European Malaya. was there that the newcomer used to learn the wisdom of the ld hand'; there that the lonely planter used to spend the few ours of his occasional trip to town; there that business was

over gin slings by day or *stengahs* by night; there, on the ng, that great battles of football, cricket, and tennis were ıt out between the rival States.

ıon its pattern the Malays, Chinese and Indians modelled own clubs, and from its members they learned to become t at the white man's games.

ıind and about the Padang stretches the city of Kuala ɔur, with its fine office buildings and modern shops, its colourful market, and its narrow, teeming Chinatown. ı place of contrasts: from the modern steel and concrete e which spans the river one looks on to the domes and ·ets of the Sultan's Mosque, standing midstream upon a islet; from a broad street which might be in London, Paris ɔs Angeles, one walks into the heart of China; bullock wend their way slowly through the press of motorcars nodern omnibuses; Chinese vendors push their wooden ws which are never oiled, because the squeaking of the s wards off evil spirits; Asiatics of all races bath openly at ide standpipes, covering their nakedness with long sarongs, in the luxury hotels and the homes of the reasonably well ere are tiled bathrooms and modern showers; a radiogram ı a sentimental *kronchong* from a Malay coffee shop, while l the corner Indian worshippers of Shiva dolefully beat their gongs.

one drives about Kuala Lumpur, in early day of residence, eeps thinking one has passed its boundaries, only to find here is yet more of it sprawling, seemingly endless, over at, mine-scarred valley between jungle-covered hills; for garden city, within whose compass there are more trees buildings, more grass than concrete.

its lovely Lake Gardens, where casuarina and Flame of 'orest grow side by side, with great bushes of purple ıinvillea and beds of orchids, are scattered the houses of ıovernment chiefs. King's House, where the Governor of nion lives now, and which used to be the home of the High

mmissioner when he visited the Federation, stands upon a l overlooking the lake. Below it is a little, sentry-box structure h a big book where the new arrival, if he is well mannered, ites his name in courtesy to the chief citizen. Malay, Sikh or njabi policemen guard the entrance, with bayonets fixed.

'n the same Gardens is the smart, expensive Lake Club, eting place of the leaders of the European community, of ich membership is a password to 'Society' throughout the r East. . . . During the occupation the Japanese used it as an cers' brothel.

n another part of the town there is an even more exclusive b, to be a member of which one must possess a million lars, roughly £116,000. Needless to say, membership is all inese.

Despite its clubs, though, its golf, tennis and racing, its sy, varied social life, Kuala Lumpur is essentially a working ce . . . which is perhaps one reason why so few people outside country have even heard of it. It offers nothing to the rist, everything to the worker.

ts communications are admirable—a main-line railway, the in road which runs from Singapore through to the Penang y, an airport, and, thirty miles away, an efficient, busy e port.

'he new Union is fortunate in having its capital ready-made. have headed this chapter 'Not So Slick' because, although quarter of a million people who inhabit Kuala Lumpur are dwellers, they live their lives at a slower tempo than their ghbours in the great port and fortress of Singapore.

'heirs is a gentler, kinder existence, spent among pleasant dens and in the shade of leafy trees, with the vastness of jungle ever in their view.

'he results of their labours are less spectacular, but sound steady, and their philosophy is more in keeping with the rit of the country at whose centre they stand.

Chapter 12

THE INHERITANCE

THE Union, as we have seen, inherits both a capital and a complete structure of government. It comes into possession, too, of great wealth.

Rubber and tin are the present mainstay of Malaya, but the country's resources are boundless, and hardly scratched.

Despite years of cultivation, more than 80 per cent. of Malaya's surface is still covered by virgin jungle, much of which can give place to crops as occasion demands; and its mineral wealth has been no more than played with.

Rubber is not the only valuable crop grown. Coconuts are planted over more than 600,000 acres, and their kernels, dried into copra for use in the making of margarine, are exported to the extent of some 75,000 tons a year. Nearly 40,000 tons of coconut oil are also sent out of the country annually.

Rice growing is a domestic business—for all its produce goes into feeding the home population—but it covers more than three quarters of a million acres and yields, in normal times, 300,000 tons of rice a year.

Then there are oil palms, grown for the soap makers . . . a valuable and spreading industry.

The last decade before the Japanese invasion saw remarkable developments in a fourth great Malayan enterprise—pineapple canning. Too few people know that the Malayan pine, for all its appearance may be against it, is the sweetest and juiciest in the world . . . far, far better than its whiter, more elegant Hawaiian cousin.

The Chinese have been the pioneers in Malayan pineapple production, but up till recently allowed internal competition to spoil their efforts. Bad factory conditions, ill-marked and

ındardised cans all contributed to keeping Malayan pines ne world market. Then British advice, and a measure of operation between the producers, gave the industry a endous fillip, and Malaya became the world's second est producer, giving place only to Hawaii.

the beginning of the war nearly all the canned pineapple eaten in Britain came from Malaya.

e industry has suffered gravely during the war, but efforts being made to encourage redevelopment.

ere are other, lesser crops—tapioca; betel nut, beloved ' of the Malays, cultivated since the 16th century; derris which produces a poison used in sheep dips and sprays s in great demand; nipah, from which are manufactured , alcohol and vinegar; kapok and sago . . . and agricul-s are constantly experimenting to find out what other h Malaya's fertile soil and abundant sunshine can

low the surface, too, lie great treasures for the Malaya e future.

e majority of the tin that is mined every year is alluvial, carried down from the hardly explored masses in the ntains to the sandy soil of the plains, there to be swiftly cheaply dug out. One can only guess at how much lies ealed in the jungle, for later generations.

ere are other minerals. One large gold mine, an Australian ern, has been working for nearly half a century, and else-e gold is found in association with alluvial tin. A total of 800,000 ounces of gold has been mined in Malaya in the ifty years.

al for the railways and power plants of Malaya comes the country's own mine at Batu Arang, which has already ed more than 10,000,000 tons. The mine is recovering only y from its extensive war damage, with the result that the ry will have to import some coal both this year and next, fter then it will be again self-supporting.

There is iron, too—a great deal of it. Before the war it was mined only by the Japanese, since other nations had supplies of iron nearer at hand—but it is always there and some day it will be needed.

Tungsten ores, manganese ores, phosphate of lime, china clay . . . all exist in Malaya in considerable quantities, and have been only partly exploited.

Also in the new Malaya's inheritance we must count all that has come of a century's inspired effort—all the towns and cities, the railways running east and west of the peninsula, the bridges and dams and vast schemes of irrigation, the docks and warehouses, the health services (now slowly recuperating from three and a half years of neglect) which transformed the country from a breeding ground of disease to one of the healthiest places in the Far East.

Perhaps it is to the last that Malaya has the greatest debt, for without them it could never have achieved one tenth of what has been done. It would amaze those who lived in Malaya half a century ago to know that now, in normal times, malaria, for instance, is unknown in its larger towns.

These same health services, guided by a brilliant institute for medical research, have done much, too, to help other tropical countries to fight the diseases which, in olden times, decimated their populations annually.

Chapter 13

THE SAGACIOUS ELEPHANT

ONCE upon a time two surveyors were working their way slowly through the jungles of Eastern Malaya, laying a trace for what was to be the railway from Singapore ie North-East coast.

very two hundred yards or so they hammered a white into the ground to mark their trail.

nbeknown to the travellers, they were being closely followed n elephant, which was taking the closest interest in their gs, since elephants are always inquisitive and like to know t is going on about their jungle.

ventually, after travelling for many weary miles, the two eyors turned to retrace their steps. When they neared the e where they had last paused to mark their way they heard, the first time, their attendant elephant, stamping away ng the tall trees and trumpeting a loud, valedictory

the white post there was no sign, save for the little hole e it had been, surrounded by the heavy hoof-marks of their wer. Searching, they found it a hundred yards away, hurled the undergrowth.

nd so it was, on the long way back, with every post they nammered in; but where, for some reason, they had omitted they found that the elephant had stopped to hunt for it at exactly correct interval, and, in evident irritation, had pled down the jungle for yards around.

ell this story—it is one of my favourites—not because it ny real bearing on Malayan Union, but because it is one of t of good stories which form a part of the Union's inheri- , about which I was writing in the last chapter.

I would have liked to have gone on, in Chapter 12, to talk about the history and traditions to which the new Malaya is heir; but there is not a great deal to tell that would be of interest to people like ourselves, whose own history is so old and so rich in colour and incident, and so often brought before us by the living reminders it has left behind.

It is only in one little corner of Malaya, the sleepy, beautiful old town of Malacca, where one can find history as we know it, told in ancient gravestones and in buildings whose crumbling ruins still bear the mark of forgotten craftsmanship.

For Malacca was a great port centuries before Singapore ceased to be a fishing village, and three European races have left their seals upon it. Albuquerque conquered it for Portugal in 1511, the Dutch drove out the Portuguese in 1641, and the British followed them in 1795. Francis Xavier was buried there for a time, until his Order removed his bones from the little hill-top church which overlooks the bay, and took them to Goa.

The real founder of modern Malaya was a Naval captain called Francis Light, who, in 1786, bought the island of Penang from the Sultan of Kedah, for a sum of money.

Light made Penang a naval base from which he put down the piracy of Malaya's western coast. The making of the new port robbed Malacca of its old importance; but, such is history, Penang itself had later to retire into the political background when Raffles gave the Empire Singapore.

The rest of Malaya's history is one of hard work and fine achievement, broken only by the three and a half years of misery which followed its conquest by Japan. Its greatness—and a country so richly endowed by Nature must one day achieve greatness—lies in the future.

I hope that when that time comes, when all the toil of the builders of Malaya has borne fruit, those who live there and enjoy its greatness will read in the crumbling newspapers and magazines of an age long past the stories of those to whom they will owe their happiness.

ere have been great men in this little country, eccentrics
of them for the Far East will always attract those who
ot fit too happily into the comfortable structure of their
s. They have lived well, sometimes fantastically, have even
uncrowned kings accruing to themselves barbaric splen-
they have been great hunters and explorers, great
ators whose triumphs of diplomacy have never been
ded.

eat in a physical sense was the late Professor Callenfels,
archaeologist, who knew more of the ancient history of
Malay Archipelago than anyone living in his time. The
ssor was a giant, six and a half feet tall and immensely
, with physical appetites in proportion. His feats at bar
able were legendary.

en offered a drink during the day he would invariably
r two beers. One evening at the Taiping Club the members,
what impertinently, kept a check upon the number of
ins he drank before dinner. When he reached the hundredth
et up a round of applause.

lenfels, best tempered of men, was for once offended.
nk because I like drinking, not to amuse you', he
ed, and stamped out of the Club.

died shortly before the war, and was universally mourned.
at in another way was the late Loke Yew, who arrived
China penniless, and went to work in a tin mine for a few
s a day. Amazingly, out of his tiny pittance he was able
e enough money to open a little shop on the mine. When
d he was, in dollars, a multi-millionaire, and there are
rials to his charity and his public spirit scattered all over
untry. He grew to have the ear of Governors and diplo-
to be a man of influence and power . . . yet he never
d either to read or to write.

e Yew was brilliant without being eccentric. Others of
untrymen in Malaya have been both. Two, who started
sha boys and grew to be millionaires, once fought out over

a period of years a bitter contest as to who should possess the smartest, most expensive motorcar. Ship after ship arriving in the country brought to one a Rolls Royce, the other a Daimler, to one a Hispano Suiza, the other a Bentley. In the end they tired of the struggle, sold their motorcars and went back to riding in the humble *rikishas* which had once earned them their living.

There has always been this tendency to extravagance in Malaya. The very earth itself breathes it . . . an earth in which you may plant a bulb on Monday and see its flower by week's end. Colours are extravagant because there is always the sun to put them in their place. Trees grow to a hundred feet and more, creepers become little jungles in themselves, spiders may have bodies as big as babies' fists.

To the 'small' man Malaya offers nothing. Its every inhabitant, however humdrum his daily occupation, has something of bigness about him . . . which is a good start for a new country.

Chapter 14

HE LURE OF ETERNAL SUMMER

VERYWHERE that I go in England now I find a spirit of unrest, a longing to get away from this dull, rationed, war-stricken land to some other country where there are and colour and opportunity and a future that is not ged in by officialdom and control.

eople who know that I have been to Malaya—and sooner ater most of my acquaintances find this out, because my ayan years were so rich an experience that I cannot help ing about them—ask me many questions which I answer best I can, though always I am oppressed by a sense of equacy.

Malaya, I tell people, must be seen to be believed. No one ever succeeded in describing it. Even Conrad, the master, only a sailor's view; while Somerset Maugham has given brilliantly, the impressions of a traveller who sees the high-s but has not time to look further.

has been the same with the few good painters who have ped ashore at Singapore or Penang, aiming in a few weeks apture and reproduce the elusive soul of this strange country. have suffered the same disappointment. Elated at first by the r-failing sun, the fantastic colourings, the vast mysteries ungle and swamp, they have rushed to canvas, only to find, little while, that what they have pictured is no more than cature of their own proper environment. They have not sed to learn their Nature afresh, to wait for the realisation, ch comes to every British-Malayan in sudden revelation months of bewilderment, that the proportions he has wn since childhood, the relations, say, between man and bird and leaf, insect and blade of grass, are different here,

are, by Western standards, monstrous and deformed. Instead, he has folded his easel and sailed for home, declaring that Malaya is unpaintable.

So we who try to tell you something of this land we have known and loved have no pictures to which we can turn when powers of description fail us—only photographs which, lacking colour, are but the shadows of the things they try to portray.

Neither is there music to help. The music of the Malays is sentimental, trivial stuff which tells one nothing; that of the Chinese and the Indians is harsh to our ears. There *was* once a man who translated the music of the jungle and the waving palms and the clear green seas into melodies which we could follow while dimly sensing a little of their significance, but his work has disappeared into obscurity.

I do not even know his name, or anything about him save that he was French and had some merit in his own country before adventure and opportunity lured him Eastwards.

He left Paris, I know, at the call of a compatriot, a ballet master, who had seen the strange temple dances of Bali and been seized with the ambition to show them to the West.

The ballet master—his name, too, escapes me—had many difficulties, the principal one being that the Dutch authorities, who rule the island of Bali, would not countenance the 'export' of their dancers. Eventually, though, and through tortuous negotiations it would be hard to follow, he found himself in Singapore with a dozen or so Balinese maidens, a young man who knew how to beat upon strange, bird-like gongs, and a repertoire of sacred dances any one of which would last, in its native setting, for twenty four hours or more.

He sent for the musician, his friend, to take the temple music and 'adapt' it to Western notions, while he himself cut and shaped the dances until, in the end, he could fit half a dozen of them into a single evening's programme. With borrowed money he bought and executed scenery, hired an orchestra, and, after weary months, was ready to present his creation to the world.

It was a masterpiece. If ever it had reached Europe it would ve made him a rich man, and gone down in the history of Western stage as one of the strangest, most beautiful, most ntastic performances ever witnessed.

t never got there, though. To earn enough money to take company to Europe, the ballet master had first to perform the East itself. Singapore, where his show opened, was ranced. Kuala Lumpur, where I saw it, was the same.

Now, years later, I remember little in detail of that strange ning—only an impression of gently swaying, slim brown dies, rippling arms and shuffling feet, with always behind dance the rise and fall of rich, heady, exciting music in which, re than in the movements themselves, one could read the ries of the jungle demons, of the beasts who were maidens l men, and of the loves and lives of the people to whom se myths were ever-present reality.

Bali is not Malaya—its people have not even the same gion—but the two have much in common, so much that, r seeing and being charmed by this one performance, I felt t I understood a thousand times more clearly the country which I was living.

Disaster overtook the ballet-master's enterprise; not in laya, which instantly loved him, but in Madras, which was ed, hot and suspicious. Other troubles came to him there. dancers had been dedicated to their work since birth, and ught up to fixed beliefs they could not shed. One such ef was that it was a deadly sin for a girl to dance after she ceased to be a virgin, and, sad to tell, by the time the npany reached India more than one of the girls had fallen im to the temptations of love.

fter Madras, the show and its promoters just disappeared. nths later I saw one 'turn', vulgarised beyond measure, rporated in a travelling Dutch-Eurasian revue . . . but her the ballet master nor the inspired musician who had ked with him was ever heard of in Malaya again.

And so, to go back to the point at which I began this digression on a little tragedy of the East, there is no music by which one can know Malaya. If you would seek its charms, you must go there yourself.

If you do, and then come back to Europe, those charms will stay with you always. You will glance out of a window on to rain or sleet, and dull expanses of grey slate roofs, and suddenly find yourself longing, with a passion of desire that almost hurts, to see a casuarina again.

It may be that, nostalgic as so many of my Malayan memories tend to be, I sometimes paint my picture with too vivid colours; and that some person who may go to Malaya because of what I have told him will one day return, disillusioned, to blame me for his disappointment.

For it is true, and I remember it now, that there are people who come to hate the country, or who, while loving it, fall victim to its temptations to indolence and excess and so end their careers in disaster and tragedy.

It is hard to pick the kind of European who will like Malaya and do well there, but there are some guiding principles. Plainly, the man who is weak and indulgent is foredoomed to failure; but so, too, is the hard, aggressively teetotal puritan. The vices of the one are swiftly accentuated in a land where examples of sloth and excess are ever present; the 'virtues' of the other lead to intolerance, which is equally fatal.

Neither will the man who is assured of his own cleverness be successful, for it is hard for him to see the point of view of others; and the stupid person cannot compete against Asiatic astuteness.

Employers, who like to pick their own assistants in Britain, look for men who have done reasonably well at school and who play games, not because games in themselves are important but because they indicate vigorous, healthy personalities. What they look for more than anything, though, are 'presence', good manners and a degree of charm.

e greatest care is always exercised over these selections,
se to carry an employee the several thousand miles which
ate England from Malaya is an expensive business, but
l the trouble that is taken mistakes are often made, and
men who arrive in the country with, apparently, every
se of doing well there, have to be sent home after a
onths.

new one such man intimately. He had had a brilliant school
niversity career and was both a scholar and an athlete.
d already 'knocked about' at home for two or three years,
earned how to behave himself in pubs as well as in drawing
s. He was, ostensibly, the perfect Malayan.

nehow, though, the sun and the colours and the easy-
, gentle life of the new country upset his mental balance.
n a week he was drinking heavily. He dropped his games
two or three desultory attempts, and, instead of taking the
or so of hard exercise which every sensible Malayan
s to be essential to health, he spent his leisure hours in bars
nking at home. After six months his debts totalled more
the not-ungenerous salary he had received. He abused the
on of authority his firm had given him, shouted at the
c subordinates, and did little work himself. He did not
bother to learn Malay. Finally, in a fit of drunken anger,
a Chinese shopkeeper who could not understand what he
rying to say . . . and that was the end of him. He was
back to England, where, I heard years later, he prospered
dingly.

lance', then, is the obvious key to success or failure in
ya; but, unfortunately, there are few who know beforehand
er or not they possess it.

riving in Malaya, the young recruit is faced with a com-
y new set of circumstances to which he must adjust
lf, while at the same time suffering from the heat which
ds very oppressive during the first few months. Even while
learning his job, he has a post of considerably more

importance and responsibility than anything he has had previously. He has Asiatics to work for him at the office or on the plantation. He has servants upon whom, if he is not careful, he will soon rely entirely, hardly stirring for himself, even to fetch a cigarette from the other side of the room. Outside working hours, he spends his leisure among men who drink a lot—for Malaya is a thirsty country—but who know how to take their drink, which he probably does not; and he has every opportunity to pile up debts, since almost all transactions in the country are done on a credit basis.

If he can stand up to all this, keep his abilities and his enthusiasm, and lead a sane, normal life, avoiding extremes, he is a good Malayan and will be an asset to the country of his adoption.

He will, though, have to face one more problem . . . marriage. I have always held that Malaya is a bachelor's paradise, but to married people it is less kind.

Its climate seems to have a harsher effect upon European women than upon European men. Once again, there is no law to be laid down here; but one does notice over a period in the country that very many girls who come out from home, pretty and fresh, quickly lose their looks and seem to grow old before their time.

Some make bad Malayans. The fact that their housework is all done for them by native servants leaves them with a lot of time, which they can use in various ways. They may busy themselves all day, supervising their servants, cultivating their own gardens, taking an interest in the women and children of their husbands' labour forces if they live on plantations or mines, or doing jobs of work if they are in the cities. They may become wonderful wives and colonisers, keep their minds active by reading and their bodies healthy by exercise. On the other hand they may let themselves become bored and disgruntled in the long hours of leisure, spend mornings and afternoons over bridge and gossip, with drinks and what the Americans call 'small eats' to ruin their digestions and their figures. They

y become haggard, predatory and loose in their morals, so
rming their husbands and losing the respect of the Asiatics,
o attach a lot of importance to marital duty and fidelity.

n short, the European woman, like the European man,
y do very well or very badly; and any British girl who is
ght in marriage by a Malayan should think long and care-
y before saying 'Yes'.

here is another thing which she should consider, and that
hat if she has children she must, when they are seven or
it years old, face the tragedy of being separated either from
m or from her husband, since European children of that
sicken under Malaya's constant sun. They must be sent
k to milder climates, and either their mother goes with
m and their father is left to fend for himself, or the children
nselves, like orphans, are brought up by relatives at home.

is possible that this very grave drawback to family life in
laya may disappear in time. Earlier in the book I mentioned
stations where Malayans who have ended their active
ers but do not wish to leave the country may retire to
y their pensions. Already schools have been opened both at
neron Highlands and another, smaller station, Fraser's Hill,
though medical opinion on this is still very varied, it may be
d in time that European children will thrive there and so
have to suffer the dreaded separation.

ou may have wondered why all this should have been
ded in a book which purports to be a review of Malayan
on. I have written it because I am convinced that it is
lutely vital to the success of this great and courageous
riment that the country should have only the best Euro-
s, and all of the best that can be spared.

ropeans who fail in Malaya do the country no good.
weaken confidence and often cause bitter feelings. Those
succeed, on the other hand, do, if only by example, assist
ly in the education of the native peoples for self-reliance
eventual self-government.

I think, too, that Europeans in Malaya will be happier now that Britain is committed to a definite policy of working for Malaya's independence. Under the old regime one had a constant feeling of impermanence, a tendency to say in the club: 'I suppose we'll have to get out of here some day, and God knows what will happen when we go!' There was the sense that we were living well in a country that was not really ours, and that, though we were giving it peace and what we hoped was, for the time being, security, we were doing little for it that was real or lasting.

In the new Malaya, though, there is a clear, finite task for all races, and it is, pre-eminently, a task worth doing.

Chapter 15

WHY ALL THE FUSS?

HROUGHOUT this book, now nearly at an end, I have tried to show that Malayan Union is a wise and statesmanlike measure which is going to benefit all the peoples alaya.

thought that the means by which it had been brought force were questionable, I might still be tempted to say he end sanctified them; but, for all the damaging sugges- that have been made, I can find nothing in them to se.

e controversy, which has spread, unfortunately, to the of other countries, has been caused by the fact that the / Sultans, who last year signed the new agreements with n which were necessary before Malayan Union could ne legal, have since 'thought again'.

y have they done this?

ould like to be able to answer this question myself, but I onvinced that there is only one man living who can do so the brilliant, much publicised *enfant terrible* of native rchs, the Sultan of Johore.

tan Ibrahim is the ruler of what was the largest Un- ted Malay State, and he has immense influence over his Sultans. His brilliant personality, his wealth and his s of statesmanship have atoned, in Malay eyes, for his unorthodoxies, such as his twice having married Euro- women and his liking for dogs, which most Mohammedans ot touch.

has, too, stoutly defended himself against any inter- e by the Colonial Office or its representatives in matters he has considered to be his own, domestic concern.

Thus, when the late Miss Lydia Hill, the English dancer who was later killed in the air raid on Canterbury, was being entértained at the Sultan's Palace, the High Commissioner, considering that there was a 'scandal', put Palace functions temporarily out of bounds for 'official' Europeans. The Sultan retaliated overnight, causing shrubs to be planted over the whole surface of the Johore Bahru golf course, which he happened to own.

This was a shrewd gesture, which set people laughing through the length and breadth of Malaya, and, since the Malay has an extraordinarily keen sense of humour and admires a joker beyond anyone else, it raised the already high esteem in which his countrymen held him.

Despite many squabbles with European authority, of which this one was typical, the Sultan gave frequent proof of his fundamental loyalty to Britain by making enormous gifts to Imperial defence.

It was to the Sultan of Johore that Sir Harold MacMichael, who last year was entrusted with the task of negotiating the preliminary agreements necessary to Union, went first, doubtless knowing that the Sultan's reactions to his proposals would have a profound effect upon their reception in the other States.

It must be remembered that he was not dealing with an ignorant, easily-influenced figurehead—Sir Ibrahim is an astute diplomat, talks English perfectly, and is the last person in the world to allow anything to be 'put over' on him.

At the close of conversations he signed 'with the greatest friendliness' (I quote from Sir Harold's subsequent report) the following agreement which, as it is fairly short, I reproduce in full:—

'Whereas mutual agreements exist between His Britannic Majesty and His Highness the Sultan of the State and territory of Johore:

'And whereas it is expedient to provide for the constitutional development of the Malay States under the protection of His

esty and for the future government of the State and territory
ohore:

is hereby agreed between Sir Harold MacMichael, G.C.M.G.,
., the Special Representative of His Majesty's Government
n the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland on behalf of
Majesty and His Highness Sir Ibrahim, G.C.M.G., G.B.E.,
ultan of the State and territory of Johore for himself, his
and successors:—

His Highness the Sultan agrees that His Majesty shall have
ower and jurisdiction (the italics are mine) within the State
erritory of Johore.

Save in so far as the subsisting agreements are inconsistent
his Agreement or with such future constitutional arrange-
for Malaya as may be approved by His Majesty, the said
ments shall remain of full force and effect.'

re can be nothing equivocal about the words '*His Majesty
have full power and jurisdiction*', yet later we find the
writing:

vas not in any way coerced or stampeded by Sir Harold
lichael into signing the agreement he placed before me.
ed it quite willingly . . . But after thinking the matter over
lly and lengthily, I came to the conclusion that I had
the agreement *without scrutinising it as closely as I should
done and that I had, unfortunately, not realised its far-
ng implications* (again my italics). I accordingly wrote to
cretary of State for the Colonies on February 15, telling
is and informing him that in the circumstances I could no
maintain the unqualified approval I had originally given.'

lly, Sir Ibrahim! No-one, let alone a clever, much-
ed statesman, could fail to see, with the minimum of
y, the 'far-reaching implications' of this very straight-
d agreement.

ould seem, then, that Sultan Ibrahim, for some reason
only to himself, changed his mind. The results of his
ice were not slow to show themselves.

From the Sultan of Selangor, who, also, had signed an exactly similar agreement, came this letter:

'Sir Harold MacMichael spoke politely and uttered no threats, yet I felt compelled to sign for the following reasons: (1) From what Sir Harold said I understood that if the rulers did not sign the agreement there would be no peace in Malaya; (2) I sincerely and unreservedly trust His Majesty the King who is the Protector of the country; (3) *the Sultan of Johore had signed*; (4) if I did not sign it would appear as if I had no faith in the King and the British Government.'

Plainly, item (3) was the one that counted.

Here it is necessary, however, to go back a little and consider rather more fully Sir Harold's report which, suffering, like so many other important documents, from the shortage of paper, received but scant notice in the press.

Sir Harold arrived in newly-liberated Malaya on October 11, 1945, one day after Britain's future Malayan policy had been announced in Parliament.

His task was: 'to invite each Malay ruler's co-operation in the establishing of a fresh constitutional organisation of Malaya . . . which is intended to ensure and facilitate the progress of the people of the country towards unity and ultimate self-government within the British Empire'; and 'to conclude with each ruler on behalf of His Majesty's Government a formal agreement by which he will cede full jurisdiction to His Majesty in his State'.

Three and a half years of Japanese occupation, though, had left some complications. To begin with, the Japanese had handed over to Siam the four northern States of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu, and in none of these was the Sultan who was reigning before the invasion still alive.

In Selangor, the Japanese had deposed the reigning Sultan, young, English-educated Sir Hisamuddin Alam Shah, and installed in his place his eldest brother, Musa Eddin, who for reasons of character had previously been debarred from the succession.

the other States, Malay rule had remained unchanged, since the liberation all had been visited by a very able servant and legal expert, Brigadier H. C. Willan, M.C., had been Legal Adviser to the F.M.S. Government before war. Brigadier Willan had examined the records of all the s during the occupation, and had prepared a report which made it clear that in every case the Malay rulers who had recognised as such by His Majesty's Government before debacle had been guiltless of any conduct which could be rded as criminally blameworthy and had, in fact, remained ally faithful to the British connection, though perforce pelled by the fact of our own withdrawal to participate in neasy and superficial collaboration with their conquerors uch minor matters of administration as were left to '.

he rightful Sultan of Selangor had already been reinstated n Sir Harold arrived, but, in order that he should be able egotiate in the four northern States whose Sultans had died e the invasion, he was specially empowered 'to open dis- ions with the individuals recommended as competent and onsible to undertake formal commitments as rulers, to gnise them on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and to agreements with them'.

am afraid that this chapter has more than its share of tations, but Britain has been accused of inviting the Malay rs to sign treaties which were 'obscure' and which they erstood imperfectly, so it is necessary that we should examine ely the nature of these treaties and the manner in which were presented.

ir Harold, who was accompanied by an interpreter (Brigadier T. Newboult, of the Malayan Civil Service) and a Colonial ce official, took with him on his visits Malay translations an explanatory note issued by the Colonial Office.

This note, despite its 'official' language, could leave no one doubt as to the exact nature of the proposals. After explaining

the need for Union and the concept of citizenship which this would make possible, it went on to define clearly and in detail the proposed future administration.

'The Malayan Union', it stated, 'will be inaugurated with a central legislative body (the Legislative Council) which will include, besides the Governor of the Union, official and unofficial members nominated by the Governor. There will also be an executive council which will have official and unofficial members in addition to the Governor. As in the case of the Legislative Council, the unofficial members of the Executive Council will be nominated by the Governor.

'The Legislative Council will pass laws for the Malayan Union, but there will also be Councils in each State (State Councils) and in the two Settlements of Penang and Malacca (Settlement Councils). These Councils will be empowered to legislate first on all matters which, in the opinion of the Governor-in-Council, are of a local or private nature in the State or Settlement, and, secondly, on all subjects in respect of which power is delegated to them by law by the Legislative Council of the Malayan Union. In each State and in the two Settlements the principal British officer will be called the Resident Commissioner, and he will preside over the State or Settlement Council. The members will be appointed by the Governor after he has consulted the Resident Commissioner.

'Thus there will be a *central legislature which will have ultimate authority* (my italics) as is necessary if the Malayan Union is to be a source of political strength, but which will delegate to local bodies such powers as can best be exercised by them . . .'

The special position of the rulers—'traditional and spiritual leaders of the Malay people'—was dealt with at length . . .

'It is intended that the ruler in each State will be provided with an Advisory Council. This Council will be presided over by the ruler, and he will appoint its members, subject to the agreement of the Governor. The main functions of these Advisory Malay Councils will be in respect of matters relating

hammedan religion, but there may be other matters on their advice may be useful to the ruler from time to time. atters relating to Mohammedan religion . . . each ruler ave powers of legislating in his State . . . Laws resulting this system will come into effect subject to the Governor's . The agreement of the Governor is necessary, because ist ensure the necessary co-ordination between the States se matters, and he must also ensure that laws on matters ng to Mohammedan religion do not come into conflict he general law of the country. In this work the Governor be assisted by an Advisory Council of the Malay rulers her sitting with him.

is Advisory Council, which will not only have the important of passing in review all legislation on matters relating to ammedan religion sent forward by the individual rulers in States, but will also discuss other subjects either at the nce of the Governor or, provided the Governor's approval tained, at the instance of the rulers, will meet regularly due ceremony, under the presidency of the Governor, will be regarded as a permanent body. It will not impair ight of direct access between the individual rulers and the ernor. It will ensure that each of the rulers can play his not only in the affairs of his State but in the future develop- of Malaya as a whole.

other ways, also, the dignity and prestige of the rulers will lly maintained. State Government property in general and s (as well as State Government debts and liabilities) will ransferred to the Malayan Union Government, but this not apply to the personal residences and estates of the s themselves . . . Furthermore, on the financial side, the onal allowances of each ruler will be maintained and secured a scale appropriate to his dignity and position.'

ere, surely, there can have been no doubt that it was posed to govern all of Malaya centrally and to give the ans power only over matters of religion, which was, in

fact, all that they had had for many years, as I explained very much earlier in this book.

However, Sir Harold reports that he did not rely solely upon this note in explaining to the rulers the purpose of the agreements he was asking them to sign. He says:

'I opened the proceedings in all cases by explaining the object of my mission and my terms of reference and, thereafter, in general terms but always with complete frankness, the salient features and justification of the policy which had been adopted by His Majesty's Government . . . I also described the constitutional framework which would be set up in the Union . . . and outlined the constitution and functions of each of the Councils'.

Subsequently he handed the Sultans copies of the note and of the proposed agreements, for reading and discussion.

'In some cases the Sultan preferred to digest the documents at leisure and discuss them with his advisers before expressing any considered views or asking more than a few questions in passing. Whichever course was chosen I agreed to it, and indeed I urged consistently the need for the fullest and most careful measure of deliberation . . . Two or three days later a second meeting with myself took place . . . In some instances nothing remained but to sign the agreement; in others there was some further discussion as a preliminary to signature . . .'

Only in two cases was Sir Harold conscious of 'any preliminary undercurrent of antagonism to the proposals'.

In Negri Sembilan, the ruler—whom you will remember as the 'Chief of the Big Gentlemen of the Nine States'—was 'evidently reluctant to commit himself at all', but was eventually persuaded to do so by the intervention of another of the 'Big Gentlemen'.

In Kedah the circumstances were rather different. The Sultan, though he had only succeeded in 1943, after the Japanese invasion, had previously been Regent since 1938 owing to his predecessor's illness. The Government of Siam, to which his

had been ceded, had allowed him, to quote Sir Harold, gree of latitude', and this, added to the fact that the State lways tended to hold itself a little aloof from the rest of ya, 'led the Sultan to a strong protest which was obviously l less upon the inherent merits of the case than upon the ring of the status of Kedah appearing to him to be implicit e policy'. This, though, did not prevent his eventually ng 'on the ground that he saw no practicable alternative'.

e Sultan of Kedah has since declared: 'I was presented a verbal ultimatum with a time limit, and in the event of efusing to sign the new agreement, which I call the instru- of surrender, a successor who would sign it would be inted Sultan'.

is important to remember two things about this very gly worded statement, the one that it was not made until ral weeks after the signing of the agreement, and the other Sir Harold, who is a very distinguished civil servant, has gorically denied imposing any time limit whatever, and said, moreover, that he 'urged consistently the need for the st and most careful measure of deliberation'.

nce the completion of the agreements, which were all either ntical with or very similar to the exceedingly clear, un- vocal document signed by the Sultan of Johore, the Malay s have all for some reason decided to attempt to repudiate word, supported by what I still believe to be only a l, vociferous section of their community.

ne senior amongst them, the Sultan of Johore, protests, a naivete that is astonishing, that he failed to understand ething that was so clear as to defy misconception.

the meanwhile, a measure which must eventually benefit people of Malaya as a whole, not only the Malays themselves, , though they are the indigenous inhabitants, are still a ority, has become law. Plainly, these ill-considered 'second ughts' on the part of the Malay rulers cannot be allowed nterfere with it.

Chapter 16

THE SUMMING UP

MALAYA, with its five royal houses, has long been a happy hunting ground for the type of European, usually a paranoic, who likes to imagine himself a 'power behind a throne'. Most of the few disputes which have arisen between the Malay rulers and the British administration have been traceable to such people.

If there have been would-be kingmakers behind the Sultans' action in trying to extricate themselves from the consequences of their treaty-signing, they have meddled to ill purpose; for they have not only marred the opening of the most formative era of Malaya's history, but they have also, and this is worse, destroyed the confidence which previously existed between the rulers and their own people.

However much the Sultans may now endeavour to excuse themselves, they have, by taking one course of action and subsequently trying to repudiate it, unquestionably lowered themselves in the esteem of their fellow-countrymen. A ruler must be right: admission of error causes him, in the phraseology of another great Eastern race, to 'lose face'.

In Chapter 3 I said that in the Briton the Malay had someone to like and to respect: I will go further here and say that he has someone to trust as well. That trust has existed for a great many years; it has even survived the terrible 'let down' of 1942. When British troops re-occupied Malaya at the end of the Japanese occupation, they were welcomed back, which is a very different story to what happened in Java and French Indo-China.

It would be a tragedy if this same trust, which has done more than anything else to justify British colonial policy in the eyes of the rest of the world, were to be broken now, and for no

l purpose. Yet it is true that the Sultans' action, followed by nments, both informed and uninformed, in the press of tain and other countries, has tended to put it into the minds some sections of the Malay community that at long last their protectors are deliberately failing them, and that the rights l privileges they have so long enjoyed are in danger.

Their fears are groundless, as they will soon discover, as tain is pledged in this matter of Malayan Union to safe-ard the rights of the Malay people; but in the meantime re has been created an atmosphere of suspicion which it l be the new government's first task to dispel.

Indeed, it would even have been better if all the rulers, ginning with the redoubtable Sultan of Johore, had refused sign their treaties without further, lengthy consideration, and thout consulting their peoples; or if Sir Harold MacMichael d returned to England with only the assurance of the Sultans' proval, not with their signatures.

I am convinced that, though this would have held up the rmation of the Union, the delay would not have been for ng . . . that very soon the Malays' good sense and the legitimate mands of the other peoples of the country would have brought out the desired result in an atmosphere of confidence and good ll.

However, the damage has been done; but I do not think its ects will be lasting. As the Malays find that the dignity and estige of their rulers are unimpaired, that their property and eir customs are still protected as before, and that their igious and educational institutions remain, the old trust ll be reaffirmed.

In the meanwhile, Malayan Union, once begun, must go on. we were to revoke it now we would raise immediate suspicion the minds of the Malayan Chinese—you will remember that cy are at least as numerous as the Malays—that their own rd-won position in the country was not to be recognised, d that their very reasonable aspirations for some say in the

administration of a land they have served so well were going to be ignored.

We owe to these Chinese as much as we owe to the Malays themselves; perhaps even more, since of the two races they suffered the more heavily in the Japanese occupation, when we had, through no fault of our own, to leave them unprotected.

Then there are the other races I have written about so often—the Indians, whose sore labour has brought Malaya prosperity; the Eurasians, who, when all is said and done, were fathered by our own people and so have a special claim on us; the Europeans themselves. To all these Malayan Union offers first citizenship and, eventually, self-determination.

Plainly, then, there must be no going back. Not only do the majority of Malaya's people wish for Union, but twentieth century thought, which has little use for colonial empires, demands it. The transformation of Malaya from a dependency to a self-governing nation must be speeded up.

We cannot leave Malaya now, for to do so would be to invite anarchy and swift ruin; but we must leave it within half a century, and, in that short time, build up a strong foundation of prosperity, enlightenment and political soundness so that independent Malaya will have a chance in the world's quarrelsome, acquisitive family.

The old Malaya, for all its haphazard political system and its many anomalies, was the finest job of colonising we have ever done. The new Malaya, if it is prosperous and peaceful, will rank with the best achievements of our long history.

Let us, then, give a blessing to this great enterprise, in which our reputation is so deeply involved. Let us watch its progress with understanding and sympathy, and, if we must criticise, try to do so from a broad, multi-racial viewpoint, remembering that we are not dealing with one people but with many peoples.

A nation is born, and we are its nurse. Let us look to our nursing.

Hove, April 1946.

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