

In 1946 a century of White Rajah rule came to an end in Sarawak when the Borneo state was ceded to Britain by Vyner Brooke. In fact by the 1930s Brooke rule had probably already passed its prime and there were already signs of political consciousness among the Kuching Malays. However, while nationalist movements in other parts of South-East Asia fought to end European rule, the Malays of Sarawak in the aftermath of the Second World War in 1945 clamoured for the perpetuation of the Brooke Raj. When extremists assassinated the British Governor of Sarawak in 1949, this anti-cession movement collapsed, but a nationalist tradition had been established which would later serve to legitimize the post-colonial leadership. This fascinating study based on hitherto unpublished documents, detailed research and personal interviews examines the last decade of Brooke rule and explains cogently the 1946 cession with reference not only to British imperial policy in South-East Asia but to dynastic politics and the failure of Brooke rule to adapt to change.

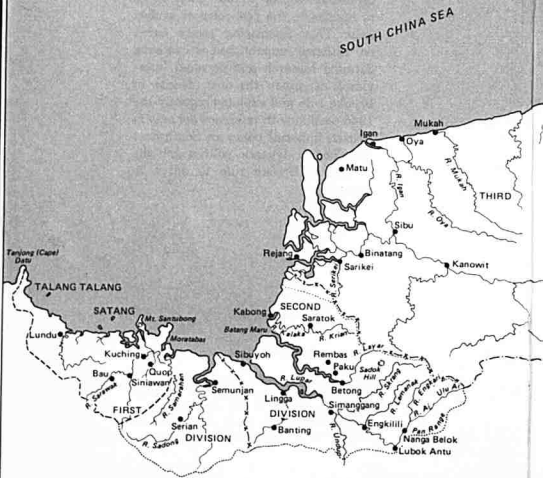
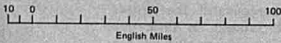
Cover illustration

Sarawak Centenary Day, 24 September 1941. The Rajah, the Ranee and C. D. Le Gros Clark (Chief Secretary) leaving the Government Offices. The Sarawak flag is on the left of the doorway. (Courtesy the late B. C. J. Spurway)

SARAWAK

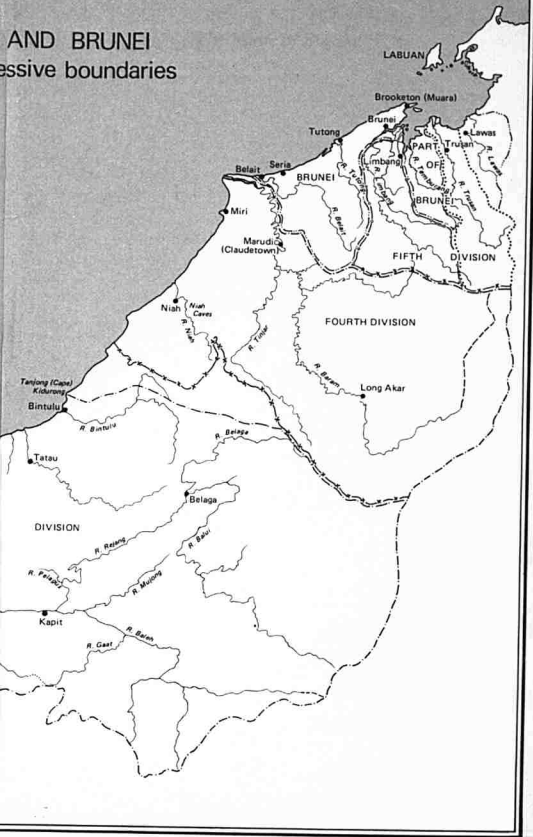
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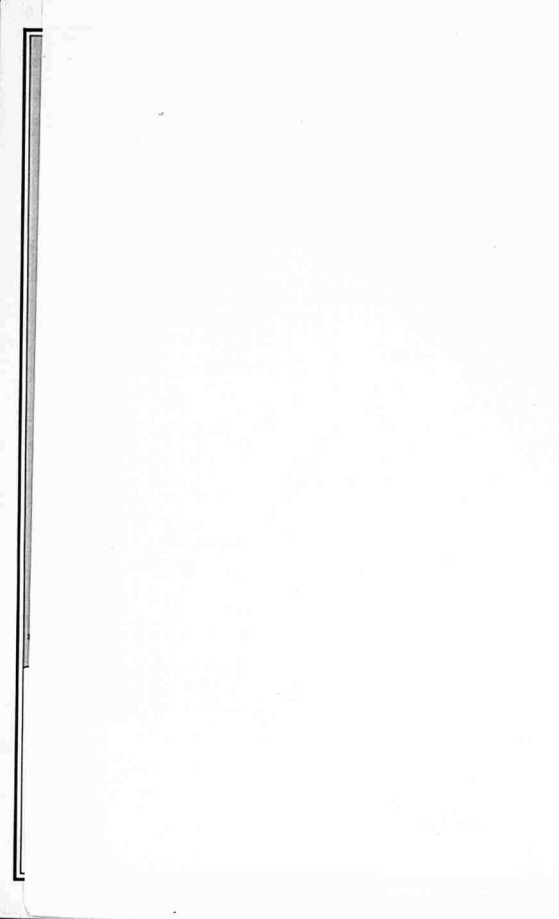
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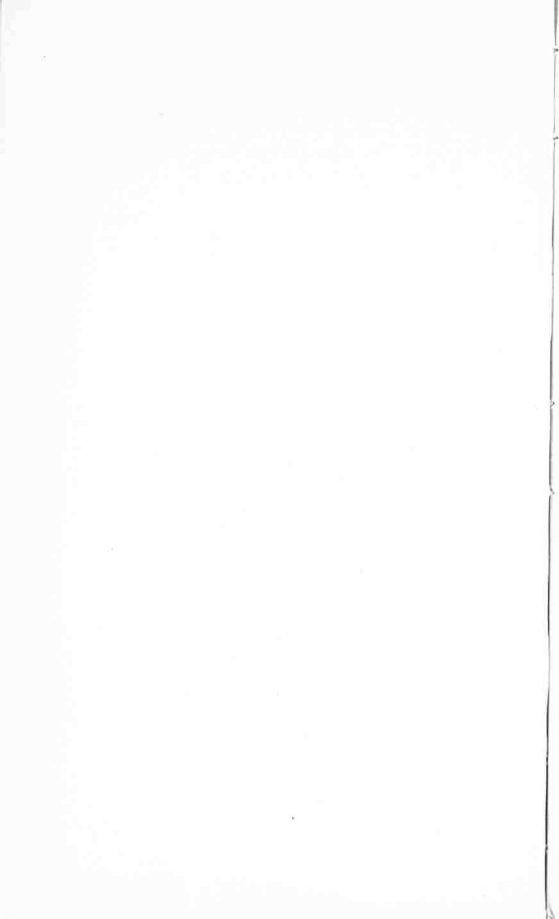
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The Name of Brooke



The Name of Brooke

The End of White Rajah Rule
in Sarawak

R. H. W. REECE



**Sarawak
Literary Society**

(Persatuan Kesusasteraan Sarawak)

1993

001583

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First published in 1982 by Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur
Second Edition 1993, Sarawak Literary Society

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ISBN 0 19 580474 0

Printed in Malaysia by
Ampang Press Sdn. Berhad.

No. 6 & 8, Jalan 6/91, Taman Shamelin Perkasa,
Batu 3¹/₂, Jalan Cheras,
56100 Kuala Lumpur.

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For Lesley and Laura

I visited parts of Borneo where no European had ever been before, and even in those parts the people came out and mentioned with delight the name of Brooke; in fact, wherever I went, I found his name was a sort of talisman. . . .

Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Cochrane, 1852

Foreword

WHILE I appreciate Bob Reece's invitation to write a Foreword to his book, my qualifications for doing so are not what might be expected.

Born with prospects of rulership which found free rein for six months in the crisis year of 1939; demoted from royal estate and dismissed from government service for alleged misdemeanours; restored to grace and re-employed nine months later; dismissed from government service again within the ensuing six months (and disinherited); restored a second time to grace after three years' military service and elevated to act as head of government with royal title restored; dismissed and disinherited a second time for being unresponsive to British proposals for Sarawak's post-war future; pronounced an 'Undesirable' and banned by the colonial government for sixteen years from Sarawak for responding to and supporting the genesis of Sarawak nationalism—all these stimulating and varied experiences the consequence of little more than three years' direct acquaintance with the life and peoples of a little country (yet as large in size as England) struggling to be born into a new life and era for itself and the world.

If this brief biographical outline strains the credibility of the reader it will nevertheless perhaps serve as a fitting *hors d'oeuvres* to the contents of Bob Reece's book.

Truth needs neither embellishment nor commendation. Personal loyalties and considerations, while they surely have their place, have in all countries been too long held to justify a veil which in political and public affairs is no longer acceptable anywhere in the world.

The author in his thorough and penetrating presentation highlights the period of Sarawak's crisis of transition from one major historical epoch to another, in the context of a still greater and more protracted period of crisis affecting our whole human family—a transition of monumental proportions the scope of which many of us are still finding difficult to grasp as we reach for a higher ethical and social consciousness as the price

and justification for our survival into the twenty-first century.

I feel especially indebted to Bob Reece for giving me this opportunity to take an integrated look at what may at one time have been seen and experienced as a series of largely disconnected happenings, the significance of which may only now, in retrospect, be fully appreciated. Such is the gift of a true historian.

I wish to take this opportunity to record my profound thankfulness for the privilege of my heartwarming, albeit relatively brief, association with Sarawak and her peoples. Many suffered emotionally, psychologically, and economically during the five years of the cession controversy. Whatever the choices made of policies, aims, and loyalties, may each give recognition that the other throughout the confusion of those years acted as he believed to be right. It was a growing experience for us all and let us hope that by now time has healed all the scars.

Looking to the future, Sarawak and her peoples, along with the rest of us, have their own uniquely important role to play for the future of human unity. None of us can afford to be unmindful of the need to sustain and strengthen the ultimate vision enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations of a global civilization based upon mutual respect between all peoples and values of love, compassion, and a sense of the true brotherhood of man.

Whatever set-backs may be experienced in our efforts to see this vision democratically fulfilled, it is only by holding the vision clearly and steadily before us that we shall be enabled to emerge triumphantly from the turmoil, strife, and conflict of our time and find true meaning for our human existence.

The Close
Addington Park
Nr Maidstone
Kent, England

ANTHONY BROOKE

Acknowledgements

FIRST and foremost among the people who assisted me was the late Margaret Noble. The collection of Brooke family and other Sarawak material which she arranged to have deposited at Rhodes House proved invaluable. She also made it possible for me to meet a number of other *orang dahulu* and her conversation and tireless correspondence helped to maintain my momentum as well as providing a wealth of information. Her excellent portraits of Vyner and Bertram Brooke and her genealogy of the Brooke family are reproduced with permission. I am grateful, too, to Lord Tanlaw and the Sarawak Foundation for permission to use Rhodes House material. Mr Anthony Brooke was most co-operative in interviews and correspondence and I very much appreciate his concern that the whole story should be told. At the same time, he displayed remarkable forbearance when commenting on the more provocative sections of my draft. Mrs K. M. Brooke was also extremely kind and helpful, letting me see some very useful material. I regret that the limits of my study have not allowed full justice to be done to her marathon tour of Sarawak in 1947. Other *orang dahulu* who greatly assisted me were Anne Bryant, Mrs Madeleine Daubeny, Mr Bill Banks, Mr A. J. N. Richards, Mr E. H. Elam, Sir Dennis White, Assistant Bishop Peter Howes, and the late Mr B. J. C. Spurway. I also benefited from the information given to me through correspondence by Mr K. H. Digby, Mr J. L. Noakes, Mrs Margaret Bowyer and Mr C. Pitt Hardacre. Mrs Evelyn Hussey was most helpful about the Rajah and G. T. M. MacBryan and the papers which she made available to me were a magnificent windfall. I am grateful, too, to Mrs Hilary Waddington for allowing me to see her brother's papers and to Mr Jack MacBryan, Mrs Eva MacBryan and Mrs Frances Benn for further information about G. T. M. MacBryan. Lady Gammans was kind enough to let me use her late husband's papers, now deposited at Rhodes House. I also received valuable assistance from a number of *orang bahru*, principally Sir Thomas Eastick, Mr J. R. Black, Professor

W. E. H. Stanner, Alastair and Hedda Morrison, Elaine McKay, Mr Robert Nicholl, Mr R. H. Morris and Mr E. C. G. Barrett. Mr C. W. Dawson, Chief Secretary of Sarawak, 1946–50, kindly allowed me to read his diary for the early part of 1946 and this work would be much the poorer without it. The Librarian at Rhodes House, Mr F. E. Leese, was kind enough to let me work in his basement and I am greatly indebted to the former Archivist, Miss Patience Empson, and her friendly colleagues for their tireless assistance with the Sarawak material. In London, Mrs Brenda Hough of the SPG archives was most obliging and in Canberra, Mr G. McEwen at the War Memorial and Mrs Joy Wheatley at Archives did their best to help me. The chance recovery and preservation of Anthony Brooke's papers, which I saw in 1978, was entirely due to the splendid initiative of Mr J. Tolson and the co-operation of Mr J. Wickens. To the many people in Sarawak who gave so much of their time and hospitality, I must express my deep appreciation and hope that there will be an opportunity of conveying it personally. I am particularly indebted to Tan Sri Haji Su'at Tahir, Tuan Haji Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor, Sumping Bayang, and Haji Yusuf Heaton. I wish to thank my thesis supervisor, Tony Reid, for his patient guidance and Dr Rob Pascoe and Dr Jim Warren who commented on some chapters of the book. I am also indebted to Professor Nicholas Tarling for his encouragement and early advice. K. C. Jong, C. P. Tang, Nuara Khir, and B. B. Dzulkifli assisted with the translations and I am grateful to my former colleague Akira Oki and to Mr S. Suzuki for a correspondence from which I benefited greatly. I also wish to thank Elinor Parker and my friends at 'Stony Creek' for their moral support. My basic research was made possible by the award of an Australian National University Research Scholarship and Murdoch University made it possible for me to visit England in 1978 to collect more material. The manuscript was typed by Annette Ritchie, Lianne Blackwell, and Kate Faraday. Kath Brown and Murray Austen-Smith re-drafted the genealogical table. Finally, I would like to thank those people who, together with the Sarawak Museum and the Imperial War Museum, gave me access to their photographic collections and permission to reproduce particular photographs.

Murdoch University
October 1980

R. H. W. REECE

Preface

WHEN I undertook my research on Sarawak history in 1974 I hoped to make the anti-cession movement of 1946–51 the focus of my study. However, investigations showed that the history of the various anti-cession groups was sparsely documented. While I located some material on the Sarawak Dayak Association's origins, no trace could be found of the records of the Malay National Union and the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak. One of the immediate consequences of the murder of Governor Duncan Stewart at Sibu in December 1949 was the confiscation of many documents by the police and the destruction of others by people who wished to remove all traces of their connections with the anti-cessionists.

By the time I began to examine the splendid collection of material deposited at Rhodes House, Oxford, by members of the Brooke family, the late Mrs Margaret Noble, and a number of former Sarawak officers, I was convinced that it was just as important to explain how cession came about. While a good deal had been written about the first two Rajahs, the end of Brooke rule had been passed over by historians. The Rhodes House material, together with the Colonial Office and War Office records and personal interviews, provided a sound basis for reconstructing the story. The Rhodes House collection also contained a number of letters from members of the Malay National Union and the Sarawak Dayak Association during 1946 and early 1947. I have used these in the last chapter which describes the first phase of the anti-cession movement in the Kuching area. The shape of the book has been influenced by my belief that the cession should be seen both as the product of factors arising from Brooke rule and British imperialism and as the well-spring of Sarawak's political development. I hope that what I have written will help to provide a starting-point for studies of the anti-cession movement itself, which must be regarded as the first expression of Sarawak nationalism.

Apart from the anticipated unavailability of key Colonial Office files for 1945 and 1946, perhaps the most disappointing gap in the archival

material is the paucity of records for Sarawak during the inter-war period, the Japanese occupation, and for Vyner Brooke himself. Unlike his father and great-uncle, the third Rajah does not seem to have been a prolific writer; if he was, pathetically little of his writing has survived. Consequently, I have had to conjecture about his personality and his motivations and I am by no means confident of the picture which emerges. There is much more material available on Anthony Brooke and I was fortunate enough to have several interviews with him in London in 1974 and 1975. A long-forgotten hoard of his papers also came to light during my visit to London in June 1978.

The first task of this book is to explain why Brooke rule ended and to describe the way in which it came about. To do this it has been necessary to explore a number of themes: the Brooke tradition; the question of the succession; the nature of Brooke rule in the 1930s; and the policy of the British government (or rather, the Colonial Office) towards Sarawak. The Japanese occupation has also been treated as a catalyst of change. The second task is to examine the cession and its impact, paying particular attention to the anti-cession movement as the watershed of modern political organization in Sarawak. Readers should note that early Brooke history, which has been rehearsed in detail by many writers, is dealt with only cursorily here.

I have tried to do full justice to the events and personalities which I have described in the belief that the reader will be led to his own conclusions. If there are distortions, I hope that these are due largely to the relative availability of evidence and not to any unreasonable bias. It may not be inappropriate to quote Bertram Brooke's retrospective view of the whole cession affair:

I know that if I had been an unprejudiced onlooker called upon to give a detailed commentary on the final stage, my verdict would have been a harsh one, embracing H.M.G. [His Majesty's Government] and all the present Brooke generation, including myself, for the stupidity which led to the suddenly enforced change of status of subject peoples amounting to a breach of trust.

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Abbreviations

AIB	Allied Intelligence Bureau
AWM	Australian War Memorial
BBCAU	British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit
BMA(BB)	British Military Administration (British Borneo)
BPM	Barisan Pemuda Sarawak
CA	Commonwealth Archives
CO	Colonial Office
FEER	<i>Far Eastern Economic Review</i>
Hansard	British Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons
IMTFE	International Military Tribunal, Far East
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
MCS	Malayan Civil Service
ML	Mitchell Library
MNU	Malay National Union
PPM	Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu
SDA	Sarawak Dayak Association
SEAC	South-East Asia Command
SG	<i>Sarawak Gazette</i>
SGG	<i>Sarawak Government Gazette</i>
SMJ	<i>Sarawak Museum Journal</i>
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
SRD	Services Reconnaissance Department
ST	<i>Sarawak Tribune</i>
SWPA	South-West Pacific Area
WO	War Office

Notes on Terms

'SARAWAK' originally referred to a dependency of the sultanate of Brunei consisting of the Sarawak, Samarahan, and Lundu river basins. Although Sarawak as referred to in this book corresponds with the present political and geographical entity, most of the events recounted took place in Kuching which was the focus of changes arising from urban and economic growth as well as being the seat of Brooke and colonial rule. It is regretted that the rest of this huge but sparsely populated state has been reduced to a somewhat disembodied existence as 'the out-stations'. 'Natives' has been used to refer collectively to all the peoples of Sarawak except the Chinese and Indians. One of the lasting tributes to Brooke rule is the term's continued use in Sarawak without any suggestion of pejorative connotations. The definition in the Sarawak Constitution, which follows Brooke practice, lists Malays, Ibans, Land Dayaks, Kayans, Kenyahs, Klemantans, Melanaus, and Muruts. I have also used 'Ibans' rather than 'Sea Dayaks', although the latter term occasionally appears in quotations and names of organizations. 'Dayak' was used during the period of this study to refer collectively to all non-Muslim natives. I have avoided the use of [*sic*] when it would draw unnecessary attention to the occasionally faulty spelling and expression of people for whom English was a second language. Unless otherwise specified, the currency referred to is the Sarawak dollar which, like the Straits dollar, was worth stg. 2s. 4d. during the inter-war period.

Dramatis Personae

Charles Brooke	second Rajah of Sarawak
Margaret Brooke	wife of Charles, Ranee
Vyner Brooke	their eldest son, third Rajah
Sylvia Brooke (<i>née</i> Brett)	wife of Vyner, Ranee
Bertram Brooke (Tuan Muda)	Vyner's younger brother, Heir Presumptive
Gladys Brooke	wife of Bertram
Leonora, Elizabeth and Valerie Brooke	daughters of Vyner and Sylvia
Anthony Brooke	son of Bertram and Gladys, sometime Rajah Muda
Anne Bryant, Jean Halsey	sisters of Anthony
Gerard MacBryan	Vyner's Private Secretary
Abang Haji Abdillah, Datu Shahbandar (later Datu Patinggi)	Sarawak's principal Malay chief
Abang Haji Mustapha, Datu Pahlawan (later Datu Bandar)	successor to the Datu Patinggi and leader of the pro-cession movement
Mohd. Rakawi bin Yusoff	founder of <i>Fajar Sarawak</i> and the Persatuan Melayu Sarawak
Eliab Bay	liaison officer for Dayak affairs with the Japanese administration
J. B. Archer	Chief Secretary of Sarawak, 1939-41
C. D. Le Gros Clark	Chief Secretary of Sarawak, 1941
Edward Gent	head of the Colonial Office's Eastern Department
Sir Shenton Thomas	Governor of the Straits Settlements and British Agent for Borneo

C. F. C. Macaskie	Chief Civil Affairs Officer, British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit
Christopher Dawson	post-war British Representative in Sarawak and first Chief Secretary in the Colonial administration
Oliver Stanley	Secretary of State for Colonies, 1942-5
George Hall	Secretary of State for Colonies, 1945-6
Malcolm MacDonald	British post-war Commissioner-General for South-East Asia
Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor	} members of the radical faction of the Malay National Union
Sharkawi bin Haji Osman	
Suhaily bin Matlayeir	
Johari bin Bojeng	
Haji Abdul Rahman	} members of the conservative faction
Johari bin Anang	
Robert Jitam	leader of the Sarawak Dayak Association
Kathleen Brooke	wife of Anthony Brooke
Sir Charles Arden-Clarke	first Governor of Sarawak
Awang Rambli	leader of the Rukun Tigabelas
Rosly bin Dhobie	youthful assassin of the second Governor, Duncan Stewart

Introduction

THE 'WHITE RAJAHS' of Sarawak have stimulated the romantic imagination of generations of European readers. It is almost as if the Brookes succeeded in fulfilling the archetypal fantasy of isolated white men ruling over savages in a tropical setting. The story of how James Brooke established his kingdom in a remote corner of Borneo has been told so many times that it has almost become a legend.

The legend is at its best in boys' adventure stories of the early twentieth century when the European imperial system was at its zenith:

. . . he had gone, an unknown Englishman, into Sarawak, had found it and its neighbouring States savage and unsettled, overridden by pirates, and he had by tact, and practically unaided, brought into existence wise government, had opened up possibilities of trade never dreamt of, had won the devotion of a people, and almost freed the country from the pirates, who had been grim barriers to trade along the coast. . . . What he bequeathed to his successor, . . . was a prosperous country, justly ruled, where natives and Europeans were fellow-citizens living at peace.¹

The essential elements are all there: the brave and high-minded European who brought peace and good government to warring and benighted savages, earning their eternal gratitude and at the same time extending the boundaries of Empire and the possibilities of trade. It is part of the mythology of how Europeans came to dominate so much of the world, part of the ideology of late nineteenth-century imperialism. Although the legend does not survive close examination, it will doubtless endure as long as the dream of being king of a tropical isle endures. It has certainly dominated the historiography of Sarawak until recent times.*

*I refer to the writings of what might be called the 'court historians'—Spenser St. John, Gertrude Jacob, and C. A. Bampfylde and S. Baring-Gould who dominated the field until the appearance of Steven Runciman's *The White Rajahs*, Cambridge, 1960. Robert Pringle's *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941*,

The history of Sarawak epitomized one of the dilemmas of imperialism: how to bring about economic change without disrupting the indigenous culture and unleashing forces which would eventually bring about social and political change. In most colonies the relentless drive to exploit natural resources and indigenous labour brought rapid change, but Sarawak did not seem to possess the necessary economic potential. While the Brookes were determined to prevent economic exploitation of their people by foreign capital, their success was as much by default as by design. Unlike Malaya and even North Borneo, therefore, Sarawak was not 'opened up' by mining and planting interests in the early twentieth century. It represented a different kind of colony whose emphasis was on native smallholders, although their interests were disregarded in favour of European capital when Sarawak joined the Rubber Restriction Scheme in the 1930s.

While it seems harsh to label the Brookes and their officers as keepers of an anthropological garden, there was something essentially feudal and self-serving about their administration. They were instinctively opposed to change because they sensed that it would undermine their status *vis-à-vis* the natives. They had a vested interest in perpetuating the system of benign paternalism which had been initiated by James Brooke, the first Rajah: 'the interests of the natives' required that Europeans should remain indefinitely as their guardians. In this sense they were all 'white rajahs', or 'little tin gods', as the last Rajah himself called them in 1946. Their position prevented them from conceding anything more than lip service to the principle of trusteeship and the ultimate prospect of native rule.

The cession of Sarawak was both the culmination of a process which had begun with the appointment of British Residents in the Malay states in the 1870s and the beginning of a post-war consolidation of British interests in South-East Asia. For almost one hundred years the Colonial Office was happy for the Brooke family to rule Sarawak. There was little interest in acquiring a state with a tiny population and limited economic potential and whose administration would probably have to be subsidized by the British government. As British subjects, the Brookes could generally be relied upon to conform with imperial policy and to discourage other powers from becoming involved in Sarawak. Although there were some doubts about the quality of their administration, it was recognized that their authority over Sarawak's polyglot population was a unique phenomenon which could only serve British interests. The relationship between the two governments as defined by the 1888 Treaty effectively precluded the introduction of the Malayan Residential system

London, 1970, and Craig Lockard, *The Southeast Asian Town in Perspective* . . . 2 Vols., Ann Arbor, 1974, are the first major contributions to the re-assessment of Sarawak/Brooke history. But C. N. Crisswell, *Rajah Charles Brooke: Monarch of All He Surveyed*, Kuala Lumpur, 1978, demonstrates the tenacity of the romantic biographical tradition. Sarawak's external relations, 1841-1941, have been exhaustively treated by Nicholas Tarling in *Britain, The Brookes and Brunei*, Kuala Lumpur, 1971, and a number of articles.

and made it difficult to bring pressure to bear on the Rajah. British intervention was limited to safeguarding the rights of British subjects, although there can be little doubt that intervention would have been decisive had there been a pressing need.

In the late 1930s a number of factors combined to bring about a change in Colonial Office policy. Concern about administrative standards and Britain's effective international responsibility for Sarawak necessitated a greater degree of involvement. Sarawak's participation in the Rubber Restriction Scheme and its inclusion in British defence planning after 1935 had also begun to end the state's isolation. Finally, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Rajah was on the point either of divesting himself of his sovereignty or handing over to another member of the family. However, there were still difficulties in the way of intervention. The Rajah was elusive and almost impossible to pin down on specific points. Nor did the Colonial Office wish to be seen to take the initiative. An opportunity presented itself in early 1939 when a number of senior Sarawak officers were forced to resign and Anthony Brooke and the Rajah then agreed to the appointment of a General Adviser whose powers were extremely limited but whose position was regarded by the Colonial Office as providing a foot in the door. There was also the feeling that it would be possible to work more easily through Anthony than it had been through the Rajah. When the General Adviser was ignored and Anthony was demoted by his uncle, the Colonial Office's hopes of increasing its influence were frustrated. The Rajah's surprise announcement in 1941 of a constitution provided an opportunity to modify the 1888 Treaty and replace the General Adviser with a British Representative equipped with more substantial powers. But it was the Japanese invasion and subsequent Allied military administration which finally provided the Colonial Office bureaucrats with a long-awaited opportunity to decide Sarawak's future.

Although it was external pressure which brought Brooke rule to a sudden end, it had already run its course. First there was the problem inherent in all dynastic regimes that they sooner or later produce a weak ruler. Vynner Brooke was more loved than his father had been, but he was indecisive and could not delegate authority effectively. His reign displayed all the weaknesses and few of the strengths of personal rule. Nor was the arrangement whereby his brother Bertram shared responsibility calculated to improve matters. In this political vacuum it was inevitable that first Gerard MacBryan and then Anthony Brooke should compete with the senior bureaucrats of the Committee of Administration to exercise the Rajah's power. Like other dynasties, the Brookes were plagued by conspiracies over the succession, which had not been settled by the time the Japanese arrived. Although it was by no means certain that the Rajah would hand over to another member of the family, his distrust of Anthony Brooke was an important factor in determining Sarawak's future.

A solitary effort was made in the early 1930s to re-think Brooke administration with a view to ultimate native self-government. The Le

Gros Clark Report of 1935 was a blueprint for a scheme which would bring more Ibans (the largest ethnic group) into government service and vastly improve the education system. However, financial problems and the inherent conservatism of the administrative officers thwarted this scheme because it threatened their status. The only change was in the direction of bureaucratic centralization which would have meant the eventual dismantling of the Resident system. The gradual development of a business-like and centralized bureaucracy had been inevitable but it was resisted by the outstation officers who saw it as a frontal attack on their position.

With Anthony Brooke as their champion, the outstation officers made a counter-attack which secured the dismissal of the top bureaucrats in early 1939. But it became clear during Anthony's subsequent term as Officer Administering the Government that his solution to Sarawak's problems consisted of little more than a restoration of personal rule and the old administrative system of semi-autonomous Residents and District Officers. There was no indication that as Rajah he would do much more than revive what he saw as the traditions of Brooke rule. If he had succeeded his uncle after the war, it is difficult to see how he could have coped with the significantly altered situation in Sarawak. There were now indigenous political organizations keenly aware of the 1941 Constitution's promise of self-government.

By 1945 Vyner Brooke had reached the age of 67 and was unwilling to return to the task of rebuilding war-torn Sarawak. His brother Bertram, the Heir Presumptive, was physically unable to take his place and the Rajah was doubtful about his nephew's suitability for the position. As early as 1938 and again in 1942 Vyner had been prepared to surrender his responsibilities in return for a satisfactory financial settlement, but he was now faced with the prospect of having to meet the cost of the military administration and post-war reconstruction. Although we cannot wholly reconstruct the Rajah's reasons for deciding to cede his sovereignty to the British Crown in October 1945, material considerations and the problem of the succession dispelled whatever residual resistance he may have felt to a Colonial Office take-over. At the same time, it is likely that he saw no middle way between Brooke rule and rule by the Colonial Office.

The Labour government seemed to be opposed to the restoration of Brooke rule. Nor was the Conservative Party prepared to make an issue out of Sarawak. On David Gammans' advice they declined to oppose cession, which was subsequently confirmed by annexation without any reference to Parliament. But in the final analysis, neither party was particularly interested in Sarawak. Cession was a victory for Edward Gent and the bureaucrats of the Colonial Office who had been trying since the late 1930s to 'tidy up' Sarawak, whose standards of administration were regarded as inferior to those prevailing in British colonies. This policy was strongly supported by the War Office who were concerned to strengthen the defences of Britain's South-East Asian dependencies against the new threat of nationalism.

Together with North Borneo, Sarawak became Britain's final colonial

acquisition. However, it was acquired not so much in a spirit of imperial expansion as one of consolidation against the insecurities and uncertainties of the post-war world. Britain had adopted a 'hands off' attitude towards Sarawak as long as there was no serious threat of third-power involvement. But the Japanese invasion meant that it could no longer afford the risks involved in not having full internal control.

Originating from the same planning office as the Malayan Union, cession was executed with similar speed and lack of scruple. Had it not been for the agitation mounted by Anthony Brooke and the anti-cession faction in England through press and Parliament, cession might have been managed smoothly enough. Instead, the legal documents brought back by MacBryan had to be scrapped and some effort made to legitimize the arrangement by obtaining the formal consent of Sarawak's Council Negri and Supreme Council. As a sop to press and parliamentary opinion, a two-man delegation was dispatched to lend respectability to what was in reality a carefully stage-managed exercise. Even so, a little more attention was paid by the British government to 'the natives' than by Anthony Brooke and the anti-cession faction who were doing battle with the Rajah and the Colonial Office in their name. And when in spite of the bribery and intimidation of Council Negri members there was still a native majority against cession, the Colonial Office did hesitate in its course. In the meantime, however, one of those extraordinary accidents of history had made cession a *fait accompli*. Nor was it clear what course the Colonial Office could have taken if their ability to manoeuvre had not been so unexpectedly removed. A resumption of negotiations with Anthony Brooke and the Provisional Government could only have produced the same stalemate which had been reached in early 1945 over the application to Sarawak of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act.

Cession was thus the final resolution of the ambiguous relationship between Sarawak and Britain, the consummation of a long drawn-out imperial affair. It also spelled the end of a European dynasty which had successfully established itself over the diverse peoples of north-west Borneo. The 'White Rajahs' had lent a romantic dimension to European imperialism in South-East Asia, but history had finally penetrated their isolation. Nevertheless, cession was much more than a minor event in imperial history. It was the catalyst of a new train of events which transformed Sarawak from a loose confederation of diverse cultures linked by little more than loyalty to the Rajah into something more like a nation-state.

The reactions of Sarawak's different ethnic groups to cession provide the best indication of the strengths and weaknesses of Brooke rule. Under the Brookes, the Chinese were allowed to engage in trade and small farming. However, their prospects for economic advancement were limited by the land regulations and their eligibility for Sarawak citizenship was also restricted. For all except some of the Sarawak-born who were well established both economically and socially, colonial status possessed the attraction of improved economic possibilities and citizenship rights along the lines of those provided in the Malayan Union constitution.

The general interests of the Malays lay with the perpetuation of Brooke rule, which had given the traditional élite a position of political power and social prestige subordinate only to that of the Brookes and their European officers. Consequently it was they who provided the initial leadership of the MNU, although even the Datu Patinggi had his price for supporting cession and might well have done so had it not been for the influence of the young Malay activists. This new educated Malay élite saw the continuation of Brooke rule as the means of retaining political independence and the ultimate achievement of self-government as promised in the 1941 Constitution. Unlike the traditional élite, they were even willing to share political power with the Ibans whom they saw as allies. In its first expression, Sarawak nationalism took the form of a native coalition in defence against Chinese assertiveness and British imperialism.

For many Ibans, cession posed an extraordinary dilemma. The traditional principle of loyalty to the Rajah required that they obey his wishes and accept cession. On the other hand, loyalty to the Raj and its constitution required that they should oppose it. Brooke rule had in fact done very little for the Ibans in the way of educational and economic improvement, or political representation. Nevertheless, the question of loyalty was fundamental for all except those few who could see the benefits of education and an end to Malay monopoly of the second level of government administration. Only a handful of Kuching and First Division Ibans opposed cession and shared the educated Malay élite's vision of independence and self-government.

The anti-cession campaign failed for a number of reasons. Unlike the Malay rulers who opposed the Malayan Union, the Rajah committed himself publicly to cession and ignored all appeals from his subjects to retain his sovereignty. He could exploit the loyalty of the Malays and Ibans as well as count on the support of the Chinese. Unlike Malaya where Malay opposition to the Malayan Union was solid, Sarawak's Malay leadership was split by the support which Abang Haji Mustapha and the other datu gave to cession. Unlike Malaya where the differing attitudes of the Malays and the Chinese to the country's political future threatened to boil over into racial strife, in Sarawak the main political struggle took place within the Malay community. Apart from a small group of educated Ibans in Kuching who supported the MNU, the Ibans and the Chinese were onlookers to the conflict. However, the support given by the Third Division Ibans to the colonial government suggested that physical action by the Malays against the government would bring about a dramatic reaction. At the same time, the anti-cession party in Britain could not match the big guns which the opponents of the Malayan Union trained on the British government. British commercial interests in Sarawak had favoured greater British control in the belief that this would allow easier access to Sarawak's resources.

Although the anti-cession campaign was unsuccessful in reversing cession, it provided Sarawak with its first political issue and its first

political organizations.* The political development achieved during the immediate post-war years was brought to a halt by the assassination of Duncan Stewart and the collapse of the anti-cession movement. But when political life was revived in the late 1950s along party lines, it was still largely based on the earlier pattern. And when Sarawak achieved a form of independence through its inclusion within the Federation of Malaysia, the anti-cession movement provided a nationalist tradition and a means of legitimizing the power of the educated Malay élite.

*In his book, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney, 1974, Michael Leigh takes the view that politics in Sarawak dates from the late 1950s with the formation of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP). In my view, this involves an unnecessarily formalistic notion of politics and political party organization.



I

The White Rajahs

BEFORE examining the cession of Sarawak to Britain in 1946 it may be useful to outline the historical evolution of Brooke rule. The Brooke Raj can be viewed from a number of standpoints. But there are two fundamental continuities: the story of north-west Borneo's Malay Muslim states and their relationship with the Chinese and the native peoples of the interior; and the development of European imperialism in Island South-East Asia. When James Brooke arrived in Sarawak for the first time in 1839, the two were already becoming intertwined. Under his nephew and successor, Charles Brooke, the state of Sarawak was extended to its present boundaries, government administration formalized, and a measure of economic and technological change introduced. Nevertheless, the Raj continued to operate within a framework of beliefs and conventions established during James' time.

The Brooke Raj

James Brooke's defeat of the Sarawak Malays' rebellion against Brunei in 1841* created for him a position of power in north-west Borneo which he spent the rest of his life consolidating and defending. With the Sultan of Brunei no longer able to assert his traditional suzerainty over Sarawak and the Dutch anxious to extend their influence along the north-west coast from Sambas, Sarawak had become a bone of contention among the Brunei *pengiran* who settled there in the 1820s to collect tax on the export of antimony ore. Having been offered Sarawak's government and revenues by Brunei's representative as an incentive to suppress the

*The view of the Brooke court historians was that the rebellion of the Sarawak *datus* (non-royal chiefs) against Brunei arose from the harsh taxation levied by its representatives. But James Brooke at no time suggested this; he believed that it had been instigated by the Sultan of Sambas on the suggestion of the Dutch. The *datus* had earlier asked the Dutch to take over Sarawak.

rebellion, James decided that a foothold in Sarawak was preferable to his original scheme of building a chain of British settlements through the Malay Archipelago from Singapore to northern Australia.* He believed that by using Sarawak to extend his influence over Brunei he could reform the sultanate as a vehicle for British mercantile interests and build Borneo into a bastion against the Dutch. In this he was firmly within the tradition of Alexander Dalrymple and Thomas Stamford Raffles, whose unfinished work he saw himself as taking up.

In accordance with his professed faith in the rehabilitation of the Malay kingdoms of the archipelago and in response to the realities of his tenuous position, James Brooke took the line of least resistance to existing custom when establishing his state.† The political structure of the Raj adhered closely to the pattern of the west Borneo states: an autocratic Rajah, relying on the authority of a Malay élite who maintained their dominance over the non-Muslim natives; pitting 'loyal' Ibans against those who challenged his authority; and depending on Chinese to generate trade and revenue.

The Raj of Sarawak developed in the west Bornean mould,‡ modified to some extent by the liberal sensibilities of its English rulers. Formal political authority was embodied in the political wills of the first two Rajahs+ which provided the only constitutional basis until 1941 by designating the succession. Although James Brooke had formally received his authority from Brunei, the Sarawak datus who had rebelled against Brunei maintained that they had requested him to become their ruler and he acknowledged holding his position 'from the people'.# The Rajah exercised sovereignty, not in the form of taxation rights over particular ethnic communities, as was Brunei's practice, but in the ownership of clearly circumscribed territory. The Rajah was sworn to uphold the Muslim faith× and the *adat* of the Malays, Ibans, and other peoples under his authority, but he also claimed the power to suppress customs such as forced trade, bondage, and headhunting. He transformed the Malay datus from feudal tax-collectors into salaried dignitaries, part of whose function was to legitimize the Raj, although they retained the power to define Malay *adat* in their own court. Their sons, the *perabangan*, became second-level administrators.

* His initial scheme outlined in the 1838 prospectus for his first voyage to the Malay Archipelago and published as an appendix to the first volume of Henry Keppel's *The Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido* . . . , 2 vols., London, [1847], was inspired by George Windsor Earl (*The Eastern Seas* . . . , London, 1837).

† For a useful study of James Brooke's views and how they were modified by experience, see Graham Saunders, 'James Brooke and Asian Government', *Brunei Museum Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1973, pp. 105-17.

‡ The best general account of pre-Brooke north-west Borneo can be found in J. Ongkili, 'Pre-Western Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah', *SMJ*, Vol. XX, Nos. 40-41 (New Series), Jan.-Dec. 1972, pp. 1-20. For an illuminating analysis of Brunei, see D. E. Brown, *Brunei: The Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate*, Brunei, 1970.

* See Appendix II.

See Appendix I.

× See Vyner Brooke's Accession Oath, Appendix II.

As early as 1841, James Brooke issued a makeshift code of laws based on those of Brunei but reflecting his own notions of British justice and 'fair play'. He ruled with the assistance of Malay and European advisers, who from 1855 constituted his 'Supreme Council', and his administration depended on a small group of Englishmen who remained in Sarawak more from a sense of adventure and 'service' than anything else. More importantly, he relied on the powerful intervention of British naval commanders like his friend, Henry Keppel, not only to destroy Illanun and Iban raiders but to smash the power of Malay rivals in alliance with Ibans.

At the apex of the Malay-dominated system, the Rajah also claimed authority over the Ibans, a claim which was often strenuously resisted and had to be enforced by bloody warfare.* The Ibans of the Skrang and Saribas who were 'pacified' during the first decades of the Raj served as the Rajah's soldiers against 'rebel' Ibans and Kayans who were often their traditional enemies. The position of the Chinese was similar to that in the west Borneo and the Malay states. Constituting the only force for economic development, they were the principal agents of change. Confident of protection when their economic interests were threatened, they provided Brooke government with most of its revenue, its trading community, and the multiplicity of skills without which the state of Sarawak could not have survived.

To the Malays, the Rajah was the titular head of a political system which had its origins in their own tradition and preserved their hegemony over the other races. To the Land Dayaks and other peoples more or less at the mercy of the Iban raiders in pre-Brooke times, he was a saviour and protector. To the Ibans of the lower reaches of the Batang Lupar and the Saribas, he was their ally against the up-river Ibans and Kayans. To the up-river Ibans, he was an intruder who thwarted their migration into new areas and forbade the practice of headhunting which formed a vital element in their culture. The Chinese saw him as maintaining conditions conducive to trade and industry, although, as the Bau rebellion against James in 1857 indicated, there were clear limits to their acceptance of Brooke or any other authority.†

It is difficult to reduce these different perceptions to a simple analysis of Brooke authority, and to assess the extent to which the Brookes' prestige was derived from their position as representatives of the new European master-class of the Malay world and the armed might it could invoke. But one important function was that of arbiter, not only between different

*The relationship between the Brookes and the Ibans has been brilliantly portrayed by Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*. . . .

†In 1857 members of the Chinese gold-mining *kongsi* (co-operative) from Bau rebelled against the imposition of taxes and took temporary control of Kuching. Their expulsion by Malays and Ibans supporting the Rajah established a tradition in race relations which was never forgotten. The rebellion is described in Runciman, *The White Rajahs*, pp. 124-33, and by L. Helms, *Pioneering in the Far East*, London, 1882, pp. 164-92. See also a recent reassessment by Craig Lockard, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. IX, No. 1 (March 1978), pp. 85-98.

ethnic groups, but within them. Content to pursue a *laissez-faire* policy towards most indigenous customs, the Rajah was an accessible court of appeal whose decision was accepted by all groups. It is significant that the term used in Sarawak to describe Brooke government was *perintah*, denoting the preservation of civil order, rather than *kerajaan*, with its more formal connotations of political authority.

The Brookes also pursued a policy of ethnic management, or 'divide and rule', which not only played off Ibans against other Ibans but segregated Malay communities from their traditional Iban allies and used both Malays and Ibans as a means of ensuring dominance over the Chinese. At the same time they portrayed themselves as protecting all their people from the tyranny of Brunei and the rapacity of foreign powers. This manipulative formula was at the very basis of Brooke rule.

The economic basis of the Raj was similar to that of the other west Borneo states. The Ibans were shifting cultivators and hunters who exchanged jungle produce for salt, iron, and cloth and remained on the periphery of the cash economy; the Malays were subsistence fishermen and padi-farmers; the Chinese were miners, pepper-farmers, craftsmen, traders and coolies. Government revenue was derived largely from taxes imposed on Chinese gambling and opium-smoking, supplemented by export duties on antimony and gold, a head-tax on the Ibans and fines for such offences as headhunting or defiance of prohibitions on migration. Government expenditure was largely officers' salaries, the maintenance of up-river forts and water-borne communication. Although James Brooke had hoped that antimony and other metals would provide the 'staple' to meet the cost of his administration, he was obliged to dig deeply into his own pocket and to seek private loans. Unable to obtain investment funds from European sources on his terms, he was dependent on the economic productivity and entrepreneurial skill of the Chinese and the financial assistance of the Borneo Company, Sarawak's only foreign capitalist enterprise until the 1880s.*

The Second Rajah

Under Charles Brooke, who ruled from 1868 until his death in 1917, Sarawak was extended to its present boundaries, its international status was clarified, government administration was formalized, and some effort made towards economic development and technological adaptation. Inheriting his uncle's interest in securing the trade of Brunei's neighbouring river systems, Charles wanted to annex the Baram River district in 1876 but was only given permission by the British government to do so after 1881 when the North Borneo Company received its charter. The Trusan was acquired in 1885, Limbang in 1890, and Lawas in 1905 by means of cash payments to the Sultan of Brunei and an undertaking to

*The only published work on the Borneo Company is the commissioned history by H. C. Longhurst, *The Borneo Story*, London, 1956. A full account of the Company's activities would be a major contribution to the economic history of Sarawak.

pay annual 'cession money'.* Charles would have taken over Brunei itself had it not been for the intervention of the British government.

In place of the somewhat amateurish and unsystematic way in which James had run Sarawak, Charles developed an administration which he personally supervised in every detail. By 1890 Sarawak was divided into four Divisions, corresponding with the major river systems, which were in turn subdivided into Districts:

First Division—Sarawak and Sadong river systems

Second Division—Batang Lupar, Saribas, and Kalaka

Third Division—Rejang, Matu, Oya, Mukah, and Bintulu

Fourth Division—Baram and Trusan.

Each Division was under the charge of a Resident who in turn supervised the work of Assistant Residents, Cadets, and Malay Native Officers appointed by the Rajah but deriving much of their authority by virtue of their descent from the datus. State-assisted education, such as it was, concentrated on providing this traditional Malay élite with elementary skills.

Native Officers assisted the Residents in general administration. In addition, there were the para-military Sarawak Rangers[†] (mostly Iban) and police (mostly Malay) and a number of Malay, Chinese, and Iban clerks and other minor functionaries. In Kuching there was also a small group of European technical officers in such departments as the Treasury and Public Works who were regarded by the Rajah as decidedly inferior to his Residents and not in close contact with the people. The government was organized on four separate levels:

Senior Administrative Service (Residents, Assistant Residents, Cadets)

Technical Service (Treasury, Public Works, Marine Department, etc.)

Native Officer Service (Malays serving directly under the Senior Administrative Service in outstation posts).

Junior Administrative Service (Chinese, Malay and Iban clerks, etc.).

Recruitment for the Sarawak Service in Charles' reign was conducted largely on the basis of family connections and personal recommendations from retired officers. The scarcity of suitable men brought about by the First World War resulted in a lowering of standards but by the late 1920s the government was recruiting cadets through the appointments boards of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. In 1924 the Senior Administrative Service established its own system of examination in the Malay language, Sarawak history and administrative procedure as a means of improving standards and regulating promotion. Although the Administrative Service had not expanded significantly from 1870 until 1914, the creation of new departments requiring technical officers swelled the total number of Europeans employed by government from thirty-seven in 1917 to seventy-nine in 1925.

*A full account of the Brookes' territorial acquisitions from Brunei can be found in Nicholas Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, Kuala Lumpur, 1971.

†These were merged with the police in 1931 but were subsequently revived in other forms and still constitute a number of the battalions of the Malaysian Army.

There was also a government-sponsored system of native administration beneath the district level. In coastal areas, every Malay or Melanau *kampong* was under the charge of a *tua kampong*, an influential elder appointed by the Rajah on the advice of the District Officer. His official responsibility was limited to tax collection and the settling of minor disputes but his position as an intermediary with government lent him a certain authority. In Iban areas the agent of indirect rule was the *penghulu* who collected the 'door' tax, tried minor civil and criminal cases, and was responsible for the mustering of armed men should they be needed by the Rajah. Among the Kenyahs and Kayans the *penghulu* system was fairly successful but in more democratic Iban society it was always an artificial imposition. As for the Chinese, indirect rule was exercised through the *kapitan china* of each major dialect group in every settlement. The principal *kapitan* also controlled gambling, pawnbroking, and other monopolies on the government's behalf. Apart from the special Chinese Court set up in 1911 to deal with civil cases, there was no government intervention in Chinese affairs until a Chinese Secretariat was established in 1929.

From the outset, Charles Brooke was determined to exploit Sarawak's natural resources, although this was not to conflict with the interests of the Ibans or of the Chinese. As early as the 1870s, Charles wanted coal mining and a colliery was finally opened up at Sadong in the First Division. He also purchased the Brooketon colliery on Muara Island (Brunei) with the idea of operating it in opposition to the Labuan coalfield. He even considered building a railway from the Silantek coalfield but the project proved too expensive. Transportation was essential to the development of Sarawak's natural resources and within the limits imposed by a tiny revenue Charles made considerable efforts to remedy the situation. In 1912 the Brooke Dockyard was opened and in 1915 ten miles of railway were brought into use. Charles was also keen that factories should be set up to process jungle produce for export,* but he was not prepared to allow foreign capitalists to ride roughshod over the Chinese. When a company to whom he had given a monopoly interpreted the agreement in such a way as to work against the interests of the Chinese middlemen, he pronounced that 'Congo rules cannot be supported in Sarawak to please anyone or company'.¹ His intervention in support of Chinese traders against European interests contrasted sharply with the situation in Malaya where British bureaucrats actively fostered European investment and protected it from Chinese competition. The major foreign-owned industry which functioned freely was the Miri oilfield. Virtually an *imperium in imperio*, the Shell-owned Sarawak Oilfields Ltd. did not depend on the government in any way beyond the maintenance of its concession. While not impinging on native interests, it provided a welcome addition to revenue.[†]

*A *kutch* (wood oil) factory began operations in the late 1890s and another factory designed to process *jelutong* (wild rubber) was built just before the First World War.

†A trial shipment of oil was made in 1913 and in the year of the Rajah's death (1917) a small refinery and submarine offshore pipeline was completed at Lutong. In 1929 Miri achieved

Charles Brooke was repelled by naked exploitation and spoke out against the new form of imperialism which developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century as the major European powers rushed to acquire colonies.² Perhaps the clearest statement of his revulsion against this process was contained in his political will of 1913 which railed at

. . . these times when eager speculators are always seeking for some new place to exploit in a money-making sense [,] when the white man comes to the fore and the dark coloured is thrust to the wall and when capital rules and justice ceases, whereas the main consideration should be an honest and upright protection afforded to all races alike and particularly to the weaker ones.³

Clinging to attitudes which antedated the great colonial boom, he was sceptical about the rubber industry which was rapidly developing in Malaya and North Borneo during the first decade of the twentieth century. When his youngest son, Harry, proposed a large-scale rubber-planting enterprise in 1910, the Rajah told him:

. . . I have had frequent applications of a similar kind from many others within the last month—but not believing in the permanence of the Rubber boom I don't wish Sarawak to be a great producer of this article—except it can be planted by natives who could afford to sell it a 20th part less than European Companies, and this is what it will come to another and not distant day. I can't look at this matter in a private light and if I had listened to the luring proposals of rich merchants I should have been a millionaire 30 or 40 years ago—I feel sure the enterprise you propose would get a good hearing in British North Borneo, which is full of Mercantile Enterprises and achievements. I hate the name of Rubber and look on it as a very gigantic gamble, as is now turned to account in making the fortunes of many and another day will be the means of depriving the poor and ignorant shareholders of their hard earned savings.⁴

So concerned was he with the possibility of Sarawak being descended upon by European speculators that he issued an order expressly forbidding smallholders from selling their land to foreign companies or individuals. He also spent a considerable amount of money on attempts to grow tobacco, tea, and coffee in the hope that this would benefit smallholders. Although he was worried that the scramble to plant rubber would be to the detriment of such traditional crops as padi, pepper and sago, he established a government rubber estate outside Kuching and encouraged its cultivation by Malays and Ibans.⁵

Like his uncle, Charles Brooke had encouraged Chinese immigration. In 1867 he wrote:

We are going to reduce the price of the cooked opium in the country and . . . [it] will be the means of bringing many hundreds perhaps thousands of people into the country. We want population to turn our waste land into shape and create bustle and industry . . . [I want] to see the jungle falling right and left and people settled over what are now lonely wastes and turning them into cultivated lands.⁶

its peak production of 1,000,000 tons but ten years later the future of the field did not seem particularly bright. As yet there is no comprehensive account of Shell's operations at Miri. For Brunei, however, see G. C. Harper, *The Discovery and Development of the Seria Oilfield*, Brunei Museum, 1975.

He wanted padi farmers whose efforts would be emulated by the Ibans, but conditions for planting padi on the lower Rejang River were not favourable and the Cantonese and Foochows who arrived found rubber a far more profitable crop. He was also anxious to have Indian and Javanese labourers and personally undertook the arrangements for their importation and supervision.

Constitutional Changes

During the first forty years of Charles Brooke's reign there was little restraint on his autocratic power. The Rajah was the source of legal as well as political authority and he legislated by means of Orders, some of which were submitted to the datus for advice. Certain orders were issued 'in Council', but the Supreme Council was an essentially advisory body which the Rajah consulted on questions of customary law. The General Council, or Council Negri, which Charles had initiated in 1867 functioned as little more than a triennial assembly of up-country native leaders and European officers who came to pay homage to the Rajah.

Between 1912 and 1915 Charles Brooke introduced far-reaching constitutional changes. By establishing a number of supervisory bodies he attempted to modify the autocratic system which he and his uncle had developed. And by dividing responsibility between his two sons Vyner and Bertram he laid the basis for a form of tandem rule. He also engineered the establishment of a Sarawak State Advisory Council in London consisting of Charles Willes Johnson (his nephew and Legal Adviser to Sarawak), two retired officers, and Bertram as President. Its nominal purpose was to supervise the financial affairs of the state,* to act as trustees and to represent Sarawak's interests in any negotiations with the British government. The members were also appointed trustees of a £100,000 Sarawak State Advisory Council Trust Fund whose capital would revert to the reigning Rajah in the event of the cession or annexation of Sarawak.⁷ At this point Charles seems to have been contemplating abdication,⁸ in which event the members of the Council would have acted as virtual trustees of the state.

Another limitation to autocratic power was the Orders Committee of 1914, consisting of the Residents and the Treasurer but with no native representation. All Orders (except those relating to conditions of service) were henceforth to be submitted to the Committee before they were finally issued on the Rajah's authority. Moreover, during the Rajah's absence the Committee was empowered to issue Orders as a matter of urgency in the Rajah's name. This was a development of some constitutional significance since the Committee was the first step towards the creation of a wider legislative authority than that of the Rajah's person.⁹

*The Council was required to consider the annual draft estimates of expenditure supplied by the Sarawak Treasurer, to supervise the revenue reports and inform the Rajah of any 'extravagance' in the disposal of land to non-natives, the remittance of large sums of money from the state and of over-spending within the state for private purposes.

Finally, in 1915 a Committee of Administration* was formally constituted as a permanent body consisting of the three Residents and five other members. No datu were appointed, although those who were members of the Supreme Council could be invited to attend.¹⁰ The Committee (which replaced the Orders Committee) was empowered to deal with all matters previously referred by the Residents to the Resident of the First Division or to the officer administering the government.

Together with the earlier establishment of the Advisory Council in London, it spelled a dramatic change in the structure of Brooke government. What it really meant was a significant diminution of the autocratic power of the Rajah by the creation of two separate and formally constituted bodies with supervisory powers over finance and legislation.

While Charles' lack of trust in his eldest son, Vyner, influenced these constitutional changes,[†] he may also have felt the need to adapt the traditional framework of government to changing circumstances. Sarawak had undergone some important economic changes by the eve of the First World War: rubber and pepper were being exported in substantial quantities and there was the prospect of increased revenue from the new oilfield at Miri. Sarawak now appeared to be a much more wealthy country than it had formerly seemed. At the same time, the establishment of a Foochow Chinese agricultural colony in the Sibu area by the American Methodist Mission raised hopes of self-sufficiency in padi.

All this called for a thorough reassessment of the role of government. Clearly, there were now responsibilities beyond collecting taxes, adjudicating disputes, and preserving civil order. Economic development meant the provision of specialized technical services and communications and Charles took account of this. New departments of forestry and agriculture were established, construction began on a railway linking Kuching with the interior, and plans were set in motion for a network of wireless stations which would give Kuching instant communication with the outstations. Charles recognized the increasing complexity of administration as being beyond the personal resources of one man and saw the Committee of Administration as an institution which could cope with the growing volume of government business. He also regarded both the Committee and the Advisory Council as providing protection against the depredations of foreign capitalists.

*The Committee of Administration had originated in 1873 as a temporary measure designed by Charles Brooke to look after the administration of the state during his absence. Consisting of three Europeans and the Datus Bandar and Imam who were empowered 'to sit and discuss any affairs of importance which may occur from time to time', the Committee's duties included responsibility for all foreign correspondence, arrangements for visiting officials, the checking of outstation cash reports, and the supervision of public works. Each month it was required to draw up reports and forward them to the Rajah in England. On his return he reconvened the Supreme Council and approved the actions of the Committee before dissolving it. Similar arrangements were made in 1878 and 1883 and the practice continued until 1904 when the Rajah told the Supreme Council that his eldest son, Vyner, then thirty years of age, would henceforth assume part of his duties and take his place in the Supreme and General Councils when necessary.

†See below, pp. 14-17.

By the second decade of the twentieth century, the Brooke Raj had been reorganized in such a way as to prepare for the altered conditions promoted by technological change and Sarawak's growing links with the world economy. While 'the interests of the natives' remained paramount in Charles Brooke's scheme of things, he did not intend that Sarawak should remain a tropical backwater.

Sarawak's International Status

It was partly an historical accident that Sarawak had become and remained an independent state. From the beginning of his involvement in Borneo, James Brooke had hoped that Britain would establish a protectorate. The need for protection had been there from the outset; indeed, he could never have succeeded without the enthusiastic assistance of the British navy in ruthlessly suppressing Iban and other opposition. The Chinese rebellion caused him to renew his overtures to the British government, but when the offer of a protectorate finally came James imposed stiff conditions. He asked for compensation for what he had spent on Sarawak, nor would he accept the compromise of a naval base which he had earlier suggested.

The next effort to secure a protectorate followed an abortive Malay rebellion in 1860.* That James was then prepared to approach Holland for protection indicates the extent to which the desperate instincts of the petty ruler had taken over from those of the Dutch-hating English patriot. The Dutch, after all, had sent him assistance during the Chinese rebellion. However, Holland rejected the proposal out of hand and James had to call off his later negotiations with the French when both his elder nephew, Brooke Brooke, and his patron, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, expressed disapproval. James subsequently approached the Belgians but negotiations were terminated by Brooke Brooke's intervention. It was his nephew's emotional reaction to these efforts which caused James to disinherit him and make over Sarawak temporarily to Baroness Burdett-Coutts whom he then advised to offer it first to the British government and then to the French.

Always hoping that Britain would take over Sarawak, James had been forced to maintain an independent status about which he was somewhat ambivalent. He was gratified when his sovereignty was recognized by the United States government in 1850 but did not negotiate a treaty of friendship in the belief that it might prejudice his chances of obtaining a British protectorate. Nor did Britain's recognition of his sovereignty in 1863 and the appointment of a consul provide a satisfactory solution, although it removed the Foreign Office's objection that he was technical subject to the sovereignty of Brunei. In retirement in Devon and with

*Generally referred to as 'The Malay Plot', this was an attempt by a number of Malay chiefs, led by Sharif Masahor of Sarikei and supported by Brunei, to unseat James Brooke. It was closely related to the diversion of the profitable sago trade from Brunei to Kuching. After the rebellion, James obtained from Brunei the sago-producing districts centred on Mukah. For a full account, see Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels* . . . , Ch. 4.

his younger nephew and nominated heir, Charles Brooke, in charge of the government, James decided that cession to Britain was the only solution for Sarawak. But his insistence on being repaid was unacceptable. Before he died in 1868, James was still negotiating for a protectorate, this time with the Italian government which he hoped would at least provide the capital to develop Sarawak.

Twenty years later, Sarawak's relations with Britain were finally regulated by a formal treaty* which gave the British government responsibility for Sarawak's foreign relations and defence while allowing the Brookes full internal sovereignty. A protected state rather than a protectorate, Sarawak possessed the further distinction of a wholly autonomous judicial system with no right of appeal to British courts. Although the 1888 Treaty authorized the appointment of a consul-general to represent British interests, the post fell vacant after the departure of the first incumbent. Britain's responsibilities were exercised by the Governor of the Straits Settlements in Singapore who, as British Agent for Borneo, was supposed to keep an eye on Sarawak and North Borneo. In London, Borneo affairs were originally handled by the Foreign Office but in 1907 responsibility was passed to the Colonial Office in spite of Charles Brooke's protest that this signified a different view of Sarawak's international status.

The Brooke Tradition

Sarawak's international personality had been developed in other ways by this time. With its own state flag and anthem, coinage, currency notes and postage stamps, it was popularly identified as an independent monarchy vaguely linked with the British Empire. Within the system of precedence designed for Imperial occasions, the Rajah of Sarawak was ranked immediately after the Indian princes and before the Malay rulers.

In 1928 Charles Willes Johnson,[†] the Rajah's nephew who had been Sarawak Government Agent in London since 1912, described what he saw as the Brooke tradition. Although Johnson had spent little time in Sarawak, it was not a difficult task for him to sum up the ideology which had sustained Brooke rule:

If we move away from the original and well-recognized Brooke policy, now of some 80 years' standing, the policy of working for the good of the inhabitants, if we countenance the extravagant ideas that have been so prevalent elsewhere since the war, so, surely as the sun rises, we shall fail in our trust. Simplicity has been the key-note to the success of Sarawak. Let us all . . . keep it so, and help to see that the resources of the country are devoted to the best interests of gradual progress, not wasted in unremunerative undertakings or in producing a false standard of

*See Appendix I.

†Johnson was a partner in the legal firm of Torr and Coy., heading their parliamentary section, when he was appointed Sarawak Government Agent. He also acted as Secretary to the Advisory Council formed in that year and as the Sarawak government's legal adviser, in which capacity he was twice called to Sarawak by Vyner Brooke. He died in September 1934. (For an obituary, see *SG*, 1 October 1934.)

comfort which is unsuitable to the circumstances . . . Let us not follow all western ideas and standards. We may and should base ourselves in principle upon British justice and British manners but let us adapt them to suit our surroundings and beware of importing quickly western methods which cannot be appreciated or even understood by eastern races. Do not let us think that only what happens in our own time matters. The life of a country is a very long one, we who serve it may best do so by curbing our impetuosity and by building slowly and surely.¹¹

The justifying myth of Brooke rule, as it had evolved by the end of the nineteenth century, was the idea of trusteeship—that Sarawak belonged to the people and that the Rajah exercised authority on their behalf and in their interests. However, it is unlikely that the Brookes and most of their officers ever imagined that Europeans would one day be redundant and that the natives would rule themselves. Indeed, the effect of Brooke rule had been to entrench a European ruling family at the expense of traditional Malay and Chinese leadership. The worst excesses of European exploitation were avoided, largely because there seemed to be so little to exploit. Furthermore, the preservation of traditional ways of life was self-serving because it protected the power-position of European officers. While the Brookes and their officers railed against 'vested interests', their own interest was to preserve their position by resisting change. They were not so much opposed to economic development as to the resulting social and political changes which would inevitably undermine the basis of their authority and prestige. Nevertheless, for the most part, they carried out their work for little financial reward and with a sincerity of purpose seldom to be found in orthodox colonial systems. The legacy of goodwill which they left behind is the best evidence of this. They belonged to the romantic or charismatic phase of colonialism.

1. Cited by Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels* . . . , p. 349n.
2. *Queries: Past, Present and Future*, London, 1907.
3. [Anthony Brooke], *The Facts About Sarawak*, Bombay [1946], p. 32.
4. Cited by Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels* . . . , p. 360.
5. 'Sale of Rubber Plantations', *SG*, 1 November 1910.
6. 'Extract from the Diary of Charles Brooke', cited by Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels* . . . , p. 304n.
7. T. Stirling Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', typescript [1934?], pp. 54-5.
8. *ibid.*, p. 59.
9. *SGG*, 16 May 1914; Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', pp. 43-4.
10. *SGG*, 4 October 1915.
11. *SG*, 1 December 1928.

II

'*La Pierre d'Achoppement*'

AS with so many other dynasties possessing autocratic power, schemes to limit the power of a successor or to disinherit him were a major theme in Brooke history. The first Rajah had disinherited his elder nephew who objected to Sarawak being made the protectorate of a European power. The second Rajah had wanted to disinherit Vyner but instead introduced a number of constitutional changes designed to keep him in check. When Bertram, but not Vyner, produced a male heir, trouble over the succession was inevitable. Vyner's own lack of initiative and unwillingness to do anything which would make enemies also helped to create a political vacuum within the autocratic system. Bertram's son, Anthony, had seemed certain to fill this vacuum eventually but his failure to win his uncle's confidence blighted his chances.

In a situation like this a rank outsider can often make a strong run. Such a dark horse was Gerard MacBryan, Vyner's talented Private Secretary, who vied with the senior bureaucrats of the Committee of Administration to manipulate the Rajah. While MacBryan and Vyner's wife, Sylvia, plotted to alter the succession, the bureaucrats were anxious to trim the Rajah's powers and avoid a Colonial Office take-over. The Rajah himself wanted to tie Anthony's hands just as his own hands had been tied, and to make long-term financial provision for himself and his family. The net result was the 1941 Constitution which established a form of limited monarchy.

The Dynastic Background

Vyner Brooke was born in 1874, two years after the tragic deaths of two brothers and a sister on a voyage home to England. In 1876 Raneé Margaret gave birth to another son, Bertram, who was to be known by Vyner all his life as *Adeh* (younger brother). A third son, Harry, was born in 1878. In 1887 Margaret took Vyner, Bertram, and Harry to Sarawak

together for the first time. Vyner was then twelve years of age and Bertram ten. From their tutor, Gerard Fiennes, we have an interesting description of how young Vyner reacted to the deference paid him by the Kuching Malays:*

It is very amusing to walk through the Malay Kampong with the boys. The natives turn out in swarms to see the 'Rajah Muda' and we generally have a swarm of urchins mostly in Nature's garb, following at a respectful distance and in wholesome awe. Vyner can't make it out at all. The last thing which occurs to his mind is that he is the object of their attention, and he has to be continually prodded to make him return their salutes. He always thinks they are salaaming to me. It is very nice of him to be so entirely unconscious and free from conceit.¹

Vyner's ambivalent attitude towards his royal status was to remain with him for the rest of his life.

Although little is known about the relationship between Charles Brooke and his sons and the few descriptions available are personally biased, he seems to have been an autocratic father against whose regime Vyner was inclined to rebel. Vyner's career at Winchester and Cambridge, where he failed to take a degree, was unimpressive although he was popular with his fellow students. His interests were in race horses, boxing, and roistering, and Rajah Charles consequently 'seems always to have thought him a little easy-going and extravagant, and not quite serious enough'.² Bertram, by contrast, reflected many of his father's ascetic values. While not so shrewd and gregarious as Vyner, he was able to apply himself more successfully at school and university and this, together with his serious and responsible manner, endeared him to his parents. Charles seems to have been fond of Harry, but once described him as 'that idle, ornamental man'.³

Vyner's relations with his parents reached their lowest ebb in 1911 with his decision to marry Sylvia Brett, the second daughter of Lord Esher who was Private Secretary to King George V. Vyner met Sylvia in about 1903 and there was a long and difficult courtship⁴ before they married in February 1911. During this time they attempted to elope and their families were estranged before 'the barrier of opposition' could be overcome.⁴

Neither the Rajah nor the Raneé (who had been living apart for twenty years) approved of their eldest son's chosen. Indeed, Sylvia seems to have been regarded by Charles as final proof of Vyner's fecklessness. He 'suspected her of having a bad influence on the Rajah Muda, encouraging him to be extravagant and pleasure-seeking and insubordinate'.⁵ In Sylvia's words, the Rajah was 'dragged most unwillingly' to the wedding,

*Anthony Brooke expressed similar embarrassment during his first visit to Sarawak in 1934. See below, p. 61.

†Lord and Lady Esher strongly opposed the idea of Sylvia living in Sarawak and in 1904, after Vyner had proposed marriage, Lady Esher told him that 'the whole thing was a chimera and a got up romance' engineered by her elder daughter, Dorothy. She instructed Vyner 'not to correspond with her in any way'. (Eleanor Brett to Vyner Brooke, 4 August 1904, Brooke Papers, Vol. 17.)

'and it was with more reluctance still that he attended the reception'.⁶ Although Charles did his best to prevent her from visiting Sarawak, Vyner took Sylvia and her brother, Oliver Brett, to Kuching in 1912, thus precipitating a quarrel which was to have far-reaching consequences.*

Charles and Margaret were apprehensive not just of Sylvia's influence on Vyner but of the opportunity which the marriage provided for Lord Esher and his financier friends to get their hands on Sarawak. In April 1912 Charles wrote to his nephew, Charles Willes Johnson, of his fear that Vyner would be 'surrounded by those who would wish to grab Sarawak when I am no more—would turn it into a money bargain . . .'.⁷ He believed that the British government would encourage this as a means of taking over Sarawak and using it to 'pay for its shortcomings in Singapore and its surroundings'. He was already framing a plan to 'bring Akeh to the fore' and install him as Heir Presumptive and President of a 'Sarawak Trust Committee'. Part of the function of this body would be 'to safeguard the maintenance of the Sarawak Raj and save it from being sold and transferred'.

From the time of his party's arrival in Kuching in June, Vyner's relations with his father were strained. Within the month Charles brought matters to a head by issuing the following proclamation:

I, Charles Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak, do hereby decree that my second son Bertram Brooke, heir presumptive to the Raj of Sarawak in the event of my eldest son, Charles Vyner Brooke, Rajah Muda of Sarawak, failing to have male issue, shall be received on his arrival in the State of Sarawak with a Royal Salute and honours equivalent to his rank. I further decree that he shall be recognised in future by all the inhabitants of Sarawak as being part of the Government of the State and [that] such recognition shall be duly registered in the records of the Supreme Council of the Raj of Sarawak.⁸

According to Sylvia, Vyner saw this as 'a direct indication of his own father's distrust in him, and a definite assumption that he was incapable of bringing into the world a future heir'.⁹ Rane Margaret was later to describe it as '*La pierre d'achoppement entre Vyner et moi*'¹⁰ (the source of irritation between Vyner and me), which suggests that he held his mother at least partly responsible. Indeed, the Proclamation, together with the establishment of the Advisory Council in London, so enraged Vyner that he threatened public action. Responding to a letter from Charles accusing him of jealousy of Bertram, he wrote: '. . . if you choose to persist in giving my brother Royal Honours on arrival, and on issuing the Proclamation, and on proposing the new Bill, I shall be reluctantly obliged to make a public protest against your action, and on leaving this country until things are more satisfactorily arranged.'¹¹

Further acrimonious correspondence followed, with Vyner refusing to accept his father's scheme and the Rajah informing him that 'I shall not in

*Further light may be shed on the dispute when the embargo is lifted from a volume of Lord Esher's papers deposited at Churchill College, Cambridge. The papers include correspondence between Vyner Brooke and Bertram Brooke, Vyner Brooke and Lord Esher and Oliver Brett and Lord Esher. (Communication from the Archivist, Churchill College, 24 November 1975.)

future require your service in the Government Offices nor in the Supreme Council'. He directed him to leave Sarawak 'as soon as convenient'.¹² Before Vyner left, he wrote to Bertram (who by this time was on his way out, quite unaware of the drama being enacted in Kuching) expressing his implacable opposition to any scheme which would limit his autocratic power on succeeding to the Raj: 'I am to do the dirty work whilst you and your gang are to say what I am to do and what I am not to do. . . . No, thank you. . . . I do not return to Sarawak again unless with full power. By full power I mean absolute control over the country.'¹³ As far as Charles was concerned, he had lost confidence in Vyner, 'and that once lost is impossible to be regained'.¹⁴ However, Sarawak was flourishing and he believed that the measures he had taken would safeguard the state's future. 'Where is the CO going to find a *casus belli* to touch me in the present rule in Sarawak?', he wrote to Charles Willes Johnson. 'The Eshers and the Bretts may have other views and wish to put Vyner above me but I am not afraid of their evil influence.'¹⁵ The quarrel between Vyner and his father was eventually patched up and Vyner and Bertram were reconciled after a number of meetings in England. But the old Rajah's distrust of his eldest son remained and he absolutely refused him permission to take Sylvia to Sarawak. For his part, Vyner continued to nurse a deep resentment towards his parents. In the meantime, Sylvia bore her first child—a daughter, Leonora.*

In his political will of 1913, Charles settled the question of the succession by bequeathing sovereignty to Vyner. However, he also stipulated that Bertram's role in government was to be hardly less important. Believing that 'two heads are better than one' and that Vyner and Sylvia would not be able to spend sufficient time in the country, he stipulated that Bertram should 'carry out the duties of Rajah and administer the Government of the State during such times as my son Vyner may be in England or absent from Sarawak . . .'.¹⁶ During these periods Bertram was to be Vice-President of the Supreme Council and Council Negri. He was to have free access to the Astana, and European and native officers were to 'pay him the same respect as is shown to his eldest brother'. On Charles' death, Bertram was to be known as *Tuan Besar* (although he in fact preferred to use his original title *Tuan Muda*).[†] When he was in Sarawak, Bertram's position as President of the Advisory Council was to be filled, not by Vyner, but by the member who possessed the longest record of service in Sarawak. Charles also insisted that Bertram should be consulted in all matters involving 'material developments'—public works, buildings, estates, railways, waterways, and any other extensions of government activity. He concluded:

I raise my second son to this position hoping that he will by his extended experience be an additional safeguard against adventurers and speculators who

*Leonora Margaret Brooke, born 18 November 1911.

†This followed the pattern established by the first Rajah who had appointed his elder nephew, Brooke Brooke, as *Rajah Muda* and his younger nephew, Charles Brooke, as *Tuan Muda*.

would desire to make profits out of the country without regard to its real welfare. And I fervently hope that my two sons will see the necessity of acting together to keep intact and develop the resources of the country which has been brought to its present state by myself and my faithful followers after so many years of devotion to it.¹⁷

Bertram had married Gladys Palmer,* only child of the biscuit-manufacturing millionaire, Sir Walter Palmer, and in December 1912 they had their fourth child, a son, whom they named Anthoni† after his delighted grandfather. But to the old Rajah's great disappointment Sylvia produced another daughter, Elizabeth, and Anthoni's presence at her christening in his own christening robes enraged Sylvia, suggesting future dynastic conflict. While the relationship between the two brothers remained affectionate, there commenced a somewhat destructive rivalry between their wives. Charles approved of the *Dayang Muda* (Gladys) as much as he disapproved of the *Ranee Muda* (Sylvia).‡

In 1913 Bertram was called by his father to his country home in Gloucestershire as soon as he (Bertram) returned from Sarawak. It was not until 1941 that Bertram told Vyner what had taken place at this meeting:

When I got there he told me he had an appointment to see the Secretary of State the following day, but that instead of making his usual formal 'call' he intended this time to discuss with him a project for curtailing your absolute powers as Rajah on your accession, as he was apprehensive of the future. He asked me what I thought, and I told him that it would be very bad luck. He then said he supposed I would not consider over going out to Sarawak, as I had a family at home, but that if I would promise him that I would go out to Sarawak on his death to take a hand in the Government, should you ask me to do this, he would not take the step he contemplated. I promised.¹⁸

In January 1917 Vyner wrote to Bertram expressing relief that their father had been shipped home after a serious bout of illness. At the same time he dreaded the prospect of the old Rajah carrying out his sworn object of returning to Sarawak to die:

I cannot go through another illness like the last one, so shall hurry back to England when I hear that he is approaching these shores. It is not good enough. After all, the old man can easily remain in England and die comfortably without coming all the way out here. He is getting very wandering in the mind and doddery and it is hard to transact business with him.¹⁹

An equally displeasing prospect for Vyner was Ranee Margaret's intention to come out to Sarawak. Vyner asked Bertram to assist him by helping to frustrate their mother's plan and by sharing the administration of the State on their father's death:

*Gladys gave an engaging account of her childhood and her mother, Lady Palmer's, *salon* in *Relations and Complications* . . . , London, 1929.

†Anthoni was christened Anthoni Walter Dayrell Brooke, but the spelling later adopted was Anthony. To his family and friends he was always known as 'Peter'.

‡Charles' affectionate relationship with Gladys and her children emerges very clearly from his letters to them between 1908 and 1917. (Brooke Papers, Vol. 3.)

Ma fully intends coming out here to give instructions to all and sundry the way the place must be run. Needless to say I shall leave for England 'instanter'. If you back me up and we pull together we can frustrate her 'knaveish tricks' but if you don't I go under as I cannot cope with her. Ma as much as I admire her is full of schemes and plots and it is hard to know what she is working at. If the old man pops off I should love you to come out and take over while I am on leave, turn and turn about. You will have full powers and of course a very considerable salary. I find that my old liver is not the thing it was and I can't put in very long here at a time, perhaps 7 months in the year. If you could relieve me during these 5 months it would be of greatest benefit to all concerned. It would frustrate Ma. She is fully convinced that I wish to sell Sarawak, accumulate vast wealth for myself and endeavour to get a peerage. Far from it. My present title sickens me. Rajah Brooke is quite sufficient without all the high fallutin' nonsense of the H.H. part of it. . . .²⁰

As it happened, Charles Brooke was never to return to Sarawak. On reaching England in May 1917 he suffered a relapse and died shortly before his eighty-eighth birthday.* Vyner was subsequently installed as Rajah at a ceremony in 1918 with Bertram in attendance and the system of tandem rule which he had envisaged was introduced.

Esca Brooke-Daykin

An early challenge to the succession had been presented by Charles' nephew, Hope Brooke,[†] who made a fruitless visit to Sarawak in 1910 to obtain what he regarded as his rights. However, it was not until 1927 that one of Charles Brooke's early peccadilloes drew public attention in Britain to the question. In 1866 Charles had been posted as Resident at Simanggang where, according to Rane Margaret, he had a number of mistresses.[‡] At any rate, he did have a son by Dayang Mastiah in August 1867 who was later baptized Isaka Brooke by the SPG missionary at the Undup River, William Crossland. When Rane Margaret came out to Sarawak for the first time in 1870 she discovered Isaka (or Esca, as he

*For the most extensive obituary, see *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard*, 19 May 1917. See also *The Times*, 18 May 1917 and *SG*, 1 June 1917. Contrary to his express wishes, Charles was buried with James in the family plot at Sheepstor in Devon. Two years earlier he had written to Gladys from Kuching: 'I should be buried here with much pleasure in unconsecrated ground—not to be removed or touched by the church authorities—I have given sealed instructions to this effect.' (Charles Brooke to Gladys Brooke, 20 May 1915, Brooke Papers, Vol. 3.)

†Hope Brooke was the son of Charles' elder brother, Brooke Brooke, who had been disinherited by the first Rajah in favour of Charles. Infuriated by Hope's claims, Charles broke off all communication with him and transferred to his wife's favour the annuity paid from Sarawak revenue. (Charles Brooke to Hope Brooke, 22 November 1910, Rajah's Letterbooks, Sarawak Museum, Vol. VI, p. 237.)

‡Rane Margaret provided an interesting insight into Charles' character with her account of his reaction when one woman slept with a native fort man during his absence:

He had her head shaved and tied the thick long tail of hair to the flag staff!! Then she was put in a boat, shaven and shorn, and paddled to and fro in front of the company, with a man who summoned the people to the bank by a gong, and who informed the populace of her misdeeds.

(Margaret Brooke to Charles Willes Johnson, 29 June 1927, Brooke Papers; Vol. 18.)

was known) at Simanggang and, in her own words, 'had the nouse [*sic*] to see that he might be a bore in the country'.²¹ With Charles' approval she took him back to England with her own children and arranged for him to be educated by the rector at Sheepstor, the Revd W. Y. Daykin, who was an old family friend of the Brookes. Daykin, who had no children of his own, took him to Canada and adopted him. Before he died in 1917 he gave Esca all the papers connected with his early life, including a birth certificate in *jawi* and a certificate of baptism signed by Crossland in 1874. Esca also inherited the annuity of £50 which Charles had paid to Daykin for his maintenance and this arrangement was maintained by Vyner.

In 1927, when he was 60 years of age, Esca decided to capitalize on his status as the eldest male issue of Charles Brooke. He had previously attempted to communicate with Charles and Vyner but all his approaches were ignored. Using the two certificates as his main cards, Esca employed an agent to visit England and investigate the possibility of bringing a lawsuit against Vyner to secure recognition of his status and an annual payment of about £25,000 which he regarded as his entitlement. Evidently supported by the wealthy Toronto woman for whom he acted as private secretary,* Esca announced his claim to the Toronto press and gained further publicity when his agent reached London.²² All this so alarmed Rance Margaret that she asked the former Chancellor, Lord Haldane, what to do about 'that half caste idiot'.²³ However, Esca could not prove his legitimacy and he was finally advised to discontinue the suit. Nor did he receive any satisfaction from the Colonial Office who apparently told him that they had no jurisdiction in the matter. Esca later wrote to Vyner claiming that the agent, who was a relative of his wife's, had been behind the whole affair.²⁴ The agent had managed to meet Vyner and the subsequent silence suggests that he may have been paid off. However, Esca renewed his claim when cession was announced in February 1946.†

By the 1920s, Vyner and Sylvia had given up all hope of producing a male heir and the problem of the succession remained an important, if submerged issue during the entire inter-war period. The only person who seemed capable of finding a solution was G. T. M. MacBryan.

'The Baron'

Gerard Truman Magill MacBryan was a key figure in the drama which spelled the end of Brooke rule. The son of an eminent neurologist,

*It has been suggested that Daykin was being backed by the Standard Oil Company which was anxious to obtain oil leases and that Owen Rutter was instrumental in bringing forward the claim. (Personal communication from Mrs Margaret Noble.) There is no evidence to confirm this, although there may be some significance in the fact that Charles Hose, former Resident of the Fourth Division whose brother Ernest had discovered Sarawak's oil deposits, met Daykin in Toronto in 1926 and confirmed his parentage.

†In early 1946 Esca, who was now 78, made an affidavit detailing his origins and connections with Sarawak and this was sent with accompanying documentation and photographs by his wife, Edith, to King George VI. Nothing seems to have come of this appeal which was passed on to the Colonial Office. (Affidavit of E. Brooke-Daykin and enclosures, February 1946, CO 537/2241.)

MacBryan was born in 1901 and brought up at Kingsdown House, the private mental hospital which his father had purchased at Box, near Bath.* Educated at St Christopher's School (Bath) and Naish House (Burnham-on-Sea), he entered Dartmouth Naval College in 1918 as a cadet. Discharged after failing his test in navigation,²⁵ he worked for a shipping firm until the oppressive conditions of office life moved him to throw the manager's morning cup of tea in his face.²⁶ He was then without any real career prospects and it was in these circumstances that an acquaintance of his father's suggested he should go to Sarawak. Henry Deshon was a member of the Bath and Country Club to which Dr MacBryan also belonged and, like other retired Sarawak officers, was always on the look-out for likely young men who might do well in the Service. His sense of adventure aroused, Gerard travelled to London and succeeded in persuading an interviewing panel headed by Bertram Brooke that he would be 'good Sarawak material'. Thus it was that in July 1920 the nineteen-year-old MacBryan found himself on a tiny government steamer crawling around the Sarawak coast towards Limbang. One of his shipboard companions was Mrs Nellie Boulton, the wife of District Officer F. F. Boulton whom MacBryan had been appointed to assist. She found him a charming and exquisitely mannered young man, but very highly-strung. Indeed, she believed he was quite unbalanced: he had told her of seeing 'an enormous ghost rise from the sea as he was taking his "watch" . . .'.²⁷ Although he had expressed pleasure in being posted to a remote outstation and described himself as 'a bit of a naturalist', MacBryan found the loneliness and isolation difficult to bear. 'We are rather worried about him', Nellie Boulton wrote in her diary, 'he is a mass of nerves, sleeps with windows and doors hermetically sealed and jumps at insects etc. . . .'.²⁸ Unable to sleep but afraid of missing his watches, he began taking sedatives. He also contracted both malaria and dysentery, necessitating visits to Labuan for treatment.

In March 1921 there occurred an event which was to have a profound influence on the young cadet. A Malay prison escapee named Junit bin Ongee murdered two Chinese and was duly captured, sentenced to death and executed by firing squad[†]—the first execution which had taken place during Limbang's thirty-one years under Brooke rule.²⁹ MacBryan noted the peace of mind which the Islamic religion seemed to inspire in the murderer and was even more impressed by the extraordinary influence which his claims to invulnerability and other superhuman powers gave him over the natives. But he was shocked by the crude nature of the execution in which a chalk circle was described on the victim's chest for the benefit of police marksmen.

*Kingsdown House was apparently one of the first privately licensed mental hospitals in England with fees which in the first decade of this century could only be afforded by the rich. It came into MacBryan's possession in 1937 and was closed before he sold it ten years later.

†Until 1889 all official executions in Sarawak had been performed with the *kris* (Malay dagger) which was thrust down behind the victim's collar-bone into the heart. ('Pieces from the Brooke Past—I', *SG*, 31 May 1964.)

Even before the execution, MacBryan had told Boulton that he could stand Limbang no longer and asked to be transferred somewhere else. Mrs Boulton noted in her diary: '... he is just a mass of nerves full up with superstition. I believe he half believes the yarns of the "spirits" and supernatural things the natives tell him. This land is the worst of places for such a temperament I fear unless he grows out of it but most boys don't fear anything—it's men, after years, get nerves out here as a rule.'³⁰ Afterwards he was 'very wild and mad in his talk and manner' and it was a considerable relief to the Boultons when he was appointed to Sibuluan.

Although MacBryan's nervousness had made him a difficult subordinate, there was no doubt about his exceptional talents. A brilliant linguist, he picked up Malay and other languages very quickly and was to develop a wide knowledge of native customs.* However, the Junit affair caused him to identify more closely with the Malays with whom he spent much of his time. One of the complaints made about him by his fellow officers was that he preferred the company of Malays to that of Europeans and he would probably not have disputed this. In the late 1920s, moreover, he took up with Sa'erah, an extremely attractive young divorcee who had previously been involved with another European officer.†

In August 1922 MacBryan was appointed to Kapit and it was there that the young cadet first came to the Rajah's notice. For a long time there had been bloody feuds between the Kayans, Kenyahs and Kajangs of the Apoi Kayan and Baloi Rivers, and the Ibans of the Batang Rejang and Batang Ai. This trouble had broken out afresh in 1921 with the murder of some Ibans on the Iwan River and MacBryan conceived the ambitious scheme of bringing the feud to an end by means of a *bunuh babi* (pig killing) or peace-making ceremony‡ similar to the one held at Simanggang in 1920 between the Ibans of the upper Batang Lupar and those of the

*MacBryan also displayed a keen interest in Borneo history, something that may have been sparked off by the discovery during his time at Limbang of a Hindu *ganesan* figure suggesting early Indian contacts with the area. In late 1940 MacBryan returned to Limbang to carry out further excavations and it was during this time that he also obtained from Brunei a number of historical Malay documents in Arabic script which were deposited in the Sarawak Museum.

†MacBryan first met Sa'erah when she was helping her father weed the Rajah's rubber garden, then under MacBryan's supervision.

‡It has been suggested that these peace-making ceremonies were a Brooke invention with no basis in traditional Iban culture. (Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 239.) Penghulu Gerinang of the Balleh who attended the 1924 Kapit ceremony told Pringle in 1965 that 'before the Rajah came there were no peacemakings'. (p. 32 n.) However, A. J. N. Richards, an authority on Iban *adat*, doubts that they were a Brooke innovation 'because part of ceremonies was the handing over of gifts and agreed fines as compensations'. The expression *palit mata sapu moa* (dry the tears, wash the face) which was used at the ceremonies was 'also applied to other customary fines in settlement of disputes. The more serious the dispute, the more difficult it would be for the parties to settle in the absence of an outside authority to organize it, and that would be the part played by the Brookes when they adopted the principle of the thing.' (Personal communication, 7 November 1976.)

Skrang, Lemanak, and Saribas Rivers.³¹ Accordingly, he made the gruelling 350 mile journey by paddled canoe to Long Nawang in Dutch Borneo where with Dutch assistance he brought about an agreement. When this was later upset by arguments over the arrangements he made another journey to Long Nawang, this time accompanied by a number of Iban leaders. A preliminary peace-making was made there and the final ceremony, attended by 800 Kayans and Kenyahs and 5,000 Ibans, was held at Kapit in November 1924 in the presence of the Rajah and Dutch officials.³² MacBryan's diplomatic and linguistic skills (he made a speech in Kenyah) had been largely responsible for the peace-making and the Rajah was greatly impressed.³³ The young officer was promptly transferred as Acting District Officer to Kuching where he soon acquired a taste for court politics.*

It may be useful at this point to provide some indication of how people outside the Sarawak Service saw MacBryan. Owen Rutter, a professional writer who later spent some time with him preparing a book on his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1936,[†] was not the keenest judge of character but his descriptions reflect something of the man:

There is nothing particularly remarkable about him at first sight. He is tall and lean and rather shabby. Dark-haired and pale, with long fingers, and a nose I always associate with King's Counsel: clear-cut and pointed, not easy to deter. But those glittering blue eyes of his are features that hold you: narrow but very bright, restless but resolute, and curiously compelling. The eyes of a man who, once he knows what he wants, goes on until he gets it, no matter how much it costs him—or other people.³⁴

Like Nellie Boulton, Rutter thought him 'an unsatisfied, jumpy creature'. He had the irritating effect of someone 'rummaging about in the drawers of a writing-table for a letter he had mislaid'.³⁵ At the same time, however, he possessed an easy diffidence and a disarming laugh which many people found extremely charming.

MacBryan took his first leave in England in 1926 and for some unknown reason decided to resign and join the British and American Tobacco Company in their Singapore office. But the new job was not to his liking and in 1927 he was back in Kuching hoping to rejoin the Service. The Rajah agreed and MacBryan went to work in the Secretariat where one of his tasks was to edit the *Sarawak Gazette* and the *Sarawak Government Gazette*. From this point, MacBryan's rise within the Administrative Service was meteoric. By August of that year he was Acting Assistant Secretary and a year later the Rajah appointed him Private Secretary and Secretary for Native Affairs. The period of MacBryan's rapid rise to power coincided with the 'purge' of a number of senior officers including the Chief Secretary, H. B. Crocker. When the Rajah announced, on Crocker's departure, that he would himself assume the Chief Secretary's duties, the general belief within the Service was that

*For her description of her first meeting with MacBryan, see Sylvia Brooke, *Queen of the Headhunters*, pp. 124-5.

†See below, p. 27.

the administration was now in MacBryan's hands. There is no evidence that he had masterminded the 'purge' but in the light of his position of power and aptitude for intrigue it seems likely that he did.

It was widely believed within the Administrative Service that MacBryan's obvious influence over the Rajah was the result of some kind of blackmail. Some spoke of him as the Sarawak equivalent of Rasputin and others called him 'Jew Suss' after a sinister character in a popular novel of the day. Certainly, the Rajah was reputed to have had affairs with his officers' wives. But to those who knew him well it was inconceivable that he could be blackmailed on such an account. The new Private Secretary's influence must rather be seen in terms of his exceptional qualities and the Rajah's fundamental weakness as a ruler.

MacBryan was a man of considerable talent with an intelligence superior to that of most officers. More importantly, he was a skilful politician and a shrewd judge of character. He seems to have had the knack of knowing how the Rajah's mind worked and of suggesting courses of action which would fulfil his wishes. Furthermore, he was decisive enough to act upon them. In other words, MacBryan was capable of doing the Rajah's thinking and decision making for him, something which Vyner Brooke found very useful at times. But there were other qualities which are important if we are to have any deeper understanding of the relationship between the two men. In her autobiography, the wife of a senior officer* provided an important clue to the Rajah's character. In order to explain his sometimes 'baffling' behaviour she recalled Disraeli's Lord Monmouth who

... saw through everybody and everything; and when he had detected their purpose, discovered their weakness or their vileness, he calculated whether they could contribute to his pleasure or his convenience in a degree which counter-balanced the objections which might be urged against their intentions, or their less pleasing and profitable qualities. To be pleased was always the principal object with Lord Monmouth.³⁶

MacBryan's deviousness fascinated the Rajah. He was diverted by the twists and turns of a man who was ultimately limited by the length of rope he allowed him. Furthermore, promoting MacBryan to a high position in the Secretariat was like setting a cat among pigeons—an entertainment dear to the Rajah's heart. 'I know MacBryan is a complete crook', he once told a friend, 'but he amuses me. I enjoy watching him and trying to work out his next move.'³⁷ A fine raconteur with a cruel wit, the Private Secretary also filled the role of court jester and was known to the Rajah and Raneé as 'The Baron' after the legendary German story-teller, Baron von Munchausen. Altogether he was an entertaining companion for the Rajah who was easily bored with the responsibilities of everyday administration.

MacBryan's whole style was that of the compulsive intriguer: his instinct was to reach the desired objective by the most circuitous route

*Averil Mackenzie-Grieve, married to Cyril Le Gros Clark (appointed Secretary for Chinese Affairs, 1929), was a highly talented artist and writer.

possible. It was even said that at parties he would disappear through one door, walk around the house, and reappear at another door in order to create an effect. To Bertram Brooke, who could hardly forget that he had been on the interviewing panel which originally accepted him as a cadet, MacBryan was a compulsive schemer. 'I hold no feelings of personal animosity towards MacBryan', he told the Rajah in 1943, 'who can't help indulging in scheming and meddling and political jugglery any more than people can help having a clubfoot or arthritis, or some other disability.'³⁸ MacBryan was a complex character who will inevitably interest the student of Sarawak history. But in an autocratic system someone more or less like MacBryan was bound to appear,^{*} particularly when the autocrat declined responsibility.

It was during his years in Kuching that MacBryan became involved in a plan to alter the succession in favour of the female line. His malicious wit and exaggerated manner, together with his genius for conspiracy, endeared him to the Raneé who enlisted his assistance in her scheme to have her eldest daughter, Leonora, declared the Rajah's successor. MacBryan even hoped to marry into the Brooke family as a means of securing power for himself[†]—not necessarily as the Rajah but as the power behind the throne. At any rate, he made some effort to persuade the datus to agree to a female ruler. Female succession was not unknown in Borneo history. There was a tradition that an Arab, Sharif Ali Bilfakih, had become the third Sultan of Brunei by marrying the second Sultan's daughter³⁹ and that when another Sultan died in the late sixteenth century without a male heir, he was succeeded by his daughter.[‡] The problem for MacBryan was that Abang Haji Abdillah,⁺ the Datu Bandar and head of Sarawak's Malay community, was adamantly opposed to the idea and the only solution was to 'pack' the Supreme Council so that his influence could be overcome.

^{*}In Malay courts there had been a well-established tradition of *saudagar raja* (King's merchants) of Armenian, Indian, or Portuguese *mestiço* origin and possessing linguistic and entrepreneurial skills. (I am indebted to Dr Leonard Andaya for information on this point.)

[†]See below, pp. 26, 33.

[‡]*Ming Shih*, Book 325, in W. P. Groeneveldt, *Historical Notes on Indonesia and Malaya comp. from Chinese Sources*, Jakarta, 1960, p. 114. However, Professor Hsu Yun-ts'iao, the principal authority on Chinese texts on South-East Asia, believes that this is almost certainly a reference to Patani, mistakenly attributed to Brunei by the compilers of the *Ming Shih*. (Personal communication from Mr Robert Nicholl, 29 September 1976.) There were also precedents in Aceh (north Sumatra) where there had been four female rulers during the seventeenth century and in Perak where only a daughter was left to succeed and her husband became the ruler. (I am grateful to Dr Leonard Andaya for information on this point.)

⁺Abang Haji Abdillah was the son of the Datu Bandar, Abang Mohd. Kassim, who died in 1921. Born in 1862, he was the first Malay to study English at St Thomas' School and later taught at his father's school at Kampong Jawa. He then worked as a surveyor for the Lands Department and as an overseer of the Public Works Department quarry before joining the police. Appointed Datu Bandar Muda in 1921, he was made Datu Bandar in 1924 at the age of 62 and Datu Shahbandar in 1928. In 1937 the title of Datu Patinggi was revived and conferred on him. He was the figure-head of the anti-cession movement until his death on 21 November 1946 at the age of 83.

In 1928 MacBryan persuaded the Rajah to appoint a number of new *datus*, at the same time promoting the *Datu Bandar* and conferring some form of honour on Ong Tiang Swee,* the head of the Hokkien community and senior *kapitan china* of Sarawak since 1889. Accordingly, on the Rajah's birthday that year Abang Haji Suleiman† was appointed *Datu Amar* and Mohd. Zin became *Datu Menteri*. At the same time, Ong Tiang Swee became the first Companion of the Most Excellent Order of the Star of Sarawak‡ and Abang Haji Abdillah became *Datu Shahbandar*. In the following year, Haji Hashim was appointed to the new position of *Datu Bentara*.

All this spelled a radical departure from the Brooke practice of appointing Malay aristocrats descended from the *datus* whom James Brooke had rehabilitated after their rebellion against Brunei. Haji Hashim was not a member of the *perabangan*. In fact he belonged to the old *nakhoda* (merchant) class which had almost disappeared by the first decade of the century due to Chinese competition and the Brookes' policy of discouraging Malays from trade.⁴⁰ His fleet of schooners shipped rubber and other produce to Singapore and his building company had won a number of government contracts. One of the wealthiest Malays in Kuching, he was also illiterate and lacked the respectability traditionally associated with the office.⁺ Abang Suleiman had for many years been a clerk in the Lands Office and Enche Mohd. Zin was a commoner who would never have aspired to a *datuship*, although he had been a member of the Supreme Council since 1907.[#]

It appears that MacBryan's purpose in securing the new appointments was to get up a petition asking the Rajah to alter the succession in favour

*Born in Kuching in 1864, Ong Tiang Swee entered his father's firm (Ong Ewe Hai and Co.) in 1882. He became a director of the Sarawak and Singapore Steamship Co. in 1887 and chairman in 1919. Ong was a member of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce from 1887 and was later elected chairman. From 1914 he was chairman of the Sarawak Farms Syndicate which held the monopoly of opium and gambling. He also headed the special Chinese Court established in 1911 and was a member of the Board of Trade. During the First World War he was a member of the Food Control Committee and collected money for various war charities. He died in 1950. See A. M. Cooper, *Men of Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur, 1968, pp. 59-64.

†Abang Suleiman bin Haji Taha became an apprentice in the Lands Office in 1891 and was later transferred to the Public Works Department and the Municipal Department, returning to the Lands Office in 1920. In 1924 he was made Assistant Land Officer and in 1933 retired on pension.

‡This was devised by Stirling Boyd, the Judicial Commissioner, when the Rajah indicated that he wanted to honour Ong Tiang Swee in some way. (Boyd to Mrs Boyd, 24 September 1928, Boyd Papers, Box 2/1.)

#Mohd. Zin joined the government service as a schoolteacher in 1890 and taught at the Kampong Gersik school until 1907 when he was made *tua kampong* and appointed to the Supreme Council. He also became a member of the Council Negeri in 1909. His beautiful daughter, Dayang Haji Renayah, had found favour with MacBryan who was responsible for her receiving land and jewels. Mohd. Zin and Abang Suleiman were friendly with MacBryan.

of Leonora and her descendants,⁴¹ believing that he could count on the support of the new datu who owed their positions to his influence with the Rajah. But the Datu Shahbandar's opposition proved too powerful and the petition had to be dropped before it could even be put to the Rajah. The antagonisms which had been created were to divide the Kuching datu as long as the main protagonists remained alive, but while the Rajah later blamed MacBryan for this it seems quite likely that he was playing his own game. Abang Haji Abdillah's prestige and influence was substantial and it probably suited the Rajah to create new datu who could be played off against him. Abang Suleiman had eloped with Abang Haji Abdillah's sister some years earlier and to appoint him Datu Amar was, in the words of one officer, 'to divide and rule'.⁴²

MacBryan went to London with the Rajah in March 1930 and in June he attended the Colonial Office conference as Sarawak's observer.* In August he resigned his position as Secretary for Native Affairs and was transferred to the staff of the Sarawak Government Office as Private Secretary to the Rajah. Shortly afterwards he left the Service. Why he should have resigned after such meteoric success is not absolutely clear but there are three possible explanations. In the first place, he had aroused a great deal of resentment among other senior members of the Administrative Service who were also somewhat fearful of his influence over Vyner. There even appears to have been a petition asking the Rajah not to allow him to return.⁴³ Secondly, he had passionately courted first Elizabeth and then the Tuan Muda's daughter, Anne,[†] threatening to commit suicide unless she agreed to marry him secretly.⁴⁴ Bertram had no sooner learnt of this than he was approached by a deputation of datu, headed by the Datu Shahbandar, complaining about MacBryan's interference in native affairs and requesting that he should not be allowed to return.⁴⁵ When the Rajah came to know about MacBryan's intrigues he decided not to allow him back. Such at least was his official reason for preventing MacBryan's return six years later.⁴⁶

In early 1931 MacBryan arrived in Australia intent on making his fortune from mining in the Northern Territory. For about twelve months he prospected in the Alice Springs area but cannot have had much success

*It was at this meeting that he announced the Rajah's decision to give £25,000 towards the Imperial Forestry Institute and a further £75,000 towards a scheme which would provide scholarships for children of members of the Colonial Service, later to be known as the *Rajah of Sarawak Fund*. Originally the Rajah had informed the Governor in Singapore that he wished to give £100,000 to Imperial Funds. When it was suggested that the money could be spent on the Singapore naval base, he was concerned about what the Labour government might think and asked the Governor for his advice. Stirling Boyd believed that the Rajah possessed ulterior motives and suspected that he was angling for an earldom. Given the Rajah's attitude to such honours, however, it seems unlikely. He probably saw the £100,000 as a guarantee of the British government's goodwill. (Stirling Boyd to Mrs Boyd, 3 October 1929, Boyd Papers, Box 2/1.) For the subsequent history of the Fund, see below, p. 231 note.

†In a 1947 memorandum Eva MacBryan noted that MacBryan had imagined himself to be in love with Anne Brooke, but later decided that 'ambition was at all times at the root of his desire for that lady'. (Document in the possession of Mrs Eva MacBryan.)

because by early 1932 he was in Melbourne, destitute and ill. However, in Adelaide in September 1931 he had met Eva Collins, the daughter of a wealthy farming family, and he wrote asking her to marry him. Shortly afterwards she was informed of his illness and arrived in Melbourne where she found him in 'a pitiable state'.⁴⁷ He had evidently suffered a nervous breakdown. Eva took him back to South Australia to convalesce and they were married in May 1932. Immediately afterwards they left for England where MacBryan worked for his stockbroker brother on a commission basis, at the same time keeping abreast of Sarawak affairs through letters. In 1935 Eva had to visit Australia in connection with her father's estate and two weeks before her departure Gerard attended a party for the Rajah and Ranee who were about to leave for Sarawak. The Rajah declined his request to rejoin the Service but invited him to stay with them in Sarawak and he agreed to accompany the Ranee on her first journey to Singapore by air. According to the Rajah, no sooner had MacBryan arrived in Kuching than he renewed his request to rejoin the Service and when this was refused began reviving his old intrigues.⁴⁸ A few days before he was due to join Eva in Australia he announced to disbelieving guests at a farewell in his honour that he was about to be converted to Islam and would make the *haj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) with Sa'erah whom he intended to marry by Islamic rites in Singapore. Before leaving Sarawak he gave the Ranee a written promise that he would never return.⁴⁹

At that time it was highly unusual for Europeans to embrace Islam and the journey to Mecca was fraught with difficulties and dangers. MacBryan's own account, as told to the author Owen Rutter in *Triumphant Pilgrimage*, was no doubt a romanticized and dramatized version of what happened and it was even suggested that MacBryan did not actually reach Mecca.* Beyond the desire for adventure, however, there were more serious motives. MacBryan had been interested in Islam ever since his experience at Limbang. And the idea that conversion to Islam might enable him to build up a political empire reaching out from Borneo seems always to have attracted him. The problem of the succession to the Raj was still unresolved and he seems to have envisaged the possibility of establishing himself as a Muslim Rajah with the support of the datus. In April 1936 MacBryan was back in Singapore announcing that he intended to return to Sarawak to organize a company for the promotion of pilgrimages to Mecca.

Vyner would not allow him into Sarawak and invoked the specially enacted Undesirable Persons Order to prevent him from landing.[†] A warning was conveyed to MacBryan through Sir Shenton Thomas but on 4 May he arrived at Pending and was immediately arrested and deported.

* *Triumphant Pilgrimage*, London, 1937, was also subjected to a caustic review in the *Sarawak Gazette* of 1 September 1937 and MacBryan for some time threatened to sue for libel. David Chale, the central character in Rutter's book, is clearly MacBryan, while his female companion Munirah is Sa'erah.

† Order No. U-1 (*Undesirable Persons*) 1935. Anthony Brooke was banned from Sarawak by the colonial government in December 1946 under the same Order.

Back in Singapore, he offered to sell newspaper editors the 'lowdown' on Sarawak, telling them that the real reason for his exclusion was the Rajah's fear that if he were allowed to remain in Sarawak he would supplant him as ruler. He also announced that he was returning to England to publish an exposé of Brooke rule.* When MacBryan met the Rajah again in London later that year he promised once more that he would never return:

I enter into this solemn and binding obligation of my own freewill and accord and furthermore I undertake to refrain from conducting correspondence with everybody living in Sarawak, either Native or European, which relates to affairs of other than a strictly personal character. And further I also undertake to refrain from writing in books, journals or letter anything which is in any way detrimental to the interests of yourself or Sarawak and which is calculated to disturb or confound the public policy of the Raj of Sarawak.⁵⁰

On his part, Vyner undertook to clear MacBryan's name in Sarawak and Singapore and agreed that he could make arrangements for Sa'erah to join him wherever he happened to be.⁵¹ This was significant because MacBryan probably saw in Sa'erah his future passport to Sarawak.

In a letter to MacBryan from Kuching in December 1936 the Raneé told him that it was his overweening ambition which had resulted in the Rajah's tough line:

If you had played your cards my way you might be here now living at Bedil.[†] As it is, you trusted the Malays a little too much. You believed they wanted a leader other than the Rajah. You wanted a Mahomedan country with a Mahomedan ruler. The Malays might have followed you Baron had you been fabulously rich. As it is they sit on their hams and see what happens. Unfortunately for you they did not wait silently—they talked. And their talk hasn't helped you towards your ultimate desire. Besides, you yourself in all that you have written and signed have made it impossible for you to come out here again during the Rajah's lifetime.⁵²

Sylvia did not reveal what her advice to him had been but she may have warned him earlier to postpone any plans until the Rajah was out of the way. She may have been thinking that it was still possible to set up Leonora as regent for her young grandson with MacBryan as a guiding *eminence* who would have the support of the Malays.

The problem of the succession had remained in the background from MacBryan's departure in early 1930 until 1933 when Leonora Brooke married Kenneth Mackay, the second Earl of Inchcape. It was about this time that Sylvia told a London newspaper that the Rajah had disinherited Bertram in favour of Leonora and a reporter was sent to question Raneé Margaret who was then living in retirement in Cornwall. Although the grand old lady was able to dismiss the story, it assumed a different complexion when Leonora became pregnant and there was a prospect of her producing a rival heir. A week before Leonora gave birth

* *Triumphant Pilgrimage*, published in the following year, contained some unflattering references to Brooke rule. MacBryan made much of the execution of Junit.

† 'Bedil' was the fine house which MacBryan had built across the river not far from the Astana.

to Simon Brooke Mackay, Ranee Margaret became so concerned that she wrote to Sir Frederick Ponsonby, Private Secretary to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. As well as the incident with the newspaper, she recalled a conversation between King George V and Vyner when the former conferred on him the GCMG in 1927. 'The King asked the Rajah if he had any heirs. "Only daughters, Sir", my son said. "Never mind". His Majesty replied, half in joke, I suppose, "I will make her Begum!"'⁵³ Ranee Margaret told Ponsonby that this had raised Sylvia's ambitions to 'boiling point' and that she had become absolutely determined to influence the succession in favour of Leonora. She had even succeeded in persuading Vyner not to allow Anthony to go out to Sarawak.

The matter had been raised in the previous year at official level—no doubt in response to what Sylvia had told the newspaper. In a letter dated 1 March 1933, the Secretary of State for Colonies, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, told the Rajah that he had heard he was contemplating some changes. He pointed out that under the terms of the 1888 Treaty, 'the question as to the right of succession must be referred to H.M. Government for decision', and expressed the hope that the Rajah would consult him fully before there was any public discussion on the subject.⁵⁴ Although the Rajah replied through the Sarawak Government Office that the story was 'absolutely false', the Colonial Office and Ranee Margaret continued to believe that it had some basis.*

The Demotion of Anthony Brooke

Ranee Sylvia's hopes of Leonora or her son succeeding the Rajah were raised to new heights by Anthony's dramatic demotion in January 1940 after serving six months as Rajah Muda and Officer Administering the Government.[†] Shortly after the Rajah's return to Sarawak in October 1939 Anthony left for Rangoon, where he was to be married. Arriving in Singapore en route, he was surprised to find a cable from the Rajah asking about the furniture which had been ordered for the residence of the newly-appointed General Adviser, Walter Pepys.[‡] A second cable stated that neither the Chief Secretary nor the Committee of Administration knew anything about the furniture and that the order was to be cancelled. To the Rajah it seemed a clear case of extravagance and irresponsibility. He told Anthony later:

I have read your letter in the file to Pepys regarding furniture . . . and again, I notice, you have been extraordinarily generous where Government money is concerned. This is the second time. As you have already given your assurance in writing that you will not meddle in Treasury matters again . . . and as the furniture on order is now countermanded, I will say no more.⁵⁵

*Replying to an inquiry from Ranee Margaret a year later, Macaskie (then Chief Secretary) wrote: '. . . I think your surmises are correct, but the realisation of your fears is so remote and improbable that it is not worth worrying about.' (Macaskie to Margaret Brooke, 23 October 1934, Brooke Papers, Box 15.)

†This period is dealt with below, pp. 66–8.

‡See below, pp. 103, 107–8.

He also informed Anthony that special leave had been granted for him to return to England for his honeymoon and hoped that he would take the opportunity to enlist.

In itself, the episode of the furniture hardly explains Vyner's disillusionment with Anthony. What really counted were the reports on his performance as Officer Administering the Government made by Archer and other senior officers. The general tenor of criticism was revealed by the Rajah in a letter to a retired officer in England some months after his return to Kuching. The letter listed three specific complaints: that he had obtained \$40,000 from the Treasury to meet the debts of officers* on the understanding that repayments would be deducted from their salaries; that he was supercilious and would not take advice; and that he judged his officers on the basis of their horoscopes. The Rajah reported that Anthony was unpopular and that the Administrative Service had threatened to resign *en masse* if he succeeded to the Raj. Some officers had apparently told him that they would prefer the British government to take over than to have Anthony as Rajah.⁵⁶

The Rajah was given the impression by Archer and others that promotion to high office had gone to Anthony's head. He was supposed to have stood on ceremony and to have flaunted the trappings of office. This was particularly damaging (regardless of whether or not it was well founded) because Vyner Brooke detested such behaviour in his officers and would have regarded it as doubly reprehensible in his nephew and likely successor.

Another factor which probably worked against Anthony was the resentment which many senior officers felt about his overnight promotion from fledgling District Officer to Officer Administering the Government—a position for which there were other contenders. He may also have been less than tactful in his dealings with the new Chief Secretary, J. B. Archer,[†] who worked immediately beneath him. Unlike his uncle,

*The Crossley case (see below, p. 62) had highlighted the fact that most administrative officers were perpetually in debt. This was a situation widely accepted in Sarawak and welcomed by the Chinese merchants as a guarantee of their security. But Anthony, fresh from the MCS where indebtedness was not tolerated, was determined to put an end to the practice.

†John Beville Archer (1893–1948) joined the Sarawak Service at 19 and spent his early years among the Melanau people in the coastal areas of the Third Division. A keen writer, he contributed numerous articles to the *Sarawak Gazette* under the sobriquet of 'Optimistic Fiddler' and was editor during the 1920s. In 1939 Archer was a member of the Committee of Administration and replaced Parnell as Chief Secretary when the latter resigned. Archer himself was forced to resign in May 1941, partly for his opposition to the new constitution's limitations on the Rajah's powers. Spending the war in Batu Lintang, he refused recuperation leave and was appointed Political Adviser to the military administration. Supporting cession as the Rajah's wish, Archer was instrumental in seeing that it went through the Council Negri of which, as Acting Chief Secretary, he was *ex-officio* President. He was also Officer Administering the Government from the Rajah's departure until the formalization of cession in July. Greatly troubled by the cession affair, he took his own life at the age of 55. An ardent Brooke loyalist who would not tolerate any diminution of the Rajah's authority, Archer had fallen out with the other members of the Committee of Administration in 1941. Cession was a highly traumatic experience for him.

Anthony took a close personal interest in day-to-day administration and made a practice of having official files from the Secretariat sent over to him at the Astana. This meant that Archer, much to his chagrin, was relieved of a good deal of responsibility and power.

No doubt there was also a certain amount of antagonism aroused by Anthony's close relationship with two or three officers, who were regarded by some as opportunists clinging to the coat-tails of power. His position in the Administrative Service had always been somewhat anomalous: on the one hand there was the feeling (which was shared by the Rajah) that he should not be regarded as anything more than an ordinary member of the Service dependent on his own talents for promotion. On the other hand, it could not really be forgotten that he was the obvious heir to the Raj.

In a letter to Bertram shortly after Anthony's departure, Vyner expressed his disappointment in his nephew. He had left Sarawak, he said, believing that all the tensions of previous years had been ended and that Anthony had 'got the Service behind him to a man' through his action against the Committee of Administration. * 'No-one could have started off under fairer auspices than Peter did,' the Rajah wrote, 'but I come back to find everything changed.'⁵⁷ He blamed himself for putting too much power in his nephew's inexperienced hands. What he now envisaged, he told Anthony later, was a take-over by the British government.⁵⁸

By 11 January the Rajah had decided to remove Anthony's title and a Proclamation issued a week later, doubtless drafted by Archer, stated that Anthony was 'not yet fitted to exercise the responsibilities of this high position'.⁵⁹ The 'yet' was apparently a face-saver insisted upon by the newly-appointed Judicial Commissioner, H. Thackwell Lewis, who was then sent to Singapore to mollify the Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, who had earlier requested the Rajah to defer publication of the Proclamation. In the meantime, Archer wrote to the five Residents informing them of the Proclamation and suggesting that they should dispel any popular notions that Anthony's title had made him heir to the Raj.⁶⁰

Anthony's immediate response was to cable the Rajah for an official explanation, only to be told that 'your Daddy will explain everything'.⁶¹ But in a later letter the Rajah repeated the judgement which he had made public in the Proclamation:

What it all comes down to, Peter, is that you are not fitted for the position. I don't say this from any feeling of jealousy, vindictiveness [*sic*] or anything of that kind, as I was quite ready to resign, at no distant date, and give over to you. But this would now be impossible. Rumours of my impending resignation have got about the

His first loyalty was to the Rajah, but the Rajah was committed to terminate Brooke rule. One of the fiercest opponents of British intervention before the war, Archer found himself in 1946 working to establish a colonial government. His manuscript autobiography has been published in part in the *Sarawak Tribune*.

*See below, pp. 61-6.

place and I have stacks of petitions from everyone asking me to stay as long as I possibly can, to which I have consented.⁶²

He told Anthony that although Sir Shenton Thomas regarded the Proclamation as 'libellous',* he had the support of the entire Service and the Chinese. He regretted the publicity caused by the Proclamation but felt that the phrase 'as yet unfitted to rule' to which Anthony had taken such strong exception 'exactly hits the nail on the head'. Nevertheless, he hoped that Anthony would return to Sarawak, work his way up in the Service and 'regain the position of trust and honour you once held'.⁶³

Explaining the Rajah's action to Gladys Brooke, Bertram was inclined to sympathize with him:

... He hasn't done it just for fun. He is fearfully perturbed by the idea that Peter, with what amounts to a Dictator's powers, even temporarily, might suddenly see fit to use them as a Dictator in some way (with the best intentions) which might be injurious to the State, or antagonise those with whom he is working. ...⁶⁴

Bertram's advice to his son was 'least said, best mended' but Anthony had been deeply wounded by the Proclamation and subsequent newspaper headlines and was determined to have the matter thrashed out, particularly in view of the fact that the Rajah was due to make his triennial speech to the Council Negri in late March. He consequently produced a veritable stream of letters to his father, the Rajah, the Chief Secretary, and Sir Shenton Thomas.

Eventually, however, Bertram was able to bring about a truce between uncle and nephew and it was agreed that Anthony would return to Sarawak in early 1941 as a District Officer. While he was pleased with this arrangement, the Rajah made it clear in his own idiosyncratic way that Anthony would have to be more careful in future. 'There's an Indian proverb', he told Bertram, 'that says "when one lives in a tank it's just as well to keep on good terms with the crocodile"'.[†] There's a good deal in this.⁶⁵ For his part, Anthony still remained puzzled by Vyner's behaviour. '... There is no sense in rigidly maintaining an unconstructive attitude, even within myself', he wrote to Edward Gent explaining why he was returning to Sarawak, 'towards an uncle who, contrary to all unwritten laws effecting [*sic*] 20th Century human relationships (except perhaps those propagated by M. Gandhi) invariably and consistently turns the other cheek'.⁶⁶

MacBryan's Return

The news of Anthony's demotion was greeted with unconcealed delight by the Ranees who were visiting New York at the time. In her

*After Thackwell Lewis' visit, Sir Shenton had written to the Rajah strongly defending Anthony's actions and pointing out how damaging the Proclamation would be for him. (Shenton Thomas to Vyner Brooke, 18 January 1940, copy in possession of Mrs K. M. Brooke.)

†One of the practical jokes played by Vyner at the Astana was to place a baby crocodile in the bed of an important guest.

element amongst newspaper reporters, she made a number of extraordinary statements which were subsequently published around the world. She felt 'pretty sure' that her daughter, Lady Inchcape, would now become Crown Princess of Sarawak and succeed to the Raj. And she expressed relief that in the light of his dismissal and of his marriage with a person of no social consequence, Anthony would not become Rajah. 'My nephew married the sister of a government official', she told the Hearst reporters. 'I don't like to be snobbish, but the native is most particular about these things. It was rather an unfortunate marriage.'⁶⁷

At about the same time that the Rajah invited Anthony to return to Sarawak, he surprisingly gave permission for MacBryan to visit the state after an absence of four years. In an attempt to allay the suspicions which Bertram must no doubt have felt about this and her own statements to the press about the succession, the Raneë told him that there were some officers in Sarawak who for reasons of their own wanted Simon Mackay declared heir to the Raj. When Bertram remained unconvinced by this, the Raneë made a concerted effort to persuade him that she had not been plotting against him and Anthony:

I never imagined in my wildest dreams that you could believe such a thing of me. I happen to know more about the MacBryan plot than anyone. It began with MacBryan making violent love to Didi [Elizabeth]. I don't think that Didi was more than fourteen at the time. . . . But as you know MacBryan was determined to get into the family somehow. Then . . . [deleted passage], and it was during this time that he started his petition which I may as well inform you NEVER got any further than his own crazy mind. MacBryan went to Inchcape and tried to get him to write to Vyner for permission to put Simon's name down as a possible successor. This Inchcape was tempted to do, but as far as I know he never actually wrote. I once wrote to Vyner and asked him if anything happened to Peter was Simon the next of kin, but I don't think he answered. The whole thing has really grown from the evil seeds in MacBryan's brain, and why I wrote to you was that Vyner has been foolish enough to allow MacBryan to return to Sarawak, and as Peter is supposedly on his way ther[e], I thought trouble might spring into the arena again. . . .⁶⁸

As the Raneë indicated, MacBryan's interest in the succession had not diminished. After his return from the abortive visit to Sarawak in mid-1936 he had advised the Earl of Inchcape 'on questions of succession and inheritance in Sarawak', although he claimed that this was in response to Inchcape's own request.⁶⁹

In mid-1940 MacBryan had cabled the Rajah for permission to bring Sa'erah back to her family in Kuching, at the same time offering his services to the Sarawak government. He was allowed to enter the state on the strict condition that he resided there as a private individual, not taking part in political affairs or holding any official post. But on his arrival in August he pleaded poverty and the sympathetic Rajah arranged a temporary post as Assistant Curator of the museum. This time MacBryan was travelling on a British passport endorsed with the requirement that he should return to Britain before the end of the year in case he was needed for military service.⁷⁰ Soon after his arrival he lost his passport

(the rumour was that he did so deliberately) and was given a Sarawak passport without the inconvenient endorsement.⁷¹ However, by January 1941 the police were inquiring about MacBryan at the Sarawak Government Office in London and during a visit to Singapore with the Rajah in late February, Singapore immigration officials claimed that 'trickery' had taken place over the passport. The military authorities insisted that he be arrested and deported to England and it was only on the Rajah's personal representations to Sir Shenton Thomas that MacBryan's services were indispensable for the completion of Sarawak's centenary arrangements that he was able to obtain permission to remain until the end of September 1941.⁷² The Colonial Office later acceded to the Rajah's request that the condition that MacBryan should return to England after the celebrations would be waived as long as he remained in the Rajah's service.⁷³

The Brunei Negotiations

It was not long before MacBryan was once again involved in a scheme to change the succession. In November 1940 he accompanied the Rajah on a tour of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions which took them to Brunei and it was during this time that MacBryan suggested that he should tidy up the problems still remaining from the annexation of Limbang in 1890* and make financial provision for the descendants of Raja Muda Hassim, about whom the Brookes had always had an uneasy conscience. The Brunei sultans had previously refused to accept payment for Limbang, claiming that there had never been a cession, but a number of Brunei *pengiran* who claimed *tulin* rights† in the area were made annual payments which were termed 'cession money' by the Sarawak government. The British Resident of Brunei, E. E. Pengilly, apparently indicated that he would have no objections to such a settlement.

In January 1941, by which time he had been appointed Political Adviser, MacBryan persuaded the Rajah to send him on a special mission to Brunei to negotiate a final settlement in keeping with the spirit of Sarawak's centenary year. Accompanied by Sa'erah and a number of metal boxes of documents, MacBryan took the royal yacht *Maimuna* to Brunei where in spite of the protests of the Resident he anchored upstream opposite the Astana.⁷⁴ Within a matter of hours he had completed negotiations with the Sultan and immediately set out for Limbang where he came to an arrangement with the *pengiran* and the descendants of Raja Muda Hassim. At these meetings he wore the Arab clothing brought back from the *haj*.

According to the agreements finally negotiated, and apparently approved by the Resident, a cash payment of \$20,000 was to be made to

*The annexation and its background are fully treated in Tarling, *Britain, The Brookes and Brunei*. See also Colin Crisswell, 'The Origins of the Limbang Claim', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (September 1971), pp. 218-29.

†Under the Brunei sultanate, certain *pengiran* possessed rights of taxation over river systems.

the Sultan for Sarawak's enjoyment of sovereign rights over Limbang for the previous fifty years and \$1,000 per annum in perpetuity. In addition, a cash payment of \$60,000 and \$6,000 per annum in perpetuity was to go to certain *pengiran* for their surrender of *tulin* rights, and pensions totalling about \$4,000 per annum to the descendants of Raja Muda Hassim. Finally there was a wedding present for the Pangeran Muda Omar Ali, the Sultan's younger brother.⁷⁵

There was a more intriguing side to the Brunei negotiations. Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin who was crowned in March 1940 after a long minority was without a male heir and was determined that his daughter and only legitimate child, Tuanku Ehsan, should succeed him rather than Omar Ali. Although he had been told by the British Resident that it was not possible to transfer the succession to the female line, he had his *wazir* (ministers) sign a document to this effect in about 1937.⁷⁶ The Limbang discussions may thus have been a 'cloak' for a secret agreement between MacBryan and the Sultan whereby the latter, in return for the payments, would emphasize to the British government that Sarawak originally belonged to Brunei, that under Brunei law the succession could pass to the eldest daughter if there were no male heir, and that therefore the Sarawak succession should pass to the Rajah's eldest daughter.⁷⁷

Altogether, MacBryan paid out about \$56,000 in cash and this was duly approved by the Committee of Administration after MacBryan had addressed them on his diplomatic victory.⁷⁸ The Rajah was so pleased with MacBryan that he took him into the Service again as a Class I Officer and designated him 'Political Secretary'. Although the Brunei negotiations had at first seemed something of a coup for MacBryan, the Resident's report brought a stormy reaction in Singapore. Sir Shenton Thomas informed the Secretary of State, Lord Moyne, that by authorizing the negotiations the Rajah had infringed the 1888 Treaty. When the Rajah was unrepentant, Moyne told him that Sarawak's response was 'what might be expected from an unfriendly Foreign Power'⁷⁹ rather than one tied to Britain in a treaty of dependence. Sir Shenton Thomas insisted that all payments be deferred⁸⁰ and he also charged that MacBryan had broken British military regulations by transmitting wireless messages from Brunei to Kuching.⁸¹ He demanded a full explanation of the whole incident and it was in response to this that the Rajah visited Singapore with MacBryan in late February. The Rajah's defence was that it had been a personal matter between himself and the Sultan⁸² but he was obliged to cancel all the agreements. He also had to press the Governor to agree that MacBryan should be allowed to remain in Sarawak until the end of September to assist with the centenary celebrations. However, the Singapore authorities remained intensely suspicious of MacBryan and an intelligence officer was sent to Brunei to prepare a full report.

In Sarawak, the Committee of Administration had been fearful that the British government might use the Brunei affair as an excuse to intervene and they naturally blamed MacBryan for bringing the state into such danger.⁸³ Le Gros Clark had already threatened to resign over his

appointment as Political Secretary⁸⁴ and there was a general feeling among the senior bureaucrats that he would have to be ousted before any further damage was done. It was also rumoured that MacBryan had made a lot of money out of the Brunei negotiations: while it was well known that he had arrived penniless in August 1940, he was believed to be worth thousands by the end of the year.⁸⁵

The Turtle Islands

Another of MacBryan's exercises in diplomacy among the Malays may also have involved the succession. On 1 August 1941 the *Sarawak Gazette* announced that the Rajah had decided to restore to himself the rights to collect turtle eggs at Talang Talang and Satang (otherwise known as the Turtle Islands)* to the west of Santubong and to entrust the responsibility to the Curator of the Sarawak Museum. A marked fluctuation in the number of eggs collected each year had brought the datus under suspicion but when the Museum Curator, E. Banks, persuaded them to keep monthly records it became clear that these were natural variations.⁸⁶ Consequently, it was not on these grounds that the Rajah withdrew the privilege. Rather, it was a means of bringing to an end the quarrel which had been simmering for years between the Datu Patinggi and the Datu Amar and which focused on the turtle egg profits.

Three months later it was revealed that a Turtle Trust had been established, consisting of R. G. Aikman, Abang Haji Mohidin (Datu Hakim), Abang Haji Mustapha (Datu Pahlawan), the *mufti* of the Kuching mosque, and G. T. M. MacBryan.⁸⁷ MacBryan had succeeded in persuading the Rajah that the three datus previously involved, Patinggi (promoted from Shahbandar in 1937), Amar, and Menteri, should be given substantial cash payments† in compensation for the surrender of

*The origin of the arrangement is not clear, but when James Brooke called at Talang Talang Besar in August 1839 on his first voyage to Sarawak he found that the control of egg collection and export was in the hands of the Datu Bandar Daud under the authority of Raja Muda Hassim. (Keppel, *Expedition to Borneo*, Vol. II, p. 20.) He later discovered that the Datu Bandar taxed fishing stakes and prawn nets in the area and that the turtle eggs were sent to Sambas, Pontianak, and elsewhere in Borneo (Mundy, *Narrative of Events*, Vol. II, pp. 304-5). A system was subsequently established whereby the profits from the trade were given to the *Bait al Mal* and the *Bait al Ullah* (Islamic institutions corresponding to 'charity' and 'piety') with a commission to each of the senior datus entrusted with the collection. This was a semi-feudal privilege which brought both prestige and profit and was particularly valued by the Datu Patinggi who claimed ownership of one of the islands, Satang Besar. The islands were also the scene of the *semah*, an annual ceremony of pre-Islamic origin concerned with placating the spirits of the sea and ensuring good fishing. At Satang Besar the *semah* was conducted under the auspices of the datus and was more clearly Islamic in character than the similar ceremony practised at Talang Talang. (Tom Harrisson, 'The Sarawak Turtle Islands "Semah"', *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 3 (1950), pp. 105-26.) No *semah* or similar ritual has been conducted at the islands since 1965 but the occasion continues to be marked by a *makan selamat* or annual feast for members of the Turtle Trust and various dignitaries.

†Compensation was as follows: Datu Patinggi—\$15,000; Datu Menteri—\$10,000; Datu Amar—\$10,000. (Personal information.)

their traditional rights.⁸⁸ The Datu Patinggi later made a number of efforts to regain the rights* but there is no indication that he objected to the settlement at the time. Indeed, it was suggested that the payment was really MacBryan's means of winning his support for yet another scheme concerning the succession. Some people believed that MacBryan wanted Abang Haji Abdillah to become Rajah with himself as *menteri* (chief adviser). It is certainly significant that in its final form the 1941 Constitution included a provision that a Malay could become Rajah.

At the outset of 1941, the centenary of Brooke rule in Sarawak, the question of the succession was still unresolved. A number of efforts by MacBryan and the Rancee to alter the succession to the female line had been thwarted by the implacable opposition of the Datu Patinggi, although it continued to be a possible option. According to the political will of Rajah Charles, Bertram as Heir Presumptive was to succeed Vyner in the event of the latter's failure to produce a male heir. However, Bertram's failing health meant that he was unlikely ever to return to Sarawak. This left Anthony, who had been given a trial by the Rajah in 1939 but, rightly or wrongly, had been found wanting. The only remaining option was cession to the Crown, a solution which had been considered by the Rajah as early as 1938.

*See below, pp. 153, 200.

1. From a transcript in the possession of the late Mrs Margaret Noble.
 2. Runciman, *The White Rajahs*, pp. 221-2.
 3. Charles Brooke to Gladys Brooke, 15 April 1915, Brooke Papers, Vol. 3.
 4. Sylvia Brooke, *Queen of the Headhunters*, London, 1970, pp. 32-40.
 5. Runciman, *The White Rajahs*, p. 222.
 6. Sylvia Brooke, *Sylvia of Sarawak*, London, 1936, p. 154.
 7. Charles Brooke to Charles Willes Johnson, 21 April 1912, Brooke Papers, Vol. 4.
- Subsequent quotations from this source.
8. *SGG*, 17 June 1912.
 9. Sylvia Brooke, *The Three White Rajahs*, London, 1939, p. 137.
 10. Rancee Margaret's handwritten notes on the 1912 Proclamation, Brooke Papers, Box 9/2.
 11. Cited by Sylvia Brooke, *The Three White Rajahs*, p. 142.
 12. Charles Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 10 June 1912, Rajah's Letterbooks, Vol. VI, p. 335.
 13. *ibid.*, p. 147.
 14. Charles Brooke to Charles Willes Johnson, 25 August 1912, Brooke Papers, Vol. 4.
 15. *ibid.*
 16. [Anthony Brooke], *The Facts About Sarawak*, Bombay, [1946], p. 31.
 17. *ibid.*, pp. 31-2.
 18. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 2 February 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 6/1.
 19. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 6 January 1917, Brooke Papers, Box 1/3.
 20. *ibid.*
 21. Margaret Brooke to Charles Willes Johnson, 25 June 1927, Brooke Papers, Vol. 18.

22. *Evening News, Daily Chronicle, Daily Sketch*, 24 June 1927; *Daily Courier, Daily News, South Wales News*, 8 August 1927.
23. Haldane to Margaret Brooke, 27 July 1927, Brooke Papers, Vol. 18.
24. E. Brooke-Daykin to Vyner Brooke, 16 March 1928, *ibid.*
25. Interview with Mr J. C. W. MacBryan, November 1974.
26. Owen Rutter, *Triumphant Pilgrimage*, London, 1937, p. 24.
27. Extracts from a diary kept by Mrs Boulton, cited in her letter to Anne Bryant of 2 January 1938, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
28. *ibid.*
29. *SG*, 1 June 1921; 1 July 1921; 1 September 1921.
30. Mrs Boulton, *op. cit.*
31. 'The Peacemaking at Simanggang', *SG*, 1 September 1920.
32. G. T. M. MacBryan, 'Peacemaking at Kapit', *SG*, 1 December 1924. See also Vyner Brooke to Mrs Kortright, 18 November 1924, Brooke-Kortright Letters, 1916-1932, Rhodes House MSS Pac. s.74.
33. [B. J. C. Spurway], 'Report on Mr G. T. McBryan', Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
34. Rutter, *Triumphant Pilgrimage*, p. 11.
35. *ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
36. Averil Mackenzie-Grieve, *Time and Chance*, London, 1970, p. 98.
37. [Margaret Noble], 'Some Notes on Sarawak (for Mr Drewe, in confidence)', Brooke Papers, Box 12/13. This document was prepared under parliamentary privilege.
38. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 26 January 1943, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
39. Amin Sweeney, 'Silsilah Raja-raja Berunai', *JMBRAS*, Vol. 41, Pt. 2, December 1968, p. 45.
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52. Sylvia Brooke to MacBryan, 29 December 1936, *ibid.*
53. Margaret Brooke to Ponsonby, 21 March 1934, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1.
54. Copy of an anonymous, undated Colonial Office minute, ref. no. 53066/41, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
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56. Notes by Boyd taken from a letter from Vyner Brooke to H. B. Crocker, 17 January 1941, Boyd Papers, Box 3/6.
57. Cited by Bertram Brooke in his letter to Gladys Brooke, 31 January 1940, Enclosure 'The Abolition of the Title of Rajah Muda . . .'
58. Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 21 December 1939, cited by Anthony Brooke in his letter to Vyner Brooke, 23 February 1940, Enclosure 16, *ibid.*

59. Enclosure 10c, *ibid.*; MacBryan to Bertram Brooke, 14 July 1943, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
60. Archer to MacPherson, Cutfield, Aikman, Daubeny, and Pollard, 11 January 1940, Enclosure 10b, 'The Abolition of the Title of Rajah Muda . . . '.
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62. Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 2 February 1940, Enclosure 15, *ibid.*
63. *ibid.*
64. Bertram Brooke to Gladys Brooke, 31 January 1940, Brooke Papers, Box 12/3.
65. Cited by Bertram Brooke in his letter to Margaret Noble, 21 August 1940, *ibid.*
66. Anthony Brooke to Gent, 27 September 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/1].
67. *Daily Express*, 24 January 1940.
68. Sylvia Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 8 July 1940, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
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71. Bertram Brooke's notes on 'Report on Mr G. T. McBryan', Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
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74. Interview with Mrs Gina Field, 8-9 January 1975. Mrs Field was a passenger on board the *Maimuna* at the time.
75. 'Extract from Minutes of Committee of Administration concerning approved payments to Brunei in connection with the annexation of Limbang', CO 531/30 [53066].
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79. Note by Anthony Brooke on his cable to Le Gros Clark, 8 September 1941, Enclosure 51, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak. Enacted:-24 September, 1941', Brooke Papers, Box 2/1.
80. Minute by Gent, 18 March 1941, CO 531/30 [53066].
81. Spurway, 'Report on Mr G. T. McBryan'.
82. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 24 November 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
83. Archer to Anthony Brooke, 22 March 1941, Enclosure 7, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak . . . '; 'Notes by C. Pitt Hardacre—Acting Treasurer of Sarawak', Enclosure 14, *ibid.*
84. Mackenzie-Grieve, *Time and Chance*, p. 98.
85. Spurway, 'Report on Mr G. T. McBryan'.
86. E. Banks, *The Green Desert*, Williton (Somerset), n.d., p. 36; see also Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
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88. Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 7 August 1974.

III

The Crisis of Brooke Government

BROOKE government in the 1920s and 1930s was marked by a number of contradictions. On the one hand there was the surviving nineteenth-century structure of District Officers responsible to Divisional Residents who were in turn accountable to the Rajah. These men possessed substantially autonomous powers and considered themselves custodians of 'the interests of the natives', the official rationale of Brooke rule. Resisting change and committed to the preservation of indigenous custom, they corresponded in their attitudes to the first generation of British officials in the Malay States. On the other hand, there was an emerging Kuching bureaucracy with little or no outstation experience which worshipped at the altar of efficiency and proper accounting. With access to the Rajah and the purse-strings, it assumed considerable power. As the business of government increased and there was a greater need for centralized administration, these bureaucrats inevitably came into conflict with the Residents and District Officers. There was also a fundamental divergence between notions of British justice and the pragmatic application of 'common sense justice'. And the Le Gros Clark Report—the one serious attempt to re-think Brooke rule and to ask how the interests of the natives might best be served in a changing world—fell victim to financial stringency and indifference. The few changes made were in the area of bureaucratic centralization rather than fundamental policy, although they were still sufficient to bring about a trial of strength between the Administrative Service, represented temporarily by Anthony Brooke acting with the Rajah's support, and the bureaucrats of the Committee of Administration.

The Problem of Executive Authority

Vyner Brooke had no desire to perpetuate institutions which so clearly symbolized his father's lack of trust in him. The Committee of Administration met once a month during 1916 and 1917 but on Charles' death it

began to languish and from 1921 until 1934 its existence was fitful. The senior government officer, A. B. Ward, found the Committee a hindrance to decision-making. More importantly, he believed the Committee to be wholly unnecessary in an autocratic system: '... the Committee was conceived under a misapprehension, and it was superfluous because the Rajah was, and always should be, paramount; besides which, there was the Supreme Council of principal Officers of State, native and European, to support his policy.'¹

In 1924 Vyner revoked the Order which had established the Committee as a permanent body and resorted to the old *ad hoc* arrangement which his father had first used. But in the following year he reconstituted the Committee as a permanent body consisting of six European members and three 'advisory members'—two datus and a Chinese.² A number of meetings were held before August 1927 when another Order was passed empowering the Committee to administer the government in the simultaneous absence of the Rajah and the Tuan Muda and to act 'in an advisory capacity at all other times'.³ The Committee was to meet once a month and its authority now covered all matters of general administration and new expenditure. Nevertheless, no meetings were actually held until 1934 when the Committee was finally established as a permanent institution of government. From that time onwards it functioned as the executive decision-making body. The Sarawak State Advisory Council had been effectively abolished in 1929 although the Trust Fund remained.

Vyner had tried to dispose of the devices established by his father as a precaution against his failings and in response to the new problems of the twentieth century government. However, he proved incapable either of exercising power in the personal style of his father or of delegating power effectively. The one hope for change was his appointment of J. C. Moulton to the newly-created post of Chief Secretary in 1923, replacing Ward as the most senior officer in the administration.

Unlike Ward, Moulton had no outstation experience. Curator of the Sarawak Museum before the war, he was brought back by the Rajah to tackle the difficult task of reorganizing the administration. Under the old system, the Residents sent monthly reports to the Rajah who then replied in longhand. Moulton changed all this: '... there were secretaries, typewriters, typists, files, letters to be answered and reasons to be given. Outstation officers exploded, some even left the service, most of them came down to the Kuching races once or twice a year and attacked Moulton bitterly, it was a wonder they did not offer physical violence.'⁴ Not only did the outstation officers bitterly resent the introduction of a Secretariat between the Rajah and themselves, they were incensed that Moulton rather than one of their number should have been chosen to head it.*

*A story which typifies the atmosphere of the time concerns a telegraph message which Moulton sent to the Resident of the Third Division inquiring if the *landas* (monsoon season) was over so that he could make arrangements for an outstation tour. Back came the reply: 'Don't know. Ask God'. 'God' is what they called Moulton. (Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 7 August 1974.)

However, those who felt they should have Moulton's job soon had a chance to show their mettle: Moulton died in 1926 and was succeeded by a number of Chief Secretaries with outstation backgrounds, none of whom lasted more than two years in office. Apart from their administrative inexperience there was the added problem of jealousy among men of comparable seniority. The Rajah had to pension off a number of veteran officers in 1929 to keep the peace.* Ward's appointment as Resident of the First Division in 1915 aroused similar antagonisms but the personal authority of Rajah Charles had been sufficient to ensure its acceptance.⁵ Rajah Vyner did not possess the same authority, nor was he prepared to support his Chief Secretaries against the opposition of outstation officers. And when Chief Secretaries had to be sacrificed, the only recourse was to personal rule by proxy.

In 1928 MacBryan, whose extraordinary career has already been sketched, was appointed Private Secretary to the Rajah and succeeded in persuading him that on H. B. Crocker's retirement as Chief Secretary late that year, the post should not be filled and that the Rajah himself should take over Crocker's responsibilities 'temporarily'. What this meant in fact was that MacBryan virtually ruled Sarawak for a year until he left for England in early 1930. The post of Chief Secretary was then revived until Bertram Brooke's appointment in September 1932 of another outsider, C. F. C. Macaskie,[†] the Financial Secretary of British North Borneo.

Although Macaskie did not receive as much co-operation from Vyner as he had from Bertram, the Rajah asked him to stay on for another term. He had no sooner obtained permission from the Chartered Company, however, than the Rajah changed his mind. Before leaving Sarawak, Macaskie advised the Rajah to appoint as Chief Secretary C. D. Le Gros Clark, the extremely able Secretary for Chinese Affairs. Instead, he appointed as Financial Secretary Edward Parnell, 'a particular friend who was a diplomatic, pleasant companion and a courtier by instinct'.⁶ The post of Chief Secretary remained in abeyance.

Vyner's disinclination to retain Macaskie was only one of a number of instances in which the system of tandem rule foreshadowed in Rajah Charles' will showed itself to be a weakness rather than a strength. What the system meant in practice was that each took a tour of duty of less than half a year, spending the remaining months in England. Consequently, not only was there a failure to delegate power to the Chief Secretary or to

*H. L. Owen, W. F. de V. Skrine, H. H. Kortright and J. R. Barnes were all retired in 1929.

†Charles Frederick Cunningham Macaskie (1888-1967) came from Yorkshire and travelled in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand before being called to the Bar. In 1910 he joined the North Borneo Civil Service and held the posts of Chief Justice and Deputy Governor 1934-45. In 1942 he was appointed head of the Borneo Planning Unit in the Colonial Office and with the rank of Brigadier commanded the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit during the period of military administration. Declining an invitation to become Chief Secretary of the Crown Colony of North Borneo in 1946, he acted as Commissioner for War Damages Claims, Borneo Territories, before retiring to Australia.

the Committee of Administration, there was no continuity of the Rajah's personal rule. Bertram was discreet in his exercise of power, declining to live in the Astana and endeavouring not to contradict his brother's policy or to institute new policies which might be interpreted as an assertion of rival authority. He was unwilling to take any initiative, while Vyner was apparently unable to do so.

The contrast between the two brothers was later expressed by Mrs Margaret Noble, who was friendly with both until cession cut her links with the Rajah:

... People often say how different the Tuan Muda and the Rajah are. But it's the difference, not of two separate organisms but of, so to speak, two branches of one tree. One has grown perilously and wildly, getting cankered and obstructive and dangerous, and bearing no fruit. The other, submitting his will to the discipline of a fine spirit, has grown to a strong and tense and fruitful shape so that no one can fail to be richer and a little greater for having known him. That deep and true humility of his makes him, I think, the most loveable and the purest person I have ever known, and everyone who really knows him feels this. The two brothers are most oddly alike in some ways. They both know that their egos don't matter, but whereas the Rajah says to himself, as I'm sure he does, 'What I am and do can only be of the most trivial significance so I may as well amuse myself as much as possible' the Tuan Muda says 'What happens to me as an individual is completely unimportant. Suffering and pleasure are equally unimportant and create in me a power for service, in however humble a capacity'. So all that 'thwarted life' has increased the gentle power of his spirit, and it is through such as him—sadly few there are!—that God works. . . .⁷

There is very little in Vyner Brooke's writing which provides any clue as to his philosophy of government and his attitude towards the 'Brooke tradition'. The one exception to his 'rule not to appear in print', his foreword to Sylvia's book, *The Three White Rajahs* (1939), contained only this pragmatic observation on native administration: '. . . if forty years of administration have taught me anything, it is the danger of assuming that any hard-and-fast rules can be laid down and followed. . . .' Perhaps the most explicit statement of his general views was made in mid-1944 when he wrote to Bertram about the possible problems of the post-war situation:

I think if the Dyaks are allowed to [live?] in their native zones unmolested by the Chinese and others their lot will be a contented one. Of course the one crucial thing that makes natives happy or discontented is *Rice*. Whether it is easily procurable and *cheap* or *dear* and difficult to obtain. I don't think anything else really matters. Both Malays and Dyaks have been so spoilt for several years past owing to high price of rubber and their smallholdings that it will be difficult to get them back to normal. The Chinese are going to be the great problem in the future of Sarawak. Selous (our Chinese expert) told me once that it wouldn't be long before the whole of the Rejang would be dominated by Chinese. The Malays, whatever happens, may go to the wall. They . . . never have been able to cope with progress and energy.⁸

If Vyner can be said to have had a policy, it was one of resisting change and preserving peace and harmony. This meant compartmentalizing the

Ibans and the Chinese and slowing down the pace of economic development. Vyner had been a highly popular District Officer in the predominantly Iban and strongly traditional Second Division for more than twenty years during his father's reign and as Rajah he retained the benignly paternalistic attitudes of a District Officer determined to protect 'his' people. During his reign it was the Iban and Malay smallholders and the petty Chinese traders whose position was consolidated. Unlike his father, he made no attempt to encourage the establishment of new industries and was unresponsive to the Borneo Company's appeals for further economic concessions and for the relaxation of controls over indentured labour.* At the outbreak of war, the Borneo Company was still refusing to pay the increased export duty on rubber which had been imposed in 1940 and the case had been taken to the Colonial Office by its London directors.⁹ However, the Company's Kuching manager, T. C. Martine, did not blame the Rajah for what he saw as the deterioration of its traditional relationship with the Brookes:

... Government Officers of to-day appear to consider it is [their] duty to frown upon any material European-owned interests in the State and with the relinquishment of their extensive mining rights by the Company in 1923, it seems improbable that those who have controlled the destinies of the country for the 3rd Rajah will encourage any extensive commercial activity which entails the bringing in of Foreign (European) Capital or Control, or presents any possibilities of becoming a virtual monopoly.¹⁰

It was ironic that Vyner, who had been suspected by his father of wanting to sell out to capitalists, should have presided over an administration which was far more averse to the entry of foreign interests than his father had been.

The Administration of Justice

Another major problem which crystallized in the 1930s was the contradiction between the pragmatic and informal mode of justice traditionally practised in Sarawak and the more conventional notions of British justice. In response to pressure from the British government the Rajah had in 1928 appointed Thomas Stirling Boyd,[†] a Scots barrister formerly of Lincoln's Inn, to the post of Judicial Commissioner. Promoted to Chief Justice in 1930, Boyd saw it as his great task to bring system and efficiency

*The Sarawak government had made the importation of indentured labour more difficult in 1935 by imposing tighter controls and a guarantee system. Regulations also made it difficult for employers to hold on to their existing workers. This principally affected the Borneo Company.

†Thomas J. L. Stirling Boyd (1886–1973) was the grandson of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and the Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh University. After taking a degree at Trinity College, Oxford, he served in the 1914–18 war and later worked for the Air Ministry. He was admitted to the Inner Temple as a barrister in 1919 and practised in London until taking up the position of Judicial Commissioner. After his resignation in March 1939 he returned to the Air Ministry for some years. Boyd was interested in drama and wrote a number of plays.

to the administration of justice in Sarawak. He was responsible for the first codification of the various Orders issued by the Rajahs which constituted the state's body of formal law,* and for the modification of the Indian Penal Code which had been introduced in 1922. At the same time, Boyd was anxious to establish a formal procedure for hearings conducted by Residents and District Officers in the outstations. It was Boyd's reforming zeal, together with the administrative changes attempted by Parnell after 1935, which constituted the first real challenge to the authority of the Administrative Service since Moulton. Boyd also brought into focus what might be called the contradiction between the rule of man and the rule of law. Both issues were temporarily settled in favour of the traditionalists by Anthony Brooke in early 1939.

Boyd regarded the establishment of the rule of law as more important than administrative reform. In a memorandum of May 1935 he wrote:

. . . there is an antecedent matter which requires examination and this is the fundamental question whether the country is or is not to be governed by law, i.e. whether it is to be governed on fixed principles which have been laid down beforehand or is to be subject merely to rough and ready empirical rules, called by some the rules of commonsense, and made up as and when occasion requires.¹¹

He saw good government as being necessarily based on the exercise of statutory authority. Without this there could be no discipline, no efficiency. And without the firm and consistent administration of the law, how could trade prosper? The first step towards the establishment of the rule of law was, in Boyd's view, the reconstitution of the Committee of Administration in such a way that all matters of importance would be referred to it for advice and 'certain matters, e.g., all proposed Orders and proposed expenditure, must have its consent before they became legal'. This could provide some protection against caprice, but 'full security could hardly be obtained unless at the same time steps were taken to provide for judicial independence . . . '.

Boyd was also anxious to reorganize the legal department and to place the entire administration of justice on a more secure and formal footing, the limitations of the 'common sense' system of legal administration practised by Residents and District Officers being increasingly obvious to him.

In 1930, a Eurasian schoolmaster was accused of carnal knowledge but the case was dismissed by Boyd when he learnt that the girl had consented and was of age under the Indian Penal Code. When the mother complained about Boyd's decision, the Resident of the First Division made this observation:

I quite see that accused is rightly dismissed according to the section under which he was prosecuted—but I am afraid I am of the opinion that this is one of the cases which would have been far more effectively dealt with under the old non-technical system, where the actual item and the charge sheet didn't much matter.¹²

* *State Orders Issued by His Highness the Rajah of Sarawak or with His Sanction*, Kuching, 1933.

He felt that since the accused was guilty of grossly immoral conduct and had precipitated a family break-up, he should not be let off scot-free. Boyd had some sympathy for this point of view and conceded that in a small and primitive society it could work, but he felt that it overlooked 'a vital and fundamental principle of liberty that a man can only be punished for conduct which the law has declared to be a crime . . .'.¹³ The schoolmaster's conviction, he believed, would have meant the application of a vague moral standard impossible of definition.

Boyd's request for reports of all Resident's Court cases was quietly ignored, but when he began overturning the judgments of these courts and upholding appeals there was a predictably hostile reaction. Particularly significant was Boyd's decision to uphold the appeal of Dunggaw and Unjar, two Ibans from Song who had been convicted for 'depredation on the Territories of a foreign power at peace with His Majesty': they had crossed the border into Dutch Borneo in July 1932 and taken some heads. Dunggaw was arrested in Sarawak and after he had been held illegally in prison for five months it was proposed to hand him over to the Dutch authorities for trial. However, there was a proposal for a peace-making and Dunggaw continued to be held until the arrest of Unjar. In August 1933 the Chief Secretary wrote to the Resident of the Third Division directing that the accused men be sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and then released after serving six months. The trial was delayed because the peace-making was not held until November 1933. An Iban headman then came to Kuching and a definite offer was made to him on the basis of the Chief Secretary's letter. However, the trial when it was held was not in accordance with his instructions: a full board of Iban assessors was not used and the men were charged under Section 126 of the Indian Penal Code.

Boyd objected strongly to the letter, which he described as prejudging the case and imposing a purely nominal sentence for what appeared to be murder. No doubt anticipating these objections, the Resident at first refused to provide records of the case on the grounds that 'it was considered unnecessary'. For the Chief Justice this was an extraordinary affront: 'As the record was called for under a statutory power the Resident had clearly no authority to refuse to send it and his action besides being improper was also ill-advised as no good purpose can be served by concealing what was done. In any case the proceedings were, or ought to have been, held in public.'¹⁴ Boyd quashed the convictions on the grounds that although the Indian Penal Code had been adopted in Sarawak in 1922, the Interpretation Order of 1933 rendered inapplicable the section under which they had been charged. However, he directed the Resident's Court to try Dunggaw and Unjar for the common law offence of head-hunting and suggested that there would be a panel of assessors. Concluding his judgment, Boyd returned to his favourite theme:

They [the two Ibans] cannot be expected to understand the fundamental importance of the point involved, but this does not affect the issue. It is essential to establish the principle that a person can only be punished for conduct which is made criminal by the law, whether statute law or common law. On any other view

rule by law is replaced by caprice, and the fundamental right of the liberty of the subject is destroyed.¹⁵

The Chief Secretary had not seen fit to have the convictions defended in court, but Boyd had publicly rapped some important knuckles and his action was seen by the Administrative Service as gross interference. Small wonder, then, that Anthony Brooke received their full support in 1939 when he unseated the Chief Justice.

Depression and Attempted Reform

Macaskie's appointment as Chief Secretary in 1932 had been made necessary by the need to cut government expenditure in the face of the drastic reduction in revenue brought about by falling prices for rubber and other primary exports.* Government revenue which had reached a peak of \$6,670,000 in 1929 declined to \$4,200,000 in 1932 and Macaskie's task was to restore the state's financial balances. This he did by pruning government departments, particularly in the area of social services. The Education Department, which had only been established in 1928, was abolished and the Medical and Health departments were merged with reduced staff. The salaries of all government employees were also cut. The Rajah himself reduced his annual salary from \$120,000 to \$96,000,

Table I: Sarawak Government Revenue and Expenditure,
1925-1938
(*\$ Sarawak*)

	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
Revenue	5,094,579	6,357,835	6,243,065	6,114,437	6,671,291
Expenditure	3,900,105	4,650,606	5,764,317	6,743,995	6,515,757
Surplus	1,194,474	1,707,229	478,748		155,534
Deficit				629,558	
	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Revenue	5,562,034	4,342,909	4,210,558	3,558,580	4,820,546
Expenditure	7,089,923	5,466,366	3,977,266	3,301,234	3,828,872
Surplus			233,292	257,346	991,674
Deficit	1,527,889	1,123,457			
	1935	1936	1937	1938	
Revenue	5,087,244	5,494,069	4,801,236	4,261,899	
Expenditure	4,222,702	4,406,230	4,104,082	4,272,140	
Surplus	864,542	1,087,839	697,154		
Deficit				10,241	

*See Tables I and II.

Table II: Sarawak's Balance of Trade, 1928-1938
(*\$ Sarawak*)

	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Exports and Re-exports</i>	<i>Favourable Trade Balance</i>
1928	21,397,737	54,527,731*	33,129,994
1929	22,726,657	34,689,890	11,963,233
1930	16,421,592	24,894,762	8,473,170
1931	10,385,056	17,414,672	7,029,616
1932	9,698,808	13,573,872	3,875,064
1933	11,348,622	14,335,898	2,987,276
1934	14,078,768	21,479,988	7,401,220
1935	16,661,079	21,109,410	4,448,331
1936	18,261,685	24,557,351	6,295,666
1937	22,916,202	32,715,532	9,799,330
1938	22,375,430	26,135,095	3,759,665

*This later proved to be a miscalculation.

although an arrangement that he be paid the interest on the State Advisory Council Trust Fund meant that in fact he was no worse off.

The Depression demonstrated that government spending could not continue on the happy assumption that revenue would increase. There was a clear need for long-term planning and the drastic reduction in government staffing meant that there was now a relatively clean slate. This, together with the advice of senior bureaucrats, probably explains why the Rajah at last allowed the Committee of Administration to be re-established with a measure of real responsibility. Furthermore, the Iban unrest which arose to some extent from the effects of the Depression had called into question the Brooke record of native administration.

One of the first initiatives taken by the new Committee of Administration in 1934 was to ask the Colonial Office to suggest a suitable man who could make recommendations on the Sarawak Service and to commission Le Gros Clark* to report on all aspects of the Sarawak administration. M. J. Breen, a senior administrator from Hong Kong, subsequently spent three months in Sarawak in early 1937 and made two reports which led to changes in the conditions of service and incidentally provided the Colonial Office with its first real information on what was happening in Sarawak.† While Breen's reports had the effect of increasing external pressure for change, Le Gros Clark's recommendations

*Possessing a distinguished war record with service on the Western Front and in Palestine, Cyril Le Gros Clark had been on the point of trying for the Sudan Political Service when he met the Rajah in London. His younger brother Wilfrid (later Professor of Palaeontology at Oxford) had signed up as Principal Medical Officer in Sarawak two years earlier in order to pursue his research. The Rajah suggested that Cyril should specialize in Chinese affairs and he spent two years in Amoy studying Chinese language, law, and customs. In 1929 he took up the new position of Secretary for Chinese Affairs which he was to hold until May 1941 when he became Chief Secretary. Interned during the war, he was killed by the Japanese at Keningau in North Borneo shortly before the surrender.

†See below, p. 100.

suggested ways by which change could be achieved internally. A technical officer with no vested interest in preserving the status quo, Le Gros Clark's sharp intellect allowed him to cut through the accretions of time and custom and see the Sarawak administration not as something unique and sacred but as just another colonial administration in need of drastic overhaul.

The main burden of the Le Gros Clark Report was its recommendations firstly on education and the Junior Administrative Service and secondly on the general policy towards the Ibans and other non-Muslim natives. 'Education, guided upon sane lines and coordinated with the life and livelihood of the people, should form . . . the key-note of future administrative policy of Sarawak', he wrote. 'And the District Officer should continue to be regarded as the pivotal unit of the administrative framework.'¹⁶ His recommendations were made on the basis of wide consultations with other Sarawak officers and his own general knowledge of British colonial policy in Malaya, India, and Africa. He suggested the appointment of a Director of Education and an educational board representing the public and the Missions. They would have control over all except Chinese schools and the introduction of a system emphasizing agricultural and technical education at the village level and in the relevant indigenous language throughout the state. At the same time, he recommended that the Maderasah Melayu, Kuching's newly established Malay-medium government school, be up-graded to provide for the education of village schoolteachers and Native Officers.*

Underlying Le Gros Clark's remarks on Native Officers and headmen was the important assumption that the administration of the country would ultimately be transferred to them. Most administrative officers, he wrote hopefully, realized that they were there 'not only to administer the Government on behalf of the natives, but also to educate the natives up to a standard sufficiently high to enable them eventually to take over a greater share in the government of the country'. From his tour of the state, however, Le Gros Clark was not impressed with the members of the Junior Administrative Service, almost all of whom at that time were Malays:

I doubt whether, with few exceptions, we could trust these native officers to undertake these duties [i.e. the duties of European officers] without the closest supervision. Not only is their standard of education low, but many of them seem to suffer from an inferiority complex due, in great part, to psychological reasons. Their reluctance to undertake responsibilities, to make decisions, their apparent lack of initiative, all these may . . . be traced largely to the fact that they are ignorant of the laws of the country, are unable to read the regulations, and as a result are entirely in the hands of the court writer. The fact, too, that a great majority of them have never left the State and, in some cases, not even their own district, must inevitably place them in a position wherein they feel inferior to the most junior member of the Junior Service.

Those few who were capable of assuming greater responsibility, he

*See below, pp. 70, 129.

suggested, could perhaps take charge of constabulary work and prison labour and the issue of gunpowder and cartridges. They could be even more useful in the supervision of government works, upkeep of government stations, inspections of barracks, control of exemption tax registers and issue of inland passes.* Le Gros Clark believed that a concerted effort should be made to recruit Ibans and other natives into the Native Officer Service. He was convinced that there were already a number of Ibans in the Junior Service who were 'perfectly capable' of taking over such duties.

Another question which concerned Le Gros Clark was economic development. In the past there had been no real economic or social planning but new factors were now at work which rendered this unavoidable. Not only were there increasingly insistent noises from the Colonial Office about the need for improved social services, particularly in the areas of health and education, but the Committee of Administration itself saw the need for planning. The Depression had shown that it was not possible to operate on a year-to-year basis on the assumption that revenue would gradually increase in concert with increased expenditure. Oil, the one long-term prospect for increased prosperity, had not fulfilled its earlier promise and Sarawak Oilfields Ltd. now estimated that economic production would probably cease by 1947 unless substantial new deposits were located. However, money had somehow to be found to finance the education programme which Le Gros Clark envisaged and he suggested a development expenditure for the period 1935-41 amounting to \$5,000,000.

If Macaskie had remained as Chief Secretary, more of Le Gros Clark's policy recommendations might have been heeded. But the Rajah's appointment of Edward Parnell as Financial Secretary in 1934 and Chief Secretary in 1937 meant that bureaucratic considerations became paramount. J. R. Hammond, a retired MCS officer, was asked to make more detailed recommendations on education¹⁷ but financial stringencies prevented their implementation and all that had been achieved by 1941 was the appointment of a Director of Education and the opening of a teachers' college for Malays. No changes were made to the Native Officer Service and the Junior Administrative Service beyond the appointment of a few Ibans as probationary Native Officers and police officers. The idea of an administrative training college lapsed. Apart from financial considerations, there seems to have been no support for Le Gros Clark's basic principle that policy should be directed towards the gradual transfer of administration to the natives. As far as the Administrative Service was concerned, it was 'in the interests of the natives' that the status quo should be maintained. However, the government did take Le Gros Clark's advice that punitive expeditions against restive Ibans should be replaced by establishing more government posts in remote areas.

*In 1915 the second Rajah had decreed that only Ibans who had been 'promised definite work by responsible people' could leave their districts. (SG, 2 December 1915.) Subsequently, passes were issued by Residents.

'Things are different in Sarawak . . .'

Isolated as it was from contact with the more prestigious MCS and the British Colonial Administrative Service, the Sarawak Service fostered the notion that unique conditions in Sarawak precluded comparisons with problems encountered and solutions adopted by other colonial administrations. There was minimal contact with the Dutch or even with North Borneo officials who might have been expected to have had a great deal in common. Outstation officers in Sarawak lived for the most part in extreme isolation, seldom seeing each other and relying on out-of-date newspapers for their knowledge of the outside world. Indeed, there were some for whom the outside world practically ceased to exist between furloughs. The only opportunity for any kind of general exchange was the annual pony races at Kuching, an event which was naturally given over to alcoholic reunions rather than to discussions of the principles underlying government policy. The *Sarawak Gazette*, in its parish magazine way, only served to emphasize the moral rightness of the status quo and to perpetuate the intellectual complacency born of isolation. Peter Scott, an officer who resigned in 1939, offered a view of the Sarawak Service which, if somewhat jaundiced, provides a useful corrective to the conventional one:

... The last thing on God's earth that I want to become is a typical Sarawakian. You may think that's balls too, but if you think a bit more, you'll agree with me that the Sarawak Government official of a certain age, and a certain length of service, both of which vary of course with the individual, is a very definite type. Without being too hard on him, he's narrow-minded, pig-headed, ignorant and ill-mannered. He has no interest in anything outside his immediate surroundings, knows nothing of events in England, or other countries, & cares less. If England is ever involved in another major war, he will show up just as badly as he did in the last, even foregoing his leave at home, lest he himself should become involved! Altogether, he's a very nasty bit of work—though he may superficially appear a rattling good sort, especially in the Club (cf Somerset Maugham's books on the East, which are too true to life out here to be taken seriously by those he describes so well), and in a great many cases he's only here because he's not fit to be anywhere else, & because H.H. is more easily gulled than any other man I ever dreamt of, and they know that even if H.H. does at last see them in their true light, he won't be too hard on them!

The final conclusion I reached long ago is that the senior official in this country is a time-server. He knows he's on a soft job, & that he doesn't stand a chance anywhere else, and he knows that H.H., though charming, is also 'wet'. He is against the British Government stepping in (not that they ever will, in our time at any rate) not because he thinks that the present regime is best for the native (an incorrect assumption even if it were genuine) but because he knows that, did they do so, he would be out on his neck before he could ever dispose of the money of which he had swindled H.H. during his service!¹⁵

The half-defiant, half-defensive cry of the Sarawak Service was: 'Sarawak is different', a convenient formula which could always be employed when even the most tentative voice of criticism was raised. However, this was a rare occurrence. There was little impetus within the

Service to question the assumptions of Brooke rule and to reflect on its future direction in the face of new challenges. What little discussion took place, principally in the columns of the *Sarawak Gazette*, was occasioned by books critical of British colonial policy. Predictably enough, Stirling Boyd's 1937 review of Rupert Emerson's *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule* took him to task for dwelling on the shortcomings of the British and imputing to them unworthy motives without providing proof. 'What would have been the condition of subject peoples without colonization?' Boyd asked.¹⁹ Even K. H. Digby,* who shared Emerson's anti-imperialist convictions, made much of Emerson's conclusion that 'for the Malay peoples, imperialist government has served on the whole to protect them against grosser abuses than have in fact been inflicted on them in recent decades'.²⁰

The publication of Julian Huxley's *Africa View*²¹ a year earlier had prompted a lone voice of challenge to the prevailing complacency. The anonymous reviewer in the *Gazette* quoted with approval Huxley's strictures on indirect rule: 'It can never be our aim, save perhaps with a few out-of-the-way peoples whose fate in unrestricted contact with Western ideas would be simply to wilt, degenerate and disappear, merely to preserve a human zoo, an Anthropological Garden. It cannot be our aim, for it would not work.'²² The reviewer believed that Huxley's comments related directly to a common attitude of mind in Sarawak which did not allow that a backward people had the right to share the benefits of civilization (towards which they were being inevitably drawn) and which preferred to treat them as eternal children:

There is, unfortunately, a type of European administrator who allows his sympathy for backward tribes and his enthusiasms for their institutions to run away with him, and to blind him to the real interests of the people he serves. It is the old story of choking the cat with cream, in the long run his unthinking solicitude and lack of foresight work just as much mischief as did the cruder methods of the earlier filibusters, and the people concerned have as little reason to be grateful to him as they had towards the advance guard of the old Imperialism.²³

He also quoted Huxley on that widespread phenomenon—the colonial official whose antagonism towards the Europeanized native contrasted dramatically with his whole-hearted admiration for the uncivilized native. The white man's very presence in a colonized territory introduced changes based on the belief that the white man's ideas and methods were superior. But when the educated native began to put these ideas into practice he was subjected to extreme hostility. This was as true for Sarawak as it was for any British colony. The mission-educated Iban, for example, was never taken seriously. (Now the *real* Iban, the man from the *Balleh*, there was a splendid fellow!) Even the adoption of European clothing was mocked. There was no recognition that if the whites ruled by virtue of their superiority, they should expect sincere imitation from those they ruled. In a prophetic moment, the reviewer wrote of the

*See below, p. 78.

danger signals which he believed could only be ignored at great risk for the future:

At the present moment, Sarawak stands at the crossroads. For better or worse, conditions have changed and are rapidly changing, and the 'zoo' idea is now an anachronism which can no longer be tolerated if the natives are to get the square deal to which they are entitled. Sarawak has ceased to be an oasis of peace in an age of hustling materialism; no longer can it be regarded as a kind of sanctuary where natives can live a life of idyllic simplicity untroubled by echoes from the outside world. . . . It is our duty to face this fact, and to endeavour to fit the natives for the struggle that lies before them—the struggle to adapt themselves to the new world which is being opened up to them. . . .²⁴

These stirring words seem to have been written in vain. Apart from the discussions precipitated by Parnell and Calvert in their efforts to centralize the administration in 1938,* there is no evidence of any serious re-evaluation of Brooke rule before the Japanese invasion. The only person who seemed capable of offering a reasoned defence of traditional Brooke policy in the 1930s was Andrew MacPherson who was promoted to Secretary for Native Affairs by Anthony Brooke in 1939. MacPherson's argument proceeded from the premise that Sarawak was an exception to the normal policy in British colonies of rapid development by means of foreign capital. Consequently, the social improvements possible in British colonies could only be paid for in Sarawak by means of loans, the exploitation of natural resources by foreign capital, and the transfer of land from the natives for the benefit of foreign concessionaires who would then employ them as wage-labourers. In MacPherson's view, loans would create obligations threatening Sarawak's independence. Furthermore, natural resources should be conserved 'until they can be exploited for Sarawak's benefit and not for the benefit of shareholders sitting in England'. He believed that Sarawak's real strength lay with its smallholders and that the industrialization of peasant populations had not been sufficiently successful elsewhere to justify the introduction of a similar system in Sarawak. Nevertheless, when it came to the point, the Brookes were prepared to subordinate the welfare of their smallholders to the interests of the big British, Dutch, and French plantation companies in Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, and Indo-China.

Rubber Restriction

The boom in rubber prices after 1918 further stimulated rubber planting in Sarawak, particularly by the Ibans of the Second and Third Divisions. By 1934 the total area of planted rubber was in the vicinity of 210,000 acres, of which all but about 3 per cent was in the hands of smallholders.† While about one-fifth of the estimated 50,000 small-

*See below, pp. 57–61.

†The following were Sarawak's commercial estates in the 1930s:

Dahan Rubber Estates (Bau district)

Sarawak Rubber Estates, Ltd. (Sungei Tengah)

holders were Chinese, the remainder were Malays and Ibans who planted the narrow strips of fertile alluvial soil along the river banks.²⁵ Most of these holdings were no more than an acre and a half, but surprisingly high yields and good prices meant that many Ibans were able to employ Chinese rubber tappers on a *bagi dua* (50/50 share) basis. During the 1920s, rewards from rubber were such that there was a significant movement away from the traditional slash-and-burn and hunting economy of the Second and Third Division Ibans. Vast areas were planted with rubber and consequently there was considerable dislocation when the price of rubber dived in 1931.

Although Sarawak's interests as a smallholder producer were not served by participation in the International Rubber Restriction Scheme, which was designed to protect European investment in large commercial estates,²⁶ it was one of the signatories of the May 1934 agreement by which the Scheme was established. Although his Residents and District Officers opposed participation for the above reason, the Rajah agreed belatedly after strong representations from the Borneo Company at the behest of the International Rubber Restriction Committee.²⁷ By contrast, Bertram Brooke warmly supported the Scheme and took an active part in its administration. Under the subsequent five-year programme, which allocated to each signatory country a quota based on total planted area and the percentage of the quota which could actually be exported each year, Sarawak's quota for 1934 was 24,000 tons with a graduated rise to 32,000 tons by 1938. New planting was forbidden and only such replanting as would offset the depreciation of mature trees was allowed.

Although exports fell short of the quota in 1934, production in that year was a remarkable 60 per cent above the 1933 figure. The maturation of young rubber trees and the slump in pepper prices from \$42 per *pikul** in 1934 to \$24 per *pikul* in 1935 made it clear that this rate of increase would continue unless there was drastic restriction of production. It was also found that the potential export tonnage, on which the quota was based, had been seriously underestimated due to lack of statistics.

Two successive measures were introduced in Sarawak to restrict production—a 'tapping holiday' scheme which restricted the number of days when rubber could be tapped and a coupon system which limited the quantity of rubber which could be sold by an individual smallholder. The first scheme aroused a great deal of ill feeling since Sarawak's high rainfall meant that tapping was often not possible during the stipulated periods. Wherever it was possible to police the regulations there were arrests and the *Sarawak Gazette* for the years 1934–8 is studded with reports of convictions. On one occasion a patrol near Sibu was attacked by irate

Nissa Shokai (Samarahan River)
Lawas (Sarawak) Rubber Estates, Ltd.
Rejang Estates, Ltd.

The Borneo Company originally owned both the Dahan and Sungei Tengah estates. In 1925 it sold Dahan to a new company in which it retained a controlling interest.

*One *pikul* = 133½ lbs.

Chinese tappers. Restriction of Chinese male immigration, intended as a further limit on rubber output, had created a shortage of tappers and enabled them to demand 60 per cent from smallholders.

The scheme also involved a four-year assessment of all smallholdings which inevitably created the impression among the Ibans that the government was planning a new tax. In October 1935 the *Gazette* reported that in spite of extensive publicity work carried out in the Ulu Oya area, the Ibans there were 'still uneasy' and inclined to believe that the government proposed to levy a quit-rent on their rubber land. Two years later the problem still existed in the Nanga Meluan area. 'In the past', wrote the sympathetic Resident, 'Government inspection and survey of rubber has generally meant some new form of taxation, and it is not surprising therefore that the Dayaks regard assessment with some mis-giving.'²⁸

From the administrative side, the scheme posed formidable problems. All the smallholdings had to be surveyed, registered, and issued with individual identification and in the process there arose the enormous task of sorting out land claims. From the point of view of the smallholders, the scheme was highly objectionable since their tendency was to plant more rubber trees in order to compensate for the loss of income from existing smallholdings brought about by low prices and the increased cost of tapping. There were numerous reports from the Second and Third Divisions after 1934 of the prosecution of Ibans and Chinese for new planting. In May 1937, for example, Ibans from most of the longhouses in Penghulu Ringgit's district at Lubok Antu were fined and imprisoned and the *penghulu* himself and five of his *tuai rumah* were subsequently fined.²⁹ Under the 1934 ordinance, offenders could be sentenced to up to six months' imprisonment and there were liberal rewards for informers.

In addition to these difficulties of enforcement, it also became clear that the reduction in tapping time by more than 30 per cent reduced output by less than 18 per cent. Consequently it was decided in 1938 to abandon the 'tapping holiday' scheme and to issue coupons to all smallholders limiting the amount of rubber which they could sell to dealers.* The problem, however, was that Ibans often sold their coupons to Chinese traders at a discount, thus undermining the effort to preserve equitability. Some smallholders were also much worse off than before. In one instance a smallholder whose rubber garden was capable of producing 27 *pikul* a month and had been able to sell 18 *pikul* under the tapping holiday scheme received coupons for only 6 *pikul*.

Dissatisfaction with the limitations imposed by the coupon scheme even sparked off a demonstration in February 1938 by more than 400 Chinese smallholders and tappers at Batu Kawa (about ten miles south-west of Kuching) who would have marched in protest to the Secretariat had it not been for the intervention of a Chinese-speaking officer who persuaded them to send a deputation instead. Unaccustomed to such

*The new scheme was based on Bridges' recommendations and was gazetted as Order R-9 (*Rubber Regulation*) 1937, SGG, 16 December 1937.

insubordinate behaviour, senior government officers reacted dramatically to the demonstration. The Chief Secretary, Parnell, told Ong Tiang Swee that if the demonstrators did march, force would be used to disperse them. He planned to station police with batons to drive back the crowd and to have others armed with rifles posted around the corner. Parnell even appears to have used the word 'shoot'.³⁰

The gradual recovery of rubber prices and the increased export quota made possible by renewed demand after the outbreak of war in 1939 eased the situation of the smallholders, but rubber restriction had amounted to a serious attack on native and Chinese economic interests. It also provided the first real issue with the potential of disillusioning members of all races with the policy and authority of the Raj. If the war in Europe had not heightened the demand for rubber, conflict between smallholders and government might well have taken on a political dimension. The government's response to Batu Kawa had been no different from that of any colonial regime.

Asun's Rebellion

Rubber restriction also served to exacerbate the Iban 'troubles' which began in 1929 with the resignation of Penghulu Asun of the upper Kanowit district and continued sporadically until the eve of the Japanese invasion.³¹ The more systematic collection of the annual door-tax, together with the imposition of gun registration fees, had led to wild rumours of further taxes among these volatile up-river people. At the same time, the newly-created Forests Department had been establishing reserves where Ibans were not allowed to farm, hunt, or collect jungle produce. The issue of inland passes was tightened up, limits on up-stream settlement were enforced and a minimum size for longhouses was introduced in order to reduce mobility.³² This seriously affected the people of Asun's area whose ancestors had settled there comparatively early and who were now short of virgin land for the cultivation of hill-padi, their staple food. The growing systemization and centralization of Brooke rule was also affecting the personal relationship between the Ibans and the District Officers whose increasingly heavy administrative burden made it difficult for them to make the traditional up-river tours.

Although there was not a great deal of rubber in Asun's area, the census necessitated by the restriction scheme fuelled further rumours of taxes and the seizure of land by the government. Up-river Ibans had already been hard-hit by the dwindling market for jungle produce which had been their traditional source of cash income. Asun and his followers never constituted a proto-nationalist, anti-Brooke movement, and hostility was directed rather towards particular Brooke officers. Nevertheless, the subsequent government military expeditions sent out to round up the dissidents and the large-scale enforced re-settlement of their sympathizers was out of all proportion to the problem. It also revealed a continuing reliance on the rough-and-ready methods of the first two Rajahs in Iban 'pacification'. Asun's rebellion was in the tradition of Iban

resistance to Brooke efforts to curb their migration, but it was also a reaction to the gradual bureaucratization of Brooke government and the inevitably less sporting attitude to tax-collection and enforcement of regulations. Government control was tightening in Iban areas without any commensurate improvement in the services offered.

The Committee of Administration adopted Le Gros Clark's suggestion that permanent government posts be established in the disaffected up-river areas, replacing the old system of control from down-river bases. However, by 1941 there had been only a token effort to extend social services such as health and education to more remote areas. Nor was much thought being given to the long-term implications of Iban involvement in the cash economy and their increasing access to mission school education. Brooke policy towards the Ibans had not advanced very far beyond the traditionally limited objective of maintaining the authority of the Raj.

The Bureaucratic Centralizers

Unlike previous Chief Secretaries (with the conspicuous exception of Moulton), Edward Parnell was not an outstation man. Although he joined the Sarawak Service as a clerk in 1905 and later became Controller of Government Monopolies, he resigned in 1927 and joined the Sarawak Steamship Company as Managing Director. But in 1934 the Rajah brought him back into government service as Treasurer and three years later appointed him Chief Secretary. Succeeding him as Financial Secretary was H. M. Calvert, a dour and ascetic man who knew the power of the purse-strings. Parnell and Calvert stood for more efficient and business-like government from the centre. This was to be based on proper records, proper accounting procedures, and adherence to set forms. Above all, it meant the direct accountability of outstation officers to the Kuching Secretariat. The semi-autonomous position of the Residents was consequently threatened. At the same time, Calvert took steps to tighten up accounting procedures in the outstations, including the detailed documentation of District Officers' and Native Officers' travelling expenses. This aroused tremendous resentment and probably sealed the fate of the two senior bureaucrats.

It is clear that Parnell and Calvert wanted to abolish the Residential system by stages and centralize power in Kuching where all senior administrative officers would in future be stationed. District Officers would thus operate independent of direct supervision by Residents and would instead be responsible direct to Kuching. The first step towards this reorganization was taken in 1934 when the Fifth Division was abolished through incorporation with the Fourth Division. This did not involve any dramatic change because there was no Resident of the Fifth Division at the time. Nor did the merger, for which there were some practical reasons, ever fully take place because of the Japanese invasion. But in the words of a technical officer of the time, 'The significance of the decision lay in the fact that the disposition of administration officers and offices

was on the orders of non-administrative officers, and this became [Anthony] Brooke's pretext to bring the confrontation [between outstation officers and the Committee of Administration] to a head.³³ While the official reason given by Parnell and Calvert was economy, outstation officers were under no illusion as to what was happening. It seemed that there would be no further promotions within the Administrative Service to the position of Resident and that when the existing Residents retired they would not be replaced.

By August 1937, Boyd was expressing dissatisfaction with the Parnell-Calvert regime in his letters:

Calvert is becoming more objectionable every day and his manners are often beyond belief and his methods of dialectic are those of the coster. Success has gone to his head and the sooner his successor is appointed the better. After months of Parnell I don't think he is really fit for the job. His outlook is too limited and he has no real grasp of administrative problems.³⁴

Boyd was also bitter about what he regarded as Parnell and Calvert's self-promotion at the expense of the state. While accepting the increases in cadets' pay, the abolition of distinctions between pensionable and non-pensionable officers and other changes based on the recommendations of the Breen Report, he had serious doubts whether the 'large increases upstairs' were warranted.*

Boyd was thinking not only of the problem of the increased costs of administration, but the effects on the outstation officers in a situation where expenditure on essential services seemed to be so grudging. A request for a dresser at Kapit or Kanowit, for example, had been refused on the grounds that no money was available; and expenditure on mosquito control for the whole of the state was less than that for Labuan. Boyd was also concerned about the fate of J. R. Hammond's report on the education system which was awaiting consideration. It seemed to him that since money had been found for the salary increases, it could be found for social services. 'If not', he told Hammond, 'it will be a disgusting exhibition of the selfish abuse of power.'³⁵

The reaction of outstation officers to the reforms, particularly the requirement to account for travelling expenses, was more dramatic. Many District Officers were openly hostile towards Kuching and were supported by the Residents. However, there was no conflict until late 1938 when William Dick, Resident of the Third Division, became involved in a personal dispute with Calvert. Dick resented Calvert's insistence on proper accounting procedures and used strong language in his official correspondence. When he refused to withdraw his most outspoken remarks, the Rajah supported Calvert and Dick had to resign.³⁶ But this victory of the Kuching bureaucracy caused something of a sensation among the outstation officers and a number of resignations

*In particular, there was the elevation of Parnell and Calvert to positions which gave them very substantial pay increases. Calvert, for example, was to receive a rise of \$300 which brought his salary up to \$1,200 per month.

were penned by junior officers as a result. Calvert was now 'universally hated' and Boyd thought that there could be no harmony until he left.³⁷ 'If Calvert does trip,' he wrote to Noel Hudson, the former Bishop of Labuan, 'there won't be many hands willing to help him to get up. . . .'³⁸

In the meantime, Parnell was anxious to find out what reaction there had been to the gradual changes being made. In early 1939 he prepared a series of questions on the 'old' and 'new' systems of government which were circulated within the Administrative Service for comment. While the circular itself has not survived, the replies of two administrative officers—one newly arrived and attached to the Secretariat and the other a veteran District Officer—provide some indication of what was at stake. A. J. N. Richards, a young cadet who had come straight from Oxford, examined James Brooke's writings for the original rationale of Brooke rule, taking as his theme the first Rajah's dictum: 'We must progress or retrograde'. He saw two major faults in the old Residential system: firstly, that it encouraged the growth of different policies, 'in so far as there were any at all', in different areas; secondly, that there was no means, short of a change of regime, of 'ensuring any kind of progression within those territories, distinct as they were, and jealous of each other and of "interference"'.³⁹ Altogether, it was static and inward-looking, 'outpaced in the course of progress', and therefore best 'left for dead'. Reversion to this system as it had operated was 'ridiculous'. The new system, on the other hand, lacked adequate staff, the delegation of power from Kuching and a definite plan of implementation, so that while the old system was being destroyed there was 'a hiatus of uncertainty and disbelief'. Contrasting the two, he described the old system as being forced into centralized execution but lacking centralized policy and control, while the new system wrongly attempted 'centralized execution of a scrappy and non-existent policy'.

If the principle of trusteeship on behalf of the natives was still the basis of Brooke rule, he argued, the recommendations of the Le Gros Clark Report should be vigorously implemented. The spread of education would mean that responsibility could be increasingly borne by the natives and expansion could thus take place without further expenditure and dependence on European officers. 'It is time', he concluded, 'that Sarawak treated itself as one state among many, and not as an isolated Utopia: it is time that she began to look upon other states and gain by considering their experience.' He accurately predicted that the absence of a strong policy would force Sarawak to follow Malaya and consequently lose some of her internal independence.

The outstation view was predictably conservative. The District Officer at Lubok Antu in the Second Division, H. E. Cutfield, wrote that he could not see how the new system would be an improvement:

In the old way, junior, sometimes very junior, officers were in charge of [a] district but they had their Divisional Resident above them who had both experience and a knowledge of his Division to check their work and see that they did not make too many blunders. . . .

Under the new scheme we would have independent district officers, some very junior indeed with no Divisional Resident to keep an eye on their work. Senior officers (who would under the old scheme have been Divisional Residents) would be stationed in Kuching and be expected to do the same work of supervision. . . . This I think would be impossible . . . they would very soon lose touch after being in Kuching for a short time and would become incapable of deciding sympathetically of the outstation ideas unless they were very exceptional men. . . .⁴⁰

In addition to these practical objections, there was a strong suspicion that the new scheme was entirely initiated by the Committee of Administration, ' . . . a body of men ignorant of conditions in general throughout the country and who found the criticism of Senior Divisional Residents inconvenient', in order to monopolize power.⁴¹ Writing shortly after the departure of Dick and the confrontation between Anthony Brooke and the Committee of Administration, Cutfield made it clear that the new scheme should be abandoned.

What the Rajah himself thought about the revitalized and power-accumulating Committee of Administration is difficult to say but it seems clear that by the late 1930s his earlier unwillingness to delegate power beyond a Chief Secretary or a Private Secretary had been overcome by weariness or even indifference. Nor did he think it likely that Bertram, only two years younger and in poor health, would be available in future to share or take over responsibility. Under these circumstances the transfer of a measure of power to the Committee must have appeared inevitable and perhaps even attractive. But it was anathema to Bertram. In a memorandum to Parnell penned in late 1936 before ending what was to be his last tour of duty in Sarawak, he left no doubt about his determination to uphold the autocratic principle against what he regarded as the Committee's arrogation of power to itself:

I know there is an idea that once the Committee of Administration has discussed a matter and given its recommendation, it should be regarded as final. I quite see the members' point of view. It means a lot of time is wasted otherwise. But we are not a country with a court system like Great Britain. If we were, the Committee of Administration would not be a body of officials. So long as the Rajah has the actual powers of originating or vetoing anything he pleases he cannot screen himself behind any decision of [the] Committee of Administration. He must take the personal responsibility for the approval of any recommendation, and, being Rajah, cannot well refuse to listen to anyone who considers that any recommendation does not correspond with a decision which the Rajah himself would have made had he personally considered the facts without Committee of Administration's advice.⁴²

Bertram gave as an example the Committee's involvement in the question of government doctors being authorized to conduct private practice in their own time. The majority of the Committee had recommended that this be discontinued and Bertram had decided to defer to the Rajah's personal decision on his return. Bertram was concerned not so much because he disapproved of the recommendation, but because the Chief Secretary 'was the only member who regarded the question from what he thought would be the Rajah's point of view if he handled it

himself. In Bertram's view the Committee's function was to anticipate the wishes of the Rajah. And it could be performed by a much smaller body: 'even a couple of people, with powers to summon advisers on various departmental and other matters would be quite sufficient *in a Raj*. "Quot homines tot sententiae". [There are as many opinions as there are men.] The only weak link in Bertram's traditionalist view of Brooke government was the Rajah himself. Vyner had approved all the financial and administrative changes introduced by Calvert and Parnell but was unwilling to support them against the opposition of the Administrative Service.

Anthony Brooke and 'The Sarawak Crisis' of 1939

Anthony ('Peter') Brooke had been born at the height of the dispute between Charles Brooke and Vyner Brooke. And so sensitive was Bertram to the question of the succession and so determined was Ranee Sylvia that he should be kept out of the way that it was not until 1934 that Anthony visited Sarawak. After Eton (1926-31) and a year at Trinity College, Cambridge, Anthony moved to the School of Oriental Studies in London to study the Malay language and Muslim law. He arrived in Sarawak in June 1934 at the beginning of one of his father's tours of duty and spent the next few months travelling around the country with the Secretary for Native Affairs. At Santubong, a Malay village at the mouth of the Sarawak River, he received for the first time the salutations appropriate to his position as likely heir to the Raj. Interestingly enough, his reactions were similar to those of his uncle fifty years earlier:

Everybody is bewilderingly embarrassing here—they will insist on showing me through doors first, and getting up when I come into the room and altogether seem to do all they can to make me feel different—and I'm not quite sure that I like feeling 'different'! However, everybody is terribly nice and I dare say I'll get used to it, as with any luck I may be in this country for another 50 years or so! (If God and the Japanese are willing.)⁴³

It had been decided by Bertram Brooke that Anthony should be seconded to the Malayan Civil Service for two years before taking up a post in Sarawak. Accordingly, he spent the period from September 1934 to September 1936 attached to the state secretariats in Kuala Pilah, Alor Star, Kuala Trengganu, and Kuala Lumpur and also acted as a magistrate. It is difficult to say to what extent Anthony was influenced by this Malayan experience. There is nothing in his private correspondence of the time to indicate that he was concerned about the political impotence of the Malay rulers and the possibility that the Malayan Resident system might be introduced in Sarawak through British pressure. In August 1935, however, he took charge of the Secretariat at Alor Star during the Assistant Adviser's absence and gained his first real taste of power. ' . . . An "Adviser" in an unfederated State', he told his sister, Jean Halsey, 'corresponds with a "Resident" except that he is really only meant to *Advise* though in reality it means a great deal more than that'. Although

he was only carrying out routine work, he evidently enjoyed the position. '... If the A.A. doesn't come back soon', he quipped, 'he'll regret that he ever went away'.⁴⁴

At the end of September 1936 he went back to Sarawak and joined Andrew MacPherson at the newly-established post of Nanga Meluan in the Third Division. After another short term at Marudi with Donald Hudden,* District Officer of the Baram, he served for some months in the Kuching Secretariat and in May 1938 went to England to take a course in colonial administration at Oxford under Margery Perham. It was also during this time that he met Hudden's sister, Kathleen, whom he was later to marry.

In March 1939 Anthony initiated an inquiry which brought about the resignation of five senior members of the Sarawak government.[†] While the subject of the inquiry—the dismissal of a young European officer—was in itself unimportant, the confrontation between the Rajah's nephew and the senior bureaucrats revealed some of the problems of Brooke government in the immediate pre-war period. Although Sarawak remained an autocracy, the third Rajah's lack of interest in the everyday business of government had resulted in a progressive assumption of executive power by the Kuching bureaucracy. The crisis of 1939 stemmed from Anthony Brooke's attempt to restore this power to the Administrative Service and to ensure that it was exercised in accordance with what he saw as the traditions of Brooke rule. In this he had the Rajah's support.

Among the junior officers alleged by Dick to have been 'persecuted' by Calvert was F. L. Crossley, whose career in Sarawak began in 1930 when he arrived as an administrative cadet. From most accounts he performed creditably enough and was regarded even by Stirling Boyd as a good magistrate. But like most of his fellow officers he got into debt. With liabilities amounting to more than \$2,500, Crossley applied to the government in 1938 for a loan to cover medical expenses. In so doing, however, he grossly understated his indebtedness and Parnell recommended after consultations with Boyd, Calvert, and others that he should be dismissed from the service. The Rajah gave his approval and in late January 1939 Crossley, who was then serving as an Assistant District Officer at Oya in the Third Division, received a letter from Parnell conveying the decision. Crossley's petition to the Rajah was unsuccessful and he could not even obtain details of the terms of his dismissal until early March when he was told that a passage had been booked for him from Singapore two weeks hence.

In the meantime, Anthony Brooke had returned from leave to take up

*Hudden was extremely popular with the people of the Baram and his name remains as something of a legend. Escaping from the Japanese in 1942, he crossed into Dutch Borneo but was caught and beheaded by Iban prisoners released for the purpose by the Japanese.

†The following account has been based on documentation provided by Boyd in 'The Sarawak Crisis', a dossier which he took back to England and circulated widely among M.P.s and newspaper editors.

the post of District Officer, Mukah, of which Oya was a sub-district. Crossley told Anthony his story, emphasizing that although he had been dismissed, he had been expected to continue as magistrate for two months before receiving terms of dismissal and notice of virtual deportation.

This provided the opportunity which Anthony might well have been waiting for. Filled with indignation at Crossley's treatment and determined to beard Calvert and Parnell, Anthony left immediately for Kuching. Soon after his arrival he called at the Astana and, in the Rajah's words, 'shot in a sheaf of letters on me' concerning Crossley's dismissal.⁴⁵ He told the Rajah that Crossley had been harshly treated and that there should be an investigation into the circumstances of the dismissal which was otherwise likely to bring the entire service into disrepute. Parnell and Calvert were then asked by the Rajah to give Anthony all the files on Crossley and later that day, after another meeting with his nephew, he told Parnell that he had 'allowed' Anthony to hold an inquiry the following Monday. 'Peter is fully aware', the Rajah added, 'that if his enquiry is abortive and merely mischievous that he will have to resign the service.'⁴⁶

There followed a most extraordinary exchange of messages across the river between the Chief Secretary's office and the Astana. Parnell and his colleagues objected strenuously to the idea that a junior officer should conduct an inquiry into their actions. They pointed out that not only had there been no alternative to dismissing Crossley (with the Rajah's approval at every step) but that Anthony had left his official post without permission and had appointed Crossley, whose dismissal was now official, in his place. Vyner admitted that it was 'unusual for a junior officer to hold an enquiry regarding conduct of his seniors in service', but it was to go ahead.⁴⁷

At about the same time he wrote an official letter empowering Anthony to hold the inquiry, the procedure of which was to be 'laid down by Mr Brooke, who has my full authority to conduct it as he thinks fit'.⁴⁸ In a covering note, Anthony asked Parnell to inform all members of the Committee that he required them to attend. He also told Parnell that he was not disputing the decision that Crossley should go: 'I am, however, much concerned with the way in which he goes, and the terms he receives for his past services. And this is why I wish to hold an enquiry—and, I may add, I have every right to do so.'⁴⁹ This 'right' stemmed not from his position in the Sarawak government service, it emerged, but from his status as Rajah Muda which had been conferred upon him by the Rajah that very day in order to facilitate the inquiry.⁵⁰

It had become increasingly obvious to members of the Committee of Administration that the real purpose of Anthony's inquiry was the removal of Parnell and Calvert. Parnell told a hurriedly-called meeting of the Committee that in his view the whole thing was nonsense and that the best solution was for him to see the Rajah and offer to go over the facts of the case with the Rajah Muda. There was full agreement on this, but before any action could be taken another note arrived from the Rajah saying that he would not see anyone about the inquiry until after it had

taken place. According to Boyd, this finally convinced the meeting 'that there was definitely something behind the decision to hold the enquiry'.⁵¹ Parnell and the other members of the Committee—Calvert, Boyd, J. B. Archer, N. A. Middlemas and J. H. Bowyer—then produced a memorandum in which they pointed out that the real issue of the inquiry appeared to be not the dismissal of Crossley but the 'propriety and otherwise of such of Your Highness' officers who were responsible for advising Your Highness what terms should be given to Mr Crossley'.⁵² They felt that although no charges had been made, the Chief Secretary had been placed in the position of a defendant. Even if the inquiry were restricted to the grounds of dismissal (which seemed unlikely), the Rajah Muda's own position as advocate clearly rendered him ineligible to judge the case, particularly since a decision that there had been no impropriety would automatically bring about his resignation. The Committee finally requested that in the absence of any impartial person 'of the requisite standing' in Sarawak, the Rajah should ask Sir Shenton Thomas, the Governor of the Straits Settlements who was also the British Agent for Borneo, to appoint one or two judges or senior officers from his own service to conduct the investigation.

While their argument was unexceptionable from a legal point of view, they had erred politically in reacting so strongly to the projected inquiry and in recommending the appointment of outside adjudicators. The Rajah told Parnell on the morning of the inquiry that he regarded their memorandum as 'puerile and farcical' and declined to acknowledge it formally:

To think of six grown men—senior men—in the Government, who have sat and deliberated together for many years not having the courage to face a single boy who only three years ago was a junior officer, without asking help from judges from Singapore and other paraphernalia. The whole situation is too ridiculous. I don't quite see how Singapore judges—learned men though they may be—can adjudicate on the future policy of Sarawak.⁵³

The Inquiry and its Outcome

From the outset the inquiry was a confrontation between Anthony and the Committee. Having recited the facts of the case as he saw them, Anthony pronounced that Crossley had been 'savagely' treated. He was to be permitted to retire and to receive six months' pay in lieu of notice as well as the leave to which he was entitled. The rest of the inquiry consisted of speeches by members of the Committee of Administration and Anthony's replies. One of the most significant of these was Anthony's response to Dr Bowyer's point that the terms originally given to Crossley were the maximum permitted under General Orders:

I should like to say that so long as I have any influence over the way the laws of Sarawak are to be applied I shall never recommend the application of those laws literally where I consider that my own good judgement fits the circumstances better, and in speaking thus I know I express the unspoken policy of His Highness the Rajah in regard to the application of the laws of the State.⁵⁴

When the inquiry came to an end on the afternoon of the second day, Parnell resigned and was immediately replaced as Chief Secretary by Archer who had treacherously retracted his earlier support for the memorandum. Calvert, Middlemas, and Bowyer also resigned although Anthony tried to persuade the latter two to stay. Boyd was told that although the Rajah wished him to resign as Chief Justice, he could stay on as Judicial Commissioner. But Boyd was not prepared to accept such a demotion. Even if he had been able to remain Chief Justice, he wrote, there would still have been the formidable problem of maintaining the independence of the judiciary. Anthony's declaration that he proposed to substitute his own 'good judgement' for the written law when necessary had persuaded Boyd that his position would become impossible. Indeed, he saw the situation as resembling the dispute between King James I and Sir Edward Coke in 1605 when the Lord Chief Justice was dismissed for challenging the King's claim to be above the Law.

At about the same time, the Rajah wrote to Parnell indicating his regret at what had happened:

No one is more sorry than I am for what has taken place as I am just as responsible as any member of the C. of A.— I attach no blame or stigma on anyone and as for yourself you have always been loyal and done your duty as a conscientious and high-minded officer . . . in spite of all that has taken place I am sure that we shall always be friends.⁵⁵

And later, in a brief note to Sir Shenton Thomas, he told the Governor that Anthony was authorized to give a resumé of all that had happened and that he (the Rajah) accepted responsibility for the 'purge' of his most senior officers:

As far as organisation, redtape and office methods are concerned I have nothing against these three officials except that the Government so formed is drifting away from native interests and I think you will agree with me that a native state cannot be governed from an office table. Having the welfare of the native community so much at heart this gradual cleavage of interests has been very disturbing to me for some years past.

All native communities and the Chinese and also Government officials who live and work among the natives very warmly welcome this change. . . .⁵⁶

All he wanted now, he concluded, was some encouragement from the Governor and with this 'everything will go swimmingly and all Sarawak . . . will heave a sigh of relief'.⁵⁷ He had appointed Anthony as Rajah Muda and Officer Administering the Government during his absence. Expressing full confidence in his nephew's ability to look after things, he left for his annual holiday in England.

The significance of Anthony's discussions with Sir Shenton Thomas in Singapore will be dealt with later.* It will suffice to say at this point that Anthony obtained the Governor's support. On his way back to Kuching, Anthony wrote to his sister, Jean Halsey, that he was about to become Officer Administering the Government 'with the full powers of the Ra-

*See below, pp. 102-3.

jah'. It even seemed doubtful to him that his uncle would actually return to Sarawak. 'Oddly enough I don't feel a bit alarmed', he wrote. 'On the contrary I am glad the time has come when I can at last do something worthwhile. . . .'⁵⁸ He later remarked on the favourable reaction there had been locally to his victory over Parnell and Calvert:

. . . the general feeling is one of great relief at the departure of the two 'Dictators'. Parnell and Calvert were *openly* referred to as 'Mussolini and Hitler' by the *Chinese* in the bazaar!! The Chinese wanted to give Parnell a 'send-off' with crackers . . . and all the rest, but we managed to dissuade them! What the Malays—and the old Datu Patinggi—thought of P. had best be left unsaid. Everyone is sincerely 'relieved'—and let us pray most fervently that their departure see the beginning of a new and better era of administration for the country. The C. of A. has used *all* the power that it had designated to itself during the past 20 years—and more especially the last 10. The whole business was very sudden and I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that never since the days of the second Rajah has the country been so much in the power of *one* man. The C. of A. is a mere *name* and nothing else—and I think it should remain so!⁵⁹

But the feeling of relief was by no means general, particularly among the technical officers. Indeed, there were those who regarded the loss of Parnell, Calvert, and Middlemas as the end of any hope of administrative reform. There was a good deal of resentment towards Anthony and his outstation backers 'for what had amounted to a coup with the consequential loss of three outstanding officers (no one worried about Boyd)'.⁶⁰ A. J. N. Richards was at the wharf for Parnell's departure:

I saw Mr. Parnell suddenly go red as fire—it must have been a moving sight to see the wharf crowded with people, only a murmur of talk and all sorry to see him go—after 34 years in the place to be 'forced' out by a commotion of royal prerogatives! And I think everyone was genuine—from old Ong Tiang Swee who had seen Parnell come out as a young man, to the 4 companions of the C. of A., sound men, down to myself who wonder how I shall fare in 20 or 30 years time!⁶¹

Thinking of the three further farewells to come, he suggested that by June he and his fellow officers would have 'built up a very sorry feeling' and would be 'more "anti" than ever'.⁶² Anthony's intentions were the source of some suspicion and his suitability as the next Rajah was questioned.⁶³

For his part, Boyd emphasized that the 'new policy' to which Anthony was objecting 'had been approved by the Rajah at every step and was carried out by the Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary at the Rajah's direction'.⁶⁴ The real basis of complaint, he told Calvert some months later, was financial policy:

I have little doubt that the finance business was the real reason for the row and of course H.H. should have taken the matter up and looked into it himself. I imagine that he did not do so because he knew if you and Parnell opposed any changes he would get the worst of any argument and wouldn't have the guts to overrule you if necessary, and secondly because he preferred the back door to the front.⁶⁵

Anthony Brooke as Rajah Muda

The period of Anthony Brooke's administration of Sarawak from April until September 1939 is of some interest. The difficulty, however, is that

there are very few records and those which have survived consist largely of complaints made about him by his critics. Consequently it is only possible to provide the most general outline of his policy.

A few days after the inquiry, Anthony told a special meeting of administrative officers that four senior men were leaving, but that there was no stigma attached and the service would be in no way impaired as long as everyone co-operated. After his departure, Archer addressed them on the subject of the 'new system' of centralized administration initiated by Parnell and Calvert, suggesting that it might not be feasible. Those supporting Archer's highly conservative views spoke up strongly and he concluded that 'the general opinion was that the new scheme would not work'.⁶⁶ However, Richards noted, if MacPherson, Selous, and others 'capable of *thinking*' had spoken frankly they would have been unpopular. '... We must be cleverly diplomatic', he wrote, 'or shut up and suffer gladly'.⁶⁷

One of Anthony's preoccupations which emerged from the inquiry was the administration of justice. He announced that the post of Chief Justice was to be reduced to Judicial Commissioner as from 1 April, a decision which had the Rajah's support. Boyd's fussy insistence on the letter of the law and his refusal to take account of Sarawak's 'special conditions' had made him something of a nuisance. Vyner agreed with Anthony that Boyd's successor need not be of top calibre and that it would be a short-term appointment on a salary substantially less than Boyd's.⁶⁸

Although there is only Boyd's word for it, Anthony also appears to have planned the abolition of the Committee of Administration, only to find that 'owing to certain difficulties' it could not be done. Certainly, the Committee's meetings during Anthony's time were little more than a formality and he did not replace the five members who had resigned. This, together with a number of other changes, convinced Boyd that Anthony's policies were 'definitely reactionary and attended with considerable danger to the country'.⁶⁹

Most of the decisions subsequently made by Anthony were not so much changes as reversals of the tentative efforts made since 1934 to centralize the administration. One of his first decisions was to re-establish the Fifth Division with F. H. Pollard* as Senior District Officer; a number of other administrative officers were also promoted, subject to confirmation on the Rajah's return. The financial and other administra-

*Frederick Hubert Pollard (1903-55), one of the most active supporters of Sarawak's independence, was persuaded to join the Sarawak Service in 1923 by his uncle, Charles Willes Johnson, who had been in charge of the Sarawak Government Office in London since 1912. Pollard had served at various stations before being appointed to Limbang and in late 1941 was promoted to Secretary of Native Affairs. In Australia when the Japanese invaded Sarawak, he joined the Australian Army and served in the Allied Intelligence Bureau. Returning to England in October 1943, he was appointed by the Rajah to head the Sarawak section of the Borneo Planning Unit but resigned in protest against what he regarded as the high-handed attitude of the Colonial Office. He became a member of the Provisional Government in early 1945 and was dismissed with Anthony Brooke by the Rajah in October. In May 1946 he accompanied Bertram Brooke on his visit to Sarawak. See below, p. 240 note 9.

tive controls introduced by Parnell and Calvert were relaxed, as were Boyd's strictures on magisterial procedure, so that Residents and District Officers could once more be free from 'interference' by Kuching bureaucrats. Furthermore, they were encouraged by Anthony to give their frank views on government policy as part of what he saw as a move towards decentralization.

One significant change was a greater emphasis on education—particularly Malay education. Fluent in Malay from the time of his arrival, it was natural that Anthony should have been more concerned with the Malays and their problems. Certainly, he was more amenable than his uncle had been to the Malay argument that educational improvement would lead to economic advancement *vis-à-vis* the other races. Anthony was apparently responsible for the up-grading of the Maderasah Melayu to the Sarawak Malay Teacher Training College, thus obviating the need to send students to the Sultan Idris College in Malaya.⁷⁰ A number of Malay teachers were imported from Malaya and a retired MCS education officer was appointed Director of Education. However, while Anthony was given credit by the Malays for all this—a factor which reinforced his position with the anti-cessionists after the war—he was probably only implementing changes already agreed to by Vyner in the light of a special report on education commissioned in 1937.⁷¹

A clearer initiative on Anthony's part was the promotion of Abang Haji Mustapha to the position of Adjutant and Assistant Commissioner of the Sarawak Constabulary. This elevation of a Sarawak native to a position traditionally reserved for Europeans marked an important change in Brooke policy. Ironically, it also accelerated the career of a man who was to lead the pro-cession opposition to Anthony Brooke in the post-war years. Three Native Officers were also placed in charge of government posts at Lawas, Daro and Matu, and Niah and Sibuti.

Anthony was also more sensitive than his uncle to the climate of colonial reform in the late 1930s which was expressed in League of Nations conventions and a re-evaluation of Britain's role in her Caribbean and African colonies. During his brief reign he amended the Penal Code and Orders on whipping, the protection of women and girls and the punishment of mutiny.⁷² Most importantly, he amended the Nationality and Naturalization Order of 1934, widening the criteria of those deemed to be natural-born Sarawak subjects from 'native subjects of the Rajah' to 'any person born within Sarawak'.⁷³ This meant that Sarawak-born Chinese not possessing other nationality were for the first time citizens as of right without having to be naturalized.

* * *

During his six months as Rajah Muda and Officer Administering the Government, Anthony Brooke had an opportunity to demonstrate how he would go about solving the problems facing the Brooke Raj. On the whole, his solutions were conservative. He saw himself as having no more

than a 'holding brief' from his uncle, guiding Sarawak back to normality after the upsets brought about by administrative changes in preceding years. His intervention in the Crossley case had been an opportunity to restore the traditional supremacy of the Administrative Service over the new power-accumulating bureaucracy and this policy was further pursued in his reversal of the few changes which had been made towards administrative centralization. Another important initiative was the abolition of the post of Chief Justice and the reaffirmation of pragmatic standards of justice. These changes were in accordance with an almost romantically traditional view of Brooke government. 'The interests of the natives' were invoked without any real attempt to take account of international pressures for colonial reform and the opportunities for economic development. In early 1939, Anthony had seemed likely to become the fourth Rajah but there were few indications that he represented much more than a re-assertion of Brooke autocracy. Brooke rule had almost run its course.

The best epitaph of the third Rajah's reign was written some years later by Bertram Brooke:

The 'Sarawak side' was wilfully blind to the fact that internally it was on the down-grade. Administrative officers were still carrying out their old duties with all the old humanity and efficiency which had originally won the confidence of the natives but acute dissensions in the Ruling House and increasing abuses effected in the name of a Ruler enjoying enormous personal popularity, but who had ceased to take even a desultory interest in administrative affairs, and acted entirely according to the advice of whomsoever 'held the Joker' for the time being, must lead to a major catastrophe unless some means could be found to curb his actions other than such a trivial degree of moral influence as could be exercised within the State by officers who were dependent on his whims for their livelihood.⁷⁴

1. A. B. Ward, *Rajah's Servant*, Cornell, 1966, p. 169.
2. Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', typescript 1934, p. 50.
3. *ibid.*, p. 51.
4. Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 14 March 1975.
5. Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
6. C. F. C. Macaskie, 'End of an Era: Borneo Reminiscences', undated typescript, Rhodes House MSS Pac. s.71, p. 91.
7. Margaret Noble to Jean Halsey, 2 December 1945, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1.
8. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 28 July 1944, Brooke Papers, Box 19.
9. CO 531/220 [53067].
10. T. C. Martine, 'History of the Borneo Co. Ltd.', typescript c.1945, Inchcape & Co. Limited, London, p. 4.
11. [T. Stirling Boyd], 'The Sarawak Crisis', typescript [1939], Appendix A. Subsequent quotations from this source.
12. Boyd, 'The Law and Constitution of Sarawak', p. 81.
13. *ibid.*, p. 82.

14. H.H. The Rajah v. 1 Dunggaw 2 Unjar, *Sarawak Supreme Court Reports 1928-1941, 1946-1951*, Kuching, [1952?], pp. 39-40.
15. *ibid.*
16. C. D. Le Gros Clark, *Blue Report*, Kuching, 1935, p. 2. Subsequent quotations from this source.
17. R. W. Hammond, 'Report on Education in Sarawak', typescript, 1937, Sarawak Museum.
18. Scott to [E. H. Elam?], 23 January 1934, Elam Papers, Rhodes House MSS Pac. s. 65.
19. *SG*, 1 April 1938.
20. *SG*, 1 July 1938.
21. London, 1936.
22. *SG*, 1 December 1936.
23. *ibid.*
24. *ibid.*
25. W. P. N. Bridges, 'A Report on Rubber Regulation in Sarawak', typescript March 1937, Rubber Research Institute of Malaya Library, Kuala Lumpur.
26. K. E. Knorr, *World Rubber And Its Regulation*, Stanford, 1945, pp. 122-4.
27. T. C. Martine, 'History of the Borneo Co. Ltd.', p. 43.
28. *SG*, 2 August 1937.
29. *SG*, 1 June 1937.
30. Boyd to Bishop Hudson, 24 February 1938, Boyd Papers, Box 2/7.
31. 'Asun's "Rebellion": The Political Growing Pains of a Tribal Society in Brooke Sarawak, 1929-1940', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol. XVI, Nos. 32-33 (New Series), July-December 1968, pp. 346-76.
32. *Sarawak Administration Report. 1929*, p. 58; *SGG*, 1 September 1927.
33. Personal communication from Mr J. L. Noakes, 3 August 1975.
34. Boyd to Hammond, 22 August 1937, Boyd Papers, Box 2/7.
35. *ibid.*
36. Boyd to Wilson, 19 February 1939, *ibid.*
37. Boyd to Edward Boyd, 4 December 1938, *ibid.*
38. Boyd to Bishop Hudson, 6 December 1938, *ibid.*
39. A. J. N. Richards, memorandum of March 1939, Richards Papers, Rhodes House MSS Ind. Ocn. s.213. Subsequent quotations from this source.
40. Cutfield to Parnell, 26 April 1939, Bay Papers.
41. *ibid.*
42. Undated memorandum [c.1936], Boyd Papers, Box 4/2. Subsequent quotations from this source.
43. Anthony Brooke to Jean Halsey, 28 June [1934], Brooke Papers, Box 10/2.
44. Anthony Brooke to Jean Halsey, 23 August 1935, *ibid.*
45. Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 24 March 1939, Appendix 1, 'The Sarawak Crisis'.
46. Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 24 March 1939, Appendix 6, *ibid.*
47. Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 24 March 1939, Appendix 4, *ibid.*
48. Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 24 March 1939, Appendix 3, *ibid.*
49. Anthony Brooke to Parnell, 25 March 1939, Appendix 8, *ibid.*
50. Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 25 March 1939, Appendix 2, *ibid.*
51. *ibid.*, p. 4.
52. Appendix 9, *ibid.*
53. Vyner Brooke to Parnell, undated, Appendix 10, *ibid.*

54. *ibid.*, p. 9.
55. Vyner Brooke to Calvert, 30 March 1939, Appendix 19, *ibid.*
56. Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 28 March 1939, CO 531/29 [53011/1].
57. *ibid.*
58. Anthony Brooke to Jean Halsey [c. 11 April 1939], Brooke Papers, Box 12/11.
59. Anthony Brooke to Jean Halsey, 24 April 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 12/11.
60. Personal communication from Mr J. L. Noakes, 3 August 1975.
61. Richards to Mrs Richards, 22 April 1939, Richards Papers.
62. *ibid.*
63. Personal communication from Mr J. L. Noakes, 3 August 1975.
64. Boyd, 'The Sarawak Crisis', pp. 31-2.
65. Boyd to Calvert, 26 October 1939, Boyd Papers, Box 3/6.
66. Minute by Archer addressed to Rajah Muda, 4 April 1939, Richards Papers.
67. Richards' note on Archer's minute, *ibid.*
68. Archer to Sarawak Government Agent, 20 April 1939, 'The Sarawak Crisis', p. 25.
69. *ibid.*, p. 19.
70. Personal communication from Tuan Haji Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor, 7 September 1978.
71. R. W. Hammond, 'Report on Education in Sarawak', 1937, Sarawak Museum.
72. Order No. W-5 (*Whipping Amendment*) 1939, SGG, 16 May 1939; Order No. P-9 (*Prisons*) 1933, SGG, 1 June 1939.
73. Order No. N-2A (*Sarawak Nationality and Naturalization Amendment*) 1939, SGG, 1 June 1939.
74. Bertram Brooke to William Charles Crocker, 11 January 1948, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.

IV

The 1941 Constitution

ON 31 March 1941, Vyner Brooke proclaimed that Sarawak was to have a written constitution which would be enacted during the Brooke centenary celebrations planned for September that year. The effect would be to 'replace Our Absolute Rule by a Form of Government on a Broader Basis and Facilitate the Gradual Development of Representative Government on Democratic Principles . . .'.¹ The Committee of Administration was to draw up the constitution which would provide for a representative legislature on whose advice the Rajah would henceforth rule. Reminding its members that they were temporarily in the position of 'Custodians of the Rights of the People of Sarawak', he directed them to devise 'a really liberal constitution which will have fair regard to the claims of Everybody . . .'.

Turning to the question of the succession, he designated Bertram as heir to the Raj on his decease. But if Bertram should die first, the Rajah's advisers were charged with the task of deciding who the heir should be. If there were any dispute, the advisers should refer the matter with their comments to the British government. Vyner also explained why he was changing the succession formula and setting in train a process which would lead to self-government:

I have always been positive, as was my Father, that it was never the intention of Sir James Brooke to establish a line of Absolute Rulers. What he set out to do was to protect the Natives of Sarawak, the real but backward owners of this land, from exploitation and oppression, until such time as they could govern themselves. . . . And now I am taking a step forward towards the ultimate aim, laid down by the Rajah as the basis of his Policy, that of a self-governing community and country.

Origins of the Constitution

One of the Rajah's main worries from the late 1930s had been the increasing financial demands of the Ranee and their daughters Elizabeth

and Valerie. The two girls had made spectacularly unsuccessful marriages and the Rajah was faced with having to provide for them on a permanent basis. The temptation to make a financial settlement with the British government was very strong indeed and it was only last-minute nervousness on the Rajah's part which prevented serious talks with the Colonial Office in 1938.* Sylvia's initiative in arranging these is clear and it seems likely that she was influenced both by a concern for her own material future and by a certain boredom with Sarawak. In the following year the Rajah's inability to cope with her financial entanglements led him to appoint someone to manage her affairs.² Despite this, by 1942 she owed about US\$7,000 in the United States where she had been living for much of the time.

There was thus a pressing need by the end of 1940 for the Rajah to make a financial settlement on his dependents and MacBryan was once again available to convert the Rajah's wishes into concrete plans. Furthermore, the repercussions of the Limbang affair apparently startled the Rajah and this, together with his earlier embarrassment over the Scott case¹ and the scare of a Japanese invasion in February 1941 may have made it easy for MacBryan to persuade him to lay his hands on a substantial sum while there was still an opportunity to do so.³ MacBryan may also have been privately convinced of the inevitability of a Japanese attack.

Another problem exercising Vyner Brooke's mind was the succession. Now sixty-seven years of age, he was weary of Sarawak and looked forward to spending his declining years in a more salubrious climate. Sylvia, who had wearied of Sarawak much earlier, was also putting pressure on him to give up. He had, after all, spent the greater part of his life there and did not share his father's ambition to 'die in harness'. Who could take his place? Bertram, who was only two years younger, had suffered a nervous breakdown in 1937 and seemed unlikely to return to Sarawak. Although Sylvia Brooke had long cherished the hope that their eldest daughter, Leonora, might act as regent until her son Simon came of age, there is no evidence that the Rajah considered it as a real possibility. The only serious prospect for the succession was his nephew, about whom he had serious doubts.

Anthony's brief career as Rajah Muda and Officer Administering the Government had, rightly or wrongly, persuaded the Rajah that he was 'as yet unfitted' to rule. The proclamation of January 1940 and Anthony's subsequent protests had been smoothed over by Bertram's diplomacy. Vyner had agreed that his nephew should return as a District Officer and he no doubt hoped that with further experience Anthony would improve. But who would look after the country in the meantime? And how could he be sure that Anthony would turn out satisfactorily in the end? The only alternative was to make King George VI his heir, to hand Sarawak over to the British government and a form of colonial rule which he had always held in disdain.

*See below, pp. 101-2.

†See below, pp. 114-16.

As a solution to the financial problem, MacBryan evidently advised the Rajah to withdraw capital from the state reserves and to deposit it in England as a trust fund whose interest would provide generous allowances for the Ranee and their daughters. In January 1941 MacBryan went to the Treasury with a note from the Rajah authorizing the transfer of £200,000. However, the Acting Treasurer, Cecil Pitt Hardacre, refused the request and when MacBryan indicated that he would have to resign, Hardacre threatened to take the keys of the Treasury to Singapore with him.⁴ It was precisely the kind of thing that had been feared ever since MacBryan's reinstatement and Pitt Hardacre was strongly supported by Le Gros Clark and other members of the Committee of Administration.

In early March MacBryan signed a written contract with the Rajah providing that he would resign his position as Political Secretary when asked, that he would accept and vacate appointments as required and that he would do everything to further certain political objects to be made known by the Rajah. In return, MacBryan was given the title of Datu and appointed life member of the Supreme Council and Council Negri. He was also to be paid \$2,000 a month for life in the event of the Rajah's abdication or death.⁵ When a copy of this document was sent to the Chief Secretary, it naturally aroused fresh anxieties.

Pitt Hardacre conceded that some provision should be made for the Rajah and his family but insisted that it be done in a proper manner and not on the basis of *ad hoc* demands for large sums of money. When asked by MacBryan what kind of guarantee he required that no further demands would be made, he suggested a constitutional guarantee. MacBryan then consulted the Rajah and returned with a note 'saying something like "Dear Pitt,—you can have your Constitution"'.⁶ Such were the origins of constitutional monarchy in Sarawak.*

In the middle of March, Anthony Brooke, who was now District Officer at Sarikei, received a copy of the memorandum signed by the Rajah but probably drafted by MacBryan. The Rajah explained that in view of the uncertainty surrounding his future intentions, he had made a number of decisions which would be announced at a meeting of the Supreme Council in April. Firstly, Anthony was to be appointed 'heir, on probation' for a period of five years during which he would serve as an officer in various parts of Sarawak. If it seemed to the Rajah and a majority of the Supreme Council during this time that Anthony was 'unfitted, for some good reason' to succeed, he would have the right to set him aside. However, if a title was conferred on Anthony during the probationary period, he was 'irrevocably confirmed as Heir' from that moment.

Secondly, the Rajah would appoint a commission to make recommendations on a constitution establishing a form of democratic government.

*The Rajah himself told Bertram that MacBryan had nothing to do with the origins of the constitution—that it 'was inaugurated by Archer and "very strongly upheld" by Pitt Hardacre'. (Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 9 August 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 19.) This is difficult to reconcile with Archer's opposition to the draft constitution and his subsequent forced resignation as Chief Secretary.

The autocratic power of the Rajah would be eliminated by the creation of an Advisory Council or some similar body with whose majority opinion he would have to conform. Provision would also be made for the representation of different ethnic groups and for the preservation of the Rajah's personal rights and privileges for the rest of his lifetime. 'By voluntarily abrogating certain powers hitherto vested solely in the person of the Rajah', he stated, 'I am hopeful that I shall be making a worthy contribution in the public interest and for the future happiness and well being of the people of Sarawak.'⁷

Thirdly, the Treasurer would pay the Rajah \$2,000,000* in cash from state reserves on 15 April in consideration of the Rajah undertaking full financial responsibility for the Ranees and their daughters. The Rajah's annual salary would be reduced from \$120,000 to \$84,000 but he would continue to receive the interest from the Trust Fund in London. Finally, Anthony would be required to swear an oath of allegiance to the Rajah and to maintain all allowances, pensions, and other special payments authorized during the Rajah's lifetime.

Anthony could not consider this arrangement, dependent as it was on his father surrendering his rights as Heir Presumptive (of which there had been no indication) and on the Rajah taking a large sum of money out of the country (of which he disapproved on principle). He also suspected very strongly that MacBryan was behind it all. Consequently he suggested as tactfully as possible that the matter be left 'in abeyance', at the same time telling the Rajah that MacBryan's continued presence was 'certain to cause unrest throughout the whole State' and that the proposed Advisory Council would request that MacBryan be removed.⁸ As he explained to Archer, this was 'designed to bring things to a head immediately . . .'⁹

Anthony had the backing of the entire Committee of Administration. R. G. Aikman, the Resident of the Third Division, supported Anthony's effort to force the issue¹⁰ and Archer was in 'entire agreement'. The Rajah, Archer said, was entirely in MacBryan's hands and all attempts to avert this had failed. When he had tried to prevent MacBryan from re-entering the Service, the Rajah had 'simply kept him over at the Astana and did all his business through him'.¹¹ However, the Rajah's memorandum had stirred the Committee to action and a secret meeting had prepared papers which would be presented to the Rajah on 25 March.

The Secret Agreement

The Committee of Administration had been meeting almost constantly since receiving a copy of the Rajah's memorandum and there was general concern about MacBryan's influence on him and the need to introduce financial controls. The two most determined advocates of this measure were Pitt Hardacre and Le Gros Clark who 'insisted that if H.H.'s request was complied with there must be some guarantee to prevent any further

*Equivalent to £200,000.

raids on the State funds'.¹² The other cause for concern was the authorship of the projected constitution. The Committee feared that the Commission responsible for its drafting would be dominated by MacBryan who had just been appointed secretary to the Supreme Council.* Consequently, two documents were drawn up: a semi-official agreement between the Committee and the Rajah incorporating a financial settlement, and an official Order transferring most of the Rajah's powers to the Committee until the constitution was enacted.

In the secret agreement signed by the Rajah and four members of the Committee of Administration on 31 March,¹³ the Rajah undertook to issue an Order authorizing 'the transfer of certain legislative powers from Himself to the Chief Secretary . . . as advised from time to time by the Committee [of Administration]'. He also promised that neither he nor any other member of his family would make any further claim on state funds than those set out in the agreement. In return, the members of the Committee accepted these conditions:

1. The Rajah was to receive a cash payment of \$2,000,000 from Sarawak funds within two weeks and a loan of \$32,000 towards his Cameron Highlands house was to be written off.
2. Provision was to be made in the new constitution for the payment to the Rajah of:
 - (a) \$60,000 per annum for the upkeep of the Astana
 - (b) \$21,000 per annum for charitable purposes
 - (c) the interest on the Sarawak Advisory Council Trust Fund
 - (d) \$7,000 per month by way of salary and his right:
 - to the sole possession and use of the Astana and the yacht *Maimuna*
 - to dispose of all his personal lands in Sarawak
 - to confer or refuse titles on members of his own family and all other titles and decorations
 - to visit any part of Sarawak and 'to exercise his customary prerogatives in accordance with the advice of his responsible advisers'
 - to maintain existing annual payments from Sarawak funds to members of his family and to datus then in office.

In the event of Bertram dying before the constitution was enacted, the Committee would appoint an heir.

An informal condition insisted upon by the Committee was that MacBryan should no longer remain in the Sarawak Service. His resignation was duly gazetted but the Rajah simultaneously appointed him Private Secretary. There seemed to be no way of loosening his hold.

The Order signed by the Rajah on 31 March was designed to safeguard the Committee's position while the constitution was being drafted. For a period of twelve months the sole power of issuing Orders was delegated to the Chief Secretary in his new position as Officer Administering the Government, 'acting by and with the advice of the Committee of Administration'. As a further insurance against MacBryan or the Colonial Office

*Archer and Ong Tiang Swee were also appointed to the Supreme Council at this time.

intervening to change the Rajah's mind, all appointments to and dismissals from the Committee were to be made by the Chief Secretary and all appointments, promotions, and dismissals in the Senior Service by the Committee. The only prerogative remaining with the Rajah was the power to disallow any Order which infringed his obligations to the British government under the terms of the 1888 Treaty.*

It was assumed by the Committee that payment of the \$2,000,000 would be made at the Treasury's convenience. However, the same afternoon Vyner sent Archer a request for cash and when the Chief Secretary told him that this would cause considerable financial embarrassment, the Rajah insisted that he order the officer temporarily in charge of the Treasury to make the payment.¹⁴ Since there were insufficient government funds and time was needed to instruct the brokers in London to sell investments, Archer demanded that the money be paid from the Currency Fund deposited with the Chartered Bank in Kuching.¹⁵ Pitt Hardacre 'protested in the most emphatic manner at this high handed action', but to no effect.¹⁶ In Thackwell Lewis' view, the Rajah's 'indecent haste' in obtaining the money was due to his fear that the terms of the secret agreement and the Proclamation might 'prove disagreeable' to the Governor in Singapore who could prevent the scheme from going through.¹⁷ At the same time Vyner began to dispose of his private property in Sarawak, including the Sylvia Cinema which he had built in 1934. Subsequently a large sum of money was transferred in the Rajah's name to Singapore where an unsuccessful attempt was made to convert it into American dollars.¹⁸

One casualty of the constitutional agreement was J. B. Archer's position as Chief Secretary. During the weeks prior to the Proclamation he had played a double game by keeping the Rajah informed of the Committee's 'plot' against him. Much as he feared MacBryan's influence on the Rajah, Archer was an old-fashioned Brooke loyalist. The very idea of a constitution was anathema to him, although his chairmanship of the Committee obliged him to go along with it. His vanity caught him out. As a wry piece of revenge on his opponents, MacBryan had persuaded the Rajah to award the Star of Sarawak to Archer and those members of the Committee who had been chiefly responsible for the secret agreement and the Constitutional Order. When the embarrassed members asked Archer to intercede with the Rajah and call the whole thing off, he told them that the Rajah would be insulted. When Vyner indicated his own misgivings, Archer told him that the members would be mortally offended if it was called off. The decoration meant too much to Archer for him to forgo the honour. Thus it was that after he had read out the Proclamation at an Astana ceremony on 31 March, an embarrassed Rajah thrust the awards into the hands of the equally embarrassed recipients. Archer's duplicity was now clear for all to see and this, together with strong protests from Pitt Hardacre and Le Gros Clark about his irresponsibility over the Currency Fund, brought about his forced retirement. He was

*Order No. C-18 (*Constitutional Reform Provisional Measure*) 1941, SGG, 31 March 1941.

replaced in May by Le Gros Clark, who ought to have been given the post some years earlier.

The New Constitution

In the meantime, the Committee was addressing itself to the novel but daunting task of devising a constitution. The bulk of the drafting was done by the Legal Adviser, K. H. Digby,¹⁸ but Thackwell Lewis was also consulted. Altogether, the document went through three drafts and although Vyner refused to attend discussions with the Committee, he made a number of attempts to overrule their decisions by means of notes sent through MacBryan. His objections seem to have been largely concerned with his desire to surrender all prerogative powers, the reasons for which will be suggested later.

A first draft of the constitution was ready by the middle of June and was immediately distributed. Translations into *jawi* (Arabic script) and romanized Malay were later prepared so that Native Officers could also submit their comments. Ong Tiang Swee gave his comments as Advisory Member of the Committee of Administration. A month later, after the incorporation of amendments arising from these reactions and from discussions with the Singapore Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, a second draft was circulated and on 31 July a meeting of the Committee of Administration considered further changes.

The only member of the Committee to question the origins of the constitution was Thackwell Lewis, who had been excluded from the consultations leading to the secret agreement. In his view, it was being introduced 'not because the people wanted it, but because the Ruler was in need of money and could not obtain it by any other means'.¹⁹

The secret agreement had already been a source of embarrassment. A reference to it in the first draft had been removed and replaced by a private requirement that each new member of the Supreme Council should sign an undertaking to observe its provisions.²⁰ However, Le Gros Clark now insisted that the secret agreement was an entirely separate matter between the Rajah and the government and had no bearing at all

¹⁸Kenelm Hubert Digby came from an old Catholic West Country family and achieved early distinction at Oxford where he seconded the famous Oxford Union motion on 'King and Country'. Qualifying as a barrister at Middle Temple in 1934, he was appointed a Cadet in the Sarawak Service and served in the Fourth and First Divisions before becoming a magistrate in 1937. In August 1940 he returned as Acting Legal Adviser and Registrar of the Supreme Court and in January 1941 was confirmed in these positions. After internment in Batu Lintang during the war, Digby continued as Legal Adviser and then Attorney-General when the position was renamed in February 1947. From 1948 until his departure in December 1951 he was a Circuit Judge. Digby was editor of the *Sarawak Gazette* from September 1946 to February 1948 during the height of the anti-cession campaign. In an unpublished autobiography ('Lawyer in the Wilderness', Rhodes House, uncat. MSS) which he wrote on his way back to England in 1951, Digby explained that the Sarawak government's decision to send Iban trackers to assist in the Malayan 'Emergency' had precipitated his departure. However, his frankly expressed socialist views had probably made him a marked man long before this.

on the proposed constitution. The Rajah, he said, had offered the constitution on his own initiative 'solely because he . . . considered that this would be in the best interests of the State and its peoples'. He stressed that if the meeting rejected the constitution, the British government would probably take complete control of Sarawak since they could not tolerate a crisis during the current world situation. On the day that Hitler marched on Russia, he told the members, 'the independence of the State of Sarawak, despite the treaty of 1888, virtually disappeared'. Sir Shenton Thomas' insistence on the appointment of a 'British Representative' was a sign of the times. Thackwell Lewis admitted that the government could not 'go back on what had already been done', but he thought that unless the draft constitution was properly amended the only choice was between a 'puppet' Rajah and an oligarchy.

The other critic was Archer who believed that the opinions of the people should first be obtained before any decision was made. Le Gros Clark could only reply that the people would not have wanted any change and it was up to the meeting to decide on their behalf if a constitution should be introduced, as the Rajah had proclaimed.

Another special meeting was held on 3 August to consider native membership of the new Supreme Council. The datus felt that the proportion of native members of the new Council Negri should be higher. However, they accepted that the natives should not be represented only by Malays. In this major departure from Brooke tradition, 'suitability' was to be the main criterion of representation, although there was no indication of how this was to be assessed. Their other objection concerned the Rajah's refusal to retain the power of veto but they were reassured when Le Gros Clark told them that the Rajah had since changed his mind. With the amendments to the second draft completed, the constitution was now ready for Sir Shenton Thomas' approval.

The invitation from Le Gros Clark for members of the Service to comment frankly on the draft constitution seems to have been received rather sceptically, particularly when the story of the secret agreement became known.²¹ The private reaction was that the motives behind the constitution had very little to do with 'Democracy' and that the Committee had no right to assume that they were the 'chosen representatives of the people'. One District Officer pointed out that outstation Residents would seldom be able to attend the Council Negri and that native members would say '*mana kata Tuan*' (as Sir thinks best) to proposals put forward by the Treasurer, Chief Secretary and Resident of the First Division; these men would also dominate the Supreme Council. It all meant a return to the bad old days of Parnell and Calvert: 'both councils will be a mere farce and the Country will be ruled by two men, without even the Rajah's power of veto. The 1939 scandal all over again'.

The significance of 1939, in another District Officer's view, was that both the Service and the natives saw it as the restoration of the Rajah as 'supreme head of the Government' and that 'a feeling of confidence was restored'. He believed that the natives could not understand the new *adat* and had always 'looked to the Rajah as their Supreme Chief'. Instead,

they were going to have an irresponsible and frequently changing oligarchy which could never have their interests at heart. Thackwell Lewis' view was that talk of democracy and liberal institutions in Sarawak was 'the most dishonest humbug' and that there would be serious unrest among the people once it became known that the Rajah had become a 'mere puppet. It would be impossible to govern, another District Officer added, without being able to play the trump card: These are His Highness' Orders'. 'This authority has existed for 100 years, the Natives and Chinese are used to it, it has been used with complete equity and the State and people have thrived under it. Lastly, but primarily, the people themselves like it and have asked for no other kind of rule.'

In its final form,* the constitution consolidated the position of power which the Committee had assumed by means of the Order of 31 March. Under the new bi-cameral system, all the Rajah's prerogative powers were to be exercised by 'the Rajah-in-Council'—the Rajah acting on the advice and consent of the Supreme Council—while the sole power of legislating was vested in the Rajah acting with the advice and consent of the Council Negri. Membership of the two Councils was arranged so that European officers would have the decisive voice. Fourteen of the Council Negri's twenty-five members were to be appointed from the Sarawak Civil Service, nine of them *ex officio* and five by the Rajah-in-Council. Within the Supreme Council, officers who were also members of the Council Negri were to constitute a majority, the Chief Secretary and the Treasurer being appointed *ex officio* and members of the old Supreme Council remaining members of the new Council during their lifetimes. The only significant prerogative now possessed by the Rajah was the power of appointing other members of the Supreme Council. During his absence from the state, the Officer Administering the Government would assume all his powers. The Rajah might refuse bills passed by the Council Negri but he could be overruled if the legislation were passed on three successive occasions.

Most importantly, perhaps, the power of the purse-strings was now firmly in the hands of the bureaucracy. As from 1 January 1941 no state funds were to be expended without the authority of the Council Negri. One question which the constitution failed to clarify was the succession, providing only that if the Rajah died, 'the person who shall have been proclaimed Heir' would be proclaimed Rajah by the Supreme Council, subject to the 1888 Treaty. However, for the first time the possibility of a Malay Rajah was anticipated in the stipulation that 'No person who is not a British subject or a native of Sarawak shall be competent to be or become Rajah . . .'. The significance of this cannot have been lost on the datus.

Ironically enough, the Preamble, which had more impact subsequently than any other part of the constitution, received no attention during the deliberations. The nine 'Cardinal Principles' were supposed to embody the essence of Brooke rule:

*SGG, 24 September 1941.

1. That Sarawak is the heritage of Our Subjects and is held in trust by Ourselves for them.
2. That social and educational services shall be developed and improved and the standard of living of the people of Sarawak shall steadily be raised.
3. That never shall any person or persons be granted rights inconsistent with those of the people of this country or be in any way permitted to exploit Our Subjects or those who have sought Our protection and care.
4. That justice shall be easily obtainable and that the Rajah and every public servant shall be freely accessible to the public.
5. That freedom of expression both in speech and writing shall be permitted and encouraged and that everyone shall be entitled to worship as he pleases.
6. That public servants shall ever remember that they are but the servants of the people on whose goodwill and co-operation they are entirely dependent.
7. That so far as may be Our Subjects of whatever race or creed shall be freely and impartially admitted to offices in Our Service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge.
8. That the goal of self-government shall always be kept in mind, that the people of Sarawak shall be entrusted in due course with the governance of themselves, and that continuous efforts shall be made to hasten the reaching of this goal by educating them in the obligations, the responsibilities, and the privileges of citizenship.
9. That the general policy of Our predecessors and Ourselves whereby the various races of the State have been enabled to live in happiness and harmony together shall be adhered to by Our successors and Our servants and all who may follow them hereafter.

Although the promise of ultimate self-government was probably intended more as democratic 'window-dressing' for outside consumption than anything else, it was to provide the more politically conscious Malays and Ibans of the immediate post-war years with a political charter.

While the idea of a constitution appears to have originated as a *quid pro quo* for the \$2,000,000, concern about the future of the state and the way in which his nephew was likely to conduct himself as Rajah may have led Vyner Brooke or MacBryan to see it as a means of limiting Anthony's scope for action. This was certainly the impression held by Digby who told a friend that the Rajah, 'seeing death gradually approaching, decided to tie his nephew in such a way that he could not avenge himself for the various slights he had suffered from the Rajah's friends and relations.'²² If this was indeed one of the main considerations influencing the Rajah, his unwillingness to retain any prerogative rights may be more easily understood.

In many ways the Rajah's action had provided the Committee with the opportunity for which they had been waiting. His advancing age and the uncertainty of the succession suggested that they would become increasingly responsible for the affairs of state. The constitution, however, was only intended as a temporary measure. As Digby explained at the time, it 'merely handed over the Rajah's powers to the C. of A. until a more permanent arrangement could be agreed upon'.²³ He later saw it as 'a stop-gap arrangement, and by no means satisfactory as the permanent solution, because in the absence of any sort of elective system, its sub-

stantial effect was to convert the Committee of Administration into a self-perpetuating oligarchy'.²⁴

At the same time, the constitution was a means of forestalling British pressure already felt in the appointment of a General Adviser.* The arrival of a garrison of British Punjabi troops in early 1941 suggested that Sarawak's sovereignty was now only technical and that constitutional reforms should be made to pre-empt the otherwise inevitable British intervention in Sarawak's internal affairs. As far as the Committee were concerned, this could only be for the worse. From the small pond of the Sarawak Service where they were their own masters, they would be flung willy-nilly into the much larger, more competitive and altogether less comfortable sea of the British Colonial Service.

Reactions to the Constitution

The non-European reaction to the draft constitution is difficult to establish. Direct knowledge of it was limited to Ong Tiang Swee, who had been present at the Committee of Administration discussions, and the Native Officers. A number of *penghulu* from the Baram district travelled 500 miles to Kuching in order to obtain a reassurance from the Rajah that he and his successors would continue to maintain personal responsibility for their welfare. However, the District Officer at Marudi, Donald Hudden, may have influenced them. The only other recorded response was an official petition from Malays of the Bintulu district where Anthony Brooke was posted.

It must have seemed incredible to many people that the Rajah should wish to surrender his prerogative powers to a committee of bureaucrats whose predecessors he had dismissed only two years earlier. European officers, beyond the charmed circle of the Committee of Administration and their friends, were incensed by the March Proclamation. G. E. Bettison, a newly-arrived customs officer, wrote in his diary that some of his colleagues had become 'violently anti-Sarawak as a result'. His own reactions were those of a man who had been attracted to Sarawak by its unique political system:

... 'constitutional' my foot! I came out here *because* it was an autocracy—to me, romantic Sarawak is dead from now on—in fact, apart from it's [*sic*] not yet being run by the chaotic collection of idiots known as the Colonial Service, it has just about degenerated in one fatal step to the level of a colony instead of being independent—I don't say that it may not lead to the State being governed in a better way, but it is nevertheless the end of a piece of history—it has just sunk to the common standard of the rest of the world. . . .²⁵

The only 'public' comment was from the *Sarawak Gazette* whose editor applied a flattering gloss to the whole affair:

At this time, when Democracy is engaged in a life and death struggle with Dictatorship, this re-affirmation by His Highness of his belief in the Democratic

*See below, pp. 102–3.

ideal is of great significance. Democracy is not, as Hitler would have the world believe, a state system. It is a living organism, subject to growth and change. Here, in Sarawak, we have seen its principles at work, the present moving from the past, the future implicit in the present.²⁶

Apart from the Colonial Office, whose reactions will be discussed in a later chapter, the two most interested observers in Britain were Stirling Boyd and Bertram Brooke. Dismissing the provision for native representation as 'purely rhetorical', Boyd paid more attention to the Constitutional Order which, instead of vesting legislative power in the Rajah with the advice and consent of the Committee of Administration, had entrusted it to the Officer Administering the Government. 'It would be interesting to know on what theory of government this proposal is based,' he wrote. 'It seems to partake of the nature of a partial and temporary abdication.'²⁷ Boyd doubted whether the Rajah could legally or ethically divest himself of his responsibility as ruler and still remain Rajah. Others like Parnell who had known him for a long time were highly sceptical of the Rajah actually surrendering administrative responsibility and were more concerned about the implications of Le Gros Clark, 'a Tuan Muda-ite', being made Chief Secretary.²⁸

Bertram Brooke could not imagine for a moment that the constitution was the Rajah's own initiative. He believed that it had been 'put before him in an attractive guise as a wonderful gesture which will put the crowning touch on his long and honourable career . . .'.²⁹ As for the claim that the Rajah was merely honouring the pledge of his predecessors, he believed that 'neither of them ever contemplated the day when Sarawak would become a self-governing community'. There was no evidence that the people themselves wanted a change; indeed, it was a 'dangerous experiment' which was almost certain to destroy the good relations between the races successfully fostered by the Brookes. He believed that the loyalty towards the Brooke Raj derived from the people's faith in the Rajah's paternal capacity to right wrongs. If the Rajah divested himself of his power he would cease to be Rajah in their eyes.

Because the present system has been carefully built up through the course of 100 years to suit a paternal autocratic regime, it would be inviting disaster to try and tinker with it and make it suit something radically different. The present machine would have to be scrapped, and a new one designed. Some of the present parts might be used after suitable reshaping and adjustment, but the mainspring, the Rajah himself, would be entirely out of place in any such structure. It is impossible to design an effective machine with a mainspring which has the power of altering its course, and going round in the opposite direction, as the whole thing would be wrecked should this take place, however unlikely it may be.

The whole notion of representative government in Sarawak, he argued, was quite impractical anyway. The Ibans would inevitably be represented by malcontents who 'would have their own ways of assuring that they obtained a majority', and the Malays by those 'most capable of intrigue'. The *datus* would have to be scrapped and the Treasury fundamentally reorganized. This did not mean that the Committee of Administration

was not capable of drawing up 'a sort of hotchpot [*sic*] of regulations, combining the old with the new, which might look alright in a blue-print', but there was no chance of creating a system of self-government which would make the people of Sarawak happier and more prosperous. He thought it would be tragic if the centenary of Brooke rule was marked by the inception of a scheme which future historians would refer to as 'a Protected State enjoying a sort of comic opera self-government' along the same lines as Tonga.

The most dramatic reaction to the constitutional proclamation came from Anthony Brooke who was alarmed at the latitude which it gave to the Committee of Administration. Consequently he asked for it to be amended so that the Committee would be obliged to submit the intended measures to the Rajah before any action was taken to put them into effect.

Anthony's attitude changed when he talked to Pitt Hardacre who was sent by the Committee to explain to him the circumstances of the secret agreement. He agreed to support the Committee's action on condition that there was a determined effort to get rid of MacBryan whom he believed to have engineered the whole business. Hardacre also had strong views about MacBryan. After his talks with Anthony and Native Officer Abang Openg, he wrote:

I have given this matter a lot of thought and I hate the idea of what might appear to be taking a hefty kick at a lame dog. But MacBryan is NOT lame—he is waiting for the crash, so we must strike first and HARD. It is in the best interests of the State and of the British Empire that he should be removed immediately (this weekend) from Sarawak, as a Defence Measure.³⁰

Addressing the Committee, Anthony obtained their unanimous support for his plan to tell the Rajah that MacBryan posed a threat to the internal security of Sarawak (and therefore Imperial interests) and should be deported. However, Vyner became extremely flustered when Anthony conveyed this message. 'You can get rid of me but you can't get rid of MacBryan', he told him.³¹ Having failed in this attempt to unseat MacBryan, Anthony then obtained permission from the Committee and the Rajah to visit Singapore where he put his views to Sir Shenton Thomas.

Anthony's precipitate action had important repercussions. Not only was Vyner 'seriously displeased', insisting on a full explanation for Anthony's visit to Kuching and suggesting that he should be disciplined,³² but MacBryan was threatening to sue him for libel. All this placed the Committee in a very awkward position. They had originally agreed to Anthony's plan but were now under pressure to take action against him for leaving his post. Moreover, if MacBryan took his case to court, the details of the secret agreement would be publicly revealed with the consequent risk of British intervention. They succeeded in persuading MacBryan not to go ahead with his action but it was a more difficult task to silence Anthony. One result of this was Vyner's decision that there would no longer be any relationship between them and that he would

henceforth regard him as 'merely a junior Government Officer'.³³ Another was the Committee's decision to transfer him to Bintulu where he would not find it so easy to make quick visits to Kuching.

What had upset the Rajah and Archer more than anything else was the tone of Anthony's replies. But Anthony was completely unrepentant and his letter to Archer of 23 April carried the full weight of his conviction that history would justify him:

... it might help you to understand the tone of these letters if I were to remind you that, apart from being a 'junior District Officer', my name is Anthony Brooke, and ... the outcome of this matter may have important repercussions on Sarawak history. It is therefore essential that this affair should receive the consideration it deserves, and that the true and complete story of this matter should be placed on the files for purposes of future record.³⁴

For several months there was silence from Bintulu but receipt of the draft constitution aroused Anthony to new heights of moral indignation. Describing the document as an 'impersonal and revolutionary monstrosity', he proclaimed his intention of opposing it by all legitimate means.³⁵ He subsequently circulated two memoranda within the Administrative Service in the hope of gaining support.

Anthony accepted the principle that autocratic rule should be limited in some way by political machinery which would eventually enable the people of Sarawak to express their views and play an increasing part in the administration of the country. The Rajah's power could be 'constitution-alized' or modified by the establishment of an advisory council which would provide the best advice available, but it was 'imperative' that the Rajah should retain the right to reject this advice.

Anthony was not so much concerned with the details of the draft constitution as with the fundamental principles of native administration which he believed it transgressed. Citing Sir Donald Cameron's dictum that the 'essence of true indirect administration is the allegiance of a people to a tribal head', he emphasized that the allegiance accorded the Rajah was no different from that accorded tribal heads in East Africa. The fact that the Rajah was a white man was irrelevant to the maintenance of his prestige and authority: the vital principle was that his authority should on no account be weakened. Under the proposed constitution, however, the Rajah and his successors would not retain the legal authority to exercise the responsibilities still expected of them by the people: '... it is only by the retention of this prerogative that he can keep the pledge which he has given to his people and shoulder the responsibilities of the Sacred Trust which no impersonal Council can fulfil. It is ... only thus that he can remain Rajah in the eyes of his people.'³⁶ Furthermore, he added, the constitution should not be introduced in such a way as to suggest that a radical change was taking place. The people wanted and expected the Rajah to act as an autocrat and it was essential to avoid any impression that his position was being weakened.

Anthony also pointed to the irony of the situation in which the Rajah was being made to act much more autocratically than he had ever done before. The Rajah, he conceded, possessed the legal right to shelve his

responsibility. The question, however, was whether it was morally right that he should be advised or allowed to do so. If the Rajah signed the constitution in its existing form he would be

... signing away to an ever-changing impersonal body the sacred trust which he and his forebears have held on behalf of the people since 1841; he will be vesting this trust in a small oligarchy comprising a majority of European Officials, to whom the people themselves have expressed no desire that the trust should be transferred, and who may lose confidence in their Rajah when they discover that this transfer has been effected.

He would appear to them as a 'guardian who has broken his sacred pledge', and their perception was much more important than that of any Europeans in Sarawak.

Anthony agreed that there should be a brake on the autocratic authority of the Rajah, but believed that

... the required limitation ... could ... be ensured by means of a separate unilateral agreement with His Majesty's Government, whereby the Rajah would undertake to record his reasons in writing in the event of his decision not to accept the advice of the Councils on any point, and would forward a full report, containing the views expressed by each member, to His Excellency the British Agent.³⁷

He also suggested that as in Johore there should be a provision in the new constitution enabling the Rajah to refuse a bill on three successive occasions so that it could only be passed after the lapse of a year. This would provide a 'double brake on autocratic action'.³⁸

Copies of Anthony's documents were sent by Le Gros Clark to Sir Shenton Thomas in Singapore who reproached him for what he regarded as hasty and ill-considered action.³⁹ The Governor had already approved the second draft, subject to certain amendments, and was impatient with Anthony's criticisms. His poor opinion of Vyner and his confidence in Le Gros Clark and the other members of the Committee of Administration, together with his belief that the constitution would facilitate British intervention, provided strong reasons for seeing it enacted. Anthony's response, however, was a determined effort to upset the constitution at all costs. He was furious with the Governor for approving the draft and tried to embarrass Le Gros Clark by asking him for a definite assurance that the 1888 Treaty had not been broken. In the absence of such an assurance, he told him, it could only be assumed that Whitehall was already actively concerned in the internal administration of Sarawak.⁴⁰

Anthony then sent a telegram designed to bring matters to a head:

I would like to be instructed by Government to negotiate with His Majesty's Government for an enduring peace on our terms, not an Armistice nor a compromise. I would take to Singapore an olive branch protruding in my left hand and a very heavy sledge hammer concealed in my right. I know exactly what I am talking about. These German methods are intolerable and are inconsistent with the dignity of His Majesty's Government. Strength must be shown now or never. If anyone gets tough remember that the will of the people and the law of God are

more important than the whims of rulers and the law of man. If necessary rebel. . . .⁴¹

But the Committee of Administration would not allow Anthony to come to Kuching to present his views in spite of the recommendation of the Resident at Miri, R. L. Daubeny, who was told instead to suspend him from duty. At this point Anthony decided to burn all his bridges and go to Kuching to seek a hearing. Before leaving he fired off a cable to Sir Shenton Thomas which he must have known would ensure his dismissal:

The proposed constitution has a background of intrigue, treachery, humbug and bad faith, sufficient to condemn the people of this stricken land to hang their heads in shame and misery for years to come. This background must be entirely forgotten before any form of Constitution can again be considered. It exceeds in sheer horror all the lowest depths to which Humanity can sink. I do not blame this Government which has been blackmailed for the past 6 months and once in the clutch of an unprincipled Atheist [MacBryan] holding a position of power there is no easy withdrawal. For the Constitution to be forced on the people of Sarawak in the present circumstances would rival the blackest political crime since the dawn of enlightened Government. The British Commonwealth is at war but the cause for which we are fighting means nothing if this outrageous measure is allowed to triumph.⁴²

When Anthony reached Kuching he was handed a letter announcing his dismissal on the grounds of insubordination and advising him to go on to Singapore. Before leaving he wrote to Le Gros Clark that the telegrams which he had sent and the decision itself were in his capacity as a member of the Brooke family, not as a District Officer. 'I would like also to say how sorry I am for any confusion which may have arisen from any failure on my part to make it quite clear to Government when I was acting as a member of the Sarawak Civil Service and when as a member of the Brooke family.'⁴³ To the Chief Secretary and the other members of the Committee of Administration it must by then have seemed an artificial distinction.

In the meantime, elaborate preparations were under way for the celebration of one hundred years of Brooke rule.⁴⁴ But Vyner was totally uninterested in the Centenary celebrations. One or two brandies and a good deal of persuasion were needed to get him out of bed on the first morning and he declined to attend either the Centenary Memorial Service at St Thomas' Cathedral or the two race meetings. His only appearance was at a ceremony at the steps of the Court House when loyal addresses were presented and the new constitution was read by him. Indeed, he left Kuching for Singapore and the Cameron Highlands as soon as it was decently possible, refusing in no uncertain terms to open the first meeting of the newly constituted Council Negri in November, in spite of Sir Shenton Thomas' pointed suggestion that he should be present.⁴⁵ However, the Governor had managed to persuade him of Singapore's invulnerability in the event of a Japanese attack and it was in this belief that he sailed for Australia with MacBryan on 25 November 1941. He was expecting to holiday there for some months.

The Constitution and the Succession

Although Bertram Brooke had not received a copy of the draft constitution by August, he knew that the Colonial Office was 'interested' and wished to study it before final approval was given by the Rajah. Writing to Vyner, he recalled the Secretary of State's reaction in 1933 to rumours about the succession and warned that the section of his 31 March address dealing with the succession was probably causing similar concern:

Had this been worded so as to empower the C. of A. to consult the BG with a view to entering into a fresh Treaty if convinced that this would best serve the interests of the State, it would have been another matter, but the charge upon the C. of A. to actually select your successor and only consult them if their selection lies outside the line laid down in the Treaty, and disputes arise in consequence . . . is all wrong.⁴⁶

He was highly sceptical that the Committee would choose a successor without considering the Rajah's views. 'If I had your standing in the country', he wrote, 'with rights of appointment to the Supreme Council and of veto, I would guarantee to get any successor I wanted appointed by them, as being the country's choice.'⁴⁷

A month later he received a cable from Vyner asking him to 'telegraph immediately do you wish to continue to be my heir or not'.⁴⁸ Vyner pointed out that Bertram had never indicated acceptance of his position as heir and this was something that the Supreme Council wished to clarify before the constitution, now approved by the British government, was finally enacted.⁴⁹ Bertram replied that no such declaration on his part was necessary since the line of succession was clearly laid down in the political wills of the first two Rajahs and confirmed in the 1888 Treaty.⁵⁰

On 23 September, Le Gros Clark asked the Rajah for his views on the succession and these were discussed at the first meeting of the newly-constituted Supreme Council two days later. Vyner thought that if he predeceased Bertram, his brother should succeed him: but only on condition that he publicly accepted the position of heir and agreed to the constitution. Moreover, an Act of Succession should be passed stipulating that in the event of his own and Bertram's death during the minority of Simon Brooke Mackay, Leonora should be proclaimed Regent until his grandson came of age and was proclaimed Rajah. If Simon came of age while either one of them was alive, he would still be proclaimed Rajah. By now Vyner was absolutely determined to exclude Anthony from any possibility of succeeding to the Raj:

I consider that these measures are necessary because of the opinion I have formed that my nephew Peter Brooke, given two great opportunities by my good-will, has proved himself irresponsible and unfitted to become Rajah of Sarawak. And I feel it to be my foremost duty to Sarawak and its People to prevent the possibility of there ever being a Rajah who is unprepared and unwilling to defer to the opinion of a majority of his Advisers and to accept discipline.⁵¹

Summing up the position, Le Gros Clark pointed out that under the new constitution the nomination of an heir was the responsibility of the Rajah-in-Council, unless the Council decided that the question should be left entirely to the Rajah's own discretion. Faced with this difficult task, the Council decided that its Malay members should examine the question in the light of Malay custom.

At the next meeting Abang Haji Mustapha,* recently appointed Datu Pahlawan, reported their view that Bertram should remain the heir on condition that he publicly accepted the position and that an Act of Succession was passed. According to their view of Malay custom, the right of selecting an heir belonged to the reigning Rajah, subject to the agreement of his ministers and the stipulation that he could not bind his heir in the nomination of future heirs. The reason for this, he added, was that it was not always possible to judge the suitability of future heirs, particularly if they were minors. The most important factor was the suitability of the nominee. The Malay members believed that unless Bertram accepted the position of Heir Presumptive in the light of the constitution, he should be disinherited. There would be no opposition from the people to the nomination of another member of the Brooke family, including one of the Rajah's daughters. Again, however, the Council could not agree on a course of action and the question was referred once more to the Malay members for consideration.

On 1 October the Malay members submitted their final views, the only addition being their desire that there should be legislation empowering a reigning Rajah to nominate his heir, subject to the agreement of his ministers. A letter from the Rajah was also read in which he expressed disinclination to 'dry-nurse' a successor in whom he had 'not the slightest interest'. 'As far as Anthony Brooke is concerned in the future of Sarawak', he added, 'this does not interest me at all except that he and I are perfect strangers and that he knows he cannot presume on his relationship with me.'⁵² The Council decided to embody the Malay members' findings in four formal resolutions, the last of which required Bertram to accept the position of Heir Presumptive under the constitution. When Bertram replied that acceptance of the position of Heir Apparent by the Heir Presumptive during the Rajah's reign might cause difficulties, the infuriated Rajah insisted that he indicate immediately if he wanted to be heir, otherwise the Council would settle the matter themselves.⁵³

At this point Bertram decided to make his stand. In a long cable to Vyner he spelled out his position:

... much might be said for closer collaboration [*sic*] with British Government to guard against possible abuse of his position by some future Rajah but I consider innovation increases possibility of such abuse under guise of constitutional reform. I have struggled to keep out of it but as you now force me to choose between my own conception of loyalty to the dead as well as to the living, and actively participating in a measure which I am convinced can only lead to disaster sooner or later in order to preserve my own position I could only earn your contempt by taking the latter course.⁵⁴

*See below, p. 135 note.

He asked the Rajah to explain his attitude to the officers in the Service. For the datus, *di-timpa daulat* would suffice.* This terse formula signified that if they agreed to the proposal, their betrayal of trust would bring punishment in the form of disease or death. At the same time, he informed the Colonial Office that he could not comply with the new terms governing the succession and that the Rajah had broken his accession oath. If the Rajah's advisers chose a successor outside the line of succession laid down by the first Rajah, then the Colonial Office was bound to invoke Article II of the 1888 Treaty.⁵⁵

Vyner still wanted Bertram to be his successor and to accept the Constitution. Before leaving Sarawak, he placed the matter in the Council's hands and Bertram was informed that the question of heirship would be held in abeyance until legislation was prepared.⁵⁶ A proposal was subsequently produced but Bertram's attitude remained inflexible: the constitution, 'however well intended', was still a violation of the Rajah's accession oath. 'I still feel bound in honour to respect my father's wishes', he replied on 20 November, 'whatever may be the present attitude of officers and others towards his Will, and feel certain that older generation Malays share this view but dare not express feelings in the present circumstances'.⁵⁷ Some days later, he wrote a long letter to Vyner† suggesting what had brought about 'this awful muddle':

I think I know pretty well what happened. It was put to you that the Constitution would be a splendid thing for the country, and it would be a wonderful gesture for you to end the autocratic powers of the Rajahs, but as you would be giving the country this immense benefit, there was every reason why you should get something out of it in return. You had a perfect right to the money, and it would be no business of anyone else's except you and the C of A. And you, with the curious childlike strain in you that old age has been unable to eliminate fell for this just as you fell for the nonsensical explanation that the Brunei business was a matter between you and the Sultan. . . .

And what would the impartial critic say?

He would say that on the 31st March you told your people a lie in saying that you were *voluntarily* relinquishing autocratic powers for yourself and your successors.

Because on the same day you had entered into an agreement selling these powers as consideration for a very large sum of money out of the public purse. That the C of A for some reason, took it upon themselves to spend this public money in purchasing these rights on behalf of people who had never shown signs of wanting them, and would not know what to do with them. And so the C of A had to see that your Officers should be instructed to persuade the people whose money had been spent in this extraordinary transaction that they would derive immense benefit

* *Daulat* was the divine element in kingship and was identified with *andeka*, the mysterious supernatural power protecting the king and punishing anyone who insulted or injured him. *Di-timpa daulat* meant to be struck down by this power. According to Wilkinson, '... *daulat* (in the expression *di-timpa d.* . . .) is confused also with the actual curse of punishment (properly *tulah* and identified usually with some disease) that attacks the sinner against the King's Majesty'. (R. J. Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary*, London, 1959, p. 261.)

† It was significant that in this letter Bertram addressed his brother as 'Dear Rajah' instead of his customary 'Dear Vyner'.

from it. And that the C of A was pledged by this agreement to push the Constitution through. . . .⁵⁸

What puzzled Bertram was the Committee of Administration's readiness to enter into such an agreement when no one really wanted a constitution. He could only conclude that something else had forced them to agree, and was strongly inclined to see MacBryan as the author of the scheme. He also saw the constitution as inevitably bringing about British intervention: 'The Constitution can't go on with Sarawak continuing as an independent State. It merely means that it will blow up and the B.G. will have to intervene. Rather a pity that you couldn't have saved a lot of trouble and disorder by entering into a fresh agreement straight away. . . .'⁵⁹

In the meantime, the Rance had got wind of the succession contretemps in America and there were reports that she was about to leave for England to break the news that Simon Mackay had been nominated by the Rajah as his successor.* 'My daughter is unaware of the purpose of my trip', she was quoted under the headline 'Nine Year-old Boy Heir to Sarawak', 'and I'm afraid it will be a great shock to her. It means that her son will soon have to prepare himself for the day when he will rule Sarawak'.⁶⁰ It was indeed a great shock to Lady Inchcape and she behaved with extreme caution, waiting to hear from the Rajah and the Sarawak Government Office. This prompted Bertram to comment that the succession was not a matter of nomination. 'I am the next Rajah', he told newspaper reporters on 9 December, 'as indeed the present Rajah announced in the Supreme Council this year'.⁶¹

Nevertheless, there were persistent rumours that the Rajah wanted his grandson to be his heir and in Kuching it was believed that only the Datu Patinggi's adamant opposition had prevented the Supreme Council from proclaiming Simon Brooke Mackay.⁶² Indeed, legal advice obtained after the war held that Simon was the Rajah's successor.⁶³

It might be thought that Bertram Brooke's stubborn adherence to the succession formula laid down by the first two Rajahs was simply a means of sabotaging the constitution and safeguarding the rights of himself and his son. He was adamantly opposed to the proposal from the outset, suspecting that its real purpose was to alter the succession. But from all that is known about him, it is clear that he was not motivated by personal interest. He regarded the succession as the most fundamental and immutable principle of Brooke rule. At the same time, his personal belief in individual accountability and a future state of punishments and rewards was a powerful influence on his actions. As he told Le Gros Clark: 'The Rajah thinks that when people are dead that's that, and there's an end of the matter so far as they are concerned. So does MacBryan. But I am certain they are wrong. I know that they live on . . . that they watch what one does . . . and that one day one will meet them again.'⁶⁴

*The Rance later claimed (*Queen of the Headhunters*, p. 156) to have made a last-minute attempt to overturn the Salic Law and have Leonora declared the Rajah's heir in order to prevent the cession. However, she had probably confused her actions in this direction in 1941 and earlier years with the events of 1945-6.

1. *SG*, 1 April 1941. Subsequent quotations from this source.
2. R. A. B. Mynors (Treasury) to A. E. Forrest (Colonial Office), 11 March 1942, *CO* 531/30 [53006].
3. Pepys' report, —July 1941, *CO* 531/30 [53011/4].
4. Note by Anthony Brooke, Enclosure 14, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak . . .', Brooke Papers, Box 2/1; H. Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 27 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
5. Cited in Walter Monckton and B. Mackenna, 'Joint Opinion re Mr G. T. M. MacBryan', 22 December 1949, Mark Morrison Papers (B).
6. Personal communication from Mr C. Pitt Hardacre, 3 October 1976.
7. Enclosure 3, 16 March 1941, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak . . .'.
8. Anthony Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 19 March 1941, Enclosure 5, *ibid*.
9. Anthony Brooke to Archer, 19 March 1941, Enclosure 6, *ibid*.
10. Aikman to Anthony Brooke, 21 March 1941, Enclosure 8, *ibid*.
11. Archer to Anthony Brooke, 22 March 1941, Enclosure 7, *ibid*.
12. L. D. Kennedy to Boyd, 26 February 1967, Boyd Papers, Box 4/4.
13. *The Facts about Sarawak*, pp. 35–8. Subsequent quotations from this source.
14. H. Thackwell Lewis, 'A short note on certain aspects of administration in the State of Sarawak between August 1939 and the outbreak of the war with Japan . . .', Brooke Papers, Box 6/1.
15. Personal communication from Mr C. Pitt Hardacre, 3 October 1976.
16. Thackwell Lewis, 'A Short Note . . .'.
17. Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 27 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
18. *ibid*.
19. Minutes of meeting of the Committee of Administration, 31 July 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 10/4.
20. Extract from minutes of Committee of Administration meeting, 3 June 1941, *ibid*. Subsequent quotations from this source.
21. 'A selection of recorded comments on the draft Constitution by certain Officers of the Service', Enclosure 47, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak . . .'. Subsequent quotations from this source.
22. Extract of a letter from Digby to A. R. Thomas, 14 May 1941, *CO* 531/30 [53011/4].
23. *ibid*.
24. Personal communication from Mr K. H. Digby, 11 August 1974.
25. G. E. Bettison, 'Sarawak Diary 1939–41', Rhodes House MSS Pac. s.56.
26. *SG*, 1 April 1941.
27. Memorandum entitled 'Constitutional Changes', Boyd Papers, Box 5/2.
28. Parnell to Boyd, 16 August 1941, Boyd Papers, Box 5, unfoliated.
29. Bertram Brooke, 'Self-Government For Sarawak', 10 May 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2. Subsequent quotations from this source.
30. 'Notes by Mr C. Pitt Hardacre . . . for the consideration of Committee of Administration', Enclosure 14, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak . . .'.
31. Interview with Anthony Brooke, 6 November 1974.
32. Vyner Brooke to Archer, 7 April 1941, Enclosure 18, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak . . .'.
33. Archer to Anthony Brooke, 21 April 1941, Enclosure 25, *ibid*.
34. Anthony Brooke to Archer, 23 April 1941, Enclosure 26, *ibid*.
35. Anthony Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 8 July 1941, Enclosure 29, *ibid*.
36. Enclosure 31, *ibid*.
37. Anthony Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 19 August 1941, Enclosure 46, *ibid*.

38. *ibid.*
39. Shenton Thomas to Anthony Brooke, 16 July 1941, Enclosure 38, *ibid.*
40. Anthony Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 22 July 1941, Enclosure 43, *ibid.*
41. Anthony Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 8 September 1941, Enclosure 51, *ibid.*
42. Note by Anthony Brooke on his cable to Jones, 11 September 1941, Enclosure 56, *ibid.*
43. Anthony Brooke to Le Gros Clark, September 1941, Enclosure 57, *ibid.*
44. For an account of the Centenary celebrations, see *SG Centenary Number*, 20 October 1941, and O. D. Gallagher, *Retreat in the East*, London, 1942, pp. 29–40.
45. Thackwell Lewis, 'A short note . . .'
46. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 16 August 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
47. *ibid.*
48. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 19 September 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
49. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 19 September 1941, 'Events . . .', Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
50. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 22 September 1941, *ibid.*
51. 'Minutes of Meeting of the Supreme Council . . . 25 September 1941 . . .', Brooke Papers, Box 10/4.
52. 'Minutes of Meeting of the Supreme Council . . . 1st October, 1941 . . .', *ibid.*
53. Bertram Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 17 October 1941, 'Events . . .', Brooke Papers, Box 2/3; Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 20 October 1941, *ibid.*
54. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 22 October 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.
55. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 24 November 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
56. Le Gros Clark to Bertram Brooke, 29 October 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
57. Bertram Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 20 November 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.
58. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 24 November 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
59. *ibid.*
60. *Daily Mirror*, 3 December 1941.
61. *Straits Times*, 8 December 1941.
62. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 23 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 22.
63. Personal communication from Lord Tanlaw.
64. Bertram Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 20 November 1941, Brooke Papers, Vol. 19.

V

Sarawak's Relations with Britain, 1934–1941

SARAWAK owed its independence to a variety of factors. When, after a long period of indifference, the British government was finally ready to acquire it as a colony, Rajah James lost the opportunity by insisting on full financial compensation. Another opportunity presented itself during Rajah Charles' last years when it seemed that Vyner might be prepared to sell out. However, for twenty years he was as tenaciously proprietorial as his father had been. Nor was there any pressing need for the Colonial Office to resolve what was clearly an anachronistic situation. Apart from oil, Sarawak was not known to possess valuable economic resources. Nor did its tiny population constitute a significant market. Had Sarawak possessed tin or other valuable minerals in large quantities, British intervention would not have been postponed.

As it was, the relationship between protected state and protecting power remained in a limbo of unresolved imperialism. The fact that the Brookes were an English family with some standing in English society was very important in ensuring their survival as a South-East Asian dynasty. The Colonial Office could not use methods which it had employed with Malay states such as Trengganu¹ without embarrassing outcries about the 'rights of Englishmen'. And the stakes were simply not high enough. The initiative for change had to be seen to come from the Brookes, and when it was not forthcoming the Colonial Office just had to wait until conditions changed. By the late 1930s, change was on its way.

The Colonial Office Background

British interest in Borneo had been quickened in the 1880s by the great race for colonies and the prospect that Charles Brooke and the Chartered Company would carve up between them what was left of Brunei. The

appointment of a British Resident at Brunei in 1906 ensured its survival as a state but the three Borneo territories continued to pose something of a dilemma. As early as the 1890s a senior official of the Foreign Office had recommended first the appointment of British Residents in Sarawak and North Borneo under a Resident-General in Labuan answerable to the Governor of the Straits Settlements, and later their unification with Brunei as a Crown colony.² The easiest course, however, was to do nothing. Britain's interest in the three territories was regarded as sufficient to dissuade any other power from becoming involved and there were no compelling economic reasons to exercise direct control.

That Colonial Office officials were sceptical about the quality of the Sarawak administration is clear from their scathing comments and the 'general opinion' (reported by Sir John Anderson, Governor of the Straits Settlements) that the only man who was any good as an administrator was the Rajah's illegitimate son.* Nevertheless, it was recognized that Charles Brooke exercised considerable authority over his polyglot subjects and there was an unwillingness to resolve the situation until he died. His status in English society and the romantic image of Sarawak made intervention difficult while he was alive.³ It was anticipated, however, that when Vyner succeeded to the Raj he would be willing to sell out his rights and the initiative could then be seen to come from the Brookes rather than from the British government.⁴

However, the old Rajah did not die until 1917 and Vyner seemed determined not to part with his inheritance after all. Furthermore, partly out of shyness and partly out of guile, he offered no opportunities for serious discussions. Consequently, from the Colonial Office's point of view the situation remained unresolved although there was still no pressing need to do anything about it. Nor was there sufficient political or commercial interest for the Colonial Office to use as an excuse for intervening. Two Labour M.P.s visited Kuching in 1920 and subsequently raised the need for appeal beyond the Sarawak judicial system. They also believed that Sarawak should be developed more rapidly and not simply be used to make the Brooke family rich.⁵ But their isolated criticisms failed to spark further comment in Parliament or the press and Sarawak continued to go its own comfortable way. Although Kuching was accessible from Singapore by means of a weekly steamer service, there was no hotel accommodation. Casual visitors were not encouraged and the Singapore newspapers do not seem to have sent reporters to Sarawak. Somerset Maugham's notes and short stories based on his 1921 visit provide a rare outsider's view of life there between the wars.⁶

The first serious initiative for change came in 1930 when the new Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Cecil Clementi, revived the old idea of linking the three Borneo states in a Resident system controlled from Singapore. His ultimate plan seems to have been to make a Crown colony of British Borneo, and having reached a basic understanding with

*This reference by Anderson (cited by Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 358-60) is completely mystifying.

the Chartered Company he was anxious to have talks with the Rajah. When Clementi visited Sarawak in August 1930 it was during one of Bertram Brooke's tours of duty and the latter seems to have made it very clear that there could be no question of altering the relationship laid down in the 1888 Treaty.⁷ Undeterred, Clementi pursued his plan to purchase North Borneo, no doubt hoping that the Rajah would come around. However, Cabinet rejected his proposal in 1933 on grounds of cost⁸ and Sarawak weathered the one serious pre-war attempt to tighten up Britain's control of its South-East Asian dependencies.

Clementi's successor, Sir Shenton Thomas, adopted a more accommodating attitude towards Borneo but Bertram Brooke still thought it necessary to remind him of the treaty relationship between the two countries. After the Governor had been accorded a full 21-gun salute on his official visit in August 1935, Bertram made a speech emphasizing that this was not to be regarded as a signal that a governor was visiting Sarawak in the course of an official tour 'but His Highness the Rajah's welcome to Your Excellency as the personal representative throughout Malayan territories of the King-Emperor, and therefore as a living link between Sarawak and the protecting power'.⁹

The only occasions when the Colonial Office applied pressure on the Sarawak government involved the rights of British citizens resident in Sarawak who were unable to seek legal redress outside the state. This eventually led the Rajah to appoint a Judicial Commissioner, Thomas Stirling Boyd, in 1928, but it was clear from the outset that the Rajah regarded the move as a tactical concession to the Colonial Office. Otherwise, the only cause for official concern was a letter written to the Colonial Office in 1927 by the British anthropologist William McDougall. In one official's view, 'the composite picture' provided by McDougall was 'rather disquieting',¹⁰ but the absence of other information made it very difficult to assess. The consequent tendency was to adopt the old position that it was in British interests that Sarawak should remain under the control of Englishmen whose loyalty to the Crown was unquestioned and who guaranteed the loyalty of their subjects at no cost to the British government.

Nevertheless, by the late 1930s the tide of international opinion was moving against the survival of the Brooke Raj. Trouble in the West Indies¹¹ and Lord Hailey's reports on the African colonies,¹² together with increasing international interest in the social and economic conditions of Britain's colonies produced some reactions within the Colonial Office. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 (replacing the Colonial Development Fund of 1929) did little to improve the situation* but it was a measure of the British government's sensitivity to a new international awareness of 'the colonial problem'. Another source of British interest in Sarawak was the question of Imperial defence and the

*Under the 1940 Act, a colonial government could receive assistance of up to £5,000,000 a year for ten years. The 1945 Act which replaced this was more generous, allowing a maximum of £120,000,000 over ten years.

strategic importance of the northern Borneo coast to the British navy. The Miri and Seria (Brunei) oilfields seemed an obvious target for an expansionist Japan and reports of Japanese activities in North Borneo had begun to worry the Admiralty.¹³

During the years immediately prior to the Japanese invasion of Sarawak, colonial affairs were in the hands of Malcolm MacDonald, Lord Lloyd, and Lord Moyne successively.* None showed any particular interest in what was happening in Sarawak, although Lord Lloyd knew Bertram Brooke well (they had rowed together at Cambridge) and Lord Moyne who had visited Sarawak briefly during a world cruise was content to repeat the conventional wisdom about Brooke rule:

The small number of white population is explained by the fact that this State has been ruled by three generations of Brooke Rajahs whose policy has been to give the first place to native interests and to prevent any undue replacement of their ancient ways of life in the interest of commercial exploitation of the great natural resources of the country. In Sarawak, therefore, there is no clash between the interests of white and native, and the European population are mainly officials.¹⁴

Of the three, Lord Lloyd was least inclined to make any change to the relationship between the two countries as laid down by the 1888 Treaty. Moyne, however, had been chairman of the West Indies Royal Commission of 1938 and was more alive to the need for colonial reform. Of the various Under-Secretaries of State who served during the period, only Sir Cosmo Parkinson and Lord Dufferin emerge as significant figures. The person who exercised the most important continuous influence on Borneo policy until early 1946 was C. E. J. Gent.

After a distinguished army career, Edward Gent joined the Colonial Office in 1920 as an Assistant Principal Secretary and after serving as Private Secretary to Lord Harlech, was made a Principal Secretary in 1926. By 1939 he had become Assistant Secretary and from 1942 until his appointment as Governor of the Malayan Union in early 1946 he was Permanent Under-Secretary of State. As head of the Colonial Office's Eastern Department, Gent was responsible for Malayan and Borneo affairs until 1946 when it was split into two sections, Sarawak then coming under N. L. Mayle and his assistant, J. J. Paskin.

The absence of a biography of Gent is unfortunate. But there can be little doubt that he exercised a strong and consistent influence on policy

*The following is a full list of the Secretaries of State for Colonies for the period covered:

9 November 1931	Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister (Viscount Swinton)
7 June 1935	Malcolm MacDonald
27 November 1935	J. H. Thomas
29 May 1936	W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore (Lord Harlech)
16 May 1938	Malcolm MacDonald
13 May 1940	G. A. L. Lloyd (Lord Lloyd)
8 February 1941	W. E. Guinness (Lord Moyne)
23 February 1942	Robert Cecil (Viscount Cranborne)
24 November 1942	Oliver Stanley
3 August 1945	George Hall
7 October 1946	Arthur Creech-Jones

towards the Malay States and Borneo through the various Permanent Under-Secretaries and Secretaries of State who came and went during his time. He seems to have been largely responsible for the important policy decisions of 1944 which envisaged the Malayan Union and the annexation of Sarawak and North Borneo. However, the only records of his thinking are his elegant minutes on Colonial Office files. Like so many bureaucrats in sensitive policy areas, a great deal of his work was done through conversation. He was a subtle diplomat, a consummate tactician and, if necessary, a ruthless politician.

Gent was essentially a bureaucratic imperialist. Convinced of the benefits which British rule had brought the peoples of the Empire, but anxious that these should be improved in the areas of social services, his main preoccupation was with properly organized administrative systems which ran cheaply and efficiently with a minimum of duplication. His attitude towards any administration which did not satisfy his standards of efficiency was conveyed in such remarks as 'a lack of regular procedure here'. Needless to say, the situation in the Malay States and Borneo during the 1930s met with his disapproval. The proliferation of administrative structures within the Federated Malay States, the Unfederated Malay States, the Straits Settlements, and the three separate Borneo governments must have been anathema to him. Visiting Malaya with Samuel Wilson, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, in 1932 he was also unimpressed with the Malay rulers whose powers Sir Samuel was anxious to increase.¹⁵ Whatever Gent may have been, he was no romantic traditionalist and he regarded the rulers as a major obstacle to real progress in Malaya.

The Popular Image of Sarawak

The way in which Gent and his colleagues viewed Sarawak was inevitably influenced by the popular image of Sarawak in the 1920s and 1930s. Strictly speaking, it was more the image of the Brookes than of the country itself which provided a romantic backdrop for an eccentric English family. People knew about the headhunters of Borneo whom the Brookes had supposedly tamed and of course there was the *orang utan* or 'wild man of Borneo'. Beyond that, there was only the schoolboy's vision of 'white rajahs' ruling over black men under the swaying coconut palms. To do him justice, the Rajah was a socially retiring man who detested publicity and was dedicated to a quiet life. However, the Raneé and her two younger daughters more than compensated for his reticence. Mixing with the Mayfair set, Sylvia exploited to the utmost her exotic role as 'Raneé of Sarawak'. She often wore Malay dress, particularly the yellow *sarong* which was her royal prerogative. She was also fond of wearing masses of jewellery and was once photographed wearing a snake-skin headband. She was famous as a source of scandalous stories about members of the aristocracy and society figures. She adored publicity and was entertaining in a sometimes malicious way.

Elizabeth and Valerie Brooke were exceptionally attractive and

photogenic young women. Liberated from schooling in their mid-teens by an indulgent mother, they joined her at the fashionable Mayfair nightclubs and were soon appearing in the social pages of the afternoon newspapers as 'Princess Pearl' and 'Princess Baba'. At one point Vyner wrote to the newspapers pointing out that his daughters were not entitled to the honorific, but to no effect. In 1935 Elizabeth married Harry Roy, a well-known dance-band leader at the Savoy Hotel who had composed 'The Sarawaki' foxtrot in Sylvia's honour. Two years later, Valerie married Bob Gregory, an all-in wrestler from Puerto Rico. However, both marriages were short-lived and broke up in a blaze of publicity. Elizabeth then revived her earlier idea of going into films and during the late 1930s she spent some time in Hollywood where Sylvia was engaged on a script for a film called 'The White Rajah'. For people like Gent, the Ranees epitomized the noxious American influence corrupting English society.

Gladys Brooke had also received her share of newspaper publicity. Separated from Bertram at the end of the war, she established a salon for artists and writers as her mother had done in the 1890s, although not with the same success. She also went through a number of religious conversions, first to Christian Science, and then Roman Catholicism which led to a personal audience with the Pope where she wore Malay dress. In 1932 she was converted to Islam on an aircraft between London and Paris.¹⁶ Although this well-publicized event produced an unfavourable reaction from the leaders of Britain's Islamic community, she went ahead with her project of exhibiting a robe said to have belonged to the Prophet Mohammed. She had published *Relations and Complications*,¹⁷ an outspoken book about her childhood, and was engaged on *The Mystic Legends of Islam*.

Sylvia, who had already dabbled in popular journalism,¹⁸ was spurred on by the appearance of Ranees Margaret's charming memoir, *Good Morning and Good Night* (1934), to write her autobiography, *Sylvia of Sarawak* (1936),* and *The Three White Rajahs* (1939). But while Sylvia was happy to exploit the exotic appeal of Sarawak in her social and literary activities, she was increasingly bored with the place. During the period from 1930 until 1936 her total time spent there amounted to less than two years. And when she returned to Sarawak briefly in September 1941 for the Brooke Centenary celebrations, it was her first visit for two and a half years.

During the publicity following the Rajah's removal of Anthony Brooke's title of Rajah Muda in early 1940 the Ranees's remarks were noted by Gent, as were her later statements criticizing Sarawak's defences and the Children's Overseas Reception Scheme. '... Her tongue style is thoughtless and sensational', he noted in April 1942 when she offered to make a lecture tour of England explaining the Far East,

*A second autobiography, *Queen of the Headhunters* . . . , was published in 1970. Although Sylvia Brooke possessed 'the talent to amuse', the book is highly unreliable and virtually useless as a historical source. Sylvia was accustomed to writing for an audience which knew little about Sarawak.

'and her inclination is towards an unruly malicious form of snobbishness'.¹⁹ He was openly sarcastic about Ranee's references to events of late 1941 in Sarawak:

Her extravagant misuse of language appears repeatedly . . . e.g. her 'escape' from Sarawak—she visited the State in August last year for the Centenary celebrations and left at the beginning of October for Australia. The Rajah himself 'escaped' in accordance with his longstanding plan for a holiday after these celebrations. . . .²⁰

Two further developments hardly improved the Eastern Department's opinion of Sylvia. The first was a debt of US\$7,000 run up in America and claimed by the man appointed by the Rajah in October 1939 to manage her financial affairs. The second was her contact with Captain Roy Kendall's Brisbane-based 'cloak and dagger' operation in 1942.* It is difficult to say how much she knew about Kendall's plan to land two Brooke officers by submarine to gather information about occupied Sarawak, but she saw herself master-minding a rebellion against the Japanese. While the 'plan' was kept from the Rajah and everyone in England, she hinted to friends that something momentous was afoot. Extracts from her letters eventually made their way to the Eastern Department²¹ and while this 'cracked-brained exploit' was not taken very seriously, it was seen as yet another example of her irresponsibility.²² Her actions can only have helped to persuade the Colonial Office that the Brookes should not remain as rulers in Sarawak.

The Breen Reports and the Question of Secondment

The Colonial Office's doubts about Sarawak were revived by Breen's reports²³ which provided the first hard information on the inside workings of the administration. Breen told Gent that there was 'only a crude form of administration' and that the financial system was 'rudimentary and uninformed'. The general picture of poor standards persuaded Gent that 'sooner or later we shall have to bring pressure on the Rajah to accept his responsibilities'.²⁴ However, Sarawak's internal sovereignty and the Rajah's elusiveness meant that there was no easy solution.

One possible means was the secondment of officers from the Colonial Service to the Sarawak government for limited periods. In February 1937 the Rajah had written to Sir Shenton Thomas asking for the extension of the Malayan Medical Service to Sarawak. The head of the Service subsequently reported that public health standards in Sarawak were very bad and the proposal was then considered and approved by the Eastern Department. Apart from improving affairs in Sarawak, the arrangement was regarded as 'opening up the channels of information as to conditions in Sarawak generally'.²⁵ It was hoped that all Sarawak departments might eventually be staffed from Malaya and that Sarawak would be in a similar

*Secret Intelligence Australia (SIA) was one of a number of special intelligence units operating within the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB) in Australia and, like the better-known Survey and Reconnaissance Department (SRD), under ultimately British control. SIA was involved in long-range penetrations into Japanese-occupied territory using trained Indonesian agents. See below, pp. 168–9.

position to the Unfederated Malay States. Gent regarded Sarawak as 'sheltering under the skirts of the Straits Setts.',²⁶ but he was agreeable as long as the Principal Medical Officer was from Malaya.* Sir John Shuckburgh and Sir Cosmo Parkinson probably regarded secondment not only as a means of improving Sarawak's standards of government but of providing a reliable source of information on internal affairs and a bargaining counter to be used when necessary with the Rajah.

In the meantime, Stirling Boyd renewed his campaign to have his successor brought in from the Colonial Legal Service. The Chief Justice pointed out that since the Sarawak government would find him difficult to replace, they might ask the Secretary of State for assistance. This would also ensure that the judiciary would in future be independent, with a Chief Justice or equivalent who was not a member of the Committee of Administration and an Attorney-General responsible for legal policy and administration. However, as Boyd acknowledged, there were difficulties:

The snag is that H.H. and the Powers-that-Be won't like it as the dangers, from their point of view, are obvious. E.g. if you came here as C.J. for 3 years and anything happened of which you didn't approve, you would only have to apply to the S. of S. with reasons, for a transfer. Your position in every way would be infinitely stronger than mine, and the S. of S. would be in a position to say what must and what must not be done.²⁷

The Eastern Department supported Boyd's proposals as a 'step forward in the direction of bringing in Sarawak as a party to the Malayan Establishment' but was not at all sure how they could be implemented. There was a precedent in the extension of the Malayan Medical Service to Sarawak but this had been done on the Rajah's own initiative. The Colonial Office's strict policy had been to refrain from offering any facilities unless they were explicitly requested by the Rajah. A direct approach to him was 'out of the question'.²⁸ All that Boyd could be told was that if the proposal was put forward by the Sarawak government it would be favourably considered: a good bureaucratic formula which made negotiations possible without committing anyone. Sir Shenton Thomas could not provide any information about the Rajah's intentions regarding Boyd's successor. And as long as the Colonial Office adhered to its position of strict non-intervention there was very little that could be done. Furthermore, when Boyd and his three colleagues were 'purged' in March 1939 and Pepys' appointment as General Adviser was announced, the over-riding importance attached to this innovation diverted attention from Boyd's replacement. Judicial reform was not seen at this point as being particularly pressing.

Lunch at Leicester Square

The long-awaited initiative from the Rajah came at last in early 1938. Now that Bertram was no longer physically able to bear his share of the responsibility of ruling Sarawak, Vyner and more particularly Sylvia

*Dr J. H. Bowyer of the Malayan Medical Service took up the post in 1938.

began to think very seriously of selling out to Britain. In July L. F. Burgis, a former private secretary to Lord Esher who was then working in the Cabinet Office, was asked by the Rajah and Raneé to make discreet inquiries as to whether the British government would be interested in such a proposal. Burgis told Gent that the Rajah was too shy to make an official approach but was 'desirous of divesting himself from the burden', subject to a satisfactory financial settlement.²⁹ The Rajah, he added, would himself look after any question of compensating Bertram as Heir Presumptive while a place would hopefully be found for Anthony in the new colonial administration. A figure of £5,000,000 was mentioned.³⁰ Gent's response was suitably circumspect. He told Burgis that while the government had not hitherto considered taking over Sarawak, the Eastern Department believed that defence matters and standards of social welfare and general administration would sooner or later raise the question. He was not prepared to commit himself on what the government's attitude would be to such a proposal. But he suggested that a private meeting might be arranged at which the Rajah could express his feelings and that a conversation might subsequently take place with the Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald.

It soon emerged, however, that there was a difference of opinion between the Rajah and the Raneé. Sylvia made no bones about her belief that the 'white rajah' system should be brought to an end and a satisfactory financial settlement arranged. But Vyner was unable to decide between a complete break and the 'far less revolutionary step' of entrusting the administration to a British Adviser while remaining in England as an absentee sovereign. According to Burgis, Vyner had only the 'haziest ideas' of what this would involve and he doubted whether he could make any clear preference without considerable guidance: 'He is only set on making a change, either greater or lesser, which will relieve him of his burden of autocracy'.³¹ At the same time, Vyner was anxious that the natives should not be left with the impression that he had 'cleared out under irresistible pressure from H.M.G.'. With Lord Dufferin's approval, a lunch was arranged for the Rajah, Burgis, and Gent at a restaurant in Leicester Square but at the last moment the Rajah telephoned to say that he could not come. 'Even the prospect of such an informal beginning as this was too much for the Rajah . . .', noted a disappointed Gent.³² However, Sarawak's future was now on the agenda.

The Appointment of a General Adviser

The March 1939 'purge' of Sarawak's five senior bureaucrats had provided the Colonial Office with a long-awaited opportunity of gaining access to Sarawak's internal affairs. The Rajah left to Anthony Brooke the task of explaining what had happened and it was during his subsequent meeting with Sir Shenton Thomas in Singapore that the latter raised a number of suggestions about future administrative arrangements. The Imperial government did not wish 'unduly to interfere' in Sarawak's domestic affairs, he told Anthony, but it still had 'necessarily

[to] take into strict account the need for safeguarding native interests and defence'.³³ He felt that there was a case for greater interchange between the Sarawak Service and the Colonial Service and recommended that in future the positions of Chief Secretary, Financial Secretary, Chief Justice, and Legal Adviser might sometimes be filled by officers seconded from the Colonial Service. The Sarawak Service offered no prospects of promotion or transfer and it was consequently necessary 'either to offer unduly high pay so as to attract good men or to be content with men who lack ambition or are unable to obtain a Colonial appointment'.³⁴ His most important suggestion was that a 'General Adviser' should be appointed to the Sarawak government and he recommended the services of W. E. Pepys, the retiring General Adviser to the government of Johore whose wide experience in administration would be extremely useful. The General Adviser's function does not seem to have been spelled out in detail but Sir Shenton no doubt saw Pepys both as a source of information and as the thin end of a wedge likely to open up Sarawak's internal affairs to scrutiny. Now that Sarawak had lost its most senior officers, Pepys might even fill the position of Chief Secretary and, during the Rajah's absence, become Officer Administering the Government.

Anthony agreed that there should be a General Adviser, although he probably had private reservations about how much authority Pepys should be given. It seems doubtful that he seriously envisaged Pepys occupying the post of Chief Secretary, or any other position of real power. But he was happy that he should assist with any arrangements concerning defence, the second area of British interest which the Governor had indicated.

On his return to Sarawak, Anthony passed on the Governor's suggestions to Andrew MacPherson, then Secretary for Native Affairs, whose views provide a valuable insight into the attitudes and values of the Sarawak Service. MacPherson believed that the hardships and discomforts of service were sufficient to weed out all except those 'who truly love Sarawak'. The Sarawak officer, he maintained, felt a special loyalty to the Rajah and the country which no seconded officer could ever feel, nor was he able to leave his mistakes behind by being transferred somewhere else: 'He is not an alien "jingo" but *part* of this country whether he likes it or not, and after some years he develops a sense of *belonging* which I think must be unique.' There was no place in Sarawak for the selfishly ambitious man who would not work for the people. The better the man, the more Sarawak needed him. Rather than secondment to Sarawak, MacPherson suggested that transfer was more desirable. '... There must be many men in other Services', he concluded, 'who are sufficiently idealistic to *prefer* Sarawak and a good conscience to high honours and a guilty one.'³⁵

No doubt there was resistance from MacPherson and others to the idea of a General Adviser. However, Anthony had made a commitment to the Governor and the Rajah gave his approval. Accordingly, an agreement was made that Pepys would spend six months in Sarawak before going on leave, after which it would be decided whether he would return. Anthony

hoped that he would be able to take up his appointment in October before the Rajah's return.

One important result of Anthony's discussions with Sir Shenton Thomas was that the Governor formed a very favourable impression of his capacity and enthusiasm to carry out his new responsibilities. Anthony had 'developed considerably', he told Malcolm MacDonald, partly as a result of attending Margery Perham's course in colonial administration at Oxford, and seemed determined to make Sarawak a 'model state'. Altogether, his prospects as the future Rajah seemed highly favourable both for Sarawak and the British government:

I feel that, whatever may happen, he starts well: the native population is of course very pleased at his appointment and his colleagues in the Service are, I suspect, by no means unappreciative of the manner in which he has taken up the cudgels on behalf of one of their number against officers much older and more senior than he.³⁶

Although both Anthony and the Rajah had emphasized that his appointment as Rajah Muda in no way affected the succession, the Governor had no 'misgivings' on the question. He believed that Anthony would be the next Rajah and that he would be amenable to British influence.

In London, Lord Dufferin expressed his satisfaction that the Rajah had at last nominated Anthony as his successor but Gent quickly disabused him of this impression. He also advised that if the Rajah was pressed on this point it 'would stir up great opposition from the Rancee and might wreck the great opportunity now offered to us of getting a foothold in Sarawak'.³⁷ Lord Dufferin accepted this assessment. '... The Rancee is a dangerous woman', he noted, 'and I think that if we let matters take their course Peter Brooke will almost automatically step into his uncle's shoes.'³⁸ Together with the appointment of Pepys, this would provide the 'foothold' which the Colonial Office had been seeking.

There was general approval in the Colonial Office for Anthony's 'resolute action' in securing the resignations of Parnell, Calvert, and Boyd. It was felt that the Crossley affair had been badly handled and that Anthony had 'acted firmly'. Furthermore, what was known about the trio suggested that they would be no great loss. Sarawak would 'hardly feel the draught' when they left. It was pointed out that secondment of officers from the Colonial Service presented no problems. And Boyd's suggestion that his successor should come from the Colonial Legal Service could also be taken up: 'The advantages would be to establish closer contact between H.M.G. and Sarawak, to open up fresh sources of information concerning the State, and generally to improve its administration.'³⁹ Gent was even more frank:

Sarawak is a territory of very great economic possibilities and of defence importance and it is essential to keep this iron hot and not to lose the opportunity . . . to ensure an orderly introduction of modern ideas of progress (in its better sense) including progressive improvement of native society, which the Rajah himself has views on—but views which distrust any departure from the most conservative policy of protecting the natives against 'progress' in its worse sense.⁴⁰

He was convinced that there were no prospects for social reform as long as Parnell and Boyd were in office but that there was much more hope with Anthony. He was disappointed, however, that more definite steps had not been taken to ensure the appointment of a General Adviser. Since the Rajah was now in England, there could be a case for offering him 'discreet assistance' in making up his mind.

Lord Dufferin agreed it was important that the Rajah should be persuaded to appoint an Adviser, but he was so 'shy and suspicious' that any approach would be a 'delicate matter'. Dufferin suggested that if he himself met the Rajah, the matter could be raised in an informal way. But if nothing had happened by July they would have to take the risk of opening more formal discussions.⁴¹ The Rajah was due to meet Sir Cosmo Parkinson to discuss defence matters and this would provide a suitable occasion. Sir Shenton was subsequently advised of the importance of taking this opportunity to influence the Sarawak administration. He was told that the General Adviser should be the best man available, and also that something should be done about the appointment of a new Financial Secretary. Finally, Dufferin sought his advice on whether to raise the subject privately with the Rajah when he came to London.⁴²

Sir Shenton did not feel that there would be any point in opening formal discussions with the Rajah, who had already agreed to Pepys' appointment. The Rajah, he told Dufferin, 'would not demur to any views that you might express, but I fear that he would promptly forget them or go back on them if he found them inconvenient'.⁴³ Besides, the Rajah would be spending less and less time in Sarawak and would probably be prepared to leave government in the hands of Bertram and Anthony as long as there was an experienced and sympathetic officer to advise them. The Governor believed that the British government would be in a strong position to influence the Sarawak government by emphasizing its genuine concern for native welfare. Finally, he attached no importance to the Rajah's insistence that Anthony's appointment had no bearing on the succession.

The Governor's optimism was supported by Major W. N. Bridges who had seen a good deal of Sarawak while working on the rubber assessment scheme some years earlier. He confirmed Gent's belief that Parnell, Calvert, and Boyd had no experience of outstation conditions and knew very little about the country. When compared with the Straits Settlements, where medical and agricultural services, education, and public works had reached a high stage of development, Sarawak was certainly 'very primitive'. Bridges found, however, that the people were contented and that their conditions of life were not inferior to the more remote Malay states such as Trengganu. He believed, furthermore, that with his 'current and valuable experience' Anthony would both maintain the Brooke family's traditional policy of protecting native interests and make useful reforms within the Kuching bureaucracy.⁴⁴

When the appointment of Pepys was officially confirmed in early July 1939, it was interpreted in many quarters as signifying that the Colonial Office was intervening in Sarawak's internal affairs as a consequence of

the 'resignation' of senior officers in March. However, the Rajah went to some pains to emphasize that it did not constitute any alteration in Sarawak's relations with the British government and that it was not connected in any way with the resignations. In Kuching, the news raised a flutter of anxiety within the Administrative Service and there were hostile comments about 'interference'. Pepys was seen as representing the British government which had thus far been successfully kept out of Sarawak affairs. An official circular was subsequently issued explaining that Pepys would not be coming to Sarawak in any official capacity but as 'Personal Adviser' to the Rajah. However, during the six months from Pepys' appointment until his arrival in Kuching there was a good deal of discussion about how best to ensure that the General Adviser would be kept at arm's length.

When news was received in January 1940 of Anthony's demotion, Lord Dufferin was furious. 'This is intolerable', he exclaimed, 'where is the Rajah & more important the Ranees?'⁴⁵ Sir Shenton Thomas reported that Anthony's misdeeds were 'trivial and none of them . . . dishonourable' and that the origins of the proclamation were clearly unsatisfactory. There was even the possibility that the Rajah had signed it, 'as he signs most documents, without reading it'. Nevertheless, the proclamation was a 'scandalous document' and the Rajah had no right to brand an officer publicly on the grounds which had been volunteered.⁴⁶ The Governor had sent a telegram protesting against its publication but this had not arrived in time. 'The Rajah gave and the Rajah hath taken away', mused J. J. Paskin,⁴⁷ although the general reaction in the Colonial Office was not so philosophical. To Sir Arthur Burns and Lord Dufferin it was yet another example of the Rajah's capricious and unpredictable behaviour which damaged the prospects of setting Sarawak's house in order. There was a good deal of hostility towards the Ranees whose excited outpourings to the Hearst press were faithfully reproduced by the London newspapers. '. . . The Ranees is still in the U.S.A. (her spiritual home)', Gent observed archly, '& generally her material place of lodging is at Hollywood.'⁴⁸ In spite of its sympathy for Anthony, however, the Colonial Office was determined to prevent the Sarawak affair from blowing up into an international incident which might bruise British prestige and create pressure for direct intervention. When it was reported from Athens that Gladys Brooke was intent on raising a clamour on her son's behalf and that the Greek government had nobly offered to suppress all mention in local publications and outgoing telegrams from foreign correspondents, the Colonial Office was appreciative.⁴⁹

The Eastern Department's view of Anthony's demotion shifted significantly after receipt of his correspondence with the Rajah. Gent was particularly interested in a paragraph from the Rajah's letter to Anthony of 19 December 1939:

Being as old as I am I can't become a Methuselah out here and prefer to spend most of my remaining years in a more salubrious climate. Pepys will be a kind of stepping stone towards intervention by the British Government. Sarawak would be absolutely *safe* under the B.G. and I see no alternative. Nothing has been

arranged yet, but I am letting the idea get about and I think it is being well received. . . . I shall have to make a definite statement at Council Negri next year and want to have everything arranged beforehand.⁵⁰

Gent conceded that this may have been nothing more than 'an expression of the Rajah's weariness of the flesh' after his return from holiday to Sarawak and its problems, together with the outbreak of war. He also noted the Rajah's hope that Anthony would regain his former position and the indication that he might still inherit the Raj. This was a less than pleasing prospect now that Anthony's uncompromising attitudes were revealed:

We are all I think sympathetic with the Rajah's nephew in the treatment which he has received at the hands of His Highness, but I cannot think that it would be wise for His Majesty's Government to favour, or contribute towards, a complete restoration of a situation in which we would have to contemplate the lifetime of another Rajah with ourselves powerless to intervene in the administration of the State, beyond the very narrow limits contemplated in the 1888 Agreement.⁵¹

Gent now believed that there was no real reason to think that nephew would be any more 'progressive' than uncle, although Anthony had certainly raised such hopes earlier. In Gent's view, the first object of British policy should be to 'strengthen the effective influence of British authority in the Sarawak regime' by means of a new treaty which would make the Sarawak government amenable to the British government's 'advice' on any issue. 'Perhaps Rajah himself would not be averse to considering new agreement providing residential advisory system', MacDonald subsequently cabled the Governor, 'which would give effective authority to British Government representative, and which might give him satisfactory assurance of maintenance of policy of native interests . . . whoever his successor may be.'⁵²

Pepys took up his new post in Kuching in early 1940 and his first reports were encouraging. Accompanying the Rajah on his outstation tours, the General Adviser was impressed with the warm welcome they received. Sympathizing with the outstation officers from his own experience in Malaya, he deprecated the earlier attempts to dismantle the traditional system and centralize all administration in Kuching. Pepys thought that the Administrative Service had exerted a beneficial influence out of all proportion to its size:

When one considers the number of European officials that have been employed in Sarawak relatively to its area, the wonder is that so much has been achieved. If little spectacular has been done in the way of material 'progress' and 'development', peace and security have been given to the inhabitants of huge tracts of country where within living memory anarchy prevailed and heads were cheap.⁵³

This was all the more impressive when viewed against conditions across the Dutch border where garrisons of native troops were maintained at all government posts. Pepys also noted the Rajah's interest in improving social conditions. In recent months he had instituted a scheme for travelling medical dispensaries to visit remote areas and was also concerning himself with education and the supply of water to larger centres of population.

At this stage, Pepys felt inclined to stay in Sarawak for a second term of service. The Rajah had been most hospitable and there was no indication of resentment or opposition to his being there although he suspected that there would have been towards a younger serving officer from Malaya. But once the novelty of the outstation tours had faded and he was endeavouring to establish an office routine, the General Adviser encountered a wall of indifference. The Rajah's reforming zeal quickly evaporated and the senior administrative officers began to ignore him.

Pepys was seen by most Sarawak officers as an alien interloper, a symbol of that bureaucratic dinosaur, the MCS. The general strategy was to keep him as far as possible from the everyday business of government; indeed, if such a metaphor can be risked in a tropical context, he was frozen out. Nevertheless, he was able to gather sufficient information about the political situation to assist Sir Shenton Thomas and the Colonial Office in their plans for Sarawak's future. This represented a considerable improvement on the previous situation where the Governor had to depend on intermittent reports of varying reliability.

Crystallization of a Policy on Sarawak

As might have been expected, Boyd visited the Colonial Office shortly after reaching London in July 1939. The former Chief Justice suggested to Sir John Shuckburgh that since he had been appointed on the recommendation of the Colonial Office, there might well be an inquiry into the circumstances of his forced resignation. He also felt that the Secretary of State should ask Sir Shenton Thomas for copies of all the documents relating to Anthony's 'inquiry'. But Shuckburgh had a somewhat jaundiced view of Boyd, who had come to him on several earlier occasions with complaints about the Rajah and the whole system of administration in Sarawak. He did not think that his complaints were unfounded but he could not sympathize with a man whose 'one topic of conversation is complaint against the ruler whom he is serving'.⁵⁴ In his view, Boyd was not only disloyal: he had become obsessive and was therefore 'almost impossible to deal with'. Nor did he approve of Boyd's desire to remain anonymous. 'If he really wants to make heavy weather over the whole business', he noted, 'we have a right to expect him to come out into the open and deliver his attack without any reservation.' But Boyd, as he correctly assessed, was not prepared to do anything which might risk his generous pension and Shuckburgh was not going to 'take the chestnuts out of the fire for him'.⁵⁵

At the same time, the dossier which Boyd brought with him to the Colonial Office and which was subsequently circulated among M.P.s and newspaper editors provided further evidence of the 'irregularities' which Gent and his colleagues suspected were being practised in Sarawak. One official commented that the inquiry 'was not exactly a model of judicial procedure'. The Rajah's own behaviour had been inconsistent, he felt, while Anthony had opened the inquiry with the deliberate intention of forcing resignations and had been obliged to withdraw 'some of his most

hot-headed statements'.⁵⁶ Gent observed that there had been 'a lack of regular procedure on both sides', but that it had not resulted in serious unfairness,⁵⁷ while Sir Cosmo Parkinson believed that the purge, 'however administered, will prove to have been for the benefit of Sarawak'.⁵⁸ Boyd was consequently told that no action could be taken and if he wished to pursue his complaints against the Sarawak government, he would have to make a formal approach to the Secretary of State.⁵⁹ Under other circumstances, something might have been done about Boyd's complaints but now the prospects of gaining influence through the General Adviser and a co-operative Rajah Muda seemed extremely hopeful. In the meantime, the 'curious condition of affairs' in Sarawak could be tolerated.

Although Boyd's dossier did not arouse great interest within the Colonial Office, there was more response in political circles. In particular, R. H. Etherton, M.P. for Stretford in Lancashire, and Sir John Graham Kerr, M.P. for the Scottish universities, made official inquiries about the situation in Sarawak. In February 1940 Etherton wrote to Malcolm MacDonald asking for an explanation of Anthony Brooke's recent demotion and the earlier resignations of senior officers. 'It all sounds very ominous', he told the Secretary of State, 'and it appears that the administration of Sarawak is far from satisfactory.'⁶⁰ He thought it 'extraordinary' that a young man of twenty-six should have been left in a position of absolute autocratic power. Nor, in view of Anthony's demotion, had his administration been very successful. Etherton felt that 'for practical purposes' Sarawak was a British possession and that any unfavourable criticism would involve Britain. The British government, therefore, had a responsibility to see that it was administered with 'reasonable efficiency', that the judicial system was 'reasonable', and that the rights of British subjects were protected. The oil field at Miri and Sarawak's membership of the International Rubber Agreement he suggested as further strengthening British interests. Gent suspected that Etherton had 'succumbed to a whispering (something really louder) campaign' by Boyd, for whom he had no great regard.⁶¹ However, he let Etherton read Sir Shenton Thomas' despatch reporting on the resignations.

There was continued pressure from the two M.P.s. On 28 February 1940 Kerr asked Malcolm MacDonald in the Commons:

... whether, in view of the proximity of the independent protected state of Sarawak to British possessions in the East and its strategic importance, he will inform the House regarding the recent deposition of the Rajah Muda, and the resignation some months ago of five senior members of the Civil Service. . . .⁶²

The Secretary of State replied, predictably enough, that under the terms of the 1888 Treaty the government possessed no authority to interfere and that it would be improper for him to make any comment. But Kerr told him privately that he had read the documents relating to the March 1939 inquiry and believed that, if made public, the facts would

... give rise to a very real feeling of uneasiness, a feeling that the old-fashioned

Rajah rule—an absolute monarchy as far as internal affairs are concerned—is no longer appropriate, and that the Sarawak government should be reinforced by a properly constituted civil service under the control of the Colonial Office, or, failing this, there should be at least an Agent of the British Government actually resident in the territory.⁶³

Echoing Boyd's feelings, Kerr described the March 1939 affair as 'a revolt against the tightening up of the previously sloppy administrative and judicial systems' and that the resignations clearly meant a return to sloppiness. The facts revealed by the inquiry, he suggested, showed that it was time to bring Sarawak up to the level of efficiency of British colonies. MacDonald defended the Rajah's actions and his general policy, adding that the secondment of Colonial Service officers and the appointment of Pepys as General Adviser would be of great benefit to the Sarawak administration. At the same time, he advised against public airing of the issue. '... The Rajah', he told Kerr, 'is . . . a shy person, and one whom it would be fatal to pillory in Parliament or in other public manner, even if he deserved it which I have no reason to believe.' The Rajah could be convinced of the need for progressive policy and methods by 'sympathetic persuasion' rather than by less diplomatic means.⁶⁴

However, the M.P.s were not easily put off. Kerr did not find Sir Shenton Thomas' despatch in any way reassuring. Indeed, it gave 'entire corroboration of my belief that the ruling family of Sarawak are really not of the mentality or strength of character appropriate to their position'.⁶⁵ Etherton persisted in suggesting that MacDonald should call for the minutes of the inquiry, a document which he felt might lead to an assessment of Anthony Brooke markedly different from the one given by the Governor who was 'singularly uninformed as to the real state of affairs in Sarawak . . .'.⁶⁶ He also suggested that a very strong recommendation be made to the Rajah that senior officers should in future be appointed from the Colonial Service. MacDonald was again defensive. He could not control the conditions of service for officers in Sarawak, he told Etherton, and it would be beyond Sarawak's financial resources to have substantial numbers of seconded officers. There had been a lack of information about Sarawak affairs in the past but this was something which Pepys would remedy:

I pin my faith for the future in the appointment of the new Adviser. . . . This marks, to my mind, an important stage in our relations with Sarawak and I hope that once instituted, I shall be successful in maintaining and improving on it, which will mean that new standards of criticism and advice on administrative affairs will be available to the Sarawak Government.⁶⁷

In mid-April, Etherton had a private meeting with MacDonald where he expressed the hope that the attitude of the Colonial Office would be one of 'We shall help and intervene if we possibly can' rather than 'We shall not intervene unless we have got to'. He also hoped that Sir Shenton Thomas' recommendations on the recruitment of senior officers and the separation of the offices of Legal Adviser and Chief Justice would be pressed on the Rajah.⁶⁸

In the meantime, events led the Eastern Department to formalize its position on the future government of the Borneo territories. In a memorandum⁶⁰ prepared in mid-February, J. M. Martin foreshadowed a policy of intervention which was based to some extent on the 'development' of Sarawak's natural resources. 'The time seems to be approaching when this question should be brought to a head', he noted. Martin summarized the arguments which had been used to justify Clementi's earlier proposal for the unification of the Borneo territories and the way in which it had been defeated. Now, however, there were signs that the Rajah might transfer all his interests to the British government. There had even been some discussion of the compensation which might be paid and of the need to overcome the Rajah's anxiety that he would be seen as 'throwing over' the natives. Martin believed that the 'purge' of senior officers should revive interest in the administration of the country which had been severely criticized in Breen's reports. The Brooke policy of protecting native interests had many things to recommend it, but Sarawak's general backwardness was not in accordance with modern ideas. 'That so large an area of potentially rich tropical territory should be left undeveloped', he wrote, 'making a relatively negligible contribution to the world's wealth and enjoying few of the benefits of modern scientific progress, cannot be tolerated indefinitely.' The duty to provide for social welfare could not be ignored and Borneo seemed to be a classic case for the application of the new policy of 'planned development'. Too much depended on the Rajah, he argued. The increasing complexity of administration was too heavy for his shoulders while at the same time the prospects for the succession depended entirely on his whim. Martin admitted that native loyalty to the Rajah was 'an asset of great value, which cannot be lightly sacrificed', but the main difficulty was money. This had led to Cabinet's decision against the proposal to purchase North Borneo in 1933 and in Sarawak there was the prospect not only of compensating the Rajah but of paying for more expensive standards of administration from an inadequate revenue. Nevertheless, he felt, something should be done before it was too late:

The present time is particularly opportune. In the international atmosphere which we may expect after the peace settlement expansion of direct British control over new spheres may present considerable and perhaps insurmountable difficulties; to-day it still can be accomplished without objection.

Martin envisaged an administratively autonomous British Borneo running its own government but drawing on expert assistance from Malaya. The return of Sarawak and North Borneo to Brunei might even enable it to be administered as a protected state under the Sultan, although he recognized that the latter was 'not generally respected' and that Borneo lacked even the racial homogeneity of the Malay states. He concluded: 'It is hard to doubt that some day we shall build a great and prosperous territory in Borneo, making a rich contribution, comparable perhaps to that of Malaya, to the Empire and presenting a solid bastion against the southward thrust of Japan.'

While there is no clear indication of how his seniors viewed Martin's arguments, it would seem most unlikely that they were in disagreement. At any rate, the future of Sarawak had become a policy issue. Following Pepys' first reports, Martin set out three 'lines of progress' in preparation for discussions which were to be held with Sir Shenton Thomas during his forthcoming visit to London:

1. Establishment of the Adviser system, involving a new treaty
2. Occasional secondment of or visits by professional officers from Malaya
3. Occasional secondment of Sarawak officers to Malaya.⁷⁰

In essence, the problem was how to reconcile the 1888 Treaty and native loyalty to the Rajah with Sarawak's isolation from the mainstream of colonial development. In Martin's view, the prestige of the Brookes, which Pepys had shown to be still very real, was 'an asset which should not be lightly destroyed'. He recalled Sir Gilbert Grindle's opinion,* no doubt prompted by the Iban unrest of the early 1930s, that 'if H.M.G. took over Sarawak they would find they had taken over a war'.⁷¹

In late June, Sir Shenton Thomas, Sir Alan Burns, Sir Cosmo Parkinson, and Gent discussed the whole question of Sarawak. The Governor told the meeting that Pepys had been getting on 'very well indeed' with the Rajah who was now probably ready to accept the Adviser system, particularly in view of his difficulties over the succession. He thought that the experiment should be allowed to continue a little longer before the Rajah was approached but Gent felt it was important to 'get something settled' before Anthony Brooke was restored to favour.⁷² Consequently it was decided that the object of policy should be the 'firm establishment' of a British Adviser under a new treaty and that Pepys should find out what the Rajah's plans were and when he might best be approached on the introduction of the Adviser system.⁷³ By the end of July, however, Pepys had made it clear that he did not want to stay on. The Rajah had evidently told Pepys that he would appoint him Officer Administering the Government in his absence but at the last moment appointed Archer. However, in true Sarawak fashion there was a face-saver. Pepys was to act as 'Liaison Officer' in Singapore, representing the four Borneo territories in defence matters.⁷⁴

Sir Shenton Thomas believed that the Rajah's *volte face* resulted from an incident in which Pepys had 'warned [him] off little Sheila' (Pepys' pretty step-daughter).⁷⁵ But it seems more likely that Pepys' dissatisfaction with what had turned out to be a largely nominal position caused him to look for reasons for leaving. He suggested to the Governor that a man of his seniority was not really needed and that the job could be done by a Class II MCS officer. Returning to Singapore in September, he even suggested that there was little point in maintaining the post.⁷⁶ Altogether, it seems likely that the Rajah had only agreed to the appointment of

*Sir Gilbert Grindle, who joined the Colonial Office in 1898, was Assistant Under-Secretary of State 1916-25 and Deputy to the Permanent Under-Secretary of State 1925-31.

Pepys as a temporary sop to the Colonial Office. As Digby put it later, 'once the boar had ceased to rush, there was no longer any need for this temporary support'.⁷⁷

Faced with the failure of this experiment, Gent's attitude hardened considerably. There had been no indication that the Rajah was even willing to replace Pepys and Gent now had less faith in Anthony's capacity as the Rajah's eventual successor. He believed that the time had come for Sir Shenton Thomas to ask the Rajah about his intentions and tell him that the British government recommended the appointment of a 'British Resident Adviser' to hold office subject to His Majesty's pleasure.⁷⁸ A new treaty would be needed: '1888 and 1940 are two different dates, and an Agreement which was good enough then may very well not be good enough now. And surely we need not be too apologetic; the protecting Power, I should have thought, must have the right at least to see that there is a reasonably decent form of government.'⁷⁹ Gent hoped that the subject would be broached with the Rajah when he returned through Singapore from the Cameron Highlands and he prepared a draft despatch to Sir Shenton Thomas reflecting the new 'hard line'.

In this document, Gent laid out all the arguments which had previously been aired in the Eastern Department: that Pepys should be replaced; that there was a need for sufficient access to Sarawak to answer Britain's responsibilities as the protecting power; and that the 1888 Treaty was 'unduly restrictive', preventing the flow of information about Sarawak and the assistance which might otherwise be given to its government. Although Gent could only have pointed to Kerr and Etherton as examples, he also said that there had been 'substantial criticisms' of Sarawak's administrative standards and that under the existing circumstances the British government was in no position to make improvements. Finally, Gent spelled out the formula which he believed would meet the situation:

What I should desire most is the consent of His Highness to a supplementary formal Agreement . . . under which provision should be made for the acceptance by the Rajah of a British Resident Adviser appointed with the approval of His Majesty's Government by the British Agent in Singapore who would not only concern himself with such matters as foreign relations and defence . . . but also would have authority to be consulted at least, if not vested with the reserve power of 'advice' on the model of the Malay States Treaties, on all matters affecting the administrative system and standards in Sarawak. It would be important that such an officer should expressly hold his appointment at the pleasure of His Majesty and that he should not be subject to dismissal by the State Ruler.⁸⁰

He hoped that the Rajah would appreciate the importance of the appointment both from the need to ensure the continuity of a 'progressive' policy in Sarawak and from the uncertainty surrounding the succession. Sir Shenton Thomas approved the draft although he saw no point in talking to the Rajah. '. . . Verbal conversations with him are apt to be quite useless', he told Sir Cosmo Parkinson, 'however accommodating he may seem at the time.'⁸¹

Lord Lloyd, however, was not prepared to authorize the despatch. 'I am not quite clear how this draft proposal [will] comply with [the] treaty of 1888', he commented.⁸² His long friendship with Bertram Brooke and a highly conservative attitude to such treaties inclined him to look for more diplomatic means of pursuing the subject. In the meantime, however, an issue arose which enabled Gent to fire a warning shot across the Rajah's bows.

The Scott Case

James Scott, a former Borneo Company engineer who had gone into business in Kuching, had been found guilty in the First Division Resident's Court of making a false statement of accounts in connection with a civil case⁸³ and was fined \$5,000. He immediately lodged a petition claiming improper practice and requesting that an appeal be heard in the Supreme Court. His complaint was based on the fact that the Judicial Commissioner, H. Thackwell Lewis, had handed a note to the magistrate before the trial indicating the course that the prosecution should take, although a copy had also been given to Scott himself. When he refused to amend the unflattering language of his appeal, he was informed by the Registrar of the Supreme Court that since he had impugned the integrity of the Judicial Commissioner, his only recourse was the Rajah. Asked by the Rajah to investigate the case, Pepys felt that although Lewis' action had been in good faith, it disqualified him from hearing the appeal. Furthermore, the Chief Secretary, Archer, had sat on the earlier civil case. Pepys' advice to the Rajah was that Scott should be asked to withdraw his imputation against the courts, after which there might be a reduction of the fine. But Scott was adamant: he demanded a complete vindication and reversal of the court's decision and when this was not forthcoming he gave Pepys a petition for the Secretary of State. Pepys passed this on to Archer whose response epitomized the attitude of the Sarawak Service to outside intervention. 'I have the honour to inform you', he told Scott loftily, 'that the State of Sarawak does not recognise any appellate jurisdiction outside of its boundaries . . .'.⁸⁴ Scott was not prepared to let matters rest there, however, and the petition finally made its way to Sir Shenton Thomas in Singapore and from there to the Colonial Office.

One Eastern Department official suggested that although the petition threw a 'disquieting' light on the administration of justice in Sarawak, under the strict terms of the 1888 Treaty there was no power of intervention: it was a case of *non possumus*.⁸⁵ One of the Colonial Office's legal advisers was not so cautious, however. 'It is seldom one meets a clear and unblushing violation of the express terms of Magna Carta', he noted, 'but here we have it. . .'.⁸⁶ The Treaty, he conceded, provided no explicit assistance but it might still be possible to use Article V which gave British subjects the same rights as those of Sarawak. 'Be that as it may', the adviser added, 'the case is surely one which, if it had happened in a foreign country, H.M.G. would be prepared to make diplomatic

representations, and *a fortiori* the Secretary of State can do likewise to the Government of Sarawak. . . .⁸⁷

Sir Grattan Bushe, the principal legal adviser, did not think that there was any need to invoke the Treaty when it was a clear case of a British subject being denied justice:

Suppose that the Rajah, instead of refusing Mr. Scott access to the court and extracting a fine from him illegally, had had him boiled in oil. Should we then be discovered carefully studying the Treaty to see whether, in a State under H.M.'s protection, British subjects may be murdered without protest?⁸⁸

Now inclined to believe that there was more truth in Boyd's 'appalling description' of affairs in Sarawak than he had first believed, he thought that the Secretary of State was bound to intervene 'formally and unequivocally', pressing for redress if there was no satisfactory explanation. The Under-Secretary of State accordingly authorized a cable to Sir Shenton Thomas asking him for a report from the Sarawak government on the Scott case.

There can be little doubt that Vyner was extremely irritated by this reminder of the Colonial Office's earlier intervention in the appointment of a Judicial Commissioner. Archer told the Governor's secretary that in view of the 'independent and autonomous' position of Sarawak, the Rajah was unable to accept the offer of assistance; while Scott's petition did not provide all the facts, the Rajah did not feel under any obligation to defend the action of the Sarawak courts and was 'fully satisfied' that Scott was guilty of the offence.⁸⁹ This prompted a personal letter from Sir Shenton Thomas carrying the polite threat that if the Secretary of State was unable to consider the petition because of the Sarawak government's failure to comment on it, then Scott might take his case to Parliament and subsequent questions might not show the Sarawak government in too favourable a light. But the Rajah (or MacBryan, who was advising him) was not prepared to give an inch. Writing from his bungalow in the Cameron Highlands, he told the Governor that he saw the issue not so much in terms of the rights of a British subject as the propriety of the Secretary of State considering an appeal:

I cannot agree that a British Subject who elects of his own freewill to live in Sarawak should be subjected to different treatment or have consideration, by reason of a grievance, other than what is accorded by the Law and Courts of the State to all dwellers in Sarawak of whatever nationality. Indeed, if I were to agree to a contrary interpretation of the position it would be tantamount to singling out the nationals of one group of countries for special and preferential treatment as compared with others. . . .⁹⁰

If the Governor detected a defiant note in this, he must have been even more sensitive to the second paragraph of the letter in which the Rajah asserted his status as an independent sovereign ruler:

Your assurance that the 'independent and autonomous position of Sarawak' is not in question at all is particularly welcome and gratifying as it comes at a time when several circumstances and also the tenor of some letters that I have received have led me to wonder if this independent position was, in fact, being questioned.⁹¹

The Eastern Department regarded the Rajah's letter as an affront. 'Even from an unfriendly and strictly foreign Government such as Japan', Gent complained, 'we are accustomed to the courtesy of a report on the facts and an opinion on the merits of any case of a British subject which we may have to take up.'⁹² With Lord Moyne's approval he instructed the Governor to tell the Rajah that he was not satisfied with this response which was no more than would be expected 'from even an unfriendly foreign government in a similar case . . .'.⁹³ The message was duly conveyed to the Rajah who, after advice from Digby that he should insist on the principle of Sarawak's internal autonomy, sent copies of the original civil judgment to Singapore with a letter expressing concern at the tone of the Governor's message. The Rajah stressed that he intended only to resist the principle implicit in the Colonial Office's cable of 21 December which seemed to claim the right to revise the case or to order a new hearing.⁹⁴ When the Governor again asked him if he would comply with the Secretary of State's request, the Rajah finally offered to send Digby to Singapore to discuss the matter.

From the Colonial Office's point of view the Governor's constant pressure had achieved the desired effect. By agreeing to discuss the matter through his Legal Adviser, the Rajah was 'weakening ground'.⁹⁵ But as far as Digby was concerned, no ground had been yielded:

My instructions were to tell Sir Shenton that we could not accept this proposal [that a Malayan judge be appointed] to emphasise that His Majesty's Government had overstepped all reasonable limits by poking its collective nose into the internal affairs of an independent State, but, if it appeared to me to be necessary, to agree that an appeal should be heard by two Sarawak officers appointed to be judges of the Supreme Court for this purpose only, and finally, to attempt to extract from Sir Shenton some kindly acknowledgement of the reasonable and accommodating spirit which we had shown.⁹⁶

The compromise suggested by Digby was eventually accepted by Sir Shenton Thomas but not by the Colonial Office.

Although the Rajah had made the only concession possible within Sarawak's legal framework, the Eastern Department's blood was up. 'We cannot let the Rajah trifle with us in this way', protested Gent⁹⁷ and the Governor was duly informed that the agreement to appoint two judges from Sarawak was 'unsatisfactory and unwise'. If Scott withdrew his petition, the matter would not be pursued; but otherwise the Rajah's action would be regarded as 'further trifling with matters of principle' and the Secretary of State would press for a proper procedure in this and all future cases involving British and foreign nationals.⁹⁸ When Scott's conviction was conveniently reversed, however, the outcome was greeted with considerable satisfaction in Whitehall. The days of *non possumus* were fast coming to an end.

The Supplementary Agreement

In early March 1941, at the height of the Scott affair, Gent decided to make another assault. Lord Lloyd's death a month earlier and his

replacement by Lord Moyne meant that the Brookes had lost their only ally in the Colonial Office. Gent pointed out that the problems of Sarawak had not been remedied and its strategic importance suggested there should be no further delay in persuading the Rajah of the need for a 'responsible British Resident'.⁹⁹ Sir Cosmo Parkinson noted Lord Lloyd's earlier reluctance but felt that they should now go ahead. The situation in Sarawak, he noted, was 'far from satisfactory' and there had been a negative response from the Rajah to Lloyd's earlier representations on the Scott case.¹⁰⁰ Gent's draft despatch was duly authorized by Moyne but before it could reach Singapore news arrived of the Rajah's 31 March proclamation on the constitution.

Lord Moyne recognized that the despatch had been overtaken by events and that the most important thing now was to ensure that the British government was consulted on the constitution before it reached final form. Sir Shenton Thomas accordingly advised the Rajah to this effect and reminded him that the rights of the British government under the 1888 Treaty should not be infringed. As far as the succession was concerned, Moyne felt that there was no objection at this stage.

In a later despatch the Governor explained the background of the March proclamation, including the secret agreement between the Rajah and the Committee of Administration and the influence of MacBryan. On the whole, however, Sir Shenton still approved of the idea of a constitution. '... There can be much more effective administration', he told Moyne, 'as the Government will no longer be at the whim of an irresponsible ruler under the influence of a crook'.¹⁰¹ The Governor had formed a favourable impression of Le Gros Clark and was pleased when he replaced Archer as Officer Administering the Government. His only worry was that the Rajah and MacBryan intended staying until the end of September, thus raising the prospect of 'perpetual intrigue' and a clash of authority between the Rajah and the Committee. He consequently recommended that the Rajah should be persuaded to visit England or America so that he would be out of the way.

This new information alarmed Moyne who feared that in the event of any conflict of interest, there might well be 'pro-Rajah factional unrest' among the natives. Consequently the proposal for a British Adviser was revived; the Rajah and the Committee were to be urged to request a senior officer from Singapore to assist in the framing of the new constitution.¹⁰² Realizing that he had brought about an over-reaction in London, the Governor went to some pains to emphasize that the situation presented no dangers of 'pro-Rajah unrest'. He explained that the constitution had been made necessary by the need to protect Sarawak's finances and that the authority of the Committee was purely temporary. Both he and Pepys believed the appointment of a British Representative to be unnecessary at this stage.¹⁰³

The subsequent arrangement was that the Rajah agreed to accept assistance from the Governor in framing the constitution. But the Colonial Office was loath to abandon its plan to replace Pepys and in May the Governor had to tell Moyne that it was 'inopportune' to press the

matter of a British Representative. The Sarawak government would want to know the reasons and this might not only delay the framing of the new constitution but could lead to 'fresh intrigues' by MacBryan. 'It would be much better to await [the] draft . . .', he advised, 'and then to consider whether as a condition of approval Sarawak should be asked to agree to a new Treaty including provision for [a] British Adviser.'¹⁰⁴

Sir Shenton Thomas subsequently arranged for Pepys to visit Sarawak and sound out Le Gros Clark on the idea of a 'British Representative' with authority to be consulted on all administrative matters. The term 'Adviser' was carefully avoided. Le Gros Clark seemed agreeable to this, on condition that the Representative did not arrive until after the constitution was enacted. Otherwise there would be the suspicion that it was the Committee of Administration's doing and that it was a further effort to oust the Rajah. Pitt Hardacre, the only other person with whom Pepys discussed the idea, suggested that while it was not strictly necessary to consult the Rajah under the existing constitutional arrangements, it would nevertheless be desirable to do so. Other officers with whom Pepys spoke said that it would be a good thing if the British government 'took over' and appointed an Adviser. MacBryan himself told Pepys in Singapore after the latter's return that he had advised the Rajah that a British Representative would be the best thing for the country. Indeed, he claimed that the Rajah would have asked for one had it not been for Archer's objections. Pepys also reported, however, that the Rajah's reputation within the Service had been 'rather shattered' by the news of the secret agreement and there was some doubt as to whether he would ever sit as Rajah in Council. There were even rumours among the Chinese that he would not be attending the Centenary celebrations.¹⁰⁵

In late July, Le Gros Clark received from Sir Shenton Thomas a draft 'Supplementary Agreement'. This was discussed at a meeting of the Committee of Administration on 31 July, together with the second draft of the constitution, and was compared with an alternative agreement prepared by Digby. Naturally enough, the main focus of interest was the definition of powers. According to the Singapore Attorney-General's draft (prepared after consultations between the Governor and Pitt Hardacre), the British Representative would be consulted 'on all matters touching the general administration of the State' as well as foreign relations and defence, have access to all State documents and records and attend all meetings of the Supreme Council and Council Negri where he could take part in discussions if invited but not vote.¹⁰⁶ It was generally agreed by the Committee that this exceeded the terms which had been settled between Sir Shenton Thomas and Pitt Hardacre and that the proposal should only be accepted on three conditions: firstly, that the person appointed should be acceptable to the Rajah; secondly, that the Representative's terms of reference should be restricted to foreign relations and defence; and finally that the government was not bound to accept any advice given outside these terms of reference. The Committee agreed that there was to be no further 'bargaining' with the Governor 'since it was considered that by offering this Agreement Sarawak had

already made a great concession'. Digby's definition of the British Representative's status was unanimously accepted. His advice was to be asked and acted upon in all matters affecting the foreign relations and defence of Sarawak and he could be consulted on matters of general administration, the relevant documents being provided; attendance at Supreme Council and Council meetings was also permitted. The last clause was a timely one, reminding the Colonial Office of Sarawak's extremely vulnerable position: 'H.M. Government will at all times to the utmost of its power take whatever steps may be necessary to protect the territory of Sarawak from external attacks and will bear the cost of such protection.' Forwarding the Sarawak government's draft to Lord Moyne, the Governor noted that it was not prepared to accept an Adviser with powers similar to those of Advisers in Malay States and that the title 'Representative' had been adjudged more fitting. However, he felt that the draft marked a 'considerable advance' and if the British Representative was a capable and experienced man he would be brought more and more into consultation with the Sarawak government.¹⁰⁷

Lord Moyne was not too disappointed with the outcome, believing that the arrangement would ensure reliable information about Sarawak and that the Representative might gradually increase his influence as he became more useful to the Sarawak government. However, he felt that he ought to be consulted on social services and all vital financial and economic questions. After some further exchanges, Sir Shenton recommended that the Colonial Office accept the formula proposed by Sarawak whereby the Representative would offer his opinion 'on matters touching the general administration of the State'. A final meeting was held with Le Gros Clark and Digby in Singapore on 23 October and the Supplementary Agreement* was subsequently signed in Kuala Lumpur by Sir Shenton Thomas and the Rajah on 22 November shortly before the latter left by ship for Australia. Lord Moyne had agreed that it should not be published, nor the British Representative appointed, until after the Rajah returned in early 1942.¹⁰⁸

The Colonial Office and the 1941 Constitution

It was not until August that the Colonial Office received a copy of the draft constitution. In the meantime, however, Anthony Brooke had offered his own outspoken comments, together with the two memoranda which he had circulated in Sarawak. 'Unless the present draft of the proposed constitution is fundamentally changed', Anthony told Gent in early July, 'the internal situation in this country may soon become such as to embarrass Imperial Interests.'¹⁰⁹ A similar protest against government by 'oligarchy' was made to Gent by one of the directors of Sarawak Rubber Estates who said that there had been 'alarming reports' from their people in Sarawak.¹¹⁰ T. C. Martine, the Kuching manager of the Borneo Company which owned a controlling interest in Sarawak Rubber

*The text of the Supplementary Agreement can be found in Appendix I.

Estates, seems to have shared the view of some officers that the constitutional Order amounted to a bureaucratic *coup d'état*.

Lord Moyne took these representations very seriously and subsequently told the Governor that according to his information, the constitution had been 'severely criticized' by local interests for the effect it might have on British commerce as well as native opinion. Emphasizing that the British government should not be presented with a *fait accompli*; he asked the Governor to investigate these reports.¹¹¹ When Sir Adam Ritchie of the Borneo Company sought an interview with Lord Moyne and Gent in late August he was reassured to some extent when told of the plan for a British Representative. However, he was anxious that the Representative should be appointed by the Governor and thus be responsible to the Colonial Office.¹¹²

Lord Moyne's first reaction to the draft constitution was that the Committee of Administration had indeed arrogated far too much power to themselves and that some provision should be made to retain some prerogative powers, such as the right to choose the Supreme Council, in order to ensure that the Rajah remained a constitutional monarch. Under the existing draft, Moyne commented, 'it would be conceivable for a group in the Civil Service to create [a] narrow oligarchy with absolute control of affairs'.¹¹³ Consequently, one of the points which he suggested should be brought to the attention of the Sarawak authorities was the appointment of members to the Supreme Council. He also wanted explicit provision made for the succession and hoped there would be a 'clear requirement' that the Rajah would always be a British subject.

After consultations with Digby and Thackwell Lewis, Sir Shenton Thomas told Moyne he was recommending that the right of appointments to the Supreme Council should be exercised personally by the Rajah and not by the Rajah in Council. On the provision that the Rajah should be a British subject, however, he pointed out that this would exclude 'any Malayan resident in Sarawak including descendants of the Chiefs who invited [the] first Rajah to take over the Government . . .'.¹¹⁴ Moyne agreed that the Rajah could also be a native of Sarawak but he was still anxious that there should be a provision for the succession. Although Bertram had already been proclaimed heir in March, the question was by no means resolved.

We have already seen that in October Bertram declined to accept Vyner's nomination of him as Heir Presumptive and that concern over the succession caused him to visit the Colonial Office.* Subsequent to this he wrote to Gent about the secret agreement between the Rajah and the Committee of Administration¹¹⁵ and to the Under-Secretary of State, providing a detailed account of the constitution's origins.¹¹⁶ In early February 1942 Bertram wrote to the Under-Secretary of State once more, claiming that even before their exchange of telegrams in October about his willingness or otherwise to inherit through nomination, the Rajah had announced to the Supreme Council his desire that his grandson should be

*See above, p. 90.

brought into the succession. '... The Rajah has finally succumbed', he concluded, 'in assenting to a project which others have been trying... to force him into, by some method or other, over a period of years.'¹¹⁷

Sarawak and Defence Planning

Vyner Brooke's defiance of the Secretary of State over the Scott case had revived some of Gent's doubts about him. In May 1941 he wrote: 'The Rajah shows signs of being attracted by theories of "neutrality" of a sort which has proved so fatal to other small nations. It will be realised that on other occasions he has actually suggested that Sarawak shd. conduct itself as a neutral towards one of our enemies in this war.'¹¹⁸ Gent was probably referring to comments made by the Rajah during earlier negotiations concerning Sarawak's defence arrangements. While the Rajah now agreed that the defence of Sarawak should be linked with Brunei and North Borneo, he seems to have at least considered adopting a neutral position *vis-à-vis* Japan. Whether this was on MacBryan's advice is not clear, but it would have been consistent with his Political Adviser's sense of *realpolitik* and his possible connections with Japanese intelligence.*

The whole question of Sarawak's international status had been raised by the outbreak of war and one of Anthony Brooke's last public acts as Rajah Muda was to issue a Proclamation on 3 September supporting Britain.¹¹⁹ In the mid-1930s the Sarawak government had sought clarification from the Singapore authorities on Sarawak's position as a protected state in the event of war, only to be fobbed off in a way which Digby found extremely patronizing: ' "Don't worry, little boy", said His Majesty's representative in effect, "your foreign relations are controlled by His Majesty's Government by virtue of the Treaty of 1888, and so we will say when you are at war" ' ¹²⁰ But it was later brought to Sir Shenton Thomas' attention by Singapore's legal authorities that Sarawak had not been covered by Britain's declarations of war and the Sarawak government was consequently informed that it should declare war on Germany and Italy! According to Digby's account, they were disinclined to conform with these instructions: 'In our opinion Sarawak was enough of a joke in the eyes of the world already without our going out of our way to provide further fodder for the war-time music halls, and we firmly decided to leave Germany and Italy alone.'¹²¹ When a regiment of British Punjabi troops arrived from Singapore in January 1941, strenuous efforts were made to assert Sarawak sovereignty. There were problems involving the trial of soldiers in Sarawak courts for civil offences, gunnery practice, and other matters which Digby unsuccessfully attempted to settle in an interview with a military legal authority at Fort Canning in Singapore: 'I remember little... except that he answered, "You know? You've got me there", to my first question, and "Bai jove! You've got me there too", to my second, the last reply being repeated in response to

*See below, p. 166.

every other question which I put to him.¹²² Legally speaking, some doubt remained about whether Sarawak was at war 'until the Japanese arrived and resolved the issue'.¹²³

Nevertheless, Sarawak's inclusion in Imperial defence planning after 1937 had drawn it closer to direct British influence. Naturally enough, the focus of British interest was the oil field at Miri which Sarawak's only defence force, the 700-strong Sarawak Constabulary, could hardly be expected to hold. Consequently the Overseas Defence Committee in London suggested the creation of a joint Brunei-Sarawak Defence Force consisting mainly of the oil company's European employees whose task would be to hinder enemy landings. However, the Rajah was concerned about the cost and may also have been anxious about MCS interference in Sarawak affairs following such a link with Brunei. He reminded the British government of its defence obligations under the 1888 Treaty, emphasizing that any defence force for the oil field should be a Brunei force but that the Sarawak government would provide the necessary facilities to allow it to operate across the border in Sarawak. At the same time, he offered a contribution of £50,000 towards the cost of defence measures, providing that half went towards the establishment of one or more landing grounds in Sarawak by the R.A.F.¹²⁴

From the mid-1930s there had been increasing interest within the British defence departments in the strategic importance of northern Borneo. The Admiralty in particular was alarmed by the degree of Japanese 'penetration' of North Borneo which it saw as presenting a wartime threat to the Miri oil field and to Singapore itself.¹²⁵ As early as 1933 an R.A.F. reconnaissance party selected sites for airfields at Kuching, Miri, and Bintulu.¹²⁶ Construction of the Kuching strip actually began in April 1936 and it was opened in September 1938 while the first landing was made at Miri in September 1939. Work also commenced on the Bintulu field in 1936 but was abandoned three years later. In early 1941 extensions to the Kuching field commenced with a view to accommodating all but the heaviest aircraft. By this time, however, the Rajah had become concerned that the two completed airfields were not only not being used by the R.A.F. except on occasional visits, but were totally unprotected. Indeed, they were a danger to Sarawak's security in that they could be very useful to any Japanese thrust towards Singapore.¹²⁷

In addition to the £25,000 given in 1937, the Rajah had also contributed generously from state reserves towards the British war effort. In late 1939 Sarawak gave \$1,000,000 and this was followed by \$500,000 in June 1940 and a further \$1,000,000 in February 1941. Money was also collected under government sponsorship by the Sarawak branch of the Malaya Patriotic Fund which operated jointly with the China Relief Fund Committee in fund-raising activities throughout the state. In December 1940 the Rajah introduced a scheme to tax the salaries of all European officers as a means of financing the state's own defence force.¹²⁸ Consequently, he felt that Sarawak had made a generous contribution and he expected that the problem of the airfields would be given attention. In

March 1941, shortly after a Japanese invasion scare, he told Sir Shenton Thomas that Sarawak would continue to assist the British war effort to the best of its ability but expected in return that the British government would take full responsibility for its defence. The Governor promptly sent a senior officer to Kuching to report on defence measures and it was on his recommendation that the 2/15th Punjab Regiment arrived in Sarawak in April to protect the oilfield sabotage teams in case of Japanese attack. It had been earlier established that the denial scheme and compensation* were British responsibilities.¹²⁹

However, the defences of Sarawak continued to be totally inadequate and in October the Secretary for Defence, J. L. Noakes, pointed out that the tiny British garrison of 600 men invited attack without being able to offer any real opposition to an invading force. Indeed, he emphasized, there was danger of the people of Sarawak 'suffering out of all proportion to the damage inflicted on the enemy'.¹³⁰ Noakes' report was sent to Lt.-General A. E. Percival, General Officer Commanding Malaya, and the Committee of Administration subsequently dispatched him to Singapore to voice their dissatisfaction. But Percival, while admitting the position, told Noakes that all he could do was to send two anti-aircraft guns within the next six months. On Noakes' invitation, Percival visited Kuching on 27 November (the day when an official warning of war with Japan was received) but the only result was a decision that the Punjabi force should concentrate on the defence of Kuching airfield, even if it meant neglecting coastal and river defences against a seaborne landing. The airfield was only to be abandoned if enemy strength made the position untenable.[†] 'There have been too many retreats', the general told the Supreme Council. 'You in Kuching must stand and fight'.¹³¹

* * *

By October 1941 the Colonial Office was well on the way to asserting its authority over Sarawak's internal affairs. The British Representative provided for in the Supplementary Agreement was no doubt expected gradually to assume the powers of a Malayan Resident, thus completing a pattern of British domination which had been initiated in the Malay states in the 1870s. Sarawak had been an anomaly, but one which there had been no pressing need to resolve. However, the clear indication in 1938 that the Rajah was on the point of giving up his responsibilities, together with concern about his government's administrative standards and the state's strategic position, made direct British intervention almost inevitable. While the Rajah had been able to resist the appointment of a Resident, the secret sale of his prerogative powers to the Committee of

* After the war, the British government paid heavy compensation to Shell for damage to the Miri and Brunei facilities.

† In fact, the defence of the airfield prompted Sarawak's novel contribution to the art of war. It was found that condoms were the best means of protecting explosives planted to destroy the airfield's drainage system. A special supply was flown in from Singapore.

Administration weakened his position *vis-à-vis* the Colonial Office. What remained uncertain was the future of the Brookes. Unlike the Malay rulers, they could not be moved sideways to a position of political impotence. It was left to the Japanese to solve the problem.

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3. Nicholas Tarling, 'Sir Cecil Clementi and the Federation of British Borneo', *JMBRAS*, Vol. XLIV, Pt. 2 (Dec. 1971), p. 1.
4. Tarling, 'Britain and Sarawak . . .', pp. 31-2, 34.
5. *Hansard*, 24 February 1921; *SG*, 1 March 1921.
6. Maugham's Sarawak stories were: 'Before the Party', 'The Yellow Streak', 'The Force of Circumstance', 'The End of the Flight', 'The Outstation', 'Neil MacAdam'. Most were published in *The Casuarina Tree*, London, 1926. All have been republished more recently as *Maugham's Borneo Stories*, Kuala Lumpur, 1977, with an introduction by Anthony Burgess. See also Yusoff Peter Heaton, 'W. Somerset Maugham and Sarawak', *SG*, 30 June 1974.
7. Tarling, 'Sir Cecil Clementi . . .', pp. 5-7; Anthony Brooke to C. E. J. Gent, 24 July 1942, *CO* 531/30 [53011/4].
8. Memorandum by J. M. Martin, 'The Future of the British Territories in Borneo', 14 February 1940, *CO* 531/29 [53011/4].
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17. London, 1929.
18. Some examples were 'Why Did You Marry?', *Daily Express*, 22 March 1929; 'Why Shouldn't We Gossip?', *Sunday Graphic*, 7 April, 1929.
19. Minute by Gent, 3 April 1942, *CO* 531/30 [53006].
20. *ibid.*
21. Sylvia Brooke to Jack Golden, 15 June 1942, 4 July 1942, *ibid.*
22. Minutes by Monson and Gent, 21 July 1932, *ibid.*
23. *CO* 531/27 [53029/1]. Breen's secret report is not available.
24. Minute by Gent, 5 July 1937, *ibid.*
25. Minute by E. B. Betham, 4 May 1938, *CO* 531/28 [53045].
26. Minute by Gent, 5 May 1938, *ibid.*
27. Extract from an undated letter from Boyd to Adrian Clark, *CO* 531/28 [53029/2].

28. Minute by A. N. Galsworthy, 1 January 1939, *CO* 531/28 [53020].
29. Minute by Gent, 20 July 1938, *CO* 531/28 [53029/3].
30. Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 27 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
31. Minute by Gent, 21 July 1938, *CO* 531/28 [53029/31].
32. Minute by Gent, 28 July 1938, *ibid.*
33. Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 19 April 1939, *CO* 531/29 [53011/1].
34. Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 19 April 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
35. Memorandum by MacPherson, 19 April 1939, on Shenton Thomas' notes of 12 April 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
36. Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 19 April 1939, *CO* 531/29 [53011/1].
37. Minute by Dufferin, 26 May 1939, *ibid.*
38. *ibid.*
39. Minute by A. N. Galsworthy, 22 May 1939, *ibid.*
40. Minute by Gent, 23 May, *ibid.*
41. Minute by Dufferin, 26 May 1939, *ibid.*
42. Dufferin to Shenton Thomas, 30 May 1939, *ibid.*
43. Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 1 June 1939, *ibid.*
44. Minute by Gent, 6 July 1939, on Bridges' meeting with Dufferin, *ibid.*
45. Minute by Dufferin, 19 January 1940, *ibid.*
46. Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 19 January 1940, *ibid.*
47. Minute by Paskin, 20 January 1940, *ibid.*
48. Minute by Gent, 23 January 1940, *ibid.*
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51. Minute by Gent, 12 March 1940, *ibid.*
52. MacDonald to Shenton Thomas, 15 March 1940, *ibid.*
53. Pepys to Shenton Thomas, 2 April 1940, *CO* 531/29 [53011/4].
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55. *ibid.*
56. Minute by Andrews, 1 September 1939, *ibid.*
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60. Etherton to MacDonald, 8 February 1940, *ibid.*
61. Minute by Gent, 15 February 1940, *ibid.*
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63. Kerr to MacDonald, 21 February 1940, *CO* 531/29 [53011/4].
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65. Kerr to Sir John Brocklebank, 13 March 1940, *ibid.*
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69. 'The Future of the British Territories in Borneo', 14 February 1940, *ibid.* Subsequent quotations from this document.
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76. Jones to Gent, 16 September 1940, *ibid.*
77. Personal communication from Mr K. H. Digby, 2 September 1974.
78. Minute by Gent, 13 August 1940, *CO 531/29* [53011/4].
79. Minute by H. T. Bourdillon, 14 August 1940, *ibid.*
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84. Archer to Scott, 11 July 1940, enclosed with Shenton Thomas' despatch to Lloyd of 28 August 1940, *CO 531/29* [53063].
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91. *ibid.*
92. Minute by Gent, 6 March 1941, *CO 531/29* [53063].
93. Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 10 March 1941, *ibid.*
94. Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 17 March 1941, cited in Shenton Thomas' cable to Moyne, 31 March 1941, *ibid.*
95. Minute by Monson, 2 April 1941, *ibid.*
96. Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 92.
97. Minute by Gent, 10 April 1941, *CO 531/29* [53063].
98. Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 15 April 1941, *ibid.*
99. Minute by Gent, 4 March 1941, *ibid.*
100. Minute by Parkinson, 6 March 1941, *ibid.*
101. Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 1 April 1941, *ibid.*
102. Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 10 April 1941, *ibid.*
103. Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 21 April 1941, *ibid.*
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109. Anthony Brooke to Gent, 7 July 1941, *ibid.*
110. Minute by Monson, 7 August 1941, *ibid.*
111. Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 8 August 1941, *ibid.*
112. Ritchie to Gent, 25 August 1941, *ibid.*
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116. Bertram Brooke to Under-Secretary of State, 13 November 1941, *ibid.*
117. Bertram Brooke to Under-Secretary of State, 2 February 1942, *ibid.*
118. Minute by Gent, 9 May 1941, *ibid.*
119. *SGG*, 4 September, 1939.
120. Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 83.
121. *ibid.*
122. *ibid.*
123. Personal communication from Mr K. H. Digby, 11 August 1974.
124. Memorandum by Gent, 14 September 1937, *CO* 531/27 [53038].
125. *ibid.*
126. Personal communication from Mr J. L. Noakes, 8 October 1976.
127. This account is based largely on J. L. Noakes, 'Report Upon Defence Measures Adopted in Sarawak from June 1941 to the Occupation in December 1941 of Imperial Japanese Forces . . .'. Noakes wrote most of the report in Batu Lintang camp during the first half of 1942.
128. *SG*, 2 January 1941.
129. Noakes, 'Report Upon Defence Measures . . .', p. 11.
130. *ibid.*
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VI

The Origins of Indigenous Political Organization, 1930–1945

DURING the decade before the Second World War, state politics in Sarawak were limited to dynastic and bureaucratic questions involving the Brooke family and the seventy or eighty Europeans of the Sarawak Service. Representation of native and Chinese interests was still the monopoly of the traditional Malay and Chinese élites. However, the pressures set up by Malay and Chinese nationalism during the late 1930s resulted in new forms of communal organization which threatened to bypass the traditional leadership. The growing economic strength of the Ibans was also expressed in the establishment of a communally-based co-operative designed to compete with Chinese traders. During this period, moreover, Brooke government was demonstrating its inability to satisfy the expectations of the educated. The Persatuan Melayu Sarawak, the China Distress Relief Fund committees, and the Dayaks Cooperative Society constituted the nuclei of political parties which were to emerge at the beginning of the cession controversy in early 1946. The Japanese broke the spell of European political and cultural supremacy even if they did not discredit Brooke rule. The Ibans of the Second Division were also given the opportunity of throwing off Malay hegemony and participating in government administration as they had never done before. By the time cession was announced in February 1946 there was both a potential for organized political action in Sarawak along lines similar to the Malayan situation and a significant group of Ibans who could not have been easily reconciled to a restoration of their former status under Brooke rule.

Education

One of the major factors preventing social change in Sarawak had been the extremely limited provision for education.¹ Apart from the handful of

SPG and Roman Catholic mission schools and those set up privately by the Chinese, there were only the sporadic attempts by the government to provide education for young Malays destined for the Native Officer and Junior Administrative Services. Government provision for Iban education was negligible.

The early 1930s saw something of a revolution in the education opportunities available to the Kuching Malays. The Merpati Jepang School opened in 1930 and the Enche Buyong School in 1931. In the same year, two existing schools were merged to form the government-sponsored Maderasah Melayu (Malay College) which was intended to train Malays as Native Officers and teachers. By 1933 enrolment had reached 400, bringing the number of students in Malay schools in Kuching to between 500 and 600 or three times the 1921 enrolment. Most importantly, Malay-language education was no longer restricted to the children of élite families. The first Malay girls' school, the Sekolah Permaisuri, also opened in 1930 and by the late 1930s a handful of Malays had attended the Sultan Idris Training College in Malaya. Meanwhile the two English-medium mission schools in Kuching, St. Thomas' (Church of England)² and St. Joseph's (Roman Catholic) had become popular institutions with the Chinese because of the growing importance of English, and were also attracting some Malays. Clerkships in government departments required proficiency in English and were normally filled by mission school graduates. A number of private Chinese-medium schools also appeared in the 1920s and 1930s. Their China-born teachers sowed the seeds of the Chinese nationalism which was to have its first expression after the Japanese seizure of Manchuria in 1931.

Iban prosperity in the Second and Third Divisions had also brought about something of a social revolution since the early 1920s. St. Augustine's School had been opened at Betong, St. Luke's at Simanggang, and St. Andrew's on the Paku, and other schools were later opened by the SPG at Saratok, Debak (Saribas), and Roban (Kalaka) in response to Iban requests. Although reduced income from rubber in the early 1930s made it more difficult for parents to send their children to school, the Iban demand for education was insatiable. When Father Jack Sparrow of the SPG arrived at Roban in January 1934, he found 300 Ibans waiting to build the school there and it was completed in a few months. Two more elementary schools were provided by the SPG on the Batang Lupar on the understanding that they would be completely self-supporting.³ By 1938 the schools at Betong, Roban, Saratok, and Debak had more than 200 pupils and thirteen teachers although the government grant was less than it had been in 1932 when the enrolment was less than half.

While educational opportunities were expanding for all communities, particularly in the larger towns, employment opportunities were not. The drastic pruning of government departments in 1932 reduced the size of the Junior Administrative Service and it was not until the late 1930s that financial restraints were relaxed and recruitment stepped up. The Native Officer Service remained the monopoly of the *perabangan* in spite of the growing number of educated Malays and Ibans who were much better

qualified. It was not until 1941 that the government appointed the first Malay Native Officer who was not an *abang*. Educated Malays and Chinese often had no choice but to become medical dressers in the outstations* and a number of educated Ibans went to Brunei or Malaya in search of work.† While there is no evidence of open discontent, it is clear that by 1941 there was a substantial number of young educated people of all races whose expectations could not be satisfied and whose interests could not be adequately represented by the traditional Malay and Chinese leadership.

Participation in Government

Apart from the major role played by the *perabangan* in administration, native representation in government was limited to the *datus* who, together with Ong Tiang Swee, constituted the Supreme Council. But the Council's formal meetings had ceased in 1927 and by the 1930s the bi-weekly meetings with the Rajah at his office were little more than social occasions, conversation being pretty much limited to '*Apa khabar, datu datu?*' '*Khabar baik, Tuan Rajah*'. (What news, *datus*? Good news, Rajah).‡ Nevertheless, the *datus* still derived power from their social prestige and their ability to find jobs for relatives and friends in government departments such as Police, Customs, and Lands and Surveys. Furthermore, with their substantial allowances they were among the wealthiest members of the Malay community.‡ And as the acknowledged authorities on Malay *adat* they constituted a Court which had jurisdiction over certain classes of Malay civil offences.

During the 1930s the Council Negri was a triennial assembly of notables from all Divisions which did little more than confirm the authority of

* A good example is the career of Haji Su'at Tahir. Born in Kuching in 1909, the son of a government servant who later became a building contractor, he was educated at the Maderasah Melayu and St. Thomas' School. For want of other opportunities, he joined the Medical Department as a dresser in 1929 and during the Australian and British military administration was posted to Simanggang as Divisional Medical Officer. He established the Persekutuan Melayu Simanggang (Simanggang Malay Association) in 1946 before returning to Kuching where he became an active member of the Malay National Union and later the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak of which he was secretary-general. In 1961 he was one of the founding members of the Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA—Sarawak Natives' Front) and acted as its publicity officer. In addition to participating in municipal politics, he was a member of the Council Negri and the Malaysian Parliament. Like so many former dressers, he became a superb linguist, achieving fluency in Iban and several Chinese dialects. He was made a *datuk* in 1978.

† This pattern continued into the 1950s when two Ibans who were later to achieve political prominence, Stephen Kalong Ningkan and Thomas Kana, worked as dressers for Shell in Brunei. It should not be thought, however, that the Ibans left Sarawak unwillingly. There was a strong Iban tradition that young men should *berjalai*, or seek adventure and fortune outside their own territory, thus improving their standing.

‡ As members of the Supreme Council, the *datus* were given a monthly allowance of \$100 which was 'big money in those days'. (Abang Haji Mustapha, 'Supreme Council Reminiscences', *SMJ*, Vol. VII, No. 7 (New Series), June 1956, pp. 109–10.)

the Rajah and foster a feeling of unity under the Raj. Even so, there was no Chinese representation until Ong Tiang Swee and Wee Kheng Chiang were appointed in 1937. Moreover, as we have already seen, the 1941 constitution whose preamble explicitly re-stated the Brooke principle of trusteeship and even anticipated eventual self-government was in no way the result of indigenous initiatives. As the only non-European member of the Committee of Administration which had totally eclipsed the Supreme Council in importance, Ong Tiang Swee took part in the early discussions of the draft and the datus gave their advice on Malay *adat* concerning the succession. But there was no serious attempt to consult 'the people', for whose benefit the entire exercise was avowedly designed. The selection of non-European members to the new Council Negri in October 1941 was still heavily biased in favour of the traditional Malay élite and one of the two additional Chinese representatives appointed was a son of Ong Tiang Swee.

The first indication of the Sarawak government's recognition of the need to involve more than just a handful of datus and *kapitan china* in the business of government was the establishment in 1919 of a Kuching Assessment Committee with Malay, Chinese, and Indian representation as a means of reorganizing the collection of town rates. This was succeeded in 1922 by the Kuching Sanitary and Municipal Advisory Board, which took over the local duties of the Department of Public Works, and in 1934 by the Kuching Municipal Board established under a new Municipal Ordinance. Consisting of five Europeans, four Chinese, and one Indian, it was headed by a European Municipal Commissioner who was in charge of the daily operation of town services. The Chinese members were nominated by the Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, and Hakka dialect groups but the Malay member was always chosen by the government and was usually a retired civil servant. Although the Board's decisions could be vetoed by the Rajah and the Committee of Administration, its achievements were considerable: the building of a bazaar drainage system, introduction of birth and death registration, improvement of health facilities, rent-control for the bazaar, and establishment of a Board of Visitors with the responsibility of checking conditions at the jail, lunatic asylum, hospital, and leper camp. It was also responsible for building permits, hawker licensing, the fixing of rates and assessments, and zoning policy.* Although the Municipal Board reflected the principle of indirect rule, it also constituted a multi-racial representative structure whose actual participation in government was more important than that of the datus and the *kapitan*.⁵

The Board's success probably accounts for the government's decision in 1938 to experiment with local government outside Kuching. In that year village councils were set up in the Land Dayak settlements of Quop and Mambong in the First Division with responsibility for the collection

*It is difficult to accept Michael Leigh's observation that the Boards 'had few significant functions'. ('Local Government: Its Origins and Early Development', *SMJ*, Vol. XXIII, No. 44 (New Series), July-December 1975, p. 9.)

of taxes, rates and fines, and for the general management of local affairs. The councillors had authority to decide criminal and quasi-criminal cases according to their own *adat* as well as supervising trading and general living including sanitation. Subject to the discretion of the District Officer, revenue was to be placed at their disposal for the construction and maintenance of roads and public buildings and the purchase of implements for more efficient cultivation.

It was hoped that the councils would in time be able to frame their own estimates of revenue and expenditure and the 1938 Administration Report expressed satisfaction with what had already been achieved. 'These Councils have taken their responsibilities seriously', it concluded, 'and there is every indication that the experiment will succeed'.⁶ By 1941 there were similar bodies established in Sibu, Miri, Binatang, Sarikei, and Bau, and it had been agreed by the Rajah that the Kuching Board should be given autonomy for a trial period of three years.⁷

Fajar Sarawak and the Persatuan Melayu

The first stirrings of Malay political awareness came to the surface in 1930 when a small group of educated Malays of non-aristocratic origin founded Sarawak's first Malay-language newspaper, *Fajar Sarawak* (Sarawak Dawn).^{*} The driving force was 'Master' Rakawi Yusoff, a former customs officer who probably used his retirement bonus to launch the venture. Little is known about Rakawi, who died in 1936, but he was Malay representative on the Kuching Municipal Board 1934-5 and was one of the few Sarawak Malays who had any links with developments in Malaya. A member from 1934 of the Persaudaraan Sahabat Pena Malaya, a writers' guild which was one of the first vehicles of Malay cultural nationalism,⁸ he had probably also been in contact with members of the Kesatuan Melayu Singapore (Singapore Malay Union) established in 1926, which was the first of a number of proto-political organizations in the Peninsula.⁹ Rakawi's two volume *Hikayat Sarawak* (Story of Sarawak) and his novel *Melati Sarawak* (Sarawak Jasmine), printed in *jawi* on his own press in the early 1930s, were the only significant indigenous prose works of pre-war Sarawak.[†] *Melati Sarawak* is a unique document of social change in Kuching's Malay community, illustrating the conflict between the Islamic and Christian systems of education and the problems of re-evaluating Malay traditional practices such as the *gendang perempuan* (*pantun* or spontaneous verse-singing sessions conducted by women).

^{*}*Fajar's* masthead bore the motto: 'The dawn has broken. Arise my nation.' It appeared fortnightly.

[†]There is only one known copy of *Hikayat Sarawak*, which has been obtained by the Sarawak Museum. More copies of *Melati Sarawak* have survived and it has been translated into English by Dr Phillip Thomas. The content of *Melati Sarawak* and the novel's relationship to later Malay literature is discussed by Phillip Thomas, 'The First Sarawak Novel: *Melati Sarawak*', *SMJ*, Vol. XXIV, No. 45 (New Series), July-December 1976, pp. 317-22.

Rakawi's chief collaborator on *Fajar Sarawak* was Haji Abdul Rahman,* a Malay of Minangkabau (West Sumatra) ancestry who owned Kuching's principal bookstore and a Malay-language printing press. Respected like other Minangkabaus in Sarawak for his religious knowledge, he seems to have been accepted as an equal by the *perabangan* and he was later to lead the traditional élite in their post-war conflict with younger educated Malays. Before the war, however, he was probably regarded as something of a radical. Other members of the *Fajar* group who later achieved political distinction were Haji Mohd. Daud bin Abdul Gani (*imam* of the Indian mosque), Mohd. Johari bin Anang,[†] and a number of young Malays including Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor[‡] who wrote occasional articles.

Fajar Sarawak died after a few months, due to lack of support and to the active opposition of the *perabangan*,⁺ and there are only a few surviving copies.¹⁰ However, it is possible to gather from these what the *Fajar* group was trying to achieve. Briefly, they were concerned with 'uplifting' the social and economic condition of the Malays which was unimpressive by contrast with the enormous progress made by the urban Chinese and even the Second Division Ibans since World War One. They also aimed at inculcating a feeling of *Malayness* among Malays who were often more conscious of their Brunei or Sumatran origins than of belonging to a community distinct from the Chinese and the Ibans. While there was no explicit criticism of Chinese immigration (which had peaked in the mid-1920s), *Fajar* remarked on the increasing number of Chinese taking over Malay shops and urged the Malays not to be left behind. At the same time, it directed veiled criticism towards the *datus* for being more concerned with improving their own material position than with helping poor

*I have been able to obtain very little further biographical information about Haji Abdul Rahman bin Haji Kassim who was one of the most important of Sarawak's early Malay leaders.

†Johari Anang is believed to have been born in Kuching in 1889 of Minangkabau ancestry. Largely self-educated, he worked as an English teacher and part-time trader. A tribute to his contribution to the Persatuan Melayu, whose secretary-general he was from its establishment until his death in 1965, can be found in his obituary (*ST*, 6 May 1965).

‡Tuan Haji Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor, commonly known as Mohd. Nor, was educated at St. Joseph's School, Kuching, and was the first Sarawak Malay to pass the Junior Cambridge examination in 1932. His father was a businessman and his grandfather, Ghafor, had taken a prominent part in putting down the Chinese rebellion in 1857. He won a scholarship to Serdang Agricultural College in Malaya but when this was given instead to one of the *perabangan* he worked in the Dept. of Posts and Telegraphs for two and a half years, after which he started an evening school and a small business. During the war, he refused to co-operate with the Japanese and went padi-planting, only to have his house in Kuching destroyed by Allied bombing. One of the leading activists of the MNU, he later helped form the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak in June 1947. Having spent all his money on the anti-cession campaign, he went to Brunei in 1948 to work for Shell and remained there for some years. Consequently he did not join any political party in the early 1960s. His son, Bujang Mohd. Nor, became Sarawak's Financial Secretary and was made a *datu* in 1978.

⁺According to Mohd. Nor, the closure of *Fajar* was the act of ruling *perabangan* with the support of ruling government to shut mouth/eye/ear so that Rakyat never knew politics and Rakyat right and privilege'. (Personal communication, 7 September 1978.)

Malays. There was a strong hint that the *perabangan* were doing very little to justify the position of prestige and authority which they had traditionally enjoyed. *Fajar* also called on the government to spend more money on Malay education, including the provision of scholarships for the Sultan Idris Training College. A proper knowledge of the Islamic religion was regarded as the only means by which the Malays could achieve regeneration and they were urged to reject fatalistic attitudes. However, there was no reflection of the *kaum muda*—*kaum tua* conflict which dominated the intellectual life of peninsular Malays from early in the century,* largely because the handful of orthodox *ulama* (religious teachers) had been educated in Mecca rather than Cairo (the source of modernist influence). Nor was there any tradition of village Koran schools as in Malaya.¹¹ There were few references to developments in Malaya but the inclusion of reports on Turkish and Afghanistan politics indicate an effort to widen the horizons of the Sarawak Malays who had been isolated from the Malay and Islamic worlds by Brooke rule.[†]

With the demise of *Fajar Sarawak* the Malays lost what might have been an important catalyst of social and economic change. However, the idea of a pan-Malay organization which had been suggested by Rakawi was vigorously pursued by Haji Abdul Rahman. The Persatuan Melayu Sarawak (Sarawak Malay Association) was not formally registered as a social club until October 1939, but it had existed informally for at least two years before this. In May 1937 a circular was sent out calling for the establishment of a Malay association with branches in all major towns whose members would subscribe funds for co-operative enterprises.¹² There had also been an earlier attempt in December 1936 to form a Bumiputra (Natives) Club[‡] similar to the Malay social clubs already existing in Sibu and Miri. The Persatuan Muslim Miri, for example, had 400 members in 1937 including Arabs and Muslim Indians.¹³ The main reason for the delays in registering the Persatuan Melayu Sarawak seems to have been that the Datu Patinggi had been angered by indirect criticism in *Fajar* and it was not until the Persatuan's founders agreed that his eldest grandson, Abang Ibrahim bin Abang Taha, should be made Datu Bandar Muda that he was prepared to give his patronage. Without this the Registrar of Societies had been unwilling to consider any application for official recognition.¹⁴ Care was taken that the Persatuan's committee included members of the *perabangan*, the Datu Amar being president and the Datu Pahlawan one of the vice-presidents. But the key executive positions of secretary-general and treasurer were in the hands

*The conflict between Islamic reformists and conservatives has been fully dealt with by W. R. Roff, 'Kaum Muda—Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction Amongst the Malays 1900—1941', in K. G. Tregonning, ed., *Papers on Malayan History*, Singapore, 1962, pp. 162—92, and *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur, 1967.

†A more detailed account of *Fajar* and its content can be found in R. H. W. Reece, 'Sarawak's First Malay Newspaper', *SG*, 1 April 1981.

‡The name was probably designed to attract Muslim native (Melanau) membership as well as Malays. Ibans and other non-Muslim natives were not involved.

of Johari Anang and Mohd. Nor, both of them members of the old *Fajar* group.

The Persatuan's aims were similar to those of the Peninsular associations: to unite the Malays and work together for their advancement; to promote business, education, culture, and the Malay language; to protect the Islamic faith; and to act as liaison between the Malays and government. The last was significant since it was yet another sign of dissatisfaction with the traditional form of representation through the *datus*. There was a strong feeling among the younger members that Malays would have to bypass the *datus* if there was to be any improvement in their social and economic condition. The Persatuan's material achievements before the war consisted of purchasing a house as headquarters, collecting about \$5,000 towards the formation of a co-operative, and establishing links with Malay social clubs in Sibu, Miri, and other centres. It also sent Mohd. Nor, Johari Anang, and Abang Haji Zaini to the second annual congress of Malay associations in Singapore in December 1940¹⁵ and it would be surprising if this experience did not help to develop a more political orientation in the organization. No doubt it was from the contacts made during this visit that Mohd. Nor was appointed Sarawak correspondent for Singapore's Malay-language newspaper, *Utusan Zaman*. At its annual general meeting in June 1941 the Persatuan was able to attract 700 Malays, including a number from other towns, all wearing Malay dress. Abang Suleiman, the Datu Amar, chaired the meeting which was entertained by schoolchildren singing religious songs.¹⁶ During the Brooke Centenary celebrations in September that year, the Persatuan played an important part in organizing Malay cultural activities and sports events. In spite of a complete moratorium on its activities during the Japanese occupation, there was still sufficient cohesion among its members and branches immediately after the war for it to be easily revived and later used by the anti-cessionists as a ready-made organization with the potential of mobilizing Malay support.

The only other Malay organization which offered any contact with the cultural and proto-political life of the Peninsula was the Sarawak branch of the Persaudaraan Sahabat Pena Malaya.¹⁷ This was presided over first by the Datu Amar and then by Abang Haji Mustapha* who had attended

* Abang Haji Mustapha (d. 1965) was the son of Datu Hakim, Abang Haji Moasili, and the grandson of Abang Haji Abdul Rahman who had been appointed Datu Hakim by James Brooke. Educated at St. Thomas' and St. Joseph's schools, he was later sent to Mecca to study Muslim law. After four years, during which he travelled in the Middle East and India, he returned to Sarawak and took up a clerical position at Limbang. In 1930 he was transferred to the police and was one of the first non-Europeans to be commissioned as an officer. In 1941 he was appointed by the Rajah to the new position of Datu Pahlawan and in June 1946 he was promoted to Datu Bandar. The leader of the pro-cession faction in Sarawak, he aroused a great deal of ill-feeling within the Malay community and did not receive strong support in 1960 when he founded the Parti Negara Sarawak (PANAS). A strong proponent of Sarawak's inclusion in the Malaysian Federation, he was one of the major obstacles in winning over the anti-cessionists who had formed the rival BARJASA. His polarization of the *perabangan* over the cession issue substantially modified the pattern

English school in Singapore and was one of the best-educated Malays in the state. The Sarawak branch does not seem to have been very active, but a few of its members including Rakawi attended conferences in Malaya and Singapore and no doubt brought back news of developments there. Abang Haji Mustapha was also involved in a co-operative whose aims were similar to those of the Persatuan. The Sarawak Malay Savings and Investment Society was registered in October 1940 with the Datu Patinggi, Datu Haji Mohidin, and Abang Haji Mustapha dominating the committee. Subscriptions from sixty-nine members amounted to almost \$9,000¹⁸ but there was no public announcement about how these funds were to be used. The Persekutuan Bumiputera Sarawak was also registered in early 1941.

The movement to establish the Persatuan Melayu seems to have provided some stimulus to the Indian and Eurasian communities who began to organize themselves in tentative fashion in the late 1930s. The Indian Association of Sarawak was inaugurated in September 1937 with Dr K. V. Krishna as president and S. C. S. Chakraverty as secretary and chose to hold its first anniversary on 18 September 1938 marking the day when James Brooke secured the government of Sarawak from the Sultan of Brunei.* A Eurasian Association was formed in 1940, reflecting the growing importance of this small but educated minority. Its president, Edwin Howell,[†] had been appointed Assistant Executive Engineer in the Public Works Department in 1941, one of the first non-Europeans to be promoted from the Junior Service. He was also the second Sarawak citizen to be awarded the Star of Sarawak. As the second Rajah had hoped, miscegenation had produced a small group of people who were

of Sarawak politics. A political realist, his instinct was to be on the winning side and to take the rest of the traditional élite with him. For an interesting obituary, see Adenan Haji Satem, 'Dato Mustapha—A Belated Appreciation', *SG*, 28 February 1965.

*Dr Krishna's speech on this occasion is a fascinating example of the way in which Brooke history had been mythologized. 'This day is pre-eminently suitable to us', he told the meeting, 'for the installation of Sir James Brooke tantamounts to installing Justice, and banishing Pangeran Mahkota means dispelling ignorance and evil.' (*SG*, 1 October 1938.) Although there had been practically nothing published by Sarawak Malays about their history, apart from Rakawi bin Yusoff's *Hikayat Sarawak*, there were strong oral traditions of the Brooke and earlier periods. The Datu Patinggi, for example, could give an amazingly detailed account of the Chinese rebellion of 1857. Unfortunately, none of these traditions has been recorded.

†Edwin was the son of an Anglo-Indian missionary, the Revd. William Howell, who married an Iban woman from the Second Division and became an authority on Iban language and lore. Together with D. J. S. Bailey, he produced *A Sea Dyak Dictionary* (Singapore, 1900-2) and contributed numerous articles to the *Sarawak Gazette* which were published in collected form in 1963. Edwin had volunteered to work as an engineer in the Middle East during the 1914-18 war. He was in Australia at the time of the Japanese invasion and in July 1945 joined the Australian Army where he was given the rank of captain. Returning to Sarawak with the BBKAU, he was cashiered for allegedly selling army stores in co-operation with an Australian officer. In 1946 he was appointed Assistant Executive Engineer, Kuching, and later became a Divisional Engineer for the Second Division. For his post-war involvement with the Sarawak Dayak Association, see below, pp. 210, 248.

well capable of assuming administrative responsibility. However, the Europeans of the Sarawak Service were not prepared to countenance this and it was not until 1940 that Eurasians were allowed to join the Sarawak Club.* Consequently, the major preoccupation of Kuching's small Eurasian community was with social acceptance.

The Dayaks Co-operative Society

The late 1930s also saw the first signs of Iban communal organization. Rapid expansion of rubber smallholding in the Second Division had brought many Ibans into the cash economy in the 1920s, only to have their fingers burnt in the early 1930s. Low prices, together with resentment towards Chinese traders, suggested to some of the more enterprising Saribas Ibans the possibility of a co-operative. In October 1939 the Resident of the Second Division reported that the Paku and Rimbas Ibans had begun purchasing supplies direct from Kuching 'since they are tired of paying the Chinese the highest possible price for everything, and receiving the lowest possible price for their rubber'.¹⁹ A group of Paku people had even taken out a hawking licence and intended operating their own boat to supply Iban longhouses along the two rivers. This initiative was greeted enthusiastically by government officers who suggested that the group should take out a rubber dealer's licence.

The Resident was probably referring to the activities of J. H. Chambai, Manggai, and Langi Boudyne who toured the Ulu Paku, Rimbas, and Krian rivers in 1938 to raise capital for an Iban trading company. After three years of canvassing they had obtained sufficient pledges to float a company and in early 1941 there was a gathering at Stambak Ulu,† Langi Boudyne's longhouse on the Layar, where more than \$20,000 of share money was collected.²⁰ Assistance was given by the District Officer and the local SPG missionary in drafting the articles of association which were later taken to the Legal Adviser in Kuching for scrutiny.

The first investment of the newly-registered Dayaks Co-operative Society was in a number of shophouses at Spaoh (on the Paku) and Betong. It was also hoped that an arrangement could be made to charter a Chinese-owned motor vessel for trade with Kuching. Since the Paku and Rimbas Rivers gave access to some of the richest rubber areas in Sarawak, competition from Chinese traders was inevitable and their reluctance to demolish the old bazaar at Spaoh was seen by one officer as a means of preventing the Co-operative from coming into operation.²¹ However, the instigators of the scheme had realized that communal solidarity was vital to its success and before the Co-operative was registered an oath was sworn by all shareholders that they would trade exclusively with it. Nor

*Although nothing has been written about the Sarawak Club and the Island Club at Sibul, their function was similar to that of the Malayan clubs described by J. G. Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880-1941: The Social History of a European Community in Colonial South-East Asia*, Kuala Lumpur, 1979.

†Stambak Ulu was probably the most prosperous Iban community in Sarawak. For a photograph of their unusual longhouse, see Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, opp. p. 171.

were other Iban companies to be floated without first obtaining the Co-operative's approval.*

In addition to the enterprising people of the Paku, Rimbas, and Layar there were also a number of Ibans who were mostly mission school graduates employed in government service. Notable among these was 'Dr' Charles Mason,† a Balau Iban who had studied at the King Edward Medical College in Singapore. Mason worked as a dresser on an estate in North Borneo (1918-26) before joining Sarawak's Medical Department and finally taking charge of the leper settlement outside Kuching. By virtue of his education and his position as the senior Iban government employee, Mason was the unofficial leader of Kuching's Iban community and maintained close contact with the Ibans of the Banting and Krian districts. Through his work as a dresser he was also well known among the Malays.

Other prominent Kuching shareholders were Eliab Bay,‡ his brother Henry Satab Bay, and his sister Barbara Bay who was the first Iban trained nurse. Related to the Bays were Philip and Robert Jitam, the sons of a government timekeeper whose ancestors had come from Lundu. Philip Jitam occupied a responsible position with the Water Supply Department and was second only to Charles Mason in status within Kuching's small Iban community. Robert worked for Sarawak Steamships Ltd. and then the Rubber Fund, a quasi-governmental body which later allowed him greater freedom of political activity than his brother. †

The Kuching Ibans shared a similar background and most were related to each other. Their ancestors had migrated from the Second to the First Division three or four generations previously and were closely associated with the Brookes. They had fought on the first Rajah's side against Iban and Chinese 'rebels' and were something of a para-military caste. By the 1930s a small number had been educated at St. Thomas' School and were looking for employment in government service. However, there were few opportunities and they were obliged to become medical dressers or petty clerks and to go to North Borneo or Malaya looking for work. Henry Bay, for example, spent most of his life in Malaya as a dresser. In spite of the recommendations of the Le Gros Clark Report, very little was done to recruit Ibans for the Native Officer Service and by 1941 there were only three Iban Native Officers: Francis Ansin, Bennett Jarrow, and

*Re-established after the war as the Sea Dayak United Co., the Co-operative went into voluntary liquidation in May 1950. Investors lost their capital and there was much ill-feeling about alleged mismanagement.

†Mason was the son of an Iban *tuai rumah* and *manang* (shaman) from Banting who converted to Christianity. The SPG missionary at Banting, whose wife was a doctor, made him his ward and sent him to Singapore. During his time in Sibul, Mason acquired considerable property and later became involved in gold mining at Bau as well as buying shophouses in Kuching.

‡At this time the family name of Bayang had been abbreviated to Bay. In the 1950s there was a return to the use of Bayang.

*In 1948 Robert Jitam became the first Iban representative to serve on the Kuching Municipal Board.

Michael Sadin, although half a dozen had been taken into the constabulary. Among these were Juing Insol, Edward Brandah Saban, his brother Andrew Jika Saban, Arthur Muda, and Robert Nicholl Kasim, most of whom were to assume positions of responsibility under the Japanese and the British colonial administration.

Ibans in the Junior Service

The frustrations experienced by Ibans and other non-Malay natives employed in the Junior Administrative Service can most easily be seen in the career of Eliab Bay. The youngest son of the *tua kampong* of the Tabuan area just outside Kuching, Eliab was a direct descendant of the Orang Kaya Ijau of Banting, Lingga, whose family had been firm supporters of James Brooke during his most difficult years. Eliab's grandfather was Jangun, a Balau Iban from Munggut Lalang near Banting in the Second Division who first came to Kuching as part of a war expedition in the early 1800s. He gave valuable assistance to James Brooke during the Chinese rebellion in 1857 by taking a message to his nephew, Charles Brooke, who was then at Skrang. Subsequently the Rajah persuaded Jangun to bring his people to Kuching where they built a longhouse called Munggut Bringgin on the hill overlooking the bazaar. When more Balau Ibans arrived, a move was made to an area four miles outside the town where there was land suitable for padi-planting. Jangun's son, Bayang, married Jumpit, a Sebuyau woman from Merdang Limo near Kuching whose family had migrated much earlier from Sadong, and inherited the leadership of Kampong Tabuan Dayak from his father. He became a sergeant in the Sarawak Rangers and was famous for his skill in the martial arts which he learned in Pontianak, the Celebes, and Java during visits there. Eliab Bay was also linked with James Brooke's enemies. His wife Chela was the great grand-niece of the Orang Kaya Dana Bayang of Padeh, Saribas, one of James Brooke's most formidable opponents.

Educated first at the SPG mission school at Merdang and then at St. Thomas' School in Kuching to Standard VII, Eliab first obtained employment as a junior clerk in the Posts and Telegraphs Department and worked in the Second Division. Declining Bishop Hose's suggestion that he should train for the Anglican priesthood, he went to Miri in 1921 and worked for five years in the accounts department of Sarawak Oilfields Ltd. He later returned to the Second Division and served as a *kunsil* (court writer) at Engkelili, Sebuyau, Lingga, and Lubok Antu with a short spell at Simanggang as Treasury clerk and store keeper. Possessing some talent for business, Eliab for many years studied accountancy with an English correspondence college. He owned a share in a rubber estate at Merdang Limo and was one of the prime movers of the Dayaks Co-operative Society (he had links with the Paku Ibans through his wife's relatives at Stambak Ulu).

At Lubok Antu in March 1938 Bay wrote to H. E. Cutfield, Resident of the Second Division, in his best mission school style:

It has been my intention for a long time to seek for a transfer to the native officers' service but since I was always in doubt as to the advisability of approaching you thereon, I have refrained from doing so till now when I think the season is opportune enough for me to carry my desire into materialisation.²²

Employed as a court writer in the Junior Service, Bay's responsibilities were considerable. Not only was he required to act as an interpreter for the District Officer's court and to record all the hearings, he also did most of the clerical work of the post. At Simanggang, where he was posted later, his responsibilities were even greater: the Native Officer there, Datu Abang Zin Galau, was not literate in romanized Malay or English and consequently a great deal of the work fell on Bay's shoulders. In his report on Bay to the Promotions Board for 1940, however, Cutfield was less than enthusiastic. He had not been able to recommend Bay's promotion while government clerk at Lubok Antu and his work as cashier at Simanggang was '*satisfactory only*'. Although the most senior Iban clerk in the Division, Cutfield continued, he was not necessarily the most efficient. He had been engaged on too generous terms in the first instance and was now disgruntled at not having received further promotion. However, the Resident regarded Bay as capable of undertaking substitution work and felt that he should be given the opportunity of proving himself as chief clerk at a district headquarters.²³

In the same month, Bay took the bold step of writing to the Chief Secretary himself about leave for members of the Junior Service. 'We Asiatic', he told Parnell, 'have been badly treated in all things and all the orders now in force are good for European Nations only.'²⁴ He pointed out that although members of the Junior Service were entitled to take annual leave, this often had to be postponed because of the shortage of staff. It was 'very wrong and cruel on the part of the government to have treated the Junior Officers this way . . .'.²⁵ Bay recommended a new system of three weeks annual leave for those with less than ten years' service and four weeks for those with more than ten, provision being made that if leave had to be accumulated, the Junior Officer concerned should be given his travelling expenses by way of compensation. A year earlier, Parnell had written to the Resident refusing to refund Bay's passage money: 'The regulations governing . . . the granting of passages to members of the Junior Service on annual leave must be rigidly adhered to'.²⁶ Bay concluded his letter in a tone which Parnell might almost have found threatening: 'It would be fair to treat everybody the same and not to European nations only. Sarawak is a poor country and it is lucky to have owned calm subjects who are always loyal to their Government in everything, but as they have been good we hope the Government will not overpress them.'²⁷

Eliab Bay's expressions of discontent and his unprecedented complaint to the Chief Secretary seem to have won him a reputation among European officers as a malcontent and a security risk, although there is no evidence that before the war with Japan he could have been justifiably described as 'pro-Japanese'. Indeed, in 1941 he was the first Iban to broadcast on Radio Sarawak which at that time was given over almost

entirely to defence propaganda. What is important about his experience is that it mirrors the difficulties experienced by mission-educated Ibans capable of assuming responsibility in a system where members of the traditional Malay élite, whatever their qualifications, were favoured as the second level of government administration.

The China Distress Relief Fund

As with other South-East Asian Chinese communities, it was the Japanese seizure of Manchuria which politicized the Sarawak Chinese. From 1932 there was an organized boycott of Japanese goods²⁸ in the bazaars which the government tried hard to suppress and Sarawak's only Japanese company, Nissa Shokai, was subjected to minor harassment such as the cutting of telephone wires leading to its rubber estate on the Samarahan River.²⁹ Patriotic feelings were expressed in such a way as to provide an organizational framework which transcended the old dialect group associations. Local committees of the Singapore-based China Distress Relief Fund were established in Kuching and Sibu in 1937, apparently on the initiative of Wee Kheng Chiang, a Hokkien banker with interests both in Singapore and Sarawak. Money for the Fund was raised through donations and the proceeds of concerts and other events organized in conjunction with the Sarawak branch of the Malaya Patriotic Fund. By late 1941 almost \$400,000 had been remitted to China through Singapore.*

The boycott and the collection of funds seem to have depended to some extent on the links provided by the Chinese Chambers of Commerce and dialect group associations and were supported by Ong Tiang Swee and Tan Sum Guan, the second Chinese member of the Council Negri. However, there were opportunities for leadership outside the old *kapitan china* dialect group structure. Khan Ah Chong, one of the most active members of the Kuching committee, was a Malayan Chinese who had come to Sarawak in the mid-1930s to manage rubber estates. A member of the Municipal Board and founder of the Kuching Rotary Club, he enjoyed a prestige rivalling that of the dialect group leaders. In Sibu, a handful of China-born schoolteachers seem to have taken most of the initiative in the local committee. Concerts, exhibitions, and stalls were held to raise money and there was a voluntary tax on Chinese businesses. A number of Chinese youths went to enlist in Chiang Kai-shek's army and China's National Day (10 October) was celebrated with Nationalist songs, marching school students, and speeches.³⁰ Such activities prompted a pan-Chinese awareness which cut across dialect group differences. Nevertheless, this was still insufficient to prompt any form of political organization. A branch of the Kuomintang which had folded shortly after its establishment in the 1920s was not revived until after the war, nor is there any clear evidence of communist organization before then.

*Oddly enough, Sarawak is not mentioned in Yoji Akashi, *The Nanyang Chinese National Salvation Movement, 1937-1941*, University of Kansas, 1970.

One of the most significant political facts, however, was that Kuching, which had been a predominantly Malay town until the first decade of the twentieth century, was now very much a Chinese town. While the population of Kuching grew from about 8,000 in 1876 to about 35,000 in 1939, the Malay percentage fell from 70 per cent to 40 per cent and the Chinese rose from 30 per cent to 55 per cent. Another 8,000 Chinese farmers and market-gardeners lived within a ten-mile radius of the town and were well entrenched along Sarawak's only significant pre-war road which led eastward towards Serian. The 1939 census also showed that the other significant urban communities were Indians (1,258), Eurasians (140), Europeans (124), and Japanese (133).³¹ Sarawak's total population was 490,806: Sarawak natives (361,955), Chinese (123,626), Indians (2,323), Javanese (1,855), Europeans (427), Eurasians (277), Japanese (155), and others (158).

Kuching's rapid growth after 1910 was induced by the booms of 1910-20, the late 1920s, and the late 1930s when it served as the export centre for rubber and the doorway for large numbers of immigrant Chinese workers. Although there was a significant net outflow of Chinese during the early 1930s, improved rubber prices revived the influx and by 1937 there were more than twice as many immigrants as emigrants. The proportion of Chinese female immigrants also increased. Consequently, the Chinese population of Kuching rose from 45,000 in 1909 to 124,000 in 1939.³² While it is difficult to find much evidence of Malay reactions to this beyond references in *Fajar Sarawak*, it would be surprising if the numerical and economic dominance of the Chinese in pre-war Kuching did not arouse anxieties among the Malays similar to those being expressed in the Peninsula. Kuching remained the seat of a fundamentally Malayophile government, but the economic enterprise of the Chinese which had been so much admired by James and Charles Brooke was now threatening to upset the traditional hegemony of the Malays.

The Japanese Period

The Japanese administration of Sarawak from January 1942 until August 1945 is sparsely documented, posing many problems for the historian.* However, it will be useful to provide a general sketch of the

*Most of the records of the Japanese administration were destroyed before the Allied re-occupation in September 1945. The most important document available is the 37th Army Group's 'Status of the Military Administration in North Borneo' for 1943, Nishijima Collection, Waseda University. There are few Sarawak newspapers surviving from the period and to the best of my knowledge no published reminiscences have appeared in Japan. Nor has it been possible to obtain very much oral information. The only Japanese official with whom I have been able to establish contact is S. Suzuki who was deputy superintendent of police, Simanggang, 1943-5, and the following account has relied heavily on information kindly supplied by Mr Suzuki. The most useful local source is a history of the Japanese occupation of Sibü by Liu Yung Tzu, *Tieh-t'i hsia ti hui-i: Jih-ch'un lin-chan sha-pa sha-lao-yueh shih-ch'i ti hu sueh-lei-shih* (History of Blood and Tears under the Japanese Army in Sabah and Sarawak), 2nd ed., Hong Kong, 1969.

Japanese administration and to suggest its most important social and political effects.

The military phase was completed in March 1942 when the last of the European officers were rounded up.* Generally speaking the Japanese were content to control coastal areas and riverine settlements. Apart from occasional patrols they made no attempt to bring the whole of the interior under their close influence. In some areas, such as the remote Kelabit plateau selected for Allied paratroop landings in early 1945,³³ they were hardly seen during the entire course of the war. While the rest of Borneo was the responsibility of the Japanese navy, Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo were controlled as one military region by the 37th Army whose headquarters were first located at Kuching and then moved to North Borneo in late 1943 when it seemed that they would have to face an Allied counter-attack. For administrative purposes, the British Borneo states were divided into five prefectures: *Kuching-shu*, *Sibu-shu*, *Miri-shu*, *Seikai-shu* (Jesselton), and *Tokai-shu* (Sandakan).

The Japanese civil affairs administration of Sarawak suffered a serious setback at the outset when four transports carrying the civil affairs staff were sunk by Dutch aircraft at Santubong near the mouth of the Sarawak River.³⁴ This served to heighten the Japanese emphasis on military priorities: tight control of coastal and more densely populated areas, economic self-sufficiency, and the supply of labour and resources to assist the Japanese war effort. The focus of Japanese economic interest was, of course, the oil field at Miri where a great deal of energy was expended in rehabilitating the wells which had been wrecked before the invasion. In spite of this, and the lack of geological records, the Japanese drilled sixteen new wells and had brought the Miri and Seria fields back to almost half pre-war production by the time of the surrender.[†] The conquest of Indo-China and Malaya meant that Japan was over-supplied with rubber and there was consequently little demand for this or for pepper, Sarawak's other major pre-war export. The one area of the economy on which the Japanese had an important impact was padi cultivation, mainly because self-sufficiency was a matter of absolute necessity after 1943.

The most influential figure in civil affairs administration was S. Yamada, an Oxford graduate who had been seconded from the Department of the Interior and sent to Sarawak in 1943 as head of the 37th Army's

*Most Europeans who crossed into Dutch Borneo after the invasion managed to escape the Japanese. However, one party led by G. R. H. Arundell, Resident of the Second Division, was betrayed by some Iban ex-prisoners and massacred by the Japanese at Ulu Mujiang in the upper Batang Ai. MacPherson, who was by that time Resident of the Third Division, was among those killed. European civilians who surrendered to the Japanese were interned at Batu Lintang, just outside Kuching. For descriptions of life there, see J. B. Archer, *Lintang Camp* . . ., Kuching, 1946; Agnes Keith, *Three Came Home*, Boston, 1947; Michael O'Connor, *Vile Repose*, London, 1950; Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', pp. 102-59.

†According to a recent account, presumably based on records kept by Shell workers retained by the Japanese, wartime production for the two fields totalled 11,498,000 barrels. (Harper, *The Discovery and Development of the Seria Oilfield*, p. 21.)

research section.* In 1944 he was made head of the general affairs section in Kuching and became responsible for the work of the *Ken Sanjikai*, or Prefectural Advisory Council, † which had been established by a military decree of 1 October 1943.³⁵ While the decree stressed 'the political participation of natives in the administration of North Borneo', Chinese, Indians, and other immigrants were entitled to act as extraordinary members. Speaking fluent English, which was the language used by the Council, Yamada became extremely popular with all community leaders and did a great deal to further relations between the Japanese and the local population. The *ken sanji* (councillors), who were probably chosen by him, came from the old élites. The Datus Amar and Pahlawan and Native Officers Abang Openg and Tuanku Bujang represented the *perabangan* of Kuching and Sibü while Haji Abdul Rahman spoke for other Malays. As with the Datu Patinggi, Ong Tiang Swee may have declined membership on the grounds of advanced age but his son, Ong Kuan Hin, served, as did Lee Wing Thoong who headed the main Cantonese association. The two Iban representatives were Charles Mason and Philip Jitam. It is not clear to what extent, if at all, the *ken sanji* advised the Japanese administration on political and social questions. Their principal purpose, as far as the Japanese were concerned, was to assist with the various economic projects which had been planned, including a shipyard to make wooden hulls from local timber and a factory to extract oil from rubber latex. As in Malaya and Indonesia, Japanese policy was to co-opt the local élite in promoting self-sufficiency and mobilizing labour for the construction of airfields and other projects. However, the *ken sanji* were not necessarily 'yes-men' and Philip Jitam's open disagreement with a Japanese supply officer on one occasion apparently resulted in the latter's suicide.³⁶

The Japanese also promoted the formation of communally-based associations similar to those which appeared in Malaya. While the local branch of the Indian Independence League represented Sarawak's tiny Indian community, the Overseas Chinese Association and the Perimpun Dayak (Dayak Association) were useful means of dealing with these two racial groups. Their leaders were held responsible for the actions of their respective communities and they could also be used to organize the demonstrations of loyalty and cultural events required on such occasions as the Emperor's birthday and War Heroes Day. ‡ The Overseas Chinese Association, † as in Malaya, had the initial task of collecting almost \$2,000,000 as *sook ching* (lit., purification through suffering) from the

* Yamada, who would have been by far the best informant on the Japanese administration, died a few years ago and does not appear to have left any memoirs. However, Manaki's 'Reminiscences of Shiseikan Yamada' is a useful source (Manaki was a staff colonel in the 37th Army). Yamada revisited Sarawak on a number of occasions after the war.

† Similar councils were to be set up in each of the other prefectures but it is not clear if this was done.

‡ The elaborate nature of these celebrations can be gathered from the programme produced for *Dai Nippon Teikoku*, 8 June 1943. (Copy in the possession of Mr J. L. Noakes.)

* Its equivalent in Sibü was the *Tung Tiao Hui* (Joint Peacekeeping Association).



1A Margaret Brooke



1B Charles Brooke

1C Vyner Brooke



1D Sylvia Brooke

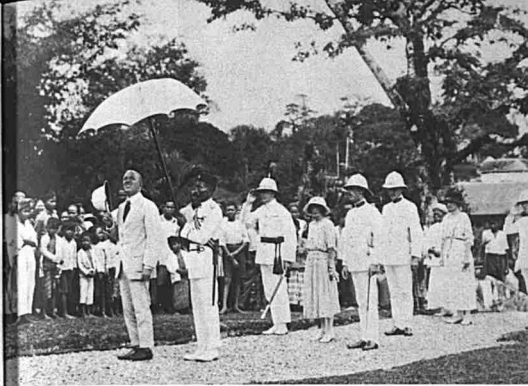




2A Vyner Brooke before his installation as Rajah, 22 July 1918. With him is Ranee Sylvia and behind them, carrying a cushion for the Sword of State, is Bertram Brooke, Tuan Muda.

2B Datus and senior officers awaiting the Rajah's arrival at Pengkalan Batu from the Astana, 22 July 1918. The datus, from left to right, are the Datu Menteri (Enche Mohd. Zin), Datu Hakim (Abang Haji Ash'ari), Datu Imam (Haji Marais), Datu Temenggong (Abang Mohammad Ali) and Datu Bandar (Abang Haji Kassim).





3A Raising the Sarawak flag in the Astana grounds during a visit by the Governor of the Straits Settlements in the 1920s. The yellow umbrella was one of the few traditional trappings of the Brooke Raj.

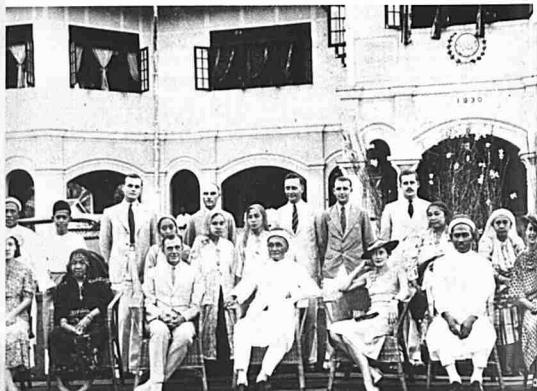
3B The peace-making between Ibans and Kayans at Kapit, 1924, in the presence of the Rajah and Brooke and Dutch officers. MacBryan's success in bringing this about found favour with the Rajah. He is seated fourth from the left.





4A Bertram Brooke, Tuan Muda, with officers and dignitaries at the Court House, c.1935. Under the arrangement foreshadowed by Charles Brooke, Bertram took turns with Vyner in the administration of Sarawak until his health deteriorated in 1937.

4B The Datu Shahbandar's tea-party, *Darul Kornia*, 1936.
 Standing (left to right): Abang Haji Fadzil, Abang Bismi, N. E. Hughes, H. B. Crocker, W. F. Dick, Anthony Brooke, C. D. Le Gros Clark.
 Middle row: Dayang Lumbek, Dayang Hariah, Dayang Sham, Dayang Set, Dayang Yok.
 Seated: Mrs Dick, Dayang Rabiyah (wife of the Datu Shahbandar), Bertram Brooke, Abang Haji Abdillah (the Datu Shahbandar), Anne Brooke, Abang Haji Moshidi (Datu Imam), Mrs Averil Le Gros Clark.





5A Gerard MacBryan, 1935



5B Sa'erah, 1935

5C The Datu Shahbandar, Abang Haji Abdillah, from a woodcut by Averil MacKenzie-Grieve



5D Ong Tiang Swee

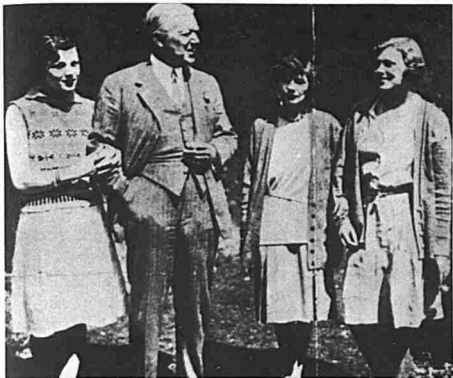




6A Kuching street scene in the 1920s: Malay *satay* seller and *peon* (office boy) customer. The Malays, who had made up 70 per cent of the town's population in 1876, were only 40 per cent by 1939.

6B Lower Rejang river scene in the 1920s: an Iban family coming to trade at a Chinese bazaar town. By the late 1930s some Ibans in the Second Division were trying to compete with the Chinese by means of a producers' co-operative.





7A The Rajah, Ranee and their daughters Elizabeth (left) and Leonora (right).

7B Amateur dramatics provided a diversion for the wives of European officers in Kuching. 'The Merry Matrons', written by the Ranee and performed in 1935, was about the arrival of a new administrative cadet who (to general consternation) turned out to be married.



CHARLES VYNER BROOKE
THIRD RAJAH.

G.C.M.C.
1938



8 Vyner Brooke from a portrait by Margaret Noble in 1938. Many of those who knew the Rajah described his piercing blue eyes which 'seemed to look straight through you'. As this portrait shows, the Rajah had a cast in his left eye which made it difficult for him to focus both eyes together. He probably exploited the unnerving effect this had on people.



9 Bertram Brooke, the Tuan Muda, from a drawing by Margaret Noble, c.1938. She described him as 'the most loveable and purest person I have ever known . . .'.
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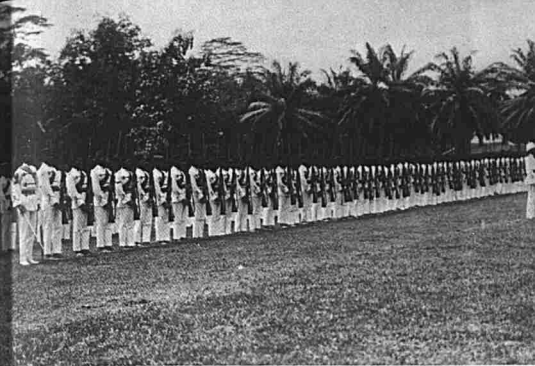
10A The District Officer was the backbone of Brooke administration. Pictured here is K. H. Digby with his establishment at Serian in 1937.

Standing (left to right): Sailor on government launch, Digby's 'cook-boy', three policemen, *penghulu* of the Melikin Dayaks, captain and engineer of government launch, three policemen.

Sitting: Clerk, rubber restriction officer, Native Officer Abang Abu Latip, Digby, Head Clerk James Lau, medical dresser.

10B Anthony Brooke, the Rajah Muda, presenting prizes at a Sarawak Constabulary sports day, June 1939. Seated on the left is J. B. Archer, the Chief Secretary, and standing on the far right is Abang Haji Mustapha who had just been appointed an Assistant Commissioner.

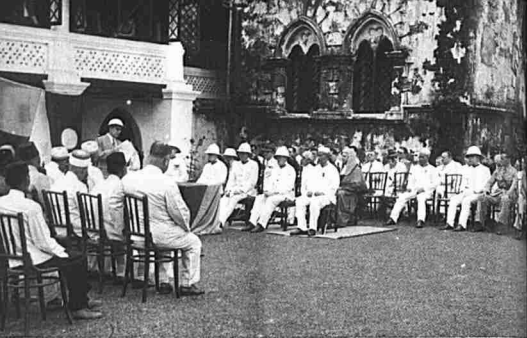




11A The Sarawak Rangers on parade. Before they were merged with the police in 1921 they were Sarawak's only armed force.

11B The Chief Secretary, C. D. Le Gros Clark, inspecting the 2/15th Punjab Regiment on the Kuching *padang* in late 1941. The British government was unable to provide any substantial measure of defence against the Japanese, although the Miri oilfield and refinery were effectively sabotaged before their arrival in December.



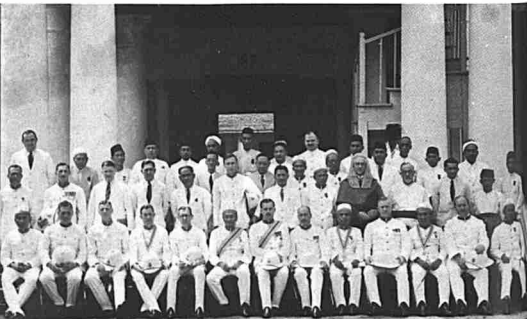


12A Vyner Brooke announcing his constitutional proposals to assembled dignitaries at the Astana, 31 March 1941.

12B The Council Negri in November 1941 after the enactment of the new constitution.

Sitting (left to right): Datu Abang Haji Mustapha, G. R. H. Arundell, A. MacPherson, J. G. Anderson, F. H. Pollard, the Datu Patinggi, C. D. Le Gros Clark, B. A. Trechman, the Datu Amar, G. L. Keir, the Datu Menteri, R. G. Aikman, the Datu Hakim.

Chief Justice Thackwell Lewis (robed) is standing in the first row, and on his left, Father Anthony Mulder.





13A The Rajah in Australia, 1942



13B The Rancee in New York, 1943

13C Gerard MacBryan, c. 1940



13D Anthony Brooke, 1945





14A Wartime Japanese propaganda poster. The Malays were urged to see the Japanese as having saved them from Brooke oppression. Of all the peoples in Sarawak, they suffered least during the occupation.

14B Japanese soldiers leaving Kuching after the surrender for an un-country internment camp. They were allowed to keep their rifles for self-protection.





15A Brooke officers shortly after their release from internment at Batu Lintang, Kuching, in September 1945. The man hauling up the Sarawak flag is J. B. Archer, who had been Chief Secretary, 1939-41. Immediately to the left is D. C. White.

15B Apart from severe mortality among Chinese and Javanese workers at Miri towards the end of the war, Sarawak did not suffer greatly under Japanese rule. The same could not be said for Pontianak in Dutch West Borneo where Malay and Chinese rebellions were brutally suppressed.



GRAVES OF
UNFORTUNATES
BURIED ALIVE
BY JAPANESE!
27th. SEPTEMBER 1945

被日軍活埋殺傷之華人
地名 東方洋
中華民國十四年九月廿三日發現



16A The Australian commander of Kuching Force, Brigadier T. C. Eastick, delivering an address at the combined Allied victory and Chinese 'Double Tenth' (National Day) celebrations, October 1945. Kuching witnessed an anti-Malay riot by Chinese the following day.

16B The Datu Patinggi presenting the Rajah with the Sword of State, symbolizing the restoration of Brooke government, in April 1946. The Ranees looks on and the Datu is assisted by his grandson, Abang Kassim.





17A The Rajah and Ranee were surprised to find anti-cession posters when they visited Kuching's Malay *kampung* shortly after their return in April 1946.

17B The Rajah and Ranee with Temenggong Koh (left) and Penghulu Oyang Lawai Jau at the Astana in April 1946.





18 Abang Haji Abdillah, the Datu Patinggi and seventeenth hereditary chief-tain of the Sarawak Malays, in full official uniform. From the announcement of cession until his death in November 1946 he was the figurehead of the anti-cession movement.



19A Malcolm MacDonald arriving for the final formalization of cession in Kuching, 1 July 1946. Behind him, in naval uniform, is Lord Louis Mountbatten.

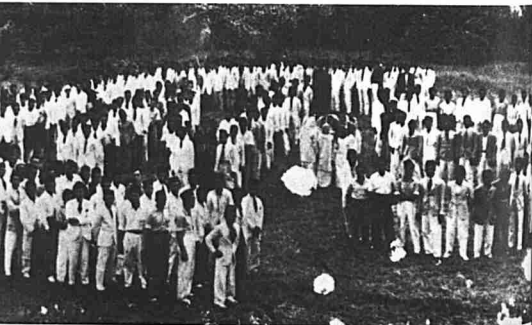
19B Anti-cession demonstration, Kuching, 1946.





20A Malay schoolteachers who resigned from government service in protest against Circular No. 9's prohibition of anti-cession activities.

20B Anti-cessionists in the grounds of the Datu Patinggi's house, *Darul Kornia*, 2 April 1947. They are grouped to represent the Malay National Union's slogan: 'No Circular No. 9'.





21 Mrs Anthony Brooke's visit to Sarawak in July 1947 came at the high point of the anti-cession movement. As an unofficial representative of the Brooke family, she was given an enthusiastic reception by the Sarawak Malays wherever she went. In the top photograph she is pictured with Lily Eberwein (second on her right) and members of the Sibu chapter of the Kaum Ibu. In the lower photograph she is with members of the Sibu Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu and the Kaum Ibu.

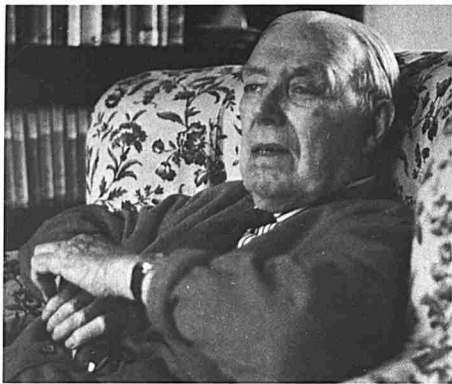




23A Members of the SibU Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu, 1948.
Seated (left to right): Tua Kampong Abang Sulhi, Awang Rambli bin Mohd. Deli, Abang Suhai.
Standing (left to right): Yusuf Haji Merais, Yusop bin Ahmad, Zain bin Abu, Bujang bin Razali.

23B Rosly bin Dhobie under arrest in SibU, December 1949, after fatally stabbing Governor Duncan Stewart in an anti-cession protest. At the time, Rosly was a student-teacher in the *sekolah ra'ayat* set up by the anti-cessionists in SibU.





24 Vyner (above) and Bertram Brooke (below) in old age. Although the cession had brought about a deep rift, preventing their ever meeting again, they maintained a strong affection for each other.

Chinese as punishment for their assistance to the Chiang Kai-shek government against Japan. Kuching was allocated \$900,000, Sibu \$700,000, and Miri \$300,000 while the Chinese of North Borneo were expected to contribute \$1,200,000.

Although the Japanese might well have made use of the Persatuan Melayu Sarawak, they banned its activities in the apparent belief that it was 'political' and therefore potentially dangerous. Instead they preferred to do what the Brookes had done—to work through the traditional élite in the belief that the authority of the *datus* could further Japanese interests more than could a group of educated Malays whose influence was an unknown quantity. Malay affairs seem to have the responsibility of a department in which Tuanku Bujang and Abang Openg occupied the senior positions. While the Persatuan's organization and all its branches remained intact throughout the war, it seems unlikely that there were any 'underground' activities. An attempt to establish a Sarawak branch of Ibrahim Yaakub's Kesatuan Melayu Muda in 1942 was speedily squashed by the *kempeitai*.

Perhaps the most significant of the associations was the Perimpun Dayak whose membership seems to have been drawn in the first instance from the pre-war Dayaks Co-operative Society. Charles Mason became president of the Perimpun and Philip Jitam its secretary. Branches were established throughout the First and Second Divisions and there were some large meetings in Kuching. At the same time the Co-operative, renamed the Gerempong Dayak, was maintained not as a trading company but as an Iban community welfare organization providing pocket money for militia recruits and looking after students brought to Kuching for training.*

The Perimpun Dayak held its first meeting in Kuching on 17 February 1944 where it was announced that the Japanese administration had given \$4,000 towards its funds. The programme indicates that the Perimpun was designed to promote the loyalty of the Ibans to the Japanese administration:

- i Fall-in in the play-ground at the back of the school (Maderasah Melayu)
- ii Give respect due to H.I.M. the Emperor of Japan. Facing east: *Kiojo yo hai* 'SAIKEREI' body bending 45 degrees, silence for ½ minute—*Naure*—
- iii Give respect due to the noble and brave heroes of the Nipponese soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of Dai Toa at the fronts:—*Nippon Gun ni tai suru Kansha no Mokuto hajime*—1 minute silence head bending, eyes shut.³⁷

Although there are very few records of the Perimpun's activities, it was evidently responsible for conducting a census of all Ibans and Land Dayaks in the First and Second Divisions and for the organization of Iban dances and other cultural items for ceremonial occasions.

The Japanese also sponsored the establishment of a *kaum ibu* or women's association in Kuching with representatives of each of the four

*Some of the financial records of the Gerempong Dayak are among the papers left by Philip Jitam.

major races. Lily Eberwein,* first headmistress of the Permaisuri Melayu, was secretary of the Malay section while Mary Ong, Barbara Bay, and Mrs Gopal headed the Chinese, Iban, and Indian sections respectively. All had been carefully chosen by Yamada both for their status within their own communities and for their ability. Lily Eberwein was the best-educated Malay woman in Sarawak; Mary Ong was the grand-daughter of Ong Tiang Swee and had trained as a nursing sister; Barbara Bay† was also a trained nurse and an active member of the Dayaks Co-operative Society; and Mrs Gopal was the wife of an Indian doctor. The *kaum ibu*'s main duty was to collect waste metal and hold jumble sales to raise money for gifts to Japanese soldiers. However, its members were also required to organize singing and dancing for concerts held on special occasions and to plant and tend plots of tapioca³⁸ which was used as a substitute for rice.

It would be easy to exaggerate the importance of the *kaum ibu* and its connection with post-war political developments. The organization was imposed by the Japanese and its monthly meetings were often comical affairs. It could even be argued that the most important change affecting women during the Japanese occupation was the chronic shortage of cloth which prevented Malay women from maintaining their custom of concealing themselves in yards of cloth whenever they left their houses. Nevertheless, the Japanese insistence that Asians were perfectly capable of doing anything that Europeans could do (and doing it better) seems to have left its mark. Barbara Bay later recalled that it was the self-confidence she developed through contact with the Japanese that made possible her subsequent involvement in politics.³⁹

The basic structure of social control, instituted by the Japanese in March 1943, was the *jikeidan* or vigilante system which divided all areas of concentrated population into units of approximately thirty households with leaders responsible to the police for what happened in their division. In the interior, longhouses constituted the *jikeidan* units. To some extent the system worked as an informal spy network which allowed the Japanese to detect malcontents and pro-British elements, but it did provide a structure of social organization and responsibility previously unknown in Sarawak. The Japanese also organized a *kyodohei* (militia) recruited mainly from the Balau Ibans of the Second Division, although the senior officers were Malays.‡ After receiving elementary military training, some were posted for guard duty in the principal towns while others formed garrisons in the interior. In the Second Division, for example, Iban garrisons were posted under Japanese supervision at Betong and Saratok, and were at times unsupervised at Pusa, Lingga, and

*For a biographical note, see below, p. 274.

†Unlike Lily Eberwein, Barbara Bay avoided involvement in the anti-cession movement. However, she later participated actively in municipal politics and was one of the founding members of Sarawak's first formally recognized party, the Sarawak United Peoples Party (SUPP) in 1959.

‡Wan Abdul Rahman (the son of Tuanku Bujang), Abang Hadi bin Abang Sulai and Haji Bohari. (McKay, 'The Kuching communities . . .', p. 57.)

Engkelili.⁴⁰ When the 37th Army headquarters were moved to North Borneo in October 1943 a number of *kyodohei* were sent there as well. All *kyodohei* units in the interior had been disbanded and sent back to the Second Division by the time of the Allied landings in 1945, but a Balau Iban who had been made a captain in the Japanese army was killed during the Allied attack on Jesselton.⁴¹

There was also extensive recruitment of Ibans for the police. In 1943, twenty-eight Ibans were put through a six-month course at the newly established police training school at Kuching and were distributed through all the Divisions.⁴² The handful of Ibans already in the police were promoted and the Japanese found them much more useful than was at first expected. Unlike the Brookes, the Japanese were sensitive to the numerical predominance of the Ibans and their frustration at the virtual Malay monopoly of the Police and the Native Officer Service. In its report for 1943 the Japanese administration expressed great satisfaction with the Dusuns of North Borneo and the Ibans whom they found particularly hardworking, honest, and loyal.⁴³

One of the most interesting and significant aspects of the Japanese administration was the establishment of indirect rule in the Second Division through the educated Iban élite. Whether this arose in the first instance from a shortage of Japanese personnel or from a deliberate policy of involving Ibans in government is not clear, but there can be little doubt about its success. In January 1942 Eliab Bay was appointed liaison officer on Iban affairs to the Japanese military administration at Simanggang.⁴⁴ Other Ibans such as Empenit Adam were also appointed *guncho* (district officer) on his recommendation and were responsible to him to some extent.⁴⁵ One of Bay's main tasks was to increase padi production by supervising Iban and Chinese padi-planting teams and facilitating the transportation of padi, salt, and other goods. He also made a number of reports to the Japanese administration on Iban customs and the qualities required for Iban leadership.⁴⁶ The handful of Ibans who had been taken into the police just before the war were promoted to positions of considerable responsibility, the most prominent being Juing Insol* who recruited Balau Ibans for the *kyodohei* and assisted the Japanese in many other ways. An outcome of all this was that the educated Ibans employed by the Japanese realized that they were fully capable of taking a responsible part in the administration of the country. Even Inspector Edward Brandah, who refused to work for the Japanese and joined the Allied advance parties before the end of the war, was deeply affected by this wartime experience. In October 1946 he wrote to Anthony Brooke:

If ever I am given the opportunity of administering the welfare of the people of Sarawak I would say that the future prosperity and social status of the people should not all be governed and guided by all the 100 per cent of the western brains.

*Juing Insol came from a well-known Saribas (Buloh Antu) family. One of his ancestors was a famous rebel against the Brookes. A man of exceptional ability, he could well have become Commissioner for Police had it not been for his reputation as a particularly anti-British collaborator. See below, p. 153.

Technicians, lawyers, doctors etc. really require 100 per cent western brains but Native administration . . . only requires 30 per cent . . . and the rest should be native. The idea came to me as far back as when I was in the interior of Sarawak during the Jap occupation.⁴⁷

While the Japanese propaganda machine did not operate to the extent that it did in Indonesia and Malaya, an effort was made to inculcate anti-European feeling. All photographs of Europeans and many English books were destroyed. A romanized Malay newspaper, *Khabar Harian Kuching*,* was produced weekly and Johari Anang was employed as propaganda editor. Slogans were posted around Kuching and other major towns lauding the Japanese armed forces, the East Asia Co-Prospersity Sphere and Asian brotherhood; rallies were organized to swear allegiance to the Japanese as the 'light of Asia'.[†] When Prime Minister Tojo visited Kuching, a huge welcome was arranged⁴⁸ and Chandra Bose, whose Indian Independence League was based in Singapore, was also given a well-organized reception. On occasions such as the Emperor's birthday and the anniversary of the Pacific war there were public meetings and concerts featuring cultural items from all communities. The only other newspaper available in Kuching during the occupation was one published by the Japanese army but radio and public address systems were used extensively for propaganda purposes. One of the themes, naturally enough, was the Brookes' failure to develop the economy and to improve the people's general welfare. When the March 1941 agreement between the Rajah and the Committee of Administration was discovered, it was used as proof that the Rajah had sold the country to Britain before fleeing to Australia.[‡]

Although the mission schools remained closed, Malay and Chinese schools were reopened after a few months. An effort was made to teach the Japanese language, particularly in Sibu where teachers were given special courses. Two Malay students were sent to Indonesia for professional training[†] and about ten others were selected to study in Japan. A senior group, including the Datu Pahlawan, was also chosen to visit Japan but these plans were made too late.

Although there was quiet antagonism on the part of many Chinese

*The only copy I have been able to locate, which is in the possession of Mr J. L. Noakes, is dated 31.5.2603 (31 May 1943).

†A Japanese broadcast of early March 1943 reported that 100 Ibans, Indian, and Chinese representatives from Kuching had recently pledged allegiance to Japan. (*SG* (Sydney), 13 March 1943.)

‡Suzuki made use of this propaganda among the Ibans in the Simanggang district. (Personal communication.)

*Ahmad Zaidie bin Wan Adruce studied at Bogor during the war where he became a close friend of A. M. Azahari, leader of the abortive Brunei rebellion of 1961. After the war he joined the Indonesian republican navy, serving in Kalimantan. The colonial government later sent him to Scotland where he took an M.A. and on his return he became a senior education officer and vice-chairman of the Kuching Municipal Council. He also became president of the reorganized BPS in 1959 and initially opposed Sarawak's integration in Malaysia.

from the outset, the Japanese remained reasonably popular with the Malays and Ibans until early 1944. By that time the destruction of Japan's merchant shipping had cut off most outside supplies and consumer goods such as cloth were unobtainable. Japanese demands for local padi became more pressing and basic commodities such as salt and sugar were scarce. In spite of all the propaganda, the Japanese position was seen to be very weak. They were unable to challenge Allied air raids and when they began cutting routes of retreat from the coast into the interior it was plain that their days were numbered. While the requisitioning of padi and forced labour* had irritated the Ibans, the main source of antagonism was an attempt to take away their hunting guns. After a Chinese-led rebellion in the Jesselton area was brutally suppressed in October 1943,[†] the Japanese commander issued a proclamation ordering the confiscation of all firearms. Wherever this was done the Iban reaction was extremely hostile. S. Suzuki, a Japanese police officer who was friendly with Eliab Bay, managed to prevent confiscation in the Simanggang district, thus preserving good relations with the local Ibans, but he was under threat of repatriation and court-martial for defying orders when the surrender came.[‡]

Suzuki also became involved with Ibans of the Lubok Antu area who had been told by a detachment of the Australian Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD) that large rewards would be paid for the taking of Japanese heads. Excited by this and by the prospect of looting Japanese stores of rice and other goods, about 500 Iban warriors armed mostly with traditional weapons attacked the 14-man Japanese garrison at Engkelili one night in April 1945, suffering a number of dead and injured from retaliatory machine-gun fire.[‡] Suzuki was sent to investigate the incident and by skilful diplomacy restored good relations.⁺ But up-country Ibans throughout the Second and Third Divisions were now out after heads and loot and it was only a matter of weeks before there was a similar attack on Lubok Antu. In the Third Division, a series of attacks on Japanese military personnel and civilians moving between Sibuluan and Miri caused seventy casualties and in May a senior officer of the Miri garrison was killed at Suai where he had retreated to avoid the bombing raids. Never-

* According to Mr H. P. Buxton, a Eurasian who had the task of supervising construction of the Bintulu airfield, the system was that Ibans would work for two weeks at a time. They had to provide their own rice but were paid in kerosene and sugar.

† For the history of the 'Kwok Rebellion', see J. Maxwell-Hall, *Kinabalu Guerillas . . .*, Kuching, 1965. This would make a fascinating subject for study, as would the abortive rebellion against the Japanese in the Pontianak area in late 1943. A Japanese account of the Pontianak plot in *Borneo Shimbun*, 1 July 1944, was translated as Exhibit 1697-A, IMTFE Proceedings, AWM.

‡ This raid was led by Penghulu Ulin anak Penghulu Unji of Spak. Ulin's warriors, reinforced by Ibans from Ulu Layan, Skrang, Lemanak, Engkari, Batang Ai, Delok, Mepi, and Lubang Baya, later attacked Lubok Antu. (Benedict Sandin, unpublished MS.)

+ According to Suzuki's own account, he compared what had happened with a child cutting itself on a razor. The Japanese army, he told the Ibans, was the razor. Whose fault was it, then, that Ibans had been 'cut'? (MS memoir.)

theless, unlike Dutch West Borneo there had been no Iban attacks on the Japanese until after the first SRD landings.

There can be little doubt that the Japanese invasion of Sarawak damaged European prestige but the rapid deterioration of economic conditions during the last eighteen months of the war created a situation in which the Australian Army was enthusiastically received. The ability of the Australians to provide relief supplies in large quantities contrasted markedly with the Japanese failure to deliver the goods and there were some who believed that *Bikau* (BBCAU—British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit)* was the best government that Sarawak could have. Although the Japanese had not introduced any radical changes, the occupation at least fostered the idea that there *could* be changes: that Brooke government was not the only possible kind of government. Generally speaking, the Japanese presence and the responses of the different communities created a new pattern of political delineation which soon became obvious during the Australian and British military administrations.

More immediately, the activities of the SRD in their reoccupation of Sarawak from the interior led to a heightening of racial tension not seen in Sarawak since the Chinese rebellion of 1857. Assisted initially by the Kayans and Kenyahs, the SRD units after some difficulty won over the Ibans of the Rejang. According to W. L. P. Sochon who headed the first party reaching the Rejang, it was 'touch and go for a while' and the decisive factor was the loyalty of two leaders, Sundai and Penghulu Pusu.⁵⁰ In the last weeks before the Japanese surrender the SRD was substantially assisted both by irregular Iban forces and individual Chinese volunteers. However, the encouragement given Ibans to take Japanese heads got out of control and several Chinese in the Song and Kanowit area were killed and beheaded before SRD officers and Iban leaders such as Native Officer Bennett Jarrow and Penghulu Jugah could intervene.

Collaboration

One of the factors in Sarawak's post-war political situation was collaboration with the Japanese. Initially it was a problem for which the Australian military administration was not really prepared. The only instructions on the subject from Australian headquarters in Labuan were that all civilian collaborators were to be taken into custody but there was no directive on what should be done with them subsequently. While there were some preliminary police investigations, there were no formal court inquiries until late December 1945. Far more important at the time was the seeking out of suspected Japanese war criminals.

Unlike Malaya, there was no real interregnum from the Japanese surrender until the re-imposition of Allied control. In Kuching and the other coastal towns of Sarawak, Japanese authorities maintained tight control until the day before the official handover to the Australians took place on 12 September.[†] The arriving Australians found Kuching 'largely

*See below, pp. 175–6.

†Kuching was occupied by a task force of the Australian 9th Division (Kuching Force) then

unscathed' but a number of collaborators were brought in by the populace and others were placed in custody for their own safety.⁵¹ There were a number of gatherings in the streets which had to be dispersed and Chinese leaders were called in to calm their people and assure them that justice would be done to alleged collaborators.⁵² The vendetta continued during the following days and on 15 September the 9th Division news sheet reported that the main activity of the previous day had been the rounding up of collaborators by the rest of the population:

Every hour or so the comparative quiet of the town is broken by wild yellings and shouts in different tongues as packs of Chinese and natives smoke a collaborator out of his lair and chase him pell mell down one of the main streets. Only the fortunate can evade the sticks and fists by gaining the protection of Australians.⁵³

By the end of the week the Kuching police station and jail were crowded with people who had begged to be held for their own protection. According to one Australian officer, however, 'few of these were in fact collaborators and many were merely the victims of communal feeling'.⁵⁴ The seriousness of the recriminations in Kuching is difficult to estimate. There are suggestions that a few people quietly 'disappeared', presumably murdered, and that many Indians were severely beaten by groups of Chinese. This may have been due to the fact that the Indians as a community gave the most open public support to the Japanese through the Indian Independence League, although there were a number of Indian *kempeitai* informers. Certainly, most of those who were denounced as collaborators and sought protection from the Australians were Indians.

The Australian authorities were deluged with complaints against people who 'had merely tried to live under the Japanese occupation'.⁵⁵ Some of the most bitter but least well founded allegations were made against the *ken sanji*. Some of its members even made accusations against each other, including those of the same race. From the initial police investigations however, only one *ken sanji*, S. C. S. Chakraverty of the Indian Independence League, was thought to have a case to answer and was tried and deported. Opposition by the Indian government to any attempts to punish members of the League ensured that with the exception of the handful who were beaten up by the crowd during the first few days, Sarawak's Indian collaborators emerged unscathed. As Digby explained, 'it was felt that action against the Indians would produce more trouble than it was worth'.⁵⁶ Even if the military administration and the new colonial government had wanted to pursue the collaboration issue, there would have been immense difficulties in obtaining witnesses. By the beginning of April 1946, dossiers had been prepared by the police on a number of suspects but prosecution was made difficult by what one

based at Labuan. Commanded by Brigadier T. C. Eastick, it remained there until the handover to SEAC in early January 1946. Separate commands were set up at Sibuan, Miri, and Brunei which were also responsible to Labuan. After the handover, a number of Australian officers stayed on and eventually joined the colonial administration.

Australian officer described as the 'very definite reluctance' of people to come forward and give evidence.⁵⁷

Edward Brandah, perhaps the only pre-war police inspector who did not work for the Japanese, had been employed by Special Branch in the investigations. In his view, most of the datus and two-thirds of the Malay inspectors were on his black list of collaborators. '... And of course what surprise to them to have their past characters investigated', he wrote to Anthony Brooke in mid-October. He had told them, furthermore, of his determination 'that Sarawak be cleared of traitors, collaborators and liars before H.H. the Rajah and the Rajah Muda set their feet in Sarawak soil'.⁵⁸

For the most part, collaboration crossed racial lines but there was one incident reminiscent of the clashes which took place in Malaya during this period. During the war the Japanese had brought in some hundreds of Chinese from Shanghai and Canton to build wooden-hulled ships and to work on other projects. Ill treatment, together with memories of the Japanese invasion of China, had filled them with a fierce spirit of revenge which was shared by many local Chinese. And, with the speedy removal of the Japanese troops, Kuching's Malay community seemed the obvious target. The Malays had not fared at all badly under the Japanese. While their diet and dress suffered towards the end of the war, there was no serious interference with their everyday lives. Their community leaders were recognized by the Japanese and they retained their government jobs; they were seldom used as forced labour. Not surprisingly, the Chinese saw them as a privileged group and were anxious to 'teach them a lesson', a feeling which reached its climax in the 'Kuching riot' of 11 October.*

Racial tension was also heightened by a rumour that 2,000 Ibans had gathered in the Serian district and were advancing on Kuching.⁵⁹ A military patrol sent to investigate found that some Ibans had indeed crossed over from Dutch Borneo and with local Iban support had instituted a three-day reign of terror during which a Malay policeman who had been particularly zealous in assisting the Japanese was tied up and shot and parts of his corpse eaten.⁶⁰ However, the situation was quickly brought under control and the Ibans were sent back across the border like so many naughty schoolboys. On 22 September there were further reports of more Ibans massing in the Serian district but investigation showed that none had crossed the Dutch border into Sarawak again.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the military authorities failed to dispel Chinese fears of an Iban attack on Kuching. Stories of the Chinese rebellion of 1857 when Chinese heads were smoked by Ibans in the Kuching bazaar⁶² were still current within the Chinese community and news that Chinese heads had been taken a few months earlier at Song and Kanowit aroused fears that it could easily happen again.†

*See below, p. 159.

†Benedict Sandin states that 'it was for this reason that the Chinese started riots in many towns in Sarawak including Kuching . . .'. (Unpublished MS.)

The significance of collaboration in other parts of Sarawak is even more difficult to assess, although it is clear that there was antagonism towards collaborators among the Sibu and Simanggang Chinese. Feelings ran particularly high in Miri where the Australian authorities intervened to prevent a group of Chinese women lynching a well-known Chinese collaborator.⁶³ There was a great deal of antagonism towards Miri's Chinese businessmen from working-class Chinese who were already manifesting leftist attitudes. An estimated 3,000 Chinese and Javanese had died of starvation in the area during the final months of the occupation.⁶⁴

This discussion begs the whole question of 'collaboration' and the moral judgements associated with it. Co-operation with the Japanese took a number of forms. First, there were government servants (mostly Malays), who retained their positions under the Japanese administration. Some, particularly those in the police who had links with the *kempeitai*, took advantage of their position but for the most part they continued their former work. Secondly, there were the businessmen, Chinese and Muslim Indians, who continued to operate their shops and businesses. Of these a number went out of their way to befriend the Japanese in order to secure business with the trading corporations which monopolized the purchase of local produce. Thirdly, there were the various community leaders whose status was recognized by the Japanese and who were in turn required to make public demonstrations of support on important occasions such as the Emperor's birthday. Fourthly, there were the educated Ibans of the First and Second Divisions who co-operated with the Japanese in a unique system of indirect rule and seized the opportunity of throwing off Malay domination. Fifthly, a number of Indians supported the Indian Independence League and provided the Japanese with a good deal of public support. And finally, there were the various *kempeitai* informers of all races who found profitable employment and revenge in spying.

Collaboration was a source of tension between some of the pre-war Sarawak officers who had been in Batu Lintang and the military administration. Archer, the pre-war Chief Secretary who had been appointed civilian adviser to the military administration, demanded that a number of arch-collaborators be tried on capital charges and all others jailed or deported.⁶⁵ The Australian authorities, however, were not authorized to do anything more than detain such people as Chakraverty, Eliab Bay, and Juing Insol, and institute police inquiries into the more serious allegations. In February 1946 Archer told Macaskie that in files left behind by the Japanese there was 'clear evidence' that the Datu Patinggi had tried to persuade them to return the Turtle Islands to him, in spite of the full settlement that had been made in 1941. Even more annoying to Archer were the venerable datu's conventional expressions of support for the Japanese:

In his letter to the Jap G.O.C. he not only says that he will help the new regime in every way because 'they have the interests of the Asiatic people at heart' but ends up with 'I should like to assure you of my loyalty towards the new regime, and to

express my good wishes for the success of the new Government'. And that is one of the men who represented 'the whole community of Sarawak' the other day. It makes me almost sick.⁶⁶

He also told Eastick that 'all the Datus except one were as near collaborators as doesn't matter'.⁶⁷ The Rajah himself acknowledged after his return in April 1946 that the Datu Pahlawan had been 'not too good'. 'Patinggi and the other Datus didn't do too well under Jap occupancy', he told Bertram. 'They all ran away to start with and eventually returned and were festooned with Jap medals. But one can't be hard on our Malays—it wasn't really their war.'⁶⁸

If the restored Brooke government can be said to have possessed a policy on collaboration during its brief span of office from April until July 1946, it was a matter of 'turning a blind eye'. The first occasion when the question was raised was the tea party for the King's birthday, to which all Kuching's notables had been traditionally invited. When presented with the guest list, the Acting Chief Secretary, C. W. Dawson, noticed the names of a number of well-known collaborators and posed the question to himself: 'Either forget all about it or what? If we start discriminating it means an investigation into perhaps dozens of cases (including such people like Datu Patinggi etc., when we would immediately be accused of discrimination on 'cession' grounds).'⁶⁹ It seemed to him very wrong that Hajjah Sa'erah, 'a well known Jap collaborator', should be invited but she had already been accepted by the Rancee and it would be impossible to omit her name without causing 'a pretty good scandal'.

That there was no consistency in the official attitude to collaborators can best be seen in the experiences of Eliab Bay and Abang Haji Mustapha. On the reoccupation of Simanggang by SRD forces, Bay had been placed in jail in the belief that he had been associated with the ill-treatment of Europeans during the early days of the Japanese invasion. There was also a need to protect Bay from the Lubok Antu Ibans who were rumoured to be after his head. On 31 December 1945 he was brought before one of the two British military administration magistrates and because of the lack of evidence against him his case was dismissed. However, someone (probably a pre-war Sarawak officer) made sure that Bay was not rehabilitated. A fortnight after his case was heard, he received a letter from the Chairman of the Promotions Board informing him that he was dismissed from government service and was not entitled to receive the government's contribution to his superannuation. Appealing against his dismissal, Bay claimed that he had been forced to join the Japanese administration, but that during this time as Resident 'the citizens were well treated and nothing eventful happened'.⁷⁰ His main responsibility, he added, had been to supervise the padi-planting group at Bijat in the Second Division where farmers had had the best harvest since the opening of the irrigated area. He then suggested that the reasons for his dismissal were ill-founded and partisan, originating principally from the Ibans of Lubok Antu and the Ulu Ai:

If Government thinks that my dismissal came through the various reports submitted by the Iban, I strongly beg the Government to reinvestigate the matter fully

through a reliable officer. . . . I doubt that the report received by Government causing my dismissal had not, in any case, [been] done by the Iban themselves, but they were backed-up by the other races [Malays] through . . . jealousy in order to overthrow all the Iban officers from [government positions] . . . hence it will be an easy matter for the other party [Malays] to handle illiterate Ibans as that of one hundred years ago.⁷¹

But Bay's appeal went unheeded. All his subsequent applications for government positions were rejected and when he formed a fishing company he could not obtain a licence to sell his catch.⁷² Bay's real offence was that by becoming virtual Resident of the Second Division he had usurped one of the most senior positions of European authority in Sarawak. Nor had he gone through the motions of apologizing for his involvement with the Japanese.

Abang Haji Mustapha had co-operated with the Japanese administration in a different way. The youngest of the datu, he was one of the promoters of the *jikeidan* and the *kyodohei* and assisted in the collection of money and goods for the Japanese war effort fund. He also spoke at Japanese-organized *kampung* loyalty meetings, and was vehemently denouncing the British and Americans only months before the Japanese surrender,⁷³ telling those who hoped for an Allied landing that they were like chickens waiting for padi to be thrown to them.⁷⁴ He was also the leader of a group which was to have been sent on a tour of Japan. Consequently he ought to have been one of the prime targets of investigation by the military administration but there appears to have been an informal direction from the Rajah that he be left alone. Indeed, following a secret agreement probably made with MacBryan in early January, he was later promoted to the position of Datu Bandar and given an O.B.E. This indicated in very clear terms to the Malays that he had been chosen to succeed the Datu Patinggi as their leader. Abang Haji Mustapha's position within the Malay community and his police connections meant that his support was as important to the new colonial government as it had been to the Japanese. In fact it was more important because he had made his support for cession clear at a very early stage. And he was prepared to be an activist in a situation where the majority of his own community was clearly on the other side of the fence. The failure to prosecute Abang Haji Mustapha meant that the only real policy was to prosecute those who had been clearly involved in acts of violence during the occupation. Writing about the situation some years later, Digby described the problem which the datu posed for the civil administration:

The restored government could not afford to dismiss him and his like, since there were no friendlier people with equal authority to put in their places. It could not, on the other hand, afford to prosecute the lesser fry and leave the big fish untouched. Too many rude comparisons would have been drawn for anybody's comfort. The only course was to let them all go on swimming safely together.⁷⁵

It has been suggested that the collaboration question was used in Sarawak to obtain agreement to cession just as it was by Sir Harold MacMichael with the Malay rulers to make possible the Malayan

Union.⁷⁶ Although there is no hard evidence that it was deliberately exploited, the question certainly assumed importance in the minds of many people during the nine months leading up to the Council Negri vote in May 1946. Abang Haji Mustapha, for example, was probably anxious about the prospect of any thorough-going investigation of collaboration and during his visit to Kuching in January 1946 MacBryan may have suggested to him and the other datus that support for cession would be one way of gaining immunity from any prosecution.

It is also possible that other Council Negri members were self-conscious about their activities during the occupation and saw support for cession as an insurance policy. Khoo Peng Loong, for example, did a lot of business with the Japanese in Sibü and had amassed such a quantity of pepper by the end of the war that it came near to being confiscated by the Custodian of Enemy Property. Abang Abdulrahim, brother of Abang Haji Mustapha and Native Officer at Sibü during the war, was also regarded as a collaborator and might well have felt apprehensive about official investigations. Bennett Jarrow, an Iban Native Officer who later supported cession in the Council Negri, was supposed to be in the same position.

It was only within the Chinese community of Sarawak that collaboration was a real issue with significant consequences. As we have seen, Chinese community leaders in Kuching and Sibü were active before the war in collecting funds to support the Kuomintang government against the invading Japanese. When the Japanese arrived in Sarawak they immediately rounded up all the committee members they could find and placed them in detention. Many were brutally treated, particularly Chien Chang Poa, the Kuching committee chairman.⁷⁷ Khan Ah Chong also earned special punishment by refusing to apologize for his pre-war activities.⁷⁸ There was even a faction within the Japanese administration wanting the execution of all the China Distress Relief Fund committee members which was only placated by the substitution of five Chinese who were caught stealing petrol at Kuching's airfield.⁷⁹

Many middle-class Kuching and Sibü Chinese who wanted nothing to do with the Japanese stayed at home and lived off their savings and the sale of property.⁸⁰ Poorer Chinese moved to villages and coastal areas of the First Division such as the Nonok peninsula where they lived on fish and home-grown produce. Others made a living by manufacturing salt from the roots of the *nipah* palm. Those traders who remained were obliged to co-operate to some extent with the Japanese administration and with the trading corporations who came in to conduct monopolies over padi, pepper, timber, and rubber. However, as Japan's position weakened, the scarcity of all kinds of goods provided unprecedented opportunities for profit and much of this was used to purchase land and other property. Accordingly, at the end of the war there were in Kuching and Sibü a number of Chinese businessmen who had not only managed to survive the occupation without discomfort but had in fact substantially improved their material position through judicious purchases of property and produce, such as pepper, on a buyers' market. It was upon these men,

who were seen to have waxed fat on the misfortunes of others, that resentment focused. Among them were dialect group leaders who could now no longer command the same respect that they had received before the war. The result was a leadership vacuum and a split within the Chinese community whose traces can still be seen.

T'ien Ju-K'ang, who conducted research on the Sarawak Chinese during 1947 and 1948, was in a good position to assess the political significance of collaboration and while his observations were no doubt coloured by the political polarization brought about by contemporary events in China, there can be little doubt about the accuracy of the general pattern which he described:

Under the present political system the Chinese community undoubtedly needs leaders who can bridge the gap between their community and the Colonial Government, but such leaders must be people who can command respect. Before the occupation the Chinese public regarded their leaders as leaders, despite their faults. Now the long-years established authority of the leadership has collapsed. Although it would be quite unjust to say that all the present holders of power were collaborators, yet a few of them undoubtedly were, and as long as any of these people still appear on the platforms of public meetings all their colleagues will be tarred with the same brush. At the present time, therefore, the gap between the so-called Chinese 'leaders' and the Chinese public . . . is made even wider by emotional antagonism. Each side acts in its own way without considering the existence of the other. The 'leaders' have only their cliques to support them, the community is without leadership.⁸¹

Before the war, the institution acting as a general intermediary between the Chinese community of Kuching and the government was the Chinese Chamber of Commerce whose members were traditionally the leaders of the various dialect associations and saw themselves as representing different sectional interests. But the problem of collaboration made it impossible for the Chamber to re-organize itself until 1948, by which time there had been a struggle for power involving several factions. The most vocal of these were the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien (Overseas Chinese Youth Associations) which were established in Kuching and other centres in early 1946. * Consisting largely of young Chinese middle-school graduates who represented the left-wing of Chinese nationalism, the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien wanted a more democratic system of Chinese representation than had existed under the Raj and supported the integration of the Chinese community 'unhampered by speech group particularism'.⁸² They were also concerned with such questions as citizenship and the status of Chinese schools which immediately affected their interests. The Hua Kheow Tshin Nien accordingly believed that there was more hope of achieving these aims under a colonial government unhampered by past traditions and were therefore disposed to support cession.

The other major Chinese political grouping in Kuching was the Chung Hua Association.⁸³ Like the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien, it was influenced by

* Associations were registered for Kuching (25 May), Binatang (20 March), Bau (3 May), Penrissen Road 10th Mile (11 June). (SGG, 16 May 1946, 1 June 1946, 17 June 1946.)

a generally felt need for a pan-Chinese body 'capable of transcending the traditional divisions within the community'.⁸⁴ However, its political orientation was right-wing and there appear to have been early links with the Kuomintang. The Chung Hua Association assumed responsibility for the celebration of China's National Day and acted as an intermediary with government for Chinese groups or individuals claiming grievances. Both groups had rejected the pre-war *kapitan* system and were anxious to see it replaced with something which would not strengthen dialect group differences. Unlike the pre-war Chambers of Commerce, their membership was not dominated by wealthy businessmen and they had been politicized to some extent by China's emergence as a world power.

Chinese Nationalism

The defeat of Japan and the massive publicity given Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government by his American and British allies had a dramatic effect on the overseas Chinese, and the Sarawak Chinese were no exception. When Australian troops entered Kuching in September 1945 they found the streets lined with Chinese rather than British or Sarawak flags. In isolated places such as Saratok where the Nationalist flag was raised immediately after the lowering of the Japanese flag 'in expectation of a Chinese landing and take-over', the local Ibans insisted that it be taken down and replaced by the Sarawak flag.⁸⁵ There were similar native reactions to unrestrained Chinese enthusiasm in Simanggang and Betong.

After more than three years of silence about the progress of the war, the sudden capitulation of Japan and the blaze of publicity lauding Chiang Kai-shek for helping to bring this about fired the patriotism of the Sarawak Chinese. From Singapore and Hong Kong came lurid posters depicting Chiang leading his forces to victory over the cowering Japanese. Chinese radio broadcasts from a mysterious source in Singapore also proclaimed that Britain was a spent force. Not surprisingly, there were many Chinese in Sarawak who believed that China had defeated Japan and that the atomic bomb amounted to no more than a *coup de grâce*. All this encouraged the idea, which may already have been in the minds of some, that China would move to incorporate the *Nan Yang* (South Seas), including the whole of Borneo, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies, as her territory.⁸⁶ The occupation of northern Vietnam by Nationalist armies in August 1945 prompted rumours in Malaya and Sumatra that Chinese armies would land there⁸⁷ and in Sarawak members of the military administration were frequently asked 'when the Chinese forces would arrive'.⁸⁸ Nationalist China's power and potential had been so grossly over-stated by Allied propaganda that the response of patriotic Chinese can well be understood and to such people the question of cession must at first have seemed absurd. The Australian military authorities in Kuching and Sibu found that while the Chinese were friendly and co-operative, they were also very anxious to have their say in matters of policy. As one of the 'Big Four', they also saw themselves as participating

in the Allied victory. Consequently, 10 October was celebrated in Kuching as 'Joint Allied Victory & Chinese National Day'. The ceremonial dais was draped with Nationalist as well as British and Australian flags and a number of Chinese leaders, including Ong Tiang Swee, made speeches to the assembled crowd. In addition to a long and spectacular parade, the organizing committee arranged sporting fixtures, a dinner at Ong Tiang Swee's house, a concert, and other events. (There had been similar celebrations at Miri on 21 September where official proceedings opened with the singing of the Nationalist anthem.)⁸⁹

Early the next morning there was fighting between Chinese and Malays in Kuching's main bazaar area and by 9.30 more than 1,000 Chinese had assembled on the road outside the Brooke Dockyard in readiness for an attack on the mosque and the Malay *kampung* behind it. They made it very clear that they regarded the Malays as traitors to the Sarawak government and that they were determined to give them a beating.⁹⁰ However, some Australian officers noticed the crowd and after a passing truckload of troops had disarmed the would-be rioters a 24-hour curfew was imposed on the town.⁹¹ While it seems likely that there were no more than ten fatalities, it is commonly believed in Kuching that as many as 100 Chinese were killed and that the whole affair was hushed up by the military administration for fear of further trouble.⁹² There is even a story that the crisis was only settled when Ong Tiang Swee came to an agreement with the Datu Pahlawan that the Chinese should stay out of politics, and that this explains why Chinese leaders kept out of the cession controversy some months later.*

For pre-war Brooke officers, the altered demeanour of the Chinese community was staggering. C. D. Adams, a veteran officer who had been brought back from retirement by the Colonial Office to assist the military administration in Sibu, could not get used to the change which had taken place. 'The Chinese', he told Macaskie in November, 'got on their hind legs and tried to dictate the policy as regards collaborators and refused to be ruled by Malay magistrates in future.'⁹³ Later that month he complained that the Chinese were hoarding rice, of which they had a good deal due to the Japanese success in encouraging padi-cultivation, and were trying to keep the reintroduced Straits and Sarawak currency at the same level as Japanese occupation currency. 'They have the idea that China is one of the Four Powers', he complained '[and that] they have the power to dictate.'⁹⁴

Some months later when two British M.P.s visited Sibu to consult local opinion on cession,[†] they were met with requests for compensation not only for the damage caused by bombing but for the \$750,000 collected by the Japanese and the \$6 head tax levied later.⁹⁵ A direct hit on the Sibu bazaar by Allied bombers had caused the deaths of 150 people. But it was compensation for Japanese taxes and damage to property which pre-occupied Teo Lo Cheng, the *kapitan china* and director of one of the local

*This is unlikely, but it is significant that it was believed.

†See below, p. 225.

banks. There were also continued appeals to the government to buy back at par Japanese dollars (which had been declared worthless).

The other pre-war organizations were not so quick to re-establish themselves although the Persatuan Melayu was evidently spurred on by the initiative taken by the Chinese. Its committee members made themselves known to the Australian commander, Brigadier T. C. Eastick, and on 11 November they organized a Malay Regatta and Malay cultural show as if in answer to the Chinese demonstration of 10 October.⁹⁶ Significantly enough, the Persatuan now referred to itself as the Persatuan Melayu Kebangsaan Sarawak, or Malay National Union of Sarawak (MNU). The Perimpun Dayak was under investigation by the military administration as a collaborationist organization and its members were probably happy to remain out of sight. It was not until the news of cession was received in early February that the Persatuan and the Perimpun received the final stimulus which transformed them from co-operative and uplift societies into political parties. However, the anxiety aroused among the Malays and the educated Ibans by the new assertiveness of the Chinese had already provided a common cause.

1. J. M. Seymour, 'Education in Sarawak under Brooke Rule 1841-1941', *SG*, 30 June 1970; 31 July 1970; 31 August 1970.

2. See Brian Taylor and Pamela Heyward, *The Kuching Anglican Schools 1848-1973*, Kuching, 1973.

3. Reports of the Bishop of Labuan for 1930-8, SPG Archives, London.

4. Interview with Tan Sri Haji Su'at Tahir, May 1975.

5. This summary is based on the invaluable account given by Lockard, *The Southeast Asian Town . . .*, pp. 326-32.

6. *Sarawak Administration Report, 1938*.

7. *SG*, 15 November 1941. For post-war developments, see Ian Morrison, 'Local Self-Government in Sarawak', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XXII, No. 2 (June 1949), pp. 178-85; John Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak*, Kuching, 1968.

8. For an account of the Sahabat Pena, see W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur, 1967, pp. 212-21.

9. *ibid.*, pp. 191-7.

10. No. 1 (February 1930); No. 4 (1 March 1930); No. 9 (1 June 1930); No. 10 (16 June 1930).

11. Elaine McKay, 'The Kuching Communities and Their Response to Cession, 1946', M.A. preliminary thesis, Monash University, 1976, p. 36.

12. *SG*, 1 May, 1939; 1 June 1939; 1 July 1939.

13. Interview with Temenggong Datuk Muif, July 1974.

14. Interview with Tan Sri Haji Su'at Tahir, May 1975.

15. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 246; Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 19 May 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 22.

16. *SG*, 1 July 1941.

17. *SG*, 2 May 1938.

18. *SG*, 2 December 1940.

19. *SG*, 1 December 1939.

20. Eliab Bay to District Officer, Betong, 23 March 1949, Bay Papers.
21. SG, 1 March 1941.
22. Bay to Cutfield, 9 March 1938, Bay Papers.
23. Cutfield to Parnell, 20 May 1940, *ibid.*
24. Bay to Parnell, 18 March 1938, *ibid.*
25. *ibid.*
26. Parnell to Cutfield, 15 January 1937, *ibid.*
27. Bayang to Parnell, 18 March 1938, *ibid.*
28. *Sarawak Administrative Report, 1932.*
29. Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 74.
30. Lockard, *The Southeast Asian Town . . .*, p. 395.
31. *ibid.*, p. 273.
32. *ibid.*, p. 266.
33. See Tom Harrisson, *World Within: A Borneo Story*, London, 1959.
34. Personal communication from Mr A. J. N. Richards, 17 June 1976.
35. Extract of Tokyo broadcast, 1 October 1943, Sarawak Government Agency, Sydney, Circular No. 5/43, 12 October 1943.
36. Lim Kim Poh to F. H. Pollard, 17 May 1946, Brooke Papers.
37. Programme of inaugural meeting of Perimpun Dayak, Jitam Papers.
38. Interview with Lily Eberwein, April 1974.
39. Personal information.
40. S. Suzuki, MS memoir, 1976.
41. Personal communication from Sumping Bayang, 29 May 1976.
42. 'Status of the Military Administration in North Borneo', Nishijima Collection, Waseda University.
43. *ibid.*, p. 79.
44. K. Itoh to Datu Abang Zin Gapor, 9 January 1942, Bay Papers.
45. Bay to Japanese Military Administration Board, Kuching, 21 March 1942, *ibid.*
46. See, e.g., his report of 10 February 1943, *ibid.*
47. Brandah to Anthony Brooke, 26 October 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
48. Ho Cheah Min, 'Jih-chih shih-chi ti hui-i' (Memoirs of the Japanese Occupation), MS prepared for Sarawak History Week, 1975.
49. S. Suzuki, MS memoir.
50. Personal communications from Mr W. L. P. Sochon, 9 September 1974; 12 October 1974.
51. *The Platypus*, 13 September 1945.
52. Police weekly report for week ending 18 September 1945 by Capt. J. Marlow, Kuching Force Diary, AWM A2668.
53. *The Platypus*, 15 September 1945.
54. R. H. Morris, MS memoir.
55. *ibid.*
56. Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 172.
57. Interview with Mr R. H. Morris, May 1976.
58. Edward Brandah to Anthony Brooke, 16 October 1945, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
59. Kuching Force Diary, 1/5/62.
60. *ibid.*; Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 175.
61. Kuching Force Diary.
62. L. Helms, *Pioneering in the Far East . . .*, p. 190.
63. J. R. Black, 'Rough Notes on Service in British Borneo with BBKAU'.

64. AWM A2663, 619/7/68.
65. Interview with Mr R. H. Morris, May 1976.
66. Archer to Macaskie, 11 February 1946, Macaskie Papers, File 5.
67. Archer to Eastick, 11 March 1948. Letter in the possession of Sir Thomas Eastick.
68. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, —May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 19.
69. Dawson Diary, 5 June 1946.
70. Undated letter, Bay Papers.
71. *ibid.*
72. Brangking Fishing Industry to Deputy Chief Secretary, 20 September 1947, *ibid.*
73. Joseph Law to Bertram Brooke, 31 May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3; Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 173.
74. 'Statement by Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor', 29 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
75. Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 173.
76. McKay, 'The Kuching Communities . . .', pp. 94–7. See also, Allen, *The Malayan Union*, pp. 168–72.
77. Ho Cheah Min, 'Memoirs . . .':
78. Interview with Mr Dennis Law, July 1974.
79. *ibid.* For a description of what happened to the Sibü committee members, see Liu's *History*. . . .
80. Cf. Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, 1967, p. 265.
81. T'ien Ju-K'ang, *The Chinese of Sarawak: A Study of Social Structure*, London, 1950, p. 77.
82. Lockard, *The Southeast Asian Town*, p. 546.
83. *SGG*, 1 June 1946.
84. Lockard, *The Southeast Asian Town*, p. 504.
85. Personal communication from Mr Robert Nicholl, 20 October 1975.
86. Morris, MS memoir.
87. Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, pp. 263–4.
88. Interview with Mr R. H. Morris, May 1976.
89. Lt. G. H. Fearnside, ed., *Bayonets Abroad: A History of the 2/13th Battalion A. I. F. in the Second World War*. . . , Sydney [1953].
90. Edward Brandah to Anthony Brooke, 16 October 1945, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
91. Interview with Mr R. H. Morris, May 1976.
92. Interview with Senawi bin Suleiman, July 1974.
93. Adams to Macaskie, 15 November 1945, Macaskie Papers.
94. Adams to Macaskie, 27 November 1945, *ibid.*
95. Barrett Diary, 10 May 1946.
96. Programme in the possession of Sir Thomas Eastick.

VII

The Closing of Sarawak's Options, 1942-1945

THE Japanese invasion of Sarawak in December 1941 was an externally imposed solution to the apparently insoluble problems of Brooke rule. At the same time, it stimulated competition among a number of contenders interested in determining the nature of post-war Sarawak. The Rajah's scheme, after an unsuccessful attempt to return to the state in late 1941, was to establish a government-in-exile in Australia which would authorize him to take over the remaining reserve funds and wind up the administration, leaving Sarawak to the victors. This was in keeping with his earlier interest in giving up his responsibilities and making financial provision for his immediate family.

Anthony Brooke anticipated that the British government would insist upon a greater say in Sarawak's internal affairs after the war and was prepared to compromise to some extent. He now accepted the need for some form of constitutional limitation which would preserve the character of the Raj and satisfy the demands of the Colonial Office. When the Rajah appointed him head of the Provisional Government in early 1945 to take over negotiations instituted by the Colonial Office, he had hopes of returning to Sarawak as Rajah. But the Colonial Office insisted upon the application of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1890 which would have had the effect of transferring sovereignty to the Crown and reducing the Brookes to the status of the Malay rulers under the MacMichael treaties.

By January 1944 the Colonial Office had decided that North Borneo should be annexed and a new treaty negotiated with the Rajah of Sarawak empowering the British government to legislate for the state and establishing an Adviser system similar to that in the Unfederated Malay States. The War Cabinet was persuaded to adopt this policy, which was inherited by the Labour government in July 1945. The plan had initially assumed that the Brookes would remain as figure-heads, like the Malay

rulers, but the Labour government was disinclined to countenance the survival of the White Rajahs in the post-war Empire.

One of the Colonial Office's assumptions was that the post-war military administration of Borneo would be British and that this would strengthen their bargaining position with the Rajah. When it became clear that Borneo was to be reoccupied by Australian troops and that the Australians were determined to dominate the military administration, there was some anxiety about Australian intentions. This, together with the unexpectedly early Japanese surrender, made it vital to break the deadlock which had developed in negotiations with the Provisional Government.

While cession was probably more than the Colonial Office had first envisaged in 1944, it was the logical outcome of their concern that Sarawak should be brought up to the level of British colonial administration elsewhere and that Britain's South-East Asian dependencies should be under tighter control. At the same time, it was the ultimate expression of Vyner Brooke's lack of faith in his nephew.

The Rajah in Australia

When news came of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Rajah and MacBryan were approaching Brisbane. The Rajah immediately sought the assistance of the Australian government to return to Sarawak and on 16 December cabled Le Gros Clark:

I deeply regret not being with you in Sarawak to share this time of anxiety and trial through which you are now passing. I send you this message of good wishes and encouragement coupled with an expression of my full confidence that notwithstanding these days the tide will soon turn. I am hastening to return to Kuching to join you with the utmost speed possible and you may expect me to arrive in the near future.¹

The District Officer of Upper Sarawak* was also to be informed that the Rajah would be returning via Dutch Borneo and that appropriate arrangements were to be made.

Reaching Surabaya by air with MacBryan on 25 December, the Rajah found that Kuching was already out of wireless contact and decided to go on to Bandung where Major-General H. ter Poorten, Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch East Indies, had his headquarters. When he told them that Kuching had fallen three days earlier, they agreed that MacBryan should travel to the Dutch Borneo-Sarawak frontier with Colonel Gortman, a Dutch guerrilla warfare expert with experience in Aceh, to assist any European refugees. Gortman, 'a spitfire of a man', was determined to organize an anti-Japanese resistance.²

The Rajah gave MacBryan a commission appointing him as his personal representative, together with verbal instructions to encourage those Sarawak officers who had escaped to accept Gortman's command.

*Upper Sarawak consisted of the Bau-Lundu district, south-west of Kuching.

As the Rajah later told Sir Ronald Cross, Britain's High Commissioner in Canberra:

... it was evident to me and to the General that the attitude of my Dayak subjects who comprise the backbone of the fighting population was one of vital importance to the future because the time would come when we should take the offensive and their presence in the interior of Borneo as the most skilled jungle men in the world might well be invaluable as a strong pro-British asset.³

But when MacBryan arrived in Pontianak on 31 December he found that the escaped officers were highly sceptical of obtaining Iban assistance. Those who had reached Dutch Borneo through Iban areas felt that the Ibans had made a realistic assessment of the military position and were not prepared to throw away their lives against superior arms. MacBryan was also the target for a good deal of hostility when it was revealed that the Treasurer, B. A. Trechman, had forestalled his attempt to draw on Sarawak state funds which had been brought from Kuching and deposited in the bank at Pontianak.⁴

Undeterred by all this, MacBryan joined Gortman at Sanggau Lidau, an airfield on the Dutch border with the First Division, and it was there that he met up with the remnants of the 2/15th Punjabis, commanded by Colonel C. M. Lane and a handful of Sarawak officers. However, Lane had already been warned by a Sarawak officer in Pontianak not to allow MacBryan through his lines under any circumstances.⁵ Lane promptly arranged an intelligence report on MacBryan* and told the Dutch that he was a suspected spy trying to re-enter Sarawak for the purpose of co-operating with the Japanese. Singapore was informed and MacBryan was subsequently arrested on the request of Sir Shenton Thomas and sent back to Batavia under military guard. Although the Rajah was still in the capital, MacBryan was not permitted to communicate with him and after some days of fruitless questioning it was decided to send him on to Singapore for examination by the British authorities.

Lodged incommunicado in Changi prison, MacBryan had a piece of extraordinarily good fortune. Sir Roland Braddell, the prominent Singapore lawyer who had previously represented the Rajah, happened to be visiting Changi to interview a client and immediately took up MacBryan's case with Sir Shenton Thomas. Braddell appealed to the Governor to produce the evidence against MacBryan or release him and some days later MacBryan was on a ship carrying civilian evacuees to Perth. Although he had been earlier placed on the immigration authorities' list of undesirables,⁶ MacBryan obtained the Rajah's assistance to gain entry and then travelled to Sydney where the latter was temporarily based.⁷

* Attached to the official report forwarded to military intelligence (not available) was an anonymous document, 'Report on Mr G. T. McBryan', the work of B. J. C. Spurway, the Rajah's former Private Secretary who had been replaced by MacBryan in early 1941. Spurway later made a formal retraction when MacBryan threatened legal action. (MacBryan to Creech-Jones, 9 August 1949, with enclosures, Mark Morrison Papers (B).)

† MacBryan continued to be viewed with suspicion by Naval Intelligence in Melbourne (who had presumably received a copy of Lane's report) and was subsequently unsuccessful in obtaining a security clearance to engage in intelligence work.

The main accusation levelled against MacBryan had been that he advised Japanese residents on the purchase of land adjacent to military posts and had extensive contacts with Japanese suspects. This prompted the suggestion in Lane's report that he was a quisling on his way back to head a puppet Japanese government in Sarawak. However, Le Gros Clark and J. L. Noakes had gone into the matter of MacBryan's Japanese contacts in late 1941 and could find no evidence then to support the suspicions held about him.⁷ In the atmosphere of the time it would not be surprising if the antagonism towards him within the Sarawak Service took on a somewhat hysterical character. Nevertheless, the possibility that MacBryan was indeed hatching such a plan cannot be ruled out. The idea of linking all the South-East Asian Muslim states in a pan-Islamic confederation had always interested him and he may have seen the Japanese as providing the opportunity.

Another suggestion is that after Pearl Harbor, MacBryan persuaded the Rajah to return to Sarawak and intervene with the Japanese on behalf of the Sarawak people.⁸ There is no conclusive evidence of this although it is supported by the Rajah's earlier flirtation with the idea of neutrality and his later attempt to contact the Japanese authorities in Sarawak via the Argentinian Consul in Sydney.⁹ At any rate, MacBryan was certainly not the man to organize an indigenous resistance movement. He was no military type and his real strength lay in political intrigue, principally among the Malays who were the least likely people to take part in such a movement. MacBryan would also have been aware that the Ibans were disinclined to take up arms against the Japanese.

The Sarawak government had already established an office in Sydney under Pitt Hardacre in October 1941 in case Sarawak was cut off from other sources of supply and it seemed the obvious place for the government to re-group in exile, particularly since more than £300,000 of its funds had been deposited there. The presence in Australia of Pitt Hardacre as Government Agent and four other senior Sarawak officers (B. A. Trechman, T. Corson, C. E. Gascoigne and F. H. Pollard) also meant that the quorum of three members required by the 1941 Constitution for a meeting of the Supreme Council was available and it only remained to obtain permission from the Australian authorities and the Colonial Office. The establishment of the Council was of vital importance to the Rajah as under the 1941 Constitution he needed its permission to draw on State funds. In late January 1942 Corson wrote to the Minister for External Affairs, Dr H. V. Evatt, asking if there was any objection to the Rajah-in-Council sitting in Australia and continuing the functions of the Sarawak government. He claimed that this would not involve any change to existing relations between the Sarawak and British governments and that the normal channel of communication through the British Agent in Singapore would continue.¹⁰ The Australian authorities had no objection, provided that the British government was agreeable, but in the meantime the Colonial Office had learnt of the proposal, together with the appointment of Pitt Hardacre as Sarawak's representative in the Netherlands East Indies 'for purpose of liaison with headquarters of

Allied Command'.¹¹ Sir Ronald Cross was instructed to ask the Rajah for details of these proposals and to inform him that under the terms of the 1888 Treaty, the British government should be consulted on any plan to establish constitutional government outside Sarawak territory.¹²

Gent and his colleagues believed that there were grave dangers in allowing the Rajah to operate freely from Australia. The primary consideration, of course, was Sarawak's reserves in the United Kingdom (amounting to about \$11,000,000) which they feared the Rajah might try to transfer to Australia. They were also apprehensive of the influence of MacBryan, now with the Rajah in Sydney, particularly in the light of the intelligence reports. Bertram Brooke opposed the scheme from the outset and urged the Rajah to return to England. Even more fearful of MacBryan's influence, he suspected that the latter would persuade the Rajah to wash his hands of Sarawak once and for all. Bertram and the Colonial Office possessed a common interest in getting the Rajah back to England.

Cross wrote to the Rajah seeking full details of his plans but it was almost two months before he could obtain a reply. In the meantime the Rajah, now living in Melbourne, was becoming weary of trying to set up an administration in Australia. In a letter to Bertram* he told of his frustration:

All news of Sarawak shut up like a clam (and wireless news bottled) days before Japs made an appearance. Our people didn't make much of a show but it is difficult to get facts till we hear more . . . I don't know what you think about the Council in Sydney. For all the good they do an agency would act just as well. Personally I think the Council or some such body should carry on in London not in Sydney. Sarawak is 'non est' at present and I very much doubt if we ever get it back but if conditions return some time to anything like normal all the negotiations, carving up, parleying will be done in London and not in Sydney. Also a strong Head Office might get a move on in *London* to try and get in touch with the unfortunate people in Sarawak either through Geneva or some neutral country. I am doing nothing here except mark time and boost the Council. If you think I would be better employed in England I should be happy to move and tell the Council, as present constituted, to go to hell—a wire from you would be welcomed—if we get back to Sarawak, and if the people wish me back (wishful thinking!), I should only do so on my own terms and with complete powers. All red tape, Councils, bureaucracy, etc. etc. to be completely eliminated. I am sure you will agree in this.¹³

Towards the end of April the Rajah told Cross that the decision to establish the Council in Australia was 'ill-conceived' and had been made under conditions of great anxiety. He had consequently decided to disband it and to appoint a Sarawak Commission in London as from 1 May 1942 under Bertram's presidency.¹⁴ The Commission, which was to function at the Sarawak Government Office at Millbank until the re-establishment of Brooke government in Sarawak, had as its principal responsibility the custody of Sarawak's reserve funds and the Currency Fund. The Rajah himself was to remain in Australia until the situation in

*The following extract was copied by the official censor and sent to the Colonial Office.

the Pacific improved and would look after Sarawak's interests in the area. One hundred thousand pounds was to be transferred to London but the remaining £200,000 of Sarawak funds in Australia was to be retained under Pitt Hardacre's supervision.¹⁵

Not surprisingly, the Secretary of State approved this new scheme but Anthony Brooke urged Gent not to take too optimistic a view of the Rajah's apparent amenability:

I hope that this gift horse hasn't got faulty teeth. My impression is that either MacBryan's power is broken at last, in which case things are looking up and my father's letters to his brother have made a deep impression. Or—and I think this just as likely—MacBryan's influence can still make itself felt, and he has prevailed upon the Rajah to make this gesture to put those concerned in a good humour and to prepare the ground for a final appeal to my father for a sum of money which would enable the Rajah (and MacBryan) to retire gracefully from the Sarawak scene for ever.¹⁶

In early April the Rajah wrote to Pitt Hardacre suggesting that since Bertram would probably accept any proposals 'provided Mac. had no fingers in the pie', MacBryan should cease to be Private Secretary but be kept on the payroll. Bertram was to be told that the Rajah was 'fed up' with MacBryan and that the demise of the Supreme Council meant that there was no further need for him.¹⁷ In fact, MacBryan was anxious to work for Captain Roy Kendall's section of the Allied Intelligence Bureau in Brisbane and had conceived a scheme to recruit Indonesians and Malays stranded in the Middle East as agents in the archipelago. However, in spite of the Rajah's direct approach to General MacArthur, he was unable to obtain a security clearance from the War Office.

The Rajah's impatience with the Supreme Council can be more clearly understood if it is recognized that during the first few months of his stay in Australia he was endeavouring, no doubt with MacBryan's encouragement, to get his hands on Sarawak's reserve funds and to transfer his remaining rights to the British government. Shortly after arriving in Sydney in 1942, Thackwell Lewis was shown a document which had been sent to the Council by the Rajah:*

It was quite short and speaking from the memory the gist of it was . . . that the Rajah had decided to abandon the State which could be taken by either the British or the Dutch after the war. He proposed in effect to wind up the existing machinery of State and after making arrangements for the payment of pensions to assume control of the Sarawak Funds in England. When the Council declined to consider this suggestion the Rajah wired for this paper to be returned to him in original. This was done but not until a copy had been taken. . . . This made it clear to me that the Rajah (1) had no further interest in Sarawak; (2) was still anxious to get even more money out of the State.¹⁸

When the members agreed with Lewis that the proposal 'could not even

*When his request was rejected, the Rajah asked for the document to be returned to him in Melbourne. The Council took the precaution of making a copy first and this document was probably among the papers sent back to London (when the Sydney office was closed in 1943) and destroyed with other Sarawak Government Office records after the cession.

be considered', the Rajah promptly dissolved the Council. He continued to seek a means of giving up his responsibilities* and in a number of letters to Bertram expressed his belief that the post-war status of Sarawak should be decided as soon as possible. In June 1942 he gave the clear impression that he was looking for a way out. 'Taking it by and large', he told his brother, 'I would rather remain "put" in England if I can do this unostentatiously and honourably. Anyhow . . . do what you can for me'.¹⁹ Bertram felt sure that if he had cabled asking for authority to open negotiations with the Colonial Office on the future of Sarawak, the Rajah would have agreed immediately.

Although the Supreme Council in Sydney and the Colonial Office and Sarawak Commission in London had thwarted the Rajah's plans to gain control of Sarawak's assets, there were still considerable difficulties under the new arrangement. While being responsible for the administration of Sarawak funds in England, the Commission was obliged to transmit substantial sums to the Rajah without having any information about their use. The Rajah, for example, placed £50,000 of Sarawak's reserve funds in the Australian government's 'austerity loan' without consulting London.²⁰ Angered by the vagueness of Vyner's reports on spending and by the news of MacBryan's reinstatement, Bertram wrote to him in November 1942 pointing out that with regard to Sarawak's finances he had a responsibility to the British government as well as to the Rajah and Sarawak, and if these proved incompatible he would have to resign as head of the Commission.²¹ Subsequently he went to the Colonial Office and discussed the possibility of writing an official letter to the Secretary of State. Now that MacBryan had been appointed as the Rajah's 'Confidential Agent for the South-West Pacific', he feared that, as with the 1941 Constitution, the Rajah would make vital decisions about Sarawak's post-war status without consulting him and Anthony.²²

In the meantime, Vyner had despatched Pitt Hardacre to London, ostensibly to explain Agency financial affairs to the Commission and to advise the Colonial Office of his opposition to the use of extra-bellucose methods in the recapture of Sarawak which might bring harm to the natives.²³ According to Hardacre, the Rajah's real purpose was to clear MacBryan's name with the War Office so that he could be employed by Kendall.²⁴ However, Hardacre was already working clandestinely for Kendall and used the return journey to spend some weeks in Cairo and Jeddah in connection with MacBryan's plan. Frustrated in his second attempt to make a financial settlement and irritated by Pitt Hardacre's failure to give MacBryan a 'clean slate' in London, the Rajah replaced him as Government Agent in Sydney, allowing him to work full-time for Kendall in Brisbane.[†]

*According to C. Pitt Hardacre (personal communication, 27 October 1976), the Rajah got MacBryan to approach Sir Ronald Cross with a view to 'selling out', but there is no evidence to confirm this.

†Hardacre's subsequent work for the Allied Intelligence Bureau in enemy-occupied Java and elsewhere earned him an O.B.E. He later occupied various British government posts

The Colonial Office was concerned about Sarawak's finances since all available funds would be needed to defray the cost of the Borneo Planning Unit, the military administration and post-war reconstruction. However, the Rajah had indicated that he would return to England in early 1943 and it was apparently decided that nothing could be finally resolved until then. In the meantime, the Commission prepared a letter to the Rajah criticizing a number of payments which he had authorized in Australia and the Colonial Office had the clear impression that its members were heading for a 'show-down' with him. Shortly after the Rajah's return, Bertram spent some time with him discussing the vexed question of finances and it was agreed that the Commission would review all expenditure, making retrenchments wherever necessary. The Colonial Office was happy with this arrangement which would prevent the Rajah from 'frittering away the resources of his Government ...'.²⁵

Anthony Brooke and the Colonial Office

Anthony Brooke arrived in England from Sarawak via Athens in mid-January 1942 and volunteered for active service but it was more than two months before he was called up. In the meantime, it seemed a good opportunity to consider Sarawak's future relationship with Britain and to make his views known to the Colonial Office. 'Once in the army', he told Margery Perham, 'it is unlikely that I shall be able to take part in any discussions regarding the position of Sarawak in the post-war world, until after the war, by which time the matter will probably have been settled'.²⁶

In early March he told Gent that he recognized the need to protect the people of Sarawak from autocratic and undesirable actions by their rulers, but that the responsibility should remain vested in the Brookes as their subjects expected. While a new agreement between Sarawak and Britain could provide an improved basis for co-operation, the Rajahs of the future should be left with 'the fullest measure of freedom to act in internal affairs short of the power to abuse it with impunity'. He suggested that a new agreement could be based on the following principles:

1. The agreement to be supplementary to the Treaty of Protection, 1888.
2. The recruitment of officers to serve under the Government of Sarawak to be effected by the Rajah in co-operation with, or with the approval of, His Majesty's Government. (This would not, however, limit the right of the Rajah to appoint non-Europeans residing in Sarawak.)
3. The chief administrative post under the Rajah to be filled by an officer appointed by the Rajah subject to the approval of His Majesty's Government.
4. In the event of the Rajah exercising his right under the Constitution of Sarawak to act contrary to the advice of his Supreme Council, he

in Berlin, Nairobi, and Libya where he remained as Financial and Economic Adviser after independence. Resigning in 1957, he returned on Colonel Ghadaffi's invitation in 1964 to serve a further five years as 'Financial and Economic Expert'.

should inform the Secretary of State for the Colonies of the action taken, at the same time transmitting a detailed report giving full reasons for his decision.²⁷

While acknowledging that political developments in Sarawak during 1941 had made the Supplementary Agreement 'both desirable and inevitable', he felt that it might eventually lead to an undesirable duality in administrative control. He conceded that there should be a constitution, but not one which 'vests responsibility in the hands of a continually changing oligarchy, as is the position at present'. The fourth provision would ensure that future Rajahs would act reasonably and responsibly and there would be an arrangement for reports to be made on any matter about which the British government required information. He could not guarantee that these 'tentative proposals' would necessarily have the support of the Rajah or his father but hoped that they might still form the basis for post-war discussions.

Bertram Brooke regarded his son's views as 'in the main as generally sound as any others might be', but he expressed strong opposition to any explicit delimitation of relations between the two countries:

My view . . . is that this cannot be achieved with any satisfaction to either party, and unless an agreement is a very loose one, with both parties determined to carry out much of what is left to the imagination in the spirit of mutual co-operation, there's going to be trouble anyhow, and the more details there are, the more wrangling there is likely to be as to whether different interpretations are 'legally' sound or not.²⁸

Conveying this to Gent, Anthony emphasized that a great deal depended on the goodwill of the Ruler. Some kind of new agreement was necessary, he acknowledged, 'though no Ruler in his senses, who conscientiously wishes to do the best for his State, would wish to relinquish more freedom than he must'.²⁹

Gent seemed sympathetic to the proposals and agreed that it was preferable to have one government in Sarawak, 'provided that . . . [it] was inspired in its task by British ideals, was prepared to avail itself of the best material [men] to carry them out, and was prepared to learn continually from developments in other British Colonies and Protectorates'. He told Anthony that Sarawak's outstation officers were highly regarded by the Colonial Service and that there was 'no intention to propose a total amalgamation'.³⁰

For all his show of confidence, however, Anthony was well aware that the events of 1941 had brought down the stocks of the Raj and that it might not survive the war. While he had always regarded Sarawak's system of government as superior to that of North Borneo, he told Margery Perham, he had to admit that the business of the Rajah's \$2,000,000 suggested there was something very seriously wrong. If the Rajah by this means had lost the people's confidence to the extent that the Brooke family was no longer wanted, 'more harm than good would clearly be done by the return to Sarawak of either my father or myself (one can safely assume that my uncle will retire—or abdicate—on his

rather prickly laurels)'.³¹ Although amalgamation with Brunei and North Borneo had been suggested in the past, he thought it neither necessary nor desirable.

Taking up the same theme in a letter to Gent, he repeated the arguments put forward by his father in 1931 against Clementi's scheme for a 'British Borneo' federation, an idea which he thought might be resurrected now that the future of the three territories was in question. The essence of Brooke rule, as he saw it, was the status of the Rajah in the eyes of the natives. 'So long as there is a white Rajah in Sarawak', he wrote, 'he must shoulder his inherent responsibility to the people of being supreme within the State and there is yet to be put forward any argument which can shake this view . . .'.³² As for the argument that a federation under the Governor of the Straits Settlements would have the advantage of 'administrative convenience', he believed that it was Singapore's very distance from Sarawak which had preserved the Rajah's position as 'the actual, and not merely titular, Ruler of the State'.

The Colonial Office and Borneo Planning

Planning for the post-war military administration of Britain's Far Eastern Colonies and dependencies was under way by early 1942 and in February 1943 the Colonial Office initiated talks which led to the creation of a Colonial Office—War Office Malayan Planning Committee, formally constituted in July as the Malayan Planning Unit under Major-General H. R. Hone. Since the Unit's authority would only be effective within the limits of Britain's South-East Asia Command (SEAC), it was necessary to establish another organization for the Borneo territories which were within the American South-West Pacific Area (SWPA) command. It was assumed that a suitable arrangement would be duly made with the Americans under the charter of the Anglo-American Combined Civil Affairs Committee set up in Washington in July 1943. This provided that when an enemy-occupied territory was to be recovered by an Allied operation, the directives given to the commander should include 'the policies to be followed in the handling of Civil Affairs *as formulated by the government which exercised authority over the territory before enemy occupation*'.³³ The fact that the Sarawak government had previously exercised authority over Sarawak was apparently regarded as immaterial.

The Borneo Planning Unit was established within the Colonial Office and was staffed by civilians. C. F. C. Macaskie, who had been on leave at the time of the Japanese invasion of North Borneo, was appointed head of the Unit and Chief Civil Affairs Officer designate for Borneo in October 1943. Since the disposal of the reserve funds of North Borneo and Sarawak was not within the authority of the British government, the cost was borne by the British Treasury on the assumption that a claim could later be made on both the Chartered Company and the Rajah.³⁴ Policy from the outset envisaged a single civil affairs administration bringing Sarawak, Brunei, Labuan, and North Borneo under centralized control.

For Gent and his colleagues the war provided the long-awaited opportunity to overhaul the administrative structure of Britain's Far East dependencies. On 22 January 1944, probably on Gent's instigation, the Secretary of State for Colonies in the National Government, Colonel Oliver Stanley,* persuaded a meeting of the War Cabinet to appoint a committee on the constitutional future of Malaya and the Borneo territories. Stanley suggested the guidelines which the British government should follow.³⁵ As far as Malaya was concerned, 'the interests of efficiency and security' required 'the closer integration of both . . . legislative and administrative arrangements . . .'. And in the 'novel conditions' which would exist on Britain's liberation of Malaya, this integration could be achieved without the 'lengthy process' which Clementi had envisaged. Finally, the responsibility for co-ordinating political, economic and social development and representing British government interests in any regional council to be set up by the United Nations for the area was to be entrusted to a British 'Governor-General' for Malaya and Borneo.

As for the Borneo territories, the main object was to ensure that in future 'their machinery of government is of such a character as will conduce to their social and political development in conformity with our general Colonial policy'. Consequently it was envisaged that Britain would acquire from the Chartered Company the sovereignty of North Borneo which would then be united with Labuan under a single governor with 'a local Executive and Legislative Council'. The Sultan of Brunei would be 'invited' to cede sufficient jurisdiction to the Crown to allow for the application of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act. A similar 'invitation' would be made to the Rajah of Sarawak since it was 'most desirable that His Majesty's Government should be placed in a position to exercise effective control over the administration'. It was felt that at this point there was no basis for a closer union of the Borneo territories but that a 'community of policy' could be assured by the responsibility of the Governor of North Borneo and Labuan and the British Advisers in Brunei and Sarawak to the Governor-General in Singapore.

In a draft directive on policy for Borneo which he presented at the same time, Stanley was more specific about the treaty to be negotiated with the Rajah 'at the earliest possible opportunity'. As well as enabling the Crown to legislate for Sarawak under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, the treaty was to provide for a resident British Adviser 'whose advice must be sought and acted upon in all substantial matters of policy and administration'.³⁶ Stanley did not expect either the Rajah or the Sultan to 'raise any difficulties' over the cession of their jurisdiction to the Crown.³⁷ The Committee on Policy in Malaya and Borneo which was subsequently appointed held two meetings and its final report to the War Cabinet in May supported the policy as outlined in Stanley's draft directive for

* Stanley had an impressive career before going to the Colonial Office. Becoming an M.P. in 1924, he was Minister of Transport, 1933-4; Minister of Labour, 1934-5; President of Board of Education 1935-7 and Secretary of State of War, 1940-2.

Borneo. When Cabinet endorsed the report at the end of month, it became official policy.

This blueprint for the post-war future of Britain's South-East Asian dependencies was drawn up at a time when the Japanese still had control of the area and when plans were being made for liberation. Consequently it would be surprising if strategic considerations did not loom large in the minds of Colonial Office planners. It was important that the Malay States, the Straits Settlements, and British Borneo should come within a single defence framework in case of any future external attack and that their peoples should possess more of a stake in resisting attack than they had in late 1941. At this early stage the potential of Malay and Indonesian nationalism in resisting the re-imposition of British and Dutch control does not seem to have been considered. Far more important to Gent and his colleagues was the possibility of American intervention and the need to pre-empt international action which might make the restoration of imperial control more difficult. The idea of a regional council for South-East Asia was no more than a token concession to American (and possibly Australian) interest in the area.*

At the same time, the Japanese invasion had created a long-awaited opportunity for the bureaucratic reorganization and centralization which had been in the air since Clementi's time. The question of negotiating new treaties with the Malay rulers had been somewhat problematical in the early 1930s. But with a British military administration taking control after a glorious British defeat of the Japanese invaders, the climate would be more favourable. If there was any resistance from the rulers, the charge of collaboration with the Japanese would be sufficient to reduce them to acquiescence. No problems were envisaged with the Borneo states. Both the Chartered Company and the Rajah had earlier indicated their willingness to sell out and the Sultan of Brunei would agree to whatever the British Resident 'advised'.

As Conservative Secretary of State in the coalition government, Oliver Stanley no doubt shared Winston Churchill's view that he had not become Prime Minister 'in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire'. Beyond this, however, it is difficult to detect his personal influence in the proposal which was finally accepted by the War Cabinet. Consequently it seems reasonable to suggest that the 1944 blueprint was essentially the product of strategic and bureaucratic considerations as viewed by the Colonial Office and the War Office and possessed little relation to British party politics beyond the general desire to preserve the Empire. This was the policy inherited by the Labour government in July 1945.

The Borneo Planning Unit was established in the belief that the military administration of the three Borneo states would be under British control. However, it became increasingly clear that the area would in fact remain within the American and Australian sphere of influence. Between

*American wartime attitudes to colonialism and British reactions are fully discussed in W. R. Louis, *Imperialism at Bay, 1941-1945* . . . , Oxford, 1977.

May and July 1944 the Colonial Office and the War Office prepared a joint memorandum on the administration of Borneo and Hong Kong which was then submitted to the Combined Civil Affairs Committee in Washington and accepted as a statement of policy under clause 6 of the July 1943 charter. The essence of this policy was that Borneo and Hong Kong should be the responsibility of a civil affairs staff consisting mainly of British officers and that instructions issued to Force Commanders should take account of this. Under a further arrangement drawn up in March 1945, known as the Cranborne Agreement, the Combined Civil Affairs Committee approved the principle that the Chief Civil Affairs Officer for Borneo should be responsible to the War Office in London as well as to the Allied Commander of SWPA:

It is intended that the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, British Borneo, should also give such advice as may be necessary concerning His Majesty's Government's long-term plans for reconstruction, in order that, as far as possible, the measures of the military administration may be co-ordinated. He should at the discretion of the Allied Commander-in-Chief, while keeping the latter, or the military commanders designated by him, informed, be authorised to communicate direct with London on questions which do not affect the Allied Commander-in-Chief's responsibilities for the military administration of British Borneo.³⁸

The 50th Civil Affairs Unit (50 CAU) was established as a British force to be based initially in Australia until Borneo had been cleared of Japanese by Australian troops under MacArthur's SWPA command. However, shortly after its first elements arrived at Ingleburn near Sydney in early 1945, a rival British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (BBCAU) was set up under the direction of Captain A. A. Conlon,* head of the Army Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs (DORCA) at General Sir Thomas Blamey's Land Headquarters in Melbourne. Opposed for strategic reasons to the post-war restoration of Dutch and British colonial possessions to Australia's north,³⁹ Conlon apparently saw the BBCAU as a means of extending Australia's role as a mandate power in the area. His tactics were to treat the 50 CAU as a holding unit and to delay as long as possible the transfer of its officers to the BBCAU and their posting to Borneo. Macaskie and his senior officers were posted to Labuan in July, but only after there had been strong pressure on Blamey from military

*Conlon was an extraordinary man. Through his connections as student representative on the Sydney University Senate, he was appointed manpower officer for the university in 1939. This in turn brought him into contact with General Stantke, head of the Army's Adjutant-General's Branch whom he persuaded to establish a research section. Impressed with Conlon's work, Blamey had the section upgraded to DORCA and placed directly under him in 1943. Its staff was also augmented with a number of academics brought together through Conlon's influence. DORCA's work involved everything from finding an alternative source of quinine to the question of changing from a military to a civil administration in Papua New Guinea, its most important responsibility. As Peter Coleman has noted (*The Bulletin*, 28 September 1963), there is a crying need for a biography of Conlon whose brief but brilliant career as a backstage politician reveals a great deal about the nature of the Australian political system. He was also an important focus and catalyst of the intellectual life of his day. (N.S.W. Benevolent Society, *Alfred Conlon: A Memorial By Some of His Friends*, Sydney, 1963.)

commanders in the field.⁴⁰ Conlon continued to direct Borneo civil affairs from Melbourne and may even have tried to remove Macaskie,⁴¹ no doubt regarding him as an agent of the Colonial Office.

The Australian War Cabinet's reluctance to get involved in the civil affairs administration of the Borneo territories had been clear from the outset and Conlon could find little support for his ideas in Labour Party and External Affairs circles. The establishment of the BBCAU was reluctantly accepted as a *fait accompli*, but Cabinet's policy was to replace Australian members of the unit with British personnel.⁴² Gent and his colleagues, through their contact with Macaskie and other British officers, were acutely aware of Conlon's successful efforts to keep the BBCAU in Australian hands. Nor could they afford to ignore the disturbing rumour reported to them from Ingleburn that Australia intended to take over the Borneo territories. British control of the civil affairs apparatus was absolutely vital to the Colonial Office's planned take-over of Sarawak and North Borneo and it seems highly likely that anxiety about Australian intentions, together with some anticipation of American disapproval, influenced both the speed with which negotiations were concluded with the Rajah and the timing of MacBryan's mission to Sarawak to coincide with the transfer from Australian to British SEAC control.

Formal Negotiations on Sarawak's Future

In June 1944 Oliver Stanley told the Rajah that in view of the progress of the war it was time to discuss the relationship between the British government and Sarawak. Explaining that public opinion in Britain and Allied countries would hold Britain responsible for the policies pursued in the future development of the state, he wished to meet the Rajah for discussions on the terms of a new relationship more in keeping with future circumstances. '... The existing agreements . . .', Stanley told him, 'do not sufficiently provide His Majesty's Government with the means to discharge fully the responsibilities which will thus be placed upon them . . .'.⁴³

Rather than reply directly, the Rajah sent the Sarawak Government Agent, H. D. Aplin, to meet Gent at the Colonial Office. Gent explained that Stanley's intention was to appoint a British Representative in Sarawak to advise on political, social, and economic affairs. This meant that the King would have jurisdiction in Sarawak's internal affairs under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act,* and it was therefore necessary to alter the 1888 Treaty or make a new one. The Supplementary Agreement signed in September 1941 had not gone far enough to accommodate the planned extension of British authority. At the same time, Gent told Aplin that the King would not exercise his new authority by issuing Orders-In-Council 'unless as an extreme measure'. The position would be as in North

*The Foreign Jurisdiction Acts of 1890 and 1913 gave the Crown the power to extend British enactments to territories under its jurisdiction.

Borneo where the King possessed the same power but had not exercised it beyond an Order-In-Council establishing an Admiralty Prize Court. When Aplin asked if Sarawak would be reduced to the position of a 'Native State', Gent reassured him that this would not be so. Sarawak, he said, possessed competent European officers who were capable of running its government properly.⁴⁴

After reading Aplin's reports of this meeting, the Rajah wrote to Stanley telling him that while 'nothing but good' would come from a closer liaison between the two governments, he thought that there could be no change in their relationship as long as Sarawak, 'owing to the unavoidable inability of the Protecting Power to preserve them from invasion', was under alien rule. If he entered into a new agreement at this time, he emphasized, his right to do so would 'almost certainly be challenged in the future with embarrassing results to myself and possibly to His Majesty's Government'. He would also be in the position of binding his successor to a form of government which, due to age, he would have no chance of putting into effect. He was willing to return to Sarawak for a short time after the reoccupation if it was desirable, but regarded his rule as effectively coming to an end: '. . . I feel that the future must be with those who have the physical vigour not only to make a fresh start, but to continue firmly along such lines as will ensure internal peace within the State'.⁴⁵

It took Stanley a month to respond to this polite rebuff. While appreciating the Rajah's reluctance to make a fresh agreement in the existing circumstances, he felt that it was still possible 'to consider the lines on which it would be desirable for the relations between His Majesty's Government and Sarawak to be developed'.⁴⁶ He therefore asked the Rajah for the names of representatives who would take part in initial discussions and the Rajah in turn indicated that the Tuan Muda would best fulfil this role:

He is an old friend both of Major Gent and Mr Paskin. I think these gentlemen would be able to assure anyone you nominate that he is in the habit of always saying exactly what is in his mind.

I can also say that I feel sure the family position of his son, A. W. D. Brooke, would not in any way bias his views as to steps for the future that should be taken in the interests of the people of the State.⁴⁷

Agreeing to this arrangement, Stanley used a phrase which Anthony Brooke later regarded as epitomizing the Colonial Office's intentions and methods. 'I feel sure', he told the Rajah, 'that this will put us on the path of an understanding as to how we shall *march together* in the future'.⁴⁸

When Bertram Brooke met Gent in early October he conceded that there would have to be changes after the war and that the Secretary of State's responsibility for Sarawak in Parliament necessitated some influence on the state's administration. However, he added, the Rajah was anxious to avoid any suggestion that he had entered into a secret treaty whose legality might later be challenged. This was particularly important in view of the likelihood that he would not be returning to

Sarawak for any length of time. He was unwilling to sign anything which might be binding on his advisers and successors. Gent said that there was no intention of rushing the Rajah into any agreement which he and his advisers thought inappropriate to his powers. Nevertheless, it would be extremely useful if they could 'discuss and come to an understanding on the terms of an agreement which the Rajah in due course would be prepared to recommend in accordance with the appropriate procedure of the Government of Sarawak'.⁴⁹ They agreed that the Colonial Office would prepare detailed suggestions as a basis for formal talks with the Rajah's representatives.

In late October, Paskin told Bertram that a paper was being prepared for submission to the Rajah, but during the next few months Bertram's health deteriorated and he asked Vyner to relieve him of his position as head of the Sarawak Government Commission. At the same time, he knew that Anthony would probably be returning to England and apparently decided that this was a good opportunity to bow out and allow his son to exercise his rightful responsibilities.

Meanwhile, in Colombo . . .

Anthony Brooke had been trying for some months to get back to England. Having served first as a private in the infantry and then in the Officers Training Corps where he graduated as a lieutenant, he was sent in early 1944 to the Intelligence School in Karachi and later to Mountbatten's headquarters in Colombo. While he found service life arduous and demanding, the future of Sarawak was never far from his mind. He had further discussions with his father before leaving England and they apparently agreed upon a compromise arrangement which could be put to the Colonial Office in the likely event of the latter's desire to amend the Treaty. On board ship to India in March 1944 he wrote to his wife, Kathleen:

. . . I still feel perfectly confident about the outcome of any talks which may eventually take place, and intend to hold my ground to the bitter end: and I don't think the British government can put up any argument which they can expect one to accept on purely logical grounds which would deprive Sarawak of her Independence. The alternative we suggest provides all the safeguards they could desire, and more, and the position is very different from what it would be if we had no alternative constructive proposals to put forward. . . .⁵⁰

When it emerged from Kathleen's letters that his father was concerned about American attitudes to British dependencies in the Far East, he told her that he was not worried. If the Allies had any say, he wrote from Karachi in April, it would hardly extend to the internal administration of Sarawak:

After all, American policy . . . is in favour of granting independence wherever possible, an attitude which would favour us. Of course they might want to grab the place altogether, but I don't think this is very likely, and we would kick up quite a useful shindy if there was any sign of that happening. No, we may have a lot of things to worry about, but somehow I can't bring myself to worry about that.⁵¹

In early June, Anthony received a letter from his father which was to have an important influence on his subsequent actions. Bertram made it clear he was not prepared to take on the title and responsibilities of Rajah at his age. He also said that he had advised Vyner to retire from active participation in government and not go out to Sarawak again. The Colonial Office were aware of his views and he hinted that the responsibility should now be Anthony's:

It's time someone in the family made up his mind and stuck to his decisions. It puts me in a much stronger position to urge that the present arrangement should not be departed from and that it is for those who have the future in their hands to thrash out a long term policy to suit the vastly altered conditions that will obtain after the war. It's no septuagenarian's job, and no septuagenarian who suggested that he was the chap to carry it out would be entitled to much confidence.⁵²

Later that month Anthony was able to reassure Kathleen that the succession was no cause for worry, although he doubted that the Raneé had given up entirely. Reporting the contents of his father's letter, he expressed great optimism about the future. 'However', he added soberly, 'I suppose the old boy will hang on as long as possible. . . .'⁵³

The news that his father would not be assuming the Rajah's responsibilities, together with Oliver Stanley's approach to the Rajah, persuaded Anthony that it was time to return home. But it suited the Colonial Office that he should remain out of the picture for the time being and it was only through an extremely vigorous campaign that the young lieutenant managed to have a cable sent by Mountbatten to the Colonial Office. Mountbatten told Stanley that Anthony was anxious to return immediately to England for discussions on the future of Sarawak. He appreciated Anthony's position and was prepared to release him if Stanley approved.⁵⁴ Mountbatten was aware that both the Colonial Office and the War Office were interested in Anthony's future. 'We have been informed', he told Anthony's brother-in-law, Captain Tom Halsey, who had written on his behalf, 'that as a potential Rajah it is undesirable that he should return to Sarawak as a comparatively junior member of the Civil Administration. . . .'⁵⁵

Anthony also wrote to Gent enclosing a letter concerning Sarawak's future which he proposed to send to *The Times*, but Gent replied by cable that it 'would be inadvisable at this stage in view of your prospective official position here'.⁵⁶ He had conferred with Bertram Brooke who may have mentioned the likelihood of Anthony being appointed head of the Sarawak Government Commission in his place. While accepting Gent's advice, Anthony emphasized the need to publicize the future policy of the Sarawak government and asked for an indication of the British government's attitude to the suggestions which he had put to Gent in April 1942. At this point he was not yet aware of the plan to make him head of the Sarawak Government Commission, but news of his imminent reinstatement as Rajah Muda had reached him in a cable from his father in the first week of November.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, however, there was no reply to Mountbatten's cable and

mounting frustration led Anthony to seek an interview with the Chief Civil Affairs Staff Officer. Events in the Pacific and the absence of any understanding through which British Borneo might come under SEAC control meant, he believed, that his proper place was in SWPA where he would be in close contact with General MacArthur's staff and the Borneo Planning Unit. This would mean taking part in the liberation of Sarawak and the subsequent military administration in which he would hold full civil powers in the absence of his uncle and his father. Such a scheme had always been his personal preference but his strained relations with the Rajah had not made it possible. Instead, he had accepted the alternative offered by the Colonial Office and General Hone of making himself useful in SEAC, taking part in the liberation of Malaya and returning to Sarawak on the termination of the military administration there. But the restoration of his title had cleared the air and he now felt it his duty to press his original plan. 'It is repugnant to me to wait for the "difficulties" to be smoothed from my path . . .', he added impatiently.⁵⁸

He subsequently requested an interview with Mountbatten, spelling out more emphatically his desire to be involved in the reoccupation of Sarawak and the military administration:

Owing to a combination of unhappy circumstances, not a single member of the Brooke family was at the helm of affairs in Sarawak in the hour of the people's greatest need. This makes it imperative, if the Raj is to continue, that a member of the family should land and be with the people at the hour of their liberation from the Japanese. . . . If I cannot have from HMG from the moment of Sarawak's liberation the confidence and support to which by qualification and right I feel myself to be entitled, I shall be unable to give to Sarawak the service expected of me by the people, and there will be no object in my returning to that country. . . .⁵⁹

He finally decided to write to Mountbatten. 'It would not be possible for me to face the people of Sarawak in the future', he told the 'Supremo', 'neither would I deserve their trust as representing them at this time, if I did not regard their affairs as being of paramount importance.'⁶⁰

The news of Anthony's probable appointment by the Rajah as head of the Sarawak Government Commission meant that he could no longer be kept out of the way. On 2 December, Mountbatten was authorized by the War Office to release Anthony from war duties.⁶¹ He was also willing to assist Anthony in obtaining an interview with the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in Delhi but could not be very helpful on the more important question of the military administration since Borneo was outside the area of his command. However, he had earlier approved a proposal that the Borneo Planning Unit should keep in close touch with Major-General Hone's Malayan Planning Unit and suggested that Anthony should make his views known in London.

Before leaving Delhi, Anthony hoped to make a broadcast on Sarawak with the aim of putting it back on the map. Permission appears to have been refused but he was able to contact a number of American journalists 'with the object of re-educating the American people away from dance

band and all-in wrestling associations with Sarawak and inculcating the spirit of Sarawak which really matters'.⁶² Anthony was acutely aware of the 'image' which the Raneé and her two younger daughters had created for Sarawak before the war in the American as well as the British press and was anxious that this be dispelled. However, he was strictly limited to talking about the history of Sarawak and the Brooke family and was not allowed to publish any views outside these subjects.⁶³

His other method of publicizing Sarawak was to insist upon his title as Rajah Muda, which had been formally proclaimed in London on 8 November 1944.⁶⁴ While this emphasis on his formal status aroused the antagonism of some people, just as it had in Sarawak in 1939 and 1941, it was useful in the corridors of power. Mountbatten suggested to Wavell that he should regard Anthony 'as the future Rajah of Sarawak, and not as a Subaltern in the Army'.⁶⁵ Wavell listened sympathetically to Anthony in Delhi and suggested that he should see Churchill, for whom he supplied a letter of introduction.* By late December Anthony was back in London eager to take an active part in the decisions on Sarawak's future.

The Provisional Government

Anthony Brooke's return significantly altered the situation in London. After long talks with Anthony, Bertram contacted Vyner. He told him that Anthony regarded the financial arrangements which he had been attempting to make as 'perfectly reasonable' and agreed that Sarawak finances for the remainder of the occupation should continue to be handled by the Commission. Bertram then recommended that in view of the need for some recognized body to deal with the Colonial Office, and the fact that most members of the Sarawak Government Commission would not be involved in the future government, it was desirable to appoint some kind of negotiating committee. Now that the financial question was no longer a bone of contention, the Rajah agreed. On 29 December 1944 he appointed a committee consisting of Anthony, Pollard, and Thomas Corson, which, he thought,

... may well be charged with the responsibility of dealing direct with His Majesty's Government on behalf of and as representing the Sarawak Government, in connection with all matters concerning State policy, whilst the Commission remains responsible for the handling of the finances, as hitherto.⁶⁶

Three weeks later, the Rajah told Stanley of his decision to appoint Anthony to administer the government of Sarawak with the advice of the Commission, 'thus constituting a Provisional Government of Sarawak with full powers'.⁶⁷ He explained that he had reached this decision in view of Bertram's wish to be relieved of his position as chairman of the Commission and on the unanimous advice of its members. 'In this way', he wrote, 'I hope to provide the means whereby a stable and full[y]

* Anthony later regretted his inability to see Churchill personally.

responsible body may plan thoughtfully and effectively for the future of Sarawak, and at the same time to clarify the position of the Commission in its relations with His Majesty's Government.⁶⁶ The other members of the Provisional Government were to be Pollard and Corson. To all intents and purposes, the Provisional Government became interchangeable with the Sarawak Commission. But its legal status, particularly in relation to the 1941 Constitution and the prerogative powers of the Rajah, was never clarified. This suited the Colonial Office which was later able to bypass it when negotiations reached an impasse and deal directly with the Rajah.

While Anthony was no doubt pleased to have been given the responsibility of conducting negotiations with the Colonial Office, he was still determined to take part in the military reoccupation and administration of the state. No doubt he believed that this would not only assist Brooke prestige and the subsequent re-establishment of Brooke government, but would strengthen his own political position. The Colonial Office and the War Office, on the other hand, were equally determined that he should not become involved. Consequently, when Anthony proposed that there should be a separate civil affairs unit for Sarawak with himself as head, he found the Colonial Office discouraging. Macaskie's response was a diplomatic suggestion that it would damage Anthony's prestige if he returned to Sarawak as an officer of the Military Commander's staff,⁶⁹ while Gent thought that there would be 'almost insurmountable difficulties'.⁷⁰

Anthony then suggested that he be appointed liaison officer between the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Borneo, and the Allied Military Commander while repeating his original proposal that the military administration of Sarawak should be separate. Eventually he managed to interview Major-General A. V. Anderson, Director of Civil Affairs at the War Office, who told him that while civil affairs was a military responsibility, the possibility of his being engaged in any military activity would have to be taken up with the Secretary of State for Colonies. Writing to Gent after the meeting, Anderson indicated their mutual objection to Anthony's involvement in the projected civil affairs unit: 'In that military organization I could see no place for the Rajah Muda, whose political stakes (from which he could not divest himself) could only be a source of embarrassment to the Commander . . .'.⁷¹ Nor was there any need, he added, for the creation of a position linking the Allied Commander and the head of the Borneo Civil Affairs Unit. No doubt sensing that there was something of a conspiracy to deny him any role in the liberation and immediate post-war administration of Sarawak, Anthony seems at this point to have abandoned his campaign, concentrating his energies instead on the Provisional Government.

Stanley subsequently sought to arrange talks with the Provisional Government and on 13 February Anthony submitted a set of proposals 'for strengthening relations with His Majesty's Government' which he hoped would be the subject of personal discussions.⁷² A day or two later Anthony met Stanley who told him that a new agreement was a matter of

some urgency since the implementation of the Borneo Planning Unit's scheme for civil affairs administration depended entirely upon it. Anthony must have been optimistic that this could be arranged without too much difficulty. 'I shall be exceedingly grateful if you will let me know . . . when you would like this formality to be completed', he told Stanley. ' . . . In so far as the Government of Sarawak is concerned, no date is too early for the terms of the agreement to be discussed and the necessary formalities completed. . . .'⁷³

In something of an understatement, Stanley pointed out that the proposals which he had received from Anthony were 'not altogether in accordance' with the proposed plans for discussion which he had set out in his letter to the Rajah of 19 June 1944.⁷⁴ Indeed they were not, and in his reply Anthony interpreted that letter as envisaging a 'fundamental change' in the relationship between the two governments. Referring to the Rajah's original reply of 4 August 1944, he indicated his determination not to enter into substantive discussions until after Sarawak's liberation and the restoration of the *status quo ante*:

Whilst I and my advisers will at all times be very glad, as representing the people of Sarawak, to discuss with you any matters of common interest to our two Governments, we are of the opinion that it would be morally indefensible for the Provisional Government of Sarawak to prejudice the post-war relations of the Government of Sarawak with His Majesty's Government by entering at this time into discussions inconsistent with the existing treaty relationship. . . .⁷⁵

Pending liberation, which would make possible the discussion of any changes to 'the independent and sovereign status of the Raj of Sarawak', he hoped that it would be possible for them to discuss his own proposals.

The first formal meeting took place on 13 March when Anthony Brooke, together with Pollard and Corson, faced Stanley, Gent, and four subordinates across a long table in the conference room of the Colonial Office. From the outset it seemed to Anthony and his colleagues that Stanley's manner was appropriate not so much to an opening of discussions as to an announcement of what the British government intended to do about Sarawak. Although Stanley might have anticipated Anthony's response from their earlier correspondence, both he and Gent were somewhat taken aback by the reaction that his speech elicited. No doubt they expected that the strength of the British government's position and the Secretary of State's authority would carry all before them.

The 'proposals' put forward by Stanley were simple enough but their implications went far beyond anything that Anthony could accept. The Sarawak government was asked

1. to accord to the Crown such jurisdiction as would enable the British Government to legislate for Sarawak under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act.
2. to accept the extension of the authority of the Resident British Representative so as to give him an effective voice in all substantial matters of policy and administration.⁷⁶

Once again it was emphasized that the power of legislating through Orders-in-Council under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act would not normally be used and that the powers of the British Representative were only being extended 'for the purpose of . . . representing HMG's views in respect of administrative policy in Sarawak'. Stanley also took issue with Anthony's claim that it was 'morally indefensible' to enter into negotiations at this point and suggested that they could surely undertake the preparatory work for a new agreement. Anthony defended the phrase by arguing that personal and autocratic rule had never prevailed in Sarawak and that the country had possessed a constitution since 1856. Consequently, he claimed, the government of Sarawak could not enter into discussions with the British government until they first consulted the people.

Stanley's manner and his approach to the question had upset Anthony to the point that he would no longer admit the need for preparatory discussions. He told the Secretary of State that he and his colleagues had come to the meeting to represent the interests of an independent sovereign state and they were not going to have any unilateral decision dictated to them. His patience now exhausted, Stanley replied that if they were not ready to enter into discussions, then the government 'would have to decide on their own course'.⁷⁷ This veiled threat did not go unnoticed and further talks were arranged after Stanley's departure.

At the three subsequent meetings,⁷⁸ which were not attended by Anthony or Stanley, discussion ranged again and again over the same ground and it was increasingly clear that an impasse had been reached. Perhaps as a means of avoiding this, and of reducing the argument to manageable dimensions, Gent produced at the fourth meeting on 10 May a statement on the international legal status of Sarawak which had been prepared by the Colonial Office's legal advisers and approved by the Foreign Office:

From the point of view of international law the State of Sarawak possesses no personality whatever and is simply a territory within the British Empire. The independence of Sarawak is a purely domestic matter with which no foreign state has any concern. From the point of view of United Kingdom municipal law, Sarawak is foreign in the sense of not being British territory: but from the point of view of international law, Sarawak is British territory and not foreign (*vide*, for example, the use of the word 'foreign' in commercial treaties in connection with imperial preference). Sarawak is simply a British protected state. The Agreements between the British Government and the Rajah of Sarawak have no existence within the realm of international law, but only operate as domestic matters within the Empire.⁷⁹

In turn, Anthony announced that he would submit the question to his own legal advisers and for this purpose he obtained the services of two distinguished international jurists, H. Wynn Parry and Arnold D. McNair. However, the long delay involved in obtaining their considered opinion was evidently regarded by the Colonial Office as a delaying tactic and in mid-July Stanley wrote to the Rajah complaining that 'the Sarawak representatives have so far shown themselves personally unresponsive to

the proposals of his Majesty's Government'.⁸⁰ He made it clear that he wished the Rajah to exert pressure on them 'to give active consideration to those measures which are necessary on their side for the resumption of discussions . . .'. Stanley was evidently unwilling to wait any longer for the legal opinion and saw no possibility of compromise from his side. Whether out of loyalty to Anthony or from an instinctive unwillingness to become involved in the negotiations himself, the Rajah was not prepared to co-operate. 'Dear Peter', he wrote on Stanley's letter, 'Please deal with this'. It must have become increasingly obvious to Gent that the Provisional Government had to be isolated from the Rajah's support, although the means of achieving this was not so apparent.

The Colonial Office was still awaiting the legal opinion a month later when the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the subsequent Japanese capitulation dramatically altered the circumstances in which the earlier discussions had taken place. There was now to be no protracted military liberation of Borneo by Australian troops and Sarawak could be expected to come under SWPA control by September. The need to obtain the Rajah's agreement to the application of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act thus became acute and pressure was evidently brought to bear on him during the following weeks.

The Final Phase

It seems unlikely that when the Labour government took office in July 1945, their policy towards British possessions in South-East Asia was significantly different from that of the National government. While recognizing that Burma would have to be granted independence as well as India, they were determined to hold on to Malaya whatever American critics might say. They were happy to continue with the policy on the constitutional future of Malaya and Borneo which had been adopted by the War Cabinet in June 1944, although there seems to have been a feeling from the outset that the Brooke Raj should not be restored.

George Hall was 63 when appointed Secretary of State for Colonies and was in poor health. As Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State between 1940 and 1942 he had visited the West Indies but was not particularly interested in colonial affairs. As one writer has pointed out, the fact that he was a friend of Attlee's was probably the main consideration in his appointment.⁸¹ A Welsh coalminer and trade unionist, he probably saw the Brookes in the same light as the big landowners of Wales and England whose wealth he and his party were intent on redistributing.

The Labour Party possessed no clear policy on Britain's Far East colonies when it came into power. The Colonial Bureau of the Fabian Society, which acted as the party's unofficial policy body on the colonies, limited its interests to Africa and India and was seldom prepared to look further east. However, the Labour Party was disinclined to countenance the perpetuation of the Brooke Raj. While the 'White Rajahs' had seemed a romantic if anachronistic idea between the wars, they could

only be a source of embarrassment to Britain in the post-war period.

In mid-August 1945, Cabinet directed Hall 'that consideration should now be given to the question of whether the present opportunity should be taken of bringing to an end the rule of the Rajah of Sarawak'.⁶² The records relating to the Colonial Office's subsequent action are not yet available. However, in a note written shortly after the directive a senior Colonial Office official (probably Gent) suggested that there were two major questions for consideration: whether the Rajah and Anthony Brooke would be prepared to co-operate within the framework of the projected new agreement, and the extent to which there was a genuine demand among the people of Sarawak for the restoration of the Brookes. Both questions raised difficulties:

... while there has been in the past much criticism of the administration of Sarawak, there has also been a general concensus [*sic*] of opinion that the personal rule of the Brooke dynasty has been a valuable asset although its undoubted popularity with the natives may well have rested largely on the tradition established by the first Rajah. During the past three and a half years, however, the people of Sarawak have been denied the advantages of personal rule and in present circumstances it would be difficult to tell to what extent attachment to it still persists since it would be natural for the relief of the population at their liberation ... to express itself in welcoming the restoration of the old regime.

The note pointed out that the termination of Brooke rule had been mooted on a number of occasions, once by the Rajah himself, but that even if the Rajah was now prepared to consider it he would have to put the question to the Provisional Government, 'and they undoubtedly will strenuously oppose such a scheme'. Likewise, the Rajah and the Provisional Government might not be willing to accept the agreement now being proposed and the only recourse in that situation would be outright annexation. That this was being seriously considered is clear from the fact that a legal officer was already investigating how it might be arranged. However, there was still a way out:

... if the Rajah is told that HMG looks to him to ensure that a satisfactory agreement is reached and that failing this HMG must consider the course they will take to ensure that they will have the necessary authority in Sarawak; and if the Rajah (and the Rajah Muda) accept this virtual ultimatum with a good grace and show themselves willing to co-operate wholeheartedly in the new circumstances which would arise on the conclusion [of an agreement] ... [document incomplete]

By the end of August there had still been no headway in talks with the Provisional Government and Hall then asked Cabinet for authority to tell the Rajah that unless a satisfactory agreement were reached within two months, the government would act unilaterally. The Rajah's return to Sarawak, he added, should also be contingent on the conclusion of an agreement. Cabinet decided on 3 September that it might be desirable to bring the Rajah's rule to an end, subject to the payment of compensation 'on an equitable basis', and instructed Hall to consider this possibility in the light of the 1888 Treaty and the 1941 Supplementary Agreement.⁶³

On 5 November, Hall told Cabinet that there was nothing in these documents which allowed the termination of the Rajah's rule by unilateral action. However, he added, this was no longer necessary in view of the Rajah's proposal of cession which had been made in the interim.⁸⁴ Cabinet later authorized Hall to facilitate the Rajah's decision by concluding a new agreement as soon as he had obtained the consent of his Councillors in Sarawak. In the meantime, the Rajah's authority would continue to be recognized and Hall was to consult with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the financial details of any new agreement.⁸⁵

Terms of Cession

Very little is known about the negotiations between the Rajah and the Colonial Office. Even when the Colonial Office files on the subject⁸⁶ are made available it is unlikely that they will contain the whole story, much of which seems to have taken place at informal meetings and through telephone calls. What is known is that before signing the preliminary document with Hall at the Colonial Office on 24 October, the Rajah obtained a verbal assurance from him that 'no one would be worse off as a result of cession'.⁸⁷ The document stated that the Rajah would send MacBryan as his 'special representative' to obtain the approval of 'certain individual members' of the Supreme Council to the conclusion of a new Agreement with His Majesty's Government providing for the cession of the state to the Crown.⁸⁸ And on 31 October the Rajah attempted to resolve the problem of the succession by proclaiming the King as his heir.⁸⁹ (MacBryan played an important part in the negotiations and the proclamation and was even promised a knighthood by Hall⁹⁰—something which must have been particularly gratifying after his efforts to clear his name.) The Rajah hoped that the final cession document could be signed immediately on MacBryan's return and he did not expect that he himself would have to go to Sarawak.

The document of 24 October did not concern itself with any form of financial settlement, something which the Colonial Office wished to postpone until after the completion of MacBryan's mission. However, they were interested in getting the Sarawak government to accept responsibility for the cost of relief and rehabilitation supplies and equipment for the state* and to keep a close check on Sarawak funds now that the Sarawak Commission was no longer in existence. A sharp rise in withdrawals in late 1945 caused Gent to ask Smith if the Rajah could be persuaded to provide detailed monthly estimates of the succeeding month's withdrawals.⁹¹ In Paskin's words, what was required was 'an understanding with the Rajah that these funds should be expended only on objects acceptable to the Secretary of State . . .'.⁹² The Colonial Office clearly expected to take over all of Sarawak's remaining reserves.

*The net cost of rehabilitation for the three Borneo territories was estimated by the Colonial Office in late 1945 at £3,412,000. Sarawak's share of this is not known but probably accounted for half. Colonial Office to Acting Sarawak Government Agent, J. A. Smith, 14 December 1945, CO 531/31/1 [53077].

Instead, however, MacBryan arranged a meeting with Gent at which he stressed the Rajah's wish that there should be an early and overall financial settlement. He proposed the establishment of a Sarawak State Trust Fund to be financed with £1,000,000 from Sarawak government funds administered by three trustees, two appointed by the Sarawak government and the other by the British government. The Fund, which MacBryan saw as the Rajah's *quid pro quo* for cession, would earn £30,000 annually from which allowances would be paid to the Rajah and his dependants. The remainder would be used for educational purposes and after an agreed time the Fund would pass from the Brooke family and be held 'for the benefit of the people of Sarawak'.⁹³ MacBryan proposed to obtain the agreement of the datus to the Fund during his forthcoming visit.⁹⁴ Gent did not commit the Colonial Office to accepting the Fund, although he was prepared to give it consideration. Nor was he prepared to accept MacBryan's claim that the Sarawak government had no power to dispose of funds without the consent of the Council Negri.⁹⁵ In the meantime he wrote to the Rajah seeking agreement on responsibility for relief and rehabilitation supplies and equipment.

Smith and MacBryan met Gent again on 18 December to reiterate the Rajah's wish that there should be one overall financial settlement rather than a number of separate agreements. After discussion, it was finally agreed that MacBryan's commission for his projected visit to Sarawak should allow him to secure 'general financial powers for the Rajah' on the understanding that he should not seek agreement on any specific proposal, such as the Sarawak State Trust Fund.⁹⁶

The Rajah's Proposal

Announcing the cession in the House of Commons on 6 February 1946, Hall was at pains to emphasize that the Rajah had not been forced into making the offer. Indeed, he added, the initiative had come from the Rajah himself when he found that the terms suggested by the Colonial Office did not go far enough.⁹⁷ This may be true, but there had been a careful effort to prepare the ground for such a suggestion. There were a number of problems which could easily have been introduced as a means of persuading the Rajah that there was no point in retaining his sovereignty. The most important of these was the cost of the military administration (part of which the Sarawak Commission in 1944 had agreed to bear)⁹⁸ and the cost of relief and rehabilitation supplies and equipment, which together would eat up all Sarawak's remaining reserve funds. The figure of £8,000,000 was used. In all probability, this was the 'virtual ultimatum' which had already been implicit in negotiations with the Provisional Government during the previous six months, and was now put to the Rajah by the Colonial Office. Both the Raneé⁹⁹ and Anthony later attested to its importance. In Anthony's words, '... perhaps the heaviest pressure came during the period of the military "liberation" when the British government plainly pointed out to the Rajah that to put Sarawak on its feet again would cost more money than he

could afford. And by then he was more than willing to agree to Cession as the right solution'.¹⁰⁰

The first reflection of Colonial Office pressure on the Rajah was in a letter from the Ranee to Anthony written on 8 September, shortly after the Cabinet decision that unless an agreement was reached within two months, the government would take unilateral action. The Rajah, she said, insisted that the Provisional Government should keep on good terms with the Colonial Office. He had every intention of appointing a British Representative for Sarawak, without whom there would be no security in future. Secondly, he emphasized that there was 'NO SUCH THING at the present moment as "SARAWAK GOVERNMENT" and that when he resumed his full authority he would appoint anyone he wished':

... what the Raja wants you to understand is that as long as he is alive and capable, he wants to Rule Sarawak in his own way, there will be plenty of time for you to Rule it AFTER he's passed out. He believes in the cooperation of the British Government, and on being on the friendliest terms with the Colonial Office.¹⁰¹

Thirdly, the Rajah wished Anthony to know that he intended taking MacBryan out to Sarawak with him once he was cleared by the Colonial Office. Accordingly, he wanted Anthony and the Provisional Government to allow MacBryan to answer in person the accusations which had been made against him in early 1942. However, the Ranee was at pains to emphasize that the Rajah was not being influenced by MacBryan:

I can positively assure you that MacBryan has NO HOLD over the Raja more than that the Raja finds that Mac's particular form of genius is extremely useful to him, and there are certain things that MacBryan can do for the Raja no one else could possibly accomplish. The Raja is perfectly aware of Mac's failings and faults and has him well in hand.¹⁰²

Two days later, the Rajah informed the members of the Provisional Government that in view of the end of hostilities in the Far East and the recovery of Sarawak he was resuming his powers, subject to the provisions of the 1941 Constitution. This necessitated terminating the position of Officer Administering the Government and he requested the Provisional Government to arrange a special issue of the *Gazette* to announce this and to prepare a suitable letter which he would sign. He was only prepared to meet Anthony when this had been done.¹⁰³

While there was a unanimous desire to see the Rajah resume an active part in Sarawak affairs, the members believed that he was 'exceeding his powers under the Constitution in demanding that measures be taken to implement a decision made by him without references to his Government'.¹⁰⁴ Strenuous efforts were made to arrange an interview and an appointment was made for Anthony and two other members of the Commission to see him at 5 p.m. on 19 September. But at 4 p.m. that day the Ranee telephoned to say that the Rajah would not be able to talk to them after all. The next day (20 September) the Rajah wrote to

Anthony announcing that he had told Hall of his decision to dissolve the Provisional Government and to appoint a new Supreme Council under the 1941 Constitution as soon as possible 'with a view to forming a legal Government'. He had also applied for travel facilities for himself and his party to visit Sarawak in October. He thus requested all members of the Provisional Government to submit their resignations at once.¹⁰⁵

Another meeting of the Provisional Government was held on 22 September to discuss the Rajah's letter. It was decided that the position had not altered materially and that it was still desirable to seek a personal interview. A reply was also drafted setting out the members' view that constitutional procedure should be strictly adhered to and repeating the request for an interview:

. . . It will, we feel sure, be readily appreciated by Your Highness that no change affecting the present constitution of the Provisional Government of Sarawak, duly recognised as such by His Majesty's Government, can be effected except by constitutional means, and that such plans as Your Highness has in mind can only be considered after Your Highness has properly reassumed the powers of Rajah-in-Council and Head of the Provisional Government of Sarawak.¹⁰⁶

If the first response had irritated the Rajah, this one must have enraged him. Writing to Anthony on 4 October, he announced that he was dismissing him as head of the Provisional Government as from 10 September:

This failure to act upon my instruction and the subsequent receipt of a letter purporting to be signed by an Officer Administering the Government and Members of a Provisional Government which no longer existed seems to me to be a direct affront to myself, and I can only regard your action as an act of insubordination without parallel in my experience of State Affairs.¹⁰⁷

The same evening, the Rajah visited Hall at the Colonial Office and informed him of the action he had taken. Late that night MacBryan telephoned Smith to tell him that he had been appointed Acting Government Agent in Aplin's place. Smith had informed the Rajah on 14 September that he was resigning from the Provisional Government and his reward was the new post at double his previous salary. In a letter to Smith confirming the appointment the Rajah instructed him to produce a special issue of the *Gazette* conveying his decisions. '. . . I am deeply shocked that you should have adopted such an intransigent attitude in negotiations,' Vyner told Anthony on 12 October. 'The proposals made by His Majesty's Government were eminently reasonable, having regard to the War and that Sarawak was overrun. . . .' He also expressed his annoyance that Anthony had spent £20,000 on the Commission's Regent's Park house and £5,000 on fittings. '. . . You may neither use in future the style and title of Rajah Muda,' he concluded, 'nor consider you have any right of succession to the Raj of Sarawak; . . .'¹⁰⁸

During August and September a series of events was in train which, given Anthony's inflexible position on the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, could hardly have been avoided. However, it is important to take account of the fact that the Rajah wrote his letter dismissing Anthony on the same day (4

October) that Hall finally received Wynn Parry and McNair's joint opinion on the international legal status of Sarawak.* As this opinion upheld Sarawak's sovereignty and could only strengthen Anthony's determination to resist Colonial Office pressure, it seems reasonable to suggest that it was closely connected with his dismissal and the Rajah's meeting the same evening with Hall.

No doubt realizing that Anthony was unlikely to remain silent about what had happened, the Rajah or MacBryan made two attempts to ensure that he did not cause trouble. On 7 November Anthony was called in to the Sarawak Government Office and told by Smith that the deeds of the Commission's house would be transferred to him and his allowance of £2,800 p.a. continued for life if he accepted two conditions: that he should 'not in future interfere with any public affairs affecting Sarawak, His Highness the Rajah or any members of His Highness' family', or 'indulge in any public or private talk whatsoever, malicious or otherwise, concerning Sarawak, His Highness the Rajah or His Highness' family'.¹⁰⁹ Anthony apparently rejected this out of hand although it was more than a year before he made any public reference to the attempt to buy him off.¹¹⁰ Another move came in late January 1946 when Anthony had begun an energetic campaign to publicize what was happening about Sarawak. Anthony's monthly allowance was delayed,¹¹¹ as if to suggest that it might be discontinued altogether if he insisted on talking to the newspapers. However, a letter from Bertram to the Rajah put an end to this.¹¹²

The Rajah's Reasons

Not the least of the historian's problems is that the Rajah left pathetically little of his own views on the cession. Apart from what may eventually be revealed in the Colonial Office files, his only surviving comments are in two letters written more than ten years after the event. In 1958 he told his niece, Jean Halsey, who had been bitterly critical of him in 1946 and now regretted the family breach that cession brought about: 'A lot of Sarawakians thought as you did, but were nervous of expressing their opinions. I knew that cession was an unpopular move, but I did it as I thought that Peter would make a very irresponsible future Raja. So there it is'.¹¹³ And two years later he wrote to his former Private Secretary, B. J. C. Spurway: 'I was very criticized when I gave up Sarawak in '46, but I did it for the best, as I had no trust in Peter, and I saw too much of my father, when in his dotage. Sarawak is no place for aged or aging Rajah's [*sic*] . . .'.¹¹⁴

However, the Rajah's remarks must be assessed in the light of the fact that he had indeed been 'very criticized' and in attempting to defend himself may have misrepresented his original reasons. Even when all the records for the period are made public, the basis for assessing the Rajah's more personal motives may be no better than it is now.†

*For the opinion, see Appendix I.

†Sir Steven Runciman concluded that '[The Rajah] himself seems to have been moved by

First of all, it is fairly clear that the Rajah never had any intention of returning to Sarawak after the war to resume the reins of office. Then aged 72 and with his energies failing, his main wish seems to have been for a quiet life in England where he could pursue his old love of gardening and attend the occasional race meeting. The prospect of financing and supervising the reconstruction made necessary by the war, the extent of which was as yet unknown, must have been daunting to say the least.

More importantly, it may have seemed to him by late 1945 that there was something inevitable about a Colonial Office take-over. Pressure for Colonial Office intervention in Sarawak's internal affairs had mounted in the immediate pre-war years and a Labour government could be expected to behave even less sympathetically. In October 1941 the Rajah had signed a Supplementary Agreement allowing for the appointment of a British Representative and must have known which way this arrangement was pointing. He may well have taken the view that there could be no practical compromise between Brooke rule and rule by the Colonial Office.

Then there was the question of Anthony. It may have been that his nephew's inflexibility in negotiations with the Colonial Office finally persuaded the Rajah that he should not succeed him and that Sarawak should instead become a colony of the Crown. As we have seen, Vyner had become exasperated with Anthony on a number of previous occasions and had serious doubts about his nephew's suitability as a successor. Relations between the Rajah and his nephew had once again become strained in June or July 1945 when the Rajah made a request to the Commission for a large sum of money.* This was refused on the grounds that it would be illegal,¹¹⁵ a decision which was perfectly within the Commission's powers and in accordance with the Colonial Office's concern to preserve Sarawak's reserve funds. However, the Rajah had always been in the habit of regarding these as subject to his personal control and his anger was heightened by the Commission's purchase in August of the Regent's Park house,¹¹⁶ a decision which he regarded as an unnecessary extravagance. All this can hardly have endeared Anthony to his uncle at a time when the Colonial Office was beginning to insist that the Provisional Government should be more accommodating in its negotiating stance.

The popular view was that the Rajah sold Sarawak to the British government, thereby stirring up a family row. Newspaper reports at the

distrust of his heir, and his own age and poor health. But he could give more valid reasons. . . .' (*The White Rajahs*. . . , p. 259.) Robert Payne wrote that 'alone, on his own responsibility, Vyner decided the time was soon coming when Sarawak would have to take its place among the possessions of the British Commonwealth'. (*The White Rajahs of Sarawak*, New York, 1960, p. 176.)

*In July 1945, Vyner Brooke established a £40,000 trust for the benefit of his daughters Elizabeth and Valerie, MacBryan and Smith being appointed trustees. In September 1947 the Rajah was under pressure from his daughters for advances on their allowances and the Raneé then suggested that the capital sum be made over to them. However, MacBryan balked at this for some time.

time certainly gave this impression and there are some former Sarawak officers and their wives who still believe it to have been the case. Certainly, the Rajah's preoccupation from the late 1930s with making financial provision for his family supports this interpretation. The Rajah's 'sale' of his prerogative powers to the Committee of Administration for \$2,000,000 in 1941 and his later attempt in Australia to take over Sarawak's assets strongly suggests that he was willing to dispose of Sarawak for cash, regardless of his brother's and nephew's rights or 'the interests of the natives'.

As we have seen, however, cession was not dependent on a financial settlement of any kind. Vyner Brooke did not agree to cession for financial gain. His understanding was, very simply, that he and his family would be *no worse off* as a result of cession. Instead of the £1,000,000 'sale' of popular rumour, what he in fact received was £100,000 from the Trust Fund established by his father in 1912 against just such a contingency. With a capital sum of £100,000,* subject to income tax, and with a wife and two daughters to maintain in the style to which they were accustomed, he was definitely worse off.[†] Unlike the directors of the Chartered Company, whose interest in obtaining the best possible financial settlement for their shareholders and more realistic attitude towards the Colonial Office kept negotiations on the annexation of North Borneo going until mid-1946,[‡] the Rajah had been prepared to place his trust in a gentlemen's agreement with George Hall. Even if he had been prepared to drive a harder bargain, however, there was no big business interest to lobby in his support. As we have seen, the Borneo Company favoured greater British involvement and there is no indication that Shell favoured the continuation of the Raj.

The Rajah's willingness to give up his responsibilities and his lack of confidence in Anthony were important factors in making cession

*Of the £100,000, MacBryan was apparently given £10,000 by the Rajah.

†From August 1948 the Rajah became involved in correspondence with the Colonial Office over the financial settlement. He continued to refer to Hall's verbal assurance of 24 October 1945 that he and his family and other dependants would be 'no worse off' as a result of cession. It was finally agreed to implement a financial settlement, made between Charles Brooke and Lord Esher in 1911 before Vyner and Sylvia were married and overlooked by the Rajah and the Colonial Office at the time of cession. Under its terms, an annual payment of £4,000 from Sarawak revenue was to be made to Vyner and on his death £3,000 annually to Sylvia and £500 to each of their children. No payment had been made to Vyner since his father's death and the cession agreement had effectively invalidated the original document. (CO 938/5 58582)

The Rajah made reference to the £1,000,000 in a 1956 petition to the Queen, emphasizing that 'in fact no financial compensation, pecuniary profit, nor recompense of any kind was received . . . in consideration of the . . . Cession . . .' and asking that everything be done to make it plain that the rumour was 'untrue and defamatory'. He also complained that Hall had not honoured his 6 February 1946 undertaking to establish the Sarawak State Trust Fund. (Petition dated 10 February 1956, Brooke Papers, Box 12/2.) It was suggested to Creech-Jones in 1949 that the Rajah should be made a peer. However, the Labour Party declined to confer this honour, probably in the belief that it would look too much like a 'pay-off'.

‡No account of these negotiations is available.

possible. However, by July or August 1945 the Labour government had decided that Brooke rule should come to an end. Once the decision had been made, it was important that the initiative should be seen to come from the Rajah. It was also necessary to obtain at least token approval from the people of Sarawak, hence the Colonial Office's agreement that MacBryan should be dispatched to Sarawak as soon as the Australian military administration came to an end in late December. Concern about Australian interests was still sufficient for the purpose of MacBryan's visit to be kept secret from the Australians and for Paskin (who was on a mission to Malaya) to be sent by Mountbatten to brief Macaskie at Labuan.¹¹⁷

Before the war the Colonial Office had indicated strong interest in Sarawak's economic resources and the belief that in spite of the doubtful future of Miri's oil, the state would ultimately prove to possess enormous economic potential. The arguments used at that time to justify a British take-over were that exploitation of Sarawak's resources was essential in order to provide social services on a par with those available in British colonies; that Sarawak could be used in resisting any southwards sweep by Japan; and that the longer a take-over was postponed, the more difficult international conditions would make it. But the Japanese invasion and the twin dangers of nationalism and international opinion had suggested a slightly different set of arguments: the Pacific War had emphasized the strategic importance of both Sarawak and Brunei oil; Indonesian nationalism posed a direct threat to British interests in South-East Asia; and fear of Australian designs and American anti-colonial sentiment suggested immediate action. A potentially valuable state like Sarawak could no longer be allowed to remain independent and British imperialism could be rendered palatable by such phrases as 'the post-war reconstruction of South-East Asia'.

1. Vyner Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 16 December 1941, CA A981 (Sarawak 2: Visit of Rajah).
2. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 31 December 1945, Brooke Papers, Box 19.
3. Vyner Brooke to Sir Ronald Cross, 31 January 1942, CO 531/30 [53079].
4. Interview with Mr B. A. Trechman, 4 March 1975.
5. Personal communication from Mr E. H. Elam, 6 July 1976.
6. Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 18 September 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 19.
7. Personal communication from Mr J. L. Noakes, 8 October 1976.
8. Personal communication from Mr C. Pitt Hardacre, 3 October 1976.
9. H. E. Jones (Controller of Commonwealth Investigation Branch) to Secretary, Dept. of External Affairs, 12 March 1942, 'Sarawak: Visit of the Rajah . . . to Australia', CA A981.
10. Corson to Evatt, 21 January 1942, CO 531/30 [53001/4].
11. Colonial Office to Cross, 17 February 1942, *ibid.*
12. *ibid.*
13. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 24 March 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 19.

14. Vyner Brooke to Cross, 27 April 1942, *ibid.*
15. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 20 April 1942, *ibid.*
16. Anthony Brooke to Gent, 28 April 1942, *ibid.*
17. Vyner Brooke to Pitt Hardacre, 3 April 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.
18. Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 27 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3; Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 10 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 19.
19. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 20 June 1942, cited by Bertram Brooke in his letter to Paskin, —December 1943, Brooke Papers, Box 10/5.
20. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 9 December 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 19; *Daily Mirror*, 7 December 1942.
21. Bertram Brooke to Aplin, —July 1943, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
22. Bertram Brooke to Paskin, 30 November 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 19.
23. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 16 November 1942, Brooke Papers, *ibid.*
24. Personal communication from Mr C. Pitt Hardacre, 27 October 1976.
25. Aplin to Paskin, 8 July 1943, CO 531/1 [53077]; Monson to G. H. B. Chance (Treasury), 28 July 1943, *ibid.*
26. Anthony Brooke to Margery Perham, 7 April 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1.
27. Anthony Brooke to Gent, 6 April 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
28. Anthony Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 20 April 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 19.
29. *ibid.*
30. Cited by Anthony Brooke in his letter to Margery Perham, 7 April 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1.
31. Anthony Brooke to Margery Perham, 8 July 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
32. Anthony Brooke to Gent, 24 July 1942, CO 531/30 [53011/4].
33. Cited by F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in The Far East 1943-46*, London 1956, p. 146. (My emphasis.)
34. *ibid.*, p. 145.
35. 'Future Constitutional Policy For British Colonial Territories In South-East Asia', 14 January 1944, C.M.B. (44) 3, War Cabinet Records, CAB 98. Subsequent quotations from this document.
36. 'Draft Directive on Policy in Borneo', 18 January 1944, C.M.B. (44) 6, *ibid.*
37. Minutes of the first meeting of War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo, 22 March 1944, C.M.B. (44), *ibid.*
38. Cited by Donnison, *British Military Administration . . .*, p. 146.
39. Personal communication from Professor Julius Stone, 9 July 1976.
40. G. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, Canberra, 1963, pp. 401-5.
41. Macaskie to Percival Dingle, 20 October 1945, and to Gent, —November 1945, Macaskie Papers, File I.
42. Minute No. 4209, War Cabinet meeting of 28 May 1945, CA 2673, Vol. XV.
43. *The Facts About Sarawak*, p. 76.
44. Aplin's official and personal reports to Vyner Brooke, 25 July 1944, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
45. Vyner Brooke to Stanley, 3 August 1944, *The Facts About Sarawak*, p. 78.
46. Stanley to Vyner Brooke, 4 September 1944, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
47. Vyner Brooke to Stanley, 21 September 1944, *ibid.*
48. Stanley to Vyner Brooke, 27 September 1944, *ibid.* (My emphasis.)
49. 'Notes of a discussion . . . on the 6th October between the Tuan Muda and Mr Gent . . .', Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.
50. Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, March 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K. M. Brooke.

51. Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 24 April 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K. M. Brooke.
52. Extract of a letter from Bertram Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 21 May 1944, *WO* 203/3973.
53. Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 29 June 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K. M. Brooke.
54. Mountbatten to Stanley, 29 October 1944, *WO* 273/3973.
55. Mountbatten to Halsey, 7 July 1944, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1.
56. Gent to Anthony Brooke,—November 1944, *WO* 203/3973. A copy of Anthony's letter to *The Times* is not available.
57. Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 7 November 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K. M. Brooke.
58. Anthony Brooke to CCASO, 21 November 1944, *WO* 273/3973.
59. Anthony Brooke to Director of Intelligence, 26 November 1944, *ibid.*
60. Anthony Brooke to Mountbatten, 1 December 1944, *WO* 203/5033.
61. War Office to Mountbatten, 2 December 1944, *WO* 273/3973; Mountbatten to War Office, 4 December 1944, *ibid.*
62. Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 27 November 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K. M. Brooke.
63. DICA to Major J. M. Jones, Inf. ADPR (U.S.), 21 November 1944, *WO* 273/3973.
64. *SG*, 15 November 1944.
65. Mountbatten to Wavell, 8 December 1944, *WO* 203/5033.
66. Vyner Brooke to Aplin, 29 December 1944, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
67. Vyner Brooke to Stanley, 18 January 1945, *ibid.*
68. *ibid.*
69. Macaskie to Gent, 29 December 1944, *CO* 531/31 [2344].
70. Minute by Paskin, 3 January 1945, *ibid.*
71. Anderson to Gent, 2 February 1945, *ibid.*
72. Anthony Brooke to Stanley, 13 February 1945, *CO* 531/31/3.
73. Anthony Brooke to Stanley, 16 February 1945, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
74. Stanley to Anthony Brooke, 22 February 1945. This letter is not available.
75. Anthony Brooke to Stanley, 27 February 1945, *The Facts About Sarawak*, p. 79.
76. 'Brief note of the proposals of His Majesty's Government in regard to their future relations with the Government of Sarawak, for discussion with the Sarawak representatives', *CO* 531/31/3 [53117/5].
77. 'Sarawak Discussions. Record of the opening meeting held at the Colonial Office . . . 13th March, 1945 . . .', *ibid.*
78. Minutes of these meetings can also be found at *CO* 531/31/3 [53117/5].
79. Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
80. Stanley to Vyner Brooke, 17 July 1945, *The Facts About Sarawak*, p. 81. Subsequent quotations from this source.
81. David Goldsworthy, *Colonial Issues in British Politics 1945–1961*. . . , Oxford, 1971, p. 14.
82. I.C.M. 45(47) Conclusions, cited in an anonymous minute, —August 1945, *CO* 531/31/3 [53117/5]. Subsequent quotations from this source.
83. 'Previous Cabinet Policy Towards Sarawak', *CO* 537/1632.
84. *ibid.*
85. Cabinet Conclusions C.M. (45), 52nd conclusions, cited in *CO* 537/1631.
86. The relevant files are probably *CO* 531/250/31/3 [53117/1, Pt. II]; *CO* 531/31/3 [53117/1, Pt. I]; *CO* 531/248/31/3 [53117]; *CO* 531/253/31/3 [53117/2]. All are closed until 1996.

87. Vyner Brooke to Secretary of State (James Griffiths), 12 December 1950, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
88. 'Relations of the State of Sarawak with His Majesty's Government', 24 October 1946, Mark Morrison Papers (B).
89. Document in the possession of Mrs E. Hussey.
90. MacBryan to Smith, 4 December 1947, *ibid.* Smith was also given to understand that he would receive an honour.
91. Minute by Galsworthy, 8 December 1945, CO 531/31/1 [53077].
92. Minute by Paskin, 28 November 1945, *ibid.*
93. MacBryan to Perceval Lloyd, 24 October 1947, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21B. The Rajah was to receive £10,000 a year, the Ranee £3,000, Elizabeth and Valerie £2,000 each, Bertram £5,000 and Anthony £3,000.
94. Minute by Galsworthy, 8 December 1945, CO 531/31/1 [53077].
95. Gent to Vyner Brooke, 13 December 1945, *ibid.*
96. Minute by Galsworthy, 18 December 1945, *ibid.*
97. *Hansard*, 6 February 1946.
98. Paskin to Sarawak Government Agent, 7 December 1944, ref. no. 55104/10/A/44, cited in a letter from the Colonial Office to Smith, 14 December 1945, CO 531/31/1 [53077].
99. Sylvia Brooke, *Queen of the Headhunters*, p. 150.
100. Anthony Brooke to Margaret Noble, 5 December 1976, Brooke Papers, Box 12/15.
101. Sylvia Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 8 September 1945, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
102. *ibid.*
103. Vyner Brooke to Provisional Government, 10 September 1945, *ibid.*
104. 'Minutes of the Sixty-Third Meeting of the Sarawak Commission. . . . September 18th, 1945 . . .', *ibid.*
105. Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 20 September 1945, *ibid.* Similar letters were addressed to the other members.
106. Minutes of the Sixty-Fourth Meeting of the Sarawak Commission September 22nd 1945 . . .', *ibid.*
107. Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 4 October 1945, *ibid.*
108. Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 12 October 1945, cited by Sylvia Brooke, *Queen of the Headhunters* . . . , pp. 149-50.
109. Anthony Brooke to Crown Agents, 19 October 1946, CO 531/32 [53185].
110. *Manchester Guardian*, 3 January 1947.
111. Note by Bertram Brooke, 22 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
112. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 29 January 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
113. Vyner Brooke to Jean Halsey, 14 March 1958, Brooke Papers, Vol. 17.
114. Vyner Brooke to Spurway, 7 October 1960. Letter in the possession of Mrs Spurway.
115. Anonymous memorandum marked 'Confidential', 13 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/2. In an accompanying note, Bertram Brooke vouched for its accuracy.
116. Extract from Minutes of Sarawak Government Commission meeting, 3 August 1945, CO 531/32 [53185].
117. Macaskie to W. P. N. L. Ditmas, 24 December 1945, Macaskie Papers, File 2; J. J. Paskin, 'Notes on a Visit to Labuan 22nd and 23rd December, 1945', CO 537/1573.

VIII

The Legitimization of Cession

ONCE Sarawak's future had been decided, all that remained was the problem of how to legitimize the transfer of sovereignty. Confident that MacBryan could persuade the Malay and Chinese leaders to give their approval, the Rajah assured the Colonial Office that this would suffice. The repercussions of MacBryan's visit and unexpected opposition from the Malay National Union overturned the original plan. However, in its subsequent arrangements designed to make cession legally defensible the Colonial Office was primarily concerned with British domestic opinion. The two-man parliamentary mission to 'ascertain native views' was no more than a sop to Parliament and the press. Although the Rajah had originally felt that European officers should not vote on the cession issue and that there should be a secret ballot, the cession bill was passed by a European majority on a show of hands. The Colonial Office representative and a handful of Brooke officers played a key role in ensuring that cession went through and when the Colonial Office suffered a last-minute attack of nerves, Chance itself made a decisive entrance. Altogether, the cession was a grubby affair, but if it was to go through it could hardly have been otherwise.

MacBryan's Visit

The Colonial Office was loath to have MacBryan further involved in the cession arrangements but the Rajah insisted that he was the only person who could obtain the agreement of the Sarawak leaders. MacBryan's dubious record raised some eyebrows in the War Office and the question was debated at the highest level before permission could be obtained for him to visit Sarawak. Even then it was on the strict condition that he was accompanied by an officer of the MCS, W. C. S. Corry. Informing Mountbatten's Chief of Staff, Brigadier E. C. Gibbons, of the projected visit and its importance for the constitutional future of Borneo, the War Office expressed serious reservations about MacBryan:

However much we may deplore the instrument chosen for this mission [the] choice has been made by the S[ecretary] of S[tate] for Colonies with his eyes open and War Office at Army Council level has agreed to the individual in question being sent out for the purpose. Corry has been fully instructed and told not to let him out of his sight.¹

Hall himself informed Mountbatten of the situation.² It was also known at the highest level in the Colonial Office that MacBryan would be taking large sums of money to Kuching to distribute to those whose approval of cession he was seeking. Arrangements were made by Smith with the Crown Agents in December for the equivalent of £55,000 to be paid to MacBryan by the Chartered Bank in Singapore. Of this, £22,500 was intended as charitable payments to the three main ethnic groups, while the remainder consisted of back-payment of salaries and allowances to the *datus* which the Rajah described as 'final distributions'.³ 'This . . . sheds more light on the form which the consultation with the natives is apparently to take', an official observed archly,⁴ but it was felt that the agreement with the Rajah could not be placed at risk by suggesting that the payments be postponed. 'This does not look very pleasant', Hall confessed, 'but we are in no position to interfere.'⁵

From what is known of MacBryan's visit there are some obvious parallels with Sir Harold MacMichael's mission to the Malay rulers in late 1945.⁶ Both men were instructed to obtain approval for a course of action which had already been decided and were not too fussy about the methods they used. While there is no evidence that MacBryan actually used the threat of prosecution for collaboration to put pressure on the *datus*, it is very likely that he promised them immunity. Police Inspector Edward Brandah had prepared dossiers on most of the *datus* and Malay police inspectors and had told them personally of his determination that they should be punished before the Rajah returned. Consequently, there was 'an atmosphere of considerable uneasiness as to what attitude the Authorities would take *vis-à-vis* those who had worked for the Japanese'.⁷ Again, there is no way of verifying later accusations that MacBryan used trickery and even force to obtain the necessary signatures, but it is clear that he deliberately misrepresented Bertram and Anthony Brooke as having agreed to the cession.

MacBryan and Corry arrived at Labuan in late December and after a meeting with Macaskie and Paskin they went on to Kuching. This was MacBryan's own account given to the Rajah two years after the event:

. . . When you sent me to Sarawak to obtain agreement to the cession I explained to the native members of the Councils (and to old Tiang Swee too) that if they conceded your wish for cession in their interests and allowed the establishment of the Sarawak State Trust Fund . . . the natives would be the real beneficiaries . . . because the interest on the fund, as each member of your 'family' died, would become available for scholarships on the lines of Rhodes scholarships. By this arrangement, as time went on, there would be in Sarawak a number of highly educated natives who would perpetuate the Brooke tradition in the East to the lasting advantage of the natives and the British. When they understood this all the members of the Councils, including the Datu Patinggi, were only too glad to sign the instruments providing for cession which I brought back with me. . . .⁸

While there are some gaps and inconsistencies in the evidence, it is possible to piece together a reasonably accurate picture of what actually took place.⁹ MacBryan's first move was to visit each of the datu and Ong Tiang Swee separately, seeking their signatures to a 'letter' which gave the Rajah authority to go ahead with the cession. He also told them not to discuss the matter with any *tuan* (European) and promised cash payments of \$12,000 to the Datu Patinggi, \$10,000 each to the Datus Menteri, Hakim, Amar, and Pahlawan and \$2,000 to the *mufti*, Haji Nawawi, who was to witness their signatures. The Datu Pahlawan and Ong Tiang Swee also agreed to accept \$42,500 each for distribution to Malays and Chinese left destitute by the war.

Only the Datu Patinggi refused to sign and the next day he was visited by the Datus Amar and Menteri, together with Abang Mohd. Daim,* who told him they feared for his safety if he did not conform with MacBryan's wishes. On 4 January the Datu Patinggi wrote to Col. C. E. Gascoigne, Treasurer in the Military Administration, describing what had happened and asking for an inquiry into the circumstances of MacBryan's visit. He also asked Gascoigne what he should do because the document was due to be signed at his house on 7 January. Gascoigne, however, does not seem to have replied. The Military Administration was turning a blind eye to the whole affair, probably on instructions from Macaskie.

However, MacBryan had to move faster than he originally intended. A meeting of the Supreme Council was called for 5 January and was attended by the Datus Patinggi, Pahlawan, Amar, Menteri, and Ong Tiang Swee, providing the quorum of five required under the 1941 Constitution. Corry seems to have been present throughout the proceedings. Having displayed his power of attorney from the Rajah requesting the Datu Patinggi to receive him as his 'envoy and representative' and to 'carry out his orders as if they were my own',¹⁰ MacBryan retired with the old datu to an inside room. Shortly afterwards, MacBryan emerged and told the others that he was refusing to sign unless, in addition to the \$12,000 already promised, he was given sole rights to the eggs of the Turtle Islands[†] and the title of Datu Patinggi was made hereditary. When this was conceded after considerable discussion, MacBryan signed a separate agreement[‡] with the old datu, and all five members then signed two Orders-in-Council.

The first of the Orders¹¹ empowered MacBryan to act as Chief Secretary until 8 January so that he could convene a meeting of the Council Negri. The second⁺ (probably the 'letter' MacBryan had originally mentioned) provided that, notwithstanding the 1941 Constitution, as from 1 January 1946 'all the prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercised by the Rajah and not otherwise'. It stated that the Rajah intended to cede

*The father-in-law of the Datu Patinggi's eldest grandson, Abang Ibrahim.

†See above, pp. 36-7, 153.

‡For this document, see Appendix III.

+For this Order and also Order No. C-22 of the Council Negri, see Appendix III.

Sarawak to the Crown and that the members of the Supreme Council had indicated their 'unanimous advice and consent'. Abang Haji Mustapha read out a Malay translation of this document and a version in *jawi* script was signed by all the datus present.

Ong Tiang Swee was then asked to withdraw and MacBryan proceeded to convene a meeting of the Council Negri of which, as Chief Secretary, he was *ex-officio* President. The business of the Council consisted of authorizing two Orders. The first of these was an indemnification Order covering the Rajah for all actions taken from 25 December 1941 until 31 December 1945 which lacked validity under the 1941 Constitution. All were now legally presumed to have been carried out by the Rajah 'with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council and the Council Negri in joint session assembled'.

The second Order authorized the setting aside of £1,000,000 from the State's reserve funds for the Sarawak State Trust Fund. Interest on the sum was to be paid out according to the Rajah's absolute discretion and upon his death a number of trustees would assume this responsibility. The Rajah also possessed absolute discretion over the formulation of the Trust Deed and the selection of Trustees. 'In establishing this Fund', the Order concluded, 'it is the purpose of the Council Negri to assure [*sic*] that the establishments of His Highness the Rajah and of his Ministers shall be independently maintained in view of His Highness' decision to provide for the cession of the State of Sarawak to His Majesty the King.' The next day (6 January) at the Datu Patinggi's house this truly extraordinary four-man assembly authorized Order No. C-22 (*Constitutional Repeal*) 1946 which repealed the 1941 Constitution in its entirety, thus relegating the Supreme Council and the Council Negri to limbo until the constitution was revived by the Rajah after civil government had been resumed. MacBryan then distributed the money from a suitcase, Corry not being present at this stage of proceedings.

MacBryan also persuaded Ong Tiang Swee and the principal Chinese association leaders to sign a statement supporting a new agreement with the British government:

We understand that the individual members of the Supreme Council have accorded their unanimous advice and consent that such an Agreement should be negotiated, and we hereby affirm and declare our complete confidence in the judgement and sagacity of Your Highness and our unreserved support for whatever measures Your Highness determines to pursue, since we know full well that the paramount interest of Your Highness is the welfare of all the people of all the races dwelling in Sarawak.*

*In addition to Ong Tiang Swee, the following also signed the document:

Wee Kheng Chiang (Hokkien Association)	Lee Wing Thoong (Kwong Hui Seow Association)
Tan Bak Lim (Teochew Association)	Yong Pong Chiang (Hakka Association)
Wong Cheng Guan (Foochow Association)	Chan Qui Chong (Chawan Hui Kuan)
Sia Lai Hin (Lui Chew Association)	Woon Siang Kwang (Kheng Chew Association)
(?) (Heng Ann Association)	

Later that month, Ong Tiang Swee sent a cable to the Rajah expressing the appreciation of the Sarawak Chinese for the \$42,500 which he had given. The cable also stressed the loyalty of the Chinese community and their hope that he would return to Sarawak shortly. Neither action became public knowledge in Sarawak until the end of January.

Returning to Singapore, MacBryan and Corry sent reports to the Rajah and the Colonial Office before meeting Mountbatten. 'The agreements reached are unanimous', MacBryan cabled the Rajah, 'and fulfil in every sense Your Highness' expectations.'¹² Corry* told the Colonial Office that the mission had been 'successfully completed'. He also wrote to Gent that as far as he could see it would be 'perfectly fair to go ahead with the change of status'.¹³ Immediately on his return to London, MacBryan obtained the Rajah's signature to two further Orders designed to make the establishment of the Trust Fund 'final and irrevocable'. The first of these was a promissory note pledging the Sarawak government to pay £1,000,000 to the trustees of the Trust Fund and £20,000 together with an annuity of £1,400 to MacBryan himself on his request, all payments being secured against Sarawak's Reserve Fund and recoverable by legal process. (MacBryan had by this time been appointed Principal Trustee by the Rajah.) The second document authorized MacBryan to institute proceedings for the recovery of these moneys in the event of any breach of the conditions of cession set out in another document executed by the Rajah that day. What these conditions were, however, remains a mystery.

On 16 January MacBryan presented the Orders signed in Sarawak to the Colonial Office, no doubt emphasizing that Sarawak's constitutional forms were *sui generis*.

As you told me yesterday [the Rajah wrote to MacBryan the next day] it is not necessary for our way of framing up our Constitution in Sarawak to tally exactly with the way of thinking of the legal pundits of the Colonial Office. There must be give and take on both sides. If Sarawakians are satisfied with the legality of our own Sarawakian Constitution I don't see why the Colonial Office legal luminaries shouldn't be satisfied.¹⁴

However, it soon became apparent that the documents were of dubious validity, even by Sarawak standards. There were a number of objections, not the least being that Sarawak was under a military administration which did not recognize the legal authority of any previously constituted civil body. Furthermore, the *ad hoc* meetings called by MacBryan did not satisfy the formal requirements regarding membership laid down by the 1941 Constitution. Finally, there was the nice legal question as to whether the Rajah-in-Council, as established by the 1941 Constitution, possessed

*Corry later came to believe that he had been duped by MacBryan. 'I undertook the mission rather too soon after being released from wartime internment', he admitted. 'My mental reactions were not back to normal and I have subsequently regretted having agreed to go to Sarawak so soon.' (Transcript of a tape recorded interview with W. C. S. Corry . . . , n. d., Rhodes House MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 215.) Sir Dennis White also attested to Corry's change of heart. (Interview, 22 January 1975.)

the authority to repeal that constitution in its entirety and return to the *status quo ante* in which the Rajah's prerogative powers were absolute. His proclamation of the King as his heir was certainly invalid. Presented as formal proof that the Rajah had been authorized by the two councils to proceed with cession, the documents would have been laughed out of court.

The interest already being displayed by such eminent authorities as Margery Perham, together with Anthony Brooke's publicity campaign, meant that the Colonial Office became extremely defensive. In late January, according to one observer, it had been 'brought to a halt' on Sarawak and did not know what to do.¹⁵ The possibility of reconvening the Provisional Government was even considered. The problem was to find some alternative means of legitimization which would not present too many practical difficulties and which would withstand the attacks bound to be made by the anti-cession faction in England and by the Conservative Party.

It was quickly decided that the cession would have to be put in the form of enabling legislation at properly constituted meetings of the Council Negri and Supreme Council* and that the Rajah should visit Sarawak for that purpose. This proposal was made by Hall on 1 February and was immediately accepted, the Rajah no doubt having insisted that his authority would be sufficient to guarantee that cession would go through without any trouble.

The Announcement of Cession

On 6 February a message from the Rajah to the people of Sarawak revealed that the King had agreed to the proposal that Sarawak should be ceded to him. 'We believe', he said, 'that there lies, in the future, hope for my people in the prospect of an era of awakening, enlightenment, stability and social progress, such as they have never had before.'¹⁶ The acceptance of the cession, he added, would consummate the hopes of the first Rajah. Denying press reports that the British government had sought to impose a new political order on Sarawak, he insisted that the initiative had come from him alone. His intention was that they should 'enjoy the more direct protection of His Majesty, and those inestimable rights of freedom which His Majesty's citizens enjoy'. Then came an uncharacteristically bald assertion of the Rajah's authority in language which suggested MacBryan's hand:[†]

It is the case in Sarawak that all authority derives from the Rajah. The people trust the Rajah and what the Rajah advises for the people is the will of the people. I am

*This had been the advice given by Boyd in a memorandum to Hall, 11 December 1945. (Boyd Papers, Box 3/6.)

†Bertram Brooke believed that the message had been devised by the Raneé and MacBryan. 'Its egotistic and flamboyant vulgarity', he wrote, 'is entirely inconsistent with his [Vyner's] character, which has many aspects—but vulgarity is not one of them!' (Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.)

the spokesman of the people's will. No other than myself has [the] right to speak on your behalf. No one of you will question whatso'er I do in his high interest. No power nor personal interest shall subvert my peoples' happiness and future. The happiness of your future lies within another realm. There shall be no Rajah of Sarawak after me. My people will become the subjects of The King. Now draws near the time when I will come to you. Expect me soon.

THIS IS FOR YOUR GOOD MY ROYAL COMMAND

Announcing the Rajah's decision in the House of Commons the same day, Hall explained that during negotiations following the dismissal of the Provisional Government, the Rajah himself indicated that the Colonial Office's proposals did not go far enough and offered to cede Sarawak to the Crown subject to the agreement of the 'Supreme State Council'.¹⁷ The Rajah then sent his personal emissary to Sarawak 'to consult leading representatives of the people' and in view of their 'very favourable reaction', now felt able to proceed. The necessary document was being drawn up and would be 'presented to the representatives of the people for their agreement' on the Rajah's return to Sarawak, probably in March.

Hall also revealed that the Rajah would hand over Sarawak's accumulated reserves of £2,750,000 and Post Office Savings Bank account of £77,000 on the understanding that £1,000,000 be set aside for a trust fund. This would provide for the Rajah and his dependants and 'certain local functionaries' on a scale similar to that which existed before the Japanese invasion. The beneficiaries would be named and the benefits limited to their lifetimes, after which the income 'would be devoted to social and other measures designed for the progress and benefit of the people of the territory', thus providing a permanent memorial to the rule of the Brooke family in Sarawak.

When pressed by Oliver Stanley and other Conservatives about MacBryan and why it had been found necessary to go beyond the original constitutional requirements, Hall made a spirited defence. The Rajah himself, he insisted, had come to the Colonial Office and 'volunteered the cession'; MacBryan had been accompanied to Sarawak by 'a very high official from the Colonial Office' and the majority of members of the 'Council' had been approached. Stanley then pointed out that the negotiations to give the British government legislative power in Sarawak were initiated with the Provisional Government in early 1945 on the assumption that the Rajah was never going to return to Sarawak. It seemed wrong, he said, that 'something which might appear as annexation' should depend entirely on the Rajah who had no personal interest in the state's future and on the agency of MacBryan with whom he did not think Hall should be associated.

Reminding Stanley that he himself had opened negotiations on the imposition of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, Hall said that cession would only take place after 'full consultation with a properly constituted Supreme State Council in Sarawak'. The Labour leader in the House, Herbert Morrison, refused to give any undertaking that the question would be fully debated later. 'I am bound to say', he told Anthony Eden who expressed concern about the international implications, 'there is

something curious about the indignation of the Conservative Party over a little bit being added to the British Empire'. Nor would Hall respond to a final request that no decision be made until a referendum had been taken of the people of Sarawak.

One factor which helped the anti-cession faction in Britain and put the government and the Rajah on the defensive from the outset was the popular impression that the Rajah had 'sold out' for £1,000,000. 'BRITAIN BUYS SARAWAK. RAJAH HANDS IT OVER: £1,000,000 FUND', ran the *Evening Standard* headline on the afternoon of 6 February, but the significance of the fund was lost on most readers. 'It is not a deal in any sense of the word', protested MacBryan in the *Daily Herald* the next morning. 'It is a manifestation of the progressive viewpoint of Sir Charles.' But the same day the *Daily Express* described a party which the Rajah and Raneé had given at Ciro's Club to celebrate what it called the '£1,000,000 compensation' paid to the Brookes. It also reported the Raneé's extraordinary view of Brooke history. 'I think the Rajah deserves it after all his years in that country', she said in response to a toast in 'stingers'.* 'He has been striving for incorporation in the Empire all his life, just as the first and second rajahs fought for it all their lives.'

Evidently anticipating something like this ever since the dismissal of the Provisional Government in October, and particularly since the Malayan Union White Paper on 22 January,¹⁸ Anthony was quick to respond:

It is for the British Government and the Rajah of Sarawak to convince the world that this transaction amounts to anything more than crude Imperialism. Such a transaction, if allowed to stand, would defile the pages of British and Sarawak history. Whatever the Rajah and the British Government may say, sovereignty resides in the people of Sarawak and the rights of the people are not for sale. I shall personally oppose the measure by every means in my power.¹⁹

However, the British press took a generally complacent view of the affair. There were predictable expressions of regret that 'the most romantic kingdom in Asia will cease to exist'²⁰ but most British newspapers agreed that there was no place for weak states in the post-war 'reconstruction' of East Asia. Admitting that the cession was 'a rather queer business' and sceptical as to how consent had been obtained, the *Manchester Guardian* nevertheless felt that nothing could now be done. '. . . To go back on the Rajah's decision would be to create instability and the very evils everybody is trying to avoid.'²¹ The only critical responses came from *The Observer* and the *Sunday Times* whose assistant editor, H. V. Hodson, was sympathetic to Bertram and Anthony.²²

Reactions in Sarawak

While the British press had been speculating about the future of Sarawak since October 1945 and there had been echoes in Singapore,

*A corruption of *stengah* (half) which was Malay for a half whisky and soda.

little information had reached Sarawak. However, rumours of cession or something like it began circulating among the Kuching Malays from the time of MacBryan's visit and the Datu Patinggi's decision a few days later to hand over the \$14,000 he had received pending an investigation. Shortly afterwards the following poster appeared in Malay:

TO THE MALAY NATIONALS

Wake up! Be conscious! With flaming hearts and souls and revenge. Be it known that our native land has been sold secretly, and do all of you know it.

Let's live let's live let's live

It seems that the people of Sarawak have been secretly cheated. We do not know by whom? Do all brethren all know it, and by whom?

Our Malay officials and the principal Malay chiefs are only seated in their capacities of being such high officials for the benefit of their own selves only.

They do not act for the public, we never knew this for hundreds of years now, and now we must stand up as the people of Sarawak. . . .²³

On 10 February the Datu Patinggi wrote to the MNU expressing his shock at the Rajah's message and explaining, somewhat ingenuously, that he had thought the document which he and the other Supreme Council members had signed for MacBryan was no more than a request that the Rajah should return to Sarawak.²⁴ Two days later he provided full details of the payments which MacBryan had made.²⁵ The MNU's response was immediate. At a special general meeting that evening, Haji Abdul Rahman told the members present that the cession proposal was a 'vital problem of our history [which] is left to you to discuss fully'. After some further speeches it was unanimously decided to send a message to the Secretary of State and Parliament pointing out that the people had not been consulted and expressing their wish that the 1888 Treaty and the 1941 Constitution should be upheld.²⁶ While it was reported by Radio Singapore and *The Times*, the meeting aroused some local scepticism. A letter to the *Sarawak Tribune* signed 'Loyal Citizens' expressed amusement that the MNU which had been silent since its inception in 1939 was now attempting 'a Big move'—in the wrong direction. The MNU, it continued, should not be taken as representing the Malays and the native population in general but its own 2,000 members.²⁷

The Rajah took their action much more seriously, telling the MNU that he would consult the two councils and had 'only the interests of the people at heart',²⁸ and announcing that he would pay annual visits to Sarawak to pilot the people through the difficult period of transition.²⁹ Both messages were published in the *Sarawak Tribune*. However, this was insufficient reassurance for those who did not want to see the Brooke Raj come to an end. On 12 March the Datu Patinggi received a letter signed by the MNU president, his four vice-presidents, and four Kuching *tua kampung*, asking him to convey this message to the Rajah:

It is the will of the indigenous people of Sarawak that His Highness the Rajah . . . should be urged to render secure the Government of the country. If His Highness considers himself to be too old or ailing in health, he should hand over the Government to His Highness the Tuan Muda, who should become Rajah; and if

His Highness the Tuan Muda cannot shoulder the responsibilities on account of his health, then the title of Rajah should be conferred on his son Anthony Brooke . . . in order that the Brooke line should be unbroken. . . .³⁰

Although MacBryan had caused a ripple within Kuching's Malay community, the significance of his visit was not widely known. The first formal indication of Sarawak's future came when Singapore Radio broadcast *The Times* editorial on the Malayan Union White Paper of 22 January, suggesting that Sarawak, Brunei, North Borneo, and Labuan might be included.³¹ Initially, of course, the news was confined to those who possessed radio sets (no more than 500 in the whole state before the war)³² and had access to the Chinese-owned and operated *Sarawak Tribune*³³ or the Chinese language newspapers. Consequently the first recorded reactions were those of the Kuching and Sibu Chinese who generally favoured incorporation in the Malayan Union.

Immediately after the Singapore broadcast the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien called a three-day meeting in Kuching which was attended by more than forty delegates from various Chinese associations. However, interest focused as much on the question of Chinese political representation as on the future of Sarawak. On the first day (27 January) the meeting passed four important resolutions:

- (i) to choose five delegates who would interview Ong Tiang Swee about the letter to the Rajah which he and the other Chinese leaders had signed for MacBryan;
- (ii) to request all those who had signed to send telegrams to the Colonial Office stating that the letter 'did not represent the aspirations and wishes of the Chinese community';
- (iii) to establish an 'Overseas Chinese Committee for the Promotion of Democratic Politics';
- (iv) to organize a supreme authority for the Sarawak Chinese.³⁴

Indignation at Ong Tiang Swee's actions ran high during the meeting and the delegates decided that a telegram should be sent to the Colonial Secretary 'stating that Mr Ong Tiang Swee and others who signed the document . . . were acting on their own initiative: their actions were against the public opinion of the Chinese community; and requesting the practice of democratic politics in Sarawak'.³⁵ Meanwhile, in Sibu a meeting of delegates from similar associations which had originally been intended to organize a reception for the Rajah's home-coming, cancelled its plans after hearing the Singapore Radio broadcast. Interestingly enough, its leading lights were under the impression that if the people of Sarawak wanted self-government, the Rajah would return to resume his old position. Otherwise the Colonial Office should consider handing it over to the United Nations as a trust territory.³⁶ Writing to the Sibu *Hua Kiaw Jit Pau* (Overseas Chinese Daily News), Yao Ken Swee said that in view of the victory of democratic countries, it was clear that Sarawak should also follow the democratic trend which was developing in Malaya. The Atlantic Charter and the San Francisco Meeting, he continued, required the power of government to be handed back to the people.

Fundamental human rights and the rights of all communities could then be protected. Calling on the Chinese of Sibu not to wash their hands of Sarawak's political future, he called for the establishment of 'a committee for the promotion of democracy'. 'We should not be treated as guests or foreigners in Sarawak,' he concluded, 'we are the people of Sarawak. Whether Sarawak is to be self-governing or to come under the trusteeship of the United Nations in future, our "committee for the promotion of democracy" should be formed.'³⁷

In defence, Ong Tiang Swee wrote to the *Sarawak Tribune* in late February regretting that his cable of thanks to the Rajah had given rise to 'misinterpretation' and 'misunderstandings'. He explained that the action had been taken in the belief that the Rajah was returning and that there was no possibility of a change in Sarawak's future status. 'The need for consultation with regard to the despatch of the message therefore did not arise at that time', he wrote, 'as it was considered a mere formality.'³⁸ He added that since the Rajah had apparently made his decision before the cable was sent, it could hardly be regarded as having affected the situation in any way.

It was not until after the Rajah's message of 6 February that there was general Chinese comment, the assumption still being that Sarawak would form part of the Malayan Union and that the Sarawak Chinese would enjoy the rights of Malayan Union citizenship. Lim Kong Ngan, for example, saw incorporation in the Malayan Union as enabling Sarawak people to take part in politics. People of all races, he said, would have equal rights and a democratic system should be adopted.³⁹ Lo Fey Sian would have preferred Sarawak to be handed over to the United Nations but was prepared to settle for the Malayan Union: 'All we want', he said, 'is to have our status raised so that we can enjoy equal rights with the natives.'⁴⁰ Ong Tiang Swee and Kueh Choo Seng (the diocesan registrar) both thought that colonial status would mean economic and commercial development with more opportunities for the working classes and the natives. While the old system was suitable to people's needs, Kueh continued, autocratic rule now was 'decidedly out'. Ong also favoured incorporation in the Malayan Union in the belief that not only would the Chinese have equal rights, but *kapitan* status would be abolished and the powers of the *datus* limited. He also thought that the Chinese government would come to an agreement with the British government for the protection of the rights of the Sarawak Chinese.⁴¹ In Ngui Ah Shin's view 'what is good for the Malayan should be good enough for the Sarawakian'.⁴² Khan Ah Chong was the only Chinese interviewed who greatly regretted the loss of the Rajah and suggested that while cession might bring material developments, taxation would also increase.⁴³

The Chinese language press was non-committal and editorial comment was limited to the *Sarawak Tribune*,* a young newspaper whose editor-proprietor trod a careful path between genuine regret at the passing of

*The *Sarawak Tribune* was the successor of the *Sarawak Times* which was established in 1941 and was briefly revived after the war. There are no surviving copies of pre-war issues.

Brooke rule and approval of the developments which colonial status would bring about. Like the Chinese whose opinions his newspaper quoted, he emphasized that times had changed and that Sarawak must 'go forward with the tide'. Unless there was material progress, the people of Sarawak would be 'living in a state of blissful backwardness untouched by the 20th Century human progress and civilization . . .'. At the same time, he added, happiness could not be measured in miles of roads and railways and the volume of trade. And if progress created needs which could not be satisfied, 'like Esau we would have sold our birthright for a cup of pottage.'⁴⁴ The editor, Dennis Law, was representative of a group of mission-educated Chinese who had a stake in economic development and modernization but appreciated many of the features of personal rule and were somewhat dubious about what would replace it.* No doubt there was an undercurrent of anxiety that another kind of government might not be able to exercise the same control over the Ibans whose recent head-hunting exploits on the Rejang were well known. A good deal was seen to depend on the Rajah's visit and the assurances that he could give.

Beyond the major urban centres of Kuching, Sibü and Miri the only news for some time was the Rajah's message of 6 February which had been telegraphed to all government posts. However, there was no further explanation and when Archer instructed that meetings were to be held to ascertain people's reactions, there was very little to report. At Bintulu, for example, a meeting of all races was held but the people were so overwhelmed by the news that they could say nothing. In a confidential letter to Archer later, the Acting District Officer, Harry Buxton,[†] explained that the first reaction was one of puzzlement, followed in time by opposition to cession. But when he went to Kuching later he discovered that his letter had been destroyed.⁴⁵

Iban reactions to the cession announcement are difficult to reconstruct but from a number of reports it is clear that most of the up-river people continued to think for some time that the Rajah was still in authority and that nothing had changed. It was only the mission-educated Ibans of the First and Second Divisions who were aware of what had happened. The main focus was Kuching where there was a small group of Ibans in government service. The most articulate of these was Inspector Edward Brandah, who told the *Sarawak Tribune* that it would take the Ibans years to realize that there was no longer a Rajah:

The Ibans have respected the Rajah more as a father than as a ruler, and one of the instances of his intimate and personal interests and cares for the Iban welfare is that he personally informs some newly engaged Government Officers that the Ibans are not an inferior race but just different. The Ibans will lose a great and kind

*The *Sarawak Tribune* of 25 March 1946 reported the formation of the Badgers Club. Named after the badger which graced the coat of arms of the Raj, the club consisted of a number of English-educated Chinese including Ong Tiang Swee, Wee Kheng Chiang, William Tan, Ong Kee Hui, Dennis Law, and others who were born in Sarawak and were sentimentally attached to the Brookes. In some ways this group invites comparison with 'the Queen's Chinese' of Singapore and Penang.

[†]Buxton, a Eurasian from Malaya, worked for the Forestry Department before the war.

protector in the person of . . . the Rajah. But what can we do? We can sharpen our spears and parangs and adorn our shields when he informs us that there are troubles at Ulu Kapit or Lubok Antu; but this time we cannot help him and I do not think he needs our help. Our fears are like that of a small boy who is sent to boarding school. He knows that he is in safe hands but he is not very sure whether he will receive the same treatment as his parents have given him at home; moreover he is always afraid of being bullied by his seniors if he does not pick up the school rule in an approved method and in a specific period. We may forget the Rajah only in words but not in heart and mind, for what he has done, it was done for our future happiness and prosperity which lies in another realm under the protection of His Majesty the King.⁴⁶

On 23 February there was a meeting of Kuching's Iban community at the house of Philip Jitam where it was decided to establish a Sarawak Dayak Association (SDA) with membership from all Divisions. While the presence of Abang Haji Zaini suggests that the MNU was anxious for the SDA to take a firmly anti-cession line from the outset, the meeting adopted a cautious attitude and it was felt that the Rajah should be allowed to explain the situation before they made up their minds.⁴⁷ No doubt this was partly due to the influence of Edwin Howell* who had been appointed 'Honorary Adviser'.

The Sarawak Issue

In the meantime, unfavourable publicity in the British press fostered by the anti-cession faction had begun to reap results. On 13 February Hall was subjected to a barrage of searching questions in the Commons after revealing that the meetings of the Council Negri and Supreme Council which MacBryan had arranged were regarded 'only as exploratory discussions' and that their proceedings would not be published. While he did not think it necessary to propose to the Rajah that there should be an independent commission of inquiry, he was prepared to consider Stanley's request for an independent observer to report on the situation in Sarawak. However, he avoided the question of the Trust Fund and the suggestion that the government had a moral responsibility for the way in which it was to be used.⁴⁸ The Sarawak question had blown up far beyond Hall's expectations and the debate was affecting his health.⁴⁹

Margery Perham took up the idea of the commission the next day in a letter to *The Times*. Describing the cession as 'a somewhat casual and private affair', she asked whether it was morally or constitutionally proper for the Rajah to give his country and for the British government to receive it in such a fashion. She was concerned both with the interpretations which would be made internationally and the significance for the Empire, held together as it was by treaties and agreements and 'faith in the justice and dignity of the British Government'. She concluded:

It may well be that annexation is in the interests and accords with the wishes of the Sarawak people, though since the administration of our smaller and more remote

*For a biographical note on Howell, see above, p. 136.

territories sometimes suffers from periods of neglect and stagnation, the improvement cannot be taken as automatic. On the other hand, it may be that, under some improved method of British surveillance, the dynasty, becoming no doubt increasingly constitutional in function, might for some time prove the best focus for the unity of a racially mixed people and the best expression of its sense of historical identity.⁵⁰

One outcome of all this was Hall's decision to send an 'independent person of standing' to observe the proceedings in Sarawak and thereby defuse the critics. When such a person proved difficult to find, the compromise was a two-man parliamentary mission representing both major parties and Hall subsequently issued invitations to the Labour member for South Croydon, D. R. Rees-Williams, and the Conservative member for Hornsey, L. D. Gammans.* David Gammans had been in charge of co-operatives before the war in Malaya and spoke fluent Malay. In 1944 he had published a pamphlet outlining his views on post-war British policy in Malaya and Borneo. Primarily concerned with the question of economic development, he saw both the Chartered Company and the Brooke regime as anachronisms. 'The ideal arrangement', he wrote, 'would be that the whole of these territories should come under some much more direct form of British control so that they could be developed with the resources of the Colonial Office.'⁵¹ At the same time, however, he advocated strict control of non-Malay immigration (in order to avoid what had happened in Malaya) and of outside capital 'so that the economic and social balance of the indigenous inhabitants was not disturbed either too rapidly or too completely'.⁵² Elected to the House of Commons in July 1945, Gammans was Conservative spokesman on Far Eastern affairs and quickly became a thorn in Hall's side. During the debate on the Malayan Union in January 1946 he was particularly troublesome, representing what he saw as the interests of the Malays against alien interlopers and misguided British policy.

Rees-Williams was not qualified for the task. He had been a lawyer in Penang before the war and spoke a little Malay but had not shown any particular interest in Far Eastern affairs in the Commons. Like most of his middle-class Labour colleagues, he accepted the idea of Indian independence but otherwise supported Britain's continuing imperial role in Africa and Asia. The casual way in which Hall recruited him for the Sarawak mission⁵³ suggests that he was thought unlikely to rock the political boat.

Accepting Hall's invitation,⁵⁴ Gammans suggested that there should be an interval of from two to three weeks from the formal proposal of the cession bill in the Council Negri to the actual vote, thus enabling them to contact all the members individually and avoiding any later accusation that they were 'stampeded into a hasty decision'. He also believed that there was another alternative to cession or the continuation of Brooke

*Hall had hoped that the Conservatives would agree to send Lord Soulbury, a former High Commissioner to Ceylon, but Stanley insisted on Gammans and the Secretary of State was obliged to agree. (Interview with Lord Ogmore, March 1975.)

rule—the appointment of an adviser to a government headed by Anthony Brooke. Most importantly, he had doubts about the method of communicating their findings. If the result was clear-cut there would be no problem but otherwise complications might arise. 'I imagine too', he concluded, 'that there must be some measure laid before Parliament in a form which is debatable, and I should have thought that the House might have insisted on hearing from us before coming to any decision in the matter.'⁵⁵

This was the last thing that Hall wanted, however, and the question was tactfully avoided by him and Creech-Jones. Hall announced in the House on 27 March that the M.P.s were being asked 'to confirm by independent inquiry whether or not the Rajah's proposal for the cession of the territory to His Majesty is broadly acceptable to the native communities of Sarawak'.⁵⁶ And in a conversation with Gammans and Rees-Williams at about this time, Hall once again stressed the informality of their mission. He also wished to adhere to the earlier suggestion that they should cable their report to him. However, he intended confirming that the Rajah would not summon the two Councils to vote on the issue until he (Hall) had communicated with him subsequent to receiving their report. Gammans remained dubious that it would be possible to cable their conclusions unless the issue was 'so clear and free from ambiguity that there can be no possible doubt as to the attitude of the people of the country'.⁵⁷ He again told Hall that the issue should come up for discussion in the House and that at least a verbal report would be made of their findings when they returned. However, his attention was already turning to Malaya which he was planning to visit after Sarawak and by the time he reached Kuching his official mission was already of secondary interest.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the mission was devised and manipulated by Hall for his own ends. While not amounting to an official parliamentary commission of inquiry, this nominal consultation of native opinion was useful in defusing parliamentary and press criticism and in lending cession some semblance of international respectability.* The terms of the mission were deliberately vague and there was no provision for a formal report (which might have created political problems).

Long before the announcement was made there was energetic lobbying by the anti-cession and pro-cession factions in Britain. On one side, Bertram Brooke, Anthony Brooke, F. F. Boulton, Pollard, and other Sarawak officers and friends provided the M.P.s with background on the situation and emphasized that Sarawak was a sovereign state whose independence should be respected.⁵⁸ On the other, Stirling Boyd circulated a memorandum criticizing Brooke rule and suggesting that British control was a long-overdue necessity.⁵⁹ A number of M.P.s had already seen his dossier on the 1939 crisis and were unsympathetic to Brooke rule. Furthermore, the influential Bishop of Newcastle, Noel Hudson, who

*Only sixteen years later, Lord Cobbold was to lead another mission to Sarawak to place the seal of approval on the state's inclusion in the proposed Federation of Malaysia. (*Report of the Commission of Enquiry, North Borneo and Sarawak, 1962*, London, 1962.)

had been Bishop of Labuan 1931-7, seems to have given his support to the pro-cession side.⁶⁰ Gammans and Rees-Williams also met the Rajah and MacBryan.

Not the least of the problems encountered by the anti-cession faction in trying to stimulate public interest was the popular image of the Rajah's family in Britain. For many people the Brookes were primarily a source of scandal and there was little interest in their remote and exotic kingdom beyond such sensational subjects as head-hunting. Margaret Noble, wife of the pre-war general manager of Sarawak Oilfields Ltd. and friend of both Vyner and Bertram, supported the anti-cession faction but found that she could make little headway. Thirty years later she described how difficult it was to get anyone to think seriously about the cession problem: 'They all said vaguely "Oh yes . . . those peculiar girls and their extraordinary marriages . . . Why did she fall for the Leader of the Band? Sarawaki"', and all that! . . .'⁶¹

In the meantime the Rajah was becoming disconcerted by the tenor of the cables and letters from Sarawak and was beginning to suspect that MacBryan was keeping things from him. As he put it himself, he did not wish to be 'spat at' and wanted some reliable indication of attitudes to cession before finally committing himself to visit Sarawak.⁶² Accordingly he asked the Colonial Office to allow two Sarawak officers to conduct a quick survey of opinion. E. Banks, who had been Curator of the Sarawak Museum since 1925, was allocated the First, Fourth, and Fifth Divisions while J. C. H. Barcroft, pre-war Resident of the Second Division, was made responsible for the rest of the state. Unbeknown to the Rajah, Barcroft also undertook to inform Bertram and Anthony of the situation.*

Banks subsequently reported in late March that there was a two-thirds majority in favour of the cession in the First and Fourth Divisions and that the Fifth Division was sharply divided due to fears of a return to Brunei rule.⁶³ Barcroft agreed that there was an overall two-thirds majority in favour of obeying the Rajah's wishes on cession and this was the message which was finally cabled from Kuching in the Chartered Bank's own code.[†] The Rajah now felt more confident. 'Barkis is willing', he replied.⁶⁴ At the same time, however, Banks believed that cession 'was understood by none', himself included. 'Sarawak is divided', he wrote to

*At a meeting with the Rajah and MacBryan on 26 February, the latter told Barcroft that there was no need to cable back his findings. But the Ranee (evidently on the Rajah's instructions) later told Barcroft to cable as often as he wished. The Sarawak Government Office was also instructed to withhold these messages from MacBryan.

†The military authorities were not pleased when they learnt of the coded messages sent through the Chartered Bank. The commanding officer called Banks in for questioning and there had to be consultations with Macaskie before the matter was smoothed over. ' . . . It only remains for them to regard me as a journalist . . .', Banks told Macaskie, 'and not as a spy to make for peace, perfect peace'. (Banks to Macaskie, 23 March 1946, Macaskie Papers, File 3.) In view of the repercussions of MacBryan's visit just two months earlier, it is not surprising that Banks and Barcroft also encountered a great deal of suspicion from other Brooke officers already in Sarawak. Banks' friendship with MacBryan before the war was well known.

Macaskie after cabling his report, 'some for Brooke, some for Bevin, very hard to estimate the proportions and impossible to say who will win, dependant [*sic*] on the powers-that-may-be at home and let us hope soon!'⁶⁵ Abang Haji Mustapha was worried enough about cession to write to MacBryan asking if it was what the Rajah truly wanted. MacBryan cabled him that in the native interest it must go through, but that it should be dependent on the establishment of the Sarawak State Trust Fund. He advised him to collect as many votes as possible for the Council Negri meeting.⁶⁶

Arrangements for Cession

The Colonial Office was determined that this time the cession should be effected without any risk of challenge. Enclosing drafts of the bills which were to be put to the Council Negri and the Supreme Council, Creech-Jones told the Rajah in mid-March that 'every possible step should be taken to ensure that the proceedings of the Councils comply with the Constitution so that there may be no room for doubts and possible criticisms'.⁶⁷ Respecting the Rajah's belief that cession was an issue of special concern to non-European members and that European members should not vote, Creech-Jones suggested that he should publicly express this view rather than issue any definite instruction.⁶⁸

At the same time, however, there was a determined campaign to torpedo the Trust Fund, which MacBryan had presented as a *fait accompli* after the Colonial Office's initial opposition and which now threatened to be a continuing source of embarrassment under MacBryan's control. More importantly, the Colonial Office was extremely reluctant to lose £1,000,000 from Sarawak's reserve funds. When it was revealed at a meeting between the Rajah and Creech-Jones on 19 March that the final terms of the Deed of Trust would have to be settled with the government and that income from the Trust Fund would be subject to British tax, the former promptly told Hall that it was 'necessary and politic' to defer his offer of cession 'for the time being'.⁶⁹ After another meeting with MacBryan, Creech-Jones apparently decided to accept Smith's earlier suggestion that the Trust Fund proposal be dropped and instead that £30,000 be paid annually from Sarawak state revenue to trustees who would then pay the pensions originally intended to have been met by income from the Trust Fund.⁷⁰ This was to be the basis of the Rajah's Dependants Ordinance* later passed by the Council Negri. However, there was still the question of the Rajah's liability to pay income tax, something which had not been settled when the Rajah left for Sarawak in April. The Rajah does not seem to have followed the later discussions about the Trust Fund and continued to assume that it would be established, informing the Singapore press to this effect.⁷¹

There was also a deliberate attempt by the Colonial Office and the Military Administration to suppress the fact that Bertram and Anthony

*See below, p. 231.

had not been consulted by the Rajah and to prevent them from going out to Sarawak. On 8 February Bertram addressed a cable to 'Secretary Provisional Government Kuching' requesting him to inform European and native officers that 'neither my son nor myself has been consulted concerning proposed cession and were unaware until yesterday that any such action was contemplated'.⁷² When this was not acknowledged he asked the Colonial Office what had happened and was eventually informed that since there was no 'Provisional Government' the cable had not been delivered.⁷³ Faced with this *prévarication*, Bertram then addressed a similar cable to Archer, adding that all he wanted was to go to Sarawak 'to ascertain and to submit to the real wishes of the people'.⁷⁴ 'In the interests of all', Archer replied, '[I] feel [I] cannot comply with [your] request until Rajah returns'.⁷⁵

In the meantime, Bertram had received a cable from the Datu Patinggi begging him and Anthony to come to Sarawak with the Rajah. '... We all have an exceedingly longing desire to meet you and I hope to get an answer', the Patinggi concluded.⁷⁶ Bertram replied through Archer that they would spare no effort to comply with the request but Archer's earlier response suggested to him that once again the message might not reach its destination. Accordingly, he wrote to Hall requesting him to instruct the head of the Military Administration to pass on his cable without delay. 'I cannot believe', he told the Secretary of State, 'that it would be the desire of His Majesty's Government to employ the existing conditions to prevent me from answering the Datu Patinggi, who might well misinterpret my silence'.⁷⁷ Then on 25 March he received a cable from the MNU saying that they did not accept as valid the documents signed by the members of the Supreme Council and did not agree with cession. If the Rajah was unable to rule, Abang Haji Zaini continued, the Raj should be handed over to the Tuan Muda or Anthony whom he once again invited to visit Sarawak.⁷⁸

It was shortly afterwards that the MNU President told Bertram about MacBryan's payments to the datus.⁷⁹ Confirming this came a cable from the Datu Patinggi and another from Barcroft saying that although the natives and Chinese were against cession, 'uncle's generous present' (the payments) had ensured that a majority of the Council Negri and Supreme Council members would vote for it.⁸⁰ Bertram immediately cabled the MNU to ask one of the Brooke officers to obtain further evidence of the payments, only to be told that there was no official they could contact.⁸¹ He then sent a message to the datus asking for an explanation and informing them that he and Pollard but not MacBryan would be coming out to Sarawak before the Council Negri meeting. He also cabled the President of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce asking whether the Chinese of Sarawak wished the state to be ceded. In reply, the datus told him that the money which they had accepted was 'assistance from the Rajah on account of the tribulations we suffered under the Japanese occupation'. Confirming the amounts, they said that they had not been compelled to sign anything and had agreed to the Rajah's proposal 'in order that there should be greater prosperity, freedom and happiness. . .

for the country and the people'. The Chinese Chambers of Commerce said that they were awaiting the Rajah's arrival before coming to any decision but considered the matter as 'one for Sarawak nationals and not we Chinese'.⁸² Bertram had to be content with telling the datus that they possessed an 'immense moral responsibility' to vote as the people they represented really wished and not to commit themselves until he had met them face to face.

Archer was not happy with the Military Administration's action. On 2 March he cabled Macaskie asking why Bertram's second message, which had been addressed to him personally, had been divulged to the military authorities at Labuan. 'It was always quite plain to me', he told Macaskie, 'that if I had done as the Tuan Muda wished I should not have been able to remain in the BMA (British Military Administration). This . . . would not have stopped me if I thought the message should have gone out willy nilly; however, I did not so think.'⁸³ He expected repercussions from the Tuan Muda but seemed more concerned that Macaskie had not trusted his judgement. The important thing, Macaskie told Colonel H. H. Goss (who had succeeded Eastick as military commander in Kuching), was that although the Tuan Muda's cable had finally been published in the *Sarawak Tribune*, there should be no official backing of any kind for the message.⁸⁴ The Chief Civil Affairs Officer was no doubt under strict orders from the Colonial Office not to allow anything which might prejudice the prospects of cession.

In the meantime, Bertram had been experiencing great difficulty in making arrangements to visit Sarawak. In early March he wrote to the Rajah asking that he and Anthony should be allowed to accompany the Rajah's party⁸⁵ and when the Rajah refused he asked the Colonial Office to facilitate transportation. However, there had to be a good deal of lobbying before Hall would even consider the question. Bertram realized that it might be easier if Pollard accompanied him rather than Anthony. Besides, he told a friend, 'they're so anxious to "fix him up" that if anything happened when we were there, he'd be accused of stirring it up'.⁸⁶ On 2 April Hall finally informed Bertram that permission had been obtained from the Rajah for him and Pollard to visit Sarawak, subject to the condition that he accepted the decision of the two councils on cession.⁸⁷ Bertram agreed to this but also requested permission to take two more companions and Hall then told him that this was a matter which would have to be raised personally with the Rajah.⁸⁸ When the Rajah indicated that he was agreeable, Bertram then gave the names of Sir Theodore Adams* and J. R. Combe† to the Colonial Office. But the

*Sir Theodore Adams, 1885–1961, was a veteran of the MCS which he joined in 1908. As Resident of Selangor in the early 1930s he had intervened in the royal succession there, much to the annoyance of the Sultan. He then served as Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces of Nigeria, 1937–43, and in the War Cabinet Office, 1943–5. It is difficult to see why Bertram Brooke would have chosen him, unless he thought that he might be a useful influence on the Colonial Office. However, Adams seems to have left Sarawak supporting cession and he probably wrote a memorandum for the Colonial Office to that effect.

†Combe was a Sarawak officer who had joined the Administrative Service in 1928 and had

Rajah subsequently objected that both were 'completely out of touch' with Sarawak⁸⁹ and Bertram once again had to ask the Colonial Office to exert pressure. Permission for Adams and Combe did not come through from the Rajah until 23 April and Bertram promptly cabled an assurance that his sole purpose was to obtain the 'true reactions' of the majority of the people to cession and to assure those who approached him that he and Anthony were prepared to continue the old *adat* but would submit to the wishes of the people. If cession did not go through, he presumed that the government would continue along pre-war lines pending fresh negotiations with the British government.⁹⁰

The Colonial Office's own arrangements for the cession exercise were rather hurried. Christopher Dawson,* a Class II officer of the Malayan Civil Service who had been British Adviser to the tiny state of Perlis before the war, was selected to act as Chief Secretary of the new colonial government if cession went through. For the time being he was to be styled 'British Representative' under the terms of the Supplementary Agreement of October 1941, but he was also given a commission with plenipotentiary powers to negotiate with the Rajah on Hall's behalf.⁹¹ His verbal instructions from Hall were 'to be neutral in the matter of cession, taking no action to help or hinder its coming into being, to observe and report to the Secretary of State the reactions of the people to the Rajah's proposal, and in the event of cession being agreed and approved by H.M.G., to accept it on behalf of the Crown'.⁹² However, Dawson later admitted that 'a pretty broad hint was dropped that cession would be in line with H.M.G.'s policy'.⁹³

William Dale, a Colonial Office legal adviser who had not been involved in the earlier negotiations, was given just ten days' notice to join the Rajah's party and there was only one opportunity to discuss the draft legislation with Smith and Digby who was on leave after release from prison camp. The Rajah had not yet supplied a list of life members of both councils and Digby emphasized that there would be 'great difficulty' in reconstituting them.⁹⁴

In preparation for the Council Negri meeting, the Rajah took care that the officers accompanying him to Sarawak and those whom he called

resigned in 1934. Bertram Brooke seems to have thought of him at one point as an adviser to Anthony should he become Rajah.

*Born on 31 May 1896, C. W. Dawson was educated at Dulwich College which he left in 1915 to join the East Surrey Regiment. After seeing active service on the North West Frontier and in Mesopotamia, he was demobilized at the rank of captain and then took up a scholarship at Brasenose College, Oxford. After a year he decided to apply for the MCS and in 1920 went out as a cadet. His first years were spent in Singapore and Johore and after serving as District Officer at Alor Gajah he returned to the Secretariat in Singapore. In 1929 he was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn and from 1933 until 1936 was Legal Adviser and then a judge in Kedah. In c.1938 he was appointed British Adviser, Perlis, and at the outbreak of war was recalled to the Defence Secretariat (Malaya) in Singapore. In 1941 he was made Secretary of Defence, Malaya, and was interned for the duration of the war. After four years' service in Sarawak he retired in early 1950 and then served with distinction as Deputy Chief Secretary of the British Administration of Eritrea 1951-2. He was awarded the C.M.G. in 1947.

from Australia to resume duty would support cession. Of the six who went to Sarawak in the Rajah's party, three were subsequently appointed official members of the Council Negri and voted for cession. R. G. Aikman, the Resident-elect of the Third Division and *ex-officio* member of the Council Negri who was recuperating in Australia after release from internment, was instructed not to report for duty until the end of May (i.e. after the Council Negri meeting) while G. A. C. Field who was also in Australia was told to report by April. The obvious explanation is that Aikman had written to the Sarawak Government Office in October 1945 advising strongly against any concessions to the Colonial Office.⁹⁵ As for the natives, the Rajah gave Dawson the impression that 'it was only necessary for him to appear in Sarawak and to tell the people of his opinion that cession was for the ultimate good of the State for the whole weight of popular opinion to come to his side of the scale'.⁹⁶ The Rajah repeated this optimistic view several times on their way out to Sarawak.

The Rajah's Return

Although MacBryan had been expected to accompany the Rajah to Sarawak, at the last moment it was revealed that he was not going after all. On 28 March he wrote a 'hysterical' letter to the Rajah and later told J. A. Smith that he was resigning as Private Secretary on a matter of principle. The Rajah himself told Smith that MacBryan had 'ratted'.⁹⁷ What probably happened was that MacBryan anticipated great trouble if Bertram visited Sarawak for the Council Negri meeting but failed to persuade the Rajah to refuse permission.⁹⁸ Pollard was disappointed because he had hoped to implicate both the Rajah and the Colonial Office when the evidence against MacBryan was produced. Both Bertram and F. F. Boulton suspected that it was all a ruse and that MacBryan would join the Rajah's party later, but Anthony believed from the outset that the Colonial Office would not risk the embarrassment of MacBryan's presence.⁹⁹ Indeed, MacBryan later claimed that Hall had refused him priority travel facilities when he did decide to go.¹⁰⁰

Reaching Singapore on 13 April, the Rajah finalized arrangements with Mountbatten for the resumption of civil government.¹⁰¹ He also made a formal statement to the press to dispel some of the 'misconceptions' about his decision, particularly the story that he was 'selling' Sarawak for £1,000,000.¹⁰²

The arrival of the royal party in Kuching was a memorable occasion. All along the river there were groups of people waving flags and streamers, and at the Astana a guard of honour consisting of Punjabi soldiers and British sailors. The next morning the Rajah visited the Supreme Council Chambers where the proclamation agreed upon with Mountbatten was read by the Commander of the 32nd Brigade. The Rajah then read his own proclamation restoring civil government and the Datu Patinggi presented him with the sword of state to symbolize the return of Brooke rule. He did not raise the question of Sarawak's future with the surviving members of the 1941 Supreme Council. However, the

Datu Patinggi had earlier handed him a letter opposing cession, together with the 12 March memorandum from MNU leaders and *tua kampong* pleading that if the Rajah felt unable to continue in charge of the government, he should hand over to the Tuan Muda or Anthony.¹⁰³ When the old man then announced his intention of revealing details of the bribes to the parliamentary mission, the Rajah described the money as allowances due to the datus since the outbreak of war. 'We have not had an opportunity yet of explaining the true position to the chieftains', he said, 'who are under a misapprehension if they think the money was a bribe.'¹⁰⁴

In the early evening there was a royal tour of Kuching which provided the Rajah with his first opportunity to observe reactions to the proposed cession. The welcome was enthusiastic: schoolchildren singing the Sarawak anthem; decorated arches; Sarawak and Chinese flags; and handfuls of yellow rice thrown over the official cars. The Rajah and Ranee were received everywhere with smiles and gaiety, leading a previously sceptical Dawson to conclude that there must have been something in the past to account for their enormous popularity.¹⁰⁵ But throughout the Malay *kampong* area there were placards denouncing cession and demanding the continuation of Brooke rule.* Dawson noticed that they were numbered and were shown at two different places along the route. 'I wonder if the placards signify anything more than an effort by a vocal handful spread along a good stretch of road (and twice over!)'¹⁰⁶ he wrote in his diary. A British Intelligence officer reported to the Labuan authorities that the posters 'appeared with the concurrence of the B.M.A.', implying that the Malays had been put up to it by those Brooke officers who were opposed to cession. But Macaskie's inquiries revealed that neither the military authorities nor the police expected placards to be displayed and were taken completely by surprise.¹⁰⁷

One of Dale's first tasks was to straighten out the constitutional tangle created by MacBryan so that the Council Negri and Supreme Council could approve the cession legislation. On 17 April, therefore, the Rajah on his own authority issued Order No. C-23 (*Constitution Re-Enactment*) 1946, declaring null and void the Council Negri's 6 January Order (which restored the Rajah's prerogative powers and repealed the 1941 Constitution) and upholding the legality of Order No. C-21 (*Constitution*) 1941 which had originally authorized the Constitution.¹⁰⁸ However, since the Rajah's authority to issue Order No. C-23 itself probably depended on the legality of the 6 January Order, the constitutional tangle only became worse. Indeed, according to Digby who had framed the 1941 Constitution, Order No. C-23 'amounted to a usurpation and was so irregular as to be clearly invalid'.¹⁰⁹

Assuming that the 1941 Constitution was once more in force, the Rajah proceeded to fill the vacancies in the Supreme Council brought about by the deaths of members since November 1941.¹¹⁰ He then called a meeting

*So surprised was the Ranee by this unprecedented display of dissent that she stopped the car at the first placard, loudly exclaiming 'What! No cession?' (Kuek Seow Hiang to Bertram Brooke, 17 May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.)

of the Council on 24 April to approve yet another Order (issued this time on the authority of the Rajah-in-Council) stating that since doubts existed as to the validity of the Supreme Council Order of 5 January restoring the Rajah's prerogative powers, it was 'expedient' that it be revoked forthwith.¹¹¹ Dale evidently had second thoughts about Order No. C-23 and designed the second Order to strengthen the constitutional position. The new members of the Council Negri were appointed on the authority of the Rajah-in-Council.

At the meeting the Rajah also made his first statement concerning cession to the people of Sarawak since the 6 February announcement. Guaranteeing that *adat lama* (established custom) and the principles of the 1941 Constitution would be observed, he emphasized that he was not abandoning Sarawak and would continue to make his customary outstation visits. The British Government, he said, would mean greater progress and stable government 'whereas otherwise there would be uncertainty and a confused future for Sarawak'.¹¹² He had no confidence that Anthony would be a good ruler. 'I have given him three chances to prove his worth', he concluded, 'and he has failed. My Heir must be the King.'¹¹³ Archer was to act as Chief Secretary until cession was finalized, although in fact Dawson shouldered most of the responsibility.

By 20 April the Rajah was becoming exasperated. There had been difficulties in nominating sufficient native representatives to the Council Negri* and fixing a date for the meeting which would give the M.P.s time to conduct their investigation. A delay in their arrival was the last straw. Fixing the date of the Council Negri meeting for 15 May, he flatly refused to remain in Sarawak after 22 May. In another outburst of irritation, the Rajah told Dawson that he had changed his mind about the Astana. Although the Instrument of Cession specified that it was to be handed over, he now wished to retain it as his own property. A great deal of diplomacy was needed by Dawson to placate the Rajah, but the matter was eventually settled, the Rajah agreeing to transfer the Astana and his private land and houses to the Crown. He retained the right to occupy the Astana during his visits to Sarawak but at other times it was to be used by the colonial government. However, this was only confirmed in writing the day he left Sarawak.¹¹⁴

On 26 April the Rajah and Ranee, accompanied by Dale and Dawson, began their official outstation tour by visiting Sibu where they walked through the streets and drove around the *kampung* to a warm reception. The next day the Rajah held open court where he listened to a variety of petitions and cursorily explained why he had decided on cession. Dawson remarked on the Rajah's apparent diffidence towards such an important matter. 'Either HH has lost interest (which would be fatal)', he wrote, 'or he is supremely confident of the outcome. . . . I wonder if the old boy is really trying.'¹¹⁵ He was sceptical, too, of the Ranee who busied herself

*In at least one case Spurway made it clear that appointment to the Council Negri would mean supporting cession. (Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 19 May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.)

making indifferent sketches of Malay girls: '... Rancee affects to be so attached to them but I wonder how much is genuine'. It seemed to him at times that they both regarded the tour as 'a trial and a bore'.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless the Rajah's impact, particularly in the Second Division where he had spent so much time as a District Officer, was very considerable. Rantai, an Iban from the Ulu Ai who had been imprisoned by the Japanese for sheltering Arundell's party in early 1942,* told the Tuan Muda in Kuching in May that the Rajah had persuaded the people of the Second Division that cession would not entail any change, that he would still visit them and that 'everything would continue exactly as before'.¹¹⁷

Dawson was also in Simanggang when the royal party arrived there on 1 May. Again there were numerous petitions and cases to be heard, including a polite request from some Ibans that they be given Japanese heads to replace those of four Chinese which they had been forced to return to the victims' families. The Rajah stated his views on cession and the response of some Ibans was: 'Which son of the King will come to rule us?' Dawson felt that as long as there was an undertaking that the Rajah's replacement would visit them from time to time, 'simple Dayaks' would accept cession.¹¹⁸

The Expedition of H.M.S. Pickle

Arriving in Singapore on 28 April, Rees-Williams and the delegation's secretary, E. C. G. Barrett,[†] were briefed on the functions of the new British Special Commissioner for South-East Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, who was due to arrive shortly. It had been proposed that he should co-ordinate the policies of the Malayan, Borneo, Ceylon, and Hong Kong governments and their relations with such neighbouring countries as Siam and the Netherlands East Indies. Rees-Williams also lunched with Mountbatten[‡] who emphasized the strategic importance of South-East Asia and the significance of current developments in the Netherlands East Indies.¹¹⁹ The Labour M.P. had earlier told the press

*See above, p. 143.

†E. C. G. Barrett joined the MCS as a cadet in 1931 and served in various states until 1942. After his visit to Sarawak he resumed duty with the MCS and became Chief Registration Officer for the Federation of Malaya in 1949 and the first President of Kuala Lumpur Municipal Council in 1951. In 1953 he was Acting British Adviser, Perak, and British Adviser, Kedah, from then until his retirement in 1957. An excellent linguist, he later taught Malay at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1957-71. Barrett's diary of the M.P.s' tour, now deposited at Rhodes House, is an invaluable source and formed the basis of a report intended for official publication.

‡Mountbatten, who had previously seemed sympathetic to Anthony and the Brookes, now seems to have believed that British control of northern Borneo was strategically vital and it has been said that he used the question of food supplies to ensure that cession went through. In August 1945 he told Gladys Brooke: '... it is unlikely that any appreciable stocks are now available for SARAWAK'. (Mountbatten to Gladys Brooke, 25 August 1945, document in the possession of Mr D. Wickens.) And in May 1946 he emphasized to Bertram Brooke that an independent Sarawak could not be guaranteed supplies of rice. (Personal information.)

that the British government 'had no imperialistic designs on Sarawak'.¹²⁰

Gammans reached Singapore on 2 May and the two M.P.s then flew to Kuching where they were immediately transferred to H.M.S *Pickle*,* a minesweeper which Mountbatten had provided in response to their representations. Most of Sarawak's own shipping had been sunk or was out of action and they had realized that without naval assistance they would be stranded in Kuching. The Colonial Office's failure to consider such questions was symptomatic of its lack of interest in obtaining a genuine indication of Sarawak opinion. At this point Dawson thought Gammans was insisting that even if cession was approved in the Council Negri, the issue would still have to be decided by Parliament. And the reputation which Gammans had already made from his opposition to the Malayan Union suggested that he would adopt an anti-cession stance. This was also Rees-Williams' impression.

The itinerary which the two M.P.s suggested to Dawson was impractical since it involved their returning to Kuching on 14 May, only a day before the Council Negri meeting. Visits to Marudi and Simanggang, the administrative centres of the Fourth and Second Divisions, were cancelled because the two M.P.s (much to Dawson's disgust) refused to go to any place where it would be necessary to spend a night ashore.¹²¹ There also had to be time for the Secretary of State to consider their report before giving the go-ahead and it was later decided that they would cable the result of each meeting and make a 'comprehensive report' after the Sibu meeting which was now scheduled for 10 May. The M.P.s issued invitations to various groups to a public meeting that evening and let it be known that they would also welcome representations from anyone beforehand. However, they remained on board ship at Pending, about five miles from Kuching town, and only the more enterprising spirits made the journey. In the meantime, an application by some Sarawak officers to accompany them on the tour was refused.¹²²

In the afternoon they were visited by representatives of the two local Chinese-language newspapers, the *Chung Hua Journal* and the *Chinese Daily News*, who gave their view that the Sarawak Chinese had no right to take sides in the controversy. Gammans, who later became one of the main critics of the Malayan Union citizenship provisions, suggested to them the advantages which full citizenship rights would entail. The M.P.s also called on the Datu Patinggi whose compound was crowded with more than one hundred young Malays with banners bearing such English slogans as 'No Cession' and 'We Want Brooke Rule'.¹ More pointedly there were other slogans saying: 'Let Judas Get His Desserts' and 'A Daniel Come to Judgement'. As the car entered the drive there was a shout in English of 'No Cession!' According to Rees-Williams, the old datu seemed 'a bit confused as to the issue',¹²³ but the letter read out by one of his secretaries made it very clear that he opposed cession.¹²⁴ The

*An earlier namesake had brought the news of Lord Nelson's death to England.

†The young MNU activists had planned a mass demonstration for the benefit of the M.P.s but this was resisted by Haji Abdul Rahman.

M.P. found him more anxious to talk about the Turtle Islands, a question which, as we have seen, he had mentioned to MacBryan as part of the price for his agreement to cession.

Most of the talking was done by three young men: Sharkawi bin Haji Osman, Mohd. Nor,* and Edham bin Bojeng of the MNU who also presented a formal letter of protest against cession signed by Abang Haji Zaini.¹²⁵ They told the M.P.s that 99 per cent of Sarawak's Malays wanted independence, fearing that their voice as a community would be lost if they became part of the colonial empire. Not only that, Sarawak would be swamped by immigrants and Malay culture extinguished. They said that there were only two Malay members of the Council Negri, Abang Haji Mustapha and his brother, Abang Haji Abdulrahim, and both were the Rajah's 'yes-men'. Blind obedience to the Rajah on the part of Council members would lead them to agree to cession. Referring to MacBryan's visit, they claimed that the document concerning cession was in English and was not explained. The Datu Patinggi, they said, had signed thinking that he was merely asking the Rajah to return. Once the signatures had been given, MacBryan had handed out the money and it was only a month later that the Datu Patinggi discovered that he had agreed to cession. They also felt that the Datu Patinggi should carry more weight than anyone else in the Council Negri or the Supreme Council because his ancestors were themselves rulers of Sarawak. If the Rajah did not want to rule, they concluded, he should hand over to his brother until such time as Anthony Brooke could become Rajah.¹²⁶ By this time the MNU had succeeded in making Abang Haji Abdillah the figurehead of the anti-cession cause, a position in which he cannot have been altogether happy. But he had been told that as head of Sarawak's Malay community his responsibility was to protect their general interest as well as those of the *abang* class.

The public meeting that evening rehearsed most of the themes and arguments which the two M.P.s were to hear during their tour.¹²⁷ Opposing cession were the Datu Patinggi, whose earlier speech was again read by his secretary, and Abang Haji Zaini and Mohd. Nor who spoke as principal delegates of the MNU. Giving unqualified support for cession were Abang Haji Mustapha, the Datu Amar, Hong Guan Lim, and Ong Kwan Hin (representing his father, Ong Tiang Swee) who argued that the state's revenues were insufficient to meet the cost of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Revenue in the past had been derived from opium, spirits and gambling, duties on rubber, pepper, sago, copra and jungle produce, and royalties on oil and gold. However, Ong Kwan Hin believed, it was desirable that taxes on opium and gambling should be abolished and while rubber, sago, and copra would bring in some revenue, the future of rubber was uncertain. Furthermore, the oil and gold industries had been destroyed during the war and it would be some time before they could be re-established. Sarawak was not bankrupt, he concluded, but only Britain could provide the capital needed for recovery and progress.

*For biographical notes on Sharkawi and Mohd. Nor, see below, p. 247, and above, p. 133.

Representing the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien, Lim Kong Ngan was more interested in political questions. Describing Brooke rule as autocratic and anachronistic, he criticized the concentration of executive, legislative, and legal powers in the hands of one man. Culture, education, economic development, and transport had also been backward. He agreed to cession if it would mean some improvement, although he pointed out that the British government had not indicated its policy. Would Sarawak be a Crown Colony or part of the Malayan Union? Both Iban speakers, Philip Jitam and the Revd Basil Temenggong,* expressed qualified support for cession, insisting that the Nine Cardinal Principles of the 1941 Constitution be upheld and indigenous customs respected. Temenggong, who had spent the war in India and was the best educated Iban in the state, added that the Ibans were not ready for sudden changes and were afraid of exploitation. He also called for a clear indication of British policy for Sarawak. The only European to make a significant speech was Monsignor Hopfgartner† who believed that the Chinese and Ibans would accept cession as long as the scales were not weighted in favour of one community and Sarawak was administered as a separate colony. Otherwise their interests would be neglected. The Eurasian community was not represented but Edwin Howell later told the two M.P.s privately that the Rajah, the Tuan Muda, and Anthony Brooke were inadequate administrators and that cession was the only solution for Sarawak. D. M. Deen of the All India Muslim League also supported cession. 'Our interest lies in the ruling principle', he observed enigmatically, 'and we accept what is good for our future'.

Summing up the meeting in his diary, Dawson was jubilant: the Malays were divided but the Chinese and Indian merchants supported cession; the young Chinese were in favour if it meant a more progressive government; and the Ibans were agreeable as long as the Nine Cardinal Principles were respected.¹²⁸ However, the meeting had only been called that same morning and was mostly by invitation. The audience of about seventy-five people was considerably less than might have been expected if more notice had been given and it had been a proper public meeting.

Regarding Kuching as representing the major part of intelligent opinion in the state, Gammans was impressed by the meeting and its general support for cession. Indeed, he told Dawson that unless there was 'violent expression of contrary opinion' elsewhere, the question would be duly passed by the Council Negri.¹²⁹ In view of the Rajah's assurance that *adat lama* and the principles of the constitution would be observed, the two M.P.s advised Hall to make a statement of the British government's

*Basil Temenggong, born in 1918, was educated at St. Augustine's School (Betong) and St. Thomas' School (Kuching). In 1939 he attended Bishop's College, Calcutta, for theological training and was ordained a priest in 1943. Returning to Sarawak in 1945, he worked for several years in the Betong district and was later appointed Archdeacon of Kuching (1965) and Bishop of Kuching (1968).

†An Austrian from the Tyrol, Hopfgartner had not been incarcerated by the Japanese. A superb linguist, he had worked mostly among the Chinese and after the war supported the faction led by Tan Bak Lim who was a Roman Catholic convert.

policy.¹³⁰ Gammans, at least, must have been aware that a blanket commitment to preserve *adat lama* might seriously embarrass a future colonial government. However, when the *Pickle* broke down on the way to Miri and it seemed that the tour might not be completed, Gammans was not disappointed. He was already confident of the outcome and, according to Dawson, was preoccupied with developments in Malaya.¹³¹ Telegrams from the Malay sultans and Dato Onn bin Jaafar, founder of the United Malays National Organization, had been reaching the two M.P.s ever since their arrival in Kuching.

During the next ten days, Gammans and Rees-Williams, accompanied by Barrett and Dawson, visited Limbang, Lawas, Miri, Bintulu, Sibul, Sarikei, and Lingga. Although they hoped to hear the widest possible range of opinion, the short notice of their visit and difficulties in communications meant that urban Chinese and Malays were well represented while up-river natives for the most part were not. The Muruts of Lawas and the Upper Limbang, for example, could not be contacted in time.¹³² It also seems that the First Division Resident's message inviting outstation representatives to meet the M.P.s in Kuching was somewhat vague and that no provision was made for transport and accommodation.¹³³ Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that individual government officers stage-managed meetings by choosing the representatives (many of whom were in the government's pay) and emphasizing that cession was the Rajah's will. Prior to the crucial Sibul meeting, a letter supporting cession was drawn up by Native Officer Jarrow for Temenggong Koh to present on behalf of thirteen *penghulu* as the expression of Third Division Iban opinion. Barrett, who seems to have been an unbiased observer, felt that the Acting Resident, C. D. Adams,* had set up the meeting to support cession.¹³⁴

Dawson acted as chairman and, with Barrett, interpreter at all the meetings. While there is no evidence to suggest that Dawson consciously directed proceedings to favour pro-cession opinions, he cannot have been neutral. As he told Hall later, the opportunity of making introductory remarks before each session meant that it was possible to 'establish a suitable atmosphere'.¹³⁵ Moreover, as the representative of the British government his presence may have silenced many of those who, while opposing cession, felt that the expression of such opinions might be held against them later. Another factor which emerged from the meetings was that cession was not understood.¹³⁶ This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that little effort had been made to explain the issue and that the responsibility rested with European officers, most of whom supported cession. The Rajah's support for cession meant that pre-war officers who would otherwise have fought tooth and nail against it now accepted the inevitability of a British take-over. The handful who continued to oppose

* Adams had joined the Sarawak Service in 1909 and retired in 1937 as Resident of the Third Division, an area where he had spent most of his career and was extremely influential with the Ibans. It seems likely that the Rajah arranged for him to return under the military administration to ensure that the Third Division accepted cession.

it seem to have done so partly out of loyalty to Bertram Brooke and partly out of disgust at the way cession was being forced through.

There was some evidence of anti-cession 'rigging' but this seems to have been exceptional. At Bintulu, where Anthony Brooke had been stationed before the war and was well regarded, Buxton may have persuaded the local Malays and Melanaus to present a united front against cession.¹³⁷ The unanimity of their opposition certainly impressed the M.P.s although it raised Dawson's suspicions.¹³⁸ He also felt that the Resident at Miri, John Gilbert, who was known to oppose cession, had tried to 'bias the meeting slightly, against cession'.¹³⁹

The meetings at Limbang and Miri did not alter the impression created at Kuching and it was only after Bintulu that Dawson began to fear that the M.P.s might be swayed by the strength of anti-cession feeling. The Bintulu meeting provided an interesting range of Malay/Melanau, Iban, and Chinese anti-cession opinion. 'It may be enough to upset the whole thing by giving an anti-cession twist to the M.P.s' report', Dawson wrote afterwards, 'thus inducing the S. of S. to stop proceedings; much will depend on what happens at Sibü tomorrow.'¹⁴⁰ When Gammans told him that the cession bill should go before the Council Negri whatever happened, Dawson suspected that the M.P. was being mischievous. 'I wonder if Gammans is trying to get things in a jam by encouraging the vote of Council to go on', he reflected, 'while knowing that he intends their report to be adverse to cession.'¹⁴¹ As a safeguard he cabled the Secretary of State warning him that the M.P.s' report might not be favourable after all. However, the Sibü meeting was to tip the balance decisively, not only because the M.P.s regarded the Sibü district as containing about one-third of Sarawak's total population, but because they also saw it as the best opportunity to test Iban opinion. As Dawson acknowledged, a substantial proportion of the Iban population had to be seen to be in favour before the cession proposal could be said to have any popular support.

Dawson must therefore have been delighted when Temenggong Koh* presented the M.P.s with his letter which he described as having the assent not only of thirteen *penghulu* and the Iban government servants present but all the Ibans of the Third Division! His only concern was that *adat lama* should remain unchanged. When asked by Gammans if he was just following the Rajah or if he wanted cession for its own sake, he replied that they trusted the Rajah. However, Inspector Arthur Muda said that he supported cession for its own sake because he wanted education for the Ibans to be promoted as quickly as possible. Another English-speaking Iban told the M.P.s that his people had not had a fair deal under the Brookes and that cession would mean better education and general development. Of the Malays, only one speaker mentioned the possibility of Brooke rule continuing through one of the Rajah's relatives. According to Native Officer Abang Ahmad, if the *adat* was preserved it was all

*For a biographical note, see Cooper, *Men of Sarawak*, pp. 49-57; obituary, *SG*, 30 November 1956.

the same to the people whether they were ruled by the King or the Rajah—just as long as it was not the Japanese. Others said that the Rajah knew what was best and that cession would lead to greater progress, including the provision of religious teachers from Egypt or Malaya.

The *kapitan china*, Teo Lo Cheng, who had been in Sarawak for fifty-six years and claimed to speak on behalf of all the Sibuan Chinese, supported cession but was much more interested in pressing claims for war damage compensation.¹⁴² A show of hands was taken and the M.P.s cabled the results to London¹⁴³ before compiling their 'comprehensive' and decisive report. In the former they emphasized that Sibuan was more significant for native as distinct from Chinese opinion and was the most important meeting to date. At the same time, they added that Sibuan was the first place which the Rajah had visited and the feeling of the meeting was consequently very different from the previous ones. They also conceded that the thirteen Iban *penghulu* had agreed to cession because they trusted the Rajah, not because they supported cession in its own right.

In their 'comprehensive report',¹⁴⁴ the two M.P.s distinguished three general reactions to the cession proposal:

1. the opinion of Malays and Ibans who did not themselves see any advantages in cession but were prepared to trust the Rajah's judgement;
2. the opinion of young Malays in Sibuan, Chinese and educated Ibans who supported cession for its own sake—the Chinese because it promised better commercial prospects, and the Malays and Ibans because they were dissatisfied with education and general progress;
3. the opinion of the MNU and Malays in small towns who supported the continuance of Brooke rule under the Rajah.

Gammans and Rees-Williams concluded that there was 'sufficient acquiescent or favourable opinion in the country' to justify the matter going before the Council Negri on 15 May and strongly urged that there should be no postponement. They also explained that much of the 'hesitation' of Malays and Ibans was due to the absence of any clearly-defined British policy and the subsequent fear that their customs would be encroached upon and their culture swamped by the immigrant races.

The implication that most of the opposition to cession arose from anxieties about an uncertain future rather than from any positive attachment to Brooke rule was misleading but it provided the formula which Hall needed. The hasty and premature compilation of the report also meant that while support for cession at Sarikei was regarded as confirming the Sibuan verdict, adamant Iban and Malay opposition at Lingga¹⁴⁵ in the heart of the Second Division was discounted. The M.P.s told Hall that the Lingga meeting did not affect their earlier 'comprehensive report'.¹⁴⁶

The range of opinions expressed at the various meetings can more accurately be characterized as follows:

1. Chinese traders and nationalists who supported cession because it meant greater economic opportunities and the strengthening of their political status and representation;

2. Educated Malays and some Ibans who supported cession because it meant greater educational and employment opportunities than had been available under the Brookes;
3. Ibans and Malays who agreed to cession because their loyalty to the Rajah prevailed over their serious misgivings about what cession would mean;
4. Ibans and Malays whose loyalty to the Raj prevailed over their loyalty and obedience to Vyner Brooke;
5. Malays of the *abang* class whose interests lay with the perpetuation of Brooke rule;
6. Malay commoners who saw the continuation of Brooke rule as a means of securing genuine self-government and independence for Sarawak within the foreseeable future.

The last two categories, together with a small number of educated Kuching Ibans whose traditional association with the Malays was relatively strong, formed the base of the anti-cession movement which was to develop during the forthcoming months.

While the two M.P.s made more of an effort to test native opinion than the Colonial Office had probably envisaged, they were swayed by other factors which could hardly have found a place in their reports. Gammans in particular was not at all impressed with the Brooke family and some of the senior officers. The Rajah, he told Hall later in a private memorandum, was 'lazy and rather stupid and for many years has preferred the fleshpots of Europe to the austerities of Sarawak'.¹⁴⁷ Gammans believed that one of the Rajah's main reasons for insisting that the Council Negri should meet on 15 May was his need to be home in time for the Derby. The Tuan Muda he described as 'completely brainless' and too old to be considered as ruler even if he had been physically fit. Gammans was scandalized by the Rane'e's conduct, seeing her as a 'bad influence in all this rather sordid Brooke family row'. She had visited a 'low-down cabaret' three times and not only danced the conga with professional dancing partners who were prostitutes but took them back to the Astana to paint their portraits. 'A more undignified woman it would be difficult to find', he concluded, neglecting to mention that both he and Rees-Williams had prevailed on Dawson to take them to that same 'low-down cabaret' on at least two occasions.¹⁴⁸

Anthony had seemed to Gammans 'a most unsatisfactory young man' who would never had been a good ruler under the new constitution.¹⁴⁹ He had met him only briefly in London but was ready to accept all the stories he heard in Sarawak about his 'ego-mania' and eccentricities, including astrology. Noting the second Rajah's anxiety that the attractions of Europe might prove too tempting for his successors, he saw the end of the Brooke dynasty as 'yet another example of the truth that institutions seldom perish from external causes but rot from within'.¹⁵⁰ Gammans was appalled by the behaviour of people like Archer, who had taken to the bottle shortly after Bertram's arrival: 'I went one night to the Cathay Cabaret and found there most of the Sarawak Government, very drunk, dancing with the professional partners, who were far more

sober than the Chief Secretary or any of the Residents of the districts.¹⁵¹

On his return to England, Gammans made much of what he regarded as the unsatisfactory character of some of the senior Brooke officers and it is reasonable to suggest that this, together with his poor opinion of the Brooke family, weighed at least as heavily as his impressions of native opinion in his final assessment. Gammans saw the issue not so much in terms of native opinion as whether the British government should allow the Brooke regime to continue.

Rees-Williams did not take such a jaundiced view of the Brookes. In his eyes, the Ranee was '... a bright and vivacious lady who brought the charm of Mayfair to the Tropics and some of the exotic perfume of the Tropics to Mayfair'.¹⁵² MacBryan, too, was a 'colourful character, belonging to a former age in our association with the East rather than to the present when circumspect delegates of Government and big business move in a deprecating way about their business'.¹⁵³ He was impressed with the outstation officers but did not think that there were people who could run a Secretariat properly.¹⁵⁴ He also felt that the Brookes had done very little for the Ibans, particularly in education. At one place, for example, he had been told by the Ibans that the only means of obtaining education was to serve a prison term.¹⁵⁵ But it was an ironic twist that the Labour member whose government was now committed to removing the Brookes should have taken a more romantic and sympathetic attitude than the Conservative member who was soon to become the champion of the Malay rulers.

The Council Negri Meeting

On 8 May, just one week before the Council Negri was due to be opened, Bertram Brooke arrived in Kuching accompanied by Adams, Pollard, and Combe. 'It is no exaggeration to say that the difference of opinion between us is... vital', he wrote to Vyner on his arrival, 'but you need have no fear that I have any intention of allowing the matter... to become the subject of a family dog-fight...'.¹⁵⁶ Although Vyner was determined to offset the impact of his brother's presence as much as possible, Bertram did not go out of his way to use his influence against cession. Installed at 'The Residency' (the house of the First Division Resident which was second only to the Astana in importance), one of his few forays was to Ong Tiang Swee's house where he heard the full story of MacBryan's visit. However, the Datu Patinggi and members of the MNU soon came to pay their respects, as did most of the pre-war European officers and Native Officers, and there was a great deal of discussion about cession.

When it became clear that Bertram had not consented to cession and had not even been consulted by the Rajah, there was a dramatic change in many people's attitudes. Philip Jitam, who had expressed qualified support for cession at the public meeting on 3 May and was scheduled to second a Council Negri motion by the Datu Pahlawan authorizing cession, was now adamantly opposed, as was his brother Robert. Dawson was

convinced that Philip had been suborned by the Tuan Muda's party¹⁵⁷ and was apprehensive for the first time about the outcome of the vote. Visiting Bertram on 14 May he found him in discussion with a large group of people, including Philip Jitam, and remarked in his diary later that Bertram's 'pretence of "not come to fuss or fight" is camouflage for a studied campaign to nobble the council (while "honest men" are sailing up rivers in an endeavour to sound the feelings of the people) . . .';¹⁵⁸ but Bertram appears to have preserved proper decorum despite the fact that the only official information he received about the Council Negri meeting was the date on which it was to be held.

Bertram could probably have prevented cession from going through if he had chosen to campaign vigorously against it.¹⁵⁹ However, this was not his style. His only communication with Vyner before the meeting was a letter complaining that MacBryan had completely misled the datus and Ong Tiang Swee as to his attitude on cession and that the majority of the people had no idea what cession really meant. He sought permission to make the situation clear to the members of the Council Negri, insisting nevertheless that it was 'no representative body assembled to express the real wishes of the people'. He also protested strongly against the 'secrecy and unnecessary speed with which this whole question has been handled', suggesting that it should be deferred so that there could be further consultations with the British government.¹⁶⁰

Dawson did not want Bertram to address the Council Negri and Archer subsequently suggested that he should issue a written statement as the Rajah had done.¹⁶¹ While Dawson was concerned that there should not be a public slanging-match between the Rajah and his brother, he was probably more worried about the effect that a speech by the Tuan Muda might have on the voting. However, Bertram was not to be put off so easily and was finally invited to make his speech next to the President's chair.

Gammans and Rees-Williams had initially insisted on a secret ballot and the Rajah had agreed to this, but it was finally decided with the M.P.s' approval that this vital question should be resolved at the meeting itself by a show of hands. At the last moment Gammans, much to Dawson's annoyance, advised European members of the Council Negri not to vote on the cession bill¹⁶² but neither of the M.P.s took much interest in the actual arrangements for the meeting, including the appointment of members. Rees-Williams was already describing the whole affair as '*opera bouffe*' (an expression which Dawson himself had used), and seems to have been cynically complacent about the outcome.

Just four days before the Council Negri meeting, the Rajah was informed by Hall that any pensions paid to him or his family would be liable to taxation. Hall suggested that instead he should retain £50,000 from the capital of the 1912 Trust Fund. Replying to this after hurried consultations with Dale, the Rajah proposed that he receive £100,000 from the 1912 Fund for himself and his immediate family 'in lieu of any other claim from [MacBryan's] Trust Fund or Sarawak revenue', the balance of £50,000 to be placed in trust for educational

purposes.* He also proposed to introduce legislation in the Council Negri granting pensions to Bertram, Anthony, and the *datus*. Accepting this, Hall assumed that there 'would be no question of establishing Trust Fund by local legislation as originally proposed'.¹⁶³ This brief exchange of cables constituted the only financial agreement connected with cession and formed the basis of the Rajah's Dependants Ordinance prepared by Dale.† The Rajah subsequently complained that he had been 'prevailed upon by the representatives of His Majesty's Government' to accept the Ordinance¹⁶⁴ and it certainly appears that in MacBryan's absence, Dale and the Colonial Office took full advantage of the Rajah's *naïveté* in financial matters.

Under the terms of the Ordinance, which was later enacted by the Council Negri, Bertram was granted a pension of £5,000 p.a., Anthony £2,800 p.a., and the *datus* pensions ranging from \$12,000 p.a. (Datu Patinggi) to \$1,800 p.a. (Datu Pahlawan) in order of seniority.‡ Significantly, the Ordinance also stated that the Order of 5 January 1946 establishing the Sarawak State Trust Fund was deemed to have no effect. In spite of all MacBryan's subsequent efforts to revive it, based on the contention that the Rajah's promissory note of 14 January remained unaffected by the Ordinance and was in fact validated by the Rajah's Indemnification Order, the Trust Fund remained a dead letter.†

Another last-minute development was the arrival of the long-awaited official statement of the British government's policy in Sarawak should cession be approved by the Council Negri. Published on the morning of the first reading of the cession bill, the statement was deliberately vague and non-committal. Sarawak was not to become part of the Malayan Union but its administration as a colony would be 'generally on the same lines as other colonies within the British Empire' and 'in general in accord' with the Nine Cardinal Principles.¹⁶⁵ The constitution would have to be altered to allow for amendments necessitated by cession but the Governor would discuss the whole constitutional question with community representatives and other concerned persons 'with a view to recommending what steps should be taken at the time when these

*When the balance was found to amount to £70,000, the Rajah agreed that £50,000 should be spent on buildings for a teachers' college in Kuching to be known as the *Rajah Brooke Training Centre*, and that the remaining £20,000 should go to the Rajah of Sarawak Fund (see above, p. 26) which had been established in 1930. (Crech-Jones to Vyner Brooke, 20 September 1948, Brooke Papers, Box 6/1.) The Rajah of Sarawak Fund was administered by the Colonial Office for the benefit of sons or daughters of British colonial officers until a few years ago when Lord Tanlaw (Simon Brooke Mackay, the Rajah's grandson) succeeded in having the remaining capital transferred to a new trust known as the *Sarawak Foundation* which now offers a limited number of scholarships for study in Britain to Sarawak students.

†Order No. R. 17 (*Rajah's Dependants*) 1946, *SGG*, 25 May 1946.

‡In a document dated 30 June 1946, the Rajah specified further dependants. (CO 531/32 [53185].) MacBryan and Smith were both granted pensions of £500 p.a. as the Rajah's trustees. Among the other beneficiaries was Esca Daykin's widow.

* See below, p. 278.

changes are made to associate the people of Sarawak with its Government and administration on a basis as broadly representative as conditions permit'. In this way the 'maximum progressive constitutional development' would be achieved. The 'fullest regard' would be given to the rights and customs of all communities and there was no intention of exploiting the people or the resources of the country. Among the most important objectives were the rehabilitation and improvement of medical services and communications and 'controlled development of trade and resources with a view to raising the standard of living of the inhabitants'.

The statement's impact at this vital stage is difficult to assess. However, it was carefully studied by people like Philip Jitam who had expressed doubts about future policy and Dawson noted that its reservations, while necessary, 'were taken to be subtle methods by which any guarantee could later be avoided'.¹⁶⁶ The absence of any reference to Chinese citizenship also left a nice ambiguity.

For his part, the Rajah called to the Astana all the European official members including Gilbert, Ditmas, and Barcroft whose support for cession was in doubt while Archer attempted to use his influence with Native Officers Tuanku Mohammed of the Baram district, Abang Mustapha of Limbang, and Edward Jerah of Simanggang, telling them it was their duty to vote for cession. Jerah told Archer that not only was the whole thing wrong since the Tuan Muda had not been consulted, but that the people of the Second Division opposed cession. When Temenggong Koh, who accompanied Jerah at this interview, learnt for the first time that the Tuan Muda had not given his approval, he exclaimed: 'In that case the Rajah has cheated us.'¹⁶⁷

In the meantime, a bitter struggle had been going on between the MNU and the Datu Pahlawan and his supporters for the votes of native members of the Council Negri. Lending her assistance to the Datu Pahlawan's camp was Sa'erah who was well placed to pick up the political gossip of the day.* Pollard believed that the failure of any of the Third Division native members to call on the Tuan Muda was due to their having been warned off.¹⁶⁸ The acting Resident, C. D. Adams, had probably taken this precaution and he would have been supported by Archer.

Chinese members of the Council were also subjected to pressure. Tan Bak Lim, a fourth generation Sarawak Chinese and head of the Teochew community, told Pollard that the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien had threatened to kill him if he voted against cession.¹⁶⁹ However, he was refused police protection and this may have accounted for his pro-cession vote. It is also likely that the illness which prevented Ong Hap Leong from attending the Council Negri meeting was of a political kind. But Khoo Peng Loong,

*Her house was conveniently located and 'was not only a listening post, it was almost an operations room for the collection of and processing of intelligence and the issue of sitreps [*sic*]'. (Personal communication from Mr R. H. Morris, 28 November 1976). Hajjah Sa'erah was also connected with the cabaret patronized by many of the leading figures including Archer, Dale, Dawson, and the two M.P.s.

who represented the Sibuhod community, seems to have been genuinely in favour of cession.

When the Council Negri meeting was opened by the Rajah on 14 May the situation was extremely tense. Having made his outstation tour and done his best to ensure that the European members would vote for cession, the Rajah adopted a low profile during the formal proceedings of the Council Negri. After a brief speech the next morning in which he suggested that the British government's statement should resolve any doubts that 'the future happiness and prosperity of Sarawak' lay with cession,¹⁷⁰ he left the Council Negri chambers for the last time.

The Council Negri meeting was loaded in favour of a pro-cession vote. The Council President, Archer, staunchly supported the Rajah and had already done his utmost to influence individual members. During the debate on the second reading he spoke three times and his behaviour was so extraordinary that Dawson and others suspected that he was drunk.¹⁷¹ Members spoke in their own language and there were no translations, so that Temenggong Koh who spoke no English and hardly any Malay cannot have understood very much. Indeed, he spent the entire meeting dozing or scratching the horny sole of his foot.¹⁷² And yet, of all the Iban members he was by far the most influential with his own people. Since the voting was by show of hands, it is possible that a number of native members (and perhaps some European members) declined to vote against cession for fear of repercussions. If cession were defeated, they would have to reckon with the Rajah and the possibility of losing their government salaries.

The case for cession¹⁷³ was opened by the Datu Pahlawan who moved the second reading of the bill and was supported by Abang Abdulrahim (his brother), Archer, Native Officer Jarrow, L. D. Kennedy, Khoo Peng Loong, and B. J. C. Spurway. Their main emphasis was on the greater progress which would take place under a colonial government, particularly in education, agriculture, and health services. In the Datu Pahlawan's view, the people of Sarawak wanted their children to become doctors, engineers, and lawyers but because of the low standard of education 'all these magnificent ideas only remain frozen in their hearts'. Spurway added that one of the benefits of cession would be an infusion of highly qualified technical officers and the strengthening of the Administrative Service. Khoo Peng Loong was also enthusiastic about improved educational opportunities but spent as much time advocating the abolition of revenue from gambling and opium. The second argument, which was used quite forcefully by Archer and Kennedy, was that the state could not continue to operate without British financial assistance. 'It is a very serious thing for Sarawak', Archer told the members from the chair. 'We either exist or do not exist.' But after a number of speeches opposing cession had been delivered, Archer began to fear that the tide was running in the wrong direction. Sarawak could not afford to remain independent, he insisted. Revenue was less than before the war and would probably decline still further and unless Sarawak came together with other countries into 'some sort of amalgamation', it would be 'sunk'.

Unless there was more money to increase food production, people would starve. Kennedy, too, argued that Sarawak could not in its present form survive the difficulties ahead; it could not fulfil its financial obligations without the assistance of the British government.*

Other European members criticized the haste with which cession was being put through and questioned the argument that Sarawak could not survive without financial assistance. The Resident of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions, John Gilbert, pointed out that it was an inopportune moment to decide Sarawak's future and that while people in Kuching had debated the question there were thousands in other parts of Sarawak who had not had a chance. 'I am unable to believe', he added, 'if we have to go anywhere else for money or loan from the British Government, they will point a pistol to us and say "No cession, no money".' The Revd Peter Howes wished that cession could be postponed until the people knew more about the issues involved:

When they ask whether they will be happy under British rule, are they to be told nothing about Jamaica? When they ask whether their lands will be secured to them under British Rule, are they to be told only of Uganda and not of Kenya? They ought to know about both. They do not yet know about such things and this should be taken into consideration.

While it had been said that existing rights and customs were to be respected, he added, the statement was no guarantee of good faith—particularly in view of the fact that the Tuan Muda's rights had not been acknowledged.

The three main native speakers against cession were Philip Jitam (who had seconded the Datu Pahlawan's motion as previously arranged), the Datu Patinggi, and Abang Mustapha. Jitam thought that the British government statement did not provide a sufficient guarantee that the Nine Cardinal Principles would be 'upheld wholly and unreservedly'. Nor had the cession been mutually agreed upon, and until there was mutual consent the question should not be decided.[†] The Datu Patinggi saw the question in terms of his loyalty as leader of the Malay community both to the Rajah and to the Brooke succession. To support cession would be to deprive the Rajah of his throne and to spurn both the good services rendered by the Brookes and the independence of Sarawak. If cession was agreed to, he concluded tearfully:

. . . my good service extending to 62 years will be in vain and it is also a great sin against the Almighty God which will give me no peace in this world and hereafter,

*Earlier inquiries made by Anthony Brooke had indicated that the Chartered Bank would have been prepared to extend an overdraft of £500,000 to the Sarawak government. (H. F. Musford to Anthony Brooke, 29 May 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21.)

†In the draft of his Council Negri speech, Jitam had provided a homely view of the cession dispute which he might well have used to some effect: 'A certain property was left as a *legacy* to be held in trust for two brothers. Consequently the trustee, without *prior consultation* tries to dispose of the property. Does this act considered as binding and proper? And would you, *acting in the best of faith*, knowing all the facts, condemn or condone such an act?' (Jitam Papers.)

and also my act of injustice will all be written by historians in different parts of the world. Because I am an old man, I do not want, therefore [a] bad name in the world and hereafter.

Abang Mustapha emphasized the accessibility of the Rajah as one of the principal virtues of Brooke rule which would not be possible under a British colonial government. Nor was he impressed with the argument that Sarawak's indebtedness made cession necessary. 'Our father the Rajah and our grandfather the King did not lose the war against Japan and Germany', he pointed out. 'We won. There is nothing in the history of the world to show the victor giving up his country. . . .' The question of war debts could be arranged between the Rajah and his people. Abang Mustapha's final appeal was a moving description of what the Rajah's departure would mean to the people of Sarawak:

The father cannot and must not leave his house if his family cries because they love him. I regret very much if the father does not care for the appeal of his children and his family. I am afraid, later, it will become a matter not to be so nice in the house and also it will become a question which is harder and heavier for the father and the grandfather. Because of this we most earnestly beseech that Sarawak should not be ceded as long as the Rajah and his line of succession and the people of this country still has breath.

Bertram's speech was moderate enough in its content, but was delivered with tremendous vehemence which almost reached the level of shouting.¹⁷⁴ His sole object, he said, was to represent the line of succession of the Raj and to assure the people of its willingness to submit to their wishes. The war had made necessary a new relationship between Sarawak and Britain but the matter had been handled 'with unnecessary haste' and there was no reason why a solution could not be found by means of consultations with the British government. However, he did not want the vote to cause animosity and ill-feeling. 'I would rather see this line of succession come to an end', he concluded, 'than that any family differences of opinion should be the cause of quarrelling or ill-feeling among the people of Sarawak.'

The force of the debate had gone so strongly against cession that the already nervous Archer was in a highly agitated state when he stammered his last appeal before the vote was taken:

There seems to be a sort of feeling here . . . that it is a ramp.* The British Government is not bad. I can assure you that we will get a fair and absolutely good deal. I do not know how long I will be here, but you will be here anyway. You have got to vote on it. I can see the feeling of the house is rather tense now. There is no idea of suborning by the British Government. I can assure you of that. I am not lying about it.

Such was the atmosphere of the meeting that when Edward Jerah proposed immediately after this that there be a secret ballot, the motion was not put clearly and the native members voted against it in the belief that they were voting *against* cession!¹⁷⁵

*A put-up job.

The motion on the second reading was then put and was finally carried by 18 votes to 16,* there being a native majority against cession of 13 votes to 12. It was the votes of six European officials which carried the day, although the Residents of the First and Fourth Divisions (Ditmas and Gilbert) and Howes voted against the motion and Barcroft abstained.

Following the vote, the Council was adjourned by Archer in the belief that the only further formality was the Rajah's assent. Gammans and Rees-Williams described the proceedings to Hall as 'sloppy and unbusinesslike', complaining that there had been no translations or secret ballot and that Archer had been partisan. It all confirmed their 'former poor opinion of many Sarawakian civil servants . . .'.¹⁷⁶ Then, having discovered that standing orders required a committee report and a third reading, they told Archer (who was enjoying himself at a victory party) that the full procedure was essential. When Archer launched into a diatribe against 'lawyers' and refused to chair another session, it took Dawson and Dale all their powers of persuasion to bring him around. Bertram had already accused him of having been bribed and he was in a state of high nervous excitement.¹⁷⁷ The bewildered members had to assemble again the next day and were then told that the bill would come into force 'forthwith'.

Abang Mustapha protested against this, as did Abang Openg who said that at least two years were necessary to give the matter proper consideration. When this was regarded by Archer as an amendment it was seconded by Gilbert and then defeated by 18 votes to 15. After a further categorical assurance from Archer that *adat lama* of all races would be followed, Howes asked him if any attempt had been made to obtain loan funds for Sarawak before cession was offered by the Rajah. However, the question was not translated and Archer's reply was inaudible. The vote on the third reading of the cession bill was then put and was passed by 19 votes to 16, the only difference being that Barcroft and the Datu Hakim who had earlier abstained now voted for cession¹⁷⁸ while Adams was absent ill. The only other business was the Rajah's Dependents Ordinance which went through all stages.

Gammans and Rees-Williams thought that the final day's proceedings were 'more businesslike' and informed Hall that the voting represented the 'fair view' of the Council as it was constituted. However, the MNU quickly issued a protest pointing out that the cession bill had depended on a European majority (a 'foreign vote') and that the Malays who could be regarded as in any way representative had voted against cession while those who supported it had only represented themselves.¹⁷⁹ When Pollard visited the Datu Patinggi's house that evening he found about thirty Malays in a high state of excitement over the day's events. There was strong criticism of Archer's statement that Sarawak was in dire straits financially, particularly since no facts and figures had been given. Cession, they felt, could only be considered as the last way out if taxes and

*The first show of hands was indecisive.

Table III: Voting on the Cession Bill in the Council Negri, 15 May 1946

<i>For:</i>	<i>Against:</i>
J. B. Archer (Acting Chief Secretary)	J. O. Gilbert (Resident, Fourth and Fifth Divisions)
G. E. Gascoigne (Treasurer)	W. P. N. L. Ditmas (Resident, First Division)
L. D. Kennedy (Trade and Customs)	Abang Openg (Native Officer, First Division)
B. J. C. Spurway (Forests)	Abang Kiprawi (Native Officer, First Division)
C. D. Adams (Acting Resident, Third Division)	Abang Samsuddin
R. E. Edwards	Datu Patinggi
Datu Pahlawan	Abang Abu Latip (Native Officer, Second Division)
Datu Amar	Datu Zin (Native Officer, Second Division)
Datu Menteri	Abang Haji Draup (Native Officer, Second Division)
Haji Nawawi (Mufti)	Abang Ali (Miri)
Tan Bak Lim	Datu Tuanku Mohd. (Native Officer, Fourth Division)
Father A. Mulder	Abang Mustapha (Native Officer, Fifth Division)
Temenggong Koh	Revd P. H. H. Howes
Bennett Jarrow (Native Officer, Third Division)	Philip Jitam
J. Owen (Eurasian representative)	D. M. Deen (Indian Muslim representative)
Khoo Peng Loong (Sibu Chinese representative)	Edward Jerah (Native Officer, Second Division)
Abang Ahmat (Sibu)	
Abang Haji Abdulrahim (Native Officer, Third Division)	
<i>Abstained:</i>	
J. C. H. Barcroft (Resident, Second Division); Datu Hakim	
<i>Absent:</i>	
Ong Hap Leong	
Tse Shuen Sung	

internal loans failed to meet the estimated deficit for 1946 of \$2,000,000.¹⁸⁰

Informing N. L. Mayle (who had inherited Gent's responsibility for Sarawak in January) of the first vote, Dawson anticipated a complaint to London from the M.P.s about the European majority. He pointed out that the official members had not voted *en bloc* and knew 'as well as

anybody . . . what is good for the country'.¹⁸¹ Given the narrow majority in favour of cession, however, Dawson experienced some mental torment before deciding to advise Mayle that the exercise should be completed. 'Let us face the consequences (street-fighting some say but I don't believe them, and anyhow the troops . . . have finally gone)', he wrote in his diary, 'and we will soon find that it will sort itself out'.¹⁸² Mayle expressed concern at the closeness of the vote, telling Dawson that unless there was a majority of at least four in the second vote he should mark time until receiving further instructions. When voting on the third reading only increased the previous days' majority to three, Dawson felt that he might not be given final authorization to put the cession bill to the Supreme Council for approval and then to sign the Instrument of Cession with the Rajah on 21 May as planned. But on the morning of 18 May he was relieved to have a cable from Mayle empowering him to go ahead. 'A dramatic moment in history; a bit added to H.M.'s dominions', he remarked in his diary, anticipating nevertheless that Bertram (who had left that day) had not 'shot his bolt' and that there would be debate, press activity and 'general fuss' for some time to come.¹⁸³

The Supreme Council duly approved the bill by a majority of six votes to two on 20 May and the signing of the Instrument of Cession took place at the Astana beneath the portraits of the first two Rajahs the following morning.¹⁸⁴ 'The result, narrow though it is', Dawson told Hall, 'represents a victory of commonsense over sentiment; and that in a country where sentiment (towards the Brookes) is a very important factor. Everybody, and not the least myself, will feel a tinge of regret at the ending of a romantic historical episode which had lasted for a century, but . . . had become anachronistic'.¹⁸⁵

Returning to his office after the ceremony, Dawson found a cable which had not been decoded because of the sudden illness of the cipher clerk. Decoding it himself, he was startled to find that it was a last-minute instruction from Hall not to go ahead with the signing. 'Cold feet at the last moment', Dawson told himself, 'not I hope a plot to fix the blame on executive officers (me) in order to side-step political bother'.¹⁸⁶ Consulting Dale, he sent off a reply explaining that the message had arrived too late and that it was now impossible to reverse what had been done. The Rajah was leaving the same afternoon.

Dawson's suspicions about Gammans were revived by the latter's remark in Singapore that 'few people in Sarawak want cession'. 'He is probably doing as I supposed he might do', Dawson wrote in his diary, 'deliberately leading us to the voting stage (knowing it would be narrow) in order to bust it sky-high later'.¹⁸⁷ But altogether he thought that it was a good thing that the message had been received too late. 'A last minute wind-up with everything laid on would have been the final blow to the Rajah and the whole project', he decided. 'The Colonial Office have in fact been prevented from making fools of themselves. They wanted to go on and must now go on'.¹⁸⁸ His hopes that they would be ashamed of their last-minute 'windiness' were answered by a cable arriving on 25 May which admitted that the 'stop' message would have made nonsense of the

whole proceedings. It also revealed, to Dawson's surprise, that the Conservatives had decided not to oppose cession.¹⁸⁹

Privately, Dawson conceded that the majority of Malay and Iban opinion was probably against cession¹⁹⁰ but he had no doubt that what had been done was in their best interests. Reports that MacBryan was suing Anthony Brooke for libel only confirmed this. 'The Brookes may be romantic', he wrote, 'but what a clotted mass of intrigue surrounds them.'¹⁹¹ Dawson knew that he had played a crucial part in ensuring that cession went through:

... the way in was so narrow that I can really claim that it was because I managed to become 'persona grata' both with the Europeans (by drinking them under the table) and with the Malays (by talking their language and dancing their dances) that the very narrow margin was in favour of cession. They could see (by looking at me) that the alternative to the Rajah was not entirely non-human; and this (it seems proud to say) may well have turned the trick. . . .¹⁹²

D. C. White, who had acted as clerk to the Council Negri, had assured Dawson that if instead of himself and Dale the Colonial Office had sent out 'two ordinary stuffy "officials"' who could not win the sympathy and enthusiasm of the European officers or anyone else, cession would have failed.¹⁹³

Although there had been some debate in Britain about Sarawak's future by the time of the Council Negri meeting, a great deal depended on whether the Conservative Party made it an issue. There was a handful of M.P.s including Stanley, Fletcher, and Donner who had already questioned Hall in the House and were anxious to press home the attack. When the Council Negri voting figures were posted and it was known that Hall's 'stop' telegram had been too late, it seemed to William Teeling the perfect opportunity.¹⁹⁴ However, the pre-arranged cable which Stanley received from Gammans did not contain what was expected. Gammans told Stanley that only the Chinese wanted cession for its own sake, that there was strong opposition from some responsible Malays and Ibans and that cession had only been put through with a European majority. However, he thought that the majority were prepared to accept the Rajah's assurances and he was personally convinced that 'on balance' cession was best for the people. Consequently he advised the party 'not to oppose Sarawak cession and not to give unqualified support'.¹⁹⁵

Gammans' cable took the Conservatives completely by surprise. On past form he had been expected to make an angry attack on the government and his attitude left some members shaking their heads in disbelief. Even Stanley, who had been 'lukewarm' about the Sarawak affair from the outset because of his earlier involvement, was disappointed that Gammans had not sent 'something stronger'.¹⁹⁶ Consequently, when Hall gave details of the voting on 22 May there was hardly a whisper of criticism from the Opposition. Admitting that the close result had caused the government to review its commitment to accept cession, Hall said it had finally been decided that the narrow majority of European members did not provide sufficient grounds for rejecting it. The M.P.s had not

insisted that the vote be limited to non-European members. Besides, he added, it would have been wrong to have ignored the European members 'who voted as individuals with knowledge of Sarawak and not as an official bloc'.¹⁹⁷ The disproportionate representation of the Malays by comparison with the Ibans and the Chinese also meant that the native vote should not be regarded as superseding the M.P.s' report on the people's views. Referring to Gammans' cable, which he had already shown to Hall, Stanley said that while he regretted some of the earlier steps, 'the only thing is to hope that this Act of Cession will prove to be of benefit to the people'.¹⁹⁸ There was not even a call for a formal report from Gammans and Rees-Williams on their mission.*

The British press accepted the Council Negri decision without much criticism, although the anti-cession faction attacked the vote in the letter columns.¹⁹⁹ A typical response was from *The Times*. 'On the whole', observed its special editorial of 16 May before the final vote was known, 'incorporation of Sarawak . . . seems likely . . . to promote the best interests of the people, even though the disappearance of a unique polity may cause some sentimental regret'. At the same time, however, it warned that cession should not go ahead 'if the people primarily affected show themselves unwilling to accept it'.

*However, in addition to the informal report which Gammans wrote for Hall in June ('Parliamentary Mission to Sarawak') an official report ('Record of the Visit of Lt. Col. Rees-Williams, M.P., and Captain Gammans, M.P., to Sarawak', Gammans Papers, Item 9) was prepared and discussed with the Colonial Office by the two M.P.s. It was finally decided not to publish it.

1. War Office to Gibbons, 19 December 1945, WO 203/3973; see also War Office to Mountbatten, 21 December 1945, WO 203/5535.

2. Hall to Mountbatten, 15 December 1945, *ibid.*

3. Smith to Gent, 14 December 1945, CO 537/1637.

4. Minute by Galsworthy, 14 December 1945, *ibid.*

5. Minute by Hall, n.d., *ibid.*

6. See Allen, *The Malayan Union*, pp. 168-72.

7. Edward Brandah to Anthony Brooke, 16 October 1945, Brooke Papers, Box 22.

8. MacBryan to Vyner Brooke, 3 December 1947, Brooke Papers, Vol. 22.

9. The principal sources for this account are: 'Report on Visit to Sarawak by Mr F. H. Pollard', Brooke Papers, Vol. 21; Goss to Macaskie, 14 January 1946, CO 537/1637 [53117/1/5]; Datu Patinggi to Gascoigne, 14 January 1946, *The Facts About Sarawak*, Bombay, 1946, pp. 89-90.

10. Brooke Papers, Box 11/2. The document is dated November 1945 and has the Rajah's seal.

11. These Orders and the three others mentioned below (together with Malay translations) were discovered by me among papers since deposited by Mrs Evelyn Hussey at Rhodes House. (Brooke Papers, Vol. 20B.)

12. MacBryan to Vyner Brooke, 7 January 1946, WO 203/3974.

13. Corry to Galsworthy, 7 January 1946, WO 203/3974; Corry to Gent, 7 January 1946, *ibid.*
14. Vyner Brooke to MacBryan, 17 January 1946, Mark Morrison Papers (B).
15. Professor Wilfrid Le Gros Clark to Margaret Noble, 28 January 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/4.
16. *ST*, 8 February 1946. Subsequent quotations from this source.
17. *Hansard*, 6 February 1946. Subsequent quotations from this source.
18. See Anthony's letters to the *Yorkshire Post*, 21 January 1946; *The Times*, 23 January 1946; *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 January 1946; *New Statesman and Nation*, 26 January 1946.
19. *Manchester Guardian*, 7 February 1946. See also Bertram Brooke's letter to *The Times*, 9 February 1946.
20. *The Times*, 7 February 1946.
21. *Manchester Guardian*, 8 February 1946.
22. *The Sunday Times*, 10 February 1946.
23. Translation enclosed in Goss' letter to Macaskie, 14 January 1946, Macaskie Papers.
24. Datu Patinggi to MNU President, 10 February 1946, 12 February 1946, Box 11/2.
25. Datu Patinggi to MNU President, Brooke Papers, *ibid.*
26. *ST*, 13 February 1946.
27. *ST*, 16 February 1946.
28. *ST*, 23 February 1946.
29. *ST*, 22 February 1946.
30. MNU to Datu Patinggi, 12 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
31. *The Times*, 23 January 1946.
32. Interview with Mr H. P. Buxton, July 1974.
33. The Rajah's 6 February message was published in the *Sarawak Tribune* of 8 February 1946 and Hall's statement on 11 February.
34. *Hua Kiaw Jit Pau* (Overseas Chinese Daily News) (Sibu), 6 February 1946.
35. *ibid.*
36. *Hua Kiaw Jit Pau*, 29 January 1946; see also the letter by Yao Ken Swee to the same newspaper published on 8 February 1946.
37. *ibid.* Since the issues of the *Hua Kiaw Jit Pau* for March and April 1946 are missing, it is not possible to trace the response to Yao Ken Swee's proposal.
38. *ST*, 26 February 1946.
39. *ST*, 15 February 1946.
40. *ibid.*
41. *ibid.*
42. *ST*, 22 February 1946.
43. *ST*, 15 February 1946.
44. *ibid.*
45. Interview with Mr H. P. Buxton, July 1974.
46. *ST*, 23 February 1946.
47. *ST*, 26 February 1946.
48. *Hansard*, 13 February 1946.
49. L. D. Gammans, 'Parliamentary Mission to Sarawak', Gammans Papers, Rhodes House MSS Pac. r.10. Item 8, pp.4-5.
50. *The Times*, 14 February 1946.
51. *Singapore Sequel*, London, 1944, p. 23.
52. *ibid.*
53. Interview with Lord Omore, March 1975.

54. Creech-Jones to Gammans, 12 March 1946, Gammans Papers, Item 1.
55. Gammans to Creech-Jones, 14 March 1946, *ibid.*
56. *Hansard*, 27 March 1946.
57. Gammans to Hall, 10 April 1946, Gammans Papers, Item 1.
58. See, for example, Boulton to Gammans, 10 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/5.
59. 'Administration of Sarawak', Gammans Papers, Item 6.
60. Bishop Hudson to Margaret Noble, 19 February 1946, 2 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/4.
61. Personal communication from Mrs Margaret Noble, 5 August 1976.
62. [Bertram Brooke?], 'Note of a discussion which took place on Tuesday 26th February, 1946 at 73 Albion Gate, Bayswater, between the Rajah of Sarawak, Mr G. T. M. MacBryan, his private secretary, and Mr J. C. H. Barcroft . . . and of subsequent developments', Anthony Brooke Papers, Box 22.
63. Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 21 October 1975.
64. Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 25 November 1975.
65. Banks to Macaskie, 23 March 1946, Macaskie Papers, File 3.
66. MacBryan to Smith, 4 December 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 22A; MacBryan to Vyner Brooke, 3 December 1946, *ibid.*
67. Creech-Jones to Vyner Brooke, 12 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 6/1.
68. *ibid.*
69. Vyner Brooke to Hall, 20 March 1946, CO 537/1632.
70. Vyner Brooke to Attlee, 21 November 1949, Mark Morrison Papers (B).
71. *ST*, 16 April 1946.
72. Bertram Brooke to Secretary, Provisional Government, 8 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21.
73. Note by Bertram Brooke, *ibid.*
74. Bertram Brooke to Archer, 28 February 1946, *ibid.*
75. Archer to Bertram Brooke, 5 March 1946, *ibid.*
76. Datu Patinggi to Bertram Brooke, —March 1946, *ibid.*
77. Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
78. MNU President to Bertram Brooke, 25 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
79. MNU President to Bertram Brooke, 31 March 1946, *ibid.*
80. Datu Patinggi to Bertram Brooke, 3 April 1946, *ibid.*; Barcroft to Bertram Brooke, 3 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
81. Bertram Brooke to MNU President, 1 April 1946, *ibid.*; MNU President to Bertram Brooke, 6 April 1946, *ibid.*
82. Bertram Brooke to Datus Menteri, Hakim, Pahlawan, and Amar, 8 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21; Bertram Brooke to President, Chinese Chambers of Commerce, undated, *ibid.*; Datus Menteri, Hakim, Amar and Pahlawan to Bertram Brooke, 11 April 1946, *ibid.*; Chinese Chambers of Commerce to Bertram Brooke, 6 April 1946, *ibid.*; Bertram Brooke to Datus Menteri, Hakim, Amar, and Pahlawan, 12 April 1946, *ibid.*
83. Archer to Macaskie, 6 March 1946, Macaskie Papers.
84. Macaskie to Goss, 2 March 1946, *ibid.*
85. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 5 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
86. Bertram Brooke to Margaret Noble, 5 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/3.
87. Bertram Brooke to Hall, 5 April 1946, *The Facts about Sarawak*, pp. 99–100.
88. Hall to Bertram Brooke, 5 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
89. Vyner Brooke to Sarawak Government Office, 23 April 1946, *ibid.*
90. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, *ibid.*
91. Document in the possession of Mr C. W. Dawson.

92. Preface to Dawson's 1946 diary, Rhodes House MSS Pac. r.7.
93. *ibid.*
94. 'Note on meeting held in Mr Dale's room at the Colonial Office on the 5th April [1946]', Digby Papers, Rhodes House, uncat. MSS.
95. *The Facts About Sarawak*, p. 14.
96. Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946, CO 938/1 [58501].
97. Notes by Bertram Brooke, 6 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2. MacBryan's resignation was effective from 31 March 1946, SGG, 16 May 1946.
98. Pollard to Margaret Noble, 28 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/4.
99. Bertram Brooke to Margaret Noble, 5 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/3; Anthony Brooke to Arthur Bryant, 10 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/3.
100. G. MacBryan, 'The Sarawak State Trust Fund. Public Enquiry Demanded', n.d., Mark Morrison Papers (B).
101. 'Notes of Agreement between the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia and the Rajah of Sarawak', WO 203/4294.
102. *ST*, 16 April 1946.
103. *Malay Mail*, 29 April 1946.
104. *Malay Mail*, 20 April 1946.
105. Dawson Diary, 15 April 1946.
106. *ibid.*
107. Macaskie to T. I. K. Lloyd, 26 April 1946, Macaskie Papers.
108. SGG, 24 April 1946.
109. Personal communication from Mr K. H. Digby, 12 December 1976.
110. SGG, 24 April 1946.
111. SGG, 1 May 1946.
112. *ST*, 26 April 1946.
113. *ibid.*
114. Dawson to Vyner Brooke, 21 May 1946. Letter in the possession of Angela Brooke.
115. Dawson Diary, 27 April 1946.
116. *ibid.*
117. Pollard, 'Report . . .', pp. 1-2.
118. Dawson Diary, 1 May 1946.
119. Lord Ogmore, MS memoir, p. 33.
120. *The Times*, 29 April 1946.
121. Dawson Diary, 18 May 1946.
122. Pollard, 'Report . . .', p. 1.
123. Lord Ogmore MS, p. 35.
124. Datu Patinggi to Gammans and Rees-Williams, 3 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
125. Abang Haji Zaini to Gammans and Rees-Williams, 3 May 1946, *ibid.*
126. Barrett Diary, 3 May 1946.
127. The following account is based on the Barrett and Dawson diaries for 3 May 1946 and *ST*, 6 May 1946.
128. Dawson Diary, 3 May 1946.
129. Dawson Diary, 5 May 1946.
130. Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, [4 May 1946], Gammans Papers.
131. Dawson Diary, 3 May 1946.
132. Barrett Diary, 7 May 1946.
133. *ibid.*, 14 May 1946.
134. Interview with Mr E. C. G. Barrett, April 1975.

135. Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946, CO 981/1 [58501].
136. *ibid.*
137. Interview with Mr H. P. Buxton, July 1974.
138. Dawson Diary, 9 May 1946.
139. *ibid.*, 8 May 1946.
140. *ibid.*, 9 May 1946.
141. *ibid.*
142. *ibid.*, 10 May 1946.
143. Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, 10 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
144. Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, 10 May 1946, *ibid.*
145. Barrett Diary, 12 May 1946.
146. Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, 12 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
147. Gammans, 'Parliamentary Mission to Sarawak', pp. 22-3. Subsequent quotations from this source.
148. Dawson Diary, 13 and 16 May 1946.
149. Gammans, 'Parliamentary Mission to Sarawak', p. 24.
150. *ibid.*, p. 25.
151. *ibid.*, p. 23.
152. Lord Ogmores MS, p. 25.
153. *ibid.*, p. 28.
154. Interview with Lord Ogmores, March 1975.
155. Lord Ogmores MS, p. 35.
156. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 7 May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
157. Dawson Diary, 16 May 1946.
158. *ibid.*, 14 May 1946.
159. Interview with Mr J. R. Combe, November 1974.
160. Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 13 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
161. Archer to Bertram Brooke, 14 May 1946, *ibid.*
162. Dawson Diary, 3 May 1946; Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946, CO 938/1 [58501]; Dawson Diary, 14 May 1946.
163. Cable messages cited in Creech-Jones to Vyner Brooke, 20 September 1948, Mark Morrison Papers (B).
164. Vyner Brooke to Creech-Jones, n.d., Mark Morrison Papers (B).
165. *ST*, 15 May 1946. Subsequent quotations from this source.
166. Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946.
167. Pollard, 'Report . . .', p. 6.
168. *ibid.*, p. 7.
169. *ibid.*, p. 5.
170. Rajah's speech at opening of Council Negri, 15 May 1946, Jitam Papers.
171. Dawson Diary, 16 May 1946; interview with Mr E. C. G. Barrett, April 1975.
172. R. H. Morris, MS memoir.
173. This account of the Council Negri debate is based on the official minutes (*SG*, 2 September 1946), the Barrett and Dawson diaries, Dawson's official report to Hall, accounts in *ST*, *Daily Mail* and *Malay Mail* and interviews with Mr E. C. G. Barrett, Archdeacon P. H. H. Howes, Mr C. W. Dawson and Sir Dennis White. Quotations are from the official minutes unless otherwise specified.
174. *Daily Mail*, 17 May 1946.
175. Pollard, 'Report . . .', p. 8.
176. Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, 16 May 1946, Gammans Papers.

177. Dawson Diary, 16 May 1946; Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946, CO 981/1 [58501].
178. Pollard, 'Report . . .', Appendix A.
179. 'Record of the Visit of Lt. Col. Rees-Williams, M.P., and Captain Gammans, M.P., to Sarawak', Gammans Papers, Item 9, p. 15.
180. Pollard, 'Report . . .', p. 10.
181. Dawson Diary, 16 May 1946.
182. *ibid.*, 17 May 1946.
183. *ibid.*, 18 May 1946.
184. For a description of the ceremony, see *ST*, 22 May 1946.
185. Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946, CO 981/1 [58501].
186. Dawson Diary, 18 May 1946.
187. *ibid.*
188. *ibid.*
189. *ibid.*, 25 May 1946.
190. *ibid.*, 8 June 1946.
191. *ibid.*, 2 June 1946.
192. *ibid.*, 31 May 1946.
193. *ibid.*, 26 May 1943.
194. Teeling to Anthony Brooke, 3 June 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/4.
195. Gammans to Stanley, 18 May 1946, WO 203/5535. Gammans elaborated on this view in 'Death of a State', *Sunday Times*, 2 June 1946.
196. Teeling to Anthony Brooke, 3 June 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/4.
197. *Hansard*, 22 May 1946.
198. *ibid.*
199. See, e.g., letters to *The Times*, 18 and 22 May 1946; *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 May 1946; *Manchester Guardian*, 24 May 1946.

IX

The Anti-Cession Movement

BEFORE the Japanese invasion, there were already signs within the urban Malay and Chinese communities that the traditional leadership was failing to meet the expectations of the new educated class. While the Japanese occupation did not provide opportunities for political activity, it did inspire the self-confidence to adopt a political stance and to organize what amounted to political parties. Although the Malay National Union and the Sarawak Dayak Association saw themselves initially as defending a threatened moral order, and while there were few signs of Malayan and Indonesian nationalist influence during the first phase of their campaign against cession, internal conflicts soon made it clear that some members would not be content with a mere return to the *status quo ante*. Tensions within the MNU demonstrated that in addition to the predictable anxiety of the traditional Malay élite to preserve the position of privilege which it had enjoyed under Brooke rule, there were Malays who saw the restoration of Brooke rule as a means of achieving a form of national independence in which political power would be shared with the Ibans.

The Anti-Cession Parties

The early months of 1946 had seen the emergence of the MNU and the SDA as Sarawak's first political parties. While their organizational basis was rooted in the pre-war years, the impetus for their renewed activity had been the political awakening of the Chinese and the announcement of cession. By the time of the Rajah's visit in April, the MNU had re-written its constitution with a more political orientation¹ and had revived its pre-war branches throughout the state. Its registered membership was estimated by the British Military Administration at 2,417 (of whom about half were from the First Division²) although MNU estimates went as high as 24,500.* By June the SDA was

*MNU membership was recorded in a register (known as the 'green book') which has since been lost. A 'black book' contained the names of pro-cessionists and backsliders.

claiming 400 members, almost all from the First Division.

The 12 February general meeting of the MNU, which had been called by Mohd. Nor and his associates to discuss the bribes, inevitably led to a polarization of those who opposed cession and those who supported it. At a subsequent extraordinary meeting on 27 February the Datu Amar, who had been President since the MNU's registration in 1939, was 'kicked out from his chair',³ taking with him a number of supporters. Abang Haji Zaini, the son of the Datu Bentara, took over as president and Abang Openg became vice-president.⁴ The supporters of cession were subsequently challenged to a debate but no one seems to have responded.*

Nevertheless, Mohd. Nor estimated that by the time of Bertram Brooke's arrival in early May, only half of the MNU's members opposed cession and only 20 per cent of the *kampung* and outstation Malays 'consented our Protest'.⁵ The Datu Patinggi, too, had to be constantly urged to maintain his anti-cession stance. From the time of MacBryan's departure, Sharkawi bin Haji Osman,[†] Edham bin Bojeng, and Mohd. Nor went to his house each night 'to give him lesson and encouraged him to be firm and brave'.⁶

From the outset the younger members of the MNU took the lead in organizing activities. A political committee was formed, instruction was given in public speaking and there was also an attempt to widen the intellectual horizons of members. On 3 March a Malay and English Literary Section was formed and its chairman, Johari Bojeng, emphasized that 'he who has not been "presented to the freedom" of literature had not wakened up out of his prenatal sleep'.⁷ At the next meeting there were lectures on 'Malay Culture', 'How to Become a Good Speaker' and speeches by fourteen other members on a host of subjects.⁸ The MNU was clearly providing the new educated élite with its first real outlet for intellectual as well as political expression since the short lived *Fajar Sarawak* and the *Persatuan Melayu* of pre-war days. However, there were no signs that this cultural and political awakening was linked in any way with Islamic reformism. As we have already pointed out, the Sarawak Malays did not possess a strong tradition of Islamic education and scholarship and there were no echoes of the *kaum muda-kaum tua* debate which had taken place in the Peninsula during the 1920s.⁹

Following its initial meeting on 24 February, the SDA was registered as a social organization with Charles Mason as President, Edward Brandah as Vice-President, Philip Jitam and Andrew Jika as Joint Secretaries, and

*Probably as a result of pressure from the British Military Administration, the *Sarawak Tribune* refused to publish correspondence on the cession issue after 5 March.

†Sharkawi and his mother were born in Sambas. His father, a Sarawak Malay, later went to live in Mecca. Sharkawi was one of the few Malays to have been educated abroad but unlike the others he did not attend English school. He was taught in Singapore by the distinguished Malay nationalist, Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy (who later formed the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party) and was employed on his return as a teacher at the Indian mosque school. Sharkawi knew Arabic and was a powerful orator, using religious arguments to oppose cession. His brother, Sheikh Shazali, had been unsuccessfully supported by the Datu Patinggi for the post of Datu Imam.

Robert Jitam as Treasurer.* Under the terms of the Societies Ordinance of 1930[†] by which it was registered, the SDA, like the MNU, could not be an avowedly political organization and its stated aims were the promotion of unity among the various Iban and Land Dayak groups (hence the emphasis on *Dayak*); their social, moral, educational, and intellectual advancement; the introduction of modern methods of agriculture; and the provision of accommodation for up-country visitors to Kuching.¹⁰ However, the meeting criticized the Rajah for not giving relief money to the Dayaks and concern was also expressed that Britain might allow 'big business' to buy up their farming land.¹¹

Not until Bertram Brooke's arrival and his subsequent conversations with Philip Jitam did the SDA come out publicly against cession, thus precipitating internal disagreement. Edwin Howell,[‡] the SDA 'honorary adviser', had supported cession from the start and exercised considerable influence over the other members. An educated Anglo-Iban, he shared the Eurasian community's desire for career advancement and social status which cession seemed to promise. At the same time, he reflected the up-country Ibans' antipathy towards the Malays and their desire for their own Native Officers.

Other educated Ibans like Philip Jitam's brother, Robert, seem to have been influenced in their opposition to cession by a number of considerations. Inculcated with the ideals of British justice during his time at St. Thomas', Jitam was inclined to project his own feelings about cession on to the uneducated Ibans of the Second and Third Divisions. '... To see a deed actually done beneath one's nose, so to speak', he told Anthony Brooke's sister, Anne Bryant, in August 1946, 'against that principle of fair play and by one who is set up as the fountainhead of all virtues, simply upset one's feelings and the natural sequence is that one sees red'.¹² More importantly, he was fearful of how the Ibans would fare as a race under colonial rule and the anticipated influx of Chinese and other aliens:

The Dayaks especially are quite unprepared to meet such an onslaught and coupled with the fact that most of our kiths and kins in the villages are still living in the 'Stone Age' era, I fear very much that in time we will be submerged beneath the avalanche of immigration and development and that the name of "Dayak" will be just a mere namesake and no more. Of course, it could not happen in one day but to quote a few examples, one is apt to ask—Where are the Sakais in Malaya and the aborigines of Australia now? Apparently, we are earmarked for the next extinction. That is the sole reason why we protested vehemently.¹³

This fear of Chinese domination was one of the principal bonds between the MNU and the SDA. As Mohd. Nor told Anthony Brooke, 'I know that if Sarawak is ceded to the Crown, we Malays are the foremost nations

*Other members of the SDA Committee of Management were: Satab Henry Bay, A. L. Reggie, Awan Rekan, S. Gawing, G. Jamuh and Johnathan Saban. Of these, only Awan Rekan was a Land Dayak. (*ST*, 26 February 1946.)

†Order No. S-1 (*Societies*) 1930, *SGG*.

‡For biographical notes on Edwin Howell and Robert Jitam, see above, pp. 136, 138.

to suffer and pressed by the foreigners and at last we will die natural death'.¹⁴

Nevertheless, internal dissension on whether to oppose cession and suspicion of some MNU members' motives prevented co-operation between the SDA and the MNU for some months. It was not until early June that negotiations resulted in an agreement on future co-operation.¹⁵ Nor would this have been achieved had it not been for the close personal friendship between Robert Jitam and Mohd. Nor and the efforts of Suhaily bin Matlayeir who knew most of the Ibans in Kuching and spoke their language. The earlier 'stubbornness' of the SDA members which Mohd. Nor and Suhaily complained about stemmed partly from the suspicion that the Malays were simply using them for their own ends, a feeling which was no doubt strengthened by the patronizing attitude of some of the MNU conservatives. Before final agreement could be reached the MNU leadership had to concede that in the event of the restoration of Brooke rule, political representation through the Council Negri, Supreme Council, or whatever other organ of government came into being, would be on the basis of the relative numerical strength of the Ibans and Malays.¹⁶ This was a major concession by Abang Haji Zaini, Haji Abdul Rahman and the other MNU conservatives, marking a dramatic departure from traditional Malay dominance. At the same time, the prosecution of the cession issue was placed in the hands of Mohd. Nor, Sharkawi, Johari Bojeng, and Suhaily bin Matlayeir, together with Robert Jitam.

From July until October the MNU itself was in the throes of an internal conflict and the SDA wavered on whether to continue opposing cession. Within the MNU, tension had quickly developed between the representatives of the traditional Malay élite and the younger activists. The conservatives were satisfied with sending cables and petitions and were not really interested in a broadly based political movement with close Iban co-operation. The younger activists, who described themselves as the 'inner circle' and the 'Laboural Committee', as distinct from Abang Haji Zaini's 'Conservative Cabinet',* were mostly English educated Malays of non-aristocratic origin who were disinclined to defer automatically to those who had traditionally been their social betters. They rebelled against the undemocratic way in which the MNU was run and found that they had more in common politically with such people as Robert Jitam of the SDA.

The conflict was significant because it reflected the wide difference in interests and attitudes which existed within the MNU. Its members wished to see a restoration of the Raj, but not necessarily for the same reasons. For the traditional élite, restoration of the Brookes meant a return to the *status quo ante* in which they had occupied a position of

*The other members of the 'Conservative Cabinet' were Haji Abdul Rahman, Haji Bol Hassan bin Haji Daud, Haji Kaur bin Said, Haji Ali bin Hosen, Haji Busrah bin Osman, Haji Yaman bin Haji Drahman, and Johari Anang. (Johari Anang to Anthony Brooke, 11 October 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.)

power and prestige. Indeed, if they still held the views expressed by the *datus* to Spenser St. John in 1855, they saw themselves as the source of Brooke authority. The *Datu Patinggi*, for example, believed that if the *Rajah* refused to rule, his power reverted to the people who would then choose their own successor and their own government.¹⁷

People like Abang Haji Zaini and Abang Bol Hassan seem to have taken the view (which was well established in Sarawak history) that the *perabangan* provided leadership which was to be accepted without question by the Malays and Ibans. They were also conservative in their notions of political action and effectiveness. Always a little embarrassed about such things as public demonstrations and posters, they adopted a constitutionalist approach, invoking the political wills of the first two *Rajahs* and British justice. Consequently they were acutely embarrassed when the 'inner circle' drafted a letter of protest to the American President and persuaded the *Datu Patinggi* to sign it.¹⁸ Accused by the conservatives of disloyalty to the British, Mohd. Nor then suggested a direct protest to Attlee.

The motivation of the younger Malays who provided the most active force within the MNU was more complex. While some wanted the restoration of Brooke rule *per se*, others wanted self-government as promised in the 1941 Constitution. The return of the Brookes under the limitations of the constitution they saw as providing an interim period which would allow the development of a multi-racial political organization. They were prepared to co-operate with members of the traditional élite and would probably have supported the idea that the *Datu Patinggi* or his grandson should become *Rajah*.^{*} But in the meantime, the restoration of Brooke rule was their only means of obtaining political independence.

The first signs of a rift within the ranks of the MNU emerged in July when a handful of the younger activists proposed the formation of a 'United Sarawak National Organization', which was conceived as an indigenous anti-cession front. While its movers tactfully emphasized its usefulness in fund-raising and creating a greater sense of anti-cession solidarity, it was also designed to answer the charge that the anti-cession movement was an all-Malay affair. It was to be a political party committed not just to the restoration of the Brookes but to educational and social change. However, the conservative leaders of the MNU, Haji Abdul Rahman and Abang Haji Zaini, resented this initiative and were not prepared to co-operate with the SDA to this extent. Nor would the Registrar of Societies accept its draft constitution and consequently the idea had to be shelved.

It is a difficult task to ascertain the ideological influences on the young activists of the MNU. During the first phase of the MNU campaign, they seem to have accepted the legal-constitutionalist frame of reference

^{*}It will be recalled that the 1941 Constitution accommodated the possibility of a Malay *Rajah* and there was at least a rumour that MacBryan had considered setting up the *Datu Patinggi*.

supplied by Haji Abdul Rahman. There were few public references by MNU members to developments in Indonesia until the appearance of Sarawak's first post-war Malay newspaper, *Utusan Sarawak*, in 1949* but many Sarawak Malays must have been aware of what was happening there. Photographs of Sukarno and other Indonesian nationalist leaders were pinned side by side with those of the Rajah and Ranee in some of Kuching's Malay houses in 1946¹⁹ and many First Division families had links with Sambas and other places in Dutch Borneo. There were even some nationalists among the Javanese brought in as labourers by the Brookes and the Japanese, including a certain Mujono[†] who was repatriated to Pontianak by the Australian military authorities on suspicion of being an 'agitator'.²⁰ Two Javanese from Matang and Pendang near Kuching were found to be nominal members of the Indonesian National Army (Field Preparation Section) in early September 1949, and others went to Sambas later that month for Indonesia's independence celebrations. However, the handful of Javanese who remained in Kuching and Miri did not play any significant part in the anti-cession movement and while there were signs of increasing Indonesian influence, the colonial government believed that it was coming from Singapore and not from across the border from Dutch West Borneo.²¹

Members of the MNU began to make visits to Singapore in February 1947 but there is no clear evidence that the anti-cessionists were associated with the Singapore-based Indonesian Association²² or Gerakan Angkatan Muda (GERAM). The latter was interested in the anti-cession movement and sent representatives including Abdulla Zawawi Hamzah and Abdul Samad bin Ismail (editor of *Utusan Melayu*) to contact its leaders in Singapore.²³ When the United Sarawak National Association (USNA) was formed by expatriate Sarawak Malays in April 1947, Tahu Kalu, president of the Singapore branch of the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP), advised it to affiliate. However, this advice was rejected (possibly due to Anthony Brooke's influence) and USNA remained isolated. Nor was there any link with the Singapore branch of Ahmad Boestamam's Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (League of Awakened Youth) which grew out of the MNP.²⁴ Indeed, the anti-cession movement remained pretty much separate from the mainstream of Malay and Indonesian nationalism until 1948. One point of contact was *Utusan Melayu* which was widely read by the Malays of Kuching, Sibul, and Miri. *Utusan Melayu* naturally gave wide coverage to Malay opposition to the Malayan Union and was warmly sympathetic to Anthony Brooke and the anti-cession cause. One of its reporters, Mahfuz Hamid, spent the early part of 1947 in Sarawak where he wrote a number of articles.[‡] The most important link, however, was Sukarno's radio speeches which were

* *Utusan Sarawak* was edited and largely owned by Abang (now Datuk Amar) Ekhwan Zaini, the son of Abang Haji Zaini.

† Mujono was active in the Sambas area during Indonesian Confrontation.

‡ Unfortunately, the only *Utusan Melayu* files for 1945 and 1946 were destroyed by the Kuala Lumpur floods of 1971 and those for 1947 were being restored at the time of this study.

listened to widely. Perhaps the first sign of Indonesian or Malayan influence was the use of the slogans *Merdeka* (independence) and *Merdeka Brooke* by mid-1946 and the naming of the MNU's splinter group, the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak (Sarawak Youth Front),* which had Indonesian nationalist overtones. However, the influence was on style rather than content.

There was a curiously 'anti-political' strain running through the thinking of the young MNU activists. Mohd. Nor, for example, told Anthony Brooke shortly after cession was finalized in July that 'politics' were alien to Sarawak and had been introduced by MacBryan and the British government:

The Sarawak people do not want to be politicians as politics only make people cheat, and this cheating caused the world war. Sarawak is a peaceful and independent State with a surplus of food; no paupers, no starvation, no unemployment and no civil war. The people lived in peace and happiness, and no politicians should be allowed to come into the country; but now MacBryan and George Hall wish to introduce politics into Sarawak so in the future there will be no happiness and no prosperity; there will be civil war, famine, strikes, demonstrations, etc.²⁵

Given this pejorative connotation of 'politics', Mohd. Nor did not at this point see his own efforts to restore the Raj as bearing any relation to political activity. However, the 'inner circle's' struggle with the MNU leadership was to provide an object lesson in politics.

The Colonial Government

The colonial government's reaction to the activities of the anti-cession parties was to encourage the formation of a pro-cession Young Malay Association (YMA) headed by Abang Haji Mustapha. Registered on 4 June 1946, its official aim was that of 'stimulating social relations among the young Malays of the country, promoting sports and recreations, and encouraging education'.²⁶ But the YMA was really designed to help Malays who had supported cession and were consequently coming under considerable social pressure, including the boycott by anti-cessionists of weddings, funerals, and other social occasions. One of the YMA's principal functions was to provide moral support for the families of 'pro-cessionists' who were suffering from this social ostracism. The parent body in Kuching consisted, predictably enough, of Malay policemen, firemen, and government clerks who were dependent on Abang Haji Mustapha's patronage. Indeed, it was almost compulsory for Malay policemen to join.²⁷ YMAs were also formed in Sibü (where Abang Haji Mustapha's brother, Abang Abdulrahim, was President) and other towns to perform similar tasks in response to the MNU's activities. In July the Rajah donated \$2,000 towards the YMA's 'welfare'.²⁸

Some members of the colonial administration did their best to intimidate the leadership of the MNU and the SDA, most of whom were

*See below, pp. 273-4.

government servants. Dawson himself was annoyed by the constant exchange of cables between the Brookes and the two anti-cession parties, but thought that banning them would do more harm than good and that the situation could be kept under control:

. . . when you get rabid telegrams going on about 'independence', 'annexation', 'U.N.O.', 'Atlantic Charter', 'Brooke for Sarawak and St. George for England', etc. it makes you wonder how much potential trouble is on hand. Not much in fact, I think. It is still the vocals; so long as they don't foment and deliberately promote trouble among the others—the neutral or placid majority. Then there is real trouble potential.²⁹

However, not all of Dawson's subordinates were so patient. When yet another cable from Anthony Brooke arrived on 22 June, D. C. White, Government Under-Secretary and Registrar of Societies, called in Philip Jitam and told him that it was contrary to by-laws not to have kept full minutes of the meeting which had been held to discuss Anthony Brooke's cable of 5 June. 'To draft your reply as representing the whole [SDA] you have to call a general meeting', White told Jitam, 'but since cession would be through in a matter of days, I do not think . . . that you need exert yourselves—it is all over bar the shouting'.³⁰

Most SDA members were living at some distance from Kuching and White must have known very well that it was impossible to have a general meeting each time to decide such matters. Nevertheless, the harassment was not without effect and the SDA's committee hesitated for some days before replying to the 22 June cable. Almost all the committee members were government servants and there was deep concern that continued activity in the face of strong government disapproval might bring about not only their dismissal but the forfeit of the government's contribution to their Provident Fund (superannuation).³¹ It was for these reasons that Dr Charles Mason resigned from the presidency of the SDA in early July. Philip Jitam, too, finally decided (as a member of the Council Negri) to take the oath of allegiance to the King and resign his position as joint secretary. When Edward Brandah threatened to dissolve the SDA unless they withdrew their resignations, they did so on condition that it stayed out of the cession controversy. Brandah felt that there was no choice but to accept this. 'I consider it better', he told Anthony Brooke, 'to refrain from active opposition than to lose the Association which in future will play an active part on the lives of the Dayak people'.³² The only committee member not directly employed by government was Robert Jitam and it was largely due to his work that the SDA was kept alive and contact maintained with the MNU.

The other major weakness of the SDA was that its appeal was limited to the First Division and those areas of the Second Division whose people had been trading in rubber and pepper for some years and were relatively westernized. The committee members of the SDA came from families who had migrated to the First Division three or four generations earlier. Having allied themselves with the Brookes and the Malays against the Ibans of the Skrang and Saribas, they identified with the Raj. Their close

contact with the Malays had broken down some of the strong historical antipathy which still existed among the Ibans of the Third Division, thus enabling a degree of political co-operation. However, it also isolated them from the Ibans of the Second and Third Divisions and prevented them from gathering political support in traditional Iban areas. The Ibans of the Third Division also seem to have been quick to accept the transfer of political authority from the Brookes to the colonial government. There were good historical reasons why they should not have identified so closely with the Raj as their cousins of the First Division.*

Threatened enforcement of government by-laws aroused the defiance of the MNU's 'inner circle' and Mohd. Nor went around the *kampong* lecturing on this new limitation to civil liberties. 'Be it known to-day Sarawak is not governed by Nazi regime or Japanese Dictatorate government', he proclaimed, 'but by Democratic Government and so people have freedom of speech and writing.'³³ Fearing police prosecution, however, he took the precaution of preparing a statement detailing Abang Haji Mustapha's activities during the Japanese occupation.

Dawson's tact in dealing with the Malays assisted the new colonial administration in establishing itself with the minimum of difficulty. However, there was one major event before the formalization of cession on 1 July which sharpened the division between those Malays who had decided to support cession and those who opposed it. As promised by the Rajah, the Datu Pahlawan was rewarded for his assistance by promotion to Datu Bandar while Ong Tiang Swee was released from a \$100,000 mortgage repayment to the government.³⁴ The reaction of the Datu Patinggi and his kinsmen was predictable enough. They regarded Abang Haji Mustapha not only as MacBryan's puppet and a traitor both to the Brookes and to the Malays, but a usurper to the Datu Patinggi's position. Abang Haji Mustapha could claim descent from Datu Patinggi Ali but his line was not as direct. The senior datuship had been given to a member of Abang Haji Abdillah's family since James Brooke's time and he had wanted his eldest grandson, Abang Ibrahim, to succeed him. He naturally refused to sign the order confirming Abang Haji Mustapha's appointment.

As far as the non-Malays were concerned, the appointment was seen as the highest official approbation of a man who had been one of the most vocal supporters of the Japanese and a prime target for prosecution as a collaborator. Robert Jitam, who had refused to work under the Japanese,

*This should not be taken to mean that all the indigenous people of the First Division opposed cession. In September 1946 the Revd P. H. H. Howes, who was then based at Quop, warned Anthony Brooke to take care that nothing he wrote or said '... suggests to your Dayaks that a return to Brooke rule would mean a return to Malay Native Officers'. He had earlier visited eight Land Dayak *kampong* with the Resident of the First Division, concluding that '... wherever Dayaks have welcomed the change, they have welcomed it on the grounds that the Rajah had been pro-Malay . . .'. 'I have heard both Sea Dayaks and Land Dayaks say that the Rajah had no time for any race except the Malay, and that all the best government jobs were given to the Malays. They go on to suggest that a change of government, if it means an equal chance for all, is to be welcomed'. (Howes to Anthony Brooke, 22 September 1946, Anthony Brooke Papers, Box 22.)

was bitter about this 'paradox'. In October 1946 he wrote to Anne Bryant:

Take for instance . . . Datu Pahlawan and Abang Openg, both of whom were working for the Japs in high posts. The way they preened themselves off owing to their high positions at that time has to be seen to be believed. I was thinking that in due course they would meet 'justice', but instead of which they are now elevated. So would you, if you are in my shoes, have any faith in those people to guide and administer to their own kind?³⁵

People like himself who had expected recognition from the government for their self-denial found instead that they were 'awarded the heavy boot . . .'.³⁶ Ironically, the anti-cessionists were later regarded by Sarawak's first British governor as a collection of collaborators and malcontents.*

Although Dawson's initial impressions of the senior members of the Sarawak Service had not been favourable, he came to appreciate why Brooke rule had retained its unique popularity. Furthermore, he could see that the transition to colonial rule should be as inconspicuous as possible in order to avoid problems. Consequently, when it became clear that Malcolm MacDonald wished to make a grand occasion of the 1 July ceremony, he was very irritated. 'God Save the King', he complained in his diary, 'I can't! This place will be a riot if they push the thing too far. Let it riot!'³⁷ Nor was it a very impressive beginning for the much-vaunted British colonial government. The flags, printing blocks, and other items promised by Singapore had not arrived and the Letters Patent and Royal Instructions were not received until 29 June.

The official ceremony confirming the British Crown's acceptance of cession and annexing Sarawak as a Crown possession took place in a subdued and somewhat resentful atmosphere. There were no Iban representatives present and the Datu Patinggi excused himself, declining to receive Malcolm MacDonald at his house.³⁸ Only a few Union Jacks had been provided and most of the decorations were in fact Sarawak flags, the Chinese being tactful enough not to display the Nationalist flag. The Special Commissioner, Malcolm MacDonald, read cables from the Rajah and the King expressing their best wishes for Sarawak's future and then confirmed Dawson's appointment as Chief Secretary and Acting Governor, the Datu Bandar reading Malay translations. In the late afternoon MacDonald insisted on making a tour of the *kampung* in spite of the boycott, acknowledging non-existent salutes and waving cheerily to closed shutters. 'Rather undignified I thought', commented Dawson who accompanied him, 'but I suppose he knows his stuff?'³⁹ It seemed to him that the empty roads were almost worse than anti-cession demonstrations.

In the evening there was a garden party at the Astana where most of the guests were European officials and Chinese and the next day MacDonald addressed schoolchildren before returning to Singapore. He had hoped

*This is not surprising in view of the dossier on the anti-cessionists compiled by someone in the Secretariat, a copy of which reached Anthony Brooke in Singapore. ('Malay Anti-Cession Personalities' and 'Sea Dyak Association', Brooke Papers, Box 22.)

to make a tour of Iban areas but this was postponed until August. Nevertheless, it was already clear that the Special Commissioner appreciated the importance of personal rule to the Ibans and the Malays. He was only too happy to step into the White Rajah's shoes on what became increasingly frequent visits by flying boat to the Third Division. Indeed, Temenggong Koh's longhouse on the Balleh became his weekend. He was cultivating 'loyal' Ibans as useful allies against anti-cession Malays.*

A few days after the ceremony, the Datu Patinggi received a letter from Dawson telling him that unless he made an oath of loyalty to the new government he would forfeit his membership of the Council Negri and the Supreme Council. However, the old man refused to bow to such pressure. 'This new affirmation', he told Anthony Brooke on 8 July when the Supreme Council sat without him, 'is only a tool to confuse members of the Council and the world so that it can be said that there has been recognition of Sarawak as a colony.'⁴⁰ In taking this stand, the Patinggi probably stemmed what might otherwise have been a gradual flow of support from the anti-cession camp towards accepting cession as a *fait accompli*.

While Dawson was careful to avoid any open breach with the Datu Patinggi, he was not so tolerant of the angry speeches made by Abang Haji Zaini in the aftermath of 1 July. When the MNU President talked about the 'blood-sucking British' and threatened to boycott the Union Jack at school sports meetings, Dawson thought that he could not stand much more of this. 'There are limits to the everlasting kindness of the British', he wrote in his diary.⁴¹ Nevertheless, he would not allow the Datu Bandar's supporters in the police to 'break up' the MNU. He also became less concerned about Abang Haji Zaini's activities when told that the latter was only interested in self-advancement and 'would fold up and come to heel if offered a Datuship (D. Bentara) by Govt.'⁴²

When it was announced in mid-July that the first governor of Sarawak was to be Sir Charles Arden-Clarke,[†] then Resident Commissioner of Basutoland, Dawson found it difficult to contain his bitterness at being passed over:

This is pretty hard [he wrote in his diary]. Do I want to stay on as No. 2 to an 'African'? Not me. And yet I hate pushing this place over having had such a hand in bringing it in. . . . It is bad policy. What this country wants is to be left alone. They begin to know me. They have to have M. MacD (twice). Now another new face. I suspect it is done so suddenly in order to prevent me from becoming too

*For the Special Commissioner's own sentimental memoir of his time in Sarawak, see *Borneo People*, London, 1956.

†Charles Noble Arden-Clarke (1898–1962) served in the Machine Gun Corps during the 1914–18 war and joined the Colonial Administrative Service in 1920. From then until 1933 he was an Administrative Officer in Northern Nigeria and was promoted to Acting Principal Assistant Secretary in the Nigerian Secretariat in 1934. He was made Assistant Resident Commissioner and Government Secretary, Bechuanaland Protectorate, in 1936, and Resident Commissioner in 1937 before going to Basutoland in 1942. After leaving Sarawak in 1949, he served as Governor of the Gold Coast (Ghana) until independence in 1957 and made a name for himself as an astute and tactful administrator.

much a persona grata and so more difficult for the next man. But what chicanery after all I have done. Feathers in the hat from Nigeria! (Not even knowing Malay or the local dancing and other 'adat' which has brought this place to hand.) They use all that, my personality, my natural influence with Malays, etc., to get the place, and then hand it over to an African. . . .⁴³

The Rajah had expected that Dawson would be made governor and Malcolm MacDonald even recommended him for the post. 'What is needed', the Special Commissioner told the Colonial Office a few days after the 1 July ceremony, 'is an uninterrupted period in which the govt. can play itself in. Dawson seems to me a wholly admirable man with the right sympathy and wisdom for this difficult task'.⁴⁴

Dawson's policy was to make the transition from Brooke rule to colonial rule as gentle as possible, but this was not in accord with Colonial Office thinking. Arden-Clarke, who was considered by many people as over-qualified for the job, seems to have been chosen with the intention of making a clean break with the Brooke past. Possessing no knowledge of the area, he was no doubt considered less prone to the 'sentimentality' which the Colonial Office had always been at pains to avoid within the Colonial Administrative Service. He was also seen as a disciplinarian capable of handling problems arising from a belated transition to colonial status. The Colonial Office was apprehensive about the situation in Sarawak, particularly in view of the native vote in the Council Negri and the publicity being given to the MNU and SDA and the anti-cession faction in England.

The Anti-Cession Campaign

During the six months following the Council Negri meeting a somewhat desultory campaign was conducted by the MNU and SDA in concert with the anti-cession faction in England. Three weeks after the Council Negri vote William Charles Crocker, a celebrated barrister who had been introduced to Bertram by his son-in-law, Arthur Bryant, told the latter that in his view Bertram and Anthony should do two things: give guidance and support to the two anti-cession groups in their demand for a restoration of independence, and make the Labour government realize that 'the permanent Civil Servants had used this somewhat inexperienced Government as a tool in a dishonourable piece of imperial aggrandizement'.⁴⁵ It seemed to him 'hopeless' to place any reliance on the Conservatives who had been unmoved by this and other breaches of the Atlantic Charter.

In the meantime, it was necessary to go through the motions of petitioning the Crown in the vain hope that the Order-in-Council would not be issued. However, Bertram's letter to the King was passed on to Hall who reminded him, predictably enough, that he had agreed to abide by the decision of the two councils.⁴⁶ Once the Order-in-Council had been issued in late June, Bertram wondered if there was any point in continuing the fight for what was now the *restoration* of Brooke rule rather than its continuation. He was concerned about the moral propriety of encouraging people in Sarawak to resist cession when he was not at all

sure that there was any possibility of securing its repeal. Furthermore, he had mixed feelings from the outset about the political activity which seemed to be developing in Sarawak. Indeed, he told the assistant editor of the *Sunday Times* that he was almost embarrassed by the support he was receiving from the MNU and some of the pre-war officers:*

This 'Union' is something quite new. I am afraid that the fact that it has come into being shows that there is a good deal of unrest out there, and that what used to be an easy-going and politically homogeneous populace is now divided into 'camps'. I fear also that such is the case with Sarawak officers. I hear of 'So-and-so' alluded to as 'for the Rajah' or 'for Peter', as the case may be.⁴⁷

The Sarawak he had known did not have these divisions and his response was to try to heal them at all costs. But a great deal had happened since 1936 when he last visited the state and there was no going back to the relatively harmonious and happy world of the pre-war Raj.

All that Bertram was now prepared to do was to test the Rajah's action in the courts and to this end he had discussions with both Crocker and Theodore Page, a barrister who had some knowledge of Islamic law as well as a keen interest in the constitutional issues. However, the questions involved were extremely complicated, as was the actual procedure, and it was not until 1950 that the case was decided by the Privy Council effectively in the Rajah's favour.[†]

It was Anthony and his sister, Anne Bryant, who kept in touch with the MNU and SDA where morale had suffered badly since Bertram's departure. On 5 June 1946, for example, Anthony sought their response to a comment by Gammans in the *Evening Standard* that 'the people of Sarawak do not care whether or not the Raj is brought to an end'.⁴⁸ This was vehemently denied by the Datu Patinggi and the presidents of the MNU and SDA who called on the Tuan Muda to assume the prerogatives

*He became even more ill at ease three years later when he saw the first issues of the anti-cession *Unusan Sarawak*.

†The first step was taken in July 1948 when a plaint was filed on Bertram's behalf in the Resident's Court at Brunei with the intention of recalling the line of succession as set out by James Brooke in his political will and Vyner's extraction of \$2,000,000 from the state funds in 1941. It was hoped eventually to petition the Crown to repeal the Order-in-Council of 26 June 1946 and to receive an account of the Rajah's transfer of funds. When the Resident's court refused to summons the Rajah and the descendants of James Brooke's trustees on the grounds that this was beyond its jurisdiction and the decision was upheld by the Judge of Appeal in the State of Brunei, it was then possible to apply for special leave to appeal to the Privy Council. This was granted after long argument but on 30 March 1950 the judgment delivered by Lord Normand finally upheld the Brunei court's decision. Ironically enough, the substantive question of the legality of cession was not discussed, most of the argument turning on the interpretation of the amended Courts Enactment 1908 of the State of Brunei and the Civil Procedure Code of the Federated Malay States. However, the judgment did determine that the original grant made to James Brooke by the Sultan of Brunei was a unilateral deed and that the Sultan did not retain any measure of authority over Sarawak. Besides, it added, '... the principles of international law or comity would exclude from the jurisdiction of the Courts of Brunei any question relating to the sovereignty or the land of Sarawak'. (*The Law Reports (Appeal Cases)* . . ., Kuching, 1950, pp. 313-27.)

of the Raj.⁴⁹ The Datu Patinggi also sent a separate message to Anthony expressing his feelings in more poetic language:

Harimau mati meninggal belang gajah mati meninggal tulang manusia mati meninggalkan nama.

[When a tiger dies, his striped skin remains; when an elephant dies, his bones remain; a dead man leaves his reputation behind.]⁵⁰

The exchange of cables became more frequent as 1 July approached, culminating in a protest from the Datu Patinggi and Abang Haji Zaini to Prime Minister Attlee that cession did not have the lawful assent of the representatives of the indigenous people and that five of the native members who had voted for cession were 'under monetary influence'. Since the Rajah had violated his accession oath and had relinquished the Raj, they said, he had committed a 'breach of faith [towards] the people of Sarawak' and should be replaced by his brother. They called on Attlee to uphold justice and the political will of the second Rajah.⁵¹ On the following day the Datu Patinggi, referring to himself as 'the fourteenth hereditary chieftain and representative of the people of Sarawak [since] before Brooke rule', invited Bertram and Anthony to return to Sarawak to initiate fresh discussions on the question of cession. 'I completely trust His Majesty the King', he concluded, 'and the British Government, which is supremely just, to take my request into consideration in order to satisfy the people's wish.'⁵²

Irritated by this and by Bertram's accusation that he had used his European officers to outvote the indigenous opponents of cession, the Rajah made an uncharacteristically bitter attack on the Datu Patinggi's 'impertinence' in claiming to be the fourteenth hereditary chieftain of Sarawak. Claiming that there had been no hereditary chieftains and no state of Sarawak before James Brooke, he concluded: 'The Datu Patinggi's influence in the Colony is utterly unimportant . . .'.⁵³

In the meantime, the anti-cession campaign continued to take the form of expressions of loyalty to Bertram and Anthony. Bertram's birthday on 8 August, which Dawson tactfully retained as a public holiday, was marked by all government offices and most shops. In the evening, about one hundred MNU members met at the Indian mosque where the Sarawak anthem was sung and a number of speeches made before the *imam* closed the meeting with a *doa selamat* (prayer of thanksgiving).⁵⁴ Haji Nawawi's complicity in the cession and his public support for it as *mufti* had led to a boycott by the anti-cessionists of the Malay mosque, further strengthening the already-existing social boycott. The anti-cessionists also made their own sighting of the moon, marking the end of the fasting month on a different day and using the social gatherings of *Hari Raya Puasa* to further their campaign.⁵⁵

Dawson's response to these tactics was to strive for closer links with the anti-cessionists so that they would be *malu* (embarrassed) about continuing their confrontation with government. Consequently he planned to visit more than seventy households on *Hari Raya Puasa*, including those of the anti-cession leaders. In Mohd. Nor's words, 'His

perfect aim for visiting was to buy people's feelings so that the opposition attitude of the Malays may dwindle down quietly.⁵⁶ However, the Datu Patinggi did not succumb, warning Dawson instead with the Malay proverb that however big a tree may be, it cannot survive without roots. In the face of this resistance, the Acting Governor cancelled his programme. 'Dawson's Diplomacy is out of date to my people now,' Mohd. Nor told Anthony Brooke.⁵⁷

The strength of the anti-cession movement surprised MacBryan when he arrived in late September to finalize his divorce settlement with Sa'erah and to dispose of the Rajah's remaining property. 'I hope there will be no fowls stolen by the fox', Johari Anang told Anthony Brooke, recalling the Private Secretary's earlier visit.⁵⁸ Accompanied by two European bodyguards and plain-clothes special branch men who had been alerted to the possibility of MNU trouble,* MacBryan would have observed that the Rajah's birthday on the 26th (by contrast with Bertram's) was marked by only a few shops throughout the town.⁵⁹ Calling the four pro-cession datu to the Native Affairs Secretariat, he chided them for failing to consolidate their position and bring public opinion around in support of cession. He told them that the cession had aroused political and national consciousness and that there would be serious repercussions. Having hoped that MacBryan would be able to assist them in some way, possibly with money, the datu were unable to make any reply.⁶⁰ A *makan selamat* (dinner of welcome) planned for the Datu Amar's house was cancelled and MacBryan cut short his visit.

On MacBryan's advice, the Datu Amar went to Sibu some days later in order to drum up support but was unable to make any headway because insufficient respect was shown him.⁶¹ Many Malays turned their backs on him in public and referred to him as '*Datu Tukol*' (Datu Bully) or '*Penjual Negri*' (traitor).⁶² In Kuching itself the five datu were constantly reminded of their actions, indeed they could not 'go out in the day for even school boys cry out calling them traitors, betrayers, sellers of Sarawak soil, bribed counsellors, etc.'⁶³ The British government was criticized in the presence of both pro-cession and anti-cession officers and the former were the target of open anti-European feeling,⁶⁴ something quite new among the Kuching Malays. Archer, for example, had his car tyres slashed.

The Campaign Renewed

In its first post-war issue on 1 September 1946 the *Sarawak Gazette* published the minutes of the Council Negri meeting as a service to future historians rather than as a reminder to the people of Sarawak of what had happened. 'This controversy is now thoroughly dead', its editor, K. H. Digby, optimistically proclaimed, 'and possibly would never have flared in such splendour if the flames had not been fanned, outside Sarawak, by

* Robert Jitam was forewarned by cable from London of MacBryan's visit and the MNU had met to discuss the matter.

ignorant adherents of the contending parties. Ignorance can seldom have flaunted itself with so much brazen courage and so little shame.' While it was true that since July the cables and letters from Anthony Brooke and others had helped to keep alive the spirits of the two anti-cession parties, the British and colonial governments themselves provided much of the stimulus which revived enthusiasm and hardened the lines of political confrontation.

When it was revealed in London in the first week of October that the Malayan Union constitution was to be radically altered and perhaps even abolished, the anti-cession faction took new heart. The *Observer* of 6 October quoted Anthony Brooke as saying that he intended seeking a judicial decree declaring the cession of Sarawak illegal. Although the exact legal procedure was not yet clear, he anticipated that it would eventually lead to a judgment by the Privy Council. When this news was published a few days later in the *Sarawak Tribune* the anti-cessionists were all smiles. In Johari Anang's words, 'It looked as happy day is coming very soon.'⁶⁵ It all provided a badly-needed stimulus to the MNU and the SDA whose morale had been teetering since May. The British government's cave-in on the Malayan Union had offered the first concrete indication that cession might be reversed.

The first opportunity to demonstrate this spirit was the installation of the Governor on 28 October. There was some encouragement from outside* but the anti-cession parties were well aware of the importance of marking the occasion. The MNU held three meetings to organize the protest and the 'inner circle' arranged a number of lecture sessions to raise the consciousness of the *kampong* people. They also went around the *kampong* 'instructing that every house must plant posters, which were ready-made by the Union'.⁶⁶ Their arrangements soon came to Dawson's ears.

. . . the Datu Patinggi [he told Mayle] is again making efforts to organize a boycott of the Malays when the new Governor arrives. He had the effrontery to call a meeting of the village elders (who are paid by the Government) for the purpose. I shall put in some counter propaganda but, of course, if I take too strong a line, I shall be immediately accused in the English papers of attempting to victimize people for having the courage to express their opinions.⁶⁷

There were even suggestions in the British press that the installation would see violent clashes.⁶⁸

On Arden-Clarke's arrival in Kuching, there was no address from the Iban community and the Malay address was presented by the Datu Bandar. The Datu Patinggi and Abang Haji Zaini signed a letter to the Governor protesting against cession⁶⁹ and the MNU the next day sent another letter challenging Abang Haji Mustapha's claim to speak for the

*The Revd P. H. H. Howes, for example, wrote to Philip Jitam on 22 October that if the people of Sarawak did not protest, 'then the people of this country will certainly believe that everybody in Sarawak wants Cession'. If sufficient people kept on speaking the truth, he added hopefully, 'then people in this country will support them, and make the Government give up the Cession . . .' (Jitam Papers.)

Malays. This in turn developed into a controversy between the MNU and the YMA in the *Sarawak Tribune*.⁷⁰

Unlike Dawson, Arden-Clarke was not prepared to ignore the placards which were displayed to mark his installation, particularly as they had been photographed by the British journalists sent to cover the event. When the MNU heard that police had been ordered to destroy the placards in the *kampong* at night, they made sure that they were taken down and posted again early each morning. Early on the morning of 2 November a party of more than 200 armed police, most of them from the outstations, destroyed all the posters along the Datus Road.⁷¹ However, more were made from pieces of timber and galvanized iron. When an official complaint was made to the Resident's Court, it was dismissed on the grounds that the names of the police involved could not be supplied.⁷²

If Arden-Clarke was irritated to find anti-cession slogans in Kuching, he cannot have been any happier about his reception a week later in Sibü where the Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu (PPM—Malay Youth Movement) arranged a similar show. He had been led to believe by his European advisers that while there was some anti-cession feeling, it was limited to one or two Malay *kampong* in Kuching and that up-country areas were solidly in favour of the new government. Orders were subsequently given for anti-cession placards in Sibü to be torn down.

From the outset, the PPM was a more radical organization than the MNU. One of the reasons, no doubt, was that the Sibü Malays lacked the strong traditional élite which exercised such a conservative influence through the leadership of the MNU. Furthermore, there was a tradition of armed rebellion amongst the Rejang Malays. Although Haji Abdul Rahman tried to strengthen the PPM's links with the MNU, many of its members rejected his constitutionalist approach. All its early activities showed that the PPM was much more inclined to take direct action. Some of its members also seem to have been more open to outside influence. Awang Rambli,* its real leader, was well-read and in August 1947 Kathleen Brooke was alarmed to discover that one of her PPM guides, Abang Han,† was carrying a work by Karl Marx with him.⁷³ However, it was only after Anthony Brooke advised them to give up the struggle in

*Awang Rambli bin Mohd. Deli was born at Muara (Brunei) c. 1912 and was adopted at an early age by the *mandor* (labour supervisor) of Brooketon colliery. Both his natural parents were Brunei Malays, hence the title *awang*. Rambli lived for some years in Kuching as a child and attended English school to Standard 3. He joined the Customs Department in July 1929 and either resigned or was dismissed in 1946. He became a member of the YMA in Sibü but after resigning became an active member of the PPM and was the leading spirit of the Rukun Tigabelas (Thirteen Precepts) which organized the assassination of Arden-Clarke's successor, Duncan Stewart, in December 1949. Found guilty of conspiracy to murder, he was hanged at Kuching prison on 23 March 1950 at the age of 38.

†Abang Han bin Abang Ahmad was born in Sibü in c. 1925 and worked for some years as an oil-tester in the Shell Oil Laboratories at Seria (Brunei). The librarian for the PPM, he also joined the Rukun Tigabelas and was found guilty on a charge of conspiracy to murder Duncan Stewart. His sentence was commuted to fifteen years imprisonment after a recommendation of mercy.

1951 that some PPM members decided to throw in their lot with Indonesia. 'Indonesian-style feelings' had existed before 1949 and there was some contact with the prominent Malay nationalist, Dr Burhanuddin,⁷⁴ but the movement was fundamentally loyalist.

By the time Arden-Clarke reached Miri, British newspaper accounts of the Kuching boycott had been published in the *Sarawak Tribune*, together with Anthony's reiterated promise to fight annexation 'as long as there is breath in our bodies'.⁷⁵ More importantly, it was revealed that he proposed to visit Sarawak and had asked the Colonial Office to arrange air travel to Singapore since all seats were still under military control. His stated reason for making the visit was the invitation from the anti-cession leaders and the need to collect information for the libel action which MacBryan was bringing against him, something which he saw as keeping the Sarawak issue alive in Britain. The collection of documents relating to cession which he and Crocker had been working on had just been published as *The Facts About Sarawak** and was being distributed overseas as well as to M.P.s and newspaper editors in Britain.

The news of Anthony's imminent return spread quickly through the state. Many of the anti-cession banners in Sibu told Arden-Clarke: 'We want Anthony Brooke to be Rajah of Sarawak' and at Miri there was a complete boycott by the Malays. When he summoned the local headmen the next day to tell them that cession was settled, he was told by Native Officer Datu Tuanku Mohammed (who had voted against cession in the Council Negri) that the Malays, Ibans, and Kedayans all objected to cession and would not be silenced. A meeting was subsequently held on 14 November to send delegates to Kuching for Anthony Brooke's arrival and to arrange a reception for him when he came to Miri. Petitions to the Governor were also sent through the MNU and the PPM by Malay and Kayan headmen of Belaga, the Kapit branch of the PPM, Penghulu Janting (who claimed to represent 2,421 Malays and Ibans of Song), and Penghulu Hang Nyipa (who claimed to represent 2,000 Ibans of Kapit).⁷⁶

The Colonial Office had no intention of giving way on Sarawak as they had on Malaya. Besides, the anti-cession faction in Britain could not match the powerful lobbying machine assembled by the Malayan veterans with the assistance of wealthy commercial interests. Nor did it seek to make common cause with the agitation against the Malayan Union, although the 'Malayans' were sympathetic and Sir George Maxwell advised Anthony Brooke on tactics with Hall. Writing to Sir Frank Swettenham in February 1946 about the Sultan of Johore's 'backsliding' on the Malayan Union, Maxwell remarked that the Rajah looked like 'another renegade'.⁷⁷ Sir Andrew Caldecott also had a poor opinion of the Rajah. 'I understand him to have been a great manufacturer [of cheese] during his latter residence in the Astana', he told

* *The Facts About Sarawak* was first published in England in a limited quantity and was later reprinted in Bombay for distribution in Malaya and Sarawak. (A *Jawi* translation was published later.) Interestingly enough, it was not very different in style and purpose from *A Statement Regarding Sarawak*, a pamphlet which was privately published by Brooke Brooke in 1862 after his dispute with his uncle.

Bertram, 'so that he may have become assimilated to his own creations.'⁷⁸ Unlike the Sultan of Johore, however, the Rajah could not be chivvied into reasserting his authority. Nor was he responsive to appeals from Sarawak's educated Malay élite. Unlike Malaya, there were no big business interests with a stake in restoring the *status quo ante* in Sarawak and applying leverage on the government and the bureaucrats. Indeed, the Borneo Company, the only substantial foreign-owned company in Sarawak apart from Shell, had been in favour of *greater* British control in order to obtain further concessions. Anxious to put an end to further speculation in Britain and Sarawak about the repeal of cession, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech-Jones, quickly issued a statement emphasizing that it was 'no longer a matter for discussion or negotiations'.⁷⁹ But expectations had been raised which could not be brought to earth so easily. The anti-cession parties pulsed with new optimism and elaborate arrangements were soon being made for Anthony Brooke's reception.

The MNU now found it much easier to strengthen their existing branches and to form new ones. Haji Abdul Rahman even took the initiative of calling for the formation of a *kaum ibu* (women's section), indicating that he was not entirely the hidebound conservative which the 'inner circle' portrayed him to be. The MNU was also making some headway in its efforts to demolish the YMA. In mid-November twenty-seven Malay firemen who had been 'tricked' into joining the YMA resigned their membership and promptly joined the MNU.⁸⁰ More importantly, there were signs that the leadership of YMA in Sibü might be won over.*

The Banning of Anthony Brooke

On 17 November Abang Haji Abdillah, the Datu Patinggi, sent a cable to Bertram Brooke saying that he wished to see him urgently. 'I now have the feeling that my end is approaching', he said, 'and on that account I have a longing to meet you again while I am still in this world. . . .'⁸¹ Four days later the old man died[†] and his funeral rites, including the reading of his will, brought anti-cession passions to a high pitch. Sharkawi delivered a moving speech before the 4,000 mourners made their way to the cemetery and at the subsequent mosque ceremony a long funeral prayer which he had composed in Arabic and Malay was read by Abang Haji Bol Hassan.⁸² In Mohd. Nor's words, the senior datu's death 'only mount the anger of the Patriotic nationalists and makes them more lovable for their independence, Raj and their nationhood'. Indeed, he was afraid of what 'some extremists' might do.⁸³ While some members of the MNU could have recalled the difficulty there had been in securing the Datu Patinggi's patronage of the anti-cession movement, they saw his death as

*Before the resignations, the Kuching YMA was estimated to have had 173 members and the Sibü YMA about thirty members.

†For obituaries, see *ST*, 23 November 1946; *The Times*, 23 November 1946.

enhancing its moral strength. Indeed, the Datu Patinggi who had been such an important rallying point for members of the SDA as well as for the Malays, was to become something of a political martyr. His house, *Darul Kornia* (abode of peace), had already been used by the MNU for its meetings and was later to serve as the first headquarters of the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak.

It was only a week after the Datu Patinggi's death that his family and the MNU invited all Malay members of the Council Negri together with representatives of the SDA and headmen from the Kuching district to discuss strategy. It was decided that the first step should be to work through the Malay councillors and when the Council Negri met the next morning the Datus Hakim and Menteri and two other members refused to confirm the official minutes.⁸⁴ However, no other members of either Council had followed Datu Patinggi in refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the King and in his speech at the opening of the Council Negri on 2 December, Arden-Clarke reiterated that even before the Datu Patinggi's death the decision on cession was final and irreversible.

Before the Datu Patinggi's death, Anthony Brooke had written to the Colonial Office requesting assistance in obtaining a passage, giving as his reason the need to collect material for the libel suit which MacBryan had brought against him. On 13 November the Colonial Office told him that it could not arrange a priority passage but said nothing to indicate that he would be refused entry. Consequently he made his own way to New York on 6 December with the intention of crossing the Pacific. 'I am not proposing to incite the native chiefs', he told newspaper reporters before leaving London. 'I want to consult my friends in Sarawak about legally regaining independence.'⁸⁵ Subsequent statements in New York and San Francisco, which received wide publicity, emphasized that he had been invited to Sarawak by the MNU 'to consult the wishes of the native communities in relation to the restoration of Sarawak independence'.⁸⁶ He also indicated that the Privy Council might take two or three years to decide whether cession was legal, but that if in the meantime it became clear that the people did not want colonial status, the Crown could still use its powers under the Order-in-Council to revoke cession.⁸⁷

Arden-Clarke was not prepared to allow Anthony into Sarawak and after consultations with Malcolm MacDonald he was authorized by the Colonial Office to issue a prohibition order under the same legislation, ironically enough, which had been used to expel MacBryan in 1936.* In its official statement, the colonial government accused Anthony of wanting to restore Brooke rule with himself as Rajah. His presence in Sarawak 'would influence popular feeling by exploiting the affection and prestige attached to the Brooke name'.⁸⁸ In a country where false reports and fears spread quickly among the largely illiterate population, it

*The ban on Anthony Brooke was not removed until 1963 when Sarawak became part of Malaysia. The Sarawak government then invited him to visit the state, which he did in 1964. Johari Anang, the mainstay of the MNU who had been hoping to meet Anthony, died the night before his arrival.

continued, there was a risk of violence. Consequently, the government's duty was 'to ensure that the present peaceful state of the country is not unnecessarily disturbed and to protect the people against the danger of disorder which might perhaps be of grave character'.⁸⁹ Whether there was in fact such a danger is now impossible to ascertain, but it was an effective argument at the time.

Reaching Manila in mid-December, Anthony learnt of the prohibition order and was refused a visa for Singapore when he rejected the condition that he should refrain from political activity concerning Sarawak.⁹⁰ He then flew to Hong Kong where the British authorities warned him not to communicate with the press. However, he immediately called a press conference and this, together with a question in Parliament, forced Hall to agree that his passport should be endorsed for Singapore and the Malayan Union.⁹¹ By early January he was in Singapore expressing determination to stay until the ban was lifted. Gladys Brooke had been there for some weeks and later took a house called *Rumah Sarawak* (Sarawak House) which was to serve as headquarters for the anti-cession movement in Singapore.

In the meantime the ban had sparked off a spirited debate in the House of Commons where the Conservatives, led by William Teeling and Oliver Stanley, pressed Creech-Jones for the reasons. Accusing Anthony of attempting to 'subvert existing authority', the Secretary of State insisted that 'the people should not be confused at this moment with another constitutional problem'. When Winston Churchill described this as '... phrase by phrase, and line by line . . . the very perfect declaration of tyranny',⁹² Creech-Jones was unable to reply. Nor could he produce any evidence to suggest that Anthony was intent on setting himself up as Rajah. However, he did say that in view of his demotion on three occasions, Anthony was a 'completely irresponsible person'. Most importantly, he revealed that the Colonial Office had earlier decided to take a tough line on Sarawak: 'A decision was taken during this year that it would be fatal at this moment to confuse the Sarawak public again, when the great work of rehabilitating the country, of restoring order, of getting social services running, must at once be taken in hand.'⁹³

Anthony Brooke's planned visit had resulted in feverish activity, not only within the MNU and the SDA in Kuching, but within anti-cession groups throughout the state. A massive rally of 20,000 to 30,000 Malays and Ibans from all districts was planned for his arrival and it was intended that this should contrast dramatically with the boycott of Arden-Clarke. Invitations for Anthony to visit Sibul, Miri, and other centres were sent to the MNU and the PPM from their branches and Mohd. Nor was appointed as his personal aide-de-camp.* On 24 November several

*Mohd. Nor composed this *panjun* (verse) in Anthony's honour:
Selamat Datang Yang Maha Mulia Ka-Negri Sarawak Darul-hana,
Kami menyambut bersuka ria, mudahan kekal di-atas Tahta,
Kepada Allah kami puhunkan umor zaman-nya Allah panjangkan,
Berlanjutan masa zaman berzaman kekal Ra'ayat di-dalam aman.

thousand Malays gathered before the main mosque in Kuching to 'pray for a return of Sarawak's freedom and a restoration of the throne'.⁹⁴ Consequently there was great dismay when the news of Anthony's banning was announced. It did not seem possible that a member of the Brooke family could be refused entry to Sarawak. Petitions were quickly drawn up⁹⁵ and on 18 January there was another demonstration with placards around the mosque. Inside, Abang Haji Bol Hassan prayed for the lifting of the ban but also called for the observance of law and order during the campaign.⁹⁶ He and Abang Haji Zaini later went to Singapore to seek Malcolm MacDonald's assistance.⁹⁷

Circular No. 9

While the MNU and the SDA expressed bitter disappointment at the banning, it was a ready-made political issue. In the meantime, however, the colonial government had provided an equally valuable rallying point. On 11 December Suhaily received advance notice of a government circular aimed at discouraging anti-cession activity. 'Any government servant', ran its final paragraph, 'who associates himself with any activity designed to keep open the question of cession or commits any act of disloyalty to government will render himself liable to instant dismissal.'⁹⁸ Anyone who felt unable to comply with this instruction was required to inform his head of department by 31 December.

Suhaily and the other members of the 'inner circle' immediately organized a meeting of Malay government servants at *Darul Kornia*, advising them not to sign any such circular 'as every signature of yours will have great value to them'.⁹⁹ At this point Sharkawi was confident that 80 per cent of all Malay government servants would resign 'rather than to give up their Birthrights and Independence . . .'.¹⁰⁰ However, he was thankful that the government had not taken such a step earlier as many would have then given in, 'not fully realizing the "Truth" which they have at heart today'.¹⁰¹ Although the 'inner circle' had provided some advance warning, the official release of the circular on 20 December still came as a tremendous shock to most Malays. As the MNU cabled Crocker the next day, it was 'just like an atomic bomb dropped on them'.¹⁰²

There can be little doubt that it was Arden-Clarke's impatience with the anti-cessionists and his penchant for African-style colonial discipline which prompted Circular No. 9. The Governor had arrived in Sarawak in a 'belligerent mood' and 'was resolved to strangle the anti-cession movement . . . as soon as possible'.¹⁰³ In his own words, he was determined 'to make it clear to the people that cession was not likely to be revoked in as sudden and abrupt a fashion as, by their way of thinking, it

[Welcome, Your Highness, to Sarawak, Abode of Peace.
We greet you with joy, hoping you will remain on the throne.
We pray to God that your reign will be long.
May your reign be long so that the people may live in peace.]
(Brooke Papers, Box 22.)

had been brought about'.¹⁰⁴ Arden-Clarke was under the impression from the outset that the Council Negri debate had aroused little interest locally and that most of the anti-cession leaders were Japanese collaborators. '... It was only when it became apparent that there was not to be an orgy of witch-hunting', he told Stirling Boyd, 'that their confidence returned and they started to organize opposition . . .'.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, in view of Creech-Jones' uncompromising statement of 13 November he knew that he would have the support of the British government.

The MNU's strategy, no doubt influenced by the threatened boycott which had been so effective in Malaya some months earlier, was to persuade people not to acknowledge the circular and to bring the administration to a standstill until it was withdrawn. Special forms protesting against the government's action were signed by 353 government employees. The MNU campaigned to obtain as many signatures as possible in Kuching and similar work was done by the PPM in Sibuluan. As Haji Su'at Tahir quickly found, however, it was not an easy task to win over most Malays. 'There have been a lot of obstacles and difficulties in bringing these people into one', he told Anne Bryant, 'and make them realise how much their independence would mean to them. . .'.¹⁰⁶ Nor was there a Malay newspaper to arouse political consciousness and mobilize opinion as *Utusan Melayu* and *Warta Negara* were doing in Malaya. The best it could do was to translate editorials and correspondence from the British and Singapore press and circulate them as printed pamphlets. The MNU had to rely on members' family and other links in order to extend its base and the campaign was consequently a highly personal one, producing bitter animosity and conflicts of loyalty.*

During the three months from late December 1946 until April 1947 there was a bitter struggle between the anti-cession activists and the colonial government for the loyalties of the Malay government servants. The deputy director of the Malayan Union government's public relations department was sent to Sarawak† and Digby, who had resumed his position as Legal Adviser and was also editing the *Sarawak Gazette*, was commissioned to write a series of articles answering Anthony Brooke. These were published anonymously in the *Sarawak Tribune*¹⁰⁷ with the aim of countering the publicity which the anti-cession cause was receiving in the Singapore press and later formed the basis of a lawsuit which Anthony brought against Digby and the *Tribune*. Sarawak's newspaper editors were also quietly told that 'undue' publicity of the anti-cession parties would be considered an unfriendly act. The pro-cession *Tribune* had refused to publish letters relating to the anti-cession campaign since

*Conflicts within families were common. For example, Abang Moalim, son of the Datu Menteri who had signed MacBryan's documents, was reported to have run *amok* in his father's house in October 1946, accusing him of supporting cession. (Johari Anang to Anthony Brooke, 3 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.)

†A. J. W. Hockenull arrived in Kuching in early December 1946 to report on the political situation and to make recommendations on how to deal with the anti-cession campaign. A copy of his report fell into the hands of the anti-cessionists who sent it to Anthony Brooke.

March 1946 except for those already published in the Singapore and British press.

In the meantime, departmental heads were instructed to dissuade resigners and it was strongly hinted that they would lose their bonuses and the government's contribution to their superannuation. The government also brought pressure to bear on European officers, particularly those who had served before the war and were sympathetic to the anti-cession cause. Soon after Arden-Clarke's arrival he made it clear that they must either give their entire support to the government or leave. Kenneth Whale, the manager of Sarawak Steamships Ltd. who strongly opposed the cession and assisted the cause in various ways, found that some officers who had continued to express their views after the Council Negri meeting began to show 'a marked reluctance . . . to discuss the cession at all'.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, there were strong rumours that outgoing mail was being censored. On the positive side, in late December the government began an inquiry into pay and conditions in the Junior Administrative Service. A month earlier it had been announced that £5,000,000 had been allocated to Sarawak from the Colonial Development Fund.¹⁰⁹

The MNU did not possess anything like the government's resources and was obliged to depend very much on appeals to Malay solidarity and individual persuasion. There were strong hints that the religious and social boycott of pro-cession families would be extended to those who did not resign and this was promptly condemned by the government as 'intimidation'.* Anxious for advice and moral support, the MNU sent representatives to Singapore to meet Anthony Brooke in February, while Mohd. Nor and Robert Jitam went unofficially. Anthony encouraged them to withdraw their resignations.¹¹⁰ However, it is clear that the unofficial delegates' visit to Singapore strengthened their resolve to pursue the campaign. As soon as Robert Jitam and Mohd. Nor returned to Kuching there was a four-hour meeting with more than fifty of the resigners where it was decided:

- (1) that they should not take back their notices;
- (2) that government schools should be boycotted after 1 April;
- (3) that the religious and social boycott of pro-cessionists should continue until they 'surrendered'; and
- (4) that non-establishment government staff should cease work on 1 April in protest against the circular.¹¹¹

Subsequent to this, twenty-eight of the 353 who had refused to conform with the circular's direction withdrew their resignations but twenty-three more Malay teachers resigned on 31 March.¹¹²

The Kuching anti-cessionists also took heart from the decision of the committee of the Sibu YMA to switch their support to the anti-cession

* According to a government statement issued in Singapore on 12 January 1947, many of the resigners had privately informed their departmental heads that their action was due to pressure brought to bear on them by their families or fear of a social and religious boycott. (*The Times*, 13 January 1947). This was repeated by Creech-Jones in the Commons on 22 January. Anthony Brooke subsequently received a refutation of this allegation signed by representatives of twenty-two departments. (*ST*, 3 February 1947.)

cause. Its secretary, Abang Kipli bin Haji Othman,* seems to have felt that the political tide was now running in favour of restoration of the Brookes. Consequently he made his way to Singapore to be with Anthony Brooke and later formed the United Sarawak National Association (USNA) whose membership consisted of Sarawak Malays and Ibans working in Singapore and Malaya.

One complication which caused the colonial government and the British authorities in Singapore some embarrassment at this point was the Sultan of Brunei's statement to the Singapore press in late February 1947 that if Sarawak was to be ceded to anyone, it should be him.¹¹³ All this came as a surprise to Anthony Brooke who had previously thought of the Sultan as 'a British Government stooge'. He suspected at first that it was connected with some Colonial Office plan to reconstitute Sarawak under the nominal suzerainty of Brunei, a move which might defuse the problem of Sarawak's colonial status.¹¹⁴ However, the Sultan was doing no more than repeating what he had said in response to cables from the Datu Patinggi and the MNU in early 1946—that Sarawak was not a *kebun getah* (rubber garden) to be sold off by the Rajah.¹¹⁵ The Sultan had made similar remarks to Gammans and Rees-Williams when they met him in May 1946. '... If the Rajah wants to give the country away', he told the M.P.s, 'why does he not give it back to me?'¹¹⁶ Interestingly enough, the anti-cessionists seem never to have considered inviting the Sultan of Brunei to re-assert sovereignty over Sarawak. However, it was rumoured in June 1947 that the British government intended to annex Brunei and administer Sarawak and Brunei as a single territory.¹¹⁷

On 2 April 1947, more than 300 government servants of whom only three were not Malays completed the three months' notice which they had been given when refusing to comply with Circular No. 9.[†] While later resignations probably brought the number to over 400,¹¹⁸ all the resigners referred to themselves as belonging to the *tiga tiga lapan* (338), a figure fixed upon by Sharkawi because of its association with one of the early

*Kipli's subsequent career was colourful. He became strongly pro-Indonesia and during Confrontation emerged as 'Djenderal Abang Kipli' of the Indonesian-sponsored *Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara* (North Kalimantan National Army). (Bob Reece, 'Sabah Rattling', *FEER*, 1968). He is now living in Jakarta but still has relatives in Kuching.

†The breakdown by department as given by the *Sarawak Tribune* of 3 April 1947 was:

76 Education	8 Treasury
4 Agriculture	18 Printing
18 Lands and Surveys	4 Secretariat
43 Posts and Telegraphs	1 Native Affairs
4 Municipal	5 Resident's and District Court
17 Fire Brigade	1 Chinese Secretariat
9 Museum	2 Astana
40 Marine	13 Constabulary
7 Forestry	1 Depot
26 Customs	1 Legal Adviser
12 Public Works	
18 Medical and Health	

Most of these were from the First Division.

battles fought by supporters of the Prophet. On the previous day, all fifty-six students of the Sarawak Malay Teachers Training College had ceased their studies in protest against the circular¹¹⁹ and a further 500 Malays from schools and non-government occupations also obtained permission to take leave that day. In the morning there was a mass meeting at *Darul Kornia*. An address was given by Johari Bojeng and a photograph was taken of the resigners forming the figures *C9* and *NO 9* to symbolize their protest against the circular. There was also some discussion¹²⁰ of pooling one-third of their bonus payments and superannuation for a \$50,000 co-operative company* but it was decided not to have any demonstrations until the money had been actually paid by the government.¹²¹

Although the resignations had not amounted to an effective boycott, they nevertheless demonstrated to many observers that the anti-cession movement was more than just the handful of Japanese collaborators and malcontents of Arden-Clarke's imagination. For the resigners, it was a momentous personal decision as well as an act of political commitment because there was very little prospect of obtaining employment outside government service.

To take one example, in January 1947 two Native Officers[†] and four other Malay government employees with more than a hundred years of service to their collective credit, told Bertram Brooke of the personal cost which their action would mean. 'By taking this step . . .', they wrote, 'we sacrifice our means of livings and worldly happiness in order to show that we are determined to protest the cession of our country as a Crown Colony and to defend its Independence under the Rajah Brooke dynasty.'¹²² Writing to Anne Bryant on 29 March, Haji Su'at Tahir also admitted that it marked the beginning of hard times for some people. However, he added, it meant 'wider and unrestricted facilities and more time to be devoted to our present struggle'.¹²³ This was something which Arden-Clarke and Dawson had not considered. They no doubt imagined that within a few weeks most of the resigners would be knocking on the government's door asking for their jobs back. And of course there were some who did. But there was also a core of young MNU members determined to keep alive the spirit of the *pergerakan 338* (338 movement). They provided the backbone of a political movement which might never have been sustained had it not been for Circular No. 9.

The largest single group among the resigners consisted of Malay schoolteachers: of the sixty employed by the government in the Kuching district, only two remained in service after February 1947.¹²⁴ Like their counterparts in Malaya who provided much of the support for the United Malays National Organization, they saw themselves as the guardians of Malay-Muslim culture against a tide of alien influence. Their subsequent

*The co-operative was subsequently formed but all its records were lost in floods. (McKay, 'The Kuching Communities . . .', p. iii.)

†Abang Kiprawi who had voted against cession in the Council Negri and Abang Zainorin, son of the late Datu Imam.

establishment of *sekolah ra'ayat* (people's schools) in Kuching and Sibul marked their determination to keep the anti-cession cause alive among the young and to uplift the Malays socially and economically. This was another expression of the movement towards social change which had first made itself felt through Rakawi bin Yusoff and *Fajar Sarawak* in the early 1930s.

Although Robert Jitam had worked hard to persuade Iban government servants to resign, none of the SDA committee members had done so. 'Hence we have no intellectuals to guide us anymore', he told Anne Bryant, 'but . . . must rely on whatever material we can gather.'¹²⁵ Recognizing that the SDA would never again have a voice unless the committee was purged of all its government servants, he arranged a general meeting on 23 December at which Alfred Jamuh was elected President, Eliab Bay joint secretary, and himself joint secretary and treasurer.¹²⁶ Suhaily expressed relief at this development. Throughout October and November he had been trying to overcome the influence of Edwin Howell and to persuade Philip Jitam that he and Charles Mason should officially resign.¹²⁷ 'I am very glad that my labour is not in vain', Suhaily wrote of his efforts with the SDA. 'Prior to this we have always to use the name of the late Datu Patinggi to sway them but now it is not necessary.'¹²⁸

The MNU Split

Ironically enough, one of the effects of the anti-cession movement's new optimism from October 1946 was to make the MNU's leaders less accommodating towards their young activists and the SDA. At a meeting on 13 October, a few days after the *Sarawak Tribune* had announced the dissolution of the Malayan Union, the General Committee of the MNU dismissed the Political Committee and replaced them with people who could be more easily disciplined. The official reason given was the letter to Truman. But to the members of the 'inner circle' it seemed that now victory was in sight, the conservatives were not going to share the fruits. 'The reason that they did not want us again', Mohd. Nor told Anthony Brooke in early November, 'is that things are assurable and the winning post is visible to their eyes'.¹²⁹ However, their names were kept on the MNU's official list of office-bearers because of their influence and popularity with the rank and file. When a meeting of the MNU on 22 January 1947 elected Mohd. Nor to act as one of the MNU's delegates to discuss the anti-cession movement's tactics with Anthony Brooke in Singapore, Haji Abdul Rahman overruled the vote and insisted that Edham bin Bojeng (Johari Anang's nephew) should go instead. Consequently, those who were dissatisfied with the decision asked Mohd. Nor and Robert Jitam to go to Singapore as well.

Another important effect was the collapse of co-operation with the SDA. 'The leaders of the Union seem to disvalue the Dayaks', Mohd. Nor told Anne Bryant, 'and besides that [the] SDA had noticed [they] were and still are not acting democratically and justly even

to the members who had sacrificed most for the benefits of their names'.¹³⁰ Within the MNU itself there were further disagreements as to the tactics to be used and the establishment of a subsidiary youth organization for both Malays and Ibans.

The outcome of all this was a meeting at *Darul Koria* on 29 January to foster co-operation between the MNU and the SDA. Attended by eighty-three schoolteachers, students, and government servants representing about 1,500 young Malays and Ibans in the Kuching district, the meeting decided to form the *Jasa P.M.S.* (MNU Action Group) which was to be a 'well and real democratic body' under the MNU's aegis. Its objects were broader than those of the MNU, resembling those of the United Sarawak National Organization which had been mooted earlier, and its office-bearers (with the exception of one SDA member) were all from the MNU's 'inner circle'. 'We really do not wish to be separated from the Union', Mohd. Nor told Anne Bryant, 'as I know there is a danger in the separation—Govt. policy of divide and rule will be easily worked on.' But short of depriving the conservatives of their leadership he could not see how permission to affiliate could be obtained from the MNU Committee. Consequently the *Jasa* would have to be formed separately and the MNU might lose about 300 of its members. 'I consider', he wrote, 'that *Jasa P.M.S.* is the only way for the Malays to work jointly with the Dayaks.' As he had predicted, however, Haji Abdul Rahman completely rejected the idea. The conservatives were determined to maintain the MNU as an exclusively Malay movement.

Now possessing no alternative, the 'inner circle' worked towards establishing a separate organization and the *Barisan Pemuda Sarawak* (BPS) or Sarawak Youth Front was in the making. According to Robert Jitam, it was a reaction to 'the very autocratic steps' of the MNU office-holders whom he described as stifling the wishes of younger members and ridiculing their suggestions.¹³¹ The new organization was open to indigenous youths 'irrespective of race and religion' and was designed to 'develop the social, cultural, economical and political welfare of the natives'.¹³² At the inaugural meeting in June, Mohd. Nor, Sharkawi and Johari Bojeng were elected vice-presidents with Haji Su'at Tahir as general secretary and Suhaily as chairman of political affairs. Interestingly enough, the 'inner circle' still saw advantages in maintaining links with the traditional élite and pressure was exerted on Abang Mohd. Kassim Taha, the Datu Patinggi's youngest grandson and one of the 338, to assume the presidency of the BPS and 'replace his grandfather's fighting posts'.¹³³ Writing to Anthony Brooke's sister, Jean Halsey, Kassim explained the BPS's slogan: 'When any of the members says MERDEKA meaning INDEPENDENCE, the replier must reply BROOKE meaning the INDEPENDENCE State of Sarawak could only be reigned by the BROOKE'S FAMILY.'¹³⁴ The first slogan was to be accompanied by a stop sign as made by a traffic policeman.

Already claiming 3,000 active members and 2,000 more supporters in the First Division, the BPS's first task was to mark the anniversary of annexation. Consequently on 28 June a 'Sarawak National Conference'

was convened at *Darul Kornia*. Attended by forty delegates, the meeting was a striking example of how the anti-cession movement had aroused Malay support in widely separated parts of Sarawak. In addition to the MNU, BPS and SDA there were representatives of Kaum Ibu MNU, Persekutuan Bumiputra Sarawak, Persekutuan Melayu Miri, Angkatan Semangat Anaknegeri Sarawak, Persekutuan Melayu Limbang, Perhimpunan Kabajikan Baram, Kersetuan Club Dalat, Sulam Mas Seria,* PPM (Sibu), Kaum Ibu Sibu and USNA. Also present as observers were nineteen *tua kampung* from the Kuching district. It was decided to stage a mass procession on 1 July and to send cables of protest to the King and Prime Minister Attlee.¹³⁵

At the same time, the BPS continued the campaign to 'convert the big bribed state Councillors' to the anti-cession side, its first victory being the Datu Menteri who was persuaded in early June to visit Anthony Brooke in Singapore. Also on the list for conversion were the Datus Amar and Hakim and the *mufli*, Haji Nawawi, followed by the Datu Pahlawan, Abang Haji Abdulrahim, and other members of the Council Negri.

Mohd. Nor believed that since the formation of the BPS, the MNU had 'lost its active services' and the support of its women's section.¹³⁶ The Kaum Ibu had been formed at an inaugural meeting of more than 1,000 Malay women on 16 March 1947. Dominating the proceedings were two schoolteachers who had resigned from government service over Circular No. 9. Lily Eberwein,[†] headmistress of the Permaisuri Melayu, was elected chairman and one of her teachers, Ajibah Abol,[‡] secretary. Similar associations were formed in Sibu and elsewhere and were to play an important part not only in the anti-cession campaign but in providing Sarawak's Malay women with their first opportunity for political expression. In pre-war times, Malay women never appeared in public without covering their heads and it must have seemed an extraordinary development that they should now be speaking on a platform and taking part in politics.⁺

*Sarawak Natives' Association, Miri Malay Association, Sarawak Natives Uplift Movement, Limbang Malay Association, Baram Welfare Association, Dalat Club, Seria gold (?).

†A Muslim Eurasian of outstanding ability. 'Chegu' Lily was 47 when elected chairman. Educated at St. Mary's School, Kuching, and Raffles Girls' School, Singapore, she was the first headmistress of the Permaisuri. During the war she was head of the Malay section of the Japanese-sponsored Kaum Ibu. In 1947 she established her own English school at Satok Road which is still functioning.

‡Ajibah Abol, 1929-76, was only 18 when she became secretary, a post she retained until 1957. She had been one of Lily Eberwein's students and after resigning she taught at one of the *sekolah ra'ayat*. Replacing Lily Eberwein as chairman of Kaum Ibu in 1960, she was made a member of the Supreme Council of the Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak in 1961 and vice-chairman of Parti Bumiputera in 1967. She was elected to the Malaysian Parliament in 1963 and when re-elected in 1974 was made Minister of State and then Minister for Welfare Services. She was also a member of the Council Negri, 1970-4, and was awarded a posthumous datukship in 1977.

* Writing in 1948 about the pre-war era, Archer remarked that 'the idea of "Women's Day" or processions of gaily clad members of Kaum Ibu was a thing which no man, brown, yellow, or white, could dream of'. (ST, 20 April 1948.)

Describing the meeting as 'History in the Making', the editor of the *Sarawak Tribune* was impressed by the eloquence of the speakers whose subjects ranged from Malay nationalist movements and Sarawak history to the backwardness of women in Sarawak and their demand for rights. 'What a far cry the women of today are from their grandmothers', he reflected. 'There is no trace of the bashfulness that so characterized a woman in the old days when making a public appearance, and the woman of today stands out on just as firm and equal a ground as that of any man, in full realization of the part they have to play in the country.'¹³⁷ Like the younger group within the MNU, the leadership of the Kaum Ibu represented a movement towards social change.

The Kaum Ibu busied itself in petitioning the colonial government, taking part in demonstrations and other activities. One of the high points came in August 1947 when Kathleen Brooke arrived in Sarawak. During her subsequent tour of the state she was accompanied by Lily Eberwein, Haji Su'at, and other MNU members and was given an enthusiastic reception wherever she went by other Kaum Ibu which had sprung up since March. While her visit is beyond the scope of this book,* it is clear that she and her Malay companions demonstrated exceptional courage in the face of the colonial government's thinly-concealed antagonism and the physical trials which such an extensive tour demanded. There is no doubt that both as a representative of the Brooke family and in her own right she was a source of inspiration for the anti-cession movement¹³⁸ and anxiety for the government.

* * *

On 1 July 1947, the first anniversary of annexation, the anti-cession movement reached its high point. Early that morning members of sixteen different anti-cession organizations assembled in the grounds of *Darul Kornia* and marched out four abreast behind their own brass band. Carrying Sarawak flags of all sizes as well as banners and posters, they followed the prescribed route through the *kampong* area towards the centre of Kuching. As they passed the Brooke Memorial[†] outside the Court House, flags were raised and slogans shouted in unison. 'It is only such an occurrence like this', observed the *Sarawak Tribune*, 'that points out to us just how far the country has developed and progressed in the march of time . . .'.¹³⁹ Its one regret was that the incentive had been provided by the cession issue since this inevitably threw the people of Sarawak into two opposing camps 'bound to clash in opinions in all instances',¹⁴⁰

The subsequent history of the anti-cession movement and its relevance to the current political scene in Sarawak must be left to other historians. However, some general observations can be made. While there was some

* It is to be hoped that Mrs Brooke will write a memoir of her visit.

† A monument to the first two Rajahs which was unveiled by Vyner Brooke in 1924.

initial participation by Ibans with relatively close links with the Malays, the anti-cession movement was from the outset an almost exclusively Malay phenomenon. The SDA was unable to extend its influence beyond the First Division and the colonial government managed to secure Iban support through improved educational facilities and other developments, particularly in the Third Division. It was not difficult for the colonial government in Iban areas to represent the anti-cession movement as being solely concerned with restoring Malay privilege.

The pattern of conflict which emerged within the MNU in 1946 was later repeated by the other anti-cession parties in Kuching and Sibü. This consisted of the inevitable contradictions arising between members of the traditional Malay élite and the young educated Malays of non-aristocratic background. The traditional élite adopted a cautious attitude towards political action, favouring delegations and negotiations within a constitutional frame of reference. Their young critics were irritated by these restrictions and by the undemocratic style of men who continued to emphasize their traditional status.

When the colonial government continued to ignore the anti-cession movement in the hope that it would simply 'fade away' as the Malays lost interest, the conservatives lost ground. In Kuching the BPM became the driving force while in Sibü even the comparatively radical PPM failed to satisfy its more impatient members. This led to the establishment in August 1948 of another 'inner circle'—the Rukun Tigabelas (Thirteen Precepts) dedicated to direct action. Led by Awang Rambli, this clandestine group planned the assassination of Arden-Clarke's successor, Duncan Stewart, by the youthful Rosly bin Dhoibie at Sibü in early December 1949.* While the incident was designed by Rambli to restore Sarawak's independence after years of mounting frustration, Stewart's death sent a wave of horror through all communities which, together with the government's punitive actions, virtually destroyed the anti-cession movement. The PPM and all its branches were immediately proscribed, their members questioned and documents confiscated. Anti-cession organizations in Kuching and elsewhere were similarly harassed.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, the incident served to strengthen Iban support for the colonial government and to lend credence to the government's old argument that Anthony Brooke's presence in Sarawak would result in

*For a description of the incident, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 December 1949. The evidence later adduced by the government suggested that the group had intended to assassinate a further ten colonial officials including the Resident of the Third Division (J. C. H. Barcroft), the Assistant Commissioner for National Registration in Sibü and the Acting Commissioner for Police in Kuching. (*Straits Times*, 10 January 1950.) According to his own statement, Rosly was chosen by Awang Rambli for the task in the belief that his youthfulness would protect him from punishment. During an earlier discussion of how the new Governor's arrival should be marked, Rosly had suggested that putting up posters was all that could be done. Rambli is said to have replied: 'Putting up posters is a small affair; there is another way of acting. Fighting in the old way is of little importance, like waiting for golden rain to fall from the sky, but this is useless. We must remember that independence is in our own hands, we must dare to sacrifice somebody'. ('Rosly bin Dhoibie', in R. W. Large, *Police Correspondence & Memoranda, Sarawak, 1948-51.*)

bloodshed.¹⁴² When they heard of the assassination, Ibans of the Balleh and other tributaries of the Rejang prepared to descend on Sibn in armed force to *tolong perintah* (lit., to help the government—the traditional expression used to describe Iban levies sent against 'rebels'). Temenggong Koh together with seven *penghulu* and a number of other Ibans in full war regalia were present throughout the Sibn trial of the eleven Malays accused of complicity in the assassination.

The trial itself was a shabby and highly vindictive affair. The accused were not allowed to seek counsel and were defended instead by a government officer who had no legal training. They were allowed legal representation at their appeal in Kuching. However, all were found guilty by Judge R. V. Hedges and on 2 March 1950, Rosly bin Dhobie and Morshidi bin Sidek were hanged on gallows which had been specially brought from Singapore. Awang Rambli and Bujang bin Suntong were hanged three weeks later, the former believing to the end that there would be a miraculous intercession by Anthony Brooke.¹⁴³ The other seven were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.*

Anthony Brooke interpreted the murder as a direct outcome of the colonial government's refusal to take the anti-cession movement seriously. He and the anti-cession parties vehemently denied the Rajah's accusation that they were a front for subversive activity.¹⁴⁴ However, the increasing frustration of his position, the dismissal of the Privy Council appeal and the somewhat hysterical atmosphere of the Cold War caused him to abandon his six-year struggle against cession in early 1951 and to advise the anti-cession parties to do the same. The fact that they rejected his advice was the final indication that independence rather than the restoration of Brooke rule had become the goal of the anti-cession movement. However, it was no longer possible to muster the Malay support which had existed in 1946–7.

As far as the colonial government was concerned, Stewart's death was not in vain. It completed what had proved to be the difficult task of bolstering its authority after a very shaky start. At the same time, the post-war rubber boom had ensured favourable economic conditions for all races. Furthermore, the government had achieved some success in mustering Iban support as a counter-weight to Malay disaffection. The official view was that the unwelcome incubus of 'politics' had been exorcized and it was now possible to get on with the real task of developing the state's economy and its social services.

Nevertheless, the schism within Sarawak's Malay community caused by cession continued to be a highly significant political factor.¹⁴⁵ Parti Negara Sarawak (Sarawak National Party), established by the Datu Bandar as the political vehicle of the Malays in 1960 in response to the formation of the predominantly Chinese Sarawak United People's Party, was boycotted by the anti-cessionists who formed the rival Barisan

*Abang Han was sentenced to 15 years; Che Osman bin Ahmad, Morni bin Onei and Othman bin Dollah to 10 years; Ahmad bin Haji Abu Bakar to 7 years; and Awang Osman bin Moh and Wan Zain bin Abdullah to 5 years.

Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA—Sarawak Natives' Front). With both ex-SDA and ex-MNU membership, BARJASA reflected the earlier aims of the MNU 'inner circle' who had abandoned the principle of Malay political hegemony in favour of a native alliance against the Chinese. It was only in 1967 that the two Malay parties were finally brought together to form Parti Bumiputera, a Malay communal party organized along the same lines as West Malaysia's UMNO (United Malays National Organization) and reflecting the desire of the Kuala Lumpur leadership that Sarawak's political parties should conform to the West Malaysian model.*

For many years the antagonisms created within the Malay community by the anti-cession campaign made Malay political organization along communal lines extremely difficult. The campaign had brought the new educated élite and a section of the traditional élite together in an uneasy alliance against the Datu Bandar, the most senior member of the traditional élite, and his supporters. The consequence of this was a political pattern which to some extent transcended the loyalties of race and religion and was therefore capable of counteracting the tensions endemic to a multi-racial society.

Epilogue

The story of cession could hardly be considered complete without further mention of Gerard MacBryan, who must be regarded as its major protagonist outside Whitehall. In 1947 MacBryan sold Kingsdown House, which he had inherited from his father, and went to live in Johannesburg with his third wife, Frances, whom he had met in England during the war. He seems to have become involved in the diamond business, making occasional trips to London and retaining a strong interest in Far Eastern affairs. In subsequent years he continued to press the Rajah to have the whole question of the Trust Fund reopened and no doubt drafted some of the letters sent by the Rajah to the Colonial Office in this connection. He successfully pressed the Colonial Office and the Sarawak government for payment of the annuity which the Rajah had specified in their contract of March 1941 as conditional on his abdication or death. However, he was thwarted in his efforts to revive the Trust Fund and could not arouse newspaper interest in his one-man campaign. By late 1949 MacBryan was beginning to lose his ever-precarious mental balance. His eccentricities became more marked and on one occasion he was arrested for stealing peaches from a fruit barrow in London when he had more than £40 in his pocket. This and other incidents stemmed from his belief that he could make himself invisible. He also carried with him everywhere a mysterious black box which he said could blow up the world. At one point he had himself committed to Epsom Mental Hospital where he was visited by Anthony Brooke, against whom he had been pressing a libel suit dating from early 1946.

*This is one of the major themes developed by Michael Leigh in *The Rising Moon*. . . .

In May 1950, MacBryan visited Kuching where he had talks with the Chief Secretary and the Attorney-General on the Trust Fund. However, the colonial government took the view (shared by Sir Roland Braddell whom MacBryan had consulted) that legally speaking there was no Trust.¹⁴⁶ This reverse, together with his subsequent failure to prevent the proclamation of Pangeran Muda Omar Ali as successor to Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin of Brunei on the latter's untimely death on 4 June, brought on another nervous breakdown which led to his certification and forcible deportation from Brunei to Singapore for treatment.¹⁴⁷ Before Tajuddin died he had appointed MacBryan Political Adviser for his planned visit to England, where he proposed to ask Shell for increased oil royalties and the British government for a revision of its treaty relationship with Brunei. Tajuddin was also advocating a Bornean Union of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo of which he would have presumably been head of state with MacBryan as the main figure behind the scenes. MacBryan had already entrenched himself as trustee of the political rights of Tajuddin's only legitimate child, his daughter Tuanku Ehsan, whom he had designated as heir apparent.¹⁴⁸ When the Colonial Office upheld his brother Omar Ali's proclamation and refused to acknowledge the rights of Tuanku Ehsan, MacBryan claimed that Omar Ali's coronation would be invalid without the *tongkat ular* (snake-headed staff of office), an item of the royal regalia which Tajuddin had entrusted to him.¹⁴⁹ After release in Singapore, MacBryan returned to South Africa but later made his way to Hong Kong where he lived in penurious circumstances until he died in 1953. The *tongkat ular* disappeared, as did most of his papers, and is still the subject of controversy in Brunei. According to Sylvia Brooke, MacBryan starved himself to death,¹⁵⁰ but there are no coroner's records to confirm this and his demise is surrounded by mystery—a situation not out of keeping with his brilliant and extraordinary career.* Always a source of potential embarrassment since 1945, however, MacBryan's death was highly convenient for the Colonial Office.

*The Rajah believed that MacBryan hanged himself. (Personal communication from C. Pitt Hardacre, 18 January 1980.) According to another account he was found dead on the docks.

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2. Macaskie to Colonial Office, 23 March 1946, WO 203/5535.
3. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
4. *ST*, 1 March 1946.
5. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 8 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
6. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 19 May 1946, *ibid.*
7. *ST*, 5 March 1946.
8. *ST*, 12 March 1946.

9. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 56–90.
10. *Rules and By-Laws of the Dayak Association of Sarawak. Established 1st March 1946*, Kuching, 1946.
11. Intelligence summary of 32 Inf.Bde., 2 March 1946, CO 537/1637.
12. Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 10 August 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
13. *ibid.*
14. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, undated [May 1946], Brooke Papers, Box 22.
15. Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anthony Brooke, 4 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
16. Interview with Tuan Haji Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor, May 1975.
17. Brandah to Mayle, 7 August 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
18. Datu Patinggi to President Truman, 10 August 1946, *ibid.*
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20. *ibid.*
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23. Malayan Security Service: Fortnightly Intelligence Journals together with Occasional supplements (1946–1948), report for 15 August 1947. I am indebted to Dr Anthony Stockwell for this reference.
24. Interview with Ahmad Boestamam, July 1974.
25. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 4 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
26. *ST*, 11 June 1946.
27. Interview with Senawi bin Suleiman, July 1974.
28. *ST*, 30 September 1946.
29. Dawson Diary, 8 June 1946.
30. Robert Jitam to Anthony Brooke, 10 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/3.
31. Robert Jitam to Anthony Brooke, 10 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
32. Edward Brandah to Anthony Brooke, 9 August 1946, *ibid.*
33. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 29 July 1946, *ibid.*
34. Dawson to Mayle, 19 October 1946, CO 531/32 [53185].
35. Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 14 October 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
36. *ibid.*
37. Dawson Diary, 27 June 1946.
38. Anon. to Bertram Brooke, 1 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
39. Dawson Diary, 2 July 1946.
40. Datu Patinggi to Anthony Brooke, 8 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.
41. Dawson Diary, —August 1946.
42. *ibid.*
43. *ibid.*
44. MacDonald to Colonial Office, 4 July 1946, cited by Dawson in his Diary, 19 July 1946.
45. Crocker to Bryant, 12 June 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/3.
46. Hall to Bertram Brooke, 28 June 1946, *The Facts About Sarawak*, pp. 97–8.
47. Bertram Brooke to Hodson, 26 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
48. Anthony Brooke to MNU and SDA Presidents, 5 June 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A; *Evening Standard*, 5 June 1946.

49. Datu Patinggi and MNU and SDA Presidents to Bertram Brooke, 19 June 1946, *The Facts About Sarawak*, p. 111.
50. Datu Patinggi to Anthony Brooke, 19 June 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
51. Datu Patinggi and MNU President to Attlee, 1 July 1946, *ibid.*
52. Datu Patinggi to Bertram Brooke, 2 July 1946, *ibid.*
53. *The Times*, 13 July 1946; for Anthony Brooke's reply, see *The Times*, 16 July 1946.
54. Johari Anang to Bertram Brooke, 10 August 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
55. Johari Anang to Bertram Brooke, 10 August 1946, *ibid.*
56. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 3 September 1946, *ibid.*
57. *ibid.*
58. Johari Anang to Anthony Brooke, 25 September 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
59. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 29 September 1946, *ibid.*
60. Robert Jitam to Anthony Brooke, 7 October 1946, *ibid.*
61. Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anthony Brooke, —October 1946, *ibid.*
62. Johari Anang to Anthony Brooke, 9 October 1946, *ibid.*
63. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 10 August 1946, *ibid.*
64. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 3 September 1946, *ibid.*
65. Johari Anang to Anthony Brooke, 9 October 1946, *ibid.*
66. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 3 November 1946, *ibid.*
67. Dawson to Mayle, 19 October 1946, CO 531/32 [53185].
68. *Daily Mail*, 29 October 1946.
69. Datu Patinggi and Abang Haji Zaini to Arden-Clarke, 29 October 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
70. *ST*, 1, 6, 7, 8 November 1946.
71. Report by Johari Anang, 3 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
72. Report by Johari Anang (undated), *ibid.*
73. Interview with Mrs K. M. Brooke, 21 October 1974.
74. Interview with Ainnie bin Dobhie, conducted by Dr A. J. S. Reid, 1969.
75. *ST*, 3 November 1946.
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77. Swettenham to Maxwell, 22 February 1946, Maxwell Papers, Royal Commonwealth Institute.
78. Caldecott to Bertram Brooke, 4 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
79. *ST*, 13 November 1946.
80. Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 18 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
81. Datu Patinggi to Bertram Brooke, 17 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Vol. 21A.
82. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 25 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22.
83. *ibid.*
84. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 4 December 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
85. *ST*, 9 December 1946.
86. *Scottish Daily Mail*, 9 December 1946.
87. *New York Herald Tribune*, 8 December 1946.
88. *Malay Mail*, 19 December 1946.
89. *ibid.*
90. *The Times*, 19 December 1946.
91. *The Times*, 24 December 1946.
92. *Hansard*, 19 December 1946.

93. *ibid.*
94. Abang Haji Zaini and six *tua kampong* to Arden-Clarke, 27 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
95. General Secretary MNU to Arden-Clarke, 19 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1; *ST*, 24 February 1947 (message to Attlee).
96. General Secretary MNU to Crocker, 19 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
97. *ST*, 13 February 1947.
98. *Malay Mail*, 2 January 1947.
99. Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anne Bryant, 17 January 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
100. Sharkawi bin Haji Osman to Anne Bryant, 16 December 1946, *ibid.*
101. *ibid.*
102. MNU to Crocker, 21 December 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
103. Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 213.
104. Arden-Clarke to Boyd, 6 April 1948, Boyd Papers, Box 6/1.
105. *ibid.*
106. Haji Su'at Tahir to Anne Bryant, 11 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
107. Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', pp. 213-18; articles of 9 November 1946, 3 January 1947, 7 January 1947.
108. Anonymous memorandum (probably by Kenneth Whale), 29 January 1948, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
109. *ST*, 29 November 1946.
110. Anthony Brooke to Anne Bryant, 12 March 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/3.
111. Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 21 March 1947, *ibid.*
112. *ibid.*
113. *Straits Times*, 28 February 1947.
114. Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 1 March 1947. Letter in the possession of Mrs K. Brooke.
115. Interview with Datuk Ekhwan Zaini, April 1974.
116. Lord Ogmores MS, p. 37.
117. *Sunday Times* (Singapore), 28 June 1947.
118. Interview with Tuan Haji Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor.
119. Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 2 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
120. *ST*, 3 April 1946; Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 21 March 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
121. Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 2 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
122. Letter to Bertram Brooke of 11 January 1947 signed by Abang Kiprawi, Abang Zainorin, Aman bin Haji Jenal, Thani bin Sanyuk, Appu bin Bodek, and Samsudin bin Noor, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
123. Haji Su'at Tahir to Anne Bryant, 29 March 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
124. *Singapore Free Press*, 17 January 1947.
125. Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 3 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
126. *ST*, 1 January 1947.
127. Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anne Bryant, 17 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
128. *ibid.*
129. Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 8 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22; see also Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anne Bryant, 17 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
130. Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 12 February 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
131. Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 23 May 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
132. *ST*, 5 May 1947.

133. Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 16 June 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1; interview with Abang Haji Kassim, May 1975.
134. Abang Mohd. Kassim Taha to Jean Halsey, 13 June 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
135. *ST*, 30 June 1947.
136. Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 16 June 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
137. *ST*, 17 March 1946.
138. Interviews with Lily Eberwein and Tan Sri Haji Su'at Tahir, April 1974.
139. *ST*, 3 July 1947.
140. *ibid.*
141. *ST*, 9 December 1949.
142. *Singapore Free Press*, 6 December, 1949.
143. Alastair Morrison, 'Fair Wind Sarawak', typescript memoir, 1976, p. 90.
144. For the Rajah's comments and the anti-cessionists' response, see *The Times*, 17 December 1949, and *Malay Mail*, 14 February 1950.
145. R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation . . .*, London, 1974, p. 89.
146. MacBryan to Evelyn Hussey, 10 May 1950, Brooke Papers, Vol. 22B; [Digby?] to Mark Morrison, n.d., Mark Morrison Papers (A), Item 4; *ST*, 23 June 1950.
147. *ST*, 23 June 1950.
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Appendixes

Appendix I *The International Status of Sarawak*

1. Brunei's Cession of Sarawak to James Brooke

(i) *Transfer by Pangeran Muda Hassim of the Government of Sarawak, 1841.*

This Agreement made in the year of the Prophet one thousand two hundred and fifty-seven at twelve o'clock on Wednesday the thirtieth day of the month of Rejab showeth that with a pure heart and high integrity PANGERAN MUDA HASSIM son of the late Sultan Muhammad hereby transfers to JAMES BROOKE Esquire the Government of Sarawak together with the dependencies thereof its revenues and all its future responsibilities. Moreover he James Brooke Esquire shall be the sole owner of its revenues and will be alone responsible for the public expenditure necessary for the good of Sarawak.

Moreover James Brooke Esquire acting with the same integrity and pureness of heart accepts This Agreement as set forth and further undertakes from the date hereof to pay to the Sultan of Brunei one thousand dollars to Pangeran Muda one thousand dollars to the Petinggi three hundred dollars to the Bandar one hundred and fifty dollars and to the Temenggong one hundred dollars.

Moreover James Brooke Esquire undertakes that the laws and customs of the Malays of Sarawak shall for ever be respected since the country of Sarawak has hitherto been subject to the government of the Sultan of Brunei the Pangeran Muda and Malayan rajas.

Moreover should intrigues arise either within or without the State of Sarawak detrimental to its interests whether caused by peoples or princes or rulers who may be inimical to Sarawak the Sultan and his brother the Pangeran Muda shall uphold James Brooke Esquire as the lawfully appointed Ruler of Sarawak subject to no interference by any other person.

Moreover the Pangeran Muda and James Brooke Esquire do themselves make this Contract and the Pangeran agrees to relinquish all further

activities in the Government of Sarawak except such as may be carried out by the consent of James Brooke Esquire and anything which they may severally or individually do in regard to the Government of Sarawak must be in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

Written in Sarawak on the night of Friday the second day of Shaaban 1257 at ten o'clock.

(ii) *Appointment by Sultan of Brunei of James Brooke to Govern as His Representative, 1842.*

In the era of the prophet—God grant him peace!—the year one thousand two hundred and fifty-eight, the year Alip, the twenty-fourth day of Jamadalachir, the day being Monday and the time ten o'clock:—

His Highness Sultan Omar Ali Saifu'd-Din son of the late Sultan Mahomed Jamalul'-Alam appoints James Brooke Esquire to be his representative and in that capacity to govern the province of Sarawak, and James Brooke Esquire covenants and undertakes to observe the orders, custom, laws and regulations of His Highness the Sultan. James Brooke Esquire is responsible for all the affairs of the province of Sarawak, and no one at all may interfere upon any pretext except on the express command of His Highness the Sultan. Regarding the affairs of the other districts within our coasts James Brooke Esquire is not to exercise authority or concern himself in any way, but only within the province of Sarawak. So it is agreed between His Highness and the Tuan Besar.

And with regard to the province of Sarawak the Tuan Besar alone is appointed our representative to govern it, and no other European of any nationality may* except only after submission to His Highness and Pangeran Muda Hassim, and only with their permission.

Regarding the revenues of the province of Sarawak the Tuan Besar undertakes to pay as tribute every year to His Highness one thousand dollars, to Pangeran Muda Hassim one thousand dollars, to the Patinggi three hundred dollars to the Bandar one hundred and fifty dollars and to the Tumunggong one hundred dollars annually. If the trade of the province of Sarawak becomes flourishing and the province obtains a large revenue the Tuan Besar shall increase the tribute to be paid to His Highness and the Pangeran Muda Hassim.

Further with reference to the Sapang and Sambok Kongsies which have been working in the province of Sarawak taxation is to be in accordance with the size of their undertaking whether large or small for this is a matter which is excluded from the control of the Tuan Besar.

The above is the Agreement between His Highness and the Tuan Besar aforesaid and contained in this written contract for the province of Sarawak.

2. The Independent Government of Sarawak

(i) *Minutes of a conversation between the Datu Bandar, the Datu Maun, the Datu Tumangong and the Tuan Khatib, Members of Council of State of Sarawak, and Mr. St. John, Consul-General. 25th October, 1855.*

The Datu Tumangong opened the conversation by saying that the Government of Sarawak had learned that it was asserted that Sarawak was not a free country but dependent on the Sultan of Bruné and as they had

*Words missing from the text.

heard that Mr. St. John had been appointed the agent of the Queen of England they wished to explain to him in order that he might explain to his Government that Sarawak was entirely independent of Borneo.

The people of Sarawak had fought against Bruné and established their own Government, they had nothing to do with Bruné.

The Datu Bandar remarked that to arrive at a clear understanding on this point, which however could not be disputed, he would explain. "From time immemorial Sarawak had been a dependency of Bruné bound by custom to pay a fixed tribute but possessed of the full right of managing the affairs of the country through their own Datus (Chiefs), that the Bruné Government had violated their ancient customs and oppressed the people of Sarawak until they rose in self defence. The war which followed lasted for some time; the people of Sarawak being determined never again to submit to the rule of the Sultan of Bruné, sent a deputation to Batavia of which he the Datu Bandar was one, to offer their country to the Dutch; the Dutch Government entertained their proposition but was too dilatory in affording assistance that the deputation returned."

In the meantime, Mr. Brooke, as he was then called, arrived in Sarawak and without his assistance the Borneans would never have succeeded in quelling the resistance of Sarawak.

The Sarawak chiefs, after this event, at first resolved upon abandoning their country and some of them actually retired to Sambas, but having confidence in Mr. Brooke they subsequently returned and after discussing the subject, they determined to select him as their ruler. In consequence they deputed some of their chiefs (the Datu Tumangong and the Datu Maun among them) to wait upon him and to request him to become their Raja, offering to support him by force of arms. They were thus an independent people and refused to acknowledge any subjection whatever to Bruné.

The Datu Tumangong here observed that the Datu Maun and himself had been sent to place the Government at the disposal of Mr. Brooke; they told him that the Sarawak people were in arms and ready to support him. He added that they were free men who had fought and were ready to fight again for their freedom, rather than to submit to the intolerable oppressions to which they had been subjected by Bruné. They had offered their country to the Dutch and they would now fight or retire to the Dutch territories rather than submit again to such a Government. They had chosen Mr. Brooke to be their Raja. They would support him for they were bound to him as closely as "their skin to their flesh".

The Datu Maun next enquired, touching the trial of British subjects accused of crime saying that they were informed that in Bruné the Consul-General was possessed of that power, but that such a power could not be exercised in Sarawak without producing confusion.

The people had been accustomed to all trials being carried on in the open Courts of the country and would be very dissatisfied if any foreign jurisdiction were introduced. The people of Sarawak were, it is true, few in number, they could not resist a great nation, but they would abandon their country in preference to having their laws and customs interfered with.

The Datu Tumangong here quoted a Malay pantun or proverb, "If there were two Gods in the world, the world would go to ruin, so if there were two Governments in a country, that country would be ruined".

The Datu Bandar here resumed the conversation by saying that the people of Sarawak were a free people and had ceased to look upon the Sultan as their ruler. They looked only to their Raja who had protected them and advanced their true interests and "who had turned an empty country into a full one". Was it possible for the Sarawak people to think of acknowledging such a Government as that of Bruné? Was not Sarawak flourishing, but what part of Bruné had any trade? Were not the people oppressed and their country ruined? Mr. St. John knows the truth of these matters and we request therefore that he will not let the British Government remain in ignorance. Sarawak is independent—the people desire peace and hate war but rather than submit to become a dependency of Bruné they would fight again as they had fought before. The Raja was chosen by them but they were bound by no agreement made with the Sultan of Bruné, it was between the Rajah and the Sultan but had nothing to do with them.

With regard to the trial of British subjects mentioned by the Datu Maun, for his part he could not see why it should not be continued as heretofore and as the British had been tried in Sarawak court[s] all along and as they were contented with the jurisdiction, why should any change be made . . .

- (ii) *Handed by the Rajah of Sarawak to Mr. Spenser St. John, Consul-General in the Island of Borneo, 25th October, 1855.*

The Raja of Sarawak holds his position from the people, the cession by the Sultans of Borneo being an incidental confirmation of possession peacefully reconciling the claims of Borneo with the existing and undoubted rights of the people of Sarawak.

As Sarawak therefore has no connection with the State of Borneo or with the numerous other States on the Island of Borneo, it will be requisite for Mr. St. John previously to undertaking the duties of Consul-General, to receive an exequator from the Government of Sarawak.

Sarawak 25th October 1855.

(signed) J. Brooke.

- (iii) *Letter from Spenser St. John Esqre, Consul-General in the Island of Borneo, to the Raja of Sarawak, 1856.*

Sir,

With reference to the conversation I had in last October with the native members of the Council of Sarawak, the minutes of which I forwarded to the Earl of Clarendon, I have the honor to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government have no desire to interfere with the local institutions of Sarawak nor to question the right of the people of Sarawak to choose their own Government, and Her Majesty's Government consider they can give no better proof of this than by allowing the courts established by your Excellency to exercise jurisdiction over British subjects, it being understood that the laws by which British subjects are to be tried shall be recorded, that no punishment repugnant to English law or excessive shall be inflicted upon any British subjects, that the trial shall be conducted in open court and that in all serious cases the Judge shall be assisted by a Jury. I have further to inform your Excellency in reply to the communication of 25th October 1855 that although Her Majesty's Government cannot authorise me to apply for an exequator from the Sarawak Government, yet they are anxious that your Excellency should

be enabled to pursue those efforts which have already been attended with so much success to civilize the natives and develop the resources of Borneo.

3. Sarawak's Treaties with Britain

(i) *The Treaty of 1888.*

AGREEMENT BETWEEN HER MAJESTY'S
GOVERNMENT AND CHARLES BROOKE,
SECOND RAJAH OF SARAWAK

WHEREAS Charles Brooke Esquire Rajah and lawful Ruler of the State of Sarawak, in the island of Borneo, has represented to Her Majesty's Government the desire of that State to be placed under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen under the conditions hereinafter mentioned; it is hereby agreed and declared as follows:—

Article 1.

The State of Sarawak shall continue to be governed and administered by the said Rajah Brooke and his successors as an independent State under the protection of Great Britain but such protection shall confer no right on Her Majesty's Government to interfere with the internal administration of that State further than is herein provided.

Article 2.

In case any question should hereafter arise respecting the right of succession to the present or any future Ruler of Sarawak, such question shall be referred to Her Majesty's Government for decision.

Article 3.

The relations between the State of Sarawak and all foreign States including the States of Brunei and North Borneo shall be conducted by Her Majesty's Government or in accordance with its directions; and if any difference should arise between the Government of Sarawak and that of any other State, the Government of Sarawak agrees to abide by the decision of Her Majesty's Government and to take all necessary measures to give effect thereto.

Article 4.

Her Majesty's Government shall have the right to establish British Consular Officers in any part of the State of Sarawak who shall receive exequaturs in the name of the Government of Sarawak. They shall enjoy whatever privileges are usually granted to Consular Officers and shall be entitled to hoist the British flag over their residences and public offices.

Article 5.

British subjects commerce and shipping shall enjoy the same rights privileges and advantages as the subjects commerce and shipping of the most favoured nation, as well as any other rights, privileges and advantages which may be enjoyed by the subjects commerce and shipping of the State of Sarawak.

Article 6.

No cession or other alienation of any part of the territory of the State of Sarawak shall be made by the Rajah or his successors to any foreign State or the subjects or citizens thereof, without the consent of Her Majesty's Government but this restriction shall not apply to ordinary grants or leases

of lands or houses to private individuals for purposes of residence, agriculture, commerce, or other business.

Given under my hand and seal this 14th day of June in the year Eighteen hundred and eighty-eight.

Seal. (Signed) C. BROOKE, Rajah.

Seal. (Signed) SALISBURY.

5 September 1888.

(ii) *The Supplementary Agreement of 1941.*

AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY'S
GOVERNMENT AND THE RAJAH IN COUNCIL
OF THE STATE OF SARAWAK

WHEREAS by an Agreement dated September 5th, 1888, between her Majesty's Government and Charles Brooke, Esquire, Rajah and lawful Ruler of the State of Sarawak it was, inter alia, agreed that the State of Sarawak should continue to be administered by the said Rajah Brooke under the protection of Great Britain, but that such protection should confer no right on Her Majesty's Government to interfere with the internal administration of the State further than was therein provided:

And Whereas it is the desire of His Majesty's Government and of the Rajah in Council of the State of Sarawak that further provision should be made regulating the relations between His Majesty's Government and the State of Sarawak:

Now, therefore, it is agreed between His Majesty's Government and His Highness the Rajah in Council of the State of Sarawak, as follows:—

1. This agreement is supplementary to the above-recited agreement of September 5th, 1888, and the said agreement shall be read subject to the provisions of the agreement hereinafter appearing.

2. The State of Sarawak will receive and provide a suitable residence for a British Officer to be called the British Representative who shall be accredited to the Court or the Rajah, and whose advice must be asked and acted upon in all matters affecting the relations of the State of Sarawak with foreign states or the rights and status of foreign nationals and on all matters of defence.

3. The British Representative shall be appointed by His Majesty's Government.

4. The services of the British Representative shall be available for consultation and he shall be entitled to offer his opinion on matters touching the general administration of the State. He shall have access to such State documents and records as concern matters in respect of which his advice is sought under this Clause or under Clause 2 of this Agreement. He shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Supreme Council when such matters are discussed, but he shall not be entitled to vote therein.

5. His Majesty's Government will at all times to the utmost of its power take whatever steps may be necessary to protect the territory of Sarawak from external hostile attacks.

In Witness Whereof the parties hereto have hereunto set their hands this twenty-second day of November, 1941.

Signed by His Excellency
the Government of the
Straits Settlements and
High Commissioner for
the Malay States for and
on behalf of His Majesty's
Government in the
presence of:

(Sgd.) T. S. W. THOMAS

(Sgd.) G. R. B. DON-FOX
A. D. C.

Signed by His Highness
the Rajah of Sarawak in
the presence of:

(Sgd.) C. V. BROOKE

(Sgd.) G. T. M. MacBryan

4. Opinions on the Legal Status of Sarawak

(i) *Opinion of the Colonial Office and Foreign Office, May 1945 (S.6).*

From the point of view of international law the State of Sarawak possesses no personality whatever and is simply a territory within the British Empire. The independence of Sarawak is a purely domestic matter with which no foreign state has any concern. From the point of view of United Kingdom municipal law, Sarawak is foreign [*sic*] in the sense of not being British territory; but from the point of view of international law, Sarawak is British territory and not foreign (*vide*, for example, the use of the word "foreign" in commercial treaties in connection with imperial preference). Sarawak is simply a British protected state. The Agreements between the British Government and the Rajah of Sarawak have no existence within the realm of international law, but only operate as domestic matters within the Empire.

(ii) *Opinion of Wynn Parry and Arnold D. McNair, September 1945.*

The main question put to us is whether the statement headed 'The International Status of Sarawak' numbered S.6 and handed by the representatives of the Colonial Office to the representatives of the Government of Sarawak as being 'the considered opinion of the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office' is a fair and correct statement of the position.

In our opinion it is not, and we shall endeavour to show why.

- (a) The legal personality of a Protected State varies according to the degree of dependence upon the Protector, and each case must be considered on its merits. At one extreme there are protected States which are undoubtedly international persons although they have entrusted the conduct of their international relations to their protector; at the other extreme there are States which have lost all their international personality, and are for all international purposes a part of the protecting state, their relations with it being a matter of domestic constitutional law. The words 'protection', 'protectorate', have no single meaning and cover a multitude of relationships.
- (b) It is stated (in S.6 referred to above) that 'The Agreements between the British Government and the Rajah of Sarawak have no existence within the realm of international law, but only operate as domestic matters within the Empire'.

We are unable to accept this statement.

The precise date at which Sarawak became an independent State may be difficult to fix.

According to the *Dominions Office and Colonial Office List* 1940, (believed to be the latest), p. 542, Great Britain recognized Sarawak as an independent State in 1864. There is some evidence that the United States of America had done the same thing at an earlier date. Then by an Agreement of September 5, 1888, executed by Lord Salisbury, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Raja Charles Brooke the State of Sarawak 'was placed under the Protection of Her Majesty the Queen'. That Agreement was undoubtedly made between two independent States, operates within the field of International Law and derives its efficacy from that system of law. Its language is such that no other conclusion is possible. It envisages relations between the State of Sarawak and foreign States and provides for their being conducted either by His Majesty's Government or in accordance with its directions, but these foreign relations are the relations of the State of Sarawak. Again, it envisages differences arising between the Government of Sarawak and other Governments, and obliges the Government of Sarawak to abide by the decision of His Majesty's Government upon such differences, but the differences are between Sarawak and other States, not between His Majesty's Government and other States. Again, by Article IV His Majesty's Government received the right to send consuls who shall receive exequaturs in the name of the Government of Sarawak and shall hoist the British flag in their residences, and Article V confers upon British subjects both national and most-favoured-nation treatment.

Article VI requires the consent of His Majesty's Government to cessions of territory by the Raja to any foreign state. All these provisions presuppose the existence of the State of Sarawak as an international person, and the effect of the Agreement is to modify its international personality by making it a Protected State. Just as the English Law of status recognizes legal persons of incomplete personality and capacity, so likewise does international law recognize a variety of status and personality.

What then has happened since 1888 to convert this Agreement and the treaty relations resulting from it from the field of international law into 'domestic matters within the Empire'?

Owing to the military occupation of Sarawak the Government is separated from its records and is not in a position to quote from its files. No importance can be attached to the transference of Sarawak affairs by His Majesty's Government from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office at some time, so we are told, between 1906 and 1912. The change called forth a protest from the Sarawak Government and was ultimately acquiesced in by it as a matter of British domestic convenience on the understanding that it in no way altered the status of Sarawak. Sarawak's foreign relations are for the most part confined to her near neighbours. Two Boundary Agreements were made in 1912 and 1920 with the State of Brunei (See Maxwell's *Treaties and Engagements of the Malay States*, pp. 152-154), and it is significant that they are signed for Brunei by the British Resident and for Sarawak by the Raja's own officer of the appropriate Division. From time to time His Majesty's Government in pursuance of the

Agreement of 1888 has made treaties and agreements with other States accepting Sarawak and has previously consulted the Government of Sarawak, for instance, a boundary treaty with the Netherlands Government in 1928 and an agreement with the same Government as to passports in 1926. When such a treaty or agreement requires legislation in Sarawak, it is for the Government of Sarawak to legislate, as in practice it does.

Finally, what is the effect of the Agreement of 22 November, 1941, upon the previous state of affairs?

- (i) Instead of wiping out the *status quo ante* and converting a relation between the two countries operating within the field of international law into a domestic matter within the Empire, it proceeds in the first article to re-affirm the vitality of the Agreement of September 5, 1888, by expressing the Agreement of 22 November, 1941, to be supplemental to it.
- (ii) It then provides for a British Representative to be 'accredited to the Court of the Rajah' and makes it necessary that his advice should be 'asked and acted upon' upon all external matters, namely, relations of the State of Sarawak with foreign States, rights and status of foreign nationals (which involve obligations towards foreign States) and defence (that is, against foreign States). Moreover, the British Representative may offer his opinion 'on matters touching the general administration of the State', may attend the Supreme Council for certain purposes without power to vote and may attend and address the Council Negri without power to vote.

It may well be that after some years of the operations of this Agreement the influence of the British Representative might become so great that the internal independence of the State of Sarawak would, *de facto* and by acquiescence, come to an end, but within about one month of the signature of the Agreement Sarawak came under enemy occupation, and it is impossible to say that Sarawak *vis-à-vis* His Majesty's Government no longer possesses internal sovereignty and independence. It is hardly necessary to say that enemy occupation does not displace sovereignty.

- (c) The independent status of Sarawak is accepted in the latest edition of Anson's *Law and Customs of the Constitution*, Vol. II., Part II (1935) (by Berriedale Keith) pp. 106-108. After stating that 'the dependent or protected states may stand in varying degrees of dependence upon the government of this country', the editor continues:

'The Protectorates or Protected States, in which a settled form of government exists—Zanzibar, Tonga, Brunei, North Borneo, Sarawak and the Malay States—possess these features in common, that the British Government by treaty exercises a control over their foreign relations, and in the first three cases* a jurisdiction over British subjects within their territories. The Malay States are practically controlled in their internal affairs by the advice of a British Resident, a phenomenon formerly exhibited on a large scale in the case of Egypt. In these cases it is not considered necessary to

*The fact that in the other Protected States jurisdiction is not asserted necessitated the passing of 17 and 18 Geo. V.c. 43, to allow of the recognition of probates granted in such territories. Since 1908 consular jurisdiction is not exercised in Brunei, powers having been given to the Resident by a local law.

exercise jurisdiction. North Borneo and Sarawak are curious examples of independent sovereignty exercised by British subjects under the protection of the Crown under treaties of 1888, but not within the dominions of the Crown. In Sarawak foreign relations are controlled and questions of succession are determined by the British Government, which also in the case of North Borneo approves the Governor-appointed by the Chartered Company. Zanzibar is governed by a Sultan advised by a British Resident, and has executive and legislative Councils: natives fall under the Sultan's Court, Europeans under the Resident's Court. Tonga, a constitutional monarchy, has in minor matters jurisdiction over Europeans'.

- (d) Further evidence of the fact of the State of Sarawak being a foreign country is afforded by its position in regard to the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts, 1890 and 1913. These Acts enable the Crown to direct that certain British enactments shall extend 'to any foreign country in which for the time being His Majesty has jurisdiction'. Amongst these enactments has been, since 1913, the Colonial Probates Act, 1892. The British Crown appears to have been advised in or about the year 1927 that it has no power to legislate under the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts in respect, amongst other States, of Sarawak, because it did not assert jurisdiction over British subjects there, and the Colonial Probates (Protected and Mandated Territories) Act, 1927, was passed which empowers the Crown to apply the Colonial Probates Act, 1892 'to any territories being either territories under his Majesty's protection or territories in respect of which a mandate on behalf of the League of Nations has been accepted by His Majesty, to which it cannot be applied by virtue of the provisions of the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts, 1890 and 1913'.
- (e) There are other factors which support the view that Sarawak is not an integral part of the British Empire. Not only does Sarawak possess its own flag and currency and postage stamps (as many States forming part of the British Empire do) and an armed force (the Sarawak Rangers), which in the words of Hailsham, *Laws of England*, Vol. XI (dated 1933), Sect. 351, 'is a force under the Rajah's sole control', but its internal independence differentiates it from many or most of those British Protected States which are regarded as part of the British Empire, in two respects: (a) the absence of any right in the British Crown to exercise jurisdiction in Sarawak, the concession of which by the Government of Sarawak appears to be one of the main objects of the pending negotiations (see the minutes of the Meeting held on March 20, 1945) and (b) the absence of any appeal from Sarawak Courts to the Privy Council or to any other British Court. The following passage may be quoted from Hailsham, *Laws of England*, Vol. XI., Sect. 272, where, after referring to the Agreement of 1888 and the powers conferred thereby upon the British Government, the author continues as follows:—

'Otherwise no intervention in administration is allowed. The administration is controlled by the Rajah and a Supreme Council composed of the heir presumptive (the Tuan Muda), two Europeans and five Malays. There is a large administrative staff and a Chief Justice. No provision is made for British jurisdiction or even

for an appeal to the Privy Council, such as exists in the case of the Federated Malay States, British North Borneo and Brunei' (see Hailsham, Vol. IX, Sect. 271, note (f)).

In short, if the statement made by the Colonial Office that 'Sarawak is simply a British Protected State' means that it is a State protected by Great Britain, the claim can be accepted; if it means that Sarawak is British, it goes too far.

- (f) The treatment of Sarawak in the *Dominions Office and Colonial Office List*, 1940, (which is believed to be the last issue) lends support to the view that Sarawak is not regarded as an integral part of the British Empire. Part II (c) is described as an 'Historical and Statistical Account of the Colonies and other Territories with which the Colonial Office is concerned'. This section deals (*inter alia*) with Malaya which it is stated on p. 380, 'comprises the Colony of the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, Pahang and the Unfederated States of Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Perlis. Malaya is also regarded as including the State of Brunei, in the island of Borneo, of which the Governor of the Straits Settlements is High Commissioner and which, like the Malay States in the Peninsula, is in treaty relationship with Great Britain'.

It will be noted that two other States in the island of Borneo, namely North Borneo and Sarawak, are not mentioned as comprised within Malaya.

Later at p. 539 there is an Appendix which gives some account of North Borneo, Sarawak, Trans Jordan and certain miscellaneous British possessions and Protectorates which are not included in the main portion of the Historical and Statistical portion above. On p. 542 we are told that in 1864 Great Britain recognized Sarawak as an independent State and the Agreement of 14 June 1888 is summarized.

It is also worthy of note that the members of what is called the Malayan Establishment Staff appear in the Record of Services of Dominions and Colonial Officers, while the members of the Sarawak Service do not. The reason is presumably the fact that the members of the Malayan Service are British civil servants, while the members of the Sarawak service are not and hold contracts from the Sarawak Government.

Again on p. XIV the description of the establishment of the Colonial Office recognizes the distinction between the Malayan States and Sarawak by describing the affairs assigned to the *Eastern Department* of the Office as follows: 'Hong Kong, Straits Settlements, Malay States, Mauritius, Seychelles and Ceylon. Business connected with the Protected States of Sarawak and North Borneo.'

- (g) It is instructive to compare Sarawak with one of the Unfederated Malay States, Kelantan, in 1924. As a result of a Treaty of 10 March 1909 between Great Britain and Siam and an Agreement of 22 October 1910 between Great Britain and the Raja of Kelantan (see Maxwell's *Treaties and Engagements affecting the Malay States and Borneo*, p. 109) Great Britain exercises (or at any rate exercised in 1924) rights of protection over Kelantan which may be summarized as follows:

- (i) Kelantan undertakes to have no political relations or dealings with any foreign power or protectorate except through the medium of His Britannic Majesty.
- (ii) His Britannic Majesty reserves power to appoint officers to be Adviser and Assistant Adviser in Kelantan, and the Raja of Kelantan 'undertakes to follow and give effect to the advice'.
- (iii) Posts, telegraphs and railways are under the control of the Raja.
- (iv) His Britannic Majesty undertakes not to interfere with the internal administration of Kelantan except as provided in the Agreement so long as nothing is done which is contrary to treaty obligations between His Britannic Majesty and foreign Governments and so long as peace and order and justice are maintained in Kelantan.

An examination of the Agreements between His Britannic Majesty and the Rajah of Sarawak of 1888 and 1941 makes it clear that the rights of the British Crown in the State of Sarawak are less than they were in 1924 in the State of Kelantan.

In the light of the certificate given by the Colonial Office for the purposes of the hearing of the House of Lords in *Duff Development Co. v Government of Kelantan* (1924) A.C. 797 it is instructive to examine the international status of Kelantan at that time as accepted in the House of Lords.

Upon a summons to enforce an award against the Government of Kelantan, the Secretary of State for the Colonies was, in accordance with the usual practice, requested by the Court for information as to the status of Kelantan. The reply from the Colonial Office, dated 9 October 1922, is summarized in the passage about to be quoted from Viscount Finlay's speech. That letter was enough and indeed was conclusive upon the Court, but it enclosed certain documents which enabled the Court to examine the background of the opinion expressed in the letter.

Viscount Finlay (at p. 814) said

'It is obvious that for sovereignty there must be a certain amount of independence, but it is not in the least necessary that for sovereignty there should be complete independence. It is quite consistent with sovereignty that the sovereign may in certain respects be dependent upon another Power; the control, for instance, of foreign affairs may be completely in the hands of a protecting Power, and there may be agreements or treaties which limit the power of the sovereign even in internal affairs without entailing a loss of the position of a sovereign Power. In the present case it is obvious that the Sultan of Kelantan is to a great extent in the hands of His Majesty's Government. The reply of the Colonial Office to Master Jelf on October 9, 1922, states that Kelantan is an independent State in the Malay Peninsula and that the Sultan is the sovereign ruler, that His Majesty's Government does not exercise or claim any rights of sovereignty or jurisdiction over Kelantan and that the Sultan makes laws, dispenses justice through Courts, and, generally speaking, exercises without question the usual attributes of sovereignty.'

Viscount Finlay then analysed the Agreement of 22 October 1910 and considered that 'while there are extensive limitations upon its independence, the enclosed documents (in the letter from the Colonial Office) do

not negative the view that there is quite enough independence left to support the claim to sovereignty.'

In our opinion this passage is applicable to the State of Sarawak. Indeed, Sarawak's is an *a fortiori* case. A comparison of the Agreement of 22 October 1910 with Kelantan and the Treaty of 5 September 1888 and Agreement of 22 November 1941 with the Rajah of Sarawak leaves no doubt in our mind that the State of Sarawak possessed after the Agreement of 22 November 1941 a larger degree of sovereignty than the State of Kelantan did in 1921.

- (h) It is also instructive to examine a case affecting what is now one of the Unfederated Malay States—Johore—*Mighell v. Sultan of Johore* (1894) 1 Q.B. 149 (C.A.). By a treaty of December 11, 1885, the defendant Sultan maintained armed forces and a postal system, dispensed justice through properly constituted Courts, conferred titles of honour, 'and, generally speaking, exercised without question the usual attributes of a sovereign ruler'. By a treaty of 1885 the Sultan's territory was protected from hostile attack by the British Governor of the Straits Settlements and 'the Sultan bound himself not to negotiate treaties or to enter into any engagement with any foreign State'. In short, the Sultan had parted with his external sovereignty but retained his internal sovereignty. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, when the Court desired to ascertain the status of the Sultan, replied that Johore was an independent State and territory, that the defendant was the present sovereign ruler thereof, and that the relations between the Sultan and Her Majesty the Queen were relations of alliance and not of suzerainty and dependence. The Court of Appeal had no hesitation in holding that the letter from the Colonial Office was 'conclusive that the defendant was an independent sovereign' and added 'For this purpose all sovereigns are equal. The independent sovereign of the smallest state stands on the same footing as the monarch of the greatest.' Thus in 1894 the Colonial Office certified that a Protected State the external relations of which were conducted by His Majesty's Government but which internally possessed the usual attributes of a sovereign, was an independent State, and it does not appear that the condition of Johore then differed greatly from that of Sarawak today. Moreover, it is significant that the Court of Appeal regarded itself as applying international law and not the domestic law of the British Empire.
- (i) Finally, we may say that the remark (contained in Memorandum S.6) that 'no foreign State has any concern' with the independence of Sarawak is not understood. The British Crown and the Government of Sarawak are capable of managing and adjusting their relations themselves, and it has not been suggested on behalf of the Government of Sarawak that any other State is interested in the matter.

We shall now answer the specific questions put to us in our Instructions.

1. For the reasons stated above we do not consider that Memorandum S.6 is an adequate statement of the position.
2. The combined effect of the Agreements of 1888 and 1941 upon the internal administration of Sarawak is twofold. (a) The conduct of Sarawak's foreign relations conceded to His Majesty's Government by the Agreement of 1888 and elaborated in the Agreement of 1941

carries with it the powers necessary to implement these relations internally where required, and if the Government of Sarawak declined to implement internally a treaty or other agreement with another State purporting to affect the State of Sarawak, His Majesty's Government would be entitled to take the steps necessary for the application and enforcement of that Agreement. Moreover, the British representative accredited to the Court of the Rajah has access to the relevant Sarawak documents and records. (b) In what may be described as purely internal affairs, the British Representative has a right to offer his opinion upon matters touching the general administration of the State. In matters on which his advice is sought he has access to Sarawak State documents and records. He may attend certain meetings of the Supreme Council and all meetings of the Council Negri. These rights in themselves do not give His Majesty's Government the right to intervene in purely internal affairs.

3. In our opinion Sarawak is a Protected State possessing incomplete international personality but not an integral part of the British Empire.
4. and 5. The statement quoted in this question from the Colonial Office's Memorandum S.6 contains a twofold assertion, namely that responsibility for the administration of Sarawak already rests upon His Majesty's Government (a) in fact and (b) in public estimation.

As regards (a) we assume that by the words 'in fact' the writer of the memorandum meant 'in law'. For the reasons discussed at length above, we are of opinion that, as a matter of law the extent of the responsibility of His Majesty's Government for the administration of the affairs of Sarawak is as follows and no further:—

- (i) His Majesty's Government is responsible to other states for the conduct of the external affairs of Sarawak, including the rights of foreign nationals and the defence of Sarawak; and
- (ii) As regards the internal affairs of Sarawak His Majesty's Government is responsible to the extent to which the Agreements of 1888 and 1941 confer rights and impose duties upon His Majesty's Government in relation thereto, including by necessary implication the right of requiring any internal legislation to be passed, which may be necessary to give effect to action taken by His Majesty's Government in the matter of the foreign relations of Sarawak.

His Majesty's Government have no further responsibility in law (or in fact) for the administration of Sarawak.

As regards (b) on the facts and documents before us we find it difficult to appreciate the accuracy of this assertion.

In view of the extent of the existing rights of His Majesty's Government which have been stated above, the assertion under discussion involves the allegation that a public opinion exists, of which His Majesty's Government ought to take notice, demanding that His Majesty's Government should take control or a substantial measure of control of the internal affairs of Sarawak.

We know of no circumstances which would justify such a public opinion, assuming it to exist; and there is before us one fact, which would seem to rob any such opinion of any justification, namely the admission of the Colonial Office that there exists no ground for

complaint as regards the manner in which the internal affairs of Sarawak were administered before the Japanese occupation.

In view of the extent of the existing rights of His Majesty's Government under the existing Agreements and in view of this very important admission by the Colonial Office, it is difficult to appreciate either that any such body of public opinion exists, or, if it does exist, that, at the expense of the State of Sarawak, it should be heeded by His Majesty's Government, the relevant department of which Government has made the important admission referred to above. Speaking with all respect, if the suggested opinion exists (which we doubt), the case would appear to be one calling for the education of the public opinion in question, rather than one for bringing pressure upon or taking unilateral action against a state, with whom His Majesty's Government has two existing Agreements and against the administration of whose internal affairs no complaint can be made.

In the above circumstances we are of opinion that the Government of Sarawak should dispute with the Colonial Office the correctness of the view put forward in the Memorandum S.6 and the twofold assertion made in the Memorandum S.5 and referred to at the beginning of this paragraph of our Opinion, and in particular should request the Colonial Office to justify its assertion that a body of public opinion exists, of which His Majesty's Government ought to take official notice, holding the view that a case exists for the interference of His Majesty's Government in the internal administration of Sarawak.

18 September, 1945

H. Wynn Parry
Arnold D. McNair

Appendix II

The Brooke Succession

(i) *The Political Will of James Brooke, 1867.*

I JAMES BROOKE Rajah of Sarawak of Burrator in the County of Devon give devise and bequeath all that my Sovereignty of Sarawak aforesaid and all the rights and privileges whatsoever thereto belonging unto my Nephew Charles Johnson Brooke Tuan Muda of Sarawak Son of The Reverend Francis Charles Johnson and the heirs male of his Body lawfully issuing and in default of such issue unto my Nephew Stuart Johnson another son of the said Francis Charles Johnson and the heirs male of his Body lawfully issuing and in default of such issue I give devise and bequeath the said Sovereignty and Rights and privileges unto Her Majesty the Queen of England her heirs and assigns for ever and I appoint Miss Angela Georgina Burdett Coutts of Stratton Street Piccadilly and Thomas Fairbairn of the City of Manchester Esquire and John Abel Smith of Chester Square in the County of Middlesex Esquire M.P. Trustees of this my Will to see the purposes aforesaid carried into effect . . .

(ii) *The Political Will of Charles Brooke, 1913.*

. . . In confirmation of the will of my predecessor I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH my sovereignty of Sarawak and all the rights and privileges

thereto belonging in manner following (that is to say) Unto my eldest son Vyner and the heirs male of his body with remainder to my second son Bertram and the Heirs male of his body with remainder to my third son Harry and the heirs male of his body with remainder to the son of my late younger brother Stuart and the heirs male of his body with remainder to H.M. the King of England.

(iii) *Vyner Brooke's Accession Oath, 1918.*

WE, VYNER BROOKE, herewith take oath upon the Bible to establish clearly and honourably our attitude concerning the matter set forth in the following Articles:—

Article 1.

We undertake to acknowledge and support the religion of Islam together with the laws and customs pertaining to that religion.

Article 2.

We undertake that such laws and customs as affect the Malay race shall follow the principles laid down by this Government in the past. And no question of any change or alteration shall be entertained except such as may be in accordance with the opinions and deliberations of the members of the Council Negri.

Article 3.

We undertake on behalf of ourselves and of our successors as Rajahs of Sarawak to abide by the conditions expressed in the Will of Rajah Sir Charles Brooke.

And we swear to obey and to carry out the wishes of the late Ruler, our honoured Father, as forming the Constitution of this State.

Appendix III *The Legalization of Cession*

I. MacBryan's Abortive Attempt, January 1946.

(i) *MacBryan's Agreement with the Datu Patinggi, 5 January 1946.*

. . . The following are five requests to which I hope Your Royal Highness will consent:

1. I beg that my title and status of Datu Patinggi, and that of my descendants, be superior to that of the other datus forever.
2. I beg that my descendants will be allowed to replace me, holding the same rank and with sufficient income.
3. I beg that my eldest grandson, Abang Ibrahim, now be made Datu Bandar.
4. I beg to have the country's revenues [kehasilan] for the last 100 years and for the future.
5. I beg to have the revenues from the turtle eggs of Talang Talang Besar, Talang Talang Kecil and Pulau Satang as my right and that of my heirs forever.

I hope that you will include these requests in the treaty with the British government as required by Your Highness' representative . . .

Written at Darul Kornia,
Kuching, 4 January 1946.

Your obedient and loyal servant,
A. H. Abdillah
Datu Patinggi of Sarawak.

Witnessed by Mr G. T. M.
MacBryan, Special
Representative of H.H.
the Rajah

I undertake that these requests shall be submitted to His Highness the Rajah for his consideration.

5/1/46 G. T. M. MacBryan, Personal Representative of H.H. the Rajah.
[my translation]

(ii) Supreme Council Order authorizing the Rajah to negotiate cession

WHEREAS Section 4 (ii) of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941 provides that all the prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercised by the Rajah-in-Council and not otherwise except in so far as the Rajah-in-Council may from time to time determine.

AND whereas the Rajah has informed the Members of the Supreme Council that it is the desire and purpose of His Highness to conclude an Agreement with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom whereby to provide for the cession of the State of Sarawak to His Majesty the King so that the exercise of any other authority in the State except that of His Majesty will thereupon be determined.

AND whereas the Members of the Supreme Council have intimated to the Rajah their unanimous advice and consent that such an Agreement should be concluded by the Rajah.

NOW, therefore, in order that His Highness the Rajah may more easily fulfill his purpose, and by virtue of the powers vested in the Rajah-in-Council by the provisions of Section 4 (ii) of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941, the Rajah-in-Council hereby determines that as from and including 1st January, 1946, all the prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercised by the Rajah and not otherwise.

Given under the Hands of the Members of the Supreme Council, the Hand of the Rajah's Personal Representative and the Seal of the Rajah-in-Council this 5th day of January, 1946.

(Sgd.) A. H. Abdillah,
Datu Patinggi

(Sgd.) A. H. Mustapha,
Datu Pahlawan

(Sgd.) G. T. M. MacBryan,
Personal Representative of
H.H. the Rajah of Sarawak

(Sgd.) Ong Tiang Swee

(Sgd.) A. Suleiman,
Datu Amar

Ratified (Sgd.) C. V. Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak.
(Seal) Vyner Brooke, Rajah-In-Council.

(iii) Council Negri Order repealing the 1941 Constitution

ORDER NO. C-22 (CONSTITUTION REPEAL) 1946.

(An Order whereby to vest in His Highness the Rajah absolutely all those powers and prerogatives of sovereignty [sic] exercised by the Rajah-in-Council and the Council Negri subject to the provisions of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941.)

(Enacted)
(Gazette)
(Operation)

WHEREAS by a Proclamation dated 31st March, 1941, We pronounced Our will and intention to provide for the future government of Sarawak by the enactment of an Order to bind Ourselves and Our Heirs and Successors:

AND WHEREAS in fulfilment of the terms of that Proclamation We enacted Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941:

AND WHEREAS on 29th October, 1941, pursuant to Section 18 (ii) of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941 the Rajah-in-Council appointed an Officer Administering the Government:

AND WHEREAS on 8th December, 1941, the Officer Administering the Government proclaimed that a state of emergency existed in the State of Sarawak:

AND WHEREAS from and including 25th December, 1941, up to and including the date of the enactment of this Order, the circumstances of emergency in the State of Sarawak precluded the proper operation of the provisions of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941:

AND WHEREAS the Members of the Supreme Council and the Members of the Council Negri in joint session assembled have declared their unanimous desire that We should enjoy absolute discretion and freedom to act in whatever manner We believe to be in the high interests of Our People and Our State:

AND WHEREAS in order to fulfill the aforementioned purpose the Members of the Supreme Council and the Members of the Council Negri have advised Us to consent to enact an Order whereby to repeal Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941:

It is hereby enacted by His Highness the Rajah acting by and with the advice and consent of the Council Negri as follows:

1. This Order may be cited as Order No. C-22 (Constitution Repeal) 1946 and shall come into operation forthwith.
2. Order No. C-21 (Constitution) is repealed.

We, the undersigned Members of the Council Negri, forming a lawful quorum for the transaction of business, by virtue of the powers conferred on the Council Negri by Section 14 (i) of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941, hereby advise that His Highness the Rajah may be pleased to consent forthwith to enact the aforesaid legislation, Order No. C-22 (Constitution Repeal) 1946.

Given under the hands of the Members of the Council Negri, the hand

of the President of the Council Negri and the seal of the Council Negri this 6th day of January, 1946.

(Sgd.) A. H. Abdillah,
Datu Patinggi

(Sgd.) H. Mohidin,
Datu Hakim

(Sgd.) A. Suleiman,
Datu Amar

(Seal) President of the Council Negri
(Sgd.) G. T. M. MacBryan

2. The Second Attempt, April—June 1946.

(i) *Restoration of the 1941 Constitution: The Two Orders*

(1) Order No. C-23 (Constitution Re-enactment) 1946

*(An Order to remove any doubts as to the continuance
in force of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941)*

WHEREAS at a meeting of members of the Council Negri held on the 6th day of January, 1946, an Order (hereinafter referred to as 'the Order of 1946') was made entitled 'An Order whereby to vest in His Highness the Rajah absolutely all those powers and prerogatives of sovereignty exercised by the Rajah in Council and the Council Negri subject to the provisions of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Order of 1941'), whereby the Order of 1941 was repealed:

And whereas doubts exist as to the validity of the Order of 1946, but if that Order is valid the sole power of making laws for Sarawak is vested in His Highness the Rajah:

And whereas it is expedient that the Order of 1941 should have the force of law and that, for the removal of the aforesaid doubts, provision for that purpose should be made.

Now therefore it is hereby enacted by His Highness the Rajah as follows:—

1. This Order may be cited as Order No. C-23 (Constitution Re-enactment) 1946 and shall come into operation forthwith.

2. For the removal of doubts it is hereby declared that the Order of 1946 shall cease to have any effect which it may hitherto have had, and the Order of 1941 shall have the force of law.

*Given under Our hand at
Kuching, Sarawak, this
seventeenth day of
April, 1946.*

C. V. BROOKE,
Rajah of Sarawak.

(2) Order of His Highness the Rajah in Council

*(Revocation of Order regarding the Rajah's
Prerogatives)*

WHEREAS by subsection (ii) of section 4 of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941, it is provided that all the prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercised by the Rajah in Council and not otherwise except in so far as the Rajah in Council may from time to time determine:

And whereas at a meeting of the members of the Supreme Council held on the 5th day of January, 1946, an instrument was executed whereby it was determined that, as from the 1st January, 1946, all the prerogatives of the Rajah should be exercised by the Rajah and not otherwise:

And whereas doubts exist as to the validity of the said instrument and it is expedient that the said determination (if valid) should be revoked:

Now therefore, by virtue of the powers vested in the Rajah in Council by the aforesaid sub-section, the Rajah in Council hereby revokes the said instrument and determination and determines that all prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercisable by the Rajah in Council or as they may hereafter determine.

*Given under the hand
of His Highness the
Rajah, by and with
the advice and
consent of the
Supreme Council, this
24th day of April, 1946.*

C. V. BROOKE,
Rajah of Sarawak.

(ii) *The Cession Order of the Council Negri*

An Order to authorise the Cession of Sarawak to His
Majesty the King

WHEREAS it is in the interests of the inhabitants of Sarawak that the territory of the State of Sarawak, and the full sovereignty and dominion over the State, should be ceded to His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Heirs and Successors:

Now therefore it is hereby enacted by His Highness the Rajah, acting by and with the advice and consent of the Council Negri, as follows:—

1. This Order may be cited as Order No. C-24 (Cession of Sarawak) 1946.

2. The Rajah-in-Council is hereby authorised to cede the territory of the State of Sarawak, and the full sovereignty and dominion over the State, to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, to the intent that Sarawak shall become part of His Majesty's dominions; and on such cession any claim, however arising, of any person other than His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, to succeed to any right of sovereignty in respect of the territory of Sarawak shall be barred and of no effect.

3. The Rajah-in-Council is hereby authorised to do all things necessary for the purpose of giving full effect to the cession, and of transferring to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, all property and rights whatsoever in respect of the State and Government of Sarawak.

4. This Order shall come into force forthwith.

Kuching, 18th May, 1946.

C. V. BROOKE,
Rajah.

(iii) *The Instrument of Cession*

WHEREAS His Highness Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, G.C.M.G., is lawfully Rajah of the State of Sarawak:

And whereas by an Agreement dated the fourteenth day of June, 1888, the State of Sarawak was placed under the protection of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria:

And whereas His Highness the Rajah, acting with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council of Sarawak, has determined that, in the interests of the inhabitants of Sarawak, the State of Sarawak should be ceded to His Majesty the King and thereafter form part of His Majesty's dominions, which cession has been authorised by an Order dated the eighteenth day of May, 1946, enacted by the Rajah with the advice and consent of the Council Negri of Sarawak, and entitled Order No. C-24 (Cession of Sarawak) 1946:

And whereas Christopher William Dawson Esquire has been authorised by His Majesty to accept on his behalf the said cession:

NOW THESE PRESENTS WITNESS—

1. The territory of the State of Sarawak, and the full sovereignty and dominion over the State, are hereby ceded by the Rajah, acting with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council of Sarawak, to and accepted on behalf of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, as from the date on which this Instrument comes into operation (hereinafter called the date of cession), to the intent that the State of Sarawak shall thereupon become part of His Majesty's dominions.

2. There are hereby transferred to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, as from the date of cession, the rights of the Rajah, the Rajah in Council, and the State and Government of Sarawak in all lands and buildings including the Astana, but subject to existing private rights and native customary rights, and all the other property rights and assets of the State and Government of Sarawak, including the funds and securities of the Government, whether within or outside Sarawak; and all things necessary to give effect to such transfer shall be done.

3. All persons who immediately before the date of cession are employed in the service of the Government of Sarawak will be continued in their employment by His Majesty on terms not less favourable than those obtaining before the date of cession save that they shall hold office at the pleasure of His Majesty; and His Majesty accepts liability for the payment of any pensions gratuities and other like benefits due to be paid after the date of cession to any person or to his dependants in respect of service with the Government of Sarawak.

4. This Instrument shall come into operation on such date as by virtue of an Order made by His Majesty in Council Sarawak becomes part of His Majesty's dominions:

Provided that His Majesty shall from the date of execution of this Instrument have full power and authority to make provision for the government of Sarawak, such provision to take effect on or after the date of cession.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF His Highness Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, G.C.M.G., Rajah of Sarawak, on his own behalf, and Christopher William Dawson Esquire on behalf of His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of

India, have signed the present instrument and have affixed thereto their seals; and the seal of the Supreme Council of Sarawak has been affixed thereto, by the authority of the Council and in its presence.

Done at Kuching, Sarawak, the twenty-first day of May, 1946.

C. V. BROOKE,
Rajah.

C. W. DAWSON,
[SUPREME COUNCIL]

(iv) *The Royal Order-in-Council*

At the Court at Buckingham Palace the 26th day of June, 1946
Present:

THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY IN COUNCIL

WHEREAS by an Instrument of Cession dated the twenty-first day of May, 1946, His Highness Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, G.C.M.G., Rajah of Sarawak, acting with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council of Sarawak, has ceded to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, the territory of the State of Sarawak and the full sovereignty and dominion over the said State, as from the date on which the said Instrument of Cession comes into operation, to the intent that the State of Sarawak shall thereupon become part of His Majesty's dominions:

And whereas it is provided by the said Instrument of Cession that it shall come into operation on such date as, by virtue of an Order made by His Majesty in Council, Sarawak becomes part of His Majesty's dominions:

Now, therefore, His Majesty is pleased, by and with the advice of His Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, as follows:—

1. This Order may be cited as the Sarawak Cession Order-in-Council, 1946, and shall come into operation on the first day of July, 1946.
2. As from the first day of July, 1946, Sarawak shall be annexed to, and shall form part of, His Majesty's dominions and shall be called the Colony of Sarawak.
3. All persons who on the first day of July, 1946, are Sarawak subjects by reason of the Sarawak Orders No. N-2 (Sarawak Nationality and Naturalization) 1934, and N-2A (Sarawak Nationality and Naturalization Amendment) 1939, shall on that day become British subjects.
4. His Majesty hereby reserves to Himself, His Heirs and Successors, power to revoke, alter, add to, or amend this Order.

E. C. E. LEADBITTER

Glossary

<i>abang</i>	title assumed by the sons of datus
<i>adat</i>	custom, tradition
<i>adat lama</i>	old-established custom
<i>barisan</i>	political grouping (orig. military formation)
<i>batang</i>	major river
<i>datu</i>	non-royal Malay chieftain
<i>haj</i>	pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>haji</i>	title assumed by those completing the haj
<i>jikeidan</i>	vigilante group
<i>kampong</i>	Malay/Melanau village
<i>kapitan china</i>	Chinese headman
<i>kempeitai</i>	Japanese military police
<i>ken sanji</i>	prefectural councillor
<i>ken sanjikai</i>	prefectural advisory council
<i>kyodohei</i>	native militia
<i>mufti</i>	state Islamic leader
<i>padi</i>	rice
<i>pemuda</i>	political youth
<i>penghulu</i>	Iban leader (a Brooke invention)
<i>pengiran</i>	title signifying connection with Brunei royalty
<i>perabangan</i>	the <i>abang</i> class
<i>pergerakan</i>	political movement
<i>perimpun</i>	association
<i>persatuan</i>	association, union
<i>tua kampong</i>	Malay/Melanau village headman
<i>tuai rumah</i>	Iban/Dayak headman
<i>tulin</i>	taxation rights

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A The Public Record Office

Colonial Office records:

- CO 531 Borneo Correspondence
- CO 537 Supplementary Correspondence
- CO 604 Sarawak Government Gazettes
- CO 777 Register of Borneo Correspondence 1935-41
- CO 802 Sarawak Sessional Papers
- CO 874 British North Borneo Company Papers
- CO 938 Sarawak Correspondence, Original

War Office records:

- WO 203 Correspondence 1944-1946

War Cabinet Papers:

- CAB 98/41 War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo, 1944

B Rhodes House Library, Oxford

A general listing including Sarawak material held at Rhodes House can be found in Louis B. Frewer, *Manuscript Collections (Excluding Africana) in Rhodes House Library, Oxford*, Oxford, 1970. However, there have been a number of very important Sarawak acquisitions since that time, in particular, large collections of Brooke family papers and the papers of the Chief Justice of Sarawak, 1930-9, T. Stirling Boyd. These were catalogued by the former Archivist of Rhodes House Library, Miss P. A. Empson, and detailed listings are available in published form from Rhodes House:

Report on the Papers of T. Stirling Boyd (1886-1973), Chief Justice of Sarawak. Oxford University Colonial Records Project, 1976.

Papers of the Brookes of Sarawak. Oxford University Colonial Records Project, 1978.

Report on Correspondence and Papers of the Brooke Family of Sarawak, including papers of Charles T. C. Grant (1831-91), Laird of Kilgraston . . . Rhodes House Library, Oxford, 1978.

A listing of the most recent acquisition, the papers of Anthony Brooke, is available in published form. Following is a list of the main collections and items relating to the cession held at Rhodes House:

Brooke Family Papers MSS Pac. s.83

T. Stirling Boyd Papers MSS Pac. s.86

E. C. G. Barrett Diary MSS Pac. s.89

This diary is a record of the various meetings held in Sarawak by D. R. Rees-Williams, M.P., and L. D. Gammans, M.P., to consult local opinion on the cession.

G. E. Bettison Diary MSS. Pac.s.56

This typescript diary is the personal record of a customs officer 1939-41.

W. C. S. Corry MSS Ind. Ocn. s.215

Transcript of tape-recorded reminiscences.

C. W. Dawson Diary MSS Pac. r.7 & 8

This diary is the personal record of C. W. Dawson's experiences in Sarawak April-August 1946, first as British Representative and then as Chief Secretary.

K. H. Digby Papers Uncat. MSS

'Lawyer in the Wilderness', typescript autobiography, 1951

File on a libel suit brought by Anthony Brooke in 1947.

Memorandum entitled: 'Note on meeting held in Mr. Dale's room at the Colonial Office on the 5th April [1946]'

Poems etc. connected with his time as editor of the *Sarawak Gazette*.

E. H. Elam Papers MSS Pac. s.65

Letters and cables home 1939-

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Correspondence March-July 1946 between Gammans and the Colonial Office and papers relating to his visit to Sarawak in May 1946.

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M. P. O'Connor Papers MSS Pac. s.58

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A. J. N. Richards Papers MSS Ind. Ocn. s.213

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and memorandum entitled 'The Search for a Policy in Sarawak, 1939'.
Photographs

C Royal Commonwealth Institute Library
Sir George Maxwell Papers

D Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
Reports of the Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak, 1930-9

E Private Collections

Great Britain

Mrs K. M. Brooke Papers

Letters from Anthony Brooke, 1942-8.

Diary of visit to Sarawak, July 1947-February 1948

Letters to Anthony Brooke from Sarawak, 1947-8

Press cuttings

Photographs

F. H. Pollard Papers (in the possession of his sister, Mrs Hilary Waddington)

Letters home, 1932-45; memoranda 1944-5 relating to the Borneo Planning Unit and administrative policy in Sarawak.

SARAWAK

A Sarawak Museum

Letterbooks of the Second Rajah

Letterbook of the Third Rajah

B Eliab Bay Papers (in the possession of his son, Mr Sumping Bayang)

Files of correspondence, memoranda etc. mostly relating to his pre-war position in the Junior Administrative Service, the Dayaks Co-operative Society and his position during the Japanese occupation; correspondence relating to his post-war political activity.

C Philip Jitam Papers (in the possession of his son, Mr Harold Jitam)

Files of correspondence and documents mostly relating to his position during the Japanese occupation and to the Perimpun Dayak; some correspondence relating to his post-war political activity.

AUSTRALIA

A Australian Archives

A2670 War Cabinet Agenda, 1944-45

A2674 War Cabinet Minutes—Index Books, 1944-45

A2673 War Cabinet Minutes, 1944-45

B Australian War Memorial

A2663 (British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit; 9th Division Diary; Kuching Force Diary)

C Mitchell Library

Mark Morrison Papers (A) ML MSS 863

D Private Collections

J. R. Black Papers

- Documents relating to his time with the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit at Miri.
- Sir Thomas Eastick Papers
Correspondence, reports, newspapers, photographs, and other materials from his time as Commander of Kuching Force, September–December 1945.
- R. H. Morris Papers
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Mr E. Banks
Mr E. C. G. Barrett
Anthony Brooke
Mrs K. M. Brooke
Anne Bryant
Mr J. R. Combe
Sir William Dale
Mrs Madelein Daubeny
Mr and Mrs C. W. Dawson
Mr E. H. Elam
Mrs Gina Field
Mrs Barbara Pitt Hardacre
Mrs Evelyn Hussey
Revd Philip Jones
Mr J. C. W. MacBryan
Mr Malcolm MacDonald
Mr W. L. B. Monson
Mr T. S. Monks
Mrs Margaret Noble
Mr A. J. N. Richards
Mr and Mrs A. R. Snelus
Mr B. J. C. Spurway
Mr B. A. Trechman
Sir Dennis White
Lord Tanlaw
Sir John Martin

SARAWAK

Ahmad Zaidi bin Wan Aduce
 Madam Barbara Bay
 Mr Sumping Bayang
 Abang Boeing
 Mr Harry Brody
 Mr Harry Buxton
 Chegu Lily Eberwein
 Datuk Amar Ekhwan Zaini
 Assistant Bishop P. H. H. Howes
 Mr Harold Jitam
 Mr Ramsay Jitam
 Mr Andrew Jika Landau
 Abang Haji Mohd. Kassim Taha
 Mr Dennis Law
 Temenggong Datuk Muif
 Dato Stephen Ningkan
 Tuan Haji Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor
 Mr Ong Hap Leong
 Encik Osman bin Mohammad
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 Tan Sri Haji Mohd. Su'aut bin Haji Mohd. Tahir
 Encik Sulhi bin Idin
 Bishop Basil Temenggong
 Mr Alan Webb
 Mr Michael Buma

BRUNEI

Dato I. Talog-Davies
 Mr Robert Nicholl
 Mr John North

AUSTRALIA

Mr R. H. Morris
 Alastair and Hedda Morrison
 Professor W. E. H. Stanner
 Sir Victor Windeyer
 Miss Lena Ricketts
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Mr K. H. Digby
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